International Development and Research in Central Asia

Exploring the Knowledge-based Social Organization of Gender

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ABSTRACT

This doctoral dissertation is a critical inquiry into the knowledge-based processes that guide multi-lateral international collaboration to foster development in post-socialist Central Asia. Adopting an innovative analytic/methodological framework called institutional ethnography (Smith, 1987), the study problematizes how women are known as potential subjects of development. The present inquiry starts from the standpoint of local women who variously participate in two specific cooperation projects operating in contemporary Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The analysis moves from women's accounts to the discovery of what is constituted in projects implementation practices, questioning procedures and structures of development as an institution.

Both projects are analyzed as operating in socially and discursively organized settings– one being research for development (in Uzbekistan) and the other development within a non-governmental organization that is dependent on the exigencies of international development aid (in Kyrgyzstan). In both projects I discover that women systematically and continuously fail to benefit from the project's apparent benefits. From an institutional ethnographic position, these experiences are understood as institutionally organized. As discovered here, overlooking of women's needs and interests occurs routinely on the basis of knowledge-based processes which operate as a particular mode of domination called 'ruling relations'. The analysis demonstrates that when particular women in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan become involved in a development project, their experience is shaped by development policies including implementation frameworks that fundamentally do not work in their interest. The findings from the research site in Uzbekistan explicate the hidden work processes through which the project beneficiaries, specifically women-smallholders who suffer from uncertain and unreliable sources of livelihoods, disappear. Ruling ideas of agricultural marketing and impact-oriented development management incorporated into the project implementation procedures produce effects for women's local knowledge to be unrecognized as such. The project in Kyrgyzstan shows the actual project implementation work serving the national government's interests of fulfilling international obligations without solving, and sometimes even exacerbating, the problems of violence in the lives of women-beneficiaries. Knowledgeable and active women living in Central Asia are misconstrued. The projects' knowledge-based practices treat the knowledge of women who are potential beneficiaries as inappropriate to the analyzed projects' agenda despite these women's significant contribution to the relevant topics; they objectify the women's experiences leaving them invisible, thus, unaddressed. Such effects contradict and undermine the projects' goals, intentions and inclusive policies. As a result inequality along "gender" lines is routinely generated. The study offers support for an argument that attending to social organization of men's and women's different and similar experiences is a more satisfactory way of understanding their lives than employing the abstract concept "gender".

This study documents exactly how things work so that institutional policies and practices carrying certain expectations, often entirely underground and unintentional, produce contradictory effects upon the women whose experiences are at issue. Offered here is a detailed map of institutional relations that explicates the multiple ways in which texts, documents, and work of institutional actors are concerted together to smoothly organize such contradictory outcomes for these local women's lives. The dissertation concludes with a discussion about how the insights generated in this study might be of use by those concerned with making positive and meaningful change in the women's lives.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese Doktorarbeit setzt sich kritisch mit den wissens basierten Prozessen auseinander, welche der multilateralen internationalen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit im post-sozialistischen Zentralasien zugrunde liegen. Unter Nutzung des innovativen analytischen und methodologischen Rahmens der *Institutional Ethnography* (Smith 1987), problematisiert die Studie die Wahrnehmung von Frauen als potentielle Subjekte der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit. Die vorliegende Untersuchung nimmt die Standpunkte lokaler Frauen, welche gegenwärtig auf verschiedene Arten in zwei spezifischen Kooperationsprojekten in Kirgistan und Usbekistan eingebunden sind, als Grundlage. Neben den Berichten dieser Frauen wird analysiert, welche Praktiken bei der Implementation dieser Projekte konstituiert werden, um dadurch die Prozeduren und Strukturen der institutionellen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit zu hinterfragen.

Beide Projekte werden in ihrem jeweiligen sozial und diskursiv organisierten Umfeld analysiert. Eines davon ist Forschung für Entwicklung (Usbekistan) und das andere Entwicklung innerhalb einer Nichtregierungsorganisation, welche von den Anforderungen internationaler Entwicklungshilfe abhängig ist (Kirgistan). In beiden Projekten stellte ich fest, dass Frauen kontinuierlich und systematisch vom offensichtlichen Nutzen der Projekte ausgeschlossen blieben. Aus einer institutionell-ethnographischen Sichtweise heraus können diese Erfahrungen als institutionell bedingt verstanden werden. Wie hier festgestellt wird, werden die Interessen und Bedürfnisse von Frauen innerhalb wissensbasierter Entwicklungsprozesse regelmäßig nicht wahrgenommen, da diese eine bestimmte Form von Dominanz ausüben, welche mit dem Begriff „Ruling Relations“ bezeichnet werden kann. Diese Analyse demonstriert, dass die Einbindung von usbekischen und kirgisischen Frauen in Entwicklungsprojekte von Implementationsvorgaben und Entwicklungszielen bestimmt wird, welche ihren Interessen fundamental widersprechen. Die Erkenntnisse aus der Feldforschung in Usbekistan zeigen die Mechanismen auf, durch welche die Zielpersonen des Projektes, insbesondere weibliche Kleinbäuerinnen, die von unzuverlässigen und unsicheren Einkommen abhängig sind, vom Nutzen des Projekts ausgeschlossen blieben. Dominante Vorstellungen von landwirtschaftlicher Vermarktung und an messbaren Resultaten ausgerichtete Entwicklungsziele, welche in die Implementierung dieser Projekte einfließen, sorgen dafür, dass das lokale Wissen und die Erfahrungen von Frauen nicht einbezogen wurden. Die Analyse des kirgisischen Projekts zeigt zudem, dass seine Implementierung zwar den Interessen der nationalen Regierung bei der Erfüllung ihrer internationalen Vorgaben hilft, jedoch die Gewaltprobleme im Leben der weiblichen Zielgruppe nicht gelöst werden konnten. Teilweise wurden diese sogar noch verschlimmert. Sachverständige und aktive Frauen in der Region wurden nicht eingebunden. Aus der Perspektive der wissensbasierten Projektkonzeption wird das lokale Wissen derjenigen Frauen, welche potentiell Zielpersonen darstellen, als unpassend in Bezug auf die Projektagenda wahrgenommen. Dies geschieht, obwohl diese Frauen einen signifikanten Beitrag zur Implementation leisten. Diese Projekte versachlichen die Erfahrungen von Frauen und lassen ihre Probleme damit unsichtbar und unbearbeitet. Solche Auswirkungen widersprechen den Projektzielen, Intentionen und einem inklusiven Ansatz und unterminieren sie damit. Ein Resultat hiervon ist die Reproduktion von Ungleichheit entlang der Geschlechtergrenzen, auch unter der in der Studie vorgenommenen Neubewertung des Konzeptes Gender. Die Resultate der Studie unterstützen zudem die Erkenntnis, dass die Analyse der sozialen Organisation gemeinsamer und unterschiedlicher Erfahrungen von Männern und Frauen eine vielversprechendere Möglichkeit zum Verständnis

ihrer Lebensumstände ist als das abstrakte Konzept „Gender“.

Diese Studie dokumentiert genau die Mechanismen, welche dafür sorgen, dass institutionelle Politiken und Praktiken mit bestimmten impliziten, oft unbewussten und unbeabsichtigten, Erwartungen widersprüchliche Effekte für diejenigen Frauen produzieren, welche im Fokus des Projektes stehen. Hier werden die multiplen institutionellen Beziehungen herausgearbeitet, welche gemeinsam mit Texten, Dokumenten und den Tätigkeiten institutioneller Akteure solche widersprüchlichen Auswirkungen auf das Leben von Frauen haben. Die Dissertation schließt mit einer Diskussion darüber, wie die Einsichten dieser Studie zukünftig genutzt werden können, um positive und bedeutsame Veränderungen im Leben von Frauen zu erreichen.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Aksakals	Council of village elderly
Asvak	A schedule-based distribution of irrigation water typically applied during water-scarce years
Dekhan	Smallholder, peasant
Fermer	Private (leasehold) farmer leased for 10 – 50 years
Gender	A contested term which typically refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable (UN, 2000). In this dissertation I interrogate this conventional definition
Gender blindness	A failure to identify or acknowledge difference on the basis of gender where it is significant often perpetuated by the convention of the usage of gender neutral language (Nobelius, 2004)
Gender equality	A social order in which women and men share the same opportunities and the same constraints on full participation in both the economic and the domestic realm (Bailyn, 2006)
Gender mainstreaming	A strategy to make women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres (ECOSOC)
Gender-neutrality	A minimization of assumptions about the gender or biological sex of people
Gender relations	The ways in which a culture or society defines rights, responsibilities, and the identities of men and women in relation to one another (Bravo-Baumann, 2000)
Ishbashkaruvchy	Farmers employed work managers.
Ilatkom	Member of a village council
Khodym	A typically female village member who is invited to assist with managing big family events

Kolkhoz	A collective farm
Makhalla	Neighborhood, or territorial section within a village
Myrabs	Water masters or hydraulic engineers
Nasoschy	Persons responsible for operating the large agricultural pumps owned by the private farmers
Paikal	Persons who are generally responsible for spreading news, typically men
Pudrat	A share-croppers or contractual worker, with obligations to the private farmer
Shirkat	Joint-Stock farm (former collective farm)
Sovkhoz	State collective farm
Sum	Uzbekistan's currency – approximately 3000 sum = Eu 1 in August 2011 (also transliterated as 'soum')
Shura	Chairperson of a village council

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Association of Crisis Centers
ADB	Asian Development Bank
BBC	British Broadcast
BMBF	German Ministry of Development and Research
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resources Management
CEDAW	Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
COP	Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
COSF	Cotton Outlook Special Feature Uzbekistan
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DANIDA	Danish Development Assistance Programs
DAVAW	Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DLR	German Space Agency
DWRD	District Water Resource Department
EC	European Commission
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FONA	Framework Programme Research for Sustainable Development
FTI	Follow-the-Innovation
GAD	Gender and Development
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HAI	HelpAge International
HDI	Human Development Index
HELVETAS	Swiss Inter-Cooperation Agency
HIVOS	Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IE	Institutional Ethnography
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INTRAC	International NGO Training and Research Center
INSTRAW	International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MAWR	Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of Uzbekistan
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NAP	National Plan of Action for Achieving Gender Equality
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NSC	National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSCE	Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSI	Open Society Institute

PAD	Postmodernism and Development
PIM	Participatory Irrigation Management
SANIRI	Central Asian Research Institute of Irrigation
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programs
SDS	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SMID	Social Mobilization and Institutional Development
TACIS	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (Programme)
TPO	Temporary Protection Order
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programs
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFML	United Nations Framework for Model Legislation
UNFPA	United Nations Populations Fund
UNGTG	United Nations Gender Thematic Group
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Funds for Women
UNTG	United Nations Thematic Group
UNU-EHS	United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialistic Republics
VAW	Violence against Women
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WID	Women in Development
WP	Work Package
WUA	Water Users Association
WUG	Water Users Group
ZEF	Center for Development Research
ZUK	ZEF-UNESCO Project on Economic and Ecological Restructuring of Land and Water Use in the Khorezm Region in Uzbekistan

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This doctoral dissertation is an inquiry into the knowledge-based practices of international development collaboration operating in contemporary Central Asia, looking specifically at the local women who were potential participants or beneficiaries of such programs. The study is conceived as a response to the increasing dissatisfaction with the outcomes of transnational development cooperation upon people living in poor countries (Li, 2007; Mosse, 2001; Wedel, 2001; Parpart, 1995; Esteva, 1992; Mohanty, 1991; Mueller, 1991). Many have argued that development's multiple discursive and material mechanisms of power and control (Escobar, 2012; Li, 2002; Mendelson & Glenn, 2002; Slatter, 1993; Ferguson, 1991) work to benefit development institutions more than local populations calling into question development's capacity to adequately address global problems and effectively serve the interest of the needy. These effects undermine the considerable quantities of global financial resources, transnational planning efforts, international scientific expertise and a myriad of high-level discussions, all of which have been officially devoted to making positive changes in the 'less industrially accomplished' world (Escobar, 1995). This dissertation contributes to the scholarship committed to producing a better understanding of the problematic nature of global development (Zellerer & Vyortkin, 2004; Mendelson & Glenn, 2002) from the positions of those whose voices have been systematically silenced. Taking specific international cooperation projects, the present study aims to produce an empirically-informed analysis of knowledge-based connections between the local practice, people's everyday experiences, and the global institution of development that shapes them.

International development cooperation is an abstract concept meaning different things to different people. Eastwood (2002) points out that analysts can learn much from studying more concretely the work of those involved doing it. Inquiry into the otherwise invisible work processes which constitute development can make available for analysis the knowledge and experiences of local people, and in this case, particular groups of women living in developing world. The analysis here handles the problem of abstraction in discussions of contemporary development through recognizing the centrality of language, knowledge and discourse in its policy, planning and implementation, and indeed, in the research on development practices. Like

Cornwall (2010) who traces the trajectories of 'buzzwords' that have become part of international development, I am interested in how terms like, e.g., 'participation', 'gender sensitivity', 'bottom-up approaches', 'transdisciplinarity', and others, travel in discourses and what they evoke across multiple sites. Taking one specific project in Uzbekistan and another one in Kyrgyzstan as sites for inquiry, I show the importance of particular conceptual instruments in constructing the kind of knowledge used in implementing global development reforms and agendas. I demonstrate how certain discourses shape policies and practices bringing important and far-reaching implications for the experiences and livelihoods of the people towards whom these policies are directed. Trusted for their benefits, including effectiveness, their outcomes are often less than satisfactory. Along with Simpson (2009) I am particularly concerned about the inequities arising from their apparently competent use. I argue, as does Simpson (2009), that global knowledge systems are inherently unequal.

As an entry point my inquiry takes the standpoint of local women who directly and indirectly participate in or benefit from these projects. To be more specific, in Uzbekistan I focus on women among local smallholder farmers (also called subsistence farmers or peasants), whereas in Kyrgyzstan I start with women who suffer domestic violence. Drawing on extended fieldwork, I examine the lived experiences of these women and discover that they are active in negotiating the resources needed to fight their own constraints and impoverishment, deploying a diversity of strategies. However, notwithstanding their relevant experience, these women do not become project participants in their own right. My research reveals their systematic and continued failure to benefit from the resources and opportunities apparently offered to them. I find that the knowledge and work of the women whose experiences I learned about is discursively coordinated to be placed outside projects' agendas despite the projects' inclusive promises. Investigating how it happens so that these women and their specific needs are routinely overlooked, I elucidate in empirical ways the connections between the everyday world of the women-beneficiaries and the larger powers that circumscribe them, i.e., the more abstract contemporary knowledge that dominates the development 'industry'. In this regard, my inquiry takes place in differently located sites that I refer to as 'the local' settings where the project is implemented on the ground, and 'the extra-local', which are the institutional sites. My research tracks the complex networks of institutional practices, discourses, frameworks and knowledge

paradigms that influence how a project is actually put together by project professionals, academics, researchers, managers and staff. I call attention to how this knowledge carries a pre-conception of the women who seek solutions to their everyday difficulties, a pre-conception that gets incorporated into the dominant concepts and discourses that shape what happens in local sites.

Reaching beyond the ethnography of development

My research contributes to the body of scholarship on development which is often called the 'new ethnographies of development' (Escobar, 2012) that are believed to bring new insights about how policy works and how links can be made between social policies, scholarship and the aspirations of the poor. Escobar (2012) sees these studies as focused on hidden processes, multiple perspectives and political interests behind policy discourses. He proposes analysis making visible "the entire development network, investigating in depth the main sites with their respective actors, cultural backgrounds, and practical appropriation of the interventions by local groups" (p. xlv). Like Escobar, Mosse (2008), argues for a more nuanced account of how development operates as a multi-scale process in ways that are too subtle for immediate capture and have successfully avoided public attention. Such an account focuses on

> social relations underpinning thought work to show how development's traveling rationalities are never free from social context, how their being in social relations in institutions and expert communities, travel with disclosed baggage, get unraveled as they are unpacked into other social/institutional worlds- perhaps through the interest of local collaborators, official counterparts or brokers – and are recolonized by politics in ways that generate complex and unintended effects (Mosse, 2008, p. 120-121).

Having been praised, the new ethnographies of aid (which I discuss in more detail in the following chapter) have also been criticized for lacking a 'clear account of what happens to what' or what happens 'to those experiences that cannot be read with the categories of the present including those of the modern social sciences' (Escobar, 2012, p. xlv). In this dissertation addressing these areas of criticism becomes possible through systematic use of a theory of knowing called the 'social organization of knowledge' and entails associated research practices of 'institutional ethnography' founded by Dorothy Smith (1987, 1990, 2005). This analytic

framework is based on premises which explicitly attend to the aspects of institutional processes and organizational operations that Mosse identifies. Conforming to institutional ethnography's analytic framework I offer an empirically-based mapping of precisely how plans, events, people and actions are connected into the processes of doing development. I discuss the foundational principles of institutional ethnography in chapter 3 where I describe the features of socially organized institutional practices, of actual connections made through diverse forms of social/textual/discursive relations, and how, therefore, specific people's experiences are organized by the development institution. From such perspective this project addresses the problematic disjuncture which Escobar has pointed out between the authoritative knowledge manifested in institutional categories and local experiences. In fact, institutional ethnography, including this dissertation, overcomes the notion, prevalent in the social sciences, that the micro and the macro are separate. Based on particular epistemological and ontological premises (Smith 2004), the research maintains the standpoint of the local actors (which some call "the micro") and extends the analysis of their experiences into the wider net of social organization originating from sites external to local settings ("the macro"). Smith's approach "offer[s] a potential for reaching much beyond the scope of ethnography as it is usually understood in sociology and into the forms of organizing power and agency that are characteristic of corporations, government, and international organizations" (Smith, 2005, p. 44). Building and developing understanding from this ontological perspective allows for mitigation of what Mark Hobart (1993) warns us about, i.e., that popular sociological theories of development often are based on presuppositions drawn from the same rational scientific epistemology which has an effect of replicating the dominant epistemology; ultimately the critics are unwittingly caught up in helping to perpetuate what they claim to criticize.

Central Asia as a research site

International security cooperation with the Central Asian states came hand in hand with an increased collaboration manifested in foreign development assistance and aid since 1991 (Olcott, 2005). The geostrategic location coupled with their formerly socialist trajectory made the states of post-Soviet Central Asia a high-stakes issue in international relations which typically took the pace of democratization as a model of their development. Schetter & Kuzmits (2006) observe that as the collaboration with Central Asian countries motivated by the war in

Afghanistan came under serious scrutiny and pressure by the US domestic groups, i.e., human rights agencies and women's organizations, the US administration needed to demonstrate that their intervention continued to foster improvements in human rights, gender equality and democratization much of which was done through aid programs. To illustrate, USAID alone has been spending eleven million US dollars annually in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan within its programs of democracy promotion (Adamson, 2002). The countries of the European Union started cooperation with the Central Asian region in 1991 with the Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) program aimed at supporting the newly independent states in their economic and social development during the transition period. In 2007 the relationship between Central Asia and the European Union was further strengthened when a strategy called "Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia" was adopted by the European Council (European Communities, 2009) and TASIC was replaced by the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) with an overall objective of alleviating poverty and promoting sustainable economic and social development (European Communities, 2009). When international development resources entered Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to fund development and democratization (Anderson, 1999), the countries became firmly entrenched in the vast 'industry' of development and democratization assistance (Simpson, 2009) and started hosting a "virtual army of international nongovernmental organizations from the United States, Britain, Germany and elsewhere in Europe" (Mendelson & Glenn, 2002, p. 2).

Research locales

It is in this context that this dissertation draws upon two specific internationally-funded projects implemented in Central Asia: an environmental research project implemented by a European development research institution in Uzbekistan, and a service-provision anti-violence project implemented by a local non-governmental organization in Kyrgyzstan. Attentive to the women in my research sites, I aim to demonstrate how the issue of gender is taken up in projects situated in the two different institutional, cultural and political settings, to open up for analysis the various processes involved in constructing gender within international cooperation. The arguments presented in this thesis draw upon juxtaposing the research sites without systematically comparing these data as one would in a conventional comparative study. Instead of engaging in a more traditional comparison, I conducted institutional ethnography in both sites

from the perspectives of the local women in order to explain how the projects 'know' and respond to difficulties arising in their lives. The analytic findings emanating from each project are then put side by side to make conclusions about the general nature of the interrelations among gender, knowledge and development in each. The analyses, drawn from project sites in Uzbekistan and in Kyrgyzstan, complement each other in revealing how globalized knowledge about gender, about subaltern women and men, and relationships among them are constructed and organized. Presumed to improve people's lives, the two studies illuminate the practicalities through which what happens in these somewhat different and somewhat similar settings is not as beneficial for the women as was envisioned by those who conceptualized them.

I discover my two projects, as divergent as they are, becoming part of the common globalized processes of developing poor countries, and as such they both actively participate in and contribute to the construction of a 'developed woman'. The two projects' attention to gender is demonstrably different, yet each has something to show about how women are understood within the project. The Uzbek project holds only a slight level of interest in the gender aspect within its ecological agenda. I discover however that the project's documentary and discursive practices routinely shift the project's various resources and services (such as improved irrigation management) away from the rural women and their needs despite its slender but official commitment to improve the livelihoods of all rural people. One might argue that this happens exactly because gender was not a goal or even a priority element in the project, or, as I will argue, while identified, women were not taken seriously. My second research site in Kyrgyzstan represents a useful illustration that even in the case where gender awareness is a priority and marginalized women are the core project's beneficiaries, these women's needs and experiences are similarly sidelined. Different levels of commitment to gender is one of the most remarkable distinctions among the conceptualizations of these two projects; nevertheless, I show the different levels of commitment to gender to be fundamentally insignificant to the outcomes created in the lives of real women.

Gender in the scope of the present study

Because of my frequent usage of the term 'gender' throughout this dissertation it requires further specification and analysis. In this research I aim to problematize the rigidity and inadequacy of gender as a category within development discourse and research. I deal with some

of the complexities and diverse perspectives on gender in the subsequent chapter, where I also look at the fierce debates about the definitions of sex and gender which underpinned development practice. In my analysis I contest the concept of 'gender' as an objectively existing category; rather, I come to understand it to be an implicitly existing knowledge-based practice which participates in how institutions 'organize' working processes. I discover that the term 'gender' is used to signify a particular position within projects' processes whereby women are demarked from men in significant ways. The way gender is taken up in the projects I study designates particular groups of people with particular sets of values in relation to the projects' goals and ways to achieve them. Seen from inside the institution, women occupy a contradictory position. Simultaneously they are talked about as important local voices, but in many ways are silenced and pushed aside from opportunities to vocalize their needs, wishes and experiences in any meaningful manner. However, as I argue later, using the concept of gender does not open up more adequately the features of women's lives and experiences that development projects might possibly change.

Women as a focus of inquiry

It must be clarified from the outset that the majority of the participants in my (two-part) study are women located as beneficiaries in local project sites. For multiple reasons this focus is deliberate. First, this research reflects my personal interests in gender issues in development and, in particular how local women's needs are addressed. Second, I respond to an articulation of the need for the studies which would give voice to the complex, diverse and multilayered realities of the women who are located as project beneficiaries/participants–the voices which were previously silenced (Blagojevich, 2010; Simpson, 2009; Escobar, 1995). Making visible the actual experiences of the women living and working in the towns and villages of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan will be made possible by grounding this research in their local everyday world and its exigencies and not in the academic discourse and conceptual realm. In contrast to the literature that posits women-beneficiaries as mere recipients of project's resources, I argue for and present a study of women's active and knowledgeable work to cope with their own difficulties. My goal is to bring attention and promote the status of the local women's everyday knowledge, taking notice of the warning about studying gender with "a romantic, essentializing vision of Third World Women" (Chowdhry, 1995, p. 38). I also respond to the call for detailed

studies that show specifically how the depoliticized, technical and authoritarian framing of development (Ziai, 2011) and of gender displaces other ways of considering and responding to the needs of women in the global South when various development projects' distinct knowledge agendas come to organize professional work that affects the lives of marginalized women. Questioning the knowledge processes which produce differently positioned women as a unified, homogenous and powerless group, I offer, instead, an ethnographic account of particular women actively deploying their knowledge, work and skills to strategize various solutions to their everyday problems. I also show that all these diverse women do their work under the generalized terms brought about by the modes of domination operating in global institutions such as those discussed in this study.

Having said that I must emphasize that my approach goes beyond bringing women into the view of researchers. Such research focus has been identified as a problem with most of the development-motivated research on gender because it is too narrow, often simply documenting differences - gendered patterns of a particular function and gendered division of responsibilities and rights (Zwarteveen, 2008). Indeed, what appears problematic is the profound lack of scholarly attention to how gender is also an effect of institutionally organized activities in which women come into view (or disappear) in the actual practices constituting international projects. My study brings to the table an analysis in which accounts made of the women lives will be an entry point leading to the discovery of how the dilemmas and contradictions that women face arise within the institutional processes outside of women's control. This is how my research addresses the criticism and takes the inquiry way beyond mere descriptive accounts. The investigation of the institutional processes in which women and gender are conceptualized, packaged and addressed will contribute to an improved understanding of how projects can be better organized to understand and address women's and men's needs. The everyday effects of routine project activities on the women who are involved are something that may be invisible to development practitioners; however, inquiring into them is important for understanding women's lives. Investigating how projects' knowledge becomes translated into project's activities and practices is fundamental for making visible how certain knowledge paradigms shape local experiences and shape them as 'gendered'.

Developing the 'women of Central Asia': An overview of politicized constructions

I contrast my perspective on women to those generated from the standpoint of the institution. Review of literature on the topic demonstrates that all too often various political agendas have constructed the 'women of Central Asia' in accordance to various political agendas and co-opted these women accordingly (Kamp, 2009; Simpson, 2009). Prior to the 1917's Soviet Socialist Revolution, as Kamp (2009) notes, Russian tsarist commissioners, travelers and scholars deployed a range of representations of women living in this part of the world. These narratives captured women in terms of their allegedly 'exotic' features or defined them solely in relation to their suffering from the 'barbaric' native patriarchy. The latter discourse was later negated by some researchers who have argued that before the Soviet regime women and men living in Central Asia, in fact, enjoyed high levels of mutual respect and equality (Tabyshalieva, 2000; Buckley, 1997). Nevertheless, the former discourse has carried on as a 'master narrative' into the later historical and political agenda and combined with a condemnation of such oppressive lifestyle. Kamp observes that with the establishment of the Soviet Union the widespread view of the oppressed women living in the 'backward Muslim territory' persisted and guided the policies which were framed as 'zhenskii vopros' (the 'women's question) to address women's ongoing inequality in the Soviet society. The 'women's question' focused on emancipating women by promoting their access to education and labor envisioned to bring change in their social status and economic roles. The authenticity of this emancipation has been questioned by a number of scholars. Massel (1974), for instance, claims that the Soviet discourse of emancipating women from the shackles of oppressive tradition was actually used for political purposes as a justification for the radical policies and strategic political technologies aimed at providing cheap labor or for ensuring support to the Communist Party in the conditions of lacking of a real working class in Central Asia. He argues that what was spoken of as 'liberated' women at that time were actually the resources for the political and economic regime turning the living women into "surrogate" or "substitute" proletariat. Douglas Northrop in his "Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia" (2004) using Edwards Said's ideas of 'emasculation of the colonized' (1978) argues that women were actually instrumentalized for the purposes of imposing the imperialist will and political-economic interests on the Central Asian societies. At the center of his analysis are the practices of 'hujum', e.g., Stalin's initiated policy

in 1927 which aimed at forcing the Muslim women of Central Asia to remove what was perceived to be the most devastating symbol of the patriarchal repression which women endured, i.e., their veils. For Nortrop, hujum's libratory goals were merely rhetorical and masked highly politicized agenda. According to him, the Communist Party appropriated the 'women's question' in the efforts to modernize its imperial periphery to enhance the difference between the 'civilized' Europeans and the 'backward' Asians and to impose colonial power in Central Asia, treating the region as a kind of 'civilizational laboratory'. Hujum has been deployed there as the war against 'tradition' and 'backwardness' whereby the women's bodies were its battleground. Ultimately, it is now recognized, the so-called Soviet 'emancipating' policies produced mixed effects on women. Granting the women the rights to be active in public spaces not only did not undermine the existing patriarchal gender ideologies but also transformed and reinforced them; opportunities for education and employment came hand in hand with new kinds of repression (Akiner, 1997).

The post-socialist forms of constructions of the 'women of Central Asia' embraced in research reports and aid agencies documents have captured them as a segment of society hard-hit by the post-Soviet transition. It was argued that the state's withdrawal from public affairs shifted many formerly state functions to the household where women were expected to perform the bulk of the work (Corcoran-Nantes, 2005). Neoliberal reforms in agricultural sphere and privatization of agricultural land excluded women leaving only few of them with property rights over family ownership (Kandiyoti, 2002). Many employers preferred to hire men decreasing employment among women or leaving women at low-status and poorly paid labor sectors (UNDP, 2005). Women became the bulk of participants in the non-conventional work: home-based, irregular, insecure and short-term. Women flooded the informal sectors, bazaars, flea-markets, petty-trading, and 'shuttle-trading'. These types of work created high risks to their physical security and health, financial security of their families and harassment from their clients, border guards, employers, etc. (Ozcan, 2006). Simpson (2009) observes that women's involvement in the reforming labor market did not translate into their enhanced autonomy but produced frustration and bitterness about the "overwhelming daily struggles [through which] they sought to overcome to mitigate precarious economic circumstances, and little gratitude they received" (p. 75).

Simultaneously with presenting these women as being in need of being rescued, the same sources conceptualized women also as a 'resource' for promoting development and democratization and as essentially prepared to promote the foreign agendas of economic growth (Çağlar, 2010; Paci, 2002; Bauer, Green & Kuehnast, 1997). Inspired by the idea that with the right technical expertise and knowledge gender equality can be achieved (Alvarez, 1999), various development institutions have been drawn to the belief that women can be engaged in development processes as relevant agents, alongside government and market sectors (Simpson, 2009). International and trans-national donor institutions have begun to fund projects to empower women as a strategy to advance economic growth. Provision of institutional support and structure for programs of poverty reduction, violence prevention, capacity-building and many other kinds of equity-oriented activities including integrating gender issues into all of the programs has become a required strategy (Mendelson & Glenn, 2002; ADB, 2005). Consequently, both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have witnessed a flurry of international development intervention for the purposes of achieving gender equality. Based on the dominant construction of women living in the countries of Central Asia, programs have been designed in accordance to these paradigms. International gender experts became central for guiding the planning and funding for the projects which were driven and directed at themes and needs that these experts had found to be important. As a result, international development sources for women were spent in Central Asia for promoting the ideas which did not emanate locally but had been rendered useful elsewhere in the world (Kamp, 2009).

Only few analysts, e.g., Simpson (2009) recognize the diversity among women and among their contributions:

> [w]omen embodied diversity. They donned mini-skirts and high heels, or blue jeans and t-shirts, or heavy woolen shawls and rubber riding boots, or headscarves and long dresses, or perfectly-pressed business suits; they toted plastic bags, briefcases, stylish purses, or backpacks. Along streets, they set up tables and sold sticks of chewing gum, single cigarettes, ice cream, and cakes. In the bazaars, they hawked cassettes and CDs from Russia, tea and condoms from China, scarves from Turkey, homemade *nan* (flat bread), and spicy Korean salads. On certain corners at dusk and dawn, groups gathered and waited as sex workers. In the regular press, women appeared as pop stars, community

> leaders, mothers, students, scholars, and teachers. They were prominent and active in university settings, conferences, prospering businesses, government offices, and political debates (2009, p. 2).

Like Simpson, I argue for analysis which shows women as diverse as they are. However, grasping the diversity of women in my study to ensure the representativeness of my participants is not a goal in this study. Rather, as I move to identify the institutional relations which organize women's experiences, I discover that common modes of domination shape women's lives regardless of how particular and specific their experiences are. As my analysis proceeds, I show how diverse experiences become homogenized by institutional regimes of power.

The research rationale: Tackling the gaps

In general terms, my study addresses the problem with international development's less than adequate outcomes for women beneficiaries/participants, largely attributed to erroneous knowledge paradigms being employed in the policy formation processes (Çağlar, 2010; Blagojevich, 2010; Ferguson, 1994). Blagojevich (2010), for instance, argues that the tendency for the dominant theories to relegate post-communist countries into already existing categories in the development discourse such as, the global North and global South or the 'core' and the 'periphery' has been detrimental to women in the post-socialist world. Policies to incorporate the interests of the local participants have failed, according to (Mosse, 2001), co-opted by top-down approaches to institutional knowledge generation. Subsequently, policies enforced on the basis of falsely generalizing versions of local knowledge - either as romanticized, idealistic, and inherently positive or, on the contrary, as unscientific, inferior and vernacular (Antweiler, 1998; Hobart, 1995; Agrawal, 1995) often led to contradictory results that undermined the expected local ownership and independence (Cooke & Kothari, 2008; Mosse, 2004). It is the goal of my study to generate knowledge to better understand these contradictions by thoroughly investigating how the incorporation of benign ideas by professionals who must manage and govern in ways which are derived from the dominant paradigms of, for instance, effective and accountable development. I am interested in the institutional framing of projects and want to see how institutional knowledge jibes with local forms of knowing the project settings and actors.. Analytically, I offer a detailed map of knowledge-based processes constituting particular

development goals and activities in my two projects; starting from the most 'on-the-ground' experience, I trace ideas found there back to the realm of global policy making, explicating empirically the material connections carried in texts that link the local and the global.

By carrying out such an inquiry in Central Asia I also address the problem of a profound lack of academic research on international development in this geographic region and the need for studies that would produce a better understanding of these processes and inform more effective policies (Zellerer & Vyortkin, 2004). Not only are such sources scarce, much of this available scholarship reflects the knowledge paradigms, technologies and interests which emanate from expertise that is largely foreign. Kamp, for instance, indicates that the notion of 'gender' per se entered Central Asia since 1991, i.e., as a term used in development programs in international organizations that operated in the post-Soviet space (2009). Her concern is that such externally-produced scholarship has little relevance and significance to those who are the objects of such knowledge.

The study I present questions assumptions entrenched in the globally-produced knowledge about the poor populations, especially the marginalized women among them, showing exactly how local experiences are shaped by global factors of powerful conceptual regimes and how the local people themselves participate in maintaining the dominant knowledge regimes which produces accounts about them. Explicating these processes puts my investigation into the context of global and local relations vis-a-vis women's and gender issues. I strive to complicate these simplistic dichotomies demonstrating how the local 'matters' not simply as a counterpoint to global, but as the site where the global is being constituted and simultaneously where its effects play out (Massey, 1994). The questions I ask and attempt to answer are about how it happens that women's participation in benevolently designed development cooperation programs fails to bring expected relief to their sufferings? My aim is to recognize and make visible the power of ruling knowledge regimes to unwittingly sideline women's own voices and women themselves. Not rejecting the opportunities development can provide for women I call for critical reflections on the development's in-built power relations and I seek strategies to work from within them creating spaces for local women to speak and craft their needs, interest and demands in relation to development projects. In doing this, I hope that my work will offer a

nuanced perspective, spark debate and contribute positively to the relevant policy discussions and research in Central Asia and beyond.

Outline of chapters

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 lays down the theoretical perspectives, scholarly discussions and arguments developed by scholars working in the areas pertinent to my study, i.e., development and women, knowledge and development, and the concept of gender as it appears in relation to women and development. Much has already been accomplished in these arenas of theory, practice, activism and research and I review selected literature that helps me assess the status and importance of knowledge used in the development apparatus. I also provide a short overview of efforts to include women more successfully in development, as well as critical analyses of those efforts. Lastly, I present institutional ethnographic research spelling out how my investigation relates to this body of research.

In chapter 3 I describe the theoretical underpinnings and identify key concepts for this study which are derived from the theoretical framework of social organization of knowledge founded by Dorothy Smith (1987). My research adopts a particular ontology of the social (Smith, 2005, pp. 49-71) developed to extend people's ordinary knowledge of their everyday worlds into reaches of powers and relations that are beyond what they know, but somehow organizing it. Smith argues for an approach which works from and with people's experiences and moves to the exploration of the discursive and material sources which organize them. The goal of a project framed from such a perspective is to produce a 'map' of these powerful sources and specifically of the institutional complexes in which they participate. The second goal is to build knowledge and methods of understanding institutions and how they operate. This is a form of knowledge that is designed to assist people to resist subjugation (Campbell, 2007). In this chapter I introduce the problem of knowing as a mode of domination, or what in institutional ethnography is understood as ruling relations, practices and discourses. In Smith's social ontology, ruling relations are not theoretical; they operate in documentary societies as actual people designing, circulating, handling, enacting and inscribing real documents and texts (Campbell, 2007). I discuss the analytic frameworks and procedures to explore the knowledge-based processes of documentary ruling practices – that are expanding their reach around the globe.

Chapter 4 focuses on the methodological issues in the present study. Informed by the theory of social organization of knowledge, the methodology chosen for my investigation is institutional ethnography (Smith, 2005). I describe the major data collection methods employed in the research such as qualitative tools of interviewing, textual analysis and participant observation. I also discuss my access to the two research settings, clarifying how the research proceeded as a process, i.e., the stages, and the purpose of each stage as well as the challenges I have encountered in carrying out each research step. I end this chapter with my reflections on the fieldwork.

Chapter 5 introduces the research site in Uzbekistan. I start with the pertinent background information where the events at the center of my analysis take place: the political and economic climate in country, the general situation of women, and the description of the project itself. The main goal of this chapter is, however, to begin my analysis from the perspectives of the women who have been associated in one way or another with a large ten-year long international development research project implemented in rural Uzbekistan since 2001 with the overarching goal to restructure natural resources use towards environmental sustainability which would ultimately help the poor population living there. On the basis of my ethnography I present the everyday worlds of women-peasants whose livelihoods the project has (implicitly) promised to improve. I explore what women know, what they do and how they know how to do their everyday work in order to put their worlds together. I discover that these women are knowledgeable, strong and active in ensuring the livelihoods for themselves and their families. However, I also find significant complications and challenges that they experience in benefiting from the project's disbursed resources, especially from more reliable sources of irrigation. Questions formulated at this stage of the inquiry direct and inform it at its subsequent stages.

In chapter 6 I move beyond the experiences of the local women-beneficiaries in the Uzbekistan project into the larger institutional arena which, as my analysis shows, shapes these experiences. Here, I explore the implementation practices within this international project to influence the work of rural people. I also inquire into the national reforms in agricultural and water management which as I discover are closely associated with the project's activities. I find that both shape local experiences through institutionally-endorsed discursive practices framed by

high-profile international frameworks on natural resource management and national strategies of cooperation with Central Asia.

Chapters 7 and 8 concentrate on the institutional ethnography conducted in Kyrgyzstan. Chapter 7 begins with relevant contextual information about the research site and proceeds to initial stage of analysis. At the center of this analysis are the events taking place in the offices of the local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which provide services of protection from gender-based violence as they implement a project with funding from a foreign donor organization. I explore the experiences of the women who seek protection from these crisis centers (i.e., the project beneficiaries), and the everyday work of the crisis centers staff. I discover contradictions in how the project implementers address their clients' needs —in contrast to the project's formal mandate, its protection practices disregard women's specific experiences, capacities and knowledge. Understanding that these contradictions are social in nature, i.e., they are 'made' to happen through institutional mechanisms governing the work of protection, leads me to the next stage of analysis. Explication of these institutional mechanisms is at the core of chapter 8. I map out the multifarious system of documents, practices, agencies, procedures, ideas and frameworks which constitute the ruling apparatus of globally-informed protection policies. I argue and demonstrate empirically that the contradictions women experience when they participate in the project are shaped by and arise in this system.

Despite considerable differences between the two projects chosen for this study, there are important commonalities among them which point to general features of the organization of development action. In chapter 9, I focus on the two analytic complexes which the research sites draw attention to, demonstrating how both projects fail women under the specific organization of the projects that were set up to help them. Using the term "gender" as the projects do, I can argue that both projects produce gender inequality. Juxtaposing the two projects, I discuss how these outcomes happen routinely on the basis of knowledge-based processes, technologies and frameworks. One conclusion pinpoints what I call the gendering features operating in each project as the relationships established between the institutional knowledge-based apparatus and women's experiences. Here, I argue that women and their experiential knowledge are objectified within the projects' dominant development discourses and organizational processes. The second inference with which I intend to leave my readers is about how in the two projects gender is

organized as a practice that in its effects constructs gendered features of people and as such makes it possible to speak about the project work as sites of 'genderization', arenas where people 'do' gender and produce women and men as 'inherently different'. These socially organized differences have the effect of excluding women from projects' benefits.

I conclude this dissertation, in Chapter 10, with ideas about the practical implications that my research may have, as a basis for thinking about opportunities for negotiation to strengthen the use of development resources and turn them to women's advantage. I contend that knowledge produced in this study directs attention to the institutional locations and practices from which women's objectification is regenerated. Additionally, I make more general propositions for reflexive and resistive activism in favor of women where I emphasize the importance of keeping women's own accounts of their lives central to policy and research agendas.

CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents literature from contemporary scholarly discussion of international development, development research, and women's place both as subjects and objects within it. It is important to note that the focus of analysis in the present study is developed from my ethnographic inquiry in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, not from taking up questions or debates advanced in the scholarly literature. My study's conceptualization does not rely on a particular, or indeed, any theory of development, but rather on a theory of knowing (that I explain in later chapters). Nevertheless, in this chapter I have collected arguments developed by scholars working in areas of theory and practice that are relevant in some way to my inquiry, and that reflect on development's ambiguous and even contested nature. My purpose is to situate my own research within the field of development scholarship and to suggest, where appropriate, how it relates to these debates. Throughout the chapter, I reflect on the nature of the knowledge that development relies on and how it changes. A case in point is the current interest in the potential contribution of ethnography to development research.

In discussing women's participation in global development, I highlight the major approaches to women in development and the criticism that these approaches have evoked. This review provides a necessary background for my discussion of more recent debates where the term gender becomes more prominent, for instance, in gender mainstreaming and the 'gender knowledge' perspective. In the final section of the chapter I discuss examples of institutional ethnography of women and development, and comment on how institutional ethnography is especially relevant to studying the questions such as those posed in my research.

Development as a site for knowing: A peculiar mode of domination

The concept of 'development' has been described as "contested… complex, and ambiguous" (Thomas, 2004, p. 1). Esteva (1987) has called it an "amoeba word" referring to its continuously changing meanings and connotations. Mueller (1991) has given it another metaphoric name of a "blob" for the loose implications of the term. What is common in these various articulations of the ambivalence of the concept is that, as Ferguson points out, "there is such a thing as 'development' and denying it or dismissing it is "non-sensical" (1994, p. xiii). A

more fixed understanding of what development is and how to achieve it appears in the mainstream development theories which have guided development since 1950s. Modernization theory understands development as a unidirectional homogenizing process of structural change whereby poor countries must transform from traditional societies into urban, industrial and economically successful states (e.g. Rostow, 1960). According to this theory development must be accomplished through productive investment of capital, technology and expertise (So, 1991). Later development theories emphasize the role of (as in dependency theory of development in 1960s-1970s) improved fiscal policies, promoting domestic markets and internal demands, import substitution and social services provision by the government for economic growth (Prebisch, 1950) or (as with neoliberal theory in 1980s) via economic liberalization and privatization (Williamson, 1990). The notion of economic progress continues to underpin all of the major development paradigms equating it with the concept of development.

In his archeology of contemporary development paradigms Ziai (2011) has traced linkages of this mainstream conceptualization of the concept of development back to Enlightenment philosophy and nineteenth century social theory. He argues that development thinking which guided development practice since end of the World War II is historically embedded in particular intellectual traditions of wisdom and reasoning. For him, evolutionist ideas that all societies proceed through a universal pattern of social change which occurs either immanently or through intentional intervention based on knowledge generated and possessed by a privileged group (that must be entrusted for common benefit) are evident in the development paradigms starting from colonialism to the theory of modernization to neoliberal development theories. Ziai contends that all these mainstream theories share important characteristics which make it possible to talk about development in singular. He notes that there are at least four core premises which constitute the basis of everything written and spoken on the topic. Among them is the existential assumption that development exists and functions as an organizing and conceptual frame, allowing for linking cultural, political, social phenomena to the one of development and at the same time permitting interpretation of these phenomena as manifestations of development or underdevelopment. The second assumption is that development is inherently good, a 'good change' for 'good society' wherein both are attainable. The attainability of development is a third premise Ziai talks about, which he sees as constituting

the foundation of the entire 'development business'. The fourth is a methodological assumption which allows for states to be compared in terms of the position in relation to development implicating a universal scale on which the development can be measured. These four assumptions, for the reasons of their being abstract, necessitate additional and more concrete conceptual grounds in order to specify which countries are developed and how the development can be achieved.

Such notion of development as a linear process of change has been increasingly questioned. Especially as the economic crisis in most of the developing countries in 1980s, the widening gap between the poor and rich states, growing awareness of the catastrophic effects of economic growth on environment made it apparent that "allegedly good policies have not been able to generate the promised growth dynamism in the developing countries. [and that] indeed, in many developing countries, growth simply collapsed" (Chang, 2003, p. 14). Inquiries have been carried out as to discover how despite the decades of intense development efforts, socio-economic problems continued to mount in the Third World. It became clear that in the face of the devastating effects of development the grand theories failed to offer convincing explanations or solutions to the disturbing effects of development policies, thus lost its universal acceptance, credibility and legitimacy. Disillusionment with development ushered the rise of the challenge to universalizing theories and conventional practices of development (Schuurman, 1993) creating what Booth (1985) called the "impasse" of development.

The criticism has charged the mainstream development doctrines with simplistic and deterministic features all reinforced by structural adjustment, economic recovery programs and the associated aid conditionalities (Woodward, 1992; Simon, 1997). Sachs (1992), among others, has made an account on how the global North was established as the center of truth, capable and willing to provide a universal explanation for poverty and underdevelopment and prescriptions for overcoming them. He looks at how, for instance, the discovery of the term "underdevelopment" (in the United States President Truman's inaugural speech in 1949) helped to establish development as a singular trajectory which firmly placed the United States (and Western Europe) at the top of it. These universal premises have been popularized and produced politics which naturalized development as 'westernization', modernization, industrialization and urbanization (Ziai, 2011). Following from these premises are far-reaching assumptions that

development must be infused through the transfer of technology, knowledge and capital from the 'developed' global North to the global South. Sachs has criticized the creation a homogeneous identity for developing countries and stripping them of their own diverse characteristics.

Esteva (1992) also advances arguments against the universalizing assumptions of development theories and posits that the "universal materialization of development goals whereby "traditional men and women" are transformed into "economic men" are impossible without the public awareness of the limits of development. The problem with accumulating such awareness, however, is that development cannot "delink itself from the words with which it was formed—growth, evolution, maturation" (p. 10). In the similar vein, Easterly (2006) has claimed that the approach to develop poor countries through transplanting Western institution is utopian. Drawing parallels between the contemporary development practice with colonialism, he observes that the relationships between today's donor countries and the poor countries resemble the imperial colonial enterprise which benefits nobody else but the colonizer. He questions the top-down reforms which for him have been designed on the basis of theoretical arguments with slim evidence that they would work. Stiglitz (2002) puts forward a related argument that development has relied on intrinsically "flawed theories" which combined ideology and "bad" science to ultimately produce adverse effects on the developing countries. Specifically, he critiques neoliberal policies promoted by international financial institutions for having no empirical evidence for effectively addressing poverty. In fact, he argues they have worked against the interests of impoverished developing countries. Chang (2003) as well finds mainstream development paradigms inappropriateness the poor countries' needs. Having conducted an analysis of economic indicators across a number of capitalist countries Chang argues that forcing neoliberal policies through aid conditionalities is a fundamental obstacle to poverty alleviation in the developing world. On the basis of his investigation he claims that state intervention policies have better chances of economic development than unregulated free markets purveyed by international financial institutions. Moreover, he collected evidence to support his claim by demonstrating that historically all major developed countries used state interventionist economic policies to achieve economic progress, i.e., did something contrary to what they currently promoted for the global South to do. He concludes that developed countries have attempted to

"kick the development ladder" which they themselves have used to climb on its top away from developing countries.

Sumner & Tribe (2008) point out yet another more or less fixed understanding of development which is typically embraced by what international development donor agencies do as practices to alleviate poverty and achieve Millennium Development Goals. Mueller (1991) refers to this understanding of development as a capital "D" development signaling the "specifically official Development organizations and their multiple connections into the other official, principally state, institutions" (p. 4). This kind of development is understood on the basis of measureable indicators and comparable targets, predefined goals and corporate management. Such conceptualization, though being viewed as yet another perspective on development, nevertheless has attracted similar criticism of being reductionist, depoliticized, universalizing (Sumner & Tribe, 2008), technocratic and limiting (Thomas, 2004), contradictory and antithetical to the promised progress (Mueller, 1991).

The entire concept of development, thus, has come to be seriously questioned. It has been increasingly being understood as malign. Stiglitz (2002) has argued that development, in fact, serves the interests of the global financial community. For Escobar (1995), development is engaged in a systematic production of knowledge and power entailing a "system of relations [that] establishes a discursive practice that sets the rules of the game: who can speak, from what points of view, with what authority, and according to what criteria of expertise" (p. 41). Like many others he sees development as a vehicle for post- World War II economic and geopolitical imperialism. The practical effect, Slatter (1993) argues, is that guided by western geopolitical interests, development 'domesticates' the Third World, making it 'safe' through penetration and, as such, violates the other societies' rights to exercise their own principles of social being. For others, this kind of development "evaporated" (Esteva, 1992, p. 22) or "ended" Rahnema (1997).

Some of the development critics suggested their own vision of change. Chang (2003) pledged that key conventional wisdoms in the debate on global development need to be rethought, considerably and urgently. For Sachs (1992), new political policies must rely on the recognition that there are limits to growth and development. Other have suggested that poor countries must engage in meaningful development in self-reliant, exploratory efforts, management of their own growth by embracing their individual characteristics and borrow ideas

from the West only when it suits their domestic aspirations (Easterly, 2006; Stiglitz, 2002). New understanding of development emerged in the context including those which focused on localized, pluralistic grassroots movements, solidarity and reciprocity (Escobar, 1995), subaltern emancipation" (Rapley, 2007), "degrowth" (Latouche, 2004), global social change (Ziai, 2011), meaningful space (Thomas, 2004), a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy (Sen, 2000), etc. However, up till now it appears that still no consensus is found on what constitutes 'good' development. As Kanbur (2002) says, there is still no uniform or unique answer. Pervasive gap still exists between the theories confidently expected to lead development policy/practice and social actualities being generated; such gaps continues to suggest that the dominant concepts are deficient in addressing the complexities of development settings (Kanbur, 2002). At the same time, more progressive views do not appear to firmly hold against a recurrent criticism that they tend to overlook or dismiss the very tangible achievements of development programs and have great difficulty in "embracing the concrete development aspirations despite their theoretical sophistication" (Simon, 1997, p. 185).

Central Asia as a site of contested development

The reviewed literature offers a view of development that is quite polarized: on the one hand, this critical perspective exists, and on the other, a normative account of development claims that assistance from the more technically developed world can be put to benefit poor people and underdeveloped societies. At a time when development knowledge is so contested, a burgeoning interest in the use of ethnography appears in the literature. These studies are believed to see "the entire development network, investigating in depth the main sites with their respective actors, cultural backgrounds, and practical appropriation of the interventions by local groups" (Escobar, 2012, p. xlv). Focusing on the hidden processes, multiple perspectives and political interests behind policy discourses the idea is to gain a more intimate knowledge of the operation of development from its setting. Thinking of Central Asia, where my research interest lies, this region's particular history and its present proximity to areas of recent political turbulence bring unique challenges for development success. How might knowing this world ethnographically assist in determining development strategy? The literature treats the region as the embodiment of the tragedies of Russian imperialism and the Soviet system with a jigsaw puzzle of countries and peoples left in their wake (Simpson, 2009). Its special location is

contradictorily described as ‘crossroads’, ‘strategic’, and ‘isolated’; the region is believed to exemplify the contemporary geopolitics of greater world superpowers, through the lens of the historic Great Games of empires and their crusades into hinterlands (Schetter & Kuzmits, 2006; Kleveman, 2003; Rashid, 2001). It has been regarded as part of the global ‘East’ and ‘Orient’, captured in images of distance and the ‘otherness’, conflict and instability, strong men and oppressive regimes, Islam and renegade groups, traditional families and silenced women (Simpson, 2009). Recent discussions about the region draw from broad frames like ‘the East’ and ‘the West’, from the notions of ‘we’ and ‘them’, or ‘local’ and ‘foreign’, or from ideas about ‘development’ and ‘transition’ (Simpson, 2009).

In spite of its distinctive history and post-soviet present, several scholars observe that the post-Cold War Western aid to the post-socialist countries is strikingly similar to the development industry and mechanisms cultivated in the so-called Third World (Blagojevich, 2010; Barsegian, 2000). Development aid to these countries has fostered ideas of ‘transition’ to western-style liberal democracy and free market economies as part of entrance to the global economy community. Based on the scholarship that has couched development as a discourse employed to reproduce power asymmetry in which local worlds are “razed than recontained in a network of concepts that issue from a Eurocentric or Anglo-American view of modernity” (Simpson, 2009, p. 27), these constructions have been traced to western European, imperial Russian and early Soviet representations – of “peripheral Asia”, Muslim “borderlands” or “virgin” lands, and their “inferior”, “backward”, “violent” or “other”/”alien” inhabitants” (p. 23) and used as justifications for rule or intervention. Yet Simpson is one of the women analysts who argues that these depictions of Central Asia are too simplistic and limited to capture the more complicated “perpetual state of flux, uncertainty and instability for the people in these countries” (2009, p. 37).

While neoliberal directions in development have brought additional troubles for the people living in the post-socialist Eurasia (Hemment, 2004), world events are surely affecting current development decisions. After the September 11th, 2001 attacks of the Islamist militant group Al-Qaeda on New York City and Washington in the United States, the concomitant geopolitical maneuvering and the subsequent US-led campaign in Afghanistan transformed the region into the ‘frontline’ of the global struggle against terror (Olcott, 2005). Schetter & Kuzmits

(2006) claim that after September 11, 2001, Afghanistan started to be perceived as part of Central Asia, and that placed the entire region "firmly on America's map of the world" (p. 172). This implied a renewed international interest to the region and a beginning of closer international cooperation (Olcott, 2005). Collaboration initiated by Washington with Central Asian states, mainly in the areas of security and promotion of regional stability, was predominantly motivated by the geostrategic position of the region, military necessities of the war in Afghanistan, and possibly, long-term economic and geopolitical interests (Schetter & Kuzmits, 2006). For the moment, the post-Soviet Central Asian states, especially Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have been the main military partners of the US in the region. Both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan host American military bases on their territory. Concurrently, Kyrgyzstan has a Russian military base established in close proximity to its capital city Bishkek, while Uzbekistani President Islam Karimov signed the Strategic Partnership Treaty with Russia in June 2004. These events ushered a host of new questions about what spheres of influence would be good for these countries. The popular overthrow of the Kyrgyzstan's government in March 2005 and again in April 2010 and Karimov's brutal suppression of popular uprising in spring 2005 in Andijon invited parallels with revolutionary contexts, similar to those of Georgia and Ukraine. The inter-ethnic massacres which broke out between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek ethnic groups in the summer 2010 in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan strengthened the discourses of conflict, instability and insecurity.

Today, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are the two poorest countries in post-Soviet Central Asia. Both have been undergoing rapid processes of drastic political, economic and social transformations as they have moved from one political-economic regime to another (Earle, Fozilhujaev, Tashbaeva & Djamankulova, 2003). These two post-socialist states are seen to represent quite contrasting levels of democratization in the region: Uzbekistan is a highly authoritarian state, while Kyrgyzstan has taken more steps toward democratic reform (Anderson, 1999). However, the two countries share similar Soviet institutional legacies, have similarly high levels of corruption, both are marked by a disjunction between formal and informal political and economic institutions, have low levels of economic development accompanied by an uneven distribution of wealth, and both are characterized by a weakened public sector infrastructure (Adamson, 2002). Since their independence, these countries were characterized by poor achievement in education and health, conflicts, high unemployment rate, and rising inequality

(Asad, 2005) and "a low level of industrialization, high population density, a predominantly rural population and a higher degree of poverty than elsewhere in the former Soviet Union" (Spoor, 2004). How effectively problems like these are being currently addressed by the development action is an important question for those concerned with measuring the development impact. How programs are actually put into places in specific locales and with what effects on particular groups of impoverished women is the focus of this dissertation. For making such an inquiry I adopt an ethnographic approach. In doing this I follow a few recent ethnographic studies which I have found useful for generating an understanding of how development works on the basis of paying scholarly attention to specific practices and their embededness in the development knowledge apparatus.

Some response to the critical analysis of development: The new ethnographies of aid

The unease created by critical analyses of development in Central Asia and elsewhere has been responded in research institutions through new critical network and conferences as well as in new approaches to research. A number of scholars have attempted to rethink development and modify its current regime through making visible the existence of a multiplicity of models of local 'real-life' economics and through studying the processes by which local cultural knowledges are appropriated by global forces (Ekins & Max-Neef, 1992). These studies are often referred to as 'the new ethnographies of development' (Mosse, 2004; Escobar, 1995) and some are relevant to my study, offering alternative understandings of how specific development practices have worked out in targeted locales. Core themes in the works of critical ethnographers of development include unraveling the development discourse which Escobar (1995, p.9) called an "extremely efficient apparatus for producing knowledge about, and the exercise of power over the Third World". James Ferguson's (1994), for instance, using ethnography to investigate a rural development project in Lesotho reveals a peculiar mismatch between the knowledge-based workings of the development apparatus and the local realities. Analyzing why a project would describe its targeted community as a rural subsistence society isolated from the market when it was, in fact, a modern capitalist economy of Southern Africa Ferguson explains that,

> to "move the money" they have been charged with spending, "development" agencies prefer to opt for standardized "development" packages. It thus suits the agencies to

> portray developing countries in terms that make them suitable targets for such packages. It is not surprising, therefore, that the "country profiles" on which the agencies base their interventions frequently bear little or no relation to economic and social realities. (Ferguson & Lohmann, 1994, p. 323).

As a result is such misconceptualization of local realities, the project failed to address the burning problems of the population such as "structural unemployment, influx control, low wages" (Ferguson & Lohmann, 1994, p. 328), reinforcing and expanding, instead, the bureaucratic state power.

Tania Murray Li's research (2002, 2007) provides another example of how dominant knowledge regimes co-opt good intentions to produce detrimental consequences for the people caught up in specific development projects in Indonesia. She shows how, through the pre-established conceptual construction of indigenous people, and institutional adherence to ideas of empowerment through the participatory land management programs called Community Based Natural Resources Management, state control over indigenous communities was intensified and their economic marginality was perpetuated. Unlike Ferguson's indictment of development as implementation of an external power, Li's (2007) ethnographically based analysis found local resistance being enacted in people's responses to the dominant management discourse.

David Mosse's (2001) ethnography of development provides useful insight into the relationship between development knowledge and practice. He exposes the notion of 'participatory development' as a hegemonic paradigm of development that has been pushed by the donor community and consequently has been incorporated into the routines of implementation agencies. His ethnography exposes the contradictory nature of the work of project staff who implement participatory planning by directing the processes of producing the versions of local knowledge to fit institutional agendas. Like Li, he argues that participatory methods and approaches come to "represent external interests as local needs, dominant interest as community concerns, and so forth" (p. 389). Ultimately, he argues that the knowledge paradigm of participation fails in its beneficial goals and further legitimizes the official project discourse.

In his edited volume "The Aid Effect: Giving and Governing in International Development" (2005), Mosse puts forward a similar argument in relation to what he calls the

"new aid framework" which embraces the agenda of global governance with its inherent ideas of democratization, neoliberalism and poverty reduction. There he asserts that the new economic and social policy is in the same way "internationalized through donor knowledge systems that emphasize the universal over the contextual, […] and constantly organizes attention away from the contingencies of practice and the plurality of perspectives" (2005, p. 6). Together with David Lewis (2005), he argues that the progressive policy emphasis on partnership, local ownership and participation are oriented towards the interests of selected players and are in fact 'instrumental' (promoting efficiency of aid), 'political' (shoring up legitimacy for aid) and 'governmental' (enabling deeper international intervention into national policies). In the same volume Mosse praises studies that examine how policy ideas are socially produced and legitimated in the practices of "managed agenda-setting", "consensus formation in manufacturing transferable expert knowledge", where policy ideas "take social form, being important less for what they say than for who they bring together; how they enroll, unite or divide" (p. 15). Mosse's ethnographic attention to how discourse works to coordinate development action seems particularly promising and something that my own study undertakes.

The ethnographies of development I have reviewed show how development-introduced discourses of progressive change embraced in the reform-laden language of participation, empowerment, and democracy have played out in a variety of local settings. My analysis will have a similar character, especially as I interrogate the presuppositions which inform much development, drawing attention to the disjuncture between the development institutions' well-meaning goals and the actual outcomes generated when these goals become operationalized. Like the ethnographies of development, my study is about how institutions, ideologies and practical realities "grate against each other, producing varied outcomes that must be analyzed in their concreteness" (Chari & Corbridge, 2008, p. 323). As do several critical ethnographers of development, I highlight the dangers associated with the assumptions associated with abstract language of particular development practices. This suggests that analytic attention needs to be paid to conceptual categories such as 'gender neutrality', 'protection', 'participation', 'gender equality', and to identifying the systematic practices in which these concepts are part of ruling discourses.

Women as clients and practitioners of development

My own study will attend to the critique Ziai (2011) makes of new paradigms and fads in development: that they continually repackage a global imaginary of modernization in renewed language. Much of the 'repackaging' has been unsuccessful. Its failures have been explained by the fact that (to quote Esteva, again) development cannot "delink itself from the words with which it was formed —growth, evolution, maturation" (Esteva, 1992, p. 19) or that advanced capitalism is development's "rock hard center" (Mueller, 1991, p. 3) "constituted in the bureaucratic organizations, policy discourse, professional work practices, academic theories, official imprimatur taken together" (p. 13). Such delinking would mean drastic transformation or even rejection of development's most fundamental assumptions. Ziai asserts, for instance, that if followed logically, the notion of sustainability would require limits to industrialization, and that participation and empowerment imply rejection of expert knowledge. He worries that the new language does not untie the practices produced, maintained and perpetuated during six decades of development policies from the concepts that arise in ruling institutions. As it stands now, indeed, the existing critiques have not displaced the use of economic theories as the correct basis to guide development practice. A glimpse into the development literature shows awareness of the critiques but only minimal attention being paid to the slippages between economic theory and social actualities (Kanbur, 2002). It seems that 'getting development right' still means getting the right ideas formulated by the right experts for implementation in a top-down institutional process to ensure the most effective outcomes. This kind of authoritative institutional practice requires that attention to the actual people involved be replaced by a universalized subject who is to be helped or changed by this theorized approach.

This approach makes scholars who work in the area of women/gender in development uneasy. They criticize existing ideological frameworks of policy making for sustaining "the hegemonic and centralized control of key institutional and material practices that really matter for the perpetuation of capitalist social and power relations" (Harvey, 1998, in Eastwood, 2002, pp. 87-88). Long-standing debates in the scholarly and activist communities have been generated about how to best work for women. The projects at the center of my analysis take place in the context of these debates, demonstrating that efforts to change local women's lives occur within a global development industry with a neoliberal agenda, in which gender is already conceptualized

and is being addressed, however successfully, in the existing policies and practices of the development institution. In order to better contextualize these discussions, I outline development approaches which have been historically undertaken to address women's needs.

Officially, 'women' have been recognized as a category in mainstream international development for more than three decades. Caroline Moser (1993) provides a detailed descriptive account of the discursive mechanisms through which women have been addressed by development. She starts with the 'welfare approach' to women within the mainstream development up until 1970s. The assumption behind the welfare policy regime contemplated that the macroeconomic strategy of growth would benefit the poor women through an increased economic status of their husbands, i.e., that the developments in the public, largely elite, male sphere would automatically and naturally 'trickle down' to women in the private sphere (Moser, 1993). This approach gave rise to a body of criticism which reexamined development theory as a largely masculinist enterprise that disempowered the Third World women, excluding them from development. Modernization-based development motivated the critique that in capitalism the status of women relative to men deteriorated leading, ultimately, to exploitation and subjugation of women (Etienne & Leacock, 1980 in Peet & Hartwick, 2009). Capitalist division of labor was criticized as a violent and patriarchal process (Mies, 1986). Development programs aiming to increase and improve the production functions of the Third World were geared towards men (Escobar, 1995; Rai, 2002) requiring the emergence of a "rational industrial man, receptive to new ideas, punctual, optimistic, and universalistic, with a counterpart in the modern efficient state, with its new mechanisms of domination and power" (Peet & Harwick, 2009, p. 251).Scott (1995), for instance, claimed that the universal modernization concepts modeled on the masculine version of modernity was contrasted with a feminized, backward, traditional, family-oriented, private sphere. Sachs (1985) observed that development planners tended to assume that men were the most productive workers, noting the "worldwide failure to evaluate the contribution of women to productive activity" (p. 127). Achieving modernity was, thus, a power struggle between rational modernity and feminine traditionalism in the passage toward modernization (Scott, 1995). Women together with their households were treated as part of the non-modern past; therefore, the ideas of mainstream development with its exclusive focus on the productive capacities of the male labor force for the international enforcement of industrial and

agricultural production in the formal sector for the acceleration of growth were not challenged (Moser, 1993). Women, framed as passive beneficiaries of development absorbed in their family roles as wives and mothers, were left out of development at this stage (Chowdhry, 1995).

WID: From 'equity' to 'efficiency'

In response to the critique of the welfare approach, a number of alternative approaches were formulated and united under an umbrella term of Women in Development (WID) which was subsequently widely taken up within the development discourse as a set of women-oriented practices and scholarship. WID was inspired by Ester Boserup (1970), a Danish agricultural economist, whose groundbreaking research "Women's Role in Economic Development" argued that although women were frequently major contributors to the productivity of their communities their economic input was invisible in national statistics or in planning and implementation of development projects. In fact, she showed that modernization theory conceptualized women in Third World countries as subsistence producers who used primitive techniques in the agricultural sector, as low-paid laborers in the urban areas or as unpaid rural workers, and as such left them behind. Boserup's work stimulated considerable scholarship on the issue of women's marginalization in development and the establishment of institutionalized practices to integrate women into the development processes that became known as WID. As a more formal development concept, WID was coined by the Women's Committee of the Washington, DC, Chapter of the Society for International Development, a network of female development professionals (according to Kardam, 1991). This group participated in shaping the USAID's policies in 1973 as a result of which the Office of Women in Development was established. WID activities also increased within the UN system in the early 1970s, leading to the 1975 World Conference in Mexico and the launching of the UN Decade for Women.

'Women in Development' adopted and introduced various perspectives to integrate women into the mainstream development processes and proceeded from 'equity' to 'anti-poverty' and 'efficiency' approaches (Moser, 1993). The 'equity approach', the WID's original set of strategies, promised to recognize women's active participation in the development process through centralized legislative measures aiming at providing for women's increased access to employment and the market. This approach encountered problems such as lack of appropriate methodologies and resistance of development agencies to equity programs, and was

consequently replaced by the second WID approach called 'anti-poverty' (Moser, 1993). Policies under 'anti-poverty' approach emerged in the mid-1970s in response to the emerging dependency theory of development that, briefly put, posits that poverty is caused not by the traditional consumption patterns of societies but because they are integrated into the world system in which wealthy (core) nations need a peripheral group of poor states in order to remain wealthy (Peet and Hartwick, 2009). Thus, within anti-poverty programming women's participation took shape through their being understood to be 'the poorest of the poor'. The alleviation of poverty among them was arranged through addressing what seemed to be its causes, i.e., lack of access to private ownership of capital and land, thus, through access to resources for production. Within this approach projects continued to focus on the productive role of women and sought to engage women in small-scale income generation concentrating on the traditional activities of the rural women.

After the debt crisis in 1980[1] and the turns on the part of the major international development players to neo-liberal economics and emphasis on the structural adjustment programs (SAP), WID advocates shifted their focus from exposing development's negative effects on women to emphasizing women's contribution to its goals (Momsen, 2004). The policies recast women as economic actors capable of advancing economic development, stabilization and adjustment. This approach is now referred to as 'efficiency approach' (Moser, 1993). Equality for women, or 'empowerment' was deemed necessary because it would enable women to increasingly participate in the efforts to enhance and sustain economic growth, reduce corruption, etc. (World Bank, 2006). Policies neglecting women were accused of leaving "untapped a potentially large contribution" (Kardam, 1994, p. 52).

Revisiting approaches to WID: "Business as usual"

Criticism by a number of scholars, revealed, among other political and practical inadequacies of WID policies, that the evolution of the discourse of women in development followed the mainstream development trends without undermining them. The anti-poverty policies towards women, failed mainly because of the (wrong) assumption that women in the

[1] The financial crisis in the early 1980s when Latin American countries declared their incapacity to service their international debt.

developing world would have time to undertake the income-generating projects in addition to their already existing workloads (Momsen, 2004). Women, being offered income-generation opportunities, might not receive provision for adequate alleviation of domestic labor such as child care; an anti-poverty program would have tripled the burden for women and extended their working day (Moser, 1993).

The efficiency approach is believed to have further exacerbated women's burdens. Women absorbed the costs of the economic crisis in the 1980s and their extended (and often unpaid) labor, time and health were deployed in order to compensate for declining social services (Parpart, Connelly & Barriteau, 2000). The efficiency policies were reported to expose women in the developing world to overexploitation of the labor market often forcing them to work in the precarious conditions (Moser, 1993). Employers compelled to seek profit in SAP conditions preferred to rely on women as "cheap docile workers" with "nimble fingers" (Escobar, 1995, p. 175) who were believed to be less likely to unionize or rebel against insecure and low payment and poor working conditions (Beneria, 2003). Male out-migration added more work for the women left to head their households and made them even more susceptible to the insecure, insufficient and unstable sources of income of their own and of their male partners (Brydon & Chant, 1989). Overall, the efficiency approach focusing on what women could do for development ignored thinking about what development could do for women, and ultimately did not improve conditions for women (Momsen, 2004).

More recently, 'gender mainstreaming' became popular as a new integrative strategy to gender in development (Momsen, 2004). Technically, gender mainstreaming means ensuring that mainstream development integrates women's as well as men's concerns into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all projects in order to avoid perpetuation of gender inequality. Gender mainstreaming became widely used after 1995's UN Conference on Women in Beijing where the State-parties became legally bonded to practice gender mainstreaming by having signed the Beijing resolution. However, this policy technology is also seen as fundamentally paradoxical because the national governments are essentially impeded from implementing gender mainstreaming due to the structural policies such as market liberalization and privatization (Moser, 1993). A more blunt opinion states that gender mainstreaming policies, like many WID-informed programs, in fact, are a "flawed project"

because it simply focuses on "gaining access to already established structures of power" and does not challenge or overthrow them (Rai, 2002, p. 118).

Indeed, WID, from equity policies to gender mainstreaming, has been criticized for accepting development's existing power structures and preserved the interests of trade and industry within all of its discourses, as the best strategy for working to improve the position of women (Beneria, 2003; Rai, 2002; Chowdhry, 1995; Mueller, 1991). This has often meant that the success of the WID movement has been closely linked to its institutionalization within the prevailing modernization themes where women were merely brought into the already existing modes of development (Moser, 1993). Kardam (1991) has argued that this has been the only way that the WID issues could receive visibility and response, i.e., if they fit well into organizational goals and procedures. It has been argued, therefore, that 'gender' as a development category has been used to maintain development's 'business as usual' often bringing deterioration to the women's situation (Escobar, 1995). Critics agree that when women and a dogma of economic growth are discussed together, the latter is organized as the primary topic of debate (Beneria, 2003). References to women become secondary at best, and in most cases non-existent (Momsen, 2004). The actual results from women's empowerment programs continue to deviate from the promised advancement for women, nor do they justify the amount of effort and funds spent (Mitchell, 2004; Riley, 2004; Thomas, 2002).

Postmodern, post-colonial and post-structural influences

New paradigms emerged toward the end of the 20th century offering solutions to newly conceptualized problems of women around the world. Some of the most basic ideas about women and women's subordination were revised as the postmodern/post-structural turn in feminist scholarship introduced new ways of understanding 'the subject' of development. Post-colonial scholarship brought a new body of theory to understanding the relations between the global North and South. One new approach to working for women was called Gender and Development (GAD). GAD put gender relations into the center of analysis of women's subordination within the development process. The GAD scholars argued that women's subordination was socially constructed rather than biologically determined and proposed to conceptualize 'sex' as the biological differentiation between male and female, and 'gender' as the differentiation between socially constructed masculinity and femininity (Parpart et al., 2000).

Thus, what was social was subject to change and became the focus of attention for feminist theorists. They, therefore, argued against 'naturalized' unequal power relations between men and women as the major barrier to equitable development and women's full participation in it (Parpart et al., 2000). GAD demanded the total transformation and re-conceptualization of the development process to take gender into account as a solution to women's subordination (Rai, 2002).

Postmodern scholarship challenged explanations of women's subordination in other ways that were relevant for development, too. According to Kapur (2005) postmodernists have repudiated views "furnished from liberal and Western feminist positions, especially those that have come to occupy the international human rights arena in their understanding and articulation of concerns of Third World women" (p. 4). Kapur has warned (Westerners) of "fetishis(ing) the Third World woman, treating her as an object of study or a subject to be rescued and rehabilitated" (p. 4). Post-colonial critics point out that development discourses employed womanhood as an expression or a measure of local and national progress. Nationalist and orientalist theories have used categories of gender and sexuality in powerful knowledge regimes to naturalize differences and legitimize the hierarchy between East and West (Gal, 2000; Yegenoglu, 1998; Okin, 1989; Scott, 1988; Ahmed, 1982). Evocation of the eastern threat through images of the deviant, uncontrolled female (Said, 1978) is one example. In more current terms, the political threat of Islam is now often depicted through images of strictly controlled female sexuality (Simpson, 2009). In the similar vein, Mohanty argues against the representation of the women from the global South as an undifferentiated 'other' or a 'monolithic' Third World woman produced through the practices which Mohanty calls "discursive colonization" (1991). Agarwal (1991) also argues against a popular construction of women as being 'naturally' linked to nature by the policies which have relied on women as inherently prone to conservation and sustainability. She claims, instead, that women in India, for instance, have suffered more in gender-specific ways from the environmental destruction and exactly for this reason have been environmentally active. Chowdhry's analysis (1995) presents a special interest in this regard. The representation of the veiled harem woman of the backward East, which she calls 'zenana', depicts women as intriguing and mystifying but also as ignorant and unquestionably accepting this confinement. Another representation of the Third World women is the 'erotic other'. Here,

the image is one of the "eroticized, unclothed "native" women who needs to be "civilized" through their contact with the colonizer" (p. 28). Such images may appear as drastically contrasting to the one of fully covered and publicly invisible zenana, however, both convey the same message: realities of the Third World women are oversimplified, reductive, discursively created and separate from the historical, socio-political and lived material realities of their existence (Chowdhry, 1991). Mohanty (1991) and Goetz (1991) have noted another (mis)representation of the women of the Third World by international development agencies which depicted these women as singular victims of modernization, patriarchy, and subordination, essentializing and misconstruing the varied interests of different women. Interventions based on such authoritative claims to know the gendered oppression of women have worked to disempower the women in the Third World (Chowdhry, 1991).

A number of scholars working in the post-socialist contexts have also been inspired by the postmodern school of thought and produced noteworthy analyses. Simpson, for instance, criticizes how the Soviet Central Asia has been captured in "symbolic geographies that ascribe and homogenize a culture of people and place, across time" (2009, p. 27) and this tendency has translated into the construction of homogeneous understanding of women, ignoring important social differences such as urban/rural, class and ethnicity and how these differences play out in practical approaches to solving women's problems framed with standardized sets of measures. International donor organizations believing that problems of women could be effectively fixed by local civil society have made funding available to build and sustain women's NGOs in Central Asia motivating many to work in the NGO sector. However, as Simpson argues, this general solution has presented contradictions for the local poor women. She cites the transformation of grassroots women's NGOs in Kyrgyzstan into professionalized organizations led by elite, metropolitan, professional women, who have little interest in incorporating the interests of poor or rural women.

Marina Blagojevich's (2010) analysis also represents a special interest in terms of postmodern analysis in the context of post-socialist geographies. Blagojevich (2010) points out the drastic insufficiency of the standard set of descriptions and categories emanating from existing development paradigms to address the needs of women in post-socialist countries. She finds that the knowledge constructions based on the simplistic comparisons of post-socialist

Central Eurasia with the post-colonial Third World context have not permitted the post-socialist world (which she calls 'semiperiphery) to be addressed as a part of the world with substantive characteristics of its own. She sees that knowledge about the post-socialist space as a distinct category is either "missing, incomplete, distorted, dislocated or devoid of its political and often practical relevance" (p. 189). She claims that the post-socialist states differ in many respects from what development theory called the 'global periphery' countries (in existing infrastructure, high level of education, shared memories of 'better' past, etc.), but have been treated as the same, both in theory and practice. She details how the standardized indicators for social and economic development used by international community elsewhere in the Third World, such as the human development framework, hides rather than reveals the existing gap in the quality of social realities whereas the indicators to 'measure' women's position have been simply misleading. For example, she argues that the 'employment rates' have blurred the fact that officially unemployed women are often engaged in the grey economy and are additionally exposed to exploitation, and that even if they are employed, they are severely underpaid. Similarly, participation of women in politics, another key indicator for measuring women's position in countries in transition, cannot be analyzed separately from the fact that the real political decisions are often made outside the official institutions, and that women in politics are often simply representatives of a new political class, and not gender aware political players. Such inadequacy in knowledge, for Blagojevich, not only made women invisible in the universalizing development programs but enacted many regressive tendencies which further marginalized poor women**.** In the light of her findings Blagojevich voices a call for creating a deeper understanding of the different ways of knowing and different knowledges shaped by different epistemic standpoints, and how they are connected to global power hierarchies.

My own analysis is inspired by post-WID scholarship calling for a more nuanced account of how international development and transnational alliances affect women's and men's lives. Like many post-WID scholars for whom the inappropriateness of development categories to the living women is central to the institutional perpetuation of inequality, my point of departure is the premise that a gap exists between the definite material actuality of lived experience and the objectified forms of knowledge of women's lives produced institutionally (Smith, 2005). From an institutional ethnographic position the disjuncture is not random, nor is it unidentifiable. As

does post-colonial thinking, my analysis begins from where the knower is located and, as Kapur (2004) says, speaking as a member of the local world to speak authentically about. However, my analysis moves beyond a goal of identifying the authentic voice and knowledge of the women as development subjects. In identifying the institutional relations that coordinate women's local experiences and explicate their operation, I'm taking on the challenge to discover the logics of mainstream discourses and practices of development, asking how they influence what actually happens as development policies unfold.

Interrogating 'gender' vs. 'women'

The term 'gender' although used as working currency in the arena in development is, like the word 'development', an ambivalent term. Scholars and practitioners have increasingly questioned its usage, revealing important inconsistencies in understanding gender as 'areas of neglect' in contemporary feminist approaches to women, gender policies and epistemologies (Baden & Goetz, 1997). For instance, understanding gender as a dimension or a factor for an analysis is often criticized for confounding gender with biological sex. Such conceptual conflation institutionalizes the term 'gender' and co-opts it for technocratic discourses ultimately disclaiming the issues of power and inequality among women and men (Momsen, 2004; Baden & Goetz, 1997; Moser, 1993). Others have adopted a social constructivist view on gender which emphasizes its contrasts with the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women. Here, gender is being understood as "socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women" (http://www.who.int/gender). This conceptualization has become predominant in many development and scientific circles. However, available criticism of the social constructivist view on gender has revealed important contradictions within it. Linda Nicholson (1994) makes a careful analysis to argue that the problem with this definition is that biological sex must be invoked every time gender gets to be defined. Thus, gender is introduced not as a replacement of 'sex' but as supplementary to it, i.e., as the social meanings inscribed upon given biological differences. For Nicholson, the conceptual contradiction here is that it largely fails to deny biological determinism of gender differences and allows for far-reaching assumptions that common physiology among all women predisposes them to common social constructions of their

sex. These far-reaching assumptions entail particular implications for understanding of the term 'women'.

When the term 'gender' is understood as a social construction of sex, 'women' tend to be defined as a group with their identical biological sex as a common denominator. This lumps them together in a singular category with a determinate meaning and common pre-established criteria. So far, 'women' have been understood on the basis of their allegedly shared femininity, motherhood, sexuality, epistemological standpoint, consciousness and oppression. Of course, their sex does have some social commonalities and consequences. However, as Nicholson (1994) and Mohanty (1991) argue, this normative conceptualization of 'women' denies the multiplicity of social intersections in which women are implicated. Persram (1994) adds, and importantly, that such stable definition of 'women' results in underplaying the differences between women across culture and race and works to universalize them. Universality works to disguise its roots in the experiences of white western women stripping the women from the global South of their voices. As an alternative to the problematic understanding of gender and, subsequently, women, these scholars advocate that universal conceptualizations and discursive constructions must be replaced with meanings to be found together with the "living, talking, real" people (Baden & Goatz, 1997, p. 20).

Judith Butler (1990) completely denies the usefulness of defining women at all, not to say operationalize them as an ahistoric group with commonly shared characteristics and interests. The latter, she claims, will inevitably perform "an unwitting regulation and reification of gender relations" reinforcing a binary view of gender relations in which human being are divided into two clear-cut categories (1990, p. 9). This binary is "monstrous" for it is central for operation of power and exclusion. She therefore suggests a radical dissociation of the concept of 'gender' from that of 'sex' believing that destruction of 'sex' would allow women to assume a more beneficial subject position. Like others she refuses to accept the notion of sex as a pre-discursive essence. A sexed body, for her, is a social construction, i.e., the social practices and judgments about physiological sexual differences vary by culture, ethnicity, place and time. What the body is, how it looks and performs is a product of cultural inscriptions. For Butler, both, sex and gender, are performed, thus, neither of them can qualify as a natural anatomic facticity, and, in fact, "sex" has been "gender all along" (1990, p. 12). Gender, for Butler, is a verb, an acquired

performance, something that what one does at particular times to convey particular image. She describes gender as a fluid process (as well as the product of that process) that shifts and changes in different contexts and at different points of time. On the basis of such understanding she criticizes contemporary feminism for failing to expand the category of 'women' to recognize the multiplicity of identities among them. On the other hand, the Butler's notion of gender as fluid has been criticized for exposing the term 'women' to myriads of arbitrary meanings, where women's experiences at certain time and place are not translatable across cultures, subsequently, on the level of international and national policy the celebrated multiplicity of different womanhoods is a serious predicament (Baden & Goetz, 1997).This according to Persram (1994) runs the risk of completely negating the conception of 'women' rather than challenging the biology is both a 'destiny' and a 'reality'. At the same time, while 'women' are completely negated, 'men' are falsely constructed as the "straw men of patriarchy': the proto-typical male chauvinists, patriarchal sexist oppressors who believe biology is destiny and wants women confined to the house, barefoot and pregnant, inferior, subordinate, second-class citizen" (Baden & Goetz, 1997, p. 18).

Despite such criticism of Butler's view on women/gender/sex her contribution to this scholarship is unquestionably significant. In her groundbreaking "Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity" (1990) she generates a rich account offering how to understand gender (and sex) as being formed through the power of regulatory practices and explains how it happens. She shows that when people perform their own gender they do it not arbitrarily but through being regulated by the specific culturally and socially constructed ideas about how one must be, which Butler calls "matrix of coherent gender norms". In accordance with these norms, people become engaged in stylization of their bodies and acts. These behaviors gain their status of 'natural' gender order through repetition of these acts. The "true" sex is produced precisely through the regulatory practices which generate coherent identities. Building on the notion of "regulative discourses" from Michel Foucault's "Discipline and Punish" (1975), Butler introduces the concepts of "frameworks of intelligibility" or "disciplinary regimes" to argue that they define and pre-establish what possibilities for sex, gender and sexualities are socially permitted. Intelligible subjects are those who institute and maintain unity and continuity among gender, sex, sexuality and desire, i.e., operate within the matrix of coherent gender norms.

People are coerced to conform to the matrix and failure to conform will be penalized by the disciplinary techniques. Various social and cultural forces "police" the social appearances of gender. Those outside of the matrix are cast impossible or defective. Gender is thus is the "repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (p. 44).

My own analysis in this dissertation will resonate with Butler's ideas of gender as having no "essence", no "external and objective ideal to which it aspires to", not a "fact", and something "that would not exist if there were no various acts of gender [which] create the idea of gender" (1990, p. 178). My analysis will also resonate with Butler's commitment to uncover the concealed nature of the operation of power in the production of gender which she describes in her "Psychic Life of Power: Theories of Subjection" (1993). Here, she explains the link between the operation of power and formation of subjectivity with the help of the notion of "subjection". Subjection simultaneously grasps two processes: the process of becoming subordinated by power and the process of becoming a subject in this subordination. Subjection, Butler argues, "must be traced in the turns of psychic lives" (1993, p. 18). Power, for her, takes a psychic form and operates through formative and generative effects of restriction and prohibitions. She argues that a subject is both shaped by and subordinated to power through the psychic processes of "passionate attachment", normative regulations of those attachments, and formation of "melancholic subjects". Drawing on psychoanalysis, Butler argues that subjects are formed in and are psychologically attached to relations of power. The nature of that attachment is structured by prohibitions which become internalized and further act as regulative social norms to produce psychic effects such as self-conscience or self-beratement. Reaching beyond the boundaries of psychoanalysis she recognizes that normative constraints are effects of wider network of regulatory discourses which produce the active subjects who continuously enact the power by submitting to it.

Butler's contribution to the scholarship on gender is unquestionably significant in the situation where concepts of 'gender' and 'women' continue being contested, reconfigured and debated over. The outcomes of these debates will have direct relevance to international development theory and practice. The problem now remains that, in Nicholson's words: "if those who call themselves feminists cannot even decide upon who women are, how can political

demands be enacted in the name of women?" (1994, p. 102). Vagueness in terminology may present some interesting dynamics (Eastwood, 2002) but, what Baden and Goetz (1997) show is that the manner in which women/gender are presented in the arena of development policies create ideological circles which render irrelevant the work and knowledge of women in the Third World. In my study I accept the call for a better understanding of gender through studying the actual sites where I find gender being treated as relevant in concrete activity of men and women. My own strategy in this research is to take the standpoint of actual "living, talking, real" women, studying how their experiences are organized as they describe them to be. In that way, my commitments to understanding actual women's situation can be maintained, whereas gender emerges as a taken for granted discourse and practice absorbed into the organizational practices of the ruling apparatus that I must analyze. My focus on organizational practices of power is one aspect of this inquiry which differentiates Butler's approach to analysis from the one I have adopted in this study. There are a few other points of divergences which emanate from distinctions in methodological commitments which I dwell upon later in this dissertation.

'Gender knowledge'

Understanding of gender as knowledge-based is embraced in a more recently theorized conceptual instrument of 'gender knowledge' **(**Andresen & Dölling, 2005 in Young & Scherrer, 2010). My analysis resonates with few studies motivated by this approach, for instance those exploring and questioning the apparent gender neutrality of knowledge generation and dissemination in various subfields of international politics (Cavaghan, 2010; Stone, 2010; Brand, 2010). Especially relevant is the study by Çağlar (2010) who uses the conceptual tool of gender knowledge to examine the practices of gender budgeting in two global development institutions. Gender budgeting is a tool for mainstreaming gender-equitable macroeconomic policies which emerged within the feminist-demanded efforts to alleviate the gendered burdens of structural adjustment policies. Çağlar notes that feminist economists have clearly defined the unified object and objectives of gender budgeting. However, she discovers that different international development organizations, the World Bank and the UNDP, have undertaken gender budgeting as remarkably different enterprises. The overall agendas of these two institutions and how they position women within these agendas explain these differences. UNDP engenders its program on the basis of 'traditional' gender division of labor with polices aiming at compensating women's

unpaid reproductive work through social policy measures. This contrasts with the policies of the World Bank which 'knows' gender in economic terms and conceptualizes women as participants in macroeconomic stabilization and smooth functioning of the markets. Gender knowledge is shown to differ between the institutions that promote it. Women, in the World Bank context are positioned as economic subjects who must be endowed with skills for the labor market. In either case, either the UNDP or the World Bank, the gender knowledge that is relied on overlooks women as subjects in their own right.

The premise of the 'gender knowledge' framework is that knowledge is never neutral, and various implicit preconceptions including gender biases and stereotypes color it. My study, however, contrasts sharply with the notion of 'gender knowledge' and its unexplicated institutional framing. My own strategy is to learn about women from them (selves). I expect their knowledge to be shaped in multiple ways and discovering that social organization is the focus of my analysis. In a later chapter I discuss how and why I take the standpoint of women in order to explore how their knowing becomes shaped by the larger social processes which surround them. In other words, I do not treat 'gender knowledge' as a static phenomenon that can be discovered with pre-established tools; rather, I explore ethnographically how living participants in actual settings continuously develop understandings of their lives. I set out to conduct the present study in ways which coincide with the approach generated in the tradition of the analytical framework of 'social organization of knowledge' (Smith, 1987), a few of which I will now discuss.

Institutional ethnographies of women/gender in development

Adele Mueller's (1986, 1991) institutional ethnography makes apparent how the institutionalized and state-linked development structures become an organizing principle for the production of knowledge about the Third World women, filtering in important ways what is known about them. Mueller (1991) argues that when women become transformed by developers "as research data, or instances of a theory, or cases of a project, coming out of and feeding directly into centralized information systems" (p. 5). These practices of development employing standardized procedures make a certain erasure of women's experiences inevitable, construing these experiences in the manner which conforms to the conceptualization of the problems of development already established elsewhere. Mueller addresses such disjuncture between the

realities of women's everyday lives and the information requirements of development agencies. I also analyze several aspects of this dynamic in terms of the manner in which it is accomplished and in terms of the implications of that accomplishment, following my interest in uncovering "a way of knowing and way of not knowing, a way of talking about women and a way of silencing women from speaking about the experience of their own lives as they are organized by unseen and uncontrollable outside forces" (Mueller, 1987, p. 1). My work coincides with Mueller's focus on documentary practices, institutional language and processes which transform the local knowledge and experiences into the institutional versions of reality. Only she speaks from the standpoint located 'in' development, i.e., from the perspective of development professional working in the historical conditions (in mid and 1980s) before a number of important for WID international events would take place, whereas my research begins with the women-beneficiaries of development and moves on to the new discursive terrains created by more recent developments in international politics.

A more recent institutional ethnographic analysis which I find relevant for my research has been conducted by Campbell & Teghtsoonian (2010). These authors analyze 'aid effectiveness', one of the current global reforms of the architecture of international aid, and its effects on the women's empowerment movement in Kyrgyzstan. The authors reveal that aid effectiveness imposes and frames the efforts of the local gender advocates to respond to the needs of local women. Their work becomes focused on what has been designed with the primary concern not on the interests of women but on the effective management of development assistance in the economic development of Kyrgyzstan. The representatives of the women's movement come to accept ruling premises of policy making even when these are at odds with what they know about women's interests and how best to express and meet them. As a result, efforts to improve the situation of women must be carried out as a technical part of aid effectiveness. Within it, the indicators of success are defined in terms which subordinate gender equality to the country's economic development strategy expressed in high profile documents such as Country Development Strategy (CDS).This strategy bears the risk that women's knowledge of what women need—and the established grassroots work that they undertake based on it—will be displaced by the technical decision-making about policy priorities which do not include women's equality and human rights.

I intend to apply similar thinking and analysis to the international development projects in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Contemporary gender debates continue because they are full of contradictory ideas regarding the best means to improve women's lives, particularly in terms of global development processes (Basu, 1995). Important shifts in development planning have occurred, with more diverse groups of women being included. Gender is being mainstreamed in development institutions and integrated into donors' activities. Transnational networks are offering women opportunities for articulating their own identities and subject positions (Simpson, 2009). However, the pertinent scholarship still adopts a 'top-down' view, focusing on formal networks, international events, state and international institutions with a starting point (or a standpoint) centering on state agencies and international institutions (Campbell, 2007). I argue against such theorizing in favor of a research practice of knowing that emerges from experiential grounds. Adele Mueller's and Campbell & Teghtsoonian's work offer a useful framework for understanding of 'how things work' and for explicating how ruling ideas influence people who work in the name of promoting women's equality. I follow Mueller's invitation to question the very procedures and structures of development as an institution of ruling where:

> more is needed than just providing new knowledge about the situation of women marginalized in the Third World countries. What is needed is an investigation and explication of the structures and routine procedures of the ruling apparatus; a solid grasp of the multiplicity of sites and forms of imperialist power if their work is to contribute to the liberation of women—women in the Third World and in the First World (1991, p. 1).

With my institutional ethnography I hope to complement the scholarship which theorizes and thematizes the local knowledge in the light of and as a part of the larger institutional organization. As already suggested, doing so raises a number of important questions about development as an institution and its documentary processes of management and coordination, and about the exercise of power. My research attempts to capture these questions and offers insights about how equity-oriented work might be different if it were grounded in the everyday experiences and standpoint of the women themselves. The questions I ask are based on my assumption that when women engage in social relations of institutional programs and practices, they are affected in some ways. What are these effects, and do they express women's interest? While international development practices and efforts are always under scrutiny for program

effectiveness, serious critiques also need to be made of the more or less invisible forms of domination that these routine policy-oriented activities entail.

CHAPTER 3. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK: SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE

The present study is inspired by and framed within the theory of 'social organization of knowledge' and is conducted through the use of the research practices of Institutional Ethnography (IE) (Smith, 2005). Making explicit the ontology of research practice, this approach relies on people's experience as the point of entry into inquiry exploring local settings of people's everyday lives and highlights how they are connected to the extended arenas of an institution (explained further). The fundamental premise in institutional ethnography is that people are experts in how they live their own lives, and that how people live and experience their everyday lives are shaped by powerful external forces called 'ruling relations' (Smith, 2005). The purpose of ruling relations is to co-order and coordinate the activities and actions of people in and across various and multiple local settings in order to achieve institutional goals (Devault & McCoy, 2002, in Deveau, 2008, p. 3). The overall goal of institutional ethnography is to methodically examine how local experience is organized by ruling relations. In so doing a researcher problematizes and explicates how the experiences of people targeted by, in this case, the international development policies, are linked to and managed by the discursive, managerial and professional forms of power. Understanding of how such an analysis is to be carried out requires a working knowledge of the basic concepts and assumptions IE offers, such as the 'problematic', 'standpoint', 'institution', 'ruling relations', social', 'social relations', 'social organization', etc. This chapter attempts to provide this working knowledge by building on Smith's own thinking and the works of her followers.

Conceptual contextualization of IE

For its major premises, institutional ethnography draws on, and integrates insights from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel's "New Materialism" (reference Smith, 2004), as well as contemporary feminist scholarship and ethnomethodology. Smith relies on Marx and Engel's analysis of ideology and the critique that social science must focus on the empirical discovery of processes that arise in the actual activities of real people (Campbell & Devault, 2011). She incorporates into her approach their materialist critique of social thought where they argue that

> the premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstractions can only be made in imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions of their lives, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity. These premises can thus be verified in a purely empirical way (Marx & Engels, 1998, pp. 36-37 in Smith, 2004, p. 449).

Following Marx and Engels, Smith draws back from believing in the objectivity of knowledge, and proposes an "ontological shift"- a belief that social reality is constituted in and as people's actions. This belief makes it necessary to base social science research in discovery and explication as "social relations" of the actual activities of particular people and their material conditions. This is where Smith's conceptual tools of 'standpoint' and 'problematic' (discussed later) are derived from. Conceptually, institutional ethnography also draws on the main premises of ethnomethodology, in particular, on the idea of local ordering of everyday activities and focus on the common-sense knowledges and methods that people use to make sense of their world and in how they talk about it (Garfinkel, 2002). Smith, however, promotes a perspective that these local everyday activities do not happen in a vacuum, isolated from the larger social, economic and political processes, but that these are incorporated into people's work, and coordinated into certain sequences of action (Smith, 2005). Consequently, understanding the localized social world of the individual or group is never treated as an end in itself. In contrast to ethnomethodology, an inquiry in IE expands into the larger social structures where the extralocal relations of ruling originate (Smith, 1987). The research interest for the institutional ethnographer, thus, lies simultaneously in two levels of inquiry. One concerns the individual people's experiences (in the settings of their local activities); the other is extra-local, and the activities, tools and discourses which shape local settings and people's experience (the ruling relations). What must be discovered empirically by researchers are the practical methods and processes of coordinating what particular people know and do in everyday sites, and thus how people become active in the ruling relations that shape their lives.

Certain features of institutional ethnography can be compared with other major schools of social thought. To illustrate, institutional ethnography's recognition of the tremendous distance between the researched actualities and how they are represented in a theoretical scientific discourse is drawn from the 'theory of social construction' (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and its

focus on the "everyday life which is subjectively meaningful to [people] as a coherent world" (p. 19). With the theory of 'symbolic interactionism' (Mead, 1959) IE shares similar claims to adhere to a social ontology and focus in a scientific investigation on how people put their lives (and work) together. Institutional ethnography has been also compared to 'grounded theory' because both advocate for exploration and explanation of the informants' perspectives and for the epistemology that starts from the field rather than from preconceived concepts and theoretical frameworks. Differently from grounded theory and symbolic interactionism, however, institutional ethnography does not aim at theory-building and its analyses do not interpret different voices into one coherent theory.

Institutional ethnography: From 'sociology for women' to 'sociology for people'

Smith developed the institutional ethnography approach in North America in the context of women's movement of 1960-1970s. With other feminist scholars of that time she recognized that the dominant forms of knowledge promoted by academic disciplines were powerful but inadequate in representing the groups of people they claimed to represent. She argued that conceptual categories and frameworks were "inattentive to the actual circumstances of the diverse lives people live in contemporary societies" and that "frequently, and systematically these slippages between everyday lives and objectified knowledge of those lives operate to produce and perpetuate circumstances that constitute social problems" (http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/pageid/1236). Smith (2005) described the historical events happening in Europe from the nineteenth century that changed men's and women's place in the public sphere. She explained that women did not participate in the public discourse associated with the Enlightenment and with the rise of capitalism. They had remained at work in the particularities of domesticity, while men, at the same historical period, participated in the public domains of the market, as well as in public discourse in the places of social gatherings, discussed current topics, etc. Thus, women, due to their distinctive roles in production and reproduction, did not appear as agents within the ruling relations (of corporations, government bureaucracy, professional discourse and so forth). A division between the spheres of experiences and action as well as of consciousness between men and women emerged. This actual social organization contributed to men becoming the subjects and agents of public discourse, to endowing their ideas and actions with an assumed universal applicability. The advancement of print and technologies

for reproducing texts and images, the development in the bureaucratization of the State, and radical innovations in the management of business enterprises took place. Women were largely excluded from these sites, increasing their isolation from places where ruling ideas and practices originated. Corporate ownership and control created 'management' as a distinct function and called for what Alfred Sloan of General Motors (1964) called "objective" organization (in Smith, 2005, p. 15). The objective organization relied on procedures for systematic reporting on performance from a company's different divisions. Smith explains:

> Relationships were no longer as they had been, for example, in the DuPont Company, where in the latter part of the nineteenth century the sons and the sons-in-law of the patriarch lived in one house, ran the various plants, and wrote daily letters to the patriarch reporting on the day's doings. The importance of the personal trust that familial relationships supplied, along with creating a community of interest in the family business, was displaced by regimes of written rules and administrative practices, combined with the systems of data collection, enabling managers' performance to be evaluated objectively (2005, p. 15).

The knowledge on which objective decisions were made was in the form of categorized and standardized data. The regimes of written rules and administrative practices combined with data collection enabled manager's performance to be evaluated objectively. Such paper-based ruling regimes proliferated, and because men were already seen as the appropriate people to rule, govern, manage, teach, write, and so on, the relations between men and women became ever more distinctly differentiated. The gender divide widened as the powers, technologies and scope of the extralocal organization of the economy, state and public discourse increased. Even as women were needed as workers in industry and commerce, the professions, and public services, only on the basis of resurgent struggles for equality have women's status (at least in industrialized countries) improved. Meanwhile, the domestic sphere becomes increasingly supplementary to the trans-local organization of power, knowledge and opportunity which men so long monopolized as its subjects and agents. Foundational to the objective (objectified) forms of knowledge that remains the basis of administration and ruling is the taken for granted, historically-based, masculinity of a knowing subject that claims a formal universality.

Smith believed that a different approach to social inquiry was needed that would be grounded in the everyday knowledge of people, therefore, avoiding the problem of characterizing 'knowing' as a mode of domination. She offered an analytic framework that looked at knowledge as 'social' and 'socially organized'. Here, knowledge of the social was not "something that is in people's heads" but "taking place in the actual social organization among people, in the social relations" (Smith, 2004, in interview with Widerberg, p.2). With her approach she proposed "a revision of the relations of knowing" (Smith, 1999, p. 95) where the knowledge is produced 'for' people as opposed to 'about' people. For this reasons, Smith originally named her approach a "sociology for women" (Smith, 1987) and later has extended it to the "sociology for people" (Smith, 2005) committing her adherents to "look at the society from the point of the people and their experience of it […], that is from below, when investigating how the social is put together or comes about, so as to produce knowledge about the workings of society that makes sense by us as citizens" (Smith, 2004, interview with Widerberg, p. 2). Building on understanding of the objectives of sociological methods from Marxist materialism, ethnomethodology and feminist theory Smith and her adherents-institutional ethnographers have further specified methodology to execute these empirical observations.

Beginning an institutional ethnography: The standpoint

Smith uses the term 'ethnography' to emphasize the idea of exploring organization concretely by using the experience of some particular person or persons as the entry point into forms of social organization which shapes local settings but originates outside of them (Grahame, 1998). The social ontology of institutional ethnography assumes that different participants constitute particular settings and each actor is situated in the social relations but situated differently. From their differently positioned locations each individual knows the setting as she/he participates in it and from her/his organized 'standpoint' (Campbell & Gregor, 2002). In the context of conducting an institutional ethnography, standpoint refers to taking up "a point of view in a marginal location" reversing thus the direction of looking in an investigation from these "margins inward-toward centers of powers and administration" (DeVault, 1999, p. 48). By approaching the research from the standpoint of marginalized groups, the research solidly rests on their experiences as an entry to how their marginalization is accomplished (Slade, 2008).

In contrast to other scholars who use the term 'standpoint', in institutional ethnography standpoint emerged as an epistemological issue that originated within Smith's collaboration with feminist scholars such as philosophers Sandra Harding and Donna Haraway, political theorist Nancy Hartsock, and sociologist Patricia Hill Collins, from which she drew and, subsequently, developed her own specification of this notion (Campbell & DeVault, 2011). As an epistemological notion 'standpoint' was coined by Sandra Harding (1991), a feminist scholar who originally identified it as a social position of the knower, subject of knowledge and creator of knowledge. The idea of 'feminist standpoint' introduced later by Nancy Hartsock (1998) focused on its political articulation. Smith, in contrast, offered her understanding of 'standpoint' as a method of inquiry that works from the "people's everyday lives and experiences to discover the social as it extends beyond experiences"; as "a site for the knower that is open to everyone" (2005, p. 10) ; or as a "point of entry into discovering the social that works from the actualities of people's everyday life and experience to discover the social that extends beyond this experience" (Smith, 2005, p.8). As a conceptual research tool standpoint allows the researcher to explicate the actual social processes and practices that organize people's every day experiences while preserving their experiences as a central resource of the research project. Working from a local standpoint helps to avoid transcending local actualities of everyday lives into a universalized subject because the researchers enter their inquiry with "commitment to learning from actualities as they are experienced…by those involved in them" (Smith, 2005, p. 50).

Problematic

The standpoint of the informants is the key to the discovery of the extended analysis of the systemic powers that shape their everyday world. Such analysis starts with what is called 'identification of a problematic'. Smith uses the term 'problematic' not synonymously with a 'problem' but to refer to the puzzles emerging from what informants say or do, and this will further orient the focus and the direction of a research. From the informants' concrete experiences ethnography derives its general orientation based on the questions which arise about how the local organization of the everyday world is connected to ruling relations (Smith, 1987). In other words, identification of a problematic refers to the properties of organization of people's everyday life to be translated into a topic for ethnographic research; it orients research attention to a number of possible questions about how local worlds are organized. The researcher picks

from the data elements which she finds mystifying and asks questions about how the puzzling experiences happen as they do. Smith points out that

> institutional ethnographers are not using people's experiences as a basis for making statements about them, about populations of individuals, or about events or states of affairs described from the point of view of individuals. […] It is people's experience of and in what they do—their "work"—and the knowledge based in their work that are the ethnographer's major resource (2005, p. 125).

Such an approach allows the focus of the research to emerge and be refined through the research process itself. Smith argues that the organization of local experience originates outside the local settings and is not immediately visible to the people situated in those settings. It takes the everyday world as an "unfinished arena for discovery in which the lines of social relations are present to be explored beyond it" (Smith, 2005, p. 39). As Smith puts it, a problematic is

> not a question that is concluded in its answer. Exploration opens up an institutional complex as it is relevant to the problematic. In opening up an institutional complex, it participates in institutional ethnography's more general discoveries of the workings of institutions and the ruling relations in contemporary Western societies (2005, p. 41).

Social organization and social relations

The research problematic normally touches upon how a particular aspect of local experience is socially organized. The problematic is grounded in what the informants know about how to perform their work. What they know, in institutional ethnography, defines the 'local knowledge'. Contrasted to any other terms which are often associated with the discussion of 'local' such as 'indigenous', 'traditional', 'native', the 'local' in my study is not demarcated by particular geographical locations, rural residence, cultural belonging or historical commitment to ritual-based activities, nor is it understood as a polar opposite to the hegemonic 'global'. Similar to various authors I position local knowledge as a "way of knowing", as practice and experience embedded in everyday live (Antweiler, 2004), as experientially-based and tacit (Evers & Gerke, 2008), as a "situated practice", or "bodily knowledge" (Hobart, 1995; Nygren, 1999). Local knowledge in institutional ethnography is where the embodied knower begins her/his experiences and is an expert there (Smith, 1987). Therefore, it is understood as people's

acting knowledgably as they constitute their everyday world, their immediate experiences in the particular and historically specific circumstances. The local knowledge is understood as invariably influenced and shaped from outside. These outside forces which enter the local settings and shape the local knowledge are conceived remotely from a particular local setting. They may refer to professional discourses, scientific theories, the media and define extralocal knowledge. Thus, local and extralocal knowledge are inherently connected, the latter coordinating and shaping the former for the interests which are external to the local. Consequently, as opposed to local as a reified objective category, local in institutional ethnography is conceptualized as always dynamic, continuously influenced and changed from outside.

Local knowledge or local ways of knowing are inherently socially organized, and are never isolated from the social relations that connect with the extralocal setting which coordinates and shapes them. In institutional ethnography, different actors are understood to perform their routine activities not in isolation but in relation to the activities of other actors, accomplishing thereby their coordination with what others do. How actual participants concert their actions with those of others, connect and sequence activities to 'put things together' comprise 'social relations' (Smith, 2005). Thus, 'social relations', as a technical term, denotes connections between different sites of action, as

> an ongoing process in which people's doings are caught up and responsive to what others are doing; what they are doing is responsive to and given by what has been going on; every next act, as it is concerned with those of others, picks up and projects (the coordination) forward into the future (Smith, 2005, p. 56).

Smith derives the notion of social relations from Marx and Engels to contend that the everyday lived experiences of people must be seen as contextualized within material (in today's world, often textually-mediated) connections that serve to organize that everyday experience:

> definite individuals who are productively active in a definite way enter into these definite social and political relations. Empirical observation must in each separate instance bring out empirically, and without any mystification and speculation, the connection of the social and political structure with production. The social structure and the state are continually evolving out of the life-process of definite individuals… as they actually are,

> i.e. as they act, produce materially, and hence as they work under definite material limits, presuppositions and conditions independent of their will (Marx & Engels, 1998, p. 41 in Eastwood, 2002, p. 64).

The 'social relations' are, thus, the actual practices coordinated to achieve a particular institutional function, for instance, international development. The focus on social relations in a research

> orients the researcher to viewing people's doings in particular local settings as articulated to sequences of action that hook them up to what others are or have been doing elsewhere and elsewhen. It is useful analytically to think of social relations as temporal sequences in which the foregoing intends the subsequent and in which the subsequent "realizes" or accomplishes the social character of the preceding. It reminds the ethnographer to attend to how the object of focus is embedded in the sequences of COORDINATED action (Smith, 2005, p. 228).

People acting within social relations accomplish social organization (Campbell & Gregor, 2002). The social organization is, then, the web of social relations which extends to the local 'site' of action where life is experienced by actual people, from the 'extralocal' site (that is outside the boundaries of one's everyday experience) and back to the local. It is important to note that social relations is not a category to be found but people acting using both their own knowledge and experience and drawing into their actions the ruling ideas, discourses, instructions, and from the institutional texts that enter their lives. The researcher's analytic job is to discover how this works.

Ruling relations

Social relations, or people 'taking up a piece of action and moving it forward' to organize, coordinate and regulate what goes on, is what constitutes what institutional ethnographers call 'ruling relations' (Smith, 2005). The ruling relations point to how power is exercised in local setting to accomplish extralocal interests (Campbell & Gregor, 2002) through purposefully organized systematic processes and practices which are used to manage and control a person's life outside that person's knowledge (Smith, 2005). This power remains hidden and mysterious until investigated empirically. Consequently, it is the aim of institutional

ethnographers to make visible these ruling relations which coordinate people's actions across separations of time and space, and often without their conscious understanding. Ruling relations are impossible to grasp by only looking at the local setting and the research needs to go beyond it (Smith, 2005) because extralocal knowledge is not immediately available from the standpoint of a local participant; similarly, it will be unattainable for the one who speaks on behalf of the extralocal to see the specifics and peculiarities of the local. Therefore, institutional ethnography starts with individual experiences under the premise that these experiences are organized and coordinated by larger ruling relations.

For Smith the ruling relations is a "concept that grasps power, organization, direction and regulations as more pervasively structured than can be expressed in traditional concepts provided by the discourses of power" (Smith, 1987, p. 3). Not identical with explicit modes of dominations or relations of hegemony, ruling relations refer to the "forms of consciousness and organization that are objectified in the sense that they are constituted externally to particular people and places" (Smith, 2005, p. 13), connecting people across space and time and organize everyday lives–"the corporations, government bureaucracies, academic and professional discourses, mass media, and the complex of relations that interconnect them" (p. 10). The power of the ruling relations is in how they, though being taken for granted, implicit and largely invisible to the people located outside of it, form fields of coordinated activities, regulate and organize life. As Campbell (2007) puts it, absorbing ruling discourses,

> people get confused; they become committed to others' ideas and agendas. Under the influence of an institution's ideologies, [development] workers are at risk of seeing changes in their work as simply the correct contemporary version of the professional practice in their field, or as the only realistic means of addressing newly important issues [of efficiency, or sustainability, for instance] (p.7).

It is a particular feature of the ruling relations that they are implicit and invisible to the local actors who participate in the ruling relations, enact and perpetuate them. Making them visible by empirically uncovering the ruling relations and explicating how they coordinate the local activities is the goal of any IE project.

Institution and texts

In institutional ethnography an 'institution' is not synonymous with a formal organization(s) and is understood to be constituted by a complex of activities organized around a distinctive function such as the legislation, government, international development, etc. Thinking of development institutions discussed in this dissertation, more than one organization may be involved. For instance, in Uzbekistan, I begin with a small Water Users Association and how it is overseen by the personnel located in the higher echelons of water management as well as by the local project implementation office; and the research continues in the head project office in Germany which operates under the conditionality of funding posed by the Federal Government. All the activities and relations that are being coordinated thereby constitute the 'development institution'.

An institution is in no way a static reified phenomenon, rather it is part of a mode of ruling which includes the institution's discursively organized practices operating through text-based administrative technologies which guide (or regulate) people's activities across time and geographic spaces (Campbell, 2007). For institutions, ruling relations operate as "actual people design, circulate, handle, and inscribe real documents and texts*"* (Campbell, 2007, p. 4). How texts and language organize social relations and ruling practices is central to institutional ethnography because such a discovery is the discovery of the arrangement through which an institution's power is produced and reproduced (Wright, 2009). 'Texts' in IE refer to documents or any representation that has a "relatively fixed and replicable character" (DeVault & McCoy, 2002, p. 765 in Deveau, 2008, p.9) which people routinely use in the conduct of their work; their engagement with institutional texts coordinates their actions (Campbell & Gregor, 2002). Smith uses the metaphor of DNA (or deoxyribonucleic acid, the hereditary material in humans) as a means of illustrating how socially organized knowledge invented in one location becomes packaged in texts and then replicated either electronically or in hard-copy format in multiple locations, becoming a means of regulating local activities and organizing the social relations among people (Smith, 1999 in Deveau, 2008). Thus, institutional texts in IE are not discrete but only important for an analysis as they enter into human action or become 'activated'; i.e., the text is treated as 'data' when people are engaged with them, interact with texts and use them to make their decisions to act in specific way to them. Smith introduces a concept of the 'text-reader

conversation' in which the reader "responds to, interprets, and acts from it [the text]" (2005, p. 105) and in doing so becomes an agent of this text. Through working with institutional texts a reader's consciousness is coordinated with the words of the text; the text exerts control in how its words activate a response. Such textual mediation becomes the practical or material form through which the ruling relations enter the local setting, ordering what happens there.

Ruling is embedded in all the contemporary administrative-managerial practices which make use of various knowledges to produce and distribute organizational knowledge through a systematized use of categories, indicators, evaluation tools, etc. In this work locally-produced knowledge becomes transposed into institutional text-based knowledge, framed in the categories of the institutional text. Specific documents such as reporting records, planning documents, funding proposals, guidelines, monitoring sheets, manuals, instructions and so forth guide the work of people, coordinating them through the requirements of working with the texts, its language, categories and classifications. Such practices of textual mediation transform local knowledge into institutional forms, and in institutional ethnography are thought of as 'ideological' in nature (Smith, 2005). The transformations taking place through institutional texts carry institutional/ideological discourses, expressed in the language and relevancies of the institution[2]. Local practices are to be made accountable in ways which express the functions of the institution; the responses the institutional texts evoke are those reflecting the terms established by the institution. This is how working with institutional texts in text-reader conversations and producing institutional accounts is ideological—institutional discourses regulate people's local activities (Smith, 2005).

Smith talks about an 'institutional capture' (Smith, 2005) in which an institutional discourse subsumes "local, concrete, and particular actions" transforming them into "standard forms of organizational action" (Grahame, 1998, p. 3). The objectified description of locally experienced actual life becomes responsive to what is relevant to the extralocal institutional mandate. Thus, from the richness of actual experiences only what 'fits' the extralocal interests is deemed relevant and is selected to appear in the text which is authorized as an objective textual

[2] Here Smith makes use of Marx and Engel's concept of ideology, as an ideological lens which presents people a reality in ways which suit the needs of those who are in power, those who control "the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it" (Marx and Engels, 1939, p.39 in Diveau, 2008, p.11).

presentation of the local experiences. It is important to emphasize that as the ruling relations impose rules, they also rely on being enacted by participants who do so knowingly and appropriately.

Once textualized, knowledge travels extralocally and may be used as a basis for making decisions. As Campbell and Gregor (2002) claim, textualizing events and people's worlds and actions translates them into official and bureaucratic accounts that become the groundwork for various forms of managerial and professional action. "The disjuncture between the experienced actualities of those caught up in such a process and what is recognized in the form of words that represent them institutionally is an important dimension of *institutional* power", says Smith (2005, p. 194). The danger is that while the distinction between the actual ways of knowing and text-mediated ways of knowing is subtle, the gaps between people's everyday lives and objectified knowledge of those lives produces and perpetuates circumstances that constitute social problems (DeVault, 2011).

Institutional texts, complemented by technologies or disciplined practices (such as strictly formatted reporting or proposal writing based on particular conceptual apparatuses), produce standardized local states of affairs or events which correspond to the standardized texts. Ruling is, thus, embedded in the doings of people as they "act in ways they expect will achieve their intentions, and often, in ways organized for the accomplishment of intentions that are not theirs" (Campbell & DeVault, 2011, p.12). Hence, inquiry into contemporary social organization, centered on explicating ruling practices and their associated text-based discourses and objectified forms of knowledge, includes identification of how particular knowledge is crucial to "local actors perform(ing) thereby the ruling of their own life" (Campbell & DeVault, 2011). The job of the researchers is to make visible the relations that texts organize. Such focus of institutional ethnography on explicating the ruling relations gives this research a potential to become an empirically-based resource for activism and transformation of people's lives. Previous research by institutional ethnographers showed that as decisions are brought back from where they were made to the local setting they may have important implications in relation to the actual circumstances experienced there (Campbell & Teghtsoonian, 2010; Slade, 2008; Eastwood, 2002).

Mapping and analytic products

People are central in institutional ethnography; however, it is not the people themselves or their problems that are the topic of research framed as IE. The analytic goal, instead, is what is sometimes called 'social cartography' or 'mapping' of the knowledge-based social relations that connect the local sites of action to extralocal sites. Mapping is useful to communicate the explicit acknowledgement of the ruling relations being organized. It generates a visual representation of the various levels of analysis. And, ultimately, it demonstrates the "interconnectedness of seemingly disparate organizations by explicitly pointing at (and mapping out) the social relations which intersect multiple institutional spheres (Eastwood, 2002, p. 72). Mapping ruling relations proceeds from a "single actor's doings, describing the processes that hook her or his activities into the discourses and practices of the relevant institution. The analysis provides an account of how this actor/ informant engages, often knowledgeably and skillfully, with the discursive materials—for example, policy and managerial texts—that guide what happens" (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 61). Such analysis is important because as Campbell (2007) notes "what that engagement of people comes to is the actuality there, on the ground, in women's lives and, presumably, will encompass their gender experiences, that our research must discover and explicate" (p. 9).

Why institutional ethnography? Institution and gender

Institutional ethnography has been used to study and map social organization within a variety of settings including environmental policies, health reforms, social and economic reorganization, education, migration, development, etc. Important for my study is the current responsiveness of institutional ethnographers to the recent global transformations related to economic restructuring and associated social changes which have entailed new requirements for accountability, new evaluative and monitoring tools and new "institutional technologies"(Campbell & DeVault, 2011). Institutional ethnography's form of analysis makes visible how the global transformations happen locally and trans-locally, and that knowledge production is central to how people shape their world and "in the process find their experiences organized outside of their intentions" (Campbell & DeVault, 2011). With its method of analysis institutional ethnography offers solutions to the limitations recognized by development

researchers (Markovitz, 2001) of the spatially demarked analysis of classic ethnography for studying tremendously complicated and fluid dynamics and relationships pertaining to the concerns with dominance and dependency in the global processes. Increasingly, development researchers see the usefulness in identifying and tracking of multi-local and multidirectional flows of information, ideas and material (Markovitz, 2001), or the social relations. Institutional ethnography's attention to a particular epistemological position expresses on whose behalf an ethnographer speaks – and is called 'taking the standpoint 'of a particular informant or group. This is an analytic strategy in research making it possible to sort out how an institutional standpoint may "rule" the standpoint of local actors. By beginning ethnography with generating a problematic "from the everyday world", institutional ethnographers undertake an inquiry that maintains that standpoint, in contrast to identifying with the ruling standpoint – that would be carried into local settings. In my inquiry I start from the questions emanating from the 'on-the-ground' stories as opposed to the top-down approach which begins with the official versions of the projects of interest.

For the purposes of the present dissertation I must emphasize that institutional ethnography makes use of and has supported considerable scholarship on the topic of gender (Smith, 1990). It has helped to show how the disjuncture between highly specific everyday local experiences of women and how they are universally and authoritatively known. Institutional texts, discourses and forms of knowledge may claim to objectively reflect them, but can be seen to socially organize gender and women's lives (Smith, 2005; Pence, 2001; Walker, 1990). Institutional ethnography's analysis and methodological approaches allow for a research practice that avoids displacing women's experiences by theoretical concepts. It also permits an empirically-based understanding of how social processes and their coordination differ systematically for women and men. Whilst institutional ethnography recognizes that ruling relations coordinate the lives of both men and women, and transform their knowledge from local activities and experiences into abstract texts, it powerfully demonstrates how the ruling relations may organize gender. Smith uses the example of the sociological discourse to illustrate the construction of gender. For her

> the issue wasn't sexism; it was not even the assumptions built into its theories or the lack of attention to women and women's issues and concerns. It was how its discursive

practices created for knowers as universalized subjects transcending the local actualities of people's lives" (2005, p. 22).

The enlightenment ideas of the purity of science and its methods for generating the objectivity of knowledge have claimed to be universal. The claims of formal universality, in fact, have concealed masculinity of the knowing subjects (Smith, 2005). The universal has been based on the dichotomies between the mind and body, objective and subjective, general/specific, men/women, etc. Anything subjective, bodily and particular has been denied as repugnant and dangerous to the purity of the "world of enlightened intellect" (Smith, 2005, p. 23). The rational mind, objective and general, has defined the universal truth to which science and academic discourse has aspired and continues to aspire to. Women, traditionally associated with subjective bodily experiences, have been positioned as objects rather than subjects of knowledge and ultimately were cast outside the mainstream knowledge production processes. This concealed masculinity has been foundational for the objectified forms of knowledge in which women and their embodied experiences were invisible. This is one illustration of how ruling discourses organize gendered experiences by Smith. This dissertation offers another example. Here I follow Smith, who situates her formulation of women's standpoint to address the exclusion of women as subjects from the objectified relations of discourse and ruling. Smith offers a sociological practice that begins from and keeps central women as subjects, as knowers and as active players.

Criticism and limitations of the approach

Critics of institutional ethnography generally point out the theoretical complexity of this framework demanding its followers to have certain knowledge of the social theories upon which Smith draws, including Marx's epistemology, ethnomethodology, etc. (Wright, 2009). A more conceptual criticism comes from Kevin Walby, an advocate of institutional ethnography, who nevertheless argues that "institutional ethnography must continue to be a sociology of possibilities, open to its own contradictions, and continuing reflexive interventions into itself" (2007, p. 1). He addresses Smith's claim for non-objectification and argues that social sciences cannot avoid producing 'objects' of research. Research methods cannot possibly be liberated from objectification, he claims, because regardless of the levels of reflexivity involved some degree of objectivity in any scholarship must be present. Smith's ontology, as Walby claims, itself determines the framework of institutional ethnographic discourse, making institutional

ethnographers participate in the ruling relations which objectify. In other words, the ontological status given to participants in the research, for him, determines how the social relations of research at all the subsequent levels will be configured. This is the contradiction which Walby encourages institutional ethnographers to pay more attention to.

Another common criticism directed at institutional ethnography is aimed at its concept of standpoint. Critics, more precisely, Hekman, Harding, Hartsock, and Hill Collins in Signs (1997) debate about the problem of relativity in standpoint theories and the difficulty of theorizing differences among women and the variety of their experiences. Hekman criticizes Smith for tackling this problem by a "definitional fiat", i.e., explaining standpoint as "actual lived experiences" (1997, p. 352) which does not solve the relativity issue. She views Smith's dichotomy between the 'abstract' categories and lived actuality flawed and incomplete because it fails to provide sufficient grounds for privileging standpoint of women and wrongly refuses to recognize how anybody's standpoint is a product of discursive formation.

Another challenge that can be observed about institutional ethnography relates to the lack of continuity between research and practice. While being talked about as "sociology for people" (Smith, 2005) institutional ethnography does not provide methodology about how to make the research findings 'actionable' and really working 'for people'. It is still unclear how results of institutional ethnography can inform organizations and institutions to work more equitably. Up to now it appears that institutional ethnography limits itself to unmasking the conceptual practices of power leaving this knowledge largely unattended. This problem becomes even more exacerbated by the unavoidable and continual confrontation with the ever-emergent and transformative character of institutional discourses and shifting "conceptual currencies" of ruling ideologies. The analysis produced in these circumstances can only be snapshots which capture and map a moment in time. This challenge remains even though institutional ethnographers, seasoned and recent advents, try to build into their analysis a sense of change that "inevitably brings forth new relations of power–sometimes more quickly than researchers can easily chart" (http://sssp1.org/index.cfm/pageid/1236/).

CHAPTER 4. METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this research, institutional ethnography, draws on the qualitative data collection methods such as interviewing, textual analysis and participant observation. This chapter discusses my access to the two settings for the purposes of ethnographic data collection, and clarifies how institutional ethnography proceeds differently from other forms of ethnography both in data-collection and analysis. I conducted fieldwork in Uzbekistan from April until August, 2011, and in Kyrgyzstan from August, 2011 until March, 2012. The research began with a broad objective of mapping the social organization of knowledge of several international development projects and in my two cases, bringing a particular focus on gender relations in the practices of implementing two international projects, one in Uzbekistan and one in Kyrgyzstan. I began by meeting and learning about the everyday experiences of the local women peasants in Uzbekistan who were among the agricultural workers whose improved wellbeing was targeted by an internationally-funded development project. My analytical framework guided me toward questions of social organization and my data collection offered me the basis for tracking how the local settings of international development were actually being organized. From observing the women's activities and listening to their stories I identified some of these socially organized processes: specific actors, implementation processes, water management meetings, and irrigation practices which linked the setting of my research to the international project action. As institutional ethnography's methodology directs, I tracked those connections through interviewing the representatives of formal and informal networks in which project staff participated, the project partners and experts, and I obtained documents and other evidence of their text-based project-related practices. This ethnographic data was used for exploring the ways in which the local project practices operated as part of broader institutional structures and an investigation proceeded to the ideas, plans, and discourses which informed the institutional knowledge-based processes involved in both projects. In more general terms, the research process followed the process which started with (a) identifying a local woman's experience (in this case of water use), (b) identifying institutional processes that were shaping that experience and (c) investigating those processes in order to describe analytically how they operated as the grounds for experience (DeVault & McCoy, 2006). In institutional ethnography, the requirement

for generating a scientific explanation is to demonstrate with data, that is, empirically, the actual connections between people's experiences and the institutional processes that organize them.

Introducing research sites: issues of entrance and access to informants and data
Uzbekistan, Khorezm, Urto-Yop

In Uzbekistan my ethnographic fieldwork focused on a ten-year action-research project coordinated by the Center for Development Research (ZEF) of the University of Bonn in Germany and implemented in the western part of Uzbekistan since 2001. The project focused its activities in Khorezm province located at the lower Amu Darya River; the main administrative office was located in the capital city of the Khorezm Province called Urgench (indicated in the below map). The project had many specific goals (described in Chapters 5 and 6) inspired by the ideas of effective and sustainable natural resource use which were envisioned, as one of the authors of the project pointed out, "about helping the poor people here … ultimately to improve their lives" (in Wall, 2006, p. 214).

Figure 1. Uzbekistan. Khorezm province

Source: The Economist, 26 July 2003, in Wall, 2006

My entry to this research site was fostered by my senior colleague, who at that time was one of the scientific coordinators of the project in Uzbekistan and who ensured my being supported in this endeavor. When I arrived to Urgench I found that the project had already put in place a well-established infrastructure. I was provided with a research assistant and accommodation in the fully-serviced project-administered guesthouse, thus making the logistical arrangements (which typically consume considerable amount of time and energy) unproblematic. The project staff assisted me with submitting my documents to the district administration to obtain a research

permit and to the city administration to receive a temporary city registration. Both processes were slowed down due to my Kyrgyz citizenship at the time when the Uzbek-Kyrgyz relationships deteriorated due to the major interethnic (Uzbek-Kyrgyz) massacre which broke out in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan in summer 2010. However, due to the skills and experience of the project team these challenges were efficiently resolved and I eventually received all the required permissions and legal status and I was allowed to start my data collection in the afternoon of my second day in the field.

My fieldwork was concerned with the project action implemented in the village called Urto-Yop. Research activities had been carried out in this particular village since the beginning of this project in 2001. In this regard, my senior colleague described the village as "overly researched" and the villagers experiencing "research fatigue". However, the long project history in this village also created pathways for more recent researchers like myself. For instance, my research assistant, Feruza, was not new in Urto-Yop, having assisted other researchers for a few years, and she was already familiar with its structure, knew the people and the local norms. At the same time, she was recognizable to the villagers and trusted by them. With the help of a person from the village she arranged access to informants, especially in the later stage of the field work, when I moved beyond the peasants' experiences to the larger network of irrigation actors. Feruza recommended a local middle-aged man, whom I will call Tamchi, who was helpful in introducing us to the people I wanted to meet. Tamchi was well-known and respected by the community due to his many years of work as a water master – thus, acting as gatekeeper, he was able to efficiently facilitate my successful access to informants. I would commute from the Urgench's guesthouse to Urto-Yop every day using the project-disbursed car. Upon our arrival to the village Feruza and I, would first pick up Tamchi and he would then navigate our driver to the required location. He would knock on the door of an informant's house, greet him/her and introduce us. This was typically followed by an invitation to come inside the house where the host would lay out a table for tea and bring food and the conversation would take place over the table. The interviews were conducted in the Uzbek language through simultaneous translation carried out by Feruza. During our conversations we would ask informants to show us their kitchen-gardens or their additional plots of land and continue our conversations there. There were days when Tamchi would be busy and in this case either his daughter or son would do the

gatekeeping role for me. At the end of each day Tamchi and I would discuss whom to contact the following day. I encountered no refusals to talk to me and only one of my interviews was cancelled, due to the sickness of the person.

Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek, "Association of Crisis Centers"

In Kyrgyzstan I started my fieldwork in the office of the Association of Crisis Centers (ACC) located in Bishkek, the capital city of Kyrgyzstan (see map below). Organizationally ACC was a network organization, registered as an NGO with its own office and staff whose mandate was to fundraise, administer and oversee projects aimed at eliminating violence against women in the country; the implementation of the project activities was carried out by the thirteen crisis centers comprising the ACC, themselves independent NGOs located in many parts of the country.

Figure 2. Kyrgyzstan

Source: www.businessinkyrgyzstan.com

I had already known the ACC's director, Antonina[3], from my earlier research in 2007-2009. I knew about the international funding it had been receiving from Hivos, the Dutch development agency for the projects aiming at improving the protection of women. The project's objectives included strengthening the network's capacity to provide protection services, raising awareness on the topic of gender violence, lobbying for anti-violence legislation and developing cooperation with the governmental institutions. ACC's responsibility consisted of coordinating and managing these projects including liaising with the donors. In our e-mail correspondence a

[3] For the ethical reasons I have changed names of all my informants appearing in this chapter with pseudonyms

few months before I arrived to Kyrgyzstan, Antonina agreed to have me conduct observations in her organization in return for doing some volunteer work for the ACC. On my first day of the fieldwork, I had a long conversation with Antonina where she described the work being currently done in the ACC, followed by her introducing me as a volunteer/researcher to the rest of her office. During the first two months of the data collection I would spend four days a week in the ACC's office translating, editing of texts, writing booklets, etc. By the end of the first month I was entrusted the key to the office and larger responsibilities such as organizing an informational campaign on the topic of domestic violence among the youth of Bishkek and among the students of the National Police Academy. I began participating in meetings, conferences, discussions where ACC was involved and subsequently met in person most of the directors and staff of the ACC's crisis centers. From this position I was able to invite and interview them with nearly no problems. The interviews would take place in their offices, or in ACC's office, in a hotel, a restaurant, during a taxi ride and wherever an informant would find it convenient and have time. Most of our conversations were conducted in Russian, and only few required some translation from the Kyrgyz language (done by a research assistant). I would ask permission and record our interviews and subsequently had them transcribed for analysis.

Where I encountered the most challenges was with accessing informants at the stage of inquiry where I needed to talk with the so-called 'project beneficiaries', the actual women who were the clients of the crisis centers turning for protection from violence. Unlike in the Uzbekistan setting, where I began with interviews with the women's whose experiences of organized water use I was interested in understanding, in Kyrgyzstan, I was situated in the project management office and had to make a special effort to meet the project beneficiaries. To observe the interaction between the clients and the practitioners in specific crisis centers, I had to leave the ACC office and be allowed into the offices of crisis centers. I did not have a congenial gatekeeper here, nor was my research assistant an insider in any of the crisis centers. As a result, at first, neither the staff nor the women-clients wanted to talk to me. There was professional reticence to my observations on the part of staff and personal embarrassment influenced women clients' openness. The sensitive nature of the problems which brought these people to my research sites in Kyrgyzstan necessitated additional work (and time) to gain access to them. With time, as the agency's trust in me grew and my active participation in the ACC's work was

recognized by the crisis center staff my presence became more 'natural' to my research informants. Slowly, and not without additional effort on my part, they began to allow more access to their work with clients. For instance, at first, I would wait to meet crisis centre clients outside the consultation rooms, or with prior permission from these clients. I'd get their contact information from the staff and make arrangements to interview them elsewhere. Sometimes, the practitioners would agree to organize individual meetings with their clients for me. I also conducted pre- and post-session interviews with the centers' professional staff, including informal conversations over lunch. As part of my volunteer work, I would pick up the phone when clients called to ask for an appointment and in passing on their messages, I would discuss those phone calls with the staff. I studied internal descriptions of the cases to better grasp the particular situations people suffer as they turn for help. I also attended to how the professionals were talking about their clients, their own reflections as they interacted with other staff in the office and outside of it. After a while, my assistant and I began to be invited to attend the actual face-to-face sessions inside the crisis centers. The physical proximity of one of the crisis centers to the ACC's office made it possible for me to quickly notice, react and grab any opportunity of possible interaction with a client and follow it up. It was from their accounts that I gained insight into women's actual experiences - what I came to see as their work of living with violence.

The inquiry: From the 'on-the-ground' experiences to the social organization

My analytic inquiry began with women's accounts of the work they do as they secure irrigation water for their fields under a new form of water management (in Uzbekistan) or living with domestic violence with support from an internationally-funded crisis center (in Kyrgyzstan). This is where my 'situated' investigation of the social world began, from the place where the knowers themselves were located. I adopted the standpoint of the local women, thus, began with data from their talks about their everyday experiences, their engaging in everyday actions in actual places, from their knowledge of their own doings, building my inquiry from what the women already knew and could tell me about their work and life, rather than from a theory or pre-established ideas about women's experiences. Analytic arguments I further constructed were from the standpoint of informants, about a problematic emerging in their everyday world.

Methodologically, in this part of the research process my inquiry relied on interviews and observations. The interviews at this stage of my research were unstructured, and focused on what the people actually did. In all the interviews in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, I started my interaction with the interviewees with introducing myself and my interests in talking to her/him. Where appropriate, I asked the participants for their permission to audiotape the interviews, and, subsequently, had the interviews transcribed. In many cases (for instance, in Uzbekistan) I was advised not to even bring up the idea of recording our conversations because it would intimidate the participants; in such cases I took notes as we talked. To ensure confidentiality all written materials the informants appear under pseudonyms.

During the first months of the fieldwork in Uzbekistan I worked in tight partnership with Feruza and took forty interviews with peasants in the village; most of these interviews were with women. I had experienced no refusal and was warmly welcomed by nearly every informant. Guided by the gatekeeper and my well-reputed assistant I was able to talk to from three to six people per day. In my early analysis of these collected material I started identifying puzzles, problematic, texts and traces of social relations. As I followed these insights, Feruza continued collecting interviews, and towards the beginning of August 2011 the total number of interviewed peasants grew to 213 people (197 women and sixteen men). However, expanding the number of the 'on-the-ground' interviews did not necessarily lead to an expanded analysis. In the end, it was the first forty interviews that comprised the bulk material used for the advancement of my arguments, only few of the later interviews added to the unfolding analysis and none of them led to new insights. Qualitative researchers would say that at my fortieth interview I have reached so-called "data saturation", i.e., a point in data collection when a researcher no longer hears or sees any new information.

Quite in contrast to this quantitative abundance of the first-stage data in Urto-Yop, the total number of the interviewed project beneficiaries in Kyrgyzstan, given the challenges described above, was significantly smaller and amounted to twenty individuals of whom two were men and eighteen were women. These twenty individual stories about clients were composed of actual in-depth interviews directly with them, their consultants, their relatives, texts used in interventions with staff, and from my observations. It is crucial to emphasize that I did not view my informants as a representative sample of their categories. In drawing on institutional

ethnography as a methodological framework, the purpose of the research was "not to make generalizations about their experiences, but rather to investigate the social organization that shaped the participant's experiences and contributes to their commonalities" (Slade, 2008, p. 92).

Along with other institutional ethnographers following the IE tradition, I understand local experiences as neither "the whole truth" nor simply idiosyncratic, "but as a node within an extended set of social relations, not a self-contained sphere that can be studied in isolation" (Grahame, 1998, p. 5). Grahame's comment is important in identifying that the ethnographic data on local experiences is never sufficient to make analytic statements about it, but rather requires further research. The point here is central to analysis in institutional ethnography: the research that explicates people's experiences links the local to the extralocal setting. The institutional ethnographer must conduct research for evidence of that social organization. If people's experience is socially organized, the evidence is there to be found, first in the local setting and then, from following the setting's organizational features, the connecting links appear. In all phases of my data collection, the selection of my informants was entirely guided by this methodological strategy. Where I needed to turn for my next interview emerged through the current interview processes. And following this process of discovery (of social organization) was how I proceeded into the next level of data collection.

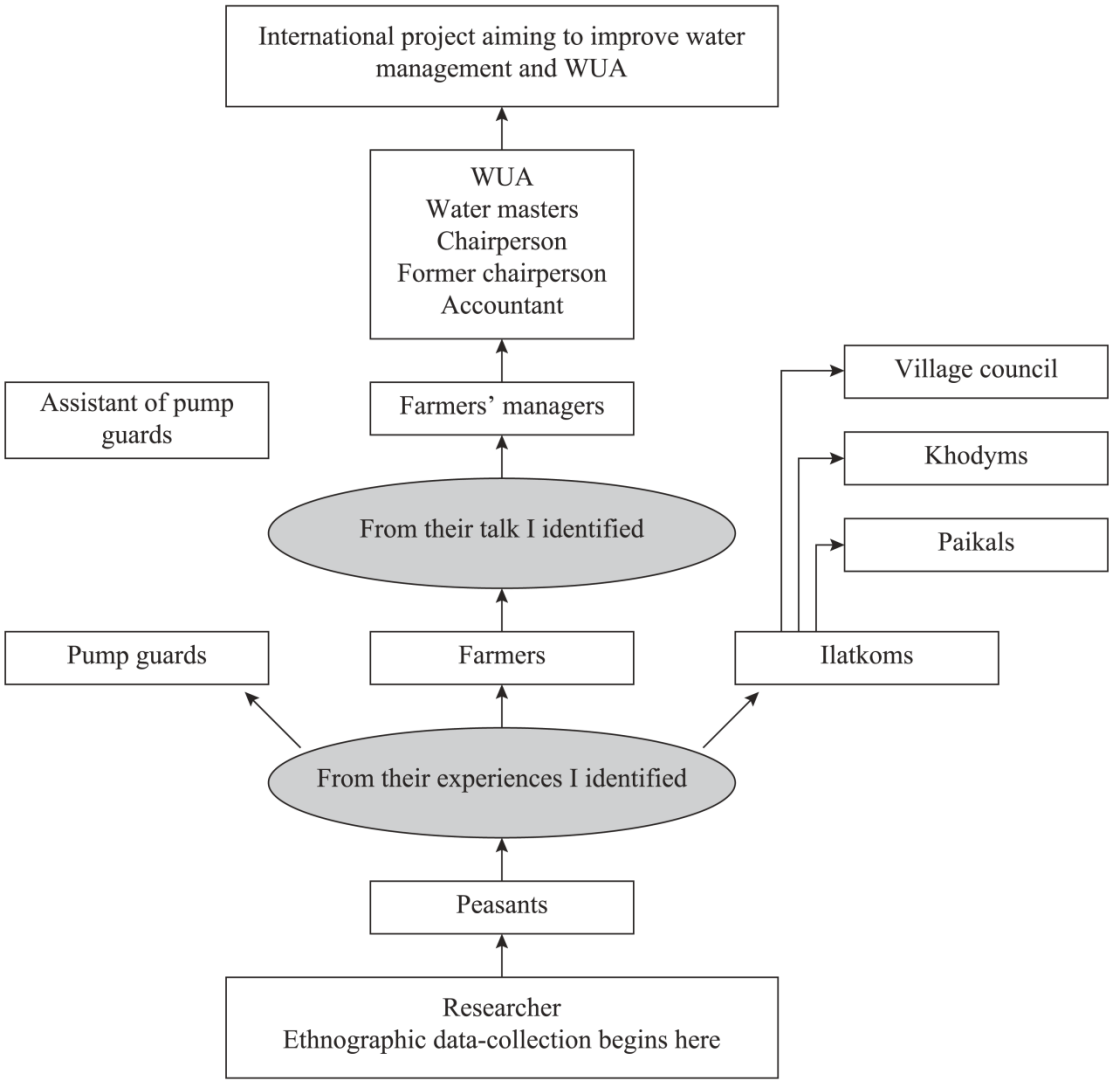
Tracking the institutional processes that shape the local experience

Having begun data collection with the women's local experiences that offered clues about social relations, I needed to find out more about how these women's lives in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan were socially organized. From what they told me, I began to look at how the extended formal and informal project work was involved. On the basis of understanding that "people's knowledge and actions are already organized before they talk about them, and they get worked up as they are talked about" (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 78), the issue at stake was in explaining puzzles that have arisen in people's lives and that show up in fieldwork. To access this level of data I continued taking interviews with the individuals (whom I identified from the previous interviews with the projects' beneficiaries) about the structures, events, processes and texts of water management and associated international project practices in the case of Uzbekistan. In Kyrgyzstan I tracked how the practices of protection of women from violence as I have observed them were shaped by certain textual forms, documents, frameworks, legislation,

the traces of which had been similarly discovered within the previous interviews. These interviews were more formalized as I began to pay attention to the informants' particular expertise on their work and work-related processes and the specific features of what the professional/workers/staff did to ensure the smooth implementation of project activities. From the interviews with beneficiaries, I started seeing puzzles which needed further understanding and exploration and I structured my subsequent conversations around them. (e.g., if water management was supposed to be improving access to irrigation, why were the peasants I interviewed not having success in watering their fields and gardens?) Finding answers became the key characteristic of data collection in this phase of research. I based the questions for each interview in part on what I have learned from the previous one and in part on my accrued knowledge of the social relations constituting the problematic under investigation. My interviews became semi-structured with questions formulated around particular aspects of the everyday work among the frontline workers to better understand it.

The research process, therefore, followed a dynamic which could not have been predicted beforehand. As DeVault and McCoy (2001) contend, institutional ethnographers "know what they want to explain, but only step by step can they discover who they need to interview and what texts or discourses they need to examine" (in Slade, 2008, p. 83). In Uzbekistan, for instance, I started with the inquiry into the lives of women peasants whose livelihoods depend on irrigated agriculture. From these data I identified other actors who played some role in how the agricultural activities in the village were structured. I would ask clarifying questions about the individuals who were mentioned in my informants' talk and asked Tamchi if he could provide us with access to them. He would take us to these people either later the same day or the following day. In interviewing these newly identified informants I would discover other people involved in water management and would interview them as well. Thus, my current informants pointed me in the direction of the subsequent participants whom I would visit next. At the end of completing this task I interviewed eight project staff and sixty five participants in the higher echelons of irrigation management in Uzbekistan. The figure below (Figure 3) is a more detailed description about how these processes took shape.

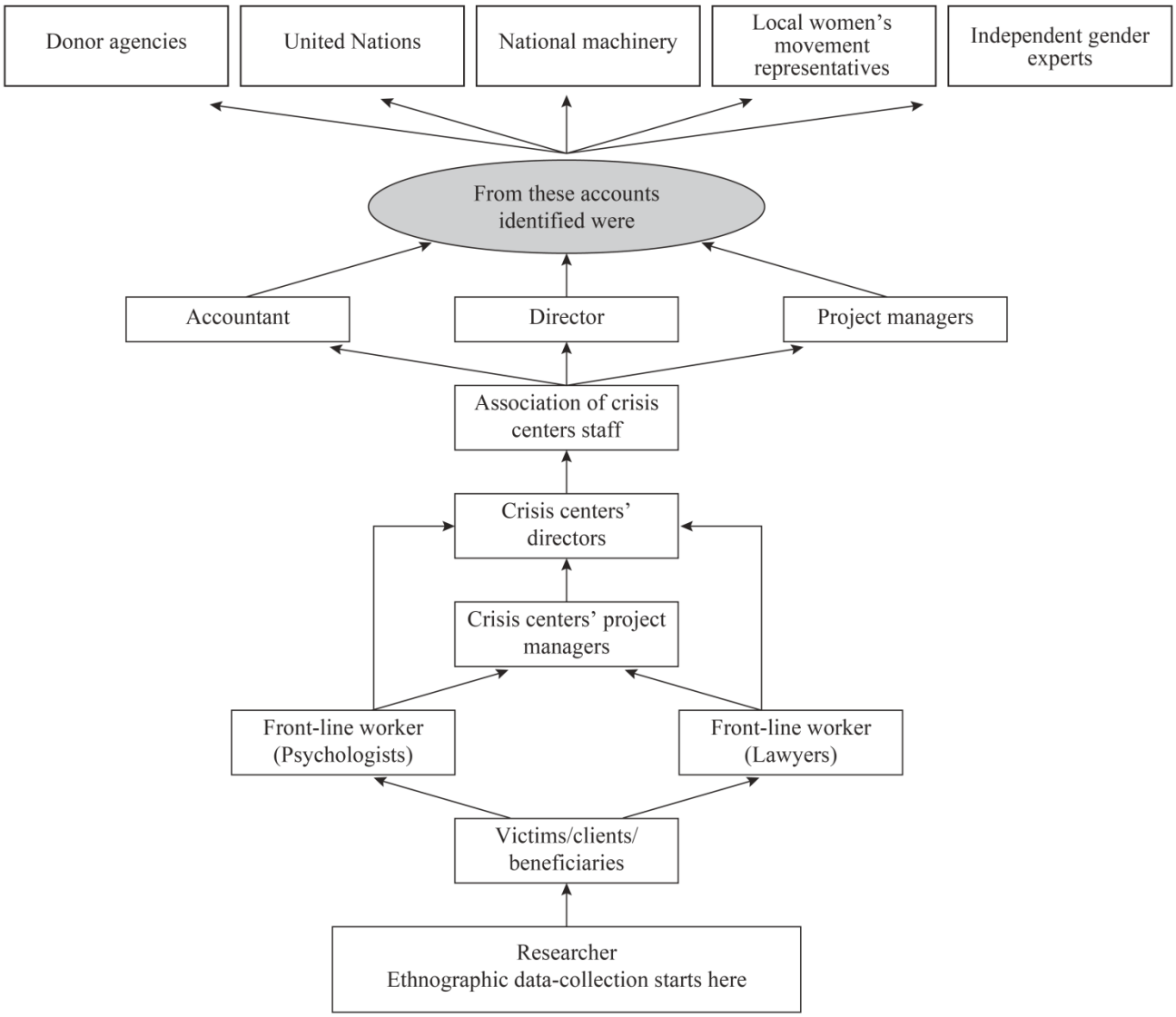
Figure 3. Fieldwork as a process of discovering social organization. Uzbekistan



Similarly, in Kyrgyzstan, the data collection was imprecise until puzzles about women-clients' protection as offered by the crisis centers began to appear in the women's stories. From the interviews with the project beneficiaries I moved to the investigation of institutional processes that shaped the experiences of the Kyrgyz women as they became targeted by the project's activities. I started taking more structured and more formalized interviews with the front-line staff, managers, coordinators, directors of the crisis centers who were implementing the project's agenda. Later, from these interviews I identified texts that organized the agency work and sometimes individuals who were not officially part of the project but who were implicated in the

development of texts and institutional procedures that had some influence on its institutional organization. I interviewed these people, as well. At the end of this part of the fieldwork I interviewed eighteen administrative employees/institutional partners/experts in Kyrgyzstan. The figure below (Figure 4) is a graphical representation of the process.

Figure 4. Fieldwork as a process of discovery of social organization. Kyrgyzstan



Observation

In all stages of the fieldwork observation was part of how the data were collected in both research sites. In Uzbekistan, I made my observations as I talked to people while they worked at home, in their gardens, in their offices or in the fields. I had an opportunity to live with one family for a short period in an Uzbek village and saw for myself what everyday work of a smallholder farmer consisted of. In Kyrgyzstan, I was actually involved in what is usually called 'participant observation', where I entered the organization as a volunteer worker. I worked in the office of the local organization, helped organize and carry out public events, participated in the planning and development meetings, etc. At first my observations were an open-ended undertaking, as I was interested in everything I saw that was happening. Later, as my research focus became more refined, I started recognizing some observations to be more or less relevant for my inquiry. My observations became concentrated on the elements of the events that appeared to touch upon the research problematic. The observations allowed me to see what was happening and to ground the interviews, texts, words, people and in the actual events that occurred. For instance, most of the interviews with the administrative/managerial workers were conducted in the participant's workplace. This was interesting and allowed me to observe their physical work environment in addition to hearing them about the work processes through the interviews. For example, during one interview in an office in Bishkek with a project coordinator (and also a psychologist) our conversation was interrupted a number of times by her hotline telephone, by her director's calling her on a different phone and by the current client's calling on the worker's mobile telephone. Besides noting how busy she was, I saw for myself the various organizations and their interests 'entering' in the agency's (ACC) work. Or, during a conversation with a Chairperson of the District Water Resources Department in Uzbekistan in his office, he was continually disrupted by employees coming in and out, by visitors and, finally, by a representative from the Ministry of Emergency Situations, who invited himself in and took photos of him and us. While both these people could have told me that their work was often disrupted by the necessity to simultaneously attend to multiple issues only few of which were directly linked to their straightforward responsibilities, I was able to gather this knowledge directly by being immersed in their work environment. In Uzbekistan, I also attended the project-

organized working meetings, presentations, workshops, and also the final closing conference and could identify individuals, organizations, texts and documents and see how they were referred to.

Collecting institutional texts

Investigating institutional processes involved analysis of the relevant institutional documents. As Smith (2006) points out, "incorporating texts into ethnographic practice is essential to institutional ethnography. It is what enables it to reach beyond the locally observable and discoverable into the translocal social relations and organization that permeate and control the local" (p. 65). Because "texts are relied on as crystallized social relations" and are "central to everything that happens" (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 79), I concentrated on the collection of the relevant institutional texts. I paid attention to participants' mentioning of any textual element involved in their work and later asked them to show that text to me. When possible I photocopied the texts or took pictures of them. In some instances, the informants would provide the electronic versions of the documents either by e-mail or by directly copying them onto my USB device. In this manner in Kyrgyzstan, I collected reporting sheets used for statistical accounting, books, booklets, manuals, guides, project proposals, project reports, etc. As I wondered about the origins of those documents and their institutional roots, I discovered a myriad of other extralocal international documents which, as I later found, were linked across distance and time to the local activities. More than two hundred textual documents were collected for further analysis in this stage of research process. In Uzbekistan, I started with a conversation with water engineer who used a particular document to sequence the irrigation. Later, I studied this document and learnt how it was embedded in the institutional structuring of the local irrigation mechanisms. This led me to discovery of a number of important organizational documents such as contracts with the local irrigation management organizations, the charter of this organization, the contracts between this organization and higher water management agencies and a few other texts. I also collected documents which were related to the project administration, i.e., project proposal, activities sheets, minutes from the meetings, back-from-the-field reports, etc., amounting to about four hundred texts in total. Collecting these texts was complemented with observations and conversations about how they were used. I was interested for instance, in what was involved in filling reporting forms in or how the irrigation schedule guides the work of water use managers. In interviews, I asked about what the workers actually did with the texts, what they knew about

the texts' goals and origins. Obtaining those documentary texts was not, however, a goal in itself. They needed to be analyzed, just like the rest of the collected data – with the goal being to see how the setting and the project work are organized, including by texts.

The analysis: From research problematic to the discovery of ideological practices

Unlike in many other formal research processes, institutional ethnography does not completely separate data collection and the analysis as isolated procedures. It is often emphasized that institutional ethnography "is fundamentally an analytic project" (DeVault & McCoy, 2006, p. 38). There is an analytic part in every stage of data collection starting from its beginnings. The accounts of everyday experiences are not merely being collected for the purpose of generating descriptions. The consideration of data about everyday experiences results in the researcher's formulation of a puzzle to be explored (the research problematic). The problematic directs the further inquiry and refines its focus. To illustrate, my problematic was concerned with the question of how the specific local knowledges and experiences that I discovered in the practices of implementing an international development project are socially organized, and what is their institutional origin? In working with the field notes and interview transcripts, I looked for clues in the institutional processes which would explain the problematic as the "organization and relations coordinating people's activities in the multiple sites of their lives and work" (Smith, 1987, p. 132). As I attended to the data I continuously refined my inquiry, identified the relevant information and used what I had collected to determine the further research steps. This was how I assembled from each informant certain information leading to my understanding of the larger social organization which influenced the experiences I discovered among local women and that I found puzzling and problematic.

The analysis is inspired by the idea that what the informants do, know and tell is coordinated by the ruling relations constituting the institution. The analytic job is then to extend the informants' own work knowledge by discovery or explication of its local coordination by the ruling relations. The idea of explication in institutional ethnography takes the analysis in a distinctly different direction from identifying themes or theorizing data (Campbell & Gregor, 2002). Unlike grounded theorists or symbolic interactionists, institutional ethnographers do not aim to analyze the data for making individual experiences generalizable. The "ultimate purpose here is not to produce an account of or from those insiders [participants]" (p.90). The point is

getting to an account that explicates the social relations of the setting. This kind of analysis uses what informants know and what they are observed doing for the "analytic purpose of identifying, tracing and describing the social relations that extend beyond the boundaries of any one informant's experiences" (p. 90). My analytical job was to make visible the relations that organize the local women's experiences of failing as irrigators or of victimized survivors of violence which I had discovered and from which I began. From interviews with projects' professionals, managers, experts and the analysis of the texts they worked with, both as instructions and to make reports from the field, I concentrated on the everyday work done to run the projects. I traced the social processes that connected the work being studied with the work of others, i.e., connections between what the frontline workers do and the documentary texts and other processes that governed that work. Finally, from learning the way the discourses of development, gender and women appeared in the international development apparatus – both as concepts and as 'what actually happened' and then infiltrated into local sites such as the projects in Uzbekistan and in Kyrgyzstan, I began to see the 'ideological character' of the institutional processes taking shape in both research sites. Much of this level of analysis was carried out by working with institutional texts, paying attention to the strategic use of language, words, the structure of the document, its emphases, rhetoric —all of those textual features that pointed to the discursive frameworks that constituted an ideological regime with implications for institutional practices uncovering "the ideological practices that produce a certain kind of knowledge practical to the task of ruling" (Sharma, 2001 in Deveau, 2008, p. 9). The discussion of the analysis stemming from the everyday to the ideological regimes, discursive frameworks and institutional practices are offered in details in the following five chapters.

Reflections on the research process

The research as process was filled with a variety of experiences, challenges and rewards, as well as, anxiety. Part of the worries and difficulties came from me being relatively new to institutional ethnography and, consequently, from my lack of confidence in doing it 'right'. Part of it came from more conventional organizational impediments. However, in the end those predicaments either were successfully overcome or served my accruing of knowledge and research expertise, or both. Like many other researchers who conducted field work I experienced difficulties related to logistical arrangements. For instance, getting access to key informants in

Kyrgyzstan was especially difficult in almost all the stages of data collection, starting from the women who turned for help to a crisis center to the leaders of women's movement who had very busy schedules. In Uzbekistan, on the other hand, where I did not have problems receiving people's agreement to talk, however, I communicated with them through translation and was not allowed to audiotape our conversations. I exerted additional efforts to be able to grasp exactly what the participants said, how they said it, how many times, etc. Making notes instead of having my interviews transcribed required my assistant and me having debriefing sessions at the end of every data collection day. There were also problems with irritation which my participants experienced when I wanted to know the details of the work which they do routinely and automatically. Where I needed clarity I would ask more questions until I was sure that I understood, perhaps appearing ridiculous or annoying my informants. Despite my awareness that interviews in institutional ethnography resists the "ordinary conversational etiquette where people assist each other in making meaning" (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 77), the irritation I was producing felt rather uncomfortable.

On the conceptual level, there were impediments which were more complicated to resolve. The beginning of my institutional ethnography in both research sites was especially anxiety-provoking. For instance, in Uzbekistan my first interview with a woman-peasant overloaded me with the specific agricultural details of home-based farming. The second interview, on the contrary, was less than informative, and during my third interview I panicked because none of the three conversations seemed to show any clues of how things were socially organized. I was also horrified in Kyrgyzstan when after four weeks of the fieldwork I realized that my data did not correspond to the promises I made in my research proposal. To overcome these problems I went back to reading literature on institutional ethnography, talked to other scholars, and persisted in collecting the data from the standpoint of the local people to whom I talked.

When I moved further on with the inquiry my focus became more refined and a different set of conceptual worries began to emerge. This time, I was concerned about how my research could be applied in ways that would be meaningful for the people on whose behalf I claimed to speak. For instance, I have established particularly positive relationships with my participants, especially in Uzbekistan. I liked the people, in particular, peasant-women with whom I spent

time, shared meal and even lived with. I saw them as energetic, hardworking, optimistic women who needed better access to irrigation water in order to maintain their livelihoods. I admired the work they did to ensure the subsistence for their families and I developed high respect for the knowledge, skills and the strength they displayed in addressing the challenges they encounter every day. I had a feeling of deep commitment to bring positive change into their lives with my research and was disappointed in my inability to figure out how exactly I could proceed with it.

In Kyrgyzstan, my so hard-to-attain interviews with domestic violence victims and observations of the consultative sessions comprised a research experience that was particularly emotionally difficult. Seeing a real woman sitting next to me with bruised face and a broken arm, for instance, and hearing the details of the physical tortures she experienced from her partner, was nearly unbearable. It produced anger, frustration as well as deep empathy with these women. There was a time when I interviewed a victim in her house, and by leaving her house I saw the perpetrator, and could hardly stop myself from reproaching him. Again, I felt that I had a responsibility to act on behalf of those who suffer violence and was not sure how I could do it with my research. I can't say that I have overcome this particular dissonance. After some considerations I have followed other beginning institutional ethnographers who had similar struggles. Like them I have envisioned my contribution to positive social change in telling the story in a way that maintains the participants' subjectivity; and in providing a piece of the puzzle that may be useful to others in strategizing how to make social change (Slade, 2008). As an academic I hope to draw attention of the frontline development workers, the policy-makers, activists and other academics to the clues that my findings offer of how to work together to disentangle the complicated power structure embedded in what is taken for granted as benign development.

CHAPTER 5. UZBEKISTAN: RESEARCH CONTEXT AND IDENTIFICATION OF A PROBLEMATIC

The present and subsequent three chapters present the analysis of the data collected in research sites in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. For reasons of clarity, the analysis of the material from Uzbekistan is presented separately (in Chapter 5 and 6) from the data gathered in Kyrgyzstan (Chapter 7 and 8). The presentation of my analysis begins with pertinent contextual information about the research site and proceeds to the initial stage of analysis resulting in identification of the problematic (Chapter 5 for Uzbekistan and Chapter 7 for Kyrgyzstan). The analysis continues with explication of the problematic in chapters 6 and 8 where I illustrate how the project in Uzbekistan and the project in Kyrgyzstan are socially organized as knowledge-based and manifest themselves as sites of interaction between the global and local knowledge. The analysis of the two sites comes together as I empirically illustrate in both cases how the ruling discourses are enacted (Chapter 9 and 10) and discuss the consequences for the organization of gender and lives of the local women.

In Uzbekistan, as I explore how implementation practices within an international project influenced the work of rural people, I also inquire into the national reforms in agricultural management which as I discover are closely associated with the project's activities. Both shape local experiences through institutionally-endorsed discursive practices of knowledge management. My explorations also reveal a gender division occurring in Uzbek agriculture, with women becoming the main smallholder farmers for reasons that I explain below. As an entry point for my inquiry I take the standpoint of women smallholders whose stories about their everyday agricultural work reveal these women's systematic and continued failure to benefit from the goals pronounced both by the national reforms and by the international project of improved access to water.

Uzbekistan: Contextualizing the project

The events in the center of my investigation in Uzbekistan unfold in an institutional environment whose brief overview is necessary to grasp the arguments to follow. In this chapter I cover some of the significant historical, political and economic background within which the project of interest was implemented. Much of this information refers to the agrarian development

programming in Uzbekistan and the antecedents of the agrarian reforms that the government of Uzbekistan introduced in the mid-1990s. The agrarian reforms addressed issues such as efficient use of land, improvements in the crop structure, adjustments in the production methods, and management and ownership of agricultural enterprises (COSF, 2005). The previous model of state-administered communal farms was first transformed into the state agricultural cooperatives or associations followed by the system of market-oriented private farming. These agrarian reforms necessitated new water distribution policies which claimed to be based on the principle of decentralized and participatory natural resource management by the local users. The government of Uzbekistan launched policy reforms in water management in early 2000s with the help of international organizations such as the USAID, Asian Development Bank and other donor agencies who assisted in the policy implementation in order to promote what is called 'sustainable agricultural development' (Asian Development Bank, 2010).

Country: Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan, or officially, the Republic of Uzbekistan, is a landlocked country in Central Asia and was part of the Soviet Union until its collapse in 1991. The country shares borders with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan and its territory comprises 450 thousand square km. The republic's population of 29.6 million people makes it the most populous country in the region. Approximately sixty percent of the Uzbek population lives in rural areas and forty four percent are engaged in farming or associated activities (World Bank, 2012). The ethnic composition in Uzbekistan is relatively diverse and besides ethnic Uzbeks (eighty percent), other major groups are represented by the Russians, Kazakh, Tajik, and others. The country is one of the world's biggest producers of cotton and is rich in natural resources, including oil, gas and gold. However, it is thought that economic reform in the country has been slow and poverty and unemployment have continued to be widespread (British Broad Cast, 2012). In 2011 the Human Development Index in Uzbekistan scored 0.630 giving the country a rank of 115 out of 187 other countries (http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/UZB.html). According to the 2008 data, about thirty percent of the population lives below the poverty line (Index Mundi, 2012).

Uzbekistan has the largest armed forces in the region. Its political system is believed to be highly authoritarian, and its human rights record widely decried internationally (British Broad

Cast, 2012). The current president Islam Karimov has led the country since 1990. He is described as a leader who "shows no signs of giving up power", "tolerates no opposition" and has forced political and rights activists to flee the country (British Broad Cast, 2012). Nevertheless, Uzbekistan's energy resources and strategic location have motivated the West and Russia to seek closer ties with its government.

Women in Uzbekistan

The post-Soviet economic transition in Uzbekistan is believed to have had a negative impact on its women (Mee, 2001). The economic and social hardships accompanied by the transition have ensued losses in economic status, education, healthcare, employment and political participation. These losses have been aggravated by the resurgence to the traditional patriarchal ideology which tends to naturalize and justify men's authority over women and restricts women access to education, job opportunities and individual negotiating power (Kamp, 2009). In terms of employment, women constitute 62 percent of the unemployed population and most of them are unskilled rural women trained for low wage unqualified work (Kandiyoti, 2002). Employed women tend to work in low-paid sectors of the economy and receive an income which is significantly lower in real terms in comparison with pre-1991 (Mee, 2001). Women's political participation has steadily declined since 1991. For instance, women's representation in the Uzbek Parliament fell from 35% during the Soviet Union to only 13.5 percent in 2012 (Inter-Parliamentary Union, http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/wmnpersp10-e.pd). Their underrepresentation in the formal political structure remains low despite the 2004 law requiring political parties to nominate at least 30% of female candidates to the parliament.

Agrarian policy reforms

Uzbekistan was part of the Soviet Union since its creation in 1924 and under the Soviet regime the country went through what was called the agrarian 'policy of collectivization' enforced by the USSR's leader Josef Stalin between 1928 and 1940. The policy aimed at consolidating individual land and labor into communal farms, i.e., collective farms and state farms. The idea of collectivization centered on the expectation that collective farming would increase agricultural exports, the supply of raw materials for processing industries and food provision for the urban population. In Uzbekistan collectivization was put in place rapidly and by

the end of 1932, 77.5 per cent of all rural households had been incorporated into 9,734 collective farms and 94 state farms (Kandiyoti, 2002). Collective farms were typically organized by combining small individual farms into a cooperative structure, whereas state farms would be organized by the state on the land confiscated from former large estates and their workers would be recruited among landless rural residents. The work within the collective and state farms was internally organized in accordance with working groups, known as 'brigades' headed by a brigade's leader or 'brigadir'. The workers of collective farms and state farms used to receive a small piece of 'private' land for their own food production (about 0.25 ha) as part of their payment and in order to keep the workers bound to the collective farm (Veldwisch & Bock, 2011).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 Uzbekistan launched a number of agrarian de-collectivization reforms which are now considered to be an "intrinsic component of the package of market-oriented policy measures implemented in the transition economies of the former Soviet Union" (Kandiyoti, 2002, p. 11.). Agricultural land was ultimately privatized and redistributed. As a result what took shape was a 'dual' agricultural structure, consisting of many smallholder farms that produce for subsistence and large market-oriented private enterprises that often took over the former state farms (Veldwisch & Bock, 2011). However, in contrast to other countries in the region, in Uzbekistan the agricultural land has never been entirely privatized as the state control over production and trade remained rigid (Spoor, 2009 in Veldwisch & Bock, 2011). Scholars therefore agree that the de-centralization of agriculture in Uzbekistan is largely questionable and remains a contested resource, "fuzzy property" or a "negative asset" (Kandiyoti, 2003, p. 245). The criticism of failed deregulation refers to research findings indicating that official ownership of land by private farmers has excluded their control over transferring and allocation of land or profiting from its products (Eichholz, van Assche, Oberkirche & Hornidge, 2012; Kandiyoti, 2003). Spoor (2009) argues in this regard that private farming is characterized as a remarkably risky endeavor especially in the conditions of a lacking institutional framework, absence of well-functioning markets and limited by the state-control over entrepreneurial freedom.

The processes of agricultural reorganization and land reform in Uzbekistan took place in a few successive stages. When the inefficient operation of the state collective farms led to a

decrease in production and subsequent shortfall in grain and other basic food products it jeopardized the food security among the rural population (Kandiyoti, 2003). In 1991 the government withdrew some land from collective farms and distributed it among rural population disbursing additional plots of land of about 0.13 hectares to each rural household. This was done in order to counter the growing poverty and promote food self-sufficiency among the underemployed farm workers at a time of reduced payments and diminished service delivery from the collective farms (Veldwisch, 2008). By 1994 these plots had been formalized as 'dekhans' (peasants) or 'household farms' (Zavgorodnaya, 2006) and the owners were granted permanent and inheritable rights to access it.

In 1997-1998 land reforms introduced by the government of Uzbekistan sought to optimize agricultural production by fragmenting large-scale units into smaller ones. As a result all the collective farms were transformed into associations (shirkats) which changed the labor organization from workers' brigades to family-based working groups (pudrats). This reorganization made the households the core production units but had a limited effect upon farm management (Veldwisch & Bock, 2011). Rural unemployment increased when the collective farms were dismantled, and the new shirkats, characterized as "family-based agricultural enterprises" (Veldwisch, 2008, p. 65) required fewer workers. The government bound private farmers to provide work for those smallholders who used to be the tillers under the communal agriculture. However, private farmers tended to choose individuals from their family, friends and neighbors (Veldwisch & Bock, 2011). This meant that many smallholders lost opportunities to generate income. At about the same time in late 1990s some collective farms (the most unprofitable) began to be dismantled and the land was divided into smaller privately-operated enterprises.

In 2005 all the remaining collective farms followed the same dynamic and were dissolved into private farms, and long-term leases were allocated to individual private farmers. Shirkats also proved to be unprofitable and were subsequently disassembled into private farms. The number of individual private farms increased rapidly from twenty three thousand in 2003 to more than one hundred and forty thousand in 2007 (Yalcin & Mollinga, 2007). Their average size ranged from 26 to 250 ha with thirty to fifty years of land tenure rights. Approximately five percent of all the rural households became private farmers and the remaining ninety five percent

became peasant farmers with their additional plots of land and kitchen gardens. In the face of these drastic agricultural reforms, the agricultural infrastructure was not modified to meet the needs of the newly established farmers. This caused confusion with regards to water distribution, additional transportation costs in delivering machinery service and eventually disrupted the cotton yields (Djanibekov, Lamers & Bobojonov, 2010). Consequently, in late 2008 the Uzbek government reversed the process of farm restructuring. The governmental program on farm optimization produced a policy framework known as 'land consolidation" (Djanibekov, Assche, Bobojonov & Lamers, 2012). In accordance with this policy private farms needed to be enlarged and many private farmers were forced to give up their land to be added to that of other private farmers. In 2011 the second wave of consolidation reduced the number of farms by further twenty percent (Djanibekov et al., 2012).

Currently, researchers identify three regimes of agricultural production pertaining to rural Uzbekistan: the state-ordered production of cotton and wheat; commercial production of (mainly) rice, and household production of food crops (Veldwisch & Spoor, 2008). The production of cotton follows the procedures established by the Soviet economy and is still strictly subordinated to the state-control. The private farmers are forced to produce cotton and submit it to the state. The amount of the cotton to be produced as well as its price is determined by the state and the private farmers have no control over it. This price is either very low and comes through 'settlement accounts' which can be used to buy state-subsidized inputs and services for production of cotton (Veldwisch & Bock, 2011). The strict state regulation of cotton and wheat production takes place through the production targets or quotas imposed on the farmers. Fines are levied for failing to produce the established amounts. Also, state organizations make major agricultural and managerial decisions, for instance, about which parts of the farmers' field must be allocated for cotton and wheat, planting dates and amounts of fertilizers. (Veldwisch & Bock, 2011). The government monitors adherence to its directives by sending its representatives to all the farmers' fields. The state revisions are based on a government representative checking the fields against the state norms and specific orders released by the District Governor's office.

Cotton production, however, gives the private farmers access to more favorable production opportunities such as growing rice (Trevisani, 2008). The farmers produce and trade

rice in a more commercial manner, where they receive hard cash for their produce in the market and purchase labor and inputs for production in cash. The smallholders use their backyards and additional plots of land to produce vegetables, fruits, rice and wheat for home consumption with small amounts for sale or bartered exchange.

Reforms in irrigation management

The structural changes in agricultural land governance were implemented together with respective reforms in management of the irrigation water. The redistribution and partial privatization of agricultural land required relevant re-organization of water distribution, including the development of new rules and regulations (Veldwisch, 2008). The organization of irrigation was formerly in the hands of the state or collective farms, i.e., the maintenance of canals and on-farm irrigation networks, the drainage system and anti-salinity measures. With the state collective farms having been dismantled the irrigation system declined (Zavgorodnaya, 2006). To counter-act this deterioration the government decreed the establishment of the Water Users Association (WUA). In 1996 the government of Uzbekistan contracted the Central Asian Research Institute of Irrigation (SANIRI) located in the capital city Tashkent, to investigate international experience with WUA and to develop legal and organizational frameworks for establishment of WUAs in Uzbekistan. In 1999 SANIRI completed its work and the Uzbek government embraced WUA as a suitable model for service provision in water distribution that would replace former managerial structure under the collective farms (Zavgorodnaya, 2006). In early 2000s the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of Uzbekistan (MAWR) introduced the concept of WUA for local irrigation management and enforced the establishment of WUA throughout the country. Many WUAs were established with assistance from international development organizations. For instance, in 1998 the government of Uzbekistan received funding from the European Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) to start a project of establishing first WUA on the territory of a former state farm where at that time fourteen private farms were operating. The project was not finished due to the failure of the Uzbek government to make its promised financial contribution (Wegerich, 2000). In 2001 Asian Development Bank initiated an agricultural development project in cooperation with the government of Uzbekistan that established and pilot-tested ten more WUAs in the country. In 2003 the World Bank in cooperation with the United States Agency for International

Development (USAID) approved a project to assist the Uzbek Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources in establishing WUA. Other international donors such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDS) also supported local authorities for expanding WUAs in the country.

At the same time most WUAs (the 'real' or the 'normal' WUA) according to Zavgorodnaya (2006) were created with no foreign funding or involvement from international donor organizations but established by the Uzbek government with the consultative help from SANIRI. In the cases of unsupported WUA, the farmers were asked/forced to become WUA members and the WUAs' leaders and technical staff were selected under the close supervision of local authorities (Yalcin & Mollinga, 2007). By the mid 2007 the active process of WUA establishment was nearly finished and the total number of WUA accounted to 1,654 WUAs with 170,000 members and a service area of 3.8 million ha (World Bank, 2012).

Water Users Association as a policy concept

WUAs are defined as grass-root initiated establishments owned by water users who organize in order to use the principles of equity and efficiency in the distribution of water and use of irrigation and drainage systems (USAID, in Yalcin & Mollinga, 2007, p.16). As such they are seen to be part of policy trends such as 'participation' and 'democratization' which seek to empower local communities (Meinzen-Dick & Zwarteeveen, 1997). New global paradigms in irrigation management emphasizing human rights, the rights to have access to water, the demand for water and its lacking supply promoted WUAs (Lukman et al., n. d.). The most influential international institutions such as the World Bank have taken up WUA as a strategy to advance the "principle of subsidiarity, or that decisions are made at the lowest level possible, a pillar of what is now portrayed as "good" water governance" (Garces-Restrepo, Vermillion & Munos, 2007, p. 16). As a policy instrument WUA is a product of a world-wide emphasis on participatory irrigation management (PIM) that is seen as fundamental to improving the performance and sustainability of irrigation, and it has been incorporated in the water resources policies of many countries (Howarth, Parajul, Baral, Nott, Adhikari, Gautam & Menuka, 2005). The need for transferring irrigation management to user groups has been stressed by the planners all over the world.

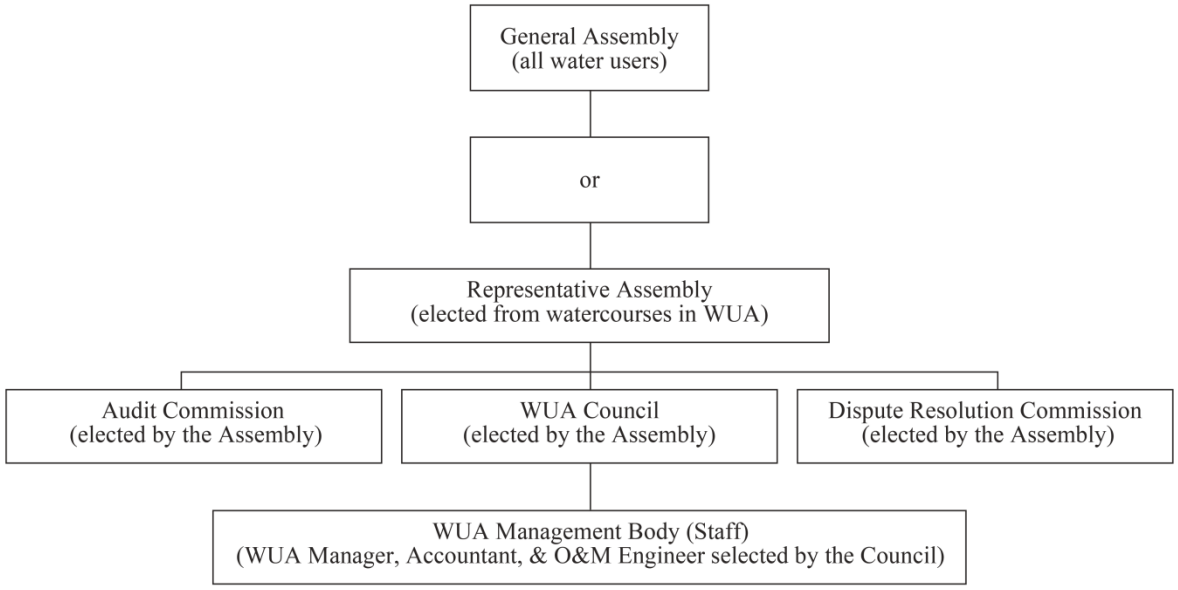
Organizationally, WUAs are expected to be established, owned and controlled by the water users themselves (Djanibekov, Hornidge & Ul Hassan, 2012). They serve as an independent legal entity with full autonomy and authority for the distribution of irrigation water, maintenance of irrigation and drainage systems and mobilization and effective utilization of funds. Technically, WUAs perform functions such as participation in land and water planning and management, reducing water-related conflict and enhance dispute resolution. They are also believed to enhance the representation of water users to government and civil society and bring in "equity, better governance and accountability, participation and involvement" (USAID, 2006, p. 9).

Structurally, WUAs consist of a General Assembly and a Management Body. The General Assembly is the supreme governance structure that provides general strategic guidance to the WUAs. It develops priorities, policies and the directions of activities in the WUAs (Abdullaev et al., 2005). The General Assembly consists of all the water users and has the authority to elect the WUA Council. The WUA Council is typically comprised of five people representing the General Assembly and is mandated to manage, supervise and monitor the daily financial and technical operation of the WUAs. Among its main responsibilities are electing a WUA Chairman; monitoring financial operations; reviewing and proposing annual budgets; calling for and setting agendas for the General Assembly meetings. The WUA Council appoints staff members to serve in its Management Body, i.e., the WUA chairperson, WUA accountant, water masters and other staff members; and they are the only representatives of WUAs that receive a salary (Abdullaev et al., 2005.). The WUA Management Body implements the work of drafting budgets and planning the work to be proposed to the WUA Council, maintains a register of members, operates and maintains irrigation and drainage systems, prepares water delivery plans, maintenance and financial plans, and contracts for approval by the Council, monitors, evaluates its work (Abdullaev, et al., 2005). WUA's major decisions are made during the biannual meetings of the general assembly through majority vote where each member of the General Assembly has one vote. The figure (Figure 5) below illustrates a typical organizational design of a WUA.

In Uzbekistan the government envisioned the WUA to be the most suitable unit of irrigation management for maintaining on-farm irrigation infrastructure and improve water

allocation among the villagers (Zavgorodnaya, 2006). It was expected that this policy reform would contribute to the overall national agricultural development strategy which ultimately aimed to facilitate poverty reduction and provide "social assistance to the most vulnerable groups" (Asian Development Bank, 2010, p. 11).

Figure 5. Structure of a "typical" WUA



Source: Abdullaev et al., n.d.

My investigation looks at the links between the WUA-oriented policy reforms in Uzbekistan and those 'most vulnerable groups' such as smallholder farmers, and women among them, in particular. The interest to such research topic emerged as I became familiar with the agrarian reforms in Uzbekistan at the Center for Development Research (ZEF) of the University of Bonn in Germany where a ten-year action-research in Uzbekistan was recently concluded. This project was entitled "Economic and Ecological Restructuring of Land and Water Use in the Region Khorezm (Uzbekistan): A Pilot Project in Development Research" (herewith ZUK project), co-funded by the German Ministry of Development and Research (BMBF) and UNESCO and implemented by ZEF.

The German-Uzbek project in Aral Sea area: Phase III

ZEF implemented the ZUK project in Khorezm in partnership with UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), UNU-EHS (United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security), and the German Space Agency (DLR) and with the State University of Urgench in Khorezm as the main local implementation partner. UNESCO provided the project with logistical support, UNU-EHS with management and dissemination of results, the DLR supported the project with the specific spatial information and satellite image analysis. The project started in 2001 "in the context of the Aral Sea crisis[4] to provide sound, science-based policy recommendations for sustainably improving the natural resource use in Khorezm region" (ZUK Project- Proposal for Phase III, p. 6).

The project was sub-divided into four phases. The first two phases were implemented in 2001-2006 with an overall goal to develop region-specific innovative technologies in land and water use via scientific modeling. During the phase I and II the project established infrastructure, compiled databases and completed baseline investigations for understanding the local situation (e.g., groundwater and soil salinity, estimation of water budgets for regional irrigations, assessment of soil conservation agriculture, introduction of alternative crops) (ZUK project-Proposal for Phase III, 2006) which were required for developing of simulation and optimization models. The two phases concentrated on four major clusters such as Natural Resource Management Strategies, Production Systems, Economy, Society and Institutions. Later, the project team completed an analysis of economic performance of the region, economic potential of crops, and of water management. They also conducted a research on the legislative framework of the use of natural resources, on the effects of de-collectivization, and on the newly emerging WUA. On the basis of this accumulated information referred to as the "substantial knowledge basis" models for pilot-testing called "reliable options for improvement" or "plausible promises" were developed (ZUK Project- Proposal for Phase III, 2006, p. 7-8). The 'plausible promises' referred to the new technologies which would convince the potential stakeholders in their potential to evolve into a tool or process that they really wanted (Douthwaite, de Haan,

[4] The Aral Sea crisis refers to the notorious and well-documented anthropogenic ecological disaster in which the recession and desiccation of the Aral led to 85% loss of its former volumes of water, losses in many species of flora and fauna, widespread regional salinization, etc.

Manyong, & Keatinge, 2001). Now that these promises have been "developed by the project in scientific isolation" from processes of practical application (Ul Hassan & Hornidge, 2010, p. 1), the project in its third phase envisioned to test them in the real-life situation in Uzbekistan (Hornidge, Ul Hassan & Mollinga, 2012; Hornidge & Ul Hassan, 2010).

The Phase III had an official name of the "Project Phase III: Change-oriented Research for Sustainable Innovation in Land and Water Use (2007-2010)". Improvement of the rural livelihoods was its ultimate goal to be achieved through building of a science-based "portfolio of technical options for sustainable land and water resource management, the adequate institutional arrangement" (ZUK Project- Proposal for Phase III, p. 16). While the first two phases of the project concentrated on the on-farm income generation, in the third phase efforts were explicitly made to integrate into the program elements of social justice which may have been disregarded. The phase III proposal explicitly expressed its concern that "although most experts agree that Uzbekistan needs to create a market-oriented policy environment that support changes in land use, it has become clear from our previous research that this transformation process has to be very carefully designed in order to avoid major social inequalities" (ZUK Project- Proposal for Phase III, 2006, p. 13). Thus, the project clearly set up to avoid generating or perpetuating biased differentiation in its action research and initiate the type of development action that would lead to the "improved rural livelihoods". 'Participation' was one of the core notions which informed the project's idea of social justice. With participation as its conceptual guide the project explicitly positioned itself on the opposite side of any linear approaches which were believed to have left little space for any involvement from the local stakeholders" (Hornidge, Ul-Hassan, & Mollinga, 2012).

The commitment of the project staff to an inclusive participatory perspective was especially evident in its dedication to support "gender sensitive approaches in project research and innovation implementation" (p. 89). The project, contrary to its description as 'gender-neutral[5]', explicitly emphasized its commitments to gender-oriented policy analysis and gender-sensitive approaches. To illustrate, the project proposal for the Phase III states a promise that the research will address among others 'the rural transformation process with specific regard to

[5] While the common use of this term can be contested as such, in the present case it implied the project's general orientation towards its target groups without an intended differentiated impact on women and men separately.

gender relations" (ZUK Project- Proposal for Phase III, 2006, p. 9). This project concept paper underlined the necessity of the project to understand and address the gender dimensions of the processes of restructuring of land and water management, of agricultural production and of rural livelihood, to which the project contributes. The proposal's authors recognized that

> social differentiation and economic diversification processes are starting to unfold in the wake of the privatization, and affect women in different ways than men, for example, regarding access to land, the division of labor, and farm-level decision-making. There is some evidence that women and men have developed partly different responses to the agrarian reform process. It is, therefore, important to investigate the gender dimensions of rural entrepreneurship, in agricultural production, in off- or non-farm small enterprises and in labour and trade migration, to understand the dynamics of a differentiating and diversifying rural economy comprehensively. This will be taken up in Phase III. (ZUK Project- Proposal for Phase III, 2006, p. 20)

The project authors put forward specific objectives including the analysis of the social and economic impact of entrepreneurial activities, migration and the gender division of labor, such as livelihood benefits and costs, impact on (local and intra-household) gender relations and the position of women and men in terms of agency (access to resources and decision making power), identity and social status, but also risks of negative impacts for women (ZUK Project- Proposal for Phase III 2006). They chose the "gender dimensions of agrarian change and rural transformation as the main entry point for assessing the differential social impact of agrarian reform" and saw the analysis of gender-specificity of rural livelihood as a way to uncovering the 'rural livelihood puzzle" (p. 26). The project opened questions such as

> Which are the various activities women and men engage in order to survive, on-farm and off-farm, as individuals but also as members of households and families? How do women and men cooperate and how do they decide about their respective responsibilities? Which different income generating activities do women and men engage in and which innovations do they develop? (p. 26)

It was foreseen that this component of phase III will bring the project the benefits of "gender-oriented institutional strengthening" (p. 29) and the "support development of gender sensitive approaches to restructuring and rural development" (p. 37).

The Phase III project continued using the infrastructure of ZEF in Bonn (space for senior researchers, doctoral students and post-doctoral fellows), of UNESCO in Tashkent (office in Tashkent and a liaison officer) and of Urgench State University (premises on the campus, research stations). The project used equipment made available in Bonn and the Institute of Soil Science in Tashkent and purchased new agricultural equipment such as tractors, seeders, a laser leveler, and cars. An international permanent station manager was hired to oversee the executive management in Urgench with local technical staff including a permanent local office-manager. Two teams of scientific coordination and management were established in Urgench and Bonn to regularly meet and make decisions on the scientific progress and planning of the project. The team in Urgench consisted of the executive project manager, representative from Urgench University and representatives from ZEF's three departments (Natural Science, Economics, and Social Science). In Bonn the team consisted of the scientific project coordinator and senior (post-doctoral) researchers from each of the ZEF's departments. Several senior scientists from Germany and Uzbekistan designed and supervised the field studies and coordinated the process of implementation. The field research was conducted by ten post-doctoral researchers (five from Germany and five from Uzbekistan) and fourteen doctoral students.

In order to do the testing of its innovations the project had three intervention levels: (1) the national and regional decision-making on the natural resource use; (2) regional institutions servicing farm and water management; (3) and the application of technologies of innovative land and water management. The project activities on each intervention levels were divided into thematic clusters which were subsequently further split into project's sub-sets assigned for specific and separate execution called 'work packages' (WP). The total of thirty four work packages constituted the project Phase III. One of the work packages with a code name "Work Package 710 Implementing, improving and adapting with target groups: "Follow the Innovation" (FTI)" will be at the center of my analysis. The FTI refers to an approach based on the original framework called "Follow-the-Technology" (Douthwaite et al., 2001). The project developers dropped the term 'technology' which they considered was limited to the rigid scientific

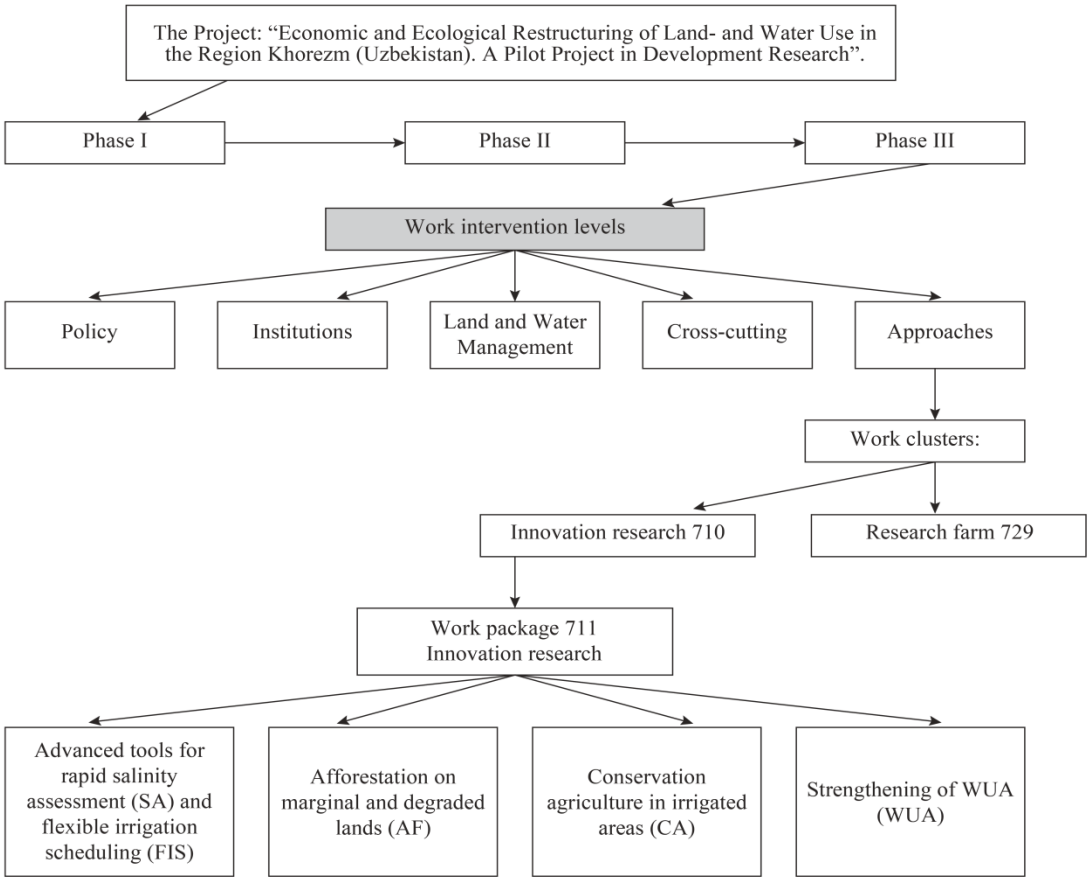
agricultural tools and exclusive of institutional aspects of development. They adopted, instead, what seemed be a more encompassing notion of 'innovation' in their self-designed framework of FTI. This work package was designed to achieve specific objective of selecting innovations (technologies, operational procedures and policy recommendations) with a 'plausible promise' identified in the research in the previous phases of the project and of taking them out to local stakeholders "for testing, adaption and adoption in a formalized process" (Work Package 710. Implementing, improving and adapting with target groups: "Follow the Innovation" (FTI), p. 1) followed by their wider application in other regions of Uzbekistan (the process referred to as 'out-scaling').

Both the "Follow-the-Technology" approach and its successor "Follow-the Innovation" deny the linear and top-down processes of technological progress in agriculture where the farmers are rendered the role of passive recipients of the technologies generated through scientific research by the scholars. On the contrary, the FTI WP relied on the idea and practices of "participatory research and participatory technology development" (Work Package 710 Implementing, improving and adapting with target groups: "Follow the Innovation" (FTI), p. 21) where the innovations are tested together with the individuals who will use those technologies once they prove suitable. As the work package FTI overtly attempted to avoid any possible disregard of the local expertise and focused on the importance of the integration of the scientific research and the local 'tacit' knowledge in fine-tuning the innovation packages (Ul Hassan & Hornidge, 2010). With this conceptual basis the FTI approach was believed to allow for a wider engagement of stakeholders into the research through a process "in which not only the innovations themselves are changed or adapted, but so are the users, and the conditions in which the whole process occurs" (ZUK Project- Proposal for Phase III, 2006, p.51).

The work on the FTI work package started in the beginning of 2008 when a full-time facilitator for the FTI processes and an external consultant were hired (Hornidge et al., 2012). The facilitator was expected to spend eight month in Uzbekistan and additionally four months in Germany (in ZEF) to lead to FTI processes and document them. An external consultant conducted five trainings to build the capacity of the project staff in the "participatory, bottom-up approaches to innovation diffusion", and with the "stakeholder involvement and transdisciplinary research" (Hornidge et al., 2012, p. 7). During the second training which took place in

Uzbekistan the twenty two participants represented by senior and junior researchers of the project listed seventeen prospective innovations which they believed had a plausible promise. These innovations were ranked against such criteria as maturity, quality and quantity of supportive research, availability of suitable sites for implementation, potential for out-scaling, political support, stakeholders' willingness to cooperation, and the project's internal capacity (Hornidge et al., 2012). As a result of this process four ideas were selected to be further implemented in the project. They were Conservation Agriculture, Advanced Tools for Rapid Salinity Assessment and Irrigation Scheduling, Afforestation on Marginal/Degraded Lands, and Strengthening Water Users Associations through Capacity-building. The figure below (Figure 6) graphically represents the location of the sub-project of interest in the entire structure of the project.

Figure 6. WUA Strengthening Package in the context of the entire project



A separate team consisting of doctoral students and scientists from various disciplinary backgrounds was shaped for each of the four selected innovations. Each team was responsible for the successful integration and implementation of the respective technology. Within the FTI process, these scholarly groups were expected to be later joined by the 'local stakeholders', i. e., representatives from the research sites to jointly implement their relevant innovation package. The involvement of the local stakeholders in the collaborative testing and adapting of the four innovations was the core feature that defined the approach as transdisciplinary (Hornidge et al., 2012). It was believed that multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches combined with integrated scientific modeling would have more capacity to "address the policy and institutional aspects through a set of activities tailor-made to the specific transitional situation of Uzbekistan" (ZUK Project- Proposal for Phase III, 2006, p. 8).

FTI WUA Innovation: The SMID framework

My analysis is concerned specifically with the practices of implementation of one innovation—Strengthening of WUA (also referred to as FTI WUA innovation package). The actual strengthening was implemented with an application of an approach officially called Social Mobilization and Institutional Development (SMID) whereby the project planned to improve an already existing WUA in Urto-Yop, which the group defined as "weak" (Ul Hassan & Hornidge, 2010, p. 1), i.e., failing to "operate and maintain the irrigation and drainage network, ha[d] difficulties of managing water within the administrative boundaries and suffering from weak management and governance structures" (Abdullaev, Franz, Oberkircher, Hoffman, Nizamedinkhodjaeva, Ataev, Ul Hassan, Lamers, Tischbein, Schorcht, Jumaniyazova & Djanibekov, 2008, p .4). The core idea of the SMID approach was to

> mobilize support of the water users for improving WUA performance on water management through ensuring inclusion of grassroot members and their concerns into the management of WUA affairs, ensuring higher ownership and financial, material and labor contributions by WUAs members" (Abdullaev et al., 2008, p. 4).

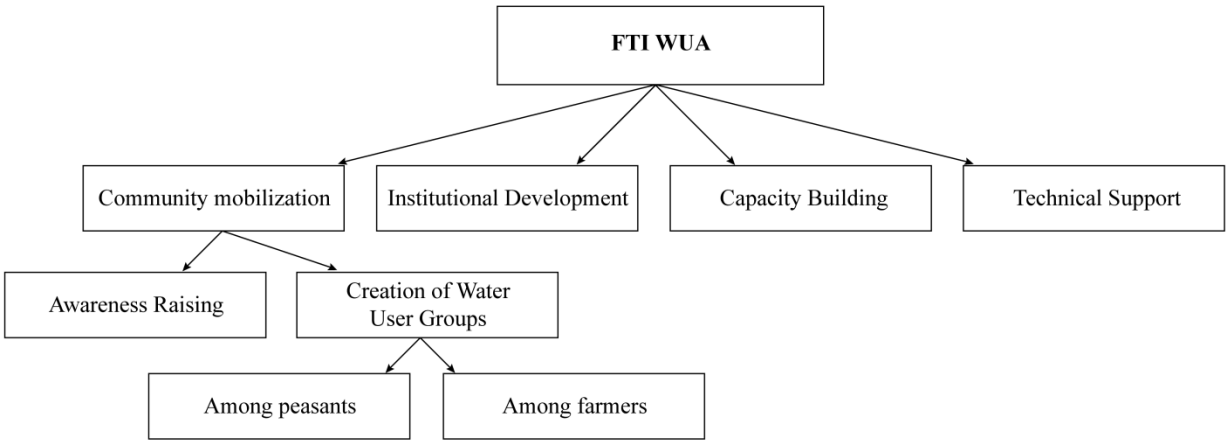
Unlike other innovations, the SMID approach was not developed through a research in the previous two phases of the project. But it was successfully applied elsewhere in different development project where the FTI team leader had participated.

Implementation of this innovation took place according the work plan the team developed in order to achieve the goals of

> improv[ing] livelihoods of the rural inhabitants and enhancing productivity of the irrigated agriculture through better water management which will be achieved by motivating /enabling water users through Social Mobilization and Institutional Development (SMID) activities to take the necessary steps to support their WUAs (Abdullaev et al., 2008, p. 5).

The SMID approach relied on two major directions which were seen as appropriate for attaining the envisioned goal (Figure 7). One component of the work called Social Mobilization aimed at

Figure 7. FTI WUA component structure



making the WUA known and understood by the villagers. This was done by a number of selected individuals (called community or social mobilizers) who would undertake awareness-raising work among the village population to ensure their understanding of the position, function and contribution of the WUA. This was expected to generate "ownership, social, monetary and labor support from the water users to the WUA" (Ul Hassan & Hornidge, 2010, p. 1) to its WUA and an overall wider "inclusion of the large share of water users and their concerns into the decision making processes of the WUA" (Abdullaev et al., 2008, p. 1). The second direction was called Institutional Development which stressed the importance of WUA's organizational growth as an entity with managerial and governance mandates. Within this component of SMID the WUA was expected to improve its capacities to manage water distribution, its financial operations and

resolve water-related conflicts. It was planned that eventually it would develop a Management Board and a Governance Board, i.e., the WUA council.

The FTI WUA project team supported and assisted the WUA in establishing its council by providing trainings on topics such as water management, organizational, financial and legal aspects of WUA work, and funded a trip for a number of people from Urto-Yop to learn lessons from another WUA in the Fergana valley, which was thought to be a successful WUA. In addition to all these processes, the project also provided technical support to the WUA (within its fourth component called "Technical Support") which was used for renovating the WUA's office and supplying it with office equipment and furniture.

For the purposes of both, social mobilization and institutional strengthening of the WUA, the SMID approach prescribed a selection of so-called 'social mobilizers', i.e., a widely accepted term for teams which conduct Social Mobilization (Abdullaev et al., 2008). The social mobilizers were responsible not only for the dissemination of the information about the role and usefulness of the WUA to the various stakeholders as mentioned above, but also (and with prior training) for the formation of sub-clusters identified as the Water User Groups (WUG). Ideas about WUGs were described by researchers of the project in policy documents which they had authored based on their past work experience elsewhere[6]. They conceptualized WUGs as indispensable for WUA formation. Formally, WUGs were defined as autonomous informal self-organized groups of people united by the proximity of their land to a particular irrigation source, i.e., canal/ ditch/ pump (later called a "hydrological unit") who manage their own irrigation system to support WUA and account to it (Abdullaev, Kazbekov, Manthritilake & Jumaboev, 2009). WUGs, thus, represented a lower level in a multi-tier system of WUA where the representative of each WUG participated in the decision –making by becoming a constituent in a WUA council. As an informal group WUG was viewed as an economical, "organized informally to minimize the expense and paperwork in maintaining them" (Asian Development Bank, 2006, p. 35) and an easily "manageable" (Ul Hassan & Nizamedinkhodjaeva, 2002, p. 15) sub-structure of the WUA making the formation of the WUG not only a major step but also a

[6] Such as the "Guidebooks for Water Users' Associations in Uzbekistan" produced within the framework of a project of the Asian Development Bank for the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (MAWR) of Uzbekistan, "SMID approach and strategy" by Ul Hassan and Nizamedinkhodjaeva.

necessary condition for the formation of a WUA. The authors of the project saw WUGs as means 'on the ground' which would be instrumental for achieving its goals of the broad-based community involvement in the WUA processes and establishing the relationships of support and trust between the water users represented by the WUG leaders and the WUA. Within the FTI WUA Innovation package, six social mobilizers were expected to shape six WUGs (each around one hydrological unit).

Entering the project implementation site as a research location

With my study I entered the project's "follow-the-Innovation" phase, and more specifically, its FTI WUA/SMID component. Methodologically, this component emphasized its commitment to 'bottom-up' approaches with active involvement from local community (Ul-Hassan & Hornidge, 2010) and focused on supporting the development and operation of the participatory water management system as a means to "improve livelihoods of the rural inhabitants and enhance productivity of the irrigated agriculture through better water management" (Abdullaev et al., 2008) in Urto-Yop. The Urto-Yop village was selected on the basis of its descriptions which characterized it as more 'disadvantaged' than other places. To illustrate, the living standards of Urto-Yop villagers was among the lowest in Khorezm province which was itself listed as one of the poorest in the country (Abdullaev & Mollinga, 2010). The river Amu Darya is the major source of water in the area and the village is located about a hundred km down from it at the tail end of the irrigation canals that begin in Amu Darya. Before the water reaches the village it must cross at least three villages located in the upstream area of the canals. During water-scarce periods such a setting creates an insufficient and unreliable water supply for household and subsistence farming (Abdullaev & Mollinga, 2010). The lands belonging to the village cover about nine thousand hectares (two thousands of which are used for irrigated agriculture) with a population comprising approximately eleven thousand people. Irrigated agriculture represents the predominant employment of the Urto-Yop inhabitants. Following a series of land reforms in 2006, 2008 and 2010 twenty-one private farms and more than two thousand peasant farms were created (Djanibekov et al., 2012). Many men who previously would be employed in household farming now actually leave home for long periods of time, making up the considerable labor immigration of the male Uzbek population to Russia,

Kazakhstan and urban areas of Uzbekistan. The women have assumed the farming work that they previously had shared with the men.

In 2005 the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Uzbekistan issued an order within which the District Water Resource Department (DWRD) established a WUA in Urto-Yop village. In this particular WUA the activities within the FTI SMID component took place. One of the scientific coordinators of the project described these activities as 'gender-neutral' which, as I came to learn more about the project and the Water Users Association, was intriguing. How, I wondered, is this gender-neutrality organized and how does it work? For this research, which occurred late in the life of the ZUK project, I had the opportunity to investigate ethnographically the local water use practices of the rural men and women who had been part of the project. As an entry point to my investigation I took the everyday agricultural practices which the Uzbekistani smallholders perform in order to put their lives together. My ethnography focused on their lived experiences of operating small-scale household farming nearly entirely dependent on the often scarce and unreliably delivered water for irrigation.

Smallholding and economic/agricultural activities

Smallholders constitute a very large percent of households in rural Uzbekistan. Following Veldwisch and Bock (2011) I use the term 'smallholder' or 'peasant' in relation to all rural households which are not private farmers, regardless of whether they are officially registered as such. All rural households have household plots. The produce from these plots is used for house consumption and the surplus is sold on local markets or bartered. The household plots usually consist of two parts; one is a backyard garden or kitchen garden and the other one is an additional plot of land located usually some distance away from home. The backyards are intensively cropped with a variety of vegetables and fruits. Veldwisch and Bock (2011) point out that the layout of the backyard gardens are carefully planned in details, based on the knowledge of soil, water and light conditions. The smallholders till the land by hand with shovel and hoe. Double cropping systems are being widely used to ensure harvest in the early agricultural period of potatoes and onions and late cropping of beans, carrots, maize, sorghum and millet. The distant plots are also used twice during the season; they are cropped with winter wheat followed by rice or maize in the summer. Most households also keep animals such as cattle, chicken and sheep. They are used for production of animal products such as eggs, milk, etc. They also serve

as a capital stock (Veldwisch & Bock, 2011); the cattle can be turned into cash or used as direct payment. In addition to their household plots many smallholders (about fifty percent, according to Veldwisch & Bock, 2011) also work on the private farmers' land. They mostly conduct manual labor on the cotton fields for some cash or for in kind payment.

Smallholders may use a variety of income strategies, and together they provide the workforce for all agricultural production, including in the fields of farmers. On the household level labor is divided according to gender and generations (Nizamedinkhodjayeva, Bock & Mollinga, 2011). Women are typically responsible for keeping the house in order, gardening the household plots and kitchen gardens, weeding, milking cows, processing food, and carrying out small-scale trade. Men, if they are not abroad seeking work, are normally responsible for arranging agricultural contracts, arranging irrigation turns and irrigating the household plots. Women make up a large proportion of the sub-contracted workers in the private farmers' fields. This is referred to as 'feminization of agriculture' and is believed to occur as a result of temporary labor migration of men and women being affected by unemployment in non-agricultural areas in a greater degree than men (Trevisani, 2006; Wall, 2006). Children from age of ten work alongside adults in the fields; at even younger age they herd animals and help with gardening, food processing and house chores. Elderly people often look after very young children and their pensions provide extra cash income.

The importance of the household food production is emphasized in a number of studies (Kandiyoti, 2003; Veldwisch & Bock, 2011). The authors point out that due to the absence of interlocking markets, public investments in infrastructure and services the expected increase in agricultural production was hardly seen. As a result, household food production has remained essential for the food and livelihood security for most rural household. Agriculture and food production continues to be the mainstay of livelihood security despite other income-generating activities that the household members can become involved in (Kandiyoti, 2003). Many households are also reported to engage in non-agricultural employment and self-employment. Labor migration forms an important source of income and in Uzbekistan, like in many post-soviet countries rural households rely heavily on remittances for their cash income (Spoor &Izman, 2009; Mertchyan et al., 2009, in Veldwisch & Bock, 2011). Due to the labor migration

which is predominantly undertaken by males, women's workload has greatly increased (Kandiyoti, 2003).

Women-smallholders and their everyday work: Lived experience

The male out-migration for waged work meant that women acquired new tasks such as soil fertilization, planting, irrigating and harvesting, as well as learning to organize their time to accomplish their intensified work. I conducted field observation as I lived in the house of Saparkul, a woman-smallholder whose husband, a temporary labor migrant to Russia, left her as the primary caretaker for their two children, their cattle and all the work on the land. Most labor migrants tend to be largely absent during the agricultural season leaving this burden entirely on the shoulders of those who stay at home. The ethnographic note below illustrates some of the everyday work Saparkul must do in order to maintain the livelihood of her family.

> Woke up at 6 am. Saparkul went out and took water from the well and sprinkled the area around her house with it several times. Then she gave food to the cow, donkey and a calf. During this time her daughter Rusara started to warm the milk produced the day before. Saparkul milked the cow and gave some of it to the calf. After that Saparkul took a hoe and a spade and we went to her field. She was digging ditches in the middle of the field to allow for a better flow of water. This needed to be done because that piece of land was located higher than the level of the water and the water did not flow well there. After she had dug two long ditches and then flattened them we went back to the house. She washed her face and we sat together to have breakfast with warm milk and bread. After that Saparkul went to her field and mowed the fodder she grew there. After that she had shower, tea and made lunch. Making food is time consuming because every step is done manually. They usually eat food which is easier to prepare but the presence of guests (my assistant and myself) made a difference. As we ate I learnt that usually at this time Saparkul would take a donkey-cart and go to fetch drinking water from a particular well in the village. After lunch Saparkul cleaned the table, fed the poultry and took a short nap. Upon waking up, she did laundry until 6:30 pm. This took long time because she was washing the laundry manually, three times, and the water for that was taken from the tank while the dirty water had to be taken away to the end of the kitchen-garden. As soon

> as she had hung the laundry on the drying lines she started peeling off the carrots which her daughter had brought 10minutes before. That was also a 3-stage procedure as she had to peel the skin off roughly, then wash, then peeled them again more carefully and wash again and then finally chop them. She was complaining that her carrots were too small that year because the water was just not enough. Having finished with the carrots she gave them to her daughter who continued with cooking. Saparkul brought water in a bucket, put some fertilizers into it and stirred it. She then brought an empty plastic bottle from coca-cola and with the help of a funnel filled the bottle with it. She then started to sprinkle with this liquid each tomato bush, every time refilling the bottle and rotating every bush. Having finished this, she turned on the electrical well to irrigate the carrots. This did not happen immediately as she could not connect two hoses in a way that would make them stick together. Eventually this happened and she remembered that at 7:30 the soup opera "Osiyo" starts on TV. She left the well turned on and went inside. While watching the soap opera she was chopping tomatoes and other vegetables for the salad. At 8:20 the film was over and she went to milk the cow. At this moment electricity black out took place. So, Saparkul ran off to milk the cow. After milking we returned home and started having dinner. After dinner Saparkul continued cleaning around the house and at about midnight we all went to bed. (July, 2011).

My records from another observation day say "that day, talking to Saparkul was almost not possible because of her attention-consuming work, the shouting of the children around her". Canning vegetables for winter, making bread, working in the field are only a few examples of the regular work women do as part of their daily routine. Without even basic house and garden equipment, what is considered time-consuming and physically complex work becomes even more so. For instance, bread making is done from scratch and with the use of a mud stove heated by brushwood that women gather, or preparation of food for canning is done manually through a dozen of carefully sequenced procedures. The below ethnographic note captures it:

> In the morning Saparkul washed about 30 3-liter glass jars. In order to do this when there is no running water in the house, she used two tanks and water which she brought from the well located on the street outside her yard. She washed the cucumbers and cut off their endings. Then she and two of her neighbors (two ladies of 20 and 21 year old each

with babies of 1 and 1.5 years old respectively) started to prepare tomato juice for which they finely chopped the tomatoes, then whirled them in the old washing machine and rubbed them through a sieve. The ready substance was boiled in one of the three tanks built-in a mud stove heated by firewood. The women then washed more tomatoes and cut more vegetables. After that the process followed a definite sequence. The glass jars were sterilized for which each jar was put up-side down on top of the boiling kettle with no top. The lids for the jars were sterilized separately in a pot. Sterilization took place inside the house. Rusara (Saparkul's daughter)took the sterilized jar outside the house and gave it to Nargiza (one of the visiting ladies) who put the jar on a flat plate and put it in between the two tanks, one with boiling tomato juice and the other one with water. She then would take out boiling tomatoes with a ladle and then from the ladle would take hot tomatoes with her fingers and put them carefully into the hot jar while holding the hot jar with her other hand. After that she would turn to the tank with the tomato juice where cucumbers, pepper and other vegetables were boiling and start taking out them in order to put them into the jar, again with bare fingers. She would have to ensure that each jar would have a definite number of cucumbers, garlic and onion. She then would take a funnel and fill the jar with hot tomato juice with a scoop. She would then take a hot lid and put it on the top of the jar. It is worth noting that while doing these manipulations, Nargiza would periodically add brushwood into the oven and also attend to her child. After that Nargiza lifted the jar and carried it to Sapakul who was sitting behind on the ground with a chopping board. Saparkul would take a spoon, fill it with salt and put it inside the bottle after having removed the lid. After that she would take vinegar, very carefully fill a teaspoon with it from the bottle, put half of it into the jar and the other half of the spoon carefully on the inside of the lid and carefully shake the lid so that the vinegar gets distributed evenly along its surface. Then the lid would go back on the top of the jar. Saparkul then would stand up and start tightening it to the jar with a special device and do it about 15 times in each direction. After that she would rotate the entire jar several times and put the ready jar aside. This long and complicated process required a lot of attention and concentration. It was even more complicated because this was happening in the temperature of about 45C. While doing the above described work, the women were

also constantly passing one towel to hold the jar, brought clean water and took away the dirty water, brought more brushwood, attended to the little children who would take tomatoes or spoon or salt away, ask to take them to toilet and had to be put to nap. At 6:30 all the jars were closed, Rusara started to take the jars inside the house, other women started to wash the tanks, devices, etc. That day they have made ready about 25 jars. During the entire summer Saparkul makes about 250-270 jars altogether. (July, 2011)

Figure 8. Process of food processing for home consumption

Source: Own photograph taken in July 2011

The cattle breeding and crops growing, previously shared with or completely done by her husband have become Saparkul's full responsibility. The double burden Saparkul carries makes her life dense, busy and sometimes hectic, even though she does not complain. This is something that she sees as "must be done". Indeed, as in most of the families I visited, what Saparkul grows in her field and garden is enough to provide almost full subsistence for her family for at least ten months of the year. From the interviews with other smallholder families, I learn that the annual wheat harvest comprises approximately one ton of flour. This amount is sufficient for twelve month consumption by a medium size family (less than eight members). For larger families, the

harvest constitutes more than 70 % of all consumed flour per year. If a family plants potatoes or rice after harvesting the wheat, the produced amount is enough for a yearly subsistence. Produced cattle feed is also enough to avoid any cash spending on this budgetary item.

It becomes apparent that the household agriculture which Saparkul and other women in Urto-Yop village conduct is significant for the family subsistence, budget and, in general, livelihoods. Some data suggests the importance of agriculture also for women's non-economic aspects of life. While Saparkul is not involved in selling the extra yield, many of my informants reported trading of their produce in the local markets and earning a cash income. One of the respondents, Khaitzhon sells the fruits from her garden because her grandchildren who are students in colleges in Tashkent need pocket money while in the city. This suggests the significance of the household agriculture not only for monetary advantage but also for non-tangible social benefits such as enjoying the giving role of a generous grandparent.

Problematic: Accentuating uncertainty

The problematic in my study develops from the women's stories and my observations of their agricultural life, and especially their water-related work; I needed to learn how their everyday life is organized and this directed my further inquiry into the institutional coordination of their experiences. Irrigation in Urto-Yop is organized by the hydrologic system consisting of two major canals, Zey Yop and Khonobod-3, which run through the village and take their beginning from Amu-Dariya. These two canals are connected with the fields through smaller canals and ditches. This water reaches the plots either by the gravity or with the help of private small-sized electrical pumps typically owned by the peasants or by the large stationary pumps located on the territory of local farmers and owned by the farmer (either purchased by the farmer or received from the local Water Users Association under the condition that the farmer takes care of its maintenance and repair). In the latter case, social relationships between a farmer and the peasants may play important role in negotiating access to water ((Hornidge, Oberkircher & Kudryavtseva, 2013). Some of the kitchen-gardens can also be irrigated through the underground well, however, the villagers object to the usage of the underground water pump because the low temperature of the underground water devastate the quantity and quality of the harvest, and also

because the costs of fuel required to run the pump is high. The additional plots of land can only be irrigated with the water from the major canals.

Figure 9. A smaller canal in Urto-Yop

Source: own picture taken in April 2010

The specific puzzle I explore begins in Saparkul's story about failing to irrigate her fields during the season. The field note and interview excerpts below provide the details of the emerging problematic:

> As Saparkul was digging ditches in her field she complained that the previous asvak [the time when water "arrived" to the canal] she was unaware about it and busy away from her home at a local farmer's land. [This was something Saparkul needed to do, because in exchange for her work, the farmer permitted her and other women to glean the cotton stalks. The dry cotton stalks would be used for heating the cooking stoves.] She therefore missed the once-in-two-weeks opportunity to irrigate her land. On another occasion, she was staying with her niece at a hospital and when she returned home she learnt that she had missed the water again (July, 2011).

Other women report similar experiences which mystified me. How would women miss the arrival of the irrigation water? For instance, Anabibi describes that she "must open her ditch upon hearing about the water arrival. The water can arrive at any moment during a day or night. If a person is not at home, the water bypasses this person's land" (April, 2011). The problem here does not end in women's not having consistent and reliable information. Saparkul

complains that “even if we know that the water is there, the water is scarce and there is no guarantee that it will reach us...” Rokhatdzon reports that “during the last asvak they did not manage to irrigate their kitchen garden and field because after the farmer had used the water, nothing was left for them” (April, 2011). What these women-smallholders speak about indicates that they experience difficulties with accessing the irrigation water and suffer a great degree of uncertainty about not only ‘when’ but also about ‘whether’ they would be able to irrigate their fields. This uncertainty worries them because failure to access the irrigation endangers the success of their agriculture. They use their specific knowledge to engage in various strategies to obtain information about water. To illustrate, one my respondent shares: “If I see that ilatkom [a member of a village council] is going to the village council leader I know they will discuss water. So, I wait till he goes back and then run to him and ask about when the water can be expected” (April, 2011). Another one adds: “If I see on the street a hydro-technician, I run to him and ask when the water will come” (April, 2011). Another interviewee demonstrated even more ingenuity, as she told me: “I know that the water will come soon when I hear the gritting sound coming from the farmer’s land. I know this is his pump being started. Then I know there will be water” (April, 2012). Many women must physically go to canal to see the water availability there. The distance to the canal may range from fifty meters to more than several kilometers of unpaved roads from a woman’s house. For instance, Shadmandzhan takes two hours by her donkey–harnessed cart to reach her field and look at the canal. If the water is not flowing, this long journey is undertaken in vain. If the water is there, she queues with other smallholders and waits until she can open her ditch and let the water flow into her plot of land. Depending on the water pressure, irrigating one plot takes from forty minutes to five hours. This adds up to long hours of work, added to the additional hours of journey back and forth to the village. Saparkul walks or uses her bicycle to go to the canal. By bicycle it takes her twenty minutes to reach the place and she has to do this once in every two-three days during the vegetation season. She says: “There is no one to ask or to telephone. Once I was lucky and learnt about the water from a neighbor who is employed at the farm and knew about asvak”. However, regardless of the creativity they introduce into their already multi-layered and complex everyday work, they often fail to do the irrigation work because they either do not get timely information or do not manage to be physically present in their fields when the water comes, or else the water is already used up.

Figure 10. A woman-smallholder working in her field.

Source: own photograph taken during the fieldwork

Developed from women's accounts of their work, puzzling aspects of water management begin to direct my further inquiry into the social relations organizing what I see and learn about. I ask questions about the well-intended water management policies which as I have shown, lack the capacity to outreach the poorest layers of the farming community. How, I wonder, with the participatory goals of the WUA as a "core instrument for good water governance policies" (Garces-Restrepo et al., 2007, p.16) which promised to bring "social assistance to the most vulnerable groups" (Asian Development Bank, 2001, p. 11), are the women smallholders being bypassed? I also wonder how the German action-research project to "improve livelihoods of the rural inhabitants and enhance productivity of the irrigated agriculture through better water management" (Abdullaev et al., 2008.) was organized so that the livelihoods of particular rural inhabitants such as women-peasants remained ostensibly complicated and uncertain. Contradiction occurs between the original policy/project promise and their effects in relation to these smallholders. Despite the considerable amount of efforts and funding disbursed for more efficient water distribution they lack opportunities to benefit from the services of WUA. Based on my analytical framework I will attempt to explore these contradictory findings and make visible what organizes the local experiences. From the standpoint of women-peasants living in a poor village and dependent upon irrigated agriculture for subsistence, the failure of the current water management system built on the democratic principles to benefit them, is difficult to

understand. How does it happen that the women-smallholders continue being the ‘rural inhabitants’ whose needs are not addressed in the face of the existing water management organization (WUA), underpinned by the German project, which emphasizes the inclusive approach to development from ‘bottom-up’? This is the problematic I explore in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6. FROM PEASANTS TO INSTITUTIONS: TRACING THE RULING RELATIONS

In this chapter I embark upon the disjuncture between the WUA's inherent ideas about inclusive participation in natural resource management and my discovery of how the household agricultural producers are not necessarily benefiting from the reforms in the irrigation water management. Processes of labor migration determined a gender division occurring in the Uzbek agriculture, with women becoming the majority of smallholder farmers. I discover that these women are routinely excluded from participation in and from benefiting from the new management policy-based practices. I explicate instances of the local operation of water management practices, and discover the text-mediated work that institutionalize water policy, prioritizing irrigation of the crops grown by the farmers who contribute to the state's agricultural export marketing. I argue that this not only contravenes the participatory and equity-oriented goals of the state policy, but has detrimental effects for the livelihoods of the smallholders and their families. I continue with an analysis of an international development project which aimed to strengthen the existing WUA in order to improve the livelihoods of all the rural population. I discover that this project produced gendered effects in which smallholder women's agriculture became invisible and their needs are unaddressed.

Explicating the problematic: making sense of uncertainty

Women-peasants experience a vast degree of uncertainty about when and whether they would be able to receive water for irrigating their plots. The uncertainty forces them to resort to a number of time-consuming and labor-intensive strategies in order to receive information about water. All of this requires additional work from women whose lives are already overly complicated and busy. This additional work often involves referring or addressing the water-related questions to certain individuals in and outside Urto-Yop. Similar to Saparkul who once learns from her neighbor about the water, some other women-smallholders, when possible, turn to persons who are known to have this information. This suggests the existence of particular social actors who are positioned to know better about water than other individuals. Saparkul mentions that her neighbor is 'employed at the farm', other women list concrete people such as 'nasoschy, 'pudryadchy', 'ishbashkaruvchy', myrabs', 'farmers', 'farmers' neighbors, and

'farmers' relatives'. These people are either private farmers themselves or related to them in one or other way. 'Nasoschy', for instance, are the persons responsible for operating the large agricultural pumps owned by the private farmers, 'pudryadchy' are seasonal employees of the farmers, 'ishbashkaruvchy' are the farmer's employed work managers, 'myrabs' are the water masters working for the local WUA. I became interested in the centrality of the figures of the farmers in this identified circle of individuals who are "in the know". Guided by the question of how farmers might be organized to know, while the smallholders are not, I continued ethnography among the individuals who have been pointed out in interviews and/or hold positions in the WUA.

My investigation shows that in sharp contrast to them, the farmers have fairly reliable ways of knowing about irrigation water. They find out right away when the WUA chairman or a water master telephones them and notifies about the date when they should expect the water to arrive. In order to understand these drastic differences I conducted ethnography in the WUA, looking for the coordinating work.

Water Users Association. Local institutional practices

The Water Users Association in Urto-Yop, also called WUA Ashirmat or WUA Kushkupir Ashirmat, was established in 2005 in accordance to the 'Uzbek model' (Yalcin & Mollinga, 2007), i.e., the government departments (mostly of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan or MAWR) designed and set up this WUA with little involvement from water users who were supposed to be the initiators of these processes. The WUA leaders and their technical employees were appointed under close supervision of local authorities and regional departments of MAWR. This is one of the WUA which Zavgorodnaya (2006) would call either 'unsupported', 'normal' or 'real' because they were founded without direct financial intervention from foreign development organizations. At the time of my ethnography the WUA consisted of its chairman, an accountant and five hydraulic engineers (also called 'water masters' or 'myrabs'). The WUA had a management board consisting of the WUA chairman, the chairperson of the Village Council (Shura) (who was also a farmer) and the director of the local Joint Stock Machinery and Tractor Park, e.g., a government machinery service system. The WUA chairman was newly elected, so I interviewed both him and his predecessor on several occasions. This WUA took the responsibility to irrigate the area of more

than two thousand ha of land and both, the farmers and the peasants paid fees for the services of the WUA. The peasants paid from three to five thousand Uzbek soum per one irrigation. The payment from farmers was differentiated by the type of crop. For instance, they paid seven thousand soum per one ha of cotton or wheat, 35 thousand soum per one ha or rice, and seventeen thousand soum per one ha of vegetables. The WUA chairman and the members of the WUA's board acted at the interface between the state agencies and the village as they attended weekly meetings at the DWRD (District Water Resource Department) to hear about the details of the sequence in which water would be delivered among villages and districts, new water regulations, temporary orders and discuss other issues pertaining the work of the WUA. Once the WUA chairman obtained this information he took it to his village and shared it with his employees, i.e., hydraulic engineers. During the episodic water-scarce years the role of WUAs became especially prominent in the village because of their leading role in managing the water through the practices of 'asvak'. Asvak acquired a key meaning at these times and WUA staff took a leading position in the relevant practices within the village.

When it comes to irrigation, the concept of asvak is in common use, appearing frequently in the people's talk. It is used synonymously with water, irrigation, something that 'just happens' and, in general, as an entity operating independently of human action, mysterious, but taken for granted. Following the approach of institutional ethnography, I tracked the actual activities carried out by real people to constitute the practices of asvak. As I interviewed the chairperson of the DWRD, I understand that theoretically, "asvak" refers to a schedule-based distribution of irrigation water typically applied during water-scarce years. It takes place on different levels, e.g., interregional, inter-provincial, among villages and inside the village. State agencies such as the Uzbekistani Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, Departments of Water Resources, the Province Water Resources Department, and the District Water Resources Departments make decisions to plan the orderly and predictable distribution of irrigation water on their respective levels. Certain criteria apply in determining the sequence of the irrigation schedule. For instance, the villages located at the tail-end of the canal must be the first to receive the water. Once the DWRD determines the sequence in which villages under its mandate are to irrigate their territories, the respective WUA in each village takes the full responsibility for further water delivery inside the village. The DWRD holds regular meetings attended by the representatives

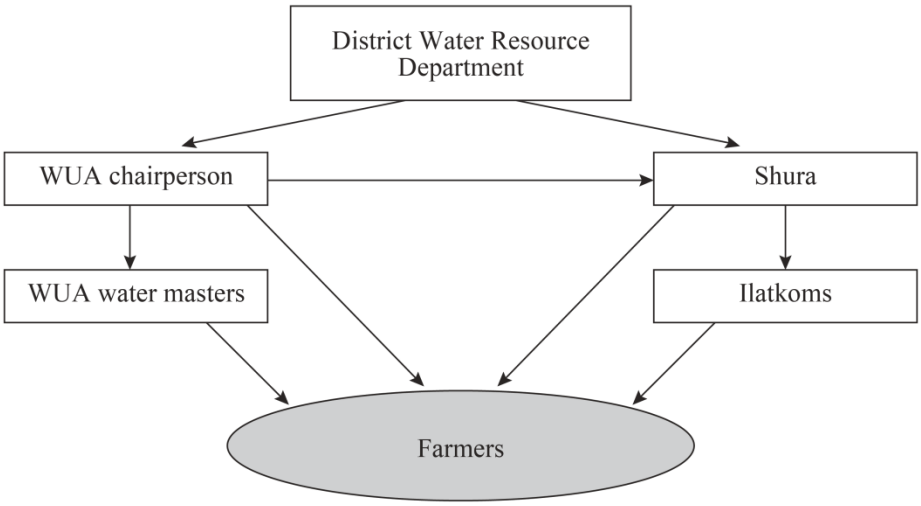
from the villages located in its district including WUA chairpersons, village council members, and hydraulic engineers to inform about the next asvak and about other water-related issues. When a village takes its turn to irrigate by opening the gate of their canals, the asvak begins in the village. For Urto-Yop, as for the other villages, asvak lasts three or four days, which is essentially the only time in every two weeks that the village gets water in its canals to water its fields.

I observe asvak take place in the village from the moment it starts as I waited together with the water masters and the WUA chairman for the water to arrive into the canal. I note the multiple actors undertaking work processes which constitute practices of water management. Water masters are responsible for 'delivering the water' to people. They do it by a continuous monitoring of the water flows in the fields, making sure that the water does not go into the water collector but directly on the land, and they establish the order in which particular crops are to be irrigated. WUA chairman who manages these processes explains that "each water master is assigned to particular seven or eight particular private farmers to ensure that their respective land is irrigated properly and timely". Myrab Bobonazar, a water master in the WUA describes his work:

> I [am responsible for] six farmers. I have telephoned them three days ago [to tell about 'asvak]'. Before asvak I go and see which land must be watered and which can wait. Last asvak three farmers watered their land, the others were not allowed because they did so the previous time. This time they [the ones that did not] will be watered. During asvak I go around the farmers' land and look. (April, 2011)

Myrab Bobonazar's attentive focus is centered on his farmers' land and their needs. His description of work explains how it happens that farmers and their surrounding people are knowledgeable about asvak; i.e., they received this information efficiently and in a timely manner from their water masters. This information flow follows multiple and reliable ways for the farmers to find out about asvak. The figure below illustrates those channels of information flow.

Figure 11. Channels of information flow for farmers



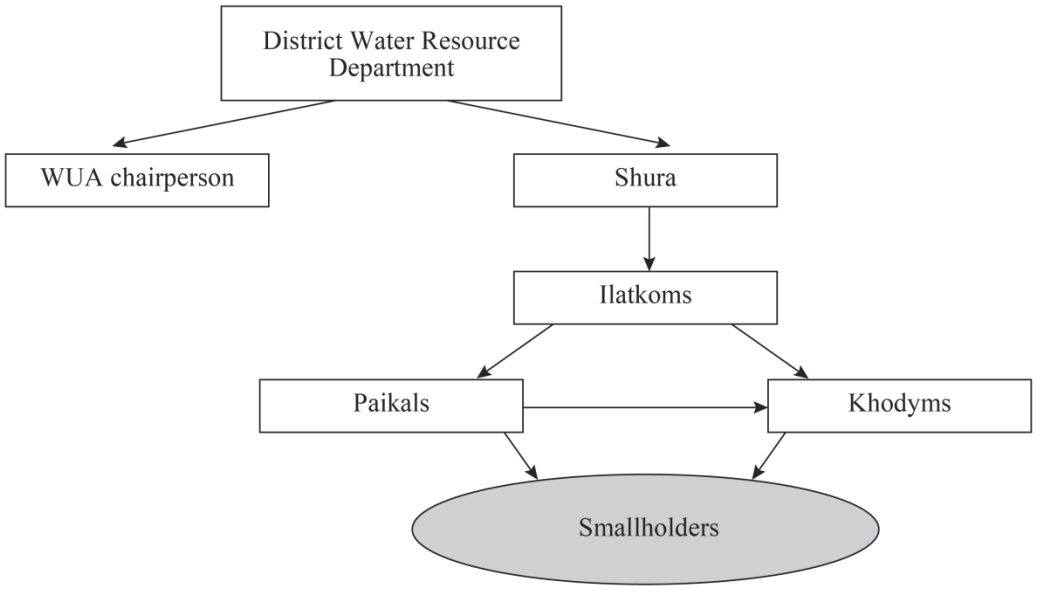
When the DWRD calls for a regular meeting he invites the WUA chairpersons and the chairmen of the village councils (shuras) from Urto-Yop and a few other villages which use the same canal for irrigation. During those meetings the DWRD authority informs them about the details of the upcoming asvak. WUA chairperson and shuras are the first representatives from the village who received this information. They transmit it to other members of irrigation network in the village. The WUA chairperson will inform its water masters, while the Shura will notify its subordinate deputy members (ilatkoms). From my interviews with farmers I learn that they can use a multiplicity of reliable ways to receive this information. In the most common situation, the WUA water masters warn their farmers about approaching asvak over a mobile phone. In other cases farmers contact directly the WUA chairperson, shura or an ilatkom.

This sharply contrasts with the uncertainty experienced by the women-smallholders. These women continue having a shared experience of having to ‘catch’ water or ‘miss’ it and rely on the indirect and inconsistent sources of information. Some of my data suggest the existence of semi-official mechanisms and rules whereby smallholders are entitled to be promptly notified about water and related issues. I present these mechanisms graphically further in Figure 12.

Failed communication channels

My ethnography finds specific communal organization which is mandated to represent the interests, including irrigation-related ones, of the peasants. I learnt that there is a network of individuals whose communal roles may and ought to serve to benefit the peasants especially in terms of a reliable receipt of information (Figure 12). I wondered how given the availability of this communal organization working to protect its residents, women lacked opportunities to benefit from its services. I inquired into how this network consisting of the Village council Chairman (shura), village council members (ilatkoms) and their subordinates perform and did not perform the role of supporting irrigation needs of the peasants. I learnt that the specific job associated with irrigating the plots of the peasants has been entrusted to various actors by the village council whose accountability and funding arrangements made this work less then appealing, ostensibly blurring terms of references and eventually leaving the needs of the peasants unattended.

Figure 12. The channels of information for smallholders: How things ought to be



The village council consists of the chairman and six ilatkoms each of them being in charge of one of the six territorial sections (makhalla) comprising the village. The shura recently had a stroke and had three members of his family pass away lately. He was either in the hospital

in Tashkent or sick at home, and I did not have any chance to talk to him. But I interviewed all the other members of the village council including the deputy of the chairman and the secretary of the village council chairperson. I learnt that the chairman of the village council is also a farmer and a member of the executive board of the WUA. He did not deal directly with the peasants but delegated this responsibility to the six ilatkoms. The post of the ilatkom entitles them to tasks such as participation in public events, resolving conflicts among the villagers, organizing night surveillance in the village to avoid crimes and so on. Ilatkom Rustam, for instance, informs that his main responsibility in his role of the ilatkom is to "ensure peace and cleanness in his makhalla and also to serve as a judge in the cases of intra- and inter-household conflicts as well as attend the family events of his residents as a guest of honor". It seemed peculiar that ilatkoms never mentioned their responsibility about asvak and water-related issues. This is especially peculiar in light of the fact that all of the ilatkoms are intensively involved in all irrigation activities in the village, especially during asvak when they must watch the water-users from the up-stream villages and prevent them from using the water from the canal when it is not their turn. For instance, when I arrived to take an interview with Rustam he had just returned from a five-day duty where he was observing the processes of irrigation making sure that the sequence of irrigation was in order. In the courses of interview it became clear that ilatkoms rarely deal directly with the specific irrigation needs of the peasants and the job of informing them about asvak was delegated to particular individuals called 'paikals'. None of the informants among the smallholder families ever mentioned getting any news about irrigation from paikals. Nevertheless, I found it useful to talk to some of the paikals.

Paikals are the persons who are generally responsible for spreading news. It is an ancient community position and is even considered to be a rural profession that passes from generation to generation. In other cases, ilatkoms elect paikals among the male residents of the makhalla. The person occupying this post receives news from the respective ilatkom about community events such as a "collective cleaning day" and, supposedly, asvak. His neighbors use his services with regards to their own family events such as weddings, funerals and birth of children. He then takes this message to the entire makhalla by announcing it either by walking from door to door (which is very hard because every mahalla is about 400 households), going along the streets on foot or by bike and shouting out the information. None of the four paikals I interviewed

mentioned doing their work in relation to asvak. While they admitted the fact that they are supposed to do this, neither actually did. The same situation refers to a female version of paikals, referred to as 'khodym'. Khodym are the women, often recommended by the ilatkoms, who are invited by the households to help organize and manage family events. One ilatkom mentioned these women as those who are 'in the know' with all the news in makhalla including water and that the peasants, especially women among them, can address questions about water to them. However, again, the interviewed smallholder women (and men) reported no cases of cooperating with khodyms in this regard.

What was learned about the work arrangements under which paikals and khodyms perform their voluntary duties explains the disjuncture between what their semi-formal services and the actual failure of the peasants to benefit from them. The semi-formal nature of the job, the ambiguous terms of payment, and lack of reporting requirements characterize such work. For instance, when it comes to spreading the news about the family events, paikals and khodyms receive payments from the hosts in cash or in kind. In contrast to this, doing the job of announcing asvak is a volunteer work which does not involve any sorts of payment. For this reasons the ilatkoms do not explicitly obligate the paikals to announce asvak. Neither are paikal required to report back to ilatkom about this work. These conditions make it very conducive for the paikal to render the work of systematically announcing asvak 'unimportant'. In this circumstances information can only be disbursed sporadically, thus, unreliably.

The data above suggest that the communicative channel of shura-ilatkom-paikal-khodym-peasants has a rather provisional character. None of these participants perceive the work with peasants as their direct responsibilities. On the contrary this task has been shaken off from one's shoulders upon the ones of others. The rather informal nature of their positions with ambiguous job descriptions and compensation determines the fact that working with peasants is not taken seriously. Rustam is the only ilatkom in Urto-Yop who receives a stipend from the local governor's office because he has worked in a similar position during the Soviet Union and his salary was retained. However, in all other regards his work and the work of the rest ilatkoms is rather arbitrary, they signed no contract or any other document which lays out exactly what their responsibilities are. Other ilatkoms receive no formal payment at all. Their remuneration is intangible and comes in the form of social respect, recognition and access to public spaces. It is

also important to remember that besides their communal roles, all the ilatkoms, paikals and khodyms have their own households to run. All of this makes their work with peasants, for which they receive no payment and no reporting is required, even less a priority. The vague definitions do not resolve the problem of uncertainty for the subsistence peasants who require a systematic and a reliable source of information.

WUA textual practices: The social organization of water use

Within the structure of the WUA I discover a similar absence of information mechanisms for the peasants. None of the water masters undertakes any specific and regular activity to inform the smallholders about water. My direct question about this surprised them and solicited a moment of silence after which they admitted that their everyday work did not include communicating to the smallholders about the water arrival. One of them, myrab Ikkhom, later said: "Informing the smallholders is not worthwhile. They will find out anyways. They look at the canal". As an institutional ethnographer I am interested in the expression of "worthiness" pointed out by myrab Ilkhom. I inquired more into the work of the water masters and more became clear about how it is "worthwhile" to notify the farmers and not worthwhile to do the same in relation to the smallholders. I traced this discursive practice through the textual organization of the WUA's work.

As I continue observing WUA water masters do their work, I notice how their farmer-oriented work is textually coordinated. Every day of asvak they must report on their work to the WUA accountant. Their reporting is mediated by the special form which the WUA staff call 'konturs'. Below I present a copy of one such kontur reproduced from an original document and translated by my research assistant.

Kontur is an unofficial name of the document; it derives its name from its content which displays data about the agricultural fields. The specific location of a particular crop can be identified with the use of numbers which indicate a particular section of land. Each section has a unique number and is also called a kontur, i.e., the original use of the term kontur comes from this definition. The WUA chairman explains konturs as being the "plots of land measured and numbered by the land surveyor. There are konturs for all the land (within the village) including canals, smallholders', land, roads, and people's houses". The notion of kontur has been generalized into its use in reference to the entire document.

Figure 13. Kontur' the document

#	Kontur-related		Water related								
1	Size of the field. ha	Number of contour	Amount of water delivered			After that		Type of crop			
			By contract	Actual	Difference between the two	Open	Number of rows	Cotton	Wheat	Potatoes	Fodder
	5	218									
	3.7	220									
	3.9	224									
	0.9	225-226									

Signature by
DWRD
Land surveyor
WUA
Farmer

As a document the kontur contains information about each plots of land (kontur), e.g., the crop, the size, and the number of the plot. The water masters use this document to mark which plots of land have been irrigated. Against each kontur they mark the official amount of water expected, the real quantity received and the difference between them. Myrab Ilkhom, for instance, informs me that as he "controls the number of the watered hectares [he] looks at the konturs. They have their numbers and define the farmers' land. [He] marks which land has been watered and informs the WUA". This account of work has a peculiar element pertaining to the water master's practices organized around the konturs which "define the farmers' land". It is the document, therefore, that accounts for the farmers' land getting watered. Such textual emphasis is supported by the words of WUA chairman who mentions that the "myrabs [water masters] use the konturs of the farmer's land only". This interesting detail, 'the farmer's land only', mentioned casually, communicates his notion of 'worthiness' just as understood by the water masters. The kontur which is 'of the farmer's land only" is a reporting instrument that textually renders smallholder's fields invisible to readers by only accounting for the farmer's land and its irrigation. This text coordinates the water masters' attention to a particular type of land and land users, granting it a more important status and a larger 'worth'. It informs the particular view of WUA members wherein some categories become 'unworthy'. Constituted in these textual accounting practices is

the understanding of smallholder farming as 'unworthy'. Apparently it is not worth knowing about the smallholders, not worth informing them, and eventually not worth irrigating their land. The implications reach beyond the mere reluctance of the water masters to do the extra work of informing the smallholders about asvak. The konturs also serve as a basis for further decision making. Being framed outside of the institutionally accountable process, the smallholders and their use of water become completely invisible to those responsible for water management at the upper levels.

Indeed, the work of the water masters itself is institutionally mediated through text and informs the sequence of other actions by the water management administration outside the village. This is where the WUA accountant steps into the process:

> Every day during the asvak, myrabs telephone me and tell me the following: how many cubes of water arrived, whether farmers have irrigated or not, how many hectares of which crop have been irrigated. I put this down on a piece of paper and deliver this information over the telephone to the Vodkhoz (DWRD official). He will then use this information (WUA accountant, interview, May 2011).

The WUA accountant points out that her information will be further used by the DWRD for making particular decisions, such as prolonging the asvak for the village when her reports indicate that more water is needed. The experience of informant Rokhatdzon, the smallholder mentioned earlier in this chapter who complained about her failure to irrigate during the last asvak because "after the farmer had used the water nothing was left for us" becomes more understandable. When the conditions of the smallholders' land and their irrigation needs are institutionally ignored at the WUA scale, their textual invisibility there makes their particularities unknown to the higher levels of water delivery system. Rokhatdzon's needs for a prolonged asvak, for instance, cannot be considered. Her needs and those of other women remain largely obscured by the local administrative practices of the WUA, the only village institution through which the water can be accessed. This is how women-smallholders' experiences of uncertainty are organized, leading to their continuing failures to access irrigation, and their agriculture being constructed as 'unworthy' of irrigation. Their subsistence-relevant water needs are taken less seriously than the market-oriented needs of the private farmers. The outcome threatens the

livelihoods of the smallholder-women; it also demonstrates that the policy of water management when implemented routinely works inequitably.

Tracking the ruling relations. State-export and the organization of water management

Having begun my analysis with what actually happens in the everyday world of local water management, my inquiry now turns to how the (supposedly equitable) system operates as I have seen and described it. Here, I will turn to the analysis of the institution as a complex of activities organized around agricultural marketing for export. I look at it as an institution embedded in the ruling relations whereby people's actions are coordinated by the "institutional discourses that are systematically developed to provide categories and concepts expressing the relationship of local courses of action to the institutional function" (Smith, 2005, p. 225). This capacity to coordinate depends on the reproducible texts which when used by people "produce the stability and replicability" of an institution (p. 228). Below I analyze the role of institutional texts in the generalization of the social organization of Uzbekistan's water management system and explicate the ruling relations in place. This is important for my analysis because as Smith (2005) points out what happens at one time and place is no more than

> a particular work organization in a particular site unless and until we can find the institutional dimension of its organization. And that means finding the texts that coordinate the work done by different people not only in that setting but in other settings so that the work done in one place is coordinated with that done elsewhere and at other times" (p. 166).

Uzbekistan's water management program is composed of standardized practices and institutional texts, and my analysis shows some of the text-mediated work in which the water policy takes shape 'on the ground' in the actions of the WUA and its staff. These actions are coordinated through work done elsewhere, over time, but maintain their constancy through the replicability of the texts organizing the work. One element of my analysis is to show how textual coordination maintains the primacy of the ruling focus on irrigating the farmers' marketable crops, even though participatory management is talked about in various and conflicting ways. Texts, generated in the state bureaucracy, 'instruct' the WUA work that maintains the institutionally proper delivery of water. Eligibility to receive irrigation, for instance, is a text-mediated process

and I describe this process below. In so doing, I discover that the organizing principle of eligibility is the market-orientation of the crops grown by a prospective member and this organization of eligibility works systematically to exclude the women-peasants from equal and reliable access to irrigation. I argue that the ruling economic logic expressed in the operation of the water policy, far from being gender-neutral, can be understood as the routine construction of gender inequality.

In the situation I am analyzing, the ruling relations that the WUA staff enact are traceable in WUA's institutional documents which link the local settings to the extralocal. People engaged in water management take up those texts, reading them, and treating them as instructions for their work. The delivery of water follows a process that begins with the agricultural reform. The Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan issued a policy paper in January 2002 "On measures of reorganization of agricultural enterprises [shirkats] into [private] farming entities" (Cabinet of Ministers Decree No. 8 "On measures of reorganization of agricultural enterprises into farming entities", adopted on 5 January 2002). The policy promised "economic development of smallholder and private farming" (paragraph 9 of the Decree, p. 2). An appendix to that decree established WUA (Appendix 7) as central organizations to "rationally manage and use water resources" (p.15). It stipulated definitions and model documents for establishing WUAs such as a charter, agreements, schedules, calculation matrices, etc. As the main policy implementer, the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resource Department oversaw the creation of WUAs around the country and circulated the model policy texts. WUA Urto-Yop received this package from the DWRD and used it since its establishment in 2005. The package included a number of documents, two of which, the charter and the agreement between the water user and the WUA, I analyze below.

WUA Urto-Yop's charter is a key text in establishing the legitimacy for certain land to be irrigated and the way that irrigation is to be managed. It lists, for instance, WUA's main tasks in the following manner:

-The scheduling of water use;
-The water delivery from the state irrigation systems and its distribution between WUA members;
-The maintenance of the on-farm irrigation system (WUA Urto-Yop, Charter, p. 1).

This text establishes ‘WUA members’ as the legitimate recipients of the water delivery services. The membership is achieved through an agreement between the water user, WUA and the DWRD, and the agreement is registered by being stamped by the water user, WUA chairman and the chairperson of the DWRD (Paragraph 9.1 of the “Agreement between water user and WUA Urto-Yop”, p. 4.). In my interview with the WUA chairman he emphasizes the fundamental meaning of the agreement for the legitimate claims for water by asserting that “agreement is the most important; if there is an agreement, there is water; no agreement means ‘no water’” . However, certain groups are not eligible for signing an agreement. The WUA accountant explains that “an agreement between (WUA and non-farmers) cannot be signed because they do not have a stamp, while farmers have the contract with the State. They have cotton and wheat…, while they (smallholders) do not have a stamp”. Anybody not possessing a stamp, i.e., smallholder, is ineligible to join WUA as a member with full rights to access water use. Private farmers who were initially registered as independent juridical entities would have stamps from the moment they were created. Having a stamp was important for entering a land lease contract with the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, obligating them to annual submission of the entire amount of their cotton yield and the larger part of wheat produce to the State at a fixed price, the so-called “State Order Quotas”, in exchange for ‘free’ land tenure. Signing this contract was a defining step in becoming a private farmer. Smallholders, as mentioned above, were created as ‘home consumption’ farmers to alleviate the growing rural poverty and were formalized as ‘physical entities’ which were not expected to contribute to the state agricultural export from what they produce in their fields.

WUA’s ‘membership’ category not only legitimizes the receipt of water for irrigation but is a key textual instrument for assigning the ‘worthiness’ status to certain categories of people. Konturs are the ruling texts carrying the authority of the charter and the agreement into the work done at the local level. The water masters focus their work on water delivery and distribution exactly between their customers, i.e., members who are private farmers. The agreement between the WUA and water user specifies the details of how the water delivery services are administered and these details ‘instruct’ the tasks of the WUA staff in determining proper water consumption. The appendices of the agreement such as “Plan of Water Use” (Appendix 1 of the Agreement between WUA Urto-Yop and Water User) and the “Limits of Water Use” (Appendix 2 of the

Agreement between WUA Urto-Yop and Water User) define the amount of water to be received by an agreement signatory based on the norms established for irrigating particular crops. These numbers appear in the text of the kontur of each private farmer. When water masters irrigate they determine the needed amount of water based on the calculated volumes specified in the kontur. Any difference between these numbers and how much has been really received must be indicated in the kontur and is further used for determining the 'quality' of irrigation, i.e., another article the water masters mark in the kontur (from interview with a representative of DWRD, July 2011). Myrabs' informing the private farmers, in advance, about the upcoming asvak contributes to this quality because it allows the farmers to prepare for more efficient irrigation by cleaning the ditches, checking the pumps, etc. This information about the 'quality' informs decisions such as prolonging the asvak. It is important to note that at the end of asvak the kontur is signed by the farmer, WUA chairman, DWRD and the land surveyor. The kontur is the evidential basis for fining a farmer if he fails to produce the minimum (contracted to the State under the state quota system) amount of cotton and wheat, as long as the irrigation water supplied was adequate. In cases of low harvest of cotton or wheat due to the lack of irrigation water, the kontur can also be used to waive a farmer's payment of the fine for low productivity. In all these ways, the local farmers are linked into the state agriculture apparatus. Of course, the small-holders not participating in the system as the farmers do, are being ruled out by the same text-mediated practices. As I have shown, not being registered water users, they cannot enter into agreements with the WUA, and cannot access an agreement's benefits. The textually organized work of water planning, allocation and reporting renders them irrelevant or 'unworthy' to the work of the water masters, WUA and DWRD.

In Uzbekistan, agricultural production (with cotton and wheat as strategic commodities for export) accounts for sixty percent of export revenues and thirty percent of its gross domestic product (Asian Development Bank, 2001). The State authoritarian control over its agrarian sector to ensure its economic interest from agricultural export subordinates public water management policies. The WUA as a policy concept has become embedded in the strongly hierarchical institutional system of land and water resource management in Uzbekistan. The agenda and goals as well as textual technologies of the state agricultural development program are part of the institutional order in which the state's crop export system provides the ruling terms under which

the work in the local setting becomes institutionally organized. The everyday work of the WUA generalizes the institutional rule through enacting the standardized institutional texts that had been introduced to improve the farmers' performance in growing contracted crops. The WUA texts 'carry' the ruling relations constituting the coordination of the local sites with the extralocal institution and its goals. The institutionally-ruled, locally implemented, water practices entail specific consequences for the household farmers (smallholders) who are not recognized as institutional actors. It turns out that the water policy is being implemented at the historical moment that people in the category of household farmers and smallholders are mainly women. All the text-based practices I have identified construct these women as ineligible for membership, thus officially excluded in terms of legitimate water use. I have tracked how this institutional order and its local implementation has the practical effect of making the women smallholders themselves understood as insignificant to the water management program. In order to grow crops for state markets, the new system of agricultural production and its related water management policies seems to have turned its back officially on smallholders and subsistence production. Figure 14 maps this analysis. My data show that these women farmers strive very hard to accommodate their work to this skewed system. They do it at the expense of their time, work, energy and health, indeed of their livelihoods. In this sense, women absorb the costs produced in supporting the state's marketing of agricultural products as a financial strategy.

The international development project's efforts to improve the 'rural livelihoods'

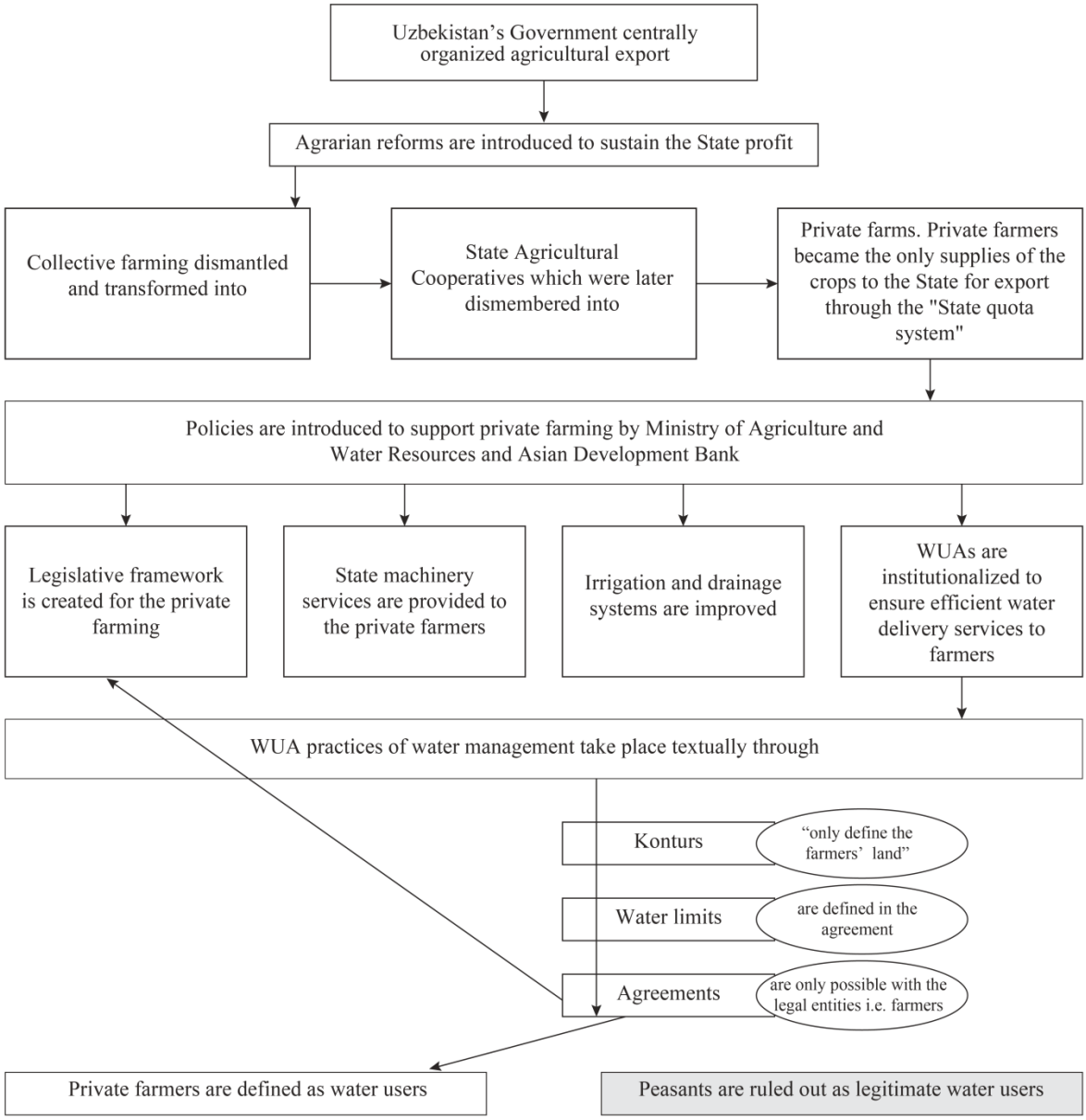
My analysis of the practices implicated by the ZUK project shows that this project underpinned the existing WUA practices oriented towards the state policy of agricultural exports despite the project's explicitly stated awareness of the social inequality entailed by such an orientation. Even with its participatory promise, I argue, the project unintentionally perpetuated practices which inadvertently excluded women from both contributing to and benefiting from the processes of bettering the water management.

"Only men work in the German project" was a phrase thrown to us[7] during a field visit in July 2011 by a woman-peasant whom we had just interviewed and who was showing us her

[7]During this field research day there were three people, my senior colleague from ZEF, my research assistant and myself

kitchen-garden. This woman's observation evoked my interest and attention because it expressed something that was not a deliberate intention of the project and even at odds with its

Figure 14. Ruling apparatus of agricultural export



participatory principles accentuated in the project. How, I wondered, did it happen that women-peasants experienced the ZUK project as 'only men's'? I argue that the discursive and material resources upon which the project drew transformed the project's intention to improve into practices which led to unequal distribution of opportunities to access natural resources among the

rural inhabitants on whose behalf it claimed to operate. I argue that this overlooking was unintended but embedded in the ruling apparatus of international development institution. I show how the skewed development programming of this project was entrenched in the routine practices of the institutional processes and procedures pertaining to the managerial agenda enforced by the conditionality of the institutionalized development. In doing so I emphasize the textual characteristics in the organization of the project that prevented the women-peasant in Urto-Yop whose experience I keep central in my analysis from benefiting from the improved water management that the project promised to bring.

Masculinity of Mobilization

The puzzle begins to emerge around the exclusionary discursive practices wherein women were framed outside of the notion of 'local participation' and 'grassroots involvement'. From the analysis of the project's work plan it becomes clear that the participation in the FTI WUA sub-project for the local stakeholders was possible either through the selection of the community mobilizers and/or involvement of WUG. I will start with the community mobilization component. All of the selected community mobilizers were men and none of them were peasants. Such an in- take puts the gender-neutrality of the participatory promise under question but this selection makes sense on the basis of the criteria applied in the recruitment process. The authors of the work plan have developed a list of characteristics which they saw were important for the role of the community mobilizers such as

1) Known to and respected by communities;
2) Have a good knowledge of area, water and agricultural issues;
3) Have free time and desire to spend for SMID (Abdullaev et al., 2008, p. 8).

Besides adhering to these standards the to-be-selected community mobilizers were assumed to have capacities to fulfill six differently specified roles within the structure of the Community Mobilization (CM) team. The team has been expected to have a team leader, two community mobilizers to work specifically with farmers, one person to work among peasants, one expert on water and land management and one facilitator. Looking closely at these criteria it becomes evident that they exclude any single opportunities for women-smallholders to be considered as proper candidates. The formulation of these criteria pertains to description of the people whose

lives are organized sharply differently than those of the women-peasants. For instance, the idea of being "known to and respected by communities" refers to a public role of a person whose visibility is unquestioned and who possesses a non-contested semi-formal authority. As in many cases around the world, attending meetings and publicly discussing is typically considered as "male" activities (Zwarteveen, 2006). In Uzbekistan, known for its backlash to traditional gender roles (more so in the rural areas), women are even less allowed to take public spaces (Kandiyoti, 2003) especially in the role of educators or speakers, both of which are implicated in the function of a community mobilizer. The women-peasants, whose labor and live circumstances are still divided along gender lines with women traditionally occupying a private, domestic domain, are unquestionably outside of this definition of an 'appropriate' community mobilizer.

Similarly, the second criterion of "having a good knowledge of area, water and agricultural issues" implies a set of particular professional features that are known for having a long history of being entirely and overtly masculine. "Working with water is a men's duty", said one of peasant women in an interview. "Watering is something real men do", said another one. This supports a general recognition that agricultural irrigation has been and continues to be a largely male sphere. For instance, Zwarteveen (2006) says that today, even though "mentioning 'women' in a professional irrigation context is much less of an anomaly", the "irrigation world continues to be masculine" (p. 14) and that "be it an engineer, manager or planner, [it] is very much identified and perceived as a male activity, or as an activity belonging to the domain of men" (p. 24). She argues that the masculinity of irrigation happens in three different 'worlds', i.e., the world where the water distribution and maintenance of infrastructure takes place; the world of thinking and production of representation of irrigation realities; and the sphere of professional irrigation cultures and identities. She provides some explanations for masculinity of irrigation employing, in part, the wider system of sexual stereotypes which associate men with features such as technical competence, physical strength, rationality and self-confidence which are typical characteristics of proper irrigation professionals. She also adds that the existence of women in irrigation as 'women', 'mothers', 'lovers' "throws them into sharp relief with male Irrigation Engineers" (p. 26). They become 'the other' against which the irrigation actors define themselves. The absence and invisibility of women in the domain of professional irrigation, says Zwarteveen (2006) contributes to "the status of the irrigation profession by underscoring its

'manliness'" (p. 26). Lynch (1993) claims that irrigation as the masculine project can be seen in it the embededness of irrigation institutions and policies in the 'bureaucratic tradition' which itself represent an apparatus where decision making and power are strongly associated with masculinity. The strength of this masculine tradition finds legitimization in the powers of irrigation bureaucracies. Zwarteveen agrees with her reporting that it is "through the 'bureaucratic tradition', that masculinity and the professional irrigation identity have come to belong to each other; they mutually constitute and define each other at symbolic and metaphorical levels" (2006, p. 24).

The FTI WUA work plan perpetuated these exclusionary practices brushing women away from the processes which had a direct impact on these women's lives. The third criterion for the community mobilizers speaks for itself; it describes a life situation which is apparently far from the lived experiences of the women-peasants. The person to be nominated for a CM team must have "free time". I have already shown in the previous chapter the everyday routine lives of the women-peasant as remarkably demanding. 'Free time' is thus an alien term for these women who are left with the multiple requirements to maintain the household, family members and themselves in the conditions of uncertain food production and their intensified domestic labor due to the extensive immigration of male adults. Consistent with findings from the research on 'women on small farms in the Third World', the Uzbek women have a triple burden of work. They carry out the social reproduction of the household simultaneously with providing the unpaid labor on the family farm as well as occasionally working for wages on another farm. To quote Momsen (2004),

> In most rural communities women work longer hours than men and have less leisure time. Consequently they have much less time than men for leisure throughout the year and at the peak agricultural season sacrifice an hour a day of their sleep and leisure time for extra farm work, despite reducing the time they spend on their reproductive tasks (157).

For the Uzbek women, the combination of productive and reproductive activities leads to long hours making them "probably the busiest people in the world" (FAO 1993, p. 37 in Momsen, 2004, p. 137). The project's efforts to identify people who have 'free time' exclude peasant women almost automatically.

WUG and lost opportunities

Besides the community mobilizers' group, there has been a second window of opportunity for the women-peasants to participate in the project and make themselves and their specific irrigation concerns visible and heard. This window of opportunity is the sub-level of water management expressed in the notion of the Water User Groups. Although these groups have been supposed to be self-organized within the SMID approach the community mobilizers have been expected to identify existing groups that resemble the features of WUG or facilitate the process of organizing a new WUG. The idea behind this notion is concerned with a second major task of the social mobilizers to facilitate the formation of such groups in Urto-Yop by identifying leaders from each WUG and promoting them into the WUA council branch, promoting thereby the bottom-up WUA management approach. My investigation reveals an active presence of the already functioning WUG-like teams organized spontaneously, without the external facilitation of the project. These unofficial village teams often operate under the initiative and leadership of women-smallholders. One of the groups is headed by a woman whom I call Zulfiya. Zulfiya took on this role in 2006 after she retired from her work as a school teacher. She started her work as an irrigation-organizer after the pump manager of her community refused to serve her street because he had a fight with two other peasants living on this street. Zulfiya approached him and they agreed that she would be responsible for collecting money from the residents of her street and save him from doing it himself. Since then her job was extended to a larger set of responsibilities illustrated in the below quote.

> I have fifty houses [under my supervision]. Today I will go around them to tell them to clean the ditches, if they don't the water will not go through. The ditch consists of two parts, one part we have cleaned and the other one has not been cleaned. I also arranged yesterday for the tractor which will take away the trash from the ditches. I do it [the voluntary work of irrigation organizer] all myself, voluntarily, if there is nobody to do this, nothing will happen. I keep a diary of the neighbors to keep track of who paid, when and how much. I look at the order of the irrigation, open the gate and ensure that people close it when they are done. Then I take the money and my records to the pump manager. Earlier I initiated that the tube be changed from small to a large one. Besides I initiated that they dig a drainage canal. When there was no a drainage canal the fruits did not ripen

well. I organized the women and we asked the ilatkom to dig the canal. Today I will clean the ditches. After that I will go to the ilatkom and ask him to remove the trees which have grown on the edges of the small canal and they interfere with the water flow (interview, April 2011).

Zulfiya's account suggests an existence of available forms of social activities, exactly the types of local dynamics that the social mobilization processes planned to achieve. However, instances like this never entered the project, remaining unknown to the project staff. The potential they held for advancement by the project processes was therefore lost. Lost, as well, was any institutional understanding of women's contribution.

The fact that the pre-existing form of social organization bearing characteristics of WUG such as the one led by Zulfiya has bypassed the project's attention is, I argue, largely associated with the projects' focus on the commercial farmers. I discover that the project attempted to economize time and resources used on the mobilization work among the smallholder water users. For instance, the project developers proposed to facilitate the formation of WUG among farmers separately from the WUG among the peasants and appointed two persons to conduct social mobilization among the twenty one farmers as opposed to only one community mobilizer for a

Figure 15. Zulfiya showing her records

Source: own photo taken in April 2011

significantly larger number of peasants (more than two thousand households). Moreover, the one community mobilizer who was hired to do his work among peasants was additionally expected to perform the duty of "observing the news and innovations which took place among the farmers, if there were problems or disagreements" (from interview with a community mobilizer, 2011). An account from the FTI WUA team leader explains why the WUG-like organizations among the smallholders were not 'interesting' for the project:

> There were no problems with organizing the peasants… [because] WUGs were informal structures and among the peasants this structure had already been present and even informal leaders among them were identified. For the peasants the work of the WUA was more important, and they were already ready to work with it (interview with FTI WUA team leader, August 2011).

In contrast to this state of affairs, what did demand an increased concentration and focus from the project team was the mobilization work among the farmers that would eventually lead to ensure their support for the WUA:

> Farmers were not ready to support WUA. They were busy implementing the state order on wheat and cotton; they were inert and not interested whether WUA functioned well or not. Farmers have a lot more rights and privileges because they supply the state order. They will receive water in any case. With peasants it was easy, they see every day how difficult it is to get the water. Farmers, on the other hand, know that they will surely get water. The farmers have many resources besides WUA, their own water engineers and irrigators (interview with FTI WUA team leader, August 2011).

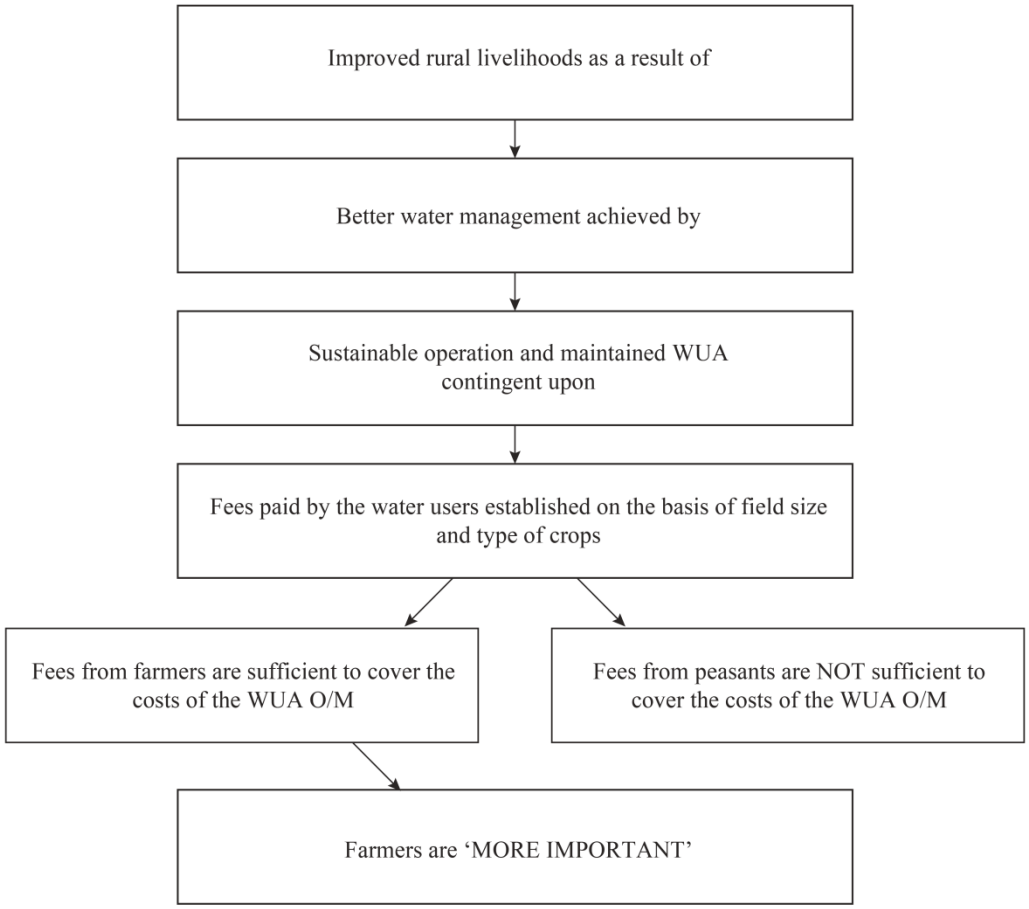
This quote illustrates the explicit focus on commercial farmers as the major targets for the project's mobilization. Such focus points to the more general conceptualization of the 'best fitting' local stakeholders which by largely embracing farmers' characteristics entailed practices that omitted women as legitimate participants with their own potential for communal management, their own irrigation practices and agency of change. On the contrary, women-peasants have been excluded from any opportunities to participate in the project as mobilizers or as WUG despite the participatory commitments and gender-sensitive promises of the project.

Revealed here is a peculiar discrepancy between the project's being conceived as participatory and inclusive, and the experiential knowledge of the project by the women-smallholders who knew the project as being 'for men only'. An institutional ethnographic explanation for this discrepancy emerges as I continue to trace the social relations of the setting into the organization of the project as part of an institution.

Beginning to trace social relations

Traces of social relations emerge in the words of the community mobilizer who, despite being assigned to work with the peasants, ended up mainly mobilizing the farmers. He explains that "working with the farmers is more important because peasants' fields are small and they are too many, whereas farmers are few and their fields are large". The findings of Ul Hassan and Hornidge (2010) extend his understanding of why it was 'more important' for the WUA to work with farmers. According to them, WUA experienced no problems with receiving payment from the smallholders, however, these fees were not sufficient to cover the required WUA expenses such as the salaries for its full-time staff. Fees (charged based on the size of the land and the type of crop) submitted by the commercial farmers would raise significantly more funds to ensure the sustainability and maintenance of the WUA. But the problem with this farmer-oriented financial sustainability was that farmers were unwilling and irresponsible payers (Ul Hassan & Hornidge, 2010). Thus, substantially more (mobilization) work needed to be done to overcome these failures in order to ensure the provision of the farmers' larger portion of the payment needed to keep WUA running. The project itself heavily relied upon the loyalty of the farmers to support WUA with their regular, consistent and sufficient payment which would allow for its effective functioning and well-managed irrigation in the village, ultimately resulting in the improvements in the livelihoods of all the rural population. The efforts of the project were, thus, focused on generating such loyalty and this was one of the way in which farmers were constructed as 'more important' (Figure 16). But this discursive construction of 'importance' not only impeded the peasants from benefiting from the project but also from contributing to the project goals, signifying a lost opportunity not just for them but for the project; the project might have productively built upon the already existing practices of social mobilization among smallholder women and failed to do so.

Figure 16. How farmers are constructed as ‘more important’



The ruling discourses: From Rio-1992 to FONA to IWRM

The fiscal sustainability focus, which I began to trace in the above paragraph, can be tracked to the overall project’s quantitative preoccupation with the managerial development technologies of ‘impact’, ‘efficiency’ and ‘results’ which I discuss in the following section. As a development research project ZUK project appears to be conceptually connected to the global processes which evolved after the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro (known as the Earth Summit) resulted in high-profile international conventions on climate change (UNFCCC), biodiversity (UNCBD) and desertification (UNCCD). These three global documents have had a particular importance for German Government’s strategy for research and development. Textual traces appear in texts of a

number of national and international research programs that the German Government has created in response to the challenges these Conventions pose, as I discuss in what follows. The ZUK project itself has been conceptually guided by the Rio 1992 discussions; these transnational policy frameworks have entered various local sites through practices packaged in a variety of bi- and multi-lateral agreements and arrangements. For instance, German Development Cooperation (GTZ, a government-sponsored worldwide organization for international cooperation) announced efficient land and water use in the Aral Sea region a priority for combating desertification in the Central Asian region in its report to the UN Secretariat for the Convention to Combat Desertification the (UNCCD, cf. GTZ-CCD 2000 in Vlek, Martius, Schoeller-Schletter, Lamers, 2001). Following this, the German Government declared priorities for cooperation with Central Asian States within the framework of sub-regional action plan for combating desertification at the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (COP) meeting in 2000 (Vlek et al., 2001). These topics included among its priorities "improvement of agricultural water use and a sustainable regional water supply, the control of erosion and salinity, a harmonization of policy and legislation and scientific cooperation" (Vlek et al., 2001, p. 7). UNCCD's particular commitments have been to a "bottom-up approach, encouraging the participation of local people in combating desertification and land degradation" and facilitation of cooperation "particularly around knowledge and technology transfer for sustainable land management" (http://www.unccd.int/en/about-the-convention/Pages/About-the-Convention.aspx). All of these priorities shaped the conceptual backbone of the ZUK project from its earlier stages.

In mid 2000s these research programs were brought under one umbrella program called Framework Programme Research for Sustainable Development (FONA). FONA was established to ensure the German response to the Rio 1992 processes and as such it carried the conceptual agenda of these conventions into the programs of the federal ministries. When German and then European Strategy on Central Asia identified "scientific and technological cooperation with Central Asian countries" as one of its priorities (BMBF, 2012a) the role of FONA has become even more prominent in shaping the projects developed within this priority. In Germany the key player for implementing activities in the area related to research and science for development is the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF), the German largest governmental

funding agency that takes an overarching responsibility for science and research-related policies (Zander & Moll, 2011). With the advent of FONA BMBF bundled all of its sustainable-development funding for research under its agenda (Zander & Moll, 2011), including ZUK project in its third stage.

Within the priority of "scientific and technological cooperation with Central Asian countries", BMBF invited and provided funding for projects in the areas of 'environment and sustainability', 'water resources management', 'environmental technologies', etc. All of these BMBF-funded projects are obliged to follow the specific guidelines of FONA which work to ensure generation of knowledge related to research areas and fields of application which are seen as strategically important. They include "enhancing climate protection and adaptation to climate change, sustainable resource management as well as innovative environmental and energy technologies" (BMBF, 2009, p. 2). Within these areas FONA establishes a number of its own funding priorities and funding policies. One of such funding priorities is 'Sustainable Water Management (NaWaM)", i.e., an approach to sustainable water management that enforces a particular complex of approaches, methods and technologies called Integrated Water Resources Management around the world (BMBF, 2012b), also inspired by the same Rio 1992 processes. On a side note, spearheaded by the UNCED, IWRM has become a global concept as well as a set of principles, guidelines for sustainable quantitative and qualitative management of water resources for supporting economic and social development while preserving the ecosystems. It has been promoted by various donor institutions, including, BMBF, as a way to implement globally agreed efforts to water management and development expressed in the transnational 'green' agendas such as the Dublin Principles and Agenda 21.

Tracking the ruling discourse in the ZUK project

The traces of the conceptual apparatuses of Rio-1992, FONA and IWRM can be found in ZUK documents and in the talk of its staff. A scientific coordinator of the project's third phase explains in an interview that "the role of the donor [BMBF] must not be underestimated. It is important to know that IWRM was demanded by the donor. The decisions were influenced by IWRM and FONA". Not to mention that the ZUK project is listed on the BMBF's website as an example of technological cooperation between Germany (BMBF) and Central Asia (http://www.bmbf.de/en/12426.php), as an IRWM project

(http://www.fona.de/mediathek/pdf/BMBF_Water-as-a-resource_2012.pdf) and as a FONA's endeavor to develop sustainable alternatives to irrigation-intensive agriculture (http://www.fona.de/pdf/publikationen/research_for_sustainability.pdf). To illustrate more specifically, FONA and IWRM-inspired foundational ideas of efficiency, maximization of economic and social welfare, sustainable resource use, technological innovations, transdisciplinary approach became the key conceptual notions in the ZUK project. These ideas when put into practice to the Uzbek context glued the notions of efficiency, sustainability, innovations with private farming. For instance, the project concept was based on the major assumption that "a sustainable restructuring of land and water use in the Aral will have to improve the livelihood of the local population through *private farming* based on (ecologically, economically and socially) *sustainable* and *efficient* land [and water] use option[s]" (Vlek & Martius, 2003, my italics). This assumption is only one example of how the centrality of 'private farming' has been integrated in the project in its all phases.

Through a particular definition of the origins of the problem that the project aimed to address, i.e., the Aral Sea crisis, private farmers have appeared in the project as a special group, specifically, as legitimate and strategically-important resource users. The project proposal for phase I identifies the reasons for Aral Sea's crisis to be the agricultural production of commercial crops: "catastrophic environmental situation [the Aral Sea crisis] has been brought about by a gigantic irrigation system set up by the former USSR to cultivate monocultures- mainly cotton" and that the "predominance of cotton in agriculture led to the drastic increase of irrigated land in the last century, with the ensuing problems of water waste and shortage, desertification, land and soil degradation and salinization and environmental degradation" (Vlek et al., 2001, p. 7). The current land and water use which the authors described as inefficient has been seen as exacerbating the already existing disaster —"[presently] agriculture consumes about 70% of all water resources in Uzbekistan, and the agricultural water-use efficiency in Khorezm is notoriously low" (p. 33). Thus, to facilitate a more efficient water use the proposal writers have planned to introduce technologies that would allow for more economical and effective irrigation practices while sustaining the "effective agricultural production" (p. 14). Since the environmentally-hazardous cotton production has remained predominant in Uzbekistan, targeting

and supporting the cotton-base agriculture carried out by the private farmers appeared more than rational.

Concurrently, with such conceptualization of the 'problem', the 'efficient resource use' becomes a key concept in the project and as I have already shown, a discursive practice for producing 'important' vs. 'unimportant' local stakeholders. The ZUK phase II increases the project's focus on cotton-producers through emphasizing the idea that efficient resource use must be done through "development [of] pathways for transforming the local economy from a centrally-based to a market-oriented system" (Project Proposal for Phase II, p. 3). At the heart of the proposal for the phase II is the idea that the "key to the success of restructuring will be the functioning markets and privatization of agriculture" (p. 5). In the conditions of the liberal market and privatized agriculture, larger producers such as private farmers are naturalized as key contributors to the market processes, therefore, are a 'preferred' category of stakeholders in the market-oriented processes. This explains the project's reliance on the private farmers as opposed to the subsistence production peasants.

Another related explanation can be found in the increasingly explicit project's emphasis on the IWRM-promoted principle of the efficient use of resources in economic development. In the Phase III the ideas of economic development become manifested through the remarkably more frequent use of the terms such as "economic efficiency", "income generation", "productivity", and "profitability" in relation to the project descriptions. The productivity orientation appears to fit the logic of the economic thinking, however, application of such professional economic terms in relation to smallholders who do not produce marketable crops is straightforwardly irrelevant. The actual smallholder farming is unrelated to market ideas of production and consumption and become, thus, discursively pushed outside of the project economics-based legitimacy.

There is also an issue of managerial performance which accounts for the project gaze towards the private farming. Here I turn to the project director who is also the lead author of the project. He explains that such links between efficient water use, sustainable management and private farming is related to ensuring the visible quantitative impact of the project on the efficiency of water use. Quantitatively, he clarifies, the project has intended to generate a

significantly larger impact if it targeted commercial agriculture conducted by the commercial farmers. This is what he says:

> So, in the beginning the program was not so much targeting any particular group. When we started there were still kolkhozes [collective farms], when the kolkhozes were dissolved we had to change our focus as well. But we were looking at water and the improvement of water use efficiency and, of course, the bulk of the water used is in commercial farming of cotton and wheat. And if we wanted to have an *impact* we had to make sure that these guys [farmers] would change because the commercial activity or the state-ordered activities of the farm was where the 90% of the water went. You know, if it only improved, even if it doubled the water use *efficiency* of the small farm activities which were using only 10% of the water, 90% of water would still be a loss. So, the bigger impact was likely to come from the bulk of water used in the commercial activities (interview, July 2011, my italics).

'Impact', is an important term for the development assistance which aims to demonstrate that a program will bring or has brought the desired, meaningful and significant benefits to the targeted population. As an institutional category it is counted on as a marker for the effectiveness of the spent resources and as an indicator considered in decision-making for funding. The typical demands of funded development assistance programming and associated technologies of development management force the developers to think about 'impact' in order to improve its reports, to achieve better accountability for program effectiveness and review its implementation policies in light of their 'impact', receive subsequent funding, etc. Here my argument concerns the ruling potential of the practices around 'impact' as a technology of development management designed to generate and measure results. My further analysis focuses on how the 'impact' has been actually enacted through the text-based practices. I argue that while concerns with 'impact' may appear to be unarguably beneficial, my analysis of the practices being employed to ensure it suggest that from the standpoint of the women-peasants' the "impact" approach has a potential to be malign.

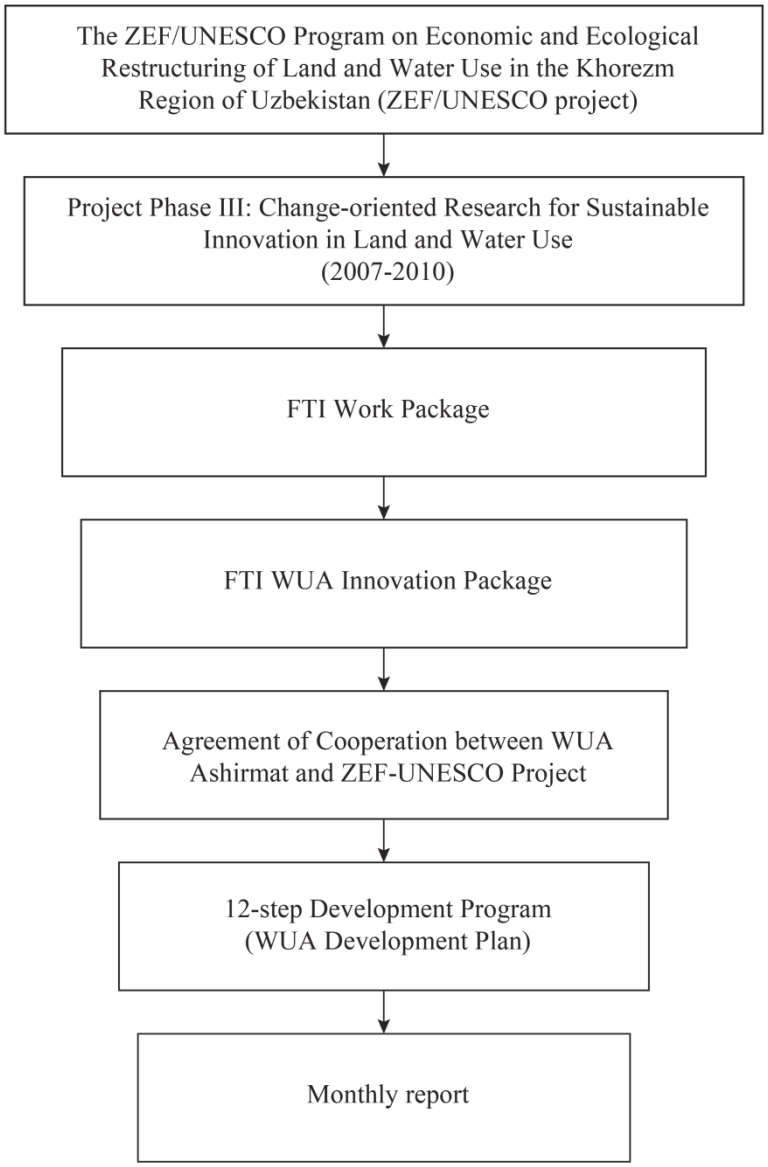
Textual accountability: The ruling practices of exclusion

The 'impact on efficiency' as an organizing institutional principle has implicitly informed the textual practices of the project even though participatory management was sought to be integrated into it. The notion of impact makes more understandable why, regardless of how well the smallholders were mobilized, it was the commercial farmers whose mobilization was more important. It was more important because their contribution to the processes of WUA, counted on the basis of the size of their land, would bring a significantly more visible and quantitatively more appealing impact. The reliance on the owners of the quantitatively larger agricultural territories and producers of 'preferable' crops invisibly entered policy documents which when enacted produced effects which were far from being gender-neutral, despite the original intention of being such. This quantitative reasoning helps to explain how in the participatory endeavors of the Project Phase III the collaboration with the village representatives drew in only farmers among the collaborators despite the original project intention to include all agricultural farming enterprises. According to one of the scientific coordinators of the Phase III, the local stakeholders group was initially expected to include smallholders, commercial farmers, livestock farmers, orchard farmers but "in the end only the fermers [commercial farmers] were represented in the project". I argue that what happened 'in the end' was constituted textually, discursively and routinely. The project texts carried with them the ruling notion of impact instructing the people working with those texts to attune their work with it. I show how the textual accountability practices of the project were ruled by the institutional power of 'impact' and institutional interests of producing quantitatively more attractive results whereby women-peasants as equal agricultural entities were invisible.

The general organizing principle of 'impact' penetrated the project texts in the form of the implicit and explicit reliance on the commercial farmers as the 'impact generators'. The project texts deemed the farmers to be "the most important land user" (Project Proposal for Phase III, 2006, p. 15), the "main agricultural experts", "innovators in the process of testing, adapting and jointly finalizing the ideas developed in the project" (Hornidge et al., 2012, p. 15) and farms as the "the basic decision unit in land use" (Project Proposal for Phase III, 2006, p. 39). The FTI WUA project work package adopted and perpetuated these ideas in its text-based accountability structure through which the connections were made between what was going on in

the local sites of the project and the project's administrative and scientific coordination (Figure 17).

Figure 17.Textual organization of accountability of the FTI WUA component



The project's most 'on the ground' textual practice was the monthly reports submitted by one of the community mobilizers to the project main office in Urgench. This mobilizer, whom I will call Ermurod, was given the responsibility to conduct this job in addition to his direct mobilization duties. A considerable amount of attention was paid to ensure the quality of the produced monthly reports and Ermurod received special training for doing this job in the

required manner and in the appropriate format. In order to generate these reports Ermurod would organize meeting of the entire group of the community mobilizers every two weeks to discuss the completed work. Following this he would take one or two hours to compile a report from the information discussed there. Then Ermurod would type his report on a computer, save it onto his USB-drive and take it to the project office in Urgench.

Ermurod's reporting work is one part of a larger accountability scheme of the project. The FTI WUA innovation package informed and was implemented on the basis of the contractual document called "Agreement of Cooperation between WUA Ashirmat[8] and ZUK Project". The agreement was signed between the chairman of WUA in Urto-Yop and the project coordinator of ZUK Project on Economic and Ecological Restructuring of Land and Water Use in the Khorezm Region in Uzbekistan to "jointly implement the mobilization of social resources for improved water management". I will repeat here the general goal of the work to be implemented under the contract corresponded to the one of the entire FTI WUA innovation package goal is to

> improve livelihoods of the rural inhabitants and enhancing productivity of the irrigated agriculture through better water management which will be achieved by motivating /enabling water users through Social Mobilization and Institutional Development (SMID) activities to take the necessary steps to support their WUAs" (Agreement of co–operation between Wua Ashirmat Koshkopir and ZUK project, p. 1).

This goal was to be achieved through the implementation of a certain arrangement called the "12 steps WUA Improvement Plan" (henceforth, 12 steps) during 2009-2010. The 12 steps appeared in the Agreement as an Appendix. This document was written in the format of a table and specified twelve major activities which were envisaged to lead to the expected results.

The 12-steps document employs technical and professional categories such as 'drainage infrastructure', 'inventory', 'hydrographic' and so on. Zwarteveen (2006) calls such language 'system-centered', i.e., directed towards making the irrigation system or irrigation management system work better. The system- centeredness generates conceptual language and methodological tools which separate the technical from the social, the system from its context

[8] The WUA in Urto-Yop was called Ashirmat Koshkopir at that time

and in practice, the men from the women agricultural workers (Zwarteveen, 2006). Smallholder farm households are dissociated from the

Figure 18. 12 Steps WUA Development Plan

Step	What will we do?	When	Who will lead?	Who will participate?
1	Get started on social mobilization process	December, 2008	Working-group (WG) members	Local people, farmers, WUA staff
2	Organize hydrographic Water Users Association along Zey Yop canal	2009	WG members, WMO management and WUA staff	Tezim, WUAs along Zey Yop canal and water users
3	Install hydro posts and start water registration	2009, second quarter	WUA staff and WMO	WUA staff, water users, farmers
4	Train farmers on water use and management	2009, first quarter	WG, FTI project team	WUA staff, farmers
5	Preparing to the General meeting	December, 2008 January, 2009	WUA administration and WG	WUA members, WUA administration, local people
6	Revise/update WUA structure	2009, January	WUA management	WUA members, WUA administration, local people
7	Strengthen the WUA's technical base	2009- 2010	WUA administration	WUA members, WUA administration, local people
8	Conduct inventory of irrigation and drainage infrastructure	December, 2008	Auditing commission	WUA staff
9	Prepare WUA's business Plan	December, 2008	WUA staff, WG	WUA staff + WG
10	Reconstruct the irrigation and drainage infrastructure of WMO/ Tezim	2009-2010	WUA and Tezim	WUA staff, *Tezim* administrative
11	Bring water from gravity canal and collector (Ozerniy) to the Shur-kul lake to increase groundwater level in Urtayab village	2009-2010	WUA and NNO «RIVOJ»	Under state grant and close collaboration with local people
12	Install two wells in each *mahalla* to improve drinking water quality (focusing on drinking water shortage in the village)	2009-2010	WUA and NNO «RIVOJ»	Under state grant and close collaboration with local people

irrigation system for its being generally associated with home production for own consumption which is often opposed to the large agricultural entities producing marketable crops for which the irrigation systems are largely designed for. This dissociation is remarkably evident in the 12

steps. The professional technicalities indicated in this document pertain, both explicitly and implicitly, to the irrigation practices of exactly the commercial farmers. For instance, the step Four is dedicated "to train farmers on water use and management". This is an illustration of an explicit disregard for and disallowing for those, who were not the farmers to enter the 'system'. It was not deemed necessary for the non-farmer groups like women-peasants to know more about water use and water management. Farmers were represented there as one identifiable group with supposedly shared interests and the needs to be better adapted to the new irrigation infrastructure and management methodologies. On the contrary, the relevancies of smallholder farms, dominated by women, are non-existent in the 12 steps despite the occasional inclusion of the term 'local people' among the participants in its text. The expression of 'local people' appears to be excessively broad to have any meaningful implications. It never comes into view by itself, but always as an add-on to some clearly defined categories of people such as the farmers, WUA staff or WUA members In contrast to farmers who emerge in the text in concrete terms as a distinct group with discrete features, the abstract category of 'local people' can potentially be anybody who resides in Urto-Yop including the farmers themselves and as such loses meaning to signify any particular group and ultimately failing to work for the real peasants' inclusion. For the people who use the 12 steps as a guiding instrument in their work it is unclear who and what are 'inside' the tag of local people in order to identify them and effectively attend to and address their concerns and views. Indeed, women and peasants may be implicated in the 'local' people but they are clearly not identified as the real agents in these processes and, as I have shown previously, acknowledging them becomes difficult and even institutionally 'improper'.

The reports which Ermurod produced followed the 12 steps embracing what Ermurod would consider, as he said, "the most important work done for the development of the WUA". He learnt how to generate these texts and what information was relevant for inclusion into the reports: "I always knew which problem to indicate, which problem was the most important". From what he could have observed happening in Urto-Yop he would deliberately select those facts, events, people, etc. that would have relevance to the packages of activities formulated in the 12 steps. His gaze as a reporter was directed towards those individuals, spaces and occasions which would lead him to a discovery of information he was expected to provide. He also knew how to make this knowledge available to him. Specifically, Ermurod consistently repeated that

he based these discoveries and choices on the ground of his direct interactions with farmers and the WUA administration. He explained: “in order to find out about them [the most important issues] I met with farmers every day and every day I visited the WUA”. The 12 steps document offers a particular textual arrangement which instructs Ermurod to perform his very local work in the way he does. It is not surprising then, that Ermurod would deliberately interact with exactly the farmers and the WUA administration in order to generate information for his monthly local reports. The reports are nearly fully devoted to the events, works and issues pertaining to the farmers. To illustrate, I demonstrate one of the monthly reports which I selected randomly (Figure 16. WUA monthly report). It is a two page A4 formatted paper entitled “Report”.

Figure 19. WUA monthly report

Report
On the work accomplished by “Kushkupir-Ashirmat” WUA for February 2009
“Work done by “Kushkupir-Ashirmat” WUA staff for February 2009 according the 12 steps of development plan:

- Received farmer’s calculation acts, farmers’ work estimation is done
- Prepared farmer’s yield contracts for 2009
- Finished the inventory of irrigation and drainage infrastructure”

The actual inventory comes immediately thereafter and lists the items such as “length of internal canals’, ‘length of pumping canals’, etc. After the inventory is finished the report states the date from which the village has access to water, specifies how many fields have been leached and details that the “head of the WUA on the daily basis controlled the on-going work” and that the “every WUA staff was assigned to certain farmer unit”. The report ends with the specific information about which farmers (with the names of the farms) were assigned to which WUA staff (including names).

Within the accountability arrangement of the 12 steps Ermurod participates in the textual construction of the generalized description of the local life in Urto-Yop. In doing so he depicts the universalized representation of the events in his village on the basis of the experience of only particular categories of agricultural workers. In his ‘stories’ which cover the narratives which reflect the relevancies of the 12 steps, peasants are absent, as well as women and their specific difficulties with regards to irrigation practices so crucial for their livelihoods. This becomes

important because the project team relied upon Ermurod's reports as the local evidence, as the data that was used for decision-making, publications, and wider application of the technologies. The monthly reports were the textual connections whereby the local activities and the state of affairs became known to the higher echelons of the scientific coordinating body of the project. What was written in these documents was used by the project for a variety of purposes as a reflection of 'truth'. The local reports would become a basis for further project planning for policy recommendations, and also serve as pieces of data for research analysis and publications. Importantly, producing the monthly reports in its form and format was counted on to make the project produce sustainable innovations for further out-scaling. "Well-kept documentation determined whether such work will work out elsewhere, whether such experience will be replicated and how to make it more successful", explains the FTI WUA team leader. Ermurod also knew that his reports were necessary for 'scientific publications'. Indeed, the FTI WUA team leader admitted during our interview in June 2011 that he still used those materials for his newer publications. From him I also learn that such reports also served to facilitate engagement from the local participants into the project work ensuring the 'joint' experimentation and transdiciplinary collaboration:

> Documenting the process was important. All the documents were produced in two languages. The notes in the local languages were submitted to the WUA so that they know and feel that they were part of all the processes. Not like someone came to them, asked them and went away. The WUA received all the documentation (interview, June, 2011).

Thus, knowledge 'returned' to WUA only repackaged in the discursive foil reflecting the project's agenda.

The ruling power of the 12 steps is constituted in the local Ermurod's work which transformed the local actualities into an object that was recognizable within the discourse expressed in the text. Such procedures subordinate the local experiences to the institutional; in this transformation the local actualities become institutionally accountable. The observable material is standardized to comply with the ruling discourse. The 12 steps is part of a technology with its frames, concepts, and categories that structured the selection of those data which would contribute to the generation of the expected results. The project institutional managerial goal to

ensure visible or envisioned impact resulted in what Dar and Cooke's (2008) called "constructing a regime of truth that makes […] some realities more legitimate than others" (p. 2).The project's backbone built on the ideas of the quantitative impact determined the conceptual practices and the implementation activities which illuminated the actualities pertaining to the agricultural life of particular villagers. Their irrigation needs were prioritized over the needs of others. 'Impact' has become part of the ruling logic which by informing the project's policies participated in the routine construction of gender inequality. The peasants' needs not entering in the either of these textual processes indicate their loss of the only possibility for them to be seen, heard and, subsequently, considered by the project and known to it as irrigators in their full rights. This is how the project resulted in talked about as 'for men only'.

Eligibility being organized on the basis of 'impact' worked, I argue, systematically to sideline the women-peasants from water-distribution processes. By the nearly exclusive reliance of the impact-generation on the commercial farmers as 'the most important' resource users and the most suitable and appropriate local partners for cooperation in launching and experimenting with agricultural innovations, the project, had effects which were highly gendered. Such result contradicted the inclusive project's promise to "improve the livelihoods of [all] rural inhabitants" and undermined its social justice claims.

ZUK project is an instance of international cooperation with clearly defined goals for improvements in 'gender-neutral' terms, i.e., treating men and women on an equal scale. The gender-neutrality in the ZUK project became expressed (wrongly) in assuming that men and women in the Uzbek villages had equal opportunities, resources, and access to participate in the project and that there were no differences in how women and men were related to market, state, commercial crops, land and that they could be involved in the project activities by similar means. Ultimately, the gender-neutral language, hid (the project's) masculinity, how it targeted realities of men, and, as in the words of a scientific coordinator of the project, "turned out to be gender-blind". I have partly shown how such gender-neutral (in fact, masculine) knowledge paradigm used for improving the situation in rural Uzbekistan informed the project's focuses, priorities, technologies and instruments facilitating the generation of knowledge which conformed to this ruling paradigm and pertained to the experiences of the men's lives in the village. The gender-neutral knowledge processes entailed perpetuation of inequality to the disadvantage of women.

Such a statement may suggest the practical uselessness and impossibility of gender-neutrality as a category. One may argue that within the frameworks of the ZUK project, gender was never a priority; it largely had a natural science focus with a slight segment on the social aspects of natural resource management. However, my next case analysis shows that even an explicit gender (and women's) orientation of an international development project may similarly sideline women's needs, concerns and experiences in favor of universalized ruling knowledge. This convinces me that the gender-aware nature of a project does not guarantee integration of women's voices into decision making and 'improvement' processes and that officially claimed commitments to gender aspects of social problems may become subsumed by the institutional ruling processes of global development such as accountability, financial arrangements, and so on.

CHAPTER 7. KYRGYZSTAN: INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION OF LOCAL EXPERIENCES

In contrast to the gender-neutral project of international cooperation in Uzbekistan analyzed in the previous chapters, the following two chapters focus on the discussion of the practices within the framework of a bi-lateral project with an overt emphasis on gender and women. At the center of this analysis are the events taking place in the offices of the local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which aim to eradicate gender violence in Kyrgyzstan with funding which they secured from a foreign donor organization. These NGOs are the crisis centers for women which jointly comprise a network organization called the Association of Crisis Centers in Kyrgyzstan (ACC), itself registered as an NGO. The crisis centers and the ACC are often referred to as 'women's NGOs' for their explicit focus on women and gender, and were created within the larger processes of women's organizing in Kyrgyzstan. These processes of women's organizing themselves are embedded in the larger post-Soviet developments in Central Asia characterized by the processes of nation- and state-building, targeted international democratization efforts, foreign aid and assistance delivery, and new conceptual practices of gender and development (Simpson, 2006). These developments set up a context that shapes certain general features of the anti-violence work done by crisis centers for women in Kyrgyzstan. More specifically, it embeds the crisis centers in the institutional organization of the foreign funding arrangements, the relationships with the State, the international women's anti-violence movement and global discourses on women and violence. My research analyses the organized relations between these contextual conditions and the everyday work of the crisis centers at various levels. This chapter and the next describe my discovery that the new institutional arrangements change the nature of the work among the employees of the crisis centers, making it more complex and disrupted. Fund-raising and activities associated with it preoccupy the crisis centers in their efforts to maintain their organizations; the professional staff becomes increasingly drawn into this work. Something also happens at the level of interaction between the workers and the clients who come to the crisis centers for support and protection from violence. In the processes of intervention the victims receive a version of protection which conflicts with the official goals and promises of the crisis centers. In contrast to the formal

mandates of the crisis centers, these protection practices originate in authoritative discourses and disregard women's specific experiences, capacities and knowledge.

In the current chapter I identify some of these larger influences which have contributed to creating the institutional environment in which the events at the center of my analysis have been taking place. In contrast to the similar part of analysis in the Uzbekistan case, where the institutional environment largely pertains to agricultural reforms, in Kyrgyzstan, the institutional environment discussed is the status of women and women's "empowerment" programs, gender equality, human rights, and civil society. This provides a background for my tracing of the processes whereby the local women's anti-violence organizations exercise intervention practices that appear contradictory to me. This study uses the approach I employed in the inquiry conducted in Uzbekistan. Here I also focus on the local practices to uncover the particularities of this work and on the ideological/conceptual underpinnings that make sense of what appears to be contradictory features of the research settings. After I situate my inquiry in the larger socio-political processes I move to a thorough examination of the ethnographic material centering on the actual activities performed by the local anti-violence organizations. The main analytic goal of the current chapter is to explore and expose those paradoxical characteristics of the local work as puzzles to be taken up - methodologically prior to the explication of the larger social organization (in the following chapter).

Country: Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan is one of the smallest countries in post-Soviet Central Asia with a population of approximately five million people and the territory of 200 thousand square km. It is also one of the poorest countries in the region where thirty five percent of population live in poverty and as many as one million live and work abroad (Manjoo, 2010). The ethnic composition of the country is very complex and includes major groups such as ethnic Kyrgyz (67%), ethnic Uzbeks (14%), ethnic Russians (10%) and more than eighty other ethnicities. Landlocked and with little local industry and only a few natural resources (including gold, hydropower, and cotton) Kyrgyzstan is economically vulnerable. In 2011, Kyrgyzstan was scored 0.615 on the Human Development Index (HDI) which placed it in 126th place (out of a total of 187 countries) (OECD, 2012).

Fertile agricultural areas with access to water have become a source of competitiveness, especially in the southern overpopulated Fergana Valley, predisposing to social unrest. In March 2005 the country's first president Askar Akaev was forced by the people's revolution to flee the country and resign. His successor Kurmanbek Bakiev was overthrown five years later in April 2010 in a violent manner leaving more than ninety people among the protesters dead. In the situation of political instability and fragile interim government ethnic violence broke out in June 2010 resulting in four hundred people killed, 375 thousand people displaced and more than one million people who suffered loss of property, physical injuries, and sexual and psychological violence. The interim government which took shape in April 2010 was headed by Central Asia's first woman president, Rosa Otumbaeva, who served in this post until December 2011 when she was replaced by Almazbek Atambayev. This was the first and only peaceful presidential replacement in the history of the independent Kyrgyzstan.

Situation of women

The situation of women in Kyrgyzstan resembles the (de-)developments described in chapter 5 for the women in Uzbekistan and is believed to have largely deteriorated since Kyrgyzstan gained its independence in 1991 and macroeconomic reforms to decentralize markets and liberalize trade were introduced (Hoare, 2009). As the new demands of the market economy necessitated changes in the organization of the state enterprises and institutions, the new regime withdrew previously state-sponsored subsidies and eroded social welfare provision including the state-provided childcare. Women in these circumstances began to be seen as an expensive and unreliable labor force and were the first to be forced out of the labor market resulting in a nearly fifty percent reduction in female unemployment from 1991 till 2005 (Asian Development Bank, 2005). Besides losses in employment opportunities, women's political participation also declined. In 2004 women made up 52 per cent of the electorate, yet only 6.7 per cent of deputies in Kyrgyzstan's Parliament in 2004 were women, and no women at all were elected to parliament in the 2005 elections (Krastev, 2005). It was only due to the special affirmative measures that the "extraordinary elections" of 2007 resulted in 24 women (26%) elected to serve in the parliament (Divinskaya & Asylbekova, 2007). However, even such an indicator of 'success' should not be analyzed separately from the fact that having women present in the political structures does not automatically translate into more inclusive pro-women policies.

Educational opportunities in Kyrgyzstan for girls, once equal to boys' have been decreasing and maternal and child health has been declining. Women's economic activities and opportunities continue to decrease and, when employed, women's salaries constitute less than 70% of men's salaries (Moldosheva & Asylbekova, 2005; Mee, 2001).

The end of socialism has been argued to signify a backlash to the traditional gender division of labor as women were forced back into the realm of domesticity (Hoare, 2009). In Kyrgyzstan the resurgence of patriarchy was supplemented with the revival of 'cultural traditions' such as the customary practices of polygamy, bride abduction and an unprecedented level of domestic violence (Moldosheva, 2008; Manjoo, 2010).The available official statistics report eight to ten thousands cases of domestic violence annually; in 2010 this number accounted to 16 720 of registered cases of domestic violence (Ministry of Interiors, 2010 quoted in Isakunova, Eliferenko & Kekiev, 2010, p. 2). However, many cases remain unreported (Manjoo, 2010) implicating a significantly higher incidence. The Kyrgyz criminal justice system, expected to protect women from domestic violence in Kyrgyzstan, is reported, on the contrary, to discriminate against women-victims. Rashida Manjoo (2010), the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, states that

> police practices create significant obstacles to the reporting and prosecution of violence against women. These include the frequent bias of police officers towards reconciliation of the couple, police inaction based on the belief that it is a private matter or the assumption that the woman will ultimately withdraw her complaint, and a tendency to apply administrative fines or short detention periods, even in cases that would warrant criminal prosecution. Moreover, experts believe that acts of domestic violence are often classified by police as incidences of "minor hooliganism", or "disorderly conduct", which means that appropriate protection is not provided and the real figures on domestic violence are distorted (A/HRC/14/22/Add.2, p.18).

National and international frameworks for improving women's situation

The increase in violence against women takes place despite the existence of a comprehensive legislative framework to address the problem in the national legislation. The National Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic provides all citizens of Kyrgyzstan "equal rights and opportunities irrespective of gender" (Paragraph 3). The National Law of the Kyrgyz

Republic "On State Guarantees of Gender Equality Ensuring" (2003) and the Law "On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women" (2008) condemn all forms of gender discrimination including violence against women. Specific measures in the national legal framework which contribute to the government's commitment to address violence against women include the law "On Social and Legal Protection against Violence in Family" (2003), the law "On Amendments to Administrative Responsibility Code of the Kyrgyz Republic (2004), the Ministry of Interiors order " On Approval in Instructions on Introduction of Temporary Protection Orders into Practical Activity of Law Enforcement Bodies and Statistical Reporting" (2004) and an order of the Supreme Court "On introduction of judiciary protection orders" (2004).

The international framework for human rights and women's rights obligates Kyrgyzstan's Government to promote and observe human rights of all its citizens regardless of their gender. The Kyrgyz Republic has acceded to more than thirty international Human Rights treaties since 1991. Among them is the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (1948), "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights" (1966), ratified in Kyrgyzstan in 1994, that warrants ensuring each person's right to life and security regardless of their gender. The other treaties that promote non-discrimination on the basis of gender include the "Convention against Discrimination in Education" (1960), the "Convention on the Political Rights of Women" (1952), the "Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages" (1962), "Convention on the Nationality of Married Women" (1957), "Convention concerning Maternity Protection" (1952) and other. Importantly for the purposes of this chapter, in 1993 Kyrgyzstan agreed to the United Nations Declaration on the "Elimination of Violence against Women" that articulated the international standard for protection of women from violence. In 1995 the country joined the United Nations Beijing Platform for Action, and in 1997 the Kyrgyz Government ratified the "Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women" (CEDAW) that binds the states to take measures against the violations of women's rights and freedoms and ensure due diligence in investigating and prosecuting the perpetrators. Ratifying these international conventions is often believed to have institutionally supported women's equality. Fillipova (2004), for instance, argues that international documents with their methodological framing for identifying and addressing gender

issues played a significant role in Kyrgyzstan for speeding up the processes of bringing gender equality in a systematic, structured and strategic manner.

Globalized gender politics and the NGO sector

Recognizing the importance of gender equality to democratic development, many international projects which put women's empowerment at the center of their agenda have operated in Kyrgyzstan since 1991. Simpson (2009) calls these processes 'globalizing gender politics' whereby gender has been taken up within Western frameworks for development and democratization to which Kyrgyzstan, due to its being the 'receiving end' of development aid, has been susceptible. More recent global mechanisms for promoting gender equality in development were introduced into the country a decade after Kyrgyzstan gained its independence. Gender equality and women's empowerment appeared in the new global development framework adopted by the United Nations in 2000 called the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), listed in this document as the goal number three to be achieved by the year 2015. In order to foster the achievement of the MDGs the United Nations launched an institutional technology called the United Nations Theme Groups (UNTG). The UNTG are defined as the "UN system consultation mechanisms at the country level on specific themes relevant for the development of the host country" (UNIFEM, 2005, p. 3). In Kyrgyzstan the United Nations Gender Theme Group (UNGTG) has become the major mechanism for donor coordination to promote gender equality and combat gender violence since 2004. The UNGTG in Kyrgyzstan consists of nine UN organizations (ILO, UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, OHCHR and WHO) and is chaired by United Nations Resident Coordinator in Kyrgyzstan. Conceptually, the UNGTG facilitates a coordinated action on gender equality where "each UN organization brings its comparative advantage in gender equality and women's human rights to joint efforts" (UNIFEM, 2005, p. 3); and ensures that commitments made to gender equality in international treaties and legislation are included into the mainstream country development policies such as Poverty Reduction Strategy. Technically, the UNGTG is a high-profile expanded mechanism to broadly enforce the idea of the gender mainstreaming. Since the 2005 World Summit's expansion of the MDG-3 (on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment) beyond education and health to include women's economic rights and access to resources; human rights and protection from violence, and citizenship rights and participation in

decision-making the UNGTM in Kyrgyzstan has been working in the directions of those new priorities. Within this arrangement, for instance, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is responsible for combating violence against women in Kyrgyzstan via advocacy with civil society and religious authorities. The United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights (UNHCR) is mandated to implement training programs for law enforcement staff in legal assistance to victims of what is called 'gender-based violence'. The United Nations Fund for Women (now UN Women) is in charge of information and awareness-raising campaigning on this issue in the country.

The new policies to promote gender equality have entered Kyrgyzstan through programming which operates through disbursing funding for creating civil society, mostly NGOs, to carry out the donor-funded gender and women's programs. Most local women's NGOs, thus, were produced as externally-supported entities with paid staff trained to be able to access ongoing donor funding via applying for grants from a pre-defined circle of sectors and for a pre-established period of time. International organizations such as DANIDA, HELVETAS, UNDP, TACIS, the Soros Foundation-Kyrgyzstan, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, INTRAC, Hivos, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Freedom House Foundation, Winrock International, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) made funding available for these NGOs to be created, to organizationally develop and to implement women's programs. To illustrate, since 1996 the Soros Foundation-Kyrgyzstan (the Kyrgyzstani branch of the Open Society Institute) has supported initiatives of women's NGOs within its 'Women's Program'. Under the auspices of this program a sub-program on "Prevention of Violence against Women" focused on developing a network of crisis centers and carrying out activities to promote cooperation between various agencies in order to increase public awareness about the problem of violence against women. Since 1998 the Women's Program has funded establishment of crisis centers by independent women's NGOs and supported the creation and institutional development of the Association of Crisis Centers in Bishkek – the organization where my investigation takes place.

The funding-dependant features of the local NGOs, women's NGOs among them, frequently raise concerns among critical thinkers about the nature of the externally supported democratic processes which these organizations implement. Many argue that deference to donors

forces these organizations to often serve the interests of the funders and not the local population on whose behalf they act (Mendelson & Glenn, 2002). Tiulegenov (2008) for instance, criticizes Kyrgyz NGOs for failing to be properly accountable to the groups they claim to represent. At the same time other researchers emphasize the crucial role of the NGOs in providing services to the most marginalized groups in the absence of the state-sponsored care (Buxton, Abraliev, Kidaraliev, Moldosheva, Naumann & Yusupova, 2007). Hoare's research in Kyrgyzstan in 2009 characterizes NGOs working on women and gender as organizations which "constitute one of the most active and vibrant sector within 'civil society' in Kyrgyzstan, both in terms of the provision of services, advocacy and lobbying" (p. 9). She, however, worries about the marginalized position they hold both within the wider civil society and the overall development agenda in the country. While being marginalized as a general category, women's organizing is also characterized by hierarchy inside with the 'core' women's organizations setting the agenda for the rest of the local women's movement (Simpson, 2006). Additional criticism arises in Moldosheva's report (2008) where she questions the appropriateness and the quality of the externally imposed capacity building for women's NGOs. She emphasizes the inadequate level of skills and knowledge among these organizations in the area of gender theories, gender equality frameworks, methodology for evaluation and analysis and research technologies.

To summarize, the organizations at the center of my further analysis, Kyrgyzstani NGOs, operate in the context of available broad-based support from the global development agencies for local gender equality and anti-violence activism, and already existing comprehensive national and international legislative anti-violence frameworks. While conducive to anti-violence activities, this framework also offers challenges to the NGO's dependence and deference to the foreign donor agencies. It is also accompanied by profound lack of political will on the government's part to adequately address at the country level the problem of gender equality and violence against women (Moldosheva, 2008). Simpson points out more evidence that in Kyrgyzstan, along with the rest of post-socialist Eurasia, authorities tend to see women-focused policies as "soft options in development process— or mere Western ideas, which in the eyes of local officials, appear to involve no real consequences" (2006, p. 13). Indeed, the Kyrgyz state's position on combating gender violence is inconsistent: even with the laws against it, the mechanisms for their enforcement and for punishment of incidents are limited. While there have

been some efforts to give women a policy-making space in government, the current state machinery responsible for women's development has not been well integrated or funded. This leaves no official mechanism with the capacity to coordinate the implementation of gender policy in public administration. National budgeting has not been transparent as to understand the funds allocated for the anti-violence action. In general, it is recognized that the State's resources for gender issues and violence against women resources (financial, administrative and technical) are insufficient (Moldosheva, 2008). In these circumstances, the women's rights groups, including the organizations under my investigation, located throughout Kyrgyzstan must take on the government's responsibilities to provide care services to the victims of gender violence and they become engaged in activities such as research, advocacy campaigns and direct services to the women who suffer abuse from their partners. The Association of Crisis Centers and its member crisis centers are among those organizations whose work is presented in details in the following sections.

The Association of Crisis Centers and its institutional practices

ACC is a network comprised of thirteen community crisis centers located throughout Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, ACC is also an NGO itself with its own staff and office. My analysis offers insights into the ACC's work that embraces ACC as both as an independent NGO and as a network, two aspects which are inseparable from each other. As an individual organization, ACC was initiated and arranged by three crisis centers in 2001 to "jointly attain gender equality, reduced violence against women and enforce these issues into the national-level priority" (Constitution of ACC). International organizations such as OSI, HIVOS, and some others provide full funding for ACC's operation and maintenance, its institutional development and ACC's staff's skills building. Currently, ACC continues drawing its funding from a number of sponsored projects— during my fieldwork it was in charge of concurrent management of three projects funded by three different international organizations: HIVOS, European Commission, and the Open Society Institute (OSI). The budget from the HIVOS-supported project covers ACC's personnel's salaries, rent, and project activities, whereas the EC/ HAI-sponsored project pays for the rent of the offices of the crisis centers and the salaries for the crisis centers' staff; the OSI-funded project sponsors for the activities and disbursed no money for organizational expenses.

In the realization of its projects ACC works jointly with its member crisis centers. ACC is responsible for the overall administration and management of the project within the work of project implementation. As such the ACC is an administrative entity whose staff consists of managing posts, i.e., the ACC's director, project assistant, project accountant and office-manager. Additional staff is hired temporarily for specific projects the ACC runs. The ACC's director, Antonina, is a middle-aged woman, with a medical degree in cardiology and training in psychology. She is also a full-time chairperson of the Division of the Functional Diagnostics in the National Center for Medical Diagnostics in Bishkek. Antonina is also a director of one of the crisis centers, called "Shans", which is a member of ACC. Her office is located on the fifth floor of the National Center for Medical Diagnostics in the city center where she accepts her clients and occasionally holds meetings with ACC staff, donors and partner organizations; adjacent to her office is the office of "Shans". Owing to holding multiple positions in different organizations, Antonina must multitask and spends considerable time outside of her office. She attends public events, delivers speeches, participates in meetings, Parliamentary hearings etc. When in her big office upstairs she is very busy as well. The field note below captures some of it.

> Antonina sits in front of her computer with the "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence Campaign" matrix on the screen. She has prepared it in order to have each crisis center fill it out, so that she knows how much money each crisis center needs. She is also reading a memo on "Gender Issues in the Emergency Situations". Beside her computer are two office telephones, one of which is hers and a second one is a parallel line of the crisis center "Shans". The psychologist of "Shans" would regularly be away on the trips related to other work and Antonina would often take over the hotline operation. Antonina has also a mobile phone which keeps ringing. Besides those interruptions, patients of the National Center for Medical Diagnostics would knock and come in asking her to give them their diagnosis and interpretations of their cardiograms, which she would do on the spot, along with whatever else she was doing. For instance, as I was leaving she was talking on her office phone with a representative from a government agency on "Gender" while writing an interpretation on a new cardiogram with a ruler in her one hand and a

> pen in her other pen. About thirty minutes later she would consult a client who called the hotline of "Shans" (as she told us later at lunch) (field note, September, 2011).

In contrast to Antonina, the rest of the ACC's employees primarily stay in their office, in a two-room space one floor below Antonina's, where they perform their work. There are five women who work in one big room, where everyone has a desk and a computer. The second, small room is used for storage and as a kitchen. The project assistant, Karina, is a former music teacher with a degree in pedagogy in music, carries out activities related to the HIVOS –funded "Reducing gender violence in Kyrgyzstan" project. She writes training manuals, training agendas, and reports for all the activities the project incorporates. She is also a trainer who plans and carries out educational sessions for the crisis centers' staff. Karina works very busily, rarely talks on the phone, and spends her working day behind her computer. She is visibly irritated when the office becomes noisy and goes to the kitchen to work there in silence. The office-manager, Bella, with training in accounting, takes care of the office documents, answers the phone, helps the accountant and makes office purchases. The office accountant, Sheila, is responsible for financial reports to the donor agencies, to state fiscal agencies and national statistical committee. She makes and receives many phone calls from the crisis centers' representatives who also visit her in the office. Sheila acts authoritatively and is treated as an informal leader in the office with occasional confrontations from the project managers. Two additional workers, Claudia and Aisha, are hired temporarily to manage a project which the ACC implements with the HelpAge International (with funding from European Commission). Both women formerly worked for another local NGO which provided relief services to vulnerable older people. They collect monthly activities reports from all the crisis centers and consolidate them into one large monthly report which they further forward to the HAI country representative office. This work requires them to make numerous phone calls to the crisis centers clarifying the information submitted, making additional explanations, asking them to submit specific details. The women conduct regular field visits to the distant regions of the country to 'monitor' the progress.

"Reducing Gender Violence in Kyrgyzstan": the project and its institutional arrangements

In 2010-2011 the ACC implemented project entitled "Reducing Gender Violence in Kyrgyzstan" sponsored by Hivos. From studying the project proposal I learn that the project

provides general support to the overall operation of the ACC. The director considers this project to be the most important for institutional purposes because the entire organizational existence of the ACC is possible due to the funds coming from the budget of this project. As the title suggests, the goal of this project is to reduce gender violence in Kyrgyzstan. The ACC proposes to achieve this goal through improving domestic anti-violence legislation, awareness-raising, informational activities, and capacity building of crisis centers. More specifically, within the thirteen-months of the project time, ACC proposes to develop and introduce amendments to the existing law "On social and legal protection against violence in the family"; maintain and improve the ACC's website; carry out activities to raise anti-violence awareness within the "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence Campaign"[9], and conduct two training sessions to improve the crisis centers' competences. One of the trainings was planned to focus on psychological counseling, and the second one – on the work with the perpetrators of violence. These activities are both overseen and performed by the ACC's staff where the project coordinator with the project assistant run the campaigns, conduct trainings, produce project documents such as manuals, periodic and final reports, and supervise the participation of crisis centers in this work. The target audience, who, as the project assumes, would benefit from the project activities are the crisis centers themselves and the women who suffer violence in their homes. The project does not specify how the women who suffer violence are involved in the project's programmed activities. Apparently, these women's benefiting from the project is mediated through the (improved) capacities of the crisis centers and their project-defined activities. The participation of the member crisis centers in the project encompasses their active execution of the project activities as well as their being the objects of capacity building.

[9] The 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence is an international campaign originating from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute sponsored by the Center for Women's Global Leadership in 1991. Participants chose the dates, November 25, International Day against Violence against Women and December 10, International Human Rights Day, in order to symbolically link violence against women and human rights and to emphasize that such violence is a violation of human rights (http://16dayscwgl.rutgers.edu/).

Crisis centers and how they are situated in the research

Each crisis center "renders social, psychological, legal and other types of support to women who find themselves in situations of crisis resulting in different kinds of violence" such as

> psychological, physical, economical and other kinds of violence in the families; to victims of sexual violence; to victims of human trafficking, to victims of enforced marriages, to pregnant women, including those who are under-aged and single, to women in the pre-divorce and post-divorce situation; to those in family conflicts and elderly women abandoned by their children (Association of Crisis Centers , 2009b, p.4).

Within the project's terms of reference the crisis centers are expected to participate in the lobby-campaign to advance the law "On Social and Legal Protection against Violence in Family"; take part in the trainings and use the new knowledge in their practice; distribute the informational materials; conduct the awareness and informational campaigns on violence-related topics. The crisis centers are required to provide reports, both financial and narrative, to the project assistant and to the accountant who then consolidates those reports into one document for the project coordinator to endorse.

The crisis centers are organizationally independent entities with different histories, sharing, however, remarkably similar features related to the conditions of their (foreign) funding and the ACC's general approach to improving the capacities of the crisis centers. The conditions for funding and its availability represent an institutional arrangement which changes the nature of the work in the crisis centers in relation to the agenda and requirements this arrangement demands. In fact, many crisis centers owe their establishment to the accessibility of such funding. Zuzanna, the director of a crisis center in Karakol[10] relates that her crisis center, called "Altynai", "was initially registered as a women's NGO. In 2000 we applied for funding to Soros Foundation [OSI] to create a crisis center and we became a crisis center". The crisis center "Aruulan" in Osh[11] grew under a state-administered agenda but, also, with a grant from a foreign funder. Nargiza, the director speaks about the beginning of her organization.

[10] A city in the Issyk-Kul province of Kyrgyzstan
[11] The second largest city located in the south of Kyrgyzstan

> In 1996 the Government introduced a special national program for women called "Ayalzat" which aimed to improve the quality of lives of women. There was a woman who worked in the Commission of Family and Women's Issue under the Provincial Administration of Osh. She founded an organization, registered it as an NGO to carry out the activities of the "Ayalzat". It is now officially called Public Union "Center for Women's Initiatives "Ayalzat". […] At that time Soros Foundation [OSI] announced a call for project proposals for opening crisis centers. This was so new for us. And, of course, we applied and wrote a project and received the funding. So, since 2000, we opened a crisis center "Aruulan" under the Center for Women's Initiatives "Ayalzat" (interview, October 2011).

The external financial support is especially important for the operation of the crisis centers because they receive absolutely no state funding from the government. At the same time, in the absence of a state-administered support system for the women who suffer from violence, these crisis centers are the only service providers to these women. There is a considerable demand for these services which steadily grows every year. The statistical chart below (Figure 20) demonstrates the dynamics in the total numbers of clients from all the crisis centers from 2004 until 2010.

Figure 20. Statistical data from the crisis centers on the number of their clients

Year	Total number of clients in the crisis centers
2004	4 573
2005	8 719
2006	8 536
2007	8 642
2008	13 543
2009	15 117
2010	16 212

Source: Informational bulletin produced by ACC "10 years of combating gender violence by the Association of Crisis Centers in Kyrgyzstan", Bishkek, 2011

Common challenges experienced in the crisis centers

Increased demand for the crisis centers' services has not led to a corresponding increase of the funding required to support the work with an enlarged quantity of complaints. On the contrary, what Zuzanna and Nargiza report is a decrease in the availability of resources that they could count on to continue their support work. Time-limited and inconsistent funding from an international donor agency creates problems for their crisis centers. Both women recognize how these changes in funding forced them to cut their activities down. Zuzanna tells me about a shelter which they had before and had to close it "in 2007 [because] we stopped receiving Soros's support". Due to the same reason Nargiza's organization was turned into "a consultative center". But even reduced activity required more funding than what was available. Zuzanna, for instance, is not in the position which allows her to be 'just' a director of the crisis center on the full-time basis. The current level of funding is only enough to pay her (very) small salary and office rent; this forces her to find additional sources of money for the crisis center and for herself. She explains:

> In my crisis center I am a director and also a psychologist. However, I must spend most of my workday in a local hospital where I work full-time as a family therapist. I also look for and work under additional sub-contracts with different organizations to raise funds for my crisis center (interview, January 2012).

Under conditions of changeable and insufficient funding fund-raising activities have become central time-consuming features of the work. The crisis centers are forced to put aside their work with women-clients and become involved in the work of raising funds for their organization and practices associated with reporting for the use of those funds. These professionally unrelated activities add more work to the already heavy workload carried by crisis centers' workers.

The practices associated with accountability become a job in itself. Professional staff are being drawn into this work which they must do in addition to the job they were hired for. Elina, for instance, is a psychologist from a crisis center in Bishkek, who must act as a "local coordinator" for project with European Commission/HelpAge International. This work requires her to do extraneous work of planning, monitoring and reporting on how her professional activities with two groups of elderly people progress. Elina is also asked by her director to look

for funding and write project proposals to donor agencies. Elina finds these work requirements as interfering with her doing psychological counseling. She complains: ”I am already forgetting how to be a psychologist, I am becoming a scribbler!” The additional work of writing proposals and reporting adds to the already existing work with the women who come to seek support. This add-on upsets professional practitioners. Elina talks about doing the managerial work

> with a horror. For me it is a wild terror to do this job. I feel nauseated that I must do this writing, reporting, planning. I can’t stand this. I do this only because (my) office rent and salary are paid from this project” (interview, November 2011).

The features of the work in which I found Elina does not happen in vacuum. On the contrary, what her case illustrates is common for all the other crisis centers because they are forced to participate in the same institutional arrangement of funding with its accountability and other time-consuming requirements. The dependence on foreign funding necessitates extraneous and troublesome work which disrupts the work that the crisis centers’ workers do in their efforts to support women who suffer violence. The crisis centers’ general characteristics emerge as all the staff become implicated in the managerial efforts to maintain themselves as viable entities.

Improving the standards of crisis centers work

Contributing to the remarkable commonalities among the crisis centers is the work of ‘standardization’ which ACC conducts in relation to its members in the light of its mandate to improve the capacities of the crisis centers. The ACC’s standardization practices include aligning the work of the crisis centers with particular conceptual ideas for their proper operation and services. These standards are offered to the crisis centers through the ACC-administered centralized capacity building programming, and through ACC-produced specific institutional texts.

The capacity building component of ACC’s programming determined the crisis centers’ receiving identical skills and knowledge about how they ought to work. Since 2001 the ACC sent its own staff and its constituents to a considerable number of foreign-funded and externally-

organized trainings which aimed at improving the quality of crisis centers' work[12]. International experts from Russia, Poland, Italy, Netherlands, Austria, etc. delivered seminars on a surprising variety of topics focusing on organizational and institutional building as well as the direct anti-violence work (Association of Crisis Centers, 2011). To improve their 'institutional capacities' crisis centers' staff took part in trainings on "Strategic Planning and Sustainability" (three trainings since 2001), "Networking" (twice since 2001), "Fundraising", "Developing and Implementing Programs for Violence Perpetrators", and "Coordinating the Support Work to the Victims of Sexual Violence". Crisis centers also received skills-based trainings such as "Methods of Psychological Counseling" and "Lawyers in a Crisis Center".

The choice of these topics is reflective of the already existing knowledge frameworks offering definite and generalized, produced from outside, strategies on how to improve the local civil society, bring democratic development and, thus, automatically, benefit women's lives. The ACC's director Antonina makes sure that through the work of capacity building the crisis centers are kept current about the new trends and ideas in their area of work. These ideas are usually part of the international discourse on women's equality and generally coincide with topics/ideas/concepts that have better chances of receiving donor funding. Through such seminars the crisis centers are introduced to the processes happening in the global arena of women's rights and presumably universal mechanisms to advance and lobby women's empowerment. The ACC itself organized trainings on the topics such as "Writing an Alternative CEDAW Report", "Human Rights Monitoring", "The Scale and Specifics of Gender Violence in Kyrgyzstan", "Monitoring of the Realization of the Rights of Women", "Statistics on Violence", and "Monitoring of Anti-Violence Legislation", involving the crisis centers in learning about the popular themes in the anti-violence movement elsewhere. Antonina invests much of her time attending public events in order to learn about these trends:

> We must always be there where issues of violence are even minimally touched upon. In which role we appear there does not matter, but we must be there. We receive relevant experience, we know all about it and how it is all put together. This must not pass us by. I always try hard to be there physically when the issue of violence is raised. …it is

[12] The full listing of the trainings the staff of the crisis centers received appears in a number of reports and on the website of the organization (http://www.acc.web.kg).

> important to be "in the know", be known and recognizable and have a reputation. If you fall out of this you will get forgotten and very fast someone will catch it up and continue doing your work (interview, October 2011).

Often, after she herself learns about trendy ideas she introduces these topics into ACC's capacity building programming. To illustrate, in 2011 -2012 when my data collection took place, Antonina had learnt about the topic of 'mediation':

> "[Mediation] is very popular and heard about and I thought, if everyone is doing it, it means that I must also see if this can be of any use for the Association. Mediation is what is modern today and we must accept this" (interview, October 2011).

In September 2011 she arranged and carried out a three-day training session for her crisis centers to teach them the nature and technologies of mediation, followed by a publication of a manual on the practices of mediation for the crisis centers. This piece of data illustrates how in the practices of capacity building the skills of the crisis centers are not only being standardized to be the alike but also to be aligned in relation to the larger processes happening in the area of the funded international development programs.

ACC reinforces the standardization brought by capacity building through the textually-mediated practices which introduce the newly required models for work performance. The ACC has generated a number of replicable 'standard' documents which offer the crisis centers pre-established textual technologies pertaining to all the aspects of what a crisis center ought to be and how it ought to operate. The crisis centers drew their definitions and descriptions from these standardizing documents as well as their institutional mandates, goals and services to which they later claim to adhere. Among these documents are guidebooks such as "Documents Regulating the Activities of the Crisis Centers", "Violence and Crisis Centers for Women", "To a Psychologist of a Crisis Center" and others. The guidebook "Documents Regulating the Activities of the Crisis Centers", for instance, is a voluminous publication which contains descriptions, instructions and templates for all the necessary documents required to set up an operation of a crisis center. This is where the crisis centers will find a sample charter, organizational structure, work plans, terms of references for staff, including those for the directors, psychologists, lawyers, texts of the contracts, etc. It also stipulates sets of instructions for consultation with victims, principles of work, schema of hotline conversations and many

other textual resources for the crisis centers to draw from. The crisis centers have reproduced these standards into their own organizational structure, services, and the character of the intervention itself. The crisis centers are aligned with these "boss texts" (Smith, 2005) which standardize them to be organizations of a particular type and with definite features as well as to perform their work in a certain manner. What describes one crisis center becomes relevant to all of them.

Professional discourses and the 'actual work': A discovery of contradictions

The textual standards instruct a crisis center to largely accentuate the psychological nature of support it renders to the women who seek protection from violence. Institutional documents regulating the operation of the crisis centers repeatedly cite expressions such as 'emotional strain', 'internal resources', 'self-reliance', and 'active listening'. These expressions are parts of a professional discourse embraced by a 'client-centered' approach to psychological counseling (Rogers, 1951). Their recursive appearing in the various textual standards indicate a certain level of recommended commitment to focusing on the clients' emotional well-being and intra-personal strength. This commitment is evident in many institutional documents of crisis centers. The charter, for example, specifies the goals of the crisis centers where the psychological support opens up this list and appears foremost in relation to the rest of the other goals. Below is an excerpt from the charter:

> The goals of the crisis centers are the following:
>
> -Providing free-of-charge confidential psychological support to the women-victims of violence;
> -Participating in informational campaigns against violence;
> -Producing and distributing informational materials on the topic of violence (A crisis center's Charter, p. 2).

In a quite similar vein, the ACC guidebooks emphasize the same priorities in delineating the work objectives for a crisis center's worker. To illustrate, the guidebook on "Violence and the Crisis Centers for Women" provides instructions for the crisis centers' staff as to how to understand what a crisis center is. It declares the purposes of a crisis center in the professional language of psychological counseling in the following manner:

> The crisis centers' main goal is to help her [a client] find her internal and external resources, jointly find internal and external reasons for what is happening to her and help her make constructive self-reliant decisions. The crisis centers' goals are attained by easing the emotional strain of the clients, activating her internal resources for resolving of her internal or external conflicts, as well as informing her about her rights (Association of Crisis Centers , 2002, p. 47).

To continue, the ACC's manual "To a psychologist of a crisis enter" stipulates the importance of 'active listening' as they consult their clients, reminding them that

> the goal of the crisis center is to help the clients understand what happens in their own life space and meaningfully reach their set goals on the basis of deliberate choice of solving their emotional and interpersonal problems" (Association of Crisis Centers, 2009a, p. 2-3).

Bearing in mind these general conceptual directives for the crisis intervention in mind, I have conducted observations of the actual process of interaction in a consultation between a crisis center practitioner and a client. What I saw in these work practices appeared in conflict with their institutional representation in the documentary texts. The analysis is now focused upon questioning this ambiguous feature of the work. On its starting level this analysis is embedded in the experiences of the most 'bottom' of participants in the institutional processes of crisis intervention, i.e., the women-clients. I have to learn from women's presentation of their stories what kinds of trouble they need help with and what happened in crisis center encounters. Then, taking their standpoint, I ask questions about what puzzled me in how they experienced the 'protection' and 'support' from the crisis centers. It was only from these local entry points that it became possible for me to see the contradictory effects that the actual practices had on the women's safety. I now turn to a more detailed discussion of this analysis.

Women seeking help in crisis centers: Identifying the problematic

My empirical observations suggest that something happens to the inherently psychological conceptual regulation of the crisis center's support practices, that forces the professionals to deviate from it despite the fact that the institutional texts instruct them to adhere to it. I have discovered that in doing the work with the women who come to seek protection the

practitioners openly ignore these principles and recommendations. From the data I have collected, I learnt about women's personal situations, coping strategies, opportunities and difficulties they experience. I draw on a few individual stories from my data to illustrate what in the work of support, as it is being currently performed in the crisis centers, seems inconsistent and contradictory. Here I introduce Leila, a new client of a crisis center in Bishkek, who arrives to see Elina, the psychologist and at whose consultation I was personally present. Below in my ethnographic note I summarize the problem she complains about.

> Leila is a 36- year old pharmacist married to a 33- year old home-based cattle farmer. They live in a village near Bishkek. They have two children, an eleven- year old daughter and a three-year old son. Since November 2011 her husband has been drinking and beating her. First physical abuse took place in November and the second one in January. Her arm was broken, face in bruises and her eyes were hurt so that her daughter had to be her guide when outside. She greets the psychologist and myself and asks "What can I do in my situation with this husband of mine?" (field note, January 2012).

Definite features of how the support as offered in the crisis centers actually occur is evident in the further interaction between Leila and Elina. The psychologist starts her intervention session:

> Did you go to the precinct? [Leila answered: "No, I would rather not involve police"]. [Elina continues:]According to the law, the precinct must react, even if you go to the higher echelons, they will still send you to the precinct. When you call the police, on the basis of your statement, they will give you a Temporary Restraining Order. On the basis of the Temporary Restraining Order, you claim the violence you have experienced and inform what behavior you would like him to change, i.e., stop violent acts, not to approach the children. This document will be given to you in 24 hours after your statement. He receives a copy, you have a copy and the precinct has a copy. If your husband does not follow the Order, he will be given a Judiciary Protection Order, and it will be the Court to decide the measures against your husband. You have under-aged children, their rights for a life free of violence must be observed (field note, January, 2012).

Elina is firm in telling that what happens in Leila's life is 'violence' and a 'crime' and forces her to go directly to the police. The psychologist actually starts her consultation with a direct question about police and later gives instructions about how to go about the legal procedures that it may entail. "When you write your complaint in the police, then you want to take the Temporary Protection Order", she insists and demonstrates a copy of the Temporary Protection Order (TPO) which she takes from the book called "Manual for Police Offices: Working with Domestic Violence in Kyrgyzstan". She frequently uses this book as she consults Leila and reads excerpts from it as she instructs her. This book spells out the legislative mechanisms for preventing domestic violence, focusing on the law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On Social and Legal Protection against Violence in Family", contains the entire text of the law and its remedial instruments, including a sample TPO. Elina ends her intervention session with giving the client the phone numbers and the names of the relevant precinct.

The interaction between Elina and Leila has peculiar features. It appears to follow a specific script or a set of instructions for how the decisions about the clients are to be made. The practitioner is so embedded in doing this job of 'instructing' that she fails to notice Leila's attempts to articulate circumstances which show the inappropriateness of the proposed solution to her situation. The psychologist attends to aspects of Leila's story that allow her to work with it in a particular manner, i.e., Leila's experiences constitute a crime against her that must be solved through Kyrgyzstan's system of justice. She insists on this course of action, even against Leila's protests. Leila says "Oh, I would rather not involve police" or "I know that it will only increase his aggression. He will become even more violent if he finds out that I turned to police. And I am very scared". Leila explains that her safety, livelihood, work, children, house are at risk if her husband, though abusive, is to be detained by police. She emphasizes that she works full-time out-of-home whereas her husband babysits their three-year-old handicapped son. Her husband also takes a full responsibility of the home-based cattle-farming which Leila is unskilled to take on. Leila has registered a loan from a bank in her name to start this farming and she is bonded to pay it back. If her husband were to be detained, Leila would be unable to deal with the conflicting tasks of daycare for her incapable child, her job, cattle and the financial debt. For Leila, these circumstances are serious and important. She worries about the practical consequences of the advice she was receiving. My observations continued two months after her

first appointment. Leila never came back to see Elina, despite the fact that meetings with her had been scheduled.

How Leila's case is handled by the worker is not an isolated incidence, but rather a general practice. For a diversity of experiences that further elaborate similar professional responses to women's stories and other instances of the problematic I present two more women-clients who received support from the crisis centers. Each crisis is unique; what is similar in the women's experiences is how their situations are handled by the staff in the crisis centers.

Nadin is an 'older' client of a crisis center and she has actually followed the recommendations given by a worker. I briefly describe her case below in my ethnographic note.

> Nadin is a woman in her early thirties who has been battered by her ex- husband. She turned to the crisis center for help about one year ago when she was still married. Within this time she had divorced her abusive husband who, however, did not stop threatening her. The psychologist in a crisis center advised her to file a complaint to Court with charges of physical and sexual abuse. So she did that with the help of a lawyer from the same crisis center (field note, January 2012).

"Nadin is going through a "rough" stage", explains Elina. As I follow how Nadin's 'rough stage' is being addressed I understand that the Court proceeding with Nadin's ex-husband is not going well. The pressure comes from the manner in which the investigations of this kind of cases are typically done, i.e., focus on the so-called "provocative behavior" of the victim and aimed at making the case where the victim must be blamed for own abuse. Nadin is humiliated and tired of having to repeatedly retell the details of physical and sexual abuse she had suffered from her husband in order to prove to the officers in the prosecutor's office that she herself did not 'cause' his aggression. There is also pressure from her relatives who insist that she discontinue the court processes and give up the case, because they think it is bringing 'shame' on their families. Nadin lives at her sister's house and must attend to what her relatives say because they support her with housing, money and care for her child. These problems discourage Nadin from carrying on with the Court case. She simply wants to "carry on with her life". However, the psychologist encourages Nadin to continue. She says she

> insisted that Nadin continued [with the Court]. I contacted "Adilet" [a legal clinic operated by an independent NGO], they know me there and I found her a new legal

consultant who would help her go through the investigation processes and in the Court (interview, January 2012).

Like Leila, Nadin is repeatedly and authoritatively referred to the state system of criminal justice. The lives of both women are framed in the terms of criminology and this erases important aspects of their lives. Psychologist's rigid judgments about how such situations must be resolved override other aspects of the intervention such as, for example, Nadin's emotional distress, lack of motivation, endangered safety and livelihood. I find it mystifying that the psychologists persist in pushing their clients towards the legal routes which they know is often unreliable and discriminatory.

The crisis centers' workers themselves recognize and even criticize the criminal justice system which they regard as inefficient for addressing women's protection from violence. Elina occasionally accompanies some of her clients to police, Prosecutor's office, medical-forensic examination, investigative interviews and is aware of what the criminal justice system subjects her clients to. In a speech which she makes outside the crisis center she shares that

> When you submit a complaint to the police department about, say rape or being beaten by your partner, you meet a lot of mistrust from the police. They don't see it as a crime; they do the same to their wives when they come home. You will have to prove that you are a decent woman and you did not "deserve" being raped or beaten. You will have to re-tell the details of what has happened to the policeman on duty, then to the officer who is in charge of the shift, then to the chair of the department and every time you must prove that you are not to blame. The perpetrator himself is absent from this process. The questions are all about the women. Why did they have to go there where they were raped? Why so late? Women have to defend themselves as they come to seek justice. Again, police does not want to deal with those cases. First, because, they are men themselves and don't see this as a "really serious crime" but rather "just a family issue". Second, because they tend to blame women for "provoking" men by dressing in certain way or "misbehaving". Third, the detection of crimes of this kind does not contribute to their promotion or statistics. So, they often will discourage women from starting a criminal case or refuse to register the complaints. So, if you have stood this stage, and your complaint has been registered, you receive a permission to go to the forensic-medical examination. The same

> is here: the court-medical expert is never there. You will have to come several times to actually "get him or her". You will go inside the examination room. Note, that this part of the criminal system is not funded well, so the room is very old, shabby, dark and looks like a "medieval torture room". The instruments are old, and you become seriously concerned not to get any diseases from them. So, after you are done with this, you will collect a package of documents, recommendations for the court. In the court, the interrogation and the criminal investigation will be centered around you, your behavior, your appearance, your reputation. If at least one person says that you are known for your unrestricted actions, you will be blamed. The courts are carried out as if the goal is to seek and find what you did or did not do so that the man felt he had to rape you or hit you. Unfortunately, what the statistic show, our system of justice is such that rarely these men go to jail…" (Public lecture in the American University of Central Asia, Bishkek, December 2011).

These data suggest possible counter-productive effects produced by the type of support women receive when they turn to crisis centers. An employee (now a former employee) of ACC, Gulnara, recalls when she

> participated in a court case on family violence. A victim turned to us for psychological help and we advised her to use the Temporary Protection Order, which she did. In a month, her husband realized that the document was nothing more than an official paper, started acting even more violently towards his wife, bit her even harder and broke her leg (interview, January 2012).

Such harmful effect is also apparent from an interview with Masha, former client of a crisis center, whose risk of abuse increased after she had collaborated with a crisis center.

Masha is an elderly woman who suffers physical and verbal abuse from her son-in-law. Her attempts to resolve the problem by calling police have not brought satisfactory solutions to her:

> If the police takes him to the bullpen and keeps him there for one night, the following morning they would bring him back and demand payment of 1000 or 1500 soms[13] for the night. It is too expensive for us (interview, January 2012).

On the basis of the advice from, and with the assistance of a crisis center, Masha has filed a complaint to court against this man (whom I will call Nikolai). Nikolai is married to Masha's daughter Natalia, the head of the local community council (officially called Territorial Community Council). In this role, Natalia is mandated to keep order and resolve conflicts, including intra-familial, in her community, thereby, representing a model of "good behavior" and proper conduct. Having her own husband arrested would publicly acknowledge Natalia's being less than appropriate for her status, destroy her established reputation and complicate (or ruin) her career. For Masha, who is entirely dependent upon Natalia (and Natalia's wellbeing), maintaining good relationships with her has a basic survival meaning for her. Therefore, it was not a big surprise that Natalia disapproved Masha's decision to appeal to the court and discouraged her mother from continuing. Eventually, Masha withdrew the court appeal and came to reconciliation with Natalia. In principle, Masha made a decision in favor of securing her needs such as food, housing and care. However, in making this choice she had to compromise her physical safety. The perpetrator interpreted Masha's withdrawing her complaint from the court as a both a sign of, and a ground for, his perpetual impunity and carried on physically and psychologically assaulting Masha. "I tremble all the time [of fear]", says Masha. It is mystifying how such important specifics of a client's situation remain invisible to the practitioners whose working agenda is to specifically provide support in cases of domestic violence. On the contrary, Masha's sudden discontinuation of the judiciary proceedings frustrated the crisis center's staff. They angrily spoke about Masha's action as "letting them down" and her wasting a few months of their time. They did not recognize how their 'support' increased the danger of increased violence for Masha.

I'm beginning to recognize the conflict between the theoretical emphasis placed on the psychological nature of support in crisis centers' work, and what I found actually happening. I identify, for instance, that the text "Manual for Police Offices: Working with Domestic Violence in Kyrgyzstan" is not part of the crisis centers' official standardized textual procedures and

[13] Kyrgyz currency. At the time of interview with Masha this amount corresponded to 18 to 25 Euro

wonder how Elina finds it useful to structure her response in relation to this book (that has been designed for police officers). I learn that as the crisis centers do their job of helping women, something happens to the very specific local experiences of these women when they step into the crisis centers as their clients. Their experiences are heard and interpreted within the language of criminology and laws, and in this transformation much from their embodied experience and knowledge of living with violence is downgraded, made invisible, therefore, non-existent to be considered for decision making. This is what I call contradictory effects of the services whose original promise is to support these women. At this point of my analysis my readers may rightfully exclaim: "So women are oppressed and this is not anything new. But what is interesting about your research?" Indeed, while I do treat seriously the women-victims' lack of opportunities to benefit from the services offered by a crisis center, this is not the analytic goal of this dissertation. Informed by my analytical framework I attempt to explore these contradictory practices based on the assumption that "underlying anyone's everyday life experience, something invisible is happening to generate a particular set of circumstances. It is that "something" that is of research interest" (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 17). The analysis to make visible what organizes people's local experiences starts from the research problematic. I identify my problematic by asking questions about disjuncture I find between the goals of the crisis centers to support women in crisis and what actually happens in the work done by the practitioners. I am interested in what explains the counterproductive nature of intervention oriented towards the state system of criminal justice.

To the researcher who takes the standpoint of the women seeking relief from abusive family members, the crisis center workers rigid focus on criminal or legal solutions seems hard to explain. How, I wonder, does it happen that in the face of the efforts to standardize the work of crisis centers staff towards psychological counseling the crisis centers' intervention is so rigidly directed towards the police and the courts? What holds them to find useful for their intervention text on the law on domestic violence as opposed to the standardized manual for psychologists produced for them? That's the problematic I explore in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 8. INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION OF PROTECTION: HOW DISCOURSES RULE

Just as I analyzed the work that women-peasant in rural Uzbekistan do to survive, I perceive as their work what women who are clients of the crisis centers do to combat violence in their lives. Living with a perpetrator and fighting against abuse is work which frequently requires more effort, energy, time and intelligence than does work in the more conventional understanding of work settings. However, similar to how women's knowledge is sidelined to the discourse of agricultural marketing or development management in the Uzbek's case, here in Kyrgyzstan, I find that in the interaction between the front-line workers and a domestic violence victim certain aspects of the victims' experiences are also authoritatively treated as irrelevant and 'uninteresting'. Such selective treatment contradicts the official goals of the crisis centers to psychologically support women who suffer violence, and to do so in a non-directive manner emphasizing the clients' ability to retain control over the decisions they make. I saw and have drawn from several instances to show, in the previous chapter, that the client-worker interaction deviated from the crisis center's standards of professional practice. Instead, crisis center worker used highly directive consultations saturated with the language of the state justice system where concepts such as 'police', 'precinct', 'protection order', 'court' gave little opportunities for 'personal growth' or 'relief of emotional strain' to occur. I raise questions about how such a disjuncture occurs. What explains these puzzling contradictions in the everyday work of the crisis centers? How does it happen that the legalistic direction supersedes the original professional commitments to protect victims? My analytic framework suggests that what I have observed as contradictory features of the crisis centers' work are socially organized and are constituted by the employees who are acting within the social relations, thereby performing their own ruling. If the work practices I problematize are located in the actual ruling relations I must be able to find and make visible the means by which they are organized and which the workers enact.

In the ZUK project I have shown that the ruling relations that the project staff enact are traceable in the institutional documents which link the local settings to the extralocal. Here, I discover the same: people engaged in the crisis centers take up certain texts, reading them, and

treating them as instructions for their work. The knowledge framework evident in those texts has an institutional character, its terms and concepts point to existence of a larger knowledge framework that has informed the development of these institutional categories and has the capacity to coordinate the local work in all the crisis centers. This larger arena, or the social organization, will explain the questions put forward in this chapter. What is this social organization, what are its composing elements, origins and ramifications? What is the 'law' that continues to re-appear in my data? How has it come to coordinate the local setting? I set out towards the analytic goal of this chapter of explicating this social organization. In this analytical undertaking I have found myself entangled in a number of datasets, historical accounts, events, processes, texts and actors. In discovering connections between them and in mapping the institutional relations among them, it became clear that what I began to explore is the social organization of the practices of protection against gender violence informed by a global knowledge-based framework for 'good' development through human rights protection practices underpinned by high-profile international/multilateral agreements that are binding on signatories.

The authoritative work activities by the workers in the crisis centers are 'connected' through social relations in which their work is embedded. This connection is textual and it links the everyday actualities with the globally promoted institution of protection. The accomplishment of this institution is textually mediated where institutional actors located variously produce, reproduce and enact text-informed institutional actions for which they are textually accountable. The investigation I undertake allows me to map important pieces of the institutional processes, places, and texts where ruling ideas are replicated and people's work moves them from being globally framed to locally enacted.

What the crisis centers' workers do every day is coordinated as sequences of action within the larger landscape organizing and containing their daily practices "where what people do is already organized as it takes up from what precedes and projects its organization into what follows" (Smith, 1987, p. 183). In situating the working experience of the crisis centers' workers I see them at work at a point of juncture between the actualities of the victims' disrupted lives and the social organization of 'protection'. In exploring this work I identify institutional practices through which ruling texts are generated and circulated and, ultimately, appear in the hands of the crisis centers' workers in Kyrgyzstan.

Social relations expressed in the words of the workers

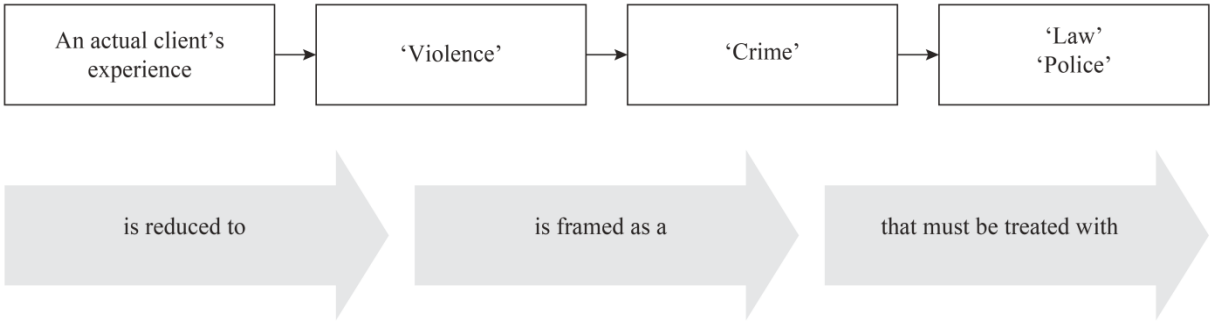
Traces of these institutional relations come into view in the words of the workers. Noticeable in their talk are expressions and references to documents which point to institutional connections linking the work of the crisis centers with the extralocally defined concept of 'protection'. The analysis proceeds by identifying and 'tracing' such talk to its institutional origin. The following quotation from an interview with a worker in a crisis center is useful in expressing these social relations.

> When a woman calls or comes here and tells me that her partner bit her or insulted her, I explain to her what it is. This is violence and I have a strong position on that. I explain her that this is violence, a crime against her and has nothing to do with her own behavior and she is not to blame. I tell her that she is protected by the law [the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On Social and Legal Protection against Violence in Family"] and inform her that she must write a complaint to police and I recommend her to go to a particular police department which is allocated to her place of residence, and the form of complaint. (interview with a crisis center's psychologist, January 2012).

From this piece of data, and also from my earlier ethnography, a number of important discursive connections can be pointed out. The psychologist applies particular ideological framework to her methodology for addressing complaints. For example, the worker selects from the vast amount of information provided to her by her client those aspects which can lead to the interpretation of the story as an instance of violence. The psychologist calls this a "development of a violence profile". As soon as this stage of information-processing is finished and the psychologist interprets the story as a fact of 'violence', she takes the concept of 'violence' and integrates it into her work. She gives it an institutional category of a 'crime' and further 'activates' this concept by beginning to frame her response under the terms which the concept of 'crime' establishes. The 'crime' requires the worker to operate within a particular discourse, i.e., the discourse of the criminal justice system and directs her intervention towards the remedial actions such as 'law', 'police department', 'form of complaint', etc. At work here is a theory-based protection practice or an institutional discourse that provides terms under which a woman's ongoing interpersonal relationships with a family member and certain patterns of behaviors from

this family member towards her, all become subsumed under a static term of ‘violence’ which triggers the entire remedial mechanism I illustrate below:

Figure 21. Remedial mechanism enacted by the crisis centers in relation to their clients



In such a capacity of this institutional discourse to re-shape a psychological consultation into a legal remedial advice, I see instances of ruling relations which I further trace to understand my research problematic.

I summed up instances of the problematic in the above quote to provide points of entry for my investigation of the social organization of the actualities in the crisis intervention. What happened to the woman is turned into a textual reference to the ‘crime’ under a particular ‘law’ and calls for action expressed in words such as ‘complaint’, ‘police’, etc. Both, the interview and my ethnographic observations point to such reference to the law as taken for granted. Where, I ask, do these ideas and words come from? They or words like them appear in every interaction between women and crisis center workers. What are the institutional ‘roots’ of these ruling concepts? Investigating these questions is fundamental for explicating the social organization which is the analytical promise of this chapter.

Institutional texts and the ‘instructions’ they carry: Beginning to track the ruling relations.

My research problematic is expanded by a puzzle that begins to emerge around the textual work the crisis centers’ workers are engaged with in their everyday consultative work with victims. This textual work focuses on producing reporting documents of two types, one based on information about each individual client and another one is an annual summary of the former. This work of textual reporting is highly systematized, requires a technical language and the use of specific textual formats. I illustrate below the reporting form called “Statistical report

on psychological consultations", that I translated and reproduced here. Each worker must fill out such form, using the variables offered, for every client they work with.

Figure 22. Statistical report on psychological consultations from (date) to (date)

1	Who represents the client:	The client herself; the client relative; other
2	Gender:	Female; Male
3	Age:	17and younger; 18-34; 35-39; 40-49; 50-59; 60 and older
4	Ethnicity:	Kyrgyz; Russian; Uzbek; other
5	Family status:	Married; live with a partner; single, divorced; widow/er
6	Children:	Has children; does not have children
7	Education:	Higher; higher incomplete; vocational; high school; illiterate
8	Social status:	Employed, invalid, student, unemployed, migrant, retired
9	Place of residence:	Urban; rural; no definite place of residence
10	Reason for consultation:	Domestic violence (circle all that apply): physical, psychological, economic, sexual, rape, incest, attempt to rape, sexual harassment, bride abduction, polygamy, sexual exploitation, violation of rights, intrapersonal problems, other
11	Type of psychological support provided to the client:	Psychological consultation with recommendations; Referred to lawyer; Referred to police; Referred to medical institution; Referred to social protection agency; Referred to shelter; Referred to local authorities; Referred to the Court of Elderly; Other.

This statistical report form opens with the typical questions about the demographic characteristics of the client. The interventions that I witnessed all began with form-filling, which structured the client-worker interaction around its categories. The psychologist either fills out the form as she directly asks questions, or as she listens to her client. She would stop to make notes in the form every time she hears what is relevant and asks for clarifications when needed. The questions determine the flow of the conversation, workers' attention and importance by establishing what gets noted down and what does not. I notice that the questions are not about the client's personal predicaments but about them as statistical elements. Extracted from her life situation are the data which are relevant to her being a statistical element. Once the woman steps

into the office of a crisis center her particular experience is transformed into something else. Her individual crisis receives a textual representation where she becomes a standardized statistical description which reduces her experience and knowledge to a set of reportable categories; she becomes an institutional figure and is treated as such. This text transposes a client's suffering into a category from the list offered in question nine. The entirety of her ongoing troubled partnership or family relationships is now being subsumed under one or two words, under the institutional names designed to group types of violence into distinguishable categories. My analysis proceeds by my discovery that these institutional categories pre-establish the institutional lens through which a client's story will be interpreted, classified and further taken up by the worker into a formulation of recommendations.

The question number ten of the reporting form which is called "type of psychological support provided to the client" appears particularly striking to me. The 'psychological support' is being detailed into sub-categories in the second column as the possibilities for answers to be ticked off by the workers. In these sub-categories the first 'type of psychological support' is a 'psychological consultation with recommendations'. This classification of psychological support appears extremely general, not to say tautological, repetitive and uninformative to a reader who is interested in what exactly was done in relation to the client's 'emotional well-being' and 'individual capacity to cope with crisis'. Which particular concerns of the victims were addressed in the consultation, what recommendations were provided, what individual goals were set are the typical data required in the client's profile to provide the most basic understanding of a client's situation and the consultative process. The statistical form provides no space for this information which is appropriate and relevant for the work that appears under the name "psychological support". Contributing to the puzzle is that this sub-category is the only one from the list that actually has any relation to the 'psychological' character of the work. Not only that, it occupies a very small segment of the text where the rest, fully eighty percent of the categories, ask about where (to which agency) a client was referred. This is particularly puzzling considering that they appear under the heading of the 'psychological support'. I reproduce this particular section of the reporting form here:

Figure 23. Reporting form. Section on ‘psychological support’

Type of psychological support provided to the client:	Psychological consultation with recommendations; Referred to lawyer; Referred to police; Referred to medical institution; Referred to social protection agency; Referred to shelter; Referred to local authorities; Referred to the Court of Elderly; Other.

The representation of psychological support that this textual document constructs is peculiar and re-shapes the conventional understanding of psychological consultancy. The text expresses the interest to whether and where a client was referred as a result (or rather, instead of) a ‘psychological support’. The categories of the text do not express interest in the psychological service; in fact, they construct the importance of something else. The significance is given to the activities done in relation to ‘referring’. In contrast to the psychological support, which appears in the text only in mentioning, the referring is quite detailed, sub-divided into seven categories and enumerates many possible referral entities. The space, the language and the level of elaboration that this document distributes among its categories, thus, articulate importance that is directed to this work of ‘referring’ thus emphasizing those aspects of protection that subdue women’s emotional needs, personal capacities and individual predicaments. Given my observation of the intervention interview which ‘followed’ the structure of the statistical report, ‘referring’ comprises the bulk of the psychological support expected from a worker in a crisis center. As a worker works with this reporting form she is engaged in what Smith calls a “text-reader” conversation (2005). In this conversation the worker or the ‘reader’ engages with the text’s language and responds to it as implicit instructions. The worker inserts the text’s message into her local work setting and into the course of her work action. She finds as she works with her clients an empirical ground for implementing the work of referring, as the text covertly ‘instructs’. The worker tells me she must “get in touch with the police on duty”. I recognize that these peculiar features of work are being textually organized and institutionally coordinated. The text here provides a “key juncture between the local settings of people’s everyday worlds and

the ruling relations" (Smith, 2005, p. 101). It is my understanding that "institutional texts are designed; […] setting their categories, concepts and frames is highly politicized, not only in those settings ordinarily thought of as political. Texts are key to institutional coordinating, regulating the concerting of people's work in institutional settings in the ways they impose accountability to terms they establish" (Smith, 2005, p. 118).

More becomes understandable about how the crisis centers workers are organized to work with the women's stories as instances of violence, of crime and of women's being in need for remedial referral as I study another textual document at work in the crisis centers. This document participates in constructing the criminal justice character of crisis consultations by establishing an accountability system where the criminal justice discourse is deemed central. Explicit and implicit directions come with the categories in the annual report form that is consolidated in a document called "Provision of Services: The Reporting Chart". The workers compile this document once a year from the individual reports they have accumulated for each client (described above). The consolidated report includes the same demographic categories from 1 to 9 as indicated in the individual forms and continues on a separate sheet where the crisis centers are required to list the type and quantity of services provided during a specific period of time (Figure 24). I have already talked about the demographic items of the individual client reports and this form reproduces them. Here I present the second section of the annual reporting form in the chart below.

This chart lists eleven categories, each representing kinds of services a crisis center has rendered to their clients during a given period of time. The first two of these categories refer to how the service was delivered, i.e., via a telephone or in person. The following three categories are the three general descriptions of the direction in which the support was done, i.e., legal, psychological or a shelter. Similar to the individual reporting form, this form does not ask for the details of either a psychological or a legal advice. The remaining part of the text consists of six categories and draws my attention. This textual segment stands out for a number of reasons.

Figure 24. Provision of Services: The reporting chart

Service	Code of the service	# of people in total	# of women	# of men
Face-to-face consultations	010			
Telephone consultations	011			
Legal advice	012			
Psychological counseling	013			
Shelter	020			
Support rendered to receive the Restraining Order	030			
Support rendered to receive the Temporary Restraining Order	031			
Support rendered to receive the Court Restraining Order	032			
Support in submitting documents to the law-enforcing agency	033			
Support in helping to initiate a criminal case	034			
Support in helping to initiate a civil case	035			

It occupies almost half of the space designated to represent the variety of services offered to the client in a crisis centers. But what is more remarkable is the specific language being in use. The concepts of ‘restraining order’, ‘court’, ‘law enforcement’, ‘criminal case’, ‘civil case’ are central to this part of the text. I have already witnessed the same language being used in the actual worker-client interaction when I problematized the rigid criminal justice approach in the consultancy work of the crisis centers.

Both of the two reporting formats emphasize the elements of intervention which exclude any other protection aspects such as emotional support, or an emphatic understanding of women’s unique situations. Working with those texts becomes more than a technical task. It draws the workers into the ruling discourse because they must engage with it and be responsive to the textual categories and attune their professional attention with its discourse. The text instructs the professionals to do what the text makes institutionally relevant, i.e., support victims in obtaining a protection order, go to court, go to police and so on. The workers, in Smith’s

(2005) words, ‘adopt’ and ‘operate’ the words from the text; the text orients the workers to items from the setting that can be ‘plugged into’ the ‘socially organizing grammar’ that these words introduce. The capacity of this text to organize or ‘instruct’ is strengthened by its requirement to report. “In order to be effective, we must work in the legislative channel” says a worker. The ‘effectiveness’ must be demonstrated institutionally, and in this case, in the text of the annual report. The text requires the workers to be accountable for working within the framework it establishes and be responsible for how well they do it.

In the process of producing the textual accounts of the work, the women become clients, transformed into an institutional category through processes that mask their experiential knowledge. This leads to disregard for the women’s own needs and capacities to deal with solutions to their problems. Traces of ruling relations become visible in the words of a crisis center’s worker who explains that they do what they do because they “have a system of interaction with the subjects of the law…” Here as well as in the pieces of data I presented earlier in the chapter the ‘law’ re-appears as part of an explanation for the questions I raised about what I saw as non-psychological and unsupportive nature of psychological support. I will track these ruling relations by examining the law that so consistently comes into view in my ethnography.

Traces of ruling relations, the institution of ‘protection’

In conducting my analysis of the social relations of which the texts were a component (in both research sites) I started from women’s experiences and their text-based work and showed how local activities and experiences were being coordinated. To do this, I became involved in the analysis of the ‘law’ and its history, which took me to the discovery of role of the women’s movement in Kyrgyzstan and globally, recent international women’s rights frameworks, and the local enforcement of these frameworks including by the crisis centers. I found that the law so notoriously and repeatedly referred to by my informants has become a central figure in how the institution of international development plays out in Kyrgyzstan both on the level of the government and the non-governmental organizations establishing institutional textually-mediated arrangements enacted by different institutional actors. The national law has become an integral part of a significantly larger social organization that shaped the events I observed in the crisis centers.

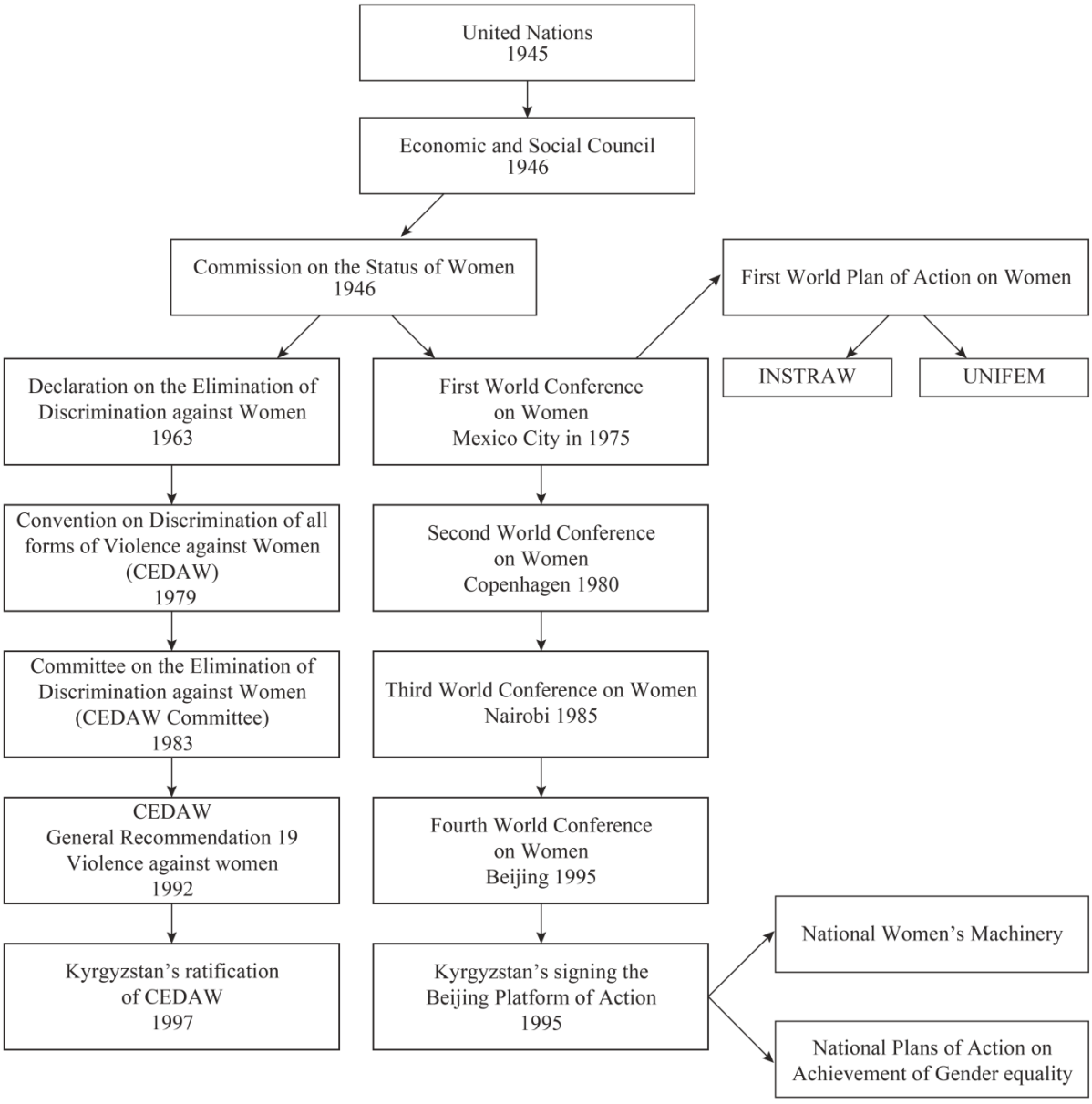
I now focus on the development of 'the law' and its multifaceted application by actors situated variously within the institution of development. I also show how the final local enforcement of this law in Kyrgyzstan is organized in such a way that it brings the consequences to the work of the crisis centers' employees that my analysis denaturalizes. The findings I present have particular historical locations. I emphasize these historically situated events because they are central to explication of the institutional origins of the ideas, concepts and practices produced and enacted in certain places and by various people. My analysis is presented as an intricate map of social relations which produce and reproduce 'protection' as an institution.

Women's protection as a global knowledge framework. Antecedents for the 'law'

The protection practices in Kyrgyzstani crisis centers reflect global developments in the area of human rights and democratization. Much like the modern international development policy-making these processes rely on and are mediated by a variety and multiplicity of documentary texts. I discover that the protection work, internationally and locally, follows the institutional contours that were established by the United Nation's policies on advancing the rights of women around the globe. Drawing on the processes taking place in the various offices of United Nations, texts and procedures generated there produced a global framework informing the efforts to bring gender equality throughout the world. This framework originally focused on advancing the human rights of the women and fostered a rights-based approach to women's safety. The graphical representation of this global framework is presented below in the flowchart (Figure 25) which I explain now. International interest in women's rights appeared in the establishment by the UN Economic and Social Council of a Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 1946 to ensure women's equality and to promote women's rights. The CSW was mandated to prepare recommendations and reports to the Economic and Social Council on promoting women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields and to make recommendations "on urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women's rights" (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/CSW60YRS/CSWbriefhistory.pdf). Since its creation the Commission facilitated and produced a number of international documents on women's rights such as the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1959), Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (1957), Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage

and Registration of Marriages (1962). What the CSW was doing is, in principle, developing a comprehensive international framework for action on women's equality.

Figure 25. Global institutional framing of protection against gender violence



In 1963 the UN General Assembly planned to consolidate its work on the rights of women and requested the CSW to draft a Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which was generated and adopted in 1979. The Convention defined what constituted discrimination against women and set up an agenda for national action to end

such discrimination. Countries that signed the Convention became legally bound to put into practice its provisions and to submit national reports on measures that had been undertaken to comply with these obligations. In order to monitor the CEDAW implementation the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) was established in 1983.

The Commission on the Status of Women, within its mandate, organized large-scale conferences to bring the international community together for joining their efforts to assert and improve women's rights. The first world conference on women took place in Mexico City in 1975 and produced the First World Plan for Action that called upon governments to develop strategies for gender equality. This Plan of Action led to the establishment in the United Nations system of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The Second World Conference took place in 1980 in Copenhagen and reviewed the Plan for Action and drew attention to issues such as equal employment opportunities, healthcare and education. The Third World Conference on Women held in Nairobi in 1985 called for improvements in women's social and political participation and decision making. In 1989 CEDAW Committee for the first time discussed the high incidence of violence against women and requested information on this problem from the State parties. In 1992 it adopted General Recommendation 19 which required the national periodic CEDAW reports to include data on the incidence of violence against women, legislative and other measures taken to protect women from violence and information on the provision of services to the victims. This change was part of a remarkable shift toward eradication of violence against women that took place in 1990s in the international gender equality arena.

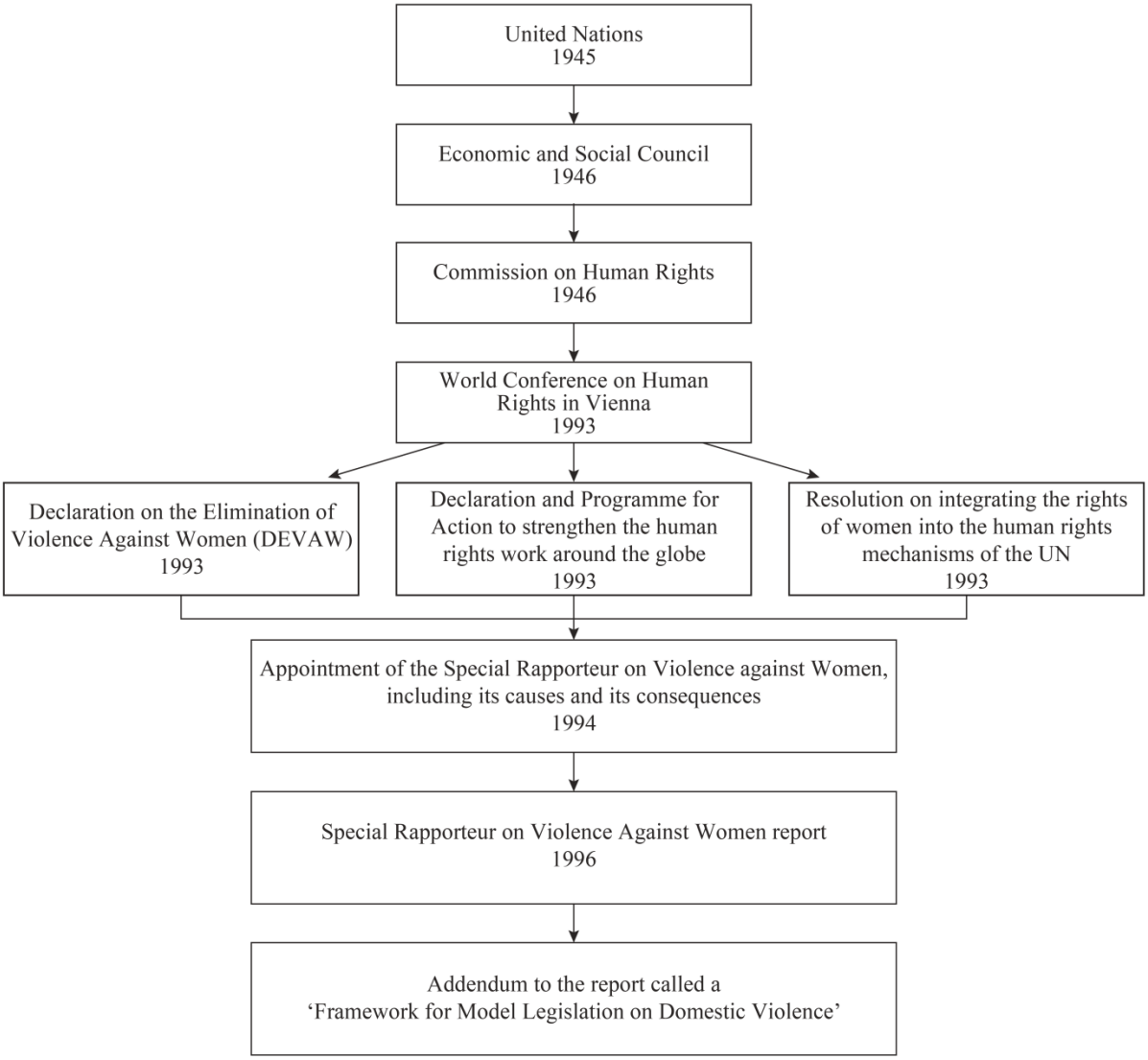
Another important milestone was the United Nations Commission on Human Rights' high-level policy considerations targeting violence against women. Since early 1990s the UN Commission on Human Rights started making contribution to the development of a framework on 'violence against women'. The flowchart below (Figure 26) is a graphical representation of this framework. The flowchart emphasizes the processes that took shape in addition and in parallel to those administered by the UN Commission on the Status of Women. In 1991 the CSW forwarded a recommendation to develop an international instrument to address violence

against women. The Economic and Social Council of the UN endorsed and drafted a document that later became the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW). In the following years, international women's NGOs and advocates drew on the human rights aspects of the problem of violence against women. The activists launched a campaign under a motto "women's rights are human rights" and used the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights to frame domestic violence in the language of the declaration calling it the violation of fundamental human rights. They ensured that the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 in Vienna prioritized women's human rights and especially the VAW. The Conference produced a Programme for Action to strengthen the human rights work around the globe where it confirmed that violence against women was a human rights violation. The World Conference endorsed the draft of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW), which the General Assembly adopted shortly thereafter in December 1993 (A/RES/48/104). Building on this Declaration and on the Resolution on Integrating the Rights of Women into the Human Rights Mechanisms of the United Nations (E/CN.4/1994/34), as well as on the approval at the World Conference on Human Rights, the Economic and Social Council's Human Rights Commission decided to appoint in March 1994 'a special rapporteur', a title given to persons who work on behalf of the UN to bear a specific mandate from the UN Commission on Human Rights to report "on violence against women, including its causes and its consequences" (E/CN.4/1994/132) . Within its mandate framed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the CEDAW and the DEVAW the special rapporteur was responsible to investigate and report on all aspects of violence against women and make recommendations as to the "measures, ways and means, at the national, regional and international levels, to eliminate violence against women and its causes, and to remedy its consequences" (E/CN.4/1994/132). The rapporteur reported to the Commission on Human Rights and liaised with the CSW, the CEDAW Committee and other relevant UN bodies.

The first special rapporteur on violence against women Radhika Coomaraswamy issued a report in 1996 which included an addendum called a 'Framework for Model Legislation on Domestic Violence' that complies with "international standards sanctioning domestic violence" (E/CN.4/1996/53/Add.2, p. 1). The special rapporteur put it forward as a "drafting guide to legislatures and organizations committed to lobbying their legislatures for comprehensive

legislation on domestic violence" (E/CN.4/1996/53/Add.2, p.1). The model legislation included definitions of domestic violence, complaint mechanisms, duties of judicial officers, criminal and civil proceedings and provision of services. It included provisions on protection orders and models of emergency and long-term services to victims as well as training legal professionals and social service providers on the dynamics of domestic violence. While the report was issued in 1996, my data suggest that the discussion around the model legislation took place one year earlier in 1995 at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the place where many developments relevant to my exploration took place.

Figure 26. Global institutionalization of violence against women



The global institution of 'protection' entering the research site

The Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing was the largest conference the United Nations organized with over 180 governments and seventeen thousand participants, four thousand representatives of NGOs, three thousand journalists and five thousands representatives of all the United Nations organizations attending the conference (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/). All the 180 governments adopted a document called the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) committing themselves to the BPfA's global agenda for women's empowerment and taking action towards its far-reaching goals, objectives and measures. The BPfA outlined the actions which State-parties must undertake to address twelve areas of concern which were identified as obstacles to the advancement of women in the world including 'violence against women' (VAW) as one of its critical areas of concern (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf). Inspired by the conference, the Kyrgyz government adopted the Beijing Platform for Action and the same year later signed the CEDAW Convention. This made the country legally bound to implement the provisions of the both documents, report on the implementation and integrate the recommendations on improvements into national legislation. This was, as I will show, quite important for producing the contradictions I have been exploring in this study. Additionally, what happened there was the exposure of the Kyrgyz delegation to the discussion about the special rapporteur's model legislation on domestic violence. The latter requires more details.

The model legislation on domestic violence: Lessons from Beijing

The Kyrgyz delegation to Beijing included the government representatives and members of Kyrgyz non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The NGO participants in the conference played a crucial role for the events I am analyzing. These NGO participants were the leaders of the early Kyrgyz feminist movement that had emerged in the direct aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union. They were members of a women's NGO called "Diamond Association" (Diamond) that was comprised of and founded by women from academia, mostly lawyers, with funding that came from international donor organizations. The Diamond's specialized interest was on conducting scientific research in the area of domestic violence in Kyrgyzstan, something that only became possible after the Soviet regime fell (from interview with Bermet, former director of Diamond, February 2012). Starting from 1997 the Diamond set up the first few crisis

centers and shelters for victims of violence in (the history of) Kyrgyzstan after securing international financing for their operation. These crisis centers with a few others were united in 2001 into the Association of Crisis Centers. The two organizations, the Diamond and ACC, closely cooperated in their activities until 2006 when the Diamond Association dissolved. Since then, ACC continued the initiatives started by and with the Diamond.

As part of the delegation from Kyrgyzstan, the Diamond members took active part in the sessions and discussions offered by the World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. From my interview with its director, Bermet, I learnt that she and her colleagues were introduced to the discussions about international experience of combating violence against women and became acquainted with new ideas about the work on the issue. They learnt about the UN framework for model legislation on domestic violence, which they called more simply, the 'UN model legislation'. Bermet remembered "hot debates about it during the conference in Beijing" that resulted in the model legislation being formulated as a "general recommendation" at the conference for the use elsewhere. She and her colleagues, all of them being lawyers, realized that they as well "needed a special legislation on prevention of domestic violence" because "it will be the legislation that has the most decisive role in influencing the current approaches and attitudes towards gender violence". Having returned to Kyrgyzstan, the Diamond members introduced path breaking changes into their anti-violence work and drew the new crisis centers into these activities. The new directions were largely reflective of the global reforms in the area of gender equality. For instance, the Diamond obtained the text of the UN Model Framework for Legislation on Domestic Violence and "took everything from the model legislation, the protection orders, etc." (from interview with Bermet, February, 2012) for drafting their own Kyrgyz version of domestic violence legislation.

The Diamond's initiative to introduce anti-violence legislation in the country eventually resulted in text of the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On Social and Legal Protection against Violence in Family", which they also lobbied in Parliament with foreign funding that they kept securing for a number of years (Tugelbaeva, 2003a). The Diamond mobilized women's organizations throughout Kyrgyzstan for a nation-wide lobby campaign to have the law accepted by the legislative body of the Kyrgyz Government. The Diamond's lawyers proposed to use what had never been used before–a special norm in the Constitution the Kyrgyz Republic on the

"popular legislative initiative" (the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on "Popular Legislative Initiative in the Kyrgyz Republic"). This constitutional norm guarantees the citizens the right to introduce laws in compliance with the legitimate proceedings such as collection of the required number of signatures from population (at that time the required number was thirty thousand signatures accompanied by the signatories' home addresses and passport details) confirming their consent with the new law. The Diamond's staff organized a conference among the women's organizations in Kyrgyzstan, including ACC and its crisis centers, and turned for their help to lobby the anti-violence law in the Parliament and collect the signatures. Below is how Bermet, the author of the law, retells the story:

> We prepared the documents, the text of the law and the forms and asked for help. 103 people representing women's NGOs, crisis centers and self-help groups agreed to form an initiative group to collect the signatures. The group worked for half a year before we could say we had enough signatures to go further (interview, February 2012).

Following this event, the Diamond leaders used their links with the representatives of higher echelons of formal power in the country. Bermet recalls how important her connections were for the inceptive introduction of the law in the Kyrgyz Parliament:

> the deputy member [by the last name] Baibolov, was one of the authors of the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic. On this basis the [Kyrgyz-Russian Slavonic University's] Department of Legal Studies [where Bermet and many other women from Diamond worked] has had regular contacts with him. So, we already had connections with him and he agreed to drag our draft law in (interview, February 2012).

The law was successfully 'dragged in" and the Parliament adopted this legislative project in 2003. Since then, the prominent role of the Diamond gradually ceased.

The breakup of the organization was related to a double-sided motivation that directed the women's movement. My data show that the motivation to institutionalize such a law partly came from the Diamond's feminist commitments to address violence against women which they saw important to unveil and attend to. On the other hand, this was part of career processes in which women academics and professionals developed expertise as specialists in civil rights, laws, legislature. Bermet remembers that "the material [they] collected [as they worked on the law]

was very rich and allowed for three or even four doctoral dissertations to be defended". She, herself, produced a number of books based on her experience of being an author of a law, and became the Dean of the Criminal Law Department in one of the largest universities in the country. Such a 'professionalization' of the members of Diamond led to the gradual disintegration of the organization. The commentary below shows how the work in the Diamond having advanced the careers of its staff, then interfered with it:

> In 2006 we still had funding from Hivos and Hivos offered to prolong the contract, but at that time I have already been away to work as the Dean of Faculty and did not have time any more for working in the Diamond. The girls continued working for a little more but then they have all gone to do scholarly work. They were doing their graduate degrees, defending their dissertations and had no time anymore...(interview, February, 2012).

The crisis centers, on the other contrary, became increasingly drawn into all the stages of practices around adoption and the promulgation of this law, with the ACC in the lead. The crisis centers' involvement in the initial lobby campaign was followed by their being trained to become 'experts' in this law, pulling them into efforts to foster the effective workings of this legislation such as providing trainings, conducting monitoring and evaluations, and carrying out awareness campaigns. In addition to the ACC's own project where the crisis centers would continue their lobby work, different organizations invited the crisis center to cooperate with them in activities related the promotion of the law. To illustrate, in an interview with a coordinator of another large-scale project on the enforcement of the law on domestic violence, Tamara, admits that she "needed people who knew the law and [she] knew that the crisis centers did and they really did. So, [she] invited them to be partners". When the international community became increasingly critical about the law, once seen as 'progressive', and then impeded from effective enforcement (Human Rights Watch, 2006; CEDAW/C/2004/I/CRP.3/Add.1/Rev.1), the demand for the crisis centers' expertise increased. Responding to the demand meant that the work of the crisis centers turned to the law's implementation.

What may appear to be happening in the offices of the crisis centers when they consult women-clients (as seen in my ethnography) is also an extension of the work they have been doing in propagating and enforcing the anti-violence law which they now do "automatically". Their identification with this law, their commitment to it, in combination with the textual

accountability requirements, work together to shape the nature of the everyday crisis centers' workers interaction with their clients where the enforcement of the law comprises the core principle of the intervention. This principle is taken for granted; its operation is not questioned by the workers themselves.

In my further analysis, however, I question such 'automatic' acceptance. I demonstrate an existence of a powerful ruling arrangement which organizes, textually and discursively, the crisis centers to shape their interaction with clients around the conceptual apparatus of the law. I argue that what may seem automatic is actually institutionally coordinated through ruling texts which have been generated extralocally to the setting I investigate in Kyrgyzstan.

What I offer as an analysis goes beyond a mere historical description of how 'things happened'. It explicates the institutional knowledge-based 'home' of the concept of 'protection of women' as it operates now in my research site in Kyrgyzstan. I show how people in the various institutional locations activate these texts and produce actions which reflect the institutional regime. This analysis of the institutional coordination required me to investigate the historical account of how protection from gender violence became shaped as a global discourse organizing the everyday work in my research site. This organizing takes place locally and is enacted by the local actors, however, it remains invisible to them.

The law and its relation to the global human rights framework

More becomes understandable from analyzing the Kyrgyz anti-violence law in the light of its being connected to the text of the UN Framework for Model Legislation on Domestic Violence (UNFML). The Kyrgyz anti-violence law, "On Social and Legal Protection from Violence in Family", dated January 2003, is a text comprised of twelve pages consisting of five sections: "General regulations"(Section 1), definitions for the 'individuals who suffer from family violence" (Section II); "entities that prevent and combat family violence and provide support to those who have suffered family violence, their rights and responsibilities (Section III); the "organization of social and legal protection from family violence" (Section IV); and specification of the statistical reporting requirements from the subjects of the law (Section V). The law is based on the principle that every individual suffering from or at risk of family violence is entitled to social and legal protection from violence through the comprehensive system "of social, economic, legal, medical, psychological and other types of support" (Article

1). These service providers are called the subjects of the law and include social protection agencies, healthcare and education institutions, commission on minors and child welfare authorities, local administration, law-enforcement agencies and Courts, and "specialized social service providers" (Article 13).

The "specialized social service providers" refer to various organizations and institutions which render social support to the victims of family violence. Crisis centers appear among the specialized social services providers in brackets after being defined as "consulting and prevention centers" (Article 14). As specialized social service providers these organizations are obliged to protect the victims of violence by offering them a complex of social support services including social, medical and psychological examination; informing the law enforcement agencies and the office of the Prosecutor about the fact of violence or a threat of such; prepare all the necessary documents for a judicial recourse (Article 14). The specialized social service providers are obliged to participate in the system of the "social prevention of violence in family" (Article 18) and promptly inform the law-enforcement if they offer services to individuals at risk.

The text of this law in its full version appears in a number of ACC's documents. The ACC's main reference book "Violence against women and crisis centers", and its manual designed for the police officers reproduce the law in its full version. It is also published on the websites of the Kyrgyz Government, donor organizations, women's NGOs, office of the Ombudsman, and some crisis centers. It is also re-printed in a publication called "Manual for police offices: Working with domestic violence in Kyrgyzstan" authored by the ACC's director in partnership with NGO partner, Tamara, and a law-enforcement representative. The workers, as discussed in the previous chapter, systematically refer to this book as they consult their clients, especially when informing their client about the rights of victims of domestic violence, the duties of police officers and judicial bodies, protection orders and so forth.

Analytic comparison of the Kyrgyz law with the UNFML leads to more insights about the work of the crisis centers professionals. The UNFML is a comprehensive legislation framework and includes all the necessary basic definitions, description of mechanisms, duties, criminal and civil proceedings and the provision of services. One especially relevant and identifiable feature of UNFML is the "domestic violence response system" proposed by the UNFML as a mechanism of cooperation among providers of services (public and private, State

and local services and programs) both for emergency and non-emergency cases where each agency provides a different service to a complainant, but all of them work in inter-communication and comprehensive coordination. The UNFML stipulates that the victims have the legal right to access this comprehensive system of services and to know about their rights and remedies stipulated in the law. The texts explain that "information on rights empowers complainants in negotiating settlements and also allows them to make informed decisions on the legal options that they may want to pursue" (E/CN.4/1996/53/Add.2). The domestic violence response system finds its reproduction in the Kyrgyz anti-violence law, specifically in its central idea of creating a system of social and legal protection from family violence through the 'coordinated response system', where the coordination is ensured by 'referral' remedies. The Kyrgyz law specifically makes provisions about the importance of coordination among the service providers to be achieved through referrals to each other. From the UNFML the Kyrgyz law replicates the principle that access to support services is the legitimate right of the victim. These rights are stipulated in details under the "Statement of rights" where a complainant is entitled to "file a complaint to police, be transported to a medical institution, receive psychological and legal consultation, turn to the court of Aksakals [council of village elderly], and be accommodated in a shelter or a crisis center". The idea of 'protection orders' was entirely new for Kyrgyzstan and was first introduced there in the text of the UNFML. In the national anti-violence law protection orders are now central to the organization of the social and legal protection against violence in family. Seven articles of the law describe, specify and variously elaborate on the provisions related to the protection order. Stipulations on the "Duties of police officers" and "Duties of Judicial officers" are analogous in both documents as well as the descriptions of procedures on obtaining and handling of protection orders.

The everyday activities in the crisis centers becomes less mysterious now that one can see how the local work's being organized around referrals, protection orders, and complaint to Court can be traced to the UNFML-informed policy technologies. At the same time, through UNFML, this local work can be discursively linked back to the "international standards sanctioning domestic violence" that reiterate adherence to international standards on human rights and criminal justice (Coomaraswamy, 1996). Following UNFML, the Kyrgyz anti-violence law becomes the basis for social and legal protection under the international standards of human

rights protection (Part II) and its principles such as 'criminal responsibility for domestic violence" (Part I).

This supports my argument that the national anti-violence law establishes and enforces a particular external understanding of protection for the victims of domestic violence. Despite the largely grassroots nature of its establishment within the national legislative framework in Kyrgyzstan, the law "On Social and Legal Protection against Violence in Family" remains a largely foreign project. The contradictions arising from the anti-violence law's being a foreign project are related to the fact that the internationally promoted comprehensive approaches rely on the existence of well-functioning institutions which participate in the well-coordinated system of response, where the staff in each agency is skilled to do the cooperation work and where the resources are available for undertaking all these activities. These descriptions do not apply in Kyrgyzstan. However, the crisis centers' professionals are trapped between a textual reality and a local actuality. This, as I have shown, plays out negatively on the work of actually protecting real women who suffer aggression at home. What still remains unclear is the already mentioned 'automatic' acceptance of the local staff to implement the law in their everyday practice of protection. Something institutionally more powerful than individual preference is implicated, impelling the crisis centers' staff to perpetuate their rigid textual practices even as they have detrimental effects on their clients. I argue that these practices are part of the global institutional arrangement for national and international accounting to the global institution of protection.

Kyrgyz anti-violence law in the context of CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action

With signing Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW, the Kyrgyz government acquired new international obligations in relation to implementing the principles stipulated in the two international documents. My analysis of Kyrgyzstan's reports written in response to these requirements reveals that the anti-violence law is important in the new institutional arrangements related to Kyrgyzstan's accountability to the global anti-violence movement. My textual analysis allows me to note an observation that the law forms part of the textual connections between the Kyrgyz government and the larger international authorities on gender equality. The law, which I saw to be largely the achievement of the women's groups, was appropriated by the Kyrgyz government for their own institutional purposes in relation to its international obligations.

In Kyrgyzstan, the text of the Beijing Platform for Action has been taken as the "program of human rights for women, based on which Kyrgyzstan began structuring the national strategy on development and use of potential of women of the Republic" (National Plan of Action for Achieving Gender Equality, 2002-2006). Within the requirements of the BPfA, the Kyrgyz Government established a national women's machinery[14] and developed National Plans of Action for Achievement for Achievement of Gender Equality. While the national women's machineries in the country changed their names and constituencies and various national plans have been produced since 1995 to plan, monitor and report on what was done in relation to promoting gender equality[15], all of them, reflecting the priority areas of the Beijing Platform for Action, included a separate section addressing the national level measures to combat violence against women.

The National Plan of Action for Achieving Gender Equality (NAP) is an official document endorsed in the highest echelons of political administration. Every iteration of the national plan begins with the "Decree of the President of The Kyrgyz Republic. On the National Action Plan for Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic, date". Here, the president endorses the national plan and decrees the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic to develop measures for implementing activities and to allocate funds from the state budget for financing the NAPs. The president requires the heads of public management bodies, heads of state administration and local self-governments to provide for the implementation of the NAP and the national women's machinery to enact control over the execution of the decree. Following the decree, the NAP outlines the achievements of the previous national plans (as relevant) in accordance with the twelve areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and specifies its domestic strategic goals. The text of the national plan contains the description of the "implementation mechanisms" which identifies the responsible entities and their tasks within the execution of the plan in a form

[14] National Women's Machinery is defined as a body recognized by the Government as an institution dealing with the promotion of the status of women. More at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/forums/review/mechanisms/index.html

[15] The first national women's machinery was the State Commission for Family, Women, and Youth Affairs which implemented the first national program called "Ayalzat" (translated from the Kyrgyz language as 'women'). The succeeding national women's machineries would develop the national plans, sometimes with consultancy from civil society and international organizations. Since Ayalzat, national plans of action for Achievement of Gender Equality for 2002-2006, 2007-2010, 2012-2016 have been produced.

of the "matrix of action". The "matrix of action" is a table that summarizes the national plan and spells out the terms of references distributed across the areas of concern.

All the Kyrgyz NAPs have incorporated the national anti-violence law into its texts, institutionalizing it for government's interests. The original version of the first national program (called Ayalzat) did not include any mentioning of the law on domestic violence, however, the drafting of such law appeared among the Ayalzat's achievements in the final report of program and as one of the State's fulfilled obligations to the Platform for Action in the section 'violence against women' (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/confer/beijing/national/kyrgyst.htm). The second national program, called the National Plan of Action for Achieving Gender Equality for 2002-2006, already incorporated among its primary priority objectives "adopting the special law on domestic violence prevention" and "educating the representatives of the law-enforcing bodies and courts about the new methods of protecting women-victims" (National Plan of Action for Achieving Gender Equality, 2002-2006). The following national plan for action (2007-2010) continued including the law "On Social and Legal Protection against Violence in Family" into its agenda and projected to "monitor and improve the enforcement mechanisms of the law" (National Plan of Action for Achieving Gender Equality, 2007-2010).

My analysis of NAPs' texts shows the connections between the BPfA, Kyrgyz government and the national anti-violence law. These connections characterize government's instrumentalizing the results of the efforts of the local women's movement. In the absence of the state-initiated anti-violence action, the NGO initiatives in this regard became a convenient reportable figure which did not require additional work and resources from the national machinery. The success of the government's implementation of BPfA's anti-violence agenda was based on the contributions from the local non-governmental organizations which has been made invisible and unrecognized. Similar processes have been discovered in relation to the law within the processes of implementing CEDAW in Kyrgyzstan. But before discussing CEDAW, it must be said that the instrumentalization argument in my analysis is not of a central focus here. Rather, as I show later, BPfA and CEDAW work together to pressurize national government and local organizations to work in a particular fashion in relation to the law.

The further analysis of connections between BPfA, CEDAW, Kyrgyz Government and crisis centers shows that what happens inside the crisis centers when they intervene with the

cases of violence and interact with the victims is organized by an intricate system of international accountability to domestically implement global protection policies designed in the office of the United Nations. The United Nations require its member-States, including Kyrgyzstan, to report to its treaty bodies (CEDAW Committee, in this case) on the implementation of the relevant treaties. The reporting follows a highly structured schema which demands strict adherence to. Firmly formatted national reports are followed by a high profile international response obligating state-parties to take certain actions and report on these actions in the following reports. In this textual reporting work, the law "On Social and Legal Protection against Violence in Family" became knit in, at first, by a mere mentioning in the periodic report and, subsequently, as a clearly defined reporting target. The CEDAW Committee singled the law out from the text of the periodic report as something they saw needed enforcement. This consideration, entered into the text of the CEDAW Committee final recommendations, made it obligatory for the Kyrgyz State to introduce new data-collection policies into its administrative departments.

The national obligation to report to the CEDAW Committee requires further clarifications. The CEDAW Committee consists of twenty three independent experts on women's rights from around the world and is mandated to receive countries' periodic reports on how the provisions of the Convention are implemented, and to hear country representatives present their reports during special sessions of the UN General Assembly. The Committee formulates concluding observations where they address its concerns and recommendations in response to the countries' reports. The Committee formulates its recommendations around the themes stipulated in the CEDAW Convention but also around any issues affecting women to which the Committee considers the countries should pay more attention. By ratifying the CEDAW Convention in 1997 the Kyrgyz Government bound itself to report on its implementation in the country by submitting periodic reports to the CEDAW Committee every four years. Since 1997 Kyrgyzstan has submitted three periodic reports to the Committee, in 1999, 2004 and 2008. The periodic reports are documents of approximately sixty pages written in strict accordance with the general guidelines for the preparation of such reports produced by the CEDAW Committee (CEDAW/C/7/Rev.3). The compilation of such reports is a task of a special commission comprised of representatives of the country government and NGOs. To

compile its reports the commission uses information from the relevant state executives and administrative bodies and from NGOs concerned with the issues of discrimination against women. The commission sends the draft of the document to ministries, administrative departments and NGOs for discussion and comments to be considered in the final version of the text. While the guidelines changed in 2005 in accordance with the 'harmonized guidelines on reporting to the treaty bodies', the structure of the periodic reports still must follow the main clusters (I-IV) of the Convention. The Kyrgyz report, for instance from 2004, consists of two parts: part I provides general information about the country " its population, political system and system of legislative bodies for protecting human rights and about efforts undertaken in the Republic to disseminate information on human rights (CEDAW/C/KGZ/2). Part II of the report

> provides information, article by article, on changes which have occurred in the reporting period in legislative, administrative and other measures taken by Kyrgyzstan to fulfill its obligations under the Convention and on the progress made, obstacles encountered and measures planned for the further implementation of the Convention (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/reports.htm).

The very first periodic report from a country is called the "initial report". The Committee considers the initial report in the presence of a representative of the reporting country. The Committee members ask for elaboration in relation to issues raised in the report. The subsequent periodic country reports follow a slightly different path. A working group comprised of five members from the Committee pre-view any subsequent report to formulate questions that would guide the entire Committee in their examination of it. The country representatives receive these questions in advance and meet with the Committee to respond to them. After the Committee considers a country's periodic report it formulates 'concluding comments' which are structured around "factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention for that State party, positive aspects, principal subjects of concern and suggestions and recommendations to enhance implementation of the Convention" (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/reporting.htm#guidelines). The following periodic reports from a country must reflect the concerns raised in the concluding comments by the Committee (CEDAW, Article 18, http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/).

After the Kyrgyz Government submitted its initial report to the CEDAW Committee in 1999, it received the concluding comments which recommended that the following report should demonstrate the country's commitment to condemn all forms of gender-based violence as an 'infringement of the rights to personal security' (CEDAW Committee Concluding Comments, 1999, Article 29) and a "focus of serious concern" (Article 30). The Committee recommended that Kyrgyzstan enhances "comprehensive measures to prevent violence and to support women victims" (Article 30) and introduce "procedures for enforcing rights through effective judicial and other means" (Article 48). In the following (2004) periodic report the Kyrgyz government provided more information with regards to violence against women where, interestingly, the only achievement in this area was "the law on measures of social and legal protection from violence in the family" (CEDAW/C/KGZ/2). The law also appeared in this report in its connection with the principle of 'complicity' which imposed upon the State the responsibility to prevent violations of human rights. The law here was presented as a national measure that "provided for an integrated approach which is implemented by combining the efforts of the law-enforcement agencies, the courts, State and social organizations, general educational and medical institutions and social services" (Article 48). Following this report, the CEDAW Committee commended Kyrgyz state for introducing the new legislation that "support of the goal of gender equality" (CEDAW/C/KGZ/2/Add.1) and the following (third) periodic CEDAW report (2008) continued highlighting the work on the anti-violence law among its achievements emphasizing the progress from drafting and adoption to enforcement and completion of "definitive work […] to improve the law enforcement practices with regard to the law "On Social and Legal Protection against Violence in Family" in Kyrgyzstan" (CEDAW/C/KGZ/3). All this takes place without committing any government resources to the actual work.

Pressures coming from CEDAW and BPfA

Along with its recommendations the CEDAW Committee forces the Kyrgyz government to strengthen their efforts in the implementation of the anti-violence law and to enforce data collection about family violence. The CEDAW Committee in accordance with its General Recommendation N 19 requires the country to present in its reports specific information on violence against women including "all available data on the incidence of each form of violence and on the effects of such violence on the women who are victim (General Recommendation No.

19 (11th session, 1992)). In its recommendations, formulated in response to the first CEDAW report from Kyrgyzstan in 1999, the Committee proposed as necessary "the collection of comprehensive sex-disaggregated data and information on the issue of violence against women" (CEDAW/C/KGZ/1). In its second periodic report to the CEDAW Committee submitted in 2004 the Kyrgyz special commission reported difficulties in collecting data on violence against women related to the lack of "specific indicators for measuring it [violence in the home] and complained that "statistics from the crisis centers and shelters do not come in standard form, which also renders analysis of the issue more difficult" (CEDAW/C/KGZ/2, p. 27). Additionally, in its concluding remarks to this report, the CEDAW Committee continues raising its concern about violence in the family having a "hidden nature" related to the insufficiency of information on violence against women.

Pressure to strengthen the statistical data on violence against women also comes from the Beijing Platform of Action which, upholding CEDAW in its practical implementation, enforces the governments to "ensure the regular production of a statistical publication on gender that presents and interprets topical data on women and men in a form suitable for a wide range of non-technical users" (BPfA, Paragraph 207). It commits the government to take measures in order to collect adequate gender-disaggregated data and statistics on the incidence of violence for the elaboration of programs and monitoring of changes (BPfA, Paragraph 120). So, the National Plans of Action for Achieving Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic have also started emphasizing the importance of the gender segregated statistics for planning gender equality programming and have committed to "pay[ing] special attention to improving the gender-disaggregated data in the national and sector-based statistics" (National Plan of Action for Achieving Gender Equality, 2007-2010).

Moreover, in reaction to these comments, the Kyrgyz government approved the document called the "Matrix of Activities for Implementing the Final Comments of the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to the Second Periodic Report of the Kyrgyz Republic on the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women" (Kyrgyz Republic Government Resolution No. 837 of 12 November 2004) in 2004. In this document the Government charged the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic with "performing special processing of statistical data on a

regular basis and releasing a compendium of gender-disaggregated statistics annually" (Kyrgyz Republic Government Resolution No. 837 of 12 November 2004 on the Approval of the Matrix of Activities for Implementing the Final Comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Paragraph, 19).

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic and the General Prosecutor's office were given the major assignment to cooperate with the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic for making improvements in the collection of more complete gender statistics in general, and more specifically, "in the mechanisms of collecting primary statistical information on the types of violence and introducing into practical use of the standardized forms of statistical reports on victims of violence in public and private sphere" (NAP 2007-2010).

The National Statistical Committee in its turn devised its own technologies to perform its assignment. The National Statistical Committee segregated family violence as a separate type of statistic and developed standardized statistical report forms with regards to violence against women

> in order to improve the collection and analysis of all statistical data in the country with regard to incidents of violence […] which should result in a strengthening of the interaction between the State statistical agencies and crisis centers, and in production of a realistic picture of the problem of violence" (Kyrgyz Republic Government Resolution No. 837 of 12 November 2004 on the approval of the Matrix of Activities for Implementing the Final Comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Paragraph 129-131).

The law "On Social and Legal Protection against Violence in Family" has enshrined the practical usage of the above described 'standardized statistical report forms' in its special provision (Article 28) which obliges the subjects of the law to conduct statistical accounting of family violence cases and specifies the government departments responsible for collecting and presenting information and the type of data required including the socio-demographic information of the victims and perpetrators. The flowchart below (Figure 23.) summarizes the cornerstones of the institutional mechanism that enforces usage of the statistical forms of the Kyrgyz anti-violence Law.

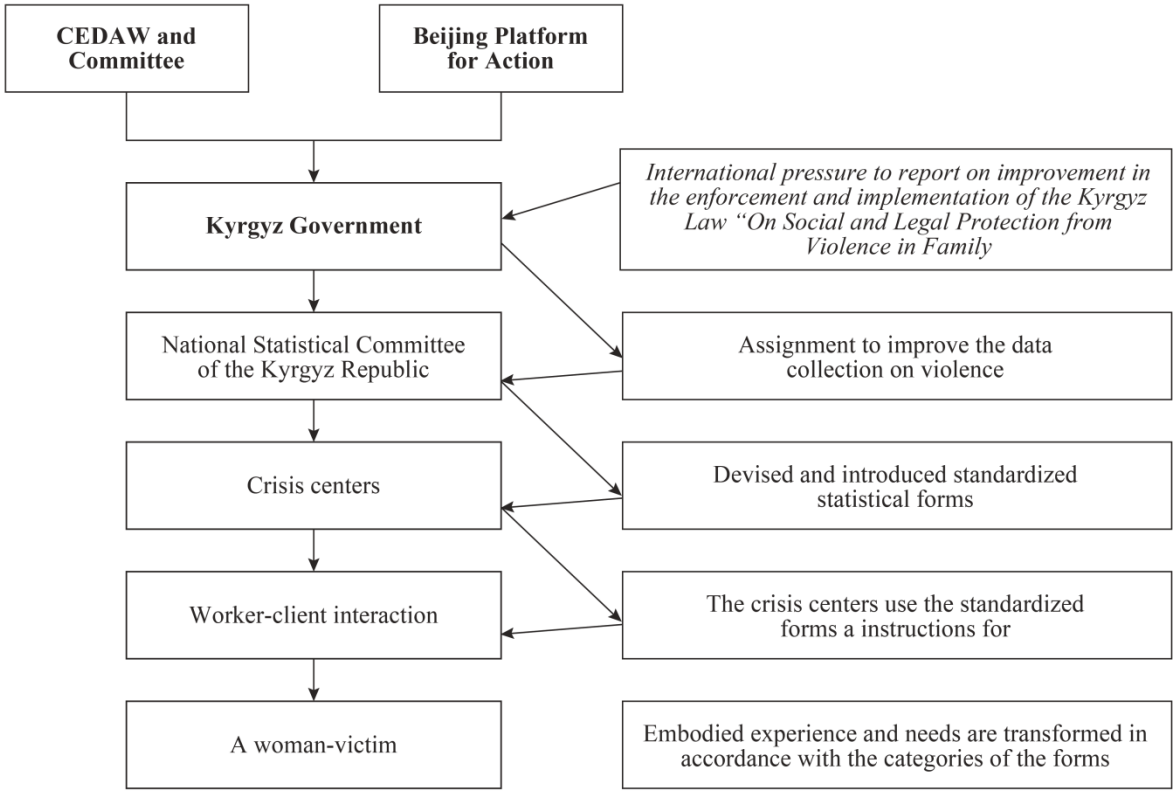
In 2004 the crisis centers received the standardized forms for statistical reporting from the National Statistical Committee and I discussed the practical usage earlier. While introducing these standardized matrices unified the previously discretional reports from crisis centers "which were difficult to work with" (from interview with Taalaigul Isakunova, a former chairperson of the Secretariat of the National Council on Family, Women and Gender Development Affairs under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, February 2012) and eased the work of consolidating reports in the office of the National Statistical Committee, it definitely did not ease the work of living with violence for the women-victims.

The complicated process the flow chart (Figure 27) describes works as follows: Once a woman-victim enters a crisis center she becomes a participant in this complex of institutional steps that are mediated and made accountable in text. Her acceptance as a client activates a multifarious system of documents, practices, agencies, procedures, ideas and frameworks which constitute the ruling apparatus of globally-informed protection policies. As outlined above, a worker in a crisis center makes a record about the client in a standard report form that emphasizes certain aspects of intervention. These reports are then consolidated into the annual summary report and submitted to the National Statistical Committee. The Committee merges the crisis centers reports into one chart called "Number of referrals to crisis centers, courts of Aksakals and other specialized institutions in (year) (people)" and another one "Number of registered crimes against women and minors (cases)". Both charts are then published into an annual compilation called "Women and men in the Kyrgyz Republic", which is one of the requirements of the Beijing Platform for Action. The statistical data from this book is conceived as an 'objective' descriptor of the Beijing Platform for Action and a response to CEDAW Committee. The Statistical Committee also submits this consolidated information to the government's women's machinery and the special commission that formulates reports on the implementation of CEDAW Convention to be eventually presented to the CEDAW Committee.

This is a global process that has local consequences. The textual work performed by the crisis centers' professional is the final activation of the global ruling apparatus on the protection of women's human rights. The texts involved here emphasize the aspects of intervention that are part of this ruling apparatus driven by the goal of bringing local actions into accord with the 'legal framework' organized and expressed by the national anti-violence law and the

government's need to report on it. It is my contention that this process actually works against women's safety, especially as safety is largely "contingent on the ability to address the specifics of her situation and requires recognition of the danger she faces" (Pence, 2001, p. 1).

Figure 27. Mechanisms of institutional enforcement of the Kyrgyz Law "On Social and Legal Protection against Violence in Family"



Conclusions about ruling practices of protection of women in Kyrgyzstan

There is a powerful ruling arrangement in place which, textually and discursively, organizes the crisis centers to shape their interaction with clients around the conceptual apparatus of the United Nations human rights technologies expressed in the Framework for Model Legislation on Domestic Violence that entered Kyrgyzstan and influenced the national anti-violence law. This global anti-violence framework has been developed in the offices of the United Nations intending to improve the situation of women around the globe through universalized human rights mechanisms for addressing violence. The two influential documents, the CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action, set the standards for good practices. The global promulgation of these standards is arranged by the authoritative power of the UN making

the member-states accountable for the implementation of the CEDAW and the BPfA. As the national governments fulfill the accountability requirements they build new policy mechanisms. These mechanisms are pushed down and ultimately end up in the hands of the crisis centers' workers. Their work is organized by the priorities established in certain reporting categories.

The Kyrgyz law on protection from family violence is an intermediary between the globally formulated standards of addressing violence and the local practices, structuring and organizing the work of the local actors to achieve the extralocal goals. When the crisis centers' workers fill out the National Statistical Committees' report forms they perform specialized work in a sequence of transactions that link their work with the institution of global protection of women. Through this specific textual work the global institution of protection of women is activated and 'intervenes' in particular ways in the lives of the women who suffer abuse at home. The practitioners use the forms, its language and words, as instructions for such work, generating in the process particular textual versions of their clients and their circumstances. This directs their interventions towards those aspects which are relevant to the categories established in the texts. The professional attention of the workers is detached from what it might mean to the woman to live with a partner who batters her. The practitioners do not work with the aspects of the lives of women that go beyond a problem that can be defined as legal. A woman's needs for coming to understand and deal with what is happening to her remain outside of the crisis center task. The professionals' task is very specific: to detect from the women's stories those aspects which can be further worked up as legal remedies that can be easily slipped into the institutional accounting regime of the law. Following this work, comes the textual practice that is coordinated with the globally established requirements. In its sum it transforms the particularities of women's lives into abstract generalized forms of statistical reporting which do not require reflecting on women's psychological well-being, self-understanding, and self-reliance. The latter are actualities external to this apparatus and as such are ruled out of consideration. The institutional goal here is to improve the texts of the reports, enrich the data, groom the statistics, make the information adequate to its purposes. Although institutionally relevant, women and their experiences are textual representations that misrepresent them. The women-victims become known to the global communities as numbers and faceless descriptions.

The textual work the crisis centers' professional perform is the final activation of the global ruling apparatus on the protection of women. These texts emphasize the aspects of intervention that are part of this ruling apparatus and when crisis centers produce such a particular representation of women's experiences in the statistical reports they participate in a circular ruling process of knowledge generation. Their reports go to the National Statistical Committee for being processed and submitted to the Kyrgyz Government's Women Machinery which in its turn uses this information for reporting to the CEDAW Committee. The CEDAW Committee receives this reduced version of what is actually going on and produces comments for improvement based on what was submitted to them. These comments go back to the Kyrgyz government where people integrate them into local policies such as, in this case, of statistical reporting. These institutional processes constitute a vicious circle for the women, their experiences are being 'eclipsed' and isolated from the institution of protection to be known, considered, enacted and improved. In this system there are no opportunities for the women's voices to be heard.

The workers themselves may see the contradictory nature of their used approach. Some of them are qualified professionally-trained psychologists; others are less experienced and skilled. But the pressures on their work are so intense because of the inadequacy of the compensations, which force them to hold two or more jobs; the added managerial responsibilities which cuts time and attention from the direct work with the clients. All of these work pressures accomplish the situation where it is easier for the workers to adhere to the letter of the law, and give straight instructions for how women are to act in accordance with it than to spend lengthy hours for 'active listening' and 'search for a meaningful understanding' and informed solutions. The demands, the structure and the social organization fall into the fertile ground, i.e., the economy of their actions that satisfy them.

Concluding this chapter I reiterate the problematic that oriented my analysis and the investigation presented in this chapter. I found puzzling the rigid authoritative instructions, inclined toward the criminal justice system permeating the worker-client interactions. Questions about the contradictory nature of intervention by the crisis centers directed my further inquiry into the social organization of these work practices. The institution for protection of women plays out in Kyrgyzstan via the domestic law against domestic violence and is reinforced by the

textual accountability demands required by the international treaties. The internationally conceived polices are pushed down to the local sites of action through textual technologies of reporting coordinating the everyday work of the local actors. The work becomes focused on producing the texts that realize locally the ruling discourses of global development policies, including those aiming at bringing gender equality. Together this work constitutes the institution of protection. The envisioned empowerment of battered women does not happen. Empowerment would require a different focus, one that addresses rather than suppresses the women's embodied experiences of violence. It would require that resources were made available for that purpose. Now trust lies in the textual processes. Women's knowledge is being transposed through the specific requirements of institutional accounting that coordinate local domestic violence practices. I have explicated the social organization of this work to demonstrate how it happens routinely and even makes a sort of sense for these practitioners to work the way they do. Having made visible this social organization I begin to worry about the vast amounts of work being performed and resources used (elsewhere) to achieve the protection of women from violence. Yet, in the way how it is done, in the discursive practices of protection, I see how the actual women do not obtain the protection they ask for. My worries are less about the 'ineffectiveness' or 'inefficiency' of development policies than about the real women who physically live the violence, whose future, health and lives are at stake. It appears that even the best policies fail them.

CHAPTER 9. DEVELOPMENT SITES IN CENTRAL ASIA: WHERE WOMEN, GENDER, AND KNOWLEDGE INTERSECT

Two dissimilar internationally-designed improvement-oriented projects have been juxtaposed in this dissertation: A large-scale, long-term, generously-funded environmental research project described as 'gender-neutral' in Uzbekistan and a small-scale, short-term sparsely-sponsored service delivery project with clearly defined gender-aware commitment and focus on women in Kyrgyzstan. I have made explicit how both projects are organized from extralocal sites through the work with texts, documents, and related activities. Showing how the two projects organize women's work in various development sites, I have attempted to unpack the processes of social organization of gender. The institutional ethnography of these two projects has shown 'how things work' in particular locations, and how ruling relations, institutional policies and practices, often entirely unintentionally, address and affect women. Having brought the two sites together has helped to illustrate how insignificant formal commitment to gender can be for a project's actual effects on local women.

In this chapter I focus on two major areas to which the analysis from both research sites draws attention. One is a set of analytic findings related to features of the relationships between the institutional apparatus operating in each project and women's experiential knowledge. The development institution in order to achieve its institutional goals makes use of specifically organized knowledge to manage (or rule) the settings over which they hold mandates for change. In each project what particular women and men do, how they are constituted as actors through the knowledge and discourses they have access to, thus, how they understand their everyday 'work' is socially organized. Sometimes the organization is textual; sometimes, I show it to be conventional but widely shared and accepted knowledge. I argue that within the projects' institutional practices particular versions of women's lives are thereby discursively constructed, and actively produced and reproduced for organizational and institutional purposes. These effects are unintentional, thus, unexpected. In one site, women's participation in the ruling organization of project implementation activities is limited because the institutional goals pertain to the experiences irrelevant to women-peasants. In the other site, women's participation is circumscribed by the straightforward logic and related accounting practices of a law.

Consequently, local women's experiential knowledge is addressed in the manner which changes it to make it fit the ruling apparatus and thereby organizes its gender-specific characteristics. This objectification of knowledge takes place routinely, invisibly, within programmed activities which are propelled by good intentions and the best available expertise rather than purposeful misogyny and overt discrimination.

The second area of focus in this chapter is my exploration of how in the two projects gender appears as specific institutionally organized practices. Here, I argue that in both projects gender is discoverable as a process, as an enacted activity carried out by the actual people who invisibly and implicitly draw upon naturalized ideas about a gender order and routinely interweave them into their institutional work. This is how I explain how it happens that the official 'gender-neutrality' has unwittingly produced gendered outcomes in one case, whereas in the other, formal gender-orientation and women-focused promises have been overshadowed. This process I call 'genderization'.

Having exposed these features embedded in the research and development practice that is positioned as neutral and 'objective' I finish this chapter with some thoughts about a less objectifying organization of women's integration into development action that could be put in place. I also discuss how a more equal and inclusive incorporation of women's knowledge is locked in the contradictions posed by the ways in which the ruling relations work.

Gender and 'objectively'-organized institution

I discover that the way the two projects ensure their proper implementation and make use of knowledge of the local women-beneficiaries relies, in each case, on distinctive but similar ruling practices. While both women and men are known discursively in the two research sites, the present inquiry visibly illustrates that the social organization of knowledge operating in the two projects unintentionally produces harmful effects on certain local women. Women-peasants' lives in the Uzbek villages and countryside are filled with uncertainty and redundant workloads while their livelihoods are increasingly endangered by the progressively deteriorating environmental situation in the country. In Kyrgyzstan, the institutional knowledge guiding the work of protection for women fails to serve their needs for safety and exacerbates their vulnerability to partner or family violence. I argue that these unexpected but malign effects happen when women's specific knowledge and experience are treated as irrelevant or

insignificant to the project efforts; speaking in analytic language, women's expertise or their knowledge of their everyday lived reality is subdued to the ruling knowledge. Much of this has to do with the institutional implementation of benevolent development practices organized as 'objective' within the accepted practices of institutional management and of global governance. It also relies on knowledge that already carries a conventional knowledge of women and women's place which becomes consistent with projects' concepts of 'gender'.

Most academic research and standards for publishing as well as policy and administrative activities operate within the knowledge regime socially organized to be 'objective'. International development is ruled by the same standards, making it necessary to generate and collect authorized 'impartial' information through the valid scientific methods which inform operation of the systematized and concerted activities of program management. Recognized professional knowledge such as expertise or science informs the design and establishment of technologies to ensure projects' successful operation leading to the efficient achievement of the carefully planned outcomes. The projects I have studied share these features; they establish the 'objective' knowledge basis for their operation and organizational management. Building knowledge that is adequate for all these purposes thus becomes a central feature of the projects in my investigation. I tracked these activities as project participants carried them out in local settings, and described what they did conducting accountability for funding, and monitoring, evaluating and reporting program activities.

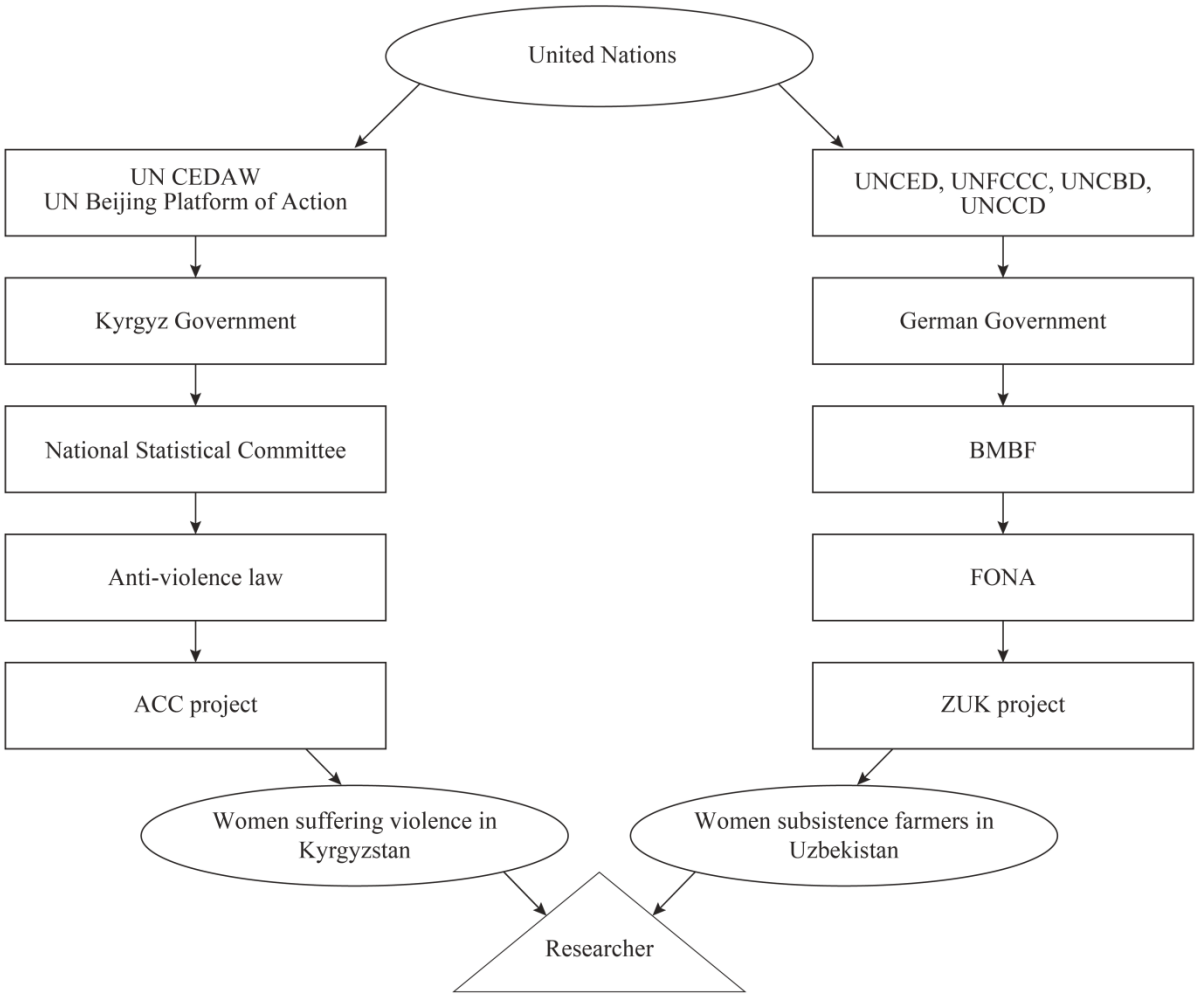
In the everyday practices constituting the projects' implementation 'objective' information-construction relies on institutionally approved text-based forms which guide what happens. Professionals, staff, front-line workers take up those texts and use them in their routine work to construct factual accounts in institutional terms. In this process texts have a regulatory function; they inform which aspects of lived actualities are selected and worked up as relevant pieces of information, events or representations of people. The texts attune the projects' work with the larger regulatory apparatuses whereof they are functionalities. These ruling discourses, as I discover, pertain to economic growth, productivity, and effectiveness of policy implementation, and of state obligations to international development community. Both projects I studied are constituted in the institutionally organized work with the United Nations at its forefront (Figure 28). UN's CEDAW and Beijing Platform of Action as well as the Rio-1992

Conventions of UNFCC, UNCBD, UNCCD are regulatory frames which establish global conceptual apparatuses and associated accountability requirements to organize their implementation through national governments, international projects and national agencies. All of this operates on the basis of the regulatory texts generated under institutional terms. Careful management and reporting procedures, planning and implementation are all operating on the basis of pre-established categories, targets and measurable indicators which together comprise 'objective' organization. Organizational practices institutionalize this authorized knowledge and transplant it in settings such as ZUK and ACC projects. ZUK project in Uzbekistan is part of the complicated system which integrates the Rio-1992-inspired European Union's strategy on cooperation with Central Asia with the European policy frameworks on sustainable development (FONA) through Germany's strategies on national sustainability and cooperation with Central Asian governments. The German cooperation with Central Asian states implemented by the BMBF acquired the features of FONA in the process of BMBF's implementation of the national sustainability strategy coordinated by the German Federal Government. Rio-1992 established a system of accountability on the implementation of its conventions by the state parties in response to which the German national sustainability strategy was founded. The ZUK project contributes to this accountability organization and its outcomes add to national (and international) efforts to achieve the goals outlined in the Rio Conventions. It is thus becomes crucial to ensure that all BMBF-funded projects bring the expected results, are 'efficient' and have the envisioned 'impact'.

The Kyrgyz ACC project is similarly a local site of implementing the country's international obligations to advance democratic principles through implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action and CEDAW and structured reporting on its progress to the transnational community. The results from this project will be used in the national reports to the high-profile international committees which monitor the global situation in relation to human rights. Central to this national reporting is the Kyrgyz anti-violence law whose effective realization is promoted by the project professionals as part of their mandate. ACC project participants are connected to the global development institution through this law and associated text-based practices which ensure its implementation. In the processes of producing envisioned results and pre-established

impacts, particular knowledge processes begin to play out with certain effects upon the projects' beneficiaries.

Figure 28. Research sites as part of global development institution



Benevolent objectification of women's knowledge

The problem for the women whom I studied, i.e., who become directly or indirectly involved in the 'objectively' organized development action is that their specific experiences do not fit into its institutional frames, at least 'as they are'. What they know must be objectified. The basis for institutionally-organized practices constituting decision-making and management is 'objective' knowledge. Such knowledge is positioned to be 'neutral', i.e., not only is it categorized to be processed with related topics, but it must be able to be applicable as a statistical

average or the most representative member of a targeted community. It can subsequently feed into the organizational information systems structured as strictly-formatted reports, matrices, quantitative tables, etc. People's experience must be reformatted in this institutional language of science and development. The knowledge grounded in everyday/everynight particularities of local women's worlds must become abstracted by these discourses. Women whom I study and their knowledge and experiences do not appear to articulate with projects' institutional goals such as economic growth, quantitative impact, rights-based approach, international accountability, etc. The organizational practices tend to be derived from and speak to the experiences of those who are seen to be the agents of production, economy, expanding capital, markets, data-based productivity. What these women know and bring to the work, their experientially-based expertise is inadequate for these institutionally-organized categories and related activities. Their actual experiences are concerned with work that is too 'local', 'bodily', 'particular', and 'subjective', thus, inappropriate for 'objectively' organized knowledge. Women's knowing is less relevant for the institutionalized forms, for generation of standardized skills, knowledge and practices, for available cause-and-effect theories and other objectively organized institutional practices. Once knowing is less 'categorizable' it is less useful for the processes of objective management and control. Information, activities, experiences and other forms of knowledge which do not conform to the 'objective' categories of the regulatory frames must be converted/changed/transliterated into existing pre-established institutional categories in order to become institutionally relevant. I discover that in this process of transformation women's actual knowledge disappear. Women's actual experiences are lost sight of. In the Kyrgyz project woman knowledge of violence and her daily work at struggling with home aggression will be transformed in the institutional process to be ultimately known as a faceless number in the statistical report submitted by the Kyrgyz government to the CEDAW Committee in New York. Or it may be ignored completely. An Uzbek woman-peasant's knowledge, her everyday efforts and strategies to ensure the success of her agriculture are invisible to the project's knowledge management and decision-making processes; her knowledge enters the system in its absence, i.e., it disappears from it entirely. The projects achieve an unintended effect of subordinating women's knowledge to the institution of development and objectifying it to the ruling knowledge. The discourses of science and development operating in two research

sites abstract women's actual knowledge and, consequently, turn away from these women and what they know and do.

Exclusion or transliteration of women's knowledge and experience occurs routinely and unintentionally within institutionally organized knowledge-based activities. To illustrate, both projects set contradictory requirements and measures of ideal participants. For instance, in Uzbekistan's project, in order to be included, the women would have had to be professional irrigators. Yet, they have traditionally been excluded from this work. They would have to be publicly visible while their modesty and invisibility have been expected. Or they would have had to be farmers owing land identified as legal entities. In either case, they would have to have free time to participate, while their workload was doubled or even tripled. Their exclusion from the project reflects their exclusion from the world that men occupy. It constructs them as ineligible in many ways. In Kyrgyzstan, the exclusion is somewhat more subtle. The local feminist anti-violence effort to address women's needs specifically in the framework of a foreign-funded project is caught up in the institutional forms of power imposed by the accepted development paradigm promoted by the funders and the national government. It promises to be gender-specific, but ultimately turns a blind eye to the women's specific experiences and needs. The ACC's professionals try to transfer resources to women's needs but they must do this in ways through which women can become legitimate recipients of development aid. This has meant framing local women's interests in the ruling language of the funding institution and the terms for advancement of the legal frameworks and their due implementation. For Smith, feminist initiatives have often depended upon "their habits of thoughts and conceptual organization through the unexplicated incorporation into its discourse of the categories institutionalizing the 'main business' or ruling" (1999, p. 37). Once such transformation is accomplished, women's actual needs are no longer derived from women's experiences, but are recast as instances to confirm the premises of the dominant ideology; the women's actual needs/concerns/difficulties become marginalized. The professional staff in the ACC's offices must work with and integrate into their work practices discourse of women and development (its rights-based approach, for instance) which has emanated from the outside, in the headquarters of the development apparatus. Existing literature criticizes such expertise for being too "white, professional, bourgeois, and fundamentally inappropriate for the situations of women in other societies"

(Mueller, 1987, p. 6). The rights-based approach infused in Kyrgyzstan by the so-called globalized gender politics and expertise expressed by CEDAW, Beijing 1995 are taken seriously by the ACC staff; they systematically implement the ruling approach together with their other organizational requirements imposed by the international donors and the national government. In doing so, the professional work in ACC is generated in concert with the purposes of the global agencies in defining and managing development practice. But in these routine practices the project professionals (themselves women, it must be noted) turn their attention away from the needs of the local Kyrgyz women towards the managerial needs of proper project implementation.

As local expression of the development institution, the two projects introduce global technologies for development, enforce the generalized guiding principles for improvements, and benevolently impose external regime of governance upon their participants. Objectification of women's knowledge is needed for the projects' achievement of these institutional goals through textual administration practices. But, in each case, these knowledge-based institutional processes subtly but powerfully negate the actualities of local women-beneficiaries' lives, ultimately failing to address the actual women's experiences and needs. As a result, possible global development resources are diverted away from these marginalized women perpetuating local women's impoverishment and subordination.

Genderization as a process of 'doing gender'

Intrinsic to the 'objectively'-organized projects' practices of the development knowledge regime, the production and reproduction of differences between men and women are taking place. Women are present in each project but their position is conceptualized according to the institutional expectations intertwined with naturalized pre-conceptions about women's roles, positions and capacities in relation to the projects. When these pre-conceptualizations invisibly work to shape institutional practices the process of 'genderization' takes place. Institutional actors unintentionally 'genderize' when, in carrying out their responsibilities of project implementation, they routinely incorporate taken-for-granted ideas about an existing gender order into their work of planning, designing, conceptualization, managing, reporting and so on. Gender takes shape as a knowledge-based activity which various institutional actors invisibly

and unwittingly put into place through institutionally-approved practice, scientific research, gender expertise, and rights-based protection frameworks.

The Uzbek project is an especially interesting instance of the genderization process at work. This particular project was conceptualized as 'gender-neutral' but once the project was operating, the processes of ruling made things work in ways that benefited the men but not the women. A project manager from the Uzbek project explains something of the situation:

> This is the reality, this is a society where men are predominant in all the organizational positions, they are everywhere and, in majority of cases, they make decisions. If I included 'gender element' [said in English] that would be artificial and would contradict the local culture. In this project the accountant was a woman and also one secretary… That is all. How can I include women? Where will I look for them? (interview, June 2011).

This quote demonstrates how owing to what was implicitly and explicitly known about women, they were treated differently than men as the project was being set up. A project manager, an intellectual and a scientist in this case, has made decisions relying on the readily available ideas about women and men, their 'spaces', positions and relation to the project's agenda of participatory water management. The project professional takes for granted that women and men are distinctly different in their 'quality' to participate in the project. It is perceived as 'natural' for men to occupy the decision making positions and looking out for women among them is considered to be 'artificial'. Women are pre-conceptualized as non-decision makers, as non-participants in the organization of water management, as essentially incapable of taking part in the project outside of the 'secretary' and the 'accountant' roles. As such they are addressed as irrelevant to the state-level agricultural production, to the large-scale improvements in the sustainable use of natural resources, thus, to the project itself. The project staff imprint such ideas about how gender in their society 'works' into the design and activities of the project such as the formulation of the allegedly neutral selection criteria for the local participants. The disproportionately 'male representation' from the quote above has not been challenged by the project planning team. Ultimately, knowledgeable women have been overlooked for project participation and benefits. In organizing such outcomes for peasant women the Uzbek project has explicitly gendered its relation to women. The concept of gender

in this case has worked to fit the already existing ideas about the differences between women and men and produce different outcomes for men and women. Gender-neutrality, in this particular case, has meant that women have been treated differently and categorized outside the project's agenda. From this treatment the women are not just disregarded for project participation and benefit — these practices serve to carry on a gender order in which the women who are already outside the public domains of decision-making, now disappear as active agents or vanish entirely. The conditions created in this manner have outcomes that further repress and disadvantage women.

Ideas about women's role in production, family, relationship to men are naturalized in both projects. In neither of them women's ongoing vigorous resistance has been taken up seriously by the projects as a sufficient ground to be built upon by the projects' policies. Even the so-called women-oriented project is not devoid of the subordinating effects of genderization. The ACC project shows us this much. Women and their position within the project are known on the basis of knowledge produced by international and local gender experts to specifically improve the situation of women who experience violence. The ruling practices are organized in such ways that women-victims must appear in the project in their distinct representation as victims. This has an effect where men's control over women is maintained. When a woman is depicted as a victim of violence her oppression becomes defined by and solely on the basis of their relation to the man and his actions of battering. Such representation serves to overlook women's active resistance to their own violence and organizes them as passive sufferers from active intrusion, the subjects of which are men. When the project imposes legalistic solutions it becomes complicit in reinserting the men's active role in gender relationship in contrast to women's passive role in it. Eradicating violence is contingent solely upon condemning the perpetrator. Women's active role in contributing to resolving their own situation is minimized. Women are prevented from being the agents of their own change; the usefulness of their own, individually-defined ways to continue to fight their impoverishments is invalidated. Relations within which women's submission to men's domination is enforced are not transformed, but rather reinforced. Everyday practices are organized to keep women in 'their gendered spaces' as women, as victim, as a passive and helpless category. This is how the Kyrgyz project specifically accomplishes genderization.

Practices of gender in relation to men

Although my ethnography and its analysis focus predominantly on women, I have used the term 'gender' throughout this dissertation. Doing so has not meant conforming to the prominent conception of gender as being synonymous with 'women'. Instead, what I have proposed as a process of gender affects both women and men and this explains the persistent use of the term. I have not elaborated on the specifics of how men in both projects become the objects of genderization in my data collection and analysis but certain instances of data illustrate that, indeed, both men and women are genderized. Displacing the term 'gender' with 'women' in this dissertation would have meant eclipsing men from these process in the face of convincing empirical evidence that the same social organization plays out in the knowledge-based activities of the projects in relation to men in particular. There are discoverable presumptions about men and their capacities to contribute to and benefit from the project informing the project's policies and related implementation activities. To illustrate, in the ACC project, men are understood as members of a rather fixed category, permanently aggressive, enduringly dominating and essentially incapable of behavioral change by any other means except the rigid punitive measures of a legalistic approach. In the ACC the project staff organize their protection practices in relation to this presumed role and place for men, and in doing so rule out men from the project's benefit as well.

In the case of the project in Uzbekistan, there is an apparent genderizing of men as well. Like in Kyrgyzstan, genderization here emerges as enacted assumptions about men's and women's intrinsic or essential abilities to be 'useful' for the projects' institutional interests. The project organizes experiences for both women and men, reinforcing their divided spaces, different livelihood possibilities, and what that means for their work and its outcomes. Men in their capacities of being professional, publicly active, willing, and having sufficient time to innovate, as well as having larger plots of land were qualified to become participants. The project targeted their needs and interests and ultimately reproduced their more beneficial positions in relation to those who do not possess those features, e.g., peasants, and especially the peasant women whose experiences I studied. Unlike these women, the men whom I interviewed were not impeded from receiving irrigation. By differentially organizing a more beneficial outcome for the men, adding to their success and status, the project genderized them. Another

aspect of genderization is the project's indirect participation in Uzbekistan's land distribution policy that increasingly organizes the work in certain jobs as men's. To illustrate, commercial farming in Uzbekistan, unlike some other agricultural activities, remains predominantly associated with and now apparently 'inherently' men's work. The state agrarian reform redistributed land in a ways which prevents peasants from being able to receive sufficient income from the small fields they received. Subsequently, a majority of men among peasants are forced to out-migrate in search of a waged labor. This has created a new division of labor with males working outside the country for cash income. The project underpinned this gendered outcome of division of labor by building on this already established inequitable organization of agricultural land. In its project conceptualization, the WUA project generalized the (water) needs and economic interests of commercial farmers to all the rural inhabitants whose livelihoods the project aimed at improving. As a result the project largely failed to notice and thus address the drastically curtailed employment opportunities of the peasants and in doing so condoned the situation in which peasant men continue to migrate for employment, also a traditionally accepted activity for men. When women pick up the subsistence 'farming' work, they are not recognized as farmers but as peasants who do "household production". And socially organized feature of knowing rural people (and their apparent natural attributes) on the basis of land distribution policies is part of the genderization of both men and women.

Gender as a process in the context of current scholarship on gender

Regardless of the origins and current everyday experience of the conventional normative knowledge about an existing gender order, these ideas can become institutionalized, reproducing gender and gender relations. I see gender as an active process in the situations I have studied and this understanding of the term can be contrasted to its conceptualization in the existing literature which discusses gender as a subject's trait, something that is 'in' the women or that they 'do' on their own. Yet feminist thought has long eschewed essentialist conceptions of women. My analysis of the genderization processes pries away from seeing gender as a stable category and an objective trait or a behavioral characteristic that is genetically programmed for men and women. Gender in my study by no means emerges as a 'dimension' or an interesting statistical variable for the research conducted by economists, statisticians and econometricians in what is often called 'the gender-disaggregation approach'. This conceptualization would tend to see

gender as a depoliticized, technocratic and static category which reduces women to a set of needs or gaps, amenable to administrative decisions about the allocation of resources. The problem with this perspective is that not all statistical differences reflect discrimination; neither does statistical equation reflect genuine equality. Moreover, treating gender as a statistical analytical unit ignores the relational aspects of gender, of power and ideology and how patterns of subordination are reproduced. In the long run such an approach to studying gender results in gender being a means to reach pre-envisioned ends and runs the risk of being discredited (Baden & Goetz, 1997).

I propose from my analysis that gender is a socially organized practice that produces power and status differentials between men and women while the categorization of them as 'gender' insinuates that the apparent difference is 'found' and thus, natural. Introducing gender as a socially organized practice contributes also to understanding the problem of essential universalism in the familiar social constructivist view on gender. The contradiction with such conceptualizing of gender as a set of social constructions attributed to either female or male individuals, as mentioned before in the beginning of this dissertation, is that it invokes biological sex at the very moment that the influence of the biological is being challenged (Nicholson, 1994). This perspective, thus, proposes that a fundamental equality and sameness exists among women and among men based on the physiological characteristics they are assumed to share. Such view on gender is argued to underplay differences across cultures and race (and across men and women of the same culture and ethnicity) in the interest of maintaining universality which often disguises its roots in the experiences of only certain groups (Mohanty, 1991). On the other hand, the proponents of the social constructivism which argue about gender as a social construction of feminine and masculine rather than female and male has been critiqued for exposing gender as the multiplicity of feminine and masculine identities with little transference across cultures thus running the risk of 'politically paralyzed relativism' (Persram, 1994). This particular perspective of the social constructivism theory on gender ignores the effects of the globalized political economy and transnational development action which conjoin the local experiences with the ruling paradigms including knowledge about gender and it potentially and erroneously universalizes this knowledge.

I argue against what both these perspectives convey, e.g., that the concept of gender is an objectively existing feature or individual culturally-defined identity. Understanding of gender as revealed in my study displays it neither as an independently floating social construction or an isolated subjectivity. I argue that gender is a trustworthy way of understanding the differences between women and men, but is a process taking place in the everyday lives and work of the actual people. It must be seen as such. Although my understanding of gender will also be socially organized, this is a different reading of gender from socially constructed ideas about gender manifested as conventional knowledge, culturally based norms, gender stereotypes, biases and the so-called 'gender expertise'. Gender expressed as concepts allows for stereotypical ideas about womanhood or manhood to be legitimated and to shape project practices. Then, as put into practice in projects, they produce effects in the real lives of people whose experiences and work become organized as differentiated in accordance to their sex. My inquiry into this work has shown exactly how such stereotypically universal ideas about women and men 'work' in various institutional spaces and practices and reproduce gender in ways disciplined by these pre-conceptualizations.

The idea about gender as a phenomenon that people 'do' resonates with Judith Butler's understanding of gender (1990; 1993). Like her, I show that gender is not what people are born with, but rather a continuous process wherein gendered people themselves participate to produce gender. I agree with Butler's ideas about gender as 'created' by various acts, and a gender order 'going on' in work around them, setting in motion what individual subjects do and think about themselves. Similar to Butler, I point to the concealed nature of power implicit in the processes of 'doing gender', regulating its production by the people and reveal the existence of various institutional powers that keep people in their gendered spaces and force them to conform to hegemonic standards of gender order. A decade after Butler's groundbreaking analysis of "gender trouble" (1990), she admits that more still needs to be known about how gender norms are established and controlled ("policed", in her own words) as well as how to disrupt these norms and overcome their policing function (Butler, 2011). It appears that my analysis at least partly addresses these questions by embedding the study of gender in empirical settings and in the lives of particular people. Of course, this approach takes the tracing of power from the general realm of psychic life to particular socially-organized practices, from mental processes to

their being pinned to concrete textual technologies. But it seems that committing to this way of analyzing the social operation of power shows a different aspect of gender, i.e., as a process, a practice that is socially-organized, textually-mediated, thus, empirically discoverable and malleable. Concrete activities, people, language and texts where the actual work of producing and reproducing gender takes place become open for learning about them and acting upon them, making necessary changes where relevant. Of course, the scale of the applicability of such analysis is not as wide as it would be, if we were to be talking about psychic mental operation of power. It seems that my analysis, though, can contribute to Butler's theoretical "troubling" of gender by complimenting it with problematizing the term in an empirical way and identifying the actual processes which account for how the culturally formed gender becomes embedded in modern institutions.

Women in the ruling relations: Consequences

My inquiry demonstrates how the efforts to improve the lives of people living in the developing world (in two particular sites of action) are locked in the development institution's ruling regime. Ruling is carried out invisibly within each project in ordinary ways, regular work practices, methods of social and natural sciences and organizational management. In pursuing their well-intended work, the development actors inadvertently advance the institutional invisibility of women's experiences by participating in the socially organized practices that modify, reconstitute or, generally, dismiss women's accounts in order to achieve pre-conceptualized institutional purposes. I argue that the consequences of the institutional disinterest to women, manifested by the objectification of women's knowledge and the processes of genderization, are far-reaching. When women's knowledge and work are subdued within organizational practices of development these projects become the kind of development that threatens its promised progress. The ways in which the women's specific knowledge is objectified by the ruling practices of institutions undermine the projects' intentions to change the marginalization and impoverishment brought by depleted natural resources or by men's violence toward women. In the case of the Kyrgyz project, these ruling relations not only undermine the integrity of psychological support, professional practice contradicts the globalized efforts of the international women's movement to combat gender violence.

Women's knowledge which has been objectified through institutional processes moves forward as the authoritative version. New institutional knowledge will be built upon this incomplete depiction of subaltern realities and form the basis for new policies, programs and actions. Exclusion of women's knowledge from further organizational decision-making, policy formulations, programming, and allocation of resources will thereby be perpetuated; their subordination will be advanced and their vulnerability will be increased. This is a circular process which poses certain contradictions for creating space and opportunities for action that would benefit particular women. If experience is not framed in the institutional language, the space for social or institutional action is limited if not impossible. The institutional world is "the only, arena for social action. […] [It] dictates what is possible for professionals to accomplish" (Mueller, 1987, p. 13). On the one hand, women's knowledge needs to be integrated into the policy arena to increase the possibilities of their concerns to be addressed by the program planning professionals. However, the way this integration operates works against women's interests, when such incorporation begins outside of women's particularities, their actualities and their standpoints. There is a high risk that women will be locked up in the vicious circle, in the circular process of knowledge generation, re-production and usage whereby their marginalization is perpetuated. This is a serious problem that continues to demand attention.

Integrating women into the highly systematized 'objective' organization in a non-objectifying manner would require a more flexible system of management, attention to specific and particular experiences rather than 'generalizable' data, negation of standardized and pre-formatted principles of activities and, importantly, refusal to separate embodied experiences from active agency. All of these propositions are exposed to risk because they ostensibly contradict the fundamental principles of contemporary organizational operation directed to achieve institutional purposes and impact with the use of 'objectively'-organized management. As Smith speaks about ruling discourses, their centripetal effects restrict the ways in which knowledge can be developed as a service to those who may participate as subjects in the ruling relations (1999). Thus, a more fair incorporation of local women's knowledge into institutional organization is antithetical to the priorities of the mainstream development growth paradigm within which they have been located and would require a fundamental transformation of the

"biggest, most male-dominated, most world-dominating institution of any and every male-dominated institutions in the world", i.e., the development institution (Mueller, 1987, p. 1).

Recommendations

It now appears logical to compliment my critical analysis with suggestions about how the most marginalized participants can better benefit from the development resources. On the basis of the results from my study I will suggest ideas about addressing the troubles identified in the actual practices aimed at bringing improvements for poor populations.

General recommendations

I have made explicit the effects of the social organization of the two projects' activities which are consequential for the beneficiaries. First, given a project's reliance on the theoretical knowledge about women and men available from the scholarly literature, including Women in Development sources, it is my recommendation that any study affecting women must be planned in ways that allow researchers to 'know' differently the actualities of women's lives. Currently, the institutional processes which operationalize projects carry the institutions ruling ideas and 'map' them onto participants as they are being conceptualized within the gender discourses. Subsequently people are addressed as if they synonymous with the discursive views of them. It should come as no surprise when the project's activities are conceptualized in this manner, its (ruling) ideas do not fall in line with what really happens on the ground, especially for women. If, in the Uzbekistan case, we want women to benefit from the project, they must not be overlooked as water users. The Kyrgyz project shows that the adherence to the global human rights discourse is at odds with the actual provision of protection for women. In the case of the project in Uzbekistan, we have seen how conceptualizing a project as gender-neutral puts into practice unwise assumptions that women and men have equal opportunities to equitably participate in project activities. In fact, it prevented women-peasants from taking part even at the most participatory project endeavors. On the basis of these findings, I argue that women and men must always be learned about through specific methods of observing and hearing them and then using what they know, rather than relying on assumptions about them, either theoretical or conventional. What people actually do, how they do it, and how they understand their work is

what needs to inform the development of any projects' activities and policies. Efforts to improve people's lives must begin from understanding these circumstances from the standpoint of these people. The approach I recommend is based on learning from people themselves what is troubling and how these troubles are organized to happen as they do. This knowledge must be the point of entry into how local problems can be effectively addressed by projects. Knowledge generated otherwise will necessarily fail to capture the actual needs, concerns and interests of particular people and will continue to promote the goals of the institution rather than those whose lives are directly affected by it. This is my broad recommendation for project developers. Now, in more specific terms, my recommendations will pertain to each project individually.

Recommendations for the project in Uzbekistan

The analysis of the project in Uzbekistan points to the profound absence of peasants as legitimate recipients of water delivery services within the national organization of water resources management. There is an overriding categorization and subsequent operationalization that erases all peasants from the institutionally organized irrigation practices and associated texts. I have shown that this entails far-reaching consequences. When water management workers carry out their work activities and use these texts they do their work properly, however, non-deliberately and ultimately this work serves to rule out the women-peasants and their farming-related needs. Prospective programming to develop rural areas should address this problematic feature of water governance and challenge it. To create space for the peasants to benefit from enhanced water management mechanisms, changes must be introduced in the current definition of eligibility to receive irrigation that will explicitly express peasants as legitimate water users. I have identified places in the institutional organization of water management where insertion of the category of peasants has the capacity to change matters. What appears necessary is re-examination of the documents which frame the organization of the national water management system in MAWR. It is these concrete texts that define water use in a manner in which peasants are not deemed eligible. Tackling these texts and reformulating the concept of water users so that it unambiguously establishes the peasants' rights to claim irrigation services is one first step and would need to be addressed by project (research) staff as a precursor to setting up WUAs. Subsequent work will entail making relevant changes in the institutional texts such as the konturs and WUA charters to be activated in the everyday work of the institutional participants in water

management. The village representatives such as the khodyms, paikals and village council members will need to be invited to participate in making irrigation accessible to the peasants. This recommendation implies a considerable expansion of the work of the water managers, and would create positions for women peasants to fill. It requires everybody to be informed and motivated to extend their services to a larger pool of water users. Only if peasants as a category become legitimate water users can the women small-holders be seen and accepted as eligible participants and project workers. It is my contention that this is the first and necessary step to facilitate meaningful improvements in their lives and their families' lives.

Recommendations to the project in Kyrgyzstan

Another specific recommendation concerns the Kyrgyz setting where my analysis makes evident the failure of the project and crisis centers to provide safety for women who seek protection. At the moment there is a troubling trait in the project work that reduces women's bodily experience of violence to its being solely a criminal act that must be eliminated through punitive measures. We have seen that these so-called solutions have not helped to reduce the safety risks for women. Again, as in the Uzbekistan situation, the project's reliance on a conceptualized understanding undermined the project's capacity to successfully combat the brutality in women's homes. Instead, the professional workers' objectification of women's experiences of violence fulfills the project's accounting requirements and accomplishes the ruling interests of the institution. To actually help women, there is an apparent need to treat instances of violence as more than something to be counted, referred to the police, and reported on. Women are actually embedded in real economic, social and familial relationships and if the professionals listened to them, they would see them as real people, active and capable, not just as victims. It is true that the government of Kyrgyzstan does not take violence against women seriously enough to fund shelters and other community features for women's safety. Crisis center staff now volunteer some of their time, including for fund-raising, and my recommendations may seem as if I am asking them to do even more unpaid work. But paying a different kind of attention to women's actual needs, to identifying local community networks and creating self-help opportunities is something that could be inserted into crisis centers. In this way women could be empowered to address home brutality in autonomously-defined and more sustainable

ways. Such transformation would require a re-organization of the work of the crisis centers, shifting professionals' responsibilities away from the overpowering tasks of administrative, fund-raising and managerial work. Recognizing and prioritizing the usefulness of work beginning with active listening (already listed as a professional's competence) would offer a more comprehensive and potentially fruitful approach to consultations. I am aware that at the moment there may be very few opportunities to take up those changes, but I am also aware that measures need to be taken fast because when women's problems remain unattended and unaddressed the costs are of paramount magnitude. To explain, as I was finalizing this dissertation I learnt that within the last eleven months of the year 2012 twenty two women were killed by their partners in their homes in Kyrgyzstan. It is known that some of these women sought protection in the crisis centers described in this study. It is apparent that the services these women received were not sufficient enough to prevent their deaths. It is also self-evident that more than twenty years of anti-violence activity and considerable financial sources invested in the country did not work to avert all these women from becoming terminal victims of domestic violence.

The recommendations presented in this section of the chapter have been conceived as possible means to address the revealed areas of criticism. However, I understand that the proposed solutions may merely address the symptoms of the intricate problems identified in this study and lack a more transformative perspective on policy change. I am aware that these recommendations must be viewed with caution because of a high degree of partiality inherently implicated in them. Adopting a particular standpoint for any institutional ethnographic research makes policy advice difficult. Biases stem exactly from a subjective position chosen by the researcher as an entry point to the inquiry and run the risk of necessarily leaving somebody behind. These contradictions between the personal choice of the standpoint and an effective policy advice endure and need to be considered as a serious challenge in the policy making process. In fact, classical institutional ethnography pries away from making policy recommendations (Campbell, 2011). Instead, researchers are encouraged to work together with policy makers and institutional actors involved in designing, planning, implementing and evaluating programs for improving services. In such collaboration, institutional ethnographers use their empirical findings to show exactly and very specifically which institutional processes,

texts or activities can be held accountable for producing adversary effects on beneficiaries (Smith, 2005). Likewise, I suggest that that my recommendations are made available to professionals and developers and subjected in a collaborative effort to a careful examination and cautious consideration in the policy planning processes.

Limitations of the present study and recommendations for further research

In this section I will address three points of self-criticism about my analysis, each of which I accompany with ideas about possible future research. First, as I have mentioned before, institutional ideologies are constantly redefined and reshaped by competing ruling discourses. What I have presented as an analysis of two specific development project may reflect only a moment in time and lack a perspective on how new relations of power may come into play and with what consequences. For this reason, I propose that new trends and fashions in development which make use of progressive language and promise positive change are scrutinized with the kind of research that starts from actual people and their experiences. Especially relevant are the various expressions of programming planned to implement the post-2015 universal development agenda which promise to "leave no one behind" and foster sustainable inclusive growth (http://www.post2015hlp.org/the-report/) which will guide development activities in the foreseeable future.

Second, even though in contemporary institutional settings there are no spaces outside the ruling and people always act within the ruling relations, they continually revise and extend the power and machinery of ruling through their activities in policy, managerial and professional positions. This aspect has remained largely uncovered in my research but needs to be investigated and discussed in the future. I would suggest that further research is directed to making more explicit how institutional actors negotiate the ruling practices and, possibly can transform them from their positions 'inside' development. This would require that researchers and practitioners work together and findings like those generated in this research become available for meaningful change. There is a strong commitment on my side to the usefulness of inviting practitioners and institutional players to analyze their own work to recognize its being coordinated by extralocal sources and to encourage them to find areas where it is possible for them to make changes. I believe that the changes they begin to see will serve the interests of the marginalized beneficiaries rather than those of the ruling institution. Investing how such

collaboration may work and with what results, opportunities and challenges will be another possibility for future research.

Third, in discussing my discovery of genderization as a process whereby conventional ideas about women and men become routinely integrated into work practices, I have not paid enough attention to how these conventional ideas emerge. The genealogy of this knowledge, its historical specificity and its possible connectedness to a diversity of larger discourses about societies appear worth scholarly attention, thinking and investigation.

Where we got and the way forward: Conclusions

Throughout this doctoral dissertation I have been building an argument about the ruling character of international development practice as it has been operationalized in two particular projects in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Both projects have been analyzed as operating in socially and discursively organized settings – one being development as research and the other development within an NGO that is dependent on the exigencies of international development aid. I found that although the projects have explicit goals of bringing improvements into the lives of their envisioned beneficiaries and their good intentions are taken for granted, women's experience is maintained as subordinate through socially organized practices. My investigation in both projects highlights how the professionals' ability to protect women from home violence or to improve women's livelihoods is fundamentally constrained by the institutional policies which guide project implementation work. I have shown how project's practitioners and professional staff proceed entirely properly in institutional terms; they use institutionally relevant language, categories, and concepts to define women's knowledge vis-a-vis its relevance to the institutional mandate. These people are coordinated at their workplaces to interpret the work, lives and experiences of their own and of others in ways that are harmonized with the ruling apparatus of knowledge. Professional researchers and practitioners are organized to learn to take action appropriate to these ruling frames, their actions are disciplined by the ruling discourses–of the development paradigms and of the professional, academic and technical expertise deployed as it is put into practice. As the professionals in agricultural economics and environmental sustainability in Uzbekistan and gender advocates in Kyrgyzstan engage with these conceptual and managerial frameworks, their efforts take the shape that these frameworks establish and require. Their work takes a technical form as they direct it into improved accountability,

producing ‘impact’ and aligning their accounts of women’s improved status with the indicators which operationalize the impact.

However, these project workers are caught in a difficult bind. While they work hard in the field to make a difference in the local people’s, including women’s, lives, their actions are limited by the projects’ commitments within international and national development politics and related institutional requirements making their own working conditions precarious; because their own livelihood depends on a projects’ smooth implementation and achievement of pre-planned goals, they are not in a position to question ‘the rules’. As a result, in both projects globalized knowledge paradigms are enacted in actual institutional processes by actual institutional actors to officially endorse a peculiar eclipsing of women’s knowledge.

In finishing this dissertation I would like to reinstate that since 1970s feminist scholars and development practitioners have made substantial and valuable contributions to scholarship on gender. Their critical thinking and often ground-breaking insights have influenced development thought and practices around the world. Today, gender appears in many high-profile global development agendas, with funding made available specifically for women and women’s needs. Yet, despite this effort inequalities and oppression of women around the globe perpetuate. My analysis of international cooperation to improve the living circumstances of men and women in Central Asia provides insight into serious problems at the heart of development planning and project management. While my projects were not chosen to be representative of the development practice affecting women, I learned from analyzing two projects how apparently well-constructed and trustworthy administrative mechanisms that are text-mediated operate to disadvantage women –even when, in the case of one project I studied, it was set up specifically to address women’s problems. Both projects operationalize conventional or stereotypic notions about women, men, and gender in local settings and no effort is made to know people differently. On the basis of this finding, I claim that any development project that is built upon the text-based systems which assume knowing the local setting and local actors, systems which plan and manage policy-oriented change, and which account for the pre-established project outcomes, will create contradictory effects for women. Insights and approach I used in this study can be usefully utilized for discussing any development programming which operates on the basis of ‘objective’ planning, textually mediated management and accountability with the goal to improve

impoverished conditions. Indeed, while this dissertation focuses on two specific empirical sites the insights it generates, the developments with which it engages and the institutional linkages it explores are applicable elsewhere. While taking on particular policy configurations in different locales, development understood broadly has become a global institution whose operation has been increasingly standardized through global governance. Consequently, the policies, practices, discourses, and even some texts advanced in my specific locales will also be present in other situations. Especially relevant such analysis appears to be in relation to projects developed under the aegis of human development, such as poverty reduction, health, education, food sovereignty, disaster mitigation, human rights, etc., because an improved understanding of how such projects 'work' may lead to policy change whereby populations could benefit better from global development sources.

My dissertation describes an approach to a practice of knowing that is built on understanding social settings as being socially organized. This approach requires taking the standpoint of the women who are projects beneficiaries as a basis of understanding them, their lives, their knowledge and skills to learn how a particular development project might support women's own efforts. It is my contention that actionable knowledge for marginalized women can only be possible if one begins from the local standpoint, producing a vision of change which arises from local understandings and with the possibilities of action to be taken there. It is such knowledge that will usefully help identify what needs to be maintained or changed by bringing to the surface institutional places from which oppression is routinely generated. Women's oppression and its institutional sources can be tracked, identified, and, possibly, addressed at the core of its conceptualization on the basis of an inquiry into organized institutional activities.

Knowledge practices can change. Recognizing that social life is socially organized, I recommend that development research needs to rethink gender. I propose that it is useful to think about gender as not a static attribute of men and women, but rather as produced in practices that differentiate between them – creating the differences that seem to be intrinsic. My analysis shows development practices institutionalizing the inequities of the local setting. If development is to ensure that women are properly incorporated into plans and programs, the settings and the people must be understood better and not treated inequitably as categories, instances of theory, ultimately organizing women's disadvantage. How precisely work informed in such manner will

differ must be understood but at the moment is a matter of collaboration among researchers and practitioners and further empirical research.

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