Transnational and Local Concepts of Gender and Social Transformation in International Development Work

Understanding Normative Frameworks through Foregrounding Lived Realities in Ghana

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I, Fanny Froehlich, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

This doctoral thesis analyses transnational and local modes of gender and social transformation in the context of an international non-governmental development programme, which was designed and implemented as well as monitored and evaluated cross-culturally. While being located within a wider public policy discourse on gender and development (GAD), the case studied in this research focuses on programme implementation in Ghana, West Africa. The overall aim of this thesis is to address 'the cross-cultural question' in international development work by studying how social actors, especially community members and development practitioners, conceptualise gender *within* and *across* socio-cultural spaces. This potentially influences understandings of programmatic success possibly aligned to notions of meaningful social transformation.

Through feminist anthropological methods highlighting grounded interpretations by research participants, as well as a documentary study of the development programme and policy documents, this research analyses gender as lived relations and representations. Drawing on qualitative methods including participant observation, interviews and focus group discussions, this doctoral study investigates, in particular, the role of social norms (change) to address questions of gender and social transformation.

Transformative elements highlighted in this thesis include alignment of individual needs and aspirations to socio-cultural collective values by linking ideas of women's empowerment and gender equality to harmony and respect; and alignment of 'hardware' and 'software' concerns based on 'open' conversations drawing on the value and practice of 'epistemic equality', especially among development practitioners and community members.

Drawing on a feminist transnational analytical and activist approach, this thesis offers reflections on how collaborative processes among feminist development practitioners and community members as part of international cross-cultural development may point to pathways of co-creating knowledge through 'epistemic communities'. In this thesis, collaboration as part of conscientisation efforts addresses the role of 'the local', what it entails/not entails and how it might link to understandings of legitimacy as part of cross-cultural GAD programmes implemented within and across specific socio-cultural locations.

Impact Statement

This thesis aims to advance knowledge in the field of feminist development research with a particular focus on addressing 'the cross-cultural question' in gender-transformative international development. It aspires to contribute to an academic and public policy debate on how to engage with socio-cultural specificities in conjunction with presumed issues of 'universal' validity through proposing pathways of co-producing knowledge. To generate impact, two areas have been identified in particular.

1. Disseminating Knowledge through Forging Collaborations

In Ghana, I have presented my research at various stages to academic and non-academic audiences. Through my attendance at the *Global Africa 2063: Education for Reconstruction and Transformation* Conference (June 25 to July 1, 2017 at University of Ghana, Legon, Accra), I forged connections with various African and European academic colleagues. Through sharing my research at the *All-African Peoples' Conference 2018: The Unfinished Business of Liberation and Transformation* (December 5-8, 2018, University of Ghana), I strengthened these research connections. In line with the objectives, rationale and values of this research, forging connections is an important element in co-creating epistemic communities, which might lead to publication of research findings in collaborative ways.

I have presented my research at community level to research participants and other community members and shared it with selected participating development practitioners, continuously seeking research validation through iterative feedback loops. Based on this doctoral research, this approach will also be adopted to identify collaborative and 'meaningful' ways for generating future impact at community-level and within the sphere of targeted development work.

With a focus on disseminating knowledge, I have also attended several conferences and workshops in the UK and Europe and presented my doctoral research. This included presentations at the *Africa Research Day Conference 2016 'Redefining the Past, Imagining the Future'* (held at SOAS on May 25, 2016) and at a conference on *Identities and Identifications: Politicised Uses of Collective Identities* (held from March 4-5, 2016, in Venice, Italy).

I aim to publish research findings in high-impact journal articles and book chapters. Planned outputs include a chapter in a forthcoming volume on 'Gender, Old Age, and Social Security in Africa and Europe' edited by Bea Lundt and Henry Kam Kah. Article submissions based on this doctoral research are envisioned in the following journals: *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *Feminist Africa* and *Gender and Development.*

2. Knowledge Exchange as part of Development Research and Practice

During the course of this research, I held several presentations on my doctoral study as part of undergraduate modules at UK institutions of higher education. Exchanging views with students generated discussions around the applicability of the research in a development practice context and informed research interests of selected students.
As a member of the Gender and Development Network, I aim to share my research findings within a dedicated space aimed at feminist transformative development practice, bringing together development practitioners from the Global South and the Global North.

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List of Abbreviations

BDPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CDP	Community Development Plan
CO	Country Office (Plan International Ghana)
CPC	Child Protection Committee
CPT	Child Protection Team
CRA	Child Rights Alliance
CRC	(United Nations) Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRRECENT	Child Research and Resource Centre
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAWN	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
DOVVSU	Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (of the Ghana Police Force)
EPU	Eastern Programme Unit (Plan International Ghana)
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAA	Girls Advocacy Alliance
GAD	Gender and Development
GCE	Girl Child Education
GES	Ghana Education Service
GHS	Ghana Health Service
GPP	Girl Power Programme
GSHRDC	Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IO	International Organisation
JHS	Junior High School
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MoGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MoWAC	Ministry of Women's and Children Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NO	National Office (Plan International Netherlands)
Q&A	Question and Answer
QPR	Quarterly Progress Report
SHS	Secondary High School
WAD	Women and Development
WID	Women in Development

1. Introduction

Development research, policy and practice with a focus on 'gender' often engage with those gender roles and relations that are said to uphold, support or quietly accept social discrimination against women and girls, impacting upon the set-up of gendered needs and interests. Gendered or sex discrimination is widespread (*cf.* GDI[1], SIGI[2]; Chant, 2016; Cornwall & Rivas, 2015; AWID, 2005 cited in Beetham & Demetriades, 2007; Ellesburg & Heise, 2005; Kabeer, 2000; Baden & Goetz, 1997; Moore, 1994; Ortner, 1972) often understood as infringing upon females' possibilities to realise their full human rights potential (Nussbaum, 2000; 2002; Elson, 2002; Levitt & Merry, 2011). Global policy frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1979 and to date ratified by 189 states,[3] attempt to propose a global approach towards eradicating social discrimination against females (UN Women, 2013; 2018). Various international and local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) draw on policy frameworks which have identified gender equality and women's empowerment as ways of overcoming social discrimination against women through a rights-based approach.[4] Notwithstanding the conceptual and programmatic value of gender equality and women's empowerment, studied in depth as part of feminist development research (*cf.* Cornwall & Rivas, 2015), this doctoral thesis aligns with the assumption that gender within international development is too often thought of in Western terms, frequently framed as universalist understandings of gender (Cornwall, 1998). Therefore, this research deems essential to adopt a feminist transnational analytical lens to understand various conceptions of gender and social transformation as part of a specific international cross-cultural development programme.

This research investigates how gender is conceptualised and enacted among specific social actors, especially community members and development practitioners, in the context of the

[1] See Gender Development Index (GDI) as part of the Human Development Report 2019, pp. 312-15.
[2] See OECD Development Centre's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) on 'Discrimination in the family', 'Restricted physical integrity', 'Restricted access to productive and financial resources' and 'Restricted civil liberties' (OECD, 2020a).
[3] See Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (2014)
[4] Another relevant global policy document constitutes the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; for further discussion, see Chapter 3.

Girl Power Programme (2011-2015) implemented *inter alia* in Ghana. The programme studied in this research, located within a wider public policy discourse on gender and development (GAD), set out to be 'gender transformative'. With an interest in addressing norms, values, attitudes and behaviours at community level, it aimed at strengthening girls' and women's rights. Several studies investigate the framework of gender-transformative development policy and practice (Engeli & Mazur, 2018; Hochfield & Bassadien, 2007; Espinosa, 2013). In feminist development research terms, accounts of transformation are often envisioned linked to empowerment as systemic changes (Sen & Grown, 1988) and addressing gendered power relations at household level (Kabeer, 2005). However, there is little exploration of the limitations and contestations that might occur when GAD programmes with a pronounced interest in 'value, behaviour and attitude change' are implemented cross-culturally. This doctoral research presents such an exploration.

This doctoral thesis analyses conceptualisations of gender and social transformation in the context of an international non-governmental development programme, which was both designed and implemented as well as monitored and evaluated cross-culturally. From a feminist anthropological perspective, cross-cultural work may provide "an analysis of the differing intersections of multiple forms of difference" (Moore, 1998, p. 161). Therefore, this research project is an analysis of how intersecting and differing conceptualisations of gender might influence subjective perceptions of the success of a development programme, potentially linked to notions of meaningful social transformation. In doing so, this research draws on a key demand of feminist literature considered, namely, to acknowledge commonalities while remaining alert to differences, in an attempt to embrace diversity in transnational terms (Nnaemeka, 1998). Such a study focus is important for this thesis to provide reflections on collaborative processes as pathways of co-creating knowledge.

1.1. Research Context – Feminist Development Research and Practice

This thesis sits within the field of feminist development research, policy and practice. Since the 1970s, feminist development work has set out to foreground the role of women in the development process and the ramifications of that process on women (Boserup, 1970). The Women in Development (WID) paradigm demonstrated strong institutional linkages and a pronounced Western liberal feminist outlook (Razavi & Miller, 1995a) focusing on how to 'bring women into the development process' notably by increasing their access to market

production (Beetham & Demetriades, 2007). The subsequent Gender and Development (GAD) paradigm considered patriarchal oppression of women not only in terms of accessing markets, or in productive terms, but as pervading all spheres of life including reproductive realities and policies. The focus on women as displayed by WID, shifted to a focus on gender as social power relations in the study and development practice aligned to GAD (Razavi & Miller, 1995a). This research adopts a lens that foregrounds gender as power relations (Scott, 1986; Cornwall 1998) focusing on both women and men, which includes relations beyond the confined sphere of married couples. Some argue that such focus continues to take prime attention in GAD research and programmes (Cornwall, 2000).

To study varied conceptualisations of gender and social transformation, this thesis traces to what extent statements of research participants draw on particular sets of feminist claims. In line with previous scholarship (Baden & Goetz, 1997), this doctoral study then highlights that there is a need when studying cross-cultural development programmes to consider feminist theoretical and activist arguments. Engaging with a development programme as a case study in this doctoral research, designed mainly in the Netherlands and implemented *inter alia* in Ghana, West Africa, considering *African* feminist claims is pertinent in arriving at a deeper understanding of gendered conceptualisations.

Feminist positions vary considerably; nonetheless, what aligns the theoretical and empirical views foregrounded by African feminists and 'Third World Women' is that they are constitutively embedded in the realities of being located in the Global South.[5] Such views continuously emphasise systemic differences based on hierarchies between particular areas of our globalised post-colonial world (see Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010; Manuh, 2007). These areas notably entail the Global South and the Global North understood as geographical and socio-cultural spaces as well as conceptual constructs aligned in hierarchical ways. This research will not only consider these hierarchies, but also pathways of 'doing knowledge production differently' based on collaboration 'on equal terms'.

'Third World women' (Sen & Grown, 1988; Mohanty *et al.,* 1991) and 'African feminists' (Okome, 2003; Mama, 2004) have criticised identical development standards for all women based on Western conceptions of gender roles and relations disguised as universal claims. Such notions might render development interventions less meaningful conducted in

[5] The terms 'Third World women' and African feminists are self-ascriptions. Other relevant terms, at times linked to particular geographical regions, include 'Southern feminists' (see Narayanaswamy, 2016) and 'indigenous feminists' (see Hernandez Castillo, 2010).

contexts outside the Global North. Through exploring pathways of co-creating knowledge, this research is interested in possibilities of identifying meaningful social transformation aligned to conceptualisations of gender within the context of an international cross-cultural development programme.

1.2. Research Specifications

Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of this thesis is to address 'the cross-cultural question' in international development work by studying how social actors conceptualise gender *within* and *across* socio-cultural spaces, potentially influencing understandings of programmatic success possibly aligned to notions of meaningful social transformation. Therefore, this research will address the following research question: How do community members and development practitioners conceptualise gender as part of a cross-cultural INGO development programme, located within a broader public policy perspective, with potential influence on perceived programme success possibly aligning to meaningful social transformation?

Addressing this question, this thesis sets out to achieve the following objectives: first, to critically contribute to an academic and public policy debate on how to engage with socio-cultural specificities and presumed issues of 'universal' validity. Social justice concerns might constitute an example of the latter in the context of development aid projects focusing 'on gender'. Second, this research seeks to engage with the dynamics and contestations around the role of social norm change as part of international cross-cultural 'gender-transformative' development work, in order to propose epistemological and practical pathways of co-producing knowledge as a means to address 'the cross-cultural question'.

The Case of the Girl Power Programme

The Girl Power Programme (GPP) constitutes a complex development programme operating internationally and cross-culturally. The GPP notably drew on sensitisation efforts to deliver the four core components of (rights) protection, (post-)primary education, economic participation and socio-political participation. Funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Netherlands, it was "carried out from 2011 to 2015, in 10 countries across four regions: Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Zambia and Ethiopia" (Mid-Term Evaluation Transition International 2013, p. 3). The

Child Rights Alliance (CRA) located in the Netherlands was overall responsible for the design, implementation and monitoring of the programme; this alliance consisted of six Dutch civil society organisations (CSOs) with particular expertise in child protection and programming aimed at gender equality (ibid.). Within GPP programme countries and communities, the CRA worked together with local partner organisations, often local NGOs, as well as Community Based Organisations (CBOs). The GPP thus operated within and across locations of the Global North and Global South.

The GPP aimed at increasing the rights of children especially the 'girl child' by sensitising young people, their parents and community members more broadly on children's rights and responsibilities in various thematic areas such as protection against violence, education and increased participation in decision-making. In some communities, GPP implementation also entailed an economic empowerment component. This research focuses on the context of GPP implementation (ex-post) in three communities in the Eastern Region of Ghana, adopting a transnational lens to analyse connections across borders and other boundaries as well as the specificities of socio-cultural locations.

1.3. Originality and Contribution to Existing Knowledge

This study offers an original perspective on GAD policy and practice by considering the 'cross-cultural question' in development work aimed at social norm, behaviour and attitude changes and proposes to address this question through the route of shared epistemologies and knowledge co-production. While this thesis acknowledges that processes of social transformation more often than not lie beyond the immediate reach of any one GAD programme, this study identifies a particular role for feminist development practitioners in co-creating spaces aimed at co-producing knowledge on gender and development through conscientisation efforts. Drawing on an understanding of 'critical education' by Paolo Freire (1973), this thesis argues that conscientisation efforts need to draw on the value and practice of epistemic equality to engage in 'open' conversations around gendered social relations and scope for their transformation. It is through 'open' conversation based on epistemic equality, a concept inspired by the work of Sarah Radcliffe (2005), that we might find pathways of understanding intersecting and differing conceptualisations of gender and social transformation. An 'open conversation' might also allow exploring how such conceptualisations align to subjective perceptions of programme success.

To address the 'cross-cultural question' in international development work, this thesis then explores pathways for co-producing knowledge, such as reciprocal conscientisation efforts among development practitioners and community members. Considering the importance of co-producing knowledge, this thesis is inspired by a feminist transnational analytical and activist approach. Such approach considers connections and crossings of spatial and other borders "in pursuit of […] connections and possibilities" (Sabea, 2008, p. 13) while also exploring and accounting for the specificities of, and relevance to, local spaces and experiences (Davies, 2014 drawing on Alexander, 2005; Mohanty, 2013 drawing on Mies, 1983; see also Mama, 2007a). Within and across socio-cultural spaces, meaningful social transformation might allow targeting widespread social discrimination against females, to a certain extent also within the scope of an international cross-cultural development programme.

To study conceptualisations of gender and social transformation as connections across borders and specificities of socio-cultural settings, this thesis drew on multiple analytical tools. Acknowledging the need to study gender in embedded *as well as* overlapping ways, this research investigated the locus from which gender is conceptualised as well as relevant gender components across loci, namely *gender as lived relations* and *representations.* Through investigating power relations and interests aligned to the role of knowledge production, this thesis also considers meanings of social transformation aligned to conceptualisations of gender. By analysing how community members and development practitioners conceptualise gender and social transformation as part of an international cross-cultural development programme, located within a broader public policy perspective, this thesis will provide a contribution to the following inter-related debates:

1. The role of knowledge production, characterised by hierarchical and unequal terms, in framing ideas of gender linked to definitions of social transformation as part of development research, policy and practice, and moving towards co-producing knowledge.
2. The role of, and limitations for, feminist development practitioners in designing and using gender analysis tools in transformative ways, raising questions of legitimate involvement as part of development planning.
3. The role of social norm changes as part of gender transformative programmes in cross-cultural terms and the risks such an approach can incorporate.

Methodologically, the in-depth analysis provided in this thesis is the result of ethnographic research entailing six months of fieldwork in Ghana, West Africa, specifically in the capital Accra and three selected communities in the Eastern Region of Ghana during May to November 2017. This was preceded by a preliminary research visit in March 2017 (for two weeks) to gain a deeper understanding of a Ghanaian GAD context. Another visit in November 2018 (for four weeks) aimed at conducting data validation group discussions with research participants in communities. This research also draws on discourse analysis of programmatic and policy documents. Combined, these methods enabled the study of gender as lived relations and gender as representation aligned to understandings of social transformation.

1.3.1. The Role of Knowledge Production with a Focus on Gender

To make sense of conceptualisations of gender as lived relations and representations as part of broader knowledge production processes, this thesis effectively deploys various feminist theories and methods. Some feminist scholars find that self-reflexivity can play an important part in "unsettling hierarchies" (Nencel, 2014, p. 76), not least by making visible power relations exposing "'white' researcher privilege" (Pillow, 2003, p. 184 drawing on Kelsky, 2001). In systemic terms, some studies point to "powerful, asymmetrical global frameworks in the production of knowledge" (Miescher *et al.,* 2007, p. 8) or "hegemonic forms of knowledge production" (Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010, p. 1) within 'gender scholarship' as well as characterising our contemporary globalised world more broadly. This notably has implications for a North-South divide with "localised knowledge […] and the accumulated literature from scholars writing from post-colonial and indigenous standpoints" being undermined (ibid.). A hierarchical relationship of theory and empiricism is created linked to the location of authorship (Manuh, 2007). Acknowledging the validity of this critique, this research seeks to draw on practices of 'doing knowledge production differently' by adopting a feminist transnational analytical lens that seeks to acknowledge and create connections across boundaries and borders while not disregarding the specifics of socio-cultural locations.

In the context of unequal power hierarchies, I will explore my own positionality in self-reflective terms, and it is in these moments that I will notably adopt a writing style that foregrounds my individual presence as a feminist researcher. Notwithstanding the critical value of reflexivity to unpack and make visible dynamics of knowledge production, over-relying on such an approach may "reinstitute and reproduce exactly the hegemonic structures

we are working against" (Pillow, 2003, p. 192) by "wading in the morass of our own positionings" (Patai, 1994, cited in Pillow, 2003, p. 175). As such, self-representation might be denied by research participants or the researcher her/himself. What we can aim for, drawing on feminist epistemology, is to carefully consider how we present ourselves and represent others as part of development research in a way that is respectful and foregrounds the agency of people (Nencel, 2014).

In this doctoral thesis, I am adopting a feminist practice to foreground potential gender and ethnic belonging in response to targeting masculine and racial biases in academic scholarship. Work on 'thoughtful citations' notably considers the politics and exclusionary mechanisms of citations and attempts at challenging these in different ways (Bosanquet, 2019; Ahmed, 2017; Hart & Metcalfe, 2010). In this thesis, authorship of sources was carefully considered and contextualised; additionally, I will write the full name of an author when introducing them for the first time in the text. To ensure ease of reading, this does not include in-text references provided in brackets. Here, I am encouraging readers to explore the full list of references at the end of this thesis, which features the full first and last name of authors and considers institutional context.[6]

To unpack the complex process of conceptualising gender as part of knowledge production, this thesis analyses gender as both 'lived relations' and 'representations' across specific locations in 'Africa' and 'the West'. The terms 'Western' and 'African' feature prominently in this thesis. Attached to intellectual thinking, these terms can be problematic as they might function in homogenising and generalising ways. They might not be able to capture the breadth and variances of different positions within and between these two historically and socio-culturally constructed as well as spatially aligned groupings with political and economic repercussions. Nevertheless, there might be analytical value in not dismissing 'Africa as a whole', often linked to notions of 'the West'. Kwadwo Osei-Nyame argues for reclaiming such binaries, as long as these groupings link to continuing "historical realities" which expose unequal structural power relations between "the dominant and the marginalized" (2007, pp. 84-86). While generalising terms might function as discursive reference points for African citizens and those commenting on Africa (p. 86), there is a need to exercise caution and not confuse encompassing terms with the analysis of *specific*

[6] The sub-categorisation 'Institutional Analysis' as part of the bibliography seeks to highlight institutional context as a particular determinant for knowledge production.

experiences of women and men. These are part of a multitude of African lived realities, and in this case, "[r]eferences to Africa as if the continent were a homogenous village are clearly nonsense" (Taiwo, 2003, p. 51).

As mentioned previously, this research notably traces how statements of research participants may resonate/not resonate, selectively draw on, combine or refrain from associating with Western liberal feminist or African feminist perspectives, embedded within broader knowledge production processes. Liberal feminism, first articulated as a political philosophy in the late 18th century (Wollstonecraft, 2004[1792]), continues to be relevant today emphasising equal social and political rights between women and men. The critique raised by African feminists against a Western liberal feminist view, perceived in monolithic terms, notably entails that the latter overlooks other perspectives, especially those of "ordinary women and men in the former colonies of the West [whose conditions] continue to worsen" (Mama, 2004, p. 121). Adopting a pronounced lens that considers "the colonial present" (Radcliffe, 2015, p. 27; see also Dirlik, 2007) as part of our contemporary globalised world, this thesis acknowledges the need to align analytical tools to study concepts of gender and development to the reality of lived relations between and among women and men, girls and boys in various settings of the Global North and the Global South (see Cornwall, 1998; Woodford-Berger, 2007).[7] To align analytical tools to lived experiences, this thesis draws on debates of diverse feminist views, which can be relevant to gaining a deeper understanding of how gender is conceptualised and enacted, at times linked to understandings of social transformation, within the scope of an international cross-cultural development programme.

Overall, to 'do knowledge production differently', this thesis outlines the use and adoption of selected collaborative methods within feminist research and development practice to support epistemic communities. Such communities, according to Nira Yuval-Davis (2010), are "based on solidarity with regard to common emancipatory values" (pp. 277-78).

1.3.2. Ideas of Power and Social Transformation Considering Gender

While most feminist theories considered in this research encapsulate some idea of change, not all buy into the notion of transformation; a similar tendency can be observed with approaches to gender and development. A Western liberal feminist approach, perceived and

[7] A related critique of not addressing actual lived realities of women and men is also raised against feminist theory more broadly (*cf.* Moore, 1994).

experienced in hegemonic terms, endorses gradual changes focusing on equal opportunities between women and men notably in accessing employment aligned to distinct economic and political societal spheres. In contrast, Black feminist positions as well as African feminist positions, and views of Third World Women, seem to entail ideas of social transformation as systemic changes addressing several forms of oppression along intersecting social identity factors such as race, gender and class, foregrounding social, economic and cultural concerns. For a GAD context, this is a problem, according to some African feminists, as the enterprise of 'developmental feminism' more broadly continues to be "organised around a liberal politics of entryism, i.e. getting women into existing institutions and into development, rather than transforming these" (Mama, 2004, p. 121). This thesis examines how gender equality and women's empowerment as key concepts of GAD research and practice, but also harmony, as a collective value aligning to an African epistemology, point to changes in gendered social relations, at times in transformative ways.

Drawing on diverse feminist views, this thesis illustrates that envisioning gendered social changes can incorporate varied ideas. African American scholars, at times adopting the label Black feminism, for instance, consider the importance of the intersection of gender and race when studying social discrimination of black women, not only premised on the oppressive system of patriarchy foregrounded in a liberal feminist view but also racism (Crenshaw, 1989; see also Collins, 2000). Several feminist perspectives, especially African feminists and 'Third World women' consider further oppressive systems such as (neo-)colonialism and (cultural) imperialism, linked to capitalism, in alignment with patriarchy and racism (*cf.* Arndt, 2002), and how to challenge them.

Considering a variety of concepts, exploring post-colonial, post-modern but also post-structuralist literature, this thesis is centrally concerned with how certain concepts are defined, by whom and under which circumstances they are perceived as legitimate, or why they might be discarded. Particularly with complex concepts, such as gender equality, women's empowerment or harmony, relevant in a cross-cultural GAD context including interventions in West Africa, an exhaustive definition is an impossibility. Nonetheless, a central guideline for this research is that we must seek to demarcate, as clearly as possible, what we mean when using a concept, and crucially consider what we leave out and do not touch upon and why, in order to expose underlying rationales for understanding and using concepts.

The concepts of 'tradition' and 'modernity' continue to be deployed within development discourse, either explicitly or implicitly, thus, this thesis sees value in an on-going critical engagement with these terms. The focus of this research lies on a central debate around gender and social transformation where 'the local' may link to 'tradition'. This research investigates the assumption that the 'local' has a higher legitimacy because it builds on a longer history and aspects to which people are more attached (tradition) than other (external) influences including international cross-cultural development interventions. To study socio-cultural and traditional practices in a *nuanced* fashion, this thesis addresses contestations around 'harmful' practices, notably when and why they constitute instances of 'abuse' in rights terms aligned to child protection, the key component addressed during the GPP implemented in Ghana. Mapping what is 'local' or 'non-local' and what makes the local 'legitimate' or 'illegitimate', considered through the lens of 'appropriateness' in line with addressing child protection issues, serves as a key contribution of this thesis.

For some liberal feminists 'the problem with tradition' seems to lie in oppressive traditional conditions perceived as standing in conflict with women's individual rights (see Molyneux & Razavi, 2002). While Western liberal feminism draws on a notion of the individual as a rights bearer, rooted in ideas of modern rationality and individual liberty, African feminism seems to foreground social groups and perceives the individual as part of these groups, embedded in a variety of social relations that translate into differentiated advantages and disadvantages (see Oyewumi, 2003b). As Gwendolyn Mikell outlined, 'African models' "have generally emphasized the communal group as opposed to the individual" (1997, p. 8). When it comes to "patriarchal manifestations" as part of 'tradition' or 'culture', African feminist critique targets these, but advocates for a nuanced and differentiated criticism (Arndt, 2002, p. 32). "This means above all that African feminism weighs precisely which traditional institutions are agreeable and positive for women, or at least can or could be, and which disadvantage women so severely that their abolition seems imperative" (ibid.).

To address the role of 'the local' and its legitimacy or lack thereof, this thesis proposes to draw on 'open' conversation based on epistemic equality as part of conscientisation efforts co-created by feminist development practitioners and community members. It is in these instances that we might find pathways of understanding intersecting and differing conceptualisations of gender, how these align to subjective perceptions of programme

success potentially linked to meaningful social transformation within the scope of an international cross-cultural development programme.

1.3.3. Gendered Social Norm Change

Recently applied GAD research and practice display a particular interest in gender norm change, linked to behaviour and attitude change, to address inequitable situations for women and girls in transformative ways (Marcus & Harper, 2014; Marcus & Page, 2014). In line with arguments on hierarchical knowledge production processes in development research, policy and practice, views on 'desired' behaviour change may be operationalised in particular ways as part of GAD practice. Such operationalisation might notably draw from understandings on gender norms linked to gender roles and relations from one socio-cultural setting and as such can be limited, not nuanced enough or too simplistic for application in another socio-cultural setting. Therefore, this thesis assumes that cross-cultural 'gender programming' aimed at social norm and behaviour change is at risk of either becoming an imposition of hegemonic discourses over other forms of discourses or might be negligible as it is not possible to generate any kind of social change that is perceived as meaningful by the local communities and its members targeted by specific development interventions. To lower such risks, this thesis provides specific analytical and practical pathways.

This research proposes studying socio-cultural values at community level, notably those that resonate widely with community members. In doing so, aligning to African feminist demands, this thesis argues that it is crucial to adopt a nuanced view on socio-cultural values, norms and practices. Studying the value and practice of respect, refracted through the social identity factors of notably gender and age, may inform gender analysis as it points to particular dynamics of social discrimination notably addressed against females (Chapter 7). At the same time, respect as a relevant socio-cultural value and practice across social identity markers, points to the importance of reciprocal and mutual social relations notably based on positively connoted forms of communication. Drawing on 'open conversations' as part of international cross-cultural development work based on the value and practice of epistemic equality does not only point to ways of aligning material and normative concerns, but also emphasises critical engagement with varied values on an equal footing as part of international development work.

1.4. Thesis Outline

This thesis is structured into ten chapters including the introduction. Chapter 2 and 3 are concerned with reviewing the relevant literature both in terms of feminist theories more broadly and research on feminist development policy and practice in particular. In doing so, this thesis foregrounds that the study of GAD programmes can be significantly enriched by considering a broader feminist theoretical sphere. Chapter 2 and 3 explicitly consider the role and dynamics of knowledge production in conceptualising and operationalising gender (and development) by presenting feminist epistemic positions embedded in, and crossing, the Global South and the Global North.

Chapter 2 engages with the content of the gender concept and the dynamics of its construction, considering commonalities and differences among a Western liberal feminist approach, perceived in hegemonic terms, and a Black feminist perspective linked to the work of African American scholars. Mainly, however, this chapter is concerned with presenting an African feminist critique which allows to re-consider the relevance of gender and opens up to thematic spheres, notably Pan-Africanism, that elide a focus on constituting feminist positions *against* a Western liberal feminism. Subsequent to presenting intersecting and differing feminist positions concerning the gender concept, Chapter 2 then addresses the theme of gender justice and the possibilities and limitations of mobilising around it across geographical and cultural spaces. This chapter ends with underlining unequal power relations in academic knowledge production and explores how to potentially overcome them.

Chapter 3 begins by considering the conceptual sphere of development aligned to the concepts of modernity and tradition through a post-colonial lens. Thereafter, it unpacks development in research, policy and practice as targeting discrimination against women to then arrive at an engagement with visions and processes of gendered social change. Gender equality and women's empowerment are notably considered as questions of power and change. Finally, this chapter looks at reflections and examples of transformative work as part of gender and development policy and practice, outlining the role of transnational feminism and feminist development practitioners. The last part of Chapter 3 includes a discussion on the role of social norm change as part of social transformation aligned to, and displaced from, the context of international development work.

Drawing upon the discussions in Chapter 2 and 3, this thesis then presents the analytical framework used to study conceptualisations of gender aligned to the concept of social transformation and cognisant of the role of knowledge production. Chapter 4 underlines the importance of considering the locus from which gender is conceptualised and then investigates elements that cut across *loci*, namely gender as lived relations and gender as representation. This chapter also outlines how particular forms of knowledge co-production rely on participation, understood in specific ways, and the value and practice of epistemic equality to consider framings of social transformation in collaborative ways.

Chapter 5 presents the epistemological and methodological research frame used in this study. It begins by laying out elements of feminist epistemology, followed by subjective reflections on knowledge production processes. Feminist anthropology is presented as a relevant approach for this doctoral research which frames the section on ethnographic fieldwork. I consider various aspects of the ethnographic journey conducted for this doctoral study in line with their implications for data generation as well as translation and interpretation processes. Chapter 5 also discusses the modes of analysis adopted in this research notably thematic coding of qualitative data based on grounded theory drawing on coding software (Nvivo 11) as well as documentary analysis drawing on discourse analysis. Methodological limitations of this study are also considered.

Chapter 6, then, outlines the case study approach of this research and commences analysis of the Girl Power Programme as a 'successful' intervention. This chapter, crucially, considers programme implementation in Ghana within a post-colonial and contemporary Ghanaian context with a focus on gender and development.

Chapter 7, 8 and 9 present the main findings of this study with analysis centred around four key analytical components as outlined in Chapter 4. These components are, one, the locus from which gender is conceptualised; two, generic components of gender across these spaces; three, the meaning of transformation and its links to power relations and interests; and four, the role of knowledge production in (a) constructing gender, (b) contributing or blocking transformation and (c) providing spaces of encounter across different *loci.* Accordingly, Chapter 7 looks at the relevance of locus for conceptualising gender and development and commences with a situational poverty and gender analysis of the three communities where research was conducted. Next, this chapter presents analysis of community development as

blurring boundaries which includes investigating traditional communal structures and practices as part of international development work. Finally, Chapter 7 addresses crossing boundaries as part of a more pronounced focus on the Girl Power Programme which includes an engagement with the significance of aligning 'hardware' and 'software' concerns in conceptualising gender and development.

Chapter 8 commences with an in-depth study of local modes of gender, analysing gender as lived relations and representation. Based on statements by community members, it considers normative views and enactments of gender at community level, examining shifts in power hierarchies at household level with a focus on household headship. This chapter goes on to look at the role of socio-cultural values in constituting gendered social relations, foregrounding an engagement with respect and harmony at community level, notably refracted through a communicative dimension. The value and practice of respect and disrespect are also analysed in this chapter in regard to how they frame abusive behaviour at community level. Finally, Chapter 8 more explicitly aligns socio-culturally relevant values to values endorsed as part of the Girl Power Programme and investigates women's empowerment as aligning individual and collective needs in transnational and transformative ways.

Chapter 9 analyses notions of social transformation in the context of knowledge production processes. Investigating the core component of the GPP, protection, this chapter first outlines congruence of 'local' and 'international' views on child protection and then continues with analysing contested views on child abuse and how to report on it. Finally, the third part of Chapter 9 analyses alignment of contested views through co-producing knowledge based on critical reflection. Here, collaborative efforts between development practitioners, including researchers, and community members are considered as part of research and practice. The importance of 'open communication' based on the value and practice of epistemic equality is emphasised.

Chapter 10 presents the conclusion to this research. Drawing on the arguments set out throughout the chapters, this final part demonstrates how these contribute to inter-related debates as identified here in the introduction. Chapter 10 will also consider limitations of this research, a process commenced in Chapter 5, and will point to future avenues of research.

2. Conceptualising Gender as Part of Knowledge Production - Feminist Epistemic Positions Within and Across the Global South and the Global North

This chapter explores the concept of gender, as a key term of this research, and differing positions brought forward as part of academic-activist feminist discourse within and across the Global North and the Global South. Throughout this chapter, commonalities and differences between and within different feminist strands are highlighted. What is at stake here are contestations on 'common' feminist interests and how to achieve those collectively, a discussion that will be continued in Chapter 3. This current chapter links specific feminist positions to a process of knowledge production that is marked by unequal power hierarchies, with particular implications for gender justice concerns. To address these hierarchies, this chapter concludes by discussing pathways of 'doing knowledge production differently'.

2.1. What is Gender?

The term gender originated in 'Western' thinking on feminism, which some would argue is linked to a particular mindset and worldview privileging white, middle-class, European and US-American experiences (*cf.* Oyewumi, 2005). While the intellectual emergence of 'gender' is tied to a specific socio-cultural, historical, political and economic setting[8], the concept finds resonance in intellectual thinking throughout the Global North and the Global South.

Gender, most commonly, denotes social roles of women and men, girls and boys, as well as social relations among and between them being socially constructed. Rather than viewing a person's sex as 'natural', gender challenges a biological determinism of gendered social roles and relations and foregrounds the processes of *becoming* a woman and *being* female or male. Some critical thinkers, such as Donna Haraway (1991), trace the roots of "all the modern feminist meanings of gender" to the work of Simone de Beauvoir, notably the infamous phrase in 'The Second Sex' (2010[1949]) "One is not born but rather becomes a woman".[9] Henrietta Moore clarifies, "Sex […], as far as we understand it within the terms of Western discourse, is something which differentiates between bodies, while gender is the set of variable social constructions placed upon those differentiated bodies" (Moore, 1994, p. 83). However, such a formula might obscure "rather than illuminate[…] when it comes to the

[8] Donna Haraway (1991) alludes to "post-Second World War social conditions that have enabled constructions of women as a collective historical subject-in-process" (p. 131).
[9] Published originally in French, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* was soon translated into English, first in 1951. In 2010 a new translation was published by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chavalier (see Marso, 2016).

analysis of sex, sexual difference and gender cross-culturally" (ibid.). This is because "it is far from apparent how we should distinguish sex from gender" and due to the impreciseness of gender itself as a concept or category (ibid.). Rather than continuously focusing on the social construction of gender, a growing literature engages with the constructed-ness of sex itself (*cf.* Ásta, 2018). Lori Marso (2016) highlights how Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* already problematises the creation of sexual difference within Western institutions rather than constituting *the* emblematic text on the social constructed-ness of gender.

Feminist scholarship demonstrates a profound interest in questions around gender, grounded in feminist epistemology, which is often applied, activist and deeply political (Daukas, 2017, pp. 61-62; Poonacha, 2004, p. 395), "addressing persistent social injustices" (Lewin, 2006, p. 1). Gender predominantly entered Western feminist scholarship from the 1970s onwards, as an analytical tool to understand social questions within the dimensions of history, culture, politics and economy (Scott, 1986; Ramamurthy, 2000). Joan W. Scott (1986) points out that gender "was a term offered by those who claimed that women's scholarship would fundamentally transform disciplinary paradigms" not least by introducing a "relational notion into our analytical vocabulary" that defined women and men in terms of one another (p. 1054).

There is a multitude of feminist strands. Different strands of feminism rooted in a Western intellectual setting include liberal, socialist, Marxist and radical currents (Ramamurthy, 2000; Lewin, 2006; Mekgwe, 2007). Black feminism is notably aligned to the academic and activist sphere of African American scholar-activists in the US[10] and there are various feminist articulations across the Global South including African feminism, those addressing a Latin American context (*cf.* Asher, 2004) and a discussion on feminism and Islam (*cf.* Zakia, 2011). Given the array of feminist positions, some scholars have raised the question whether it would be more appropriate to talk about feminisms in the plural, rather than feminism in the singular (*cf.* Arndt, 2002, p. 31). Nonetheless, in the singular, the term feminism might aid in conceiving a global feminism network and "the ambivalence of being located" in such a network (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 1996, cited in Arndt, 2002, p. 32; see also Nnaemeka, 1998, pp. 5-6).

[10] For the role of Black feminism beyond North America, particularly in a European context and notably the UK, see Muegge *et al*. (2018).

This research investigates gendered conceptualisations as part of an international cross-cultural development programme. A Western liberal feminism seems to continuously inform global policy and practice of international development concerned with women and/or questions of gender (*cf.* Razavi & Miller, 1995a; Mama, 2004) while Black feminism, early on, raised relevant critique of racial and class ramifications of such a view, which overlooked discriminations at the intersection of gender and race. African feminism foregrounds the importance of theory to respond to everyday life realities of African women and men; the latter is a key concern of this research studying the implementation of an international cross-cultural development programme in Ghana, West Africa.

2.1.1. Through the Lens of 'Western', Black and 'African' Feminism

Oyeronke Oyewumi alludes to feminism as historically aligned to a particular European and North American experience (2003a, p. 1). This European experience seems to reference liberal feminism, which was first articulated as a political philosophy in the late eighteenth century (Wollstonecraft, 2004[1792]) with the express aim "to free women from oppressive gender roles and achieve sexual equality" (Oxley, 2011, p. 258). Its underlying assumptions and aims have remained largely the same, "women, as rational human beings, are deserving of the same social and political rights as men, and gender justice is best achieved by modifying existing social institutions and political systems" (ibid.). Liberal feminism notably characterised the 'first wave' of feminism at the end of the 19th and early 20th century unfolding predominantly in Europe and US-America focusing on the struggle to gain women's rights to vote (Brunell & Burkett, 2019). Some term liberal feminism 'egalitarian or mainstream feminism' "based on the simple proposition that all people are created equal and should not be denied equality of opportunity because of gender" (Lindsey, 2016, p. 17). According to Julinna C. Oxley (2001), liberal feminism exhibits an adaptive approach, modifying rather than breaking with existing institutions.

The so-called 'second wave' of feminism was shaped by "the women's liberation movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s" which inspired feminist research across the social sciences, notably feminist anthropology (Lewin, 2006, p. 1).[11] Early on, African-American women in the US commenced criticising the women's movements of the 1960s and 1970s for representing a particular perspective, namely that of white, middle-class women rendering other views invisible notably those of Black women in the US. Audre

[11] For further discussion on the women's liberation with a focus on a US-context, see Nicholson (1997).

Lorde (2007[1978]) reflected, “Even within the women’s movement, we have had to fight, and still do, for that very visibility which also renders us most vulnerable, our Blackness” (p. 42). Black feminist thought can be viewed as a critical social theory, which “aims to aid African-American women’s struggles against intersecting oppressions” (Collins, 2000, p. 32) carrying a particular politics entailing a “dialectic of oppression and activism” (ibid. p. 3).

Notably African researchers question the possibility and usefulness of feminism/s in an African setting (Nnaemeka, 1998; Cornwall, 2005; Oyewumi, 2003a; Miescher *et al*., 2007). African feminism was formed “[p]artly in protest against the White history of and the White domination within feminism” (Arndt, 2002, p. 32) and some African researcher-activists go as far as rejecting the term feminism altogether as unfit for an African context (see Mekgwe, 2007, p. 167). While Oyewumi (2003a) clearly links *feminism* to Western experiences, she also argues that the term *feminist* might describe “a range of behaviour [sic] indicating female agency and self-determination”, the latter identified as an ‘African value’ (p. 1, drawing on Steady, 1981). Various scholars argue that “feminism (the feminist spirit, at least) is indigenous to the [African] continent” (Nnaemeka, 1998, p. 10, drawing on Sofola, 1998).

‘Third World women’ and ‘African feminists’ have criticised Western feminism, notably in its liberal form and argued that it is other ‘feminisms’ that have addressed “the needs of those who have for a long time been marginalized and unrepresented by mainstream feminism” (Mekgwe, 2007, p. 166-7). Pikwie Mekgwe, a feminist African literary studies scholar, finds that “[s]uch ‘feminisms’ have tended to be theorized against what is loosely termed Western feminism”, often referred to in monolithic terms (ibid., p. 167). Western feminist scholarship, perceived in monolithic ways, is notably charged with strategically eliding a consideration of structural oppressions other than patriarchy (Medie & Kang, 2018, p. 39), which will be further discussed below.

The terms ‘Western feminism’ and ‘African feminism’ are problematic as they draw from and reduce a varied complexity of positions including those that actively question ‘the feminist label’ altogether. By engaging with a monolithic understanding of ‘Western’ feminist thinking as liberal feminism foregrounding the experiences of White, middle-class women and presenting critique brought forward by notably ‘African feminism’, I outline discourses that carry the characteristic of ‘ideal-type’ narratives. Such narratives expose gendered representations across different locations and might provide analytical insights when studying an international development project designed in the Global North and

implemented in the Global South, potentially affecting subjective notions of programme success and visions of meaningful social change (see also Chapter 4).

Structural Oppression and the Notion of Power

A 'Western' feminist tradition might include a variety of currents and at times diverging positions (*cf.* Scott, 1986, pp. 1057-58). A common element lies in identifying the system of patriarchy as a root cause for discrimination against women. The term patriarchy is "crucial to contemporary feminism because feminism needed a term by which the totality of oppressive and exploitative relations which affect women can be expressed" (Humm, 1989, p. 200). Various strands of 'Western' feminism conceptualise patriarchy in distinct ways. Socialist feminists set out to explain "the relations between gender and class subordination as a product of two mutually reinforcing systems of domination – capitalism and patriarchy" (Lewin, 2006, p. 134 drawing on Beneria, 1982; Eisenstein, 1979), while Marxist-feminists display a tendency to frame capitalism as the basis of all oppression, with patriarchy being important, yet secondary. During the 1970s, radical feminists, notably in the US, focused on sexual and body politics in their scholarship to make sense of women's oppression through patriarchy (*cf.* Firestone, 1970). While much feminist attention is geared towards combatting patriarchy, in both analytical and activist terms, various critical feminist scholars from the Global South including African feminist voices highlight other structural oppressions linked to lived experiences of social discrimination.

African interventions in the feminist debate tend to stress "the understanding of gender as an expression of power that is inextricably linked to colonization and liberation" (Miescher *et al.*, 2007, p. 9). African feminism draws on a multiplicity of oppressions faced by African women *and* men in varying degrees and "discuss[es] gender roles in the context of other oppressive mechanisms such as racism, neo-colonialism, (cultural) imperialism, socio-economic exclusion and exploitation, gerontocracy, religious fundamentalism as well as dictatorial and/or corrupt systems" (Arndt, 2002, p. 32). While patriarchy forms part of oppressive structures, it is by no means the only or predominant one.

Commencing an analysis of intersecting systems of oppression, Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) focussed her investigation on Black women in the US and highlighted how "the interaction of race and gender" (p. 140) results in particular forms of discrimination overlooked when adopting a "single-axis framework" (ibid.) with *either* race *or* gender as independent analytical categories. For Black feminist thought, and later feminist research across disciplines, the work of Crenshaw (1989) on intersectionality became a widely used

"analytical and methodological principle" (Daukas, 2016, p. 62) for studying gender not as a binary but in interlinkages with other social identity factors.

The notion of gender as social power relation seems to be widely adopted in feminist scholarly work. Scott (1986) asserted that "gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power" (p. 1067), an assertion resonating across various strands of feminist scholarship (*cf.* Cornwall, 2000; Ebron, 2001). Paulla E. Ebron (2001), a Black feminist thinker, alludes to the work of Scott, for instance, and finds "gender a useful category of analysis important for examining power and difference" (p. 229) as it points to "multiple intersecting and overlapping structures of identity and inequality" (p. 230). However, some African feminist scholars question the usefulness of the gender concept as an analytical tool to study African settings.

2.1.2. A Focus on African Feminism

The seminal work of Ife Amadiume (1987) and later on Oyewumi (1997) challenged the relevance of 'gender' as an analytical category in an African setting and presented a broader critique of racist and ethnocentric assumptions found in certain (feminist) scholarly work on Africa. By questioning the validity of the gender concept altogether for an African setting, African feminism distinguishes itself clearly from Western feminist thought.

In her work 'Male Daughters, Female Husband' Amadiume (1987) focuses on Nigeria and Igbo society, and argues, "The flexibility of Igbo gender constructions meant that gender was separate from biological sex. Daughters could become sons and consequently male. Daughters and women in general could become husbands to wives and consequently males in relation to their wives" (p. 15). For Filomina Chioma Steady (2005), the work of Amadiume demonstrates "how misleading biological categories can be in studying sex and gender since either sex can assume socially viable roles" (p. 320), targeting the existential link between sex and gender within mainstream Western feminist thought, even if only to analytically separate the one from the other.

Researching Yoruba society in Nigeria, Oyewumi (1997) argues that "social relations derive their legitimacy from social facts, not from biology" (p. 12), with seniority or chronological age, rather than gender, as key social organising principles (pp. 13-4). According to Carole Boyce Davies (2014), for Oyewumi "gender did not exist in her reading of Yoruba society but is in fact a western imposition" (p. 19). Oyewumi (2003b) adds that

'womanhood' throughout much of Africa "does not constitute a social role, identity, position or location" (p. 2). Rather, "each individual occupies a multiplicity of overlapping and intersecting positions, with various relationships to privilege and disadvantage" (ibid.). In a related fashion, for Steady, "the term 'gender' carries a Western bias […] [which] tends to be myopic, inventive, and can obscure other differences (2005, p. 319).

More broadly, African feminist scholarly critique targets Euro-American feminism for misrepresenting African realities, often generated through generalisations in much of 'Western scholarship'. Olufemio Taiwo (2003) criticises a 'culture of misrepresentation' notably in Marxist and socialist feminist (US-based) work on Africa, which draws on categories for theory building that "are not equipped to deal with the complexity of the African […] situation [and to] [t]alk about Africa's bewildering diversity" (p. 48). Davies argues, more broadly, "The critique of Euro-feminism […] [is] challenging the assumption that women experience oppression in the same way or have access to power in a unilinear way" (2014, p. 83). Mojubaolu Olufunke Okome (2003) specifically criticises that in Western feminist thinking, "[t]here is no allowance for female power not granted by men", rather, "women are presented as a jumbled mass of sameness" (p. 87). Such generalising scholarship results in a production of knowledge that does not respond to and is thus *not relevant* for an African context. In contrast, African feminism is characterised by being *relevant* to African realities and experiences. African feminist scholars Bagele Chilisa and Gabo Ntseane (2010), for instance, stress the need for "context-specific awareness" and "context-relevant knowledge production" while Amina Mama (2007a) argues for a "scholarly ethic of social responsibility" that is relevant to "African realities and aspirations" which includes "addressing the paradigmatic and methodological implications of the ethical commitment to Africa" (p. 18).

In an attempt to reclaim the validity of the gender concept for an African setting, some scholars have eloquently criticised the work of Amadiume (1987) and Oyewumi (1997), especially for adopting culturalist and essentialist assertions when contesting "overarching definitions in Western unitary understandings of gender" (Davies, 2014, p. 84). Instead, Davies suggests drawing more carefully on "[t]he idea of 'recovering local epistemologies'" (ibid., p. 86). This might entail viewing "[t]he separation of gender from sex roles provid[ing] unique spheres, spaces and locations from which women can constitute and construct identities" (Nfah-Abbenyi, 2005, p. 266).

Many African feminists tend to highlight a broader range of social relations based on cooperation in social groups including but not limited to gender. Gwendolyn Mikell (1997), for instance, identifies a *corporate* ideological model and *dual-sex* organisation as culturally dominant formations throughout Africa (pp. 10-12). While the first points to participation of individuals in traditional African societies "on a lineage or clan basis" (p. 11), the second denotes that "women could participate as members of occupational and ritual organizations, or as members of age groups and sex-specific secret societies and associations" (pp. 11-12). African models of solidarity draw on a "strong sense of community and the fact that individual experience could best be realized in a group" (Oyewumi, 2003a, pp. 16-7) with organisations formed around a notion of commonality other than gender "as the primary basis of solidarity" (ibid., p. 18). Juliana Makuchi Nfah-Abbenyi (2005) purports that "[t]he individual voice and participation […] are part and parcel of the theoretical and (communal) critical process" within African oral tradition (pp. 263-64), while Mikell (1997) outlines how "[t]he goal of […] relationships is to maintain the harmony and well-being of the social group rather than that of individuals" (p. 10). The foregrounding of social collectives within African feminist thought is a vital theme that will be re-addressed throughout this thesis.

Relevant criteria of African feminism set it apart, especially from radical feminist currents 'in the West' according to Nnaemeka (1998)[12]. Instead of an exclusive focus on gender as oppressive patriarchal relations enacted upon women by men, relevant criteria for African feminism include "first of all, the idea of a cooperation and complementarity with men, the affirmation of motherhood and the family" (Arndt, 2002, p. 32; on this point see also Nfah-Abbenyi, 2005, p. 266; Mekgwe, 2007, pp. 169 ff.). What sets African feministm apart from both Western 'White feminism' and from US-based Black feminism is "the necessity of taking into account the material circumstances and cultural histories of African societies" (Arndt, 2002, p. 32).

What African feminism and US-based Black feminism share is theoretical cross-fertilisation, potentially carrying pan-African connections throughout African societies and an African diaspora. Alice Walker[13] coined the concept of *womanism* which seems to find resonance with contemporary African feminists who find it "describe[s] the particular

[12] For Nnaemeka (1998), African feminism can be seen as an act of demarcation away from "radical feminisms' stridency against motherhood" (p. 6).

[13] Alice Walker is a US-American writer who focuses on women and African American culture in her novels, short stories and poems. *The Color Purple* (1982) is among her most noted works (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020).

experiences of people of African origin, both diasporic and indigenous. […] [it] claims that the solutions to gender inequality should be found in African philosophy" (Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010, p. 619). Others have criticized Walker's work, though, questioning precisely whether her writing resonates with African lived realities (Oyewumi, 2003a; Okome, 2003).[14] While theoretical cross-fertilisation points to connections between African intellectuals and US-based African American scholars, particular criticism may point to uneasy relations between the two, "particularly once one acknowledged Africa as a place in historic time and not simply a symbol used to further African American political desires" (Ebron, 2001, p. 218).

A criticism voiced by feminists across the Global South and the Global North targets the over-privileging of sexual difference within a dominant liberal strand of feminist thinking. As we will see throughout the section below, drawing on post-structuralist methods to address the power dimension in dominant discourses on gender cuts across various strands of 'Western' feminism, Black feminism and African feminism.

2.1.3. Over-Privileging Sexual Difference in the Division of Labour and Post-Structuralist Critique

The following paragraphs set out to present and simultaneously problematise a focus on the sexual division of labour premised on emphasising sexual difference when investigating women's oppression linked to a delineation of a public and private sphere. Caren Levy (2009), in a nuanced argument, invokes ideological articulations of 'reproduction' which sustain a particular model of gender relations, and associated roles, seemingly across cultural contexts. Drawing on the work of socialist feminists (Beneria, 1979; Harris & Young, 1981) Levy analyses "biological reproduction, reproduction of labour, and social reproduction" (p. iv) and argues that conflating different aspects of reproduction "contributes to a fundamental explanation of the division of labour in society" (ibid.). The conflation of biological reproduction with the reproduction of labour power translates into "the most basic division of labour in most societies (that is, between unpaid work and paid work, assigned to women and men respectively)" (Levy, 2009, p. v). It also generates two critical roles for women in most societies, "childcare and the daily maintenance of the labour force, that is, domestic labour"

[14] Mainly African feminist scholars based at US institutions of higher education voice this critique.

(ibid.). The ‘conflation of biological reproduction with social reproduction’ generates the need for a specific system of inheritance translating into strict control over women’s biological reproduction (ibid.). Levy (2009) outlines that “because of the conflation of a biological function with a social role”, domestic labour assigned to women was framed in ‘natural’ and thus immutable terms (p. v).

Earlier anthropological work explored women’s presumed position as more closely linked to nature due to their biological reproductive system. Sherry Ortner (1972) investigates how positioning women as linked to nature often translated into women being perceived as less worth and inferior to men who traditionally occupied spaces of culture such as the arts and academia. The author engages with gendered implications of a presumed nature-culture divide, reflecting a core set of dualisms as part of the Western philosophical tradition, and argues that women are as *cultural* as men, contributing as much to culture and are equally capable of intellectual thinking. Ortner draws on the love of a mother to her child (which is both biologically rooted and socially constructed), transcending all categories and thereby practicing a *universal* principle, understood as the highest accomplishment of the mind. Drawing on various empirical data sets, Ortner asserts a “universality of female subordination, the fact that it exists within every type of social and economic arrangement and in societies of every degree of complexity” (pp. 5-6). Eloquent anthropological critique targeted such essentialising claims of universal sexual hierarchies (Rosaldo, 1980) and Henrietta Moore (1998) noted, “The critique by feminists of colour and third world scholars of the universalising claims of western feminism has had a major impact on feminist theory and has drawn attention to the need for specific analyses of women in concrete historical and cultural locations” (p. 160).

African feminists tend to criticise the model of sexual division of labour not on the grounds that discrimination against women might be a common phenomenon, but for “*a prior-ism* in the analysis of the sexual division of labor [sic] and the *prima facie* oppression of women” (Taiwo, 2003, p. 53). The a-priorism lies in already assuming a universalism in the division of labour based on sex roles that translates into oppression of women without conducting proper analysis first. “Whether or not we will have a theory that can generalize across […] diverse specificities will be the conclusion of our research: it cannot be the beginning” (ibid., p. 62).

Addressing a public-private divide, in more general terms, the public sphere tends to be framed as open to state interference, often constituted as a 'male arena' and 'the world of work and politics' aligned to citizenship, while the private sphere is seen as free from state interference, constituting a 'sphere of family' and consequently a 'women's arena' with women as carers assumed as 'natural'.[15] Various socialist feminists have discussed the analytical separation of the public and private sphere. They caution us against separating patriarchy and capitalism as two dominating systems as such a separation would "replicate and reinforce capitalism's separation of public and private by assigning patriarchy to a private sphere" (Lewin, 2006, p. 135 drawing on Mies, 1986). Susan Andrade (2002) identifies a problematic "tendency within feminism toward the 'liberal schema' wherein the ideological division between public and private is analysed so as to make of women's entrance into the public sphere an automatically progressive act" (p. 48, drawing on Sangari, 1999). This act can only be discerned as progressive, though, because of "Western economic influences and colonial control [that] altered this domestic/pubic linkage in women's roles" in the first place (Mikell, 1997, p. 9).

Mikell (1997) argues that complex 'African models' entail a "nature-culture fusion as well as an overlap between household, or domestic, roles and the public/political roles of African women" (p. 8). Notably African women seem to transcend a public-private divide as their multiple responsibilities are "carried out through a continuum of household and extra-household economic activities, which means that the distinction between domestic and public is often difficult to make" (ibid.); a point that West African market women specifically demonstrate (p. 10).

Judith Butler (2007[1990]) asks "Does being female constitute a 'natural fact' or a cultural performance, or is 'naturalness' constituted through discursively constrained performative acts that produce the body through and within the categories of sex?" (p. xxxi). Butler's work, as well as other feminist postmodern and poststructuralist work, provided invaluable challenges to dualist thinking, prominent in Western philosophical tradition. Dualisms that are part of Western philosophical tradition trace back to a presumed mind-body division (Descartes, 2008[1637]; see also Reinhardt, 2009). For Oyewumi (1997, drawing on Marks & Courtivron, 1980) "dualisms like nature/culture, public/private, and visible/invisible" are "enshrined on bodies" and present "variations on the theme of male/female bodies

[15] See Gender Policy and Planning Programme, Development Planning Unit, University College London (2015c)

hierarchically ordered" (Oyewumi, 1997, p. 7, drawing on Marks & Courtivron, 1980). For Butler (2007[1990]) "foundational categories of identity – the binary of sex, gender, and the body – can be shown as productions that create the effect of the natural, the original, the inevitable" (p. xxxi).[16] Her work sets out to discursively deconstruct foundational binary assumptions not least through considering the dimension of power.

As a prominent reference point within critical Western feminist discourse, the work of Butler, particularly her monograph '*Gender Trouble'* (2007[1990]), describes gender as performance, stressing that not only gender but also sex is discursively constructed. In extensive dialogue with French post-structural feminists (such as Irigaray, 1985; Wittig, 1981, Kristeva, 1984), Butler eloquently criticises a practice of gender that draws on a naturalised heterosexuality, taking the binary oppositional matrix between female and male as a foundational ontological assumption. The author scrutinises the presumed coherence between sex, gender and desire (*cf.* pp. xxxi, xxxii, 185) and draws on her concept of 'subversive performativity' to open up political contestations on the regulatory and limiting frameworks surrounding the practice of gender, crucially considering the role of power.

Various other critical feminist scholars located in the Global North have equally critiqued the construction of sexual difference in foundational binary terms (Scott, 1986; Moore, 1994). For a "binary categorisations in anthropology", Moore (1994) highlights, they do "not stand up to cross-cultural examination" (p. 81). Desiree Lewis (2005) outlines for the Global South how "[m]any radical third-world feminists have extensively deployed such and other post-structuralist methods and theories, while insisting on the 'postcolonial' […]" and a focus on power operating at various levels (p. 393; drawing on Mama, 1995; McFadden, 2001; Mbilinyi, 1992).

Post-colonial work specifically engages with a modernity-tradition binary (see also Chapter 3). Investigates several Western feminist writings and their depiction of 'Third World Women', Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1988; 2003) examines the way women are *represented* cross-culturally which invokes discursive notions of modernity and tradition with corresponding simplified, even stereotypical, characteristics attached. Based on the epistemological premise that western feminists "construct themselves as the normative referent in […] a binary analytic" (p. 65), such analysis assumes

> a homogenous notion of the oppression of women as a group […] which, in turn, produces the image of an 'average third-world woman'. This average third-world

[16] In the original quote, Butler poses this statement as a question.

> woman leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender (read: sexually constrained) and being 'third world' (read: ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, religious, domesticated, family-oriented and victimized, etc.) (Mohanty, 1988, p. 65)

This, Mohanty suggests, is in contrast to how western women represent themselves, "educated, modern, as having control over their own bodies and sexualities" and being free to make decisions (1988, p. 65). Mohanty's work, and that of (other) postmodern and poststructuralist feminists was mainly accredited "for undermining northern universalism (whether liberal or marxist) by centering the different lived experiences of southern women in everyday struggles for material existence" (Ramamurthy, 2000, p. 248, drawing on Marchand & Parpart, 1995). While post-structuralist (and post-modern work) guarded against essentialism, it also "emphasize[s] the differences among women [which] can undermine the need for solidarity and collective action, thereby reinforcing the power of patriarchy and/or capitalism" (Asher, 2004, p. 43, drawing on Nzomo, 1995; Udayagiri, 1995).

Thus far, this section has traced commonalities and differences between selected strands of feminism foregrounding epistemological and ontological assumptions. Three strands of feminism were considered in particular: Western liberal feminism often constituted as White, Western and middle-class, Black feminism sensitive to the experiences of African American women in the US and African feminism imbued with a focus on the material hardships of African women and men in their everyday lives. Each of these strands may carry a multitude of positions which ultimately affect feminist claims on gender justice. Due to placing differential thematic emphasis in their analytical and activist work, various strands of feminism propose distinctively different means of political engagement around gender justice. The next section will reflect on the possibilities and limitations of collective mobilisation in political terms around gender justice.

2.2. Gender Justice

While the next chapter will engage with conceptual notions of gender justice, this section addresses limitations and possibilities of political and scholarly-activist mobilisation around gender justice. Possibilities for common mobilisation might be grounded in processes of 'doing knowledge production differently'.

2.2.1. Limitations and Possibilities of Political Mobilisation – Questions of Culture?

The term 'sisterhood' understood in its "transglobal" and "transcultural" dimensions of feminist activist connection has been criticised, not least for drawing on a term that "emerges from the logic of the nuclear family, which is a specifically Euro-American family form" (Oyewumi, 2003a, pp. 5-6). Others have commented on the limitations of a feminist project, notably within Africa, to overcome racial and class-based "resistance to feminist work" (Moletsane, 2002, p. 60). For Olabisi Aina (1998), there is "a general lack of trust between rural grassroots women and elite women who are mostly in the cities" and which she terms 'Western trained women' (pp. 82-83, cited in Nnaemeka, 1998, p. 15). For Marnia Lazreg (2005) setting 'feminism' up *against* 'culture' and 'tradition' is problematic, not least for feminists from the Global South.

For Charmaine Pereira (2002), notably African feminists might "experience a conflict between criticising those features of 'culture' and 'tradition' that oppress women and affirming aspects of the same 'culture' that uplift women or that have social value but have been distorted by global agendas" (Pereira, 2002, p. 34). In much African feminist writing, we find "an emphasis on culture", understood as "a collective pattern of living that conveys the norms and values of society that is handed down from generation to generation", marked as being "both dynamic and resilient" (Steady, 2005, pp. 325-26). Culture understood in these terms might serve "as the paradigmatic framework that has the potential of producing action-oriented research capable of transforming society and empowering women" (ibid., pp. 326-7). However, Western liberal "feminism has always questioned appeals to culture and tradition where these are used to legitimate female subjugation" (Molyneux & Razavi, 2002, p. 15). For some liberal feminists the 'problem with tradition' lies in

> [t]he fact that the roles and symbolism associated with femininity together with patriarchal authority and masculine privilege are often made into cultural signifiers, [which] places women's individual rights in conflict with those seeking to impose

> 'traditional', 'authentic', or 'national' customs on their people. (Molyneux & Razavi, 2002, p. 16)

It is this divide between a modern comprehension of rights *in opposition to* a narrow understanding of oppressive traditional and cultural practices that induces Lazreg (2005) to argue,

> […] Third World feminists feel under pressure to choose between feminism and their ethnicity or culture. This identification of feminist practice within Western culture has resulted in a contest between those who affirm their ethnicity of culture against 'feminism' seen as a monolithic system of thought and behaviour, and those who flaunt their feminism against their culture, implying that feminism stands above culture. (Lazreg, 2005, p. 71)

Across the Global North and the Global South, much feminist work carries a scholarly-activist dimension (Beauvoir, 2010[1949]; Butler, 2007[1990][17]; Mama, 1996; Nnaemeka, 1998). However, the extent to which collectivist action for gender justice might be possible across cultural, geographical and socio-economic borders may depend on drawing on practices of 'doing knowledge production differently' (for further discussion see Section 2.2.2. below). This can include the possibility of a broader 'sisterhood' in both analytical and activist terms (Nnaemeka, 1998, p. 3).

A pan-African vision carries particular potential for common mobilisation against intersectional oppression and overcoming misrepresentation of social realities of African people and those of African descent in the diaspora. Such "diasporic connection" crucially shapes the relation between African American and African scholars, including those undertaking feminist work (Ebron, 2001, p. 215). The link between Black feminism and African feminism is marked by a deep ideological, analytical and activist connection, not least framed in postcolonial terms and linked to racialised and sexualised experiences. Notwithstanding the existence of pan-African connections, particular rifts run through African and Black feminist positions. This was notably evident during the first international conference of Women in Africa and the African Diaspora (WAAD), held in Nigeria in 1992, when tensions among various feminist positions within the pan-African feminist movement were clearly visible. African activists emphasised "improved health and education for

[17] The Anglophone feminist tradition notably incorporates themes of sexual identity and LGBTQ+ concerns that were central to formulating a queer epistemology as well as a research and activist agenda (see Callis, 2009).

African women" rather than "[s]ex-based and race-based exclusionary practices in the United States and Europe" (Miescher *et al*., 2007, p. 2).

Several authors engage with an applied scholarly feminist activism drawing on strategies that call for a pan-African focus (Abbas & Mama, 2014; Mama & Abbas, 2015).[18] Nonetheless, Davies (2014) observes a tendency "to disarticulate feminist frameworks of analysis as unrelated to pan-Africanist positions" (p. 80) while others point to the need to strengthen "the Africa/African diaspora relationship" when addressing issues of feminist concern (Nnaemeka, 1998, p. 29, drawing Hudson-Weems, 1998; Sofola, 1998; Aina, 1998). Looking forward, Patricia McFadden (2002) highlights the role of African intellectual women "within the context of anti-colonial and now anti-patriarchal global feminist resistance" (p. 62). Amina Mama and Hakima Abbas point to growing "[f]eminist-led struggles [that] are […] working across the class and educational spectrums, as well as with the various gender non-conforming and queer communities who are the latest target of state-orchestrated violences" (Abbas & Mama, 2014, p. 3).[19]

Besides an activist dimension, feminist claims on gender justice, are embedded in broader processes of knowledge production.

2.2.2. Unequal Power Relations in Academic Knowledge Production – Exploring and Overcoming Them

Academic knowledge production is broadly entangled in asymmetrical frameworks privileging the Global North at the expense of the Global South (Miescher *et al*., 2007, p. 8; see also Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010). Therefore, some scholars argue that there is a need for a different mode of knowledge production (*cf.* Miescher et al., 2007). The characteristics of this hegemonic asymmetrical knowledge production within academia, particularly gender studies and feminist theory, include simultaneous "underrepresentation of scholars in the Global South" and "hegemony of Western gender […] scholarship[20] (Medie & Kang, 2018, p. 38). This is notably the case for "knowledge production about Africa" (Anyidoho, 2006, p. 164)

[18] The academic journal *Feminist Africa* dedicated two entire journal editions to investigating issues on 'Pan-Africanism and Feminism' (2014, 2015).
[19] For further discussion on the place of queer themes as part of African feminism see Ekine and Habbas (2013).
[20] Medie and Kang (2018) notably comment on gender and politics scholarship within the field of political science.

resulting in negligence towards publications emanating from the Global South, notably Africa (see also Introduction). While McFadden (2011) highlights the importance of African women to dare "imagine themselves as intellectuals and makers of theory" (p. 63), Takyiwaa Manuh (2007) reflects on the challenges for theoretical knowledge production in postcolonial countries of the Global South. Scholars might be confronted with a choice: for those who have the possibility, they can move to another location, maybe a centre of knowledge production typically located in the Global North, but with the severe consequence of "becom[ing] less connected to the relevant content areas" (2007, p. 140). Pumla Dineo Gqola (2002) and Pereira Charmaine (2002) highlight in their work how African feminist scholars might face a particular double challenge in their role criticising both male sources and de-centering white, Western scholarship. To address asymmetrical knowledge production, it is vital to adopt a process of 'doing knowledge production differently'. This process might start with an initial acknowledgment of structures and dynamics generating unequal knowledge production (Miescher *et al*., 2007, p. 8; Lewis, 2005, p. 393).

Strategies for 'doing knowledge production differently' include decolonising academia which involves "identifying, critiquing and correcting the inequalities embedded in scholarship and at the foundation of knowledge production" (Medie & Kang, 2018, p. 40). This can mean generating theory *from within* ensuring that theory stays relevant and connected to local realities, which seems to be of particular relevance for African feminist scholarship. Manuh (2007) argues that "theory must be rooted in the concerns of African-based women and men in order to make the theoretical contributions correspond to our experience" (p. 140). Chilisa and Ntseane (2010) suggest "challeng[ing] universalized Western gender theory" and "reveal[ing] local standpoints[21]" (pp. 617-8) through adopting "post-colonial, indigenous and African feminist approaches" in theoretical and methodological ways (for further discussion, see Chapter 5).

Strengthening local academic institutions as platforms for critical thinking which embrace the relevance of local specificities and experiences might be part of challenging hegemonic structures of knowledge production (Mama, 1996). "[S]pace exists for feminist imagining and scholarship in Africa" (Pereira, 2002, p. 22), notably the Council for the Development of Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and the Association of African

[21] Critical standpoint theory is of particular importance within feminist scholarship; it "begins with the idea that less powerful members of society have the potential for a more complete view" (Poonacha, 2004, p. 395; see also Haraway, 1988 quoted in Daukas, 2016, p. 65).

Women for Research and Development (AAWORD) (Mama, 1996; Pereira, 2002; Steady, 2005).[22] AAWORD "was among the earliest women's organizations of the South to adopt a critical approach to research and to challenge Eurocentric paradigms from a feminist and post-colonial perspective" (Steady, 2005, p. 317) while CODESRIA is of "strategic importance as [a] space[…] for intellectual engagement dedicated to regional transformation" (Pereira, 2002, p. 23).

Tapping into the "transformative potential" of feminist knowledge production in Africa (Pereira, 2002, p. 23; see also Mama, 2004; Gqola, 2002), Pereira points to "feminist reconstructions of culture" (2002, p. 24) which aim at "transforming our institutions and our societies in the direction of gender equality and social justice" (p. 35). To do this involves "addressing, rather than evacuating, ambiguities […] contradictions, silences and gaps" (Pereira, 2002, p. 22). Likewise, transnational feminist theorising stresses "what is framed out" and encourages feminist researchers to be concerned with what is silenced (Nnaemeka, 1998). Drawing on transnational feminism might allow us to theorise *diversity*[23], rather than *difference*, "emphasiz[ing] the centrality of contiguity […] which simultaneously recognizes difference and the possibility and/or reality of connection" (ibid., p. 20). Such theorising entails

> […] a rethinking of 'progress,' 'development' and overall North/South relations. It challenges the giver/receiver, researcher/researched paradigms of unequal relations that govern North/South debates and engagement by replacing them with a more reciprocal, equitable, and dialogic vision of the North and the South as respectively harboring givers and receivers as well as mutually reinforcing communities of learners. (Nnaemeka, 1998, p. 22, drawing on Miles, 1996)

Transnational feminism entails a particular analytical approach and intellectual practice. It endorses the forging of activist connections across several kinds of boundaries (Nnaemeka, 1998, p. 3). This links to a broader path proposed for countering 'asymmetrical knowledge production' through building "alliances across difference [which] are simultaneously fragile and strong, problematic and necessary" (Miescher *et al*., 2007 pp. 11-12).

[22] Other relevant research institutions in sub-Saharan Africa include the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD) and the Laboratory for the Study of Social Dynamics and Local Development (LASDEL) (Medie & Kang, 2018, p. 45)

[23] Throughout the last two decades, diversity as a conceptual pathway to overcoming the differences between feminist strands, notably 'Western white' and 'indigenous coloured', has taken on more relevance (*cf.* Bulbeck, 1998).

This research notably draws on the understanding of 'transnational' as presented by Hanan Sabea (2008) who argues that "[a] spatial axis underpins" the term, yet it is "indeed about crossing the boundaries of the nation and the state, in pursuit of other connections and possibilities" (p. 13). However, there is also the risk of turning "transnational into a meta-narrative and system-like formation or explanation, thus challenging unwittingly the potentials of 'crossings and connections'" (ibid.). Despite these concerns, in practice, transnational feminism often acknowledges "that working across borders and cultures is an essential feature of our contemporary world, and that our own specific locations and identities must be part of the bases of our analyses" (Davies, 2014, p. 90). In analytical terms, Peace A. Medie and Alice J. Kang (2018) outline that transnational feminism entails using a 'global lens' (pp. 46-48) while transnational knowledge-making projects more broadly set out "to develop frameworks that are simultaneously intersubjective, comparative and relational, yet, historically specific and grounded" (Alexander, 2005, p. 53 cited in Davies, 2014, p. 89).

This thesis adopts a transnational analytical lens for studying conceptualisations of gender linked to subjective notions of programme success, potentially aligned to ideas of social transformation as part of an international cross-cultural development programme. While this section has pointed to the conceptual implications of changing the relations of feminist knowledge production, the political economy of aid, encapsulated, for instance, in funding relations, might form a key barrier to the co-creation of knowledge across boundaries (for further discussion see Chapter 7 and 9).

2.3. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has addressed conceptualisations of gender as part of broader knowledge production processes throughout and across the Global South and the Global North. It has presented commonalities and differences among and between selected strands of feminism and considered limitations and possibilities of mobilising around gender justice. It also considered analytical and practical pathways of 'doing knowledge production differently'.

In the first part of this chapter constitutive elements of three specific feminist currents were presented as well as relations between them. A monolithic version of Western liberal feminism rooted in a political philosophy dating back to the late 18th century rests on the conviction that people should not be denied equality of opportunity because of gender, notably when it comes to political rights as well as political and professional positions. A

Black feminist critique emerging in the mid-20th century highlighted how a liberal 'mainstream' feminism in the West/ North America, overlooked the experience of women that are not White and not middle-class. Highlighting intersectional oppression based upon gender and race, Black feminism points to systemic oppressions interlinked in particular ways. Third World feminists and African feminists criticised a monolithically perceived 'Western feminism' for foregrounding patriarchy at the expense of considering various other forms of structural oppressions faced by women *and* men including racism, colonialism and capitalism linked, but not reducible to, patriarchy. While both Black feminism and African feminism foreground oppression enforced upon people at the intersection of gender and race, what sets African feminism apart from both a 'White' Western feminism *and* a US-Based Black feminism is the emphasis on African socio-cultural histories which entails particular experiences of material deprivation in the Global South.

An African feminist critique was presented that notably questions the relevance of the gender concept for an African setting altogether, which connects to a broader critique of misrepresentation of African realities in scholarly texts emanating from 'the West'. African models of solidarity seemingly foreground social groups and a notion of commonality that does not necessarily revolve around gender. Such notion emphasises the individual as part of communal processes and might link to the promotion of collective values such as cooperation, complementarity and harmony among and between women and men. Various critical feminists across the Global South and the Global North, drawing notably on poststructuralism, have criticised and challenged the over-privileging of sexual difference in Western feminist thought which particularly affects ideological understandings of the sexual division of labour and claims on its universalised form.

This chapter has highlighted 'Western' and 'African' feminism, while acknowledging the risk of drawing on such generalising terms, which might reduce and simplify a complex heterogeneity of feminist positions. Nonetheless, identifying common tendencies as well as differences across and within feminist strands labelled 'Western' and 'African' might allow depicting certain 'ideal-type' discourses on gender that can aid in analysing gendered conceptualisations as part of international cross-cultural development work, as this doctoral thesis sets out to do.

The second part of this chapter addressed gender justice, especially the limitations and possibilities of political mobilisation across intersecting social identity factors such as gender and race but also geographical location. Pan-African connections in intellectual and activist

terms notably align Black feminism and African feminism, while tensions continue to persist notably in placing differing emphasis on what constitutes the most important elements of an analytical and activist pan-African agenda aligned to feminist concerns. This chapter explored limitations as well as possibilities for collectivist action across cultural, geographical and socio-economic borders and suggested that this might entail 'doing knowledge production differently' by acknowledging and addressing unequal power relations in academic knowledge production. A collective analytical and activist feminist practice might draw on a transnational and transformative feminism which stresses values and practices such as reciprocity and equitable dialogue. This, then, might support creating a mutual learning community on feminist positions and common pathways related to gender justice.

The next chapter will investigate how the concept of gender is operationalised as part of international development policy and practice. It will draw on various of the feminist positions, their commonalities and differences, as presented in this chapter.

3. Operationalising Gender in Development

While the previous chapter has extensively dealt with particular strands of feminist scholarly-activist work, this chapter explores the operationalisation of the concept of gender as part of international development policy and practice. Notably feminist development studies, positioned within the field of social sciences, address questions at the intersection of feminist research and development studies (Ramamurthy, 2000; see also Harcourt, 2016; Parpart *et al*., 2000; Cornwall *et al*., 2007). This thesis is located within the field of feminist development studies.

Three paradigms can be helpful in understanding the role and experiences of women in the context of development – the Women in Development Approach (WID), the Women and Development Approach (WAD) and the Gender and Development Approach (GAD). The WID approach challenged the assumption that women have no role to play in market production. This assumption was quite prominent within development cooperation in the 1960s and 1970s and led to sexual inequalities within development approaches, such as men receiving training, because they were associated with production for the market, while women were being restrained to subsistence farming (Boserup, 1970). The Danish economist Ester Boserup (1970) pointed to the negative repercussions that modernisation can have on women's autonomy, especially in agricultural production.[24] This point was taken up by the WAD approach, which identified both the mode of production (within an international capitalist system) and class inequalities as the primary reasons for subordination of women.[25] The GAD approach was more encompassing and identified patriarchy, the pervasive nature of male domination within most societies, as the root cause for domination of women through not only controlling their labour, but also their sexuality and procreation, therefore focusing on both productive and reproductive spheres of societies.[26]

Early on, critique was raised against WID, WAD and later GAD approaches. In this chapter the critical views of Southern feminists are foregrounded as they carry important implications for the neo-colonial critique of the treatment of gender in development. Mama (2004), as an adamant critic of 'developmental feminism', questions who benefits from different approaches to feminism and development as WID, WAD or GAD predominantly generate

[24] For an in-depth engagement with the impact of Boserup's work on the WID and later GAD approach, see Ramamurthy (2000, pp. 241-44).
[25] For further discussion on the WAD approach, see Rathgeber (1989).
[26] For an engagement with different feminist views on the relevance of patriarchy, see Chapter 2.

> […] a need for gender expertise – something of a travelling circus of experts – gender technocrats […] [which] service the industry, but their value to the alleged beneficiaries of development remains debatable, as conditions of ordinary women and men in the former colonies of the West continue to worsen. (p. 121)

This chapter will engage with the role of gender expertise in development as targeting discrimination against women. As the research focus of this doctoral study lies on conceptualisations of gender linked to notions of social transformation, visions and processes of gendered social change within the sphere of international development will be explored. Emphasis is laid on the concepts and implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment. This chapter also explores the current state of knowledge regarding theories and practice around transformation, potentially linked to success of international development programmes, and engages with the role of development feminists in this process. Finally, this chapter will consider the role of social norm change for social transformation, within and beyond development policy and practice. The first section of this chapter provides a reflection on the concept of development more broadly and sets out to contextualise understandings of gender in development policy and practice.

3.1. Understanding Gender in Development Policy and Practice

WID, emerging in the early 1970s, and GAD, which took hold in the late 1970s and early 1980s, are part of a broader discursive context on development.[27] Below, I will first reflect on the concept and shifting meanings of development to then discuss WID and GAD in more depth. Gendered conceptualisations as part of a particular international, cross-cultural development programme, which constitutes the research focus of this study, might align in more or less explicit ways to the broader discursive context of development policy and practice as outlined below.

3.1.1. Reflecting on the Concept of Development

Development, framed as an international practice of aid, can be dated back to the inaugural speech of US-American president Harry S. Truman that took place on the 20th of January 1949 and set out a 'programme of development' to 'underdeveloped areas' (*cf.* Sachs, 1992;

[27] For a chronology of the emergence of WID and GAD, see Razavi & Miller (1995a).

Fischer *et al*., 2004). Since its inception, the discourse on development, notably as part of global public policy, saw various paradigm shifts.

Predominant notions of development invoked between the 1950s and 1970s drew heavily on 'the modernisation school' which conceived of development in economic terms with a focus on generating economic growth in the pursuit of 'progress' (*cf.* Rostow, 1960; Myrdal, 1957; Lewis, 1955). Modernisation theories are grounded in a linear and gradual model of progress; Walt Whitman Rostow's model (1960), for instance, envisions societies passing through five stages of growth, from 'traditional' to 'the age of high mass consumption'. Such gradual development is premised on industrialisation and mechanisation as part of a broader logic of capitalist economic growth, often understood as an increase in *per capita* product (Rostow, 1960, pp. 4-16; see also Adamovsky, 2011).

Rostow's model, premised on post Second World War experiences of the United States, Britain, China and Russia, "presents the crudest version of the linear, Eurocentric vision of economic development that nineteenth-century liberals had already established" (Adamovsky, 2011, p. 531). Notably for the US, Western Europe and later Japan, the assumption of such "planned socio-economic change", namely "that the benefits of resources channelled by the state to market-oriented production would automatically 'trickle down' to everyone" seemed to hold true and translated into "sustained increases in standard of living" (Ramamurthy, 2000, p. 241; see also World Bank, 2019). However, such views on development, premised on modernisation theories with a pronounced Eurocentric outlook, undermined or rendered invisible historical links to colonialism, and markedly different experiences of 'development' throughout the Global South.

The Conceptual Sphere of Development, Modernity and Tradition Through a Postcolonial Lens[28]

Studying the colonial history of sub-Saharan Africa, Frederick Cooper (2002, pp. 30-31) outlines, that the British colonial government already implemented instances of 'economic development' in the late 1930s, even if only to slightly improve the working conditions of African labourers to efface any tendencies for rioting. Some scholars and development practitioners claim that it is crucial to understand and consider these links between attempts at colonial development, the post-war inauguration of international development practice and

[28] In this section, I am drawing on some ideas I have engaged with previously (see Froehlich, 2015; Froehlich, 2009, unpublished).

postcolonial international development aid. A combined study of the concepts of development, modernity and tradition seems to be central in this regard.

On the one hand, modernity and associated notions of 'progress' and 'development' was a key vocabulary item to express the possibilities and perils of social transformation and freedom from colonial rule (Holden, 2008, p. 24). On the other hand, critical thinkers assailed modernity's Eurocentric and westernising character and agenda, conceiving of time in specific ways with consequences for understanding nationalism. Anne McClintock (1995) demonstrates the tendency to envision national history as "naturally teleological, an organic process of upward growth, with the European nation as the apogee of world progress" (p. 359). She identifies a 'disavowal of agency' among "women, the colonized and the industrial working class", which is "projected onto anachronistic space: prehistoric, atavistic and irrational, inherently out of place in the historical time of modernity" (p. 40).[29] The concept of modernity aligns, semantically, to the concept of development as they both display the construction of a temporal horizon, a goal and a seemingly adequate path towards achieving it.

The concept of modernity most commonly links to a Western philosophical tradition based on enlightenment principles of liberalism stressing individual freedoms and rights as well as knowledge constituted through rationality.[30] Early on, scholarly thinkers have fiercely debated the concept of modernity.[31] Philip Holden (2008) points to "the very different experience of modernity of colonial subjects from that of European or North American citizen-subjects", which means that "analytical concepts associated with modernity" cannot simply be transferred "to the colonial world" (p. 26, drawing on Chatterjee, 1995). Holden highlights the need to embed modernity "within discrete material and social contexts" (2008, p. 24) and links the concept to industrial and technological advancements including communication technologies with profound implications on modern subjectivity (drawing on Appadurai, 1996). However, "For the colonized such technologies were always inextricably linked to others, […] [or] 'technologies of power' exemplified by the omnipresence of

[29] See also McClintock (1997).
[30] For an eloquent critique of this fundamental assumption, analysing how European nationalism might also be read as being displaced from rational progress, adopting a form of cultural fetishization, see McClintock, 1995, p. 102.
[31] Philip Holden (2008, p. 22) alludes to critique brought forward by Western philosophers and sociologists such as Max Weber, Paul-Michel Foucault, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno. See for example Weber (1958); Foucault (1979); Horkheimer & Adorno (1969).

colonial rule" (p. 25, drawing on Foucault, 1979). While some have argued that different experiences generate alternative or multiple modernities (*cf.* Eisenstadt, 2002), most scholars still opt for framing modernity in the singular, which may include "a process of indigenizing modernity" (Holden, 2008, p. 29).

Various African intellectuals investigated how a profound difference was discursively established between 'the traditional' linked to African experiences, and 'the modern' linked to colonial European experiences. Achille Mbembe (2001) argues that the possibility of an African modernity remains profoundly problematic as it was often reduced to differentiating between authenticity and alienation and thus creating an opposition for an African subject to either identify with a 'traditional' African life or to lose this connection by adopting 'modernity' (p. 12, cited in Auga, 2007, pp. 137-38).[32] Reflecting on the discursive dichotomy between modernity and tradition traces back to postcolonial literature, which has engaged prominently with the theme of 'Othering' (Fanon, 1963; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1985a; Thiong'O, 1986).

As an early expression of the postcolonial school of thought, Edward Said (1978) outlined how the Orient forms part of European colonies and is "the source of its [Europe's] civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the other" (p. 9). As such, "the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West)" (ibid.). Nonetheless, it is the western mode of thought that permeates and dominates the intellectual process of making sense of the world, notably as a representation of 'the beacon of enlightenment' and 'path to development' (*cf.* Chakrabarty, 2000). Attempting to redefine this universalism of the West, Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) ultimately accords continuous prominence to 'Europe' as the prevailing mode of thought. Frederic Cooper (2005) argues that the critique of Eurocentricsm or modernity, or of post-Enlightenment rationality, "obscures the moments and contexts in which political choices were made and provides little insight into questions of choice and responsibility today" (pp. 234-35). He stresses a more dynamic perception of the history of colonialism and decolonisation focusing on how Asia, Europe and Africa have shaped each other. Cooper defines decolonisation as a particular process shaping encounters "in which new possibilities for changing institutions and discourses opened up along the way (…)" (p. 238). Elizabeth Wolde Giorgis raises a similar point but focuses on the agency of Africans which "shapes itself in a continuous space of

[32] For a reframing of the modernity-tradition divide into a discrepancy between feminism and culture, see Section 2.2.1.

contestation that critically engages European projects of modernity, its history, and its intellectual tradition" (2010, p. 83).

Nonetheless, critical scholars identify a danger of getting caught up in Western conceptual categories disguised as universal. Zubairu Wai (2007), studying societal visions of African independence leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana or Julius Nyerere in Tanzania, criticises the concept of development in an African context notably along the lines of modernity and tradition. During the independence struggles throughout the 1960s and 1970s in the then European colonies in Sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia, development "became an organising ethos around which societies were galvanised and through which processes of social transformation leading to the constitution of new societies were imagined" (Wai, 2007, p. 72). However, development was also "somewhat imbued with Eurocentric and Western conceptions of progress" (p. 78). As such, "development in Africa, to a very large extent, in practice, was simply equated to Westernisation and vulgarisation (or the misrepresentation and confusion at best) of indigenous social life, traditions and cultures" (ibid.).

While various authors target the constitution of modernity as an antidote to tradition and culture in the context of (post-)colonialism and development, to define modernity *per se* as the problem might carry its own repercussions, such as leaving non-modernity as the alternative, or a notion of multiple modernities with their inherent risk of essentialising. Cooper stresses that Western terms reflecting certain ideals, such as electoral democracy and open markets, are not the only ones in which political possibilities can be discussed. However, "we lose a great deal as well if we assume that such notions are a static package; that the powerless cannot find in the ideology of the powerful tools that are useful in confronting tyrants at home and abroad" (2005, p. 236). A precise historical analysis of colonisation and decolonisation can show the range of possibilities and constraints for different actors at any moment and the different trajectories that follow upon acting in one's own time (ibid.). Such analysis informs the distinct post-colonial lens adopted as part of this research. This lens acknowledges 'the colonial present' while taking into consideration critique raised against a postcolonial focus.

Critique of post-colonial studies, including from a feminist perspective, has pointed to an over-emphasis on "a single, binary opposition: colonial – postcolonial" (McClintock, 1995, p. 10) which "may too readily license a panoptic tendency to view the global through generic abstractions void of political nuance" (p. 11). Arif Dirlik (2007) criticises literature that over-emphasises the study of colonialism as a cultural phenomenon at the expense of not

considering its political and economic dimension sufficiently. This research studies gender as power relations and considers systemic factors of social discrimination together with an embedded case study approach notably interested in socio-cultural questions which aims at responding to such and other critique by aligning various perspectives.

Linking elements of tradition and modernity might constitute a different pathway of engaging with development in an African context (see Froehlich, 2015). The West African priest Carl Christian Reindorf, born in the British colony of the Gold Coast and educated in the Basel Missionary School, as well as the Fanti legal scholar John Mensah Sarbah, educated in the British colonial school system, point to tradition as elements of indigenous African forms of life, culture and history. As Africans educated in an Europeanised school system, they constantly bridged, negotiated and translated between 'modernity' and 'tradition' in their writings. This includes both temporal and spatial crossings, as Kwaku Larbi Korang (2004) outlines while commenting on the work of Sarbah,

> Customary nativity must 'cross over' in order to stake a claim to a share, stage its full presence, and demand its recognition, in the 'space' of the Universal. [...] Sarbah must nativize the modern [...] On the other hand, Sarbah is enjoined to modernize the native. And that is to say if the (native) past must cross over in a forward- linkage with the (colonial-modern) present, so also must this present, in a reverse cross-over, inhabit the past in a backward linkage. (Korang, 2004, p. 119)

Some scholars, engaging with the theme of 'Othering' similarly focus on co-constituting processes of hybridisation when studying the meaning and function of the modern or universal and the traditional or local (*cf.* Bhaba, 1994). This thesis is equally focused on such complex processes, interested in meanings, discursive use, and practical consequences of the concepts of modernity and tradition as part of contemporary international development policy and practice.

With an emphasis on the role of postcolonialism, what this section has highlighted thus far is that the study of complex concepts, their formation, implementation and contestation, in intellectual and practical ways, needs to consider a broader epistemological and historical context.

Conceptualising Development between the 1960s and 2010s

As early as the 1960s, research aligning to the school of dependency theories criticised how 'development' of some nation-states was directly linked to the 'under-development' of others

(Frank, 1969; 1975). Such research indicated that some key industrialised states (such as the USA, Europe and Japan) constitute centres and benefit from economic processes of growth while others, notably Latin American nations in the Global South with high levels of agricultural production, remain dependent on them. Dependency theories challenged the assumption of economic growth to 'trickle down' evenly amongst nations. They drew on historical critique of modernisation theories which were charged with overlooking uneven distribution of economic progress, among and within nation states connected through a global trade system.[33] In his work, Samir Amin notably considered the African continent and implications of its location within a world system (*cf.* Amin, 1977; 1990; see also 2006). Critics of the dependency school highlight how such theories left out or minimised cultural and social aspects such as class.[34]

With rising scepticism towards the promises of modernisation theories, development discourse of the 1970s focused predominantly on poverty reduction, often translated into safeguarding better access to services such as education and healthcare, as well as better nutrition. The state and other institutional actors were seen as key in providing more direct poverty reducing measures, not solely relying on the premise of economic progress to be distributed evenly through the functioning of the market (*cf.* Razavi & Miller, 1995a). 'Alternative' thinking on development, commenced in the 1960s, re-emerged in the 1980s and shifted the analytical focus beyond economic growth. 'Human development' was considered as safeguarding human capabilities for leading a dignified life (*cf.* Sen, 1999), deliberations on participatory approaches to development arose (*cf.* Chambers, 1994; 1997) and institutional reflections on broader environmental and sustainability concerns (*cf.* Knox, 2013).[35]

Nevertheless, it was also during the 1980s and 1990s that neo-liberal economic policies took centre-stage in international development practice in the form of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), firmly rooted within a 'development through economic growth' paradigm. Some have commented on the detrimental effects of the SAPs notably in the Global South, dubbing the 1980s 'the lost decade of development' (Kabeer, 2015, p. 382). Ghana was an early adopter of the SAPs; an experience that Eboe Hutchful (2002) reviews critically. The institutional narrative on development adopted in the 1990s shifted its focus onto political factors, specifically the role of good governance and the upholding of

[33] For an extensive historical analysis, see Wallerstein (1974; 1980; 1989; 2011).
[34] For a systematic review of this critique, see Hanna (2000, pp. 151-52)
[35] For a specific engagement between development, gender and the environment see Zein-Elabdin (1996).

democratic ideals as a necessary prerequisite for 'achieving development' (see Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 2005). Some scholars highlighted the need to consider development, first and foremost, as an idea with the potential of unifying divergent and at times oppositional discourses and agendas (*cf.* Sachs, 1992).

In the 1990s, some critical thinkers postulated an era of post-development (Escobar, 1995; Esteva & Prakash, 1998; see also Esteva, 2007). Scepticism towards development (aid) continued well into the 2000s, with some authors proclaiming aid as dead in a provocative tone geared towards the media (Moyo, 2009). Nonetheless, more recent global policy frameworks on international development such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2000 – 2015) or the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2015-2030) can be viewed as providing a thematic and regulatory frame of how to achieve 'Human Development for Everyone' (HDR, 2016). Such frameworks reflect a thinking on well-being that goes beyond measuring development in terms of Gross National Income *per capita* (Chambers, 2006; Laderchi, Saith & Stewart, 2006). Notably feminist critique points to the limitations of these broad frameworks in bringing about transformative changes (Kabeer, 2015), not least due to the legacy and upholding of certain neo-liberal economic policies by the 'development industry' still posing a real threat to human rights concerns and those of gender justice (Elson, 2002).

Based on the above elaborations, I assume that the concept of development, notably in its connectedness to modernity, is problematic as it is too often constructed to serve certain interests - colonial and later Western or those of institutionalised development agencies. While considerations of 'modernity' and economic growth have ceased to be the explicit criteria for development, such thinking on development may still be implied in current discourse and practice of development. In line with an understanding of development that pronouncedly goes beyond economic considerations, while not dismissing them completely, this research studies conceptualisations of gender in cross-cultural terms linked to ideas of social transformation as part of a specific international NGO programme. Such a focus considers development practice together with exploring a broader discursive public policy perspective and examines the use and function of the concepts of 'tradition' and 'modernity'.

3.1.2. Development as Targeting Discrimination Against Women

Addressing development as a discourse and practice that specifically entails targeting discrimination against women, this section commences with a brief historical overview of international development and then discusses the WID and GAD approaches in more depth.

During the 1950s to the 1970s, a widely adopted welfare policy was "concerned with women in developing countries" (Moser, 1993, p. 58). This policy was rooted in a residual model of social welfare and translated into a dual approach to development, "financial aid for economic growth and relief aid for socially deprived groups" (p. 59). Most pronouncedly in the 1970s, various camps criticised the welfare approach; for development economist and planners it was linked to the broader "failure of modernization theory" especially applicable to 'developing' countries (Moser, 1989, p. 1810) while the emerging Women in Development (WID) approach was "arguing that modernization was impacting differently on men and women" (Razavi & Miller, 1995a, p. 2). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Gender and Development (GAD) approach emerged, criticising WID on various grounds (for further discussion see below).

From the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s, the United Nations (UN) held four 'World Conferences on Women' resulting in an international consensus around ending discrimination against women through a human rights lens. Various policy documents were generated in the process such as The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979),[36] which incorporates the principle of equality "of human rights and fundamental human freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field" among women and men (Art. 1). This and other UN conventions provided a global policy framework and platform for addressing questions of women and development and can be viewed as an attempt to present some sort of universal vision on women's rights. However, critique notably voiced by feminists from the Global South targets the tendency of equating 'Western' liberal claims with a presumed universality and global applicability. The below paragraphs will further present this critique as part of a critical overview of the WID approach.

[36] "Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979, entry into force 3 September 1981" (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979, p. 1).

A Critical Look at the Women in Development Approach

As touched upon previously, WID highlighted that women were located outside 'core' development interventions which focused predominantly on generating *male* employment (Moser, 1989, p. 1810). Consequently, the WID approach "stressed the integration of women into the market economy through development programmes focused on women" (Beetham & Demetriades, 2007, p. 201). Influenced by the claims of the US women's movement and a clearly "liberal feminist approach" (Razavi & Miller, 1995a, p. 3), WID, as a term, "was coined in the early 1970s by a Washington-based network of female development professionals" (ibid., drawing on Tinker, 1990, p. 30). The WID paradigm more broadly displays a strong institutional affiliation.[37] While for some this translates into 'effective' and 'efficient' development work focusing on women, critics continue to raise scepticism against a 'developmental feminism' on institutional grounds (*cf.* Mama, 2004).

WID and GAD approaches consist of various development policy rationales which have implications on methods adopted and the "institutional arrangements" (Hannan, 2000, p. 155) coalescing around particular strands of development work. The WID Equity approach, the first of several WID policy rationales[38], was adopted within the UN Decade for Women (1975-1985). It stressed an active role for women in the development process and can be considered challenging, or confrontational, as it identifies the subordinate position of women to men in both the private (read home) and public (read market) sphere and implies a re-distribution of power (Moser, 1989; 1993). Formed in "bottom-up confrontation […] by feminist women's organizations" (Moser, 1993, p. 64) and with a thematically challenging approach, WID Equity was not popular with governments and development agencies (Moser, 1989, p. 1811; Hannan, 2000, p. 158; see also Razavi & Miller, 1995a, p. 28). Other policy rationales that emerged during the 1970s include WID Anti-Poverty, closely aligned to development as poverty reduction as outlined above, and WID Empowerment.

WID Empowerment displayed some popularity during the 1980s and was marked by feminist writings of 'Third World Women' and grassroots organisations challenging Western feminist models of development, instead focusing on women's self-reliance (see Moser, 1989, 1993). Although "largely unsupported by governments and agencies" (Moser, 1989, p. 1808), WID Empowerment was of particular relevance to feminists from the Global South. Nonetheless, various Southern feminists criticised an *institutionalised* WID paradigm as a

[37] WID advocates were aligned to international organisations such as the United Nations and state-led ones such as USAID (see Razavi & Miller, 1995a, p. 2).

[38] For a comprehensive overview of WID policy rationales, see Moser (1993) and Hannan (2000).

manifestation of Western feminism to the detriment of incorporating other perspectives (Okome, 2003; Mama, 2007b). From a pronounced feminist African perspective, Okome (2003) investigates the UN Decade for Women (1975 – 1985) and points out "that the ideals and norms of Western feminism were the new standards by which feminists from other parts of the world would be judged" (ibid.). Consequently, she continues,

> I am questioning the mind set that presumes that Africans cannot apprehend reality independently of Western intervention, that they always need help, and that their 'voiceless' women can only be given voice by the 'progressive, sympathetic' Western feminist. […] African societies are, I argue, able to identify their problems and to prioritize their goals. (p. 70)

While being critical of liberal feminism as a global standard, some African feminists (Mama, 2007; Pereira, 2002) distance themselves from official state narratives in various 'developing' countries, rendering feminist claims as a Western imposition and thus not relevant for an African context (Moser, 1989, p. 1811).

The WID Efficiency approach emerged in the 1980s and 1990s and is widely perceived as the most dominant approach (Moser, 1993; see also Beetham & Demetriades, 2007). It stresses "a combined argument for equity and economic efficiency" in its women-centred work (Razavi & Miller, 1995a, p. 1) ensuring "that women benefited from mainstream development programmes and projects" (p. 10). Highlighted above, WID displays strong institutional affiliations and aligns to a distinct Western liberal feminist outlook. Such criticism might also apply to GAD's mainstreaming agenda, which will be addressed below as part of a brief engagement with the GAD approach more broadly.

Gender and Development – Attempts at Repoliticising Development

GAD notably incorporated the concept of gender which reflected a broader analytical trend in feminist scholarship (Cornwall, 2007; see also Section 2.1) and entailed a "shift from women-only research and programmes to a broader consideration of 'gender relations', or the hierarchical power relations between men and women that tend to disadvantage women" (Beetham & Demetriades, 2007, p. 201 drawing on AWID, 2005). For Cecile Jackson (1997), the "real achievements" of GAD include the creation of "political space for feminists in academia" as well as bringing "women into international fora and debate" (p. 150). GAD also ensured a redirecting of "resources towards gender issues" while setting out to re-conceptualise what development meant (p. 150, drawing on Udayagiri, 1995), notably critiquing earlier liberal feminist efforts.

Critical GAD voices targeted various WID approaches, notably *Anti-Poverty* and *Efficiency*, for conceptually conflating women and poverty. While the 'feminisation of poverty' argument provided a convincing rationale for diverting parts of much contested development resources to 'women's issues', critics have argued that the conflation also led to the instrumentalisation of women as a means for pursuing development's changing objectives (Kabeer, 1997). Moreover, such conflation risks undermining the GAD agenda altogether as "[g]ender appears to have collapsed into a poverty trap" (Jackson, 1998, p. 39).

Closely aligned to an institutional GAD approach, building upon WID's efforts to 'integrate' women into development (Baden & Goetz, 1997, pp. 4-5), gender mainstreaming became a widespread tactic during the 1990s. Aimed at safeguarding the principle, value and practice of gender equality in an organisational setting, notably governments, gender mainstreaming entailed "systematic procedures and mechanisms […] for explicitly taking into account […] gender issues at all stages of policy-making and programme design and implementation" (p. 5). Critics of gender mainstreaming find it "largely […] disappointing" (Parpart, 2014); Gwendolyn Beethman and Justina Demetriates (2004) mention, if only in a footnote, that it "has meant a shift away from a focus on women, a depoliticisation of women's issues" and under-funding for "programmes and organisations focusing on women's issues" (p. 212). However, when GAD emerged, it seemed to hold a promise of a pronounced political engagement with women's issues.

Despite GAD's critical contributions, including considerations of masculinities and femininities as part of development work,[39] the GAD paradigm more broadly has been criticised for continuing to carry Eurocentric and Western biases. Andrea Cornwall (1998) reflects on this point in the following way,

> Taking a closer look at the ways in which gender is thought about in the models that are used in GAD work, it is possible to identify certain assumptions that are based on a Eurocentric conception of gender difference and on concerns which were relevant to middle-class Euro-American feminists, but do not necessarily correspond with the ways in which African, Asian and Latin American women and men think, speak about and live gender difference. (pp. 49-50)

In line with the above quote, Sally Baden and Anne Marie Goetz (1997) observed that the 'mainstream project' of GAD dismisses various issues such as "the role of women in many parts of the world in maintaining tradition, and the centrality of religion to their lives [as well as] women's joy in mothering and nurturing" (p. 18). This points us to a discussion around

[39] For further discussion on this point, see Section 3.3.3.

gender equality and the role of socio-culture practices in the lives of women and men, which will be addressed in the next section (see 3.2.).

Both WID and GAD paradigms engage in particular ways with visions and processes of social change in order to target gender-based social discrimination. By the mid-1990s, gender equality and women's empowerment had been inscribed as the envisioned goals, and pathways, of overcoming social discrimination against women within a development policy and practice arena. While gender equality as a development objective was closely aligned to an institutional GAD approach, women's empowerment, as a radical approach, entered international development in the 1980s and 1990s. It was concerned with "transforming power relations in favour of women's rights, social justice and the transformation of economic, social and political structures" (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015, pp. 404; 412, drawing on Batliwala, 1994; 2007; Kabeer, 1994; 1999; Bisnath & Elson, 2000). As such, the concept of empowerment is closely linked to the idea of transformation as "structural change in favour of gender equality" (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015, p. 405). The next section will explore visions and processes of gendered social change in more depth, focusing on the concepts and international development practice around gender equality and women's empowerment.

3.2. Visions and Processes of Gendered Social Change – Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment as Questions of Power and Change

In the introduction, a case was made for the existence of wide-spread social discrimination against women, not least premised on unequal power relations that tend to disadvantage women. Much feminist work distinctively draws on the role of social change in bringing about more favourable and less discriminatory conditions for females. From an international policy perspective, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women foregrounds a human-rights-based approach premised on gender equality, while the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA), a global policy document adopted during the 'Fourth World Conference on Women' held in Beijing in September 1995, foregrounds both gender equality and women's empowerment. The latter policy document stresses the importance of "enhancing further the advancement and *empowerment* of women all over the world" to address "constraints and obstacles" (p. 2, Para 7, emphasis added) such as the persisting "*inequalities* between women and men" (p. 2, Para 5, emphasis added). Development interventions focused on gender equality and women's empowerment might

draw on such global policy documents and often aim at changing, sometimes also transforming, (gendered) power relations. In the following, the dimension of power and change aligned to the concepts of gender equality and women's empowerment will be further discussed, with a particular interest in the role of international development practice as well as women's movements. Finally, this section deliberates upon development 'success' as change or transformation.

3.2.1. Gender Equality and the Question of Universal Human Rights

Chapter 2 has presented some anthropological work on women and their relation to culture in particular connection to nature (Ortner, 1972) and has addressed critique targeting essentialising claims of universal sexual hierarchies subordinating women (Rosaldo, 1980). The concept of 'culture' itself has been subject of extensive academic debates notably in the field of social and cultural anthropology. While an engagement with these debates lies beyond the scope of this thesis, reflecting upon socio-cultural practices, notably those deemed 'harmful' by feminists themselves, forms part of this study. Various feminists agree on the existence of harmful socio-cultural practices (see Molyneux & Razavi, 2002; Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994; Nnaemeka, 1998). However, Southern feminists challenge how these practices are portrayed and dealt with in dominant feminist discourse imbued with Western liberal feminist values.

Sylvia Tamale (2008) argues that African feminism and African culture are closely linked; indeed, "the close connection between gender, sexuality, culture and identity requires that African feminists work within the specificities of culture to realise their goals" (p. 54). In this approach, egalitarian, positive and rights-supportive aspects are foregrounded within African culture often translated into traditions, beliefs and values. Tamale challenges a presumed 'culture/rights' divide and rather "demonstrates how culture can be transformed to bypass the polarity between 'rights' and 'culture' in order to achieve social transformation" (p. 56). Levitt and Merry (2011) also problematise how a 'culture/rights' divide is framed; in their reading, this framing dismisses that the human rights framework itself can be linked to a particular cosmopolitan "cultural system, one premised on ideas of human rights and universality" (p. 83). However, in the "cosmopolitan world of government diplomats, UN and NGO experts, and donor officers […] working in transitional justice or development projects", 'culture' seemingly continues to refer "to the way of life of the 'other'" (ibid.),

often focused on ‘harmful’ and ‘discriminatory’ practices enacted upon a female, sexualised body.

Western liberal feminists demonstrate a tendency to argue that certain forms of “cultural and moral relativism […] [are] at variance with universal legal standards” (Molyneux & Razavi, 2002, p. 15). An assumption seems to prevail in Western liberal feminist thought that the ‘weapon’ of human rights can imply salvation from a traditional and cultural context that subordinates and potentially harms women (Levitt & Merry, 2011; see also Molyneux & Razavi, 2002; Nussbaum, 2002), including practices of FGM. Building upon the previous discussion on social empowerment as legal changes (see Section 3.3.3), the discourse around female genital mutilation, and how to transform it, has become quite controversial.

For Obioama Nnaemeka (1998), African feminism stands precisely in contrast to “the nature, tone, spectacle, and overall *modus operandi* of Western feminist insurgency against female circumcision in Africa and the Arab world” (p. 6). Tamale (2008) takes a more nuanced view on the “cultural labia of African women” (p. 62). On the example of the *Ssenga* institution among the Baganda in the central region of Uganda, she outlines that most women interviewed for her study “spoke positively of this cultural practice” (p. 63) of elongating the labia minora, which can enhance sexual pleasure for women. However, Tamale also addresses FGM as incising the clitoris or labia practiced among the Sabiy and Pokot communities of eastern Uganda which can violate “women’s bodily integrity and their sexual reproductive health rights” (ibid., referring to Toubia, 1995). The main point that Tamale raises though is that positive lived experiences in conjunction with the *Ssenga* institution “contradicts the negative blanket characterisation” (Tamale, 2008, p. 63) of the cultural labia of African women as offered by mainstream international development discourse and institutions, in particular the WHO. Peggy Levitt and Sally Engle Merry (2011) argue that a human rights discourse which frames women predominantly as victims of traditional practices “misunderstands how rights and culture work and instead builds on imperial narratives of the civilizing process and the transformation of ‘backward’ society” (ibid.). Such narratives generate portrayals of women as victims of their own culture and “as passive and vulnerable persons” in need to be rescued (pp. 81-82) - often by a “masculinist state” (p. 82) and the weapon of human rights (p. 83).

Several feminist development scholars raise critique on human rights-based approaches and identify a particular North-South divide that runs through and across different groups of actors working with such approaches (Tsikata, 2007; Kabeer, 2015). Naila Kabeer

(2015) notably criticises a tendency of institutionally powerful actors, such as donors, "to privilege a civil-political understanding of rights […] but downplay an economic-social understanding of rights" (p. 391). Nonetheless, various Southern feminists continue to view human rights-based approaches to development as a useful tool for research and activism geared towards gender equality from a Southern perspective (Sen, 2013; Win, 2007; Tsikata, 2007). Moving away from a notion that human rights are "the sole property of 'the West'" might mean a shift in focus to their use "in an increasingly transnationalised world, [where] they have acquired both local and regional resonance" (Molyneux, 2004, p. 115). Especially women's movements might draw on human rights instruments "to provide a normative and analytical framework for fighting against discrimination, reframing socio-economic injustices against women as human rights violations" (ibid.).

Invoking a 'transnational feminist perspective' with a particular interest in the work of women's movements, Elaine Unterhalter (2007) comments in markedly feminist terms on 'cosmopolitanism from below' (p. 32, drawing on Butler, 2004). Similarly, David Harvey (2009) points to "counter-hegemonic social movements […] generating considerable political energy for progressive changes in the global system" (p. 96). [40] Pointing to 'cosmopolitanism from below' may point to how we might overcome a perceived opposition between culture and (universal) rights. Notwithstanding the importance of adopting rights-based discourses as part of transnational feminist movements and the necessity for a constitutional legal framework that explicitly endorses women's rights, Tamale (2008) nonetheless reminds us, "For many African women the sustainable solutions to their oppression, exploitation and sub-ordination hardly lie in vague, alien legal rights, but in a careful and creative deployment of the more familiar cultural norms and values" (p. 64). As such, Tamale views culture as "a neglected pathway to women's justice" (p. 55). In Chapter 6, when the case study context to this research is further outlined, a discussion on rights and culture will be revisited.

Exploring a variety of *global* social justice claims (Nussbaum, 2005; Sen, 2004; 2005; O'Neill, 1993; 2000; Okin, 1999; Ackerley & Okin, 1999), Unterhalter finds that while in some way or another these studies acknowledge "that people have diverse values […] they also argue value pluralism cannot trump some principle or process that engages the question

[40] Harvey (2009) further argues "There is nothing wrong with a subaltern cosmopolitan perspective [drawing on de Sousa Santos (2005) and Young (1990)] remaining particularistic and local in orientation, provided the dialectical connectivity to global conditions is sustained" (p. 96).

of *gender equality* and education"[41] (2007, p. 34, emphasis added). As such, the existence of diverse values is widely acknowledged, but remain secondary when put in comparison to a *broader* principle, such as gender equality, prevailing as part of *global* social justice claims. How claims on justice can be shaped through culture, especially locally relevant collective values, will be explored in later chapters (see Chapter 8 and 9).

3.2.2. Women's Empowerment - The Role of Power in Transforming Gender Relations

In considering questions of power in transforming gender relations, this section will outline how the activist engagement of women's movements might draw on a particular understanding of social justice linked to a transformative notion of empowerment as part of visions and processes on gendered social change.

This thesis firmly understands gender relations as power relations (drawing on Scott, 1986; Cornwall 1998). Feminist literature has long dealt with the question of power and in conceptualising power as relational, Iris Marion Young (1990) challenged the distributive paradigm in understanding power. Young's understanding has notably influenced various feminist and intersectionality scholars (see Celis & Lovenduski, 2018, p. 155). Conceptualisations of power include "easily identifiable material dimensions", often responsible for defining access to resources, as well as "more subtle manifestations in ideologies, values and discourses" (Johnson & Mayoux, 1998, p. 148). According to Hazel Johnson and Linda Mayoux (1998), various feminist writings on development (*cf.* Kabeer, 1994; Nelson & Wright, 1995) consider a relational difference between 'power to' and 'power over', a distinction initially made by Steven Lukes (1994). 'Power to'

> can signify the position of the relatively powerful, but it also suggests a way forward for the relatively powerless: the development of people's capacities to exert increased control over and/or to change their conditions of existence. 'Power over' signifies means of control over people […]. (Johnson & Mayoux, 1998, p. 149)

'Power to' is then significantly linked to the ability to change 'conditions of one's existence'. However, the material and ideological dimensions of power often aim at sustaining unequal social relations and can "have the effect that both the subordinate and the relatively powerful are protected from potentially threatening processes of change" (Johnson & Mayoux, 1998, p.

[41] Unterhalter (2007) is particularly interested in 'Gender, Schooling and Social Justice' as the title of her monograph indicates.

148). In social practice, change and transformation might not be perceived in desirable terms, rather an upholding of the *status quo* might be envisioned as a preferential future scenario.

In the work of various women's movements, we can find a strong alignment of women's empowerment considerations with *transformative* social justice concerns (Sen & Grown, 1988[1987]; Mohanty, 2013). Kabeer (2005), argues that *empowerment* lies precisely in the existence of processes of *change*, notably acquiring "the *ability to make choices"* when this has been denied previously (pp. 13-14, emphasis in original). Feminist thinking about empowerment in social justice terms often invokes the relevance of speaking from particular standpoints. Notably "the vantage point of the most oppressed appeared to offer a more strategic entry point for grasping – and tackling – the complexities of subordination in the interests of a more just development" (Kabeer, 1997, pp. 1-2). Conceptually, empowerment can point to "a continuous process of change in which women empower themselves and challenge patriarchal structures and institutions"; an understanding mostly adopted "by social movements and scholars" (Chopra & Mueller, 2016, p. 1, drawing on Nazneen *et al*., 2014; Cornwall & Edwards, 2014).

The scholarly-activist work of Development Alternatives with Women for a new Era (DAWN), a "network of activists, researchers and policymakers" based in the Global South continues to be a relevant voice aligned to a WID Empowerment approach. DAWN's envisioned development alternative combines research and activism and sets out an inclusive agenda premised on intersectional identities sensitive to different forms of oppression (Sen & Grown, 1988[1987], p. 9). Development alternatives as envisioned by DAWN notably draw on the concept of 'self-empowerment of women' as a process of achieving 'basic rights of the poor' aligned to broader institutional transformation in line with equality.

> Only by sharpening the links between equality, development, and peace can we show that the 'basic rights' of the poor and the transformation of the institutions that subordinate women are inextricably linked. They can be achieved together through the self-empowerment of women. (Sen & Grown, 1988[1987], pp. 81-2)

Such concerns for systemic transformation and structural constraints seem to be missing from current agendas of international development such as the MDGs and SDGs (Kabeer, 2015; Sen, 2013; Chopra & Mueller, 2016). While these agendas and a broader discourse on international development policy and practice explicitly engage with women's empowerment and gender equality, they "often fail to address underlying structural imbalances of power, giving cover to existing gender, economic and political inequalities rather than challenging

them" (Medie & Kang, 2018, p. 40, drawing on Batliwala, 1994; Longwe, 2000; Kabeer, 2005).

The MDGs (2000-2015) and the SDGs (2015-230), as recent and current global frameworks for international development, set out an agenda that encompasses gender equality and women's empowerment as 'development objectives' to be attained and present a pronounced technical translation of these concepts. They thus display a logic of results-based management which can also be identified in gender-related global indicators such as the Gender Development Index (GDI), based on the Human Development Index (HDI), and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) which set out to statistically measure broader development concerns related to women in a comparative manner among nation-states.[42] Kabeer's (2015) critiques the MDGs on grounds of this logic which "effectively rules out broad, non-linear goals such as human rights, democracy, participation, which have featured in many UN declarations" (p. 383). However, these "were considered too difficult to measure" (p. 384).

Various authors point to the need to review gender-related indices notably UNDP's Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) and have proposed some new statistical measures (Bardhan & Klasen, 1999; Beneria & Permanyer, 2010). Some view regional frameworks such as the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI) as promising albeit with reservations (see Beetham & Demetriades, 1997, pp. 209 ff.). Despite feminist critique which targets the technical, results-based management logic of setting up targets and indicators for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, Deepta Chopra and Catherine Müller (2016) outline how in a contemporary setting the 'development industry' continues to conceptualise empowerment "as a goal, with aims and targets" (p. 1, drawing on Nazneen *et al*., 2014; Cornwall & Edwards, 2014).

International development policy and practice have been criticised for co-opting transformative feminist agendas embedded in social movements (Mama, 2004; 2007b). This critique targets a pronounced institutional dimension from a Southern, post-colonial perspective. Already at the 'Beijing Conference' (in September 1995) "some southern women activists" expressed "ambivalence about – or even hostility towards – the GAD discourse" (Baden & Goetz, 1997, p. 10). This "perhaps reflects deeper anxieties about the

[42] Other gender-related global indicators include the *OECD/DAC Gender, Institutions and Development Data Base* (*cf.* Beethman & Demetriades, 2007, pp. 204, 206) or quantitative measurements such as the *Gender Inequality Index* (GII), the *Global Gender Gap Index* (GGGI) and the *OECD's Social Institutions and Gender Index* (SIGI) (*cf.* Chant, 2016, p. 212).

imposition of what is perceived as an external agenda and about whose interests are served by the mainstreaming project" of development (ibid.). Notably the "professionalization and 'NGOization' of the women's movement and the consequent lack of accountability of 'gender experts' to a grassroots constituency" were criticised (ibid., p. 6). Conceptual imprecision potentially aids in framing opposing agendas as overlapping. As Unterhalter (2007) highlights, "From the late 1990s INGOs, New Social Movements (NSMs) and looser formations of the women's movement, have often been grouped together by analysts and activists, and termed global civil society" (p. 18).

Mama (2004) eloquently argues that "unequal power and authority" between feminist thought and "much more powerful players in the development industry" has "ensured a dynamic of appropriation and incorporation that constantly subverts and depletes transformative feminist agendas" (p. 121). Gender Analysis Frameworks, designed and implemented as part of international development policy and practice, might play a particular role in supporting or hindering transformative feminist agendas. The next section discusses the role of gender analyses frameworks in identifying gendered interests and needs and addresses the role of INGOs in either supporting measure-based changes *or* social transformation.

3.2.3. Identifying Interests and Needs – Considering Gendered Implications

In the field of development policy and practice, participatory approaches set out to identify interests and needs of 'target populations' *together with* people and communities concerned. This section will engage with such approaches, linked to questions of empowerment, and then present discussions around the process of identifying gender interests and needs. With a special emphasis on international development practice, this section will also engage with the use of gender analysis frameworks in considering interests and needs.

Participatory Approaches and Empowerment

Participatory approaches foreground views of women and men and emphasise an active, or empowering, role in their own development. Notably Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) emphasises criteria as exhibited and used by the local population to determine their own development (Chambers, 1994a; 1994b; Johnson & Mayoux, 1998; Vlaar & Ahlers, 1998; Bilgi, 1998). As an approach, participation continues to be particularly prominent in 'development fieldwork' and encompasses "a wide range of strategies and techniques"

(Stewart-Withers *et al*., 2014, p. 67; see also Johnson & Mayoux, 1998, pp. 151-53). Participatory processes as part of development carry the *potential* of being empowering, as their broad aim is "to increase the involvement of socially and economically marginalized people in decision-making over their own lives" (Guijt & Shah, 1998, p. 1). This might include "participatory research and appraisal as components in a flow of knowledge-generation and use: design-decision through implementation-monitoring-review and modification" (Green, 1998, p. 72). However, participatory processes as part of international development *are not necessarily* empowering. Mosse (2004) engages critically with participatory approaches as part of a specific development intervention, notably "the ambiguous idea of participation — which could mean both market research and empowerment" (p. 649). Nonetheless, he highlights the beneficial consequences of such ambiguity for the actual practice of development aid.

Since the inception of PRAs in development, some feminist development work stressed that participation has often failed to adequately recognise differences *within* a community, which hindered an equitable process of participation, not least in gendered terms (Guijt & Shah, 1998; Cornwall, 1998; 2000; 2003). A marked emphasis on consensus

> whether [as part of] committees, user groups, community action planning groups and so on – can exacerbate existing forms of exclusion, silencing dissidence and masking dissent […] The voices of the more marginal may barely be raised, let alone heard, in these spaces. (Cornwall, 2003, p. 1328, drawing on Mosse, 1995; Mouffe, 1992)

Cornwall (2003) points to a case where some community members perceived a development intervention as 'violating' certain (patriarchal, potentially consensus) norms and taboos, generating backlashes in the form of physical violence against women[43] and an increase in divorce rates (p. 1334, drawing on Guijt, 1997). Nonetheless, participatory approaches continue to constitute one pathway of ensuring sensitivity for context in the formulation of gender interests and needs as part of international development, at times drawing on particular methods sensitive to community problems at different levels.[44] Therefore, participatory approaches geared at "[c]ommunity-based action remains a powerful and essential vehicle for development, as long as it addresses gender and other dimensions of

[43] Several development practitioners seem to be concerned with such and other potential backlashes notably as part of transformative GAD programmes tackling domestic violence (personal discussions with development practitioners as part of a Theory of Change workshop conducted by Plan International UK, Autumn 2015).
[44] Investigating the work of Redd Barna Uganda, Sewagudde *et al.* (2000) suggest production of community action plans "for those problems that must and can be resolved at the community level, and group action plans […] for more group-specific problems about which there is less need for or agreement on collective action" (p. 79).

social difference explicitly" (Guijt & Shah, 1998, p. 2), ideally throughout the entire project cycle of design, implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation (M&E)[45] of an international development programme. A crucial element is *how* addressing of social difference is done. Solely departing from a consensus-driven approach without methodologies in place for exploring different interests and needs might cause backlash.

Gender Interests and Gender Needs

Maxine Molyneux (1985) elaborated her argument that we need to adopt 'gender interests' as an analytical category "to differentiate them from the false homogeneity imposed by the notion of women's interests", which does not take adequate "account of the particularities of their [women's] social positioning and their chosen identities" (p. 232). Embedded in broader political and sociological considerations focusing on post-revolutionary socialist governments in Latin America specifically Nicaragua, Molyneux (1985) proposes to distinguish between strategic and practical gender *interests*.

According to Molyneux, *strategic* gender interests are "the ones most frequently considered by feminists to be women's 'real' interests" (p. 233) and they "are derived in the first instance deductively, that is, from the analysis of women's subordination and from the formulation of an alternative, more satisfactory set of arrangements to those which exist" (p. 232). *Practical* gender interests "are given inductively and arise from the concrete conditions of women's positioning within the gender division of labor" and "are usually a response to an immediate perceived need" (p. 233). While they "do not in themselves challenge the prevailing forms of subordination, […] they arise directly out of them" (ibid.). In the field of development and gender planning, Caroline Moser's approach (1989, 1993) draws on a diagnosis of "women's triple role" notably in 'Third World society'[46] as well as practical and strategic *needs* arising out of that role (1989, p. 1799; see also Moser, 1993). As such, Moser draws profoundly on the seminal work of Molyneux, in order to create a gender diagnosis tool based on the analysis of different gender roles for women and men.[47] Moser, however, introduces a shift in analytical focus, from interests to needs.

[45] Across a contemporary international development sector, the abbreviation MEL has become more widespread, standing for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning.

[46] In later writings, Moser acknowledges shifts in terminology and adopts the term Global South (Moser, 2014, p. 8).

[47] The gender roles framework was "developed by researchers at the Harvard Institute of International Development in collaboration with the Women in Development Office of USAID" (Razavi & Miller, 1995a, p. 14). Theoretically grounded in 'sex role theory' informing liberal feminism (ibid. drawing on Connell, 1987), it has been altered by researchers at University College London who proposed a gender diagnosis tool (see

While both Molyneux and Moser view women as those who can legitimately identify strategic and practical interests and needs, there seems to be a tendency for 'external interventions' to identify strategic interests/needs, and for poor women themselves to identify practical interests/needs. Molyneux clarifies that "Gender interests [which can be either strategic or practical] are those that women (or men, for that matter) may develop by virtue of their social positioning through gender attributes" (1985, p. 232). However, she also argues that "In contrast to strategic gender interests, these [practical gender interests] are formulated by the women who are themselves within these positions rather than through external interventions" (p. 233). Moser (1993) largely uses the formulation of Molyneux when explaining "Unlike strategic gender needs they [practical gender needs] are formulated directly by women in these positions, rather than through external interventions" (p. 40).[48] In my reading of the quoted passages, there then is a tendency, even if only a slight one, to invest particular social actors with *epistemological authority* and *legitimacy* to identify strategic gender interests and needs *for* 'low income Third World women' and men.

In Moser's work (1989; 1993; 2014), the shift to identifying practical and strategic *needs* instead of *interests* has sparked broader critique as it was perceived as de-politicising a process, taking it out of an explicit political sphere and moving it into a development planning domain (Moser, 2014, drawing on Kabeer, 1992). Moser (2014) herself maintains that such criticism points to broader "tension between complexity and simplicity" or "between the political and the technical" (p. 14). For some academic commentators, mandatory 'gender trainings' throughout development institutions from the 1970s onwards seem to specifically illustrate "how the political project of gender and development has been reduced to a technical fix" (Cornwall *et al*., 2007, pp. 7-8), rendering gender into "something that is ahistorical, apolitical and decontextualized" (Mukhopadhyay, 2004. p. 95, cited in Cornwall *et al*., 2007, p. 8). Both Molyneux and Moser stressed that the identification of gender interests and needs are necessarily context dependent. However, the application of Moser's gender roles framework in development practice might perhaps be charged with seemingly taking on an air of universal relevance when it actually reveals a particular western/liberal preoccupation foregrounding the individual and leaving out the consideration of broader systems of oppression (see also Chapter 2).

Moser, 1989; 1993; 2014). For highlighting the latter point to me, I would like to thank Caroline Levy (personal conversation Autumn 2016).

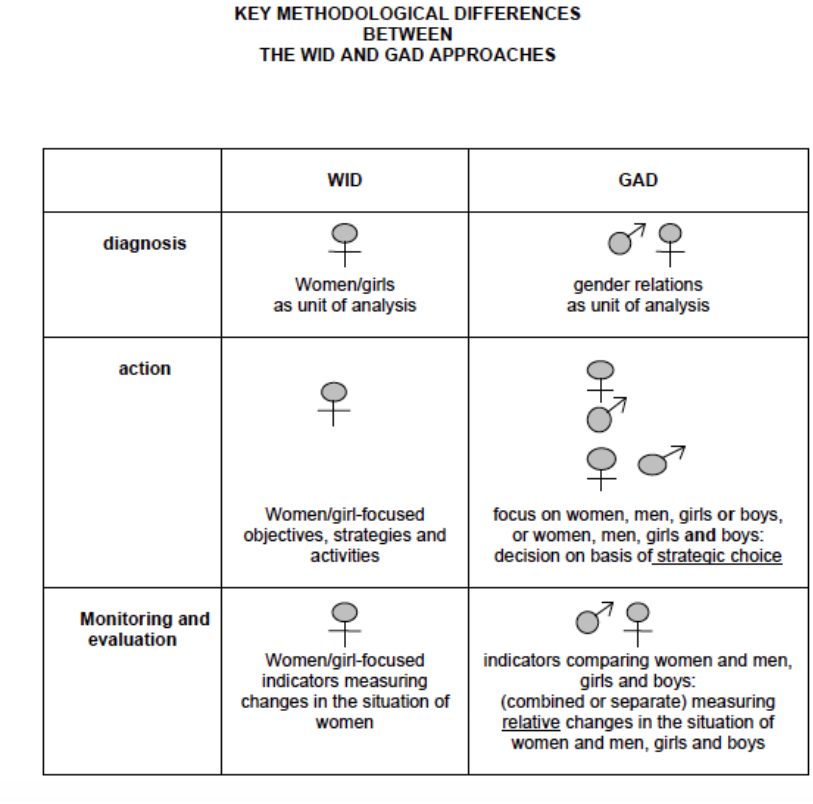
[48] At the same time, Moser also outlines that women identify strategic *and* practical gender needs (pp. 39-40).

Gender Analysis Frameworks

Gender analysis frameworks tend to generate an analytical diagnosis of a particular development 'problem' in gendered terms. Such diagnosis, or analysis, then informs development policy and programme action and, subsequently, the monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) thereof. A main drawback of gender analysis frameworks adopted in international development policy and practice might entail that they are first and foremost documents and tools produced *for* and *within* an expert context.

The gender roles framework, such as Moser's gender diagnosis tool, is a "popular approach within […] mainstream development institutions" and "derives from insights and concerns of the early WID approach" (Razavi & Miller, 1995a, p. 14). Later gender analysis frameworks as part of international development notably draw on "social relations analysis to highlight the need for action-oriented political strategies to bring about women's 'empowerment'" (p. 31). As such, we can observe a shift in focus during the 1980s and 1990s, reflecting paradigmatic changes from WID to GAD with methodological implications (Moser, 2014, p. 12). This shift was characterised "from the technical concerns of policy makers and planners to the political arena *per se*" (Razavi & Miller, 1995a, p. 31, drawing on Kabeer, 1992; Young, 1993; see also Fig. 1 below).

Figure 1. Key Methodological Differences between the WID and GAD Approaches



Source: Development Planning Unit, Gender Policy and Planning Programme, 2015a, unpublished training resource, UCL, London

Drawing on methodological aspects of GAD approaches (see Fig. 1 above), a contemporary rationale for gender policy and planning, 'gender analysis' for short, tends to examine gendered division of labour, closely aligned to gender roles and an identification of household structures as well as disaggregation of key categories such as 'community' or 'people centred' development. It also considers practical and strategic gender needs of women and men, boys and girls (see Appendix A). While such rationale has taken into account much criticism raised as part of GAD research, some authors notably view a gap between (gender) policy formulation and policy implementation as the problem (Parpart, 2014; Engeli & Mazur, 2018). Isabelle Engeli and Amy Mazur point to improving analysis of policy documents by closely aligning it to development practice (2018, p. 112).

Critical observers continue to argue that "[t]he language of gender and development fails to resonate with most people's lived experiences of the many different shades, tones and textures of relationships between and among women and men in different cultural contexts" (Cornwall, 2007, p. 75). Transformative gender analysis frameworks might allow for a more

relevant, contextualised and political engagement with questions of gender and development (for further discussion, see Section 3.3.).

3.2.4. Development 'Success' as Change or Transformation?

As indicated in the introduction, this research focuses on a specific development intervention conducted by an international non-governmental organisation (INGO) working together with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) at national, regional and local level as well as community-based organisations (CBOs). As such, it is relevant to explore selected literature on the role of (I)NGOs in bringing about social change, potentially in transformative terms.

The work of NGOs can be geared towards change and social transformation in terms of 'D/development with a big D or little d'; "[t]he distinction […] is between partial, reformist, intervention-specific alternatives, and more radical, systemic alternatives" (Bebbington *et al*., 2008, p. 5). The current focus on measurable achievements, highlighted previously, links to development 'with a little d' and "has the potential not only to reign in but also to depoliticize the range of strategies open to NGOs in promoting development" (Bebbington *et al*., 2008, p. 16, drawing on Derksen & Verhallen, 2008). Due to the differences in structure, goals and membership, NGOs demonstrate various, at times, opposing agendas with profound impact on the kind of social changes envisioned through development work.

NGOs are often denominated as the third sector in society, apart from the state and the market (Fisher, 1997, p. 445). They are characterised by "ideological and functional diversity" (p. 449), ranging from "groups providing social welfare services" to "social action groups struggling for social justice and structural changes" (p. 447). NGOs can differ in their levels of operation and "organizational structure, goals and membership" (ibid.) which often links to particular spatial levels. NGOs might operate globally, internationally, nationally, regionally, at district or at local level; the difference in denomination between notably INGO and NGO often links to these spatial levels. In practice, however, the borders between levels from/in which development organisations operate are porous, overlapping and mixed (for analysis on this point, see Chapter 7).

NGOs might be viewed as "idealized […] organizations through which people help others for reasons other than profit or politics" (Fisher, 1997, p. 442). At the same time, notably anthropological research work sets out to challenge such views (ibid.; Mosse, 2004;

2005; Li, 2007).[49] The work of David Mosse forms part of a body of literature on the anthropology of aid policy and practice, which foregrounds *how* development works in practice, rather than engaging with normative questions on 'how good/bad' international development is perceived to be (Mosse, 2004; 2005). Such literature (see also Li, 2007) fundamentally questions the role of development policy in directly steering, affecting or impacting implementation 'on the ground'. Mosse (2004) encapsulates this point when he states that "(policy) ideas do not have a life of their own apart from institutions, persons and intentions, but can only be understood in terms of the institutions and social relationships through which they are articulated" (p. 666). Work in the field of anthropology of aid suggests that success of a development project[50] depends upon

> (i)establishing a compelling interpretation of events, (ii) sustaining this as a key representation (through model building, reporting and field visits), and (iii) enrolling a wider network of supporters and their agendas, whether donor advisers, researchers, government officials or regional NGOs, and linking them to the success of the project. (Mosse, 2005, pp. 158-59)

Drawing on the work of Bruno Latour (1996), Mosse (2005) argues that 'skilful brokers', notably development workers such as field staff and project managers, are engaged in a process of constant translation – between various institutional languages and stakeholders – so a narrative is created that fits into the policy framework and allows for the construction of meanings and interpretations in which various project stakeholders can invest. This process carries the potential to align stakeholders' potentially project-independent agendas. The ambiguity of project designs is then a crucial factor as they "have to be porous to different agendas" (p. 172) in constructing programme success. Therefore, "development success is not merely a question of measures of performance; it is also about how particular interpretations are made and sustained socially" (Mosse, 2005, p. 158). Thus, success as part of international development can be understood as particular *representation*. Accordingly, 'failure' can be viewed as "the consequence of a certain disarticulation between practices, their rationalising models and overarching policy frameworks" (p. 182).

[49] The anthropological work of Sardan (2008, 2014) also explores 'actual daily functionings' focusing on state governance in Francophone West Africa.

[50] In his work, David Mosse focuses on micro-managed projects, as well as "policy as project design, model and approach" (2004, p. 640). The intervention studied as my case study seems to fit this interpretation. Mosse (2004) explains in a footnote, "(a) […] these [projects] acquire form and win (or lose) legitimacy because they articulate (or fail to articulate) wider policy ambitions; and (b) […] project exemplars are necessary to frame and sustain wider policy itself" (p. 640).

In the field of anthropology of aid, 'success' does not necessarily equal 'impact' of a development project which might not constitute a problem *per se*. 'Impact' relates more to "everyday spheres of action autonomous from the organizing (or legitimizing) project models" (Mosse, 2004, p. 665) However, development actors who inhabit these spheres "work actively to sustain those same models – the dominant interpretations – because it is in their interest to do so" (ibid.). Such interest crucially links to safeguarding a continuous flow of (financial) resources which is bound to notions of 'success'. Success of international development programmes as interpretation will be considered when studying the dimensions of perceived success of the Girl Power Programme, the case investigated as part of this doctoral research (see Chapter 7).[51]

Returning to the initial differentiation presented in this section, Development success ('with a big D') more often than not links to 'partial, reformist, intervention-specific alternatives' or changes, while development ('with a little d') aimed at 'more radical, systemic alternatives', or social transformation, remains largely outside the scope of any one (I)NGO intervention. Andrea Cornwall and Althea-Maria Rivas (2015) argue that development interventions focusing on gender equality and women's empowerment often fail in their broader endeavour of *transforming* (gendered) power relations as they often leave out the important task of "making strange those familiar social norms that are such a potent source of inequity and disempowerment" (p. 405, drawing on Batliwala, 1994; Kabeer, 1994; see also Chant, 2016). Nonetheless, categories such as 'gender-sensitive' and 'gender-transformative', whose content might differ slightly, often form part of a normative continuum adopted to evaluate development policy and practice (Hochfield & Bassadien, 2007; Espinosa, 2013).[52] Tessa Hochfeld and Shahana Rasool Bassadien (2007) argue that "gender- sensitive indicators" are "value-driven and designed to ensure a gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation process that has the potential to be transformative" (p. 227). What kind of transformative work can be part of development policy and practice, is the focus of the next section.

[51] Personal discussions with Andrea Region were invaluable for my engagement with the field of anthropology of aid; see also Rigon (2012; 2014).
[52] Various other terms might also be included in evaluative frames proposed (*cf.* Engeli & Mazur, 2018, pp. 121-23).

3.3. Transformative Work as Part of Gender and Development Policy and Practice

This section explores three aspects that might allow for transformative work as part of GAD policy and practice. First, transnational feminism will be considered as providing conceptual and practical pointers for GAD policy and practice, which includes transformative uses of gender analysis frameworks. Second, this section discusses the potential role for development feminists as part of a reflexive conscientisation efforts with community members targeted by development interventions. Third, a focus on social norm change, in contemporary gender policy and practice, aimed at transformation and empowerment will be addressed. This thesis studies a development intervention, which distinctively draws on norms, values, behaviour and attitude change linking to gendered social relations and roles.

3.3.1. Transnational Feminism and Transformation

Building upon discussions in Chapter 2, notions of a transnational feminism operating in an activist realm might provide valuable pointers for a feminist re-envisioning of GAD practice. Important elements include the theorising of diversity, rather than differences, sensitivity to both border-crossings as well as the importance of location in analytical and activist terms, as well as the consideration of 'transversal politics' (Yuval-Davis, 1999). The latter proposes membership as part of epistemic communities "based on solidarity with regard to common emancipatory values" (Yuval-Davis, 2010, pp. 277-78). Such considerations point us to relevant efforts which might form part of gender planning practices, notably acknowledging and supporting "the formation of epistemological communities build around shared values, which may encompass a diversity of specific interests" (Walker & Butcher, 2016, p. 289).

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA) might constitute a shared reference point for creating epistemic communities. According to various observers, be they feminist academics or activists from the Global South and the Global North, the 'Beijing declaration' serves as a central reference point for critical feminist claims on systemic changes concerning equality and empowerment. As such, the BDPfA continues to influence the GAD landscape and a reading of feminist development literature suggests that this global declaration might offer a useful and critical framework for systemic transformation towards gender equality and empowerment in rights terms, both for feminist development practice as well as women's movements (Wee, 1996; Unterhalter, 2007; Kabeer, 2015; Moosa, 2016; GADN, 2016).

There seems to be a current and renewed interest in re-thinking women's empowerment as part of international development work considering feminist alternatives through a closer co-operation of institutional GAD practice with autonomous women's organisations (Moosa, 2016). This aligns in certain ways to a WID Empowerment thinking (see above) and points to a conceptual understanding of empowerment in political terms, which entails mobilisation and considers the role of especially autonomous women's movements as vital for affecting progressive social policy change (Weldon & Htun, 2013). The role of (I)NGOs as part of GAD practice might lie in re-directing their focus to what is 'at stake', namely "the very notion of the good and the process of deciding what it is and how to pursue it" (Fisher, 1997, p. 446). While 'gender sensitive' or 'gender-transformative' project work of INGOs might carry the potential to create an enabling environment for gender transformative actions and processes, the latter is often perceived, or framed, as out of the direct impact or control of INGOs. However, social change aligned to transformation in meaningful ways might draw on reflexive identification of strategic gender interests, aspirations and needs with a potential role for development feminists.

Transformative Uses of Gender Analysis

Some feminist development scholars and critical practitioners point to the need of constantly criticising and being sensitive to the use of gender analysis frameworks as part of international development work, if these are to support the process of transformative change. This process, then, entails the "potential for addressing gender inequalities and injustices in society" (Woodford-Berger, 2007, p. 131). In her study of "gender analytical frameworks currently used in Swedish international development work", Prudence Woodford-Berger (2007) points to the importance of considering lived experiences of women and men as well as problematising representations of gender in international, cross-cultural development work. Because gender analysis does not only document women and men's lives in a neutral, objective or a-political way, 'lived gender relations' and 'gender as representation' are linked. Thus, it is crucial to explore both of these components as part of gender analysis in the context of international development (for further elaboration, see next chapter).

Woodford-Berger notably engages with what happens if we apply particular frames developed in one specific cultural setting (for instance, Sweden) onto another (for instance, Ghana) and asks, "How do representations of sex, gender, 'women' and 'men' in […] [those frameworks] fit with the realities of particular women and men in non-Swedish cultural

settings?" (p. 128). Drawing on her extended ethnographic work in Ghana[53], Woodford-Berger (2007) argues that such gender analytical frameworks "work to obscure […] the way in which women mobilize resources, their affective as well as economic bonds with the men in their lives and the cross-sex alliances of various kinds, especially among kin, that can be so critical a part of women's livelihoods" (p. 130). A 'creative use' of gender analysis frameworks as political instruments is suggested, "encouraging attention to and dialogue on inequalities for the promotion of transformative change" (p. 131). This notably entails examining "own underlying assumptions" in the design and use of gender analysis frameworks used (ibid.) as a way of re-politicising contemporary 'gender work'. For Jane L. Parpart (2014) transformative gender (analysis) work also entails targeting "the hegemonic masculine practices of rule that legitimates access to power and resources in particular contexts" enacted by a global elite that is no longer exclusively White, Western and male (p. 388 drawing on Connell, 2005). Apart from transformative uses of gender analysis frameworks, what scope is there to contribute to 'transformation' and 'empowerment' through GAD policy and practice and thus to re-politicise 'gender work'? The next section will further investigate this question.

3.3.2. Feminist Development Practitioners and Conscientisation Efforts

Sharashoub Razavi and Carol Miller (1995b) point to two main strategies that feminists adopt in their uneasy relation with (development) institutions: a 'disengagement strategy' displaying overall scepticism of the possibility to bring about significant changes for women through institutional work, and an incremental approach, allowing for change being promoted within, and as part of, public (development) institutions (p. ii).[54] While some feminist activist work seems to adopt a disengagement strategy, several feminist development researchers considered as part of this doctoral study (Razavi & Miller, 1995a, 1995b; Baden & Goetz, 1997; Beetham & Demetriades, 2007) appear to adopt an incremental approach.

The positionality of feminist development researchers and practitioners, for instance within or outside of development institutions, is relevant as they are often the producers and users of gender analysis frameworks – and those criticising them. Such positionality might lead to conflating various, potentially diverging, processes of knowledge production and

[53] Woodford-Berger (2007) notably conducted studies in the "Dormaa district of the Brong-Ahafu Region of Ghana" (see pp. 128-29).
[54] In her research addressing feminists and state institutions, Rai (2008) comments on the "danger of co-optation in governance regimes" (p. 2).

dissemination[55] but also allows for voicing critical standpoints from unique positions (Okome, 2003). Feminist researchers, closely aligned to institutional development practice, seem to demonstrate an interrelatedness of academic research, applied development research (notably in terms of institutional policymaking) and development practice (in programmatic terms), which marks the field of feminist development studies. Such linkages might prove useful in re-envisioning GAD work through "much more pragmatic and applied, dialogue between researchers and practitioners" in the development of analytical concepts (Baden & Goetz, 1997, pp. 10-1) as well as 'deconstructing development discourse', engaging critically with 'buzzwords' and 'fuzzwords' of development policy and practice including 'gender' (Cornwall 2007b; Cornwall *et al*., 2007). However, this does not erase critique raised earlier against international development policy and practice that are charged with co-opting transformative feminist agendas.

'Alternative approaches' to participation rooted in critical education, with a focus "on issues of power, voice, agency and rights" (Cornwall, 2003, p. 1326, drawing on Rahman, 1995; Cornwall & Gaventa, 2001) might bring about gendered empowerment as part of international development practice with a particular role for development feminists. Critical education notably echoes the work of Brazilian adult educator Paolo Freire. Freire's liberating 'pedagogy of the oppressed' invokes a notion of transformation from "the reality of oppression" towards "the process of permanent liberation" (2000[1970], p. 54). Such pedagogy is based on a process of 'education for critical consciousness' (Freire, 1973) not least understood as "genuine participation" of the formerly oppressed and illiterate, as an exercise of "social and political responsibility" (p. 36) in an "authentic democracy" (p. 35). This thesis argues that feminist development researchers and practitioners may foster spaces for reflection through conscientisation efforts based on epistemic equality. [56] Sarah Radcliffe

[55] Beetham and Demetriades (2007) seem to conflate different institutions with specific trajectories, operational logics and organisational cultures when exploring "[i]ndicators [that] are used to measure research and programme success by donors, development organisations, and research institutes themselves" (p. 205), investigating methodologies adopted by "gender researchers and mainstream practitioners alike" (p. 207). In my view, this poses a risk of overlooking critical differences in how knowledge is produced and disseminated and might not be conducive to overcoming "incomplete and/or biased research" through studying "complex aspects of gender relations" (p. 199) as the authors set out to do.

[56] Freire's work is a crucial reference point for this thesis and, as Nelly Stromquist (2014) foregrounds, Freire's critical literacy approach links to emancipatory gender learning. From a purely textual perspective, however, a gendered perspective seems to be largely missing. In the English translation of his 1973 monograph 'Education for Critical Consciousness', the individual (often 'the illiterate') is seemingly framed in masculine terms, in line with grammatical conventions of the time. One of the few moments when Freire addresses women, or relations among women and men explicitly, is when he provides an example for differentiating "between

(2015) argues that various discourses on or around development deny the "epistemic equality" of notably "indigenous claims" (p. 17). Thus, a relevant question is, how can various social actors in the context of an international, cross-cultural development intervention raise their claims on the basis of 'epistemic equality', which entails extending the same value to different knowledge claims?

Martha Nussbaum's (2002) work on the capability approach, which looks particularly "at what women are actually able to do and to be" (p. 73) considers participation notably in terms of empowerment translated into securing opportunities and making choices. Nussbaum's work aligns to Freire's writing as both are framed in humanist and liberal terms. However, Nussbaum's philosophical study differs from Freire's work in the extent to which she considers critical consciousness generation. Nussbaum (2002) asserts "that we should prefer a cross-cultural normative account that focuses on empowerment and opportunity, leaving people plenty of space to determine their course in life once those opportunities are secured to them" (p. 56). In my reading, Nussbaum's cross-cultural normative framework seemingly dismisses people's own assessment and evaluations of, as well as aspirations for, their lives *prior to* people's 'empowerment' and opportunities being secured to them.[57] How can we, as researchers and development practitioners, be sensitive towards not precluding *a priori* the possibility of claims *being legitimate* when put forward by social actors who lack certain human capabilities, notably (formal) education? Further elaborations on co-producing knowledge based on the principle, value and practice of epistemic equality will address these and other points (see Chapter 4).

3.3.3. The Role of Social Norm Change in Transformation

Aligning gender norms to the concept of empowerment, recent research highlights that debates around women's empowerment mainly focus on three dimensions: political, economic and social empowerment,[58] the latter closely linked to "changing gender norms and values" (Chopra & Mueller, 2016, pp. 2-3). Highlighted previously, Cornwall and Rivas (2015) pointed to a shift in social norms, especially those that serve as 'a source of inequity

education and propaganda" (p. 57); a cigarette advertisement portraying notably women in particular ways is termed 'propaganda'. While *naming* women and men, girls and boys does not in itself guarantee an analytical approach that considers gendered, and other social differences, it can support such an approach.

[57] For further engagement with a debate between Nussbaum and Amartya Sen on this point, see Gasper (1997).

[58] For recent feminist engagement with political empowerment see Celis & Lovenduski (2018), Kabeer (2015) and Imam (2016).

and disempowerment' as carrying the potential of transforming gendered power relations (see Section 3.2.4.). Since the 1980s, feminist scholarship with an interest in economic questions has taken into account the role of gender norms impacting women's agency and gender relations as part of intra-household negotiations. In her seminal work, Deniz Kandiyoti (1988) demonstrated how certain dynamics might lead to women consciously negotiating 'bargains with patriarchy'. Building upon this work, Bina Argawal (1997) argues that factors likely to affect women's bargaining power include "women's property status, support from gender-progressive groups, and social norms and perceptions" (p. 34). In this and other GAD research work, the household as a unified entity was questioned as various feminist studies presented "nuanced and context-specific understandings of how households embody both separate and shared interests, and both conflict and co-operation" (Cornwall *et al.*, 2007, p. 11, drawing on Jackson, 1997). GAD research pointed to the need for "a gender equitable approach to development" addressing "structural constraints" in their gendered dimension, particularly poverty (Kabeer, 1996, p. 20). Notably studies investigating female-headed households highlighted elements of gender inequality other than material deprivation (Chant, 1997; Jackson, 1997; Elson, 1995) while studies on urban poverty continue to reflect on gendered dimensions drawing on elements such as vulnerability, entitlement and social exclusion (Masika with de Haan & Baden, 1997; Chant, 2013).

Some feminist development research argues that favourable economic conditions (understood as economic growth) might promote more gender equitable norms (Seguino, 2007), while Razavi (1997), studying small rural communities in south-eastern Iran, arrives at a different conclusion. She argues that while men in poor households usually "control the new sources of income [and] are in a better position to meet their basic normative obligation towards women (feeding the family)" (p. 55), it is a situation of (continuing) poverty that "very often undermines the norms of seclusion and wifely dependence, which tend to constrain women's ability to dispose of their own labour power, while opulence upholds them" (p. 57). Development as acquiring (new) sources of income and poverty as the absence thereof have contradictory impacts on gender norms influencing the dynamics of gender relations and gender roles.

Pereira (2002) has commented on the continuous "biases and inequalities within households" that favour men throughout the Global South (p. 4). Naila Kabeer, Ayesha Khan and Naysan Adlparvar (2011) investigate patriarchal norms that characterise Afghan society. The authors stress how women in their study tended to accept "that men's greater responsibilities in providing for their families and protecting family honour justified their

greater rights and privileges" (p. 12), along a "communitarian vision of mutual responsibility" (p. 33). However, "gender asymmetries in family life" (p. 33) and the extensive use of violence against women in the domestic sphere, means that such contractual responsibilities are neglected.

Seminal sociological work on 'hegemonic masculinity' in conjunction with 'emphasized femininity' highlighted norms, behaviour and attitudes associated with dominant modes of 'being a man' and 'being a woman', with particular impact on individuals and groups as well as implications for gender roles and gender relations (Connell, 1987; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). "Hegemonic masculinity was understood as the pattern of practice (i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men's dominance over women to continue" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). From its inception, GAD's conceptual *research* focus lay on gender relations; nonetheless, some critical scholars argue that GAD *policy* as well as *practice* continues to leave out an in-depth engagement with the role of men and boys in the development process (Kabeer, 1997; Cornwall, 2000; Chant, 2000). Based on such critique, some GAD literature explores gender relations through investigating the role of masculinities and its impact on the development process (Cornwall, 2000; Greig, 2001; Cornwall *et al*., 2011; Edstroem *et al*., 2014).

A rich, inter-disciplinary field engages analytically with the study of social norms (Xenitidou & Edmonds, 2014, p. 3) including a relevant body of work in computational social sciences drawing on complexity science and the field of cognitive science.[59] As Rachel Marcus and Caroline Harper (2014) outline, social norms analysis entered international development through "the field of health promotion […] [including] norms constraining breastfeeding [and] adoption of modern sanitation" (p. 5, drawing on Bicchieri, 2013). To investigate social norms, applied GAD research notably draws on game theory and the work of Christina Bicchieri (*cf.* 2005; 2013; 2014), as well as social convention theory (*cf.* Mackie & Le Jeune, 2009; Mackie *et al*., 2012). Bicchieri (2005) explains that norms "can be formal or informal, personal or collective, descriptive of what most people do, or prescriptive of behaviour" (p. 1). In terms of social norms, which are mostly seen as informal, various theories exist "but most converge on defining them as people's beliefs about: (1) what others in their group do

[59] Bruce Edmonds (2014) argues that there is a need for a "cross-field conversation" and an "inter level approach" to better study the complex phenomena of social norms; he also points to the benefits of mixed methods research (p. 191).

(called *descriptive norms*) and (2) the extent to which others in the group approve or disapprove of something (called *injunctive norms*)" (Cislaghi *et al*., 2019, p. 1480). As such, social norms are intricately linked to people's *behaviour* and *beliefs.* Due to the socially 'interdependent' characteristic of social norms, some scholars distinguish norms from *attitudes* which might be held individually (Marcus & Harper, 2014, drawing on Mackie *et al.*, 2012). In a sociological understanding, however, values and attitudes may form part of social norms. From a sociological perspective, gender norms can be defined as "powerful, pervasive values and attitudes, about gender-based social roles and behaviours that are deeply embedded in social structures" (Keleher & Franklin, 2008, p. 43).

Much contemporary GAD planning and practice seems to align to a sociological notion of gender norms. In this understanding, gender norms "manifest at various levels, including within households and families, communities, neighbourhoods, and wider society" and are "interacting to produce outcomes which are frequently inequitable and dynamics that are often risky for women and girls" (Keleher & Franklin, 2008, p. 43). Risks for women and girls are located along a broad spectrum.[60] Gender norms from a sociological perspective may "ensure the maintenance of social order, punishing or sanctioning deviance from […] norms" (ibid.). Because gender norms tend to be upheld by a variety of factors, "challenging discriminatory norms" can often be "complex, messy and non-linear", as it might entail targeting various factors simultaneously (Marcus & Harper, 2014, p. 16).

Contemporary applied GAD research, as well as GAD practice, seem to demonstrate a particular interest for social norm change. This is also the case for the development intervention studied in this doctoral research. Structural drivers of social norm change may include economic change, conflict, migration (together with demographic change and urbanisation), education, communication but also political and social mobilisation comprising the role of shifting public policy as well as legal changes (Marcus & Harper, 2014; Marcus & Page, 2014). Rather than shifting norms 'directly', these structural shifts are said to lead to changes in gender *roles* as they "challenge 'descriptive norms' (or people's sense of what women and men usually do) because it becomes apparent that a large number of people are acting in a new way" (Marcus & Harper, 2014, p. 16). This might

[60] "Risks include violence against women and girls, discrimination, denial of education, illiteracy, poverty, economic and social injustice, honour killings, sexual assault and rape, female foeticide, subordination and exploitation, restrictions on women's physical mobility and education, and political disenfranchisement" (Keleher & Franklin, 2008, p. 43).

> pave the way for changes in gender ideologies and the emergence of new normative expectations (or 'injunctive norms') of how society should be organised, and new empirical expectations (or 'descriptive norms') of acceptable behaviour for men and women, girls and boys of different ages. (Marcus & Harper, 2014, p. 16)

Gerry Mackie and John LeJeune (2009) propose that a 'critical mass' logic is needed to change social norms; "[a]n initial core group, called the critical mass recruits others through organized diffusion, until a large enough proportion of the community referred to as the tipping point is ready to abandon [a particular practice]" (p. v). Other avenues for social norms change entail exposure to new ideas by working with role models or considering the role of communication and media technologies such as television (for the latter point, see Kabeer *et al*., 2011; Jensen & Oster, 2007).

Social norm change, notably geared towards women's empowerment, can entail the risk of causing or increasing violence against women and girls. This becomes especially pertinent when considering gender equality as a redistributive process (Kabeer, 1994, p. 97; Razavi & Miller, 1995a, p. 27). Then, "violence can be seen both as a reaction against processes that set out to change the existing gender relations, and as a way of maintaining the current social order that keeps women and girls in socially subordinate gender roles" (Chopra & Mueller, 2016, p. 6, drawing on Hossain, 2012). Considering backlash and resistance to gender norm change needs to form part of a comprehensive picture of the processes of social norm change (Marcus & Harper, 2014; Marcus & Page, 2014).

Below, social empowerment as changing social norms and values will be considered as legal changes and, crucially, through the role of education, two thematic areas that were relevant as part of the international cross-cultural development intervention considered as a case in this research.[61]

Social Empowerment as Legal Changes and the Role of Education

On the role of law in generating social changes, Shalu Nigam (2008) delineates,

> Law is a double-edged instrument that may be used to enhance people's access to justice as also to sanction regressionary trends or to legitimise practices that marginalise a set of people within a democratic set up. The beneficial aspects of law lie in the fact that it provides a platform to the marginalised people in society to raise their concerns. (p. 1)

[61] See Appendix B for the Social Institutions and Gender Index (2019) Theory of Change, foregrounding actors of change, legal frameworks and social norms as drivers of social transformation.

Picking up on the theme of law as 'legitimising practices that marginalise people', institutional development research found that equal access to resources and assets among women and men is often not legally safeguarded (OECD, 2019; Marcus & Harper, 2014, p. 31). It is in these cases that the provision of legal literacy, often to marginalised women, forms a core element of supporting social norm change through legal paths. Nigam (2008) explains, "Legal literacy is a tool to empowerment that helps to demystify law besides enabling the process of law reform as well as social change" (p. 1). Legal literacy, then, targets an enhanced understanding of codified law and potentially supports activism to change laws.

In some societies legal pluralism exists where codified law forms only one, even if dominant, system among 'multiple normativities' (Engelcke, 2018). There also exists customary law which "concerns the laws, practices and customs of indigenous peoples and local communities" (WIPO, 2013, p. 2).[62] A setting of legal pluralism can carry specific consequences for implementing a human rights framework along other normative legal orders (Corradi *et al*., 2019). Customary laws as well as codified laws tend to be more effective and transformative when they align with social norms of a socio-cultural setting and when perceived as legitimately constituted and enacted (Bicchieri & Mercier, 2014). Law change that is out of tune with social norms might generate resistance; the following brief discussion on efforts to changing Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) practices in legal terms sets out to illustrate this point.

Mackie and LeJeune (2009) compare community practices, such as FGM/C across the African continent and highlight that these practices serve a particular social purpose, namely, to constitute 'marriageability' criteria. Women might "perceive their daughters' best interests to be met by conforming to norms that secure their marriageability and hoped-for economic security" (Marcus & Harper, 2014, p. 33, drawing on Mackie & LeJeune, 2009). Some might interpret a general dismissal of FGM as 'criminalisation of culture', which does not generate a conducive environment for abolishing FGM/C in legal and practice terms (Marcus & Page, 2014, pp. 51-52, drawing on Shell-Duncan *et al*. 2013). "If the goal is eradication [of female genital surgeries], appropriate strategies must be jointly devised" among supporters and opponents of this practice, according to Okome (2003, p. 77). In terms of norm change, Cristina Bicchieri and Hugo Mercier (2014) delineate how FGM/C "is not an isolated cultural

[62] Various debates exist around the definition of customary law, specifically in contrast to customary international law (WIPO, 2013).

norm […] [but] embedded in a rich network of beliefs" including "religious justifications [and] its effect on health (or lack thereof)" (p. 43). This "make[s] norm change extremely difficult" (ibid.) as such 'sticky' gender norms "permeate and are reinforced through different social institutions, such as households, markets, polities, the media, religious institutions and education systems" (Marcus & Harper, 2014, p. 12, drawing on Watson, 2012). Widespread community practices, such as FGM/C in certain contexts, then needs "the whole community coordinating on its abandonment" (Mackie & LeJeune, 2009, p. v). Working with inconsistency in beliefs towards the practice of FGM/C might encourage community abandonment. In such "a process of collective deliberation", "people are made to work out […] the practical consequences of […] values" such as respect for human life and a desire to have healthy children (Bicchieri & Mercier, 2014, p. 45).[63] Considering varying pathways of addressing social norm change, especially linked to perceived 'harmful practices' within a context of 'multiple normativities' (in a legal sense), forms a relevant part of analysis presented later on in this thesis (see Chapter 9).

Education can carry broader social transformative potential in conjunction with aspirations for gender equality (Unterhalter, 2007, p. 19). An extensive and active field of study engages with gender and education in conjunction with international development. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to engage with this vibrant area of study in depth, several points will be raised in this section, which carry relevance for analysis, presented later on.

Investigating the nexus of gender, education and international development can link to different relationships within the home or household, the community and the wider society, notably investigating attitudes to women and girls in public life and within the family. This includes considering underlying assumptions of a gendered division of labour and gendered expectations.[64] Various scholars have advocated for a nuanced understanding and differentiated research topics such as increasing women's literacy (Jackson, 1997), the quality of teaching and gendered retention trajectories with schooling progression (or how many girls and boys continue after primary, and consequently, after secondary schooling) (Unterhalter & North, 2011; Unterhalter, 2007). Elaine Unterhalter and Amy North (2011) notably point to the problematic implications of mainly focusing on increasing girls'

[63] Bicchieri and Mercier (2014) base their arguments here on the work of the Senegalese NGO Tostan (p. 45, drawing on Gillespie & Melching, 2010).
[64] See Development Planning Unit, Gender Policy and Planning Programme (2016, unpublished training resource)

enrolment as part of gender and education concerns within international development; "This limited perspective often rules out any advance of larger feminist concerns about the multidimensionality of gendered exclusion, exploitation, and subjection to violence in interconnected sites, or the development of visions of gender justice, equality, or empowerment" (p. 2). The effect of gendered violence in a schooling context constitutes a particular area of research concerned with education and international development (Parkes, 2015a; 2015b; Parkes & Unterhalter, 2015; Parkes *et al*., 2013). Interested in conceptual questions around framing gender and violence and drawing on insights from studies in schools and communities in *inter alia* Ghana, Jenny Parkes, Jo Heslop, Samuel Oando, Susan Sabaa,[65] Francisco Januario and Asmara Figue (2013) present a framework that emphasises "acts/individuals, institutions and interactions" (p. 551). Such a conceptual approach allows the authors to consider "transformation of gendered power relations and inequities" (p. 546) rather than focussing exclusively on gender and violence as acts committed by individuals. In the analysis chapters of this thesis, aligning individual and relational perspectives will play a key role in linking different views on social transformation as part of international cross-cultural GAD work (see Chapter 8 and 9).

Recent research on gender, education and international development considers the impact of sexual norms within a school context (Heslop *et al*., 2016). Overall, Jo Heslop, Jenny Parkes, Francisco Januario, Susan Sabaa, Samwel Ondo and Tim Hess (2016) argue that specific gendered norms "help produce coercion in girls' sexual encounters" and girls' experiences (p. 329). Institutional publications as part of GAD policy and practice (Marcus & Harper, 2014) demonstrate how social norm change in relation to education might be operationalised in an international development setting (*cf.* pp. 35, 38). However, such institutional research also points to an overall lack of knowledge in this regard (*cf.* p. 34). In this thesis, the role of upholding, or deviating from sexual norms in an educational GAD context, notably in line with the theme of teenage pregnancy, constitutes a relevant component of research analysis (Chapter 9).

[65] In this research, Susan Sabaa's position as a development practitioner is foregrounded as she is the Executive Director of the Child Research and Resource Centre (CRRECENT), one of two local NGOs responsible for GPP implementation at community level throughout the Eastern Region of Ghana. See also Chapter 6.

3.4. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has discussed the operationalisation of gender in development and reviewed how 'gender' was institutionalised by tracing research areas and policy rationales of dominant paradigms as part of feminist development research, namely WID, WAD and GAD. Foregrounding critique of these paradigms as presented by Southern feminists highlighted post-colonial implications and questions of legitimacy and relevance when it comes to planned development interventions imbued with Western liberal feminist values.

Commencing with reflections upon the concept of development more broadly, this chapter has then presented ideas on development as targeting social discrimination against females. Gender equality and women's empowerment were notably considered as visions and processes of change within an international development sphere. While gender equality was considered through the prism of human rights and universal claims, notably on global social justice, the elaboration on women's empowerment entailed exploring the role of women's movements and their understanding of social justice from contextualised vantage points. This chapter has demonstrated that 'cosmopolitanism from below' might allow overcoming a divide of justice concerns along socio-cultural and seemingly universal lines. A tension remains, however, between globally significant concepts, such as gender equality, and their interrelation to more locally framed claims towards gender justice. This was illustrated not least as part of a continuing debate around 'culture and rights' and the problematic framing of 'harmful' cultural practices in a dominant discourse imbued with Western liberal feminist values. An engagement with the process of identifying gender interests and needs as part of international development policy and practice followed and then, development success was considered along the lines of change and transformation.

Finally, this chapter has presented transformative work as means of re-politicising GAD policy and practice, with transnational feminism identified as providing relevant pointers to foregrounding connection across borders while considering local specificities and forming epistemic communities that thrive on diversity. Development feminists may have a role to play in fostering spaces for critical reflection notably in a process of identifying needs and interests of members of 'poor' communities based on the value of epistemic equality. Notions of transformation and empowerment seem to be at the forefront in contemporary GAD practice with a focus on social norm change; dynamics and areas of contestation regarding this process have been reviewed in this chapter.

The next chapter will present the analytical framework adopted as part of this current doctoral research to investigate gendered conceptualisations as part of a contemporary international cross-cultural development intervention.

4. Gender, Transformation and the Role of Knowledge Production – Presenting an Analytical Framework

The initial dilemma I faced in designing an analytical framework was offering a frame of reference that would not pre-determine how the conceptual space of gender *should* be filled, in normative terms, but be conducive to engaging with various conceptualisations of gender as expressed by several community members and development practitioners. As part of an academic research investigation of a specific INGO development programme, I think that we need space for a more grounded interpretation as part of our gender analysis that allows us to incorporate conceptual findings from the field.

This doctoral research investigates a large GAD programme as a case study (see Introduction; see also Chapter 6). Various large GAD programmes cross multiple geographical and cultural boundaries throughout design, implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation phases. Drawing on transnational and transformative analytical and activist feminist practice allows investigating GAD policy and programmes in terms of framing success with potential links to 'meaningful' social transformation in specific socio-cultural terms, according to a variety of social actors. Adopting such a feminist transnational analytical frame might generate insights about the scope and limitations of cross-cultural and international INGO interventions to address gender equality and women's empowerment as development goals. This chapter will present the analytical framework adopted in this doctoral research. While these elaborations form part of feminist development research, they might also be useful for applied GAD policy and practice.

To answer my research question, 'How do community members and development practitioners conceptualise gender as part of a cross-cultural INGO development programme, located within a broader public policy perspective, with potential influence on perceived programme success possibly aligning to meaningful social transformation?', I propose an analytical framework that considers four core elements. One, the locus from which gender is conceptualised; two, components of gender that cut across various spaces; three, the meaning of transformation and its linkages to (gendered) interests and power; and four, the role of knowledge production. For the latter, pertinent questions include how does knowledge production (a) construct gender (b) contribute to or block transformation and (c) provide a

space of encounter across the different *loci*? In the following, I will address each of these components separately and then outline how they connect to each other.

4.1. Considering the Locus in Conceptualising Gender

This thesis rests on the assumption that understandings of gender rest on the locus from which 'gender' is conceptualised. It further suggests that this locus entails geographical spaces, institutional and activist affiliations as well as positions (on gender and development) based on intersecting social identity factors. As Chapter 2 and 3 have shown, power hierarchies within knowledge generation on gender display geographical differences, with knowledge emanating from and being based in the Global South facing particular limitations in contrast to the Global North where nodal institutional centres of knowledge production continue to be predominantly located. Chapter 2 and 3 have equally demonstrated that certain institutional affiliations, such as strong institutional connections of WID representatives based on a Western liberal feminist approach, can have a significant impact on what kind of gender policy and programmes are conceptualised and implemented within the sphere of international development. At the same time, a strong institutional affiliation characterising 'mainstream' or 'developmental feminism' forms the basis for criticising the lack of transformative potential which might rather be found in activist spaces. It is in these activist spaces, at times aligned to academia, that the role and importance of intersecting social identity factors for the experience of gender is seemingly foregrounded (*cf.* Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 2000; Sen & Grown, 1988; see also Radcliffe, 2015).

Based on the explorations presented in Chapter 2 and 3, we might delineate specific feminist claims generating discursive gendered ideal types, or 'cultural models' of gender (Moore, 1994), which link to the locus from which gender is conceptualised. Moore (1994), engaging with various theoretical feminist arguments, maintains that "different aspects of gender are perhaps best seen as mutually co-existent, but sometimes conflicting, models of or discourses on gender. […] What is essential is to examine those contexts in which certain discourses become *appropriate* and *powerful*" (p. 91, emphasis added). This thesis focuses on such an investigation of when particular discourses on gender become *appropriate* and powerful in connection with considering lived experiences of gender.

The table below (Fig. 2A) summarises 'ideal-type' feminist positions within a feminist academic sphere, based on the elaborations in Chapter 2 and 3. It is assumed that

these academic discourses constitute a frame of reference, even if implicit or fragmented, for gendered conceptualisations as part of a specific international cross-cultural development programme studied in this research, notably designed in Europe and implemented *inter alia* in selected countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, the below table (Fig. 2A, next page) will be used to investigate statements of research participants, and those written in programme documents and policies, as to whether they stand in alignment to, resist, or draw on a selected combination of the below presented elements. Statements may also refrain altogether from referencing elements presented. Such an approach will support analysis of gendered conceptualisations in transnational terms, considering when and how 'local' understandings are invoked, and what makes these local, and whether and how 'international' or 'global' understandings are referenced and what characterises these.

Figure 2A. Epistemic Feminist Positions Generating Gendered Ideal Types

Feminist Epistemic Positions – Gendered Ideal Types
(schematic illustration)

Western Liberal Feminist Thought	African Feminist Thought
Informed by	
Liberal values notably individual freedom grounded in Western philosophy (17th to 19th century, Enlightenment period)	Collective values such as cooperation and connection grounded in African epistemology
Knowledge production that favours rationality and abstract thinking	Knowledge production that embraces contradictions and allows for fusion of abstract and spiritual thinking
Generated mainly through	
Universal claims on equal opportunity between women and men	Claims relevant to complex local African realities focussing on social groups, the importance of motherhood and complementarity between women and men
Focus on women's oppression through patriarchy; gender as useful analytical concept; sexual division of labour as foundational assumption	Focus on structural forms of oppression notably colonialism and racism linked to capitalism as well as patriarchy; partly debating usefulness of gender as analytical tool; contesting foundational assumption of sexual division of labour
Characterised by	
Analytical focus on the gendered individual and social roles	Analytical focus on social collectives and intersecting social identity markers (such as race, gender and age)
Universal gender justice claims emphasising gender equality and women's empowerment (notably in civil and political rights terms and economic opportunities)	Context-specific gender justice claims with possibility for global resonance emphasising equality and women's empowerment (notably in social, economic and cultural rights terms); proposition to focus on cultural African principles, such as harmony, to study social justice
Methodological focus on 'expert' knowledge and tools; can include participatory approaches	Methodological focus on tools that open up to African perspectives (such as feminist indigenous African methods); includes participatory approaches

Source: Author

Ideal-type academic feminist positions, such as the ones outlined in the above table, and discussed in depth throughout Chapter 2 and 3, may foreground specificities of particular positions. African feminist positions tend to emphasise the complexity of local experiences across rural and urban spaces and target a Western liberal feminism, which notably Black feminist scholars have criticised for carrying a pronounced middle-class and White urban outlook. Such outlook, as notably 'Third World women' scholars as well as Southern

feminists drawing on post-colonial and post-modern approaches have argued, is often constituted in misleading universalising terms.

This thesis firmly views our contemporary globalised world as deeply structured by the experience of colonialism and drawing on a spatial partitioning in Global South and Global North may indicate systemic differences and discrimination across wider geographical, socio-cultural, economic and political spaces. At the same time, referencing 'the Global South' might also point to transnational connections. Sabea (2008) further explains,

> The invocation of a 'Global South' – itself imagined and constructed as a product of transnational connections with aspirations for radical change in epistemology and practice – has yet to challenge […] the homogenizing tendencies that come under the rubric of measures and scales for success in international discourse and practice […]. (p. 17)

Challenging homogenising tendencies, as articulated in the above quote, might entail a transnational 'cosmopolitanism from below', notably in the form of social movements, drawing on a human rights framework to raise concerns that arise out of specific contexts (see Chapter 3).[66] It is in such transnational connections that various feminist positions might find alignment in diversity. Chapter 2 and 3 have engaged with transnational feminist efforts as foregrounding diversity, co-constructing epistemic communities across national and state borders and finding (analytical and activist) connections in various spaces. In this research, I am adopting a feminist transnational lens cognisant of 'the colonial present' for studying conceptualisations of gender as part of a cross-cultural international development programme, linked to notions of programmatic success potentially aligned to social transformation. For analysing the locus from which gender is conceptualised, this means simultaneously considering 'local' specificities and 'international' or other connections, and how these might align or contest one another, or refrain from referencing one another altogether, with particular implications for understanding gender and development.

[66] However, there is a risk of 'cosmopolitanism from below' being colonised by patriarchal interests just as 'cosmopolitanism from above' might be problematic as it may impose a specific way of life on others.

4.2. Conceptualising Gender across *Loci*

While the above section has considered the role of locus from which gender is conceptualised, potentially generating different viewpoints, this thesis also suggests that components of 'gender' cut across various *loci*. These analytical components are 'gender as lived relations' and 'gender as representation' which allow investigating a diversity of lived gender relations and roles, together with a specific emphasis on a normative and discursive sphere.

4.2.1. Gender as Lived Relations

Analysing gender as lived relations targets critique which has been raised against feminist theory more broadly as well as gender analysis frameworks adopted as part of WID and GAD work (see Chapter 2 and 3). This critique targets the disjuncture between theories and the complexity of social realities such as relations *between* and *among* women and men, girls and boys. This thesis responds to the need to consider diverse local and 'lived' perspectives on gender and development. It does so by centring analysis around views of community members in areas where a specific international cross-cultural development intervention was conducted, and the perspectives of development practitioners as part of a broader development policy and practice context.

African feminist research crucially emphasises the need to be relevant to local experiences and social practices (Mama, 2007). Such an approach targets the dis-association or misrepresentation of 'lived realities' in academic research 'on Africa', but also within certain GAD discourses and programmes. This thesis suggests that we need to consider African feminist views, as well as feminist perspectives from the Global South more broadly, when studying GAD policies and INGO programmes that take effect in the Global South, notably in an African setting.

From a feminist anthropological perspective, Moore (1994) asserts "There is […] nothing useful to be said about gender outside of the concrete specificity of gender relations" (p. 93). As part of development policy and practice, Cornwall (2007) suggests "refocusing attention on the social practices that constitute gender relations and identities" (p. 76). In this thesis, 'gender as lived relations' entails lived social experiences of women and men, girls and boys as part of social relations and includes considering social practices linked to gendered roles, which might frame access and control over resources. 'Gender as lived relations' draws on an understanding of gender as power relations (see Chapter 2 and 3).

Drawing on the work of Scott (1989[1986]), authors like Cornwall (2007a) stress the importance of acknowledging the power dimension inherent in constituting social difference when considering the concept of gender as an analytical tool. Cornwall (1998) suggests starting with common experiences, everyone – male and female and identifying otherwise – can relate to, namely the "experience of being made to feel powerless" (p. 54). "Such an approach would take gender not as a given, but as a dynamic relation that is subject to change and to contest: a relation of power set in a wider social context" (p. 55). This research firmly views gender as power relations, which "allows us to notice power-laden cultural intersections at which standards of identity and proper behavior [sic] are being actively negotiated" (Ebron, 2001, pp. 229-30).

Working with 'gender as lived relations' in the experience of individuals and social groups entails considering a variety of social relations other than gender relations framed as "oppressive relationships, exemplified by and premised on heterosexual relationships between men and women" (Cornwall, 2000, drawing on Tcherzekoff, 1993). Thus, gender analysis as framed in this research may consider areas of tensions as well as shared interests *among* and *between* women and men, acknowledging that individuals and groups are located within various social networks, drawing on the work of Young (1990) and various African feminists (see Chapter 2).

Engaging with gender as a common experience of feeling powerless and reflecting upon power might be a conceptually viable starting point (Cornwall, 1998, p. 51) without overestimating the existence of common interests. To ensure the latter, this thesis also engages with intersectionality conceptually as an explanation that gender is not a binary but rather constitutes and relates to other aspects of social identity which might differ in a myriad of ways. Coined as an analytical tool to study discrimination at the intersection of gender and race (Crenshaw, 1989; see also Chapter 2), some have used intersectionality as an applied method and precise language for analysing "lines of social difference – including gender, race-ethnicity, sexuality, (dis)ability, location, and class" in the context of development policy and planning (Radcliffe, 2015, pp. 2-3).

The analytical framework adopted as part of this research considers gender roles *as part of* an analysis notably focussed on gender relations, thus, not over-relying on gender roles at the expense of disassociating with the complex reality of social relations.[67] Building upon

[67] Such a critique has notably been raised against the WID Efficiency approach (see also Chapter 3).

Moser's gender-roles framework, the Development Planning Unit (DPU)[68] Gender Policy and Planning method sets out a comprehensive formulation of four gender roles open to women and men, boys and girls. These include productive, reproductive, community-managing and 'constituency-based politics' roles considered as socially important work even if some of these roles continue to be undervalued as such in much public policy and remain frequently unremunerated (Development Planning Unit, Gender Policy and Planning Programme, 2015b; see also Appendix C). In the analytical framework adopted as part of this research, social practices and experiences are embedded in social relations and roles that are gendered, linking to notions of power. Highlighted previously, practical and strategic gender interests and needs can be understood as arising out of different gender roles which notably link to access to and control over resources (Molyneux, 1985; Moser, 1989; 1993). Thus, gender as lived relations links to the constitution of gender interests and needs of women and men, girls and boys, which aligns to aspirations and priorities as identified by people themselves based on diverse and intersecting identities (Walker & Butcher, 2016).

4.2.2. Gender as Representation – Discourses and Social Norms

Representations of gender are notably accessible through various discourses which may exhibit particular normative interpretations of gender. Chapter 2 and 3 have engaged with post-colonial and Southern feminist critique, targeting particular forms of conceptualising gender and foregrounding the process and dynamics of discursive Othering, aligned to a constructed antagonism between modernity and tradition. Based on a pronounced critique of Othering, Mohanty (1988) highlights the importance of considering lived realities of 'women' as well as discursive representations of 'woman'.

> The relationship between Woman – a cultural and ideological composite Other constructed through diverse representational discourses (scientific, literary, juridical, linguistic, cinematic, etc.) – and women – real, material subjects of their collective histories – is one of the central questions the practice of feminist scholarship seeks to address. (p. 62)

Addressing this central question continues to be a relevant task for feminist scholarship while drawing on "grounded, particularized analyses linked with larger, even global, economic and political frameworks". [69] It is in this way, that research may be able to consider both the 'the

[68] The DPU is part of The Bartlett, Faculty of the Built Environment at University College London, UK.
[69] While practice theory from a feminist and subaltern viewpoint also suggests linking (larger) structures with (localized) agency, it does not display a particular interest in discursive narratives (*cf.* Ortner, 1996, p.2).

discursive' and 'the material' while not privileging one over the other (Mohanty, 2003, p. 501, drawing on Mies, 1983).

Scott (1986) reflects on feminist historiography and asserts that "gender involves four interrelated elements", among them "culturally available symbols that evoke multiple (and often contradictory) *representations"* (p. 1067, emphasis added). Gender also entails,

> […] normative concepts that set forth interpretations of the meanings of the symbols, that attempt to limit and contain their metaphoric possibilities. These concepts are expressed in religious, educational, scientific, legal, and political doctrines and typically take the form of a fixed binary opposition, categorically and unequivocally asserting the meaning of male and female, masculine and feminine. (Scott, 1986, p. 1067)

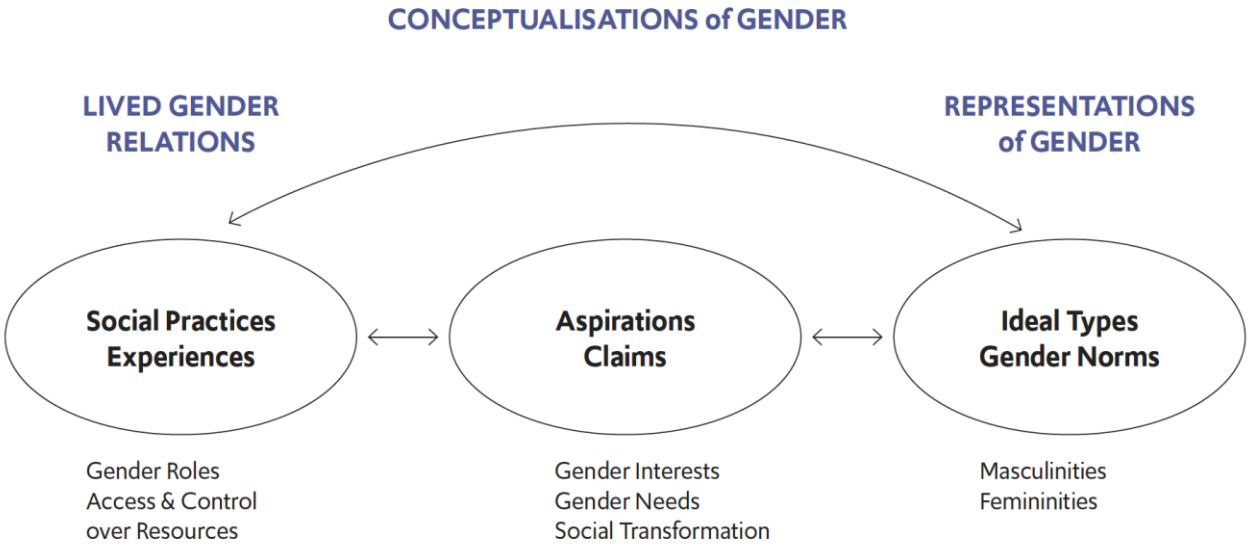
The interpretation of gendered symbols in normative terms has been of academic interest notably in the field of feminist anthropology (*cf.* Moore, 1994) and specific strands of feminist theorising (see Scott, 1986, pp. 1057-58). For academic and applied GAD research, "the realm of symbolic analysis – the social construction of gender identity – was not central to the theory" (Razavi & Miller, 1995a, p. 13). Rather, gender analysis frameworks tend to conceptualise, and focus on, "gender as social relationship" (ibid.). Recently, "there is […] much wider interest in *social norms* as important factors that maintain unequal gender relations and constrain efforts to promote gender equality" notably in the context of international development practice and applied GAD research (Marcus & Harper, 2014, drawing on Ball Cooper & Fletcher, 2012; DFID & Girl Hub, 2012; emphasis added). This thesis considers the role of social norms, and their proposed changes, as part of 'gender as representations', which links to previous feminist work on masculinities and femininities (see Chapter 3).

What constitutes fair or appropriate behaviour linked to gender norms might be contested. As research on social norms has demonstrated, fair or appropriate behaviour aligned to notions of descriptive and injunctive norms can differ across specific cultural and situational settings (Bicchieri *et al*., 2018, pp. 16-7, drawing on Henrich *et al*., 2001; Cappelen *et al*., 2007; Ellingsen *et al*., 2012). This is of relevance as several 'gender-transformative' GAD programmes draw on norms, behaviour and attitude change in a cross-cultural setting as part of their programmatic rationale and activities. A core assumption of this PhD entails that issues may arise in the process of 'translation' as part of cross-cultural, international GAD programmes concerning the constitution of fair or appropriate behaviour as part of gender norms aligned to notions of social transformation. Such notions may link, or

be distant, to particular ideas of gender equality, women's empowerment and harmony as visions and processes of gendered social change.

It has been highlighted thus far that this thesis engages with 'gender as lived relations' and 'gender as representations' as components for conceptualising gender across *loci*. Figure 2B below is a visual representation of conceptualising gender across *loci* as proposed in this thesis.

Figure 2B. Conceptualisations of Gender



Source: Author

Figure 2B suggests that lived gender relations align to representations of gender with implications for the formation of aspirations and formulations of claims, which are potentially based on gender interests and needs and might echo notions of social transformation. Highlighting the alignment of gender interests and needs to people's individual and collective aspirations based on intersecting social identity factors links to the DPU's Gender Policy and Planning method, which "seeks to ensure that planning reflects the complex lived realities and aspirations of diverse groups of women and men, girls and boys" (Walker & Butcher, 2016, p. 290). Claims are understood as the conscious, and potentially directed, voicing of selected practical and strategic interests and needs within, and at the same time challenging, hierarchical power structures and relations in manifold ways.

The above figure indicates that representations of gender are considered as discursively established ideal types; this links to the table presented previously (Fig. 2A). Representations of gender are also examined as gender norms, drawing on work and ideas related to the study of masculinities and femininities (see Chapter 3). The role of social norm change might link to (social) empowerment and notions of transformation (see Chapter 3). Ideas of social transformation might, but do not necessarily have to, converge with notions of 'change' closely aligned to an institutional understanding of development programme 'success' (for a visual illustration of this point of convergence, see Appendix D[70]). Visions of social transformation as empowerment may constitute a point of convergence between programmatic success and ideas of transformation. However, there is also a risk that convergence of subjective notions of programme success with ideas of social transformation may lead to agreeing upon least controversial points that do not challenge the status quo and, in a related fashion, do not challenge current power relations. Critical conscientisation efforts as part of reciprocal and mutual dialogue among development practitioners and community members, targeted as part of a specific development intervention, may include challenging power relations in varied ways.

4.3. Framing Social Transformation

Chapter 3 engaged with visions of social change within gender and development policy and practice and focused on discussions surrounding gender equality and women's empowerment. Chapter 2 has pointed to the importance of harmony as a collective value constituting desirable gender relations within African feminist thinking. Visions of gendered social change are framed by the locus from which gender is conceptualised. As Figure 2A (p. 83) outlines, ideal type Western liberal feminist positions can be characterised by universal gender justice claims emphasising gender equality and women's empowerment, notably in civil and political rights terms as well as economic opportunities. African feminist positions, in ideal type terms, are characterised by context-specific gender justice claims with a possibility for global resonance emphasising equality and women's empowerment in notably social, economic and cultural rights terms. Some African feminists propose to focus on cultural collective African principles, such as harmony, to frame significant areas and processes of social transformation.

[70] Appendix D includes a visualisation of a complex set of relations framing conceptualisations of gender in the context of international cross-cultural development work 'on gender'.

Power relations continue to exist in development practice, which may mean that development practitioners have more space to shape and promote particularly strategic gender interests and needs. Notwithstanding the existence of structurally advantaged positions within power relations, this thesis attributes a relevant role to feminist development workers in supporting women and men, girls and boys to identify strategic gender interests and needs through fostering a (self-)reflective space of co-conscientisation engaging with social norms. Social norms structure gender power relations and may be internalised by people. As part of a cross-cultural international development intervention, conscientisation efforts might entail reflecting together on the idea of hegemony and invisible power which can translate into people buying into institutions and discourses even if these are, or seem, oppressive to them.[71] Drawing on transformative uses of gender analysis tools, feminist development practitioners may support critical reflection on, and identification of, interests and needs aligned to individual and collective aspirations by women and men, girls and boys, linked to social norms.

Challenging established power hierarchies might entail a collective reflection upon social norms that structure social relations, together with considering the desire to conform to certain cultural and gendered ideals in pursuit of social recognition by others (see Marcus & Harper, 2014, p. 8). Studying gendered divisions of labour in Kitwe, Zambia, Alice Evans (2014) draws on answers of male participants and asserts that "[c]ultural expectations" were linked to "concerns about social condemnation (of themselves and their wives) by onlookers for carrying out domestic work" (p. 997). Likewise, Margrethe Silberschmidt (2001) finds that in an "atmosphere of conflictual gender relations, men who assisted their wives (for instance with farming) were subject to ridicule and exclusion from the company of other men" (p. 65). However, Evans (2014) also points to "the importance of exposure to other men undertaking unpaid care work" (p. 997) in changing gendered perceptions, with impact on (socially accepted) behaviour regarding reproductive roles. Considering gendered tasks and responsibilities, such as conducting household chores, through a normative dimension and examining pathways of shifting them towards increased well-being will form part of analysis presented later on in this thesis (see Chapter 8 and 9).

[71] For a critical discussion on the use and misuse of Gramsci's hegemony concept within critical development, see McSweeney (2014).

Questions of participation might become pertinent when framing programmatic 'success' which potentially aligns to notions of 'meaningful' social transformation. Chapter 3 has outlined critique on participatory approaches as part of (international) development. Re-thinking participation might entail an increased inter-institutional and multi-levelled perspective (Chant, 2013, p. 105), or framing the question of participation in broader citizenship and rights-terms (Tsikata, 2007; Kabeer, 2015b, p. 391). Based on elaborations in Chapter 3, another pathway of widening the participatory scope within development could entail co-operation between INGOs and autonomous women's movements, re-shaping the landscape of (international) development actors potentially challenging certain established power hierarchies. This study suggests that participatory approaches as part of GAD policy and practice, sensitive to 'diverse identity-based needs' (see Walker & Butcher, 2016), may draw on epistemic equality in the formation of gender needs and interests and reflecting on social norms as part of critical conscientisation efforts aimed at co-creation of knowledge. A key question as part of conscientisation efforts entails, what is the role of the development professional and of the 'project beneficiary' in acting as a critical friend in helping each other to question norms in transformative ways? Here, the principle and practice of epistemic equality plays a significant role as it carries the potential to challenge established power hierarchies in several ways, resting on the epistemological idea of equality of knowledge claims in co-producing knowledge as part of cross-cultural international development.

4.4. Knowledge Co-production

Chapter 2 has engaged with 'doing knowledge production differently', a discussion that was continued, to some extent, in Chapter 3. It was suggested that critical GAD practice could draw on transnational feminism, which challenges unequal North-South relations and proposes replacing them with a reciprocal and dialogical vision of the North and South, both occupying the roles of 'givers' and 'receivers' (Nnaemeka, 1998). Embracing the idea of finding connections in diversity, co-production of knowledge, as envisioned in this thesis, draws on notions of membership in epistemic communities (Yuval-Davies, 2010; see also Introduction) and foregrounds the value and practice of epistemic equality.

Drawing on the work of Radcliffe (2015), epistemic equality can be understood as the opposite of, and fundamentally challenges, structural epistemic violence. Radcliffe considers the project of development (policy) linked to 'indigenous women' from a distinct post-colonial lens in Latin-American nation states and puts this in a broader context; "Across the

world, subalterns are denied a voice through the deployment of epistemic violence that misrecognizes their knowledge and denies epistemological equivalence and validity" (p. 27 drawing on Spivak 1993 [1988]; Mignolo 2000; Maldonado-Torres 2007). In contrast, epistemic equality seemingly lies in "[d]ecolonizing knowledge production regarding Latin American indigenous women […] [which] involves recognizing their diverse and distinctive standpoints, off-center perspectives, and varied tactics" (p. 27). Inspired by the work of Radcliffe (2015), I propose two core components of epistemic equality: one, people expressing their views based on distinct value sets on an equal footing and two, different rationales and modes of expressing views linked to values receiving equal weight. The second point also draws on the work of Zeremariam Fre (2018), who focuses on "[c]omparisons and complementarities" between knowledge systems (p. 1) and initially specifies that "[o]ur perception of knowledge and reality is, in part, culturally, socially and ecologically determined, and that applies to a multitude of indigenous, or *local/empirical*, and exogeneous, or *scientific/western*, knowledge systems" (ibid.; emphasis in original). Later in this thesis, the two criteria of epistemic equality will be examined in the context of development research and practice.

Preconditions for the enactment of epistemic equality link to Fraser's (*cf.* 2003) concept of parity in participation. Chris Armstrong and Simon Thompson (2007) engage with Fraser's theory and eloquently summarise that her "theory aims to negotiate three distinct dimensions of justice, and by doing so it suggests a way of combining cultural accounts of due recognition, economic accounts of fair distribution, and political accounts of inclusive democracy" (p. 1). Later in this thesis, I will notably consider hindrances in addressing distributive economic justice and thus blocking full emergence of epistemic equality as part of international cross-cultural development interventions.

Co-establishing epistemic equality might draw on dialogue as method as outlined by Freire in his work on adult literacy (see also Section 3.3.2). Such dialogue "is a horizontal relationship between persons […] When the two 'poles' of the dialogue are […] linked by love, hope, and mutual trust, they can join in a critical search for something" (1973, p. 45). The educator, importantly, enters into such dialogue working with people's own realities, experiences and cultural expressions such as popular sayings to offer instruments, so people can teach themselves how to read and write (pp. 45 ff.). Critical consciousness is then "integrated with reality" and linked to grasping causality as well as the will to continuously submit such causality to analysis as it might change (p. 44). Engaging in dialogue as method, as outlined

by Freire, in the pursuit of critical consciousness, we might find instances of epistemic equality as part of participatory processes of international development, potentially aligning notions of success to meaningful social transformation. Such an approach may challenge established power hierarchies and takes into account local realities and intersectional inequalities through participatory approaches, notwithstanding notably feminist critique on the limitations of such approaches (see Chapter 3).

This analytical framework proposes considering questions of epistemic equality as a value, principle and practice of knowledge production aligned to a critical engagement with participatory approaches as part of international cross-cultural development. Drawing on epistemic equality might allow for aligning varied conceptualisations of gender and ideas of meaningful social transformation.

4.5. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has proposed an analytical framework for studying conceptualisations of gender entailing four core analytical components. The locus from which gender is conceptualised; 'gender as lived relations' and 'gender as representation' as generic components cutting across varying *loci*; the meaning of transformation and its linkages to (gendered) interests and power; and the role of knowledge production. This analytical approach foregrounds conceptualisations of gender as communicated by community members and development practitioners. It aims at investigating gendered concepts as understood by various social actors as part of an international cross-cultural development interventions in material and discursive terms considering socio-cultural practices and notions of gender.

The role of transnational feminist analytical and activist practice was proposed as informing re-politicised GAD policy and practice through co-creating epistemic communities based on identifying connections across state and other borders while considering the specifics of local places and positions. Drawing on epistemic equality in identifying interests and needs and reflecting upon social norms as part of critical consciousness-raising efforts within international cross-cultural feminist development practice, may support the linking of subjective perceptions of programme success to broader 'meaningful' notions of social transformation linked to varied understandings of gender. The next chapter outlines the methodological frame suggested for studying the analytical ideas as presented in this chapter.

5. Epistemological and Methodological Research Frame

My research sets out to incorporate polyphone voices and perspectives to understand conceptualisations of gendered lived relations and gendered representations in the context of an international cross-cultural development intervention with implications for subjective perceptions of success, potentially linked to envisioning meaningful social transformation. While interpretative authority and responsibility for this research rests with me, this study adopts a mostly open, incremental and iterative research approach, foregrounding a possibility for co-creation and co-analysis of data. This chapter presents research methods adopted for addressing the research question, closely aligned to key concepts, issues and relations as identified in the analytical framework (see Chapter 4). During the course of this chapter, the role and ethical responsibility of a researcher through a particular post-colonial, indigenous and African feminist lens will be considered, with specific implications for choice of methods. In the following, I will draw, at times, on a personal style to reveal my researcher-self in connection to methods adopted in the process of research analysis.

5.1. Framing Research Methods

To address my research question, 'How do community members and development practitioners conceptualise gender as part of a cross-cultural INGO development programme located within a broader public policy perspective, with potential influence on perceived programme success aligning to 'meaningful' social transformation?', I drew on feminist anthropology and conducted an ethnography based on several months of fieldwork in Ghana, West Africa, adopting qualitative methods of participant observation, field note writing, interviews and focus group discussions. I also conducted documentary analysis of programme documents produced as part of a specific INGO programme, the GPP, and considered selected policy documents drawing on discourse analysis. As this chapter will show, the conduct of research methods as part of this doctoral study demonstrated a co-operative, co-creational and incremental research approach to methodology and analysis.

At the beginning of the research process, institutional and programmatic mapping led to the case study selection of the Girl Power Programme implemented *inter alia* by Plan

International.[72] Due to my research focus on gendered conceptualisations as part of international, cross-cultural development interventions, I was interested in researching a development organisation that demonstrated an explicit focus on gender equality and women's empowerment in both their programmes and organisational policies. Moreover, due to my research focus on subjective perceptions of success, with potential links to meaningful broader social transformation, my interest was raised to study a development programme that was widely perceived as 'successful' (see also Chapter 6). Both of these dimensions were present in the study of the Girl Power Programme as implemented inter alia by the INGO Plan International.

5.1.1. Feminist Epistemology – Subjective Reflections on Knowledge Production Processes

Feminist epistemology privileges subjective experiences and problematises value-neutral knowledge production. It notably includes "taking women's experiences as central" and "conceptualis[ing] truth as subjective-influenced by the perspectives of the researcher and the researched as well as their socio-cultural, economic and political locations" (Poonacha, 2004, p. 396). Feminist epistemology aligns with the interpretive tradition within the social sciences and humanities that foregrounds meaning that human agents attribute to social interactions (ibid., p. 395). As part of a broader critique on the positivist scientific method, various critical feminist researchers have problematised the assumption of a universal knower, equated with a particular social positioning of an elitist, male and white subject of knowing (Poonacha, 2004; Daukas, 2016). Feminist methods such as critical standpoint theory countered the validity of universalistic viewpoints by foregrounding particular and localised perspectives, notably of marginalised women (Haraway, 1988; Harding, 2004). My research sets out to consider specific socio-culturally embedded perspectives on lived relations echoing Mohanty's call of scholarship needing to be "attentive to the micropolitics of context, subjectivity, and struggle, as well as the macropolitics of global economic and political systems and processes" (2003, p. 501, commenting on the work of Mies, 1982).

To investigate conceptualisations of gender, a critical feminist anthropological approach, drawing on grounded theory, might prove valuable to study complex African social lived realities (see Lewis, 2005). Drawing on discourse analysis to study programme and

[72] Specifically, I was made aware of the existence of the GPP through an internal document shared with me by Plan International UK, mapping 'best practice programmes' across various member organisations of Plan International.

policy documents, sensitive to post-colonial politics of representation, forms another component of the methodological frame. A core element of such epistemology includes the analytical tool of reflexivity.

Reflexivity has a long history amongst qualitative researchers, particularly those engaged in feminist scholarship. They "all routinely use reflexivity as a methodological tool to better represent, legitimize, or call into question their data" (Pillow, 2003, p. 176). Often this includes reflecting on the researcher-self and how her/his positionality affects research relations, practices of data generation and crucially, knowledge claims derived from processes of analysis. In writing up this research, I asked myself, how can I resonate with the complexity of communal life, acknowledging the breadth of social practices and experiences shared or observed during my research stay in selected Ghanaian communities without romanticising, simplifying or distorting the lives of people, particularly women and girls? Equally, I queried how to make critical sense of investigations into various, at times overlapping, levels and spaces of (international) development practice and policy? How was I to analyse the work enacted by many dedicated and committed individuals and groups of development practitioners in a critical yet compassionate and fair way? While I am taking a critical stance on development as an 'industry', I am also engaging with development practitioners as people, with all their complexity and the need to be aware of personal politics in operation. Throughout the research process, I reflected on the following question: What can I, as a non-African, European, white, female, middle-class, feminist researcher affiliated with a UK university, contribute to understanding particular dynamics of a selected GAD intervention in post-colonial Ghana, West Africa, without perpetuating certain processes which might be understood as forms of epistemic violence?

To reiterate a point already made in the introduction, some feminist scholars find that *self*-reflexivity can play an important part in "unsettling hierarchies" (Nencel, 2014, p. 76), not least by making visible power relations exposing "'white' researcher privilege" (Pillow, 2003, p. 184 drawing on Kelsky, 2001). I assume that such privilege might manifest itself through being able to adopt an advantageous position in the presence of unequal hierarchies as part of (post-colonial) knowledge production processes (see also Chapter 2). The below paragraphs engage with a perspective that seemingly renders problematic a white non-African researcher studying African realities.

During fieldwork in Ghana, I attended two academic conferences. They both took place at the University of Ghana and were co-hosted by the progressive Institute for African Studies. At the 'Global Africa 2063: Education for Reconstruction and Transformation'

conference (June 2017), the overarching theme was pan-Africanism. This conference revealed commonalities but also differences between researchers (and activists), raising questions about the impact of location on knowledge production processes. Focusing on the theme of pan-Africanism in conjunction with gender, the conference constituted a space for forging relations between academia and activism, notably between African and African American scholars (and activists) based in Africa and those based in the US. At times, but not always, gaps could be bridged between scholarship and activist struggles in different socio-cultural, political, economic and institutional spheres.

During the Q&A as part of a session on 'African Knowledge Systems and Reconstruction', I was able to ask one of the speakers, Prof. Oyewumi, Associate Professor at Stony Brock University, USA, about the implications of a white researcher's positionality studying 'Africa'. Prof. Oyewumi replied that there were more obvious topics and places for white scholars and the potential to reveal problems from there. As a possible location, she suggested the US state department and somewhat jokingly added that this would 'keep them from coming to Africa' (Conference Notes 1). It was difficult to hear Prof. Oyewumi's answer and it was soothing that various African conference participants engaged me in conversation afterwards, sharing that they did not necessarily agree with this strong position. During the same Q&A, another conference speaker, Jean Allman, Professor for African and African American studies at Washington University in St. Louis, USA, added that there are "much sharper edges of racism in the US" and that "in a way, it is much easier to operate here [in Africa] as a white researcher" (Conference Notes 1).

Reflecting on this episode retrospectively, Oyewumi's position seems to be firmly grounded in a post-colonial critique on Othering and a criticism targeting ethnocentric and racist scholarly work *on* Africa notably by *white* researchers. Post-colonial critique of knowledge production processes, notably by African feminist scholars, constitutes a pertinent academic intervention. Researchers such as Anthonia Kalu (1994) for example, call for an "authentic viewpoint" adopted by African researchers studying African problems (p. 78).[73] There might be a risk, though, in delineating strict boundaries of what constitutes an 'authentic viewpoint' notably to the detriment of capturing polyphone views. The comments of Ros Posel (1992) might constitute a useful intervention here; she "locates authenticity not in identity politics but in [research] professionalism" (cited in Nnaemeka, 1998, p. 24).

[73] Kalu's critique (1994) focuses on African literary studies.

Marked by a distinct feminist and Pan-African focus, Prof. Mama chaired some of the sessions I attended during a second conference in Ghana (December 2018).[74] During a conference workshop, Prof. Mama guided us while adopting an inclusive approach, seemingly forging epistemic communities along particular research and activist interests (Conference Notes 2). My research aligns with such an approach. As such, this study foregrounds a possibility for co-creation and co-analysis of data, incorporating a multiplicity of potentially divergent voices and polyphone perspectives, based on intersectional identities. My research, then, highlights epistemic equality not only as a key concept to be studied, but a key value to be embraced (see also Chapter 4).

5.1.2. Feminist Anthropology

This current research draws notably on feminist ethnography as part of feminist anthropology which sets out to making women visible and examining women's lives, exploring "women and men [as] […] fundamentally cultural constructions" (Moore, 1994, p. 71). To investigate 'culture' as part of a specific cross-cultural international development programme, this thesis adopts methods of "detailed, in-depth description of everyday life and practices" (Hoey, 2014). A core tension lies at the heart of feminist anthropology; anthropology "understands itself in terms of its concern with the Other, while feminism constantly questions the viability of the alienation and exploitation such an approach would seem to mandate" (Lewin, 2006, p. 26, drawing on Strathern, 1987). Some would argue that interpreting "cultural uniqueness" while developing "cross-cultural explanations" constitutes a "contradictory mission" (Brodkin, 1989, p. 129). This 'mission' is characterised by a risk of generalising that might lead to erasing the heterogeneity of those described at the expense of a binary, oppositional narrative that renders more insight on those who do the describing than the described. Critical feminist ethnography has suggested some strategies to deal with this tension including "problematizing the researcher as 'the one who knows'" and staying well clear of "Western feminist ethnographic traditions of romantic aspirations about giving voice to the voiceless" (Lather, 1997, p. 300).

Some anthropologists have notably highlighted the problematic linkages of the discipline of anthropology to colonialism and racism, rendering its research use problematic

[74] The conference was entitled 'All African Peoples' Conference 2018 - Revisiting the 1958 All-African Peoples Conference: The Unfinished Business of Liberation and Transformation', 5 – 8 December 2018. At this conference, I presented some of my own research work and forged academic links.

notably when conducting gender research in Africa (Steady, 2005, p. 314). For contemporary research in South Africa, Nnaemeka turns to the work of Gertrude Fester (1998), who speaks of "'academic colonialism' in the sense that the academicians (mostly white and middle-class women) are often the researchers while poor, black women are the researched" (Nnaemeka, 1998, p. 27). Based on such and other critique, Irma McClaurin (2001) suggests drawing on a Black feminist anthropology "self-consciously fashioned as an act of knowledge production" (p. 2).

Feminist epistemology as social epistemology highlights "collaborations among multiple knowers" (Daukas, 2017, p. 63) and "inclusive knowledge practices" (ibid., p. 64, drawing on Harding, 2006; Rolin, 2002). Notably African feminist indigenous approaches demonstrate a particular collaborative format of action research and knowledge production highlighting 'relational existence' as a central feature of "African conceptions of life and reality" (Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010, p. 619). Such approaches set out "to assist others to heal and to build harmony and bring about social transformation" (p. 625). These epistemic suggestions are firmly rooted in an African philosophy and devised as a critique against an over-reliance on Euro-Western methodologies, echoing earlier critique, notably in the field of anthropology (Mudimbe, 1988). This thesis sets out to draw on feminist epistemology as social epistemology through creating communities of learners along feminist transnational ideas (see also Chapter 3 and 4).

5.2. Ethnographic Journey

My fieldwork in Ghana took place in three phases: first, an initial visit to the capital Accra and the Western region of Ghana (March 2017, two weeks) to acquire information and map out the (inter)national gender and development context within Ghana (often centred within or around Accra). Second, the bulk of data collection/generation and initial data analysis took place during my subsequent stay in Ghana (May – November 2017, around six months)[75] characterised by multi-sited ethnography. Third, constantly aiming to ensure a cooperative process of data analysis and interpretation, I found it necessary to return one year later (November 2018, one month) to conduct three further focus group discussions with

[75] Due to unforeseen circumstance, I had to return to the UK in the middle of my fieldwork stay, from mid-July to mid-August 2017, which retrospectively proved helpful to further prepare for the stay in rural, or peri-urban, communities in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

community members, clarifying themes that had arisen during a preceding analysis phase. In this section, I will outline the various sites and phases of my fieldwork in Ghana, presenting and reflecting on ethnographic research methods conducted and their analytical, ethical and moral implications.

Phase I – Delineating the 'field'

I visited Ghana for the first time in March 2017 and stayed for two weeks. To commence a process of mapping the context of GAD practice within Ghana, I visited various international and national NGOs located in Accra; these included Marie Stopes International (MSI), Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF) as well as at the Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre (GSHRDC). Meetings with various development practitioners provided insights into how some INGOs and NGOs operate in Ghana and notably which themes were central to their work. My previous historical research on Ghana (Froehlich, 2015) shaped my doctoral study and aided in building my academic and professional network within Ghana.[76]

To engage with conceptualisations of gender as part of international development work, the Girl Power Programme (GPP) served as a valuable discursive and spatial 'field' for this research. Delineating the field allows for defining the scope for data generation; this, inevitably, includes processes of both inclusion and exclusion. Delineating the ethnographic field is a central aspect of anthropological work and carries particular implications in ontological (see Castaneda, 2006) and epistemological terms. In her reflections on Black feminist anthropology, Carolyn Martin Shaw (2001) considers the role of discourse in "constituting the field, defining the elements of the field, […] and emphasizing the reality of power in the construction of what is and can be done and known" (p. 104), reminding us to consider the aspect of power when engaging 'in' and 'with' social fields.

In a more practical regard, my first visit to Ghana was crucial for seeking institutional approval for my doctoral research from the implementing NGO of the GPP in Ghana, namely Plan International Ghana and particularly their Country Office (CO) located in Accra. Ethical research approval from my university, University College London, was sought and had been

[76] Through an invaluable professional relation with historians Bea Lundt (see Lundt, 2016) and Nina Paarmann, my professional academic network in Ghana started to grow. Bea Lundt, an emeritus professor formerly affiliated with Europe-University Flensburg, works on questions of history and education, often from a post-colonial and comparative viewpoint considering Germany and Ghana (*cf.* Apoh & Lundt, 2013). Nina Paarmann is the PhD student and research assistant of Bea Lundt and investigates questions of gendered representation in West Africa, notably Ghana, from a historic perspective (*cf.* Paarmann, 2018).

granted previously. An initial contact to the CO Plan International Ghana was established through a former colleague at Plan International UK where I used to work as a development practitioner in various roles.[77] Based on terms of references that I had drafted (see Appendix E), institutional approval for conducting research in former GPP communities was granted by Plan International Ghana in early June 2017. The contact to, and close cooperation with, Plan International Ghana manifested in various research relations, which will be further reflected upon subsequently.

Phase 2 – Immersion in the 'field'

The second phase of fieldwork began in May 2017 and lasted until November 2017. It entailed a multi-sited ethnography, following relevant 'spaces' of, or related to, the GPP which delineates the spatial and discursive field for this research. According to Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson (2007), "ethnography usually involves the researcher participating […] in people's daily lives for an extended period of time" (p. 3). It draws on particular methods such as participant observation and fieldnote taking but also other qualitative methods such as conducting interviews and focus group discussions; it can also entail documentary analysis. I adopted such methods throughout my entire stay which included an internship at the Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre (GSHRDC) in Accra (throughout June 2017).

The internship at the GSHRDC, or Gender Centre, allowed me to observe and better understand how a national Ghanaian NGO was operating. At the same time, I offered my professional skills as a hopefully valuable resource. During my internship, I studied various GAD resources publicly available at the Gender Centre including organisational publications comprising academic, programmatic and other material (Coker-Appiah, 2007; Cusack & Manuh, 2009; Akumatey & Darkwa, 2009; GSHRDC, 2010; 2011; 2012; 2013). These sources informed the mapping of a broader Ghanaian GAD context. The programmatic work of the Gender Centre was closely aligned to the thematic areas of the GPP and drew on Community Based Action Teams to deliver programmatic components; a similar approach was adopted as part of the GPP (for further discussion, see Chapter 7).

[77] I have worked as a Research Assistant (May - Aug 2016) on the cohort study 'Real Choices, Real Lives' investigating gender and social norms in nine countries including Ghana (see Plan International UK, 2016), and worked as an Assistant Programme Officer (APO) for the Banking on Change Programme (Sept 2015 – Feb 2016).

Ethnography in a more encompassing sense was conducted during August to October 2017 (two and a half months), residing in one rural or peri-urban community in the Eastern Region of Ghana as "a means for producing knowledge from an intense, intersubjective engagement" (Clifford, 1983, p. 119). While in a strict anthropological understanding, "[f]ieldwork usually required living with a group of people for extended periods, often over the course of a year or more" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 1), ethnography was conducted within a "compressed time mode" (Jeffrey & Troman, 2004, p. 538; see also pp. 539-40).

Conducting ethnographic research in the field was made possible by working in a small research team consisting of Alice Agyeiwaa, Patricia Arthur and myself. The research assistance of Alice and Pat (which is how we addressed each other mostly, on a shortened first name basis) was invaluable for many reasons including translation work between English and *Twi*.[78] *Twi* is part of the Akan languages and most Akan language speakers are located in Southern Ghana, while some clusters are found in neighbouring countries (Cote d'Ivoire and Togo). Akan serves as a trade language and has several million speakers, either as a first or a second language and comprises *Asante* (Ashanti) *Twi*, *Akuepim Twi*, *Fante* (Fanti), and *Brong* (Abron), which are broadly mutually intelligible (Bendor-Samuel, 2020; University of Cambridge Language Centre, 2019).

Negotiating access to the field and maintaining field relations form pertinent elements of ethnographic field work with implications for data generated and analysis thereof (see Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, pp. 41-69).

5.2.1. Accessing the Field – Negotiating and Maintaining Field Relations

With the support of the Eastern Programme Unit (EPU) of Plan International Ghana, responsible for GPP implementation in communities across the Eastern Region of Ghana, three rural or peri-urban GPP communities were selected for conducting fieldwork, namely Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom. Our research team took up residence in Kwamoso for more than two months, with regular research visits to Nsutam and Mintakrom.[79] All three communities shared similar characteristics notably in terms of access to transport, infrastructure and dominant farming livelihoods. The selection criteria previously shared with

[78] Due to my rudimentary *Twi* language skills, conducting research activities on my own in Ghanaian communities, where the majority of residents are speaking *Twi*, was out of the question. There were further considerations as a young female researcher, notably safety concerns, which made the prospect of being part of a research team a viable option.

[79] We, the research team, stayed in a guesthouse that offered all the basic amenities, which was not necessarily the case for the houses surrounding us (Fieldnotes B, 21 Aug to 6 Sep 2017).

the Gender Advisor at the CO Plan International Ghana included that research communities would be (former) GPP communities and would show willingness on community-level for research being conducted there. In alignment with these criteria and due to a variety of practical and logistical reasons, the head of the EPU Plan International Ghana, Kofi Debrah, suggested Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom. As became clear during a later interview with Kofi Debrah, these communities were also selected because they were particularly 'successful' communities, and my research was seen as potentially useful for future development work by the EPU in the selected communities. Prior, during and after GPP implementation, there was close co-operation between development practitioners at the EPU and selected community members in all three communities.[80]

Acknowledging that establishing field relations cannot be rushed, I first visited the research communities before commencing fieldwork. Together with the head of the EPU Plan International Ghana, I introduced my research proposal to the chief and elders in all three communities, asking for their permission to go ahead with my envisioned research plan (see Appendix F); permission was granted in all three communities. Community chiefs and selected elders, mostly male and some female, acted as gatekeepers in the context of my research at community level.

Hammersley and Atkinson outline that "gatekeepers […] will shape the conduct and development of the research" (p. 59). Being endorsed by the community chief and elders facilitated access to other community members in various ways; having received permission to announce our presence and research activities on the respective community radios meant that community members were broadly aware of our research activities. Besides such awareness, the publicly communicated buy-in of community heads seemed to be very helpful in raising interest of other community members to join various research activities. It also meant that we could find venues to hold group discussions and, before our departure from the field, organise community *durbars*, or community-wide meetings, to present preliminary findings to community members and development practitioners. Holding focus group discussions (FGDs) with chief and elders in each community allowed for engaging with their

[80] While the GPP was implemented in 100 communities across the Eastern region, there was on-going engagement between the EPU Plan International Ghana and 73 selected communities in the Eastern Region (DP Interview KD A EPU Plan GH).

perspectives in depth as part of research activities, which also provided more clarity in how far the perspective of our research team was potentially affected by their viewpoints.

For this research, gatekeepers including chief and elders but also members of CBOs established for the purpose of implementing the GPP. These gatekeepers have certainly mediated our perspective on the respective research communities. However, we, the research team, tried to balance this situation by not over-relying on any one person for information. We sought multiple perspectives throughout our research stay, while at the same time setting out to adhere to cultural codes of respect by consulting with community chiefs and elders on the conduct of research activities. Validity of our research was sought through ensuring multiple perspectives but also triangulating methods and data sets.

During the entirety of our research stay, we set out to constantly manage expectations. At the start of each research activity, we clarified that our research is an academic one and will most likely not provide any immediate benefits for community members or development practitioners. Nonetheless, we wanted to 'give back', notably to community members some of whom raised questions during house-to-house interviews and FGDs concerning the benefits of our research, such as "What will you do to our answers? Will you do something to reduce our hard living?". At the end of one house-to-house interview, a female research participant in Kwamoso raised a comment, which might encapsulate the experience of various community members concerning research conducted at community level, "Some people come and ask us soo many questions on our problems in the community - what are you going to do for the community after have[having] finished answering all the question[s]?".

In this research, we, the research team, adopted three immediate and tangible ways of 'giving back'. One, presenting preliminary research findings during community *durbars* in all three communities at the end of fieldwork, including a Q&A segment that provided a platform for interaction between representatives of EPU Plan International Ghana and community members. Two, we made available written copies of reports on preliminary findings both to representatives of the communities and EPU Plan International Ghana. Three, we shared 'useful items' in each of the communities at the end of durbars. These items were identified as useful based on information that had emerged during previous research activities and entailed fertilisers for farming (Kwamoso), portable toilets (Mintakrom) and books, toilet paper as well as sanitary pads across all three communities. Sharing items, together with other ways of reimbursing participants, might be considered a problematic

approach as part of research (Thompson, 1996). However, it can also be implemented in line with reciprocity as "a guiding principle for research relationships" (Bennett *et al*., 2013, p. 110; see also Thompson, 1996); it is the latter that we aimed for.

Maintaining research relations in the field entails an ethical responsibility on the side of the researcher to ensure that research participants are not exposed to any kind of harm due to the conduct of a study. While the specific means of safeguarding depend on research focus, discipline and conditions, an often-used strategy within scholarship entails anonymising data, so that research participants are not recognisable. This might include omitting any identifiable social markers. While anonymising the names of research participants and research locations can certainly contribute to not causing harm as part of conducting a study, others have argued that "the universal application of confidentiality and anonymity in social science" speaks to a "methodological imperialism" aligning to "Euro-Western methods" (Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010, p. 621). Drawing on collective values as demonstrated in much African feminist research, Bagele Chilisa and Gabo Ntseane are notably concerned that, at times, these codes "protect the individual at the expense of disempowered groups or even the community in general" (ibid., drawing on Chilisa, 2005). In this doctoral research, a partially anonymising strategy was adopted.

Based upon the approval of community chiefs and elders, I use the real names of communities in this research, which can be read as an attempt to adhere to expectations we might have set, notably during data validation *durbars* conducted in November 2018. During the community *durbar* held in Kwamoso, Alice, one of the research assistants, added, at the very end, "In future, if any organization wants to help the community, they can refer to Fanny's research and know the problems here so that [an] organization or NGO can do something for you […]". While I view it as highly unlikely that any benefits will emerge for the communities as a *direct* result of my research, including the real names of communities does present an opportunity for others to read about the communities' problems which might potentially lead to targeting them.

In line with valuing subjective experiences as voiced by research participants individually or collectively, people's real names might be mentioned as part of this thesis *if* consent was provided. A vast majority of research participants, both community members and development practitioners, agreed that we could use their real names in the write up of

this current research when asked whether they would prefer to remain anonymous or not.[81] I will notably mention the names and organisational roles of development practitioners whom I interviewed, whenever this permission was granted; this rationale is not least based on the GPP demonstrating a shared narrative of success among various stakeholders. The assumption I am carrying here is that a narrative of success lends itself to mentioning individual names and their professional roles as it reflects favourably upon their development work. I will refer to some community members by name or their roles in the community; this notably applies to persons holding leadership roles such as chiefs and elders but also members of CBOs. These research participants hold well-respected, well-integrated roles in the community which, I assume, serve as a strong factor in mitigating any potential negative consequences from disclosing statements they have made as part of this research. Nonetheless, to ensure mitigation of any potential harm, statements by research participants of a more critical nature were anonymised. Notably critique concerning development practice in the case of the GPP, as brought forward by community members, was anonymised to safeguard against any potential repercussions such as potential exclusion from further NGO benefits (on this point, see also Section 7.2.2.).

Negotiating and maintaining field relations link to the roles a researcher takes on in the field. My roles in the field have shifted and oscillated. At times, I actively and consciously 'took on' certain roles, other times they were given to me and often it might have been a mix of the two, putting in question how the boundaries of self-presentation as part of ethnographic work are constituted. Notwithstanding the critical value of reflexivity as part of qualitative research and notably feminist studies, over-relying on such an approach carries its own risks (see Introduction). As such, self-representation might be denied by research participants or the researcher her/himself.

5.2.2. Researcher Roles in the Field

Arriving in Ghana, I would most often be referred to with a respectful 'Miss' or 'Madame'. This respected position, together with drawing on my professional network, helped me to gain access to various INGOs and NGOs operating in Ghana as well as facilitating meetings with Ghanaian academics. Some authors have notably problematised the term 'Miss' or

[81] Evidently, the choice of those research participants who opted for remaining anonymous was fully respected.

'Madame' as mirroring racial hierarchies when used to address a white woman (Durrheim *et al*., 2011, pp. 100-1).[82] Reflecting upon dimensions of respect, the head of the EPU Plan International Ghana clarified in a research interview,

> […] in our area, the colour even matters. You are *obroni*, you go everywhere, people are opening doors for you, isn't it? […] people who are light-skinned are better-respected than those who are black-skinned. That is a certain conviction that people have. (DP Interview KD B[83] EPU Plan Gh)

Obroni is an expression in *Twi* that marks a white foreigner within Ghana; in many every-day moments, I would be exposed to calls of 'obroni' in the streets. During fieldwork in three rural or peri-urban communities in the Eastern Region of Ghana, a majority of community members referred to me as 'obroni'. Being called 'obroni' meant that people were willing to teach and explain things to me as I was not expected to be familiar with social and cultural conventions. Drawing on "qualified naïveté" (Kvale, 2007, p. 12, cited in Nussey, 2019, p. 83) aided the ethnographic data generation process and explanations provided were recorded as part of my fieldnotes and informed my analysis. While my limited *Twi* speaking skills curtailed the possibility to conduct certain research activities on my own, or to fully take part in informal conversations, they did allow me to greet people and introduce myself in a widely spoken Akan language within Ghana. Various people acknowledged that 'obroni is trying' which seemed to have a positive impact on building relationships in the field. An initial exchange of greetings in *Twi* often served as an icebreaker and sometimes led to conversations being continued in English.

During my first visit to Ghana, I met a fatherly friend who 'gave me' my Akan name, Akua/Ekua, or Wednesday-born. As I learned, it is a name that someone has to give you; it is not a name that you can claim on your own. I would use my newly acquired name to introduce myself to people in various contexts, often adding my first name, Fanny Akua. For a while, very naively, I thought that I was initiated, that I was 'part of' something, maybe even having 'found access' to 'Ghanaian culture' and being allowed to be part of it. With increasing familiarity of the context, people started calling me by my Akan name 'Akua/Ekua' in the course of prolonged field residence. Being called 'Akua/Ekua' often meant that people acknowledged me as a short-term resident in the community and allowed

[82] Durrheim *et al.* (2011) notably investigate the post-apartheid situation in South Africa.

[83] This reference points to the research interview conducted with a development practitioner (DP), in this case Kofi Debrah (KD), head of the Eastern Programme Unit Plan Ghana (EPU Plan Gh). As I conducted two research interviews with Kofi, statements as part of the first interview are indicated through the letter 'A', statements as part of the second interview through the letter 'B'.

for more in-depth conversations (with translation help from Alice and Pat). Various children in the community would refer to me as 'Auntie Akua/Ekua' while few women, that I was in contact with more regularly, would sometimes call me 'Sister Akua/Ekua'. Both expressions can potentially be read as signs of increasing familiarity. Despite this, the feminist "epistemological ideal" (Nencel, 2014, p. 77) of "research relationships that are egalitarian, non-authoritative and intersubjective" (ibid., p. 78) could not fully be realised. Being called 'Akua/Ekua' did not erase power hierarchies as part of ethnographic research (see also Abu-Lughod, 2016, p. 276) and it did not mean that I could surpass fundamental limitations to my understanding, in both linguistic and socio-cultural terms. The following section will outline these and other aspects in the context of data generation and analysis.

5.2.3. Data Generation – Working with Alice Agyeiwaa and Patricia Abena Arthur

As mentioned above, Alice Agyeiwaa and Patricia Abena Arthur acted as research assistants to this doctoral research in the field, notably conducting translation tasks between English and *Twi*. During August and November 2017, our research team conducted 225 house-to-house interviews with 150 female research participants and 75 male participants across three research and former GPP communities, as well as 14 FGDs (see Appendix G for more information). A semi-structured interview format (Galletta & Cross, 2013) allowed for comparing answers across research participants while at the same time encouraging interviewees to answer in as little or much depth as they wished. We, the research team in the field, also conducted extensive participant observation and took fieldnotes which can be viewed as a constitutive part of ethnographic research (Emerson *et al*., 2001; DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010). I also conducted research interviews with eight development practitioners (see Appendix G for more information) and commenced documentary analysis during fieldwork. Access to GPP programme and policy documents was notably facilitated through the EPU Plan International Ghana.[84]

Interviews

The interview guides adopted as part of house-to-house interviews with community members, and partly amended for interviews with development practitioners, included five segments. Commencing with collecting general information on gender, age and

[84] During fieldwork, I visited the EPU Plan International Ghana office in Koforidua regularly and was granted permission to take photos of written GPP records.

profession/work of people interviewed, the opening narrative, or Segment 1 that followed, set out to gauge research participants' views on context, notably how people described their community and their current life situation. Answers to these questions provided contextual information on the communities studied and revealed perceived community needs and problems. Segment 2 of the interview guide entailed questions addressing local modes of gender with a focus on tasks and responsibilities as well as asking people what they liked/not liked about being a woman/man, thus gauging gendered personal likes and dislikes and how these might link to lived gendered experiences as well as gendered norms. Addressing a normative sphere, Segment 2 entailed questions such as 'What makes a 'good' woman/man?' and 'What is respectable/non-respectable behaviour and attitudes for a woman/a man?'. Questions on gender relations among and between women and men explicitly asked about 'areas of harmony' and 'areas of tension and problems'. Responses to questions in Segment 2 allowed gauging how research participants conceptualise gender as lived relations and representations, the latter notably in terms of social gendered norms.

Segment 3 of the interview guide aimed at understanding how community members assess the Girl Power Programme ex-post and was divided into a 'general assessment' section and a 'specific issues' section. Answers to these questions allowed identifying perceived programme success of a range of community members as well as further identification of community needs and how to address these. Segment 4, the end of the interview, included a question that encouraged research participants to share 'any other comments/thoughts/reflections' with us. Segment 4 also inquired whether people agreed, or not agreed, to using their real names as part of this research and, in the case of Kwamoso, the end of the interview also included a question whether people would be willing to participate in a further group discussion and if we could contact them with information on date and location (see Appendix H).

Alice and Pat conducted house-to-house interviews with community members in Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom. Most of the house-to-house interviews were conducted in *Twi*, selected few in English. I conducted interviews with development practitioners in English, which consisted of largely similar segments as outlined for the interviews with community members above, as well as added segments on 'relevant concepts and terms' and on 'international and national NGO work in Ghana'. A gradual or incremental research approach was adopted when themes emerging from house-to-house interviews and focus group

discussions conducted in Kwamoso fed into amending guides for research interviews with development practitioners (see Appendix I).

Each interview was commenced by giving a short overview of the research project and asking for people's verbal consent (community members) or written consent (development practitioners, see Appendix J). We made clear that people were free not to participate in the research and that they could end the interview at any time. Apart from a few exceptions, all people we asked for an interview granted us one. Interviews with community members lasted between fifteen minutes and one hour, while interviews with development practitioners lasted between one and two hours, depending on the length of the answers of research participants. As a means of recording interviews, we asked for permission to either audio-record or take notes during the interview; while most people opted for the first option, various interview transcripts were based on written notes. Notably audio recording helped to retain the relevant 'verbatim' character of the transcripts pointing to the ethnographic characteristic of "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973) to understand socio-cultural practices and experiences.

For interviews with community members, we chose a random sampling method, going 'from house to house'. We considered some factors to ensure breadth of data collected including a) covering as many different geographical parts of a community as possible within the time frame available; and b) approaching both women and men from different age ranges, between the age of 18 and 60+.[85] Selection of development practitioners for research interviews was based on purposive sampling, targeting people located in Ghana and the Netherlands who had worked on the GPP. Rather than ensuring validity through representative sampling in quantitative research terms, the validity of this research is grounded in triangulating different methods, data sets and research perspectives. Different methods included interviews and focus group discussions as well as ethnographic methods based on participant observation and field-note writing, different data sets included transcripts of (spoken) interviews and group discussion as well as (written) documents such as programme and policy documents as well as observed behaviour encapsulated in fieldnotes. Different research perspectives

[85] The lower age indicated as 18 years is based on ethics approval granted for this research by University College London, UK. The upper age of 60+ resonates with statistical findings that outline that the age group of 60+ in Ghana entails 6,7 % (for both sexes), while 55% of Ghana's population fall within the age bracket of 15-59 years, and 38.3% are below the age of 15 years (Ghana Statistical Service 2000 and 2010 cited in the Ghana country report on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, UNFPA, 2012 cited in WHO, 2014, p. 2).

notably include the views of the research team and reflecting different research participants' perspectives through conducting data generation in co-operative ways and through an incremental and iterative approach.

Group Discussions

As part of this research, we conducted 14 focus group discussions (FGDs) in both *Twi* and English, sensitive to collective social dynamics in groups which are largely missing from one-on-one interviews. Working with an FGD guide, but sensitive to specific interests of community members that would spark debate and conversations, a flexible unfolding of the FGDs was supported.[86] An initial set of FGD questions were based on themes arising from already conducted house-to-house interviews reflecting a gradual approach (see Appendix K). Such gradual approach also characterised the creation of interview guides for house-to-house interviews in Nsutam and Mintakrom (see Appendix L), which were conducted after the bulk of research activities in Kwamoso had already ended.

Following a collaborative research approach aimed at co-generating knowledge, FGD participants shared their personal and collective aspirations. As part of FGDs, the research team suggested visualising these aspirations through paintings or representing them, potentially, through traditional songs, proverbs or sayings. Freire (1973) points to the importance of typical sayings constituting 'generative words' as part of literacy work aimed at building up critical consciousness (p. 49). To foster a Freirian critical engagement throughout research activities, this doctoral study drew on the value and practice of epistemic equality, which aimed at co-creating research situations in which people felt comfortable enough to share their views openly. It also meant drawing extensively on the practice of probing (notably as part of research interviews) to 'understand deeply' what kind of underlying assumptions, and potentially norms, certain statements were based on. Drawing on the value and practice of epistemic equality also meant that the research team, as part of the FGDs, shared their views, open to contestation. Critical engagement during FGDs was also translated into encouraging participation along the lines of diversity and inclusiveness which, for instance, meant encouraging active participation of younger and older female participants in group discussions.

[86] Our role as FGD facilitators included making limited use of questions to kick off a session or re-direct focus in line with the research.

To investigate subjective perceptions of programme success and potential links to meaningful social change in collaborative ways, we asked community members to co-create 'problem-solution-trees' as part of several FGDs. This exercise was based on the objective-oriented project planning (OOPP) method (Debrabandere & Desmet, 1998) and set out to explore development intervention areas and community-led approaches to addressing these.

FGDs were conducted with pre-established community groups as well as groups formed exclusively for the purpose of this current research. At times, we worked with 'male only' or 'female only' groups, at other times with mixed groups of women and men *above* the age of 18 years in line with ethics approval granted for this research (see Appendix G). Cornwall's reflections on 'localizing strategies' and group formation as part of PRA were particularly helpful to consider the impact of group formations on data generation and analysis (1998, p. 55). For some research activities in groups, it posed a challenge to encourage female participants; often we relied on the support of other (male) research participants to encourage female participation. Thinking of and adopting additional ways of motivating female research participants for group activities could have proved a feasible approach.

As part of the FGD with the youth group in Kwamoso, 31 'boys' between the age of 17 years and 30 years participated, as well as five girls between the age of 15 and 18 years. As this was the first FGD we conducted, we only 'took attendance' after the group discussion and collaborative exercises had been completed and thus, the exceptional participation of community members *below* the age of 18 years can be explained, most of them female. Subsequently, we changed to taking attendance (for internal research use) at the beginning of research activities. Ways of mitigating any risks that might have been incurred for the young female and male participants during this FGD activity entailed participation together with their peers (both female and male) as well as sensitive facilitation of the workshop.[87] While in line with ethics approval granted for this research, limiting research attendance of young women and men below the age of 18 years is considered one of the main limitations of this research (for further discussion, see Section 10.4).

During fieldwork, further research activities aimed at data generation included farm and school visits in all three communities. I also conducted additional meetings and interviews with representatives of state institutions working closely together with Plan International

[87] Aimed at diffusing any discussions that showed risks of inter-personal disputes among discussants.

Ghana in the implementation of the GPP and its follow-up programme, the Girls Advocacy Alliance (GAA) (see Appendix M).

To conduct interpretation in both linguistic and socio-cultural terms as part of data generation, the translation work of Alice and Pat, who acted as research assistants to this doctoral research in the field, was invaluable.

5.2.4. Linguistic and Socio-Cultural Translation and Interpretation – Considering Representation

This study sets out to represent research participants and their agency in a respectful way, mainly by adopting various research methods in co-operative ways aiming at co-generation of data, while interpretative authority ultimately rests with me, the doctoral student. Being fluent in *Asante Twi*, Alice and Pat were able to translate between English and *Akuepim Twi*[88] in the conduct of various research activities with community members and subsequent transcriptions thereof.[89] Besides linguistic translations, Alice and Pat also 'translated' socio-cultural aspects notably what constitutes 'respectful' socio-cultural behaviour. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) remind us that "most kinds of data recording are necessarily selective and involve some interpretation, however minimal" (p. 156), while Lorraine Nencel (2014) points to the role of interpretation processes to "situate […] actions within a broader cultural context" (Nencel, 2014, p. 79). A fieldnote entry during the data validation phase of this doctoral research encapsulates the outcome of previous socio-cultural translation processes by Alice and Pat,

> Nana [the chief] says that I have 'done well' to learn about the traditions and also the way we have done things […] is 'really something else' (positively!). […] The way you socialised with us, the party you organised, it is something else.' (Fieldnotes Data Validation, 20 Nov to 18 Dec 2018)[90]

Research assistance work tasks of Alice and Pat, that we had agreed on prior to fieldwork commencing, included translations from English into *Twi* (of the research information sheet, consent forms and interview as well as FGD guides), co-conducting various research tasks

[88] All but a handful of people we approached to conduct research activities were fluent in *Akuapim Twi* or English; there were two instances of research activities not being conducted due to community members speaking *Ewe*.
[89] After some initial uncertainty (on all sides), we agreed upon payment that would cover field residence of Alice and Pat and their subsequent translation and transcription work.
[90] Fieldnote entry on November 26, 2018

during common field residence, as well as translations from *Twi* into English (through producing transcripts of interviews and FGD data recorded). Nencel (2014) reflects on language translation and the interpretative process as part of ethnographic work and reminds us, "Being interpreter means accepting the authority this entails. This authority demands a sense of responsibility against harming the research participants and representing them in a way that respects and highlights their agency" (p. 78). While approaches adopted as part of this doctoral study to safeguard against harm have been outlined previously in this chapter, the following paragraphs will engage with the issue of respectful representation.

Respectful representation was a core value and objective throughout co-creating knowledge as part of an incremental and iterative research process adopted in this study. Themes and theoretical findings that emerged from data analysis, be it initially or as part of a subsequent in-depth analysis, were discussed among the research team in the field and together with research participants throughout the research process. Triangulation of research perspectives constitutes one way of practicing data validation; such triangulation took place between researchers and research participants but also among researcher during fieldwork in Ghana, and to a certain extent thereafter. In the beginning of our stay, our research team spent a couple of days familiarising ourselves with the objectives and aims of the research, as well as its theoretical framework; I mostly spoke and 'led' these sessions. Thereafter, the dynamic changed. On the many days Alice and Pat conducted house-to-house interviews with community members, we had daily morning meetings to plan research activities of the day and de-briefing sessions in the afternoon allowing us to *reflect together* on the experiences of the day. Besides expected and unexpected elements as part of the broader interview experience, we also discussed people's answers notably in terms of potentially unfolding 'common threads' and outliners. This analytical exchange was invaluable for the process of early data analysis and aided in designing the question guides for the FGDs. Triangulation of researcher perspectives continued in the process of producing, sharing and subsequently discussing transcripts of our research activities.

Respectful representation can be aided through the process of linguistic and socio-cultural translation. Various limitations to that translation process need to be considered. For instance, while Alice and Pat were knowledgeable of linguistic and socio-cultural conventions, they were also removed from the social identities of the majority of our research participants at community level. Alice and Pat were mostly raised and schooled in the urban capital Accra, had finished tertiary education and had bright prospects for employment to gain an income to support themselves and their families. Such background and prospects

were not necessarily shared among a majority of research participants at community level. Upon conducting more in-depth analytical work, it became clear that 'returning to the field' was a feasible option in line with validity concerns grounded in co-producing knowledge with research participants (see below for further discussion).

5.3. Modes of Analysis

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, this research draws on several analytical approaches to investigate conceptualisations of gender as communicated and enacted by community members and development practitioners as part of a particular international cross-cultural development programme with implications for subjective notions of success, potentially aligned to 'meaningful' social transformation. To explore 'gender as lived relations', a variety of ethnographic and qualitative methods were adopted to generate data which was subsequently exposed to a process of thematic coding drawing on grounded theory.[91] To investigate 'gender as representation', documentary analysis was conducted, drawing on discourse analysis, and views on social gendered norms were studied (as expressed in interviews and FGDs). To consider the locus from which gender is conceptualised, I drew on discursive tools as well as ethnographic methods.

My research is based on particular ethnographic and qualitative methods and analysis that foregrounds grounded interpretations of gender and transformation, speaking to 'gender as lived relations' as adopted in the analytical frame of this research (see Chapter 4). Simultaneously, this research sets out to study 'gender as representations' with discourse analysis of documentary sources (notably programme and policy documents) as the main pathway of investigating these. Several eloquent studies combine ethnographic and discursive methods (Anderson *et al.*, 2020; Nussey, 2019), considering material as well as discursive spheres in the study of gender and development (see also Jackson, 1997). Inspired by these studies, my research sets out to consider the interplay of an interpretative sphere and actual lived realities (see Jackson, 1997, p. 151, drawing on Fraser, 1989, p. 164) by drawing on the notions of 'gender as lived realities' and 'gender as representation'. I am proposing a gender analysis framework considering lived experiences of women and men, girls and boys as well as dynamics of representation, embedded in power relations within international

[91] Thematic coding was notably undertaken on interview and FGD transcripts triangulated with fieldnotes encapsulating participant observation.

development, pointing to potential transformative uses of gender analysis frameworks. Such uses also consider the locus from which gender is conceptualised.

5.3.1. Analysing the Locus from which Gender is Conceptualised

To consider the locus from which gender is conceptualised, I draw on discursive tools as well as ethnographic methods. Analysing the locus from which gender is conceptualised entails reflecting upon statements on gender and development, either verbal or in writing, in regard to geographical location, institutional or activist affiliation and intersecting social identity factors of those who authored statements as considered in this research. While utterances predominantly belong to a discursive sphere, analysing the context of lived realities in which these statements were uttered may add to our understanding and frame our analysis. This thesis centres around statements and analysing lived realities, in alignment with social norms, of community members of three communities in the Eastern Region of Ghana where a particular GAD programme was implemented. Considering such statements while being physically present in locations of the Global South cannot *per se* guarantee 'fuller comprehension', but it might be a start. Elizabeth Shome Yeboa (2009) writes in her research on urban women in Ghana, from a locally embedded view,

> There is such a variety of forms of expression and interpretation that it is nearly impossible to capture all these aspects of Ghanaian live in general terms, much less to convey them. Much cannot be interpreted, least of all with a simple translation into another language, because many customs and gestures are not interpretable with words. To be able to interpret, one must first comprehend. And it is just there where the problem lies […]. (p. 21-22; author's translation)

There might be much to gain in acknowledging limitations to comprehension; it can point us to the limits of transnational analysis not assuming that we can always find tactics or strategies to overcome a fragmented state of knowledge linked to occupying varied and differing loci. This, I believe, can point us to the limits of what we can achieve as part of a transnational research, or cross-cultural development, project.

Returning to a discussion on reflexivity as presented in the beginning of this chapter, Pillow (2003) encourages us "to situate practices of reflexivity as critical to exposing the difficult and often uncomfortable task of leaving what is unfamiliar, unfamiliar" (p. 177). This research encourages further thinking on the 'unfamiliar', not setting out to 'making it familiar', but to aim at understanding why it is perceived as 'unfamiliar', for whom and with

what kind of consequences, for instance as part of international cross-cultural development work.

5.3.2. Ethnographic Methods and Grounded Theory

Ethnography "captures the dynamics of a context, documenting the visible and less tangible social structures and relations" (Jeffrey & Toman, 2004, p. 538). Section 5.2. has presented the ethnographic research journey as part of this doctoral study in-depth. In this part, I will focus on grounded theory as an analytical approach that foregrounds theory-building which emerges from the (ethnographic and qualitative) data collected. This grounded approach entails five strategies,

> 1)simultaneous data-collection and analysis; 2) pursuit of emergent themes through early data analysis; 3) discovery of basic social processes within the data; 4) inductive construction of abstract categories that explain and synthesize these processes; 5) integration of categories into a theoretical framework that specifies causes, conditions and consequences of the process(es). (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001, p. 160)

While adoption of the first three strategies have been previously outlined in this chapter, construction and integration of categories mostly took place after the fieldwork phase in Ghana had ended, working with computer-based software (NVivo 11) to undertake coding of various data sets. Guidance for this process was found in the literature (Boyatzis, 1998). Aligning to initial elaborations on grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), literature exploring its compatibility with feminist research approaches points to the relevance of 'in vivo codes' grounded in the language used by research participants (Plummer & Young, 2010, p. 311). It also foregrounds respect for diversity of experiences while "highlighting shared patterns, perspectives and strategies" (Allen, 2011, p. 27). In the analysis part of this thesis, I will draw on the 'language used by research participants' and present several statements of community members and development practitioners to support presentations of research findings along shared patterns and alternative views challenging these.

5.3.3. Discourse Analysis

Based on the view that documents represent "documentary construction of reality" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 121, drawing on Coffey & Atkinson, 2004), I used discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992; 2003; Landwehr, 2008; Potter *et al*., 1990) to identify local patterns within a particular textual corpus. This form of analysis sets out to be sensitive

to the poststructuralist feminist critique targeting simplified representations of the 'poor, oppressed and marginalised' woman as often displayed notably in feminist academic and GAD writings emanating from 'the West' (see Chapter 3). I studied around 100 GPP programme documents,[92] "ranging from the 'informal' to the 'formal' or 'official'" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 123) as one pathway of analysing 'gender as representation'. Such designations are highly context and actor-dependent and may reveal broader dynamics of knowledge production processes. Programme documents considered in this research link to the design, implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of the Girl Power Programme, the development intervention considered as a study case. Documents included contractual agreements and amendments, reports, internal and external evaluations, internal communication as well as written records relating to the implementation of programmatic activities (such as lists of items distributed, timetables of programme activities and so forth). I also studied selected gender policy documents of INGOs involved in the GPP as well as Ghanaian policy documents such as the *Women's Manifesto for Ghana* (2004). Such documents were 'read together' with seminal global GAD policy texts.[93]

There is a wide variety and array of studies making theoretical or methodological claims concerning discourse analysis, and an even larger body of work drawing on discourse analysis for interpretation of research findings (see Potter *et al*., 1990, pp. 205-6). In this research, engagement with the work of Norman Fairclough (1992, 2003), Achim Landwehr (2008) as well as Jonathan Potter, Margaret Wetherell, Ris Gil and Derek Edwards (1990) is foregrounded. This is because these works a) critically raise questions on regimes of knowledge production in their engagement with discourses and analysis thereof, and b) highlight the possibility of discourse analysis as text analysis without discarding the "the role of discourse in social/interpretative practices" (Potter *et al*., 1990, p. 209).[94]

For Fairclough (2003), discourses are "(a) representing some particular part of the world, and (b) representing it from a particular perspective" (p. 129). Landwehr (2008), who engages with discourses and their analysis from a historical perspective, views discourse as "the sum of all textual, audiovisual, material and practical products engaging with the theme of a discourse in one way or another, even if only merely touching upon it" (p. 102, author's

[92] Out of 100 GPP programme documents, 45 documents were considered explicitly during research analysis; see GPP Programmatic Documents as part of primary sources listed in the bibliography.
[93] See Policy Documents as part of primary sources listed in the bibliography.
[94] I want to acknowledge here that reading the work of Charley Nussey (2019) has helped me to identify the importance of the work of Fairclough (1992) and Potter *et al.* (1990) for my research focus.

translation). This research aligns to the work of authors who view discourses, and an analysis thereof through texts, in co-existence with (studying) social elements. Therefore, discourse analysis can be understood as textual analysis of representation of social events, social practices and social structures (Fairclough, 2003), with a focus on a "functional orientation of language" with "constructive processes" and "variability" necessarily included (Potter *et al.*, 1990, p. 207).

The textual statements considered as part of discourse analysis in this research belong mainly to the sphere of the GPP where authorship rests with a few social actors aligned to particular institutional arrangements, embedded in a broader GAD public policy narrative. The 'concrete corpus' (see Landwehr, 2008, pp. 102-3) considered in this research is limited in specific ways. Nonetheless, analysing a variety of documents throughout the course of programme design, implementation and MEL of a specific international cross-cultural development programme can generate insights into discursive representations of social events including social actors, practices and structures.

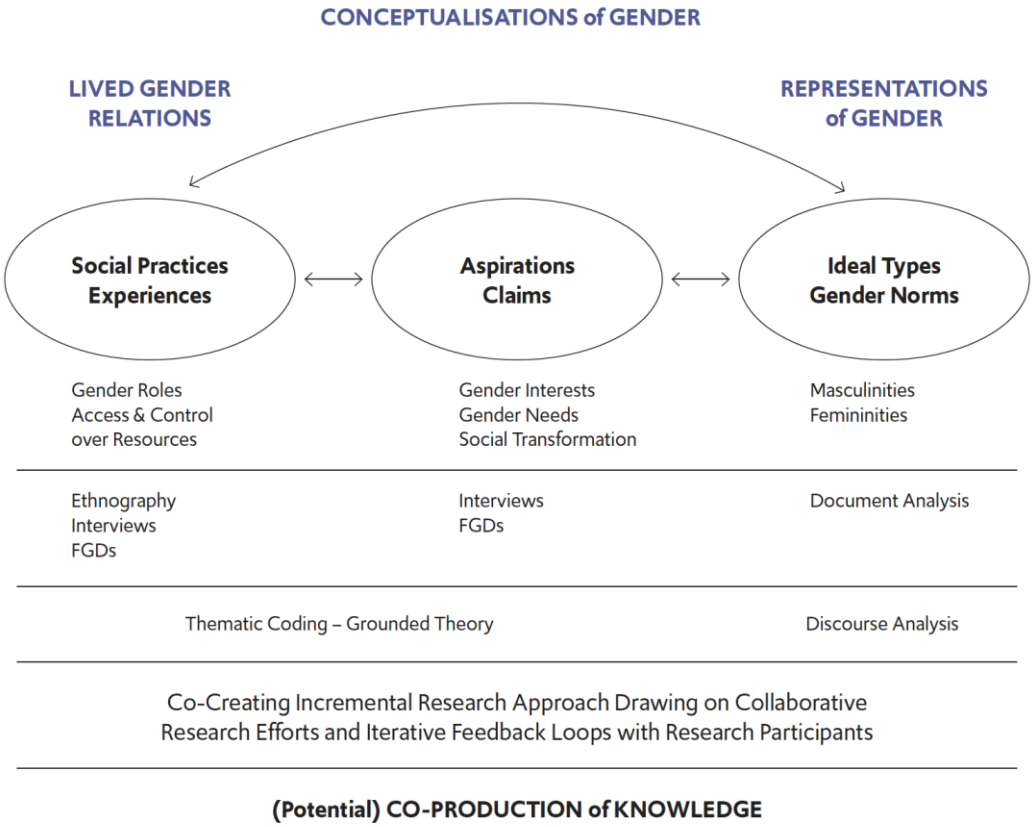
Fairclough (2003) draws on linguistic, grammatical and interdiscursive text analysis to make broader claims on representations of social events, linked to social practices and social structures. Considering discourse analysis as methodological practice, Landwehr (2008) focuses on context analysis (notably concerned with the text as a media form) as well as situational, institutional and historical context of discourse (specifically texts), but also text analysis in its micro and macro structure. This current research will draw on these analytical tools, albeit in selective ways.

From a broader epistemological perspective, Landwehr argues that historical discourse analysis is particularly interested in "regimes of knowledge and the construction of reality" (2008, pp. 101-2, author's translation). He views texts as social actions, entailing choice and selection and, inevitably, exclusion (2008, p. 114). Fairclough illuminates that discourses, as forms and perspectives of representation, are notably contested in terms of "the power of […] preconstructed semantic systems to generate particular visions of the world which may have the performative power to sustain or remake the world in their image" (2003, p. 130, drawing on Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Fairclough's focus on "[e]xclusion or inclusion of elements of social events" as textual analysis (2003, p. 134) links to his view on social practices "as ways of controlling the selection of certain structural possibilities and the exclusion of others, and the retention of these selections over time, in particular areas of social life" (pp. 23-24). In this research, discourse analysis of various policy and

programmatic documents, includes an analytical focus on the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion.

Drawing on analysing locus, ethnographic qualitative material through grounded theory based on coding and discourse analysis, the validity of this research is grounded in triangulating different methods and data sets. It does so to incorporate common patterns and strategies while also accounting for diversity of potentially divergent voices and perspectives, within and across locations in the Global North and the Global South. Notably, to explore polyphone voices, there was a constant 'exchange' with research participants, both community members and development practitioners, which was vital to understanding whether and how emergent findings were supporting or diverging from the analytical framework proposed, and for what reasons. It is in co-creating platforms for these 'exchanges' that we might find instances of co-production of knowledge in conceptualising gender and considering social transformation, as Figure 3 below illustrates.

Figure 3. Conceptualisations of Gender Considering Social Transformation from an Analytical and Methodological Angle



Source: Author

The component of social transformation in the above illustration is understood as carrying potential links to subjective notions of programme success (see Appendix D); on this point interviews and FGDs generated various insights. Collaborative efforts during group discussions aimed at co-creation of data and illustrated community perceptions of development problems and solutions, as well as individual and collective aspirations. Further notions of programme success with potential links to meaningful social change could be captured as part of document analysis.

Returning to the 'Field' – Co-Creating Analysis

As this chapter has demonstrated, the research design adopted in this study is collaborative, resting on an iterative and incremental character. Conducting community *durbars, or* community assemblies, for the purpose of this research, foregrounded possibilities and limitations for co-creating research analysis. At the end of our fieldwork stay in the Eastern Region of Ghana (October 2017), the research team presented preliminary research findings in all three research communities with an extended Q&A segment at the end (see Appendix N). Additionally, the research team created reports of preliminary findings for each research community, which were shared with representatives of communities and the EPU Plan International Ghana. For the purpose of data validation, three further community *durbars* were held in Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom respectively, seeking feedback on emerging research findings from research participants. These *durbars* were conducted in November 2018, one year after the main fieldwork research phase had ended. Holding community *durbars* is a well-established and widely implemented socio-cultural practice for disseminating and discussing (relevant) information at community level. While co-conducting data validation *durbars* together with Alice (in November 2018), it became clear that certain questions I had devised seemed to be 'untranslatable' in both linguistic and socio-cultural terms[95]. Despite necessary attempts to comprehend, we might need to accept,

[95] During data validation *durbars,* we set out to engage with eight different themes; the main format was to present emerging findings and ask research participants whether they thought a finding was correct and whether something was missing or should be added. Some themes included additional questions; for Theme 8 'Knowledge', the additional question in the guide was the following, 'Within a development project like the GPP, is 'traditional' knowledge valued as much as 'modern' knowledge, for example knowledge that comes from research?'. Alice translated this question in the following way, 'Ghana, too, take[s] knowledge from some European countries because we know that they have developed [more] than us. Even when we take 5 GHS [a] loan from them, they decide what we should do with the loan, I mean there are some conditions on it, all because they have money and knowledge [more] than us. Why is it so? Why do we allow that in our life?'. Transcripts notes, based on the audio recording of this research activity, indicated that people were asking for more explanation, Alice liaised with me to find out what it is that the answer 'is aiming at' and provided

especially as researchers not deeply familiar with a particular socio-cultural context, that limitations to a 'fuller' understanding remain.

5.4. Limitations

The two main limitations, in a methodological sense, centre around absences; one, the perspective of a particular group is missing in this research, and two, certain data sets (carrying particular perspectives by extension) were not considered. However, particular strategies were adopted to mitigate the impact of these limitations.

In line with ethics approval granted for this research, the main limitation of this research entails that the research team in the field could not gauge the perspective of young women and men under the age of 18. As such, an important perspective was missing from this study, investigating a development programme primarily focused on girls and young women. While *direct* engagement with people under the age of 18 years was not possible, this research drew on *indirect* engagement by gauging the perspective of young women and men as represented in programme documents and by research participants above the age of 18 years. During one instance of 'other research activities', there was a *mediated* engagement with young girls.[96] For future research projects, seeking ethics approval that allows engagement with research participants under the age of 18 years, ensuring strict safeguarding measures, could be a possibility to include the perspectives of young women and men (for further discussion see Section 10.4).

'Gender as representation' in this research is mainly considered through discourse analysis of written sources aligned to the design, implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of a specific international cross-cultural development programme. Considering representations of gender in mainstream media outlets such as newspapers (study of text and images) and TV (images and audio) could have added another dimension to the discursive corpus. Moreover, the analysis of 'gender as representation' could have incorporated a more systematic study of non-written sources such as radio programmes or murals that were part of the GPP

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further details in *Twi* to research participants. In the end, Alice added the following note in the transcript of the data validation *durbar* in Kwamoso, 'This question wasn't clear to them and so they couldn't answer very well or because it was getting dark, they felt like going home'.

[96] During a school visit in Mintakrom (Oct 9, 2017), there was mediated engagement with various school-going girls under the age of 18 who were members of the school's Girls Club. The girls' schoolteacher, who was also the patron of the Girls Club, had prepared and facilitated a meeting between the girls and the research team where we talked about the girls' experience of the GPP.

implementation process.[97] Socio-cultural artefacts could have equally been investigated more systematically as part of this research (see Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, pp. 134-36). Notwithstanding these limitations, this research considers the relevance of oral traditions throughout Ghana and West Africa (see Daaku, 2016; Nketia, 2016; Lundt, 2018) demonstrating sensitivity to particular socio-cultural contexts.

5.5. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has presented the methodological research frame of this study aligned to feminist epistemology. Commencing with subjective reflections on broader knowledge production processes, I have acknowledged the importance of self-reflective tools considering researcher positionality while also pointing to their risks and limitations. This chapter has presented the approach of this study as co-creating and co-analysing data, foregrounding polyphone voices. Such an approach sets out to support the formation of epistemic inclusive communities and might align to feminist social anthropology. Nonetheless, in the end, interpretative authority rests with me, the doctoral student, while continuous pathways are sought for engaging collectively with my research (for further discussion on this point, see 10.5).

This chapter has outlined how this research draws on feminist ethnographic methods, including participant observation and field note taking, as well as interviews and group discussions to study 'gender as lived relations'. Transcripts generated in this process were subjected to thematic coding drawing on grounded theory. To study 'gender as representation', documentary analysis of (inter)national development programme and policy documents was conducted, working with discourse analysis. Another route to analysing 'gender as representation' entailed foregrounding the views of research participants on social gendered norms, as shared during interviews and group discussions. To investigate the locus from which gender is conceptualised, discursive and ethnographic methods were combined, as has been outlined in this chapter.

This chapter encompasses the ethnographic journey embarked upon for this research, conducted in the Ghanaian capital Accra and three rural or peri-urban communities in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Negotiating and maintaining field relations, aligned to managing

[97] I would like to thank Paola de Munari for helping me to arrive at this insight (Informal Workshop FF PdM, May 4, 2019).

various ‘researcher roles’, carried particular implications for data generation and analysis. Research assistance of Alice Agyeiwaa and Patricia Abena Arthur was invaluable not only in generating data during fieldwork, but also for conducting translation and interpretation tasks in linguistic and socio-cultural terms. As this chapter has demonstrated, this research adopts various methods and considers various data sets, foregrounding different views of research participants and researchers, which all aimed at ensuring validity of this qualitative research in a co-generative, iterative and collaborative way.

The next chapter will present and contextualise the case study of this research, the Girl Power Programme, an international cross-cultural INGO development programme, implemented *inter alia* in Ghana, West Africa.

6. The Girl Power Programme Embedded in Ghana's Post-Colonial and Contemporary Gender and Development Context

The Girl Power Programme, or GPP for short, especially its design and implementation in selected Ghanaian communities, serves as the case study for this doctoral research. Having briefly presented the GPP in the introduction to this thesis, this chapter considers a broader historical and contemporary context, in which the GPP is embedded, and then offers a concise description of the GPP.

6.1. The Post-Colonial and Contemporary Ghanaian Context

This section commences with outlining the colonial and post-colonial historical context of Ghana, with a focus on gender, showcasing how African women's writing constitutes a discursive canon for contemporary thinking on gender and development. This section, then, discusses the contemporary Ghanaian state architecture for gender equality.

6.1.1. Colonial and Post-Colonial Historical Context of Ghana with a Focus on Gender

Ghana was the first Sub-Saharan African British colony to attain independence on March 6th, 1957, and, some claim, took up a forerunner role for the independence of all African countries (*cf.* Asamoah, 1993). Ama Ata Aidoo (1992) states that "[f]or the great majority of West African women, colonialism meant unmitigated suffering" (in Sutherland-Addy & Diaw, 2005, p. 381). She also states, "Less known is that in response to Europe's insistence on conquering the continent, Africa over five centuries produced countless women soldiers and military strategists, many of whom died in the struggles" (ibid., p. 377). Aidoo's statements point to a tendency of obliterating women's agency from many historical accounts; it is only recent, yet growing, historiography that reflects on "women's riots and rebellions, as well as […] women's organisations that gave rise to them" (Andrade, 2002, p. 50). Not only was the historical account of women missing, but women as writers were also largely absent and thus "a corrective to the gaps, erasures, and misunderstandings of hegemonic masculinist history" (Mohanty, 1991, p. 34). The arrival of African women on the West African literary scene from the 1960s onwards meant an introduction of "a female perspective into the socio-political vision of Africa portrayed by male writers, and to address women's experience and the cultural barriers they faced" (Casely-Hayford *et al.*, 2015, p.

148).[98] Flora Nwapa's novel '*Efuru'* (1967) was the first major novel published by a woman in Anglophone West Africa, followed by increased (published) writing by female authors in the 1970s and 1980s. West African women's writing entailed manifold views that notably reflected on the colonial and post-colonial period of West African nations.

Colonial and Post-Colonial Period [99]

As early as the 15th century, the geographical area forming modern day Ghana was exposed to European powers exerting various degrees of economic and political influence.[100] It was the Portuguese that coined the name *Mina de Oura* (gold mine) or *Costa da mina*, Gold Coast, to denominate the gold-rich coastal strip in West Africa, stretching from contemporary Cote d'Ivoire to Benin, encompassing today's coast of Ghana. From the mid-17th century onwards, the presence of British powers carried far-reaching consequences as they established an exploitative economic system under a foreign empire's political rule, declaring the Gold Coast a British colony in 1874 and absorbing the war-strong Ashanti Empire some years later in 1902 (see Gocking, 2005).

From the 16th to the early 19th century, the West African coast, notably the coastal areas of present-day Ghana, formed a prominent part of the transatlantic slave trade spanning to the 'New World' including the Americas and the Caribbean. History bore witness to inhuman atrocities enacted upon human and gendered bodies through the predominantly economic system of the transnational slave trade. While estimates are continuously debated, some speak of around eleven million African victims. People, captured and traded as slaves, supplied a human resource to labour-intensive plantation economies in the US-American settlements of New England and Virginia, as well as sugar production in the Caribbean, in exchange for goods from the 'New World' (Rodriguez, 1997; Essah, 1997). While predominantly European powers and North American interests upheld the transatlantic slave trade, some historians investigated the role and potential collaboration of 'African slave trade' (see Eltis & Welvin, 1981, pp. 9-12) or 'indigenous' slave trade (see Perbi, 1981). However, these variants differed from the transatlantic one, notably in terms of protection

[98] I am drawing here on the exhibition catalogue of 'West Africa – World, Symbol and Song' displayed at the British Library in London in 2015.

[99] This section draws on earlier work (see Froehlich, 2015, Chapter 2 and 3).

[100]According to Gocking (2005), European presence can be dated back to 1471, with the arrival of the Portuguese in the coastal areas of West Africa. Various other European powers followed such as the English, the Swedish, the Danish, the French and the *Brandenburger*. By the 17th century, there were about 110 European forts on the West African coast, 100 of which were located in the area of 'The Gold Coast' (pp. 25-28).

accorded to slaves and that "slavery was seldom viewed as a permanent condition" (Rodriguez, 1997, p. xviii).

The abolition of the transatlantic slave trade was championed by the kingdom of Denmark[101] (1803), and the British Empire as well as US-America quickly followed suit (1808) together with various other European powers thereafter. However, illegal trade continued for various years. In the aftermath of the US-American war of independence (1861-65), people continued to be shipped as slaves, albeit in lower numbers and notably to Cuba and Brazil (Rodriguez, 1997, p. xxii; Eltis & Walvin, 1981, p. 6). Investigating the British empire's abolition of slavery in 1834, David Eltis and James Walvin (1981) engage with a variety of rationales and positions and argue for undoing a strict separation of either moral or economic reasons as both seem to apply with varying emphasis (pp. 6-9).

The notions of 'tradition' and 'modernity' play a pivotal role before, during and after the political independence struggle from colonial rule in West African nations. Many African intellectuals of the 19th and 20th century were educated in a European missionary and later British colonial school system and set out to re-claim the possibility of Africans to participate in (a Eurocentric) modernity without having to shed all elements of their traditional African culture (Nkrumah, 1979[1957]; Korang, 2004). As such, African intellectuals, early on, challenged the dominant colonial narrative which put 'tradition' as an obstacle to modernity, equated with progress and development (see also Section 3.1.1, p. 44 of this thesis). The beginnings of formal educational opportunities for Africans in present-day Ghana were linked to European Christian missionary work; access to the educational system was limited notably to an African elite and it was mainly boys attending missionary and later colonial schools. The next section will briefly look at educational opportunities for girls linked to African women's writing including, but not limited to, themes and perspectives on gender.

African Women's Writing Linked to Educational Opportunities

Educational opportunities for girls were limited in colonial Gold Coast and post-colonial Ghana. In the first half of the 19th century, there were few primary and even fewer secondary schools for girls, the earliest ones dating back to 1822/23 and 1884 respectively (see Gadzepko, 2001, pp. 45-46). While colonial education for boys in the Gold Coast "aimed at

[101] For an engagement with the colonial presence of the kingdom of Denmark in Ghana, see Odotei (1972) and Hernoes (2003).

reinforcing British administrative policy by producing subjects who could function in the system" (ibid., p. 43), education for girls set out to prepare them "for their circumscribed roles as Christian mothers and helpmates to their Christian bread-winning husbands" (p. 48). Aidoo (1992) comments on this theme through partially pointy remarks,

> While the boys in colonial elite schools were being prepared to go to England to become professionals (mostly lawyers), girls in the equivalent schools were being taught needlework and needlepoint, crocket and baking. This was to make sure they became wonderful wives and great mothers. And many turned out exactly as programmed. (Aidoo 1992 in Sutherland-Addy & Diaw, 2005, p. 381)

Expansion of girls' educational opportunities in the first half of the 20th century afforded obvious benefits such as reading and writing skills; nonetheless, Audrey Gadzepko (2001) demonstrates in her work how education for females was contested on various grounds (pp. 47 ff.). Still, such education directly links to the presence of African women's writing during colonial times (between 1874 and 1957) and thereafter. Such writing entailed "a wide range of themes to counter [the] masculinist account of Africa's encounter with modernity" (Casely-Hayford *et al*., 2015, p. 149), including the position and role of women as mothers and daughters, polygamy, difficulties imposed on women by social and traditional expectations and discussions on gender inequality. African women writers also gave ample space to themes of power and socio-political injustices (ibid.).

Women's writing in West Africa produced representations of African women that challenged masculinist, racist and sexist accounts. From the 1960s and 70s onwards, sustained African women literary writing "mainly set out to dispel misrepresentations of African womanhood that proliferated in African literature at the time" (Mekgwe, 2007, p. 166; see also Casely-Hayford *et al*., 2015). A brief engagement with two Ghanaian women writers, who contributed to the literary and public discourse of their time and occupied varying public roles, will illustrate this point.

From the 1930s onwards, Mabel Dove-Danquah (1905-84), a writer, journalist and political activist "dared women to break with form, to derive inspiration from the suffragists, to denounce imperialism, and to fight for their rights" (Gadzepko, 2005, p. 371). Under various pseudonyms, Dove wrote for several West African newspapers and became editor of the *Accra Evening News* in 1951, the second woman in Ghana to hold a newspaper editor position (ibid.). Dove addressed gender and racial stereotypes in various ways, notably in her satire entitled '*The Adventures of the Black Girl in her Search for Mr Shaw'* (1934, published

in fragments as part of the *Times of West Africa* newspaper).[102] This satirical comment was as a direct and pointed response to the earlier publication by George Bernhard Shaw '*The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God'* (1932), which was laden with racial and sexist stereotypes. Dove was also the first woman elected to the Gold Coast Legislative Assembly (West African Review, September 1954 cited in Casely-Hayford *et al*., 2015).

Ama Ata Aidoo has been a prominent voice within contemporary Ghanaian literary and public discourse (1992; 1993; 1995; 2012). A literary writer, academic and short-term politician, it was already in her early work that she wrote protagonists into existence that often defied the stereotypical women's roles of their time (see Aidoo, 1964). Nana Wilson-Tagoe (2007) points out that Aidoo created "histories of women's agency" and also explored "the dynamic social and historical contexts of national transformation" (p. 228). African female scholars of gender and development continue to challenge simplistic representations of African women in a critical way. In doing so, they draw on the literary tradition of African women's writing, building upon it while, simultaneously, challenging certain aspects of it.

The discursive canon established by female West African writers in a colonial and post-colonial context influences writing on gender and development in a contemporary Ghanaian context, in a nuanced way. A case in point is addressing iconic historical and heroic images of "Yaa Asantewaa, an Asante (Ashanti, Ghana) queen [who] led an insurrection against the British" (Aidoo, 1992 in Sutherland-Addy & Diaw, 2005, p. 378). Deeply imbued in collective memory,[103] such images support a presumed valued position and role of females within broader Ghanaian culture, which cannot be upheld; there is a focus on individual achievement rather than referencing or being mindful of the collective (Manuh & Anyidoho, 2015, p. 21). The next section will take a closer look at a contemporary Ghanaian context for gender equality.

6.1.2. Contemporary Ghanaian State Architecture for Gender Equality

At a national and sub-national level, the Ghanaian state deals with gender equality and women's empowerment in various ways. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana (with amendments through 1996) includes the principle of equality between men and women and specifies, *inter alia*, that women have equal rights at work. Manuh (2009) comments that while women and

[102] The British Library collection holds various, even if not all, chapters of Dove's satire printed in several issues of *The Times of West Africa* from 1934. Retrieving missing chapters and making Dove's satire available to a broader audience, in its entirety, constitutes a future research and publication project.
[103] For further work on collective memory, see Assmann and Czaplicka (1995).

men are equal before the law, as endorsed in the Constitution, "in reality, a pervasive number of gender disparities in women's access to a range of personal, public and productive resources exist" (p. 40, drawing on Kuenyehia, 1998). Specialised government bodies set out to address these disparities. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP), created in January 2013 and headed by a female minister, sets out to "achiev[e][…] gender equality and equity, facilitate the enforcement of the rights of children [and] promote integration and protection of the vulnerable, excluded and persons with disabilities in the [national] development process" (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 2021). To achieve these aims, the Ministry has drafted various policies and action or operational plans including a recent National Gender Policy (May 2015) entitled 'Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment into Ghana's Development Efforts'. The forerunner to the current MoGCSP was the Ministry of Women's and Children Affairs (MoWAC), established in 2001, which replaced the National Council on Women and Development, the "national machinery for women […] play[ing] an advisory and advocacy role" since 1975 (Manuh, 2009, p. 40; see also Anyidoho & Manuh, 2010). What becomes clear is that gender equality and women's empowerment are issues integrated in the overall national state-led development effort in Ghana.

The MoGCSP draws on intersecting social identity aspects such as gender, age and ability/disability to consider gender equality and women's empowerment in various regards. The overall approach taken by MoGCSP seems to rest on gender mainstreaming, arguably prohibiting more transformative changes (see discussion in Chapter 3). From a structural point of view, the weakness of MoGCSP's predecessor MoWAC laid in its absence from "decentralised district assembly structures" (Manuh, 2009, p. 40), which "are charged with implementing national policies at local level, contextualized to suit local priorities and needs" (p. 39). For MoGCSP, the situation seems to have improved with officers/units in charge of gender programmes at various district level government institutions, together with some resource allocation to gender issues/statistics. Gender budgeting is also being used and trainings in this, and other related areas, received (MoGSCP in collaboration with Ghana Statistical Service, 2017). However, there is, arguably, still much room for further strengthening designated government gender structures at district level (see ibid.).

While there is a state-led trajectory of addressing poverty, into which gender issues are immersed, inequality persists in various dimensions in Ghana (UNDP, 2019a; McKay &

Osei-Assibey, 2017; OECD, 2014).[104] Disparities among women and men, girls and boys in Ghana continue to be "reinforced by neo-traditional customary systems and practices, religious doctrines […], and socialization and education processes […] that define females as less than males, and not deserving of the rights of full citizenry and self-actualization" (Manuh, 2009, pp. 40-41, drawing on Oduyoye, 2009; Ammah-Koney, 2009; Adomako Ampofo & Prah, 2009). As such, considering the contemporary Ghanaian state architecture needs to be linked to a balanced and nuanced engagement with culture and customary practices and their diverse impact on gender equality and women's empowerment.

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana endorses 'Ghanaian culture' (Art.39.3, see also Art.26.1) while it also outlines customary practices which are dehumanising or cause physical or mental injury to the person are prohibited (Art.26.2). In a similar vein, programme documentation of the Girl Power Programme points to balanced engagement with culture and socio-cultural practices (for further discussion, see chapters following). Overall, Manuh (2009) emphasises that, "traditions and culture […] have a democratic and popular content which must be upheld and struggled for, against its authoritarian face which is often seen" (p. 37). While various 'gender activists' in a Ghanaian context, often lawyers, "have viewed culture in the form of customary law and practices, as the major contributor to women's disempowerment and unequal participation in Ghanaian society" (p. 60, drawing on Adjetey, 1995; Ofei.Aboagye, 1994; Sam, 2005), others point to "women need[ing] both their culture and their rights" (Manuh, 2009, p. 60, pointing to Butegwa, 2002; Nyamu-Musembi, 2002 and Tamale, 2008). This thesis aligns with the latter findings.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in a Contemporary Ghanaian Context

Nana Akua Anyidoho and Takyiwaa Manuh (2010) outline how the discourse around women's rights, gender equality and women's empowerment draws on national, as well as global influences with local ramifications. In a contemporary Ghanaian context,

> […] discourses on women's rights owe as much to provisions in the [Ghanaian] constitution and other positive statements in the law as they do to cross-fertilizations and global discourses popularized by the UN and its agencies and international feminist movements. (Anyidoho & Manuh, 2010, p. 267)

[104] According to the Briefing Note for Ghana on the Human Development Report (UNDP, 2019a), the Gender Development Index (GDI) value for Ghana lies at 0.912, placing it in Group 4. Countries in Group 1 are considered closest to gender parity (based on data from the Human Development Index, HDI) while countries in Group 5 are considered furthest from gender parity in the three HDI and GDI dimensions. Ghana ranks 133 out of 162 countries in the 2018 Gender Inequality Index, calculating gender-based inequality in three further dimensions, reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity. For the entire Human Development Report 2019, see UNDP (2019b).

Thus, “it may be difficult to separate the local from the global” (ibid., drawing on Manuh, 2007). From a legal state perspective, Ghana endorses various international documents aimed at safeguarding women’s rights and gender equality. Ghana ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1986 as well as the Optional Protocol in 2011. Likewise, Ghana ratified the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights in 1989 and the Maputo Protocol in 2007 (Make Every Woman Count, 2014, pp. 87-89).

International development efforts, drawing on rights-based approaches as endorsed in policy documents and measured in global gender-related indices, may address aspects of inequality, advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment at national, district and local level. Notwithstanding the potential to address inequality, Dzodzi Tsikata eloquently criticises inter- and transnationally informed rights-based approaches as

> […] little accountability is demanded by the RBAs [rights-based approaches] of the IFIs [International Financial Institutions] and other multilateral agencies, bilateral agencies, transnational corporations, Western governments or international NGOs, who to various degrees are the ones in the driving seat of development policy-making, particularly in Africa. (p. 219)

A (re-)consideration of accountability, connected to power structures as part of international development, may be incorporated in gender analysis frameworks that set out to be transformative (see also Section 3.3.1).

Manuh and Anyidoho (2015) assert that gender equality “is not only a question of state policies or of the activism of women’s groups and movements, but also relates to the values, attitudes, behaviour and relationships among citizens, within communities, and in society at large” (p. 19). Reflecting on the notion of women’s empowerment, linked to gender equality, the authors notably consider the influences of the Beijing conference in a contemporary Ghanaian context, aligning a policy sphere to lived realities. Manuh and Anyidoho stress that what the Beijing Conference of 1995 provided was “a discourse or framework within which demands [of Ghanaian women] could be articulated” (p. 23).

> […] after Beijing it also became about agency in personal, social and political relationships of power between the state and women, and between men and women. In other words, it was about the representation and visibility of women in the political, social and personal domains in Ghanaian society. (p. 20)

Studying the Girl Power Programme as a research case in this doctoral thesis, a key emphasis was laid on how an international policy sphere aligns to local lived realities (for further discussion, see chapters following).

6.2. The Girl Power Programme – a Case Study Approach

Adopting a case study approach, this thesis studied GPP design, implementation and MEL phases with a particular focus on three rural or peri-urban communities in the Eastern Region of Ghana. According to Bent Flyvbjerg, who has worked on the methodological case study approach extensively, the "advantage of the case study is that it can 'close in' on real-life situations and test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice" (2006, p. 235). Flyvbjerg eloquently engages in a process of undoing five major misunderstandings attached to case study research, foregrounding its methodological strengths. In this process, Flyvbjerg points to understanding "concrete experiences" linked to "feedback from those under study" (p. 223) and that validity claims are generated in dialogue with other validity claims (p. 233); these elements were adopted as part of this research.[105]

6.2.1. GPP Design and Chronology of Its Implementation

Between 2011 and 2015, the GPP was implemented in South Asia (Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan), Latin America (Nicaragua and Bolivia) and sub-Saharan Africa, more specifically, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone in West Africa, Ethiopia in East Africa and Zambia in Southern Africa. Led by the INGO Plan International, it was a 57 million Euro global programme focussing on protection with an emphasis on violence against women and girls (VAWG), (post-primary) education, economic participation and socio-economic participation. According to an internal document, the GPP objective was to empower girls and young women

> through three specific impact areas: elimination of physical and sexual violence against girls and young women by promoting the full implementation of all the recommendations of the UN Study on Violence against Children;[106] socio-economic empowerment of girls and young women by strengthening the quality of and access to education; and socio-political empowerment of girls and young women by promoting their equal and full participation in the social and political development of

[105] Broader thinking on research design as part of this thesis was influenced by Blaikie, 2010.
[106] See United Nations General Assembly Report of the Independent Expert for the United Nations Study on Violence Against Children, 29 Aug 2006, A/61/299

> their society (Plan International UK, Internal Document, shared with author in January 2017, pp. 1-2)

The Girl Power Programme links to a number of relevant approaches as part of Plan International's wider 'Girls 2030 programme'. These approaches include Champions of Change, 18+ Ending Child Marriage, Safer Cities for Girls, West African Initiative on Child Marriage as well as Promoting Equality and Safety in Schools (Plan International UK, Internal Document, shared with author in January 2017). According to their website, Plan International, founded in 1937, "is a development and humanitarian organisation that advances children's rights and equality for girls", striving "for a just world, working together with children, young people, our supporters and partners" (Plan International, n.d. a; see also Plan International, n.d. b). With this thematic focus, the development work of Plan International, and the Girl Power Programme in particular, clearly demonstrate pronounced emphasis on empowerment of women and girls through strengthening their rights and a focus on gender equality. This was congruent with parts of the identified focus for this doctoral research project (see also Introduction).

While the GPP was overall led by Plan International, it was funded primarily through the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Child Rights Alliance (CRA) based in the Netherlands was overall responsible for GPP design, implementation as well as MEL processes. In the ten programme countries, the CRA worked together with partner organisations, local NGOs as well as community-based organisations (Development Practitioner Interview Jet Bastiani Plan Netherlands).[107] Structured as a programme, the GPP entailed a multitude of projects conducted in different countries, at varying levels of development work.[108] As such, it is an international intervention that operates at various levels cross-culturally, which constitutes an important focus for this research (see also Introduction).

Plan International's complex organisational structure, together with civil society and institutional partners involved in GPP implementation at national, regional and local level translates into an intricate GPP set-up. Plan's complex organisational structure entails "the Global Hub […] located in the United Kingdom, over 50 Country Offices [COs] and their Programme Units [PUs], 4 Regional Hubs and 4 Liaison Offices" (Plan International, n.d. c).

[107] In the following, referenced as DP Interview JB Plan Nl.

[108] Study of GPP programme documents as well as interviews with development practitioners revealed that in Ghana, the GPP is both referred to as a 'programme' and/or 'project'.

While COs and PUs, together with regional hubs, are located in the Global South, the Global Hub and 20 National Offices (NOs) together with the liaison offices are located in the Global North. NOs constitute separate legal entities and are responsible for fundraising as well as "effective management and implementation of major grant-funded projects" (ibid.). Plan International Ghana took the lead in implementing the GPP across three regions in Ghana, with financial resources and technical support provided through Plan International Netherlands. In Ghana, the GPP was implemented in 200 communities throughout the Eastern, Upper West and Ashanti region (see Fig. 4 below). Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom, the three communities investigated as part of this research, are located in the Eastern Region of Ghana, where the GPP was implemented in two districts, Akwapim North and East Akim.

Figure 4. Political Map of Ghana

Source: One World – Nations Online, 2019

During GPP implementation in the Eastern Region of Ghana, the Child Research and Resource Centre (CRRECENT) and the Ark Foundation were the main 'civil society partners', or 'local NGOs', conducting programme activities at community level.[109] Various other institutions were also involved in the implementation of the GPP notably state agencies such as the Department of Social Welfare, the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Force as well as the National Commission on Civic Education (GPP Final Report 2015, p. 17). Crucially, implementation also relied on various CBOs, such as Child Protection Teams (CPTs) formed during GPP implementation. Organisations involved in the GPP as implemented in the Eastern Region of Ghana often carried thematic, regional or particular project cycle responsibilities.

The chronology of GPP implementation within Ghana is illustrated within GPP programme documentation available to the researcher including quarterly progress and annual reports as well as progressive documentation on budget and output modifications. In line with the above discussion, narrative reporting mostly considers programmatic activities and components in four GPP thematic areas, Protection (against violence), (Post)Primary Education, Economic Participation and Socio-political Participation. This is in line with the four-fold objective of GPP implementation in Ghana, which is as follows:

> The GPP in Ghana seeks to: 1) Protect Girls and young women from violence; 2) Enhance socio-political participation of girls and young women; 3) Enhance economic opportunities for girls and young women; 4) Promote post primary education for girls and young women. (Project Outline Eastern Programme Unit Plan Ghana[110] Aug 2012, p. 2)

The four GPP areas are addressed at various societal levels, as becomes especially clear in the GPP Final Report (2015). Section III of the GPP Final Report presents outputs under three GPP thematic areas (pp. 6-16), while an in-depth performance review (Section IV) also considers a fourth thematic area when linking output delivery to GPP outcomes (pp. 17-62). Section III illustrates that the thematic area of Protection includes child helplines,[111] child

[109] Overall, the GPP programme in Ghana relied on six 'implementing partners', including the African Movement for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (AMPCAN), the Social Initiative for Literacy and Development Program (SILDEP), the Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty, the Environment and Child Support (CAPECS) and GNRC (Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child) (Mid Term Evaluation Transition International Dec 2013, p. 3).

[110] Subsequently referenced as EPU Plan Gh

[111] In conversation with community members in Kwamoso during participant observation, it was revealed that the helpline does not always seem to function, as one cannot get a signal and/or the line is continuously busy.

marriage free villages/communities as well as community-based protection services; (Post-primary) Education includes scholarships, school construction and rehabilitation as well as community-funded educational services; and Economic Participation, or Empowerment, includes *inter alia* vocational skills training as well as life skills training. Section IV (pp. 17-62) shows that, at individual level, the outcome in terms of socio-political participation entails "[g]irls and young women take equally part in decision making and politics" (p. 28). The outcome at socio-cultural level includes "Communities value girls and young women as actors of (importance) in political decision taking" (ibid.), while the outcome at institutional level contains "Government actively creates conditions for equal political participation by both sexes" (p. 29). What becomes clear is that while GPP chronological implementation takes places *overall* in four thematic areas and at four societal levels, emphasis is placed on a selection of areas and levels at times.

Section II of the GPP Final report (2015, p. 5) entails a summary sheet that succinctly shows GPP output planning and realisation at four societal levels throughout the years 2011 to 2015, juxtaposed with information solely focussing on the final GPP year, 2015 (see Fig. 5 below). At individual level, "Services delivered by partners to young girls and women" are included; at socio-cultural level "Sensitisation of communities (men and women) by partners" took place; at institutional level, the focus laid on "Influencing national/district/local governments (by partners)"; and, at civil society level, "Strengthening of civil society (orgs) by partners" was envisioned.

During the interview with the DOVVSU representative (25 August 2017), she shared that she was not sure whether the helpline is still working.

Figure 5. Summary Sheet GPP Output Realisation

II. **SUMMARY SHEET**

Output realisation – summary sheet		Planned 2015	Realised 2015	Planned 2011 - 2015	Realised 2011 - 2015
A3. Creation and promotion of grassroots organisations (by Dutch alliance member organisations)					
# of new grassroots organisations targeted in 2015 for (capacity) development support by Dutch alliance organisations		-	-	-	-
# of grassroots organisations supported with capacity development in 2015 by Dutch alliance member organisations[1]		-	-	-	-
B.1 Services delivered by partners to young girls and women (individual level)					
Services to individual girls/young women and boys, including helplines, media messages, trainings and workshops on gender equality and/or overall empowerment, sport events/activities, support to victims of GBV through shelter facilities or at community level, scholarships and/or material support for (post-) primary education, vocational skills trainings, savings and loans schemes	**# of girls and young women** reached by services delivered by partner organisations in 2015	17,300	47,450	15,840	60,500
	# of boys reached by services delivered by partner organisations in 2015	4,687	18,660	9,375	23,273
B.2 Sensitisation of communities (men and women) by partners (socio-cultural level)					
Sensitization activities/campaigns to (adult) community members and public leaders	**# of communities** reached by partners with activities aimed at promotion of gender equality & girls' rights	200	200	200	200
	# of households reached by partners with activities aimed at promotion of gender equality & girls' rights	24,000	24,390	48,000	51,080
	# of traditional leaders reached by partners with activities aimed at promotion of gender equality	655	755	2,000	2016
B.3 Influencing national/district/local governments by partners (institutional level)					
# of frontline professional staff of (local, district, province, regional or national) government institutions reached by partners for training – including police, justice, health, education		165	189	436	573
# of staff of government institutions reached by partners for lobby and advocacy to influence laws and policies related to girls empowerment, child rights and women's rights		40	56	180	315
B.4 Strengthening of civil society (orgs) by partners (civil society level)					
# of CSO's and media professional reached with capacity strengthening support by partners – including girls' clubs, women cooperatives, youth organisations, community based organisations and other grassroots organisations		285	356	100	628
# of CSO networks supported or strengthened in relation to gender equality and women's rights by partner organisations		4	4	4	4

[1] This refers to the total number of grassroots organisations supported in 2015, including organisations that were already supported in previous years.

5

Girl Power Alliance – Girl Power Programme
7-2-7 GP Country Projects Final Report 20151016

Source: GPP Final Report, 2015, p. 5

Modifications on budget and output as part of GPP programme documentation show that various programmatic activities and components are implemented within one programme year and reveal differences in emphasis between years.[112] Apart from the first Project Outline Budget and Output Modification, all report on budget expenditure in three thematic and one general area: Right to Protection (including in and from emergencies), Right to Quality Basic Education, Right to Household Economic Security and Health as well as Programme Support (GPP PO Modification #1, 21 Jan 2013 to #9, 18 June 2015). Across programme documentation, varying rationales of reporting GPP outputs aligning to three, or four, (differently termed) thematic spheres at four societal levels arguably necessitate some translation and alignment between programmatic documentation.

[112] While under 'Right to Protection', Modification #4 (April 2014) included the following programme elements "Community development plans", "Awareness raising for children, parents and communities on ROC [Rights of the Child]", "Training for professionals on ROC", "Child Protection" and "Learn Without Fear", a later Modification (#9 June 2015) entailed additional outputs under the same thematic area. These were "Support for national policy and practice on ROC", "Radio/TV for children" and "Life skills for adolescents".

6.2.2. Achievements and Challenges of the Girl Power Programme in Ghana

The GPP was broadly perceived as a 'successful' programme, an appraisal that was widely shared among community members and development practitioners interviewed as part of this research, but also evidenced in programme documentation. However, achievements, or 'success', of a development programme can be perceived in various ways as highlighted in the discussion of my analytical framework in Chapter 4. Due to the research focus on subjective perceptions of success, with potential links to meaningful broader social transformation, studying a 'successful' development programme, and inquiring what this means to differing social actors, forms a core part of this thesis.

According to the GPP Mid-Term Evaluation (Dec 2013), conducted by external consultants Transition International (TI),[113] the GPP fared well in all four evaluative dimensions, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, despite some challenges in regard to efficiency on the grounds of high staff turnaround and limited financial resources, as well as some issues with internal MEL measures. Relevance of a development intervention is defined as "the extent to which the objectives of an intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies" (Dec 2013, p. 41). Efficiency "measures how economically resources (human resources, financial resources, time, materials) are applied (the inputs) and converted to direct results (the outputs)" (p. 42), considering quantity and quality as well as application (the process) of inputs and outputs (see ibid.). Effectiveness points to an intervention's outputs having made "a demonstrable contribution to the achievement of the invention's intended objectives" (p. 43) and closely links to the dimension of sustainability. The latter includes factors such as "stakeholder involvement, socio-cultural environment, capacity-strengthening, community and institutional structures and the availability of an exit strategy" (p. 45). While GPP documentation clearly indicates that aspects of relevance and sustainability are considered (for in-depth discussion, see Section 7.2.2), output realisation understood in terms of efficiency features prominently. As highlighted above, the language of 'outputs' linking to 'results' and 'goals' in quantitative terms features prominently in Section II of the GPP Final Report (2015, pp. 5-13). However, a section on 'additional progress information' entailing qualitative information follows, with a focus on an 'institutional level' (pp. 14-16) especially "changes in (implementation of) legislation and policies on GBV, child

[113] According to their website, Transition International (TI) is a Netherlands-based, international consultancy firm with a network of senior consultants around the world (see Transition International, 2016).

protection, gender and/or girls' rights" (p. 14). A significant part of the GPP Final Report (2015, pp. 34-54) considers development as a process, reporting in qualitative and narrative terms on realisation of 'outcomes', rather than outputs, seemingly in line with feminist critique of MEL approaches (*cf.* Batliwala & Pittmann, 2010).

Girls and young women were targeted as main beneficiaries on individual level as part of the GPP; levels of satisfaction among programme 'beneficiaries' might serve as a proxy for programme 'success'. Girls and young women benefitted from various sensitisation activities and trainings as well as (in-kind) scholarship schemes. These and other programmatic activities linked to "the purpose of the project" across GPP countries, including Ghana, which "was to ensure equal rights and opportunities of girls and young women, and to encourage their participation in the social, economic and political development of society" (Plan International, Internal Document, shared in January 2017, p. 2). According to the Mid Term Evaluation (TI Dec 2013), a majority of respondents, notably young women, displayed high levels of satisfaction with the overall GPP programme in Ghana, while none "answered that they are unsatisfied with the programme" (p. 41).

An internal document by Plan International outlines various 'achievements'. At individual level, this included Girls' Clubs formed "and used as platforms to train adolescent girls on their rights (education, sexual reproductive health, participation, protection)" and providing "training for girls to participate in decision-making and leadership", with "club members serv[ing] as peer educators in their communities". A publication by Plan International Ghana (n.d. a) depicts that notably girls and young women benefitted from an 'economic participation strategy' as vocational and life skills training as well as apprenticeships, while young men also benefitted (see Fig. 6A below). The Post Training Report of Vocation Skills Training (April 2015) compiled by Wiltex Ventures, one of two organisations who provided training in the Eastern Region,[114] indicates that there was wide satisfaction among all participants with the training.[115] Vocational skills training included

[114] Wiltex Ventures conducted training in Koforidua, the capital of the Eastern Region in Ghana, for 89 females and 12 males. They were trained in smaller groups in different skills, while all participants (together with three additional women) received business and entrepreneurial skills training (Post Training Report of Vocational Skills Training April 2015). Positive Action Against Poverty (PAAP) provided "short-term training for 100 youth (86 young women, 14 young men) in […] Akwapim North"; this entailed provision of "start-up equipment", training in business and financial literacy skills, as well as "mentoring and coaching" (one visit per two months for six months) (GPP Monitoring Report Vocational Skills EPU Plan Gh, p. 1).

[115] The 'success' of the GPP component of economic empowerment was also addressed in an interview with a development practitioner (DP Interview 2) as well as further GPP programme documentation (GPP Feedback from Beneficiaries EPU Plan Gh n.d.).

soap making, pomade/powder making, skills training on bakery as well as mobile phone repair, together with broader training on entrepreneurial and business skills. Expenditure for vocational skills training was among the highest as part of the GPP.[116] A more critical engagement with trainings provided will follow in the next section.

Figure 6A. GPP Economic Empowerment

Source: Plan International Ghana, n.d. a, p. 5

During house-to-house interviews conducted as part of this research, a majority of community members assessed that the GPP had 'worked well' (KWHtH).[117] Several community members interviewed referred to scholarship provision, either in-kind or covering school expenses as well as accommodation, linking to the GPP core component of (post-primary) education. Programme documentation outlines that "1200 pupils benefited from the in-kind scholarships in both Districts" (GPP Handing Over Note EPU Plan Gh July 2015, p. 1); in the Akwapim North and East Akim districts in the Eastern Region of Ghana, significant resources were earmarked for in-kind scholarships as part of overall GPP budget (GPP PO Modification #9 June 2015). According to programme documentation, "[t]he project is also supporting [several] youth at the KOICA [Dream] centre where we provide scholarship for their fees and accommodation" (GPP Handing Over Note EPU Plan Gh July 2015, p. 1), and

[116] Business skills training includes two account lines, 'Payment to NGO partner' in this case specifically for 'Vocational Skills training' and 'Contractor Payment'. The first account line amounting to a budget of GHc162,000 and the second to a budget of GHc206,021 (Budget with Modification 2015). The total of GHc368,021 constitutes 12,5% of the overall budget available for the GPP.

[117] KWHtH stands for 'Kwamoso House-to-House' and designates data generated through house-to-house interviews with community members. In response to Question 18 of the Interview Guide, 'What worked well in your opinion?', many community members answered that the GPP worked well (see also Appendix G).

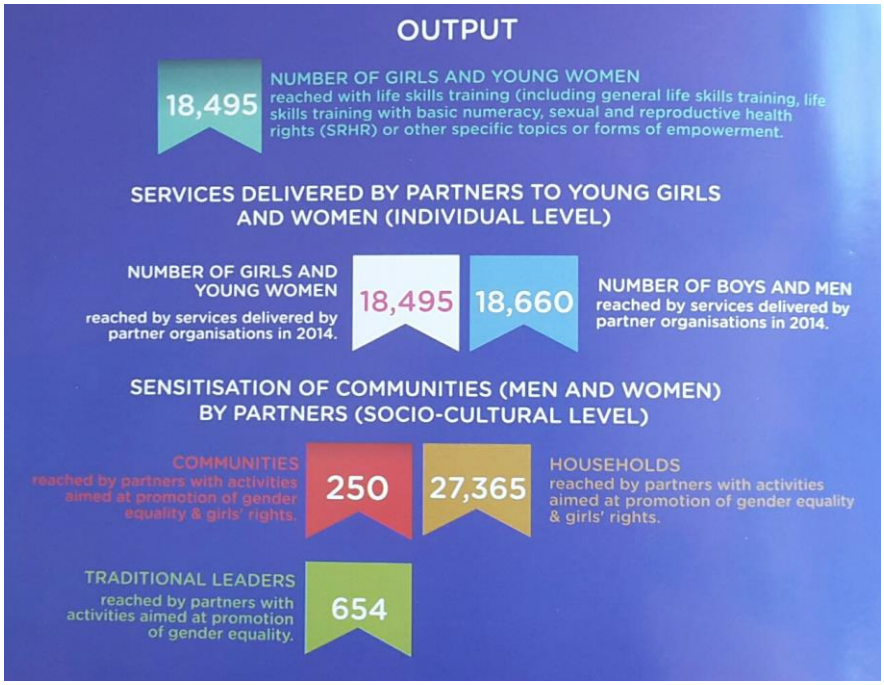
"34 young women (24) and men (10) were supported to pursue vocational training at Hyundai KOI(N)CA Dream Centre" (GPP Project Outline Comments EPU Plan Gh n.d. pp. 1-2). Especially research participants that were in receipt of scholarships, either for themselves or their children, tended to view them as 'successful' (KWHtH). Few research participants in Kwamoso criticised the number of schoolbooks distributed by the EPU Plan International Ghana. As part of in-kind scholarships to school-going girls, there was a felt or perceived need for a higher number of books to sustain a child throughout the entire school year.[118] Selected youth benefitted 'in depth' from scholarships to train at the KOICA Dream Centre, with both fees and accommodation being covered for a three-year training programme as auto technicians.[119] However, these scholarships only reached few beneficiaries when compared with overall beneficiary numbers (see Fig. 5, p. 139). Nonetheless, providing such possibilities to notably some young women (but also some young men) might address 'gender-transformative' issues as young women are trained in a field widely reserved for male workers and employees.

6.2.3. Representation of Girls and Boys as 'Beneficiaries' in Programme Documentation – a Note on Lessons Learnt

The GPP targeted girls and young women as main beneficiaries while boys and young men also benefitted. A higher number of boys and men benefited from 'life skills training' and from selected male-only activities (see Fig. 6B below).

[118] GPP programme documentation, specifically a note entitled 'Feedback on Audit Response April 2015', indicates that some children at one specific school were provided with one notebook each, while a male participant in the FGD Youth Group mentioned distribution of up to three books per child. However, he also added, "A class five child uses about ten books".
[119] See Hyundai Motor Company, 2014

Figure 6B. GPP Outputs as Services Delivered and Sensitisation Conducted



Source: Plan International Ghana, n.d. a, p. 4

Selected programme documentation points to a GPP workshop and includes the observations of the Municipal Director of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice.[120] The director observed that most workshop participants "ascribed gender roles as natural or God-given which could not be changed". However, he believed that workshops and other activities, "will enhance their understanding and further equip them with needed information and skills to promote gender equality" (GPP QPR Ark Foundation Oct to Dec 2014, p. 4). Acknowledging that certain aspects of gender roles and relations can change seemingly serves as a rationale for conducting particular GPP sensitisation activities especially with boys and young men. Narrative reporting describes another GPP workshop targeting men and boys in the following terms,

> Participants were exposed to the dangerous effects of disempowering girls and women on the victims and the community at large, and how it affected boys and men too. […] They were further educated on gender roles and norms that […] affect the realization of women's empowerment […] they were agents of change for gender balance and equality. (GPP Quarterly Progress Report[121] CRRECENT Jan to June 2014, p. 21)

[120] See Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (2021)
[121] Subsequently referenced as QPR

In framing empowerment of women and girls as a process of change for which also boys and men are responsible, the above quote points to Plan International's Child-Centred Community Development (CCCD) approach. This institutionally widely adopted approach envisions strategies for lasting impact in terms of children's rights and equality for girls at individual, community, institutional and civil society level in a particular socio-cultural context (Plan International UK, 2012), working together with various social actors.

Besides targeting girls and boys themselves, sensitisation activities including workshops and trainings were aimed at communities, households and traditional leaders (see Fig. 6B above). Sensitisation activities addressing and challenging perceived gender roles, relations and norms can carry the potential to support gender-transformative work in various ways; a key lesson learnt from the GPP. However, the role of sensitisation as part of programmatic implementation was also contested in several ways (for further discussion, see Chapter 7).

Engagement with boys and men clearly featured as part of GPP implementation in Ghana. This aligns to a contemporary rationale of gender analysis which suggests designing development programmes according to practical and strategic gender needs within a specific environment (see Fig. 1, p. 62). This might entail sole focus on males during some programmatic activities. The rationale of strongly including young boys and men in a gender programme implemented in Ghana might also link to particular conceptualisations of gender, drawing on African values as expressed in African feminist research such as collaboration and complementarity among women and men (see Chapter 2). Finally, it also aligns to a particular inclusive CCCD approach to development work adopted throughout Plan International. However, inclusion of high numbers of boys and men in GAD programmes, displaying particular gendered divides in the provision of vocational skills training, might also reinforce inequalities facing girls and young women in accessing jobs and taking up vocational professions equally.

As part of GPP programme documentation, the Post Training Report of Vocation Skills Training (April 2015) compiled by Wiltex Ventures displays that the vocational skills training component drew on a notably gendered divide among trainers and the uptake of training. Male trainers functioned as facilitators in all but the bakery component, which was taught by a female instructor. Men predominantly opted for the mobile phone repair skills training which constitutes a lucrative skill set aligned to a field of 'technology'. In a Plan

International Ghana publication, Margaret Brew-Ward, former programme manager of the GPP, comments on this point,

> for the mobile phone repair component, we couldn't get a lot of women. Very few were interested. We should pay more attention to how to encourage young women to take part in such initiatives. One-to-one sessions will be helpful in that regard. (n.d. a, p. 17)

Overall, several development practitioners interviewed were concerned with the limited number of beneficiaries for vocational skills training (DP Interview 2; DP Interview Ahensah Asum Kwarteng Country Office Plan Ghana[122]) pointing to some misalignment between perceived needs at community level and programmatic focus (for further discussion, see Chapter 7).

As a programme widely perceived as successful among a variety of social actors, studying GPP implementation in Ghana carries the potential for better understanding how subjective notions of programme success can be aligned to understandings of meaningful social transformation. The GPP arguably envisioned social transformation in transnational ways. As a basic definition, transnational means 'involving several nations'[123], a set-up that characterised the GPP intervention, as outlined in this chapter. However, Hanan Sabea (2008) reminds us, "[t]ransnational has many biographies and meanings" (p. 13); "[t]ransnational was also wrapped up in capitalist and imperial designs, signalling the corporate body that metamorphoses with the historically different configurations of capitalist regions" (p. 11). Nonetheless, some meanings of 'transnational' are "celebrating the possibilities offered by the concept that promises methodological rigour and theoretical advance achieved by multiple crossing of boundaries, the national being only one among many" (p. 13). It is in this character of the transnational that it aligns to a transnational transformative feminist lens adopted in this doctoral research and specified earlier (see Chapter 4). The following chapters will present analysis that addresses whether and how the GPP constitutes a transnational intervention - merely in terms of 'involving several nations' or carrying a potential to approach meaningful social transformation through transnational and other connections across boundaries?

[122] Subsequently referenced as DP Interview AAK CP Plan Gh

[123] According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2019), the core meaning of transnational is 'involving several nations'.

6.3. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has engaged with the Girl Power Programme, embedded in Ghana's post-colonial and contemporary GAD context, as a case study of this research. The first part of this chapter commenced by considering the colonial and post-colonial historical context of Ghana with a focus on gender and development. Briefly addressing the theme of gendered colonial education of African intellectuals led to presenting African women's literary writing tradition as an influence of contemporary GAD discourses within Ghana. Next, the contemporary state architecture for gender equality was considered illustrating how the Ghanaian state attempts to deal with gender equality and empowerment. Besides considering 'the colonial present' as part of our contemporary globalised world, this chapter highlighted that understandings of women's rights, gender equality and women's empowerment reference both the local, national and the international in intertwined ways as part of a contemporary Ghanaian context. The need for a balanced engagement with culture and socio-cultural practices was foregrounded together with an affirmation that 'women need both their culture and their rights'.

The second part of this chapter addressed GPP design and outlined the chronology of its implementation, mainly in Ghana, between 2011 to 2015. It then addressed GPP achievements, challenges and lessons from and discussed representations of girls and boys as main 'beneficiaries' at individual level. This chapter positioned the GPP as a 'successful' programme, which serves as a relevant basis for discussing conceptualisations of gender linked to subjective notions of programme success, potentially aligned to meaningful social transformation, as analysed in the next three chapters.

7. The Relevance of Locus for Conceptualising Gender and Development

This chapter investigates how varying conceptualisations of gender and development link to locus, studying the sites and relations from which these are expressed in the context of the GPP, an international cross-cultural development programme. This chapter is divided in three parts; the first one presents a situational analysis of the research communities considering community, municipal or district and national levels while focusing on critical poverty and gender analysis. The second part examines community development as a process of blurring various boundaries with implications for conceptualising gender and development, a theme that is taken up again in the third part of this chapter with a more pronounced focus on the Girl Power Programme.

As outlined in the analytical framework, investigating the locus entails a consideration of geographical and physical spaces as well as institutional and other alignments of social actors refracted through intersecting social identity markers. Analysis presented in this chapter considers the 'local', notably as rural and peri-urban sites, while also engaging with cross-cultural sites, including the 'international', through INGO networks, urban spaces and a state-legal nexus. A transnational focus in analysis will allow considering connections and crossings of spatial and other borders while simultaneously exploring and accounting for the specificities of spaces. Considering the role of power relations throughout, this chapter will demonstrate that there are different ways to articulate gender and development and varying positions align different authority to those interpretations.

7.1. Situational Analysis of Research Communities

This section entails a situational analysis of the three small-sized communities, Kwamoso, Nsutam[124] and Mintakrom located in the Eastern Region of Ghana, where in-depth ethnographic and qualitative research was conducted (see also Section 5.2). Located along a main road, the three research communities are connected to the national capital Accra and to Koforidua, the urban capital of the Eastern Region. In this section, a more pronounced focus is placed on Kwamoso, the largest of the three communities, located 60km north-east of Accra in the Akwapim North municipality. Most primary data considered in this research was (co-)generated in Kwamoso, where the research team took up residence for more than two months (21 Aug to 29 Oct 2017).

[124] This spelling is mainly used in GPP programme documentation; a different spelling designating the same community seems to be Nsutem.

The research team 'in the field' managed to speak to many more people than anticipated[125] and consciously foregrounded female voices as interview partners at community level. In house-to-house interviews and focus group discussion with community members but also interviews with development practitioners, we worked mainly with open questions aimed at generating in-depth narratives. While the sample drawn on is not representative, the larger size allows for comparative reflections between community-level data and municipal-level data as presented in this chapter.

This research draws on 'code development' and qualitative analysis of thematic coding to identify patterns and breaks in patterns (see Boyatzis, 1998). Working with qualitative coding software Nvivo 11, analysing patterns allowed to gain a deeper understanding of the conceptualisation of social phenomena, such as gender linked to development. Counting occurrences of terms, or codes, within statements of research participants can form part of such analysis as it provides pointers to commonly held and socially widely sanctioned views (high occurrences) and what might constitute alternative views (low occurrences).[126] At the same time, in-depth thematic analysis and triangulation with other research methods adopted in this PhD, such as participant observation, aided in illustrating to what extent widely held views were confirmed or challenged through lived realities.

7.1.1. The Akwapim North Municipality within the Eastern Region of Ghana

Kwamoso and Mintakrom are located in the Akwapim North Municipality, while Nsutam is located in the former East Akim district;[127] both form part of the Eastern Region in Ghana. Prior to the implementation of the GPP, namely in the period of 1996 to 2001, there was a consistent reduction in inequality across the Eastern Region of Ghana, while the reduction of poverty varied, with some districts performing better than others. The poverty rank for Akwapim North, for instance, worsened (Annim et al., 2012). Approaching poverty and inequality as multi-disciplinary, multi-dimensional and dynamic concepts, Samuel Annim, Simon Mariwah and Joshua Sebu (2012) characterise poor communities in Ghana "by low

[125] Prior to commencing fieldwork, I, the doctoral student, had envisioned cooperating with one Ghanaian research assistant. However, the opportunity arose to work with two research assistants which had implications on how much data we could collect and co-generate with research participants.
[126] In part, the frequency of specific terms and codes also links to the set-up of the research questionnaires aligned to the focal areas of the GPP; see Appendices H, K and L.
[127] Now Fanteakwa North and Fanteakwa South District; see Eastern Region Co-ordinating Council (2016a).

income, malnutrition, ill health, illiteracy and insecurity" (p. 7) and view inequality notably as regional disparities between Southern and Northern Ghana. These link to colonial and post-colonial legacies structuring the Ghanaian economy, with higher levels of deprivation in Northern Ghana. Additionally, an urban-rural divide can be identified with Southern areas and urban areas performing better regarding several socio-economic indices (ibid.).

In implementing programmes to reduce poverty and promote *gender* equality, there are linkages between Ghanaian state institutions at different levels and cooperation with international, national as well as local NGOs. Linking district and national considerations, the Akwapim North municipality's Medium Term Development Plan (MMTDP, 2010-2013), for instance, aligns to a national policy framework including the theme of Human Development, Productivity and Employment (Eastern Region Co-ordinating Council, 2016b). While aligning to national frameworks, the MMTDP was prepared at municipal assembly level. At municipal or district level, up until 2017, the Eastern Region was made up of 26 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs). Since 2017, this number has been increased to 32 MMDAs, including 13 Municipal Assemblies and 19 District Assemblies (Eastern Region Co-ordinating Council, 2016a). For this research, the Akwapim North Municipal Assembly located in Akropong is of particular importance as it caters to two research communities, Kwamoso and Mintakrom. The stated mission of this assembly is "to improve upon the living conditions of the people through effective and efficient mobilization and utilization of resources with particular reference to community participation" (Eastern Region Co-ordinating Council, 2016b). Via fifteen service centres across Akwapim North, services are distributed which include "education, health, banking, telecommunication, postal, security, market, and agriculture extension services" (ibid.). The performance review of 'cross-cutting issues from 2010 to 2013' for the Akwapim North municipality (Eastern Region Co-ordinating Council, 2016b) includes programmes conducted by the Government of Ghana as well as by international and national NGOs such as the Hunger Project or the Girl Power Programme, the latter being undertaken in 50 communities across Akwapim North with the local NGO CRRECENT mentioned.[128] The relations between local government and (I)NGOs within Ghana can be further illustrated by taking a closer look at the implementation of the 2015 national gender policy by MoGCSP at municipal level.

[128] While the international NGO Plan International and their country office Plan International Ghana do not feature in the summary of the GPP as part of the online presence of the Akwapim North's municipal assembly, they do feature in various national news outlets (*cf.* News Ghana, 2015).

The 2015 national gender policy identifies MMDAs as "the main machinery for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of action plans at the district and community levels" (p. 42). MMDAs are also responsible for implementing programmes to promote 'gender equity' and reduce poverty, while the identified role of NGOs within Ghana includes "monitor[ing] national programmes on gender and advocat[ing] gender equality at all level[s]" (p. 40). Selected development programmes, as outlined above, indicate that local government and (I)NGOs are working together. While cordial relations between local government and NGOs can be identified, previous research has indicated that such relations can be superficial and tokenistic (see Bawole & Hossain, 2015).

Official sources within Ghana explicitly consider the situation of women and men in various thematic areas and include gender-disaggregated data (GSS, 2013; 2014; Eastern Region Co-ordinating Council, 2016b). With a focus on demographic information, the national analytical report of the 2010 Population and Housing Census (GSS, 2013) indicates that the overall population of Ghana is 24,658,823 and then outlines gender-disaggregated data for various age groups (see p. 54).[129] Besides indicating that the Ghanaian population more than tripled between 1960 and 2010 (ibid.), it also shows that the sex ratio for 1960 used to be 102.2 males per 100 females and, in 2010, this has declined to 95.2 (see p. 59). Newer data indicates that the Eastern Region makes up 10.5% of the overall Ghanaian population with 3,318, 853 (GSS, 2019). For the Akwapim North district, the 2010 Population and Housing Census (GSS, 2014) estimates a population of 136, 483 (with 53.1% females and 46.9% males) with the majority of residents (63.6%) being under the age of 30 and the highest number of households being engaged in agricultural activities (47.1%).[130] The farming conducted across Akwapim North is mainly subsistence farming "with just a few engaged in large scale farming for commercial purposes" (Eastern Region Co-ordinating Council, 2016b). The population size of Kwamoso, the largest of the three communities researched, was recorded at 1,512 (768 females and 744 males) including 425 households and 323 houses (GSS, 2014). Newer data estimates Kwamoso's population at 1,622 (Eastern Region Co-ordinating Council, 2016b), with gender-disaggregated data not easily accessible. Mintakrom,

[129] The newest national Population and Housing Census 2021 is currently being undertaken; see Stats Ghana (n.d.).
[130] Followed by 22.1% of the employed population, who are service and sales workers and 17.8% who are craft and related trades workers (GSS, 2014).

or 14 miles, has 1,269 residents (663 females and 606 males) with 282 households and 266 houses (GSS, 2014). Population data for Nsutem was not easily available.

For all three research communities located within the Eastern Region of Ghana, development practitioners interviewed identified "similar features [namely] poverty and joblessness or limited […] jobs" (DP Interview SS CRRECENT); overall, there was an "issue of poverty" (DP Interview 4). A majority of respondents at community level described Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom as farming communities and villages, with many research participants outlining that farming was both their work or profession and/or their daily tasks. Few community members said that they were engaged in 'petty jobs' which only offer irregular and meagre income, and which carry gendered specifications. Men mainly conduct occasional mason work or provide farm labour to farm owners in cases where they do not own farmland themselves while women tend to fetch water and peel cassava for others which is then often sold in stalls along the roadside as *gari*, a staple food within Ghana (KWHtH,[131] MINTAHtH,[132] NSUHtH[133]). These 'petty' or occasional jobs taken up by women throughout all three research communities, might allow earning between 5 to 10 Ghana cedis (70p to £1,33; conversion rate of October 2020). While several community members mentioned that 'life is OK', various respondents across all three research communities pointed to life being 'hard', 'difficult' and 'not easy' in response to the two opening questions posed during interviews.[134] 'Surviving' emerged as a mode of living linked to a lack of jobs or occupation, together with a lack of money and, at times, scarcity of food. However, several answers of community members point to a more diverse picture in terms of deprivation within the three communities.

A male community member, who works closely together with the Eastern Programme Unit (EPU) Plan International Ghana, explained for Kwamoso, "It is not a deprived community because we have access to water, electricity, schools". The 53-year-old wife of the Chief for Progress and a provision seller added that it is "a village; we have light, clinic and a school". A 36-year-old male teacher and farmer explained why living in Kwamoso "is

[131] KWHtH designates data generated through house to house (HtH) interviews with community members in Kwamoso (KW).
[132] MINTAHtH designates the data generation process of interviews with community members conducted in Mintakrom (MINTA) from house to house (HtH).
[133] NSUHtH designates data generated through house to house (HtH) interviews with community members in Nsutam (NSU).
[134] See Appendices H, K and L.

ok, this place is serene, things are not expensive and no arm[ed] robbery cases here" KWHtH). A 19-year-old male student said that in Mintakrom, "Life is moderate because some are living better lives here" (MINTAHtH) and a 50-year-old female farmer explained for Nsutam, "Life is good so if you work hard, so [that you have] what you will use to survive, you won't suffer for it" (NSUHtH). In line with the diverse levels of deprivation within the three research communities, interviews with community members showed that some residents have other occupational roles, apart from farming or 'petty jobs', which include government workers, commuting workers and few university students.

7.1.2. Kwamoso

Kwamoso consists of two main areas: Quarters, which derives its name from the living quarters of workers at the former state farm, the Kwamoso Oil Palm Plantation,[135] and Habitat for Humanity, after the name of the INGO which was involved in re-building this area after a flooding incident (KWHtH). Quarters is characterised by compound and adobe housing and shows higher levels of deprivation, based on participant observation, as compared to Habitat for Humanity (hereafter Habitat), which mostly features self-contained stone housing.[136] The population in Kwamoso, as in the rest of Ghana, is comparatively young; of the 132 community members (86 women and 46 men) interviewed in Kwamoso, nearly half of them (48.5%), or 64 respondents (41 female and 23 male) were between 18-35 years.[137] Respondents who stated that they were unemployed during the time of interview were overwhelmingly from this younger age bracket and female. A total of 16 respondents (15 females and 1 male), or 12%, pointed to being unemployed[138] with most of them (all but 5) residing in Quarters. While participant observation suggested that a large amount of community members was engaged in 'petty' or 'occasional work', only four respondents (3 females and 1 male) pointed to occasional work when asked about their profession.[139] Three of them (2 females and 1 male) were 28 years or younger and all but one resided in Quarters. Considering that the sample used in this research cannot directly be compared to, for

[135] See Gyasi (1996) and Ghana Business News (2011); see also Lambert (2019)
[136] Nonetheless, the guesthouse where the research team resided in Kwamoso was located in Quarters, featuring various basic and additional amenities.
[137] Overall, 22%, or 29 respondents at community level (17 females and 12 males) were between 18-25 years, while 26.5%, or 35 respondents (24 female and 11 male), were between 26-35 years of age.
[138] This included three females between 18 and 26 years who were currently schooling, in vocational training or about to commence the latter.
[139] In addition to occasional work, two respondents also mentioned farming and selling food items.

instance, the sample used in the 2010 Population and Housing Census, it is, nonetheless, interesting to note that the unemployment rate in Kwamoso at 12% is nearly three times the rate for Akwapim North in 2010 (GSS, 2014, p. 29). A "high incidence of unemployment", specifically youth unemployment, characterises communities across the Akwapim North municipality (Easter Region Co-Ordinating Council, 2016b). In a research interview, the Executive Director of the local NGO CRECCENT pointed to the phenomenon of "migration away from the place" especially for young people which might link to a lack of opportunities within communities (DP Interview SS CRRECENT).

Two female interviewees at community level mentioned that they were living with a disability which had differential impact on the income-generating activities taken up by each of them. While one indicated that she has "no work, only runs errands for people [and] sits at friend's shop", the other outlined that she buys alcohol from the farmers and then sells it (KWHtH).

Farming was most often mentioned as a profession by community members in Kwamoso. Of the 132 (86 women and 46 men) community members interviewed, 52 (34 women and 18 males), or 39%, said that their profession was farming. Around one third of these respondents (12 females and 5 males) indicated farming as their sole profession; in all other cases, further professions were also mentioned, mostly selling of produce or other items and rearing animals.[140] This points to various streams of generating income taken up by several community members interviewed.[141] A vast majority who indicated farming as their profession lived in Quarters.[142] The agricultural sector "used to be the main backbone of the Municipality" in Akwapim North but seems "to be dwindling" which can be linked to several challenges making "the sector less lucrative" (Eastern Region Co-ordinating Council, 2016b). At municipal level, Akwapim North is implementing several programmes to address this situation including the Rural Enterprise Programme (2013-2020) and the Youth in Agriculture Programme (since 2010) (ibid.).

More than one third of research participants in Kwamoso (44 respondents; 38 females and 6 males) mentioned selling as their profession; this included selling of farm produce,

[140] One additional 30-year-old male respondent described his profession as being self-employed and rearing goats and poultry.
[141] In analysing different professions taken up at community level in Kwamoso, those respondents who mentioned various professions, for instance, farming and selling of produce, were counted to each of these professions.
[142] Only 11 respondents, or 21%, who mentioned farming as their profession lived in Habitat.

mostly plantain, cassava and maize which are used to prepare staple foods across Ghana, and fruits but also cooked food (including cooked rice and stew, *waakye* and *kenke*) as well as tinned items. Few respondents were selling clothing items and shoes. What is striking is that 5 out of 6 respondents who were shopkeepers were male (between 35 and 63 years) while most women sold their items in temporary stalls, by carrying goods around in the community, or in nearby market towns. 19 people (8 female and 11 male) who responded to our house-to-house interview questions in Kwamoso indicated that they had a vocation with clearly gendered characteristics. While both women and men mentioned that they are seamstresses or tailers, only females mentioned being hairdressers and only males mentioned being drivers, carpenters and masons. There was also one 38-year-old female photographer.

Economic participation might be limited due to widely accepted social behaviour for women and men linked to gender roles and relations. Carrying loads, notably for elders, was mentioned as respectable behaviour for women, while a female respondent further explained, "I can carry things on my head and sell, but a man cannot do [the] same" (KWHtH). The following interaction unfolded as part of the FGD with the *susu*[143] group in Kwamoso and addresses 'carrying items' as a predominantly female task.

> Alice: Women are sometimes food vendors and hawkers (selling soap, dried fish, toiletries, small scale shop keepers) – can a man do the same?[144]
> All: Not in Kwamoso; men can never be a trader carrying foodstuff or ingredients around selling.
> All: In Accra or city[145], men carry pure water[146] around, but not in Kwamoso.

What emerges is that social acceptance for economic activities linked to particular social behaviour differentially applies to community or urban spaces with gendered implications. In an interview, a female respondent clarified this point, "I can carry soaps or anything to sell, but this community, a man cannot do that because people will laugh at him" (KWHtH). Potential exposure to ridicule, notably for men, when transgressing the confines of widely accepted gendered behaviour serves as a powerful deterrent to adopting particular practices (for further discussion, see Chapter 8).

[143] *susu* is the local denomination in *Twi* for Village Saving and Loan Association (VSLA).
[144] Question 3.7. in the FGD Interview Guide, see Appendix J.
[145] Throughout Accra, notably female but also male vendors and hawkers sell their produce either at markets, in the streets or at highly frequented spots such as larger bus stations. Goods for sale often include snacks and drinks as well as a variety of household items (Fieldnotes Pilot Visit, 15 Mar to 1 Apr 2017).
[146] Pure water refers to plastic sachets containing 500ml of drinking water sold for locally affordable prices.

For Kwamoso, a 36-yearl old male teacher and farmer said that "people [are] from different walks of life, literate and illiterate […]" (KWHtH) pointing to a diverse range, not only in terms of professions but also educational levels. Of 132 people (86 women and 46 men) interviewed, 69 %, or 91 (51 female and 40 male), indicated that they attended formal schooling (including two women who mentioned vocational training). Overall, a fairly large amount of people interviewed, namely 32 (or 24%), did not answer this question about their level of education which was linked to the set-up of interview guides (mostly)[147] as well as some people preferring not to disclose this information to the research team. Nine people (all female) indicated that they did not go to school, were uneducated/not educated formally (7%).[148] What becomes strikingly clear is that the further we move up the educational ladder, the fewer females are represented. In Kwamoso, 15 people interviewed (14 female and 1 male) completed or partly attended primary education; 47 people (28 female and 19 male) completed or partly attended Junior High School (JHS), and 8 people (1 female and 7 male) completed Secondary High School (SHS); one female mentioned that she was schooling. Out of the 18 research participants (14%) who indicated the highest educational level, tertiary education, the numbers of males are nearly thrice that of females (5 females, 13 males). This female:male ratio seems even more striking when considering that females are 'overrepresented' among the people interviewed for this research in comparison to national or district level data. These gender-differentiated numbers seem to be in line with the objective of one of the key intervention areas of the GPP, namely increasing equal (post-primary) education among girls and boys (for further discussion, see pp. 175 ff.)

In Ghana, basic education is envisioned for 12 years and includes kindergarten (4-6 years), primary school (6-11 years) and Junior High School JHS (12-15 years). Some students then move on to SHS (16-18 years). In practice, levels of schooling and age of school-going children do not always align neatly in this way, especially in a setting of poverty. Participant observation and meetings with heads of schools in Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom (see Appendix K) revealed that some school-going children were older than their expected age for a particular school level due to interruptions in studies caused by lack of financial resources and other reasons including teenage pregnancy. Throughout GPP programme documentation, a clear distinguishing feature in the representation of boys and

[147] On the first two days of conducting interviews in Kwamoso, the interview guide used did not include a question on level of education. This was amended on the third day of interviews whereupon this information was also collected.

[148] Of these 9 respondents, 5 were 42 years or older and none was below the age of 30.

girls entailed whether they are 'in school' or 'out of school', which potentially translates into different forms of programmatic intervention with these respective groups in terms of addressing child protection issues (*cf.* GPP QPR CRRECENT Jan to Mar 2014; for further discussion, see Chapter 9).

One difference that emerged linked to differential educational levels is that younger males in higher education (or with a higher education degree) tended to be more critical about the responsibilities of males towards their family, to cater for a future wife and children. The lack of money was often portrayed as an insuperable problem, particularly for men to fulfil their responsibility of providing for their families (for further discussion, see Chapter 8). During an FGD with the women's group, another difference emerged; there was an agreement among various participants that people who did not enjoy formal education (such as elementary school, JHS and/or SHS) would not value education as important for their children; this assumption could not be verified as part of this research. Rather, a 56-year-old woman and seller of fruits, bread and diapers, who indicated that she was 'not educated' answered the following when asked what worked well as part of the GPP, "Girl Child Education because after JHS the girls go to SHS so that they can get some skills to do something" (KWHtH). A 28-year-old woman, who resided in Habitat and engaged in 'petty work', indicated that she was 'uneducated' and likewise mentioned Girl Child Education as an area that worked well as part of GPP implementation.

While there is striking unevenness linked to gender when it comes to levels of education, there is a fairly equal distribution among Quarters and Habitat of community members interviewed who attended formal education. For instance, out of the 18 respondents (5 female, 13 male) who completed or were currently in tertiary education, 8 resided in Habitat, 9 resided in Quarters and one worked in Quarters but did not live there.[149] While there are various schools located in Kwamoso (for kindergarten, primary and JHS level), often affiliated to churches, construction of an SHS building had been commenced but then put on halt, as was identified during research conduct (for further discussion, see Section 7.2.2 below).

For many years already, the NGO Plan International Ghana has a community presence in Kwamoso, supporting 'sponsored children' until the age of 18years.[150] During the conduct of

[149] The latter was a female teacher and the headmistress for the Presbyterian Basic School Kwamoso.
[150] For further information, see Plan International UK (n.d. a).

research in Ghana (from May to Nov 2017 and then Nov 2018), the construction of a health clinic was in progress and the Girls Advocacy Alliance (2016-2020), the follow up programme to the GPP, was being implemented in Kwamoso.

7.1.3. Mintakrom and Nsutam

Mintakrom, or 14 miles, designating the community's distance from Koforidua, the regional capital, includes a large mission, the Holy Spirit Church, with worshippers coming from all over the country as the church leader and founding member, an elderly man, explained during a research interview. The church works with people who have psychological or mental illnesses who then stay, anything between three weeks and a year, in guesthouses provided with access to toilets and cooking facilities. At the time of research, some parts of the main school building in Mintakrom were not functioning and smaller buildings belonging to the Presbyterian church were used in the interim; four *susu* groups were active in the community. Plan International Ghana has been present in Mintakrom for various years and was implementing the IWASH (Integrated Water Sanitation and Hygiene) programme with Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) committees operating at community level when this doctoral research was conducted.

In Mintakrom, the research team interviewed 44 people (26 female and 18 male), most of them farmers, followed by traders/sellers as professions mentioned. Several interviewees alluded to other professions including male drivers, a female seamstress and a male teacher. Seven people (four female and three male) mentioned that they were not working, most of them 28 years or younger with two male respondents (19 years) indicating that they were (SHS-level) students. Of the 44 people interviewed, 32 (17 female and 15 male) completed or attended formal education at different levels, up until JHS; only a male teacher interviewed indicated that he held a tertiary education degree. Seven people indicated that they did not receive formal schooling; all but one were female, mostly 49 years or older. One woman, who was selling herbal drugs, explained, "No schooling because in the olden days they said that girls are supposed to be in the house" (MINTAHtH). Similar to Kwamoso, we can see a pattern of less females (as compared to males) attending schooling, especially the higher the level of education gets.[151]

[151] Several interviewees in Mintakrom preferred not to disclose information on their level of education to the research team.

Nsutam includes the Saviour Community, which forms one area of the town made up of the houses of congregation members of the Saviour Church. There is also a sizeable orphanage in this community including a school building and latrines. There are school buildings for kindergarten (KG), primary and JHS level; one KG and JHS was sponsored by Plan International Ghana. The NGO has been present in Nsutam for various years and was implementing the IWASH programme with WATSAN committees operating at community level at the time of research, similar to Mintakrom. Girl-friendly toilets at the JHS were under construction and a borehole had been built by Plan International Ghana.

In Nsutam, the research team interviewed 49 people (35 females and 14 males), most of them farmers, followed by traders/sellers as professions mentioned. Several interviewees alluded to other professions including a male driver and a female teacher and acting headmistress of the Orphanage school. Four people (two female and two male) mentioned that they were not working, all of them 25 years or younger with one male respondent (18 years) indicating that he was 'learning electricals'. Of the 49 people interviewed, 25 (18 female and seven male) completed or attended formal education at different levels, up until JHS; one male respondent indicated that he was an SHS leaver, and another male respondent said that he was a university student. Of the 10 people who indicated that they did not receive formal schooling all but three were females aged 42 years or older. Similar to Kwamoso and Mintakrom, we can see a pattern of less females attending schooling, the higher the level of education gets.[152]

This section has presented a situational analysis of the three research communities, and it became clear that the levels of deprivation among community members in Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom differ and markedly link to gendered aspects. The next section places emphasis on development conducted at community level, addressing different aspects of deprivation.

[152] Several interviewees in Nsutam preferred not to disclose information on their level of education to the research team.

7.2. Community Development – Crossing Spaces and Blurring Boundaries

An engagement with the three research communities as *both* peri-urban and rural spaces will commence this section. It will then be argued that crossing rural, peri-urban and rural spaces has implications for identifying and addressing individual and group needs as part of 'community development'. Thereafter, dynamics of conducting 'community development' *as part of* international development work will be examined.

7.2.1. Addressing Needs Within and Across Spaces

Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom, the three research communities, can be described as *both* peri-urban and rural. They can be designated as peri-urban due to their closeness to the main highway, linking the national and regional capital with potential access to services located in urban areas (DP Interview Margaret Brew-Ward CO Plan Gh[153]). They can be defined as rural due to their character as farming communities (DP Interview Susan Sabaa CRRECENT[154]) and limited state services available within some communities. The strategic proximity to both the national and regional capital "allows socio-economic interaction" between communities and capitals in terms of "trade, movement of, and access to goods, services and people". Such interaction, in turn, "promotes the development of the Municipals' [sic] economy" (Eastern Region Co-ordinating Council, 2016b). The difference between a peri-urban or rural character being foregrounded in people's lives links to whether they have the capacity to cross rural-urban boundaries, with implications for 'development'.

Some research participants at community level indicated in house-to-house interviews that they regularly cross rural and urban spaces in fulfilment of various needs. Selected community members explained how they go to Accra and engage in trading activities there, notably at Madina, a large market area located in the Eastern part of Accra. A male elder in Kwamoso explained, "I will wake up, take my bath and go to Accra to engage in petty business" (FGD Chief and Elders KW), while a 31-year-old farmer and cassava dough seller described her daily tasks in the following way, "I buy cassava and mill it into cassava dough and sometimes take it to Madina [Accra] to sell. I sometimes sell my farm produce like rice, maize, cassava during the rainy season" (KWHtH). Notably community members who have means to travel and, in the case of the female farmer, to invest in transforming raw produce into more readily consumable food mention accessing markets in urban centres with a higher

[153] Subsequently referenced as DP Interview BW CO Plan Gh
[154] Subsequently referenced as DP Interview SS CRRECENT

number of potential buyers. Another reason indicated for regular crossing of urban and rural spaces were close relations and frequent contact between family members living in Kwamoso and in Accra. A 19-year-old male painter described his daily tasks as follows, "I go to Accra to work and come back to the community on weekends and help my mother to go to the farm", while an 18-year-old female student, who had just completed Junior High School (JHS), commented on the relation between mother and son as a "[v]ery good relation; my brother […] stays in Accra but come[s] to visit my mother" (KWHtH). Public transport, notably minibuses called *trotro* frequent the main road connecting Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom to the national and regional capitals and arguably allowing for regular crossing of spaces. However, various community residents experience problems in accessing urban centres due to financial difficulties in paying for public transport (Fieldnotes A, 20 May to 20 Aug 2017).

Gauging community members' felt or perceived needs through four specific questions as part of house-to-house interviews[155] not only showed how some of them are addressed through crossing spaces but also linked to a GPP context in distinct ways. For many interviewees at community level, crossing rural, peri-urban and urban spaces allowed for increasing opportunities to earn an income as well as to further one's education, linked to an expected better ability to cater for oneself and one's family financially. For research participants in Kwamoso and Nsutam, the creation of jobs was mentioned with the highest frequency as 'the most important issue now (Autumn 2017)', while in Mintakrom the need for both a school and a public toilet took precedence. Creating jobs accounts for 'things that need dealing with' and 'suggestions for future improvements' throughout all three GPP research communities (KWHtH, MINTAHtH, NSUHtH). Out of the four core components of the GPP, 'Economic Participation' seemingly addressed a widely perceived need in research communities most directly, followed by the GPP component on '(Post-primary) Education'.

A lack of jobs in the community, as well as absence of secondary or tertiary education together with limited possibilities for training in vocational skills, meant that some community members looked for job and training opportunities in the city.[156] Several people

[155] Asking about 'the most important issue/area when the GPP started', 'the most important issue/area now (Autumn 2017)', 'things that need dealing with' and 'suggestions for future improvement'; see also Appendices H, K and L.

[156] Push-and-pull factors in terms of employment and training or educational opportunities seem to favour 'the city', a phenomenon studied widely, and in more nuanced terms, elsewhere (*cf.* Lattof *et al*., 2018; Doan & Oduro, 2012; Schiller & Caglar, 2011).

in a younger age bracket identified 'areas of improvement' at community level in line with these aspects. A young farmer mentioned how a 'current issue/area/problem that needs dealing with' entails "Creating jobs for the youth, so that they won't go to Accra to look for job[s]" (KWHtH). Selected community members, notably young females, mentioned that they are staying with either an uncle or an aunt for the purpose of education or vocational training. In terms of 'future improvements', an 18-year-old female student who had just completed Junior High School (JHS) mentioned,[157] "Government should set up more vocational jobs for the youth. You see, I have to go live with my uncle in Accra to learn hairdressing" (KWHtH).

Thematic coding of house-to-house interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) in Kwamoso revealed that the development of the 'community', 'village' or 'town'[158] was often linked to the responsibility of leaders, especially community leaders which might include representatives of (I)NGOs at community level (KWHtH; FGD Women's Group KW; FGD Youth Group KW). On the example of community development as part of the GPP, an international development programme, it can be illustrated how, apart from crossing spaces, needs are addressed by blurring boundaries along local and international lines.

7.2.2. Community Development Along Local and International Lines

Thematic coding of house-to-house interviews and FGDs in research communities revealed that development of the town was linked to creation of jobs and infrastructural projects. Jobs should particularly be created for the youth (Kwamoso), not least so they might further their education with their income. Proposals for generating jobs entailed constructing factories (in all three research communities) while community members also foregrounded the need for vocational work (notably in Nsutam and Mintakrom). Creating jobs would allow parents to take care of their children's needs, such as education, and, as a female respondent put it, "by creating jobs for the community", it would "help the town [to] get money to help us ourselves" (NSUHtH). A relational and inter-generational aspect in addressing needs at community level emerges, which will be further discussed in Chapter 8 and 9.

[157] On age of school-going pupils, see also Section 9.2.1.
[158] Thematic coding of research activities conducted in Kwamoso (house –to-house interviews and FGDs) revealed that the term 'community' or the expression 'in the community' was coded with a high frequency of 237 times, while the related term 'here' was coded 101 times; 'village' was coded 12 times and 'town' 36 times (out of a total of 882 codes collected under 'Spatial aspects').

Community development in terms of infrastructure entailed constructing, or completing, a secondary high school and a health clinic for Kwamoso. For Nsutam, it included building a school and also a 'communal pipe', well or water dam, while for Mintakrom, felt or perceived needs of community members interviewed included the building of a school, a clinic and the construction of public toilets. Maintenance concerns, of notably the 'pipe' and the toilets, were linked to 'suggestions for future improvement' (KWHtH, MINTAHtH, NSUHtH). In research activities, infrastructural aspects of development were often linked to communal labour, or *asafo ejuma*, a recognised social practice in various Ghanaian rural or peri-urban communities. Drawing on communal labour or *asafo ejuma* as part of an international development programme seems to correspond with traditional processes at community level echoing collective values. However, the lack of financial incentives, connected to a communal practice when enacted *as part of* an international development programme, seems to pose a limitation in aligning local and international development work.

Many interviewees across all three research communities stated that they were involved in communal labour, mostly sweeping in the community (both men and women) and weeding (mostly men). Communal labour might also entail carrying mortar and sand (mostly men) to a building site and fetching water (mostly women) for construction projects. A vast majority of community members perceived partaking in *asafo ejuma* as one's responsibility for the community (KWHtH, NSUHtH, MINTAHtH). A couple of research participants also stated that communal labour can bring about 'unity' and 'togetherness' within the community, pointing to positive implications for social cohesion at community level; "[u]nity is when we all decide to do communal labour to develop the town" (FGD Data Validation KW). Unity is also supported through several groups operating in Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom at community level.[159] Some of them are linked to religious congregations, such as the Women's Group of the Presbyterian Church or the Youth Gospel Club in Kwamoso, others include *susu* groups (across all three research communities). 'Unity' is also used as an expression by selected research participants at community level to indicate that different ethnic groups are living together peacefully; "there are […] many ethnic groups in the community but we live in unity", as a 57-year-old male driver and farmer mentioned for Kwamoso. Across all three research communities, ethnic groups included Krobo and Ewe; in

[159] As became clear during the FGD with the Youth Group in Kwamoso, groups in the community are often perceived as platforms for creating unity.

Kwamoso, Akuapem were the dominant ethnic group, also represented in Nsutam. In both Mintakrom and Nsutam, further ethnic groups included Twerepon while in Nsutam also members of Fante and Ada groups reside. Referencing unity in several ways points to the importance of collectivity as a value in social relations linking to a distinct African perspective (see Fig. 2A, p. 83).

When an opportunity arose for the EPU Plan International Ghana to address the felt or perceived need of constructing a (better) health clinic in Kwamoso, they drew on communal labour. The construction of a secondary high school (SHS), that had previously been commenced, subsided (KWHtH; DP Interview KD A EPU Plan Gh). The community development plan for Kwamoso, which arguably includes felt needs of community members based on consensus, entails construction of a clinic *as well as* an SHS (DP Interview KD A EPU Plan Gh).[160] While a majority of community members mentioned one or more elements that 'worked well' when asked about their experience of the GPP, outlined in more detail previously, a few voices mentioned the stop of the school construction as an element that 'did not work well'. This might link to confusion around why the school construction was stopped, and the building of a health clinic commenced, but also financial issues related to the conduct of communal labour as part of international development programmes.

Communal labour was not attended in great numbers for the purpose of supporting the construction of the health clinic in Kwamoso (DP Interview KD A EPU Plan Gh); this point was corroborated by a small number of community members during research activities (KWHtH). Selected voices during house-to-house interviews suggested financial incentives to increase the willingness of community members to partake in communal labour as part of international development work to avoid potential financial losses.

> To be honest, the people in the community are not helping with the communal labour, so I think Plan Ghana should make it in such a way that people will avail themselves by giving money to the guys to help make the projects successful like giving them 40gh[161] [GBP 5,33][162] or perhaps 20gh [GBP 2,66]. It will help because if you tell someone to come and work on the field the whole day and you [are] not giving him anything and he [has] wife and kids to care for. (KWHtH, male respondent)

Direct monetary payments occurred frequently between NGOs in the Global North and those situated in the Global South throughout GPP implementation, while some community

[160] For more information on community development plans, see also p. 175 of this thesis.
[161] Here, the abbreviation 'gh' indicates the local Ghanaian currency, the New Ghana Cedi.
[162] Conversion based on October 2020 rate.

members also received in-cash payments, albeit not when helping with communal labour but rather when conducting specialised tasks such as masonry. Indirect payments to programme beneficiaries were mostly in the form of educational scholarships and trainings (see Chapter 6), while members of CBOs received reimbursement as part of particular programme activities.[163] An overall strategy of not paying individuals at community level was linked to Plan International's CCCD approach, as Kofi Debrah, the head of the EPU Plan International Ghana outlined; "in our case, the whole money we put together and then [for instance] a clinic will be put up" referring to such interventions as 'curative' and contributing to community development in substantive terms. Overall, various community members agreed that providing in-kind scholarships to children and 'not paying money directly' to parents was a feasible strategy as part of the GPP (FGD Women's Group KW; FGD Youth Group KW).

To align communal labour to the conduct of international development at community level, the practice of 'open communication' while addressing needs as identified by community members seem key. The confusion around the school and clinic construction, which few community members identified as a GPP aspect that 'did not work well', stressed the importance of open and reciprocal communication from *all* sides as part of a successful INGO programme conducted at the community level, including community members *as well as* development practitioners. For instance, the reason for halting the SHS construction and commencing with the health clinic, which was unexpected availability of an additional financial stream for EPU Plan International, could have been communicated to community members much clearer. At the same time, the head of the EPU encouraged community members, whenever something is "beating your mind" to go and ask about it, for instance, posing one's question to members of CBOs created during GPP implementation who are residing in the communitye (DP Interview KD A EPU Plan Gh).

The Work of Child Protection Teams at Community Level

To address the key component of protection, the GPP conducted development work at individual, socio-cultural or community, institutional as well as civil society level. Foregrounding work at community level as part of an international cross-cultural

[163] Members of Child Protection Teams, CBOs set up for the purpose of the GPP, were reimbursed with transport costs, for instance, when they attended training sessions outside of their respective communities (Fieldnotes B, 21 Aug to 6 Sep 2017).

development programme might constitute one pathway of ensuring that the objectives of a programme align to the needs of a variety of community members. Child Protection Teams (CPTs) or Child Protection Committees (CPCs) were CBOs created as part of GPP implementation and interacted with a variety of social actors at community, institutional as well as civil society level. As such, the work of the CPTs or CPCs linked to relevance and sustainability of the programme as conceptualised in the external Mid Term Evaluation (Dec 2013; see also p. 140 of this thesis).

CPCs or CPTs set out "to ensure the advancement of child protection issues at the community level" (GPP QPR[164] Ark Foundation Jul to Dec 2013, p. 2).[165] The Ark Foundation formed 43 Community Child Protection Teams (CCPTs) in East Akim[166] and trained them on issues of child rights, child abuse and child protection to enable them [to] address incidents of child right violation" (ibid.); CRRECENT was engaged in formation and training of Community-Based Child Protection Teams (CBCPTS) in Akwapim North. As a local NGO, CRRECENT set out to "build capacity of CBCPTS and support them to create awareness on the GPP thematic areas, identify cases of abuse, document and report to appropriate institutions for support" (GPP QPR CRRECENT Apr to Jun 2014, p. 8). The Arc Foundation supported CPCs or CPTs to "develop[…] specific action plans in relation to the needs of their particular community" (GPP QPR Ark Foundation Jul to Dec 2013. p. 2). As applied GAD research conducted in Ghana reveals (Coker-Appiah, n.d.), a community response might be an effective and sustainable way to responding to violence against women (VAW) in Ghana, notably through the creation of Community Based Action Teams. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) was one area that CPTs or CPCs dealt with as part of their protection work at community level.

CPTs or CPCs drew on sensitisation activities and engaged with community members from house to house, conducted community *durbars* with the wider community and worked with smaller groups, notably aligned to churches or mosques (the latter applies especially to the East Akim Municipality, see GPP Report EPU Plan Gh Dec 2014). Besides working with girls and young women directly, engaging the community notably meant collaborating with parents as well as traditional leaders, which aligns to the CCCD approach widely adopted across Plan International and specified previously.

[164] QPR stands for Quarterly Progress Report
[165] On the role of CPTs, see also GP Country Projects Annual Report Ark Foundation (2013, p. 7).
[166] Programmatic documentation reveals that "[a] total of 387 community members (127 females and 260 males) from 43 communities were trained" (GP Country Projects Annual Report Ark Foundation 2013, p. 7; see also GPP QPR Ark Foundation Jul to Sep 2013, p. 1).

7.2.3. Traditional Structures and Practices as Part of International Development Work

At community level, local NGOs worked together with traditional leaders supporting girls' and women's empowerment, arguably linking to 'sustainability' as stakeholder involvement and considering the socio-cultural environment (see MTE TI Dec 2013, p. 45). GPP programme documentation refers to a "meeting with [the] Akwapim North Queen Mothers Association" which constituted part of awareness raising sessions "on violence against children, particularly girls and young women" (GPP PO Outputs Planned vs Delivered 2016 EPU Plan Gh, p. 2). The Queen Mothers are a traditional institution across Ghana and can be viewed as community leaders tackling (development) issues specifically focusing on women and children.[167] Further programme documentation foregrounds the role of especially male traditional leaders (GPP Annual Report 2014 CO Plan Gh). Working together with traditional leaders and drawing on particular socio-cultural and traditional community practices as part of the GPP (GPP Annual Report 2014 CO Plan Gh), points to a balanced view on tradition, seemingly aimed at ensuring local support at community-level for an international, cross-cultural INGO programme.

Drawing on traditional socio-cultural practices, CRRECENT initiated a mentoring programme in selected GPP communities which "seeks to bring back the communal ownership of the child as a means to secure the best interest of the child for a responsible and happy adult life in [the] future" (GPP QPR CRRECENT Apr to June 2014, p. 20). The mentoring programme was notably aimed at girls between the ages of ten to 17 and "[w]omen mentors have been selected to literally 'mother' selected girls and boys" (GPP QPR CRRECENT Jan to Mar 2014, p. 25). The social importance and value of motherhood is notably emphasised in the writings of various African and Black feminists and displays a particularly African collective perspective (see Chapter 2; see also Fig. 2A, p. 83). The 'mothering' or mentoring programme as part of the GPP addressed several thematic areas, as indicated below.

> The mentors are expected to ensure that their mentees' academic performance improves, they do not engage in activities that will make them victims of sexual abuse of teenage pregnancy, they establish a more cordial relationship with their parents and also acquire more practical knowledge of child rights and responsibilities. (GPP QPR Apr to June 2014, p. 20)

[167] There are around 10,000 Queen Mothers at clan, neighbourhood, village, district and regional level; an international network has been formed recently, the African Queens and Women Cultural Leaders Network, see Mistiaen (2016). For academic work on the Queen Mothers, see Fayorsey (2006).

Further discussion on several of these thematic areas, especially reduction in teenage pregnancy and knowledge of child rights *as well as* responsibilities, will follow in the proceeding chapters.

In programme documentation on radio messaging, a sensitisation strategy drawn upon as part of the GPP, some cultural practices are marked as *bad*, while others, notably the use of local languages, point to accessibility of programmatic content.[168] Jingles envisioned to be aired widely on regional radio stations formed "the opportunity [for communities] to compose their own songs in their local languages using the four core themes of the project" (GPP QPR CRRECENT Jan to Mar 2014, p. 26). In one community,

> their song centred on parental care as a way of improving the welfare of children, protection of children from sexual abuses, *bad cultural practices* and promotion of their education […] *using the traditional style*, which community members could easily identify with. (GPP QPR CRRECENT Jan to Mar 2014, p. 26; emphasis added)

Easy identification linked to composing songs in a 'traditional style' to convey programmatic messages points to understandings of programme success as linked to community ownership aligning to relevance of the GPP at community-level. The word and concept of 'tradition', discursively linked to modernity (see also Section 3.1.1), seems to be widespread and thriving within current public policy discourse and practice as part of international aid. Various social actors within international development seemingly use the term differently and for varying strategic purposes. In GPP programme documentation, the terms tradition or traditional feature in various programme and policy documents (*cf.* GPP Annual Report CO Plan Gh 2014; Plan's Policy on Gender Equality 2011). At times, development practitioners based in Ghana link to a communal, identity-forming notion of 'tradition' (GPP Annual Report CO Plan Gh 2014) while others link to respecting traditional 'communal structures' (DP Interview KD A EPU Plan Gh). While throughout programme documentation and as part of interviews with development practitioners, it became clear that traditional institutions of chieftaincy are highly respected, issues and tensions also emerged along the lines of local NGOs and local traditional governance, as further outlined in Chapter 9.

[168] 261 radio programmes and 182 jingles on GPP core components such as (child) protection reached high numbers of people. The estimated reach of these broadcasts is indicated at 216,890 people in programme documentation (GPP Final Report 2015, p. 13). For further discussion on 'counting beneficiaries' reached through radio messaging, see Vital Voices Global Partnership, n.d. For a critical discussion on the pitfalls and limitations of MEL tools as part of gender transformative programmes, see (Batliwala & Pittmann, 2010).

7.3. Crossing Boundaries as part of The Girl Power Programme

The GPP was a complex development programme implemented in ten countries across sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America between 2011 and 2015, through an alliance of international, national and local NGOs as well as community-based organisations (see also Section 6.2). As such, the design, implementation and MEL process of the GPP crossed various geographical boundaries but also institutional and organisational spaces. During research interviews with development practitioners connected to the GPP, mainly located in Ghana but also the Netherlands, questions of what constitutes a local, national or international NGO were addressed; analysis thereof and an investigation of inter-institutional collaboration with an impact on framing development programme success will be presented in the first part of this section. Then, analysis of how the GPP aligned 'hardware' and 'software' concerns showcases yet another relevant dimension of crossing boundaries.

7.3.1. Linking Local and International Development as Part of the GPP

Protection, notably understood as safeguarding the rights of young girls and women, constituted the first and core component of the GPP, as illustrated throughout programme documentation (*cf.* GPP Final Report 2015). Drawing on a state-legal nexus, the four key thematic areas of the GPP foreground rights protection of notably adolescent girls, equal access to education and socio-economic as well as socio-political participation; these four aspects clearly illustrate the gender values that informed the GPP. Collaboration across local and international NGO spaces was another key element and value drawn upon as part of the GPP and notably manifested in thematic alignment around 'child protection' through the lens of protecting young women and girls' rights. Notwithstanding that collaboration was in place and manifested in several ways as part of the GPP, marked differences linked to local and international spheres remain.

From an institutional perspective, a 'local' NGO shows physical presence in a particular space over a longer period of time, has local ownership of institutional strategy and holds respect for local laws and communal institutions. For the Executive Director of CRRECENT, implementing GPP programme activities across 50 communities in Akwapim North, "CRRECENT is a local NGO; local in the sense that it was born and bred here [in Ghana] and growing here" (DP Interview SS CRRECENT). For Margaret Brew-Ward, programme manager of the GPP between July 2012 and July/Aug 2015, an NGO can only "operate fully local" when it has a "local board" (DP Interview MBW CO Plan Gh). Thus, a

key difference between an international and a local NGO lies in where it is registered and where your board is located. Kofi Debrah, the head of EPU Plan International Ghana who was responsible, together with his team, for GPP implementation across 100 communities in the Eastern Region of Ghana, explains, "Plan is local because it respects local laws and also, always, encourages […] respect[ing] communal institutions". At the same time, Kofi Debrah continued,

> Plan is international and Plan is local, and we also subscribe internationally to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child of which the principal action then is whatever we do, we must do it in the best interest of the child. (DP Interview KD A EPU Plan Gh)

Echoing this emphasis on child protection linked to global policy documents, CRRECENT's Executive Director stated, "If it's child protection, it's child protection everywhere in both local and in international NGOs, so there are common grounds". Furthermore, local NGOs like CRRECENT have "international linkages" (DP Interview SS CRRECENT).

A marked difference between 'local' and 'international' NGOs is differential access to international funding, echoing a particular set-up of power relations linked to geographical location. A Ghanaian development practitioner outlined that "accessibility to funds is limited [and] international NGOs are widespread" (DP Interview 4, written notes). Margaret Brew-Ward raised a similar point and explained that while various NGOs might apply for international funds, such as EU funds, it is often international NGOs, at times in collaboration with country offices, that are "much bigger here" (DP Interview MBW CO Plan Gh). As GPP programme documentation shows, especially the Addendum to the GAD (June 2011), Plan International Netherlands received a financial contribution from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who acts as the main donor of the GPP. The "maximum amount […] for this project […] determined by the Euro (€3,084,728) value stated" was then made available to Plan International Inc., who seem to have provided the funds to Plan International Ghana.[169] Who finances programmes matters, because funding can link to setting up MEL tools with potential impact on certain definitions and understandings of development programme success.

[169] The donor's contribution was matched with funds provided by Plan International Netherlands (see Addendum to GAD June 2011). Plan International Netherlands operates as a National Office under the Plan umbrella with far-ranging organisational independence as a separate legal entity vis-à-vis the Global Hub or Plan International Inc. In contrast, country offices do not enjoy that degree of organisational independence (see also Chapter 6).

As part of the MEL approach used in the GPP, *some* reporting tools are designed as opportunities for both monitoring and learning, inter-institutionally as well as between community members and development practitioners. This not only shows that inter-institutional collaboration can be an important factor in framing development programme success, as well as challenges, but also carries the potential to challenge power hierarchies across different levels of development work (for an in-depth discussion on this point, see Section 9.3.1). On a programmatic level, inter-institutional collaboration seemingly influenced subjective notions of programme success among community members interviewed for this research. During house-to-house interviews, a majority of community members mentioned one or more elements that 'worked well' and commented on 'change that came about because of the GPP'; notably girl child education as well as the reduction of teenage pregnancy were stated in 'successful' terms. For the (post-)primary education component, local NGOs collaborated with the Ghana Education Service while the protection component included awareness raising on sexual reproductive health rights (SRHR) through cooperation between local NGOs and representatives of the Ghana Health Service. Nonetheless, the continued existence of power hierarchies, not least linked to funding responsibilities, might pose limitations to co-producing knowledge as part of international development work across institutions located in different spaces.

Use of selected evaluation tools as part of the GPP might point to limitations in inter-institutional collaboration on 'an equal footing'. The CIVICUS score notably assessed the ability of CSOs to represent CBOs as well as particular segments of communities, notably girls and young women. At the same time, it evaluates "[h]ow active and successful […] civil society [is] in empowering G & YW [girls and young women]" (p. 59). The 5C's framework was used to self-assess 'organisational development' of notably GPP partner and implementing organisations such as CRRECENT. On a gradient from zero to four, participants in a workshop with external evaluators as part of the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) provided a number value to assess the performance of their own organisation in five dimensions.[170] In comparison to other GPP implementing organisations, CRRECENT scored the lowest and raised a critique of this evaluative exercise that point to hierarchical structures within reporting requirements,

[170] These five dimensions included: Capability to commit and act, Capability to deliver on objectives, Capability to relate, Capability to adapt and self-renew, Capability to maintain coherence. See GPP Final Report (2015, pp. 52-53).

> The management of the organisation [CRRECENT] […] stated that even though the tool is a standard tool, it was important that they also make input into development of a tool that was supposed to assess them. They also state that the tool should be contextualised to reflect local conditions and should have been sent to them earlier so they could thorough[ly] go through them before the eventual evaluation. (MTE TI Dec 2013, p. 27)

Importantly, the above quote highlights the need for further considering how to make tools potentially useful, in line with the value of epistemic equality, rather than a *primus inter pares* approach when working together with 'partner' organisations.

7.3.2. Aligning 'Hardware' and 'Software' Concerns in Conceptualising Gender and Development

Sensitisation activities formed a large component of GPP implementation to address all four thematic area: protection, (post-primary) education, economic participation and socio-political participation. Sensitisation activities included community *durbars* as well as radio messaging[171] but also trainings and workshops targeting girls and young women themselves, their families, notably parents, traditional leaders and the wider community. Sensitisation activities mainly addressed the theme of child protection (*cf.* Addendum to the GAD, 2011), especially for the girl child; at times, activities set out "to sensitize the general public on the need for preventing sexual and gender based violence particularly among youth" (GPP QPR Ark Foundation Oct to Dec 2014, p. 8). Programme participants were sensitised on the value of education, equally for boys and girls (*cf.* GPP PO Aug 2012 EPU Plan Gh) while some programmatic activities addressed equal economic participation among women and men as well as equal socio-political participation (GPP QPR Ark Foundation Jan to Apr 2013, p. 6). Borrowing terminology from Ghanaian development practitioners interviewed, 'software' designates programmatic activities of sensitisation aimed at supporting gender equality and women's empowerment notably through strengthening women's and girls' rights while 'hardware' describes infrastructure projects and economic activities. The GPP managed to align 'hardware' and 'software' elements. However, a female development practitioner located in Ghana outlined,

> [The community members] cherish direct benefits [in-kind], more than other software – they cherish it, but not as much as material things. [For example] a young single

[171] Radio outreach took place on regional radio stations as well as community radios, or Community Information Centres (CIC) covering a single community (*cf.* GPP QPR CRRECENT Jan to Mar 2014, pp. 14-16). The realisation of media broadcasts was also reported on during the GPP Final Report (2015, pp. 12-13).

> mother receives education on family planning but no money, no food, no livelihood activities [for instance vocational training] – if you want to support young women, the girl child and mothers, look at the areas they [cherish], [then you will] achieve more than you plan to implement. (DP Interview 2, written notes)

In this quote, the development practitioner foregrounds how felt and perceived needs of especially young women link to 'hardware' concerns and that there is a need for considering those felt concerns when conceptualising achievements of an international development programme implemented *inter alia* at community level. Addressing this point, Ahensah Asum-Kwarteng, Programme Support Manager at the CO Plan International Ghana, outlined "I believe in a mixed approach" combining advocacy with "direct […] project delivery". The latter includes access to jobs and improved livelihoods as well as access to education and health.

> So, if you design a project that only include[s] talk […] without tangible support to some of these systems, very soon, people will become tired. And they see it as a waste of time, even though, from where we sit as development practitioners, they are important. (DP Interview AAK CO Plan Gh)

The GPP arguably 'combined advocacy with direct project delivery'. The Case of Girl Child Education showcases how 'software' and 'hardware' components were aligned with implications for perceptions of programme success.

The Case of Girl Child Education

Community members widely perceived Girl Child Education as a GPP component that 'worked well' (KWHtH). This perhaps is due to a clear link to perceived relational needs of parents having to provide for the educational needs of their children (see Chapter 8). The (post-primary) education component as part of GPP implementation throughout 100 communities in the Eastern region of Ghana entailed various elements such as the provision of educational scholarships (see also Section 6.2), building of a secondary high school, provision of training elements notably for primary school teachers, as well as sensitisation components such as increasing community awareness on female education.[172] As such, some aspects align to 'hardware' considerations while others link to 'software' in conjunction with sensitisation activities.

During the FGD with the women's group in Kwamoso, education was endowed with a key role in 'gender projects' and linked to other infrastructural elements of community

[172] See GPP Project Outline Aug (2012); and GPP PO Modification #9 June (2015, pp. 5-8).

'development'. A female participant said, "gender projects bring(s) education to the community members, like the school, boreholes and clinic, you can see some little developments [in] this community". Another female research participant added how especially education addressed a widely felt need at community level, "It brings employment or jobs in the community because the natives[173] are educated."

Aligning 'hardware' and 'software' concerns, potentially drawing on inter-institutional collaboration as was the case for Girl Child Education as part of the GPP (see also Section 7.3.2 above), might point to supporting transformative changes within the scope of an international cross-cultural development programme. Transformative changes within the GPP are understood as targeting underlying and deep-rooted socio-cultural assumptions linked to social discrimination against women, drawing on global policy documents while being responsive to socio-cultural values at community level (for further discussion, see Chapter 8 and 9).

Gender-transformative Programmes

Gender-transformative programmes take time and, according to the former Gender Advisor at the CO Plan International Ghana, they address 'root causes of discrimination' (DP Interview SD CO Plan Gh). This point is also stressed in selected organisational gender policy documents such as Plan's Policy on Gender Equality - Building an Equal World for All Children (2011) and the Plan International Global Policy on Gender Equality and Inclusion (2017). Ahensah Asum-Kwarteng, Program Support Manager at CO Plan International Ghana, pointed out that "[…] gender issue, the way they play out, […] most of them are rooted in culture, they are rooted in […] social norms […]". He alluded to the need for longer-time frames when he explained, "you know, gender issues take time to change […] you cannot use one project […] to achieve any significant change" (DP Interview AAK CO Plan Gh). While many international GAD programmes last between three to five years, as was also the case for the GPP, the work of Plan International Ghana notably draws on a long-term presence of especially PUs at community-level. In communities where 'Plan sponsored children' reside, Plan International Ghana engages with communities for up to eighteen years, supporting a child from birth to the end of their adolescence. It is as part of

[173] The term 'natives' is notably used for members of ethnic communities who have resided the longest in a particular area of Ghana; consequently, some research participants described themselves as 'visitors' despite living in a particular community for 30 years. A 'visitor' might also be someone who stays in the community for a short-term, for instance, to attend a funeral celebration or, like our research team, to live in the community for a couple of months for other reasons.

long-term engagement between development organisations and community members and acknowledging the important role of culture that meaningful social transformation might be supported.

A 'gender equality intervention' addresses 'remote or underpinning causes' which are potentially encapsulated in cultural sayings and practices, as the head of the EPU Plan International Ghana outlined. In the below quote, illustrating this point, it also becomes clear that 'what is necessary' according to development practitioners can differ from what is viewed as 'needed' by community members. Kofi Debrah explained,

> As I mentioned to you earlier on, some of the things, the interventions which are *necessary* for the community to come out of this poverty, the community member[s] themselves do not see it as a *felt need*, you get it? Ehe, gender issue is *not a felt need* of the community. For them, life goes on and life is normal; 'Let the boys lead, let the boys go to school, after all the girls will take chop money[174] […] from boys in the long run. […] there are many sayings and proverbs in our language which perpetuate that, so, what is the big deal? We are ok with it.' But you and I know that if those remote causes or underpinning causes like gender issues are not addressed, it will take a looooong time before communities can develop. So, [a] gender […] equality intervention is *necessary*. (DP Interview KD A EPU Plan Gh, emphasis added)

Some indications as to why 'gender equality interventions are necessary' can be inferred from the GPP Project Outline (Aug 2012) created at EPU Plan International Ghana level. Sensitisation as a key strategy as part of the GPP set out to address norms, values, attitudes and practices notably aligned to issues of child protection and child rights and with broader linkages to concerns for gender equality and safeguarding girls' and women's rights. As the GPP Project Outline states, at socio-cultural level, the GPP envisioned working together with "women, men, boys, families, traditional leaders, [and] communities ([their] norms, values, attitudes, practices)" (Aug 2012 EPU Plan Gh, p. 2). When considering that 'what is necessary' might not align with 'felt' or perceived needs of community members, where does that leave us in terms of adhering to 'meaningful' development interventions which arguably need to – at least partially – address these?

To engage with collective and individually identified needs of community members as part of an international programme intervention, Community Development Plans (CDPs) were created in the early phase of the GPP. As part of GPP programme documentation, various Project Outline (PO) modifications concerning budget and outputs include the creation of community development plans with a certain amount of the overall financial

[174] 'To chop' can be translated as 'to eat' and 'chop money' entails money provided to women, mostly by their husbands, for household upkeep, especially food preparation.

budget earmarked for it.[175] CPDs can be interpreted as entailing 'felt needs' of the community as presented during a time-limited event, presumably based on consensus considerations. During public *durbars*, or community assemblies, representatives of the EPU Plan International Ghana jointly created CDPs, together with community members entailing prominent participation of chief and elders (DP Interview KD B[176] EPU Plan Gh). As such, we might argue that the GPP showed commitment to gauging the community members' felt or perceived needs as expressed in CDPs, based on the realities of their life situations and lived experiences.[177] In order to align felt and perceived needs of community members and what development practitioners identify as necessary, development practitioners may take on a mediating and translator role, as previous research has suggested (*cf.* Mosse, 2005; see also Section 3.2.4). Such role could entail providing a rationale for gender-transformative programming in a local context where strengthening gender equality might not be widely perceived as an essential element for community development (for further discussion, see Section 8.3.1).

This thesis argues that linking subjective perceptions of programme success to meaningful social transformations rests on on-going 'open' conversations among community members and development practitioners through providing spaces for critical reflection that could link to co-designing, co-implementing and co-evaluating development implementations. I argue in this research that the potential of aligning subjective perceptions of success to meaningful social transformation lies in foregrounding epistemic equality between the following: first, the needs, interests and aspirations at individual, community, institutional and civil society level as part of a particular socio-cultural context, and, second, an understanding of child protection, gender equality and women's empowerment aligned to rights-based approaches as envisioned in selected global policy documents and drawn upon by development practitioners as part of official narratives. These two different, yet aligned, sets of 'what is important' seem to foreground 'hardware' and 'software' elements to different degrees. The proceeding

[175] In GPP PO Modification #4 (April 2014), it is indicated that the current budget dedicates 15,000 Ghana cedis to the creation of CDPs through payment to the local NGO (p.2), out of an overall budget of GHc 1,181,913 (p. 5).
[176] Highlighted previously, the first interview I conducted with Kofi Debrah is indicated through the letter 'A', the second through the letter 'B'.
[177] Conditions for creating CDPs at community-level could have been investigated in more depth as part of this research, adding to analysis of power dynamics between different stakeholders as part of a cross-cultural international development programme implemented at community level.

chapters will engage in much more depth with specific socio-cultural contexts and the role of epistemic equality in aligning differing and intersecting perspectives.

7.4. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has addressed the relevance of locus for conceptualising gender and development as part of cross-cultural international work conducted at community level. It commenced by providing a situational analysis of the three research communities with a focus on a critical poverty and gender dimension. While all three research communities share various characteristics, including being farming communities and displaying 'poverty issues', it was demonstrated that levels of deprivation are diverse among community members residing in the communities. In terms of professions and educational levels, analysis found distinct gendered aspects such as participation of females in education declining the higher the educational level is, with actual and presumed impact on possibilities for finding jobs and conducting income-generating activities, linked to a normative sphere.

The second part of this chapter, on community development as crossing spaces and blurring boundaries, showed that the strategic location of the three research communities means that crossing rural, peri-urban and urban spaces is possible in fulfilment of individual and group needs, which are often set up in distinct gendered and relational ways. It also showed, however, that accessing this possibility is not within reach for all community members, especially those reporting higher levels of deprivation in their lives such as lack of jobs and lack of money. Blurring the boundaries was then examined as development taking place within communities along local and international lines, which can create beneficial synergies as well as a source of tension. Analysis showed how traditional structures and practices can feature as part of cross-cultural international development in meaningful and nuanced ways, while also pointing to tensions when selected traditional communal practices, such as *asafo ejuma* or communal labour, are conducted *as part of* an international development intervention. The important role of 'open communication' as part of international development work conducted *inter alia* at community level was foregrounded in this chapter.

With a more pronounced focus on the Girl Power Programme, the third part of this chapter focused on crossing boundaries, notably through cross-organisational and inter-institutional collaborations at local and international levels with implications for framing development success. Collaboration across local and international NGO spaces was identified

as a key value of the GPP linking to the gender values of the GPP which were identified as foregrounding rights protection of notably adolescent girls, drawing on a state-legal nexus. Certain limitations to organisational collaboration remain, however, linked to differential access to financial resources pointing to power hierarchies aligned to geographical location.

Finally, this chapter has illustrated how the GPP drew on a large sensitisation component to implement activities and how the programme managed to align 'hardware' and 'software' concerns, which was *inter alia* illustrated through the case of Girl Child Education. What became clear was that 'what is necessary' as part of a 'gender equality interventions', according to development practitioners working with and in communities, might differ from what community members themselves identify as 'needed'. This thesis argues, as emphasised in this chapter, that linking diverse perceptions of programme success to meaningful social transformations is based on on-going 'open' conversations among community members and development practitioners through providing spaces for critical reflection based on epistemic equality. Aligning 'hardware' and 'software' concerns and drawing on inter-institutional collaborations that is accountable to community members and their identified individual and collective needs in socio-culturally sensitive and respectful ways seems to form an important component of linking diverse perspectives on conceptualising gender and development.

The next chapter will consider conceptualisations of gender and social transformation by foregrounding diverse views and analysing relevant values at socio-cultural level together with considering their alignment to values adopted as part of the GPP.

8. Conceptualising Gender and Social Transformation in the Context of an International and Cross-Cultural Development Programme

This chapter focuses on conceptualisations of gender and social transformation. Based on research fieldwork conducted in the Eastern Region of Ghana, the first and second part of this chapter (Section 8.1 and 8.2) present analysis foregrounding local modes of gender. These parts demonstrate how socio-culturally widely relevant values might align but also pose limitations to bringing about changes in gendered social relations, possibly linked to meaningful social transformation. The third part of this chapter (Section 8.3) presents analysis that combines local modes of gender with the thinking and language on gender, development and transformation within the Girl Power Programme (GPP), the case study of this research. An assumption that grounds this chapter is that local modes of gender constitute the relevant socio-cultural space in which a particular international development programme, targeting gender issues through a social norm lens, unfolds. Conceptualisations of gender and social transformation as local modes as well as thinking and language displayed throughout an international cross-cultural development programme might link but also contest one another in several ways.

In this chapter, I am revisiting frameworks that have been outlined in depth previously (see Figure 2A, p. 83, Figure 2B, p. 89 and Figure 3, p. 121). I will *inter alia* analyse statements of research participants considering to what extent they align to, or are displaced from, a Western feminist liberal perspective, on the one hand, and an African feminist perspective, on the other. This can help in unpacking particular conceptualisations of gender as lived relations and representations, especially how they might link to specific ideas of meaningful social transformation in gendered terms.

8.1. Gender as Lived Relations and Representations - Shifting Power Hierarchies

To better understand local modes of gender, this research engaged with views on gender roles and gender relations aligned to needs and interests from a community perspective, with a particular emphasis on the role of social norms. The first part of this chapter outlines this point in more depth focusing on the theme of sharing household chores. The second part of this chapter builds upon this analysis and investigates the question of shifting power hierarchies at household level focusing on household headship. Throughout this section, and the next, analysis emphasises social gendered relations and demonstrates that local modes of

gender can both perpetuate, as well as contest, social discrimination enacted against women and girls.

8.1.1. Local Modes of Gender

The most significant roles for women at community level included being a wife and mother, while for men it was being a husband and father. Marriage and childbearing were desired social statuses for both women and men and aligned to lived realities of many community members interviewed. Gendered tasks and responsibilities link to roles of women and men and the identification and provision of needs for other family members which are mostly set up in relational and often inter-generational terms. All of this has particular impacts on ideal-type masculinities and femininities as well as personal likes and dislikes of community members interviewed in three selected rural and peri-urban communities where the GPP was implemented (2011-2015).

We[178] asked community members during house-to-house interviews[179] in Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom in the Eastern Region of Ghana about their tasks and responsibilities in their everyday life. Women are mainly responsible for household tasks like sweeping, fetching water, cooking, washing utensils and clothes and providing food for their children and husbands. The duty of men included to give 'chop money' to their wives and to pay the school fees of their children. Particularly married women tend to receive 'chop money' from their husbands, and they use it to buy groceries and prepare food for their husbands and children. Most male respondents indicated during house-to-house interviews that they are income earners of their families – conducting paid work regularly, or less regularly[180] (KWHtH, NSUHtH, MINTAHtH).[181]

What constitutes a 'good man' or a 'good woman' and, thus, ideal-type masculinities and femininities, is closely aligned to the ability to fulfil one's tasks and responsibilities. Various male and female respondents mentioned during house-to-house interviews that a good man "has to give chop money and take[s] care of the house"; it is someone who "provides for the needs of children and family and look[s] forward […] [to] the prosperity of

[178] 'We' refers to the research team during fieldwork consisting of the author of this dissertation and two female Ghanaian research assistants, Alice Agyeiwaa and Patricia Abena Arthur (see also Chapter 5).
[179] As a research method, we conducted semi-structured interviews with community members by going from house to house in research communities.
[180] For further information on income-generating activities at community level, see Chapter 7.
[181] KWHtH, NSUHtH and MINTAHtH reference house-to-house interviews conducted as part of this research in Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom.

his children"; a 'good man' is "responsible for the children's and wife's wellbeing and very caring" and "takes good care of [the] wife and children" (KWHtH). According to female and male respondents, a 'good woman' takes care of her children and her husband and provides for their needs which include taking care of household chores; notably "when married, [she] do[es] [her] […] household chores". Another respondent during house-to-house interviews mentioned that a 'good woman' is "taking care of […] [her] child and husband, [is] very innocent, […] and respectful". A 'good woman' also supports her husband and thus "helps in decision-making, [and] helps the man in providing for the needs of the house" (KWHtH).

Research participants often mentioned personal likes and dislikes in conjunction with what was identified as constituting 'a good woman or man', linked to the widely desired roles of wife and mother as well as husband and father. The likes of women, in general, included the ability to cook and perform household chores for the family (husband and children) and the ability to give birth. Many male respondents during house-to-house interviews equally mentioned that they like aspects that come with being a husband and a father. An elderly farmer (over 70 years) stated his likes as a man include, "To marry and take care of my wife and children", while a 20-year-old male occasional farmer and mason stated, likewise, "To marry, to give birth so that your family will be respected. I also love to support the family" (KWHtH).

In terms of lived realities, 61%, or 81 research interviewees (60 female and 21 male) at community level indicated that they had one or more children, while only 14%, or 18 respondents (7 female and 11male) between the ages of 18 and 35 years, indicated that they had no children and were not married. Of the research interviewees that indicated that they had children, only 16 of those research participants (11female and 5 male) explicitly mentioned that they were either not married, a single parent or divorced.[182] One young woman of 26 years mentioned that she was married but had no children. Whether or not one is married and has children can affect daily tasks and responsibility across gendered lines and can also have an impact on personal likes and dislikes. The only male respondent, who mentioned that he was a single parent, indicated that his daily tasks included cleaning his carpentry shop, washing utensils but also "sweeping the room, wash[ing] my children['s] clothes and mine too", the latter being household activities mostly mentioned by women

[182] As we did not explicitly ask research participants about their marital status and whether they have children, this analysis is based on the mentioning of spouses and children in answers to other house-to-house interview questions. For nearly a quarter of interviewees (23%, 17 women and 14 men), their marital and/or child status could not be clearly identified from answers to interview questions.

throughout research interviews at community level. A female single parent mentioned the following when asked what she likes about being a woman, "I have been able to cater for my kids without any man". However, research participants, at times, pointed to being overwhelmed with gendered tasks and responsibilities and not being able to cater for their family as a personal dislike (see also p. 157 of this thesis).

During house-to-house interviews, some female respondents mentioned their 'suffering' because of a heavy workload including responsibilities for conducting household chores. Various participants in FGDs also pointed to women 'suffering' due to an increased overall workload combining productive as well as reproductive tasks (FGD Women's Group KW, FGD Research Interviewees KW).[183] The following discussion unfolded during the FGD with the women's group in Kwamoso,

> All women: The women in this community suffer [more] than the men.
> Alice: Grandma, why is it that we [women] suffer a lot in this community?
> Grandma: There are some women who will go to the farm with the baby on her back; when she returns, too, she will now have to cook for the man whilst the child is on her back. The men will not even take the child so that the woman will be free in order to cook quickly, but some will be shouting angrily at the woman, 'Hurry up, I am hungry!'

Responsibility for household chores, without support from 'the man', as indicated above, may lead to a high workload for women. Women suffer notably in those cases, when a man is not fulfilling his 'end of the bargain' such as providing 'chop money' (FGD Women's Group KW). While women are mainly responsible for household tasks, several statements of research participants during interviews indicated that some men support household tasks, often when their wife is sick. Men seem to take over these tasks when their wife is gone and also perform household tasks when they do not have a wife (KWHtH). As such, besides a normative dimension that clearly aligns the conduct of household chores to the role of females, the reality and practice of conducting household chores also depends on circumstantial conditions and, notably, marital status.

Engaging with the theme of household chores in this research is based, on the one hand, on statements of some female research participants identifying it as an area that makes them 'suffer', thus, marking it as a potential area for social change to increase well-being of women in selected research communities. On the other hand, sharing of household chores has

[183] Statements on suffering due to a high overall workload seem to echo research conducted on the 'double burden' of women (*cf.* Bratberg, 2002) as well as research on the 'triple burden' of women (*cf.* Lyon *et al.*, 2017; Gupta *et al.*, 2005). As a note, the academic work cited here considers notably different geographical and institutional contexts than the ones investigated in this research.

been, and continues to be, a question of feminist research interest. As highlighted previously (see Section 2.1.3), feminist scholars have for some time now investigated questions on social reproduction focusing on 'unpaid parts of economies' (Elson, 2012) with implications for gender equality and women's empowerment (for further discussion, see Section 8.3.3).

Research activities indicated that the social roles of mother and wife constitute the two defining social positions for a woman in the community. During discussions with the women's group from the Presbyterian Church in Kwamoso, the research team asked why this is the case and one woman responded,

> It['']s God's creation because God created women to get pregnant and keep the baby in her stomach, so it [is] natural for women to have patience because they know the troubles they went through during pregnancy. So, I will say it['']s God's doing. (FGD Women's Group KW)

Two women corroborated this point in their statements, seemingly receiving wide approval from other FGD participants (FGD Women's Group KW). Such reasoning bases the role of the mother, characterised by taking care of one's children and their needs, on religious and biological grounds. As coding of interviews and group discussions demonstrated, references to God function as a legitimising strategy and provide authorisation to statements carrying (largely unchallenged) truthfulness. This points to an epistemological sphere that combines rational and religious, or spiritual, thinking, which aligns more to an African feminist perspective, rather than Western-liberal feminist positions (see Fig. 2A, p. 83). In the development practice adopted as part of GPP implementation in Ghana, the role of religion was most clearly acknowledged through seeking collaboration with religious groups and religious leaders at community level to support the strengthening of women's and girls' rights (see also Chapter 7). Such an approach considers bringing about change by aligning a Western liberal feminist discourse, foregrounding individuals as rights bearers, with an acknowledgement of the importance of religion, or spiritual thinking, as well as the relevance of social collectives, prevalent in some African feminist work.

Judgement of others plays a relevant role in blocking or supporting the transformation of gender relations in terms of sharing household chores and loosening the normative gendered ascription of who is responsible for conducting these chores. "Some men would like to help

the wife in doing the household chores like steering *banku*,[184] but the friends will mock him, if they see him doing that, so because of that, they [men] can't help us [women]" (FGD Research Interviewees KW, female participant). This perception of who can conduct household chores without fear of social ridicule, seems to align to rural-urban differences, "It is only in the village that the attitude of not helping the wife in the household will never change because of the mocking, but in the urban areas and in the city, men help their wives in the household chores" (FGD *susu* Group, female participant). A similar difference based on rural-urban location has been identified previously in terms of socially widely accepted gendered behaviour and implications for transgressing it (see p. 155 of this thesis).

Specific forms of housing that potentially align to rural and urban differences might support a more equal distribution of household tasks. While in those parts of Kwamoso that display higher levels of deprivation compound housing is prevalent, the relatively more affluent parts are characterised by self-contained houses (see also Section 7.1.2), which are also more common in urban areas within Ghana. Ahensah Asum-Kwarteng, Program Support Manager at CO Plan International Ghana, explained the implications of residential architecture on determining the gendered scope for conducting household chores.

> [In] Ghana, the architecture is moving from [..] compound housing […] to […] some kind of self-contained [housing] and so that is going to break up a lot of these gender […] divides […] because you are with your wife and […] she is pounding, you can pound *fufu*[185] […]. But if there are five, ten other families looking around, it will be more difficult. Normally, it's difficult, you think twi[ce]. […] And even your wife wouldn't want you to […]. (DP Interview AAK CO Plan Gh)

The above discussion suggests that upholding social norms and avoiding negative social judgment by others has particular gendered implications for the case of sharing household tasks among women and men. At the same time, urban-rural differences, notably type of housing, can diminish the role of social judgement of others, as gendered social behaviour is no longer widely visible.

[184] *banku* is a staple food in Ghana, often prepared of fermented corn and cassava dough.
[185] *fufu* is a Ghanaian staple food mostly prepared by boiling cassava, yams and plantains or cocoyam and then pounding until it reaches a dough-like consistency.

8.1.2. Who is the Head of the Household?

Thematic coding pointed to dominant social roles of mother and wife as well as father and husband notably aligned to fulfilling needs understood in relational terms, especially taking care of the educational needs of one's children. The ways parents adopt to fulfil educational needs of their children point to changes in gendered positions within the household. In a setting of unemployment, the monetary strength of heads of households that enables securing family needs, is compromised. Due to this situation, the position of head of the house, often accorded to a man, might be challenged, as some community members shared with us during interviews and focus group discussions. This points to a potential shift in power as part of gender relations within the household.

This section engages with *normative* views on household headship while combining these with selected statements of research participants pointing to lived realities in terms of household headship. One limitation of this research is that we did not identify household leadership explicitly as part of house-to-house interviews within the three research communities. However, district-level data for Akwapim North suggests that the "majority (68.1%) of the households in the Municipality are headed by males with 38.1 percent headed by females" (GSS, 2014, p. 24).

Various statements by community members in Kwamoso point to increasing difficulties in taking care of educational needs when these are linked to providing financial resources in a setting where available jobs are sparse, and farming provides a limited income (see also Chapter 7). The provision for educational needs of children entails buying books and paying for printing fees but might also include giving some money to the school-going children to buy food during the school day (often from female community members selling snacks and drinks or fully prepared dishes on the school grounds, as participant observation revealed). Many male and female research participants highlighted the need for job creation in the community, not least so that parents could support their children, including their educational needs (KWHtH). In a situation of poverty translating into limited financial resources, taking care of the educational needs of children has increasingly become a shared responsibility of mothers and fathers, challenging male household headship.

Among community members who took part in this research, there was wide agreement that the position of head of the household is a role most often reserved for men and entails taking good care of one's family. A male respondent in the FGD with the youth

group in Kwamoso stated, “As a man, I am seen as the head of the family and they look up to me in taking decision[s], so I like being a man”. In contrast, one female farmer in her mid-thirties stated during a house-to-house interview, “I don’t like being a woman because the man is always the head, and I am the tail” (KWHtH). While the position as head of the household is predominantly encoded as male during research activities, the ‘tail’ in the house is a role often accorded to females. *Not providing* for family needs and, thus, not adhering to one’s duty as a man and head of the household might lead to shifting power relations linked to particular treatment refracted through the socio-culturally relevant value of respect.

> If you, the man, you don’t do your work like giving chop money and it’s the woman who has been going and coming, then […], whatever you will say in the house, nobody will listen to you, and no one will respect you and you will be like a woman in the house whilst your wife becomes the man of the house (male discussant, FGD Data Validation KW).

A similar point is encapsulated in the following statement by a 38-year-old female photographer,

> The man is the head – as you are the head of the family, when you wake up, you have to see to it that everything goes on well in the house before you step out, and make sure the wife and children have something to eat, give chop money and kids school fees. If you don[‘]t do all this[these] thing[s], then you will become the tail in the house instead of the head of the family. (KWHtH)

While several women seemingly *enact* the position of head of the household, this does not seem to widely challenge the assumed *rightful* position of a man as the household head. A female FGD participant stated, “some of the men will not provide for the child’s schooling, it is all on the woman […] she will go and work, fetching water for people and peeling cassava to get money for the child’s school fees” (FGD Women’s Group KW). Another woman added, “So, to me, in this community, when it comes to the child’s educational needs, it is the women who have been providing for the children [more] than the men” notably, because it is the mothers attending Parent Teacher Association (P.T.A.) meetings (ibid.). A female participant in the FGD with the women’s group in Kwamoso mentioned, “Sometimes the men don’t take out any money for the household […] He will never give it to you. In this *community, women have turned into men* working for the family to survive” (emphasis added). Statements on potential shifts in gendered relations and positions within the household, conditional upon fulfilling one’s gendered tasks and responsibilities, seemingly detach a social role from any grounding in a person’s biological sex. Echoing selected

African feminist studies as well as wider concerns about the constructed-ness of not only gender but sex demonstrates a certain tension with a Western liberal feminist view.

According to the majority of research participants, it is the man as head of the household, who still carries final authoritative decision-making power, no matter if he is the main income earner or not. Final decision-making power seems to be another element that marks the position of household headship. Nonetheless, the majority of research participants in all three communities, irrespective of gender and age, also stressed that it is the husband and wife *together*, who make decisions in the household and that it does not necessarily depend on who is the main income-earner in the family. Most female discussants in the FGD with the women's group in Kwamoso agreed that women and men decide together, notably spouses in a well-functioning household, "Please, it depends on how you live with [your] spouse. If you *respect* your spouse and do his or her likes or support your spouse during soft [easy] and hard times, you will always decide together" (emphasis added). The socio-cultural value of respect plays a key role, yet again, this time framed in mutual and reciprocal terms.

By drawing on statements of community members, this part illustrated that tasks and responsibilities are gendered linking to needs, interests and aspirations of people, or groups of people, which are often set up in relational terms and refracted through a normative lens. It demonstrated how, in a setting of limited economic resources, difficulties arise in providing financially for the family to secure needs, a role predominantly aligned to the head of the household mostly encoded as 'rightfully male'. While women, at times, enact the position of head of the household, this does not seem to widely challenge the *normative* expectation of male household headship. Women taking care of their family's needs does, however, seem to link to shifts in *enacted* gender roles and relations. The socio-cultural value of respect has started to emerge as a relevant aspect for framing gender relations at community level.

8.2. The Role of Socio-cultural Values in Constituting Social Relations

This part will first address the role of respect and harmony in constituting gendered social relations at community level and will then discuss understandings of respect and disrespect with implications for framing abusive behaviour.

8.2.1. Respect and Harmony

This research aimed at understanding gender relations at community level, including relations *between* women and men, but also *among* women as well as *among* men. During research interviews, a majority of research participants viewed these various community relations as 'peaceful' and 'harmonious'. The terms 'harmony' and 'harmonious', or seemingly related expressions such as 'peaceful' or 'love/peace reigns',[186] were used quite frequently to describe mutually respectful relations, often linked to an absence of tensions and problems and thus desirable (KWHtH).[187] The practice and value of mutual respect features prominently in conceptualisations of various 'harmonious' gender relations, be it between spouses, parents and their children, or among community women and men more broadly, with a particular role for intra-personal communication. Some statements of community members pointed to 'understanding each other' as a means of upholding harmonious relations, especially when adhering to one's expected gendered roles is not always possible.

> As [I] am a farmer and sometimes the money you expect, you [are] not getting, so because of that, you don't have any money on you to cater for the house - it brings fight in the house and when [I] am able to give *chop* money and when I return from the farm and there is no food in the house, it brings fighting. But in all, when there is understanding, I think it will make the house a peaceful [place] because it [is] not every day that you will get whatever you want or expect. (KWHtH, male respondent)

The role of harmony in envisioning social gendered relations seems to be pronounced in African feminist work while it is does not find considerable resonance in wider feminist work, especially those studies considered within the realm of international development policy and planning (see Chapter 2 and 3).

[186] 'Love or peace reigns' is an Akan saying, which was widely used throughout research communities.
[187] It has to be noted that as part of research activities, we explicitly asked research participants about 'areas of tensions and problems' and 'areas of harmony' concerning various social relations in the community. However, references to 'peaceful' or 'harmonious' relations were also provided in answers to other interview questions.

Research participants mentioned various family relations with a high frequency throughout research activities, which indicates relevance of these relations at community level. It could also reflect the thematic focus of the GPP and, by extension, parts of this research.[188] Wife-husband relations were referred to with the highest frequency throughout house-to-house interviews and FGDs with community members in Kwamoso, followed by references to relations between parents and children. The third and fourth highest frequency belonged to the mother-child relations and the mother-daughter (or 'girl child') ones respectively.[189] Across research activities in Kwamoso, variances of relations between fathers and their children, for instance, father-daughter or father-son, were mentioned sometimes, together with references to siblings.[190] Relations between grandparents and their grandchildren, sometimes between a grandmother and a granddaughter or a grandfather and a grandson, as well as relations between maternal uncles and nieces, or nephews respectively, were also mentioned, at times, in response to targeted prompts by the interviewers.[191] Mentioning extended family members, and notably the maternal uncle and niece relation, aligns to the relevance of a wide familial network echoing matrilineal Akan family structures within West Africa. While references to various family members that are part of larger social family groups align to an African perspective, emphasis on husband-wife relations and among parents and their children points to a focus on the nuclear family, more in line with a Western feminist liberal point of view.

As highlighted previously (see Chapter 7), counting occurrences of terms, or codes, can form one, even if only minor, part of thematic analysis linked to code development. It points to what is common and socially sanctioned and thus to what one can widely refer. To contextualise whether a theme is common or unused, I am indicating whether 'many/a majority', 'some/several', or 'few' people mentioned something. At times, to indicate a common or unused theme, I am also quantifying occurrences of terms or codes; such information is provided in footnotes.

[188] See Appendices H, I and K.

[189] Wife-husband relation was coded 283 times throughout house-to-house interviews and FGDs conducted in Kwamoso; parents-children relation was coded 104 times, mother-children 84 times and mother-daughter 30 times (overall coded occurrences on social relations: 908).

[190] Variances of father-child/children relations were referred to 97 times, variances of siblings relations were referred to 64 times.

[191] Grandparent-grandchildren relations were referred to 15 times, relations among maternal uncles and nieces (as well as nephews) were referred to 29 times.

In statements of research participants, certain communicative acts were coded in positive terms and link to the socio-culturally relevant value of respect with implications for positively connoted interpersonal relations among community members. Thematic coding revealed that particular speech or communicative acts were linked to 'being respectful', such as 'talks in humility', 'talks patiently', someone who has a 'good diction' and knows 'how to talk' as well as 'listening' and 'responding calmly' to someone, or 'giving advice' to someone (KWHtH). Such acts were often aligned to statements such as having a 'good' or 'cordial' relation with someone, being 'good', 'fine' or 'cool' with each other and 'relating' or 'living well' with one another (KWHtH), pointing to interpersonal relations encoded in positive terms. The Chief for Progress in Kwamoso explained during the FGD with chief and elders, "In all things, respect has to do with the way you talk, humility and obedience." The latter, as becomes clear as he continues speaking, applies to both women and men and irrespective of any socio-political position one might have; even the president of Ghana is respectful when he talks to the elders of the community (FGD Chief and Elders KW).

Respect is understood in reciprocal terms, as various statements of community members illustrated. A 38-year-old woman, who sells maize, groundnut, yam and meat for a living, pointed out that respectable behaviour for a man entails the following, "If the man is married, respecting the wife all the time; respect is reciprocal so when the man shows the wife some sense of respect, he will earn the respect back from the wife" (KWHtH). Other research participants pointed to reciprocal respect as an important value and social practice between children and their parents, among siblings as well as among community members more broadly. In response to our prompt on relations among siblings, an 18-year-old female student answered, "We are in good terms, when I send her [to do errands], she goes, and vice versa because respect is reciprocal" (KWHtH). Respect, often coded as positively connoted communicative acts, forms a relevant socio-cultural value at community level, especially in safeguarding 'peaceful' or 'harmonious' gender relations across social markers of gender, age or familial status.

At community level, social norms seem to dictate respectful behaviour, notably linked to particular forms of communication, 'in the house' and 'in the community' for both women and men. Being 'head of the house' entails being a role model and *communicating well* with others. For male headship, this includes *respecting* your wife and children. Various statements during house-to-house interviews pointed to a 'good man' as someone who has a 'good diction' and has patience when talking to people. It is someone who 'talks well'

especially to his wife and listens to elders. A 'good woman', according to community members interviewed, is someone who uses a 'good choice of words', is not 'gossiping', does not insult or use 'abusive words'. She also greets others, notably elders, and 'talks in humility'. Selected statements of community members also pointed to the importance for a 'good man' to talk in humility (KWHtH). A 'good woman' is someone who "respect[s] in- and outside the house" while a 'good man' is "respecting the elderly in the house and in the community as a whole" according to a 25-year-old female baker (KWHtH). Despite respect being a relevant value across social identity markers, varying emphasis on some communicative acts linked to perceived respectful behaviour is refracted through the factors of gender and age. This carries particular consequences for displaying perceived disrespectful behaviour (for further discussion, see Section 8.2.2).

Throughout house-to-house interviews in Kwamoso, male as well as female respondents mentioned that relations among men in the community are mostly peaceful and harmonious, characterised by playing together, often football or *ludo*.[192] Outside the familial sphere, research participants at community level referenced relations among friends during interviews as well as FGDs.[193] Some respondents pointed to friends as a social support network, such as this 32-year-old female hairdresser, who was currently unemployed at the time of the interview, "[…] when I am with a friend and she needs rice to eat and I give her and she also gives back to me anytime I am in need, there is always peace." Friendships as a system of social support seem to draw on reciprocity and mutuality, which can apply within a longer time perspective based upon when needs arise. This can translate into positively connoted social relations where 'peace reigns', an indication for 'peaceful' or 'harmonious' social relations. Friends might help each other finding a job; a 22-year-old female farmer outlined that among men,

> When a man travels outside of the community and finds a job, he can [go] back to the community and tell his fellow men to follow him to the other town he got the job, to also join him and go and work to survive. (KWHtH)

Women might also help their female friends to find an opportunity for earning some income, as another respondent indicated (KWHtH). Friends and their support might be linked to

[192] Ludo is a cross and circle game; "Like other cross and circle games, Ludo is derived from the Indian game Pachisi, but simpler. The game and its variations are popular in many countries and under various names." See Wikipedia (2021)
[193] 80 occurrences were coded.

Godly intervention; “When I need something and ask God to help me get that thing, you will realise that God, too, will send your friend and the person will give you two cedis[194] and so God doesn’t allow me to suffer” (FGD Data Validation KW, female participant). Providing a religious explanation to the role of friends as a social support network seems to point to processes of sense-making that incorporate spiritual components.

In statements on friends, women would notably refer to female friends while men cited male friendships predominantly. Only a few respondents mentioned friendships *between* women and men such as a 38-year-old woman “When I came to Kwamoso, I got a male friend whom I talk to concerning my problems and he advises on what to do” (KWHtH). In this quote, the communicative acts of sharing problems and giving advice seemingly constitute harmonious friendship relations among people of different genders.

For some respondents, both female and male, respectable behaviour for a woman entails *not* having too many friends of either sex. Likewise, ‘not joining or walking with *bad* friends’ was considered respectable behaviour for men, while ‘joining or walking with bad friends’ was often coded as negative behaviour for men. This frequently aligned to other non-respectable behaviours for men such as drinking alcohol, smoking weed, stealing and, more generally, ‘engaging in social vices’ as well as living a ‘bad lifestyle’. Refraining from drinking, smoking weed and stealing and demonstrating a ‘good’ or ‘exemplary lifestyle’ was perceived widely as respectable behaviour for men, together with showing a ‘good character’ or ‘attitude’ (KWHtH). It was when refraining from non-respectable behaviour that men were perceived as being better able to take care of the needs of the family.

8.2.2. Respect and Disrespect - Framing Abusive Behaviour

Analysis of participatory qualitative research activities showed that adult community members are expected to be respectful towards elders, likewise children are expected to display respectful behaviour towards their parents. Elders are the ones expected to provide advice, similarly, parents are being expected to advise their children. The role of adult community members in relation to elders, and children in relation to their parents, includes listening to this advice and, ideally, behaving correspondingly.

[194] The New Ghana Cedi (GHS) is the currency used in Ghana; GHS 2 equals GBP 0.27 (conversion rate October 2020).

Statements of research participants indicated that raising children entails teaching them respectable behaviour, which might align to disciplining them including through physical means when they display non-respectable behaviour, or 'too little' academic progress as part of schooling (FGD Research Interviewees KW; FGD Youth Group KW; FGD Women's Group KW). Raising children also entails training them, which seems to link to supervising girls and boys in conducting gender- and age-aligned tasks when helping with household chores. During the FGD with chief and elders in Kwamoso, a male elder outlined these points alluding to particular tasks for mothers and fathers.

> In reality, women raise a child and men care for a child. When you raise a child, you give the child directives like 'Sweep here. Go and fetch water. Cook. Fetch water and go and put it in the bathroom for your father to bath.' These are some responsibilities of a woman; women teach, train, raise a child. When it comes to rearing of the child, then it's the man's duty because most of the corrections come from the father, do you understand?

'Corrections' might include moderate beating, which emerged as a widely accepted legitimate practice of raising children, especially to keep them from behaving disrespectfully, or encouraging academic progress (FGD Research Interviewees KW; FGD Youth Group KW; FGD Women's Group KW). While a majority of women during the FGD with the women's group in Kwamoso pointed out that *excessive* beating of children is not acceptable as part of educating and raising children, *moderate* beating of children (with or without a cane or wooden stick) seems to be a widely accepted social practice of disciplining children.[195] Other than beating, physical disciplining of children enacted by parents as well as male and female school headmasters might entail "asking the child to kneel down or crawl (while kneeling) to the roadside [and back]", or "[a]sking the child to spread his hands apart and allow the child to carry blocks on his head or on both sides of his palm", as two women mentioned during the FGD with the women's group in Kwamoso. Other participants in the same FGD pointed out that raising children to be respectable also includes raising them with "good choice of words and humility", foregrounding the importance of specific forms of communication. Raising children also demands "a parent who uses God-fearing virtues to teach the child" (FGD Women's Group KW). From the various strategies adopted to raise and train children, the socially sanctioned role of moderately beating children points most clearly to different understandings of what protecting children and cases of child abuse can entail.

[195] As also observed during participant observation.

With a focus on child protection, responsibility seemingly lies with GPP implementing organisations to act in accordance with global policy documents such as the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (1989). Article 19 points to the responsibility of states "to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment […] while in the care of parent(s) […]" (Paragraph 1). What Chapter 9 will discuss in depth is that a challenge for aligning conceptualisations of child protection cross-culturally, as part of an international gender and development programme, might lie in understanding *why* a certain practice is socially accepted that might infringe on children rights to protection. This research argues that consideration of alternative pathways through co-producing knowledge is key without dismissing the relevance of socio-culturally relevant values such as respect and harmony. Contestations around what constitutes child abuse and appropriate forms of protecting children within the context of a cross-cultural international development intervention can point to pathways of aligning perceived programme success and meaningful social transformation, as the next chapter will present thoroughly.

Perceived respectable and disrespectable behaviour for girls and boys, as well as women and men, often links to the gendering of spaces. Raising children, as highlighted above, includes training them in specific chores. For girls, this often includes sweeping *inside*, cooking and fetching water while the tasks for boys entail sweeping *outside* and weeding (as house-to-house interviews in Kwamoso, but also participant observation revealed). During several research activities, certain statements indicated a gendered difference in respectable behaviour along the lines of 'public' and 'private' spaces (KWHtH; FGD Chief and Elders KW). A male participant in the FGD with the chief and elders in Kwamoso explained,

> A disrespectful woman is better off than a man who disrespects. A disrespectful man can affect the home, family, community, society and everyone. He influences any child that gets closer to him. Such rude men don't leave [live] alone but they want [a] group of people to join him so that he will spoil them. A woman, who disrespects, does that in the house but not in public. She will [not] disrespect in public unless you cause her to do so. […] A woman, who disrespects will change as soon as she gets married […] [a] man will not mind insulting his in-laws, mother, pastors, leaders of the church, chiefs and elders of the community, wife, family members or dignitaries. A man [who] does not respect is very bad. (FGD Chief and Elders KW)

The above quote encapsulates various gendered ascriptions concerning perceived disrespectful behaviour of women and men and shows that male community members are invested with a wider sphere of influence outside the home and the family. Women's sphere

of influence seems to be much more defined within and around the home. While respectable and non-respectable behaviour often included similar elements for women and men (KWHtH), the examples outlined in the below paragraphs highlight gendered differentiations in collective perceptions of certain behaviour impacting upon social gendered relations.

Respectable or non-respectable behaviour notably rests on individual and collective judgement by others, thus investing 'public' actions with particular relevance, as these can be observed or overheard by others. A male coconut farmer and volunteer for *Plan Ghana* encapsulates what various community members viewed as 'bad behaviour' for women,

> A woman who flirts around and [is] known by everybody in the community. If a man want[s] to marry her, the same community members will advise him that the lady is cheap and has slept with a lot [of] men, hence she is not a marriageable material. (KWHtH)

When it comes to non-respectable behaviour for a man, the same male research participant denotes particular actions as well as markers of physical appearance.

> A man who smokes in public; bad haircut.
> Alice: How?
> With lines draw on his head; smoking weed; a man with a rasta hairdo; insult elders in the community. In fact, no one will give you a good name if a man is [showing] such unacceptable behaviour. (KWHtH)

What becomes clear is that non-respectable behaviour often links to what others can observe, or overhear, and then interpret as not acceptable. Thematic coding revealed that 'observing or overhearing situations' is linked to knowledge accumulation and was often used as evidence for adhering to criteria of truthfulness. If one is not able to draw on such observations, the possibility to raise truthful claims is limited or non-existent.

During the FGD with research interviewees in Kwamoso, a group solely constituted for the purpose of this doctoral research, a discussion unfolded that outlined why 'sleeping around', as non-respectable behaviour for women,[196] was worse than 'being lazy', as non-respectable behaviour for men. Some respondents, both female and male, pointed to the risk of contracting diseases when "sleeping with a lot of men" (female participant). To keep women from 'sleeping around', a woman during the FGD with the *susu* group in Kwamoso mentioned, "Sleeping around can be reduced when there is a job in the community; with that,

[196] The codes 'Sleeping around', 'Prostitution' and 'Immoral Practices' were referenced 53 times. These codes were part of the code 'Sexuality – socially not accepted' referenced 89 times. While 'sleeping around', 'prostitution' and 'immoral practices' predominantly addressed behaviour of women, 'womanizer' was a code reserved for males, indicating not acceptable social behaviour.

the woman has her own money and it will prevent her from sleeping around", linking to an earlier discussion on addressing 'felt' or perceived needs of community members (see Chapter 7).

A female respondent during the FGD with the *susu* group commented, "A woman who has been sleeping around is bad, because it tarnishes the image of the town when she is asked which community she comes from and mentions Kwamoso". This quote highlights a perceived notion that it is this female body, when it is 'tarnished', that maculates the image of a whole community. Consequently, abstinence was a widely accepted sexual behaviour for women, while various comments during house-to-house interviews also pointed to a 'good' woman as someone who has a 'pure' lifestyle and shows 'cleanliness', which refers to both physical appearance and 'keeping one's house clean' (KWHtH). Ascribing ideas of purity on the female body, notably linked to sexual modesty, is a long-standing phenomenon throughout various cultures, and well researched elsewhere.[197]

In contrast to promiscuous women as carriers of diseases, a publication of the GSHRDC focusing on the North of Ghana (Akumatey & Darkwa, 2009) shows how gender norms, domestic violence and women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS link together, notably due to the higher social acceptance of *men's* infidelity and promiscuous behaviour. Such behaviour exposes wives in certain areas of Ghana to a higher prevalence of HIV/AIDS infections, together with limited negotiating power in terms of condom usage. According to some female participants in the FGD with the women's group in Kwamoso, men are 'natural cheats', aligning their promiscuous behaviour to biological reasons. The women debated whether such behaviour could be changed through wives advising their husbands, but opinions were divided on this topic.

'Snatching someone's husband or boyfriend' was identified as a problem among women in the community, while 'snatching someone's wife or girlfriend' was mentioned, albeit less frequently, as an area of tension between men in the community (KWHtH). It also became clear that 'gossiping', identified as an area of 'problems and tensions' among women in the community, might escalate such a situation. A person might 'gossip' that someone was trying to snatch someone, which might not adhere to the reality of what happened and even if it does, might lead to severe marital problems if a wife confronts the husband based on 'gossip' (KWHtH).

[197] Various recent doctoral theses and academic articles are exploring this topic; see Ortiz (2019), Abeyasekera & Marecek (2019), Bilan (2016), Taragin-Zeller (2014).

Abusive Behaviour Linked to Disrespect in Matrimonial Relations

Analysis of interviews with community members revealed that matrimonial fights and quarrels are often based on gendered perceptions of respect aligned to particular forms of communication, frequently linked to not being able to adhere to one's gendered tasks and responsibilities. Wives are expected to show respectful behaviour to their husbands by engaging in positively connoted communicative acts, such as 'talking in humility'. There are potentially severe repercussions for negatively connoted speech acts, notably when performed by women in their roles as wives, such as 'insulting' or 'offending' the husband, as well as 'complaining' or 'nagging' him, or 'talking back' (KWHtH).

During the FGD with the chief and elders in Kwamoso, one respondent explained that "[…] the women should be submissive" which notably entails not being "rude to their husbands". Various development practitioners during research interviews corroborated that 'submissiveness' for women is widely viewed as respectable female behaviour throughout Ghana. The Executive Director of CRRECENT explained, "When you want to […] know, what society has accepted generally as the norm, but in the negative sense, society has accepted as the norm your subservience [as a woman]" (DP Interview SS CRRECENT). Margaret Brew-Ward, the former GPP programme manager, indicated that perceived respectable behaviour and attitudes for a woman include that a "person must be silent, not loud, not speak too much, be respectful, not ask many q[uestion]s. (However), […] things are changing […]" (DP Interview MBW CO Plan Gh). This change entails that "some y[oun]g men [are] accommodating and beginning to understand equality" for instance, "women can ask q[uestions]" (ibid.)

Negatively connoted interpersonal communication can trigger matrimonial fights, which might lead to physical abuse, notably enacted by husbands against their wives. This often aligns to *not* fulfilling one's tasks and responsibilities, or only *just* fulfilling them in circumstances of poverty including limited availability of financial resources. Various comments of male participants during the FGD with the *susu* group in Kwamoso concerned women talking rudely to their husbands, which might provoke them to beat them.

> Some women talk rude to their husbands if they refuse to give chop money and when the man is coming back from work with his friends and the man asks for food, the way the woman will insult him in front of […] friends. And with that, when the friends leave, the way and manner he will beat the woman. (FGD *susu* Group KW, male participant)

In this statement, not fulfilling one's responsibilities (not giving chop money) links to inappropriate communication between a wife and a husband (the woman insulting the husband) notably in a public social sphere (in the presence of friends) which seemingly makes beating the woman a valid consequential action for some research participants. Matrimonial quarrels might lead to physical abuse, which can be augmented through the intake of alcohol, which the following statement of a female respondent encapsulates.

> When a man has been flirting around and the woman complains, he won't give chop and when through that, he goes to take alcohol, when he comes home, he will just be messing up, insulting the woman and since he thinks he is stronger, he start[s] beating you. (FGD Women's Group KW)

While men are often the perceived and actual perpetrators of violent acts inflicted upon women, various male research participants firmly disagree with enacting physical violence upon women. During the FGD with chief and elders in Kwamoso, the Chief for the Ewe, an elderly man, stated,

> […] some men beat their wives after marrying her. The woman is not a drum to be beating [beaten] all the time. If you marry her and she is disrespectful, just send her to the parents rather than beating her, because she is special to her family.

'Sending someone to one's parents' arguably points to conflict-resolution mechanisms widely used at community level, namely 'settling disputes amicably' drawing on mediation support of elders (for more discussion on this point, see Chapter 9). This strategy draws on positively connoted interpersonal communication and carries the potential to impede abusive behaviour and bring about harmony or peaceful relations. Wives providing advice to their husbands forms another interpersonal communication mechanism, in both practical and normative terms. A female respondent elucidated, "If you love the man, you will talk to him. Some will not take the advice; others will take the advice for peace to reign in the family and the couples will live happily" (FGD Women's Group KW). As an alternative strategy to 'settling disputes amicably', some women in the same FGD suggest 'playing the fool' during disputes.

Not considering the advice a wife provides to her husband can be understood as infringing on a 'right of women' in line with socio-cultural norms and values. Some men might not "take heed to [of] the advice of their wives, because they think they are the head of the family and also income earners", as a female participant of the FGD with the *susu* group in Kwamoso explained. She continued, "So, no matter what you say or do, the man will try to infringe on right of the women". After being prompted by one the research assistants, a

female participant in the FGD with the women's group in Kwamoso shared her opinion and stated, "When the man is doing something that is not good, you can advise him. Some men take it very well, but others don't and will insult you: 'A woman is not supposed to advise me'." Insulting others is coded as non-respectable behaviour for *both* women and men, albeit in less frequent terms for men.

This section has demonstrated that the concept and enactment of respect at community level links to harmony and the constitution of peaceful social gendered relations, which seem to be perceived as desirable among community members. While respect constitutes a relevant socio-cultural value across social makers of gender, age and educational status, there seems to be a widely relevant social norm that notably expects respect towards elders, from children to their parents and from wives to their husbands. Thus, a certain hierarchy is created linked to the social identity factor of age and gender, with a man being perceived as the rightful head of the house. Perceived disrespect of notably children and wives might be disciplined through moderate beating, which especially in the case of moderately beating children seems to constitute a widely accepted social practice at community level. This has implications for aligning views around child protection, the main focus of the GPP, as the next chapter will address in further detail. At the same time, respect as positively connoted speech acts in reciprocal and mutual terms can point to pathways of preventing and addressing abusive behaviour enacted against children and women within the household and at school. The question that emerges is whether and how socio-cultural norms and practices can point towards meaningful social transformation of gendered social relations at community level? The next section will explore this point unpacking the concept of women's empowerment within the context of the Girl Power Programme.

8.3. Women's Empowerment – Aligning Individual and Collective Needs in Transnational and Transformative Terms

Analysis revealed that the understanding of women's empowerment in the context of implementing an international cross-cultural development programme in three selected peri-urban communities in the Eastern Region of Ghana links to challenging certain aspects of one's culture without completely breaking with them. At the intersection of individual choices and the need for social recognition as part of a group, an understanding of women's empowerment in particular socio-cultural contexts points to the importance of aligning individual and collective needs in transformative ways, as this section will demonstrate.

8.3.1. Women's Empowerment and Gender-transformative Programmes

As outlined in Chapter 7, gender-transformative programmes set out to target underlying and deep-rooted socio-cultural assumptions linked to social discrimination against women. Root causes of discrimination against women might manifest in certain sayings or proverbs, especially those that indicate females have less worth than males (DP Interview KD B EPU Plan Gh). Kofi Debrah, the head of the EPU Plan International Ghana, further identified that "the root causes are taboos […] norms, institutions […]. When I talk about institutions, I am not talking about […] public institution […] schools or something, the institutions are their belief system at the social level" (ibid.). At the same time, it is particularly 'tradition' and socio-cultural norms and practices that might offer pathways towards meaningful social transformation aligned to gender equality and women's empowerment (see also sections 3.2.1, 6.1.2 of this thesis), echoing aspects of widely held socio-cultural values, such as respect and harmony, at community level.

Women's empowerment as economic empowerment and creating *equal* opportunities, notably in accessing jobs, cuts across statements provided by development practitioners and community members throughout Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom (FGD Data Validation KW, NSU, MINTA). Notions of women's empowerment at community level link to a widely perceived need for job creation (see Chapter 7) and align to views on gender equality. Such views might be well encapsulated in a saying that was used several times throughout research activities, 'Whatever a man can do, a woman can do'. In practice, the saying 'Whatever a man can do, a woman can do' manifests, for instance, in women and men taking up the same

professions at community level, albeit with particular gendered differences remaining (see Chapter 7). As discussed previously, what women and men do in practice aligns to gendered norms and social expectations of displayed social behaviour within the household and outside that sphere. What women and men *cannot* do, seems to differ significantly in gendered terms, as analysis of research activities with community members demonstrated, notably aligned to the sphere of respect.

Women's participation in decision-making links to socio-cultural values of respect and harmony in particular ways and shows tensions between a normative and practical sphere with implications for understanding women's empowerment. Women seem to hold leadership positions at community, municipal and national levels throughout Ghana. According to the head of the EPU Plan International Ghana, "traditionally within the Akan system, a woman's place in terms of decision-making is well guaranteed" as in "the selection of the paramount chief, the final decision lies with the woman" (DP Interview KD B EPU Plan Gh). However, according to the GPP Annual Report 2013 by the Ark Foundation, one of the 'major challenges' is that "[m]ost of the GPP communities are still entrenched in patriarchy and, therefore, do not readily accept the concept of […] involving girls and young women in decision making processes at community level" (p. 7). This notably had an impact on the formation of community-based organisations, such as Child Protection Teams (CPTs), as part of the GPP (ibid.).

As indicated previously, a widely endorsed notion among community members entails the view that decision-making within the household is collaborative, no matter whether one is an income earner, or not. However, selected statements of community members and development practitioners challenge the view that decision-making *is* a collaborative process at household level. Rather, some statements of research participants indicated that earning an income does have an impact on *final* decision-making power aligned to the position of household headship. While women providing financially for the family seems to open up spaces for women to *enact* the position of head of the house, for strategic reasons, this might not yet translate into rightfully claiming final decision-making powers.

When women earn money, aligned to accessing educational or vocational training, this makes a difference in terms of 'earning more respect' translated into increasing their decision-making power (DP Interview KD B EPU Plan Gh). According to Kofi Debrah, this links to women's empowerment in the following way,

> In Akan, there is a proverb that says […] 'When your money is small, you haven't got much to say' […] So, the point is, empowerment is about two things: one, access to

> information and application of that information; then, two, skill […] and [disposable] income. […] These two things are the main underpinning factors for empowerment […] And don't forget, access to information also comes about with education. When you are educated, one thing that education does is that it gives you options for choice! (DP Interview KD B EPU Plan Gh)

What becomes clear is that women can claim access to decision-making based on their income-generating activities *as well as* particular understandings of the socio-cultural value of respect that is reciprocal and might manifest in collaborative decision-making processes among spouses. Respect as reciprocal and mutual forms of communicative acts, such as listening to each other and giving advice, already frames the decision-making sphere, in ideal terms, as a collaborative exercise and a marker for 'harmonious' social relations, especially between husband and wife. However, how to align collaborative decision-making with *final* decision-making power is another aspect to be considered.

While the concept of empowerment in Plan's programmatic and policy documentation considers a wider societal setting, it foregrounds an *individual* sense of worth for girls and *personal* control over their life. As statements by Ghanaian development practitioner revealed, women's empowerment might lie in considering an individual sphere *in conjunction with* a societal sphere, aligning individual as well as collective values and needs through challenging one's own culture in particular ways without fully breaking with it.

> The 'key long-term objective' of the GPP programme is
>
> […] to ensure that girls and young women in Ghana have equal opportunities and chances to develop and *enjoy their freedoms* and participate in society by fostering a safe environment for the realization of the fundamental rights of girls and young women. (GPP Final Report 2015, p. 18; emphasis added)

In a related fashion, Plan's Policy on Gender Equality - Building an Equal World for All Children (2011) states that "[…] gender-based empowerment involves building girls' assets (social, economic, political and personal), strengthening girls' ability to make choices about their future, and developing girls' sense of *self-worth* and their belief in their *own ability to control their lives*" (p. 11, emphasis added). Considering educational paths of children, a female Ghanaian development practitioner working on the GPP, outlined the tension between societal expectations and individual aspirations in taking up opportunities, influencing one's choices and well-being.

> [According to your] capability and knowledge, opportunities open, you can go into it [but there is] pressure [and] society will see you differently [and you] don't want to be

> an outcast, [so you] go their way [and] don't go your way. [This is] not leading [to] your true selves; it kills [you and has] a lot of consequences [on] your self-esteem. Most people are suffering that there is no happiness in their life. (DP Interview 4; written interview notes)

The same development practitioner outlined that "[the children] need to be themselves – [they] don't develop their talents but what [their] parents think they should be" (DP Interview 4, written notes). The crucial element lies in challenging what respect means, linked to children 'climbing higher', understood as educational progress, on their own terms.

> [C]ulture says, 'A child must be seen but not heard'. So, for an adult, a child that speaks is disrespectful. Children are not showing respect (in this view), but it is not about the child's respectfulness, but going against cultural norms and principles. We need to bring adults/parents in – they need to understand dynamics; we think (our) culture is rich, and we are respecting (it) but we can (try to) change ways to help the child to be confident to climb higher. (DP Interview 4, written notes).

While children following the expectation or advice of parents, in 'unseen' or 'unheard' ways, may be considered as a sign of respect as part of socio-cultural practices, these same cultural expectations can be viewed as 'intimidating' for an individual (DP Interview 4). Aligning individual and personal needs, foregrounded notably in a Western liberal perspective, to an understanding of needs, rights and responsibilities that is set up in collective terms within socio-cultural settings that draw on a distinct African value set might be the role of transnational feminist development work in an international cross-cultural development programme. This might entail questioning and challenging one's own culture in particular ways, notably in regard to what constitutes respectful or disrespectful behaviour.

8.3.2. From Rights to Responsibilities and Sharing Household Chores

Few parents criticised GPP sensitisation activities aimed at Rights of the Child (or ROC), as these were perceived to 'spoil' the children and made them 'not respect' their parents. Raising this point during research interviews with GPP development practitioners, Jet Bastiani, Senior Health and Gender Advisor at Plan International Netherlands, commented, "Yes, I recognized it, I heard it as well. Actually, that's […] exactly the fact, [I think] why there is an African Charta for Child Rights. Then there […] [are] not only rights but also plights for children" (DP Interview JB Plan Nl).

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child "is an African regional human rights instrument".[198] Part One of the Charter addresses "Rights and Duties" with a strong focus on the individual rights of the child as part of a social collective. Article 31, for instance, states, "Children have responsibilities towards their families and societies, to *respect* their parents, superiors and elders, to preserve and strengthen *African cultural values* in their *relation* with other members of their communities" (emphasis added). An understanding of rights intrinsically linked to responsibilities is foregrounded and seemingly links to relevant socio-cultural values of reciprocal respect constituting harmony in social relations. The concerns, few parents voiced on the GPP, aligns to safeguarding this double focus on rights *and* responsibilities. A development practitioner explained how messaging on ROC during GPP sensitisation activities was amended accordingly.

> [W]e aim to teach them both] rights and responsibilities – [we now] changed the info material [to cover more of the responsibilities] i.e. [the] Right to receive adequate food [is linked to the] responsibility to not waste your food; [the] Right to Education [is linked to the] responsibility to respect who is taking good care of you[r education] so that resources won't go to waste. [The] parents [were] not getting it well, [so we] added responsibility now[199] as [a] key issue – [the] emphasis on that [is] for parents to understand [better]. (DP Interview 2, written notes)

The quote illustrates that a perception of children's rights foregrounding individual privileges was then amended to feature training and sensitisation on *both* children's rights *and* responsibilities among children and their parents in line with collective values. It points to mutual and reciprocal relations between parents and children, understood in collective rather than individual terms, while drawing on 'adaptive programming'.[200] Aligning a notion of children's rights based on individual privileges to a notion of children's responsibilities in line with collective values in particular socio-cultural contexts may point to aligning subjective notions of programme success to meaningful social transformation as part of international cross-cultural development programmes.

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[198] The Charter was "adopted by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union (AU), on 11 July 1990. The charter entered into force on 29 November 1999" (WHO, n.d.).

[199] At the time of the interview (Autumn 2017), current sensitisation activities on children's rights and responsibilities were conducted as part of the GPP follow-up programme, the *Girls Advocacy Alliance* throughout selected communities in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

[200] According to a report by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), based in the UK, "Adaptive programming suggests, at a minimum, that development actors react and respond to changes in the political and socio-economic operating environment. It emphasises learning and the development practitioner is encouraged to adjust their actions to find workable solutions to problems they may face" (Valters *et al*., 2016). I want to thank Paola de Munari for introducing me to the concept of 'adaptive programming' as part of international development practice (Informal workshop FF PdM, May 4, 2019).

In line with the education component of the GPP as well as the programme's main component, protection, Rights of the Child (ROC) clubs were formed during GPP implementation and aimed at school-going children, mostly girls.[201] In these clubs, themes such as child protection, child abuse and personal hygiene were addressed (GPP M&E Progress Report CRI Aug 2014). GPP documentation (ibid.) indicates a shift during GPP implementation in both denomination of the clubs and content of the training provided, namely from Rights of the Child clubs emphasising children as rights bearers, to Rights and Responsibilities of the Child clubs, also considering responsibilities of children in relational terms. What becomes clear is that gender-transformative international and cross-cultural programming needs to be based on a process that links an understanding of girls as rights bearers as stated in international policy documents with local conceptualisations of gender to relevant collective values such as harmony and respect, when working towards women's empowerment in particular socio-cultural settings.

Previously in this chapter, the theme of sharing household chores was addressed. In the following paragraphs, this theme is revisited, focusing on potential areas of transformative change linked to women's empowerment. Differences in views concerning demanding equal sharing of household chores among development practitioners and community members point to both possibilities and limitations in aligning a normative and practical sphere in GAD programmes.

Various GPP development practitioners in Ghana, interviewed for this research, were critical of demanding fair sharing of household tasks. For the Executive Director of the Child Research and Resource Centre (CRRECENT), one of two implementing 'local' NGOs of the GPP at community-level, the work of some 'gender activists and feminists' sets out to disrupt harmony in female-male relations. During a research interview, Susan Sabaa outlined that

> […] sometimes, some of the gender activists and […] feminists […] sometimes, the message is decreased [and] rather causes a lot of *disharmony* […] in the family […] because they want to turn over the status quo in the negative way. (DP Interview SS CRRECENT, emphasis added)

[201] An explanatory note of the Ark Foundation (which seems to form part of the QPR Jan to April 2013) indicates that ROCs were addressed at JHS students. However, "some pupils from the Upper Primary (Primary 4 to 6) were included because, in some cases, the JHS could not provide enough children to meet the selection criteria". It is also explained that few boys were selected in five schools as they fitted the selection criteria. Overall, the note points out that there are higher numbers of girls in those schools that serve more communities such as Kwamoso. Smaller communities such as Nsutam sent school-going children at secondary level to a larger community (in terms of land size and population) during GPP implementation.

As a negative example, Susan Sabaa mentioned that women are being encouraged to take a stand on "unpaid job[s] in the house" and making claims on being "entitled for payment", as well as the need for men to share household chores with them. Susan Sabaa continued, "See, you are disorganising the domestic-level situation. […] We have roles and they are all supposed to work in *harmony* […] when the system is allowed to work, it is a perfect one". It is only when there is "deviation", "[it is] […] not working *harmonious[ly]*" (DP Interview SS CRRECENT, emphasis added). In a similar manner, Ahensah Asum-Kwarteng, Program Support Manager at CO Plan International Ghana further explains, "[…] some gender programmes that propose to challenge the stereotypes and sort of try to, literally, […] uproot certain thing[s] *they consider to be […] bad* […] you may approach it that way, but it will not work!" (emphasis added). He further commented,

> […] you know, we should understand that this whole thing[202] is rooted in social structure. So, the structure has been there for generations, passed on from generation to generation, you can't just disrupt it, you cannot. (DP Interview AAK CO Plan Gh)

What the above quotes strongly question is not only the role of disruption and deviation for changing gender relations, potentially compromising on the relational and collective value of harmony, but who initiates this disruption and what the role of 'foreign' actors might be. While 'gender activists' and 'feminists' may be foreign due to an ideological stance that is perceived, by some, as not compatible with upholding harmonious gender relations within a West African context, 'foreign' might also point to development practitioners working in Ghana, who are from other nations and nationalities. 'Foreign' might also indicate distance in terms of class and education, though, which might also apply to development practitioners from the Global South working in poorer communities in the Global South.

The dismissal of some development practitioners regarding the demands of 'feminists' concerning sharing household chores as disrupting 'harmony' in the household might foreground an ideological position that, perhaps, does not take full account of the possibilities of social transformation aligning notions of women's empowerment to the socio-culturally relevant values of harmony and respect. The willingness of community members as part of research activities to envision future changes regarding sharing of household chores notably in line with reducing the 'suffering' that some women experience due to an increased

[202] Referring most likely to traditional gender roles making up gender relations, and potential deviations therefrom (see DP Interview AAK CO Plan Gh).

overall workload, points to the possibilities of a practical approach while considering the value of reciprocity through mutual support when considering sharing household chores.

Inquiring about perceived fairness in the distributions of tasks and responsibilities among women and men during research activities, many community members commented on future changes being possible and that more men can help with household chores. Loosening the ascription of specific tasks and responsibilities to certain genders arguably points to the sphere of social transformation, opening up spaces in (re-)defining the roles of women and men within the household. "It can change" as a woman during the FGD with research interviewees in Kwamoso mentioned, "when we educate them [men] that they can also help us in household chores" Few, but very pronounced objections to this view were put forward, often linking conducting household tasks to a 'natural' or religiously intended and cultural role for women. Overall, statements of research participants at community level pointed to sharing household chores among marital couples along *broader* justice concerns as part of marital equality refracted through a normative lens.[203] This can go beyond a narrow consideration of sharing household chores as the following statement of a female research participant illustrates, refracted through differences in urban and rural settings.

> If it [is] in the city, I will be working and my husband, too, will be working; he can help me in the household chores. But [I] am not doing *just* [when I am] in the house and the man goes to work or go to the farm, he can't come back and come and help in the household chores (FGD Research Interviewees KW, emphasis added)

Some feminist scholarship has explored views on and the practice of household chores *in alignment with* well-being in heterosexual relationships (*cf.* Askare *et al*., 2010; Britt & Roy, 2013), while others continue to foreground a more individual sphere, investigating implications of (not) sharing household chores for professional female progression (*cf.* Strober, 2016).

Transformative elements of the GPP also lay in aligning 'hardware' and 'software' concerns (see Section 7.3.3) and creating spaces of co-producing knowledge in the conceptualisation of gender and development. The next chapter will present analysis combining the spheres of knowledge production and social transformation foregrounding possibilities and limitations to co-producing knowledge as part of cross-cultural international development work implemented at community level.

[203] See Gager & Hohmann-Marriott (2006)

8.4. Concluding Remarks

Focusing on the socio-cultural context of three selected communities in the Eastern Region of Ghana, where an international cross-cultural development programme was conducted, this chapter has investigated conceptualisations of gender linked to ideas of social transformation. Throughout this chapter, a variety of social relations *between* and *among* women and men at community level were analysed. However, wife-husband relations as well as parent-children relations emerged as particularly important ones.

The first part of this chapter drew on statements of community members during research activities and illustrated how gendered tasks and responsibilities are set up in relational terms and link to the widely desired and enacted roles of wife and mother as well as husband and father. Personal likes and dislikes linked in particular ways to these desired roles refracted through a social norms' lens. It became clear that women are increasingly taking care of their family's needs, in a setting of limited economic resources, which links to shifts in *enacted* gender roles and relations. While women, at times, *enact* the position of head of the household, this does not seem to widely challenge the *normative* expectation of male household headship, aligned to decision-making power.

In the second part of this chapter, analysis has demonstrated that respect and harmony constitute important socio-cultural values at community-level and mark positively connoted interpersonal relations. Harmony and peaceful relations rest on reciprocal respect notably encoded as 'positive' forms of communication such as 'talking patiently' and 'in humility' as well as 'listening' and 'responding calmly'. 'Harmonious and peaceful' social relations rest on adhering to one's gendered tasks and responsibilities (where possible) and understanding when it is, temporarily, not possible. Not adhering to 'respectful' behaviour might have particular implications, refracted through the social identity factors of gender and age. This part also addressed the role of respect and disrespect in framing abusive behaviour and provided a brief engagement with conflict-resolution mechanisms widely used at community level to deal with, or prevent, abusive behaviour.

The third part of this chapter presented an analysis of various understandings of women's empowerment, linked to gender equality, and considered these within the context of gender-transformative development programming. Statements of community members, together with those of development practitioners, but also language as elucidated throughout programme and policy documents were considered. Statements of Ghanaian development practitioners showed how women's empowerment in Ghana might link to challenging certain

aspects of one's culture without completely breaking with them, at the intersection of individual choices and the need for social recognition as part of a group. Like this, particular concerns of women's empowerment and gender equality align to elements of widely accepted socio-cultural norms and practices, such as harmony and respect, acknowledging the important role of culture in gender-transformative programming. Considering a shift from rights to *both* rights and responsibilities and further reflections on sharing household chores pointed to gender-transformative areas within, or linked to, the context of the GPP enacted at community level.

9. Transformation and Knowledge Production

Addressing the research question of this study on conceptualisations of gender linked to understandings of meaningful social transformation, the focus of this chapter lies on how a particular vision of social transformation, refracted through the dimensions of gender and age, unfolded in knowledge production terms. Investigating the publicly stated intention of transformation that the Girl Power Programme was trying to achieve, notably in the area of child protection, the first part of this chapter explicitly addresses congruence in local and international views on child protection. Here, I build on the discussions outlined in Chapter 7. The second part analyses contested views on child abuse and how to report on it to safeguard child protection, elaborating on aspects addressed in Chapter 8. The last part of this chapter investigates co-production of knowledge as aligning contested views through critical reflection, with a particular role ascribed to feminist development practitioners. In doing so, this chapter supports the main argument of this thesis that shared epistemologies and knowledge co-production can serve as a route to address the cross-cultural question as part of international development work, with a constitutive role ascribed to the value and practice of epistemic equality.

This chapter, and the two preceding ones, all explore alignment and conflict in values as part of an international cross-cultural development programme, which this thesis argues significantly influences the conceptualisation of gender and visions of social transformation. In discussing gender relations and women's empowerment, foregrounding the perspectives of community members at local community level, Chapter 8 engaged with a conflict between collective values, such as respect, and those foregrounding an individual dimension. Chapter 9 investigates child protection, the key focal area of the GPP, and examines the conflict between respect and protection. While these debates focus on different thematic areas, what links them is the discussion of values across these chapters. This chapter will elaborate that, in the course of the GPP, safeguarding protection at community level drew on strategies setting out to align individual and collective concerns around protection, considering implications for, and alignment with, concerns for respect.

9.1. Congruence of Local and International Views on Child Protection

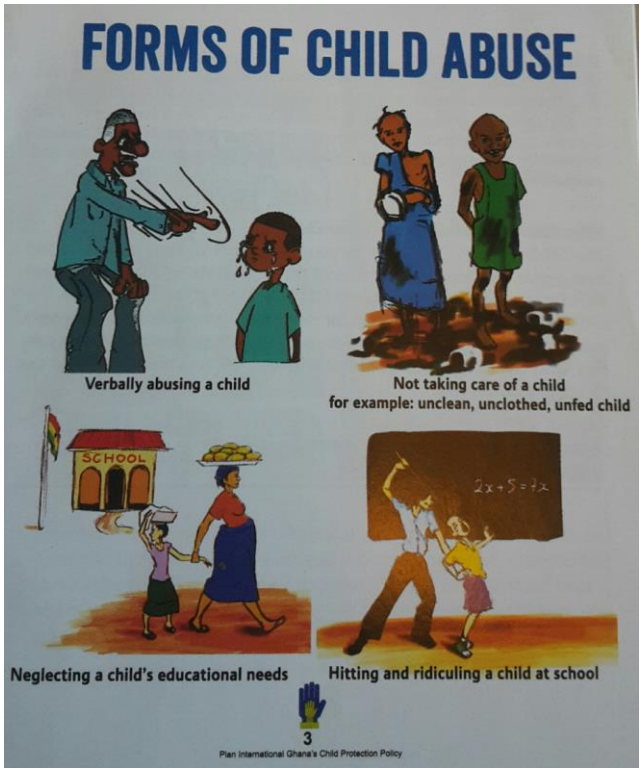
Chapter 7 has demonstrated how different implementing organisations as part of the GPP aligned thematically around child protection, drawing *inter alia* on international global policy documents, based on an explicit rights-based approach. Child protection can be understood as preventing or responding to instances of child abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence.[204] The collective value of respect considered in Chapter 8 is relevant in constituting gendered social relations and resurfaces in Chapter 9 as a relational aspect that at times stands at odds with individual child protection concerns.

What Constitutes Child Abuse?

The child-friendly Child Protection Policy by Plan International Ghana (n.d.) states that "A child is anyone below 18 years of age. Both the United Nations Conventions on Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Children's Act 1998 (Act 560) states that no child should be abused" (p. 2). The policy further explains that child abuse consists of physical and emotional aspects as well as neglect, which is explained in the following way, "When a child is hurt because they are not watched or taken care of, this is called neglect" (n.d., p. 2). Different 'forms of child abuse' are explained in the child-friendly policy document through text as well as images (see Fig. 7A and Fig. 7B below). This policy clearly aligns socio-cultural specifics with broader global policy documents in an effort to explain instances of child abuse, and how to overcome them, at community level.

[204] See The International Save the Children Alliance (2007).

Figure 7A. Forms of Child Abuse



Source: Plan International Ghana, n.d. b, p. 3

Figure 7B. Forms of Child Abuse

Source: Plan International Ghana, n.d. b, p. 3

The GPP Project Outline (Aug 2012) composed at EPU Plan International Ghana level points to "harmful traditional practices such as FGM [Female Genital Mutilation] and *trokosi* at the family and community levels [which] subject girls and young women to all forms of abuses which have a negative effect [on] future development" (p. 2). FGM is rarely practiced in the Eastern Region of Ghana[205] and *trokosi*, a form of ritual servitude, is practiced predominantly in the south-eastern coastal area of Ghana and particular districts within the Volta Region.[206] It notably entails the removal of young girls from their family of origin to a traditional place of worship (Child Frontiers, 2011). While GPP programme documentation includes a variety of child abuse cases, it does not include reporting on 'harmful traditional practices' such as FGM or *trokosi* explicitly.[207] Besides addressing 'harmful traditional practices' as part of the GPP Project Outline (Aug 2012), the GPP Annual Report (Country Office Plan Gh, 2014) points to "the traditional communal value of community ownership of the child" (p. 2) to support "nurturing of […] girl children" with positive links to child protection and gender equality.

At municipal level, it is notably the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service that deals with child right abuses in legal and executive terms. In a letter, the DOVVSU office (for Akropong-Akwapim) reports on their work in line with the GPP's focus on child protection, emphasising cases of neglect and sexual abuse,

> […] it is very clear that reports of Non-Maintenance […] [are] highly on the lead with Defilement following. It is to be observed that both of these crimes are directly related to children. The situation is therefore worrying. An unofficial inquiry revealed that most of these crimes[208] are committed due to sheer ignorance of the laws regarding them. (Letter DOVVSU Akropong-Akwapim Annual Report 2014 and Action Plan for 2015, 13 Jan 2014, p. 2)

[205] A report by Child Frontiers (2011) outlines that "[b]etween nine and 15 percent of the population is believed to engage in FGM/C, particularly in the rural Savannah and Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions" (p. 27), drawing on a joint report by the Government of Ghana, Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MoWAC) and UNICEF Ghana (July 2009).

[206] See Fig. 4, p. 136

[207] An intelligence report by DOVVSU for the East Akim district in the Eastern Region of Ghana alludes to cases of 'unlawful removal of a child', 'abduction, 'child stealing', 'child trafficking' as well as 'kidnapping' (Letter DOVVSU Kibi East Akim to EPU Plan Gh, 21 Jan 2015), which might include cases of *trokosi.*

[208] As DOVVSU Intelligence Reports for the year 2014 reveal, crimes or offences dealt with by DOVVSU include rape, defilement, attempted rape, incest, indecent assault, attempted abortion, criminal abortion, abduction, assault, causing harm, causing damage, harassment, insulting behaviour, child abuse, child stealing, unlawful removal of a child, non-maintenance, child trafficking, attempted murder, abandonment of child, and kidnapping (DOVVSU Intelligence Reports in Letter DOVVSU East Akim Municipality Annual Report 2014, 21 Jan 2015, p. 4).

Defilement is "the offence of rape of children" and "a major reproductive justice issue" according to Renee Aku Sitsofe Morhe and Emmanual Senanu Komla Morhe (2013), with "the majority of rape victims in Ghana […] [being] children below the age of 15 years (p. 23, drawing on Bortei-Doku & Kuenyehia, 1998). The findings of Mohe & Mohe (2013) point to Ghana as having "a comprehensive law on defilement" with many cases being reported to DOVVSU, but subsequently withdrawn for settlement outside of the courts (p. 23). Research activities conducted as part of this doctoral thesis showed that traditional dispute-resolution mechanisms at community-level, or 'amicable settlement' outside of the courts, are widely endorsed as the 'appropriate' process to deal with cases of (child) protection against violence (KWHtH).[209] However, GPP documentation points to state actors such as DOVVSU as the 'appropriate' institutions for handling especially cases of sexual violence enacted against children (and women).

During research activities, some community members mentioned how 'reporting to DOVVSU' (via CPTs) supported the reduction of child abuse cases. Asked about his experience of the GPP, a 55-year-old male teacher, shopkeeper and farmer responded, "It has helped […] it has exposed us to stop child labour, if you abuse a child, you will be reported to DOVVSU" (KWHtH). Other research participants contested 'reporting someone' to DOVVSU as *appropriate* for dealing with child protection cases. Overall, 'reporting someone' does constitute a widely established practice at community level, especially reporting someone to an elderly person who can then provide advice to the reported person aimed at 'amicable settlement'. For the case of marital problems, a female research participant explained, "Sometimes, if the woman tries to settle [a] misunderstanding and the man doesn't understand, she can report the man to an elderly person in the community or an elderly person in the family to resolve the problem" (FGD Women's Group KW). Another woman added, "She can call the man in front of an elderly person, he refuse[s] to go, but if she reports to the chief, he will be obedient and go" (ibid.).

Upon adjudication, traditional community leaders might 'fine' people in particular ways, often through payment of a certain number of bags of cement, or a certain amount of money (KWHtH). This is widely perceived as a functioning deterrent in a community setting of restrained financial and other resources (KWHtH, FGD Women's Group KW). While the punishment of imprisonment is notably aligned to being 'reported to DOVVSU or the

[209] KWHtH designates data generated through house-to-house (HtH) interviews with community members in Kwamoso (KW).

police', this does not constitute a consequential action when one is reported to elders or chiefs of the community. During research activities at community level, some research participants proposed imprisonment as a valid strategy, though, while an analysis of programme documentation revealed that DOVVSU officers might draw on mediation techniques in their work, very similar to traditional means of conflict-resolution through 'amicable settlement' (DOVVSU Interview).

Together with adopting mediation techniques, DOVVSU was also engaged in awareness raising efforts during the GPP. These efforts included sensitisation at community-level on "diverse types of Child Abuse" with discussion topics mostly focused on the constitution of "child rights […] laws regarding a violation of such rights, and how to access justice in such cases" (Letter DOVVSU Akropong-Akwapim Annual Report 2014 and Action Plan for 2015, 13 Jan 2014, p. 3). Collaboration and tensions between official state reporting structures, such as DOVVSU, and settlement through traditional governance structures will be further discussed below (see Section 9.2.2).

DOVVSU Akropong, responsible for the Akwapim North district, and DOVVSU Kibi, responsible for the former East Akim district, worked closely together with the Child Protection Committees or Teams, CBOs created during GPP implementation. To address issues of child protection and notably "the lack of available social protection systems and services against various forms of gender based violence" (GPP PO Aug 2012 EPU Plan Gh, p. 2), formation and training of community-based child protection teams constituted a major part of GPP implementation. Local NGOs trained Child Protection Committees or Teams "in case identification and referrals" (GPP PO Outputs Planned vs Delivered 2016, p. 3) and CPCs "in all 100 GPP communities [throughout the Eastern Region] were visited at least once every two months to find their challenges and provide necessary support" (ibid.; see also (see also Section 7.2.2).

Throughout GPP programme documentation, addressing the role of parental care together with issues of parental neglect was considered key to ensuring the protection of children's rights, especially in the work of child protection teams (GPP QPR CRRECENT Apr to Jun 2014, pp. 3, 4). Bylaw Six of the Proposed Bye-laws by the Mintakrom Child Protection Committee, a one-page printed document which was part of GPP programme documentation, addresses 'parental responsibility'. It states that "All parents should perform their responsibilities to their household or children, send them to school on time and also pay bills in the school and school materials needed by the child", addressing the importance of

parental care and preventing parental neglect. During the GPP, bylaws were created to "protect the welfare of children and the general welfare of the community" (GPP QPR CRRECENT Apr to June 2014, p. 4), drawing on the sphere of customary law. Chiefs have the authority to enact bylaws, so people are "well-protected and well-led" in line with "the country's laws and constitution" as CRRECENT's Executive Director explained (Fieldnotes C 7 Sept to 9 Oct 2017). Bylaws proposed by Child Protection Committees at community level, during the GPP and its follow-up programme the Girls Advocacy Alliance (GAA, 2016-2020), either entailed a guiding or a deterring function.

Child Protection Committees suggested bylaws concerned with safeguarding children from various kinds of violence and strengthening the link between traditional leaders and CPCs, but also DOVVSU. Foregrounding the role of parental responsibility and parental neglect seems to show congruence with an understandings of child protection in international policy and INGO documents.[210] The next section will investigate contested views on what constitutes child abuse and how to *appropriately* report on it to safeguard child protection at community level.

9.2. Contested Views on Child Abuse and How to Report on It

First, this section will analyse contested meanings of child abuse between the community and the international project aligned to state legal visions. Then, this section will address contestations around what is perceived as *adequate* or *appropriate* reporting mechanisms on child protection issues at community level. What will become clear is that the relevant divide is not identified between international actors, on the one side, and local actors, on the other. Rather, a tension surfaces between INGOs and local (Ghanaian) state institutions and NGOs broadly working with a shared set of values, as agreed upon within the scope of an international development programme, which at times stands in conflict with local or village level values such as collectivity and respect. Especially Ghanaian development practitioners, as people at the forefront of this divide, are caught up in this complexity which manifests in simultaneous alignment to at times very different and competing value sets.

[210] See The International Save the Children Alliance (2007).

9.2.1. Contesting the Meaning of Child Abuse – What are Harmful Practices?

Within the context of the GPP including local official stakeholders such as DOVVSU, there was agreement upon child abuse as consisting of physical and emotional aspects as well as (parental) neglect. Incidents of child abuse link to answering the question 'Who is a child?' which was discussed during awareness raising efforts conducted by DOVVSU Akropong as part of the GPP, referred to above. The definition of children as people below the age of 18 years marks social phenomena of teenage pregnancy, child marriage and child labour as key issue for child protection as discussed among community members and development practitioners interviewed for this doctoral research.

During research activities with community members, the reduction of teenage pregnancy was identified as one of the main areas that 'worked well' during GPP implementation at community level. While 'Child Marriage free villages/communities' are clearly communicated as a core interest of the GPP (GPP Final Report 2015, pp. 7-8) that sits within the thematic scope of 'Protection Against Violence', an explicit discussion on the practices of child labour and the beating of children seems to be largely missing from official GPP programme documentation.

As highlighted above, the child-friendly protection policy by Plan International Ghana points to an understanding of children as anyone below the age of 18 years, drawing on global policy documents (Plan International Ghana, n.d. b). Within Ghana, terms such as youth, girls and boys, or young women and men, also adopted in GPP programme documentation (*cf.* GPP Summary CRRECENT 4th Qtr 2013; QPR CRRECENT Jan to Mar 2014), might encompass a wider age range pointing to possibly differing classifications of youth and children cross-culturally or internationally.[211]

The Role of Child Marriage and the Social Practice of Beating Children

Child marriage is a cultural practice, still remaining in some areas of Ghana. During GPP implementation, 'early and forced marriages of girls' were notably addressed as part of programme implementation in the Upper West Region.[212] The practice of child marriage can align to incidents of 'teenage pregnancy'. Traditionally, giving away an adolescent child in marriage, when she is pregnant, was an accepted practice as it would reduce the burden of

[211] Being a child and moving into years of adolescence, at times equated with 'youth', is often related to schooling up until the age of 18 years. In Ghana, the expected and actual age of school-going children does not always align (see p. 157).

[212] This is notably documented in the report by Plan International Ghana/Endogenous Development Services (2015) on 'The Changing Face of Early and Forced Marriages of Girls in the Upper West Region, Ghana'.

taking care of an additional family member and rather transfer this responsibility to the father of the child.[213] The female Chief Constable of DOVVSU in Akropong, Eunice Afelipok Afinya, outlined along an intersecting gender and age dimension how there can be an uneasy relation between cultural practices and lawful practices linked to perceptions of appropriateness.

> […] the issue of child marriage: it was a cultural practice to give out an illiterate child of 13, 14 into marriage, it looked *appropriate* to be married off. To give out your child before 18 used to be our custom and not against any law. […]
> Widowhood rites[214] offer another clash with the law. *It is abuse – we call it culture*. […] A family choosing which three of their eight children they want to send to school. It is *discrimination* [and] *abuse* – we call it *choice*. (DOVVSU Interview, written notes, emphasis added)

What becomes clear is that what constitutes abuse or discrimination can differ whether we view practices through a cultural or legal lens. Correspondingly, proper reporting mechanisms might be contested as the case of the widely socially accepted practice of moderately beating children within research communities, but also within Ghana more broadly, illustrates (see Section 8.2.2). In line with the following statement of a male FGD participant with the youth group in Kwamoso, several people contested 'reporting someone to DOVVSU' as a rightful act at community-level, especially when it concerns 'straightening' or 'disciplining children'.

> The leaders who serve as representative[s] in this community [CPC members], I would urge that the leaders reduce the threat in the community, […] 'I will catch and report to DOVVSU'. The leaders have to know that the parent gave birth to the kids, and they know what is good and bad for the kids so that they don't live astray. So, if the children misbehave(s) and the parents didn't use the right way to straighten the child, the leaders have to go to the parent and advise them or talk to the parents in a calm way on how to discipline their kids so that peace will reign between the children and the parents. So, the act of threatening the parent by the representatives of Plan Ghana must reduce. (FGD Youth Group KW)

In the above statement, the act of reporting infringes upon a valued and desired state of gendered social relations, namely that 'peace reigns' between children and parents. Both the upholding *and* elimination of beating children may link to a collective understanding of rights and responsibilities, aligned to mutual and reciprocal parent-child relations with emphasis on

[213] A representative of CRRECENT presented this point during a Girls Advocacy Alliance Workshop held on 27th of September 2017 in Akropong (Fieldnotes C 7 Sept to 9 Oct 2017).
[214] Widowhood rites may particularly include "property rights violations […] resulting in long-term economic challenges for them[widows] and their children" (Korang-Okrah & Haight, 2015).

upholding respect (see also Section 8.3.2). For another male participant of the FGD with the youth group in Kwamoso, the absence of beating as a rightful way of disciplining children directly aligns with children disrespecting their parents, "[B]ecause most children have been *enlightened* on their rights, they don't respect their parents at home, even they don't sleep in the house because they know their parents can[']t beat them" (FGD Youth Group KW, emphasis added). For another male research participant disciplining children through beating may function as a deterrent from 'bad' behaviour. "In the olden days, if you do wrong, your mother will cane and next time you won't repeat it but now, if you cane your child for wrongdoing, the child will run and report you to the police" (FGD Data Validation KW). The prohibition of beating, then, is perceived by some research participants as lacking means of ensuring 'respectful' behaviour and punishing 'deviant' behaviour, but also lacking tools to support children's academic progress, the latter point encapsulated int the following statement of another male community member.

> To be honest with you, the act of not beating the child anymore will really have bad consequences on us. There is no better discipline than caning; when there was the use of canes in the schools, immediately the teacher takes the cane, it scares the child and create[s] the awareness that what she is supposed to concentrate on, the child will do it. (FGD Research Interviewees KW)

During the GAA workshop, conducted by CRRECENT and aimed at CPT members,[215] it became clear that selected by-laws proposed by Child Protection Committees entailed a certain number of lashes (beatings) enacted upon children as a consequence to 'roaming around' (Fieldnotes C 7 Sept to 9 Oct 2017). Various bylaws proposed by CPTs aim at deterring children from 'roaming around' or 'walking aimlessly' in the community, albeit not drawing on beatings as a way of curbing this behaviour, widely perceived as non-respectful for women and men, girls and boys (KWHtH). While the suggestion of beating forms the exception, curbing such behaviour might adhere to both safeguarding respect as well as child protection at community level. 'Roaming around', notably at night during celebrations of funerals and cultural festivals, might link to cases of child abuse as these occasions were identified as spaces where 'sexual abuse' can take place (DOVVSU Interview).[216]

CRRECENT's Executive Director pointed out during the GAA workshop that a bylaw that suggests beatings to curb 'roaming around' would not be in alignment with national

[215] The GAA workshop was held on September 27th, 2017, in Akropong, Akwapim North.
[216] Institutional development research points to the problematics of limitations of movement as a specifically gendered phenomenon targeting (young) females (Plan International UK, 2016).

Ghanaian law and its constitution. She continued, "if they have proposed that, we need to intervene as this one is not acceptable" and rather adopt different "means and ways of disciplining them [children]" (Fieldnotes C 7 Sept to 9 Oct 2017). By pointing out which consequences as part of customary law are acceptable, or *appropriate,* and which ones are not, in terms of safeguarding child protection, the role of development practitioners may lie in guiding through what the law says and how this potentially aligns, or stands in contrast, to some traditional practices such as moderately beating children.

The Ghanaian constitution draws on internationally recognised law as well as socio-cultural specificities to a West African and notably Ghanaian setting. On 'Children's Rights', Art 26.1.d. of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana states that "children and young persons receive special protection against exposure to physical and moral hazards", while on 'Cultural Rights and Practices', Art 26.2. of the constitution states that "All customary practices which dehumanise or are injurious to the physical and mental well-being of a person are prohibited". To what extent this translates into a *complete* prohibition of beating children might still be a case of interpretation; the words 'beating', or 'physical violence', are not part of the constitutional wording. Answering to concerns of community members around not being able to 'discipline one's child', the head of EPU Plan International Ghana stated the following during a research interview,

> […] the fact that the child knows his or her rights does not mean that you cannot discipline the child. You can discipline the child! And whatever the children say, it is not *Plan* which drew the Children's Act; it is a constitutional issue. And in Ghana, whatever the constitution says, surpasses everything. So, it is a matter of coming to terms with what makes sense and what doesn't make sense. (DP Interview KD EPU Plan Gh)

Awareness of rights, and by extension the law, notably entails a process of 'sense-making' and 'coming to terms', potentially with the shifts of what constitutes child abuse in a legal *and* cultural sense. As highlighted above, during the GPP, CPCs as well as DOVVSU drew significantly on "efforts toward the creation of awareness" which included sharing pathways of how to access state justice (Letter DOVVSU Akropong-Akwapim Annual Report 2014 and Action Plan for 2015, 13 Jan 2014, p. 2). The letter by DOVVSU to the EPU Plan Ghana also states that "[…] sensitizing the public […] will obviously reduce the number of crimes committed due to ignorance of the laws of Ghana especially the DV [Domestic Violence] Act 732/2007, the Children's Act 560/1998 and the Criminal Offences Act 29/1960" (ibid., p. 4). 'Ignorance' of the law might, however, also point to continuous contestations of the law through a cultural lens.

The phrase ‘to be enlightened’ was mentioned by few community members linked to GPP implementation and awareness raising on children’s rights. The secretary of the CPC in Kwamoso explained, for instance, “I do sensitisation of child rights at schools, churches, chiefs and house to house”. When Alice, one of the research assistants to this study, further asked, ‘What do you tell them?’, he responded, “I *enlighten* them on their child rights. If your child does not go to school, you, the parents, will be taken on task” (KWHtH). A woman during the FGD with the women’s group in Kwamoso responded the following to our question whether ‘gender projects like the GPP can help community members to achieve a better life’, “It has helped the community to be *enlightened*.” Finally, a 38-year-old female photographer added as a comment at the end of a research interview, “It is good you have come to the community, ask me all […] [these] question[s], for me to be *enlightened* on soo many things” (KWHtH). The expression ‘to be enlightened’ thus carries a particular meaning in the context of international development work at community level, pointing to knowledge accumulation based on sensitisation activities and educational or training components.

From a cross-cultural perspective, the Senior Health and Gender Advisor at Plan International Netherlands mentioned that raising children is a complex and difficult task, departing from the setting of rural or peri-urban communities in the Eastern Region of Ghana,

> […] it is more a matter of […] people […] not know[ing] how to handle their children anymore […] but we have the same here in Europe […] I think this is one more reason […] to give […] more attention to the parents; to involve them and engage them when you do something with the children, with the youth, but also to give them skills. […] [When] […] you just say, ‘No, you are not allowed to beat them’ [the answer will be], ‘Yes, but give me [money, skills]’ – I understand. (DP Interview JB Plan Nl)

In this quote, aligning ‘hardware’ concerns, such as supporting income-generating activities of parents, to ‘software’ issues, such as sensitisation on ROCs understood as the *complete* absence of beating of children, one dimension is crucially dependent on the other. Strengthening the family environment, notably the economic strength of parents, is acknowledged as an element in the GPP and child protection programming more broadly,[217] thus considering the importance of parent-child relations at community level in addressing child abuse issues.

[217] On this point, see The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2019, p. 182.

What Constitutes Child Labour?

During research activities conducted as part of this doctoral study child labour emerged as a social practice which was being contested along culturally accepted but legally unjustified lines. A male participant of the FGD with the youth group in Kwamoso, where most families live from farming produce and income, asked, "So, if a kid is sent to the farm, is that child labour?". In the transcript to this FGD, Patricia Abena Arthur, one of the research assistants of this doctoral research, explained,

> [I] answered by saying it depends. When the child is given a work beyond his strength, like weeding, carrying heavy stuff, it is child labour and when he or she is supposed to be in school and seen working on the farm, it is child labour.

A similar explanation was provided by the head of the EPU Plan International Ghana during a community *durbar* conducted in Kwamoso (Oct 2017) when Kofi Debrah pointed to child labour as being defined in relation to a child's physical capabilities and their educational needs (Fieldnotes D, 10 Oct to 29 Oct 2017). The community *durbar* conducted for the purpose of presenting and sharing preliminary findings of this doctoral study at the end of our fieldwork stay included a Q&A session. Most questions were being addressed to the head of the EPU Plan International Ghana concerning the theme of child labour, which may point to on-going contestations and misunderstandings regarding the scope and rationale of what constitutes child labour and how to deal with it.

Contestations around what constitutes child labour as child abuse, or not, might link to ways of valuing farming as a profession in poor communities as well as adhering to reciprocal child-parent relations. During a focus group discussion in Kwamoso, a male research participant raised the following predicament on child labour,

> When a footballer wants to make his child be like him, he learns how to play football but why is it that when someone sends the child to farm, it [is] tantamount to child labo[u]r? […] why is it that a footballer is not arrested because that was his talent and he is helping the child achieve and be a great person and when a farmer portrays his talent to his kids, it is seen as child abuse? (FGD Youth Group KW)

Another male research participant referred to reciprocal child-parent relations in connection with farming when responding to a research question, namely whether programmes like the GPP can help achieve a better life for community members through strengthening everybody's rights.

> It doesn't help because when I was in form three [Comment Pat: JHS], I escorted my parents to [the] farm to carry heavy farm produce to the house. Now, they [Comment

> Pat: Plan Ghana] said there is something called 'child right' and when a father ask[s] a child to escort him to the farm, they won't go and the father can't discipline the child. So, the father will go to the farm and return with foodstuffs to cook for the same child who refused to go to the farm. (FGD Youth Group Kw)

'Child right' in the above quote seems to come at the expense of reciprocal parent-child relations, refracted through the absence of certain disciplinary methods of raising children. As outlined in Chapter 8, during the implementation of the GPP, eventually, both rights and responsibilities were foregrounded, together with emphasising the importance of communication among parents and children as a means of raising children and adhering to reciprocal respect without having to resort to 'disciplining' one's children through physical means. Being mindful of reciprocal child-parent relations based on communication and void of physical disciplinary measures seemingly constitutes one pathway of meaningfully addressing 'child labour' as part of an international cross-cultural development programme implemented at community level.

Contested Means of Reducing Teenage Pregnancy

During research interviews, many community members identified the reduction of teenage pregnancy as an element of the GPP that 'worked well' and 'brought about change' in the communities (KWHtH). Teenage pregnancy as a prevalent phenomenon at community-level links to various aspects. From a cultural perspective, teenage pregnancy can link to traditional practices of child marriage. From a legal perspective, it can link to cases of sexual abuse, such as defilement. As part of GPP programme documentation and during research activities, teenage pregnancy was mostly framed as a phenomenon linked to adolescents (willingly) engaging in premarital sex.

During GPP implementation in Ghana, abstaining from premarital sex was the main pathway suggested by local NGOs for reducing cases of teenage pregnancy, aligned to, but not necessarily emphasising a broader scope of sexual reproductive health rights (SRHR). It is in the debate around what constitutes the scope of SRHR as part of the GPP, and its follow-up programme the GAA, that the most visible divide between Dutch representatives of an international NGO and Ghanaian representatives of a local NGO lies. Here, questions of aligning different value sets aligned to child protection concerns play out.

During the GAA workshop, CRRECENT's female Executive Director supported abstinence as the best approach to reducing teenage pregnancy. This was put in contrast to family planning which would rather increase sexual activity of adolescents with potential

negative effects on school progress. Likewise, a relevant theme emerging during thematic coding of house-to-house interviews with community members frames abstinence as a widely accepted norm and practice, especially for adolescent females (KWHtH).[218] During data validation conducted as part of three communal *durbars* in Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom, we raised the question of whether other means than abstinence, such as using condoms, contraceptives or further family planning methods, might be useful in reducing teenage pregnancy. In response, some community members referred to the bible (FGD Data Validation NSU) and to 'wait until marriage' (ibid.; FGD Data Validation KW) as the best way to avoid teenage pregnancy. Making use of family planning methods would encourage adolescents to have sex and goes against the 'ideal' situation of practicing sex only as part of marriage, as the bible states. Emphasising abstinence as a relevant approach to reducing teenage pregnancy, as the Executive Director of CRRECENT did, thus aligns to the dominant viewpoint held at community level. At the same time, foregrounding abstinence as *the* relevant SRHR theme stands in somewhat of a contrast to the position of Jet Bastiani, Senior Health and Gender Advisor at Plan International Netherlands, leading on GPP implementation in Ghana. Jet Bastiani stated "what they [children] should know is that they can have sexual education somewhere in the school or in a health club and that it's not about abstinence *only* but also other issues" (DP Interview JB Plan Nl).

In Rights of the Child Clubs linked to schools, later renamed Rights and Responsibilities of the Child Clubs (see also Section 8.3.2), themes such as child protection, child abuse and personal hygiene were addressed, at times, covering themes and issues linked to sexual and reproductive health (GPP M&E Progress Report CRI Aug 2014, p. 15).[219] As part of the GPP, development work on sexual reproductive health also entailed "community sensitization campaigns in 14 communities in the East Akim Municipality" (GPP QPR Ark Foundation Jan to Apr 2013, p. 3), which aimed at "educating girls and the entire communities on Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS in relation to the empowerment of young women" (ibid., p. 5). During these campaigns, "the need for community members to be involved in the development of the girl child" was emphasised while girls and young women, specifically,

[218] Variations on this theme included formulations of 'shunning pre-marital affairs' and 'not prostituting' (KWHtH).

[219] Overall, the formation and training of ROCs, and later RROCs, entailed cooperation with the Ghana Education Service, which is forming and training 'Girls Clubs' more widely across schools in Ghana (Introductory Letter Municipal Education Office Kibi, August 26, 2013, in GPP QPR Ark Foundation Jan to Apr 2013, p. 11; Interview GES Representative).

> were informed to understand that their future was most important, hence the need for them to keep themselves healthy and avoid premarital sex. They were made to understand that premarital sex could get them pregnant, or they could contract any sexually transmitted disease (such as HIV/AIDS) which has a great potential of jeopardizing their future. (GPP QPR Ark Foundation Jan to Apr 2013, p. 5)

Despite invoking community support in line with a holistic and inclusive programmatic approach as demonstrated throughout GPP implementation,[220] the above quote seemingly focuses on the individual responsibility of girls and young women themselves. At the same time, during the GAA workshop, CRRECENT's Executive Director explained that the main issue with family planning was using it as a "short cut" and dispensing parents of their responsibility to advise children, foregrounding a relational dimension and receiving much resonance from the majority of CPC members present in the room (Fieldnotes C 7 Sept to 9 Oct 2017). At the GAA workshop, pathways towards diversifying the reduction of teenage pregnancy were discussed as part of, at times, heated debates which will be further outlined below (see Section 9.3.1).

9.2.2. Traditional and State Reporting Structures

The GPP drew on a collaborative approach to support 'proper' reporting on child protection issues at community and municipal level (GPP QPR Ark Foundation Oct to Dec 2013, p. 4; GPP QPR CRRECENT Apr to Jun 2014, p. 9; GPP Report Distribution of In-kind Scholarship East Akyem EPU Plan Ghana n.d., pp. 2-3). While in GPP documentation the concept of appropriateness mainly links to state reporting structures, at community level, community members interviewed pointed to 'reporting someone' as aimed specifically at ensuring 'respectful' behaviour framed as 'proper' or 'appropriate'. An elder explained during the FGD with the chief and elders in Kwamoso,

> Sometimes, people with disrespectful behaviours are taken to leaders of their churches or a person with good reputation or honour to advise him or her. If the person does not change, then we summon the person to the palace and (the person) will be asked to pay a fine.

For the family and the household, a male participant of the FGD with research interviewees in Kwamoso outlined,

> There are some kids, the bad behaviour and attitude they portray, the mother can do whatever to straighten the child, the child won't be afraid of her. She will say, 'Wait when your father comes, I will report you' and the child will be calm.

[220] For further engagement with Plan International's inclusive CCCD approach, see Chapter 7.

What these, and other, statements show is that the nexus of respect is tied to mechanisms of communal conflict resolution through 'reporting someone'.

In GPP programme documentation by the EPU Plan International Ghana on the infrastructural situation of DOVVSU Akropong, the tension of what constitutes 'appropriate' ways of reporting severe offences, via state institutions, is addressed.

> Because the DOVVSU office is shared with other police officers and also exposed to other people, leaking information to the general public is very easy. There have been several instances where police officers and people have to call opinion leaders such as chiefs and assemblyman/women[221] on phones or inform them at home about pending domestic violence cases, rape and defilement and to the extent of advising them to come and withdraw the cases from the police station for amicable settlement at home. This is a setback to the enforcement of domestic violence and child abuse cases. But the *right* thing must be done. Despite the fact that the perpetrators are to be prosecuted, if the cases are referred to the *appropriate* authorities and the *right* channels passed, victims of these crimes are to be treated medically, and also rehabilitated to be integrated back to society. (Situation of DOVVSU in Akwapim North Municipality EPU Plan Ghana n.d., p. 2, emphasis added)

The above quote points to offences of domestic and sexual violence enacted mainly against women and girls and indicates that, in these cases, legal prosecution through state authorities is the *appropriate* course of action, rather than dispute resolution at communal level aimed at 'amicable settlement'. As highlighted above, some research participants viewed 'reporting to DOVVSU' as a legitimate course of action, in particular to reduce child labour, while other community members criticised 'reporting to DOVVSU' or 'reporting to the police' as measures that go against widely accepted communal dispute-resolution practices, especially in case of moderately beating children.

Supporting change that takes place along contested lines (what constitutes child abuse and how to report on it) may come at the price of causing inter-personal problems faced by those community members who are centrally involved in strengthening child protection mechanisms at community level aligned to state institutions. One female Child Protection Committee member shared the individual burden that might come with reporting fellow community members in cases of 'mercilessly beating children' or domestic physical violence enacted against children.

[221] Members of the District Assembly in Ghana have particular duties which are "essential for the Assembly's discharge of their deliberative, legislative and executive functions". These duties include close and regular liaison with the electorate at community level, representing their issues and concerns to the District Assembly and reporting back to the electorate upon District Assembly meetings (see Labone Express, 2019).

> We educate the parents well to handle their kids, because of the fact that we see to it that every child has the right to be free [from] violence. A child was beaten by the father mercilessly and the child run to me, so afterwards I reported the case and because of that, [I] have become a devil to the girl's family. (KWHtH)

To support community members that are part of CPCs, local NGOs implementing the GPP, as well as its follow up programme the GAA, held regular workshops that aimed at strengthening collaboration among CPCs within a regional district such as Akwapim North (see above). In these workshops the linkages between CPCs and state actors, such as the Ghana Health Service, were also strengthened (see discussion below).

On the theme of contesting the definition of child abuse and how to appropriately report on it, this section has commenced with demonstrating that the platform on which competing values sets are discussed can, but does not necessarily have to, include representatives of different national cultures. Rather, a value debate is deferred into one national cultural space, playing out at various societal levels, displaying a heterogeneity of value-induced views and positions linked to institutional and organisational locations. How some of these diverse views and positions might be aligned is the focus of the next section.

9.3. Sharing Epistemologies and Co-Producing Knowledge

This thesis argues that understanding ideas on gender and social transformation needs to start with collaborative exercises aimed at co-producing knowledge among (national or international) development practitioners and Ghanaian citizens and residents, notably community members of 'poor' communities throughout Ghana (see also Section 7.1). In this section, co-producing knowledge as bridging different loci in international development work will be considered through exploring three core criteria of epistemic equality and how a cooperative approach delivered these principles. The three components of epistemic equality considered include: one, people expressing their views directly based on distinct value sets on an equal footing; two, different modes of expressing views aligned to varied rationales linked to values receiving equal weight; and three, enabling conditions, and limitations, for the presence of epistemic equality notably considering economic (re)distribution. On the first point, this doctoral research considers different value sets equally and identifies spaces of engagement where epistemic equality was adhered to as part of the GPP. On the second point, this research includes varied modes for expressing views, albeit with limitations to

supporting diverse rationales such as conducting research as 'healing methods'. While the third criterion was extensively discussed as part of the literature review chapters of this thesis, this section focuses on hindrances in addressing distributive economic justice which continue to block full emergence of epistemic equality as part of international cross-cultural development interventions. Below, all three points will be presented in further depth.

9.3.1. Expressing Views on an Equal Footing

While the GPP included a component on socio-political participation, emphasis was clearly based on other components, notably protection of girls' and young women's rights through strengthening community and municipal reporting structures on (child) abuse cases. These included cases of parental neglect as well as domestic physical and sexual violence cases notably enacted against adolescent girls and children. It also, arguably, included the social phenomena of beating of children, teenage pregnancy and child labour (see discussion above). In strengthening reporting structures to safeguard child protection mechanisms, the GPP featured a large sensitisation element, raising awareness among children, especially young girls themselves, and the broader community on children's rights, together with their responsibilities. However, access to spaces of decision and rulemaking at household and community level continue to be limited for young females due to practical and normative reasons, one of them being (young) women *not* expressing their views directly. This, arguably, continues to limit socio-political participation of girls and (young) women.

Some GPP programmatic activities aimed at "helping women to talk in public" (FGD Chief and Elders KW).[222] Still, as a community elder during research activities explained, "women [are] refusing to talk in gatherings or making decisions". He continued,

> Even if they will talk, it's only few women who will talk. I believe it's because our forefathers advised women not to speak in public and how they side lined women in certain events, it has impacted women still now. (FGD Chief and Elders KW)

Selected GPP activities aimed at supporting girls' empowerment as taking up leadership positions through the route of increasing girls' self-esteem, among other elements (see GPP Report on Girls Camp EPU Plan Gh 5-12 Aug 2015). Empowerment of girls and young women as raising and communicating their own concerns as part of socio-political processes

[222] A male elder explained, "they gave the community a draft board, *ludo* and dice with the name Plan Ghana written boldly on it. This symbolises that, when the men group to play draft or *ludo*, the women can observe and cheer the men up, they can even give clues on how the men can win the game. Based on this, the women are learning how to talk with the men in public"; see FGD Chief and Elders KW.

plays a role in opening up a wider societal platform for engaging in conversations about safeguarding women's and girls' rights. However, understanding empowerment of young women as increasing girls' self-esteem manifest in being vocal also foregrounds individual responsibility for social change and may risk overburdening an individual, not least due to going against socio-cultural norms at potentially great personal costs. Women 'speaking up' in public might be viewed as disrespectful behaviour, challenging the widely accepted norm of female submissiveness and subservience with potentially severe consequences (see Chapter 8).

Transferring a focus on individual responsibility to group activities in support of transformative changes may ease the burden on individuals and align more closely to collective values at community level. Active participation of girls and young women in public events, such as GPP football tournaments notably coded as a male activity, may point to changes aimed at transformation in systemic terms. Reporting on 'inter-school sports events' outlines that some girls could increase their access to public or semi-public group activities,

> […] the girls who participated indicated their joy in being involved in a program like this.[223] For a great number of them this was their first time they participated in a *public* event like this. Two of them whose parents witnessed their play stated they were happy because their parents will now recognise the importance of the [Girls] Club[224] and allow them to attend meetings and also be active in other community activities. (GPP QPR Arc Foundation Oct to Dec 2014, pp. 5-6, emphasis added)

Similarly, vocational skills training for women and men in groups that supports females in taking up male-dominated professions might point to transformative changes (see Chapter 6), challenging normative assumptions regarding gender roles and relations impacting the 'gendering' of professional spaces (see also Chapter 7).

An 'open conversation' featuring varied views, including those of adolescent women individually and in groups, might shape how we asses and propose to implement programmatic activities as part of gender-transformative programmes. In such conditions, activities carry the potential to be 'impactful' in terms of programme objectives while also being perceived as 'meaningful' in terms of ideas on social transformation explicitly

[223] Based on images provided in the Quarterly Progress Report by the Arc Foundation (Oct to Dec 2014, pp. 11-19), some pictures suggest that girls were part of football teams, albeit in small numbers, while it is unclear whether girls participated as players in *all* sports events conducted.
[224] On Girls Clubs, see also footnote 218, p. 224 of this thesis.

considering understandings of community members. From my research, I was able to reveal when epistemic equality as expressing views directly on an equal footing was at play, foregrounding whether and how local values are pictured, or not, in project strategy. Below, this point will be illustrated along specific GPP reporting structures enabling mutual learning and knowledge sharing as well as through continuing the discussion of the social practice of moderately beating children and reducing teenage pregnancy.

What did not happen in this research but needs to be part of the practice of epistemic equality to function as co-producing knowledge is to reveal publicly what the GPP values are and engage with them in a critical conversation at local level. This is of importance, as (social) transformation is grounded in realising particular values and what is thus at stake is which different values are being prioritised.

Co-Creating Knowledge as Mutual Learning and Information Sharing

GPP implementation showed instances of collaborative work among social actors including community members and development practitioners, arguably supporting co-production of knowledge. Development practitioners facilitated various instances of participation as co-creation of knowledge based on mutual learning as highlighted in selected GPP reporting documents (MOU EPU Plan Gh and Ark Foundation Addendum 4 Aug 2014; GPP QPR Apr to Jun 2014 CRRECENT, pp. 10-13; GPP QPR Ark Foundation Jul to Sep 2013, p. 6; GPP QPR CRRECENT Jan to Mar 2014, p. 6). The GPP Girls' Panel activity entailed "[t]rain[ing] girls Expert Panels on the GPP thematic areas […] [and] [f]acilitat[ing] quarterly meeting of girls Expert Panel to assess the progress of activities, […]" (MOU EPU Plan Gh and Ark Foundation Addendum 4 Aug 2014, p. 8). Linked to the work of the Child Protection Teams, a Quarterly Progress Report alludes to an activity entailing "Learning and sharing experiences between communities" (GPP QPR Apr to Jun 2014 CRRECENT, pp. 10-13). The Ark Foundation also reported on the training of Child Protection Committees which "offered the opportunity for participants to discuss and share information regarding child protection issues within their community with members from other communities" (GPP QPR Ark Foundation Jul to Sep 2013, p. 6). As part of GPP programme activities, head teachers were being "trained in child rights and the role of the school and the community in securing the rights of children" with participants "engaged in brainstorming sessions to find the best and most practical ways of addressing child abuse cases using the combined efforts of the school, community and government institutions". Based on this consultation, 'secret boxes' were established at schools for notably shy students, or those afraid to speak to someone in

authority, to report cases of abuse (GPP QPR CRRECENT Jan to Mar 2014, p. 6). As such, approaches for addressing cases of child abuse were also co-created with state actors at community and institutional level.

Some GPP reporting structures revealed instances of co-creating knowledge as exchanging mutual learning between development practitioners across different levels of development work. The reporting templates for Quarterly Progress Reports on the GPP entailed sections aimed at mutual learning and information-sharing across various levels of development work.[225] An explanatory note on 'Section 5 Highlights' encourages 'Southern Partners' to report on what their organisation "considers as successful" and why, but also what they "found challenging" and why, as part of GPP implementation (GPP QPR CRRECENT Apr to Jun 2014, pp. 27-28; see also GPP QPR CRRECENT Jan to Mar 2014; GPP QPR Ark Foundation Jan to Apr 2014). This points to a multifaceted understanding of what *can* constitute success or challenges, gauging the perspective of implementing Southern partner organisations regarding GPP work at community, institutional and civil society level. Other GPP reporting structures equally drew on a reporting format that functions both as a monitoring and learning tool, notably by exchanging 'success stories' and mutually learning from 'challenges' (*cf.* GPP Mid-year Progress Report Ark Foundation Jan to Jun 2013). Sharing experiences and specific understandings of what constitutes 'success' and 'challenges', notably between partner organisations in the Global South and the Child Rights Alliance located in the Netherlands, thus drew on co-creation of knowledge. In this case, co-production of knowledge adhered to the first criteria of epistemic equality, sharing views directly and on an equal footing. Limitations to co-producing knowledge as part of inter-institutional collaboration have been addressed previously (see Section 7.3.1).

Addressing the Social Practice of Beating One's Children

This research argues that contested views on 'disciplining' children constitute a problematic issue in the context of programme implementation aimed at safeguarding child protection in a cross-cultural perspective. International and organisational policy documents through references to physical violence indicate that beating constitutes child abuse in *any* setting or context while a widely held view at community level endorses moderate beating as an accepted socio-cultural practice as part of raising children, as outlined above. What became

[225] For the head of the EPU Plan International Ghana, sharing of knowledge and learning is a component that is working particularly well across Plan International (DP Interview KD A EPU Plan Gh).

clear during research activities as part of this doctoral research is that 'disciplining children', for instance through moderate beating, links to perceived 'disrespectful' behaviour of children. Children's behaviour can be misunderstood as 'disrespectful', though, when they are actually questioning their parents due to lack of parental care, a key issue when it comes to child protection. According to Kofi Debrah, when parents are not sending their children to school, or take them to the farm to work, […] and the child questions you […] it's not that the children have become disrespectful, it's rather the parents, who are failing to dialogue along certain lines" (DP Interview KD A EPU Plan Gh). Linking to a previous discussion, children knowing about their rights is then not linked to them *being* disrespectful, rather, from a relational point of view, they are *perceived* as disrespectful, often by their parents or carers. In addition to looking at child protection as a key value, for there to be epistemic equality, this research argues that the importance of 'respect' as a key local value also needs to be part of the discussion.

Addressing 'child protection' issues at community level in the Eastern Region of Ghana can entail safeguarding mutually supportive and reciprocal parent-children relations, aligning to socio-cultural collective values in an African setting, such as respect and harmony. Safeguarding 'respect' through positively connoted interpersonal communication seems to support the upholding of harmonious parent-children relations in reciprocal ways in line with socio-cultural values, as highlighted previously. GPP sensitisation activities conducted by CPCs often included an element of how children and parents could 'better talk' to one another. The Queen Mother for Girls and Young Women outlined, for instance, as a method for parents, "[…] use […] a good way to cuddle the child to come close to you. In any situation, let the kid be able to express him or herself" (FGD Women's Group KW). The need for parents to advise children and learning how to 'befriend' them were also mentioned as important means of raising children (KWHtH; FGD Women's Group KW).

Linking to research conducted on the role of collective deliberation among development practitioners and community members in the abandonment of FGM practices in Senegal (see Bicchieri & Mercier, 2014, drawing on Gillespie & Melching, 2010), conscientisation efforts among community members and feminist development practitioners can co-generate learning. Such learning could focus on *why* some people think that beating their children can help, revealing that it might function as a tool for disciplining children and ensuring 'respect', but also to deter children from engaging in practices that might be harmful for them (such as practices understood as 'committing social vices'). Community members and development practitioners could then think together and directly express other ways that

could achieve the same outcome, such as 'respectful' behaviour of children within the family or academic progress at school, without enacting a widely socially accepted practice of moderately beating one's children that seemingly infringes on the rights of adolescents as rights bearers. This includes negotiating the tension of what constitutes socially accepted practices and norms, on the one hand, and child abuse on the other, working together with *both* children and parents and being mindful of rights *and* responsibilities in reciprocal ways.

Diversifying Pathways of Reducing Teenage Pregnancy

Throughout research communities, reducing teenage pregnancy was mentioned by many research participants as an aspect that 'worked well' during GPP implementation at community level, not least because it was aligned to increasing girl child education, another aspect widely perceived as successful, as discussed previously. However, contested means of reducing teenage pregnancy point to cross-cultural differences in value sets and the limitations of aligning programmatic implementation across socio-cultural spaces (see discussion above). During selected GPP activities, the voicing of alternative views allowed for discussions on sexual reproductive health rights beyond a moralising discourse of young women's abstinence as perceived respectable behaviour and individual responsibility. Creating platforms for considering various pathways towards sexual reproductive health, including a discussion on teenage pregnancy and 'appropriate' measures to combat it, points to the role of feminist development practitioners in enabling conscientisation efforts as part of reflecting collectively and publicly on local norms and practices.

GPP campaigns entailed presentations by "resource persons [who] educated participants on the various methods of family planning such as abstinence, pills, condoms, IUD [intrauterine device] etc." (GPP QPR Ark Foundation Jan to Apr 2013, p. 6). Moreover, "[p]articipants were further informed to seek help such as counselling and other support services from health centres, social welfare, DOVVSU and other service providing agencies as and when needed" (ibid.). During the GAA workshop mentioned above, a representative of the Ghana Health Service (GHS), 'pleaded' with both CRRECENT's Executive Director and the majority of (largely male) representatives of Child Protection Teams to consider seeking advice on family planning. Such advice is provided at state hospitals to parents and children. These suggestions, crucially, did not dismiss the value and benefit of local practices *per se*, such as emphasising abstinence as the most legitimate way of reducing teenage pregnancy. Rather, these suggestions opened up a discussion on when and why certain practices might be legitimate for supporting protection of girls, understood in this context as

reducing teenage pregnancies. The GHS representative advocated for the possibility of providing family planning as a *legitimate* means of targeting teenage pregnancy when other pathways have proven unsuccessful (Fieldnotes C 7 Sept to 9 Oct 2017).

As part of a broader discussion on Sexual Reproductive Health Rights during research activities, research participants pointed in their statements to addressing the social phenomenon of teenage pregnancy through normative and practical elements, as well as through linking individual and collective aspects. This demonstrates that 'open communication' based on the principle of epistemic equality can reveal various routes of reducing the occurrence of a social phenomenon such as teenage pregnancy.

Participants of the FGD with the youth group in Kwamoso raised fear of social ridicule linked to social norms and pointed to costs of condoms as practical impediments to using contraceptives. A young man explained, "Please, some people feel shy to buy condom at the drug store because he will be mocked, or the vendor will know that he is going to have sex and will even tell his friends […]" (FGD Youth Group KW). At times, people who wanted to purchase and use condoms could not afford 'quality' ones and ended up buying 'fake ones' (FGD Data Validation NSU). In terms of aligning individual and collective responsibility for dealing with cases of teenage pregnancy, a female respondent during an interview indicated a shift linked to GPP implementation.

> At first, they use[d] to say 'women cannot do anything like men'. Now, girls go to school; even if they give birth whilst schooling, they give their babies to their mother and continue the school and now some are at the university. (KWHtH)

What the above quote points to is a shift from marking the reduction of teenage pregnancy as an individual responsibility of young girls, preferably through the avenue of abstinence, to a collective approach that socially sanctions teenage girls returning to school after giving birth, with a particular role ascribed to the mother or grandmother respectively. It is notably the limits to equally accessing education among adolescent girls and boys that marks teenage pregnancy as a broader issue as it hinders notably adolescent girls to 'reach higher in life' through education.[226] During collaborative exercises with community members as part of this doctoral research, it became clear that the notion of 'success' notably links to 'attaining higher in education' (FGD Women's Group KW). The next section will further present this

[226] A report by the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes, and consequences "found that teen pregnancy [in Ghana] contributed to a high dropout rate for girls, since some school districts have policies that suspend pregnant girls and/or they are ridiculed into dropping out" (OECD, 2020b).

and other points while investigating different modes of expressing views receiving equal weight.

9.3.2. Different Modes and Rationales of Expressing Views Receiving Equal Weight

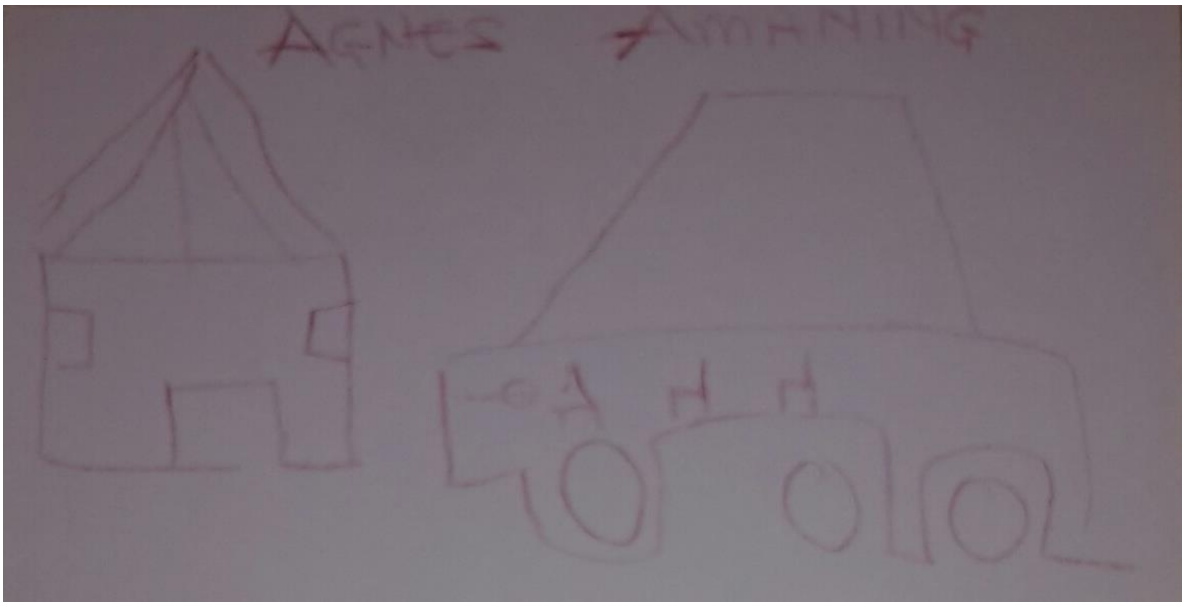
This research is based on a collaborative research design and entailed specific collaborative exercises as part of FGDs with community members such as co-creating 'problem-solution-trees' and sharing personal and collective aspirations in creative ways. In this doctoral research, expressing views on an equal footing was then linked to specific modes of sharing views through collaborative and reciprocal dialogue, understood in Freirian terms as outlined in Chapter 4, enabling a joint 'critical search for something'.

Collaborative Exercises

As part of the FGD with the *susu* group and the women's group in Kwamoso, we asked participants to share their aspirations through collaborative and creative exercises such as drawings. Notably during the FGD with the women's group, 'success' in life was marked as 'going higher in life' through education. Throughout these creative exercises, a relational understanding of aspirations featured prominently understood mainly as reciprocal support across generations invoking a future temporal sphere. Presenting her painting, one female research participant explained, "It's a nurse and my granddaughter. I want her to go to nursing training" (FGD Women's Group KW), foregrounding relations between grandmother and grandchildren. During creative exercises, various FGD participants stressed such intergenerational relations.

A female research participant shared her aspirations while presenting her painting (see Fig. 8 below), also emphasising a relational and reciprocal aspect; "[m]y future aspiration is to build a house for my kids, and they will buy a car, so that when I grow old, I will enjoy in the car before I die" (FGD Women's Group KW).

Figure 8. *Sharing Aspirations During Collaborative Research Activities*



Source: Agnes Amanung. participant in FGD Women's Group KW

Emphasising the relational, at times intergenerational, set-up of needs in particular socio-cultural spaces carries the potential for cross-cultural development work to support meaningful social transformation.

During group discussions conducted as part of this research, various community members identified education as a core component of 'gender projects' to 'achieve a better life'.[227] Some research participants identified education as being linked to material markers of development, pointing to the importance of ongoing alignment of 'software' and 'hardware' concerns as part of gender and development through open communication (see Section 7.3.2). A female participant during the FGD with the women's group in Kwamoso stated, "gender projects bring(s) education to the community members like the school, boreholes and clinic, you can see some little developments [in] this community". Another woman in the same group discussion outlined that a 'gender project' "brings employment or jobs in the community because the natives[228] are educated", linking education to the widely perceived need of job creation at community level, aligning to individual and collection notions of programme 'success' (see also Sections 7.2 and 7.3).

[227] During the FGD with the Women's Group in Kwamoso, we asked 'Do you think gender projects like the GPP can help community members to achieve a better life?' (Question 8.1. in FGD Guide; see Appendix J)

[228] Research participants used the term 'natives' to describe members of ethnic communities who have resided the longest in a particular area of Ghana, for instance, in a specific community. The term 'visitors' could describe long-term or short-term residents of a community, who were not considered 'natives'.

During a collaborative exercise aimed at co-creating 'problem-solution-trees' with community members, aligning 'hardware' and 'software' concerns was equally emphasised when addressing the issue of girl child education, together with foregrounding relations between parents and children (FGD Youth Group KW). A young female participant mentioned that there should be "[c] reation of jobs in the community so that parents and school drop-outs can earn money to go back to school and parents providing the educational needs of their wards". A young man alluded to "[s]ensitising the parents on the need to send their girl child to school" while another male participant added, "[p]arents should give birth to the number of children they can cater for rather than giving birth plenty and cannot cater for their needs and schooling". In Kwamoso, six 'problem-solution trees' were created during focus group discussions with pre-established community groups, responding to our prompts of considering current community problems and potential solutions more widely and in relation to the GPP themes.[229]

Three collaborative visualisations addressed the theme of education and two the theme of employment. Specifically, two 'problem solution trees' addressed the lack and accordingly construction of a secondary high school, one each addressed the theme of Girl Child Education, Violence against Women and Children' and 'building a market square' as well as 'constructing a factory'.[230] At the beginning of each 'problem-solution-tree' exercise, community problems were identified and then voted on (in terms of priority) as a collective process, at times linking to durability concerns and an emphasis on long-term solutions. Throughout the collaborative exercise, addressing the 'problem' was envisioned in various steps outlining roles and responsibilities for community leaders and community members, but also entailing various other stakeholders notably the government of Ghana and NGOs. Collaborative exercises as part of this doctoral research aimed at co-constructing knowledge in regard to communal problems and solutions as identified by participants of specific community-based groups, as well as sharing of individual and collective aspirations in creative ways. These exercises functioned as platforms to express congruent and differing views refracted through intersecting social identity markers, potentially in empowering ways.

[229] Two mixed sub-groups (women and men) as part of the FGD youth group co-created four 'problem-solution-trees'; a further two were created by two all-female sub-groups as part the FGD women's group.
[230] For an example of a problem-solution-tree created as part of this research, and the transcript to the exercise, see Appendix O.

Traditional Modes of Expression

During selected FGDs, the research team suggested to community members to share their personal and collective aspirations through traditional modes such as songs, storytelling or proverbs, in line with a Freirian quest for critical consciousness (see also Chapter 5) and aligning, in particular ways, to African feminist indigenous methods (Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010). During the FGD with the women's group in Kwamoso, research participants shared a poem, two folktales and one song, a selection of which is presented below.

> FOLKTALE
> Woman: 'Is it not *Kweku Ananse*' he said, 'he will take all wisdom in the world and hide it behind his back'. *Kwesi Ananse* was on top of the tree, we don't know what happened, he fell from the tree to the floor and all the wisdom got burned.
> (Pat comment - This story is to advise us that, irrespective of who we think we are, human beings must not be greedy.)
>
> SONG
> (Pat comment - All the women singing and [it] goes like this:)
> One day, I went to the farm and I saw a small small ghost,
> I was afraid ooo, I was afraid
> The small ghost raised the gun, I also raised my[mine],
> It pointed it at me, I also pointed at it
> And we all shot our guns.
> (Pat comment on the song - Whenever you go to the farm, no matter the gender you are, whether a man or woman, if you see something scary, you must face your fears or any dangerous thing that come[s] your way.)

In contrast to some of the proverbs considered previously in this thesis (see Chapter 8), none of the poem, folktales or song shared during collaborative exercises was explicitly coded in gendered terms. Rather, they align "with conventional fables" in which animals or other beings "act like human beings" (Asare, 2018). Ananse, the spider, is a well-known figure "within popular culture in African countries" (Lundt, 2018, p. 21) and, according to Sutherland-Addy (2018, p. 31) "embodies the Ghanaian idea of what a human being really is". Embodying both "heroism and antiheroism", the figure of Ananse points to the whole idea of power and how it can be abused. […] But it also [gives] us a chance to laugh at ourselves, at all the terrible things we do and wouldn't dare confess to" (ibid., p. 31). In the collective act of sharing songs, proverbs or tales, the role and function of laughing at ourselves is then different from laughing at someone else as ridiculing linked to upholding social norms through judgement of others (see Chapter 8). While the latter seems to entail a restrictive function, the former opens up possibilities at scrutinising one's behaviour and normatively induced convictions.

Inspired by African feminist indigenous methods, or 'healing research methods' (Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010), this doctoral study supported 'reciprocal research' as "public and collective feedback in the local language" (ibid., p. 629) which can form one component of critical and reciprocal conscientisation efforts among development practitioners and community members. In their work on African feminist indigenous methods, Chilisa & Ntseane (2010) point to a case study which "describes how the women research participants resisted the use of conventional interview method and insisted on the use of songs and utensils to communicate their life experiences" (p. 628, drawing on Ntseane, 2009). They outline the use of a magic spoon and a basket during FGDs (Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010, pp. 628-29) and it is in the use of such utensils invested with particular spiritual powers that the authors locate an invitation "to move to healing research methods" (p. 629). These "allow research participants to name and share pain and to collectively envision strategies for resistance, resilience and survival" (ibid., p. 629). This doctoral research did not draw on the use of specifically endowed utensils, and rather than women themselves insisting on the use of songs and utensils, as in the case described by Chilisa and Ntseane, the research team in the communities asked participants to share their views through traditional means. This seems to have led to falling short of using methods in a healing way.

However, this research did manage to continuously discuss and scrutinise emerging findings of this study through public feedback loops with research participants in the local language. Crucial instances of this 'public and collective feedback' were the presentations of our preliminary findings (in English and Twi) as part of three community *durbars* in all three respective communities (in October 2017), and the conduct of three further *durbars* in Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom as part of data validation, one year after field residence (November 2018). As mentioned previously, *durbars* are widely announced community gatherings; they can take place on public meeting grounds, often located in an outside space in the community or inside a communal building such as a school or a church (see also Appendix G).

Thus far, Section 9.3 has discussed spaces of engagement as part of development research and practice where epistemic equality was present according to two criteria: people expressing their values receiving equal weight and various ways and modes of expressing values being equally recognised and accepted. Below, enabling conditions for the presence of epistemic equality will be discussed, together with hindrances in realising them.

9.3.3. Obstacles to Realising Epistemic Equality

In this research the value and practice of epistemic equality constitutively links to Fraser's theory on parity of participation. Fraser (2003) emphasises in her general thesis that social justice incorporates both claims for redistribution and for 'politics of recognition'. In this section, I will provide an initial account of hindrances linked to redistribution and 'politics of recognition', foregrounding a socio-cultural dimension. I will argue that these hindrances block the full emergence of epistemic equality as part of international cross-cultural development interventions.

In this chapter, varying views among development practitioners interviewed were outlined, some of whom do not appear to engage with transnational feminist development practice. The implications thereof are that the *same* development practitioner, in some statements, can adopt a limited critical reflexive approach, while other statements are grounded in a feminist development practice understood as co-producing knowledge based on collective deliberations aligning understandings of gender equality and women's empowerment (as communicated in global policy documents) to aspects of socio-cultural norms and practices widely relevant at community level. In aligning differing perspectives in transnational feminist ways that do not erase socio-cultural differences and problems but embrace them in conceptualising gender and development, a 'politics of recognition' is arguably drawn upon. Continuously co-creating an environment for 'open communication' to emerge as part of international cross-cultural development GAD work that acknowledges the complexity of socio-cultural values held and sets out to align them in feminist transnational ways, at individual and group level, is then the key issue and challenge for a feminist development practice

Continuously co-creating an environment for 'open communication' to emerge signifies a type of communication that adheres to the first two criteria of epistemic equality, which incorporates being honest and up front about what our values are as development practitioners, researchers and funders, as well as stating clearly what we are advocating for, and why, as part of a development intervention. Conscientisation efforts among feminist development practitioners and community members may then engage, continuously, with what constitutes gender equality and women's empowerment, and how we can bring it about in transformative ways while honouring the relevant values in specific socio-cultural contexts such as 'harmonious' social relations and respect relevant at community level in the Eastern Region of Ghana, West Africa. Critical thinking efforts among feminist development

practitioners and community members might also transform 'gender-transformative' programmes themselves, conducted internationally and cross-culturally. Then, these might not only entail challenging *other* people's norms, values, behaviours and attitudes, but also our *own* norms, values, behaviours and attitudes as development practitioners, researchers and funders. Such an approach necessitates an engagement with the complexity of value-formation and shifts in values while also considering relevant power relations and impact thereof.

Power relations point to significant limitations to realising distributive economic justice on a systemic scale, institutionally as well as among groups and individuals. Distributive economic justice, which Fraser (2003) describes as "a more just distribution of resources and wealth" (p. 7), does not seem to constitute a key concern within the current international system of aid. Power inequalities and actors' different control over key resources for development arguably impact on the space of epistemic equality, posing a hindrance to the full emergence thereof. Chapter 7 of this doctoral thesis entailed a discussion on inter-institutional collaboration among organisations in the implementation of a specific international development programme. Collaboration *on an equal footing* was, however, limited by hierarchies linked to differential financing powers. Within the context of (I)NGO work, certain points of views, for instance during planning sessions or project evaluations, tend to come aligned to money. Controlling more financial resources tends to result in a stronger position to communicate one's views and to lay out relevant values to be considered in the scope of a development intervention. In the practice of international development, actors from the Global North tend to occupy these financially stronger positions.[231]

Reflections on 'feminist development alternatives' are taking place including the aspect of financing. A publication by GADN in collaboration with AWID (2019), considers funding dynamics between actors in the Global North and the Global South. Tina Wallace and Fenella Porter (2016) reflect on current constraints as part of funding modalities within UK development policy and practice context. They offer principles for a feminist approach to programmes and their evaluations emphasising women's power and their voices.[232] Strengthening 'poor' women's representation through supporting the work of women's movements (see also Section 3.3.1) as well as creating favourable conditions for females to

[231] Tendencies presented are based on personal experiences working as a development practitioner for UK-based INGOs.
[232] See also GADN (2016).

entering spheres of decision- and rulemaking *directly* can, arguably, point to social transformation as addressing broader structural oppressions, such as patriarchy (see also Section 8.3 and discussion above). Aligning structural and group levels, the preamble of the Women's Manifesto for Ghana (2004) notably envisions strengthening women's movements when it points to a determination "to support self-reliant national development initiatives as a basis for effective political and economic changes in Ghana" in the face of being "[d]issatisfied that women are over-burdened by the heavy responsibilities they bear in the face of economic crises and the retreat of the state from its social development mandate" (p. 9). Discussing systemic social transformation in feminist terms also includes addressing the role of INGOs, intended or unintended, in supporting said retreat.

9.4. Concluding Remarks

This chapter addressed dynamics of knowledge production processes on conceptualising gender and social transformation as part of international cross-cultural development practice and research. Divided in three parts, this chapter first addressed congruence of local and international views on child protection illustrating broad alignment between international and local NGOs guided by international policy documents as well as Ghanaian state actors, drawing on a distinct legal perspective. Second, this chapter presented analysis on contested views on child abuse and how to report on it. Focussing on traditional socio-cultural phenomena at community level including the practice of moderately beating children for disciplining purposes, child labour and teenage pregnancy, this chapter revealed that contestations run along cultural lines which do not always align with legal perspectives on safeguarding child protection. The divide between traditional and state reporting structures on child protection issues was also analysed as well as attempts at alignment, not least through drawing on CBOs formed during international development work at community level, such as the CPTs as part of the GPP. The third part of this chapter analysed processes of co-producing knowledge as sharing epistemologies.

To assess processes and dynamics of co-producing knowledge as part of international development practice and research, three criteria of epistemic equality were discussed. Analysis of the first criteria, expressing views on an equal footing, commenced with examining how direct socio-political participation of adolescent females can be supported. Then, co-creating knowledge as part of the GPP through mutual learning and information sharing among various social actors was investigated. Analysis also addressed engagement

with two socio-cultural phenomena through a critical collaborative approach. Addressing the practice of beating one's children pointed to critical conscientisations efforts as reflecting together why a practice is widely accepted and what other ways could be available to achieve the same outcomes without resorting to a practice that arguably infringes upon individual rights of children. An examination of diversifying pathways of reducing teenage pregnancy revealed the importance of co-creating platforms to share diverse views freely. Considering practical and normative aspects, analysis of diverse views then emphasised the importance of going beyond a moralising discourse that foregrounds individual responsibility of young women through abstinence and move towards collective responsibility for reducing not only the occurrence of teenage pregnancy but also its gendered negative repercussions. This notably entails creating enabling conditions for pregnant girls and young mothers to continue schooling.

An investigation of the second criteria of epistemic equality, different modes and rationales of expressing value-induced views receiving equal weight, outlined specific modes of sharing views through collaborative exercises as adopted in this doctoral research. Linking back to analysis presented in Chapter 8, it was revealed that considering a relational aspect, especially in inter-generational terms, constitutes a relevant pathway for addressing needs of community members in meaningful ways, key among them the education of girls. In examining how this doctoral research incorporated traditional modes of expression during collaborative exercises, it became clear that the thesis fell short of using 'healing research methods' as envisioned in an African feminist indigenous research approach. However, this doctoral study drew on a collaborative and reciprocal approach to research, drawing on iterative feedback loops in the local language which can form one component of critical and reciprocal conscientisation efforts mindful of socio-cultural specificities among development practitioners as well as researchers and community members.

Finally, in this chapter, pre-conditions for realising epistemic equality were analysed, focusing on redistribution and 'politics of recognition' linked to Fraser's theory on parity of participation (2003). It became clear that a key issue and challenge for feminist development practice lies in continuously co-creating spaces for 'open communication' and critical reciprocal conscientisation efforts to emerge, drawing on the criteria of epistemic equality. It also became clear that power relations within international cross-cultural development work linked to financing continue to hinder distributive economic justice which poses an obstacle to full emergence of epistemic equality.

10. Conclusion

The final part of this thesis considers the arguments of the chapters thus far to conclude how they have contributed to inter-related academic and public policy debates, as identified in the introduction. This conclusion also discusses research limitations as well as future avenues of research.

This thesis has studied transnational and local concepts and modes of gender and social transformation as part of broader knowledge production processes to understand how a specific INGO programme operates within and across socio-cultural spaces. As indicated in the introduction and throughout my thesis, my research question set out to investigate the link between conceptualisations of gender, subjective understandings of perceived development programme success and notions of social transformation as a core feminist claim. I have examined these issues through studying conceptualisations as voiced by community members and development practitioners, and as presented in programme and policy documents, as part of the Girl Power Programme, an international cross-cultural development programme implemented in Ghana, West Africa. The over-arching conclusion of this thesis is, in order to address the 'cross-cultural' question in international development work in meaningful ways, exploring pathways to co-create shared epistemologies to conceptualise gender and social transformation as part of co-producing knowledge processes is vital.

The original contribution of this thesis draws on the value and practice of epistemic equality which necessitates socio-cultural values at community level such as respect and harmony receiving equal weight as values expressed and enacted as part of an international development programme, in the pursuit of envisioned social transformation in the context of gender and development. Through reciprocal conscientisation efforts among and between (feminist) development practitioners and community members, intersecting and differentiating conceptualisations of gender and social transformation can be aligned. Nonetheless, limitations to realising epistemic equality remain as part of international cross-cultural development work *inter alia* implemented at community level.

10.1. Co-producing Knowledge on Gender and Social Transformation

The first main contribution of this thesis is to add to the debate on the role of knowledge production in academia and development policy and practice, characterised by hierarchical and unequal terms. The research has demonstrated how conceptualisations of gender, linked to definitions of social transformation, are moulded along complex power relations and then considered pathways of 'doing knowledge production differently' (Chapter 2). Analysis indicated that this entails moving towards co-production of knowledge along shared epistemologies (Chapter 9), considering connections as boundary crossings while acknowledging the specificities of socio-cultural locations as part of a transnational feminist analytical lens.

In this thesis, I have explored alignment and conflict or contestation around values in the context of an international cross-cultural development programme, which I argue significantly influences the conceptualisations of gender and visions of social transformation as part of broader knowledge production processes. The socio-culturally relevant value of respect, foregrounding a relational and collective dimension, considered in Chapter 8 is relevant in constituting gendered social relations and resurfaces in Chapter 9 as an aspect that, at times, stands at odds with individual child protection concerns. Addressing the 'cross-cultural question' in international development work, it became clear that international and local NGOs as well as Ghanaian state actors broadly align around a rights-based approach to gender and development, foregrounding child protection concerns as part of an official narrative in the case of the GPP. While such an approach can draw on traditional structures and practices in nuanced ways (Section 7.2.3), at times, it also stands at odds with specific elements of socio-cultural values and practices, as well as governance structures present at local community level (Section 8.2.2; Chapter 9). Development practitioners working as part of international cross-cultural development programmes at local or community level are at the forefront of this complexity which is exacerbated through massive sets of changes taking place at local NGO and local governance levels.

On the theme of contesting the definition of child abuse and how to appropriately report on it to safeguard child protection, this thesis has demonstrated that the platform on which competing values sets are discussed can, but does not necessarily have to, include representatives of different national cultures. Rather, a value debate is deferred onto one national space, playing out at various societal levels, displaying a heterogeneity of value-induced views and positions linked to institutional and organisational locations (Section

9.3.1). This thesis has argued that the role of 'open communication' drawing on criteria of epistemic equality is constitutive in aligning diverse views on concepts of gender and development linking to ideas of meaningful social transformation (Section 7.2.2, Section 9.3).

Addressing locus and space in transnational terms, defined as acknowledging the crossing of borders and boundaries while being centrally concerned with the specificities of socio-cultural location, can constitute spheres of encounter for conceptualising gender and contributing to social transformation. In these spheres of encounter, however, views on social transformation as part of knowledge production processes can be congruent as well as contested, as was the case in the GPP, the international development programme analysed as a case in this research. To align diverse views in the context of development research and practice, this thesis has argued for adopting a collaborative approach aimed at co-producing knowledge. This approach notably rests on sharing epistemologies and is based on the value and practice of epistemic equality. While limitations exist in ensuring that pre-conditions for epistemic equality are fulfilled, this thesis continued to stress the relevant role of 'open communication'. Such communication entails directly sharing value-induced views on an equal footing and accepting different modes and rationales for expressing views, particularly among community members and development practitioners in the context of international development work.

Highlighting feminist arguments that are raised within and across specific socio-cultural locations, this thesis has foregrounded an African feminist critique raised against an institutionalised Western liberal feminism, perceived in monolithic terms. This served as a means of arriving at a deeper understanding of gendered conceptualisations in the context of an international GAD programme partly implemented in Ghana, West Africa. To unpack the complex process of conceptualising gender as both 'lived relations' and 'representations' across specific locations in 'Africa' and 'the West', this research has traced the extent to which statements of research participants resonate, selectively draw on, combine or refrain from associating with African feminist perspectives and/or Western liberal feminist views. This analytical tracing exercise helped with identifying how certain conceptualisations of gender link to particular value sets and what kind of social transformation was considered possible and desirable, and through which means, according to research participants.

Prior to this tracing exercise, Chapter 2 and 3 have presented a comprehensive literature review of the gender concept and the dynamics of its construction and

operationalisation both within broader feminist theory and activist work as well as within feminist development research, policy and practice. By considering feminist epistemic positions within and across the Global South and Global North, this thesis has foregrounded the role of locus in framing gender. Locus entails consideration of geographical location and one's own positioning, potentially as part of collective groups, based on intersecting social identity factors, linked to institutional or activist affiliations.

Chapter 3 engaged in more depth with the concept of social transformation, which carries different meanings for social actors in varied contexts. This chapter showed how ideas of change and social transformation can be constituted within the realm of feminist development research and practice while drawing on a broader feminist theoretical context. What became clear was that for some feminist authors, transformation includes structural and systemic shifts, for instance in terms of macroeconomics; social justice arguments are foregrounded, and the impact of systemic changes considered especially in terms of the lives of marginalised individuals and social groups. Some feminist literature proposes empowerment as a way of challenging a status quo that continues to disadvantage females throughout societal levels as part of gender relations understood as power relations. 'Considering a power dimension', Chapter 3 has pointed to proposals as part of development practice to engage in transformative work drawing on transnational feminism and critical conscientisation efforts.

Chapter 4 has presented the analytical framework of this research around gender, social transformation and the role of knowledge production considering 'the colonial' in our contemporary globalised world while Chapter 5 outlined the methodological and analytical tools linking to feminist epistemology. A case was made for considering material and discursive dimensions, studying gender as lived realities and representations, to arrive at a deeper understanding of how knowledge production processes frame social transformation. Participation based on the principle, value and practice of epistemic equality was presented as a method to co-produce knowledge through critical dialogue.

Overall, this thesis has demonstrated that there is a need for a more grounded interpretation of gender analysis as part of feminist development research, policy and practice, co-producing ideas of development success and social transformation aligned to conceptualisations of gender among and between community members and development practitioners.

10.2. Considering 'the Local' and its Legitimacy – A Potential Role for Feminist Development Practitioners

The second main contribution of this thesis adds to an academic debate on the role of, and limitations for, development practitioners conducting gender-transformative work as part of development planning, raising questions of 'legitimate' involvement. This points to critique put forward by African feminist scholars highlighting that a Western liberal feminism continues to influence a 'mainstream' GAD sphere, overlooking systems of oppressions other than patriarchy, which include racism, colonialism and capitalism. Transformative GAD work is cognisant of the uneasy relation among 'White Western' feminists with their 'African' and 'Black feminist' counterparts by problematising 'universalising' arguments, such as the sexual division of labour, generated in one socio-cultural setting and imposed onto another, not responsive to local realities and concerns (Chapter 3). This thesis has emphasised how transformative gender analysis tools consider both, gender as lived relations and representations, ascribing a particular role to considering social gendered norms and values in specific cultural settings, while also questioning broader hierarchies as part of international development work itself.

Throughout this thesis, it became clear that the 'the local' constitutes a key site in a battle for legitimacy as part of GAD work. Chapter 9 considered the case of reporting mechanisms on child protection as part of the GPP, which pointed to tensions around conflict resolution mechanisms between 'traditional' processes and (modern) 'state' structures. Analysis of reporting mechanisms aimed at safeguarding child protection as part of the GPP, and its follow-up programme, revealed that aligning traditional processes of conflict management and dispute resolution to state mechanisms might lie in increasing awareness of what constitute rights (and abuse thereof) in negotiation with locally sanctioned practices. *Critical* sensitisation efforts aimed at *mutual* learning between development practitioners and community members revealed that safeguarding child protection at community level notably rests on foregrounding reciprocal parent-children-relations. This translates into safeguarding both rights and responsibilities of children and parents, drawing on the value of respect as reciprocal communicative practice as this thesis has demonstrated.

To align contested views in critical ways, this thesis has pointed to the role of feminist development practitioners in 'opening up' discussions based on epistemic equality. The notion of 'respect' played a pertinent role when contesting whether child labour and moderate

beating of children point to illegal practices infringing upon child protection, or socially accepted cultural practices aligned to particular norms refracted through the intersecting identity factors of gender and age (Chapter 9). This thesis suggested that through collaborative critical conscientisation efforts, development practitioners and community members could reflect on child abuse and child protection together, also including the theme and social phenomena of teenage pregnancy. Such conscientisation efforts and critical discussions focus on when and why socio-cultural structures and practices might be appropriate, or legitimate, for supporting protection of girls and women in rights terms and when and why amendments or changes are sensible. This, crucially, does not dismiss the value and benefit of local structures and socio-cultural practices *per se,* but points to an understanding that awareness of rights, and by extension the law, entails a process of sense-making and 'coming to terms', potentially with the shifts of what constitutes a socio-cultural practice in contrast to child abuse framed in legal terms (Chapter 9).

The role of transnational feminist development work in an international cross-cultural development programme can lie in aligning individual and personal needs, foregrounded notably in a Western liberal perspective, to an understanding of needs, rights and responsibilities that are set up in collective terms within socio-cultural 'local' settings that draw on a distinct African value set. According to some Ghanaian development practitioners, for instance, women's empowerment in Ghana might link to challenging certain aspects of one's culture without completely breaking with them, at the intersection of individual choices and the need for social recognition as part of a group in collective terms (Chapter 8).

This thesis has pointed to the importance of feminist development practice understood as co-producing knowledge based on collective deliberations aligning understandings of gender equality and women's empowerment (as communicated in global policy documents) to aspects of socio-cultural norms and practices, widely relevant at community level. This approach is characterised by the value and practice of epistemic equality characterised by two aspects: one, directly sharing value-induced views on an equal footing and, two, accepting different modes and rationales for expressing views on an equal footing. Besides providing examples of when epistemic equality emerged as part of development research and practice, this thesis also pointed to limitations for realising distributive economic justice as a pre-condition for the full emergence of epistemic equality.

10.3. Social Norm Change as Part of Social Transformation

The third main contribution of this thesis is to add to feminist development research on the importance, and problematics, around social norm change as part of gender-transformative programmes conducted internationally and cross-culturally. This thesis showed that sensitisation activities constituted a key strategy and method of GPP delivery, notably addressing values, norms, attitudes and behaviours at socio-cultural community level, aimed at strengthening support for women's and notably girls' rights. During research activities, some community members and development practitioners were critical of sensitisation activities that mainly addressed 'software' concerns void of material and service delivery components. Borrowing terminology from Ghanaian development practitioners interviewed, programmatic activities of sensitisation aimed at supporting gender equality and women's empowerment notably through strengthening women's and girls' rights can be viewed as 'software', while infrastructure projects and economic activities are seen as 'hardware'. The GPP managed to create a balance between 'hardware' and 'software' elements. Creating this balances links, in particular ways, to aligning felt and perceived needs of community members and what development practitioners identify as necessary (Chapter 8). Together with critically reflecting on gender equality and women's empowerment in conjunction with aspects of socio-cultural practices and norms, aligning hardware and software concerns as part of 'open conversations' can point to transformative areas of social change.

This thesis has argued that an 'open conversation' grounded in epistemic equality is ready to challenge values, norms and practices of community members *as well as* values, norms and practices of representatives of implementing organisations at community, national and international level as part of cross-cultural development interventions. Such an understanding of 'open communication' arguably links to socio-culturally relevant values of reciprocal respect and harmony at community level in the Eastern Region of Ghana, manifesting in a communicative sphere encoding particular speech acts in positive terms. 'Open communication' as reciprocal and mutual inspection of personal and collective values does not yet necessarily constitute an integral part of gender-transformative programming, arguably limiting its potential so support social transformation at community level in systemic ways.

Analysis in Chapter 8 foregrounded how the set-up of gender roles and relations is refracted through a social norms' lens. In particular, Chapter 8 foregrounded the role of the socio-

cultural collective values and practices of respect and harmony. It was demonstrated that an engagement with what constitutes respect in mutual and reciprocal terms in selected communities in the Eastern Region of Ghana, via specific positively connoted speech acts, can function as framing harmonious and peaceful gender relations. However, it was also shown how respect and notably notions of disrespect, linked to the intersecting social identity factors of gender and age, can link to framing abusive behaviour at community level.

Analysis in Chapter 8 pointed out that, in ideal terms, the socio-culturally relevant value of respect already frames the decision-making sphere as a collaborative exercise and a marker for 'harmonious' social relations. Various research participants pointed to husbands and wives 'making decisions together' independent of who was the main income earner. However, some research participants questioned whether decision-making, as an enacted practice, is indeed collaborative. Rather, they linked income-generation and taking care of family needs, a responsibility aligned to household headship, to increased decision-making power. Thus, income-generating activities can potentially increase women's decision-making power, linked to conceptualisations of women's empowerment, but also the socio-culturally widely relevant value of respect as reciprocal and mutual forms of communicative acts, such as listening to each other and giving advice. Analysis demonstrated that in a situation of economic deprivation, women already *enact* the position of household head, even if, for strategic reasons, this might not yet translate into rightfully claiming final decision-making powers which seemingly continue to rest with males of the family in *normative* terms.

This thesis has argued that there is a need for development practitioners across different geographic locations, socio-cultural settings and institutional levels to familiarise themselves with what constitutes relevant socio-cultural values, norms and practices in locations where international development work is designed and implemented. A nuanced and balanced approach to analysing the role of diverse socio-cultural values, norms and practices is crucial. This point was elaborated on in Chapter 3 (Section 3.2.1), resurfaced in Chapter 6 (Section 6.1.2) and was then addressed in Chapter 7 through a nuanced examination of traditional communal practices as part of international development work implemented in three research communities in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Chapter 8 investigated the socio-culturally relevant values of respect and harmony with implications for framing local modes of gender and areas of social transformation. Chapter 9 drew on selected socio-cultural values and traditional practices of conflict-resolution at community level in considering different perspectives on what constitutes child abuse with implications for conceptualising and

implementing child protection. A nuanced and balanced engagement with socio-cultural values within and across different spaces as part of international cross-cultural development work allows identifying meaningful ways of aligning diverse perceptions on gender and development linked to particular socio-cultural value sets.

This study has contributed in particular ways to specific sets of discussions taking place within academia and a public discourse on development policy and practice, foregrounding the importance of conceptualising gender and social transformation aligned to knowledge production processes. Underlying epistemological rationales for co-producing knowledge within the sphere of international cross-cultural development work were outlined, together with practical tools (Section 9.3.2). Highlighting specific pathways for, potentially, aligning subjective notions of development programme success to meaningful social transformation linked to conceptualisations of gender, this thesis pointed to the important role of co-producing knowledge based on principles of epistemic equality.

Transformative elements highlighted in this thesis included alignment of individual needs and aspirations to socio-cultural collective values by linking ideas of women's empowerment and gender equality to harmony; and alignment of 'hardware' and 'software' concerns based on 'open' conversations among development practitioners and community members. In addressing the 'cross-cultural question' as part of international development work, this research stressed the complexity present when different sets of values encounter each other. Rather than a divide between 'Western' and 'African' values, or a debate between international and local development work, the work of local NGOs is at times perceived at odds with local governance structures as well as socio-culturally widely accepted practices. It is in the spaces of local government as well as local NGO work that massive sets of changes take place, aligning legal concerns with socio-cultural perspectives on what is 'right' and 'appropriate'. In programmatic work on gender and development, aligning practical and normative spheres allows for deeper understanding of child protection across spaces with a focus on adolescent girls.

10.4. Limitations as Absences

This thesis did not fully engage with the views of young women and men below the age of 18 years. Therefore, relevant views of girls and boys on gender and social transformation are missing from this study. *Not* engaging with people under the age of 18 years *directly* was mainly linked to risk considerations and not exposing young people to potentially harmful consequences of participating in this research, in line with the ethics approval granted for this study.[233] However, reserving access to research activities to people above the age of 18 years meant that a particular perspective of lived experiences along the intersections of gender and age was left out in this research. This is particularly crucial as the GPP, studied as a research case, notably focused on adolescent girls as the name of the programme already indicates, *Girl* Power Programme.

To mitigate the absence of voices of young people below the age of 18 years, this research engaged with individuals and groups of people that considered themselves as youth and were mostly above the age of 18 years (see also discussion in Chapter 5). This study also considered representations of young people under the age of 18 years as communicated in programme documents or during research activities. In future research projects, working together with researchers who have special training in conducting research with minors, or acquiring such skills myself, might be a way to address a key limitation of this research.

A broader analytical question that remained with me throughout this research is, *can* and *should* development researchers of a certain positionality represent the views of community members *at all*? Some feminists, notably African social science scholars located in institutions of higher education in the US, would answer that my social identity as a White, Western European female middle-class feminist development researcher means that I am not able to represent the views of African community members faced with the lived realities of poverty (Section 5.1.1). However, work on transnational feminism, crucially drawn upon in this study, sees possibilities of connections across boundaries foregrounding an understanding of diversity that does not erase differences, but encourages us to work with them.

In this research, I worked together with two Ghanaian research assistants who invaluably influenced on-going interpretation and translation tasks as part of this research. Further means of enabling contextual understanding of research findings were also adopted

[233] By University College London (UCL), a higher education institution based in the UK.

as part of a broader research design aimed at co-creating knowledge together with research participants (see Chapter 5). In terms of representation of research participants as exhibited in this doctoral thesis, this meant that these representations were open to contestation throughout the entire research process. As part of a doctoral research, where interpretative authority ultimately rests with the doctoral student, such an approach does not guarantee co-creating knowledge as part of epistemic communities but allows for it to be a possibility by drawing on a collaborative and iterative qualitative research design.

Being crucially concerned to engage with the views of community members and development practitioners in the Global South, another limitation of this research is that it only features one interview with a development practitioner based in the Global North, notably the Netherlands. While research design envisioned a workshop with development practitioners involved in the GPP located in the Netherlands, once emerging findings were consolidated, this research component could not be realised due to time and financial constraints. Through the study of policy and programme documents, an organisational and institutional perspective of actors located in the Global North could be assessed. However, further engagement with development practitioners in the Global North could have added to the lived experiences of conducting cross-cultural development work. Finally, a workshop among development practitioners from the Global North *and* the Global South could have adhered in specific ways to ideas of collaborative co-creation of knowledge highlighted in this research. Further research projects may draw on these envisioned possibilities.

A further limitation of this research lies in a limited engagement with a South-South perspective as part of a cross-cultural development programme implemented across ten countries in the Global South. Future research on large-scale, multi-stakeholder GAD programmes designed, implemented as well as monitored and evaluated cross-culturally may consider collaborative research efforts drawing on various research teams in different socio-cultural spaces to explore conceptualisations of gender aligned to social transformation. Such collaborative research work could draw on regular exchanges framed as ‘open conversations’ based on the value and practice of epistemic equality, adopting processes of knowledge co-production among development practitioners and researchers as well as between practitioners or researchers and community members.

10.5. Future Avenues of Research

The above section on research limitations as absences has already indicated some avenues of future research. In this section, I want to concentrate on practices of disseminating study findings linked to future research avenues, considering connections to a policy and practice sphere.

The main argument of this thesis set out to address 'the cross-cultural question' in international development work through sharing epistemologies and co-creating knowledge on concepts and pathways of gender and social transformation. Such an approach entails sharing the findings of this research with research participants at community level. Initial research findings were already shared during community *durbars* conducted in October 2017 in Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom, the three communities located in the Eastern Region of Ghana studied as part of this research. I intend to present the finalised doctoral study to research participants as well and to inquire about their willingness to further work together with me to identify pathways for developing this research collectively. This might frame the focus that a future academic article based on this doctoral study can adopt, or other ways of 'meaningfully' engaging with and 'using' this research in line with the views of community members. Similarly, I will invite development practitioners I have worked with as part of this doctoral research, to feed into further steps of disseminating findings of this doctoral research.

While the following reflections cannot be considered fully-fledged policy recommendations, they do address an international policy and practice sphere. This study has pointed to elements of social transformation that echo the call of feminist development practitioner-researchers to consider power hierarchies within policy and practice of international development itself. Continued efforts are needed to incorporate such considerations as part of transformative GAD work which could include adopting a self-reflective lens on the role of INGOs in women's rights work.[234] This could point to meaningful broader changes on the role of institutions, taking into consideration the locus from which they are operating. To challenge current power hierarchies within international development, I have reflected in this thesis on the need to make more funding available, notably to 'local' NGOs and smaller CSOs which can include women's movements or initiatives. More efforts at increasing the

[234] On initial reflections on this theme, already taking place, see GADN & AWID (2019).

financial strength of smaller organisations could enhance the possibility for meaningful social transformation aligned to gender and development and support ‘open’ conversation on intersecting and differing pathways addressing social transformation in meaningful ways. Finally, reflections around the role of international development work in potentially contributing to the retreat of the state from its social development mandate (Section 9.3.3) could form yet another important part of transformative GAD work.

Based on intersecting social identity factors, geographical location as well as institutional and activist affiliations, we might still have different ideas of what constitutes social discrimination against females and the ‘legitimate’ pathways to address this varied social phenomenon, potentially in transformative ways. This research has argued that drawing on reciprocal and open communication based on the principle of epistemic equality can constitute a first step in addressing intersecting and differing conceptualisations of gender and social transformation, openly and honestly. Such communication as part of collaborative conscientisation efforts among and between feminist development practitioners and community members might point to pathways of considering social transformation in the context of international cross-cultural development work. This might only be a first step, but transformation might start as such, a first step, taken together.

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Fieldnotes Pilot Visit. 15 March to 1 April 2017
Fieldnotes A. 20 May to 20 August 2017
Fieldnotes B. 21 August to 6 September 2017
Fieldnotes C. 7 Sep to 9 Oct 2017
Fieldnotes D. 10 Oct to 29 Oct 2017
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Appendices

Appendix A. Rationale for Gender Policy and Planning

THE RATIONALE FOR GENDER POLICY AND PLANNING

Disaggregated categories such as "household", "community", "target group" or "people centred" development	Analysis of the **Gender division of labour**	Identification of **household structures**

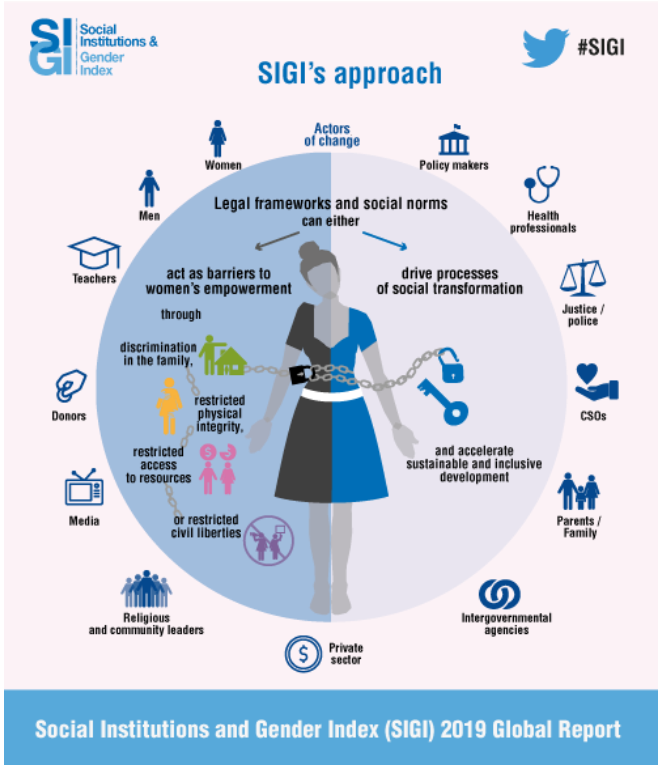
Women and men, girls and boys have different **gender roles**	Women and men, girls and boys have different access to and control over **resources**

Women and men, girls and boys have different **gender needs**

PRACTICAL GENDER NEEDS the needs of women and men, girls and boys which come out of existing gender roles	**STRATEGIC GENDER NEEDS** the needs of women and men, girls and boys which may change existing gender roles
PGN met through actions which assist women and men, girls and boys to perform existing gender roles more easily	**SGN** met through actions which challenge or change existing gender roles, relations and control over resources.

Source: Development Planning Unit, Gender Policy and Planning Programme, 2015b, unpublished training resource, DPU, UCL, London

Appendix B. Theory of Change Highlighting Actors of Change, Legal Frameworks and Social Norms



Source: OECD, 2019

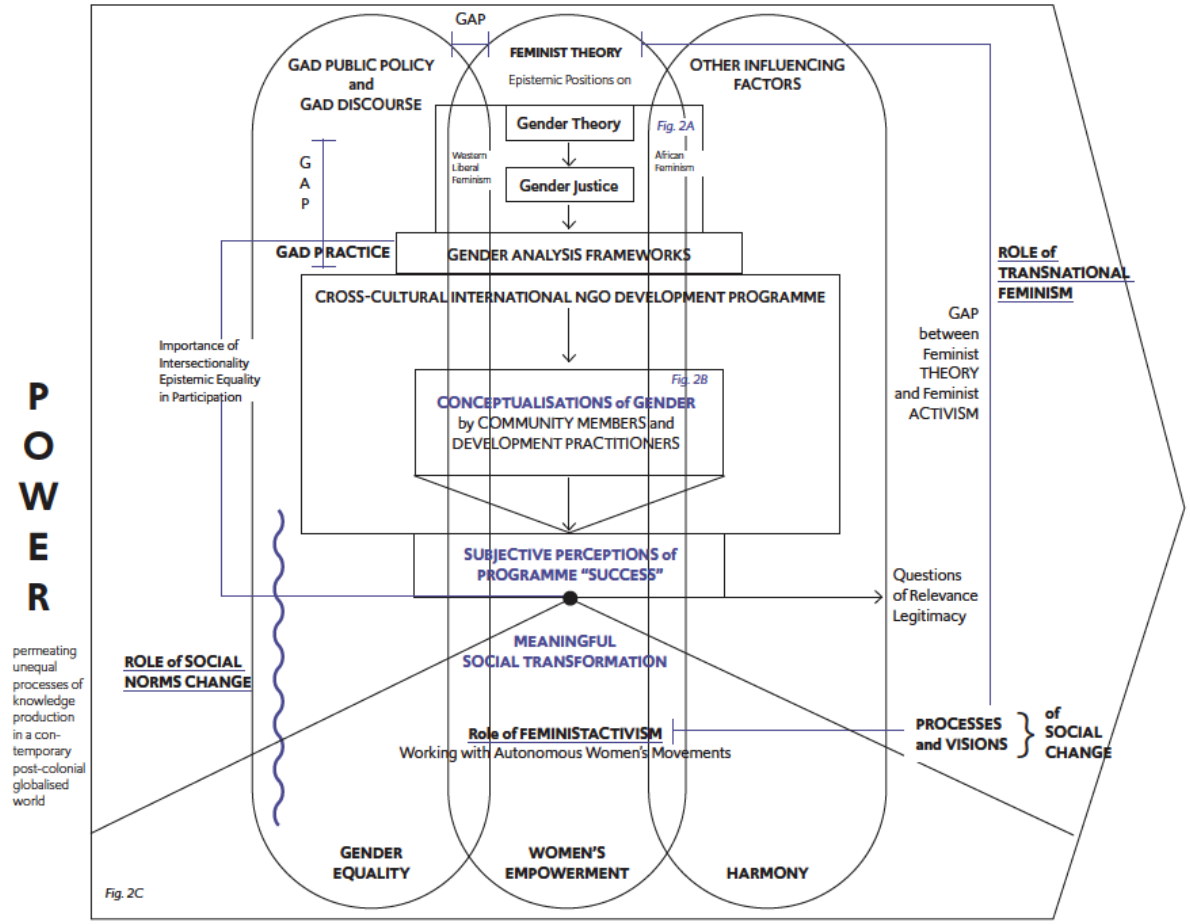
Appendix C. Gender Roles Framework based on Moser (1989, 1993)

Roles	Women	Men
Reproductive Role *Tasks related to daily child rearing and domestic chores*	Childbearing Child rearing Organisation of the household	No continuous responsibility but may have occasional customary domestic tasks
Productive Role *Work done by both women and men for pay in cash or kind*	Represented in lowest paid jobs and often gender stereotyped occupations/ sectors in the formal economy i.e. kindergarten teacher, working in elderly homes, cleaning, etc. Women's labour may be prioritised in low paid flexible industry (e.g. export processing zones). The work of low-income women in the informal economy is often invisible because it operates at household and neighbourhood levels. In rural areas, a majority of women works in subsistence economy and combine agricultural work for own consumption (RP) and for sale (P). Work of women is often not in official statistics. Where women are `secondary' income earners, they often make a critical contribution to income in poorer households. In female-headed households, women may be the sole income earners.	In most countries, men represent the majority of the labour force in the formal economy, in higher paid jobs; they have access to a wider range of occupations (also stereotyped); they are the majority in senior management. A higher proportion of men are 'middlemen' in the informal sector. In rural areas, men are the majority in cash cropping work. Men have more ownership of land and more productive lands. The work of poorer men is also often not found in statistics. Men are perceived as `primary' income earners (even when they are unemployed).
Community Managing Role *Voluntary and unpaid activities at community level*	Women tend to be involved in unpaid community provision and maintenance of collective goods and services (e.g. water, roads)	Men tend to be involved in unpaid community provision of collective goods and services (e.g. water, roads)
Constituency Based Politics Role *Participation in decision-making at all political levels on behalf of interest-based constituencies*	Strongly influenced by class, education, age and ethnicity. Women represent a low proportion of leaders except in autonomous women's organisations promoting customary concerns of women. Numbers may be boosted through quota systems.	Strongly influenced by class, education, age and ethnicity. Men tend to dominate leadership.

	Responsibility and number of women tend to increase at local levels.	

Source: Development Planning Unit, Gender Policy and Planning Programme, 2015b, unpublished training resource, DPU, UCL, London

Appendix D. Conceptualisations of Gender as part of a Cross-Cultural International Gender and Development Programme



Source: Author

Appendix E. Terms of Reference for Doctoral Research on Gender Programming in Ghana

(4 pages)

Terms of Reference for Doctoral Research on Gender Programming in Ghana

Introduction

Socially privileged roles often define and confine the gender roles available to women and men and they differ between and within geographical regions, cultural zones and life stages. Gender roles are inextricably linked with gender relations. Both of these are targeted within 'Gender programming' in International Development often engaging with gender roles and relations that uphold, support or quietly accept social discrimination against women in marginalised communities. Various Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) – both international and local – as well as International Organisations (IOs) have identified Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment as ways of overcoming social discrimination against women. These strategies also form the overall aim of 'gender projects', which frequently adopt a rights-based approach and envision transformation through changes in social behaviour (*cf.* Cornwall and Rivas 2015). The understanding of accepted gender roles and gender relations varies though, as well as ideas on how these should change (see e.g. Butler 2007; Okome 2003).

The main assumption of this Doctoral Research Project, linking to what other authors have identified as problematic (*cf.* Gujit and Shah's edited volume 1998), entails that gender within International Development is too often thought of in Eurocentric terms rendering interventions less meaningful conducted in marginalised communities in non-European contexts. Thus, understanding local Ghanaian conceptions of gender roles and relations as exhibited by community members being beneficiaries of a development project targeting gender, is deemed essential in this research. This research then sets out to contribute to making development interventions more meaningful for relevant stakeholders, specifically beneficiaries.

This Doctoral Research Project is part of the Development Planning Unit (DPU), UCL aiming "to build the capacity of national governments, local authorities, NGOs, aid agencies and businesses working towards socially just and sustainable development in the global south."[235] In line with DPU's research cluster on Social Development Practice, specifically within the thematic area of Gender Policy and Planning, this Doctoral Research Project takes "a critical approach to 'people-centred' development, addressing the challenges for promoting well-being and equitable citizenship in the context of social diversity and globalisation."[236]

[235] See DPU's website, https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/development/

[236] Ibid.

Research Work

Objective

To contribute to increasing – practical - knowledge within Development Practice on the design and impact of Gender Programming; and
to contribute to the international policy and academic debate revolving around design and impact of Gender Programming. Often, this discussion is framed around taking into account local specificities on the one hand and adhering to universal values such as social justice on the other hand. This Doctoral Research Project aims to investigate how to align these two standpoints and how to make development interventions more meaningful for relevant stakeholders, specifically beneficiaries.

Aims and key research areas

- The aim of the research is to answer the following Research Question **How do women and men in local communities in Ghana, which are characterized by deprivation and poverty, understand and evaluate gender roles and gender relations through participating in or being exposed to a development project specifically targeting 'gender'?**
- This question will be addressed by engaging with different perspectives, namely Community Members/Beneficiaries, international NGOs such as *Plan International Ghana* (hereafter Plan Ghana) and social institutions such as the *Queen Mothers.*
- Key research areas include
    - In general terms, Lived Experiences of Gender Roles and Gender Relations as well as aspirations and ideal types presented of these
    - In specific terms, the understanding and evaluation of gender roles and gender relations in three distinct thematic areas a) Targeting Domestic Violence; b) Access to quality education; and c) Increased participation of women in decision-making

Methodology

During the fieldwork phase of this research, the focus lies on primary data collection. The researcher adopts a variety of mainly qualitative methods including Participant Observation, Focus Group Discussions and Interviews. Data generated from these methods will be triangulated with available statistical data.
The Doctoral Research Project sets out to investigate a specific gender project implemented by Plan Ghana, namely 'The Girl Power Programme' (2011 – 2015). This project was implemented in 3 regions – Eastern, Upper West and Northern – in 250 communities. Due to the scope of the research project, the researcher aims to investigate 3 communities in more depth. Ideally, these communities would be situated in each of the 3 regions and would be representative of the entire project implementation i.e. no outliners to the positive or to the negative.
The researcher aims to spend up to 3 ½ months in <u>one</u> specific community to be able to work with the anthropological tools of Participant Observation to ensure a better understanding of the context.

Inputs

In order to conduct the Doctoral Research Project successfully and to offer evidence to Plan Ghana that could support project planning, the following inputs would be very helpful/needed

- Support from Plan Ghana to identify three (3) communities where 'The Girl Power Programme' was implemented and that would be interested in participating in the Doctoral Research Project. Ideally these communities are in all three regions where the project was implemented – Eastern, Upper West and Northern - and are no outliners i.e. representative of the project within Ghana as a whole.
- Support from Plan Ghana for an initial visit to the communities. Maybe it is possible for the researcher to go with one of Plan Ghana's cars and a staff member of Plan Ghana and/or a PU staff could accompany her. The researcher will cover the driver costs if needed and her accommodation costs. The researcher is flexible in her timings, and is happy to work around Plan Ghana's time schedule (please see also time frame below).
- Sharing of project documentation with the researcher i.e. Plan Ghana could share the Feasibility Study, Baseline Study, Mid-Term Evaluation, Final Evaluation, and any other project docs Plan Ghana deems relevant.
- Availability for an interview of Plan Ghana staff members (who were part of the design, implementation and/or MEL of 'The Girl Power Programme')

Outputs

- Written output of research findings
    - Executive Summary for Plan Ghana with relevance for their programmatic work
    - Doctoral Thesis – will be shared with Plan Ghana

Timeframe

Primary data collection for this research will be conducted during a prolonged fieldwork stay in Ghana for the duration of 6 ½ months, from May 20th 2017 to December 11th 2017. Please find the proposed time schedule below; it depends on and is subject to availability/feasibility for Plan Ghana. The researcher is happy to work around Plan Ghana's time plans.

Dates	Tasks and Activities
Late May 2017 to early June 2017	Arrival in Ghana; analysis of secondary data
June 2017 (date tbc)	Initial visit to selected communities of 'The Girl Power Programme' Researcher introduces herself to Council of Elders of selected communities and presents her research; if approval is given, then researcher could proceed to presenting project to community members. Researcher aims to find out during this initial visit whether it is possible for her to stay in one of the communities for a total of 3 ½ months.
Mid-July 2017 Suggested date: July 24th 2017	Start of Fieldwork Residence in one community (in case approval is obtained)
Mid-July to mid-Sept 2017 Suggested end date: Sept 17th	8 weeks of Fieldwork Residence – Part 1 Conducting Participant Observation and two Focus Group Discussions (one general, one on specific themes)
Late September 2017 Suggested dates: Sept 17 – Oct 1	2 weeks in Accra

	Initial Analysis; Interview with Development Practitioners of Plan Ghana
Early October – mid-November 2017 Suggested dates: Oct 2 – Nov 12	6 weeks of Fieldwork Residence – Part 2 Conducting between 15 and 30 individual interviews; potentially conducting another FGD

Delivery Team

The Researcher, Miss Fanny Froehlich, will conduct the Doctoral Research Project. This includes the following areas of research: content, scope, methodology, theory and analysis. Miss Shirley Acquah, Gender Advisor at Plan Ghana, will be the focal person for the researcher at Plan Ghana.

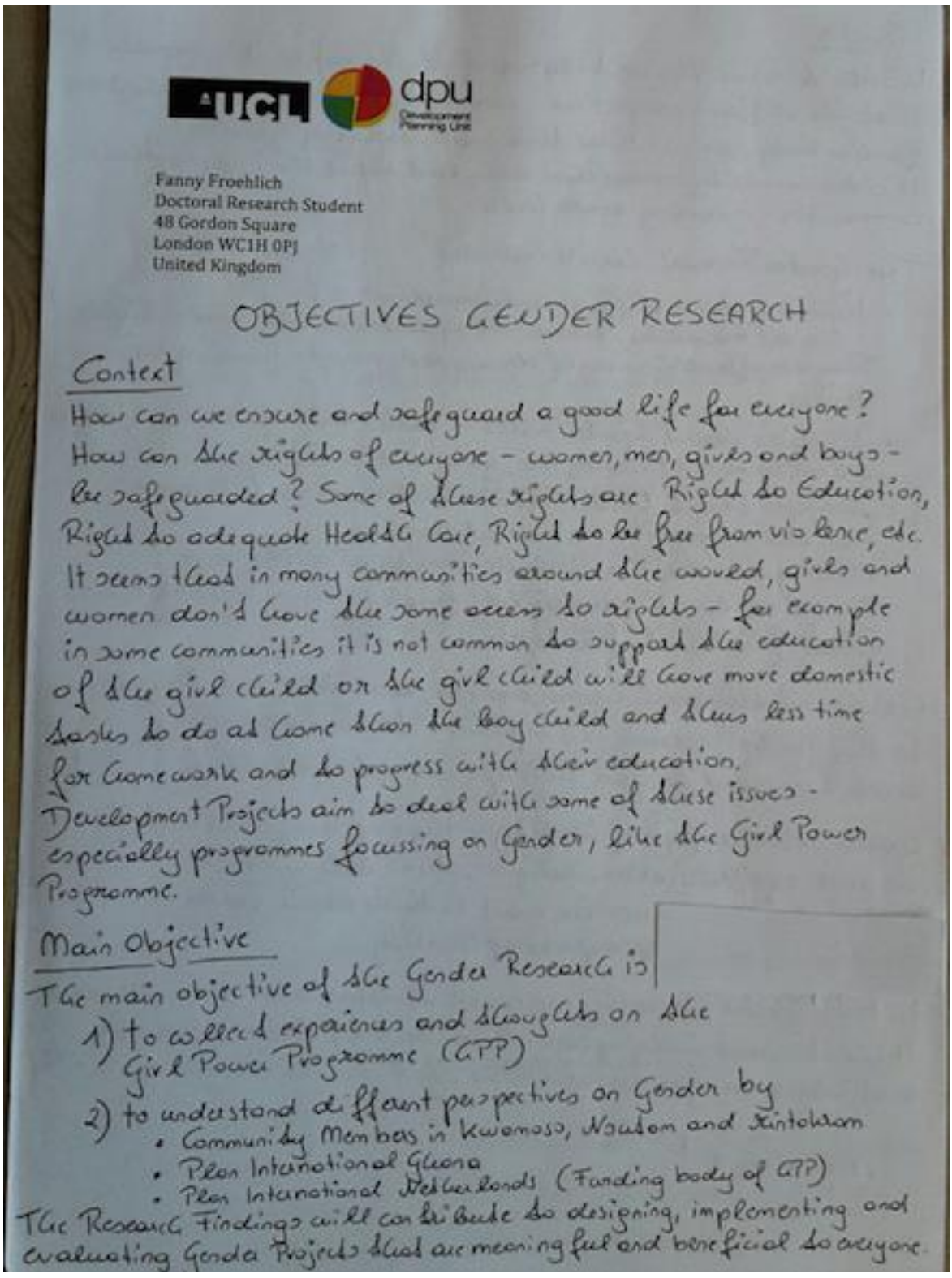
Intellectual Property

1. Each party grants to the other Party a non-exclusive, royalty-free licence to use its Background Intellectual Property for the purposes of this Agreement only. Background Intellectual Property is and shall remain, as between the Parties, the exclusive property of the Party making such Background Intellectual Property available. Background Intellectual Property contains any intellectual property made available by either Party for use for the purpose of this Agreement, e.g. Project Documentation of 'The Girl Power Programme' such as Baseline Survey, Feasibility Study, Mid-Term Evaluations, Final Evaluations and any other project documentation.

Each party hereby grants to the other Party a non-exclusive, royalty-free licence to use its Foreground Intellectual Property for the purposes of this Agreement only. Foreground Intellectual Property is and shall remain, as between the Parties, the exclusive property of the Party making such Foreground Intellectual Property available. Foreground Intellectual Property entails any intellectual property arising from and developed in the course of this Agreement, e.g. the Doctoral Thesis of the DPU Do

Appendix F. Research Objectives and Itinerary as Presented to Chiefs and Elders in Communities

(4 pages)



UCL dpu Development Planning Unit

Fanny Froehlich
Doctoral Research Student
48 Gordon Square
London WC1H 0PJ
United Kingdom

OBJECTIVES GENDER RESEARCH

Context

How can we ensure and safeguard a good life for everyone? How can the rights of everyone - women, men, girls and boys - be safeguarded? Some of these rights are Right to Education, Right to adequate Health Care, Right to be free from violence, etc. It seems that in many communities around the world, girls and women don't have the same access to rights - for example in some communities it is not common to support the education of the girl child or the girl child will have more domestic tasks to do at home than the boy child and thus less time for homework and to progress with their education.
Development Projects aim to deal with some of these issues - especially programmes focussing on Gender, like the Girl Power Programme.

Main Objective

The main objective of the Gender Research is
1) to collect experiences and thoughts on the Girl Power Programme (GPP)
2) to understand different perspectives on Gender by
   - Community Members in Kwamoso, Nsuaem and Kintoboam
   - Plan International Ghana
   - Plan International Netherlands (Funding body of GPP)

The Research Findings will contribute to designing, implementing and evaluating Gender Projects that are meaningful and beneficial to everyone.

Gender

In order to ensure the contribution of the Research, it is important that the different perspectives - community members, implementing NGO, funding body / donor - share their understanding of gender.
It is the community members that know most about the issues in their communities - including gender issues.

The Gender Research Work includes

- Thinking about different understandings of Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Girls' Rights. They are often objectives of development projects focussing on gender.
- Thinking about Gender Roles - tasks and responsibilities/duties and entitlements of women, men, girls and boys.
- Thinking about Gender Relations - interactions between a man and a woman i.e. a married couple.
  Other gender relations include a maternal uncle - niece, a grandma then - a grandchild, female siblings, male siblings, female friends, male friends, etc.

Gender includes both women and men, also girls and boys.
In this Gender Research, it is important to involve everyone, women & men, and to hear their opinions and experiences.

Gender is one aspect of identity - there are many other aspects as well: age, education, religion, ethnic belonging, etc.
In this Gender Research, we want to think about gender in connection with other aspects of identity.

In this Gender Research, we want to learn and exchange ideas. It is not about judging each other but to share experiences and ideas on gender and The Girl Power Programme (GPP).

Me daase!

Fanny Froehlich
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London WC1H 0PJ
United Kingdom

GENDER RESEARCH - ITINERARY

Duration : 10 weeks, Monday August 21st 2017
to Sunday October 29th 2017

Research Communities: Kwamoso, Nsuaem, Kindaboam

Researcher, Principal Investigator: Fanny Froehlich, PhD Student, UCL

Research Assistants: Alice Aggeiwoo and Patricia Adjei

KWAMOSO - Aug 21 - Sept 17, Oct 16 - Oct 29

Week 1 Aug 21-27

Arrival in Communities; Meeting with Chief and Elders
Introduction to PRan / CRREECENT members
Meeting Youth Group
Women's Group
Other Groups
Participant Observation

Aug 23:
Kofloridua
DOVVSU
Community Durbar

Week 2 Aug 28 - Sept 3
Mon 4pm - V&A
Visit to Farmlands

Visit to school class

Group Discussions with Youth Group
(approx. 2 hours) Women's Group
Other Groups
Interviews with PRan / CRREECENT members
Interviews with Community Members
Participant Observation

Week 3	Sept 4 - Sept 9 Visiting HHs at Home	Workshops with Youth Group (approx 2 hours) Women's Group other Groups Interviews with Plan/CRRECENT members Interviews with Community Members Participant Observation
Week 4	Sept 11 - Sept 17 Visit to Community Council Meeting (if possible)	(If needed arrange Workshops with Youth Groups, Women's Group, other groups) Interviews with Community Members Participant Observation
Week 5	Sept 18 - Sept 24 Fri, Sept 22 - Focus Group Discussion in NSUTAM	Preparing Research Activities in NSUTAM Conducting Research in NSUTAM
Week 6	Sept 25 - Oct 1 Fri, Sept 29 Workshop in NSUTAM	Going to NSUTAM in the morning, Returning in the evening (Mo - Fr)
Week 7	Oct 2 - Oct 8 Fri, Oct 6 Focus Group Discussion in MINTAKROM	Preparing Research Activities in MINTAKROM Conducting Research in MINTAKROM
Week 8	Oct 9 - Oct 15 Fri, Oct 13 Workshop in MINTAKROM	Going to MINTAKROM in the morning, Returning in the evening (Mo - Fr)
Week 9	Oct 16 - Oct 22	In-depth Interviews in KWAMOSO with Plan/CRRECENT members with Community Members
Week 10	Oct 23 - Oct 29	

Appendix G. Research Participants

1.House-to-house Interviews with Community Members conducted during Fieldwork Stay in Eastern Region of Ghana (Aug 21, 2017 – Oct 29, 2017)

Location	List of Participants (between 18 years and 60+)		
	Women	Men	TOTAL
Kwamoso House-to-House Interviews (KWHtH)	86	46	132
Nsutam House-to-House Interviews (NSUHtH)	35	14	49
Mintakrom House-to-House Interviews (MINTAHtH)	29	15	44
TOTAL	150	75	225

2.Interviews with Development Practitioners conducted mainly during Fieldwork Stay in Ghana (May 20, 2017 – Nov 27, 2017)

Name	Date and Location	Audio/Written Notes	Reference
Shirley Dancquah, Gender Advisor, Country Office, *Plan International Ghana*	Aug 18, 2017 Country Office *Plan International Ghana*, Accra	Audio Recording	DP Interview SD CO Plan Gh [not with DP Questionnaire thus designated Interview 8]
Kofi Debrah, Head of Eastern Programme Unit *Plan International Ghana*	Sept 18, 2017 Kwamoso	Audio Recording	DP Interview KD A EPU Plan Gh
Anonymous		Written Notes	DP Interview 2A
Kofi Debrah, Head of EPU Plan Ghana	Oct 6, 2017 EPU *Plan International Ghana* Office	Audio Recording	DP Interview B KD EPU Plan Gh
Anonymous			DP Interview 2 B
Ahensah Asum Kwarteng, Program Support Manager, Country Office *Plan International Ghana*	Nov 2, 2017 Country Office *Plan International Ghana*, Accra	Audio Recording	DP Interview AAK CO Plan Gh
Anonymous		Written Notes	DP Interview 4
Susan Sabaa, Executive Director *Child Research and Resource Centre*	Nov 9, 2017; 2pm CRRECENT Office, Accra	Audio Recording	DP Interview SS CRRECENT
Margaret Brew-Ward, Programme Manager of the Girl Power Programme, (formerly) Country Office *Plan International Ghana*	Nov 22, 2017, ca. 7pm Skype Interview	Written Notes	DP Interview MBW CO Plan Gh

Interviews Conducted after Fieldwork Stay			
Interview Jet Bastiani, Senior Health and Gender Advisor at *Plan International Netherlands*	Aug 29, 2018 Skype Interview	Audio Recording	DP Interview JB Plan Nl

3.Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) during Fieldwork Stay in Eastern Region of Ghana (Aug 21, 2017 – Oct 29, 2017) and during Data Validation Phase (November 2018)

Type of Group Discussion, Date, Location	List of Participants		
	Women	Men	Total
Kwamoso			
Focus Group Discussion Youth Group 'Gospel Fun Club', 10/9/2017, School Building	5 (between 15 and 22 years)	26 (between 17 and 30 years)	31
Focus Group Discussion *susu* Group, 11/9/2017, Communal Meeting Grounds	6 (between 18 and 54 years)	6 (between 24 and 55 years)	12
Focus Group Discussion Women's Group of the Presbyterian Church, 13/9/2017, Church Building	19 (between 47 and 81 years)		19
Focus Group Discussion Research Interviewee Group, 15/9/2017, Church Building	6 (between 37 and 47 years)	10 (between 20 and 55 years)	18
Focus Group Discussion Chief and Elders, 20/9/2017, Chief's Palace		6 (information not available)	
	36	48	80
Nsutam			
Focus Group Discussion Nsutam, 22/9/2017, Church Building	17 (female subgroup, then mixed between 25 and over 80 years)	17 (male subgroup, then mixed between 26 and 67 years)	34
Focus Group Discussion Chief and Elders, 28/9/2017, Chief's Palace	1 (31)	9 (between 50 and 81)	10
Workshop Nsutam 28/9/2017, Church Building			Approx. 30 (no list of participants available)
			Approx. 74
Mintakrom			
Focus Group Discussion Mintakrom, 6/10/2017, School Building	18 (female subgroup, then mixed between 27 and 77 years)	15 (male subgroup, then mixed between 21 and 60 years)	33
Workshop Mintakrom, 13/10/2017, School Building	4 (between 30 and 40 years)	11 (between 22 and 60 years)	15
Focus Group Discussion Chief and Elders, 13/10/2017, Chief's Palace	1 (65 years)	5 (between 42 and 83 years)	6
	23	31	54
Data Validation Phase			
Focus Group Discussion Data Validation Kwamoso, Nov 2018, Communal Meeting Grounds			Approx. 20 (attendance not taken)

Focus Group Discussion Data Validation Nsutam, Nov 2018, Communal Meeting Grounds			Approx. 20 (attendance not taken)
Focus Group Discussion Data Validation Mintakrom, Nov 2018, Communal Meeting Grounds			Approx. 20 (attendance not taken)
			Approx. 268 participants

Note on Multiple Attendance
In Kwamoso, one female participant took part in three different FGDs (susu group, Women's Group, Research Interviewees). In Mintakrom, one male participant took part in three different FGDs (FGD Minta, WS Minta, FGD Chief and Elders).

In Kwamoso, two male and one female participant took part in two FGDs (Youth Group and susu Group). In Nsutam, one male participant took part in two FGDs (FGD Nsu, FGD Chief and Elders NSU). In Mintakrom, one male participant took part in two FGDs (FGD Minta, FGD Chief and Elders MINTA). In Mintakrom, six male participants took part in two FGDs (FGS Minta, WS Minta).

In Kwamoso, participants of the FGD Research Interviewees were also interviewed as part of house-to-house interviews. In Kwamoso, two female participants took part in an FGD and were interviewed as part of house-to-house interviews (one female took part in the FGD susu Group and one in the FGD Women's Group); one male participant took part in an FGD and was interviewed as part of house-to-house interviews (FGD Chief and Elders).

Appendix H. House-to-House Interview Guide (Kwamoso)

(4 pages)

Interview Protocol: Gender Research - Community Members

Introduction, Information and Consent

Good morning/afternoon!

My name is Alice/Patricia and we are conducting a Gender Research on the Girl Power Programme here in Kwamoso. We would like to invite you as a community member of Kwamoso to participate in this research project for an interview.

This research project wants to investigate how women and men in some local communities in Ghana understand gender roles and relations and whether they see any impact or change on these after a development project was conducted, such as the Girl Power Programme here in Kwamoso. Your participation would greatly help to achieve this.

The research findings will be shared with all of the participants of this research project. The findings want to contribute to ensuring that gender projects are meaningful and beneficial for all stakeholders of a development project, especially the community members. The main researcher (Fanny Ekua) will use the research findings to write a PhD dissertation and parts of it will be published in academic journals.

It is your choice to decide whether to take part in this research or not. Choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. If you decide to participate in the research, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

Your personal information will remain anonymous within any of the publications of the research. We will not use any information that could personally identify you unless you explicitly agree for personal details to be used (i.e. your name).

Is it ok for you to participate in the interview?

☐ Yes ☐ No

It is important for the research that we keep a record of your answers. We can either record your answers or take notes on a sheet of paper. Which of the 2 options would you prefer?

☐ Recording ☐ Taking notes

Is it ok for you if we start with the interview now?

☐ Yes ☐ No

The interview will take between 30 minutes and one hour. Depending on your time availability, we are happy to have a short interview now and come back for more questions later. We can stop the interview at any time.

General Information

The respondent is

☐ Female ☐ Male

How old are you?

☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 55 and above

What is your profession/work?

_____

What is your level of schooling? _____

Segment One: Opening Narrative

Context

1. How would you describe your community?
2. What is life like in your community for you?

Segment Two: Understandings and Evaluations of Gender Roles and Gender Relations

Tasks and Responsibilities

3. What are your daily tasks? *[Maybe probe: your daily tasks including paid work and non-paid work]*
4. What are you responsible for in the household?
5. What are you responsible for in the community?

Looking into "Local models of gender"

Gender Roles

6. What do you like about being a woman/man?
7. What do you **not** like about being a woman/man?
8. What makes a 'good' woman?
9. What makes a 'good' man'?

10. What is a respectable behaviour and attitudes for a **woman**?

11. What is a respectable behaviour and attitudes for a **man**?

12. What kind of behaviour is considered **not** respectable for a **woman** in your community?

13. What kind of behaviour is considered **not** respectable for a **man** in your community?

Gender Relations

14. How do **women and men** interact with each other in your community? In your opinion, what are the areas of harmony and of common interests? What are the areas of tension and problems?
[*Maybe probe, can you think of other women-men relationships such as mother-son, father-daughter, maternal uncle-niece, grandfather-granddaughter, grandmother-grandson, siblings, cousins, etc*.]

Let's look at some other gender relations:

15. How do **women and women** interact with each other in your community?In your opinion, what are the areas of harmony and of common interests? What are the areas of tension and problems?
[*Maybe give examples i.e. mother-daughter, paternal aunt-niece, siblings, cousins, friends, etc.*]

16. How do **men and men** interact with each other? In your opinion, what are the areas of harmony and of common interests? What are the areas of tension and problems?
[*Maybe give examples i.e. father–son, maternal unlce–nephew, siblings, cousins, friends, etc.*]

Segment Three: The Girl Power Programme

Girl Power Programme –General assessment

17. What was your experience of the GPP?

18. What worked well in your opinion?

19. What could be improved in your opinion?/ What did not work so well in the GPP?

20. Do you think a **change** came about in your community because of the Girl Power Programme? If so, what kind of change do you think came about?

Girl Power Programme – Specific issues

21. The Girl Power Programme focussed on four areas of intervention:

a) Girl Child Education
b) Violence against Women and Girls
c) Participation of women in decision-making processes
d) Socio-economic empowerment such as *susu* groups

21.1. Please pick one area that you think was the most important issue at the time when the GPP started (2011)
21.2. Please pick one area that you think is the most important issue now (September 2017)

22. **Choosing1 area/problem** you picked in the last question – **either** the most important issue at the start of the GPP or the most important issue right now - what are some of the things thatneeded/need dealing with in your opinion?
[*Please record what issue was chosen – start of GPP or now*]

23. How could the area/problem be improved in the future? What are ways of getting there/achieving this in the future?

Segment Four: End of Interview

24. Do you have any other comments / thoughts / reflection you would like to add?

25. Is it ok for you that we use your name in the publications or would you prefer to stay anonymous?

☐ It is ok to use my name ☐ I would prefer to stay anonymous

26. Would you like to take part in a group discussion about gender and The Girl Power Programme? It is no problem if you don't want to do that.

☐ Yes, I would like to take part ☐ No, I don't want to take part

If the person answered YES, please ask the following question:

27. Please, is it OK that we contact you with more information about the group discussion i.e. time and location? Please be aware that we might not be able to invite everyone to the group discussion, who is interested in it.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Me daase!

Appendix I. Interview Guide Development Practitioners, Plan International Ghana
(6 pages)

Interview Protocol: Gender Research – Development Practitioners

Introduction and Information

Good morning/afternoon!
My name is Fanny Froehlich and I together with two Ghanaian Research Assistants conduct a Gender Research on the Girl Power Programme (GPP) implemented by *Plan International Ghana* in the Eastern Region and Upper West Region (from 2011 to 2015). The research focuses on project communities in the Akuepim North District specifically Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom.

I would like to invite you as a development practitioner to participate in this research project.

This research project wants to investigate how women and men in some local communities in Ghana understand gender roles and relations and whether they see any impact or change on these after a development project was conducted, such as the Girl Power Programme implemented by *Plan International Ghana*. Your participation would greatly help to achieve this.

Your participation would involve taking part in a semi-structured interview, which would last for about an hour at a location of your choice i.e. your work office.

The research findings will be shared with all of the participants of this research project. The findings want to contribute to ensuring that gender projects are meaningful and beneficial for all stakeholders of a development project, especially the community members. I will use the research findings to write a PhD dissertation and parts of it will be published in academic journals.

It is your choice to decide whether to take part in this research or not. Choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. If you decide to participate in the research, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

Your personal information will remain anonymous within any of the publications of the research. We will not use any information that could personally identify you unless you explicitly agree for personal details to be used (i.e. your name).

In case it is ok for you to participate in the research interview, please sign the Consent Form.

Me daase!

General Information

Name: _____

Organisation: _____

Job Title: _____

The respondent is

☐ Female ☐ Male

How old are you? _____

What is your level of schooling? _____

Segment One: Opening Narrative

Context

1. How would you describe a **project community** within Akuepim North that took part in the GPP, for example Kwamoso, Nsutam or Mintakrom?

2. According to your observations and experiences, what is **life** like in this community **for the community members** for example in Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom?

Segment Two: The Girl Power Programme

Girl Power Programme –General assessment

3. What was your **experience of the GPP**?

Co-Analysis: based on Interview and FGD responses conducted in Kwamoso

3.1. One respondent said, "**Why preach all of these things, when we need money to survive?**" Do you think gender projects like the GPP can help community members to achieve a better life? Do you see a link between strengthening everybody's rights – women and men, girls and boys – and having a better life? [*Potential probe: rights like the right to education, right to be free from violence*]

3.2. In our interviews we learnt that some people were **not aware of the GPP** at all – what do you think can be done to improve the visibility of such projects so that all who would like to participate can participate?

3.3. Some respondents questioned the need for the work of local organisations like

CRRECENT and suggested that **instead of giving money to organisations like CRRECENT, it should go directly to the community**. How would you respond to this statement?

3.4. Regarding the on-going work of *Plan International Ghana* in the community, some respondents when asked of their experiences of the GPP mentioned that *Plan International Ghana* has **supported their children through sponsorship** and they were very happy with the outcomes i.e. that they could send their child to school. However, some other respondents mentioned that "Plan Ghana comes and snatches pictures of their children and then we never hear from them again." For some families, there is no immediate benefit like provision of scholarships for their children even though their children's pictures are taken.

- How would you respond to these statements?
- How is the money acquired through sponsorships allocated to different communities? What is the sponsorship money used for? Do sponsored children benefit directly from the sponsorship money?
- Is *Plan International Ghana* working with community budgeting?

4. Regarding the GPP, what **worked well** in your opinion?

5. Regarding the GPP, what **could be improved** in your opinion?

Co-Analysis:
Statements: The overwhelming answer here was that the Girl Child Education and reduction of teenage pregnancy worked well.

5.1. Some people also said in the interview that the GPP worked well because it led to a **reduction in Violence Against Women and Girls**. The increased capacity of **DOVVSU** has been mentioned as helpful in a variety of cases of domestic violence shared with us. However, some respondents criticised that now community members are sent to DOVVSU "too early" instead of family members sitting down and trying to resolve the issue amongst them. How would you respond to this?

5.2. Many respondents mentioned in a positive way that the awareness of community members has increased in regard to children's rights and responsibilities and in regard to parents' responsibilities for their children i.e. providing for their education. However, some respondents shared with us that they observed a **link between strengthening children's rights and children disrespecting their parents** when it comes to adolescent youth (14 years upwards). Children are staying out late and do not fear their parents anymore as they cannot discipline them as they used to i.e. beatings. How would you respond to that?

6. Do you think a **change** came about in project communities in Akuepim North such as Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom because of the GPP? If so, what kind of change do you think came about?

Co-Analysis
Statements: All children go to school now. The behaviour of girls also changed – they don't go astray from their houses anymore and do not sleep at their boyfriend's places. Children now respect their parents; parents now provide for the educational needs of their children. A respondent shared that due to sex education the girls received they now know how to communicate with the boys.

6.1.1. Regarding the change that GPP brought about in the community, many respondents also mentioned positively that a **new school building** is being built and the building of the **clinic.** We wanted to ask

- Why was the school building not finished? When will the construction of the building be resumed and when is the estimated time of completion?

- Is building the clinic part of the GPP? Were some GPP funds used for the building of the clinic? Are some other funds used for the building of the clinic? When is the estimated time of completion?

Girl Power Programme – Specific issues

7. The Girl Power Programme focussed on four areas of intervention:
   e) Girl Child Education
   f) Violence against Women and Girls
   g) Participation of women in decision-making processes
   h) Socio-economic empowerment such as *susu* groups

7.1. Please pick one area that you think was the **most important issue** at the time when the GPP started (**2011**) in project communities in Akuepim North such as Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom.

7.2. Please pick one area that you think is the **most important issue now** (September 2017) in project communities in Akuepim North such as Kwamoso, Nsutam and Mintakrom.

8. **Choosing1 area/problem** you picked in the last question – **either** the most important issue at the start of the GPP or the most important issue right now - what are some of the things that needed/need dealing with in your opinion?
   [*Please record what issue was chosen – start of GPP or now*]

9. How could the area/problem be improved in the future? What are ways of getting there/achieving this in the future?

Segment Three: Understandings and Evaluations of Gender Roles and Gender Relations

Looking into "Local models of gender"

Gender Roles

10. What is a respectable behaviour and attitudes for a **woman**?

11. What is a respectable behaviour and attitudes for a **man**?

12. What kind of behaviour is considered **not** respectable for a **woman** in your community i.e. the places where you work and live?

13. What kind of behaviour is considered **not** respectable for a **man** in your community i.e. the places where you work and live?

14. Is there any kind of **sanctions** in your community or your workplace when someone behaves in a not respectable way? What are they?

Gender Relations

15. How do **women and men** interact with each other in the places you work and live? In your opinion, what are the **areas of harmony** and of common interests? What are the **areas of tension** and problems?
[*Maybe probe, can you think of other women-men relationships such as mother-son, father-daughter, maternal uncle-niece, grandfather-granddaughter, grandmother-grandson, siblings, cousins, etc*.]

16. How do **women and women** interact with each other in the places you work and live? In your opinion, what are the **areas of harmony** and of common interests? What are the **areas of tension** and problems?
[*Maybe give examples i.e. mother-daughter, paternal aunt-niece, siblings, cousins, friends, etc.*]

17. How do **men and men** interact with each other in the places you work and live? In your opinion, what are the **areas of harmony** and of common interests? What are the **areas of tension** and problems?
[*Maybe give examples i.e. father–son, maternal uncle–nephew, siblings, cousins, friends, etc.*]

Tasks and Responsibilities

18. What are your daily tasks? *[Maybe probe: your daily tasks including paid work and non-paid work]*

19. What are you responsible for in the household?

20. What are you responsible for in your community i.e. where you reside?

Segment Four: Relevant concepts and terms

21. In your opinion and based on your experiences as a development practitioner, **what do the following terms mean** to you:

21.1. Gender Equality
21.2. Women's Empowerment
21.3. Girls' Rights
21.4. Harmony between women and men

Segment Five: Local and international NGO work in Ghana

22. Can you give an example of a local NGO in Ghana and an international NGO operating in Ghana?

23. In your opinion, are there commonalities and differences in the way local NGOs and international NGOs operate in Ghana? What are the commonalities and differences?

24. Would you describe the PU Eastern Region of *Plan International Ghana* as a local NGO? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Segment Six: End of Interview

25. Do you have any other comments / thoughts / reflection you would like to add?

26. Is it ok for you that we use your name in the publications or would you prefer to stay anonymous?

☐ It is ok to use my name ☐ I would prefer to stay anonymous

Me daase!

Appendix J. Informed Consent Form Development Practitioners

(1 page)

Informed Consent Form – Development Practitioners

Title of Project: Transnational and Local Concepts of Gender and Social Transformation in International Development Work. Understanding Normative Frameworks through Foregrounding Life Realities in Ghana.

This project aims at understanding how women and men in selected local communities in Ghana, as well as development practitioners, conceptualise gender roles and relations and how they might link these conceptualisations to a specific development project. A particular interest of this research lies in understanding ideas of social transformation linked to conceptualisations of gender. Your participation would greatly help and would involve a semi-structured interview, which would last for about an hour at a location of your choice i.e. your work office.

Thank you for agreeing to participate. If you feel uncomfortable or want to stop participating for any reason, you can terminate your research involvement at any time and do not need to provide any reasoning for your choice to stop.

Participant's Statement

- I have read the notes written above and understand what the study involves.
- I understand that if I decide at any time that I no longer wish to take part in this project, I can notify the researcher involved and withdraw immediately.
- I consent to the processing of the recording for the purposes of this research project.
- I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the provisions of the UK Data Protection Act 1998.

I agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in this project

Signed: Date:

Appendix K. Focus Group Discussion Guide

(9 pages)

Note: The FGD guide presented here was mainly used in Kwamoso; FGD guides used as part of selected group discussions in Kwamoso may differ slightly. FGD Guides for Nsutam and Mintakrom were slightly amended and include few additional questions (all FGD Guides can be accessed through the researcher).

Focus Group Discussion Gender Research: Questionnaire

General Information

Total Number of Participants: _____

☐ Number of Females ☐ Number of Males

[Table of Participants collecting information on gender, age, profession and level of schooling]

Introduction, Information and Consent

Good morning/afternoon!
Our names are Fanny, Alice and Patricia and we are conducting a Gender Research on the Girl Power Programme here in Kwamoso. We are grateful that you decided to be here for this group discussion and workshop, and we are looking forward to learning from you.

This research project wants to investigate how women and men in some local communities in Ghana understand gender roles and relations and whether they see any impact or change on these after a development project was conducted, such as the Girl Power Programme here in Kwamoso. Your participation would greatly help to achieve this.

The research findings will be shared with all of the participants of this research project. The findings want to contribute to ensuring that gender projects are meaningful and beneficial for all stakeholders of a development project, especially the community members. The main researcher (Fanny Ekua) will use the research findings to write a PhD dissertation and parts of it will be published in academic journals.

It is your choice to decide whether to take part in this research or not. Choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. If you decide to participate in the research, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

Your personal information will remain anonymous within any of the publications of the research. We will not use any information that could personally identify you unless you explicitly agree for personal details to be used (i.e. your name).

Is it ok for you to participate in the Focus Group Discussion?

☐ Yes ☐ No

It is important for the research that we keep a record of your answers. We can either record your answers or take notes on a sheet of paper. Ideally, we can do both. Would it be OK for you if we both record your answers and take notes?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If the answer is No: Which of the two options would be prefer?

☐ Recording ☐ Taking notes

Is it ok for you if we start with the FGD now?

☐ Yes ☐ No

In this group discussion, we will work with some interview answers that community members gave to us on various topics; we want to try to understand some of these answers better together with you and conduct a Co-analysis.

Segment One: Opening Narrative Gender

1. What do you like about being a woman?
2. What do you **not** like about being a woman?

- Split into Two Groups: Group Alice, Group Pat

Segment Two: Understandings and Evaluations of Gender Roles and Gender Relations

Look into "local models of gender"
Gender Roles

3. **We asked**
   a) What do you **like about being a woman/a man**?
   b) What do you **not like about being a woman/man**?

Tendencies: The likes of women in general included the ability to cook and perform HH chores for the family (husband and children) and the ability to give birth. Some women talked about their likes for long dresses, breading their hair and taking care of their skin. Most men talked about the strength and courage they have to work efficiently as a man.
In the interview answers by community members, we could identify a tendency that some answers are linked to physical attributes of being a woman/a man and some answers are linked to social roles attached to being a woman/a man.

Some women for example liked that they can give birth, but they did not like that they are lacking a men's strength to weed a large field – that would be physical attributes.
Some men liked that they can care and provide for their family – that would be social roles attached to being a man.
Some men, when asked what they do not like about being a man said 'Nothing' – they liked being a man; only very few women answered in a similar way.

Specific Statements:
"I like being a woman because they are very hard-working; I don't like being a woman that we sometimes suffer because of hard work."

3.1. We learnt, that it is mostly women who **take care of the children** – it was only once that we saw a man carrying a child on his back. Why is it that most women are good at caring for a child at birth, but men can't do the same? [*Possible Probe: Women are very patient to take care of a child, but men don't have such patience to do that*]

3.2. In many interview answers, we heard that men like having the strength to earn money and care for the family; we also heard that women have the strength to **support their husband**. Do women frequently support their husband economically and financially at home?

3.3. We would like to ask you some questions about **decision-making at home**:
- Who makes the decisions at home, the husband or the wife or someone else?
- Are the decisions made unilaterally or in consultation with other HH members?
- Is the decision-making power related to who earns the most income for the family?

3.4. We learnt that a good woman is someone who advises her husband – in what cases does a woman **advise** her husband?

3.5. One respondent said, "I don't like being a woman, because some married men are seen as leaders and heads of the house and try to subjugate the woman." Do you agree with this statement? Why? Why not?

3.6. Do men and women equally provide **educational needs** for their children?

3.7. **Jobs**: Women are sometimes food vendors and hawkers (selling soap, dried fish, toiletries, small skilled shop keepers) – can a man do the same?

[3.7.][237] Some respondents talked about **"manly" tasks** like weeding the field for a long time, which is related to the strength men possess; a respondent mentioned that she likes being a woman because of the capacity to learn certain **vocations that only women can do** like being a seamstress.
- Do you agree with these statements?
- In your opinion, are there "manly tasks" and vocations only women can do? If so, what are they? In case you do not agree, why not?

[*Possible addition: one respondent mentioned, she doesn't like being a woman because only men can be electricians and climb a pole to fix the faults on the pole.]*

3.8. Many men in the interviews said that they **liked being a man** and answered that there is nothing they do not like about being a man. Why do you think it is mostly men that

[237] In the FGD with the Women's Group, this question functioned as Question 3.7.

gave this answer and only very few women? Is it harder to be a woman than a man in your community?

4. We asked

a) What makes a **'good' woman**?
b) What makes a **'good' man'**?

Tendencies: In the interviews, there was a tendency that a 'good' woman is someone who takes care of the house and of the children, someone who is respectful and humble and knows how to talk to people.
A 'good' man is hardworking and able to provide for his family.
For both women and men, it is considered important to be humble and respectful and to talk well to people.

4.1. Do you agree with the answers that were presented? Why? Why not?

4.2. Do you have something to add?

4.3. Do you think what makes a 'good' man and a 'good' woman differs for different life stages?

- When you are young – when you are old
- When you are healthy – when you are sick or when you are disabled
- When you are employed – unemployed

4.4. In the last years, have the expectations changed what makes a 'good' woman and a 'good' man?

4.5. If you think there was a change, because of what do you think this change came about?

5. Social Differences

5.1. What do you think are the **most important differences** between people in your community that **make life easier or harder**?

5.2. When it comes to providing for your own needs and the needs of your family, does it **matter most** if someone is a woman or a man? Or whether you are young or old? Or does it matter most whether you have a job or not? Or whether you have farmland or not? Or whether you have attained higher education or not? Or something else?

Gender Relations

- In our research, we are not only interested in different gender roles, but also in Gender Relations – the way women and men, women and women and men and men interact with each other in the community and in the family.

6. We asked in the interviews:
   a) How do **women and men** interact with each other in your community? In your opinion, what are the **areas of harmony** and of common interests? What are the **areas of tension** and problems? [*Maybe probe, can you think of other women-men relationships such as mother-son, father-daughter, maternal uncle-niece, grandfather-granddaughter, grandmother-grandson, siblings, cousins, etc.*]

Tendencies: In the community, generally the relation between women and men, between women and women and men and men is mostly considered peaceful.

However, there are areas of tensions.
For married couples, a problem is often the amount and distribution of chop money, which can lead to matrimonial fights and quarrels.
Specific Statements:
Woman: "I don't like being a woman because sometimes men take advantage of you."
Man: "I like the way I am because if you are born a woman, men abuse you a lot. I saw it on TV: a pregnant woman was carrying a baby and the man insulted her."

6.1. We learnt that husbands and wives sometimes fight in the community; these fights are sometimes related to abusive behaviour.

- What kind of abusive behaviour exists in the community?

- We learned that matrimonial fights are sometimes caused by abusive behaviour (such as using bad words constantly) and sometimes lead to physical abusive behaviour i.e. beating.
  - **How can husbands and wives understand each other better?**
  - What are **other forms of solving problems** rather than using bad words or beatings?
  - When a person in the community uses abusive behaviour towards their spouses or family members, how should the community deal with this? [*Possible probe: Should the person be sent to the authorities such as DOVVSU or should family members try to settle the case? When should someone be sent to DOVVSU?]*

6.2. We learnt that **groups** can help to bring about **harmony** in the community both between women and men, but also between women and women and men and men. In your opinion, what actions that are performed in groups bring about harmony?

7. We asked in the interviews

a) How do **women and women** interact with each other in your community? In your opinion, what are the **areas of harmony** and of common interests? What are the **areas of tension** and problems?
[*Maybe give examples i.e. mother-daughter, paternal aunt-niece, siblings, cousins, friends, etc.*]

Tendencies: The interaction between women and women in the community is mostly peaceful. Most mothers and daughters relate very well. When women in the community quarrel, a main issue seems to be (the real or perceived attempt) to snatch away husbands or boyfriends.

7.1. Why do women fight each other and not the men when their partners cheat on them?

7.2. We learnt that women sometimes engage in gossiping and backbiting. Is this something men are not engaged in? How can the gossiping and backbiting be reduced?

Segment Three: Personal Aspirations on Gender Roles and Gender Relations

Creative Exercise (22 minutes)

- Introduction of Exercise (2 minutes)

In the first part of this FGD, we talked a lot about different gender roles – in the interview, there was also a section on Gender Relations. We would like to invite you now to think about **your own personal aspirations for the future, or aspirations at a community level.**

- Either on <u>your roles as a woman or as a man</u> i.e. your educational aspirations, the job you would like to do in the future, the everyday tasks you want to perform in the future, the responsibilities you would like to have in the future, the benefits you would like to have in the future, etc.

- Or your future wishes and aspirations for any kind of <u>gender relations</u>
  - Between women and men such as husband and wife or father and daughter or mother and son or maternal uncle and niece, etc.
  - Between women and women such as mother and daughter, grandmother and granddaughter, female cousins, female friends, etc.
  - Between men and men such as father and son, grandfather and grandson, male siblings, male friends, etc.

We would like to invite you to express yourself in many ways; sometimes it is not so easy to express these complex wishes and aspirations, so **we would like to invite you to do something creative**

- We have a lot of material here i.e. **paper and coloured pens** and post-its: maybe you would like to share a **painting** that can both be real-life or symbolic that encompasses your future aspirations
- Maybe you want to share a **song** with us that we could record
- Maybe you want to share a **poem** with us that we could record
- Or you could think of a different creative way to express yourself.

You can decide whether you would like to do this **exercise on your own or in a group**.

- Doing Exercise (10 min)
- Participants present their paintings to each other (10 min)

Segment Four: The Girl Power Programme

- We would now like to discuss the Girl Power Programme with you.

The GPP was implemented in the Eastern Region by Plan Ghana and CRRECENT in 50 communities including Kwamoso from 2011 to 2015. The Girl Power Programme focussed on four areas of intervention:

i) Girl Child Education
j) Violence against Women and Girls
k) Participation of women in decision-making processes
l) Socio-economic empowerment such as *susu* groups

8. In the interviews, we asked
   a) What was your **experience of the GPP**?

Statements: Some people shared with us, that the GPP entailed groups walking around in the community to educate people on girl child education and teenage pregnancy. The groups also went to churches and educated in schools.
People now know that a man who engages in sex with a girl who goes to school can be sent to DOVVSU in Akropong; also, if you engage your child in child labour, you can be sent to DOVVSU (i.e. sending your child to work on the farm when it is supposed to be in school).

There have been cases in Kwamoso where men who abuse their wives or children are now sent to DOVVSU. There have also been a few cases where women were advised to stop abusing their husbands, otherwise they would be sent to DOVVSU.

Specific Statement:

Statement 1: "People used to say a woman couldn't do anything. Now women go to school and even if they give birth, they can still go to school."

Statement 2: "We should take care of our girls so they can climb higher; we should not only support our boys to aim higher. We should provide for the needs of both girls and boys."

8.1. One respondent said, "Why preach all of these things, when **we need money to survive**?" Do you think gender projects like the GPP can help community members to achieve a better life?

[*Potential probe: Do you see a link between strengthening everybody's rights – women and men, girls and boys – and having a better life? Rights like the right to education, right to be free from violence*]

8.2. Some people were **not aware of the GPP** at all – what do you think can be done to improve the visibility of such a project so that all who would like to participate can participate?

8.3. We learnt that the GPP educated children on their rights; we also learnt in one group discussion that there seems to be a **link between strengthening children's rights and children respecting their parents**. With adolescent youth (14 years upwards), awareness of their rights can lead to disrespecting their parents. Do you agree with this? Why? Why not? Can you give an example?

9. We asked

a) What **worked well** in your opinion?

Statements: The overwhelming answer here was that the Girl Child Education and reduction of teenage pregnancy worked well.

9.1. Some people also said in the interview that the GPP worked well because it led to a reduction in **Violence Against Women and Girls** – how do you see the situation in your community? Is VAWG present? What is done about it? What more can be done about it in the future?

10. We asked

a) **What could be improved** in your opinion?/ What did not work so well in the GPP?

10.1. A respondent said, "Why doesn't the money go directly to parents?" Some respondents in the interviews suggested that rather than having in-kind scholarships as part of the GPP that give pens and books to students especially girls, money should go directly to the parents – what is your opinion on this? Do you think it is better to provide **needed material or money** directly to the parents? In your opinion, what are advantages but also potential risks with that approach (provision of cash)?

10.2. One respondent mentioned that parents don't beat their wards anymore because of Plan Ghana; in this respondent's opinion, the **lack of beating** has a negative **impact on education** as the students don't study hard and many are not passing their B.E.C.E. What is your opinion on this topic? What could be other ways of motivating students instead of beatings?

11. We asked

a) Do you think a **change** came about in your community because of the Girl Power Programme? If so, what kind of change do you think came about?

Statements: All children go to school now. The behaviour of girls also changed – they don't go astray from their houses anymore and sleep at their boyfriend's places. Children now respect their parents. Parents now provide for the educational needs of their children. A respondent shared that due to sex education the girls received, they now know how to communicate with the boys.
Specific statement: "Yes, there was a change. Now the girls have the belief that they can match up with the boys in education."

11.1. Do you agree with these statements? If so why? If not, why not?

Segment Five: Co-Creating a Problem-Solution Tree (30 minutes)

During house-to-house interviews, we asked 'Please pick one area that you think was the **most important issue at the time when the GPP started (2011)'**
Statements: The overwhelming answer to this question was Girl Child Education.

We also asked 'Please pick one area that you think is the **most important issue now (September 2017)'-**
Statements: People gave different answers to this question.

- Most people said the most important issue right now is that there are **no jobs** and no employment opportunities especially for the youth. There are insufficient jobs as there is only farming.

- Many people said there are **no vocations** and there is a need to have training in different vocations.
  [*Possible Probe: a woman shared that vocations such as carpentry, hairdressing and tailoring could be taught. "A little education, a little vocation makes a full human being.]*

- Many people mentioned that there is a need for a **Market Square** in the community – this would benefit the women in the community. One respondent said, "Every woman can survive with a market place". One person mentioned it would also benefit the youth.

- Another issue raised was the need to **improve leadership** in this community.

- The **SHS building** should be completed.

- There should be **public toilets**.

- There is a **lack of waste bins** and there should be a better system to dispose of your waste and refuse.

- The **interest rates for loans are too high** and should be reduced.

- There is a **need for potable water**, as some of the water from the boreholes is not purified.

Creating a Problem-Solution Tree

TREE A (10 min)

Step 1. Pick 1 area/problem from the 4 GPP areas of intervention.
Girl Child Education
Violence against Women and Girls
Participation of women in decision-making processes
Socio-economic empowerment such as *susu* groups

Step 2. What are some of the things that needed/need dealing with in your opinion? What are the problems/issues?

Step 3. How could the area/problem be improved in the future? What are ways of getting there/achieving this in the future?

TREE B (10 min)

Step 1. Pick any area/problem that you consider the most important issue now.

Step 2. What are some of the things that needed/need dealing with in your opinion? What are the problems/issues?

Step 3. How could the area/problem be improved in the future? What are ways of getting there/achieving this in the future?

- Come together in big group
- 2 people from each group (Group Alice, Group Pat) explain the problem trees (10 min)

Regarding all of the issues we discussed today, do you have any other **comments/ thoughts / feedback** you would like to share?

Me daase!

Additional Note on FGD Interview Guides (October 2020): Due to time limitations, it was not possible to conduct both collaborative exercises (sharing aspirations drawing on creative means AND creating problem-solution trees) in all FGDs.

Appendix L. House-to-House Interview Guide (Nsutam and Mintakrom)

(4 pages)

Interview Protocol: Gender Research - Community Members

Introduction, Information and Consent

Good morning/afternoon!

My name is Alice/Patricia and we are conducting a Gender Research on the Girl Power Programme here in Nsutam. We would like to invite you as a community member of Nsutam participate in this research project for an interview.

This research project wants to investigate how women and men in some local communities in Ghana understand gender roles and relations and whether they see any impact or change on these after a development project was conducted, such as the Girl Power Programme here in Nsutam. Your participation would greatly help to achieve this.

The research findings will be shared with all of the participants of this research project. The findings want to contribute to ensuring that gender projects are meaningful and beneficial for all stakeholders of a development project, especially the community members. The main researcher (Fanny Ekua) will use the research findings to write a PhD dissertation and parts of it will be published in academic journals.

It is your choice to decide whether to take part in this research or not. Choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. If you decide to participate in the research, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

Your personal information will remain anonymous within any of the publications of the research. We will not use any information that could personally identify you unless you explicitly agree for personal details to be used (i.e. your name).

Is it ok for you to participate in the interview?

☐ Yes ☐ No

It is important for the research that we keep a record of your answers. We can either record your answers or take notes on a sheet of paper. Which of the 2 options would you prefer?

☐ Recording ☐ Taking notes

Is it ok for you if we start with the interview now?

☐ Yes ☐ No

The interview will take between 30 minutes and one hour. Depending on your time availability, we are happy to have a short interview now and come back for more questions later. We can stop the interview at any time.

General Information

The respondent is

☐ Female ☐ Male

How old are you?

☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 55 and above

What is your profession/work?

_____

What is your level of schooling? _____

Segment One: Opening Narrative

Context

1. How would you describe your community?

2. What is life like in your community for you?

Segment Two: Understandings and Evaluations of Gender Roles and Gender Relations

Tasks and Responsibilities

3. What are your daily tasks? *[Maybe probe: your daily tasks including paid work and non-paid work]*

4. What are you responsible for in the household?

5. What are you responsible for in the community?

6. Often, it is mostly women who perform **household chores** – from sweeping, fetching water, washing utensils, washing clothes, cooking and taking care of the children.
    - Why do you think it is mainly the women performing the household chores at home?
    - Do you think this could change in the future and more men can help with HH chores?

7. We would like to ask you some questions about **decision-making at home**:
    - Who makes the decisions at home, the husband or the wife or someone else?
    - Are the decisions made unilaterally or in consultation with other HH members?
    - Is the decision-making power related to who earns the most income for the family?

8. Do men and women equally **take care of their children**? What are the **mother's tasks** in raising the children? What are the **father's tasks** in raising the children?

Looking into "Local models of gender"

Gender Roles

9. What do you like about being a woman/man?

10. What do you **not** like about being a woman/man?

11. What makes a 'good' woman?

12. What makes a 'good' man'?

13. Do you think what makes a 'good' man and a 'good' woman differs for **different life stages/circumstances**?
    - When you are **young** – when you are **old**
    - When you are **healthy** – when you are **sick** or when you are **disabled**
    - When you are **employed – unemployed**

14. What is a respectable behaviour and attitudes for a **woman**?

15. What is a respectable behaviour and attitudes for a **man**?

16. What kind of behaviour is considered **not** respectable for a **woman** in your community?

17. What kind of behaviour is considered **not** respectable for a **man** in your community?

18. What happens when women or men **do not follow the respectable behaviour** for a woman or a man? What are the – social / legal – **consequences**? Can you give an example?

Gender Relations

19. How do **women and men** interact with each other in your community? In your opinion, what are the areas of harmony and of common interests? What are the areas of tension and problems? [*Maybe probe, can you think of other women-men relationships such as mother-son, father-daughter, maternal uncle-niece, grandfather-granddaughter, grandmother-grandson, siblings, cousins, etc*.]

20. How do **women and women** interact with each other in your community?In your opinion, what are the areas of harmony and of common interests? What are the areas of tension and problems?
    [*Maybe give examples i.e. mother-daughter, paternal aunt-niece, siblings, cousins, friends, etc.*]

21. How do **men and men** interact with each other? In your opinion, what are the areas of harmony and of common interests? What are the areas of tension and problems?
    [*Maybe give examples i.e. father–son, maternal unlce–nephew, siblings, cousins, friends, etc.*]

Segment Three: The Girl Power Programme

Girl Power Programme –General assessment

22. What was your experience of the GPP?

23. What worked well in your opinion?

24. What could be improved in your opinion?/ What did not work so well in the GPP?

25. Do you think a **change** came about in your community because of the Girl Power Programme? If so, what kind of change do you think came about?

Girl Power Programme – Specific issues

26. The Girl Power Programme focussed on four areas of intervention:
m) Girl Child Education
n) Violence against Women and Girls
o) Participation of women in decision-making processes
p) Socio-economic empowerment such as *susu* groups
    a. Please pick one area that you think was the most important issue at the time when the GPP started (2011)
    b. Please pick one area that you think is the most important issue now (September 2017)

27. **Choosing1 area/problem** you picked in the last question – **either** the most important issue at the start of the GPP or the most important issue right now - what are some of the things thatneeded/need dealing with in your opinion?
[*Please record what issue was chosen – start of GPP or now*]

28. How could the area/problem be improved in the future? What are ways of getting there/achieving this in the future?

Segment Four: End of Interview

29. Do you have any other comments / thoughts / reflection you would like to add?

30. Is it ok for you that we use your name in the publications or would you prefer to stay anonymous?

☐ It is ok to use my name ☐ I would prefer to stay anonymous

Me daase!

Appendix M. Further Research Activities

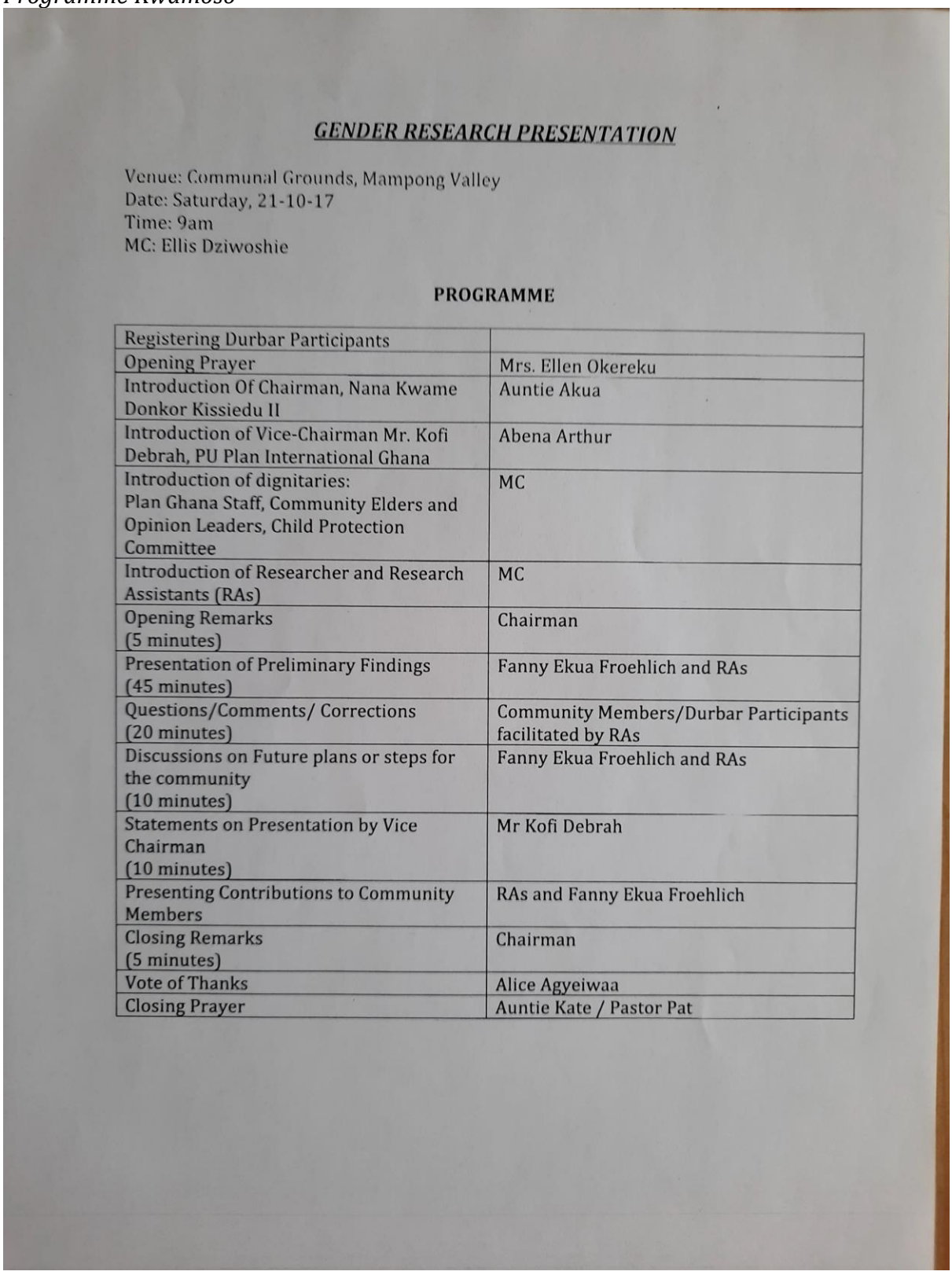
Type	Date and Location	Mode of Keeping Record	Content of Activity linked to Research Focus
Accra, May to August 2017			
Meeting with Dr. Akosua Keseboa Darkwah, Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology, University of Ghana	May 22, 2017	Written Notes	Discussing academic gender and development context in Ghana and doctoral fieldwork plans.
Internship at Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre (GSHRDC)	June 6, 2017 – July 14, 2017	Written Notes	Purpose of the internship at GSHRDC was to learn about its programmatic work, which included accessing its resource centre; allowed for gaining a deeper understanding of the gender and development context in Ghana in practice.
Meeting with Project Officers at GSHRDC during *internship* at GSHRDC	June 9, 2017 GSHRDC Office, Accra	Written Notes	Discussing programmatic work of GSHRDC
Meeting with Shirley Dancquah, (former) Gender Advisor, Country Office Plan International Ghana	June 15, 2017 Phone Call	Written Notes	Finalising fieldwork location in former GPP communities in the Eastern Region of Ghana; confirmed through e-mail exchange with the head of the EPU Plan International Ghana on June 16, 2017.
Meeting with Prof. Irene Odotei (formerly Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana)	June 22, 2017 House of Prof. Odotei outside of Greater Accra	Written Notes	Engaging with Prof. Odotei's work on the colonial context of Ghana; gained further understanding of traditional Ghanaian structures especially the institution of *Queen Mothers*
Meeting with Community Chiefs and Elders in Research Communities (facilitated through the head of the EPU *Plan International Ghana*)	July 10, 2017	Written Notes	Presenting research to community representatives; approval granted to conduct research in communities

Eastern Region of Ghana, August to October 2017			
Informal Meeting with head of EPU Plan International Ghana and *commencement of fieldwork stay* in research communities	August 21, 2017 Car Drive to Communities	Written Notes	Discussing programmatic and regional scope of the GPP
Meeting and *Interview* with Chief Constable Eunice Afelipok Atinya, Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU), Akropong, Eastern Region, Ghana	Aug 25, 2017 DOVVSU Akropong Office	Written Notes	Gaining understanding of DOVVSU's police work protecting especially girls and women while respecting traditional customs.
Meeting with head of EPU Plan International Ghana	Aug 28, 2017 EPU Plan International Ghana Office, Koforidua	Written Notes	Discussing GPP implementation and other areas of work for EPU Plan International Ghana
Participating and *Observing* Girls' Camp Opening Ceremony facilitated by CRRECENT (part of Girls Advocacy Alliance GAA, follow-up programme to GPP)	Aug 29, 2017 Akropong	Written Notes	Possibility to observe programme implementation with focus on engagement with adolescent girls; display of inter-institutional collaboration
Farm Visits in Kwamoso facilitated by the Child Protection Team Representative/ Secretary in Kwamoso	Sept 7, 2017 (5 male farmers) Sept 9, 2017 (2 female and 1 male farmer) Sept 16, 2017 (1 male farmer) Sept 30, 2017 (3 female and 2 male farmers)	Written Notes	Understanding of lived reality of farming as main income generating source in research communities; addressing gendered issues while foregrounding fairness and collaboration among women and men
School Visits in Kwamoso	Sept 14, 2017 (Kwamoso Presby JHS; Kwamoso Presby Kindergarden and Primary)	Written Notes	Engagement with educational context in Ghana in selected rural or peri-urban communities
Informal Meeting with head of EPU Plan International Ghana	Sept 18, 2017 Car Drive to EPU Plan International Ghana Project Communities in the Eastern Region	Written Notes	Possibility to observe EPU Plan International Ghana's development practice at community level; sharing research itinerary for Nsutam and Mintakrom with community representatives

Participating and *Observing* CRRECENT Workshop for Community Protection Teams (part of Girls Advocacy Alliance, follow-up programme to GPP)	Sept 27, 2017 Akropong	Written Notes	Understanding how CRRECENT is supporting collaboration among regional CPTs; aligning bylaws to state law; display of inter-institutional collaboration
Meeting and *Interview*, Madame Rosalyn, Ghana Education Service (Ghana Education Service)	Oct 9, 2017 Guesthouse Kwamoso	Written Notes	Discussing the role of the GES as part of GPP implementation.
Participating and *Observing* EPU Plan International Ghana *Event for the International Day of the Girl*	Oct 11, 2017 Municipal Assembly, Akropong	Written Notes	Implementation of GAA (follow-up programme to GPP); inter-institutional collaboration across different levels
Farm Visit in Kwamoso facilitated by the Child Protection Team Representative/ Secretary in Kwamoso	Oct 17, 2017	Written Notes	See above
Presentation of Preliminary Findings of Doctoral Research in Research Communities	Oct 21, 2017 (Kwamoso) Oct 27, 2017 (Mintakrom, Nsutam)	Written Notes	Ensuring preliminary findings dissemination at community-level in line with collaborative research approach
Accra, November 2017			
Interview with Evelyn Nuvor, GSHRDC	Nov 22, 2017 GSHRDC Office, Accra	Audio Recording	Gaining further understanding of Ghanaian GAD context
Interview with Rosemary, GSHRDC	Nov 22, 2017 GSHRDC Office, Accra	Written Notes	Gaining further understanding of Ghanaian GAD context

Appendix N. Programme for Gender Research Presentations Created by Community Representatives

Programme Kwamoso



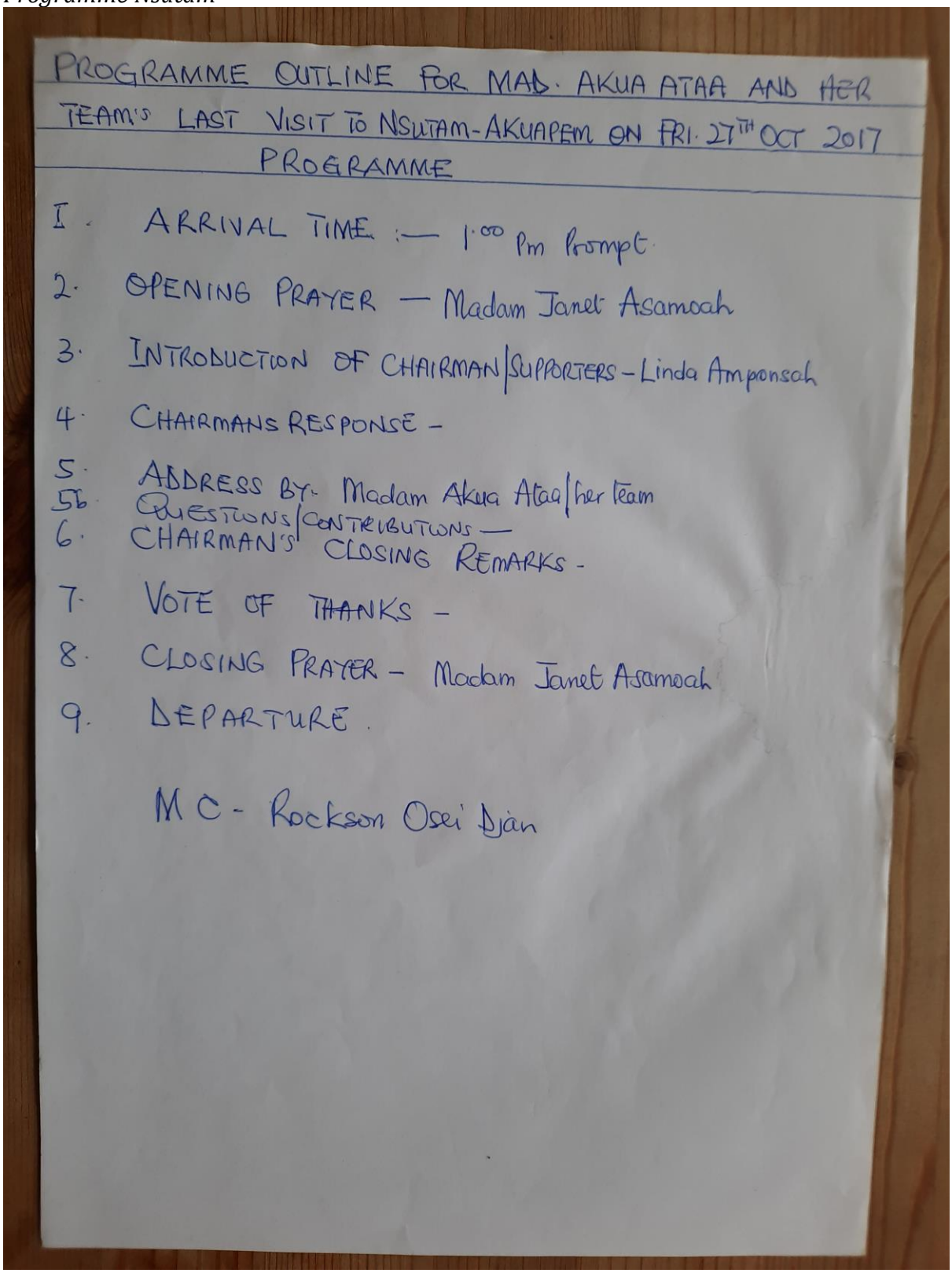
GENDER RESEARCH PRESENTATION

Venue: Communal Grounds, Mampong Valley
Date: Saturday, 21-10-17
Time: 9am
MC: Ellis Dziwoshie

PROGRAMME

Registering Durbar Participants	
Opening Prayer	Mrs. Ellen Okereku
Introduction Of Chairman, Nana Kwame Donkor Kissiedu II	Auntie Akua
Introduction of Vice-Chairman Mr. Kofi Debrah, PU Plan International Ghana	Abena Arthur
Introduction of dignitaries: Plan Ghana Staff, Community Elders and Opinion Leaders, Child Protection Committee	MC
Introduction of Researcher and Research Assistants (RAs)	MC
Opening Remarks (5 minutes)	Chairman
Presentation of Preliminary Findings (45 minutes)	Fanny Ekua Froehlich and RAs
Questions/Comments/ Corrections (20 minutes)	Community Members/Durbar Participants facilitated by RAs
Discussions on Future plans or steps for the community (10 minutes)	Fanny Ekua Froehlich and RAs
Statements on Presentation by Vice Chairman (10 minutes)	Mr Kofi Debrah
Presenting Contributions to Community Members	RAs and Fanny Ekua Froehlich
Closing Remarks (5 minutes)	Chairman
Vote of Thanks	Alice Agyeiwaa
Closing Prayer	Auntie Kate / Pastor Pat

Programme Nsutam



PROGRAMME OUTLINE FOR MAD. AKUA ATAA AND HER TEAM'S LAST VISIT TO NSUTAM-AKUAPEM ON FRI. 27TH OCT 2017

PROGRAMME

1. ARRIVAL TIME :— 1.00 Pm Prompt
2. OPENING PRAYER — Madam Janet Asamoah
3. INTRODUCTION OF CHAIRMAN/SUPPORTERS - Linda Amponsah
4. CHAIRMANS RESPONSE -
5. ADDRESS BY- Madam Akua Ataa/her team
5b. QUESTIONS/CONTRIBUTIONS —
6. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS -
7. VOTE OF THANKS -
8. CLOSING PRAYER - Madam Janet Asamoah
9. DEPARTURE.

MC - Rockson Osei Djan

Appendix O. Co-Creating Knowledge Through Collective Exercises

Transcript to the creation of the Problem-Solution Tree as part of the FGD with the Women's Group in Kwamoso

Research Assistant (RA): How do we build the Senior High School?

All: The government or NGOs should come and build it for us.

RA: After, what is the next step if any of the above bodies come to the community to build the SHS?

Respondent: They should go and see the chiefs or leaders of the community

Respondent: They will and go search for a land.

RA: After the land what is the next step?

Respondent: We need blocks, sand, cement and other construction materials and a mason.

RA: So where should the mason come form?

All: from the community.

RA: Should the mason be solely a man?

All: No, the women can fetch water, carry mortar or blocks then the men can mix mortar, build the foundation of the school.

RA: So now we have finished the building what is next?

Respondent: There should be a canteen for the students who will be borders, day and teachers.

RA: Should it be boarding or day school?

All: It should be a mix school.

Respondent: From the beginning of the school, it should be a day school and later turn to boarding for students who don't live in the community.

RA: What should be sold at the canteen?

All: Food, books and school bags.

Respondent: The matrons for the canteen should be from this community.

RA: What about the teachers, do you have any plans for them?

All: We will build bungalows for them.

RA: Should the teachers come from outside or within the community?

Respondent: Outside the community.

RA: What about your sons and daughters who have completed university?

Respondent: Ok with that one those who like to teach, we will send their names to the District Chief Executive so as my son or daughter has completed training college, he or she will be posted to teach here.

RA: How can outsiders know that there is an SHS in this community?

All: Through announcing it on the radio station

Respondent: Erecting a big signboard by the roadside.

RA: What next? Ok who is to manage the school?

Respondent: Since we are not educated currently in the community, the headmaster should be an outsider, educated and has strong connection or protocols so that he can easily support or aid for the school.

Problem-Solution-Tree created as part of the FGD with the Women's Group in Kwamoso