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**“THE ROLE OF NORTHERN
NGOs IN THE INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO”**

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To my father Fabio,
My mother Nicoletta,
My brother Gabriele,
My grandparents Matilde & Giulio,
My partner Giovanni,
All my dear friends,
the Professor Jennifer Fluri,
the Professor Austin Crane,
Ariane Geiger Hiriart,
Fabio Massimo Abenavoli, M.D. Ph. D.,
My Assistant Debora del Piano.

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INTRODUCTION

Without any doubt, we can affirm that we live in an interconnected world where countries, companies, organisations are all dependent from one another. In such a world where poverty and power relationships are entrenched in the very roots of this global society. Until now, many have been the attempts to solve for the disparities and the unbalanced contrasts between communities of the developed Global North and the dependent and impoverished Global South. However, concrete development in these societies is an ancient, repeated goal which have not reached its successful peak yet. Inefficiency of the main policies and projects carried out on the ground of these struggling sceneries by the main international organisations, has been widely discussed and criticized in the International Development scenario. Particularly, in this thesis, our argumentation will be destined to the role, attitude and fundamental ideas associated to some of the predominant characters of the international scene. Indeed, focus will be addressed to the analysis of the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) these bodies of civil society which are idealised as effective and cost-efficient ways to build connections and reply to the demands of the needy local recipients. All the *first chapter* of this dissemination will, hence, be dedicated to their thorough analysis with a specific concern towards the Northern NGOs, mostly the U.S- based ones, as this Nation is currently considered to be the world top Donor of International Aid for the humanitarian assistance. Their inner structure, their organisational architecture as well as the external and internal relationships with other bodies will be investigated. Additionally, the fields addressed by them and the major geographical areas of the world scene will be tackled through scholarly review papers and general literature review. Also, gender disparity and women inequality in this contemporary display will be given a special emphasis. This is a major issue and an impacting phenomenon nowadays which is necessary to evaluate and, eventually, to find the most appropriate tools for it. As a matter of fact, after all these years and after all these efforts, criticism is more than suitable in some cases. Thus, this discourse will be raised so as to understand the failures which paint some of the Aid delivery projects by Northern NGOs and the reasons of this recurrent global inefficiency. In fact, a literature review is not enough for our general comprehension of the efficiency of these organisations in the international scene. The methodological analysis in *the second chapter* will

testify our main hypothesis referring to the ineffectiveness of Northern associations because of their inappropriate models of Aid. The lack of inclusion of the social capital and the inadequacy of the knowledge management in their model of action, provoke the inability to respond to the real requests from the societies in need and just aliment the self-interests of foreign donors and business. After having understood the theoretical bases and the research methods used for the evaluation of our main hypothesis, an introduction of some specific case studies will be undertaken. In our *third chapter* indeed, concrete results and data from some regions of the world will be largely disclosed. Through our two diverse examples, we will be able to practically understand some significant non-profit organisations, their activities, their ideologies, their focuses and respectively their mutations in performances and identities hold in the Development arena - each time more *advocacy* oriented. For this very reason, we will analyse the case study of an influential NGO operating in the country of Sri Lanka, since the evidence will be provided on its recent shift of positional role, now aimed at diverting the political agenda there. Desire of a gender equality will be the soundtrack of their discourse while instead they carry out their own interests and receive benefit from these campaigns. Nonetheless, the main emphasis, the biggest amount of information that will be disclosed, and our main attention will be placed on the major and principal case study in this thesis. Here, we will particularly consider, during our empirical research, the debated country of Afghanistan. Attempts will be given to the process of scrutinizing the harrowing conditions which are endured by the Afghan population today, especially by the female slice of it after the Taliban return. This *Republic of NGOs* will be widely discussed throughout the last chapter of this elaborate. Additionally, a great contribution to these concepts will be given by the voices of many influential personalities of the Development scene. The words from these relevant individuals, who are directly associated with this tortuous environment, have resulted very beneficial for our discourse. In fact, some cited phrases from the oral interviews conducted with these distinguished people will give a concrete addition to the thesis. Academic concepts from renowned University Professors and personal experiences from active personalities directly intervening in these scenarios, will enrich the whole material exposed. A positive breath of hope and a desire for an actual change will mark the tone of our conclusion, with, possibly, future successes and improvement for the Development scenario.

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE NGOs

1.Introducing the NGOs

The first section of the first chapter will be destined to the introduction of the NGOs with definitions, connotations and historical references provided on the essential terms to acknowledge when referring to these actors of civil society. Particular perspective will be dedicated to the role of Northern NGOs, with specific emphasis assigned to the US.- based ones and the U.S.’ position.

1.1 The NGOs in Civil Society

When discussing about the nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) we might first need to account for a general definition about what we mean with this generally acknowledged abbreviation. In such wise, we could be able to dig into the meaning of this conjunction of letters which reunites together a full load of actions, policies, international relations and undiscovered stories behind.

Although there is not a unique and universally accepted annotation of an NGO, “*typically it is a voluntary group or institution with a social mission, which operates independently from the government*”¹. These organisations and similar ones can be found today in all the countries of this complex, globalised and interconnected world. The term was retrieved for the first time in 1945, year in which the United Nation released the Charter, specifically in the article 71 of this innovative document just published. The establishment of this new term is recent, and it aimed at the public differentiation between the governmental bodies and the private organisations. As even defined by the International Institution of Development, namely the World Bank: “*The NGOs are private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or to undertake the community Development.*”²

¹ Ngosource.org. (n.d.). Retrieved May 2023, from <https://www.ngosource.org/what-is-an-ngo>

² Devaney, C. (2022, September 20). *What is an NGO: Definition, role, duties, types I liberties.eu.* Liberties.eu. Retrieved May 2023, from <https://www.liberties.eu/en/stories/what-is-an-ngo/44392>

These organisations can either focus on one issue or address a large variety of topics. In fact, the advocacy character is an essential trait in their work since they do not only deliver Aid at the grassroots level, but they can also operate as giving expert support or being part of the advisory board for governments, international agencies and even the UN bodies. Nevertheless, what is considered to be an NGO in one specific country, may not be considered such in another state as well. The reason behind the distinction in the usage of this term, lays precisely in the variety of the legal definitions that we may entail. This accounts for the difference between the activities that are permitted in one territory whereas others are prohibited in another country. Likewise, it deals with the fact that in some areas there is the possibility to monitor the programs and to oversight the transparency of their policies; while there is not this chance in other different contexts. Therefore, this abbreviation can refer to a wide range of diverse organisations, each with their own distinctive background, their own cultural roots, their global purposes and their own precise idiosyncrasies.

Even though not every acronym found in the literature can be considered as a synonymous of the other, still an organization which is similar to an NGO may be defined by using a variety of different connotations. For instance, we may talk about *non-profit organization* (with the abbreviation of NPO), we may refer to a *civil society organization* (CSO) or to a *citizen sector organization* (CSO). Moreover, we may hear the term of *social benefit organization* (SBO), or of *advocacy organization*, if not of voluntary organization as a *grassroots organization* (GSO) or of *non-state actor* (NSA). Another additional archetype could be the model of *faith-based organisations* (FBOs). Thence, every presented organisation can operate at different geographies and scales: from the international level, to a regional, to a national, or local one. Included in this framework are to be found also the *foundations* and the *religious development organisations*, but alternatively we must exclude from this set of bodies all the universities, hospitals, churches, political parties, unions, and academic institutions. Generally speaking, we refer to a field that is seen as a *civil society - managed* district. In fact, sustaining this information we use another time a definition disclosed by the World Bank where “*Civil society refers to a wide array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations [NGOs], labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations,*

*and foundations”*³. The connotation of civil society started spreading in the 1980s when it achieved significance in discussions of political and economic character. Particularly, it appeared associated with the nonstate movements that were representing the ideologies of the Central and the Eastern Europe as well as the Latin American countries. Additionally, related usage is conferred to the term *Third Sector* since this field has the power to influence actions of policy makers and their respective private businesses. Noticeably, the nature of civil society and its main aim is a constantly evolving one. This is due to the transformative character of the technological developments nowadays and also to the various internal changes that happen within the societies.

1.2 Northern NGOs - the U.S.- based NGOs

Particularly, throughout this elaborate, reference will be given to the role of Northern NGOs with an overlook at the U.S- based ones. When assessing the U.S.-based NGOs, we might as well need a more precise definition of them. A common connotation is taken by the ‘USAID’ information profile about the *private voluntary organisations* (PVOs) which is eventually the mechanism guiding the processes and mechanisms required for the registration of the NGOs too. We attribute to this significant body a precise connotation in order to determine it: *“USAID is the world's premier International Development agency and a catalytic actor driving Development results. USAID's work advances U.S. national security and economic prosperity, demonstrates American generosity, and promotes a path to recipient self-reliance”*⁴. Then, US -based NGOs are entities which are independent politically from the U.S.’ government (and from any other possible government) and which are to be found in the U.S.’ territory through either the locations of their headquarters or else the position of their main offices. When analysing their role, NGOs are key partners for the U.S.’ programs in accounting for Development at an international scale. They have a main impact in the global efforts pursued by the U.S.A. - the *Land of Liberty*. This is considered today to be the main donor and top aid-provider for delivery of benefits to the Global South. Definitely a frontrunner for the Development scenario. Along these lines, the primacy of the United States of America, can be testified and backed by the data from last year about the largest donors

³ Jezard, A. (2018, April 23). *Who and what is 'civil society'?*. World Economic Forum. Retrieved May 2023, from <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/04/what-is-civil-society/>

⁴ U.S. Agency for International Development. (2023, February) from <https://www.usaid.gov/>

of humanitarian Aid worldwide in 2022 (in million US dollars) by country. Proof of this information is clearly evident in the *Statista’s* graph below ⁵, showing the U.S.’ world power and its top position in the field of ID. This is given by the 12,328.5 \$ of donations granted in a year. The leader country leaves a wide gap with the upcoming one in the list, namely Germany, and this latter is followed by the European Commission, the United Kingdom and then Canada. Consequently, in the reported list we can find other institutions as The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), a body funded in 2005 by the UN for providing humanitarian Aid and offering life-saving assistance to the many emergency contexts. Subsequent countries are other Northern States as the modernised Japan, consecutive there is Sweden and then following Norway and France. These ones are all Nations which are considered as belonging to the Global North side.

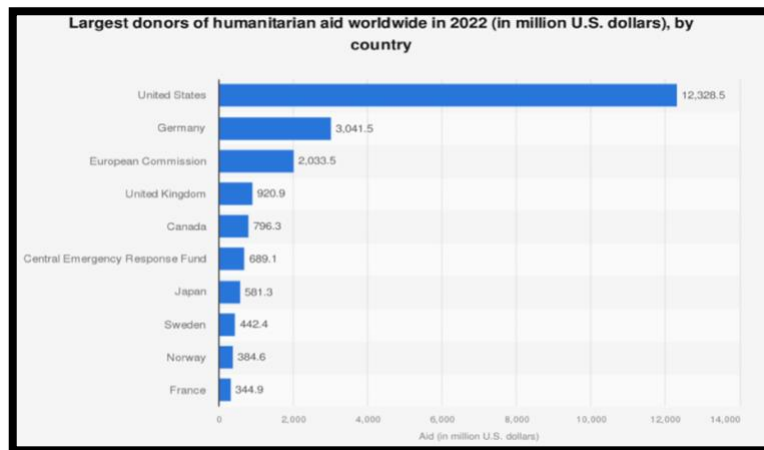


Figure 1: The list of the largest donors of humanitarian aid worldwide in \$

Moreover, data that has been collected from web articles addressing the NGOs engagement in US global efforts ⁶. This has been widely acknowledged in demonstrating how in the past years, more than one third of the USAID’s disbursements was destined to the U.S.-based NGOs. A probable example is given through the reported number of a \$2.32 billion influx in 2013 which was

⁵ Published by Statista Research Department, & 5, J. (2023, January 5). Largest donors of humanitarian aid worldwide 2022. Statista. Retrieved February 26, 2023, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/275597/largest-donor-countries-of-aid-worldwide/>.

⁶ Kellie Moss Published: May 11, 2015. (2015, July 22). *Foreign NGO engagement in U.S. Global Health Efforts: Foreign ngos receiving USG support through USAID - report*. KFF. Retrieved February 2023, from <https://www.kff.org/report-section/foreign-ngo-engagement-in-u-s-global-health-efforts-foreign-ngos-receiving-usg-support-through-usaid-report/>.

disbursed to the U.S.- based NGOs for global health efforts and aimed at policies implementation.⁶ Nonetheless, much of the total funding were awarded to only a few NGOs and the small number of these nongovernmental organisations were accounting for the wide majority of the main U.S’. global areas of action. In fact, most of the organisations received funding to work in multiple areas of emergency and only half of them were granted monetary aid to work in single areas of programs. Furthermore, conforming to the above-mentioned article, the majority of U.S.-based NGOs are granted worldwide support and they particularly focus on activities and policies that have global scale and global purposes. These enterprises can involve the delivery of missions and the carrying out of activities which can reach a high number of people and thus assist very populous countries.

In point of fact, some North American NGOs are granted funds to deliver either *region* or else *country specific* projects. In the former case, we include regions as for instance they are Africa, Asia, Eurasia, Latin America and the Caribbean countries as a whole. Whereas in the latter case, we deal with a precise country under-consideration or alike, in few situations, with two countries together. Overall, the wide majority of these *Stripes and Stars* NGOs’ programs are carried out in Sub-Saharan regions given the fact that the countries with the highest level of NGOs funding are specifically towards this slice of the Planet (as for instance in Nigeria, Ethiopia and Kenya). NGOs efforts destined to Africa uniquely are more than the ones given to other regions combined together.

In accordance with the above statement, we accessed the list of the top-ten world recipients of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) ⁷ to testify the most aided countries of the developing world today in terms of the USD million that are annually awarded to various populations in need. Here we can read countries as India, Bangladesh and Afghanistan which are in the podium by dint of the high extent of funds crossing their borders. Then, the list opens the doors to Sub-Saharan African territories, then to other Southern & Central Asian countries and also to Middle East ones.

⁷ *Development finance data*. OECD. (n.d.). Retrieved February 2023, from <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/>

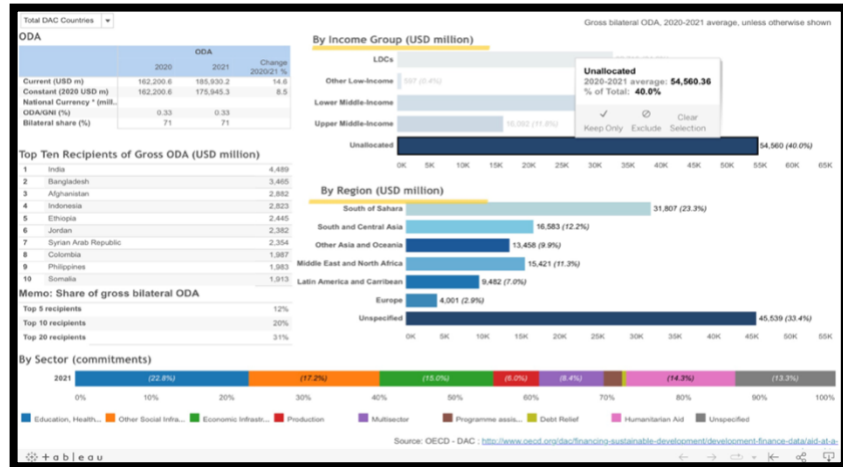


Figure 2: The list of the most common recipients of financial assistance in \$

Thus, on the grounds of their crucial role in ID’s contemporary scene, the NGOs’ engagement at the global / regional / national / local level has to be carefully analysed as demonstrated by the high influx of money collected and handed over to these non-profit organisations. This is supported by the importance of the projects delivered on the ground to these territories and mostly by the big share of populations in need who are targeted and who are today in an urgent status of emergency.

2. The NGOs’ Role for Development

This section is destined to the analysis of the impressive authority that has been achieved by the NGOs in the current International Development scenario. The repercussion they had on the current global society will be underlined while their growing significance and presence will be displayed.

2.1 The NGOs as main actors in ID

As follows, Northern NGOs have a leader position in implementing these programs on the ground. In fact, development organisations have morphed into commanders of the international display since the 1990s, while playing a critical role in the world’s transition to a more *global civil society*. Their importance lays in the projects aimed at raising awareness of public opinion, their ability of stressing the role of education, their aspect of conducting research and also of producing new knowledge about the unheard voices of the less considered ones. All of these acts are accompanied by a careful analysis and assessment of the future consequences. Hence, they play a relevant task

in the advocacy of a particular public policy for it to be supported and recommended in concrete terms. Impact on fundraising activities, then, can make these policies to be actually implemented. In our contemporary world, many are the fields and areas of actions in which NGOs have maintained a leading position. They have been awarded more and more power so as to pursue their policies and to approach targeted populations that are in urgent need of benefits and development. With the term *Development* itself, we intend – according to the famous Sen 1999’s definition: *“Development is the expansion in freedoms, not only in political freedoms, but also in social opportunities, in protective securities, economic opportunities and transparency of guarantees. The outcomes associated with these freedoms include improvements in health, education, sanitation and democratic governance, among others”*⁸. Thus, the nongovernmental bodies play a primary acting on the stage of this discussed arena which is the International Development (ID).

Their activities can involve the implementation of projects which can arrive to be worth around trillions of dollars each year. As a matter of fact, the sector of International Development is an industry which is a very much knowledge – sensitive one, with great addition given by data and information complementary to the sector. It is assigned the name of *Development 2.0* and it is the eight largest economy of the world. They are acting in the social, political and financial scenarios and they receive more than 20% of the overall government funding worldwide which is specifically designed to humanitarian assistance. Nowadays, this industry is the second worldwide if considering the charity sector and it is preceded only by agencies that are embedded within the United Nations’ network of the bodies for Development. It concerns a budget of more than 1 trillion U.S. dollars annually and it comprises more than 19 million employees which are salary–paid if not implicating the endless volunteers involved in the *lifecycle* of the projects delivered.⁹ In recent years, indeed, NGOs, and particularly the International Advocacy Non-Governmental Organisations (IANGOs), have become dominant personalities in the Development arena and they have managed to reach out an increasing number of people and to share a great extent of unheard voices. In fact, it is now hard to quantify how massive the sector is globally. Their importance in advocacy – the promotion of public policies to adopt in society- cannot be underestimated because

⁸ Brass, J. N., Longhofer, W., Robinson, R. S., & Schnable, A. (2018). NGOs and International Development: A Review of thirty-five years of scholarship. *World Development*, 112, 136–149. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.07.016>

⁹ Ibid.

of their international strength to enhance global governance and to provide for problem solving. These actors were replying to the many contemporary criticisms and they were satisfying the ideologies about the necessity of civil society’s involvement in the cycle of creation and distribution of development programs. Genuinely, NGOs are frequently viewed as administrative delegates representing the public sphere (even if this discourse can be somewhat reductive) and thus Development agencies are progressively channelling their own funding through NGOs. They are, indeed, thought to be more convenient manners to operate and thus they are framed publicly as *“efficient and cost-effective methods of partnering with civil society”*¹⁰. These agencies, thus, tend to be conceptualised as more efficient, more effective, innovative and with a particular commitment to democratic procedure and to a *Pro-poor Development*. In this manner, they seek to appease global standards through their transparency and efficiency in projects. Along these lines, they promised at the end of the XX century, to put all their efforts and all their capabilities so as to encourage the sharing of information and stimulate the diffusion of alternative political ideals. This could mean *“to do the wrong thing for the right reason”*¹¹ and also to encourage for the empowerment of the less advantaged ones who are in constant necessity to be externally supported.

2.2 The NGOs’ impact in ID

As a matter of fact, since the 1980s, the number of NGOs that has been contributing to operate in developing countries has impressively boomed. The parallel research on these organisations has fostered the fame of these agencies provoking then the explosion in number of them. Indeed, the meteoric relevance in the International Development scenario has been very well emphasised. This outstanding and unexpected boost of organisations can be testified by the fact that only in 2018, the ‘Union of International Associations’ has estimated a total of more than 37.500 active international NGOs and, in addition, it can be counted a number of around more than 1000 international NGOs which are included each year only in the U.S. Development scenario alone¹².

¹⁰ Levine, A. (2002). Convergence or convenience? international conservation ngos and development assistance in Tanzania. *World Development*, 30(6), 1043–1055 [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0305750x\(02\)00022-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0305750x(02)00022-0)

¹¹ Kuruppu, S. C., & Lodhia, S. (2019). Disruption and transformation: The Organisational Evolution of an NGO. *The British Accounting Review*, 51(6), 100828. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bar.2019.03.003>

¹² Kellie Moss Published: May 11, 2015. (2015, July 22). *Foreign NGO engagement in U.S. Global Health Efforts: Foreign ngos receiving USG support through USAID - report*. KFF. Retrieved February 2023, from <https://www.kff.org/report-section/foreign-ngo-engagement-in-u-s-global-health-efforts-foreign-ngos-receiving-usg-support-through-usaid-report/>.

As even reported by the ‘World Bank Database’ in 2018, there has been an augmentation from 21% in 1990 to more than 90% in 2018 of NGOs participation or another CSO involvement in a currently financed project of Development and humanitarian Aid delivery. More than 20% of all bilateral aid which flows today passes through NGOs, as it is dispatched by the ‘OECD’ data¹³. This escalation has been favoured by the recent trends of mistrust towards National governments coming from international foreign donors and member of the contemporary managerial ID scene. Therefore, the lack of credibility of the political sector, the idea of the absence of political willingness to account for real civil society’s issues and the concern about the corrupted attitudes of many governments in action today, has led to this extraordinary augmentation of International NGOs all around the world. They are idealised as entities which are strictly connected to the community and they are framed as sort of *expanders* of direct democracy and *defenders* of the methods to intensify civil participation on the ground. The boom of these organisations in the International stage can be visualized in the graph below, published by one of the main journals of the Development sector, *World Development*, and which is reported by the author Brass in 2018.

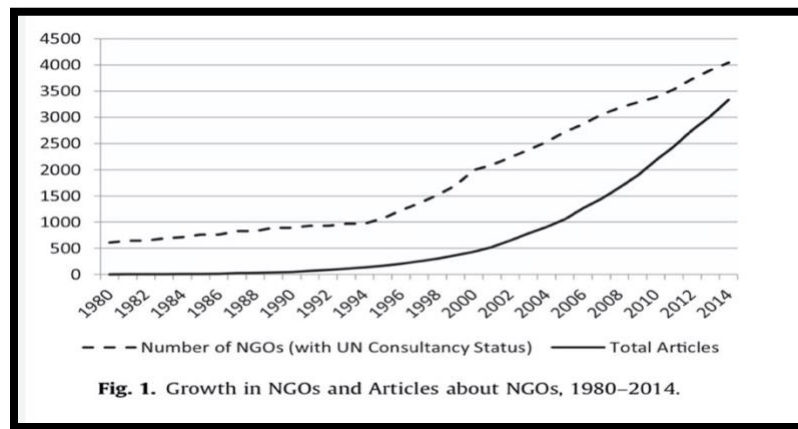


Figure 3: The progressive increase of the number of NGOs between 1980-2014

The proliferation of non-governmental organizations largely stemmed from to the recent emphasis on their status and from the pressure by the International Development institutions today. Genuinely, the overestimation of the portrayal of NGOs and their positive appearances for the democratic enhancement and for the social improvement, is stressed by many international agents.

¹³ Development finance data. OECD. (n.d.). Retrieved February 2023, from <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/>

This phenomenon is visible up to the point that there might be the risk of undermining the public sector and to curtail the presence of employees in the public districts of workforce. This is given by the fact that many members of Development are now attracted by the higher salaries and by the abundance of rights and the associated possibilities which are given by the private sector. In this scenario, indeed, the governmental power and, consequently, its international legitimacy with respect to the wider global society and the public sphere can be very much threatened nowadays.

3. The NGOs in the academic literature

In this section we will refer to the academic literature present on the topic under discussion in this dissertation. The collection of reports and researches about the roles, the positions, the matters addressed, and the various areas of intervention will be analysed in each following subsection. Particularly, among the various topics undertaken by the NGOs, the gender question and the impact that this one has in the International Development scenario will be conceded further room.

3.1 The literature on the NGOs

The wide dataset of researches and published articles which are disposable in the academic environment are acknowledged for their Northern origins and, thus, most of them come from Northern scholars who are often not working in the academic field. There is, indeed, a smooth evidence of the lack of journals written by scholars from the Global South side of the world. This dearth of academic authors and the tendency of writers to be internal actors who are mostly affiliated to the non-governmental organisation, reduces the possibility of transparent studies and aggravates the delivery of excessive biased articles. Clearly, there is no space for instructive criticism from people who are paid by NGOs and who have a stable position inside the companies.

As demonstrated by the reports conducted by Brass in 2018, the vast majority of journals and peer-reviewed articles are published by Global North scholars and editorial companies that find their origins and locations in Northern Hemisphere’s countries; specifically North American ones given that the influence and global relevance of the United States is widely recognised. Backing this information, evidence suggests that Canada and USA are the leaders in the current academic literature scenario and then Europe comes right after them. Visibly, there is an omission of Latin American countries and other developing scenarios such as Africa, Asia and the Caribbean countries; sort of forgotten places from the academic viewpoint. Through an innovative synthetic

review - which is an alternative form of literature review aimed at taking methods and analysing how to appraise the studies on NGOs - authors of the analysis by Brass, Longhofer, Robinson & Schnable in 2018 thoroughly collected a branch of various and randomly selected some non-profit organisations. Here they managed to study all the research made upon the nongovernmental bodies and all the information about their policies, their areas of programs and their inner structures. Then they disclosed all the traits of the literature which is currently available on these characters, their biased nature and the missing clarity of information possibly retrievable from the academic data.

For instance, into the corpus of the research conducted about a random sample size of numerous NGOs which are currently operating in ID we can there read the names of diverse interdisciplinary journals. These are the academic newspapers which report information and evidence about different sectors of civil society, and which are dealing with their main characteristics. We recall for instance: *Development on Practice* (which is a journal coming from an Australian association) or subsequently we read the name of *Voluntas Journal* with its affiliation to the Austrian University of Vienna and another major University in the Netherlands. Consequently, another academic institution which was encountered in the study was the *World Development Journal*, a predominant academic journal whose origins are to be found in a Dutch editorial house. These studies are shown in table 1 from the Brass, Longhofer, Robinson & Schnable, 2018 and whose graph I report below.

Table 1
Top journals represented in corpus.

Journal	Total articles (% of corpus)
Development in Practice	217 (6.50%)
Voluntas	113 (3.39%)
World Development	94 (2.82%)
Public Administration & Development	62 (1.86%)
Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly	53 (1.59%)
Third World Quarterly	40 (1.20%)
Disasters	39 (1.17%)
Development	37 (1.11%)
Journal of Civil Society	35 (1.05%)
Gender & Development	34 (1.02%)
Social Science & Medicine	33 (0.99%)
International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law	31 (0.93%)
Development & Change	28 (0.84%)
AIDS Care	22 (0.66%)
Human Rights Quarterly	20 (0.60%)
Democratization	19 (0.57%)
International Journal of Educational Development	19 (0.57%)
Reproductive Health Matters	18 (0.54%)
African Journal of AIDS Research	17 (0.51%)
Society & Natural Resources	16 (0.48%)
Global Governance	16 (0.48%)
Total	963 (28.87%)

Figure 4: The list of the most famous journals in International Development

3.2 Weaknesses in the academic literature

Besides, methodologically speaking, there was the demonstration of the predominance of qualitative studies over quantitative ones. This massive presence of case studies and the quantity of descriptive reviews made from a social science framework can leave space for social criticism. Additionally, these papers were edited and published mostly using the dominant English language, leaving no space for the remaining articles written by authors of the Global South to be included in English-based literature and, thus, to be ultimately read by the most influential Northern scholars.

However, scholars should be aware of the fact that more data reports, more concrete and better empirical findings (without an overrepresentation of certain sectors of civil society) could enhance benefits and lead to the improvement of global development outcomes and their effects today. As a matter of fact, although there has been over 35 years of research on the role of NGOs and over 3000 articles written,¹⁴ there is still much work that is missing and much more to be perfected. The fields of the study are very biased, with many deficiencies and some Northern repercussions, whereas the geographies under current literature review are not yet all the ones possibly analysable. This scarcity of material is also conditional to the fact that many areas of this contemporary world are now under conflicts or internal conditions of political, economic and social instability. On account of that, scholars cannot pronounce their own conclusions about some of these geographical places. Rather, this analysis might be more suitable in areas which are well studied by the general public review as the Israeli-Palestinian conflictual scene or the Afghanistan context of struggles.

Ultimately, recognition of the innovation from the project ‘NGO Knowledge Collective’- a platform that catalogues articles and update them periodically – may be a system to use for guiding the production of new information about research, for enriching the various fields of action and for donating proper reports about all the locations of the world where international NGOs behave. This fashion can contribute for the embellishment of future systematic reviews on the literature about nongovernmental organisations. It can provide for the accuracy of researches on their

¹⁴ Brass, J. N., Longhofer, W., Robinson, R. S., & Schnable, A. (2018). NGOs and International Development: A Review of thirty-five years of scholarship. *World Development*, 112, 136–149. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.07.016>

profiles and can account for the real procedures in the delivery of projects. In this way, we can correctly evaluate their effectiveness in development outcomes: truly, what we are interested in.

3.3 Locations & Topics of NGOs in literature

Since we live in an interconnected world where no agent can be considered alone, a study will be inquired about the relationships between NGOs and other external actors as for example: foreign donors, international organisations, governments themselves and also the citizens who live in the countries where these organisations operate into. Likewise, when considering this intertwined planet, we can see which were the most reported geographical areas in the NGOs’ literature review. Predictably, the areas that are the most populated of the Global South were the top-ranked ones in the literature reports. Indeed, we find both India and China in the top positions of the charts. They have, thus, a massive significance in the developing scenario due to their huge populations and to the variety of issues faced by these wide societies. However, not forgettable is the Sub-Saharan Africa and there we find most of the research about Uganda and Kenya. This may be given by the fact that Nigeria and Ethiopia are the most populated areas of the African continent. As also demonstrated from the graph analysed in Brass, Longhofer, Robinson & Schnable, 2018, below.

Country	Total articles (% of corpus)
India	193 (5.79%)
China	163 (4.89%)
South Africa	129 (3.87%)
Bangladesh	118 (3.54%)
Mexico	78 (2.34%)
Russia	72 (2.16%)
Israel	67 (2.01%)
Kenya	64 (1.92%)
Brazil	63 (1.89%)
Uganda	63 (1.89%)
Nigeria	58 (1.74%)
Tanzania	52 (1.56%)
Ghana	50 (1.50%)
Pakistan	50 (1.50%)
Indonesia	49 (1.47%)
Afghanistan	48 (1.44%)
Thailand	44 (1.32%)
Cambodia	43 (1.29%)
Philippines	38 (1.14%)
Turkey	37 (1.11%)
Total	1,474 (44.18%)

Note: Number of articles based on at least ten mentions of country in article text. Articles may feature more than one country or none, so percentages do not sum to 100.

Figure 5: The list of the top countries represented in NGOs’ literature.

Moreover, it resulted from the study that the prioritised and the most common sectors of research were mostly two. Firstly, we see Governance, which is the protection of human rights, the

advocacy of public policy, the process of enhancement of democracy, the criticism for the degradation of the global society and the requirement of reduction of the current corruption. Then, as a second field there was public health. Here we find the necessity to deal with incurable diseases in the South and the failure of vaccines campaigns for the most fragile members of the societies. The general findings about the list of research fields being the most addressed by NGOs retrieved from the Brass, Longhofer, Robinson & Schnable, 2018 paper we examined, are attached below.

Table 2
Sectors and development priorities represented in corpus.

Sector	Total articles (% of corpus) [*]	Largest keyword
Governance	458 (13.73%)	civil society (23.9%)
Health	386 (11.57%)	health (45.2%)
Gender/women	306 (9.17%)	women (83.2%)
Conflict	301 (9.02%)	humanitarian (24.2%)
People and culture	292 (8.75%)	children (24.5%)
Environment	289 (8.66%)	conservation (25.8%)
Economic development	251 (7.52%)	microfinance institution (20.0%)
Education	204 (6.12%)	education (75.4%)
Agriculture	197 (5.91%)	farm (38.4%)
Infrastructure	149 (4.47%)	urban (46.1%)
Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)	102 (3.06%)	water (79.5%)

^{*} Cutoff based on proportion of sector-based text that falls one standard deviation over the corpus mean. Percentages do not sum to 100 because an article can be about multiple sectors, and not all articles are focused on a sector.

Figure 6: The list of the top sectors of development most represented in NGOs' literature

3.3.1 The topic of gender inequality in ID

It is interesting to connect the field of International Development and to express some of the main points associated to the thematic of gender. This is a very pressing matter daily addressed by the NGOs, precisely, it is the third category among the field of priorities and matters towards which they devote to. As demonstrated, if the current International Development scenario would focus and give more emphasis on the gender question, very wide economic advantages will emerge. This will take place thanks to the promotion and campaign advocacy for the attainment of equal rights for women and men through the boosting of female empowerment. In this manner, the entities which are directed towards the achievement of the goals for our global society, should focus on rearranging and on strengthening the distribution of opportunities, assets, and decisions for men and women. Only in this way, both of these gender identities will have an equal potential to control

their own quality of life and to contribute to their respective households, their daily activities or even to their living Nations’ policies and direction. Without such dedication and attention from the international agents, no civilisation will ever grow sustainably.¹⁵ To assess the gender disparity topic in the current International Development scene, the United Nations has instituted the ‘UN Gender Inequality Index’. This index is based on three main points of concerns for analysing the disparities between sexes: the reproductive health of the women, their empowerment and finally their economic activity and personal agency. Additional focus is given to the question of the wage gap, the limited mobility imposed on women, the sexual violence suffered by the females and the lack of equal chance to access to sectors as healthcare and also to the political sphere – thus the possibility of women to have a public voice and holding a position in the governmental Institutions.

The realisation of some policy initiatives and of crucial International Development goals - such as combating food insecurity, environmental degradation, violence, and instability - can be sped up by a possible gender parity achievement. In the interest of accomplishing this goal, investments, reforms, and interventions are mainly required, as reported by the World Bank, to : a) significantly boost the revenues and profitability of female entrepreneurs and staff members; then to b) increase the number of women who are hired in the workforce; and finally to c) start encouraging women's involvement and participation in final choice in surrounding communities, private enterprises, and the civil service.¹⁶ In dealing, for instance, with the sector of employment for women, we discovered by research that it may well be a main determinant for the world economic progress.

In fact, if gender employment discrepancies were abolished, our global long-term GDP per capita would expand by nearly 20% on average throughout all the economies. Based on the most recent studies, if women launched and promoted start-ups at about the same rate as businessmen do constantly, the economy would benefit by \$5–6 trillion.¹⁷ It will be costly for societies to depend on the skills of only half of their citizenry despite the higher risks of economic stagnation and the cases of recession throughout many areas of the world. Hence, there is a chance to raise earnings and accelerate economic growth only by simply addressing our gender disparities. If we eventually want to convey some results of NGOs dealing with this thematic, reference is given to the above-

¹⁵ *Overview*. World Bank. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/gender/overview>

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

mentioned ‘USAID’s reportage’, since we have widely exposed the goals and means of actions used by the body of United States’ assistance for all the developing countries in the Global South. From the official website, there was the disclosure of a case of aid program coming from the partnership between USAID and the local NGOs. In this overview, there was the reference to the developing country of Nicaragua and the possibility to commit to the local people and denouncing the extensive rate of sexual abuse which is typical of that country. Thanks to the support coming from the international governmental and nongovernmental bodies having U.S.A- roots and operating in this geographical context, we could assist to more than 80 communities supported and to the provision of services to close to 1,000 women affected by a gender-based violence.¹⁸ The data is impressive, and it reinforces our previous discussion about the possibilities and alternatives which could be delivered in International Development uniquely through the donation of more attentive outlook and dedication to specific activities and operations for the gender-based question.

4. The main characteristics of the NGOs

In this section we will refer to the main traits of the NGOs. Their duties, the essential principles and their fundamental values will be exposed, and their structures and directions will be described.

4.1 The NGOs’ Internal Organisation & Governance

Crucial is indeed the scrutiny of the structures of these international nongovernmental entities. This analysis was carefully assessed through the paper published by L. Brown and A. Ebrahim in 2012, with the collaboration coming from a great Indian feminist and social activist S. Batliwala.¹⁹ In effect, we must take under analysis the governance of nongovernmental organisations which deal with the direction decided by the main body and the process of making choices. This includes the system of the methods to apply, as well as the strategies to pursue and the missions to carry out on the field. However, the manner through which this Governance relates to NGOs’ management has been wrongly under-explored by the international literature today. During the review of the literature about the theme of governance we can read that *“governance is of central concern to non-profits organisations [...] However, theories of non-profit governance are*

¹⁸ U.S. Agency for International Development. (2023, February) from <https://www.usaid.gov/>

¹⁹ Brown, L. D., Ebrahim, A., & Batliwala, S. (2012). Governing International Advocacy NGOs. *World Development*, 40(6), 1098–1108. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2011.11.006>

*underdeveloped in comparison with corporate governance ones.”*²⁰ Furthermore, we can argue that *“governance is, first and foremost, a set of dynamic processes. This means (a) that governance needs to be conceptualised from a process perspective; and (b) that it needs to be empirically examined through processual analysis.”*²¹ Likewise, we could *“call for more discursive explanations of governance and its shifts for a better evaluation of the key stakeholders involved in these insidious mechanisms. This topic of Governance is critical to present the final shape of the organisational architectures”*²² of the association. This metaphor is used to refer to the so-called *organisational designs* of the agencies which combine together both the formal structures and the informal cultural ones. These fundamental internal pillars of the organisations aim at the creation of roles, at the formulation of processes and reports of NGOs’ inner & outer relationships.

Hence, these upper-mentioned architectures are imperative pillars for providing accountability and respectability to the organisation, accounting for advocacy and achieving coordination between the industrialised developed world - from one side - and the developing countries - on the other one. On that account, their profiles can be defined as (S) or (N) in the case in which they either belong to the Global South’s perspective or else to a Northern one and thus they possess their own headquarters and offices in the Western directed and more developed countries of our modern world. Wherefore, the connections and the links which are present between the international NGOs and the countries contemplated in the investigation, are dependent on the wealth and on the variety of material resources of the country itself in the global scene. In this manner, we can and will (indubitably) encounter a huge gap between the NGOs of the Global North and the Global South.

4.2 The NGOs’ Accountability & Legitimacy

It is fundamental today for these bodies to be the clearest and most transparent as possible in the Development environment. This would increase their international credibility and ensure the availability of concrete and unbiased results among all the parties involved in the process about their undertaken policies and their initiatives on the ground. Here, a relevant topic is the discussion about the subject matter of *accountability* and the response to the question: to whom these

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Brown, L. D., Ebrahim, A., & Batliwala, S. (2012). Governing International Advocacy NGOs. *World Development*, 40(6), 1098–1108. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2011.11.006>

²² Ibid.

organizations have to be finally accountable? In fact, *“When referring to the topic of accountability, this is a crucial element of governance, especially within the field of non-profit organisations”*²³

When talking of accountability it thus refers to the fact that *“An NGO, and the individuals working within the organization, have a responsibility to account for its various activities, finances, policies, and other undertakings.”*²⁴ Additional reference can be made to the diverse types of liabilities which NGOs have the duty to ascertain. For instance, with the appellation *constituency-accountability*, we refer to the necessity of satisfying the interests of the constituents and their own personal, self-oriented needs. Instead, when talking about *mission-based accountability*, we aim at the satisfaction of the expectations built up for the missions which the organisation wants to achieve. Finally, in the last type we find the *movement-based accountability*, a broader set of interests not wanted by the inner members but rather connected to the *general needs of the others*.

In this last category, it is included the international 1982 U.S.-based organisation called The Association for Women rights in Development (AWID) which advocates for women empowerment and fights for the eradication of gender inequality in today global scenario. Its collective hope is to finally reach the indispensable gender justice needed today. Disburses to this association are also awarded by UN Women - a specific gender-oriented UN body founded in 2010. These monetary funds are awarded so as to support the organisation and, therefore, to render it economically independent to fight for the delegitimization of anti-rights actors and to continue the battle so as to *“contribute to making visible feminism in practice.”*²⁵ The organisation is a very crucial player in the active campaign for women rights and for its achievement, which has to be sustained by the increment of their autonomy, their empowerment and their personal agency in the international scene. AWID itself can be considered as a support group and it is combined by a network of different actors with loosely coupled relations. Its main activities (similarly to other international advocacy NGOs) are the dissemination of information, the carrying out of further research and of course the concurrently standing and advocating for women’s rights and liberties.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Devaney, C. (2022, September 20). *What is an NGO: Definition, role, duties, types I liberties.eu*. Liberties.eu. Retrieved May 2023, from <https://www.liberties.eu/en/stories/what-is-an-ngo/44392>

²⁵ *Who we are & what we do* AWID (n.d.) Retrieved February 2023, from <https://www.awid.org/who-we-are-what-we-do/>

Moreover, while addressing the nongovernmental organisations from an international spectrum, particular care must be given to the question of *Legitimacy*. In fact, given the decrease in credibility of organisations and the mistrust towards international, transnational and multinational actors in this current world, we must assess different kind of legitimacies which are granted to those bodies. The range is wide, and it goes from political legitimacy, passing through *associational legitimacy*, including also *cognitive legitimacy* and *technical expertise legitimacy*, as well as the *legal one*. These *Legitimacy Claims* are paramount and the failure to account for them can have serious costs for the association transparency and their credibility in the International Development framework.

4.3 The NGOs’ Organisational Architecture

Furthermore, each of these private sector association is defined by its own inner organisational architecture. This is the one which defines the strategies, the norms, the values, the commitments and the path of activities of that precise body in action. The conjunction of the peculiarities and the organisational elements determine, eventually, their final performance in ID. We can find diverse types of structures as: *federations*, which are composed by a wider main centre in the association or else the *confederations* which instead hold more autonomy between their members and have a less centralised coordination. Then, the classification sees *networks* which are particularly connected by shared values, norms and goals to achieve through alternations of mutual respect and trust. Finally, we can find organisational architectures recalled by the name of *support organisations*, which are more specialised and are technical-related branches of support. The following figure can help us to visualise the various types of structures that can characterise a body.

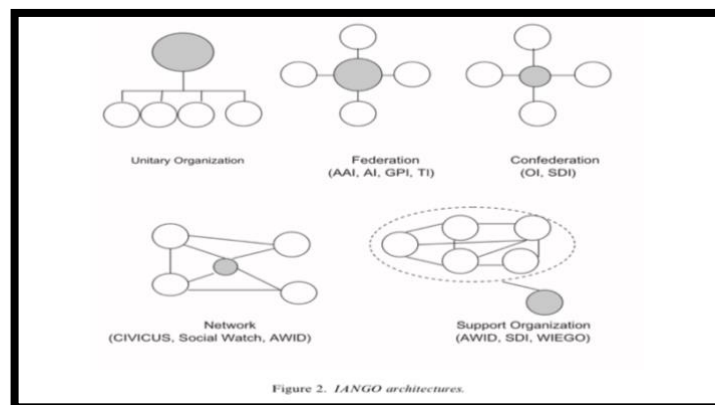


Figure 6: The types of NGOs’ organizational structures

“These elements interact to shape activities that generate results, and incongruent elements can seriously undermine the organisations and their network performance”.²⁶

The structures of the organisations must be considered very carefully in order to fully evaluate the performances and the practices of the non-governmental organs under consideration. Moreover, the diverse origins and the particular traits of the organisations, allow us to classify them more precisely and to differentiate them between *bottom-up* entities from the *top-down* ones. Supplementary to this is also the distribution of power, the influence and the concept of authority, which are crucial in the assessment of the organisations’ role. The circulation of material and human resources inside the several NGOs, is very affected by the architectures and it is impacted by the evolving contexts in which the organisation operates and delivers its advocacy policies. Hence, many are the strategies, the interests and the public actions which are carried out by these IANGOs and distinctive are their own personal repertoires of initiatives undertaken, as well as the targets addressed. These activities range from political affiliated ones to more criticising gestures as, for instance, actions raising public awareness or even public demonstrations that may embarrass political actors by demonstrating their uncaring attitude towards the cruel international challenges.

5 The current challenges for the NGOs

The upcoming section’s aim is to expose the challenges which are daily and repeatedly faced by the NGOs in the current international affairs. Their battles to solve for the most alarming conditions of the global society will be talked and also criticism will be an important part to dedicate here. Concluding, the research questions will be demanded, and main ambition will be to reply to them.

5.1 The NGOs' contemporary issues

The complex character of these contemporary global struggles – which are recalled as “*the perfect storm of interlocking global problems*”²⁷- requires the conjunction of more agencies together. This is due to the fact that the single action of one body might not be enough for overcoming the comprehensive crisis combining several issues together, as famine, climate change, poverty, etc. Hence, the necessity of multi-agencies coordinated action at various scales with well-informed and

²⁶ Brown, L. D., Ebrahim, A., & Batliwala, S. (2012). Governing International Advocacy NGOs. *World Development*, 40(6), 1098–1108. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2011.11.006>

²⁷ Ibid.

well-resourced background is essential. In case of misalignment of more entities together, the failure can make the organisation to obtain troubles and to publicly demonstrate the impossibility of the agency to provide for real development outcomes and deliver then some successful results on the ground. This evidence can undermine the public universal integrity and the personal profile of the entire association as a whole in the international viewpoint. In other situations, the increase of the effectiveness of policies and strategies which were implemented by the entity, was a matching between the *time horizons* and the precision of the *varied targets* involved in the process. This evaluation is always done with the particular examination of the evolving social, cultural and political contexts around us, given that they are constantly changing. This requires these agencies to always redesign for them. Further, existing and operating international institutions which are operational today, have demonstrated to be inadequate to solve for many transnational issues. From the other side, instead, the IANGOs are idealised as characters capable of playing conclusive performances in the international setting and are represented as necessary to operate effectively.

Nonetheless, contemporary NGOs, like other project delivery and Humanitarian Aid organizations, have appeared and still appear in many cases to be failing stakeholders and to disappoint foreign donors and various members' expectations. Fault of this situation can be attributed to their poor results delivery and the many unsuccessful programs that did not achieve what they were meant to reach. The greatest challenge and the main goal of the International Development NGOs and other civil society international agencies, is, notably, the support of beneficiaries and populations in need. However, most of the times International Development ends up facing unconsciously some “*wicked problems*”²⁸. Specifically, we refer to those problems which are almost impossible to be solved given the complexity in the character of these social or cultural issues. Their interconnected nature lacks clarity of what would actually be the best policies to apply so as to overcome them in the future. These difficulties are subjected to the real-life obstacles which are present in our modern contexts. To such a degree, they usually have a contradictory and a changing nature and this attribution makes the agents who are willing to solve for them to have, in practical terms, to recur to concrete organisational and re-organisational adversities. There is a sort of resistance to actually

²⁸ Miković, R., Petrović, D., Mihić, M., Obradović, V., & Todorović, M. (2020). The integration of social capital and knowledge management – the key challenge for International Development and Cooperation Projects of Non-profit Organizations. *International Journal of Project Management*, 38(8), 515–533. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2020.07.006>

solve for these issues. Therefore, most of the times, they happen to remain unsolved or - even if one side of the problem is solved - there might be the possibility to create another conflicting issue in another field. This render many Northern NGOs to be unprepared under several circumstances.

5.2 Criticism and the Research Questions

The criticism towards the main Northern NGOs, as suggested and underlined repeatedly by scholars as Banks et al. in 2015, comes from the shortcoming of the connections to civil society, from these bodies' dependency on powerful donors and their excessively technocratic relations adopted to manage development challenges. Veritably, many times, the numerous critical reviews of NGOs' tasks and positions in Development scenario, tend to consider the performances which were carried out only to reinforce their donors' interests or their interests themselves. They may fall pray of powerful actors and being captured by the restricted elite and by their thirst of privileges and dominance in our international scenario. In fact, many contexts see NGOs as advancing for the reinforcement and reification of already existing power imbalances at the local, national, or international level. This phenomenon might assuage findings about NGOs' positive effects and results on the targeted populations because these international development agencies frequently fail to adapt programs to local cultural contexts. This ideology can conceptualise them as a sort of *aid-machines* whose operations are strictly connected to the perpetuation of self-interests or of foreign players or philanthropic donors' while not to the actual empowerment of the population. The inhabitants of communities in need who they claim to save but they rather worsen.

Despite the repeated efforts of multilateral organisations, nowadays, more than 700 million people (around 10 per cent of the world's total population) still live under a condition of extreme poverty. This slice of the overall global population is in dearth of the adequate basic living human needs as it is to retain clean water or the chance to be in possession of food or else to access to healthcare. As inequality continues to escalate and social discrimination keeps spreading intensively around this complex world, particularly gender disparity and loss of female agency has found recently a huge space in today global society. For this very reason, we desperately crave more skilled professionals, those agents who could understand the complexities of the Development sector and who could be able to fight for this alarming trend in the upcoming future. We hope for a close one.

For these considerations and for the purpose of addressing more thoroughly what is the real role of these Development organisations in the modern scene, it would be very interesting to understand and assess all the pros and cons of this topic. It is attractive then to reply to the following questions:

→ *How effective have been the International Northern-based nongovernmental organisations in the delivery of their policies and their programs to the developing countries of the Global South?*

→ *To what can we attribute the inabilities of Northern NGOs to achieve successes and efficiency in their Development programs for the relief of the most challenging global issues in ID today?*

→ *Particularly, how has the question of gender inequality been treated by these Northern NGOs?*

The misevaluation and mismanagement of policies and of programs of development by the Northern NGOs, which could relief women role in struggling environments, is more than real. These Western programs tend to be ineffective particularly in many countries of developing areas of our Southern side. Then, an analysis is required to understand how it is possible that we are still under these conditions of struggle in the international scenario of today. How is this possible given all these efforts, all the international organisations which have been born recently, all these non-profits actors and members involved, all this influx of money, all these projects implemented and most importantly, after all this time that has painfully passed for the people still suffering today? We shall analyse it in the upcoming chapter, through the help of our dependent and independent variables, by their assessment and thanks to the information collected about the evolution of the Northern International NGOs and their governance. We will account for the failures of these programs and for the inadequacy of the Western-oriented traditional old models of charity which are mostly used to administer humanitarian Aid in the International Development scenario of today.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH DESIGN ON THE NGOs’ MODEL

1. Critical review of the NGOs' role in ID

The purpose of this section – in line with the argumentation of this chapter - will be to initiate a critical analysis on the role of the NGOs in the International Development scenario. Here, we will deal with the ineffective character of the many predominant NGOs and their incompetent methods used which have inevitably produced an excessive amount of failures and a poor delivery of Aid. This part will commence the research design of our discussion and thus it will explain and give proofs which certify the main hypothesis of the thesis. Possibility to conduct an evaluation of the variables inside the design will clarify both the independent variable as well as the dependent one.

1.1 The inefficiency of Northern NGOs in ID

The enquiry on the reasons why many NGOs at the international level today are effective or not in responding to the demands from the Global South, is a crucial one. We are wondering to what we can blame the several and repetitive failures of the most developed charity and non-profits associations in satisfying the needs of the beneficiaries in the developing side of this global society. Our main idea is associated to the assumption that the significance of Northern NGOs – mostly the U.S- based ones- cannot be stressed enough given its primacy in civil society and the extent of the monetary capital and influxes which is managed by these organisations at an international level.

Nevertheless, the NGOs, like other project-delivery organisations affiliated with the civil society and non-profit – sector, appear to be faltering many partners that contribute to their own businesses. This is due to the poor outcomes delivering. Hence, a constructed analytic analysis is a must to undertake in order for us to be capable of discerning the various scandals affiliated with these preeminent entities in ID. This is essential to interpret the international worries and the discontent voices arising from the NGOs’ performances today. We conduct this scrutiny given the recent attention coming from the international agents concerned about the over dependence of the NGOs.

In fact, the crucial part of this argumentation lays in the evidence that the majority of these projects ends up being a failure and a disappointment to many sides of the sector and to many players included in the aid-delivery arena. Veritably, it is estimated that around 64%²⁹ of the ID programs initiated and concluded by these bodies, are insufficient and appear to be scarce resources for the beneficiaries in urgent need of aid. Henceforth, there is a general paucity in the satisfaction of the local needs requested by the local members of the struggling communities in addressing some of the most impacting issues of civil society. In particular, we will refer to the question of gender disparity in the least democratic contexts. In truth, the great majority of this phenomenon which is related to the inefficiency of these nongovernmental bodies, is due to the fact that their provincial needs appear to be completely mismatching and as if they were incompatible to the visions of the clients and of the foreign Donors associated to these organisations. Thus, we culminate to the point of what we can define as a sort of *Double- Client system*. This latter happens to be triggered by the over-reliance of these organisations on foreign powerful donors that have multiple requirements.

Moreover, we can assess the recent and challenging transition of the major Northern NGOs from a primary basic position which was firstly remembered as *development-based role*. On this account, the international entities are viewed to be the *direct implementers* since they usually tend to carry out the development projects themselves while providing for the main welfare services to the communities. The transition has been to an instead more *policy-advocacy based role* in the contemporary political global setting. These advocacy-oriented bodies, indeed, have recently tended to be more impressive and very manipulative agents of the political direction of the States and of the decision-making environment from the national governments. They have managed to build much public awareness on the major pressuring social and political events and, therefore, they have been trying to push for the fulfilment of the activities by the stakeholders. They do this so as to deal with the major issues of today. For instance, one of these challenges can be the question of gender-based violence and gender disparity in the most struggling communities today. Furthermore, some organisations have been recalled for the *hybrid mixed type* of their orientation. All models will be concretely showed in a specific case study during the analysis in chapter 3.

²⁹ Miković, R., Petrović, D., Mihić, M., Obradović, V., & Todorović, M. (2020). The integration of social capital and knowledge management – the key challenge for International Development and Cooperation Projects of Non-profit Organizations. *International Journal of Project Management*, 38(8), 515–533. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijprom>

Additional traits may be appraised and used in our general assessment of the positive or negative results delivered by these bodies. Other than positional and role-based shifts of the associations in recent time, we can also consider the various determinants and elements that are significant for the management of the entity. Here, we can detect both the *essential descriptors* of a certain NGOs such as development or welfare activities and the *contingent descriptors* on the other side which are instead the variables which are strictly related to the evaluative factors as their accountability.

Table 1 Types of NGOs.			
	Development	Advocacy	Hybrid
Orientation (Unerman & O'Dwyer, 2006a; Vakil, 1997)	These NGOs are direct-implementers in that they run projects themselves involving: 1. Welfare activities based at the basic needs of a population 2. Development activities aimed at capacity building of beneficiaries. These organisations may be membership oriented or provide services	Influences policy and decision making of government and creates widespread awareness and action by other stakeholders on issues such as gender-based violence. Within this, group there exists: 1. Development education NGOs who primarily educate groups within industrialised countries 2. Networking type NGOs who provide expertise and technical knowledge to smaller NGOs/organisations and communities 3. Research-based NGOs who inform development thinking and action	Hybrid organisations are typically large and diverse NGOs which encompass elements of both development and advocacy NGOs (Unerman & O'Dwyer, 2006a, p. 312).
Level of operation (Balloa, 2014; Vakil, 1997)	1. Community-based 2. National 3. International	1. Community-based 2. National 3. International	Mainly national or international
Sectoral focus (Vakil, 1997)	Disaster relief, humanitarian activities, food and shelter, education, etc.	Issues which tend to perpetuate marginalisation and poverty, such as education of girls, employment of women the workforce, improved participatory governance, etc.	Hybrid organisations tend to run programs which cut across both development and advocacy issues. Some projects intertwine both development and advocacy issues together.
Implementation mode	Direct-implementation or partnership-based.	Direct-implementation or partnership-based.	Direct-implementation or partnership-based.
Evaluative factors (Vakil, 1997)	These are factors such as accountability, efficiency and participation. Factors change primarily based on the size, scale and orientation of the NGO, with international NGOs argued as having a tendency for opacity rather than transparency (Vakil, 1997).		
Capacity (Balloa, 2014)	Across all types of NGOs, are three types of capacity that enable activities (albeit at an international level): political capacity which deals with how NGOs can manage and coerce other actors, technical capacity which relates to knowledge and ability to implement the organisation's vision, and administrative capacity which relates to internal management.		

Figure 7: The types of NGOs' positional roles

1.2 The critiques towards Northern NGOs

When assessing development outcomes and while seeing Northern NGOs failures for delivering welfare and prosperity, we cannot help but encountering many critiques that are loudly pronounced, justified and exposed by the most influential actors of the political arena of the today ID scenario. Particularly, the criticism arises from the tendency of these bodies to be capable of taking actions from a standpoint of *domination and exploitation* of the developing countries rather than from a possible constructive communication and a collaboration with the designed local communities of the Global South which are urging multi-later initiatives from the Northern developed countries.

Many influential development scholars have hazarded in their work to talk about a sort of *New Imperialism* of the Global South from the Global North while referring to a new type of impact and a persuasive behaviour of the wealthier States to the underprivileged ones. These influential trends have demonstrated to be typical not only of actors that are wearing a political mask, but they can be seen even in these attracting bodies which are framed as “*willing intermediaries*”³⁰ namely the international Northern NGOs. These latter, have increasingly been criticized to be pressured, leveraged and shaped by foreign and international donors and by their neo-liberal authoritarian agendas in action. Their attitudes are defined by the modern appetites for carrying out Westerns ideologies. Ideas that end up only subtracting the potentiality, the power and the personal agency of the beneficiaries to deal with their alarming battles. As a matter of fact, the existing boundaries -which are marked between these diverse types of public and private-sector international actors - have started to blur in recent times. This has set the basis for an accomplishment of *win-win* relationships - as in International Relations’ theory. These were present between the fields of NGOs from one side and the *business* district from the other one. The full weight and relevance of business in the performances of the organisations has bolstered the support towards the neoliberal ideologies to a sort of market democracy which pushes towards a *mission-drift* attitude. This leads to the primacy of attention over the worries of the political foreign characters rather than over the real necessities of the assignees coming from the developing world.

Additional discourse on this controversial but contemporary topic was also addressed by the Professor Igor Pellicciari on his recent book about the role of Aid³¹. In his work, it was very clearly expressed this shift of emphasis towards the interests of the Donors rather than dedicated to the real needs of the Recipients and on this new direction of Aid destined to Business desires and political interests rather than humanitarian assistance and developing populations’ help. This dynamic inevitably brings to the so called (D > R) relation where the Donors’ interests were of greater importance and where the procedure of delivery of this Aid was primarily *Donors-Driven*. Their attention was here concerned on the *negotiation* of Aid rather than on its real *implementation*.

³⁰ Kuruppu, S. C., & Lodhia, S. (2019). Disruption and transformation: The Organisational Evolution of an NGO. *The British Accounting Review*, 51(6), 100828. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bar.2019.03.003>

³¹Pellicciari, I. (2022). *Re-framing foreign aid history and politics: From the fall of the Berlin Wall to the Covid-19 outbreak*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Interesting disclosure of these ideas was extensively carried out by the Italian Professor of International Relations in pointing out the alteration of direction of the International Development actors' focus that passed from the necessity to deliver Aid and intervene in struggling community; to instead simply replying to the political motivation of the Donors. On this regard, these two characters of the Donors and the Recipients, are given the same importance. Along these lines, we arrive at looking at Aid as a real instrument of *power politics* rather than of *soft politics* as it should be, and it used to be, in the first stage. The topics underlined by the professor are more than concrete and certified and they have only increased during the Pandemic COVID-19 period. In fact, after this tremendous humanitarian crisis which impacted the whole global scenario, the actors of international Aid and the institutional donors have only augmented their desire to be in the first place in the provision of Aid, particularly in territories and regions of the world where their geopolitical interests were of major significance and were motivated by their personal benefits. This mechanism was commenced so as to enhance the *status* of the international Donors and to profit every time more from the decided type of Aid they were delivering to emergencies contexts. Their attentiveness was on the *competition* side rather than on a productive *cooperation* process. These conclusions by the Professor reinforced our general standpoint and gave interesting contemporary insights on the powerful Development personalities of the international scene today.

In point of fact, critiques have flourished today, and many are the scholars who want to have a say in this undertaken argumentation. This model is a sort of “*New market model which does not challenge state sovereignty, but rather it reinforces it*”³². Here, strong is the assumption and the commentary about their usefulness and their effectiveness today. As even claimed by other scholars' work, there might be the chance that these international bodies “*may be doing more harm than good*”³³ to developing countries. We may have come to the point of rupture of their undiscussed international credibility as if they were the leaders and *unquestioned institutions of ID*. The emphasis here is completely directed on the expanding *politicisation* of these associations and on the acknowledgment of the impact coming from the process where they are completing replacing the national local state in numerous developing countries. These dynamics are leading

³² Kuruppu, S. C., & Lodhia, S. (2019). Disruption and transformation: The Organisational Evolution of an NGO. *The British Accounting Review*, 51(6), 100828. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bar.2019.03.003>

³³ Ibid.

to the birth of a sort of *parallel state* which undermines the civil society and drives to a trend of *recolonization of developing countries* with arbitrary and controlling Western ideologies. The tensions about which may be the most suitable position of the Northern based NGOs in the current international stage have been widely escalated and have been translated, in some cases, in a new marginalisation and questionability of the organisations on the actual necessity of them in the ID.

1.3 The set of factors provoking failures for the NGOs

Now, it is crucial to discern the most acknowledged barriers which impede the full success of these projects of delivery and which deny the gratification of the beneficiaries in their own communities. While grasping the various reasons for which these organisations have a tendency to bring failures and ineffectiveness in their actions rather than triumphs and proficiency, we are dealing with what can be premeditated as a set of diverse elements, a sort of conjunction of many factors. All points which are main pillars of the research hypothesis of the thesis about the inefficiency of the prominent Northern NGOs in ID. These are observed to be the repercussions coming from the scarcity of the Global South’s involvement as well as from the paucity of social inclusion of the receivers of Aid. It is all alimented by the shortcoming in the usage of social capital and the incapability of knowledge management conducted by Northern NGOs in this unbalanced universe.

Therefore, there is the misallocation of internal and external resources of these charity corporations. This phenomenon creates a daunting socioeconomic-political context, and the ambiguity of the programs, initiatives, techniques which are navigating in standard and old charity models of practices. All of these are the segments composing the *independent variable* affecting the dependent one. De facto, our independent variable in the research design is designated as the usage of traditional and currently expired, inappropriate models of Development by the Northern based and Internationally working NGOs which are operating in the developing scenarios of today. In fact, these determinants can be intended as the ones who eventually affect the efficiency of these Aid companies’ policies and who account for their final inefficiency in the delivery of development outcomes. This ineffectiveness at the international level coming from the International NGOs is, namely, our *dependent variable* in the research design. In truth, the effectiveness and success of International Development programs are strictly dependent on the attitude of these bodies.

Particularly, this set of diverse components can be reduced to the inadequacy of the “*know-how to use the organisations’ social capital*”³⁴. The proper utilisation would be one of the fundamental ingredients which will render these entities capable to better manage their own projects and to face all the challenges of today. Verily, NGOs are demonstrating “*to be ineffectual in using their traditional strengths as intermediaries to build bridges between grassroots organisations and local and national levels, and to apply their knowledge to local contexts in an increasingly interconnected globe*”³⁵. As a certification of this upper hypothesis we can bring the study conducted by the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) where they referred to the 631 ID- NGO leaders from 183 associations conducted in the years between 2012 - 2015.³⁶ The survey was used to disclose the substantial hurdles rendering inefficient these relief operations. Those were the inadequate social liaisons with local actors, a dearth of balance between connectivity and the donation attempts, and further the inadequate feedback which were coming from the vulnerable addressed. All of the components present in these old charity models.

As a matter of fact, the planning of the activities is heavily dependent on the unique structure of a project's social capital and on the usage of the company’s knowledge about specific issues and the recognition of the best tools to exploit so as to succeed in the Aid delivery operations. Therefore, the NGOs must interact and must define multi-interested parties and cross-sectors good practices. They must do this both from a formal perspective as well as from an informal one in order to nurture more cooperative reactions. Without such a general coordination, the “*NGOs’ swarm is inevitable, and the organisation mission is in danger*”³⁷. The definition of this uncommon word is taken from the social platform LinkedIn. Here, while referring to the term *swarm*, we intend “*the action of people working with others who they know just barely, if at all and teams will also include people that are outside the control of the organization [...] a fast, powerful and continuously*

³⁴ Miković, R., Petrović, D., Mihić, M., Obradović, V., & Todorović, M. (2020). The integration of social capital and knowledge management – the key challenge for International Development and Cooperation Projects of Non-profit Organizations. *International Journal of Project Management*, 38(8), 515–533. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2020.07.006>

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

*responsive behaviour to change of trillions of interconnected cells then applying swarming at an organisational level transform for better business activity”.*³⁸



Figure 10: 'The NGOs' Swarm' & swarming main characteristics

In trying to evaluate the reasons why there is this excessive failing of businesses' accomplishments, we should invoke the fact that these nongovernmental organisations are usually dealing with *Traditional models* which are incorrectly inspired by profit and governmental organisations. Yet, we are aware the two entities are more than diversified from one another and, thus, incompatible.

2. The biased mentalises of the ID scenario

There is the necessity to understand the international scene where these organisations are operating and delivering their own projects. It is relevant to individualise the general arena where these operations and models are put into practice. Only in this way, it is possible to understand the reasons why these models are still used and thus, inefficiency occurs. This is precisely the aim of the section. Here, we will see how the world is thought to be ideologically separated by walls made up with the old and expired mentalities which perpetuates the wide global gap between the Global North and the Global South of this unbalanced world. Past mentalities these are still entrenched in our current ideologies. The following analysis will give a global perspective on the images and the representations on what is considered to be this biased and disjointed world where we live today.

³⁸ Patary, C. (n.d.). *Swarming technique for organisational transformation: Community > structure*. LinkedIn. Retrieved May 5, 2023, from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/swarming-technique-organizational-transformation-chandan-lal-patary>

2.1 Identities construction by Northern NGOs

Significance is given to the acknowledgement of the discourse carried out by the influential Northern NGOs operating at an international level. Here, we will deal with the appraisal of the imagery and the visual mental representations which have been built up by these bodies throughout all the recent years that have elapsed. They succeeded in sustaining the construction of opposite *identities* of the divergent constituents. This global framework led to the ideal justification of the global gap which is currently and repeatedly distancing *us* – the Northern colonising people with supreme powers and leading authority - *from them* – who are the poor colonised Southerners in need of our civilization process. This is given by the ideal and hierarchical superiority of the West. Hence, we cover here a part of the show in which we see the two main characters on stage composing the play. From one side there are the Northern influential Aid delivery organisations and then from the other side, the Southern constituents’ recipients of Aid in humanitarian crises. How are these actors represented? Let’s assess it together throughout our methodological analysis.

In the current international portrayal, indeed, these Southern members are represented and visualised as in a permanent status of passive, needy and essential dependence on the Northern counterparts. They are (on the other side of the coin) designated as the active, knowledgeable, motivated, energetic, expert, kind and very supportive players in the development projects undertaken. They are, as seen in Alpa Dhanani’s paper³⁹ as characterised to be *the do-gooders* of the development scenario, the ones to whom developing countries need to show their gratification.

Nonetheless, this is a very biased discourse and an unclear representation which leads to the framing process of the Southern receivers and the Northern assistants as following a traditional and expired *Charity Model of Development*. This ideology, obviously, undermines the values and principles which should be instead followed in ID. We should recall mutual trust, respect, collaboration, equity, just solidarity and egalitarianism. All this set of ethical values should be part

³⁹ Dhanani, A. (2019). Identity Constructions in the annual reports of international development ngos: Preserving Institutional Interests? *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 59, 1–31.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpa.2018.06.001>

of the *Ethos* making up the predominant Northern NGOs. These bodies should have open minds and a firm willingness to be truthfully engaged in realising the demands of the Southerners in need. The Northerners have been found to appear as vastly giving strong emphasis to the interests of the foreign audiences and to their self-servings. The annual reports are increasingly used as the display of the Northern NGOs’ businesses which have been manipulated so as to give a persuasive image of our modern world: *The North and The South*. This image enriches the reputation of the former side in assisting the latter part. Therefore, to what does this imagery lead if not to the creation of non-neutral reports about the outcomes achieved by these Aid companies? This uniquely aliments the formation of global imbalances and asymmetries of power which promote expired beliefs and incorrect ideologies on the nature of these two portions of the final puzzle making up the world.

These major figures of the Northern side have been capable of acquiring the ability to formulate the main rules in the play and to *create people* through the formulation of the needs and the unreal wishes of the beneficiaries. Undoubtedly, this argumentation was inspired by Brown work in 2010, where he conveyed his discussion about the manners through which these Northern bodies are shaping both of the figures in the international setting, while nurturing a new global representation. The Northern public perspective formulates their own biased framing of stories and of identities and they tend to be the first-row spectators of the unsecured and needy Southern characters on stage. The Northern public appears to be engaged in a campaign of self-promotion which inevitably fosters the formation of false ideologies. These ideas are wrongly certified, and the mentalities are assured by the untrue images and the data reports from the big multi-national Northern NGOs. On the other side, the smaller and less politicised local companies could instead be better connected with the governments of the States from the developing and unprivileged world.

Consequently, we must acknowledge that this discourse is connected to the ideas coming from the Post-Colonial Theory and from its cultural legacies. This alimented the North/South asymmetries and these inequitable power relations occurring between the colonised and the colonisers. In point of fact, we can demonstrate three main points which are here claimed so as to clarify our doubts while also challenging the discourse-oriented theory on the past colonial power. In this way, we could discover and unlock the hidden power relationships between these distinctive societal groups.

At the same time, we could expose the possible power dynamics formulated within the discourse and place attention on the role of the NGOs, while considering the parallel discourse on the construction of social identities and social relations through blurred lenses. This argumentation was widely expressed by Said in his masterpiece about the relationship between power and knowledge-creation during the colonial epoch which is called “*Orientalism*” in 1978. We will recur to the analysis of this discourse’ framework and to the understanding of the images and the examination of the usages of photographs on the main Development journals or in the annual data reports. We will be able to acknowledge the inner processes and the various reasons why societal actors, certain events and some organisations are depicted in such particular fashion inside a specific historical, political and cultural context where the main Northern NGOs happen to operate.

The Post-Colonial Theory under discussion is centralised on the role of the Non-Western subjects. These Southerners are, hence, designed and idealised as being inactive and incapable of providing for themselves. This is due to their lack of sovereignty and to their mental *inferiority* which made them to have *meaningless* voices. This mentality, obviously, perpetuates the colonial power and consolidates the many inequalities and the uneven relations of power between these two groups. These players, however, are visualised through the post-colonial biased lenses. Thus, there is no need to say that this colonial argumentation was a politicised and unreal construction of a Reality surrounding us that has no scientific bases and that possesses no resemblance with the real world of nowadays. Here, we find the overestimation of the old ideology about the Eurocentrism discourse and the supremacy of the developed side of the world. It is crucial to assess these structures of domination which position the Northern over the Southern disadvantaged counterpart.

Along this discourse, it is known that these Northern development NGOs find their origins and their first operational roots in the decolonisation period itself. Mostly in the years of 1970s /1980s /1990s we assisted to a boom of the NGOs’ number and their growth of powers guided by a *charity-welfare* approach. In this field, they were moved by a mentality where there was a predominance of *care towards others*. Thus, they had to put all their efforts so as to provide for the assistance and the development of these just-decolonised countries of the world, which have been suffering for decades from the colonising pains provoked by these agents and by their wealth and appetites.

Now, the Development industry and the NGOs are seen as the most suitable agents who could finally give a voice to the ones who have been ignored for too many years, to spread the voice of the marginalised groups in the *subaltern* societies. Then, there was an ideological shift from the prevalent colonial discourse of the *charity-based* model to a more post-colonial *right-based* model of intervention. This latter aimed at the wellness of the people in need and at the eradication of the inequitable societal structures which were the causes of the gap between the privileged and the disadvantaged ones. Eventually, these Aid- organisations had not only to give funding and grants to the poor people in need of financial assistance but also to support their lives and wellbeing.

These Development companies were globally framed as the ones who could arrive at the right solutions in order to overcome poverty, give dignity and revive the respect to the ones who have always been silent, without any possibility of empowerment with no personal agency and neither means of ownership in the development process. This process could manage to flourish their rights while also allowing them to access to the resources offered by these communities and rendering them the architects of their own processes of development. Summary of all this discussion is possible with the assessment of this process as being the shift from the old, biased and currently expired *discourse of care towards the others* to an instead new *discourse of emancipation and of direct empowerment* of the local communities of the South. Findings of these ideas were also declared by Spivak in the argumentation that he carried out and then disclosed in his 1988 work.

All this discourse is inflated by the Western ideology of bringing welfare and of delivering the necessary democracy and social justice, which is fundamental for the flourishing of needy developing states. Hence, these actions are seen as the justifications from Northern companies of their behaviours and their attitudes which are directed to the Global South of the world. They were thought as acting in accountability towards these people since they were *“speaking as the people, with the people, for the people and of the people”*⁴⁰ while assessing the *continuum of NGOs voice*. However, this ideology aiming at the delivery of equity, human freedom and social equality, is usually overshadowed by the augmentation of power and by the dominative relations between the Global North & the Global South and with the criticism directed towards these Northern bodies.

In conclusion then, we all accept that there is poverty and there is urgency of actions and interventions in many impacted socio - political difficult scenarios. However, how this story is told and how these actors play on the stage is a major point which calls for an analysis of the methodological perspective and its approach. It is relevant to understand how we can see this connection between language and power and the discourse which is used by the main International agents who are the most influential in the Development sector. Moreover, significant importance is conceded to *“the way social power, abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted reproduced and resisted”*⁴¹. In this manner, we are capable of understanding why there is an unchangeable socio-political context of struggle and why we account for a diversity of power between these two opposite societal groups. This can shed light to the ideologies through which people *make sense* of the *Reality* while justifying and thus perpetuating our extended global gap in this current world.

2.2 North / South divide in ID.

Particularly, when dealing with these associations' in action, significant were the challenges which have been faced by the Northern international organs during the recent global events. Impacting circumstances and struggling political economic and social contexts, were provoked by the Global Financial crisis of the last decade (2007 - 2008) which have contributed to the worldwide spread of many adverse effects. These events have indeed affected extensively every local regional and national managerial sector around the world, and most importantly they have pushed the developed, wealthier and financialised side of this planet to react to the crisis so as to find affordable solutions.

Therefore, the Northern governments and all the affiliated organisations, as well as our nongovernmental organisations, have been forced to radically rethink about their process of delivering humanitarian assistance and Aid to the emergency contexts, since -as reported by the UK government in 2013- they had *“An increase responsibility in getting the best value for every pound which is spent on foreign Aid”*⁴² The Northern donors were motivated to appear as being *“the great contributors for a sustainable economic growth and a poverty reduction”*⁴³. Then large donors who were located on the developed portion of the world, have always been very interested in using a sort of model of *Aid for trade* where they could receive *“mutually beneficial development for the advancement of the donors as well as for the advantage of the recipients beneficiaries”*⁴⁴.

Again, these bodies and their efficiency in the delivery of good projects in International Development, are also determined by their geographical location. These traits are what we refer to as *the sample specific categorical variables*. They are those remembered to be the variables representing the number of projects of the association, the work carried out, the extent of the staff and so on. In point of fact, the contextual diversities and the communal developmental differences that each association faces, are significant determinants of their behaviours and also, they impact the future attainments of positive outcomes in the delivery of benefits to the agonising populations of the Global South. The Northern agencies, indeed, focus and place their resources on some *broader issues* which can be for instance the education or other main developing ideas; whereas the latter, which are more locally directed, are usually carrying out some project initiatives at the regional, local, communal level since they tend to be less expensive in costs. Furthermore, some of the main Northern NGOs may be around 100 years old, reaching almost 20 projects over-sought per year and with millions of dollars of budget available in their operations. Consequently, they may involve more than 10.000 individuals in the management of the project cycle with around half of them regularly paid with a fixed salary and later adding the non-paid volunteers that contribute

⁴⁰ Dhanani, A. (2019). Identity Constructions in the annual reports of international development ngos: Preserving Institutional Interests? *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 59, 1–31. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpa.2018.06.001>

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Kuruppu, S. C., & Lodhia, S. (2019). Disruption and transformation: The Organisational Evolution of an NGO. *The British Accounting Review*, 51(6), 100828. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bar.2019.03.003>

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

to the strategies for humanitarian relief in more than 200 developing countries. The diversities in policies between the two groups is capable of producing power disparity and inequalities in ID.

Additional information on this global divide has been well-documented by scholars as for instance Mohan in 2002, through his research. Insights from this work, will be useful so to have a clear global representation on how these two sides of the world are distanced from one other. This separation occurs through the ideological biases given by ages of dominant discourse. This analysis is essential so as to account for the characteristics and for the diversities of these two portions of the world that have been shaped. In fact, we can clearly categorise the Northern as *the developed part of the globe* whereas, on the other side, the Southern as *the developing counterpart*.

Subsequently, more scholars gave precise account of these two sides of the globe and dealt with this appealing discrepancy of the modern scene. In the former side the *paternalistic* donors are remembered as the supportive *Northerners* who are mobilised by a sort of *parental* instincts of protection, of endless care and of nurture among the observers and among the audience of the Northern NGOs. Instead, from the other side, there are the miserable *Southerners* who are depicted in an inferior manner since they are passive, lesser beings and culturally backward. All the images are thus showing the Southern constituents –particularly women- as the perfect personification of vulnerability and helplessness, without including the dimension of the personal aspirations, the ambitions and the dignity of these members who are blocked into inequitable structures of power. In fact, the representation of the powerlessness is conveyed without including the general contexts and the circumstances in which these populations are segregated. Hence, this idealisation only perpetuates the reinforcement of the process retrieving all the human agency from the Southerners.



Figure 8: The imagery of women in Northern biased reportages

This dynamic leading to the reification of the dependency of the Southerners from the Northerners, cannot help but building up a persuasive *active-passive continuum* where the active agents of the Northerners are the ones intervening and providing for the remedy of missing social goods. On the other side the Southerners are visualised as *have nots* in their level of helplessness. Needless to say, these representations do not give attention to the focus towards “*the Southerners’ survival efforts and endeavours and resilience and resourcefulness of the communities*”⁴⁵ since they live in situations where they face and fight many adversities daily. In truth, “*it does not matter how well intentioned and charity-oriented interventions that supply social goods are, they almost always damage the search of local political solutions*”⁴⁶. The intensification of the role of Northern NGOs as upholding the position of *neo-colonialists* encroaching on the global Southerners about what they should possess by human right, shapes the public communication of global civil society, and undermines the capabilities of the constituents themselves. This is remembered from the research of the “*The cast of the characters*” written by Dogra, in 2012 and which is reported in the paper analysed ⁴⁷. Here, there is the idea of the *duality* between the Southerners’ passivity and on the other side there is an overestimation of the Northern fabricated activity and of their support.

⁴⁵ Dhanani, A. (2019). Identity Constructions in the annual reports of international development ngos: Preserving Institutional Interests? *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 59, 1–31. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpa.2018.06.001>

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

A precise study analysed in Dhanani, 2019, shows how there was an overrepresentation of the Northerners with more than 57% of the images where the Southerners receivers were represented as posing in a passive, detached and willing-less manner. Whereas on the opposite side, in more than 66% cases, there was the configuration of Northerners as being the active and *energetic doers* who were showed to be carrying out a particular type of activity in motion. The same intervention which would have brought economic progress to the communities of the Global South. This is all clear evidence about the idealisation of the Northern communities and their NGOs as being motivated to provide humanitarian assistance and to help the Southern inferior counterparts in need. Plus, many are the pictures representing these Northern supporters from nongovernmental organisations in different photos and not in the same as the ones with the Southern recipients. These two groups could not mix together. In fact, there was a general sense that the Donors were superior and could not mingle with the activities undertaken by the Southern communities. The Northerners were engaged in providing for funds which will be later used in local projects for the societies. Reports on the evidence about the *Duality discourse* is attached in the following scheme.

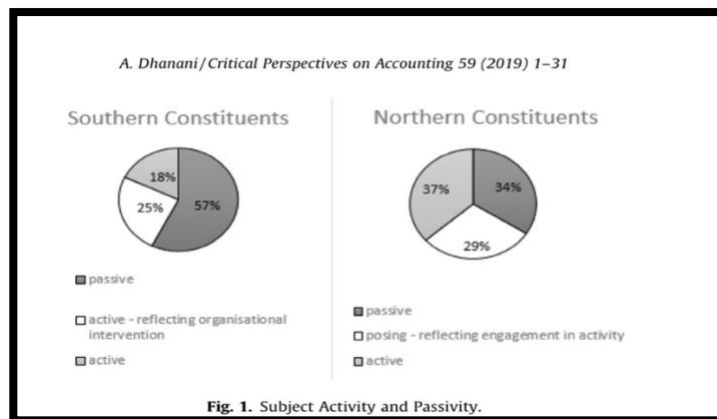


Figure 9: ‘The cast of Characters’ - Duality South & North

3.A New Model for Northern NGOs

In this part, the research design will concentrate on the possible manners through which Northern influential NGOs could achieve better results, acquire more trust by the international agents and fulfil the desires of the recipients of humanitarian Aid. Moreover, the examination of the methods used in this research will be conducted so as to find and disclose this final possible Model for success and all the characteristics involved. This one should be used by NGOs so as to be victorious.

This stage opens the doors to new procedures and attitudes for Northern NGOs to follow in Development. Here, we reply to the research questions and propose an alternative to our hypothesis.

3.1 The Integrated Model for success in ID

The requirement of adopting an efficient use of social capital and to achieve social networks and well-suited social connections in the knowledge management of projects delivery by the NGOs is, indeed, very emphasised by our research design and by our assessment of this failing environment. Precisely, this word just cited, *knowledge*, is a crucial one since the elements of knowledge and learning are to be found at the very heart, as being pillars of the International Development practice. There is, in truth, a sort of inevitability in accessing and creating this specialised knowledge so as to strengthen the influence of the Northern located and Western oriented NGOs in the International Development scenario. This framework will also enhance the self-agency of the beneficiaries and their human capital and render them capable of being fairly involved in the decision-making process. This is the conjunction of the activities and the ideas about the projects which are destined to foster their own wellness in society. The wellness which is not only conceptualised from an economical point of view but most importantly from a human perspective of living a real *good life*. As follows, the *development persuasiveness* and the positive results will be strictly connected to the ability of the organisations to properly manipulate and handle this *knowledge* - which flows from a variety of channels, and which is given by the body external and the internal social capital.

A particular parenthesis here must be assigned to the term *Social Capital* “*it is the sum of actual and potential resources of an organisation*”, continuing the explanation, it is “*A network of strong personal connections which have developed over time and which represent the essence of trust, cooperation and collective action in such communities [...] A valuable resource, bringing mutual recognition and long-term obligation as a result of feelings of gratitude, of respect, of friendship or of institutionally guaranteed rights, to members of a family, class or school*”⁴⁸. The philosophical inspiration comes from the philosopher Bourdieu in his 1986 ‘*The forms of Capital*’.

⁴⁸ Miković, R., Petrović, D., Mihić, M., Obradović, V., & Todorović, M. (2020). The integration of social capital and knowledge management – the key challenge for International Development and Cooperation Projects of Non-profit Organizations. *International Journal of Project Management*, 38(8), 515–533. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2020.07.006>

Hence, social networks are very valuable resources as well as social capital both from an inter-organisational viewpoint and also from an intra-organisational angle. There are, altogether, a huge variety of dimensions from which we shall address this social capital discourse in the investigation:

- From a *structural dimension* which investigates the relationships between the various participants, their ties in the network, their structural equivalence, and also their position in it.
- There is, also, a more human dimension which is called *relational dimension*, and which comprises all the personal interactions among people overtime. This proportion englobes also the closeness between individuals, their reciprocal trust, and also all their mutual expectations.
- Subsequently, we cannot omit to consider the *cognitive dimension* which is the conjunction of the *shared meanings* that are collectively hold by all the members who are part of the network.
- Finally, we pose our attention to the aspects of the *nodal dimension* which is specifically destined to the appraisal of the recipients and even the sources of information of this *knowledge*. Reference to this discussion is readable in the following table which is therefore presented below.

INPUT VARIABLES	Link to the literature cited in the theoretic and methodological part of the paper
SAMPLE-SPECIFIC VARIABLES	
Years of work	
Number of projects, employees, volunteers	
Management structure of the organization	
Geographic location of the organization	
Scope of work of the organization/prevalent activity	
SOCIAL CAPITAL (inter/intra-organizational levels)	
S1 - Number of ties (network openness)	Burt, 2004
S2 - Number of direct ties (network closeness)	Straub, 2005
S3 - Network position (centrality)	Burt, 2004
S4 - Structural equivalence	Walker, 1985
S5 - Strength of ties (intensity of communication)	Marsden & Campbell, 1984
S6 - Strength of ties (longevity of ties)	Marsden & Campbell, 1984
S7 - Closeness of actors	Simonin, 1999; Sampson, 2007; Hansen & Lovas, 2004
S8a, S8b, S8c - Trust (individuals, teams, organizations)	Fukuyama, 1995
S9 - Self - heterogeneity (individuals, teams, organizations)	Puranam, 1993
S10 - Norms (and respecting the norms)	Puranam, 1993
S11 - Sanctions	Puranam, 1993
S12 - Obligations and expectations (individuals, teams)	Burt, 1992
S13 - Common vision and goals	Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998
S14 - Common organizational values	Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998
S15 - Common expertise	Ori, 1990
S16 - Diversity of network contacts	Perry-Smith, 2006
S17 - Power (material/financial resources)	Barhamand & Hesse, 2007
S18 - Power (achieved results)	-
S19 - Power (level of influence)	-
S20 - Capacity for receiving/transferring knowledge	Matharand & Alexander, 2009
S21 - Depth of knowledge	Tallon & Phares, 2007
OUTPUT VARIABLES	
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT	
K1 - Knowledge creation (innovation of knowledge through exchanges with other individuals, groups and networks)	Bukowitz & Williams, 2000; McElroy, 1993; Wing, 1993; Meyer & Zack, 1996
K2 - Knowledge acquisition (collection of existing knowledge and identification of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge)	Lee & Choi, 2003
K3 - Knowledge dissemination (share of tacit knowledge through social and collaborative networks and transfer of explicit knowledge from one source to another)	Niinaka, 1994
K4 - Knowledge usage (usefulness and reliability of tools and procedures for accumulating knowledge and data, standardization and clarity of systematized knowledge and data, system for storing data and prevention of data and knowledge loss, simplicity of usage of knowledge and data)	Niinaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Argote & Ingram, 2000
	Bouill Vukob, Milanović & Gombak, 2010; Katić & Given, 2017

Figure 11: The social capital & knowledge management’s components

Therefore, the possession of knowledge is an advantage for the association itself and it has its own proper life cycle; this is called the “*knowledge management maturity*”⁴⁹ and it is, indeed, an essential requisite needed in the phases for idealisation and then the conduction of the projects.

⁴⁹ Miković, R., Petrović, D., Mihić, M., Obradović, V., & Todorović, M. (2020). The integration of social capital and knowledge management – the key challenge for International Development and Cooperation Projects of Non-profit Organizations. *International Journal of Project Management*, 38(8), 515–533. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2020.07.006>

Thusly, it follows that the exchange of ideas, the emphasis on the knowledge and the expertise of the heads involved in this process, affect and could determine the organisations’ accomplishments while leading to future long-term triumphs and to positive outcomes from Northern NGOs in ID. In such a way, there is the necessity for a new model which pushes towards a knowledge-based network for Development and also towards a sort of *mutual learning* viewpoint between the insiders of these organisations and the needy beneficiaries receiving Aid. This mixture will lead to a new effective *Integrated Model* which will involve both social capital and knowledge management. The correct implementation of this model would drive the IANGOs in the direction of a good management of the life cycles of the projects and to the avoidance of a possible mismatch between *wicked problems* (addressed in chapter 1) and the members of the current charity sector. Plus, we must remember that these entities most likely aim at the so called *soft* rather than *hard projects* and they often hold on to abstract ideas and conceptions which prefer the methodological usage of the qualitative analysis rather than then the recurrence to empirical quantitative studies. Here, reported below, is a scheme which conveys the above-analysed integrated model of knowledge management and social capital which could lead to more positive outcomes for NGOs.

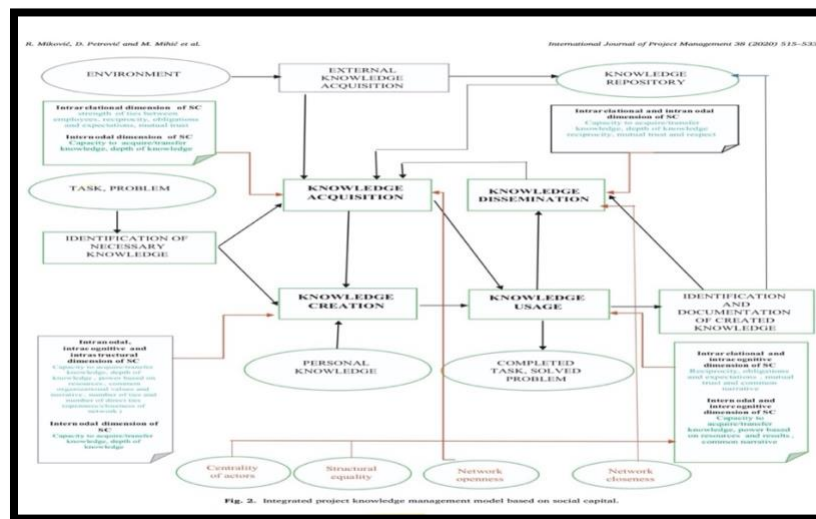


Figure 12: Visual representation of the Integrated Model for future NGOs’ successes

3.2 Methods used in the Research

Through a methodological research, we may be capable of appraising what do we mean when we use either the term *failure* or *success* in the distribution of compensations and in the consignment of Development outcomes in struggling contexts. Many are the useful methods which can be adopted in order to appraise the extent to which a non-profit association has been efficient or not. Several are the methodological tools which have been used to identify the research questions of the research design, to be capable of replying to them through the findings obtained and at the same time to give a theoretical background in support of these results at the end of our analysis. This is essential to educate about the necessary conjunction of elements as knowledge management and social capital composing the new integrated model discussed during our hypothesis exposition. As a matter of fact, distinctive methods of research have been adopted during the present analysis we have conducted. Precisely, our research design has been used in order to answer to the research questions at the base of this investigation and thanks to the empirical evidence extrapolated from singular and concrete case studies. Here, we used a variety of diverse methods to achieve the final results and therefore to confirm and to certify our hypothesis coming from prior knowledge. We recall indeed, several methodologies which have been implemented in this analysis, as for instance:

We recurred to the implementation of an *interpretative content analysis*. This one has been adopted so as to better understand how NGOs organise their social capital and manage their knowledge while delivering their Aid policies and projects on the ground. From the Columbia University website, we can donate a better idea on what we mean with the term of content analysis: “*Interpretative Content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data (i.e. text). Using content analysis, researchers can quantify and analyse the presence, meanings, and relationships of such certain words, themes, or concepts. The researchers can in this way evaluate language used within a news article to search for bias or partiality. Researchers can then make inferences about the messages within the texts, the writer(s), the audience, and the culture and the time of surrounding the text.*”⁵⁰

⁵⁰ *Content analysis*. Content Analysis | Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. (n.d.). <https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/research/population-health-methods/content-analysis>

With this explication, we can firmly assess the high amount of usages we destined to this method. In fact, many times this dissertation focused on the meanings of the words and on the evaluation of certain terms or expressions used in our modern scene. This was possible through the exposure of the *Biases* in the discourse carried out by the Northern NGOs. Much of this technique was used to enlighten the way through which the influential International NGOs we examined in our case studies, used their own influence and own strategical position to impact these developing countries.

Moreover, in some other cases we recurred to the utilisation of a method called *semi - structured interviewing* for a better understanding of the findings through the words coming from relevant scholars, professors of Development with a great knowledge of these scenarios and even from influential agents who are directly operating at a grassroot level through their own NGOs. The usage of this method was significant given the fact that it gave us the chance to report and to analyse the ideas coming from the voices of notable personalities. These individuals either directly or indirectly impact communities and have a say on the current fragmented Development scenario. To give a precise definition we can use the citation reported on the Scribbr Website where “A *Semi - Structured Interview* is a data collection method that relies on asking questions within a predetermined thematic framework. However, the questions are not set in order or in phrasing. In research, semi-structured interviews are often qualitative in nature. They are generally used as exploratory tool in social science, in survey methodology, and in other research fields. They are also common in field research with many interviewers, giving everyone the same theoretical framework, but allowing them to investigate different facets of the Research Question”⁵¹. As a matter of fact, this definition was very specific on what we used as a major method to expose our case studies and the analyses associated to them. The usage of these types of interviews - which are not priorly fixed but possibly variable and flexible in nature – allows the interviewers to get in a closer connection with the interviewees and thus to recollect further information which is personal for those questioned and at the same time it is crucial to understand for the conductors of the research design and for the examination of precise singular case studies. In fact, “*Semi-structured interviews are often considered “the best of both worlds.” Combining elements of*

⁵¹ George, T. (2022, November 30). *Â Semi-structured interview: Definition, Guide & Examples*. Scribbr. <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/semi-structured-interview/Â>

structured and unstructured interviews gives semi-structured interviews the advantages of both: the chance to obtain comparable and reliable data, and, at the same time, the flexibility to ask follow-up questions”⁵². This particular method was beneficial for the research since we could withdraw more information and extrapolate the personal point of views of the agents working in those contexts under-examination. Given that our interview respondents are all personally associated with those deprived environments reviewed by our investigation (as the agents interviewed are strictly connected to the major case study of this dissertation) it was helpful for the conduction of the research and for bringing up correct answers to these Research Questions.

Eventually, as even conveyed by Creswell in his 2009 paperwork, with the instruction of a data analysis of these precise methods conducted during a research design, we can be capable of exposing and understanding the key insights and disclosing the particular connections that may emerge from an interview which can be associated to another one or else to other documents or to others observations that have been discovered throughout the collection of this information. Then, after the collection there is the possibility of writing a so called abundant and well supplied *thick description*. That allows us to bring light to the intentions of these NGOs, along with the potential issues and the possible shortcomings. The methods used and here described, allowed us to explore all the variables of our hypothesis through the findings from our case studies and to expose the necessity to implement a new Integrated model of success for the NGOs working in the ID scenario.

In pursuance of the identification of the variables related to social capital (our *input variable*) for the organisations, we shall consider the discrete dimensions. In this fashion, we could determine the relationships, the connections, the links, the communications, the shared values, the goals, the various dynamics on the role of power, material and non-material resources, expectations and the obligations between the actors involved in the process of Aid delivery and its reception. Thereafter, for the sake of determining the variables related to the knowledge management which is needed by each NGO so to intervene (*our output variable*), they should adopt the *four stages of research*.

⁵² George, T. (2022, November 30). *Semi-structured interview: Definition, Guide & Examples*. Scribbr. <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/semi-structured-interview/>

- *KC = Knowledge creation* through the innovation of our knowledge transfer in the process.
- *KA = Knowledge acquisition* thanks to the collection of knowledge which renders it explicit.
- *KD = Knowledge dissemination* thought the share of both the tacit and also explicit knowledge.
- *KU = knowledge usage* which happens through both the accumulation and the standardisation.

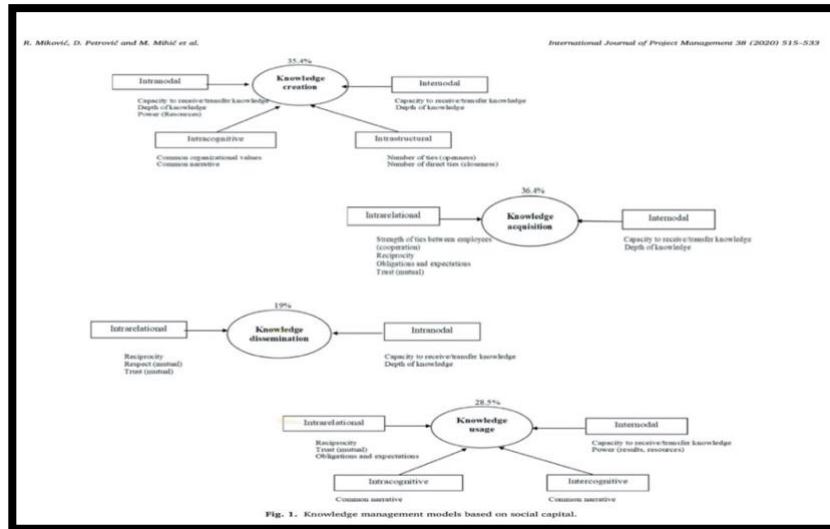


Figure 13: The variables associated with knowledge management.

After all this analysis, through the conduction of a particular research design and with the usage of these methods we could certify our hypothesis. The statistical tables reported can testify the internal consistency and truthfulness of our hypothesis on the possibility of enrichment of the NGOs and their effectiveness in delivery of efficient outcomes in the Development scene. This is thanks to the *cyclical feedback* that is present between the social capital and the knowledge management by a civil society association. Thus, these two elements are very influential and powerful tools for the business management and internal organisation of a non-profit body, since the creation, the transmission and the adoption of this knowledge can lead to the creation and to the adoption of other knowledge given the contribution provided by the social interactions and since we could learn from the knowledge acquired by others in the same field.

Therefore, the urgency of this model has to be given major emphasis because of the necessity of these bodies to successfully propose development policies and *good- projects* for the beneficiaries. In fact, these latter are conducted only if a body has a certain knowledge on how to use its own resources and how to achieve the best outcomes. Thus, they need knowledge on both what is the topic concerned (the struggle faced by the beneficiaries such as corruption, poverty, natural disaster, social inequality and so on and so forth) as well as on the best manner to solve for these issues (advocacy, the policy making, the cooperation between the various sectors of civil society).

Genuinely, when addressing all these elements, they are influenced by the internal as well as by the external environment which surrounds the associations and for this very reason the *knowledge repository* and background of these International nongovernmental entities is crucial in the model. The help provided by the research design here was fundamental to allow us to consider how this knowledge management deposit (this sort of internal archive possessed by the non-profit sector) could be hugely ameliorated through the inclusion of the variable *social capital* in the organisation system. The paramountcy of social connections in the system is certified in this new version from the scholar Gasik’s integrated project knowledge management model in his published 2011’s work.

Accordingly, we are capable to methodologically connect the increase of social ties, the reciprocity, mutuality, cohesion and teamwork abilities, to the respective augmentation of the access of information necessary to carry out of the project’s lifecycle (from initiation to the final delivery). This expanding collaboration and cooperation between the workforce in the management sector of the organisation, will inevitably require more direct entrance into the project information package. It is essential to clarify that the innovative and efficiency character of the undergoing International Development projects undertaken by the NGOs, is correlated to the traits of the projects internal and external managers and their ability to be *innovators*. The same projects and policies for the community which could solve for the exhausting challenges offered by the social, political and economic scene. Thence, the urgency of expertise, well-talented and well-networked managers and internal workforce in the managerial district cannot be stressed enough. All our attention is given to the structure and composition of the *project-ecosystem* and to the impacting usage of acquired knowledge for the achievement of positive results through these new lessons learned in the model.

The following step involves the sharing and the transmission of this systemised knowledge through both internal and also the external dissemination of the methods implemented. For this reason, the social interactions are the main protagonists of this chapter and the main actors of the research design. This is due to their capability to lead to some successful Development outcomes and then to reduce the excessive number of failures reported by our contemporary NGOs. Only through few but very essential elements we could reach outstanding results. We have come to the conclusion that there is the chance to alter and to redirect the failures into successes in the International Development industry. This may be possible through the integration of this new holistic model whose related questions are: *How to deliver Development projects ... And with whom to do this?*

4. Empirical Evidence for the Research Design

The requirement of real, concrete case studies is a must in the conduction of a proper research design. Possible connections with actual situations, lived environments and discussed scenarios will enrich this discourse and provide additional information on what has been the main focus of the study. A complete analysis demands for the disclosure of empirical findings and not only theoretical standpoints. Therefore, we will introduce the case studies which are used in the research and from which the research answers to our demanded initial research questions, will be responded.

4.1 Case studies' introduction

Exposing some case studies donates more accuracy and more evidence to the discussion. The literature review and the research design about the dependent and independent variable composing was essential for our main hypothesis. Now, thanks to the evaluation of two case studies in this work, wide references will be given to what we mean with Northern NGOs' roles in the International Development scenario, its general framework, the internal lacks, the biases, the paucity of their activities and the possible alterations of the directions of the NGOs to deliver Aid. Many are the cases in which we find the political influence from predominant Northern NGOs and here we can consider mostly the areas of the world where the intervention has been directed in order to assist the needs of the social community and in particular to account for women's struggles. These are given by the wide gender inequality and female disparity present in these environments.

Therefore, we will here consider two case studies which are used to sustain the information retrieved during the analysis. We will encounter a difference of relevance between these two analyses since the second case study will be assigned more magnitude throughout all our research. The opening one will be the case study of Sri Lanka and the transition of role of one of its main NGOs, its influential position in the communal framework and the results of its Business. This part will deal with the many international critiques coming from agents of the Development arena given the lack of social capital, local connections, fair links and bridges of communication with the indigent locals. The geopolitical position in the global scenario of this country will be appraised with also the critiques which have been justly directed towards the attitudes of the influential NGOs willing to solve for the weaknesses of the Asian country and to advocate for gender equality.

However, significant parenthesis will be dedicated to a second case study which will be the main and principal case study of the dissertation. This one focuses on the social and political condition of Afghanistan. The Afghan one is a very debated context for the international affairs due to the several concerns arising from the international agents about the scarcity of human rights, the lack of social and civil liberties and the role of women’s subjugation in this pressing environment. Also, it is a crucial State when we look at the global dynamics and at the International Relations because of the extent of Western influence and mostly of the United States’ presence in the territory and their ideological commitment towards the freedom of this community. Many times, we hear about the Northern magnetism, mostly U.S commanded, towards these struggling geographies of the developing world. Here, we account for the promises and the ambitions of delivering some true outcomes which could solve for the unbelievable conditions of inequality afflicted by the Taliban.

With the help coming from the methods used in the research design we will recollect information coming from international papers, main journals of Development , updated websites of today and from the words retrieved by the interviews conducted with major influential figures operating there, insights will be given on the mentalities coming from main Northern NGOs supporting the thesis’s general idea. The realization of this process could be the first step walked towards a path of democratic development, a new International Development industry built up on the true values and the shared communal desires to obtain results on the ground. The focus is on the real people and not leveraged by the interests of the foreign donors and stakeholders in the international scene.

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDIES’ ANALYSIS

1. Chapter’s introduction

This section of the dissertation refers to some examples, some precise geographical contexts and the specific behaviours of our protagonists: the nongovernmental organisations. Here, there will be the disclosure of the positions and the Northern biased attitude towards these Southern scenarios through some singular NGOs’ case studies focusing on precise contexts and specific communities. Therefore, we will now take all the elements we have analysed throughout the thesis, and we will combine them together in some authentic, solid, case studies. Firstly, emphasis will be given to the role of an influential NGOs operating in the Asian territory of Sri Lanka, and its conversion in time to an advocacy body. This case shows the foreign Donors influence in their campaigns for welfare and precisely their interest in directing advocacy for the community and for women rights. Continuing, then, bigger room will be destined to the second case study, the central and principal one during the whole chapter, which will release evidence on the intense conditions in Afghanistan. In this particular research, the disclosure of extended and certified material will sustain our ideas while also considering the role of the NGOs entities working in the country and while talking about the topic of gender inequality and women’s impossibility to conduct a proper and deserved lifestyle.

2. Case Study N°1 ‘Sri Lanka’s NGO & Gender Inequality’

The next sections, then, will be directed at the analysis of the geopolitical context of Sri Lanka. The scenery of the country will be explained with specific references assigned to the historical and the political conditions of the community. Additionally, the positions of the young girls in the Sri Lankan environment will be understood, and this will also be sustained by data concerning the role of women and their past and recent conditions in the society with respect to the male portion of it.

2.1 The Sri Lankan background

Before referring to the study of this NGO’s governance in Sri Lanka, significant is to evaluate the geopolitical role of this Nation in the global current scene. This country is located in the Indian Ocean, which is today a very interesting position in the geopolitical perspective. This relevance is given by the variety of its connections and the influences of this area in the international scenario. De facto, this country serves as a sort of bridge of connections between the two superpowers of China and Europe and this is a very influential and strategical location to have between two preeminent regions. Also, it is a neighbour State of other powerful countries such as Pakistan and India. Nevertheless, this strategic position of the country does not preclude it to still be under the influence of the old British domination coming from the colonisation period. Here, we account for the imperial times with domination and exploitation of all the material resources. It was one of the tassels of the trade and it included all the political and commercial relations inside the commonwealth, which were genuinely used to take advantages of the old wealth from the oriental underdeveloped countries. Since that period of time, many are the power dynamics inside these local contexts with the political direction of the State following the foreign interests and inner mentalities. These latter could possibly reinforce and give another time room to a *neo - imperialistic ideology*. Mentality which is capable of undermining the government guidance and impacting the national sovereignty and the personal democratic agency of the Sri Lankan people.

2.2 Report on gender inequality in Sri Lanka

When dealing with the gender dimension in the country, we have a variety of reports to consider and much data which has been collected in order to assess women conditions and their social situation concerning their role in the political community. In fact, this precise country of the central Asian region has a lacking aspect concerning gender equality and same opportunities between the two sexes. It globally ranks on a low level on many gender equality indices. This is true even if for many years women played a large role in the political community while fighting for their rights and claiming loudly their own requests. Nonetheless, in most of the cases, women are unable to fulfil their own needs and have constant obstacles to properly live a life outside of their female-oriented domestic sphere. In considering some of the data collected and dealing with gender issues,

Sri Lanka had a rapid decline when we focus on gender gap. Using the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI), we compare the various gender-based gaps and the countries’ progress or decline over a specific period of time. The worsening score of Sri Lanka is impressive: if the country was 13th out of 115 states in the Global Gender Gap Index in the year 2006, consequently in the range of time between 2019-2020 it collapsed to the 102nd position out of 153 countries. An impressive drop of more than 89 positions, as visible in the graph reported below ⁵³.

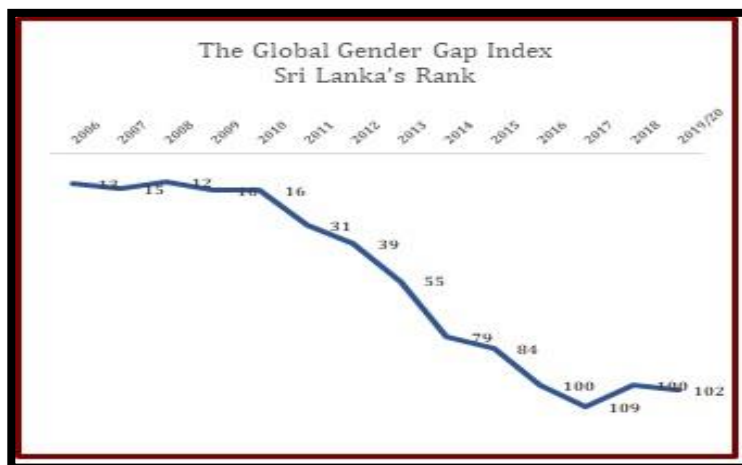


Figure 14: The GGGI report in Sri Lanka between 2006-2020

Moreover, continuing on this analysis, out of the 8.5 million economically active population, great difference is visible in the gap between the 72% who are males and only the 35% who are females. Plus, even if women constitute the 52% of Sri Lanka’s population, still female representation in parliament is only 5.3% which gives a very low political representation to women. Along the lines of this information, women are largely unrepresented in the national politics. In fact, on regard of that matter, the country is positioned 182 out of the 193 countries of the international scene. ⁵⁴ The matter of the dearth of the political participation is one of the most impacting questions for Sri Lanka’s civil society, since we assist to a complete lack of women’s

⁵³ *Reducing the gap in understanding Sri Lanka's gender gap - verité research*. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.veriteresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/VR_ENG_Insights_Mar2021_Reducing-the-Gap-in-Understanding-Sri-Lankas-Gender-Gap.pdf

⁵⁴ *UN Women Sri Lanka*. Asia. (n.d.). Retrieved March 29, 2023, from <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/sri-lanka>

voice in politics. Finally, we must consider the topic of gender-based violence which is another of the crucial themes for the NGOs and for their advocacy in international campaigns. Data coming from the research conducted in 2019 by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), reports that more than 90% of all the Sri Lankan adult women and young girls have possibly faced a sexual harassment in public sites or in public transportations at least once in their lifetime⁵⁵. The respect towards women is a significant topic and, for this reason, many influential NGOs are nowadays focusing more on human (particularly women) rights and directing towards an advocacy position.

3. The Transformation of the NGOs’ role in Sri Lanka

The following section will be destined to the study of the positional shifts of some of the most influential non-profit bodies intervening in Sri Lanka. Particularly, one of the main NGOs operating in the country – DEVPA Sri Lanka- will be inspected and its annexed critiques will be disclosed to sustain our hypothesis through literature review and through visual informative tables.

3.1 Critiques towards the NGOs’ activities in the country

As criticism is an undergoing process which we always find in most of the current literature available on the main Northern NGOs, even in this part of the work we will focus on the critiques that have been pointed out towards the major organisations operating in this country. Many are the voices which echoed the idea that the various Northern NGOs acting in the State have been seen rather as *foreign facing* than justly oriented towards the needs of the Sri Lankan people. Hence, not replying to the local government’s requests of humanitarian assistance and external Aid. There has been a recurring necessity of NGOs’ accountability at an international level, not only from some foreign figures and their material funding, but most importantly from the general public. Accountability was required while aligning with the local political agenda to succeed development.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

3.2 The evolution of an NGO: ‘DEVPA Sri Lanka’.

Many are the contemporary NGOs which are working in the Sri Lankan groundwork but, in this precise case study, the optic is oriented at the examination of one of the predominant organisations in the country, namely, ‘DEVPA Sri Lanka’. This nongovernmental entity has been very active in the country for decades and it is child of the parent body recalled in ID as ‘DEVPA Global’. This organisation has passed diverse phases of transformations and internal evolutions of its main positions, roles and structural directions in the international framework. In fact, it started its operational serving in the Development scenario as a *development - based* body usually acting as a direct implementer of concrete development ideas in the delivery of welfare and of assistance. However, when time elapsed and some projects have been carried out in the country towards the inhabitants, the organisation found itself to be seen as a sort of *hybrid- company* connecting both direction of development and advocacy together in order to be politically influential too. Thus, it passed a phase where it had both a development-based as well as an advocacy-based organisational structure, which made the NGO to be a mix hybrid body in the International Development setting.

However, in the last stage, there was a voting procedure, and, in this instance, it was approved for a majority of votes the decision aimed at a change of the NGO’s role in the Sri Lankan context. De facto, now the body is an international *policy-advocacy* non-governmental organisation which is more advocacy oriented. As main characteristics, it is now less hierarchical with a more decentralized structure and with much more attention (public focus) towards the urgent challenges and policies to be promoted and supported by civil society. These are mostly the concerns which are related to the topic of many women, young girls and their children in need of assistance in the community and desiring the accomplishment of gender equality in this unbalanced society today. After the alteration of the organisation’s direction, there has been a request of more trust towards the NGO and of more support arriving from donors’ countries and from the States’ governments. Not missing were the hesitations from external bodies to fund the company itself, given that it was not proving to be successful in its position of delivery of Aid and of actively responding to the needs of the people. There was a very visible trend towards a dependency of the association on the foreign core stakeholders given that they prioritised to be legitimated by these agents rather than by the local partners. They were acting not towards the communal receivers of Aid in first person.

This is a concrete example of the hypothesis which we have explained during the research design in the previous chapter. Here, it is possible to understand how the businesses and foreign interests of the company were essential and more important than the real needs of the Sri Lankan recipients. Henceforth, this shift of position has led to the augmentation of the interdependence of the power relations between the players involved in the Development process. This has also driven towards a deficiency in the general clarity of their projects and inaccuracy of the programs and their benefits. Thus, we have arrived at a situation in which now Donors give resources to the Northern and International NGOs in order for them to be capable of influencing the local governments and of directing the policies to be implemented in the community’s political setting. In this manner, they have succeeded in managing to subtract from the Local inhabitants their democratic right, if not their personal agency and their basic entrepreneurship in the political decision making. All traits which should be present in the country given the fact that it is a liberal democracy Sri Lanka today. Concluding on this case study, as expressed by the authors Kuruppu and Lodhia, 2019, further research is more than needed in order to carefully analyse the positive and negative consequences that come from the diversity of governance adopted by the NGOs.⁵⁶ Along these lines, additional research is also necessary to examine the plausible operational models and the effective means which can be implemented to correctly respond to these emergency contexts and current challenges.

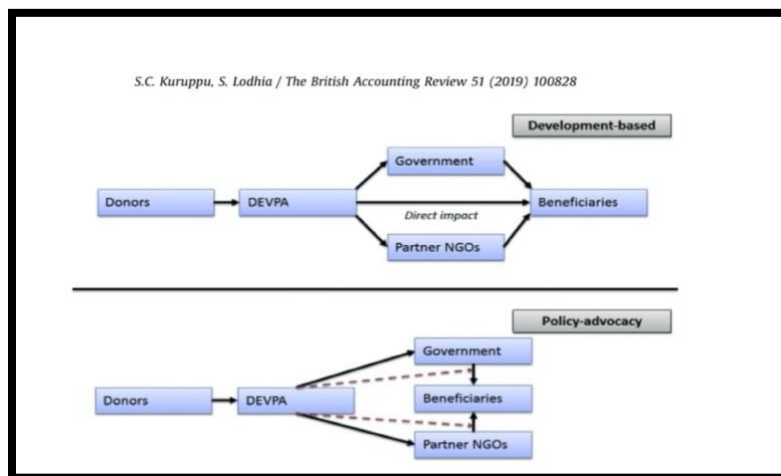


Figure 14: The shift of direction of 'DEVPA Sri Lanka's' role

⁵⁶ Kuruppu, S. C., & Lodhia, S. (2019). Disruption and transformation: The Organisational Evolution of an NGO. *The British Accounting Review*, 51(6), 100828. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bar.2019.03.003>

4. Case Study N° 2 'Afghanistan, Development and Geopolitics'

In this section of the dissertation, we will focus on the second case study, the leading one of the entire chapter, concerning the geopolitical scenario of Afghanistan and the possible intervention in the country. We will continue on the analysis of the Central Asia region, but now, with a precise and cardinal attention given towards the dynamic background of this country. The significance of the case study will be disclosed while providing many ideas, concepts, and personal references addressing the current living conditions daily faced by the inhabitants, especially by the young girls and the women. Consequently, crucial issues as the gender status of this Nation will be exposed and then later evaluated through data and citations from authors of the Development scene.

4.1 The Afghan background

While referring to Afghanistan, there are harsh and severe conditions which are suffered by the population on a daily basis. As supported by Amnesty international in its reportage,⁵⁷ the national setting of the country is very unstable, and the situation has uniquely worsened in recent times. The country is located in the Central Asian region along countries as Iran, Russia, India and China since it is not considered to be precisely part of the Middle East, as explained by the Afghan Aid.⁵⁸

The list of significant neighbours suddenly introduces the strategical interests by the Western states. If this State was already a struggling environment for the global international affairs, now the condition has reached its worst peak since the Taliban (Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan) takeover on the 15th of August 2021 and the respective fall of the Afghan National Government. This phenomenon has progressively led to its international isolation and to a complete economic upheaval which worsened even more the social, the political and the cultural insecurities of the country. The Taliban, or *students*, as it is the meaning in Pashto language, emerged at the same

⁵⁷ Human rights in Afghanistan. Amnesty International. (n.d.). Retrieved March 2023, from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-asia/afghanistan/report-afghanistan/>.

⁵⁸ Afghanaid. (n.d.). *Is Afghanistan in the middle east? Afghanaid explains!* Afghanaid. Retrieved May 2023, from <https://www.afghanaid.org.uk/is-afghanistan-in-the-middle-east-afghanaid-explains>

time of the Soviet Troops’ redrawing from Afghanistan in the early 1990s and, ever since that, they were determined to spread their own Islamist hard-line form of the Sunni Islam. The imposition of the Taliban rules and their authoritarian perspective was accompanied by the institution in politics of the ‘Sharia Law’. This is the Islam’s Legal System which derives precisely from the Quran – Islam’s holy book – and also from the Sunnah and the Hadith – respectively the deeds and the various sayings pronounced from the Prophet Muhammad.⁵⁹ However, when responses are not clearly found on these books, then religious scholars are allowed to donate their own personal conception to the writings and to enlighten the followers with the correct ideas and actions. In fact, the Law’s institutionalization was initiated and set up in November 2021 and ever since that introduction, there were so many radical changes all around the country. There were many extrajudicial executions happening in public places and with no national safeguard for the citizens condemned to be legally protected. Moreover, there was the ban of all peaceful assemblies and reunions of citizens and additionally no public demonstrations or protests were allowed. The streets turned out to be highly unsafe since the attacks and the bombings are at the order of the day.

Personal experiences of these events were provided by the interview with the influential personality of Ariane Geiger Hiriart⁶⁰. The perilous scenario of the country is here certified by her words: *“We have a lot of explosions; a lot of bombings and rebels try to carry out several terrorist attacks. It is still very difficult to live here since there are a lot of fears and many insecurities all around the city. Women and children are the most targeted and impacted individuals since they are always represented as being the most vulnerable ones of the entire population in need [...] Anyway, life is harsh and very precarious for everyone who lives in the city of Kabul today”*⁶¹. Apart from fear and violent demonstrations, very far is the respect for human rights and democratic possibilities granted to the citizens of this purely authoritarian and illiberal country of Afghanistan.

⁵⁹ BBC. (2021, August 19). *What is sharia law? what does it mean for women in Afghanistan?* BBC News. Retrieved May 2023, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-27307249>

⁶⁰ Though the contact given by Fabio Massimo Abenavoli (M.D., PhD and the founder of the NGO ‘Emergenza Sorrisi’ operating in the country), she conceded me a telephone call from Kabul- the country’s capital city. She has been living in the region for 23 years. She moved there from the French city of Colmar in 2000. Then, she decided to remain there to give her contribution after the foundation of her and her husband’s NGO in 2002: ‘*Le Pélican*’. This local NGO aims at the direct Aid delivery of meals and provision of education and protection of the most disadvantaged: the *Hazara* minority.

⁶¹ Personal Interview conducted with Ariane Geiger Hiriart

As even reported by the UN Office For the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in 2022 up to 97% of the Afghan population was living in extreme poverty – up to 47% from 2020 before the Taliban acquisition of governmental power⁶². This event pushed a wide share of Afghan people to recur to illegal methods to survive as organs selling and child marriages. In this scenario, 75%⁶³ of the public spending in the country is subsidized by the international humanitarian Aid coming from foreign finances and external Donors. Nonetheless, this urgent context was not all alleviated by the intervention and external humanitarian Aid delivered by the foreign International Donors.

The non-profit companies, indeed, started cutting down the financial influxes of money after the Taliban State’s domination and avoidance of any international relations. Inevitably, this left the economic side of the country to be completely frozen and abandoned. The only unaltered assistance which was continuously delivered by the foreign Donors and by the Development associations were the basic survival deliveries of Aid as food and water. Today, more than 18.9 million people are experiencing daily food insecurity with increased risk of malnutrition, hunger, starvation and also many preventable diseases that end up becoming incurable. As supported by the words of the NGO founder Ariane Hiriart during the interview *“They were repeatedly begging me for food, for basic human needs to survive... there is a desperate plight for the Afghan people”*⁶⁴.

Nowadays, after the exodus of the majority of the people from the debased country, many sectors have even ended up being completely under-resourced as the healthcare field, the educational setting and the public governmental framework that have no material and economic inputs. This abandoned trait present in the Afghan society is additionally confirmed by the North American professor Jennifer Fluri⁶⁵. As even sustained by the literature review about the Afghan background,

⁶² Afghanistan: An entire population pushed into poverty. The IRC. (n.d.). Retrieved March 2023, from <https://www.rescue.org/article/afghanistan-entire-population-pushed-poverty>

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Personal Interview conducted with Ariane Geiger Hiriart

⁶⁵ She is a feminist political geographer concentrating on conflict, security, and Aid/Development in South and Southwest Asia. Ph. D at the Pennsylvania State University, now she occupies the department chair as a professor of Geography at the University of Colorado. Her interest for struggling scenarios started in 2001 since she was keen to study social and political movements in conflictual environments and specifically interested in spatial arrangements and gender roles in the Afghan international community of Kaboul. The tragic event of 9/11 happened and thus she wanted to have a more pluralistic understanding of Afghanistan. She started going there in 2006 and then she used to come back almost every year during the Islamic Republic under Western dominance. The last time that she went there was in 2019 and even if she wanted to go back to Afghanistan in 2021 the Taliban return disrupted her plans.

she reported *“it is such a mess over there and thus it is a great and singular case study to conduct and to carefully examine”*⁶⁶. During our interview she confirmed to me the insecurity affecting the minds of every individual inhabiting in this country. In her words she claims *“ I don ’t know if ever get back there... also all of my connections and all of the workers of Development I was in personal direct contact with, are today either emigrated out of the country, they have fled away as far as possible, or else they are operating while hiding in this unstable and conflictual territory.”*⁶⁷

This statement reaffirms to us the scarcity of the material as well as the human inputs and resources. Then, again, to make this geographical setting even more insecure, the territory was impacted by several and repeated natural disasters as the flash flooding, the terrible droughts, the earthquakes and any additional environmental degradations which were impacted by the climate change today.

4.2 The critical gender condition in Afghanistan



Figure 15: Image of an Afghan young girl

⁶⁶ Personal Interview conducted with Jennifer Fluri

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Currently, Afghan women and particularly young girls are facing the heaviest of all the burdens in the country. This phenomenon was worsened by the alternative authoritarian direction undertaken at the national level by the Islamic Emirate and the Taliban command. Addressing gender, Afghanistan is the worst among all the world’s countries as it is positioned 170th out of 170 States.⁶⁸ This is assessed if considering all the data reported while evaluating women social inclusion and overlooking at the respect of female justice and at the women personal security in the community. As also reported in the Amnesty International article,⁶⁹ Afghanistan is the *only* country in the world where there has been a complete ban of women and young girls to attend any form of education, any secondary schools and, subsequently, any possible future tertiary education.

Harshly and with no regrets, the Taliban government has completely shut down any institution that was aimed at addressing questions as the gender-based violence or other relevant women’s rights. In fact, many structures as The Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWa) was instead replaced with the Ministry for The Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice. Also, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), former governmental structure aimed at protecting women rights, has been completely dismantled. Now, women are excluded from every possible sector of civil society and workforce that they were previously holding during the past decades. As even confirmed by the words of the activist and NGO founder Ariane Hiriart *“All the modernity that the country achieved during these past 20 years was so easily swiped away by the Taliban and the females found themselves to be denied of any possible right, of their own jobs, of their dignity as human beings. How could they accept this? They will never accept it; they have lived another life for all this time and now they are seeing all these achievements taken away from them in a whiff”*⁷⁰. In point of fact, women were also banned to participate and take part in any possible NGOs’ activities with only chance of being segregated and precluded to households and domestic scenes.

⁶⁸ Human rights in Afghanistan. Amnesty International. (n.d.). Retrieved March 2023, from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-asia/afghanistan/report-afghanistan/>.

⁶⁹ Human rights in Afghanistan. Amnesty International. (n.d.). Retrieved March 2023, from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-asia/afghanistan/report-afghanistan/>.

⁷⁰ Personal Interview conducted with Ariane Geiger Hiriart

Along with some dress prohibitions and also many travel restrictions, the impossibility of women to access to basic rights, goods and services was unbelievable. If taking in consideration some essential necessities, as the access to healthcare services and other fundamental goods for humans provided by the standard communities, they were mostly ambiguous and many times inconsistent. It follows that, a large amount of contribution that aggravated this urgent crisis in Afghanistan, is certainly due to the prohibition of women to both receive all type of education and, additionally, to be engaged and employed in the civil sector. The Taliban governmental restriction to participate and to be part of any active Northern NGOs’ structure and organisational setting, was indeed an extensive pain suffered by women. Many NGOs that used to be very significant donors and productive contributors to the development of the country’s civil rights, have been recently forced to quit their interventions and stopped their services while denying women to receive foreign help.

Contribution to this information was provided by the words withdrawn from the interview conducted with a volunteer member⁷¹ of the Coordinamento Italiano Sostegno Donne Afghane Onlus (CISDA). This is an NGO born in Italy so to empower women and sustain their emancipation in the Afghan society. This company partners with many other international NGOs as Humanitarian Assistance for Women and Children of Afghanistan (HAWCA) or else Revolutionary Association of the Women in Afghanistan (RAWA) operating in the country. The work of these companies is now completely destined to a supportive role and not a direct one as it used to be. As she explained to me in the interview, *“It is almost impossible to get there nowadays; the city is hard to reach, and some NGOs’ resources can even take 2/3 months to finally get there intact. Today no women can work in there anymore and this is a huge loss”*⁷². Her words now sustain the literature about the denial from the Taliban to include the women in any possible sector and to let them engage in some civil society’s activities. *“We used to go there as volunteers at least twice per years, now with the Taliban is impossible to go and our work as NGO is a distant one”*⁷³. Being a woman in Afghanistan today then, is a very discussed issue and a significant concern for the international community as a whole. The gender condition is a major topic for the Development scenario which must be urgently addressed and supported by foreign actors of the Northern side.

⁷¹ The name of the volunteer woman was preferred to remain undeclared. She volunteers for ‘CISDA’ and also for another proactive Northern NGO operating in contexts of emergencies, namely ‘Emergency’.

⁷² Personal Interview conducted with a member of the CISDA

⁷³ Ibid.

The Taliban exploitation of power have delivered a society that appears as if women were only a small not useful parenthesis unworthy of any plausible facility to live their life and pursue their own dreams. They have only nightmares, constant every second. Women are surrounded by fears, insecurities, violent and unjust condemnations from the authoritarian regime ‘imprisoning’ them. *“Is this what it means to be a wife? Is this what it means to be a woman today in Afghanistan? I have certainly learned what fear is and nothing else”*⁷⁴ These were the words pronounced by a young girl named Samira who is daily engaged in her life in Afghanistan. This is a report of her words taken after the vision of the ‘After-Shelter project’, one of the 9 projects currently carried out by CISDA Onlus. It is always present their distant but supportive trait and the role of advocacy upheld by the company at the international level. Impressive is the quotation of one of the many women who are bearing the exact same living conditions and are suffering as much as Samira is.

For this reason, some of the remaining local organisations and the last people inhabiting the country are still craving for real change and putting all their efforts to completely alter the geopolitical context and to reassure at least some securities to the women as well as the young girls forced to live in that treacherous community. As even declared by the determined voice of Ariane *“we wanted to teach the boys but also the girls indistinctively”*⁷⁵. Then, she said that respect for the Law is a must which cannot be avoided from the local associations and from each citizen. She continued: *“At the moment my NGO’s schools are doing just basic education for girls under 12 years because the board of directors of the NGO follows some basic orders from the regime and the Taliban orders. They differ in orientation since Taliban groups have different restrictions”*⁷⁶. However, the impacting role that the Taliban had and have every day on women and on their life, cannot deny some hope for the future, as Ariane said: *“I will continue to help these people in need, the most important thing is the hope I give to them [...] As much as I can, I will continue to work and to give humanitarian Aid to these individuals craving for a bright light in their life. I feel unconditional love towards these people and when you love, you want to do actions and you want to make these actions reality, this is the end of the story! Just do it and do it with your heart!”*⁷⁷.

⁷⁴ After shelter project. (2019, March 31). Retrieved April 2023, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xo-yCVLRHtY>

⁷⁵ Personal Interview conducted with Ariane Geiger Hiriart

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

5. Critical Analysis on Northern NGOs in Afghanistan

In this following section, we will analyse the role of the main characters of the thesis: The Northern NGOs. Particular reference will be given to their direction of intervention from the U.S. based NGOs with their biased initiatives and the expired traditional models used during their operations in this country. Then annexed critiques about their roles and their actual position of strategic power and geopolitical interests towards Afghanistan will be discussed, thanks to many diverse insights.

5.1 Afghanistan: A Republic of NGOs?

Articles about this country give us a very significant perspective on what is the contemporary situation in the Afghan territory from an International Development critical standpoint. There is a famous proverb in Afghanistan which quotes that “*The one who feeds, then commands*”⁷⁸. However, this may not be altogether true. In a political community where the overwhelming majority of the citizens is suffering hunger and does not have basic human rights, the proverb may be inconsistent with the fact that the actual National government is not providing anything necessary to support and to give its contribution to the necessities of its people in constant pain.

In truth, it is not the Islamist Emirate which feeds the population, but rather the international agencies and foreign Donors for Development and Aid-delivery. As demonstrated in the above-mentioned VOA’s article on this critical theme, we can compare how the international agencies and humanitarian assistance programs have the goal to spend at least \$4.4 billion on humanitarian and very basic goods as essential services for the Afghan people. On the other side, the Taliban regime reported a national budget of not even \$520 million for the first year⁷⁹. In fact, according to their extremist perspective as claimed publicly by the Taliban’s chief minister Mohammad Hasan Akhund “*The hunger calamity is a test of God*”⁸⁰. By saying this, he meant that the Taliban regime is not responsible itself for the needs of the people. All these hungry masses of Afghan should be themselves the ones who look after their basic needs and refer to God for *His* assistance

⁷⁸ Dawi, A. (2022, March 21). Is Afghanistan a republic of ngos? VOA. Retrieved April 2023, from <https://www.voanews.com/a/is-afghanistan-a-republic-of-ngos/6494871.html>.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

towards them. In this framework, then, it may look like the NGOs’ sustenance and their delivery of basic human needs appear as very convenient and useful for the Taliban themselves. These extremists are represented here as the exploiters of the International civil society’s Aid-delivery towards the Afghan people. They are facing everyday more the need to testify their legitimacy and to eventually connect with the Afghan people. The same legitimacy which should be democratically assured by the National governments of the global community. The power, however, was illegally obtained by the hard-line Islamist group which seized and marched over the city of Kabul in 2021 and, therefore, it is impossible to be recognised by the international arena. For this very reason, it is nowadays the UN bodies accompanied by the help of more than 150 nongovernmental organizations delivering Aid to the country, which provide assistance to the great majority of the citizenry. This is an impressive number of non-profit entities uniquely working in this precise geographical context and this marks even more the unicity of the country and the current conditions in it. Hence, the aim of the nongovernmental organisations is that of reaching out more than 22 million Afghans who are constantly demanding for foreign Aid and support. This number would be indicatively around 70% of the overall estimated population in Afghanistan.⁸¹

In this regard, we know how many funds and financial influxes are channelled uniquely through the NGOs in order for them to intervene in the field of human rights, civil society and other projects. In fact, many are the sectors of civil society which are still alive and not completely crumbling down only because of the financial support provided by the Northern NGOs. They have been essential in paying for the salaries of the workforce operating in the healthcare district, in the educational field and in other main areas where the people need to be paid for their public services. Proof of this information is also given by Sarah Rose, a policy expert within the Centre for Global Development who released these words to the VOA agency during her interview for the journal: *“It’s important to recognize that in an acute crisis when time is of the essence, providing for the assistance through the U.N. and the NGOs can help deliver lifesaving support quickly”*⁸². Even if that would have meant to import liquidity through influxes of cash or to else to bypass completely the national Taliban regime and to avoid all their sanctions and their prior restrictions.

⁸¹ Dawi, A. (2022, March 21). Is Afghanistan a republic of ngos? VOA. Retrieved April 2023, from <https://www.voanews.com/a/is-afghanistan-a-republic-of-ngos/6494871.html>.

⁸² Ibid.

On account of that, we could correctly assess that, as even pronounced by the independent consultant on the Taliban taxation for the centre of Development (since the Taliban’s ascent to the governmental power) Rahmatullah Amiri: *“Afghanistan has been an NGOs Republic’ for over 30 to 40 years now”*⁸³. Over these recent decades, indeed, the foreign Donors of Humanitarian Aid spent billions and billions of dollars so as to build up the collapsing State’s institutions for their development actions in Afghanistan. In a percentual number 75% ⁸⁴of public spending was from uniquely foreign donors. These international agents are respectively trying to undermine the Institutions which have been invigorated by the National regime itself. Nevertheless, now the funds have started to be stopped and there has been a cease of economic funds to be handed out to the inhabitants of the country because of the assault of Taliban power. This is subsequently readable in the written phrase reported in the publication *“foreign donors ceased all development funds”* ⁸⁵.

5.2 U.S. NGOs’ Aid for Afghanistan & Afghan Women

In such a contested environment, we are not surprised to acknowledge that the main actors of the International Development scenario were more than keen to intervene in this country and to take appropriate actions in such regards. Inevitably, we refer to the United States as being the main Donor for excellence of Humanitarian Aid towards these developing countries. This nation was and still is more than present in the conflictual country from a geopolitical perspective. For this reason, the role of the Northern-based and most specifically the U.S.- based NGOs, is crucial to analyse from an international point of view and from an advocacy orientation in directing public policies and in undertaking initiatives in this community. As even disclosed by the VOA’s article, if we consider only and singularly the U.S. intervention alone, we can report a total amount of at least \$36. 14 ⁸⁶ billion uniquely dedicated towards the organisations’ governance in Afghanistan and to the enhancement of Development. This wide amount of funds was further certified by the words of the activist and geopolitical professor Fluri while reporting to me during our discussion that *“there was a lot of subcontracting that was happening there in Afghanistan. In fact, everyone*

⁸³ Dawi, A. (2022, March 21). Is Afghanistan a republic of ngos? VOA. Retrieved April 2023, from <https://www.voanews.com/a/is-afghanistan-a-republic-of-ngos/6494871.html>.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

working in Development was trying to take their little piece of that enormous number of imprints which was flooding directly into the territory”⁸⁷. This data was extrapolated in a range of time going from 2002 up to the year 2021. Moreover, as it was announced on the official website of the USAID ⁸⁸ a local organisation was funded in this country through the *Cooperative Development Program* so as to enhance the possibility for the Afghan people to access to their own credits and to secure their own savings. This would render them capable of buying some products and goods. Therefore, as even reported in the websites and articles, the United States find imperative the connection and the establishment of network and contacts with nongovernmental organizations and with other organs as also international organisations. For instance, we include the UN bodies or Public International Organisations (PIOs) or even Faith-Based Organisations. The U.S.’s goal is then to implement a partnership with these bodies so as to *“deliver services, enrich democratic processes and meet the constituents needs in all the areas where USAID works”*⁸⁹. In an idealised groundwork, indeed, this would be a great project and a very definitive program where the NGOs would use their internal expertise as well as their social capacity and their knowledge management to compose the entire project cycle and to finally reach positive development outcomes. Hypothesis which was also promoted by Ariane Hiriart with her words *“I could achieve these successful results in the territory because I could get to the heart of the problem, yes, I have knowledge about the problems, I have personal connections with the local population in need”*⁹⁰.

On the opposite perspective was the idea coming from the influential and Afghan expert Jennifer Fluri about the Development sector in general and their lack of knowledge : *“The vast majority of international workers of development there have no knowledge or understanding of Afghanistan, they maybe have read some fictional traits about the country and three cups of tea about the background but actually they do not know about the history, the diversity of the country, the culture and the particular ways in which Afghan Muslims practice Islam. Therefore, there should be a minimal amount of basic knowledge to acquire, at least a year of study is a priority, it is a must”*⁹¹.

⁸⁷ Personal Interview conducted with Jennifer Fluri

⁸⁸ Non-governmental organisations (ngos): Partner with us. U.S. Agency for International Development. (2022, December 11). Retrieved April 2023, from <https://www.usaid.gov/partner-with-us/ngo>.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Personal Interview conducted with Ariane Geiger Hiriart

⁹¹ Personal Interview conducted with Jennifer Fluri

This final discourse explained by the major organ of the US Development Aid (USAID) and by these influential personalities working in this field is on the same road of what we have described in the research design composing the 2nd chapter of the dissertation. However, is this happening concretely on the ground? That is the preeminent concern currently coming from the ID scenario.

Additional insights have been influential from the geopolitical Professor Jennifer Fluri who could dismantle this ideology from the U.S– based organisations perspective and disrupt their fictitious emphasis to concentrate on the Development side and on Aid rather than on other fields. As she expressed indeed *“There was a disrupting factor in Afghanistan, not that there was not a lot of Development in the country but that there was a flood in the usage of that money and in its distribution”*⁹². The motivation in bringing the geopolitics in it was connected to what was coming from the reports and from the current news in the USA. Most of the workers into the Development endeavour were desperate and very critical. They were venting their expiration about how poorly the environment was treated and how little of the funding were getting to the people they were willing to help. There was a lot of flood in the Development in the country and so many people were there just to make money and to achieve a better working position in the Development district. *They were there to “do their time in Afghanistan so as they could get a better job in the Development field of today. Thus, even if we critique a lot Development, we do not look enough at the geopolitics and economics in communities particularly in conflict and post conflict spaces”*⁹³.

In point of fact, she confirmed the huge influxes of money that are disclosed by the United States’ articles about their financial intervention with her *“The amount of resources that were alimending the whole international community were sort of outstanding”*⁹⁴. But then she also confirmed the concern we addressed about the ID mistrust towards these organisations *“The geopolitics angle was imperative to analyse because that was driving a lot of decision making and a lot of the lack of effectiveness of the Development side. This is due to the fact that most of the funding that were floating to Afghanistan were destined to the military side and thus billions of dollars donated to Afghanistan was on military operations and to the department of defence and to the department of State of the USA. Hence, the USA- ID got the least amount of money. Therefore, of the trillions of*

⁹² Personal Interview conducted with Jennifer Fluri

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

dollars spent on Afghanistan, the vast majority was spent on military operations and on the department of State guiding the embassy and with influence on the prevention and reconstruction. Ultimately, the last sector addressed was the Department of the USA- ID and the gender issues”⁹⁵. In fact, significant is the matter of gender inequality and women disparity which will be given a particular concern during this chapter and thesis as a whole. Precisely, the focus will be put on the U.S.-based NGOs and their ideologies towards this current gender matter. Marking more than one year since the Taliban takeover, we have seen the birth in the U.S.A of the U.S. Policy Advocates for Afghan Women and Girls Working Group which is a coalition of the NGOs in this country.

As readable in the Women’s Refugee commission article dating 2022,⁹⁶ one year after the conquest of power from the Islamist Emirate, this event only boosted the unhuman burden for Afghan women. They have loudly spoken, and their voices were more than transparent: *“Their rights must be respected, and they must have an equal place in society for Afghanistan to prosper. We urge President Biden and the Congress to act immediately so to correct course and live up to the U.S.’s own commitments to the people of Afghanistan”⁹⁷.* This was correctly pronounced by the Vice President of advocacy and of external relations of the WRC, Gayatri Patel. In reality, the condition of a collapse of women’s rights in Afghanistan was already predicted by many women’s rights activists living in the country who were afraid of a probable *gender apartheid* because of the chance of a Taliban return and alteration of the community in the future. Fear which became true.

The factors were numerous but surely the United States’ troops withdrawal from Afghanistan and also the shift of international focus towards the Ukrainian critical situation and warfare worsened the country even more and left women completely alone in the international relations’ scenery. The article underlines another time the urgency of *“U.S. moral duty & the U.S. national security interest to counter the Taliban’s gender apartheid and to advance security and prosperity in Afghanistan. Surely, some results have been achieved and this is one of the proudest achievements*

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ NGOs assess impact of Taliban on Afghanistan, provide roadmap for immediate U.S. humanitarian action for Afghan women and girls. Women's Refugee Commission. (2022, August 15). Retrieved April 2023, from <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/press-releases/ngos-assess-impact-of-taliban-on-afghanistan-provide-roadmap-for-immediate-u-s-humanitarian-action-for-afghan-women-and-girls/>.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

for the U.S humanitarian support in the two decades which are prior to the Taliban’s governmental seize”⁹⁸. The strong partnership with the Girls Opportunity Alliance has delivered some progresses in the country showing U.S-based NGOs’ commitment for education and empowerment of Afghan females in recent years during the 20 years preceding the Taliban. Still, much needs to be done.

5.3 Report on Gender and Development in Afghanistan by the U.S



Figure 15: Image of Afghan women reunited for the International Women’s Day in Afghanistan

In this section we will give deeper insight on the role of the U.S.- based NGOs towards Afghanistan and precisely to the female portion of the population. Coherent with our methods, here a content analysis will be used so to analyse texts, themes and concepts and then detect *biases* and *partiality* of the US-based *discourse*. We will refer to literature and we will take insights from the article written by Professor Jennifer Fluri in 2014 ⁹⁹. Focus will be put on the U.S.’ viewpoint about this thematic also thanks to the words the Professor herself pronounced during the interview she conceded me. This will give us the tools to obtain a better and wider comprehension on the actual role of U.S- based NGOs, of the identities of the Afghan women and on how we can empower the less advantaged categories of this community. Emphasis will be put on the U.S.’ direction of humanitarian Aid delivery so as to give the possibilities to live in a system based on gender equality with equal accesses to commodities and equal life opportunities for each young girl or aged woman

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Barometers of 'success'. Himal Southasian. (2021, August 27). Retrieved April 2023, from <https://www.himalmag.com/barometers-success/>.

in Afghanistan today. In a very self-inspired manner, the U.S. development companies have been carrying out projects that should aim at the eradication of political, social and economic disparities between classes of the civil community in Afghanistan. The main outlook should be specifically directed to gender inequalities and the attention on the role of women with their paucity of rights.

However, the lack of discourse on gender roles and the relations of power between men and women in the Afghan society is a big omission by these U.S.- based nongovernmental organisations. In fact, the international agencies give narrow representation of women in the country. This is strictly (and erroneously) connected to the role of women hold by an ignorant point of view and not associated to the female ideologies and their relations in the community where they live with men. As also sustained by the feminist Professor Fluri words during our interview: *“There is a mismatch between geopolitical discourse used as a reason why the USA should stay and have kept staying in the country and on the other side what is on the ground that it is not real and it is not happening concretely”*¹⁰⁰. While exposing the U.S.’s discourse, she reinforced this argumentation about the feminist ideas in the country: *“There is a white liberal imperialist approach on how Afghan women should be properly feminist and on how they should be liberated in society. Hence, there is very little space on the point of view of the Afghan girls themselves and on their own views about Afghan feminist programs to be conducted in an Islam framework and Islam programming of projects”*¹⁰¹.

These bodies are indeed biased to associate females to their subsistence and to their daily pain of living under a patriarchal regime. Hence, the action of framing all this general context as a blaming discourse towards the entrenched social and political roots of patriarchy, marked the U.S.’ ideology about the Afghanistan poor patriarchal structure. As reported by the feminist activist Professor Fluri: *“Therefore women’s influence in Afghanistan is very minimal and this account of women who have or do not hold power and influence in the society needs to be generally understood! The few women that happened to be in power are often considered to be as sort of honorary men under the viewpoint of these biased ideologies coming from the patriarchal roots of*

¹⁰⁰ Personal Interview conducted with Jennifer Fluri

¹⁰¹ Ibid

the community. The patriarchal ways of treating women is thus so frustrated for them”¹⁰². As a matter of fact, every afghan woman’s influence is relatively quite small and there are few women who genuinely have a role in the national setting. The feminist geographer and geopolitical Professor, for instance, interviewed a lot of women who lived in villages and who did not even know the political side of the community. They did not know who the leaders in command of the country were and they could not name one single woman who was in charge there (this is also due to the fact that there is not even one woman that much influent to be known at the national level). This phenomenon provokes the misunderstanding of the real recognition of the different roles of women in the country, of the various positions to be hold and of the diverse perspectives and aspirations of women in civil society. As said by her: “Afghanistan is an incredibly heterogenous country, there are different groups and different ethnics groups and different beliefs systems and even if the vast majority are Muslims it does not mean that all of these people think and practice alike and think about Islam in the same way of course. So, one of the biggest issues was the actual treating of women as if they were a single united category and as if all of them thought alike. Therefore, one way to correct this discourse is to account for the diversity of thought among all the women, the so-called Development’s discourse recalled as the Women Intersectionality¹⁰³”

In point of fact, it would be a missing discourse to simply think about women as the least educated and the least advantaged individuals in society. In fact, between the same gender category there are many differences. Obviously, we cannot compare an urban living educated woman to a rural uneducated and illiterate one. Their socio-political status and their accesses to public commodities vary with respect to their own personal socio-economic background and personal life- possibilities. As backed by Fluri’s words to me: “There are a lot of ideological differences between women leaders and women groups, so methodologically, women were sort of separated which does not mean that women were divided but they simply have different ideas. They have a diversity of ideas because they have different positions, they live in diverse environments surrounding them and they have different social structures where to live. So, understanding geography and the geographical side is also very relevant. They had different life experiences because of their different backgrounds. Hence, what works for Afghan women that are leaders and made it up to higher

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Personal Interview conducted with Jennifer Fluri

*levels of society because of their familiar setting, would not be the same of that for the illiterate and uneducated women living in the periphery with unsupportive families and who cannot even speak the national language because they are enclosed in their minority language status”*¹⁰⁴ Verily, the U.S. policies coming from the influential international NGOs operating in the country, are often miss-looked by the natives and by the influential men inhabiting Afghanistan who see these foreign interventions as a massive threat to their untouchable *status quo*. They see them as the chance of undermining their local stability and affect the domestic role dedicated to women.

Therefore, focal point of this section is left to the criticism arisen in the international scene and to the critiques destined towards the U.S.- based nongovernmental entities’ behaviours in these societies. Here, we can expose some main questions which are destined to these nongovernmental organisations: How can their willingness to *“win the hearts and the minds of the Afghan people”*¹⁰⁵ be seen as a strategic move to conduct further military and other intelligence missions in this targeted country? Is it the U.S.A - Top Aid-Donor of the world in the international rankings- the actual kind- hearted Donor which we think it is? Or else, are there some hidden and more subtle intentions which are not visible and clearly showed behind their masks while being the *good and proactive* characters that act like if they were assisting these poor people living in Afghanistan? This was also sustained by Professor Fluri who carefully examined all the reportages about the distribution of North American influxes towards the community. This data was impressive particularly during the first decade of the new millennium (from 2001 to 2011 during the Western influence in the Republic of Afghanistan). In this way, she could report to us how of *“All the money the USA spent in the country, a very small percentage of that was destined to the International Development scenario and particularly the least of that was handed out to the area referring to women’s programs or towards the gender-based programming”*¹⁰⁶. She confirmed to us that the rhetoric carried out and the discourse sustained by the U.S.A was on the same page as *We are saving Afghan women and we are distributing all this money to that precise concern*. However, when discussing about the leadership possessed by women, their legitimacy was always in question because all the bodies which were women’s organisations were not successful ones. The

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Barometers of 'success'. Himal Southasian. (2021, August 27). Retrieved April 2023, from <https://www.himalmag.com/barometers-success/>.

¹⁰⁶ Personal Interview conducted with Jennifer Fluri

Afghan women who were running the NGOs did not report many positive outcomes and victories on the ground. This was provoked by the lack of their funding and it was further confirmed by the Professor who could interview several women in Afghanistan during her stays there *“These women in power just do not have the core funding necessary. They are constantly chasing for grant after grant handed out to them. Along these lines, many times they are losing legitimacy because they are not succeeding in finishing a project and this is happening just because they have not enough funding for then concluding it. There is a true mismatch between all these feminist ideologies¹⁰⁷”*

Moreover, these Aid related bodies from the United States were and still are today completely missing out on many other issues that Afghanistan needs to face every day, and which can be put at the same level of the former worries, if not at an upper one. For example, we refer to the complete paucity to consider in their intervention any of the environmental complications which are alarming for the territory. Likewise, we must refer to the loss of further educational engagement in the country, both across men and now even banned for women. Here, ignorance and illiteracy are indeed extremely extended. We encounter the scarcity of qualified teachers and also of the willingness to become educated young adults. This is a systematic problem spread all around the country, both in the villages and in the main cities of the Nation given that – as even backed by Ariane Geiger Hiriart quotation on this subject *“Education is the only way for a future to be a bright one in a country”¹⁰⁸*. This phenomenon incentivises the decrease of the learning skills of the population and the scarcity of acknowledgement of their own native languages. Nowadays, it has become more common to uniquely learn English as a main language (the foreign donors’ idiom and their way of communication) rather than learning their own mother tongue and local costumes.

Thence, what would be a good move and a correct position to take by the main international Northern agencies, mostly U.S.-based ones, so as to effectively address this huge issue of gender inequality in the country? After the extensive criticism, room will be dedicated to the possible solutions to this major dilemma. Clear evidence suggests that there is a need to alter the *discourse* made by the powerful Donors of International Aid operating in the country. Here, there is the necessity to correctly assess the role of women in society and put relevance to their primary

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Personal Interview conducted with Ariane Geiger Hiriart

necessities. In this way, it is not because of the labour force and their income and monetary resources that we would be able to make women walk the right road to Development and Liberty. It is rather a combination of several factors which are influencing the final result and hopefully leading them to the path of personal freedom, while destructing the bases of the patriarchal system. Even if that would be rare from the point of view of the North American capitalistic dogma of enrichment and economic stability as a precondition to the monetary rewards into the social question. As Jennifer Fluri emphasised *“Necessity is on the real listening to the Afghan women themselves and on what is going to work and on the patriarchal structure of society. Therefore, there is the actual need to acquire knowledge on women while carefully listening to them and also they should not only consider just the projects which the workers of Development agree with but they should consider implementing some more projects of the women whom they do agree with”*¹⁰⁹.

Nevertheless, this process would not be functional if we did not consider the enlightenment of Afghan men as well as women in society. The necessity to make men to learn about and to share openly women’s rights and their liberties in society is a must which cannot be an omitted variable in the model. This is certified by the geopolitics Professor’s words given the fact that she told me she used to know an Afghan man who was a feminist activist in the country. She reported to me that He claimed *“We need to educate men about women’s rights and about their necessities and possibilities within Islam and within an Afghan framework that also includes the cultural side. There is not only the need of a Women Ministry but also of a possible Men Ministry which is Enlighted about the actual rights, the duties and the needs of both of the sexes present in the community. This is done so as to avoid the question and the theme of gender exclusivity. In this way, real improvement could be accomplished, and this could mark a point of a first difference”*¹¹⁰.

Hence, not only women should fight for their own empowerment in their daily struggles, but they should also start to conduct these battles hands in hands with men. We account for male figures who actively advocate for gender equality and for women’s rights in a strong and determined way. As much as this statement may sound futile and unattainable, cooperation and decisive coordination at the international level between foreign bodies and local members can be the key.

¹⁰⁹ Personal Interview conducted with Jennifer Fluri

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

This is an action which needs to be conducted and carried out mainly inside the country and by the Afghan people themselves. Any additional and external intervention by the foreign interests as the ones of U.S.’ Development agencies (which are constantly promoting their *saving Afghanistan mantra*) are not requested if not accompanied by the engagement of the Afghan population as well. This thesis arose the awareness to write down that there is the necessity and urgent requirement to remove our personal interests-driven and biased lenses above our eyes and to start looking at the real needs, at the true necessities of the people and at the best efficient ways and policies to apply so as to achieve them. This regards all the activities which are mostly carried out by the international companies as the Northern NGOs around this interconnected and complex scenario. In this manner, we would discover how the human nature can reserve for us many surprises through the usage of resources to deliver the *fair and good global society* everybody in ID still dreams of.

6. Final Remarks

Final margin of the chapter will be destined to the actual assessment of the results. Here, the discussion can be conducted since we have now gathered information from real case studies and discovered many additional insights about scenarios and conditions in specific places of the world. Thanks to the theoretical repertoire which we have acquired, and the methodological analysis carried out in the last two chapters, we can now arrive at the end of our argumentation of the thesis.

6.1 Discussion on the Findings

As in every analysis which is undertaken by researchers, at the end of the discussion there is the need of the assessment of the results and the evidence found on the topic. Our findings were advantageous for the overall investigation since they have been correspondent to the information that has been conveyed by our studies. As a matter of fact, thanks to the roles of the NGOs which are operating in Sri Lanka, and particularly through the specific one considered in the study–DEVPA- we have examined the positional shifts of many Northern NGOs and IANGOs that carry out policies and projects in some debated scenarios. The political influence, the leveraged character coming from the interests of the foreign stakeholders and the contributors of the material resources

for the company rendered the body less efficient during their Aid delivery and increasingly more untrustworthy for the agents of the Development scenario, as well as for the local receivers in need. This was the main representation of what we have considered to be the Donors / Recipients relations and most importantly the power dynamics which have been augmented by the recent trend of biased mentalities about these two parties. The North/ South discourse and ideas in this case are a clear expression of the diversity of the constituents from the wealthy willing contributors. The advocacy-oriented position is showed to be used by the company in a very politically influenced manner and specifically directed at the social and civil rights’ promotion in the society. However, the paucity of positive outcomes by these nongovernmental organisations in the country is more than visible and it backed the discussion about the overemphasis towards the personal interests rather than to the real necessities of the community. This is also readable in the indexes concerning gender inequality and the women struggles in the country, even if this is supposed to be one of the major concerns for the advocacy and the international status of the Northern NGOs.

Same results which have been very present in the context of Afghanistan too. Data of this country and of women conditions have been widely reported so as to stress the urgency of action required from the international agencies. Nonetheless, the nuanced communications and the missing social links between the many influential Northern NGOs (especially the U.S.-based ones) which are initiating activities in the country and the local Recipients, is a major concern in this discussion. The geopolitical and strategical position in the territory from the North American agents has surely not provided for a possible enhancement and democratic Development of the community. Hence, these charity bodies were missing the new integrated model of Aid delivery that we have targeted as a plausible manner through which good and positive outcomes in the International Development scenario could be eventually accomplished by the predominant International NGOs of today in ID. Confutation of these statements were also given by the founders of the local NGO directing working on the ground and building *social connections* with the population. This was sustained by the NGO’s founder interviewed Ariane Geiger Hiriart while exposing her beneficial usage of social capital and her correct possession of internal knowledge. The successful model which she could use with the Afghan minorities living in Kaboul and in need of her faithful and genuine assistance.

Moreover, these main requirements to avoid any self-based interests and to simply desire the alteration of the discussed scenario with accurate *knowledge* so to bring a new light in the country was also backed by the other personality I could interview, the relevant geopolitics Professor Fluri. As she concluded in the last part of our dialogue: *“So much of Development might not be just a success story to tell but it should account also for the failures and thus it should include some of these mistakes. There is not a lot of institutional memory and precise knowledge inside the organisations. The mistakes and the failures can be a standpoint where to learn from, they can be an information for the next people coming in the ID scenario. If we knew how to do it better and we acknowledged what did not work and what were the local disputes and the internal disruptions, we will also know what could work in the future. The lack of knowledge slowed things down and made it more difficult for many local NGOs to effectively implement projects and to bring good results on the ground to these urgent emergencies”*¹¹¹. In fact, she strongly sustained this discussion which we have conducted on the findings and which have been thoroughly exposed in the thesis. To conclude, indeed, each of these individuals supported the hypothesis about the necessity of a New Integrated effective Model ultimately based on the enhancement of social capital and the correct knowledge management by the main influential Northern NGOs in ID today.

6.2 Response to the Research Questions

How effective have been the Northern NGOs in delivering their programs to developing countries of the Global South? Which are the reasons why they have been mostly inefficient in the delivery of Aid relief? Particularly, how have these bodies been addressing the topic of gender inequality?

These were the initial questions that motivated all the conduction of the study and our initiative to attempt the theoretical review and the research design of the main hypothesis of this thesis. After all these studies and thanks to the evidence provided by the empirical cases selected, we are now capable of transparently replying to these doubts with appropriate and final unbiased information. These nongovernmental bodies have been seen as one of the major exponents of the contemporary International Development Scenario; anyhow, their real effectiveness has been widely questioned.

¹¹¹ Personal Interview conducted with Jennifer Fluri

Since they are granted big funds by the main International Donors and the National Governments, now, they are requested to actually satisfy the needs of the populations targeted and to deliver relief to these communities addressed. This last stage has been very debated since the augmenting number of failures and the extensive amount of burden suffered by many struggling communities has not been overcome yet. This is even more clear while evaluating the question of gender inequality in the countries of the Global South. Discussion has been proposed on the model used by these nongovernmental bodies. To ultimately reply to the main research question, we refer to the discourse supporting the usage of old traditional models and overexaggerating the Northern supremacy. This Western biased ideology was coming from a post-colonial theoretical discourse and it encouraged the perpetuation of the Northern NGOs' benefits and their cycles of Businesses.

Conclusively, the general thesis's hypothesis required the enactment of a new model for success in the delivery of humanitarian Aid and assistance on the ground. Here, we seek for the social connections, the active cooperation and the collaboration between partners of both the Southern and Northern world. Now, a well-directed communication made up with a proper knowledge can be a plausible solution for these unsatisfied personalities of Development. These interventions from the predominant and internationally operating NGOs could be rendered successful by the correct usage of the internal knowledge of the company and by its proper management on the issues under stake and through the evaluation of the factors in the process. Most importantly, it is the institution of social ties and genuine relationships in the community that can establish a good network between Donors and Local Recipients: the desired goal in the International Development.

CONCLUSION

We have arrived at the very end of this bachelor thesis and now we can claim to have a wider and deeper comprehension of who are these much-discussed characters of the international scene – *the NGOs* - and how they have been behaving in recent times. After the great amount of literature surrounding this topic and the careful consideration of scholarly reviewed papers, we have affirmed the impressive role that nongovernmental / non-profit organisations have achieved during these past decades at an international scale. Huge amount of funds and financial influxes have been granted to these bodies by foreign Donors and philanthropic figures of the world arena. If not considering the almost untouchable authority which has been reclaimed by these bodies eventually idealised as the personification of the modern civil society, of its true ambitions and its real desires. Nonetheless... *How effective have been these characters?* This was the loud question resounding in our minds and only an analysis conducted in the second chapter could enlighten our perplexity. The results of the analyses advanced were, not surprisingly, very predictable. The criticism did not take long time to spread in the International Development scenario when dealing with the failures of the Aid-distribution and the dissatisfaction of the Southern Recipients. Those Global South’s developing communities in urgent need of an external humanitarian assistance required these organs to actually respond to the real demands coming from the local people. Attentive assessment was indeed addressed during the dissemination towards the inefficiency of the organisations, their internal direction and the inadequacy of the resources used by them. Evaluation of these old traditional models used by the predominant and very influential Northern non-profit bodies, inevitably accounted for the lack of efficiency and the inability to deliver successful results in the Aid consignment. This anomaly prevented the local receivers to obtain welfare and community’s improvement. We do not have to uniquely encompass the financial support field and the monetary influxes, whose presence is visibly sustained by statistical data on this topic. In fact, it is way more than that. It actually involved the real connection with the Southern inhabitants, the appropriate usage of knowledge management about specific issues and the best tools to operate and to solve for them. This is applicable solely through the utilisation of the organisation social capital, through the creation of a profitable network which is made plausible by the internal resources and by the

authentic ties connecting Donors and needy individuals together. This implicates the construction of the bridge of cooperation, such an essential infrastructure for the current Development scene. Therefore, only an integrated model reuniting these positive elements together could be the necessary advancement of the international scene. This latter is a vital stage which we have discussed throughout all our analyses in the dissertation. Without any doubt, there is the necessity of concrete responses to the several contemporary emergencies of today. Notwithstanding, these responses by projects, policies and humanitarian interventions for emergencies, should obviously not relate to the interests and the eagerness of success and profit by the International foreign Donors of Aid and the associated dominant NGOs. In fact, these members of the ID scenario too often end up being leveraged by vicious and attracting cycle of businesses and by personal benefits. Excessive are the cases in the current global scene where we encounter extreme poverty, social unbalances, reduction - if not complete loss - of human rights and scarcity of material as well as immaterial resources. There is a dramatic absence of all those imperative accessories which are required to conduct a *desired good life*. Astonishing is for instance the matter of gender inequality and the unimaginable living conditions which are suffered by women and young girls. All those vulnerable individuals who live in anguishing political communities of this modern International arena, as it is the case of the Sri Lanka and the Afghan context. The concerning character is that we exposed these topics in an XXI century's thesis. In it, we should aspect for the victory of human rights, the appropriate possession of basic human needs, and the abundance of primary resources provided by the extraordinary advancement of technology and by all the commodities granted to the civil society in the contemporary Welfare States. However, we are simply encountering more and more global deterioration, corruption, self-advantages, personal interests and private profit form the major and influential foreign characters. Still, the conclusion of this thesis is destined to give hope to the general International Development scenario. Many are the strong-willed personalities and the local NGOs who want to succeed and deliver some real changes in this global society. The future is always uncertain, we know, but what we can do in our daily present and what we crave, what we desire, what we aspire to and what we can always fight for, is in our very hands.

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ABSTRACT: “Il Ruolo delle ONG del Nord

Nello Scenario dello Sviluppo Internazionale”



Figura 16: Le ONG nella società civile globale

La presente tesi di laurea è il risultato di uno studio articolato volto a donare una panoramica di respiro internazionale sul ruolo attuale delle maggiori associazioni non governative operanti nella scena dello sviluppo internazionale. La volontà di approfondire un argomento di ricerca così singolare viene dal mio personale interesse verso il settore dello sviluppo. Verso quell'intervento umanitario indirizzato ai paesi che si trovano in condizioni meno favorevoli e quindi richiedenti un supporto straniero al fine di superare l'emergenza. Senza alcun dubbio, possiamo affermare di vivere in un mondo interconnesso in cui Paesi, aziende e organizzazioni dipendono gli uni dagli altri. In un mondo in cui la povertà e i rapporti di potere sono radicati nelle origini stesse di questa odierna società globale. Finora, molti sono stati i tentativi di risolvere le disparità e gli squilibri presenti tra le comunità che appartengono alla cosiddetta parte del Nord di questo pianeta (la regione considerata attualmente la sezione più sviluppata e più arricchita di esso) e dall'altra parte invece gli scenari che fanno parte del Sud globale (rappresentato dalla letteratura internazionale e dal pensiero moderno per essere visto come il versante dipendente, la regione più sottosviluppata). A causa di questi disequilibri mondiali, lo sviluppo concreto ed effettivo della società globale è un obiettivo antico e molto spesso dibattuto dai membri della comunità internazionale che però non

ha ancora raggiunto il suo vero apice. L'inefficienza delle principali politiche sociali, delle attività di distribuzione di supporto umanitario e dei progetti realizzati sul territorio di questi scenari in difficoltà da parte delle principali organizzazioni internazionali originarie del Nord del mondo, è stata ampiamente discussa e criticata dal panorama internazionale. In particolare, in questa tesi la nostra argomentazione sarà destinata ad un'analisi attenta del ruolo, dell'atteggiamento e delle idee fondamentali le quali sono associate a personaggi predominanti della scena rivolta allo sviluppo.

Per essere più precisi nella realizzazione di questo Abstract, l'attenzione sarà rivolta particolarmente all'esaminazione delle Organizzazioni Non Governative (ONG), cioè gli organismi che sono i principali esponenti della *società civile* e sono idealizzati come dei mezzi efficaci e relativamente più economici. Per questo, essi sono visti come più adatti alla costruzione di connessioni tra le popolazioni e gli agenti poiché sono spesso rappresentati come i soggetti più efficienti e in grado di rispondere concretamente e in maniera produttiva alle richieste provenienti proprio dalle comunità bisognose. La presente tesi, infatti, è stata strutturata per poter illustrare chiaramente questo studio. Per questo motivo, dunque, l'ipotesi principale verrà articolata durante l'elaborato ed essa combacerà con una raccolta di specifiche idee a sostegno dei nostri pensieri. Le idee esposte e qui confutate attraverso dei grafici, degli schemi e delle tabelle statistiche prese dai vari articoli di letteratura e *journals* dello sviluppo internazionale, ci serviranno come evidenze attraverso le quali saremo in grado di rispondere alle domande di ricerca, motivanti tutta l'indagine. Per fornire una visione generale e schematizzata dell'elaborato, presentiamo qui queste domande di ricerca e l'ipotesi principale a comando della dissertazione, per poi esporre la sua intera struttura.

Quanto sono state efficaci le ONG del Nord nel fornire i loro programmi ai Paesi in via di sviluppo del Sud? Quali sono le ragioni per le quali sono state per lo più inefficienti durante la donazione di aiuti umanitari? In particolare, come hanno affrontato il tema della disuguaglianza di genere?

Le domande qui riportate hanno quindi motivato la conduzione della ricerca ed hanno donato un deciso slancio alla nostra iniziativa di tentare la revisione teorica e lo studio dell'ipotesi di questa tesi. Dopo le analisi condotte e grazie alle prove fornite dai principali casi empirici selezionati e riportati nel terzo capitolo, siamo ora in grado di rispondere in modo chiaro e trasparente ai presenti dubbi attraverso informazioni accurate, definitive ed imparziali. Questi organismi non governativi sono stati visti appunto come uno dei maggiori esponenti dello scenario contemporaneo dello

sviluppo internazionale. Tuttavia, la loro efficacia, responsabilità, efficienza nei loro progetti, autorità e legittimità sono state ampiamente messe in discussione negli ultimi tempi. Nonostante esse ricevano ingenti finanziamenti dai principali donatori internazionali e dai governi nazionali, ora si chiede loro di soddisfare effettivamente i bisogni delle popolazioni destinarie e di prestare soccorso a queste comunità in urgente emergenza. Quest'ultima imposizione è stata molto dibattuta, poiché il numero crescente di fallimenti e l'ingente onere subito da varie comunità in difficoltà non sono ancora stati superati. Le perplessità verso questi organismi criticati dalla scena internazionale, sorgono dal fatto che essi vengono spesso osservati come se fossero nel pratico unicamente motivati dal desiderio di influenzare strategicamente gli scenari geopolitici profittevoli delle comunità in difficoltà del Sud. Infatti, come sorretto dall'ipotesi predominante nell'elaborato, questi organi dominanti della scena dello sviluppo hanno ripetutamente adottato dei vecchi modelli di beneficenza ormai scaduti che sono spesso presi a modello da altri organismi internazionali governativi o da quelli a scopo di lucro (i quali non sono compatibili tra di loro date le differenze strutturali). Qui, si è fatto costante riferimento al discorso che implicava l'inadeguatezza dei vecchi modelli tradizionali sottolineando l'erroneità della posizione di supremazia del Nord globale. Questa ideologia di prospettiva Occidentale proviene da un discorso teorico post-coloniale che ha incoraggiato la perpetuazione di idee le quali donavano unicamente benefici personali alle ONG stesse e alimentavano i loro cicli di business e di interesse privato. Per rispondere alle nostre domande di ricerca e donare luce sulla questione, la tesi è stata sviluppata per proporre una discussione sul modello utilizzato e per auspicare un futuro cambiamento per lo sviluppo odierno.

Il primo capitolo di questa dissertazione, infatti, sarà dedicato all'analisi ben approfondita delle citate organizzazioni non - profit. Esse sono ben distaccate dai settori politici e dai vari governi internazionali poiché definite *teoricamente* come indipendenti da qualsivoglia influenza politica. Nello specifico, avremo un occhio di riguardo per le ONG del Nord del mondo e particolarmente quelle con sede principale o origine negli Stati Uniti d'America, in quanto questa Nazione è attualmente considerata per essere il primo donatore al mondo di aiuti per l'assistenza umanitaria. In primo luogo, verranno analizzate alcune componenti di esse: tra le quali troviamo ad esempio l'approfondimento dedicato alla loro struttura interna, alla loro architettura organizzativa e alle svariate relazioni che esse possiedono, sia esterne che anche interne, con gli altri organismi della scena internazionale. Inoltre, sempre durante la prima parte della discussione, verranno ispezionati le tematiche delle quali si occupano queste organizzazioni e le principali aree

geografiche della scena mondiale alle quali vengono indirizzati gli aiuti più cospicui nel settore. Tale analisi verrà effettuata attraverso una rassegna d’opere di studiosi ed attraverso dei testi di letteratura accademica generale. Un’attenzione particolare verrà data specificamente alla disuguaglianza di genere e alla disparità della categoria femminile nello scenario contemporaneo. Si tratta di una questione di primaria importanza da affrontare e di un fenomeno di grande impatto al giorno d’oggi. Per questo, è necessario valutare e, infine, cercare di trovare gli strumenti più appropriati al fine di raggiungere dei risultati tangibili nella lotta a salvaguardia dei diritti delle donne, della loro emancipazione e della loro partecipazione attiva alla vita politica e sociale nelle comunità. Infatti, dopo tutti questi anni e dopo tutti gli sforzi profusi, la critica proveniente dalla cornice internazionale è più che opportuna se consideriamo gli indici a sostegno di questa informazione. Tale discorso verrà affrontato in maniera approfondita in modo tale da comprendere il motivo dei fallimenti che caratterizzano alcuni (troppi) dei progetti di erogazione degli aiuti umanitari da parte delle ONG del Nord e quindi le ragioni di questa loro ripetuta inefficienza.

In conseguenza di ciò, la revisione della letteratura riguardante questa tematica, non è sufficiente per comprendere l’efficienza o meglio l’inefficienza di maggiori organizzazioni sulla scena internazionale. A sostegno di questo discorso, un’analisi metodologica sarà utile e più che rilevante per comprendere il nostro pensiero principale. Essa si riferisce infatti all’inefficacia delle associazioni del Nord del mondo (la nostra variabile dipendente) a causa dei loro modelli tradizionali nell’elaborato che oramai appaiono inadeguati (la nostra variabile indipendente). Come esposto dall’ipotesi primaria della tesi, la mancata inclusione del *capitale sociale* delle associazioni umanitarie e la scarsità di gestione della *conoscenza primaria*, essenziale durante l’intervento, sono alla base dell’incapacità delle ONG di rispondere alle reali richieste dalle società bisognose del Sud. Questi fattori provocano un’insoddisfazione delle comunità locali e alimentano gli interessi personali dei donatori stranieri. Dopo aver compreso le basi teoriche, dunque, nel secondo capitolo verranno esposti e analizzati i metodi di ricerca utilizzati per la valutazione della nostra ipotesi. Grazie a queste tecniche, avremo la capacità di raggiungere i risultati desiderati e di dare delle risposte certificate. I metodi comprenderanno per esempio *un’analisi interpretativa del contenuto* in modo tale da ben comprendere il significato dei termini esposti e delle immagini utilizzate in ricerca e quindi da scovare le varie *Bias* ricorrenti nelle mentalità dei paesi del Nord del mondo. Quelle stesse ideologie le quali hanno senz’altro influenzato tutto il pensiero dell’odierna comunità internazionale, causato da decenni di discorsi dominati dall’autorità

dell'Occidente. Infine, un grande valore aggiunto alla ricerca verrà fornito dalle *interviste semi-strutturate* che sono state effettuate verso molte figure rilevanti nella scena dello sviluppo internazionale. Per questo motivo, la possibilità di riportare i pensieri, le idee e le parole pronunciate dalle voci di personalità influenti sul tema oggetto della nostra ricerca, ha contribuito in maniera efficace a rispondere a molte delle nostre domande. Parole di esperti accademici con grande conoscenza internazionale su questioni geopolitiche e sociali, accompagnate dalle idee personali dei fondatori di alcune delle maggiori ONG che operano nei contesti più arretrati della nostra società globale, hanno ampiamente arricchito tutta la dissertazione. Esse sono state in grado di sostenere la nostra ipotesi donando al contempo dei punti di vista unici, peculiari e inconfutabili. Proprio questi tipi di metodi sono stati utilizzati concretamente durante la parte destinata alla ricerca empirica. In effetti, un'analisi per poter essere definita completa ha sempre bisogno di riportare ed esporre delle evidenze empiriche sull'argomento sotto analisi. Dunque, proprio per questo motivo, la fine del secondo capitolo sulla metodologia, introdurrà gli specifici casi di studio.

Ed infatti, continuando nel terzo capitolo, saranno ampiamente illustrati i risultati e i dati empirici delle regioni del mondo qui riportate. Attraverso i nostri due esempi principali, saremo in grado di conoscere nel concreto alcune importanti organizzazioni *non - profit* con le loro attività, la loro visione, la loro missione ed anche i loro cambiamenti durante le attività sul campo. Questi corpi non governativi però vengono ogni volta sempre più orientati verso la cosiddetta *advocacy*, e quindi, verso l'influenza politica di una società proprio volta al fine di dirottare le politiche e le mentalità interne di un Paese. Tutta questa discussione è proprio quel che otterremo dallo studio del caso riguardante il contesto storico, sociale e geopolitico dello Sri Lanka. Questo paese è stato infatti scelto per l'influenza di una delle maggiori ONG operanti sul territorio la quale ha subito un maggiore cambiamento interno della propria struttura organizzativa. Nonostante il corpo *non-profit* fosse originariamente dedicato alla donazione e distribuzione di aiuto umanitario diretto alla popolazione, posteriormente ad un recente cambio nella direzione dell'ONG stessa, oggi l'associazione è invece più orientata al versante politico e decisamente più indirizzata alla promozione delle politiche da adottare nella comunità sociopolitica ed ai molteplici progetti da implementare nel paese. La posizione influente dell'organizzazione rende questa nazione dell'Asia centrale ancora meno autonoma e democratica di quanto in verità essa sia. Tutto ciò viene procurato dall'autorità predominante occidentale nel controllare le dinamiche interne degli stati del Sud del mondo. Essi sono percepiti come *inferiori* rispetto agli stati *superiori* del Nord e

considerati solo con il fine di raggiungere gli interessi personali e strategici di quest’ultimi. Come giustificazione viene addotta la loro volontà di supportare la popolazione e di alleviare le condizioni di disegualianza sociale e disparità di genere che le radici patriarcali hanno provocato.

Sempre nel terzo capitolo, però, il focus sarà ben posto sul caso di studio inerente alle condizioni strazianti che vengono sopportate dall’attuale popolazione Afghana ed in particolare dalla sua parte femminile che abita nella dibattuta Nazione. Essa è ricordata come l’odierna *Repubblica delle ONG* e soprattutto come un territorio molto interessante per gli stati influenti e i loro interessi geopolitici. Sicuramente, primo fra tutti, il principale donatore di aiuti umanitari, gli Stati Uniti d’America, la quale influenza nel Paese merita sezioni di riferimento durante la tesi stessa. Mentalità occidentali e interessamenti strategici personali verranno analizzate accuratamente per mettere luce sul loro sguardo alle condizioni dello stato; soprattutto alla condizione delle donne afgane. Un grande contributo a questi concetti sarà dato dalle opinioni delle svariate personalità della scena dello sviluppo mondiale. Le parole di rilevanti figure direttamente associate a quest’ambiente tortuoso, sono risultate più che utili per il nostro discorso. Infatti, alcune frasi citate durante le interviste condotte con questi illustri personaggi poi porteranno un’evidenza forte e concreta all’idea della tesi. Queste saranno utilizzate per discutere dei risultati e per riportare una discussione finale a risposta delle domande. Un soffio di speranza e un desiderio internazionale di effettivo cambiamento, nonostante il paesaggio cupo e tenebroso instaurato dai Talebani ritornati al controllo nel paese, segneranno il tono della nostra conclusione. In essa si sottolineerà la possibilità di futuri successi per lo scenario odierno realizzati da nuovi modelli ora più appropriati.

In conclusione, l’ipotesi generale della tesi richiedeva, infatti, l’attuazione di un nuovo modello integrale di fornitura di aiuti umanitari e di assistenza diretto sul campo. In esso si ricercavano le connessioni sociali, la cooperazione attiva e la collaborazione produttiva tra i partner del Sud e del Nord del mondo. Una comunicazione ben indirizzata, basata su delle conoscenze adeguate, può essere una soluzione plausibile per queste personalità scontente della scena dello sviluppo internazionale. Infatti, gli interventi da parte delle ONG operanti su scala globale potrebbero essere resi efficaci da un uso corretto delle conoscenze interne dell’azienda, dall’opportuna gestione delle questioni in gioco e dalla giusta valutazione dei fattori nel processo. In primo luogo, è essenziale la vera istituzione di legami sociali e di relazioni genuine con la comunità. Ciò può stabilire una bilanciata rete di rapporti tra i donatori e i destinatari locali che è poi l’obiettivo principale auspicato

nello sviluppo internazionale. Quindi, attraverso la stesura di un primo capitolo destinato alla ricerca e alla revisione della letteratura accademica, di un secondo capitolo destinato all'analisi metodologica attraverso puntuali metodi di ricerca del modello investigativo ed a seguito di un'approfondita indagine su dei definiti casi studio, siamo giunti alla conclusione di questa tesi di laurea. Possiamo affermare senza dubbio di avere una comprensione più ampia di chi siano questi personaggi tanto discussi della scena internazionale e di come si siano comportati negli ultimi tempi. Dopo un'attenta considerazione di articoli recensiti da studiosi, abbiamo confermato il ruolo primario che le organizzazioni non governative hanno raggiunto oggi su ampia scala internazionale. Enormi fondi ed introiti finanziari sono stati loro concessi da parte di donatori stranieri e figure filantropiche del mondo con un occhio attento per le emergenze umanitarie. Sarebbe un errore limitarci a comprendere solo il settore del sostegno finanziario e degli afflussi economici; si tratta di molto più di questo. Parliamo difatti di una vera e propria sinergia con gli abitanti del Sud, di un uso appropriato della gestione della conoscenza delle associazioni e delle idee relative a specifiche problematiche di un definito ambiente geografico. Questo perfezionamento è applicabile esclusivamente attraverso la creazione di una rete proficua resa possibile dalle risorse interne e dai legami autentici che uniscono donatori ed individui bisognosi.

Tutto questo implica la costruzione di un ponte di cooperazione, ovverosia di un'infrastruttura essenziale per la scena di sviluppo. In effetti, eccessivi sono i contesti nell'attuale scenario globale in cui si riscontrano povertà estrema, squilibri sociali, riduzione - se non completa perdita - dei diritti umani e scarsità di risorse primarie. Vige una drammatica assenza di tutti gli accessori imperativi al fine di condurre una vita giustamente desiderata da ognuno di noi al giorno d'oggi. Un aspetto cruciale della tesi presentata è l'esposizione di queste tematiche in una ricerca la quale risale al XXI secolo. In essa, si dovrebbero auspicare la vittoria della società civile, l'adeguato possesso dei bisogni umani essenziali e l'abbondanza di risorse fornite dallo straordinario progresso della tecnologia. Eppure, si riscontrano sempre più depauperamento, disinteresse, corruzione, vantaggi, interessi personali e profitti da parte dei personaggi predominanti. Ciononostante, la conclusione di questa tesi è volta a dare speranza all'arena dello sviluppo internazionale. Molteplici sono le personalità che hanno volontà e potenziale per cambiare lo *status* contemporaneo e svariate sono le ONG locali desiderose di riportare successo e cambiamenti reali nella società globale. Il futuro è costantemente incerto, si riconosce, ma ciò che si desidera, al quale si aspira, per cui si combatte ed eventualmente si raggiunge, è sicuramente nelle nostre mani.