

UNDERSTANDING THE INFLUENCE OF DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS
ON WOMEN BENEFICIARIES' PERCEPTIONS OF EMPOWERMENT:
A CASE STUDY IN SOUTH SULAWESI, INDONESIA

BY

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Abstract

This thesis argues that international development interventions influence the way women perceive empowerment. It does so by looking at aid relationships and the relevance of development interventions. It involves a case study of Oxfam's Restoring Coastal Livelihoods Project (2010-2015) in South Sulawesi, Indonesia.

Efforts to empower women have been channeled through various approaches. However, little has been said about the practice of aid relations within projects and how aid relations work through the 'aid chain' and influence women's perceptions of empowerment. Also, there has not been much said about how, in the intersectionality of aid relationships, women make 'empowerment' their own, appropriate it, transform it, adapt it to their stories and needs through their active engagement in projects.

The qualitative research which involved a five-month period of ethnographic research found that women beneficiaries perceived empowerment mostly based on their experiences in the project. However, the degree of empowerment is relative to the types of women's engagement, the nature of activities, and their general understanding of gender relations. The project has brought economic-driven gender awareness by facilitating women's practical and strategic needs through economic groups. It has also brought empowerment consequences which went beyond the economic dimension.

The research highlights the importance of personal, relational, and multidimensional aspects of empowerment in women's perceptions of empowerment. Efforts to empower women seem to still rely on external intervention to facilitate the process and to deal with existing dynamics of power relations. The findings reassert that women's empowerment requires enabling internal and external environments to promote women's awareness of, and capacity for, empowerment.

Finally, the thesis underlines that empowerment depends highly on women's personal experiences, awareness, agency, resources, choice, willingness, and commitment. This research contributes to our understanding of women, aid, and development as it highlights the multidimensional and multi-layered aspects of aid relations and women's empowerment.

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I learned particularly from women beneficiaries that empowerment is personal and relational, but it is also private as empowerment depends on the individual choice of each woman to be empowered. I also learned various effects of development intervention although it was conducted initially with the economic approach as women became aware of their rights and capacity, including their participation in public spheres. Women beneficiaries also showed me the meaningful aspect of social capital and the bond they created after their engagement in the RCL Project. Women beneficiaries have capitalised the benefits of the project not only in economic terms (profits, financial, and business expansion logics) but also in social and political aspects as their social solidarity and political participation increased.

Women beneficiaries gave me the impression that collective empowerment should start from individual awareness and empowerment before working together with the wider society to bring a positive change in development to the people. As a woman, I am also proud of knowing that women beneficiaries were the local champions of the village who could inspire other women and society, in general, to be aware of their capacity and local resources and to participate in development in meaningful ways by partnering with the local government.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AF: Accion Fraterna

BAPPEDA: *Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah* (Local Development Planning Agency)

BPPKB: *Badan Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Keluarga Berencana* (Agency for Women's Empowerment and Family Planning)

CDS: the Country Development Strategy

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CIDA: the Canadian International Development Agency

DAC: Development Assistance Committee

DFATD: Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development of Canada

GAD: Gender and Development

HDI: Human Development Index

IFES: the International Foundation for Electoral Systems

IMF: the International Monetary Fund

JPP: *Jaringan Perempuan dan Politik* (Women and Politics' Network)

Komnas Perempuan: *Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan* (the National Commission on Violence against Women)

KPI: *Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan dan Demokrasi* (Indonesian Women Coalition for Justice and Democracy)

KPP & PA: *Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak* (the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection)

LBH APIK: *Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan* (Legal Assistance Institution, Indonesian Women Association for Justice)

LDC: less developed countries

MAP: Mangrove Action Project

MDGs: Millenium Development Goals

MoU: Memorandum of Understanding

Musrenbang: *Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan* (Development Planning Meeting)

NDI: the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organisations

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Oxfam: Oxford Committee for Famine Relief

Oxfam GB: Oxford Committee for Famine Relief of Great Britain

Pangkep: Pangkajene Kepulauan (Pangkajene Islands)

P2TP2A: *Pusat Pelayanan Terpadu untuk Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak*/ (Integrated Service Center for Women Empowerment and Child Protection)

RAN PUG: *Rencana Aksi Nasional untuk Pengarusutamaan Gender* (the National Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming)

RCL: Restoring Coastal Livelihood

RD: the Rural Development Trust

SBA: strengths-based approach

SC USA: Save the Children of the United States of America

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

SP: *Solidaritas Perempuan* (Women Solidarity)

TII: The Indonesian Institute, Center for Public Policy Research

UN: the United Nations

UNDP: the United Nations Development Programme

USAID: the United States Agency for International Development

WAD: Women and Development

WB: the World Bank

WID: Women in Development

WSG: Women's Savings Groups

YKL: *Yayasan Konservasi Laut* (Marine Conservation Foundation)

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Since the 1990s, women's issues have been included and promoted as one of the main issues of concerted international efforts to tackle poverty alleviation. One of the most prominent women's issues is empowerment. Empowerment itself has been heavily used in development interventions as a way to increase public awareness and promote public participation in the policy processes (Connel, 1999; Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Friedmann, 1992; Rowlands, 1999). It is seen to be of particular relevance for women and others marginalized in, and by, development.

To ensure a development project's relevance, it is important for development interventions to consider the contexts and relevant stakeholders where the projects take place. As argued by Marina Ottaway (2003), efforts to promote democracy through foreign aid should be put in a comprehensive frame as part of a large and complex picture. The practice of development aid has also led post-development and postcolonial feminist writers to criticise the definitions and practices of development, particularly regarding power relations between donors and recipients.

This study primarily focuses on women beneficiaries' perceptions of empowerment and being empowered after their involvement in a development project. My understanding and conceptualisation of empowerment are highly influenced by the work of Jo Rowlands (1999) who argues that empowerment should be understood by seeing it in personal, relational, and collective dimensions. The personal dimension of empowerment is about the ability to identify self-capacity and capability. Moreover, I understand that the personal aspect of empowerment in this study is particularly reflected in relation to women's awareness, choices, confidence, and commitment for self-actualisation, participation in and contribution to society. The relational aspect of empowerment can be seen from the acceptance and acknowledgement of others of women's agency and achievement which are situated in the context of women's relationships with others. The collective aspect of empowerment is about the ability to transform society by moving from insight into collective action.

My analysis and understanding of empowerment also reflect the multidimensional aspect of empowerment as highlighted by Luttrell, et.al (2009). This aspect shows that empowerment is not limited to economic empowerment as there are other important dimensions of empowerment such as social, political, cultural, economic, environmental or natural resources, health, human, as well as social and spiritual. The multidimensional aspect also reflects that empowerment is not limited to economic empowerment. Empowerment is also multi-layered as it connects various actors and interests at various levels. Empowerment is highly influenced by the contexts where women live their everyday lives as well as general awareness and understanding of gender relations and gender equality.

Furthermore, as argued by Andrea Cornwall (2016), with regard to empowerment, women experience various pathways of transformation processes. In relation to pathways of empowerment, Cornwall & Edwards (2010), empowerment is understood as a journey which involves constant negotiation and compromises with unpredictable results due to the nature of empowerment which is conditional and contextual. In this case, they argue that context is crucial in making sense of empowerment.

With regard to this study, the existing context where women live and embrace experience, such as in relation to cultural norms, history, social relations, local politics, including the contexts of aid relations and development intervention, which women participate in, are important in influencing women's empowerment and their perceptions of empowerment. I also connected my analysis on women's perceptions of empowerment with their aid relations because this study relates international aid and women beneficiaries' perceptions of empowerment,. In this case, I referred to Rosaline Eyben's argument on the importance of understanding aid relations in relation to the management of international aid (2006a, 2006b). I also highlighted the aspects of women's multiple voices, different experiences, contexts, and relationships in approaching this research by connecting to arguments from Alsop et al., (2006) as well as Cornwall & Edwards (2010).

In this thesis, based on the key authors mentioned above and the insights provided by the participants during fieldwork, I developed a conceptual framework of empowerment, the 5Cs (capacity, capability, confidence, choice, and commitment) and the 4As (awareness, achievement, acceptance, and acknowledgement) according to my understanding of empowerment based on the key authors above and the findings of the

study. Through this conceptualisation of empowerment, I aimed to reflect the multiple voices of the research participants. The 5Cs and 4As emphasise that there is no singular concept of empowerment and that women experienced their own stories of transformation processes according to the contexts where they lived and interacted with others. It is based on the experiences of women both as individuals and parts of collectives in perceiving their positions, rights, and roles in private and public spheres. Empowerment reflects various stories of women's journeys of transformation depending on their roles and positions within society.

Therefore, empowerment highlights the importance of women having access to and control over resources. Empowerment enables women to cooperate with others to collectively tackle common agendas by promoting gender awareness and gender equality in society. Above all, empowerment requires enabling internal and external environments, in which opportunities are open and available for women to fulfil their strategic and practical needs. I will elaborate further my understanding of empowerment and existing literature on empowerment of the key authors which influenced my conceptualisation of empowerment in the literature review chapter. The 5Cs and the 4As will also be reflected in my analysis on women's perceptions of empowerment throughout this thesis. I will also come back to this framework in the Conclusion chapter and relate that to the literature and key authors, the debates in the literature, as well as the findings of the study and potential future research out of the study.

This study looks at the aid relations between women beneficiaries and executing agencies of the development project, the local government, their families and the wider community. This study also looks at and analyses the relevance of the development intervention to women. For instance, it asks whether development interventions affected women's lives and if so, to what extent the projects actually empowered women. The research further investigates how development interventions influence women beneficiaries' perceptions of empowerment after their involvement in the project. I use the term 'women beneficiaries' when I explain women's relations, positions, and roles in the development project. However, I often refer the term 'women' to refer particularly to women in this study but not to generalise and homogenise women's multiple voices and stories of empowerment. I also use the term 'women' to avoid the weak and passive perceptions of women in the aid chain due to the labelling of development agencies on beneficiaries in the project.

These concerns constituted the rationale for this research, which examined Oxfam's Restoring Coastal Livelihoods (RCL) Project in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. South Sulawesi has been known as the hub for development interventions in the Eastern region of Indonesia, due to its infrastructure and active public activism. Recalling the fact that empowerment is culturally and socially contextualized, South Sulawesi with four ethnic groups (Bugis, Makassar, Mandar, and Toraja) and diverse languages provides a good context for the topic of this study. These were also my reasons to select the RCL Project as the main case study for this research.

Furthermore, the length of the RCL Project and the specific project locations were also interesting to look at in exploring the project's relevance to the needs of the women and understanding their perceptions of empowerment both individually and collectively. In addition to the local context, development interventions also influence women's perceptions of empowerment. I found the combination of the influence of both development interventions and local context on women beneficiaries' perceptions of empowerment as the gaps in the literature.

Existing literature on aid, women's empowerment, and development also tend to lack discussions on the personal and relational aspect of empowerment from the perceptions of women beneficiaries, especially in the context of their involvement in development projects (Eyben, 2006b; Pasteur & Scott-Villiers, 2006). Development agencies are criticised for neglecting issues such as relationships, leisure, pleasure, love, and care in understanding experiences of empowerment and disempowerment. They have also been criticised for disregarding women's own voices, analysis, experiences and solutions in the rush for results (Cornwall & Edwards, 2010).

Furthermore, empowerment has been treated as a destination which women will reach by going through the same pathway of development, whereas in reality, women have their own individual or collective journeys of empowerment. However, their stories of transformation processes remain hidden (Cornwall & Edwards, 2010; Cornwall, 2016, p. 342). These gaps I found in the literature also motivated me to take this study in order to understand women's empowerment, particularly by looking at how the contexts of development interventions such as the RCL Project, women beneficiaries' positions and roles in the project framework, and their aid relations influenced women's perceptions of empowerment.

I also selected the RCL Project because it covered a variety of issues, not only the environmental and economic sustainability of the local people living in the project area, but also women's empowerment in economic, social, political, and environmental dimensions. The existence of a women's empowerment component in the project also showed the gender mainstreaming aspect of the RCL Project, which was in line with one of Oxfam's concerns, being is economic justice. Women's empowerment was incorporated in this project recalling the fact that women count as the majority of the members of the villages within the project area. In addition, Oxfam¹ and the donor of this project, CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) also shared the same commitment to promote women's empowerment through this project. The RCL Project also aimed to secure women's voice in local development.

The RCL Project was a five-year project (2010-2015) conducted on the west coast of South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. The Government of Canada through CIDA funded 90 percent of the project. CIDA also initiated the project with Oxfam Canada and Oxfam Great Britain (Oxfam GB). Oxfam's Eastern Indonesia office in Makassar, South Sulawesi, administratively managed the project. The office itself is responsible to Deputy Country Director of Oxfam in Indonesia.

The RCL Project was implemented under the supervision of the Oxfam GB Indonesia Economic Justice programme both substantively and programmatically. Oxfam involved two local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the project, namely Mangrove Action Project (MAP) and Yayasan Konservasi Laut (YKL) or the Marine Conservation Foundation. The project promoted sustainable economic growth by working with local communities and local partners to increase family incomes by making use of renewable natural resources. According to Oxfam's final project report in August 2015, the project team has built 74 economic groups in 60 villages. These are actively attempting to find alternative sources of livelihood to improve the living standards of families.

Oxfam claimed that through the project, the women's economic groups have undertaken market assessments, bargained with buyers, and formulated business plans and expanded their businesses. Oxfam has also trained approximately 1,000 beneficiaries,

¹ Oxfam (Oxford Committee for Famine Relief) is an international confederation of 18 independent NGOs which was formed in 1995 to work together for greater impact on the international stage to reduce poverty and injustice. Oxfam operates in more than 90 countries with programmes in Africa, Middle East, Asia, and in parts of Eastern Europe and Latin America. Oxfam International Secretariat is based in Oxford, United Kingdom (Oxfam International, 2016).

mostly women, at 44 coastal field schools. In addition, with the support of the project, the local government agencies are also taking into account gender equality issues and proposals from the women's groups in local policy planning and development.

In relation to the project location, based on the project document, the RCL project aimed to strengthen the ecological and economic resilience of the people by supporting the restoration of degraded mangrove forests, farming saline soil, stimulating the growth of small enterprises and helping women who count as the majority of the members of the village economic groups to secure their voice in local development. Furthermore, the project also included advocacy with the local authorities to provide direct access for women to basic needs such as fresh water and electricity, and channels to market their products to four districts, namely: Maros, Barru, Takalar, Pangkajene Kepulauan (Pangkep). That was also the reason the project had a component of women's empowerment in which Oxfam also promoted women's participation in the policy process.

With regard to women's participation in the policy processes, Indonesia has accommodated public participation including by women such as in the deliberation of development planning mechanism at various levels, including at the village level (FPPD & The Ford Foundation, 2008; Suhirman, 2004). Women are considered to have the capability to portray poverty issues in detail and map the right targets for development programmes, particularly women themselves (Sari, 2003). Nevertheless, the mechanism known as *Musrenbang* (Development Planning Meeting) has been criticised due to the lack of involvement of women in the decision-making processes, such as at village level, where women representatives tend to be public figures or wives of officials (Rostanty & Dewi, 2005).

Therefore, it was also in the interests of this research to investigate whether and how aid relations related to development interventions and women's empowerment efforts actually empowered women in Indonesia, particularly women beneficiaries of the RCL project who were the focus of this study. Furthermore, if women were empowered, how did the practice of aid relations in the development project influence the perceptions of women beneficiaries of empowerment and being empowered after their participation in the project?

1.2. Post-development and Postcolonial Feminist Perspectives to Approach the Study

In order to approach this study, I applied post-development and postcolonial feminist perspectives on international aid, development, women, and empowerment. Existing literature (Little, 2006; Veen, 2011) on international aid has shown the importance of analysing reasons or backgrounds behind donors' interests in distributing aid to particular projects or programmes to their preferred recipient countries. In this case, post-development discourses are critical in examining development practices, including development aid and aid relations.

The main arguments of post-development authors which have been central to this thesis were related to the history of aid (Veen, 2011) and the nature of aid which creates superiority of the donors over the recipient countries which enables the donors to undertake development interventions (Gronemeyer, 2010). Post-development authors also examine critically the logics behind aid according to the ideals of the donors (Veen, 2011), the preference of donors in distributing international aid (Little, 2006) by setting conditionality and selectivity (Diamond, 2008) and by dominating the initial design of aid (Sato et al., 2011) and implementation of the development interventions (Killick, 2008). The powerful position of the donors who have the most resources available to them has enabled them to define international development agenda (Crawford, 2003, Koggel, 2008). These arguments from post-development authors are crucial in contributing to my understanding and analysis of development interventions in this thesis as they examine not only the history and background of aid, but also particularly how aid relations occur amongst various actors involved in development interventions within the dynamics of power relations.

The core unique contribution of post-development discourses in this thesis is ambiguity of the role of power because of the 'influential action' of the powerless. As argued by Jensen & Winthereik (2012), the discourses of the powerful are not always powerful themselves because the practice of power relations depends on particular situations, projects or networks. With regard to empowerment, Mosse (2005) also underlines the importance to understand empowerment by looking at the context of particular positions and relations between different actors and interests in development. Post-development discourses also contribute mainly in deconstructing the meanings and practices of development (Cavalcanti, 2007). In this case, post-development theories acknowledge and highlight various frames of development and actions, including from the less

powerful as they have their own perceptions of development and ways of implementing development according to the context where they live and work, and their needs.

In relation to this study, post-development discourses are relevant, particularly to understand how women in this study perceived empowerment, how they played their roles in project design, how they actualized empowerment individually and collectively, and how they managed their relations with others, including with their family, the local authority, and the executing agencies, after their engagement in a development project.

In line with post-development authors, postcolonial authors such as Baaz (2005), Friedmann (1992), Campbell and Teghtsoonian (2010), Green (2002), Grabe (2012), Nussbaum (2000), and Nair (2013) also criticise the domination of the donors in formulating international development agenda. They also underline the importance of understanding the contexts and the identities of Self and Otherness in analysing aid (power) relations between various actors and interests under the aid industry. In addition, postcolonial feminist theories are crucial in understanding various interests and perceptions of the different actors involved in development intervention, particularly by understanding the contexts and fragmentation of development workers (Baaz, 2005; Nussbaum, 2000).

Postcolonial feminist theories themselves are particularly concerned with the different experiences between women and men due to gendered identity and entitlements, as well as structural constraints on women's empowerment (Friedmann, 1992). Contexts such as history, cultural norms, political and social contexts and institutions are also crucial in influencing women's empowerment (Cornwall & Edwards 2010). The key aspect of postcolonial feminist theories also argues that women experience double colonisation due to gender, class, and circumstance which make it impossible to treat women as a homogenous group because of their different experiences (Mohanty, 1991, as cited in Mishra, 2013). Postcolonial feminist theories also acknowledge individual differences of women's stories of empowerment based on the contexts and the multidimensional and multi-layered aspects of power relations and empowerment which each woman experiences uniquely due the intersectionality of their everyday lives (Allen, 1998; Cho, et.al, 2013; Luttrell et al., 2009; Patil, 2013).

Furthermore, postcolonial feminist perspectives are valuable as they also consider tradition and the relationality aspect of social relations which promote mutual respect and harmony (Mishra, 2013). Therefore, I found postcolonial feminist theories crucial

and useful in connecting international aid and post-development discourses to the importance of contextual particularity; gendered aspects of everyday lives, relations, and structures; the intersectionality of various actors and interests which affect women's perceptions of empowerment and their transformation processes individually and collectively.

Both post-development and postcolonial feminist perspectives are suitable and relevant in approaching the topic of this study. These theories also connect well and critically with the discourses and practices of international development and women's empowerment, both in theory and practice. They also helped me capture the dynamics and complexities of aid relations and women's empowerment as I tried to explore, understand, and analyse the influence of development interventions on women beneficiaries' perceptions of empowerment.

Post-development theories were important to help me understand and critically analyse the background of international aid and aid (power) relations between donors, executing agencies, recipient governments, and direct beneficiaries of development projects. Post-development theories further provided me with relevant discourses in analysing and criticising the practice of aid relations which still have the tendency of imposing the interests of those who have the most resources in defining international development agenda and the use of the 'deficit frame' in portraying beneficiaries, thus ignoring the strength-based approach and importance of ownership from the beneficiaries' side and dependency on external assistance, thus disempowering effect of development aid.

Postcolonial feminist theories were challenging and motivating me to explore aid relations from the multiple voices of beneficiaries, particularly women, in relation to the intersectionality they encounter with regard to the local culture, local politics, gender, and class as well as their relations with others, in which women had their own transformation processes both individually and collectively. Postcolonial feminist theories also reminded me to appreciate and acknowledge different experiences of women's empowerment due to the intersectionality they dealt with in their everyday lives, including their engagement in development project.

Both post-development and postcolonial feminist theories were relevant particularly in helping me analyse women's positions and roles within the project framework, as well as their engagement in the project, and how they had influenced their perceptions of empowerment and their transformation processes to empowerment. The theories also highlight the importance of understanding the practice of aid (power) relations by

looking at the contexts, interconnection between various actors and interests involved in the aid industry, not to mention the positions and voices of marginalised subjects in the aid world, including women.

This section will highlight how post-development and postcolonial feminist theories analyse the practice of international aid; the discourses on women, development aid, and empowerment, as well as the intersectionality of aid relationships within the aid chain.

1.2.1 On the Practice of International Aid

In relation to the practice of international aid, post-development writers highlight strong critiques of development. Amongst the critiques is the view that development has been seen as manipulative and creating a universal one-way approach. Development with this approach puts those who have the most resources in a position of power to define the international development agenda. Therefore, development ignores the relevance of the project to the intended beneficiaries (Connel, 1999; Kabeer, 1999b; Kitzinger, 2004).

Development has been criticised for putting the people as the problems and objects of development, as well as presenting women as marginalised others. Development has also been depoliticized and implemented by neglecting contextuality which leads to the masculine nature of international development (Cho et.al., 2013; Esteva, 2010; Green, 2002; Nussbaum, 2000; Ottaway, 2003; Rahnema, 2010; Sachs, 2010).

Post-development authors focused on discourses of development to examine how power and knowledge involved in the representation of the undeveloped, articulated and practised in development. However, apart from the powerful element of discourse, the practice of power relations in development depend on particular situations, projects or networks. For example, it is possible that there is 'influential action' from the powerless to the powerful that destabilise established position. This 'influential action' means that the discourses of the powerful are not themselves so powerful and that the role of power itself is far more ambiguous (Jensen & Winthereik, 2012, pp. 84–5). Such overstatement of the capacity of international development is also shared by anthropologists because existing critics of development placed so much importance on the donors. In practice, policy ideas such as 'empowerment' or 'social development' must be understood in the context of the particular position and relationships between

various stakeholders and interests involved in development processes (Mosse, 2005, pp. 14–15).

These arguments highlight the importance of considering aid power relationships where aid is seen with the logic of ‘gift’ and ‘entitlement’ that creates a moralising process with its own hierarchy of authority and expertise. These arguments also highlight complexities of aid as an international policy of aid is produced by development actors who interpret abstract global policy according to their own interests, values, and ambitions (Mosse, 2005, pp. 19–20). In relation to the nature of aid, post-development authors have a strong position not only in criticising how development has been framed, identified, and implemented but also in rejecting the whole idea of development. However, post-development has also been criticised for not providing practical and clear solutions to its critiques of development. Nevertheless, post-development authors would argue that aside from the critics, post-development is still seen as being important and useful especially in deconstructing the meaning and practice of development (Cavalcanti, 2007, p. 90).

With regard to international aid, both post-development and postcolonial development authors have criticised the superiority of donors over recipients. Donors as the ones who have the most resources have the authority to define international development agenda policy (Crawford, 2003; Koggel, 2008; Sato et al., 2011). Distribution and management of aid are strongly defined by the interests and preferences of the donors (Buffardi, 2013; Little, 2006; Veen, 2011). Recalling the ‘elegant power’ of international aid, the donors have justification to intervene in the jurisdiction of the recipients. The donors also have the power to apply conditionality and selectivity in distributing their aid (Diamond, 2008; Gronemeyer, 2010; Killick, 2008; Lancaster, 2008).

1.2.2 On Development, Aid, and Women’s Empowerment

With regard to development, feminist theory criticises development which tends to focus on physical aspects and undermines women’s contributions to the economy (Rowlands, 2002, p. 37). Some feminist scholars also criticise the limited dimension of empowerment in which development is brought to women, particularly with regard to a narrow economic aspect. This has hindered efforts to promote social transformation, particularly in gender relations (Connel, 1999, pp. 85–86). These situations and

critiques have also become reasons for the international agencies to undertake projects on women's empowerment.

Furthermore, discussing issues in aid, women's empowerment and development are best approached by using feminist perspectives. In this case, postcolonial feminist works also pay attention to the changing nature of development, the complexity of power relations, economic inequalities, culture, and identity, which influence the identification of the Western Self and the Otherness of aid recipients or partners. Postcolonial works focus on refining development which takes into account the so-called marginalised and disadvantaged and urges inclusive democracy through accountable and responsive government to promote the humanist face of development (Baaz, 2005; Friedmann, 1992). In addition, feminist theory which has origins in the constructivist paradigm, basically underlines that realities should not be seen as given because they are constructed socially, such as through interactions, languages, values, structures, and power relations (Green, 2002; Nussbaum, 2000; Patil, 2013).

Postcolonial feminist authors, such as Tandon (2008) also argue that the most critical aspect of the definition of development is its political economy and historical context. They argue that developing countries have gained their political independence. However, in most cases, developing countries are still trapped in an asymmetrical economy, power and knowledge relations with the former colonial powers. The former colonisers continue to dominate the process of globalisation, and the institutions of global governance, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization. Moreover, the major donors in the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) – DAC (Development Assistance Committee) have defined the terms of development and aid, and the relations between both terms, according to their vocabularies, definitions, which the United Nations has also adopted. In this case, aid practices are seen as self-serving, Western-centric, value-loaded and with arbitrary definitions, which ignore political and ethical contexts.

Some feminist authors discuss women's empowerment and development aid by underlining critical issues such as development approaches to women; women's agenda in international development intervention; aid power relations; women's empowerment and participation (Burnell, 2008; Connel, 1999; Everett & Charlton, 2014; Kabeer, 1999a; Rowand-Campbell, 1999; Rowlands, 1999). Aid relationships, the practices of development aid and women's empowerment issues are commonly approached by using

feminist constructivist theories, especially postcolonial feminist theories which pay important concern to power relations and women's empowerment, such as intersectionality theory. This theory along with the post-development perspectives on aid, women's empowerment, and development, provided relevant tools in understanding the interconnections between donors, recipient countries, and other relevant stakeholders, including women for this study.

1.2.3 On the Intersectionality of Aid Relationships

In relation to these interconnections between various actors in the aid industry, I analyzed the findings of the research based on the relations between these international agencies and the local and relevant stakeholders. Recalling that aid is a matter of relationships, it is crucial to pay attention to the aspect of aid relations to understand how the aid industry works (Eyben, 2006a; Veltmeyer, 2005). With regard to the case study of my research, the international agency which I was looking at particularly was Oxfam Great Britain, especially Oxfam in Indonesia (I will refer to it as Oxfam throughout this thesis). Other relevant stakeholders are the Indonesian Government (relevant government divisions dealing with the RCL Project), women beneficiaries in the study area, and Oxfam's local NGO partners and non-beneficiaries.

In this research, I applied a feminist constructive perspective on development. Feminist approaches are concerned with social context and gender analysis and acknowledge the equality of citizens, both men and women, in policy processes. The approach also underlines different experiences between men and women. Furthermore, in approaching the issues of women, aid, and development, as well as women's empowerment component in the case study of this research, I applied the intersectionality theory in addition to post-development and postcolonial feminist perspectives on empowerment.

Intersectionality theory focuses on the structure of power which considers existing contexts and dynamics of existing relations (Cho et al., 2013). The theory is relevant to understanding and analyzing the dynamics and complexities of international aid, particularly in investigating the position of women beneficiaries in the aid chain and how development intervention influenced women's perceptions of empowerment after their involvement in the project.

In addition, feminist perspectives and post-development approaches are useful in investigating and analyzing aid the rationale of development intervention as they are both concerned with the nature of international aid and aid power relations. Feminist and current postcolonial feminist works, such as Ammy Allen's work on empowerment, put significant emphasis on relationships and structures of power, particularly in theorizing change and understanding the disempowering effects of different relations between people in specific contexts. Feminist perspectives also highlight the intersection of power in multi leveled and a multi-layered network of local, regional, and global relations. Several feminist scholars believe that their account of power relations is also relevant to analyze how those who are in power or more powerful than others will have greater influence to shape the agendas and policies of development projects (Koggel, 2008).

Regarding the 'soft power' nature of international aid, development agencies, for example, undertake development intervention in the name of promoting and mainstreaming empowerment (Gronemeyer, 2010; Killick, 2008). Those postcolonial feminist and post-development arguments are also reflected strongly in the intersectionality theory. Intersectionality theory highlights the complex phenomena of relations which involve various levels of analysis and different aspects (Cho et al., 2013). Intersectionality theory and feminist works on power relations enabled me to have comprehensive and appropriate analysis in addressing the questions in this study (Patil, 2013).

The positions and arguments of a feminist approach were critical and important in approaching this study as I analysed the interconnectedness amongst international agencies and recipient governments, beneficiaries and relevant others during project selection. In this case, it was important for me to always consider the complexity of power relations as argued by postcolonial feminist works (Koggel, 2008), particularly in trying to understand the position of women beneficiaries who tend to be the targets of the projects rather than significant, capable, and active subjects of development projects (Heilman & Barocas Alcott, 2001).

Although there are many kinds of literature on international aid and aid relations, not to mention the works of postcolonial feminist scholars on the complexity of power relations and empowerment, not much has been said about women beneficiaries' perceptions of empowerment within the dynamics and complexities of power relations

according to the transformation they experience after their engagement in development projects. Critical analysis from post-development and postcolonial feminist perspectives have not discussed much women beneficiaries' positions in development projects and the influence of aid relations and development interventions on women's perceptions of empowerment and how they were empowered after their involvement in the project.

1.3. Research Questions

The main question of this study was: How have development interventions influenced women beneficiaries' perceptions of empowerment? In order to answer this question, I investigated the following questions:

- ❖ How were women beneficiaries positioned as participants in the RCL Project?
- ❖ What was the practice of aid relations between women beneficiaries with other stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project?
- ❖ How did women perceive empowerment after their involvement in the project?
- ❖ How did women consider the relevance of the projects to their urgent needs?

1.4. Scope of Research

This study focused on one district out of four districts covered by the RCL Project, namely Pangkep (Pangkajene Kepulauan)/Pangkajene Islands District, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. The ethnographic research was conducted mainly in Pitusunggu Village, where I observed one economic group focusing on organic farming. The other two economic groups which I looked at were working on snack food production. They are located in the neighboring area of Pitusunggu Village, which is Pitue Village. I started the fieldwork from May 2015, which was toward the end of the RCL Project period, to November 2015. The project ended in August 2015.

1.5. Thesis Outline

This thesis is comprised of eight chapters. This first chapter of this thesis will provide the background of this research. It also discusses post-development and postcolonial feminist perspectives which were applied in this research. This chapter also highlights the research questions, the scope of the research, and the thesis outline.

Chapter two will focus on the literature review on international aid. It will also discuss the interconnection between women, aid, and development as highlighted in the existing literature. The chapter also discusses women's empowerment through development aid.

Chapter three will explain the methodology of this research. It starts with the epistemology and the qualitative and ethnographic methodology of this research. This chapter also discusses the ethical aspect, not to mention my reflexivity and positionality in this research.

Chapter four will introduce the contexts of the research area with a general profile of the area and gender in the perspectives of Bugis-Makassar culture. This introduction will be followed by the overview of Oxfam's Restoring Coastal Livelihoods (RCL) Project in South Sulawesi (2010-2015) after the bridging section between the research area contexts and the case study of this research. This section will be followed by the discussion of the contexts of the research area and the case study.

Chapter five will further explain the practice of aid relations in the RCL Project. This chapter will remind the readers with the literature on development intervention and discuss the position of women beneficiaries in the RCL Project Design. Then, it will also remind the readers about the literature on aid relations and show the findings of this research on women's aid relations, with the discussion on women and empowerment in the project's aid relations.

Chapter six will highlight four-selected women beneficiaries' processes of transformation. This chapter will include unique stories of empowerment which the women have experienced. It also provides further discussion about the importance of personal, relational, and multidimensional aspects of empowerment.

Chapter seven will discuss the influence of development interventions on women beneficiaries' perceptions of empowerment based on the existing literature on aid, women's empowerment, and development. This chapter also highlights several findings

of this research with regard to the influence of development interventions. The findings will be linked to the discussion of rethinking aid relations and gender power relations in promoting and sustaining women's empowerment.

Chapter eight will conclude the thesis by sharing reflections of my research journey, the elaboration of the main findings of this research and the research contribution. It will also touch upon the limitations of the study and recommendations for future studies. This chapter will be concluded with my final remarks of this thesis.

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Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

The three key issues discussed in this thesis are international aid, women's empowerment, and development. Therefore, it is important to ask some key questions from the literature regarding these topics. These questions include: how have development aid actors perceived and practised gender and development approaches in promoting women's empowerment?; when and how did the aid industry become interested in gender and women's empowerment issues?; and how are the interconnections between various actors in the aid system reflected in development interventions? The answers to these key questions should consider the nature of aid (power) relations, the design of development interventions, the contexts of the project area, women's empowerment in a development context, gender relations issues from feminist perspectives and the multidimensional and multilevel nature of empowerment.

The literature on international aid has discussed several key issues, such as the history of international aid, theoretical perspectives on international aid, the rationale behind aid policy, various actors and interests in international aid and aid relations between donors, recipient governments, and other relevant stakeholders. Most authors focus their analysis on the state actors, or higher official levels of non-state actors, such as international organisations or donors, and formal policy processes and procedures (Buiter, 2007; Buss & Gardner, 2008; Diamond, 2008; Nelson, 2008; Veen, 2011). This chapter aims to review the literature on international aid, the practice of aid relations in development intervention, as well as literature on women's empowerment, aid, and development. The topics of the literature are intertwined to provide the foundation for critical analysis to approach this study.

I start the chapter by discussing the literature of international aid, the inclusion of women's empowerment in international development agendas, and the intersectionality of aid relations. In this section, I provide the background of the inclusion of women's empowerment in the international development agenda as a response to the changing paradigm in international aid. The review of the international aid literature will also highlight the reflection of the intersectionality of aid relations with regard to contexts,

various actors and interests involved in development interventions. These initial sections provide a useful background to understanding the complexities and dynamics of international aid for this research before I discuss particular issues relating to women's empowerment through development aid in the following section. In this section, I discuss this particular topic by looking at feminist perspectives on development and women's empowerment.

I conclude this chapter by looking at the existing literature on international aid, women's empowerment, and development and highlighting gaps in the literature. I found that not much has been written about aid relations. For example, in works on the subject, such as by Eyben (2006a); and Pasteur & Scott-Villiers (2006), which discuss the importance to understand aid relations in the management of aid. This study worked to explore relationships between women beneficiaries and other stakeholders in development projects which promote women's empowerment, before analysing the influence of development interventions on women beneficiaries' perceptions of empowerment.

I also referred to the work of Cornwall & Edwards (2010) which highlight 'relationships' issue which women experience as one of the important issues in understanding empowerment and disempowerment, which I found relevant to the relational aspect of empowerment which Rowlands (1999) argues. In addition, not much has been said on women beneficiaries' voices (particularly women at grassroots levels), their positions in the project design and their journeys of empowerment (Kitzinger, 2004; Grbich, 2007; Cornwall, 2016). Authors of existing literature on international aid have also not said much about how aid relations through development interventions have influenced women's perceptions of empowerment after their involvement in the projects.

2.2. International Aid

It is relevant to review the literature on international aid to have a better understanding of the rationale of international aid in the international development agenda. In relation to international aid, women's empowerment projects and other development

interventions which incorporate a women's agenda, are some of the notable elements of contemporary development assistance.

2.2.1 The History of International Aid

Understanding international aid requires knowledge of its history. Several scholars and practitioners have written much on the origins of international aid. A. Maurits van der Veen (2011, pp. 6–7) states that in international politics, international aid started primarily after the Second World War when the United Nations endorsed the member states to support the international machinery to promote the social economic advancement of all peoples. A key example was the Marshall Plan and other initiatives by colonial powers, such as the United Kingdom which introduced the 'Colonial Development and Welfare Act' in 1945. Other colonial powers, such as the Dutch also provided development aid (1945-1951) and the Belgians applied the same policy in the 1950s. Furthermore, the end of the Second World War was considered as the beginning of aid because considering the context of the international political economy (1945-1970), international aid as promoted by the United Nations was conducted to deal with emergency relief in war-torn countries. Aid was also channelled to undertake reconstruction after the war and to promote foreign investment (Lancaster, 2007, p. 28).

Development assistance gained prominence in the 1960s when development became the main agenda in the international sphere as highlighted by the United Nations. In the same period, a central agency to coordinate aid policies of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), called the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), was created (Burnell, 2008, p. 503; Veen, 2011). DAC became part of the OECD based on the Ministerial Resolution on 23 July 1961. The Committee consists of 29 countries, many of which are the largest donors of aid. The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) participate as observers (OECD, 2016). The 1960s was also known as a period of active promotion of democracy assistance through international aid (Burnell, 2008, p. 506).

During the 1960s, harmonisation, coordination, and alignment were the major pillars in the aid-effectiveness agenda. Since then, harmonisation has been facing challenges arising from the different arrangements applied by the donors in managing their aid. The

DAC has also been criticised for creating another cartel of donors, as in reality, the major donors remain the ones with the resources and authority to influence the development agenda, thus undermining ‘country ownership’ (Eyben, 2007).

The following period of international aid in the 1970s witnessed efforts to focus the distribution of aid to poorer subgroups within less developed countries (LDCs). However, this concern was criticised by the writers of the dependency theory and those who criticized aid as part of a new form of colonialization to maintain the domination and achievement of interests of the Western donors in the recipient countries, particularly with regard to the Cold War context (Kothari, 2002, pp. 36–40; Minogue & Kothari, 2002, p. 187; Burnell, 2008, p. 505; Rai, 2008, p. 72).

Furthermore, during the period 1970-1990 aid agencies became more professionalised. Multiple aid agencies had a large proportion of aid particularly for development purposes (Lancaster, 2007). Therefore, it can be seen that international aid has experienced various dynamics and interests in its period, such as the contexts, issues, and actors involved. International aid also experienced a period of stagnation and ‘aid fatigue’ in the 1980s and 1990s when donors paid more attention to domestic economies (Veen, 2011).

This ‘aid fatigue’ era happened as donors’ wealth was declining following the oil crises of the 1970s and aid effectiveness was being challenged. This resulted in the rapid decline of aid (Burnell, 2008). The 1990s were also well-known for the adoption of neoliberal reform to promote the primacy of market reforms. Neoliberal reforms were seen as vital to reviving the poor economies of developing and post-communist countries although these reforms brought variable results to different countries due to the selective nature of the reform agenda and the lack of credible strategies (Manzetti, 2009). Inequalities increased and there were concerns that poverty levels had increased.

In the 21st century, the international commitment to aid reached a new peak, especially after the launch of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The United Nations (UN) Conference on Financing Development in Monterrey 2002 followed and suggested the doubling of the amount of official aid to reduce by half the proportion of people living in poverty (Riddell, 1987; Lancaster, 2007; Riddell, 2007; Burnell, 2008). The importance of international aid and its effectiveness was also related to international agreements between the world leaders, such as the Paris Declaration of 2005. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 and the later Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 both explicitly included women's empowerment and gender equality as one of their goals. Thus, in the past 20 years, the inclusion of gender and women's empowerment issues in the international development agenda have been integrated into global efforts to alleviate poverty (UNDP, 2016).

It can be concluded that international aid has been intensively used as a foreign policy tool. International aid policy has been practised to serve various interests of the donors. These interests include, for example, diplomatic and development goals, democracy promotion, security, power and influence, wealth and commerce, culture, humanitarian relief, tackling global problems, conflict prevention and mitigation (Lancaster, 2007; Haan, 2009; Veen, 2011). Therefore, international aid is framed by the interests of the donors which underlines the objectives of international aid policy (Veen, 2011).

The importance of international aid can also be seen by the variety of actors, including donors, recipients, and others involved in the aid world, whether representing state or non-state actors (Lancaster, 2008; Gronemeyer, 2010). This is also why it is crucial to look at the literature on the practice of aid relations to understand the complexities and dynamics of international aid, particularly in development interventions.

2.2.2 Critiques of Aid Relations

Maria Eriksson Baaz (2005) argues, in the context of development aid and postcolonial studies, the identity of the donors has heavily affected the way the development agenda has been implemented. This includes the paternalistic nature of the partnership between the donors and the recipients. This paternalistic nature of aid is also reflected in the discourse of the designated images of the donors' Self and the recipients' Otherness. Referring to postcolonial arguments, culture and identity are important in understanding identification of various actors and conflict of interests in the encounters. The arguments further suggest the importance of noting economic inequalities as portrayed by ownership of resources and power relations between the donors, the development workers, the partners and the beneficiaries.

The asymmetric power relations and identification of 'Self' and 'Otherness' between the donors and the NGOs and the conflicting interests have resulted in different perceptions of various parties in implementing partnership (Groves & Hinton, 2004; Baaz, 2005). This can be seen from development projects in which formulation and

implementation of the agenda have been set by the donors (Sato et al., 2011). The donors also define the conditionalities over the regulation and management of aid (Wallace, et.al., 2006; Fowler, 2008, p. 534; Killick, 2008, p. 514). In this case of asymmetric aid power relations, the aid industry drives development agencies and workers to adjust their concerns, expertise, and management according to the standard and the current interests of the donors.

For example, within the aid industry, women beneficiaries are required to fit their collective organisations (already existing or newly created) into the predesigned modes of collective organisations set by the donors. This shows the strong influence of donors in the practice of aid relations (Mwaura-Muiru, 2010). These arguments of the asymmetric aid power relations are also relevant for this study in investigating the relevance of development projects to the needs of women (Connel, 1999; Kabeer, 1999b). Moreover, while international aid has a good image, it is also seen as the source of the problem since donor representation reflects the global power hierarchies and asymmetric relations among states (Nair, 2013).

These arguments are also supported by other authors, such as Joabe G. Cavalcanti (2007) with his research on the goat-breeding project of the World Bank in north-east Brazil. The findings of this study showed that the lack of interest of the community in the project happened due to the imposition of the needs of the project by technicians and outsiders to satisfy their interests in the project. The goat-breeding project was seen as a threat to the lifestyle of the community as the donor defined that the project should be carried out as a collective activity. However, the people were focusing on their own subsistence agriculture and defining their own social activities individually. This reality of development projects also highlights that beneficiaries are not just passive and weak actors. Apart from the relative bargaining power positions and the imposition of values, concepts, and ideas by the executing agencies (outsiders), in the end, the beneficiaries have their own ideas, perceptions, and interests about the project. They also have their own perceptions of various development concepts that the projects introduce and promote.

In the practice of aid relations, it is also important to take into account the donors' preferences in giving aid recalling the fact that they are the ones who define the distribution of aid (Little, 2006). Donors tend to have the power in managing international aid by defining conditionality on and requiring specific actions from the

recipient government in return for assistance (Burnell, 2008; Diamond, 2008; Killick, 2008). Marianne Gronemeyer (2010) discusses the ‘elegance of power’ of help, in which donors can justify their intervention by applying external standards on normality and highlighting the importance of donors’ interests through institutionalisation and professionalisation of foreign aid. Help as an instrument of their power has created superiority-inferiority relationships between the donors and the recipients (Gronemeyer, 2010). This argument of preferences of donors in aid relations is also supported by Veen (2011, p. 2) who argues through his study on foreign aid of the Netherlands, Norway, Italy, and Belgium, that aid has an ideational aspect, in which ideas and interests define policy objectives and outcomes of foreign aid.

In addition, the distribution and management of international aid have also been closely related to the interests and authority of the donors, which are also relational in nature due to the interests of other stakeholders involved in development projects (Little, 2006; Lancaster, 2007; Diamond, 2008). Apart from the regular articulation of the centrality of recipient ownership and of the partnership between donors and recipients to support a positive impact of development aid, in practice, the overall aid relations are controlled by the donors. Recipients remain junior partners rather than equal partners who retain limited control of the fund (Riddell, 2007). For example, donors would prefer to fund development projects which share similar concerns with the donors’ funding criteria.

In other words, existing studies have shown the importance of understanding the motives of donors in giving aid to particular projects or programmes to their preferred recipient countries and primary beneficiaries by collaborating with particular development agencies. Authors on international aid also consider aspects such as the history of aid or contexts of existing aid (donors, recipients, aid relations, domestic considerations, forms of aids, interests, sustainability, locations) in discussing international aid (Little, 2006; Lancaster, 2007; Veen, 2011). The existing studies are useful and relevant in understanding the logics behind aid; complexities of aid power relations; and dynamics of various interests and perceptions of the stakeholders involved in the aid chain. The existing literature also highlights critics on development and international aid, particularly in the practice of aid relations and the intersectionality of various actors and interests in the aid industry.

2.2.3 Changes in the Practices of International Aid

Following commitments made to increase levels of aid giving in the Monterrey Declaration on Financing Development, in 2003, donors turned their attention to making aid more effective. The OECD promoted a series of meetings of ministers and the top officials of both donor and recipient countries, and as well as multilateral aid agencies. The first such high-level forum was in Rome in 2003 (Haan, 2009).

The critics of development and international aid also urged international donors to evaluate and ensure the aid effectiveness which was highlighted in the Paris Declaration. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness was signed in March 2005. It was an initiative of the OECD and its DAC. There are five principles outlined in the document for allocating and managing aid. They are ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results, and mutual accountability. The declaration highlights the need for mutual accountability, assessment on the performance of the frameworks to be shared between donors and recipients, and for assurance that incentive systems are in line (Haan, 2009).

Furthermore, the Paris Declaration was reaffirmed at the High-Level Forum in Accra in September 2008. During the forum, the recipient countries clearly expressed their concerns about donor practices. Their main requests to the donors included simplifying donor procedures and thus reducing transaction costs, donors agreeing to work more closely together and synchronising their procedures with those of recipient countries, and becoming more transparent by sharing more information between the donors and recipients (Haan, 2009).

Ownership

Ownership was identified in the Paris Declaration as the key to aid effectiveness as it promotes the recipients to take charge of their own development. The principle of country ownership puts the recipient country (in practice the recipient government) to take the responsibility to identify and articulate the recipient country's development priorities. The principle of alignment underlines that the decisions are made within recipient countries. The decisions which are written in an articulated and written

document (the country development strategy/CDS) will guide international donors in discussing and directing the aid (Haan, 2009; Campbell & Teghtsoonian, 2010).

Alignment means that donors commit to base their overall support according to the partner countries' development strategies. Donors also commit to using the partner countries' own institutions and systems, in which both partners and donors agree to create mutually agreed frameworks which provide reliable assessments of performance, transparency, and accountability of the partners' systems. In addition, the partner countries also commit to strengthening development capacity with support from the donors, including their financial management capacity and national procurement systems by taking leadership in the processes. The alignment principle also entails untying aid to increase aid effectiveness and to improve country ownership and alignment (OECD, 2005).

Furthermore, the Busan Agreement in 2011 highlighted the commitment to apply principles of 'democratic ownership' or 'inclusive development' by involving the participation of non-state actors (Eyben, 2007). In this case, 'inclusive aid' is important because of the greater awareness about the dynamics of power and relations amongst various actors in development aid. Development should be seen as a complex system which involves various actors, interest, and processes (Sogge, 2002; Groves & Hinton, 2004). However, major decisions that affect people's lives continue to be made without giving sufficient attention to social reality and political incentives. The new aid modalities have increased the quality of partnerships amongst key development actors. The new aid modalities have also provided sufficient rooms for the beneficiaries, including the poor to voice their concerns (Groves & Hinton, 2004). Inclusive aid could include civil society more but at the Busan, it mainly seemed to mean the market and new donors (China).

With regard to the 'country ownership', Buiter (2007) argues that country ownership is a property of the conditionality attached to the programmes, processes, plans, or strategies. The principle refers to several dimensions of the multidimensional relations of the domestic party of the programmes. These multidimensional relations are reflected in the involvement of the country in drafting and designing the programmes, its agreement on the objectives, and its contribution in implementing the programmes.

Therefore, it could be seen that there are efforts to improve the practice of international aid recalling the embedded nature of aid power relations in development interventions. For that reason, donors introduced development concepts such as ownership,

participation, and partnership to engage various parties in development interventions and to ensure sustainability of the positive outcome of the project.

For example, with regard to the concept of ownership, it is important to ensure domestic ownership and leadership to promote change are supported by the local champions. The existence of external facilitators is important to encourage the people to come up with their own initiatives and priorities and to take the lead in the development processes. The bottom-up approach is important to create real empowerment and to avoid 'power over' by development agencies (Connel, 1999; Rowlands, 1999). Killick (2008, p. 513) explained the importance of domestic ownership for effective implementation of development intervention because the imposed pressures from the donors rarely produce reform due to different goals and interests.

'Domestic ownership' is important for effective development intervention as the concept of 'country ownership' considers the goals and interests of the recipient (Killick, 2008). However, in practice, the capability and roles of the recipient countries, the donors' perceptions towards the recipients, and lack of specification of the term, have influenced donors' decisions in involving the recipient country in development intervention (Zimmermann & McDonnell, 2008; Buffardi, 2013).

'Country ownership' should consider patterns of relations between the donors and the recipients, the specification of actors and activities, and the contextualization of involvement of actors in particular activities. These considerations will help both donors and recipients to relate accordingly with deliberate decisions and bargaining capability for preferred roles, relationships, and the sustainability of development gains. In relation to donor-recipient relations, donors have a variety of perceptions towards the comparative advantage (capability and roles) of the recipient countries in different levels as well as the non-state actors. Despite efforts to increase greater ownership and inclusive partnership, the lack of clarity of the notions of ownership and partnership, and the varied perceptions of the donors towards the recipient governments and non-state actors, there is still a challenge due to less involvement of the recipient country in development intervention and donor-driven mandates towards the recipients (Buffardi, 2013).

However, in practice, ownership put more emphasis on recipient governments. Local communities or NGOs were not given much attention. The term 'country ownership' has also been criticised as ambiguous as it creates artificial understanding in the practice

of aid relations. For example, the term does not necessarily reflect significant involvement of the recipient countries in the design and implementation of the programmes. The concept itself is also questioned recalling the heterogeneous and competing views and interests existing in a country. Thus, there is a criticism of the representativeness and realistic consultative processes in the aid relations (Buiter, 2007).

In addition, the terms of ownership have been criticised for being inconsistently applied and lacking specification. For example, on the clarity on the notion of ownership, who should be involved in what activities, and types of country ownership. Country ownership is indicated by the involvement of the recipient countries in the decision-making process, prioritisation of issues, and fund management of international aid (Zimmermann & McDonnell, 2008). Therefore, ownership is important to ensure project relevance to the beneficiaries' needs. Ownership is expected to create a sense of belonging and to promote the sustainability of the positive outcomes of the project. Despite knowing the nature of aid power relations where those who have the resources are influential in defining international agenda, it is still challenging to have a feasible, realistic, and effective participatory process from the beginning, if not throughout of the project design and selection.

Participation

The relational aspect of aid and power relations can be seen in the application of another concept of development, namely participation. Participation was actively promoted in the 1990s by writers such as Chambers and adopted in principle by many development agencies. This concept was also closely related to the promotion of the ownership principle.

However, participation has been criticized not only for its methodology and practice, but also the discourse, which reflects the potential of an unjustified exercise of power, such as exploitation of the people in the participatory approach, ignorance of diversity, differentiation in the community, and manipulation of 'local knowledge' (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). Nevertheless, apart from the criticisms, these terms in development have also led the way to promote women's empowerment and participation in development.

In relation to participation in development, Connel (1999) argued that the practice of the participatory approach is still rooted in a particular constructed reality, which justifies

development professionals' existence and intervention in the development process. The participatory approach in development intervention has been used as a methodology and the strategic goal of development. Empowerment should be encouraged from the beneficiaries' side through facilitation by and knowledge sharing with external actors. Participation is justified for the objectives of sustainability, relevance, and empowerment aspects of development.

The dichotomous approach between project beneficiaries (the less powerful) and development workers (elite groups) in participatory development also leads to deeper stratifications and stronger power relations in development practices. These practices work to obscure daily oppressions which people experience in their everyday life and to keep participants as the subject of development surveillance (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). In relation to that, by the late 1990s, debates on 'mainstreaming' participation focused on the dangers of preoccupation with the technical aspects and 'routinization' of the participatory process. Donors were criticised for being too bureaucratic and difficult to be flexible enough to actually work effectively with participation. Moreover, those who worked for the donors seemed to have a lack of sufficient understanding about participation (Arora-Jonsson et.al., 2006).

However, it is also important to relate participation as a realisation of empowerment. Empowerment as part of a development intervention agenda involves strengthening people's asset-based agency and changing the institutional rules that shape human behaviour and interaction. For example, increased access to information can improve the basis from which an agent bargains. Institutional change can empower people by creating greater "equality of opportunity" for those who are traditionally disempowered (Alsop, et al., 2006).

On the other hand, as argued by Rahnema, terms such as participation have been part of the interests of, and favoured by, government and development institutions. This happens because 'participation' is not seen as a threat as it can help them to match their interests with the donors'. 'Participation' also becomes a politically attractive slogan, which has economic appeal and good potential for fundraising. These conditions create dilemmas of participation due to the economization of life, which is subjecting the participants and creating addictive manipulation of the often invisible and structural processes (Rahnema, 2010). From this aspect, it can be seen that imposition and appropriation of particular development terms or jargon terms, such as participation, by

the donors, have been accommodated by the recipient governments and development institutions. Aside from the importance of considering the criticisms of participation, it is also important to note that the practice of participation in development, which is closely related to empowerment, also leads the way for concern and efforts in promoting women's empowerment and participation in development.

Therefore, it is crucial and urgent for development workers to have a better understanding of 'participation' and how it affects the perception of the nature of aid power relations, not to mention development professionals' understanding of the reality of aid relations when implementing development intervention. The need to have a better understanding of development concepts also applies to development projects which incorporate the women's empowerment agenda, where feminists have a special concern with women's voices and the complexities of power relations with regard to empowerment.

In response to efforts to empower women, facilitators of development interventions are in theory working by presenting ideas and encouraging local initiative. They are not pushing and imposing their ideas and defining what is best for the people. The existence of facilitators is very useful to exchange knowledge with the beneficiaries. They motivate and assist beneficiaries in realising their initiatives, and to bridge the beneficiaries when dealing with other actors, such as the executing agencies, the donors, the government, and private sectors related to the issues and sectors of development intervention (Connel, 1999; Rowlands, 1999).

Therefore, development and empowerment efforts should also involve the state as the policy makers whose policies affect people's lives, particularly on access to existing resources. For effective and significant empowerment, development should also consider relative access to resources and different interests exist amongst the poor. Moreover, it is important to encourage people's movement to get support from other actors who share similar concerns, such as volunteers, NGO workers, and so on (Friedmann, 1992).

Partnership

Another development term which is interesting to look at with regard to the practice of aid relations is the 'partnership' between donors and partners. Authors of the literature on the development aid industry also analysed how aid has created a less diversified

development industry as development NGOs share similar concerns and templates in line with the donors' preferences and standards (Tvedt, 1998, p. 213; Wallace et al., 2006). The concept of 'partnership' reflects complexities of aid relations and the powerful side of the donors (Crawford, 2003).

'Partnership' has been used heavily in development projects as a way to share responsibilities between the donors and the partners, such as through cost-sharing to show the partners' commitment, responsibility, and ownership for the sustainability of the outcome of the projects. However, under the implementation of partnership, there is pressure for development workers to provide favourable reports to the donors. At the same time, donors are trying to let the partners take the lead in the dynamic partnership. Nevertheless, in the context of partnership, it is important to acknowledge the characteristics of aid relationships. Some of the characteristics are unequal power, economic inequalities, conflicting and competing interests, as well as the processes of identification between the 'donor' Self and the 'partner' Other, influencing the meanings of these aspects as perceived by different parties and the practice of partnership in the development aid industry (Baaz, 2005).

With regard to the donors' relations with other actors, Wallace *et al.* (2006) have argued that the aid chain has created a kind of market in which the 'supply' of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) respond to the 'demand' of the donors by adjusting to the conditionalities imposed by the donors. The NGOs have become parts of the donors' branches in the aid industry, where donor power defines the relationships, structures, and methods of the NGOs. Therefore, the NGOs would try to match their organisations with the interests of the donors, apart from the considerations of the local contexts along with problems and priorities, thus voices of the beneficiaries.

Similar situations also occur in relationships between donors and recipient governments, especially the poor countries, where different leverage and bargaining power exist, in which the donors have more say in defining development aid programmes (Killick, 2008, p. 514). Even in partnership between the donors and the NGOs, the asymmetric relations occurred, such as in power, in access to information, in formulating and implementing the rules and in fair sharing of risks and responsibilities (Groves & Hinton, 2004). The reality of the practice of aid relations still reflects the strong influence of the donors on the practice of aid according to their ideas, interests, and preferences (Little, 2006; Veen, 2011). This reality means that the practice of aid

relations are still dominated by the powerful actors who determine international development agenda, including in promoting women's empowerment. The significant position and influence of the donors in aid management and distribution also allow them to exert pressure on the recipient governments to follow development interventions' objectives in providing enabling environment for women's empowerment.

For this study, the reality of aid (power) relations is important to understand the dynamics of international aid and sustainability of the aid industry as international aid remains influential in influencing development agenda, including on women's empowerment. Development interventions through the practice of aid (power) relations also influence women beneficiaries' perceptions of empowerment throughout women's engagement in the projects.

2.2.4 Remaining Challenges of International Aid

Development aid proceeds through several stages beginning with project identification. It is important to understand who makes the initial step in project formulation, who are the stakeholders, and what types of decision-making are implemented (Sato et al., 2011). The strong influence of the donors can be seen in conditionalities imposed on NGOs, and donors' power in defining interventions, managing aid, and implementing the rules in partnership (Wallace et al., 2006; Fowler, 2008, p. 534; Killick, 2008, p. 514).

With regard to power relations in international aid, I would argue that it reflects international politics which is still rooted in the history of the world wars and it can also be seen from the influential roles and positions in international institutions, and bilateral relations (Tandon, 2008). Furthermore, there is a tendency to depoliticize development to reduce development to technical issues and local contexts of poverty to justify development interventions and give prominent roles to development workers (Baaz, 2005, pp. 172–3).

Moreover, the elegance of power and the justification of aid which follows international aid are possible and accepted because of the soft power of aid, which enables donors to assert their influence over the recipients. International aid has been seen as a 'feel-good' activity and acts to relieve guilt and subtly satisfy the parental/paternal authority (Sogge, 2002) as the major donors tend to impose development prescriptions on the

recipient countries (Eyben, 2007). Thus, aid chains are systems of power because they consist of lines of command and control from the donors to the recipients. However, recalling the dynamics and complexities of the aid industry, the outcome of an aid-driven plan will often look quite different from what the donors intended from the beginning (Sogge, 2002).

The existing literature has shown not only the importance of considering ideas and interests behind the implementation of aid policy from the donors' side. The literature also helps us to understand the nature of aid power relations between the donors and the recipients. As discussed by the authors, even with the implementation of the concept of 'partnership', it is difficult to say that there are equal relations and a win-win solution involving both donors and the recipients in the aid industry.

2.3. Women, Aid, Development

The changing paradigms of international aid have led international donors to take into account gender equality and women's empowerment as parts of the global commitment to an international development agenda (Burnell, 2008, p. 506). The changing paradigms also changed how aid relations are being practised by considering the intersectionality of various actors, not to mention the nature of aid relations which still have the tendency to position the donors as influential decision makers in the aid industry.

The inclusion of women's empowerment and gender equality imperative in the international development agenda has raised the question of how the intersectionality of power relations, created in the aid industry, has influenced women's perceptions of empowerment. In this case, it was challenging to investigate and fill in the gaps in the existing literature through this research. For example, whether within such complex aid relations, development projects positioned women beneficiaries in empowering positions and how aid relations influenced women's perceptions of empowerment after their involvement in the projects.

Furthermore, in approaching the topic of this research, it is important to explore the topics of women's empowerment, aid, and development to understand the background

behind the inclusion of women's empowerment in the international development agenda, especially in development aid.

This section aims to approach the topic of this research by investigating the dynamics and complexities of international aid. For that, this section will highlight two questions in the existing literature on women, aid, and development. *First*, how have the changing paradigms in international aid raised donors' interests in gender and women's empowerment issues? The question is relevant to this study as it will provide the contexts about when the donors and international aid began to focus on the gender and development approach, especially women's empowerment issues.

Second, how are the interconnections between various actors in the aid system reflected in aid power relations? This question is important to have an in-depth understanding of the relational aspects of empowerment, where women's perceptions are also influenced by their relations with other stakeholders and their involvement in development interventions.

2.3.1 Changing Paradigms in International Aid and Women's Empowerment

International aid has gone through several changes related to changing contexts. This is also in line with Van der Veen's frame theory which suggests that foreign aid is influenced by the ideational aspect. This aspect underlines the objectives of aid. In this case, ideas are about goals and purposes of aid policy which shape formulation and implementation of the aid policy. Ideas result in different choices of policy. Goals of aid can be grouped into seven categories. They are: security, power and influence, economic self-interest (wealth), enlightened self-interest, self-affirmation and reputation, obligation and duty, and humanitarianism (Veen, 2011).

With regard to this study, international aid, which has been channelled through development projects including the ones that promote women's empowerment, was better suited to analysis under the objectives of enlightened self-interest and humanitarianism. Enlightened self-interest as a frame means that the aid was implemented to pursue several things, such as global public goods, peace, stability, environmental health, population control, et cetera. As for the humanitarianism frame,

the aid was channelled to promote the well-being of the poorest groups worldwide and provide humanitarian relief (Veen, 2011).

Changing International Contexts Promoted Inclusion of Women's Issues in the International Development Agenda

Everett and Charlton (2014) have mentioned that it was Sweden which first pushed to insert women's issues in its development aid since 1963. This initiative was followed by other development agencies, such as USAID (United States Agency for International Development). However, it was the publication of the 'Women's Role in Economic Development', by a Danish development analyst Esther Boserup in the 1970s, which had provoked the inclusion of women in development agenda. The inclusion of women's issues in the international aid agenda was also closely related to the internationalisation of women's equality agenda in development projects. This was highlighted by the UN Conference on Women in Mexico in 1974 and follow-up conferences such as the one in Beijing, which produced the Beijing Platform. The Beijing Platform outlined more detailed ways to promote the agenda for women's empowerment (Rowand-Campbell, 1999, pp. 11–12). The gender-based critique on development policies and programmes had been highlighted in the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985). These series of events in promoting women's needs in development had been endorsed by most development agencies to incorporate women's agenda in their projects and programmes, as well as apply gender mainstreaming in the development discourse (Connel, 1999, p. 85).

Furthermore, the inclusion of gender in the international development agenda started after the increasing criticisms of development failures in tackling poverty and ignorance of the gender-bias in development practice. Gender bias is socially constructed. It affects how women interact with men as well as the relations between women and men. It defines the roles and behaviours, and expectations of women in society, which in the end segregate the way women participate in the public sphere as gender bias. Gender bias has also put women in segregated spaces between the private and public spheres. The segregated space makes women's contribution to society invisible. For example, women's participation in a public meeting or in decision-making is often limited because men are the ones in charge of discussions and making decisions; women mostly

work in professions related to care services, administrative tasks and the domestic spheres (Friedmann, 1992; Rowlands, 2002; Bedford & Rai, 2010).

In addition, women's participation in the market economy is generally motivated by the ethics of care for their family due to women's reproductive and nurturing roles in the society. This reality has influenced women's agency structurally and limited women's agency and entitlement (employment and income) because of the social gender constructions (Friedmann, 1992, p. 111). In both the formal and informal political arena, the costs of women's participation are different from men's as the costs also depend on the social and economic resources which enable women to access political life (Rai, 2008, pp. 62, 64). That is also why most feminist scholars pay special attention to women's experiences as a crucial starting point of knowledge (Rai, 2008, p. 61).

The insertion of the gender agenda in international aid has its origins to the increasing new kinds of security threats after the Cold War, such as migration, environmental threats, and so on. Poverty alleviation has also called global attention to gender mainstreaming in the international development agenda (Burnell, 2008, p. 506). It can be said that insertion of the gender agenda in international aid has been possible due to the endorsement, if not conditionality and selectivity, applied by external actors, such as the donor countries, women's movement, and international organisations which support the agenda of the movement (Minogue & Kothari, 2002; Burnell, 2008; Buss & Gardner, 2008; Desai & Potter, 2008; Diamond, 2008).

Several feminist scholars, such as Naila Kabeer, Caroline Moser, Gita Sen, Caren Grown, Srilatha Batliwala, Jo Rowland, and Andrea Cornwall, have argued that democracy has not been inclusive in engaging women in its processes (Zuckerman, 2002; Rai, 2008). Feminists believe by making women visible in democratisation processes, democracy can be inclusive and complete. This can be done through social mobilisation of women and men in dealing with issues in public spheres (Rai 2008, p. 60). Therefore, it can be said that the inclusion of women in the development agenda was also initially endorsed by the international community, such as on the conditionality applied by the donors, especially in the efforts for poverty reduction. One example was the donors requested recipient governments to consult with civil society (including women) and use participatory approaches in the development process (Burnell, 2008).

The agenda for women's empowerment has become a focus in international health and development. Women's empowerment has also been recognised as a human right and crucial for human welfare. These aspects have informed many major international

agendas and global policies in support of women's empowerment and gender equality. For example, the Beijing Platform for Action; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the Cairo Programme of Action; the outcome document of the 23rd Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Gender Equality; Development and Peace for the 21st Century (Rai, 2008, pp. 71, 72, 75; Hennink et.al., 2012, p. 361). Gender equality and women's empowerment have been part of a global commitment to sustainable development as highlighted in the world leaders' commitment to the MDGs in 2000 and the SDGs in 2015. This continuous commitment has also driven international aid to consider gender equality and women's empowerment dimensions in its development agenda (UNDP, 2016).

Efforts to empower women must come from within the nation's culture. There is a substantial need to understand the local culture contexts in dealing with the issues of women's disempowerment and subordination because women may have their own perceptions of domination by men in their community. Women might perceive the male domination as part of the cultural pattern and collective harmony rather than domination and subordination over women. Therefore, for women's empowerment efforts to involve a majority of women, it is crucial to make sense and relevance of these efforts with the women's life experience (Friedmann, 1992, pp. 114–15).

This is to say that efforts to promote democracy, including women's empowerment will depend on the local contexts of countries and mainly how the beneficiaries perceive democracy in their governance (Ottaway & Carothers, 2000, pp. 148–151). It is also important to acknowledge psychological assets in development terms, especially in relation to empowerment recalling the tendency of "adaptive preferences" of people in perceiving their life possibilities and making choices (Alsop et.al., 2006). Understanding the context of the recipient countries is also crucial to learn and to understand how to improve the overall impact of aid and to enhance its impact in the future (Riddell, 2007). Therefore, it is important to understand the working of the aid industry in the specific context of countries (Haan, 2009)

The inclusion of the women's agenda in international development, the global commitment to promote women's empowerment, and the ability of development workers to consider the contexts where development interventions have taken place have become enabling factors for recipient governments to apply gender-aware policies

and to involve women in policy processes. In short, the inclusion of women's agenda in international development was not something given and fixed. As discussed in the section on international aid, the inclusion of women's agenda in international development was also part of the ongoing international commitment to alleviate poverty.

In reality, apart from the importance of the donors and the project executing agencies to understand the contexts of the recipients and the project area, the practice of international aid in development intervention, the design, selection, and implementation of particular projects and sequences of the projects' activities by the donors are significantly related to the interests of the donors and their interconnections with respective stakeholders, such as the recipient governments and women beneficiaries.

From WID to GAD Approach

The inclusion of women's agenda in international aid policy should also be understood in feminist perspectives on development which situates and influences women's empowerment, participation, and contribution in development contexts. For that, it is important to understand the concepts of gender and development (GAD), women in development (WID), and women and development (WAD). These concepts have been transitioned from feminist perspectives on development, from women in development (WID) with the 'welfarist' approach to women and development (WAD) with the 'equity' approach; and finally, to gender and development (GAD) which highlights the anti-poverty approach. In short, the insertion of gender issues in the international development agenda was related to the concept of GAD. The concept highlights the importance to achieve equality between women and men in society, including in the policy processes (Connel, 1999).

WID only mentions women's issues without considering issues in existing power and gender relations, not to mention broader political factors which cause problems such as low attendance of women in schools and domestic violence (Zuckerman, 2002, p. 90). A WID approach calls for greater attention to women in development policy and practice, by integrating women in the development process (Haan, 2009). The GAD approach promotes gender mainstreaming by challenging existing structures of gender relations and analysing relations between women and men; the roles of women and men, and efforts to tackle poverty issues (Zuckerman, 2002, p. 90). The GAD approach

focuses on the socially constructed basis of differences between men and women (Haan, 2009).

The GAD approach has been seen as a way to fulfil women's strategic interests while at the same time, as argued by Maxine Molyneux (1985), the promotion and fulfilment of women's practical interests will also support the long-term structural objectives in pursuing the strategic interests of challenging the systematic disempowerment and subordination of women (Friedmann, 1992, p. 112). However, the shift from the WID to GAD approach was not delineated (Haan, 2009).

Furthermore, some feminist scholars believe that issues pertinent to women must be seen more than just as identifying the problems, but also acknowledging different experiences faced by men and women, the gender relations aspect, and thus power relations. Power relations are socially constructed and impact relations between men and women in society as citizens both in the public and private spheres. According to feminists, poverty, for example, happens due to inequality of access to resources and participation of women in policy processes (Connel, 1999; Rowand-Campbell, 1999; Rowlands, 2002; Baaz, 2005; Rai, 2008, p. 61).

Feminist perspectives also relate challenges of development with the importance of women's empowerment. In this case, it is important to link woman's individual social, psychological and political empowerment as well as a struggle with other women to create a social network and organisation that can create empowering relations that further promote social transformation. To that end, development must consider structural gender inequalities which are rooted in society including the ones in the households that have a hierarchy based on age, gender and kinship (Friedmann, 1992, pp. 107, 116–17).

The GAD approach gained prominence due to the deterioration of the global economy in the 1980s and the implementation of economic recovery programmes through neoliberal structural adjustment programmes in the South. Within the approach, women's empowerment became important. Women have been seen both as economic targets and actors in promoting social transformation. The basic premise of GAD is achieving gender equality for women and men in society, where women have equal rights to access resources and opportunities as well as to participate in policy making processes (Connel, 1999).

Different from the concept of WAD, which basically underlines the demand to ask for facilities for women to enable them to function well in society, the GAD concept is seen to be challenging the status quo of gender bias in society where men dominate the public and private spheres (Connel, 1999). The concept of GAD is relevant to this research because it is related to the efforts of international agencies to empower women, to position women as the active subjects of development, and not only targets of development intervention (Baaz, 2005; Nair, 2013).

Based on the discussion above, it can be seen that the existing literature is useful and relevant to expand the analysis of international aid, women, development, and women's empowerment. Apart from the acknowledgement of the authors of international aid on the fundamentals of aid relations and interactions, development agencies have given little attention to the relational aspect of aid (Eyben, 2006a; Pasteur & Scott-Villiers, 2006; Cornwall & Edwards, 2010). Discussions on reorganising aid relationships appear to have been ignored or forgotten as they have been overwhelmed by aid reform discussions which do not challenge the existing political architecture of aid-giving (Riddell, 2007).

The Need for Greater Concern Regarding the Practice of Aid Relations and the Dynamics of International Aid

As I argued before, there is still a lack of discussion considering aid power relations between women beneficiaries and other relevant actors in the existing literature (Pasteur & Scott-Villiers, 2006) and the importance of 'relationships' issue in understanding women's empowerment (Cornwall & Edwards, 2010), especially on a development project which aims to promote women's empowerment. The existing literature discusses the power of the donors in defining development agenda and intervention. The gap in the existing literature which needs to be explored is understanding the rationale of inclusion of women's empowerment agenda in development projects. Furthermore, it is also important to understand the complexities of international aid by exploring the voices of beneficiaries, particularly in this case, women's stories of transformation processes through their involvement in development projects both individually or collectively (Cornwall, 2016). I found that the existing literature on international aid tends to focus on the donors' side and does not explore much about the connection between the ideational aspects of aid with other aspects, such as the relational and

contextual aspects as highlighted by postcolonial feminist authors with regard to aid relations, particularly from the beneficiaries' points of view.

In relation to the powerful position of the donors, Little and Clifford (2006) add Veen's ideational aspect of aid by arguing the importance to weigh donors' preferences on recipient countries and time with regard to the implementation of their projects or programs and the ethics of aid distribution (Little & Clifford, 2006, p. 97). Therefore, it can be seen that authors of existing literature on international aid tend to discuss the ideational and ethical aspects of foreign policies from a pragmatic aspect. Most authors argue that foreign aid policies will rationally follow the logic, and reflect and serve the interests, of the donors in interacting with other actors in international relations.

Nevertheless, these arguments need to go further and deeper by seeing the relational aspects of international aid, which are beyond the focus on the state and high-level official actors (Crewe & Harrison, 1998; Haan, 2009; Sogge, 2002; Groves & Hinton, 2004). The authors tend to focus more on the formal entity of nation-states, thus governments, and actors such as donors and aid agencies (development workers and project officers of local NGO partners). This was also why I address this concern in this research by looking at the relations between women beneficiaries with the aid agencies and the recipient government in the development project.

Despite the arguments of post-development and postcolonial thoughts on the importance of considering the voices of the so-called 'non-existent' actors, not much has been said considering the position and voice of women beneficiaries in a development project. This is also in line with the fact that most of the development projects are still being treated as procedural matters, where the log frame is the main reference for the project, and the donors and the executing agencies are the dominant actors with their own ideas and interests. The recipient government and the beneficiaries are involved as objects (targets) within the already designed and selected development intervention.

In addition, I also think that the arguments in the existing literature also need to look at the context of changing paradigms in international aid, by taking into account events, such as global commitment to promote aid effectiveness through several declarations on aid, not to mention global commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment in the international development agenda. For example, the MDGs and SDGs, promote inclusive and participatory processes of development including women's participation

which are seen as crucial to aid effectiveness. In relation to the global agenda to promote women's participation, the global commitment to eradicate poverty through broader sustainable agenda has also brought interests of international donors to promote women's empowerment and gender equality, whether in bilateral or multilateral schemes.

2.3.2 Interconnections between Actors in the Aid System

In order to understand the complexities and dynamics of aid relations, it is important to explore literature on international aid, especially with regard to aid relations. The literature on aid relations is closely intertwined with the literature on development intervention as explained in the previous section. First of all, it is necessary to acknowledge that the aid industry is basically a matter of relationships, which involve humans, organisations, and political relations in multilateral arenas (Eyben 2006b; Pasteur & Scott-Villiers, 2006). Empowerment itself also has a relational aspect (Rowlands, 1999) which is defined by women's relationships with others (Cornwall & Edwards, 2010). The aid industry should also entail the voices of beneficiaries and their journeys of empowerment through their involvement in development interventions (Kitzinger, 2004; Cornwall, 2016).

The practice of aid industry is also influenced by interpretations and agency of development professionals in implementing development projects to bring relevant benefits and positive impact to the recipients through political engagement (McKinnon, 2007). To understand the positions of various actors means to explore and to have an in-depth understanding of the internal and external conditions and relations amongst various stakeholders under the aid industry, thus, the recipients' perspectives which are influenced by their experiences in dealing with donors (Sato et al., 2011).

Recalling the need to pay attention to the practice of aid relations and the contexts of international aid, I used postcolonial feminist theory and post-development theory in analysing aid relations and the influence of development interventions on women's perceptions of empowerment after their involvement in the projects. These theories suggest the importance of looking at the complex power relations within the aid system. In this case, intersectionality theory is suitable in explaining the complexities

and dynamics of aid relations.

Intersectionality can be investigated and understood by looking at different roles and positions (levels) which each person plays. These roles and positions will affect the capacity of a person to make effective choices. Therefore, each person is experiencing a different degree of empowerment in various and intertwined ways, domains, levels, and locations (Alsop et.al., 2006). Intersectionality is very useful to show the positions of women, whether as passive beneficiaries (Campbell & Teghtsoonian, 2010; Nair, 2013) or active participants in the project (Crewe & Harrison, 1998; Baaz, 2005).

Intersectionality in the aid chain also reflects the complexities and dynamics of power relations, which are affected by various actors with conflicting and competing interests. This nature of aid power relations also influences the implementation of development intervention and different interpretations on the success and failure of the intervention both from the donors and the partners.

The Social Actor Approach

In relation to power relations, authors such as Norman Long, Magdalena Villareal and van der Ploeg (Long & Long 1992; Long & Villareal 1993) have proposed ‘the social actor approach’. The approach presents the development actors as active participants, not passive recipients. This approach also makes a complicated process of development intervention recalling different interpretations and changes in policy by various actors during the implementation stage (Crewe & Harrison, 1998; Baaz, 2005, pp. 73–75). It also makes self-evident that aid is a matter of relationships which makes management of relationships in the aid industry important for effective aid (Eyben, 2006a). However, development agencies have given relatively little attention to this aspect although international development cooperation is based on human, organisational and political relations in multilateral arenas. It is within relationships that aid actors exert their influence and learn much about development, particularly about the context, processes, impact, and possibilities (Pasteur & Scott-Villiers, 2006).

In addition, the social approach should be seen in the context of donor representation, which remains critical to understand the discourse of aid and aid relationships in a development context. As highlighted by the social approach, recipients are not passive. They also co-produce asymmetry when they serve as ‘partners’ for the donors although they might also challenge it in their own ways (Nair, 2013). It can be seen although there are different analyses of the nature of the development aid industry, the authors still share common positions in taking serious account of unequal power relations, economic inequalities, various actors, perceptions, and interests, as well as the binary identity of the donor’s Self and the partner’s Other in the aid industry.

The most affected actors in such a complex and dynamic situation are women. As both women and beneficiaries, women have to deal not only with the patriarchal environment within their community but also other power relations practised within the aid industry, where most of the time, women are positioned as the weak beneficiaries. This reality also led development aid executing agencies to apply the deficit frame in positioning women in the design of development projects as justification to get funding from the donors. In this case, a feminist approach to power relations was relevant and useful for this research, especially in exploring and analysing power interplays and different interests between various actors in the aid industry, which also affected women’s perceptions of empowerment.

This argument is also supported by Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash who focus on people’s or grassroots movements, in which common men and women learn from each other and lead the struggle for change, according to their local values and ways of living (Esteva & Prakash, 1998). In relation to women’s empowerment, as highlighted in the feminist perspectives, it is important to consider women’s voices and experiences to understand the contexts of the gender issue and how the structure accommodates women’s participation and gender relations (Nussbaum, 2000; Kitzinger, 2004; Grabe, 2012).

In relation to the binary identity, the authors might state their arguments according to the contexts where the various aid relationships took place where the donors seemed to have the powerful position over the recipients. On the other hand, the authors have also underlined crucial points in arguing the active and strong roles of the aid recipients apart from the imposition of the logics of development intervention carried out by powerful donors. The recipients apparently have their own perceptions of

development concepts and missions according to their experiences prior to and after the introduction and implementation of development projects.

Understanding Empowerment with Intersectionality Theory

This sub-section will provide definitions of empowerment, which are closely intertwined with the terms of power, structure, and agency in order to understand empowerment in approaching the topic of this study. There is no single definition of empowerment as can be seen in various definitions of empowerment below. However, each approach relates empowerment to its interconnection with power, structure, and agency.

Empowerment

In relation to the definition of empowerment, my understanding and conceptualisation of empowerment are significantly influenced by Rowlands (1999). Her definition of empowerment shows the complex aspect of empowerment, particularly by looking at its personal, close relationships, and collective dimensions. I consider Rowland's definitions of empowerment to be interesting and comprehensive, as the definitions reflect both processes and outcomes of empowerment, which start from individual insight to collective action.

Empowerment also includes processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions. Empowerment is more than simply opening up access to decision-making processes. Rowlands further argues that empowerment is also about moving from insight to action. In the context of development, focus on individual empowerment is not sufficient to achieve collective empowerment. Changes are needed in the collective abilities of individuals in identifying and fulfilling their own needs. Nevertheless, it has to rest on the individual empowerment of at least for some people (Rowlands 1999). The importance of the personal aspect of empowerment is also highlighted by Luttrell et.al. (2009) who argue that the process of acquiring 'power to' which focuses on access to decision making and 'power within' which focuses on building self-esteem, must start with the individual. In short, empowerment also

requires individual awareness and change in perceiving their rights, capacities, and potential.

Bonnie Keller and Dorcas Chilila Mbwewe (as cited in Rowlands, 1999, p. 146) define empowerment as a process whereby women become able to organise themselves in order to increase their own self-reliance, to assert their independent right to make choices and to control resources which will help them to challenge and eliminate their own subordination. Gita Sen and Caren Grown (1987, as cited by Jane 2008, 356) elaborated empowerment by referring to collective action based on the lived experiences of the very poor women and (men) in the South. Empowerment is also defined as a set of strategies and new methods for mobilising political will, empowering women and poor men and transforming society.

Caroline Moser (1993, as cited in Jane, 2008, p. 356) defines empowerment as the ability to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change, through the ability to gain control over crucial material and non-material resources. Naila Kabeer in relation to empowerment, emphasises collective grass-roots participatory action to increase the ability to exercise choice (associated with access and claims on resources, agency, and achievement) (Kabeer, 1999, p. 437).

As argued by feminists, empowerment is not limited to economic targets alone, but also further is a means to create social transformation (Rowlands, 1999, p. 146). Empowerment is not limited to economic empowerment. Feminists have criticised empowerment, which has been reduced from a complex process of self-realisation, self-actualisation, and self-mobilisation to demand transformation, to a simple act of transformation through the transfer of money and/or information (Cornwall et al., 2006, p. 7). There are other important dimensions of empowerment, such as political, cultural, economic, environmental or natural resources, health, human, as well as social and spiritual. This diversity highlights the multidimensional aspect of empowerment and relational aspects of empowerment (Luttrell et al., 2009).

Power

Allen (1998) defines power simply as “the ability or capacity of an actor or set of actors to act.” This rather broad definition includes all three modalities of power (power over; power with; power to) which can accommodate feminists’ concerns in understanding domination, resistance, and solidarity. Power-over is the ability or capacity to act to constrain the choices available to another actor or set of actors; power-to is the individual ability or capacity to act to reach some ends, and power-with is the collective

ability or capacity to act together so as to realize some shared interests. Because it can include power-over, power-to, and power-with, this definition can accommodate feminists' interests in understanding domination, resistance, and solidarity. This rather broad definition of power also underlines the interrelatedness of the three senses of power, which reflect distinguishable features of a situation.

Allen's concept of power can also help us in making sense of complex power relations, which form structures of domination and possibilities for resistance and solidarity. Power relations are thus complex and challenging as they are not only about men's domination over women, especially when we put it in a global context where multiple and intersecting forces of power over take place (Koggel, 2008). In line with Allen, Rowlands argues that there are three kinds of power: 'power over'; 'power within', and 'power to'. 'Power over' is related to obedience, for example, domination by men over other men, by men over women, and by dominant social, political, economic, or cultural groups over those who are marginalised. Therefore, 'power over' in this context acts as an instrument of domination. In contrast, 'power within' means that people are aware of identifying their own capacity and capability to take action to reach their goals. With this 'power within', people are able to practise another type of empowerment, which is 'power to'. The 'power to' means the ability to take action and have influence in undoing negative social constructions (Rowlands, 1999, pp. 143–44).

These definitions of power from Rowlands and Allen are relevant and useful in understanding and analysing the complexities and dynamics of both women's empowerment and aid relations which influenced women's perceptions of empowerment. These definitions of power reflect personal, relational, and collective aspects of empowerment. In addition, both definitions are also critical in portraying the contexts of women's empowerment; the structure where women live their everyday lives and relate with others; and women's transformation process which show women's agency in dealing with gender inequalities in the structure, thus a sign of empowerment. With regard to power, feminists believe that issues pertinent to women must be seen more than just naming the problems, but also acknowledging different experiences faced between men and women, and the gender relations aspect, thus power relations. Feminist theories also underline that realities are constructed socially, such as through interactions, languages, values, structures, and power relations. Therefore, power relations are also socially constructed. They are impacting relations between men and

women in society both in public and private sphere, not to mention as citizens. According to feminists, poverty, for example, happens due to the inequality of access to resources and participation of women in policy processes (Rai, 2008, p. 61).

In both formal and informal political arena, the costs of women's participation is different from men's as the costs also depend on the social and economic resources which enable women to use to access political life (Rai 2008, 62, 64). That is also why feminist scholars pay special attention to women's experience as a crucial starting point of knowledge (Scott and Buttler 1992 as cited by Rai 2008, 61).

Structure and Agency

According to the study on empowerment by Hennink et al. (Hennink et al., 2012), there are six mechanisms of empowerment. They are: knowledge, agency, opportunity structure, capacity-building, resources, and sustainability. Different combination of these mechanisms function depending on three distinct levels where empowerment occurs (an individual; a community; or an organisation). With regard to empowerment, structure is defined more as opportunity structure, which shows the existence of enabling social, political, institutional environment and community support to promote individual and community development.

Furthermore, Hennink et al. (2012) suggest that agency is one of the mechanisms of empowerment. In this case, agency is defined as "capacity to act independently and make choices. Agency is comprised of three components. They are: self-confidence and self-efficacy; ability to make informed decisions; belief in own ability to take action to effect change based on own goals. In short, agency relates to capacity with regard to self-identity, decision-making, and effecting change.

Luttrell et.al. (2009) argue that structure and agency are complementary. In this case, dynamic forces of structure can influence human behaviour. On the other hand, human's agency can also change the social structures where they live in. In addition, Cornwall & Edwards (2010) suggest that women's pathways of empowerment depend on 'structures of constraint' which restrict women's ability to select their own paths. Alsop et al. (2006) also suggest that development interventions provide opportunity structure which enables women's agency through their positions, roles, and achievement in the project's framework, as well as women's aid relations with others in the project and wider society.

Empowerment also depends on power relations affiliated with specific criteria, such as gender, culture, class, or caste. In this case, Batliwala (1994, as cited in Rowlands, 1999) argued that it is often assumed that economic strength is automatically created power. It may do, but often it does not due to the specific relations determined by intersectionality which women experience. Thus, economic relations do not always improve women's economic situation. Further, Batliwala criticised development, which is still done 'for' women, and priorities on economic activities do not necessarily make a room for women to see their own role as women, or at other problematic aspects of their lives.

Therefore, Batliwala argues that empowerment is in danger of losing its transformative power because the term has virtually replaced terms, such as poverty alleviation, public participation, and welfare. In this case, empowerment is crucial as the process of challenging existing power relations of gaining greater control over the sources of power (1994, as cited in Parpart, 2008). This argument is supported by Dan Connel (1999) who argued that subordination of women results from socially constructed gender relations as well as broader political factors. This situation has resulted in the urgent need to promote social transformation through structural change in gender and class relations (Connel, 1999, pp. 85–86).

These feminists' arguments regarding power relations and empowerment are also reflected strongly in intersectionality theory. Intersectionality theory focuses on the structure of power which considers existing contexts and dynamics of existing relations, in which relations, as highlighted by feminists, should be seen as complex phenomena which deal with various levels of analysis and different aspects or sectors (Cho et al., 2013). Intersectionality theory also focuses on the multiple processes at different scales, including particular local dynamics which also have relevance to gender issues. There are several examples of the local dynamics, such as issues of histories and relations between local and global dynamics which are defined by multi-layered and intertwined power relations (Patil, 2013, p. 863).

The application of intersectionality theory and feminist work on power relations helped me in addressing the research questions as both intersectionality theory and feminist work on power relations provide comprehensive and appropriate analysis over issues in the complex and globalised world (Patil, 2013). The intersectionality approach is useful to show how various contexts (such as race, gender, social status, economic

background, and political issues) can influence gender relations, particularly the attitudes and roles of women in specific situations. In addition, it is important to understand relations between structures, institutions, and agency to have a better understanding of gender and development. This can be done by applying inclusive and transformative feminist approaches in understanding different phenomena of globalisation and their impacts on women, not to mention gender relations between women and men (Everett & Charlton, 2014).

Therefore, it is relevant to look at the relationship between structure and (individual and collective) agency and understand that structures are imposed and internalised externally to actors through the relationship. This relationship will affect the actions of the actors and how actors relate with other actors within the existing structures. Actions result from relationships between structure and agency as well as contextual elements with rational, conscious and affective interpretations of meaning. In relation to the class and patriarchy, for example, actors respond to them by considering different positions and interests which affect the reproduction of the structures accordingly whether they realise or want it. Therefore, the world is experienced differently by women and men, poor and rich (Byrne & Callaghan 2014, pp. 111–14, 125).

Furthermore, the interconnection between power, structure, and agency are reflected in the concept of empowerment, the mechanisms and the combinations of the mechanisms of empowerment, and its actualisation at individual, collective, and organisational levels (Hennink et al., 2012). This is also why intersectionality theory is suitable to approach the topic of this study because the theory acknowledges different positions, interests, resources between women and men, which results in different experiences and voices between women and men in giving meaning to their everyday lives, roles, and positions. The intersectionality also applies to women's perceptions of empowerment according to their relationships, positions, participation, and interests in the development aid industry.

In relation to development projects, Kabeer (1999b) argues that development projects which bring collective awareness will result in a social and economic transformation, such as through the equal wages in agricultural sectors. Collective awareness further promotes collective action which helps women to participate in the policy process and to connect with the current issues in society. Therefore, it can be seen that development interventions have brought positive impact in increasing women's agency with regard to their individual and collective awareness, participation and leadership in the public spheres.

On the other hand, women's participation in the market economy is generally motivated by the ethic of care for their family due to women's reproductive and nurturing roles in society. This reality has influenced women's agency structurally thus limiting women's agency and entitlement (employment and income) due to the social constructions of gender (Friedmann 1992, 111, Rowlands 2002, 33).

For the needs of this research, I focused on aspects of women's empowerment which I considered strongly relevant and useful to answer the questions of this research. They are personal, relational, and multidimensional aspects of empowerment. Therefore, it was also crucial to approach the topic of this research by linking the literature review on international aid to the literature review on women, aid, and development to understand the complex aspects of empowerment, not to mention women's position and participation in a development context.

2.4. Empowerment of Women through Development Aid

Apart from the efforts of development agencies and workers to accommodate beneficiaries' needs through participatory approaches, it has been clear that the aid chain has maintained dominant positions and roles for the powerful donors, particularly in defining and driving development agenda (Little, 2006; Diamond, 2008; Killick, 2008; Gronemeyer, 2010). In practice, recipients are involved as objects to fulfil the procedure of the project. Executing agencies would portray the recipients as passive actors in their project proposals and presentation to the donors and the recipient government.

Nevertheless, in spite of the existing literature on international aid and development concepts which try to comprehend and accommodate various actors and interests in the aid world, there is still a need to explain further how aid power relations are practised in development projects and how aid relations influence beneficiaries' perceptions of development concepts, such as empowerment (Eyben, 2006a; Pasteur & Scott-Villiers, 2006; Cornwall, 2016). This also applies to development interventions related to women's empowerment where feminists seriously put special concerns on power relations, in which women have to deal with various actors, interests, and levels of aid relations to be empowered. These considerations also attracted my interest to see how

development interventions positioned women in the project design and how aid relations affected women's perceptions of empowerment after their involvement in the project.

As discussed in the previous sections, international events have led to the inclusion of women in the development agenda, especially women's empowerment, where programmes of gender mainstreaming were introduced. The increasing importance to include gender in international development agenda was also related to the failure of development policies in alleviating poverty in the 1990s due to the top-down approach and exclusion of the poor people in the efforts. One of the realisations of the effort to promote women's empowerment was the Beijing Platform in 1995 which underlined the importance of women's empowerment to achieve equality, development, and peace. Women's empowerment was also listed as one out of eight guiding principles for the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in 1999 (Parpart, 2008).

Development interventions have been seen as crucial in providing opportunities to promote women's participation in policy processes. One example of the positive impact of development interventions was revealed by a study on Save the Children (SC) of the United States of America (USA) Women's Savings Groups (WSGs) programmes in Bangladesh in 1994, which showed how women participants appreciated programmes for women's empowerment. They also tried to accept the changes brought by the programme. On the other hand, the study also showed that women interpreted the programme on their own terms (Naved, 1994).

The programme encouraged women's participation in groups and women's mobility became widespread and socially accepted in the area. Credit introduced by the programme has been critical in making the community and the family accept the programme. Women with access to loans and credits are now perceived as providers of support during financial crises. In relation to women's access to resources, Dixon defines "status of women as the degree of women's access to (and control over) material resources (like food, income, land and other forms of wealth) and to social resources (including knowledge, power and prestige) within the family, the community and in the society at large" (Naved, 1994, p. 175).

The study showed that many of the components of women's status have been enhanced by this particular type of intervention (Naved, 1994). One of the realisations of the status of women is women's participation in the democratic system, such as in public meetings. In this case, the status of women is reflected in how women are not afraid to

participate actively and share their concerns in public, thus contributing to the policy process.

Another example of the positive impact of development interventions was the watershed programme by an NGO called Accion Fraterna (AF) in Andhra Pradesh, a drought-prone and poor rural area in southern India. Since the inception of the programme activities, women's attendance has increased at various levels of public meetings. Due to the equal wages paid to men and women for watershed activities, the gender disparity in agricultural wages was reduced substantially, as an increasing number of women pressed farmers for more equitable pay (Reddy, 2011).

The project has brought collective awareness which has led to collective action of women in Andhra Pradesh. It has resulted in a social and economic transformation, such as through equal wages in agricultural sectors. Such collective action helps women to take part in the policy process, and move beyond the project design, by linking them to current issues in society. In short, development intervention promotes 'upstream' participation which requires women to be actors in the policy making process (Kabeer, 1999b).

In addition, as a result of the Rural Development Trust (RDT) programmes and, subsequently, the AF watershed development programme, the active participation and leadership of women in decision making have become important characteristics of many villages. Women's attendance has increased at meetings. In addition, they also feel confident to approach officials about issues of concern to them, such as drought-relief works, equitable distributions of benefits, compensation for agricultural losses, and other issues (Reddy, 2011). In this case, the watershed programmes gave scope for women to exhibit their leadership qualities. Women reported benefiting from the programmes in various ways, from greater empowerment in decision making to time-saving on household work by using biogas systems, and less disparity in wages for other agricultural works due to the gender-equitable wages paid for watershed work (Reddy, 2011). This shows that external intervention is still needed to provide space and opportunity for women to participate in a meaningful way in various aspects.

In relation to empowerment through development aid, empowerment can be an objective of an intervention, or it can be an instrument to reach a project or programme objective. In short, the importance of empowerment to a future intervention will determine how the empowerment framework is used during preparation and later

implementation (Alsop et al., 2006). That is also why development projects have various approaches although it will usually be conducted under a specific theme.

In practice, recalling the multidimensional nature of empowerment, the executing agencies would also work on other issues which are still considered relevant with the project objective. For example, in Oxfam's RCL Project, the main objective was to create community resilience in the coastal area. However, the project also came with an additional component of women's empowerment to show concern for gender and development issues. This component was also designed to promote women's participation in public spheres and contribution to creating the resilient community.

In the context of international aid, the concept of empowerment has been criticised for being used and mainstreamed to provide justification for development intervention by powerful global actors (Koggel, 2008). Beneficiaries become subject to external power and rule (ruling language, forms, and practices of aid effectiveness). This is to say that, there is no neutral space outside the ruling relations for women to occupy in the complex dynamic of aid relations. This argument is also in line with the concern of postcolonial perspectives on the regimes of power (Campbell & Teghtsoonian, 2010; Nair, 2013).

With regard to development, feminist theory criticises development, which tends to focus on physical aspects and renders the role of women in the economy invisible (Rowlands, 2002, p. 37). In short, the situation tends to situate women merely as targets or objects of development, rather than being involved in policy processes. Some feminist scholars argue that women's empowerment is not limited to economic target. The approach is also seen as a crucial way to create social transformation. Srilatha Batliwala (as cited in Rowlands, 1999, p. 146) notes that in some (especially Integrated Rural Development) programmes, the terms empowerment and development are used synonymously. Economic empowerment is often assumed as the source of power. However, as argued by Friedmann (1992, pp. 109–11), women's integration into the market economy has worsened women's social positioning regardless of whether it improves their income or living conditions because women's gender roles, as defined by their sex, have meant that they are underpaid or unpaid. This also highlights the structural issues which have caused women disempowered in both domestic and public spheres as women's agency is restricted and constrained by their gendered identity and entitlements.

As discussed in the previous section, several feminist writers discussed women's empowerment and development topics by underlining critical issues such as approaches to women and development, women in development, gender and development; women's agenda in international development intervention; power relations; women's empowerment and participation (Friedmann, 1992; Connel, 1999; Zuckerman 2002; Koggel, 2008; (Luttrell et al., 2009). These approaches are relevant to understand and analyse the significance of power relations in development projects and the position of women beneficiaries in the project design. The irony I found in the literature is that the neoliberal perspective has been seen as the cause of the inclusion of the women's agenda in international development. However, at the same time, the perspective has been criticised for putting women in a marginalised position due to its economic rationale and priorities.

Furthermore, as some Southern feminists argue, the concern is more about how women are incorporated and treated rather than just asking for the inclusion of women in the processes (Trotz, 2008, p. 353). There is also a need to challenge existing literature on international aid, women, and development to look deeper and more critically at the changing and relative nature of power relations, including the ones under the aid system (Sogge, 2002; Eyben 2006c; Haan, 2009; Veen, 2011). Therefore, it is necessary and important to investigate the gaps in the existing literature and analyse the findings of the research comprehensively and critically to see how the practice of aid power relations is applied in the development project.

For example, in the context of promoting women's participation, it is also important to note that participation should be preceded with empowerment. In this case, women are not only aware of their rights and capabilities, but also resources for them which enable them to participate equally with men in the society as parts of the citizens (Rai, 2008, p. 62; Hennink et al., 2012;). In relation to women's awareness of their rights and potentials, studies have shown that it is important for development agencies to promote women's empowerment by coming up with positive framings, such as a strengths-based approach (SBA) and an appreciative inquiry approach rather than negative framings, such as needs and deficit framings (Willets et.al., 2013).

In addition, bearing in mind the critiques of development's concepts by post-development theorists, in reality, the concepts are still heavily used in development projects funded by international aid. Moreover, apart from the criticisms of the practices

of international aid, in practice, the negative framework is still widely used in the literature on gender and development, as well as in the rationales and designs of development projects.

2.5. Conclusion

There is a rich literature on international aid which contributes knowledge about the nature, history, and background of international aid and policy. There are also many works from postcolonial feminists on the complexity of power relations. However, not much has been said about how women are being involved in and empowered through development projects, and whether they perceive themselves as active social actors in the complexities of aid relations.

In addition, although raising strong criticisms about development, the existing literature on women, aid, and development still has the tendency to focus on the high-level, formal, and official actors, such as the donors, the government, and the executing agencies in analysing the concept and context of aid relations. Not much has been said about the complex aid relations which women beneficiaries experience in their involvement in development projects and their perceptions of empowerment following their involvement in the projects.

The authors also tend to ignore the existence of the multiple voices of women in development projects. The multiple voices represent various socially constructed perspectives and realities which women experienced in their everyday life. These voices are important to be taken in practising reflexivity throughout the research processes (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2007). In this case, understanding the multiple voices is also important to have a better understanding of women's perceptions of empowerment after their engagement in development projects.

Furthermore, they also tend to undermine the dynamics of power relations which involve various actors within the aid chain. The literature also does not explore much about the changes and transitions which take place throughout development interventions. These changes enable renegotiation and bargaining power, thus adjustment between various actors and interests in the aid industry, including women beneficiaries. In this case, not much has been said about the perceptions and voices of

women in the complexity and intersectionality of aid relations, particularly within development interventions which concern women's empowerment issues.

On the other hand, the existing literature is relevant and useful in providing a critical foundation for this research. On the context of international aid, the literature has critically highlighted the history of international aid and the inclusion of women's agenda in international development policy. The literature also mentioned the importance of considering and understanding the voice and perceptions of beneficiaries, not to mention the contexts of the area where development interventions take place.

In relation to aid relations, the literature also underlined the importance of understanding the hierarchical nature of aid power relations which put the recipient government and the beneficiaries in weak positions as aid is still practised as 'business-as-usual'. This nature of international aid is also discussed thoroughly in postcolonial feminists' works on women's empowerment which situated intersectionality of power relations which women have to experience both in their everyday life and within development intervention.

As mentioned, for the needs of this research, I only focus the personal, relational and multidimensional aspects of empowerment as I consider these aspects to be relevant and useful both in understanding the aid power relations experienced by women and their perceptions of empowerment and how they were empowered after their involvement in the project.

Recalling the topic and the questions of this research, I applied qualitative research design. I looked at a particular case study in this research and conducted an ethnographic research to obtain a better understanding of the context of the area where the research participants live. The next chapter will discuss further the epistemology, methodological approaches, methods, ethics, and my reflexivity and positionality of this research.

Chapter 3. Research Design

3.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology which I used to show how I approached the questions of this research. This chapter will explain how I conducted the research, analysed the findings, and arrived at the conclusions about aid relations, development intervention, and women's perceptions of empowerment. I also share my arguments and reflections in applying the methodology for this research. The first section of this chapter will discuss the epistemology of the constructivist paradigm, post-development and postcolonial feminism which became the philosophical foundations for this study. The constructivist paradigm, post-development, and postcolonial feminism are relevant for this research because they align well together.

Recalling the research questions and topic, qualitative and feminist ethnographic research were the best options which are suitable for this research. I conducted qualitative research to understand the multiple voices of the research participants and to approach the topic of the research from their point of view. I also conducted feminist ethnographic research to understand how the research participants gave meaning to their everyday lives, particularly their perceptions of gender relations and empowerment after their involvement in a development project. I lived in the main study area, Pangkajene Kepulauan (Pangkep) District and travelled back and forth to Makassar (the capital city of South Sulawesi) and Jakarta (the capital city of Indonesia) for about five months.

Moreover, I decided that the approaches and the design are suitable to help me obtain an in-depth understanding of the context of the research area, especially the women's perceptions of empowerment with regards to their involvement in the development project. I used Oxfam's RCL project as the main case study of the research as the project was not only about economic resilience and environmental rehabilitation of the coastal community in the west coast of South Sulawesi. The project also had a significant women's empowerment component which positioned women as the major beneficiaries and the main drivers.

The case study helped me to focus on a particular context of a development project to answer the research questions which linked international aid and women's empowerment. In conducting the study, I undertook reviews of relevant documents and literature, as well as semi-structured interviews with 37 research participants related to the RCL Project and participant observation in which I observed meetings, groups' activities, as well as women's relations and communications with others to validate the findings of this study both in theory and practice.

The second section will further discuss the methodology for this research along with the methods and data analysis. I will conclude the chapter by discussing the ethical, reflexivity and positionality aspects which I applied and experienced in the research processes. I tried to ensure that I acknowledged the intersubjective and situated nature of knowledge as well as power relations embedded between the research participants and me. I also tried to avoid colonising tendency in re-presenting the findings due to the multiple voices of the participants and the complex nature of the contexts of the study area. I also reminded myself on the multiple positionalities of the participants and me, where I also had my own voice and limited knowledge and understanding of the contexts.

3.2.Epistemology

This research was based on a constructivist paradigm, which according to its ontology argues that realities are constructed socially. Furthermore, realities themselves are dependent on the adaptable constructions as held by individual persons or groups. As for the epistemology, constructivism assumes the transactional/subjectivist nature of knowledge, where knowledge is created from interaction between the researchers and the research participants (Grbich, 2007, p. 8; Guba & Lincoln, 1994, pp. 110–11).

Therefore, ontologically, a constructivist paradigm underlines that there is no single true reality but rather there are multiple socially constructed realities. Epistemologically, there is a close subjective interaction between the researchers and the research participants, in which the values of the researcher cannot be removed because their positionality influences their interpretation of the participants' lived experience (Stahl, Taylor, & Hill, 2012).

In relation to social theory, constructivism is also concerned with human agency because of the nature of human beings as social beings (Graham, 2005). Moreover, the relationship between structure and agency results in action, where the structural context is not only imposed externally, but also embodied in a social relationship (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014, p. 111). Individuals formulate subjective, varied, and multiple meanings to understand their world. These meanings are formed socially through historical and cultural norms, thus social encounters. Furthermore, it is also crucial to pay attention to the role of space and time where individuals are situated in creating various meanings for the individuals (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014, p. 130; Creswell, 2014, pp. 8–9). Therefore, created knowledge will depend on various factors of interpretations, such as social, political, cultural, economic and gender dimensions. Knowledge is accumulated from experiences and case study reports.

This reminder about the nature of knowledge is important because the research participants and I have different positionality, and we live in different contexts. Thus, we experience different dimensions and stories of empowerment which influence how we perceive women's empowerment and women beneficiaries' aid relations. This also includes the way we interpret our relations with others in our everyday lives. The subjective nature of knowledge also reminds me to respect the “multi-voice” of the research participants to understand their perceptions of empowerment in their own terms.

I mostly based my research epistemology on the post-development and the postcolonial feminist theories (refer to section 1.2. of Chapter 1). These theories are relevant to approach the qualitative research and the topic, as well as the research questions of the research. Post-development discourses criticise how international aid has been practised, which tend to create superiority-inferiority between the donors and the beneficiaries (Gronemeyer, 2010). Post-development authors are also critical in seeing how aid has been used as an intervention tool to serve the interests of the donors, in which the donors define the distribution of aid, the targets, as well as the implementation of aid (Little. 2006, Nair, 2013).

I was particularly influenced by the work of post-development theories such as Gronemeyer (2010), Mosse (2005), Killick (2008), as well as Esteva and Prakash (1998), particularly in exploring and critically analysing international aid and common agenda of women and men for social transformation. Other theorists such as Eyben

(2006b) and Haan (2009) also affected how I understood the complexities of aid relations between the donors and beneficiaries.

In addition, the work of post-colonial theorists, such as Baaz (2005), Friedmann (1992), Campbell and Teghtsoonian (2010), Green (2002), Grabe (2012), Nussbaum (2000), and Nair (2013) who also agree with the argument from post-development authors, particularly on the domination of those with the most resourceful ones over formulation of development agenda. These post-colonial theorists also highlight the importance of contexts and Self and Otherness identities in analysing aid (power) relations between the donors, executing agencies, recipient government, beneficiaries, and other related actors under the aid industry.

Furthermore, my work was also influenced significantly by feminist theorists, such as Rowlands (1999), Allen (1998), Luttrell et.al. (2009), Cornwall (2006), Kabeer (1999a), Rai (2008), and Alsop et.al (2006), particularly on women's empowerment and its multidimensional and multilayered aspects, as well as dynamics of power relations. In relation to the complexities and dynamics of aid and empowerment, I also based my research on the intersectionality theory, whose theorists such as Crenshaw, Cho, and Patil (2013) also affected my analysis on women's transformation and their aid (power) relations as they look at the multidimensional live experiences of the marginalized subjects, including women.

In addition, recalling the topic of this research, a postcolonial feminist approach was appropriate in understanding international aid, women's empowerment and development issues. The approach has its origins in the constructivist paradigm. The paradigm basically underlines that realities are constructed socially, such as through interactions, languages, values, structures, and power relations. Feminists believe that issues relevant to women must be addressed not only by naming the problems, but also acknowledging different experiences that men and women experience, gender relations, as well as power relations (Rai, 2008).

This argument is also supported by Chandra Taipade Mohanty, a postcolonial feminist author who argues that women experience double colonization as a colonized subject and as a woman, which makes women have different experiences from men. Mohanty is against Western feminism on categorizing women as a homogenous group without considering the differences with regard to race, class, and circumstance. She also

disapproves negative characterizations of postcolonial women without attention to history and differences (Mohanty, 1991, as cited in Mishra, 2013, 132).

Postcolonial feminist theories are critical in providing the gendered context of international aid and women's empowerment, particularly in the various stories of women's transformation processes and unique challenges they experienced. Postcolonial feminist theories frame feminism by looking at the ordinary woman in a particular context while also thinking her situation in relation to broader issues (Young 2003, as cited in Mishra, 2013, 130).

Postcolonial feminist theories are also contextual as they stand against the homogenising and universalising tendency of the Western form of feminism. The theories explore different contexts where women live and work as they underline the multidimensional life and the intersectionality which women experience uniquely due to their identity, sexuality, gender, class, and race. Postcolonial theorists are critical in analysing issues such as representation and setting of the contexts (Mishra, 2013).

With regard to international aid, postcolonial feminist and post-development authors share the critiques that the debates on international development aid have been constrained by conceptual traps and limitations of definitions set by the donors. For example, donors have their own interests in defining particular development agenda according to their logical framework in designing and implementing development projects (Buiter, 2007; Eyben 2007; Haan, 2009; Killick, 2008). The arguments from postcolonial feminists are also in line with the critiques from post-development writers on development. In relation to the practice of international aid, post-development writers highlight strong critiques of development, such as the practice of a manipulative one-way approach which favours the donors and ignores the relevance of the project to the recipients (Connel, 1999; Kitzinger, 2004; Naved, 1994).

Post-development authors also criticised development for positioning the people, including women, as problems and reflecting the masculine nature of international development (Grabe, 2012; Green, 2002; Njoh & Akiwumi, 2012; Sachs, 2010). As mentioned, these authors and their arguments in the literature are influential in shaping my understanding and critical analysis on the topics of international aid, women, and development. Particularly on women's perceptions of empowerment, constructivist epistemology, post-development discourses, postcolonial feminist theories, and the intersectionality theory have made me arrive on developing the 5Cs and the 4As conceptualisation of empowerment, which reflect the personal, relational,

multidimensional aspects of empowerment in relation to the complexities of the aid relations.

The 5Cs and the 4As are also developed from the findings of the study. Both 5Cs and 4As reflect the personal and relational aspects of empowerment as argued by Rowlands (1999). In addition, the 5Cs and 4As are also intertwined and reflected in various aspects of empowerment (economic, political, environmental, social) as can be seen in the context of Oxfam's RCL Project and the multiple voices of women beneficiaries and their different stories of transformation processes. I developed this framework according to the findings of the study where I found key elements of empowerment which were highly expressed by women and reflected in their stories and through my observation in the field.

The 5Cs and 4As also provide significance of contexts, unequal power relations, the importance of understanding dynamic of aid and gender (power) relations in addressing this study. Therefore, the 5Cs and 4As conceptualisation of empowerment are also in line with post-development and postcolonial feminist theories, and the constructivist epistemology applied in this study. Recalling the epistemology of constructivism, postcolonial feminist and post-development approaches, qualitative research design and ethnographic research became the suitable methodology to approach this research.

3.3. Methodological Approach

I used a qualitative research approach and ethnographic research design because of the research topic and the paradigm which was applied in this research. A qualitative research approach and an ethnographic research design were also appropriate to address the research questions. As I conducted feminist research on this topic, I applied qualitative research design to hear the "multi-voice" of the research participants and to understand the topic of the research from their point of view.

I also conducted ethnographic research to understand how the research participants gave meaning to their everyday lives, including their perceptions of gender relations and empowerment after their involvement in a development intervention such as the RCL Project. Therefore, I found the qualitative research design and ethnographic research

relevant and useful for conducting the research. This section discusses the methodological approach which was applied in the research.

3.3.1 Qualitative Research Design

I applied a qualitative research design to have an in-depth understanding of the particular case study and a small number of relevant research participants. The qualitative approach produces descriptive data (primary and secondary) from a comprehensive observation in the form of written words or verbally from the observable persons and behaviours (Brockington & Sullivan, 2003; Taylor, 1998). In addition, many feminists have highlighted that it is essential to adopt a qualitative methodology to ensure that the voice of the research participants can be “heard”. Feminists also argue that researchers must be involved in the research, and thus, researchers cannot be objective (Abbott, et.al., 2005, pp. 368–69).

Qualitative methodology was appropriate for this research because the methods were applied to understand and interpret voices of the research participants (individuals and groups) by drawing out from different meanings, perceptions, and understandings that they give to their behaviours, experiences and social phenomena. The main task of qualitative research is ‘meaning making’. The methodology does not require statistics or large-scale data, which is also relevant to the needs of this study, which aimed to focus on women beneficiaries and their perceptions of empowerment after their involvement in the development project. A qualitative approach is appropriate as it requires the researcher to search for meaning and explore complexities. Therefore, conducting the study with a qualitative methodology helped me to understand how women interpreted empowerment and how they were empowered after their involvement in the project (DeLyser, 2010; Gillham, 2000; Walter, 2010, pp. 25–6).

It is important for the qualitative researcher to grasp different things by meeting with different people in the field to create different understandings. It is also essential to consider the voices of the research participants and interpretations of the researchers as part of being reflexive on the researchers’ positionality and power relations with the research participants before coming up with the understanding of those various voices (DeLyser, 2010).

The researchers are the key instruments in the study as they collect the data mostly through face-to-face interaction with the research participants. They conduct the data collection in the natural setting where the research participants experienced the topic of the study (Creswell, 2014). In this study, I collected the data from the research participants, particularly those who were involved in the RCL Project. I studied, for example, the case study of a development project, the contexts where the project took place, and the stories from the research participants who were involved in the project, particularly women beneficiaries. I also applied ethnographic research to have further understanding about how women gave meaning to empowerment after their involvement in the project.

The intensive relationships between the researcher and the research participants have caused the need for reflexivity. Reflexivity is a self-conscious awareness of the researcher on his or her position in the research, specifically concern about power relations (Brockington & Sullivan, 2003; Willis, 2010, p. 409). In relation to the importance of being a reflexive researcher, feminist research places much concern and attention to women's voices and experiences in the analytical framework because feminists strongly believe that women's voices and experiences will provide access to understanding ideas, thoughts, interpretations, priorities, and experiences of the women (Cornwall, 2016; Grbich 2007, p. 124; Kitzinger 2004). In this research, the stories collected from the research participants were also their testimonies of their experiences in the development project. The stories also provided information and contexts of the development project and women's participation in the project. They also revealed relations, topics, and ways of conveying meanings on that particular case study which were relevant and useful for this study.

The stories of the women are also crucial to explain and understand the phenomena, to break through the culture of silence (Freire, 1998, as cited in Higgs et al., 2012), and to provide a political tool which will impact on social change (Higgs et al., 2012). Feminist researchers believe that narratives are the best sources to obtain authentic, rich, and original data from the research participants. Stories also provide personal information about people, situations, events, places, and sequences of processes. They can capture complexity between people and situations to understand intertwined events, which also bring out the emotional connections to what is revealed in the data (Neuman, 2012, p. 361).

The stories from the research participants can be analysed by looking at the structure of narratives and broader interpretive frameworks of the stories. Furthermore, engaging the research participants in sharing their stories on aid relations in a development project empowered them as they also shared their reflections and assessments of the project (Grbich, 2007, p. 124). In this study, the power of stories was useful for me to know how women were positioned in the project; how research participants were involved in a development project; and how women experienced changes in their life after their involvement in the project.

Creswell (2014, pp. 8–9) argues that personal experiences affect the researchers to choose particular research approaches. My considerations to apply the qualitative approach were also related to my personal experiences in using the approach (such as in working on policy assessment and project evaluation), the research questions, and my position to see the research problem from the constructivist worldview. Qualitative research has value through its descriptive aspect and the themes created in the context of a specific site, as highlighted in this research (Creswell, 2014). Recalling the topic and the research questions, the qualitative approaches were suitable to explore interpretations from the research participants and power relations embedded in the interpretations as considered by feminist works, particularly on issues such as women's empowerment (Murray & Overton, 2014).

The qualitative researcher explores and analyses the views of the research participants and interprets the meanings shared by the participants and the data from the fieldwork to address the research questions (Creswell, 2014, p. 19). In relation to this study, the research questions which primarily focused on how aid relations influence women beneficiaries' perceptions of empowerment through their involvement in development projects also required me to operate using an ethnographic approach.

3.3.2 The Ethnographic Research

I conducted the ethnographic research to have a better understanding of the everyday lives of my research participants, particularly women beneficiaries of the RCL Project. The ethnographic research was also necessary to have a better understanding of the women's perceptions of empowerment as I conducted participant observation and lived in the project area during the fieldwork.

I started the ethnographic research by making initial contacts with Oxfam GB Indonesia Office, Oxfam Eastern Indonesia Office, and local contacts in Makassar (NGO personnel involved in the project). I also managed to obtain the official permission to undertake the research for 6 months from the national, provincial, and local government. I met with local village leaders during my fieldwork in Pangkep District. I stayed in Pitusunggu Village at the home of Sitti Rahmah and Muhammad Al Arif (from Pita Aksi group) during the ethnographic research, where I observed their organic farm and daily life, their relations with others in the village, as well as dynamics in the village. I had the opportunity to engage with my host family in the harvesting time. I visited and observed other economic groups (Cahaya Soreang and Mutiara Desa groups) formed by the project in the village and sometimes joined their activities.

Ethnography can be understood as spending long periods of time observing people, talking to them about what they are doing, thinking and saying to understand how people perceive their surroundings (Jackson, 1983, 1985, 1989; Jackson & Smith, 1984, as cited in Crang & Cook 2007, p. 7; Delamont, 2004, p. 218; ten Have, 2004). Understanding different people's everyday experiences should also be accompanied by understanding their everyday actions which are influenced by the embodied structures of their culture (Herbert, 2000, as cited in Crang & Cook 2007, p. 7). This is also why this research paid close attention to the contexts of the study area where the project took place. I also interviewed the people engaged in the project and observed their social relations and activities in their everyday life. My direct engagement with the research participants during the ethnographic research was useful to know and understand their experiences in the project and their perceptions of women's empowerment in relation to the project.

In ethnographic approaches, it is essential to learn about a person's identity which is influenced by his or her thoughts, feelings, memories, way of doing things, possessions and so on, which are not reflected in a fixed pattern due to compromising, pragmatic, and the never pure nature of identity (Harraway, 1988; McCracken, 1988a; Miller, 1987, as cited in Crang & Cook 2007, p. 10). This is why keeping reflective notes during the research periods is considered important to make sure the constant exercise of reflexivity is applied throughout the ethnographic research (Willis, 2010, p. 410).

During the fieldwork, I maintained two kinds of notes. One was on my observation and another one was on my reflection during the research processes. I found it best to keep

both notes as reflexive ones because they then complemented each other. Throughout the research journey, I needed to be considerate and cautious of the contexts and the multiple voices of the research participants and tried to conduct the research in an ethical, polite, and reflexive manners. These notes also reminded me of my observation and my reflection on the observation both in positionality and reflexivity aspects.

3.4. Methods

I gathered the data for this research from January to November 2015. Data was collected from various sources, such as project documents, public documents, and interviews with the research participants. I also obtained data from participant observation in South Sulawesi Province, particularly in Pangkep District and Makassar City from May to November 2015. This section discusses the data collection techniques applied in this research.

3.4.1 Case Study

Reasons for Selecting Oxfam's RCL Project

The case study method enables the researcher to focus on a particular project with a specific observation on the project's activities, areas, and stakeholders (Creswell, 2014, p. 14). The method was also appropriate in this research because I conducted ethnographic research where I focused on a specific case study of a development intervention, the contexts, and power relations created in the aid system.

Oxfam's RCL Project was used as the central case study in this research. The RCL project was selected because it covered a variety of issues, not only the environmental and economic sustainability of the local people living in the project area, but also women's empowerment in economic, social, political, and environmental dimensions. The existence of the women's empowerment component also showed the gender mainstreaming aspect of the RCL project, which was managed under the Economic Justice Goal Lead of the Oxfam GB Indonesia Office.

Women's empowerment was incorporated in this project because women counted as the majority of the members of the villages within the project area. As elaborated in Chapter 1, I selected the RCL Project as the project area provides a good context for this research. In addition, I selected the RCL project because I got access and support from the Oxfam GB Indonesia Office, where I have some contacts. I also selected the project to take advantage of my personal contacts in Makassar. I was also previously involved as an evaluator of Oxfam's project on women's empowerment in Papua Province, Indonesia in 2012. Due to limited time and resources of the research, I focused on Pangkep District as the main area of the research. The selection was also made after the discussions with my supervisors, Oxfam, and local NGO personnel.

The case study method helped me to understand how women perceived empowerment after their involvement in the project. By focusing on one case study, the researcher could have an in-depth study on the research topic and provide an in-depth understanding of the case and critical analysis on the research (Vogt, 2014).

The Use of Case Study for The Research

A case study will investigate an individual, institution or community to answer specific research questions. It also looks for different kinds of evidence to get the best possible answers by understanding the context from multiple sources of evidence through observation. This method requires the researcher to learn about human phenomena and the meaning of being human in the real world by seeking people's feelings, experiences, and perceptions (Gillham, 2000).

The case study was relevant to the needs of this research, particularly in understanding the contexts of the development intervention background, project area, and women's positions in the project's design, and project activities which concerned women's empowerment. The case study method was also relevant to identify women's participation in the project and to understand their perceptions of empowerment after their involvement in the project.

The selection of the case and the observation area and objects are made considering several aspects of sampling, such as convenience, purposive, and diversity (Neuman, 2012, p. 147). In relation to these aspects, I had several considerations in finally selecting only one district (Pangkep) out of the four districts covered by the RCL

Project, where I conducted ethnographic research in Pitusunggu Village and Pitue Village. The considerations were a limitation of the research period, resources, and contexts of the study area (geographical characteristics, ethnic diversity, the variety of groups' activities, and approachability).

The selection was also made based on my discussions with my supervisors, Oxfam, and local NGO workers. In order to investigate and understand women's perceptions of empowerment, I observed several economic groups in the two villages. The groups have different economic activities, such as on organic gardening (*Pita Aksi* Group) and on food production (*Cahaya Soreang*, *Mutiara Desa*, and *Assyura* groups). I also interviewed women in each group, especially the leader or committee member of the groups, whom I considered had more information and stories to share with regard to their involvement in the project and the contexts of the project area.

3.4.2 Document Reviews

In order to get a better understanding of the context of the study area and the topic of this research, I conducted analysis of relevant documents, particularly project documents, government and study area profiles, and documents on international aid, development projects, and women's empowerment. In this case, official reports, government and area profiles, related policies were some of the public documents reviewed for this research. I organised the discussions of the literature based on the topic of the research, particularly on women, aid, and empowerment.

Document review is crucial, as I needed to be critical in finding and analysing the gaps between policy and practice on this topic. Lindsay Prior (2004) argues that documents show relationships in society. Therefore, the researchers should analyse documents by considering the human interactions which lie beneath the texts (Prior, 2004, p. 388). For instance, profiles of the project area, project documents which revealed information such as the background, objectives, approaches, executing agencies, activities, and discourses of the development project. Project documents also showed the stakeholders and beneficiaries of the development project.

The regular narrative reports (quarterly, semi-annual, annual) of the RCL Project, media publications ("Kabar Pesisir"/Coastal News magazine), data of the economic groups

created under the project, including CIDA's joint policy on gender equality were some of the documents I reviewed for the project.

In addition, I also reviewed documents from the government, such as the MoU with Oxfam, statement of commitment between Oxfam and the district government, data from the Statistics Bureau, related government information on gender mainstreaming and decentralisation (laws, booklets/profiles of the government, and information from the official website). I analysed the contents of the documents and validated the contents by conducting semi-structured interviews with the research participants and engaging myself actively and passively in the ethnographic research in the study area.

3.4.3 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are conducted in a conversational and interactive way but they were still controlled and structured. The researchers have already defined some questions and topics but they also have a flexible checklist which is meaningful to the research participants and relevant to the research (Brinkmann, 2012, p. 85; Mikkelsen, 1995, pp. 75, 102). I conducted semi-structured interviews to get comprehensive information and understanding about aid relations and women's perceptions of empowerment after their involvement in the RCL Project.

I interviewed 37 participants (18 of them were women) related to the RCL Project (See Table 3.1.). I applied purposive sampling and snowballing method to reach and select relevant participants. In this research, I interviewed representatives from the donor agencies, related government officials at various levels, executing agencies of the project, and women beneficiaries. I also interviewed male beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries who had experiences and knowledge on the topic of this study. Non-beneficiary research participants were an anthropologist of a private university in Makassar and a local female activist engaged in women and legal protection issues.

The questions asked to the research participants (see Appendix 5 and Appendix 6) were relevant to address the main question of this study, which is "How have development interventions influenced women beneficiaries' perceptions of empowerment?" The questions also reflected the sub-questions of this study which were related to positions and roles of women in the project; the practice of aid relations in the

project; women's perceptions of empowerment after their engagement in the project, and the relevance of the project to the needs of the beneficiaries.

By asking these questions to various research participants related to the project, I was able to capture the dynamics and complexities of both aid relations and women's empowerment. These questions were also useful for me to explore the research participant's perceptions of the personal, relational, and multidimensional aspects of empowerment. The answers from the research participants and my observation in the field had become the contextual and logical foundation for me in developing the 5Cs (capacity, capability, confidence, choice, commitment) and the 4As (awareness, achievement, acceptance, and acknowledgement) conceptual framework of empowerment.

I let the research participants decide their preferred time and place for the interviews for their comfort. I had most of the interviews with the women at their homes, especially during the groups' activities when the women were having their routine activities which usually took place at the leaders' house. Sometimes the men were present as they were also members of the groups. I could also see that the men also helped to take care of the children when the women were busy working in the kitchen or the men helped to serve the guests who came to their houses.

However, there were times when I observed that the women were shy and sought approval or confirmation from their husbands when the men were present during the interviews. I was not sure whether these were the signs of respect to the men as women sat behind the men or when they looked at the men first when giving their answers. It was quite challenging to interpret these situations, especially because previously these women were quite confident to express how they became empowered after their participation in the project.

In addition, I could also sense that women were more confident sharing their stories when they were in groups and when the leaders were around, as the leaders were usually the ones opening the conversations and introducing the members and their groups' activities. On the one hand, the women were quite confident in sharing their transformation process after their engagement in the project and how positive the project was done by Oxfam. On the other hand, they seemed to be reluctant to share their recommendations, if not critics on the project when I asked the question. I had an impression that they might think that I was from Oxfam, although I had explained my affiliation when I introduced myself from the beginning of the research.

The questions asked were based on the participants' affiliations. For example, I asked technical questions, such as on the project background and implementation to participants representing the donor and the executing agencies of the project. For women beneficiaries, I asked further questions on their stories of transformation, urgent needs, aid relations, and perceptions of empowerment after their engagement in the project.

I created a matrix according to the research questions and the key issues of my research, such as on the project knowledge, participation, gender relations, transformation, perceptions of empowerment, and recommendations. I processed the findings using qualitative data analysis where I presented the findings in various forms (quotes, narratives, vignettes, and tables). The analysis provides particular narratives from the research participants and relational aspects of aid relations and empowerment.

Recalling the importance of conducting ethical and polite research, the researcher initially introduced the research and intentions to the research participants (Kitzinger, 2004). I also asked for their consent to participate in the research in writing or verbally. I primarily interviewed women beneficiaries because they were the main focus of this research. They also participated in the RCL project, so that they were able to share their experiences in the project, their perceptions of empowerment and what it means to be empowered according to the local contexts and their social interactions, including their engagement in the project.

The number of research participants is made recalling the nature of qualitative research design and the need to obtain comprehensive information and an in-depth understanding of the topic of research from a variety of research participants (Stern, 2011). The questions for the interviews depended on the affiliation of the research participants. For example, questions on the project knowledge (background) were asked to those involved in the donors and executing agencies of the project.

In addition, as argued by Creswell (2014), the researchers purposefully select the research sites or individuals to provide them with the best assistance in approaching the research. To enrich the findings of the research, I applied a purposive sampling method based on the project documents from the executing agencies and snowballing method according to the needs of the research and information from relevant research participants.

The snowballing method which I applied in this research means that I would consider using suggestions on names of other research participants to follow on from the previous research participants, and so on and so forth. For example, I received several contacts' details and references from Oxfam and local NGO activists in South Sulawesi, whom I considered relevant and worthwhile talking to for my research.

Table 3.1. List of Research Participants

Affiliations	Number of Participants
Ministry of Social Affairs and State Secretariat	4
Pangkep District BAPPEDA (Local Development Planning Agency)	1
Cultivation Affairs of Fisheries and Sea Technical Unit, South Sulawesi Province	1
Head of the Villages	2
Oxfam's local partners (Marine Conservation Foundation)	2
Women beneficiaries (leaders, secretaries, treasurers, community organisers, members)	18
Male beneficiaries	2
Donor (CIDA)	1
Oxfam (Director of Economic Justice, Director of Gender Justice RCL Acting Project Manager, and RCL Project Officer)	4
Local NGO activist and academic	2
Total	37

I have presented the findings from the interviews in various forms, such as quotes, narratives, tables of the government's concerns on international aid and development interventions, and vignettes of women regarding the transformation processes. For the interviews with the women beneficiaries, I explored how women assessed the relevance of the project in relation to their urgent needs, their processes of transformation, their relations with other stakeholders of the project and their surroundings, and their perceptions of empowerment after their involvement in the project. In this case,

interviews enable women to voice their concerns themselves (Mikkelsen, 1995, pp. 169–70).

When the research participants feel uncomfortable with the audio recording and other methods used in the research, the researchers should be flexible and apply another method such as by relying on their own memory to record the responses and expressions of the research participants (Vogt, 2014, p. 54). I practised these methods when I was in the field. Sometimes it was easier and better to rely on my memory to record the interviews, particularly when I was not only involved in the conversations but also in the activities. I would then take the notes based on my memory after I finished with the interviews to ensure that I still kept a fresh memory on the interviews and observation. Using the memory also helped me to engage in better and closer conversations with the research participants. This was important as our interactions were not separated by a recording machine and instead were friendly and relaxed interviews.

In conducting the interviews, the researchers should also consider the privacy of the research participants and the selection of time and places for an interview, which was comfortable for them (Crang & Cook 2007; Mason 2002). I approached the research participants by confirming the time and place at their convenience. Based on the findings from the semi-structured interviews with the research participants, I created a matrix according to the questions and the key issues of my research. I also highlighted particular statements of findings, which I considered important and relevant to the research I then processed the findings of the research using qualitative data analysis which will be discussed in the data analysis section.

3.4.4 Participant Observation

In order to explore in-depth findings from the research participants to address the research questions of this study, I conducted participant observation in the study area for five months, particularly in Pangkep District (Pitusunggu and Pitue Villages) and Makassar City, South Sulawesi, with the consent from the research participants. I had been observing daily activities of women beneficiaries, the activities of several economic groups (*Pita Aksi*, *Cahaya Soreang*, *Mutiara Desa*, and *Assyura* groups). I

also observed women's interactions with Oxfam and the local NGO partners, their family and surroundings, as well as the local government.

I was so lucky that I was very welcome and supported by my research participants, especially Sitti Rahmah (Leader of *Pita Aksi* Group) and family, who were my hosts in Pitusunggu Village. She made me feel like I had a family during my fieldwork. Oxfam GB both in Jakarta and the Eastern Indonesia Office were also very supportive of my research as they allowed me to use the RCL Project as my case study, to obtain the necessary documents related to the project, and to attend and observe their events, such as on their exit strategy event in mid-August last year. The project people from Oxfam also helped me in getting research participants from various affiliations, such as the government, local NGO partners, and the beneficiaries. Project Officers from the local NGO partner, such as *Yayasan Konservasi Laut* (Marine Conservation Foundation) were also helpful in connecting me with the research participants.

Crang and Cook (2007, p. 37) explain a three-stage process of participant observation, which the researcher should go through. The initial and crucial process is gaining access to a particular community by making initial contacts and explaining the purpose of the research to the designated community in various versions (Crang & Cook 2007, p. 41). I made sure that I had received research permission from the national, provincial, district authorities, right down to the village government. Initially, I was introduced to the research participants from Oxfam's project officers, facilitators, and local partners' project officers for the RCL Project. The snowballing and purposive strategies in selecting the research sites and participants for this research also enabled me to talk to various research participants. Therefore, I was able to capture multiple voices and understand various meanings conveyed by the research participants in responding to the questions of my research.

The second stage involves living and/or working with the people. The last stage is sharing the results of the research to the intellectual audience in a thesis form, which uses language and formats that follow academic standards (Crang & Cook 2007). I experienced this stage when I conducted ethnographic research in Pangkep District. I also presented the research findings at the forum of the Postgraduate Students' Association of Victoria University of Wellington on 24 May, 2016 and in front of the Indonesian Students' Association at the Wellington Indonesia Nano Discussion on 17 October, 2016. In addition, I shared my research at the DevNet Conference 2016 at the university on 6 December, whose theme was 'Pacific Currents, Global Tides'.

Maintaining Reflexivity During the Fieldwork

Participant observation is mainly descriptive and interpretative. It is also subjective, informal, and flexible in gathering information and making data analysis (Gillham, 2000). While conducting the interviews, the researchers often make observations and when possible joined in the social life of the community. By staying longer with the research participants, the researchers gain a better understanding of the research setting, research participants, their perspectives, and behaviour from their social interactions (Glesne, 2011). Participant observation is important to investigate the dialogical relationship between empirical observation and theoretical frameworks (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014, p. 130).

During participant observation, the researchers make descriptive and reflective notes on the behaviour and activities of individuals whom they observe in the field. The researchers try to avoid being judgemental and look for accuracy in recording details of their observations (Creswell, 2014; Delamont, 2004; Glesne, 2011). In this research, I engaged myself in activities of the research participants in the field. I took pictures of the research sites, the people, and the groups' activities. I recorded the interviews and visited the groups, the families, and the organic garden. I also attended public meetings at the villages. I applied ethnographic research by combining observation with interviews to understand the everyday life of the research participants and the actual meaning of a situation for the research participants (Wogan, 2004, as cited in Crang & Cook, 2007, p. 37; Neuman, 2012, p. 291).

Moreover, it is a good idea to keep a diary throughout the research process to move from observation through participation to self-reflection, which is shown in the researchers' ideas and questions on the research journey. For example on locating the ethnographic setting and the physical space in that setting; description of others' interactions in that setting, and the researcher's participation in those interactions (Crang & Cook, 2007, p. 51). This was what I also did when I conducted participant observation at Sitti Rahmah's house and the group activities at *Cahaya Soreang*, *Mutiara Desa*, and *Assyura* groups. I learned how to harvest green beans and other organic vegetables from the garden. I helped to work on the seeds of the vegetables and to water the garden. I joined the women in tying the seaweed and cooking snacks during

their production days while interacting with them in informal ways and observing their activities, relations, and conversations with others.

The researcher should also take notes of the observation in a diary to maintain reflexivity during the research process (Crang & Cook, 2007, p. 51; Delamont, 2004, p. 226). The diary or journal is also important to differentiate the researcher's personal understanding and responses from those of the research participants. This is important because the idea of knowing is a dialogical activity, which involves objections, confrontations, disagreement, and even a breakdown in the process of retaining understanding (Janesick, 1999, p. 506, as cited in Brinkmann, 2012, p. 79). This was something that I managed to do during the fieldwork, by having separate journals. One as an observation journal and the other was a personal (reflective) journal.

The journals were very useful to help me reflect and write an analysis for this research by considering both the voices of research participants and my understanding of the findings. Having the journals was also important to remind me to be reflexive throughout the research processes. As suggested by Abbott *et al.* (2005), reflexivity is essential for the researchers to maintain their awareness of their values, attitudes, and perceptions which influence the research process.

For me, being reflexive also meant that I had to be aware of different positionalities, experiences, and understanding between me and the research participants in looking at the key issues of the research, particularly women's empowerment, aid relationships, and development aid. Being reflexive also helped me not only to be critical in analysing the findings of the research, but also to be considerate in presenting the multiple voices of the research participants in this research.

3.4.5 Data Analysis

A qualitative research data analysis considers particular narratives from the research participants and relational aspects of aid relations and empowerment (Grbich, 2007, p. 39). I analysed the findings by looking at existing social relations between women and other stakeholders in the field. I compiled the data and made coding.

Coding is the process of organising data gathered into categories, and labelling the categories with a term. In this case, qualitative data analysis involved ongoing reflection

on the collected data, building analysis from the data, making interpretations, writing notes throughout the research, and making reports. Qualitative data analysis went through several stages, namely data organisation and preparation, reading through the data, coding the data, describing the information, making the narrative of the findings of the analysis, and making interpretation of the data (Creswell, 2014).

The coding is made by investigating and categorising key themes from the findings as the foundation of the data analysis (Neuman, 2012, pp. 354–58; Vogt, 2014). The coding from collected data was shaped from the research questions and designs. For this research, I used matrices which highlighted the key issues in the research to help me in organising the data.

For the coding, I used topics such as project knowledge; project participation and evaluation; changes and impact; gender relations; requirements for women's empowerment; relations with executing agencies; and recommendations and sustainability in coding my interviews with the women beneficiaries of the RCL Project.

As for the literature review, I organised the discussions of the literature according to the topics. Some of the topics were feminist perspectives of women and development; international aid; empowerment; recommendations for development agencies; participation, and challenges in development work, in order to approach the three main issues in this research (women's empowerment, aid, and development).

I made the qualitative analysis based on post-development and postcolonial feminist perspectives on development, power relations, and empowerment. In this case, I was looking at how women were positioned and treated in the project design, their aid relations with other related actors, and how their perceptions of empowerment were influenced by their involvement in the RCL Project. By applying feminist theory, I was able to address the research questions in this research and provide comprehensive analysis on the topic, particularly from the women beneficiaries' point of view.

I analysed both primary and secondary data gathered from document study, case study, participant observation, and semi-structured interviews. For the analysis, I also put careful consideration into the importance of the contexts of the research area (political, economic, social, and cultural aspects) and various voices of the research participants (particularly of the women beneficiaries) by looking at the positions and roles of women, cultural norms, women's urgent needs, challenges, and related policies.

3.5. Ethics

In this section, I discuss further the ethical aspects of the research in four sub-sections. They are: the importance of ethics; ethics and intersectionality; the importance of values and contexts, and expressing ethics in relationships with the research participants.

3.5.1 The Importance of Ethics

Ethical principles are intrinsic under the constructivist approach because of the personal and dialectical nature of the research processes. The constructivist paradigm acknowledges the active role of the researchers in facilitating the “multi-voice” of their constructions and the participants’ constructions. This will require the researcher to understand various factors which affect the perceptions of the research participants, such as social, political, economic, cultural, ethnic and gender factors (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 115).

However, not all feminist researchers share the same stance about the “multi-voice” concerns as the best response to the politics of interpretation and representation (Kirsch, 1999). For example, in a research report, Sherry Gorelick (as cited in Kirsch, 1999) argues that researchers must be responsible for analysing and interpreting research data. By acknowledging different positionality between the researchers and the research participants, such as with regard to knowledge, power, and experience, feminist research can come up with new insights which enable sensible and critical representations of the participants’ knowledge and experiences.

There are also challenges to re-present and tell the stories of the research participants in ways which minimise the effect of colonisation, providing a space for other voices although the research participants do not necessarily feel colonised. Re-presenting the stories can also be a liberating and joyful experience for the researchers (Higgs et al., 2012, pp. 243–45). During the research process, I tried to have follow-up interviews and visits to clarify the meaning making conveyed by the research participants. In addition, recalling the fact that this research was conducted for a purpose, I also made my personal and intellectual perspectives in this study visible in various documents, such as the research proposal, research permission letters, research information, research participants’ consent forms, and ethics approval from the university I also tried to be

reflexive throughout the research period by recalling different positionality between me and the research participants.

3.5.2 Ethics and Intersectionality

In relation to intersectionality, the researchers have to be aware that every social position is defined by the interaction between hierarchical systems which entails race, class, and identity. Laurel Weldon (2008) proposes that there are other ways of thinking about intersectionality, such as by applying the intersectionality-plus model. In this case, the model was relevant to the findings of my research which showed how social structures interact in different contexts, in which the effects of social structures could be intersectional and autonomous, particularly recalling the personal, relational, and multidimensional aspect of empowerment (Weldon, 2008, pp. 203, 216). Therefore, during the research period, I needed to be reflexive and critical about the intersectionality and power relations experienced by the research participants, especially the women beneficiaries.

In addition, the research participants are not necessarily weak. They know which information to reveal and to conceal. They also seem to be familiar with being interviewed. When they feel comfortable once good and close relations had been built with the researchers, it was easy to obtain information from the participants (Kirsch, 1999). With regard to my relations with the research participants, I was able to build good connections with the research participants by being open to and spending time with them during the fieldwork. The research participants were also aware of their positions and roles related to the development project. Therefore, they knew how to respond to the questions addressed to them during the interviews.

This was also what I experienced during my fieldwork. Staying with the research participant somehow also influenced me when I talked to other research participants as I had a closer connection with the host family. Nevertheless, by being reflexive throughout the research period and being attentive in undertaking participant observation, I could manage to try to explore the research topic from various voices while trying to be cautious about the intersectionality and different roles, positions, and interests of various stakeholders who were involved as research participants.

During the fieldwork, I learned that the political aspect of women's empowerment strongly related to existing conditions of the local politics, particularly at the village level. For example, the local government elections affected the unity and solidarity of villagers. The elections also increased the influence of the village leader, particularly in distributing assistance (for example, rice, cash, fertilizer and other in-kind tools for farming) from the government or political candidates to the people. In short, empowerment in a political sense has both positive and negative impacts.

The project has promoted women beneficiaries' participation in the policy process as they gained gender awareness and civic rights knowledge as well as capacity building. With regard to the negative aspects: women's empowerment in addition to political conditions have created hostile relations and competition between village leaders and the people for the sake of influence and assistance. I often heard stories from the host family and other villagers about the tendency of the village leader to keep the assistance and prioritise her family and other people she preferred to receive the assistance.

They also said that the village leader created economic groups only to attract assistance and to obtain rewards although the groups were only active when there were particular official visits or evaluations. The village leader was even mentioned to persuade members from other existing groups to join her economic groups. Another time, I heard from the village leader other stories, that she had been able to encourage women to be productive in the economic groups and active in the village meetings. She also criticized the idea that development assistance distributed without consulting her because she argued that some assistance only went to the same groups related to the project, particularly to the same individual leader.

3.5.3 The Importance of Values and Contexts

A feminist approach and a post-development approach both underline the importance of values and contexts in analysing phenomena such as women's voices in aid relationships. Most of the methodological strategies feminists have developed attempt to end power inequalities between the researcher and the researched (Sprague, 2005). Therefore, the researchers need to consider how they perceive and understand the topic of the research because these perceptions and understanding affect how they investigate the topic and how they relate with the research participants. The researchers should also

realise that the research itself is a process which relates to the knowledge from their side and others who are involved in the research. In short, the research and knowledge are also mutual and complementary (Crang & Cook, 2007).

In this research, I looked at how women were positioned and treated in the project, and how their perceptions of empowerment were also affected by their involvement in the project. The ethical challenge I faced was inevitable. Due to the different positionality between me and the research participants, I had different perceptions of looking at women's empowerment which I learned from the feminist literature on women's empowerment. For example, I critically analysed the limited understanding and women's perceptions of empowerment in this research. However, as argued by Kirsch and Mortensen (1999, pp. 100–101), I also needed to hold myself and remember that I must respect the voices of women which reflected their various experiences and perceptions of empowerment.

Furthermore, I had to clearly present the research findings and analysis by differentiating the voices of the women beneficiaries and my voice as the researcher. Practicing ethical and reflexive research required that I admit that due to the intersectionality and different positionality between myself and the research participants, we have different experiences ideas, stories, and perceptions.

These ethical dilemmas I encountered in the field were also in line with the argument from Donna Haraway (2008, p. 350) about situated knowledge, where partially understood knowledge, multiple subjects, and interpretations are the conditions which create the claims for rational knowledge. Therefore, Haraway states that science becomes the paradigmatic model, which is contestable and contested, in which situated knowledges are about communities, not about isolated individuals. In this case, ethical issues deal with ethical practice in reality.

3.5.4 Expressing Ethics in Relationships with the Research Participants

In relation to ethical research, I provided the information, research permission, and consent forms to the research participants before they decided to participate in the research. I also informed them that this research was academic in nature which also meant that it was not neutral as I had a specific purpose in undertaking this research. I

also respected their decisions if the research participants did not want to have their identity revealed in the research process and/or in the thesis. I am glad that I received consent from all the research participants to reveal their identities in the thesis.

This level of consent is understandable given the information revealed was not secret nor dangerous. As for the compensation, I also provided tokens of appreciation for the research participants for their contribution to this study. Sometimes I also took the host family and other research participants out for a meal or coffee, not only to appreciate their contribution but also to value my relationships with them. In addition, from my observation in the field, people were so happy to get visitors coming to their house. It was a form of prestige for them to get visitors from outside the village.

Moreover, there were different ways to express my appreciation to the research participants. Some of the expressions were by paying them some visits, helping them during group activities, taking them out to the city and for dinner outside their place, and even just by sharing my knowledge and experiences which might be interesting, relevant, and useful, if not new to them. Likewise, I also learned new things from the research participants, such as tying seaweed, cracking crab shells, watering an organic garden and taking out harvested seeds. They also invited me to attend social events (wedding receptions, house warming parties, citing *Al-Qur'an*, village meetings, and the national independence ceremonies).

Feminist research scholars pay attention to ethical concerns such as safety, dignity, diversity, and responsibility because these concerns are important and they can potentially result in new perspectives and valuable information (Jaggar, 2008). This is to say that by undertaking ethical research, feminist research is able to explore comprehensive and contextual knowledge and understand multiple voices, which are being heard in the research processes. With regard to ethical research, I also considered my positionality and tried to be critical of my actions and motivations, both as an insider and an outsider which influenced the research processes, my relationship with the research participants, and how I addressed the research questions (Brinkmann, 2012, p. 61; Crang & Cook, 2007; Sultana, 2007). As argued by Murray and Overton (2014, p. 25), all research has value-judgements at its root because of the influence of the individuality of the researcher on the research processes.

Therefore, during the research process and period, I tried to make sure that I was conducting ethical and reflexive research by considering the impartiality and situated nature of knowledge and different positionality and intersectionality between me and

the research participants. This research received ethical approval from the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee on 11 September, 2014. The approval means that this research followed the necessary protocol, such as providing an information sheet for research participants, obtaining informed consent prior to involving them in the research, explaining how the research was conducted and how the research dealt with issues around confidentiality (see Appendix 8).

3.6. Reflexivity and Positionality

Recalling the feminist approach and the qualitative nature of this research, which put special concerns on power relations and the active engagement of the researcher with the researched, it was very important for the researchers to reflect on their reflexivity and positionality during the research process (Brockington & Sullivan, 2003; Willis, 2010, p. 409). Positionality requires the researchers to consider the differences between themselves and the research participants, and their perceptions towards the identity of the researchers to engage in multiple positionalities in a more meaningful way (Sultana, 2007).

Reflexivity is a methodological practice, which advises researchers to consider how their positionality influences: questions, methods, and conclusions of their research (Jaggar, 2008). Reflexivity involves critical reflection on how researcher, research participants, research setting, and research procedures interact and influence each other during the research period. Reflexivity of the research discusses the personal dimensions of subjectivity, emotion work, positions, and positionality of the researchers (Glesne, 2011). Reflexivity has been the main characteristic of qualitative research as the researchers acknowledge how their background will influence their interpretation of the findings (Creswell, 2014).

Reflexivity is important to differentiate the point of view of both the insiders and outsiders which will be reflected in the findings and analysis of the study. Moreover, reflexivity also enabled me to map and to understand the various point of views from the research participants both on aid relations and women's empowerment. Being reflexive also meant that I was aware of the existing power relations during my research

period and different views from the participants, which I respected as original voices from the research participants.

3.6.1 Reflexivity on my Background and Interests in Doing the Research

In relation to the importance of reflexivity and positionality in the research, I had to admit that aside from the gap I found in the existing literature on women's empowerment, international aid, and development, initially it was my personal interests that motivated me to propose the research. I was interested in taking on this topic because of several experiences, which were personal and significantly related to the work I had done at my office, The Indonesian Institute, Center for Public Policy Research (TII), especially on project evaluations, which were also related to women's empowerment issues. The topic on international agency and international aid are parts of my interests as I used to work at an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) called the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) in Indonesia, where I learned how international aid and related agencies had been working in promoting democracy and governance in Indonesia.

Secondly, my first experience working with a foreign-based NGO also gave me knowledge and understanding about how international agencies relate with their host countries' counterparts (beneficiaries), whether representing the governments, political parties, or civil society. However, I realised that apart from my academic background in international relations and international studies, and my professional experiences working at a US-based democracy NGO and a private research institute in Jakarta, I did not have sufficient knowledge and understanding about complex aid relations and how development projects actually empowered women in Indonesia. As a woman, I also had a further interest about how development interventions in various activities and with diverse goals influenced women in perceiving empowerment and being empowered.

Moreover, I was also interested in having an in-depth understanding about how women positioned themselves in aid relationships and how development interventions addressed the needs of women. However, my position which was not part of the women beneficiaries and basically an outsider for the beneficiaries limited my experience and knowledge about these issues. That was why I conducted this research. These

motivations were indeed personal and of my own interests. I was aware that these motivations had affected me in undertaking the research due to the knowledge, resources, understanding, and experience, and networks that I have. Therefore, it was very important for me to be critical about my position related to my motivations. On one hand, I could use those motivations to help me carry out the research. On the other hand, I needed to be aware of my position as a PhD candidate who was undertaking academic research, which is different from undertaking policy research.

I also needed to consider the ethical aspect of the research, which recognised the intersubjective learning in knowledge production during the research processes. Nevertheless, I believed it was also a matter of being able to put everything into context, being reflexive throughout the research stages and acknowledging the contribution of the research participants by providing the proper space and representation for their voice in the research. My understanding of the topic relied on the information from the research participants in which I had to recognise intersubjective learning throughout the research processes.

Therefore, I needed to ensure that I had conducted ethical research, where I paid attention to reflexivity; the research period; the production of knowledge; and the power relations between me and the research participants. Although, in practice, it was extremely difficult to ensure that the research was ethical given the intersubjective nature of knowledge production and various positionalities of the researcher and the research participants in understanding women's empowerment and development aid as well as in giving meaning to women's empowerment.

3.6.2 My Positionality: Both an Insider and an Outsider

In conducting research, the researchers have to consider the differences between themselves and the research participants, and their perceptions towards the identity of the researchers in order to engage in multiple positionalities in a more meaningful way (Sultana, 2007). In relation to the ethnographic approach, the researchers are also aware that the observation period affected how they feel about being similar and different from the people in the community which they are observing, and that they belong as both insiders and outsiders for that particular community (Kneafsey, 2000; Mullings, 1999;

Valentine, 2002, as cited in Crang & Cook, 2007, p. 43). With regard to positionality, I must be aware of my gender and positions as both insider and outsider, and the intersectionality and interconnection between the two positions, and how this positionality affected how I conducted the research and how the research participants perceived me and engaged in this research.

As an insider, the research participants saw me as an Indonesian woman who understands Indonesian contexts and has relevant contacts in Indonesia to help me in conducting the research. In addition, having family affiliations and a Bugis ethnic background in South Sulawesi province because of my father also made me an insider. I could sense how the research participants were more open and welcoming to me and interested in my research when they found out about my family background. They were very helpful when knowing these facts and noticing that my middle name “Tenriangke” comes from their culture. Other research participants from the other three ethnic groups (Makassar, Mandar and Toraja) would immediately recognize me as someone who is a South Sulawesi descendant from my middle name.

In addition, having relatives and friends living in the study area also gave me an advantage as they helped me a lot in understanding the local contexts and introduced me to key informants and other relevant research participants. In short, being if not seeing like insider also gave me a sense of confidence, comfort, guarantee, and security in undertaking the research in the study area. I also considered my position as an insider during the research period as an advantage as I got support and access from Oxfam to use the RCL Project as my case study in this research. As an insider, it was also quite easy for me to get data, contact information, and to create a network as I was seen as an insider.

As an outsider, I realised fully that the research participants understood me as a city girl who was born and raised in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia. I had been living in Jakarta since birth and only visiting South Sulawesi rarely for vacations and work. The fact that I spent most of my life in Jakarta studying and working and that I do not speak the local language in the study area contributed to my role as an outsider. My current status as a student from a university abroad who is doing her academic research created further distance between me and the research participants, especially from the study area, in the research processes.

Although in general, the research participants were very welcoming, friendly, and helpful, I also experienced the time when they treated me differently and introduced me

more like a guest speaker, from Jakarta (the capital city of Indonesia) and New Zealand. Some of them also thought that I had expertise in organic farming. They expected me to share more information and knowledge during village meetings or group activities. Sometimes, they also thought that I was part of Oxfam. The village officer, especially representing the army unit, also tried to make sure that I was safe as well as stay during the period approved by the local government. The research participants sometimes also told me that I was not from their area, therefore, I should not expect too much, especially when it comes to promoting women's empowerment.

In addition, as an outsider, the research participants could see the contrast in how I dressed compared to the women who generally wore veils. Fortunately, this did not hinder my relations with them as they were friendly, helpful, and welcoming to visitors regardless of their gender, religion or race. As development projects entered the villages, the people became familiar with visitors, including development workers from outside Sulawesi who lived with the beneficiaries, or foreigners who visited or stayed in the villages.

On the other hand, I also felt awkward sometimes when I was in a situation where I was the only one wearing sneakers and no veil. Nevertheless, I also realised that the women would not mind as they seemed to be excited to have me there and to share their experiences with the project and their everyday life stories. However, I was also mindful to cover my hair when I was invited to religious events at the village, such as citing *Al-Qur'an*. I thought as long as I was respectful of others, including wearing appropriate clothing, the people would be welcoming.

Another experience which I found challenging during the fieldwork was when I had to restrain myself from being too critical and up front towards the government officials who visited the villages as I sometimes thought that the people themselves should be confident to speak up and raise their concerns, especially when they had an opportunity to do so. Sometimes they would ask me or the project's facilitators to speak on their behalf, but sometimes they would rather keep their critiques amongst ourselves.

Because of those reasons, having been seen as an outsider, I had to get the research permits, not only from the university and the school, but also from the Government of Indonesia (national, provincial, district, sub-district, and village levels). The process to get the permits took a lot of time but no serious challenges presented themselves.

I only received official permission to undertake the research for six months in the field, which was shorter than I had been planning for. Being an outsider, I had to adjust my schedule, especially during ethnography research in the Pitusunggu and Pitue villages in Pangkep District. Having spent approximately three months in the study area, I realised that as an outsider, I actually learned a lot from the research participants and the surroundings. I learned about aspects such as the people's everyday lives; the self-subsistent life of the farmers; different stories of women's empowerment; Bugis-Makassar culture on gender relations; the local language; social relations; local events; environmental challenges; and local politics.

As an outsider who only stayed for several months for thesis research in the area, I also experienced an emotional stage: frustration, and longing for my family, friends, and my life in the city. However, I was glad that I had built a new connection with the research participants in Pitussungu Village, especially with Sitti Rahmah's family. I also felt close to other research participants in the study area because originally the people in Pitusunggu and Pitue sub-villages have family connections. Living in the village and building such a close connection with the people had also brought me a sense of belonging and empathy.

3.6.3 The Importance of Conducting Reflexive Research

Neuman (2012) argues that it is very important for the researcher to be reflexive throughout the research process by acknowledging that the research participants would respond according to how they perceive the researcher's position and how they relate to the researcher's background. In relation to that, I had to be honest with regard to my position and to build trust with the research participants. For that, I had built initial contacts with potential research participants and get initial information prior to fieldwork, particularly information on the case study to familiarise myself with the local contexts of the case study area and the people. As argued by Pink (2004, p. 397), reflexivity must be taken seriously as the knowledge produced through the qualitative research methods should be recognised as the product of the interaction between the researcher and the research participants

Post-development and postcolonial feminist authors (Green, 2002; Nussbaum, 2000; Patil, 2013) argue that it is very important to understand the context of development aid

and the project area to have a better understanding of the complexities of aid relations and women's perceptions of empowerment. The next chapter will discuss the context of the research area and the case study of Oxfam's Restoring Coastal Livelihoods (RCL) Project in South Sulawesi Province, particularly in Pangkajene Kepulauan (Pangkep) District, Indonesia.

Chapter 4. Contexts of the Research Area and the Case Study

4.1. Introduction

This chapter describes and discusses the contexts of the research area, which is South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia, particularly Pangkajene Kepulauan (Pangkep/Pangkajene Island) District. The main information about the context of the research area will relate to Indonesian women, particularly in the research area. The information will also connect to the case study of this research, which was Oxfam's Restoring Coastal Livelihoods (RCL) Project in South Sulawesi Province.

Interviews with government officials are the main source for this chapter, in addition to other reliable and complementing sources of information, such as, the profile of the research area (demography, geography, government, social and economic conditions, the culture), policy on development planning, policy on gender mainstreaming, and reports of Oxfam's development project to the government.

In accordance with the constructivist paradigm, post-development and postcolonial feminist stance, it is crucial to understand the context where the case study takes place to have in-depth knowledge and understanding of the background and reasons of human behaviour and responses within the structures surround human beings (Cho et al., 2013; Friedmann, 1992; Grabe, 2012; Nussbaum, 2000; Rai, 2008). The context of the case study is also important to provide underlying factors which influence women's behaviour in, and perceptions of, their social interactions, including women's aid relations within the dynamics and complex aid industry.

This chapter will start by providing a general profile about Indonesia and South Sulawesi Province. This section will also give information about Pangkajene Kepulauan (Islands) as known as Pangkep District, particularly the villages (Pitusunggu and Pitue) which were the study area for this research. The information will be presented according to the themes which are relevant to this research.

A section of gender in perspectives of Bugis-Makassar culture will follow this section. After this section, I will provide the overview of the RCL Project after a bridging section on the context area and the project. This section will be followed by a discussion about the relevance of the context of the area and the case study, which was also one of

the materials for the analysis of this research. The chapter will conclude by highlighting the importance of understanding the context and the case study of this research. This understanding will be useful to have a better understanding on how aid power relations through development intervention influenced women's perceptions of empowerment and being empowered after their involvement in the project.

4.2. General Profile of the Research Area

Below is the map of Indonesia and the location of South Sulawesi Province (highlighted in box) as seen in Figure 4.1. Following the map, Figure 4.2. shows the map of South Sulawesi and its districts. I conducted this research in Pangkajene District (*Kabupaten Pangkajene*).

Figure 4.1. Map of Indonesia



Source: (MapsofWorld.com, 2016)

Figure 4.2. Map of South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia



Source: (Archi Pelago Fastfact, 2016).

4.2.1 Geographical Condition

South Sulawesi (Sulsel) Province is one of the 34 provinces of Indonesia. The capital of South Sulawesi is Makassar (See Figure 4.2.). The province consists of 295 islands, 21 districts, 304 sub-districts, three municipalities, and 2,953 villages (Pemerintah Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan, 2016). As for the focus area of this study, Pangkep District is located on the West coast of South Sulawesi Province, with Pangkajene as the capital. Pangkep District has 115 small islands 73 of which are inhabited. The district consists of 13 sub-districts, with nine districts located in the islands (including Ma'rang Sub-district where I did my fieldwork) and four districts located in the islands. According to the Data from Sea and Fishery Unit of Pangkep District (2011), the size of sea area of the district is 11,464,44 km². This size is wider than the size of the land area which is 898.29 km²

(Bagian Humas & Protokol Sekretaris Daerah Kabupaten Pangkep, 2014; OXFAM, 2014).

I carried out participant observation in two villages, Pitusunggu and Pitue. The following descriptions of their geographical conditions are based on unpublished village information and observation. Pitusunggu Village is one of the villages in Pangkep District which has direct borders with Pitue Village in the South and in the East. The village has an area of approximately 365 ha. Pitusunggu Village is located around 5 km from the capital of the sub-district or approximately 23 km from the city centre of Pangkep District, and 70 km from the province's capital of Makassar.

Pitusunggu village consists of three sub-villages, namely: Bontosunggu, Kampung Baru, and Pungkalawaki. Bontosunggu sub-village, where I lived with my research participant is located in the village centre. On the other hand, Pitue Village covers an area of \pm 565 ha. The village is about 7 km from Ma'rang Subdistrict's capital, or about 19 km from the city centre of Pangkep District. Pitue, and 69 km from the province's capital in Makassar. Pitue Village has borders with Pitusunggu Village in the North. The village is divided into four sub-villages, namely Pitue, Gusunge, Jennae, and Sabange.

4.2.2 Demography

Based on the data from the National Statistics Indonesia in 2015, the population of Indonesia was 255,461,700 people. Out of this number, approximately 128.5 million people lived mostly in the rural areas (Statistics Indonesia, 2016b). Indonesian people can be identified into two groups. Those in the Western part of Indonesia are mostly related to the Malays whereas those in the Eastern part of Indonesia are Papuans. Many Indonesians define themselves as parts of specific groups according to languages and origins. For example, Java, Sunda or Batak. There are also minority ethnic groups, such as Chinese, Indian, and Arabian. Most Indonesians speak in local languages, however, the official language is Bahasa Indonesia (Portal Nasional RI, 2016a).

There were 8,520,034 people in South Sulawesi Province according to South Sulawesi Statistics 2015. Out of that number, 4,359,329 were women, and 4,160,975 were men

(Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan, 2016a, 2016b). The province has four ethnic groups, namely Bugis, Makassar, Mandar, and Toraja (Pemerintah Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan, 2016). The District of Pangkajene Islands (Pangkep) which was the focus of my fieldwork is one of the districts in South Sulawesi. Based on the data from South Sulawesi Statistics, there were 323,597 people in 2015 with 167,309 women and 156,288 men (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan, 2016b).

As for the population of the villages where I did my fieldwork, based on the undocumented data from the village government as they were written manually and updated on the board at the village office, the population of Pitusunggu Village based on the recapitulation in June 2015 was 1,986 people (963 men and 1,023 women). There were 348 people with elementary school background. Whereas in Pitue Village, based on the monthly population report in August 2015, there were 3,094 people (1,497 men and 1,597 women). The majority of the population have an elementary school background (1,512 people). All the people of the populations in both villages are Muslim.

4.2.3 Government

Indonesia is a democratic multi-party presidential republic. The political system recognises the separation of the legislative, executive and judicial powers. Indonesia consists of 34 provinces, and each province has its own legislature and governor (Portal Nasional RI, 2016b). In general, the provinces in Indonesia are divided into districts (*kabupaten*), cities (*kota*), sub-districts (*kecamatan*), and village (*desa*) (Pemerintah Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan, 2016).

The provincial governor as the representative of the central government is responsible to the President. Implementation of regional government in Indonesia is regulated by Law No. 23 Year 2014 on Regional Government. In relation to the regional government affairs, issues related to women's empowerment, environment, community and village empowerment, and small and medium enterprises are parts of the non-basic services mandatory affairs conducted by the regional government. With regard to the village government, the National Parliament has passed the Law on Village No. 6 Year 2014. The law gives authority to the village to manage its own affairs as well as providing a budget for development (Portal Nasional RI, 2016b).

4.2.4 Social and Economic Conditions

According to data from Statistics Indonesia, Indonesia's economic growth in the second quarter of 2016 was 5.2% with 10.9% of the population recognised as poor in March 2016 and an unemployment rate of 5.5% in February 2016 (Statistics Indonesia, 2016b). Table 4.1 below shows several social and economic indicators of Indonesia and South Sulawesi. With regard to poverty, Statistics Indonesia measures poverty by using the basic needs approach, where poverty is seen as incapacity from an economic aspect to fulfil basic needs (both food and non-food) which are measured from the expenses' side (Statistics Indonesia, 2016a). Indonesia also faces other problems related to poverty, for example a lack of access to basic services such as health and education; huge gaps between regions in the country with Eastern Indonesia being poorer; malnourished children; high maternal mortality rate; lack of access to higher education and safe water (OXFAM GB Indonesia, 2008).

Table 4.1. Social and Economic Indicators of Indonesia, South Sulawesi, and Pangkep District (2015-2016)

Indicators	Indonesia	South Sulawesi
Economic growth (2016)	5.2%	8.1%
Percentage of the poor (March 2016)	10.9%	9.4%
Percentage of the poor in rural and urban areas (March 2016)	14.1% (rural area) and 7.8% (urban area)	12.5% (rural area) and 4.5% (urban area)
Percentage of Indonesian population of 10 years of age and over who were illiterate by sex (2015)	2.6% (men) and 5.9% (women)	5.9% (men) and 9.3% (women)
Human Development Index (HDI) in 2015	69.5	69.15

Source: Statistics Indonesia 2015-2016.

According to the data displayed in Table 4.1, South Sulawesi Province enjoyed a higher percentage of economic growth compared to the economic growth of Indonesia in the second quarter of 2016. It can be seen from the province's percentage of the poor in March 2016, including the percentage of the poor both in the urban and rural area which is lower than the national percentage. Compared to the country as a whole, the province had a higher percentage of the population of 10 years of age and over who were illiterate by sex in 2015. However, the data both in Indonesia and South Sulawesi also showed that the percentage of women with illiteracy was higher than the men's.

With regard to poverty in Indonesia, there were 17,665,62 thousand poor people in the village area (14.1%), compared to 10,339,79 thousand people (7.8%) living in the urban area in March 2016. Whereas in South Sulawesi, the total percentage of poverty of South Sulawesi in March 2016 was 9.4% (807,03 thousand people), including both poverty in the urban (4.5%) and rural (12.5 %) areas (Statistics Indonesia, 2016c, 2016e). This data also showed that the rural area and the people living in the area tended to be poorer than the urban area in Indonesia, including in South Sulawesi Province as shown in Table 4.1.

In Indonesia, men are the majority of households' leaders both in urban and rural areas. In addition, apart from women outnumbering men in the population, they were also the ones who had higher illiteracy rate (Statistics Indonesia, 2016f). Data from Statistics Indonesia-National Economy and Social Survey 2009-2011 showed that 85.16% of urban and rural households were headed by men and 14.84% were headed by women. This data was also reflected in South Sulawesi Province, as the survey showed that 17.85% households were women-led in the rural area, and 82.15% men-led in 2013 (Statistics Indonesia, 2016d).

Agriculture has been the most significant sector as it contributed 25-34% to the province economy in the last 10 years. In addition, almost half of the workforce was in the agriculture sector (43%) and most of the workforce (64%) also lived in the rural areas (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan, 2015). The data above showed the significant contribution of the agricultural sector in South Sulawesi where men were the majority of the household leaders and the workers in the sector. On the other hand, the data also highlighted the poverty face of rural areas apart from the significant contribution of agriculture to the province economy and the fact that most of the workforce lived in the rural areas.

With regard to the focus area of this study, Pangkep District produces fisheries' products, which include fish and prawns. Exploration from the sea covers fish and seaweed to name a few sea resources. Pangkep District is also famous for its granite, fruit, and rice industries (Pemerintah Kabupaten Pangkep, 2015). Such potential resources in the fishery, agriculture, and mining sectors have accelerated social, cultural, and economic activities of the people (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Pangkep, 2014).

As for the two villages where this research was based, Pitusunggu Village has a coastal village characteristic, where natural resource management and public access to natural resources is quite high. This can be seen from many people of the village who cultivate seaweed and manage ponds. In Pitue Village, the majority of the people are working as farmers, fishers, and in seaweed cultivation. The majority of the population of both villages is Bugis and Moslem. The Bugis language is the language of daily communication, although most of the people understand and use Bahasa Indonesia.

4.2.5 Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Participation

Indonesia has a national policy framework regarding public participation in general and women's participation in particular. The National Government also requires the local government to apply the policy at the local level and support the policy with the local stipulations and relevant agencies. The national policy framework has recognised public participation as a right of citizens and one of the democratic principles in Article 6A, Article 19, Article 22, and Article 28 of the 1945 Constitution. In addition, Law No. 25 Year 2004 further regulates public participation in development processes. Public participation starts from planning, implementation to monitoring stages in order to accommodate their interests in the development process (The Indonesian Institute, 2011).

With regard to women's participation in Indonesia, there are several national policy frameworks which become the foundations of the implementation. They are Law No. 7 Year 1984 on The Ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Presidential Instruction No. 9 Year 2000 on Gender Mainstreaming in National Development. According to the Ministry of

Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (2011), these policies act as gender mainstreaming policy within the framework of National Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming (RAN PUG) that also applies to the regions to conduct a gender responsive regional development (The Indonesian Institute, 2011). In relation to the commitment for gender mainstreaming in the policy processes, respondents to a survey by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) in 2010, stated that 'Indonesia's commitment to international agreements as the most significant factor in building the intention to increase women's participation (IFES, 2011). Therefore, it can be seen that the policy on gender mainstreaming is also part of Indonesia's commitment as part of the international community for women's empowerment.

In Pangkep District, the policy on women's empowerment is coordinated by the Agency for Women's Empowerment and Family Planning (*Badan Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Keluarga Berencana/BPPKB*). The agency works based on several rules and regulations, among others are: Law No. 52 Year 2009 on Growth of Population and Family Development; Law No. 23 Year 2004 on Domestic Violence; and Government Decree No. 21 Year 1994 on Implementation of Development of Family Welfare. In order to harmonise with interests at the local level, the Government of Pangkep District has issued Pangkep Regent Decree No. 34 Year 2008 on Commentary on the Main Tasks, Functions, and Working Procedures of BPPKB of Pangkep District (BPPKB Kabupaten Pangkep, 2016).

With regard to women's participation in the policy process at the village level, women's participation depends on the governance of the head of the village. In Pitusunggu Village, the head of the village involves a collective public involvement decision-making process, especially including women. The current head of the village is also a woman who often encourages women to participate in the village meetings. Women's participation in productive activities is also possible due to the creation of income-generating groups, whose main actors are women. The groups cover activities, such as sewing, crab processing, salted egg processing, seaweed processing, snacks, and milkfish processing. (Interview with the Head of Pitusunggu Village, Nurhayati, 15 November, 2015).

Meanwhile, in Pitue Village, the village institution often involves the people in many of its activities, including women. The head of the village also encourages the people, especially women to optimise the local resources to increase their family income. For

example, by making use of the garden for organic farming to produce processing food (Interview with Head of Pitue Village, Amrullah, 2 August, 2015).

4.2.6 Actors for Women's Empowerment at National, Provincial, and District Levels

There are several actors at the national level which work to promote women's empowerment. First is the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection (KPP&PA). KPP&PA works to promote gender equality and child protection by implementing a series of programmes that involve actors at national and regional levels. There are also centres created at the village level to support the works of KPP&PA, which are known as *Pusat Pelayanan Terpadu untuk Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak/P2TP2A* (Integrated Service Center for Women Empowerment and Child Protection) (The Indonesian Institute, 2011).

Second is the National Commission on Violence against Women (*Komnas Perempuan*). The Commission was established due to the demands of civil society, particularly women, to make the state responsible for resolving violence against women, recalling the tragedy of sexual violence happened during the May 1998 riots in major cities in Indonesia. To undertake its works, the Commission relies on its 18 strategic partners in 12 provinces. Although it has similar authority like other State Commissions in providing recommendations, the Commission does not have the instruments to apply the recommendations, especially recalling the fact that they are not legally binding (Suhirman, 2004, p. 19, as cited in The Indonesian Institute, 2011).

The third is women's NGOs at the national level. They are working on a variety of issues in order to promote women's participation in various fields recalling the cross-cutting nature of participation and the need to have women-sensitive policies (Masruchah, 2009, as cited in The Indonesian Institute 2011). Several examples of the women's NGOs at the national level are Movement for Women's Voice Empowerment/*Gerakan Pemberdayaan Suara Perempuan*, Indonesian Women Coalition for Justice and Democracy/*Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan dan Demokrasi* (KPI), Women and Politics Network/*Jaringan Perempuan dan Politik* (JPP),

and Women Solidarity/*Solidaritas Perempuan* (SP). All of them are working hard to empower women (Soetjipto, 2002).

These NGOs have wide networks and cross-borders activities in the regions of Indonesia. However, their participation will depend on the political parties' willingness to recruit 'potential women' from outside their traditional basis. They are working on a variety of issues in order to promote women's participation in various fields recalling the cross-cutting nature of participation and the need to have women's sensitive policies (The Indonesian Institute, 2011).

In South Sulawesi Province, the official policy on gender acceleration is coordinated by Women's Empowerment and Family Planning Agency/*Badan Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Keluarga Berencana* (BPPKB) (Pemerintah Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan, 2016). In Pangkep District, BPPKB which has the mandate to undertake women's empowerment policy. The programmes of this agency are family planning, family welfare, gender mainstreaming, and women's empowerment and child protection. The district government also has several policies to regulate efforts to promote policies on women and cultural characters in Pangkep (BPPKB Kabupaten Pangkep, 2016). At non-government level, there are several social organisations concerning women's issues, such as the Indonesian Women Coalition/ *Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia* (KPI). There are also other women organisations which are independent and those which are parts of the civil organisation or political parties (Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia Sulsel, 2016).

On the other hand, apart from understanding the context of the research area to understand the women's perceptions of empowerment, it is also crucial to understand the context, particularly by looking at the perspectives and practices of gender relations according to Bugis-Makassar culture which is dominant in the area of this research.

4.3. Gender in Perspectives of Bugis-Makassar Culture

Bugis-Makassar has actually had a long history of progressive culture when it comes to gender relations. In the perspectives of Bugis-Makassar culture, a tribute to women has existed since hundreds of years ago. At a time European women were imprisoned in a deeply patriarchal culture, Bugis-Makassar women had already appeared in decision making in the kingdom. They also had the same rights to voice their concerns just like men. Harassment to women in the Bugis-Makassar traditions is considered as a

despicable act or known as *siri'*, which means risking life for the sake of women's dignity. Bugis philosophy recognises the terms of *burane mallempa* (men bear) and *makkunrai majjujung* (women uphold) (Munawar, 2011).

The philosophy reflects mechanisms of job divisions in the household, where man must be the breadwinner for the wife and the family and the wife must take care of the household. However, this is not a necessity, such as it is all right if the husband takes over the wife's tasks when the wife is absent. On the other hand, the wife does not only take care of the household (Munawar, 2011). With regard to the division of work, Pelras (2006) argues that Bugis-Makassar women have their own activities. According to a Bugis proverb, woman's territory is around the house, whereas man's space soars to the sky. This is to explain that there are different roles between men and women in the households. Women have general roles, which are limited to a domestic territory. As a mother (*indo'ana'*), women must take care of the children, pound the rice, cook, wash, prepare meals and shop for the needs of the family. Women's main tasks are within the house and its surroundings as well as managing and spending income from the men as a "wise caretaker" (*pa'taro malampé' nawa-nawa-é*) (Pelras, 2006).

However, as argued by Munawar (2011), the wife does not only take care of the household. Sometimes, both husband and wife work together. This is called as *sipurepo* or burden sharing. Women are bound with the strict custom to keep their sanctity. It does not mean that their roles in public are limited. Women can participate in politics and economy sectors just like men in general

The different roles between men and women can also be seen in other norms, from how to dress, a division of territory in the house, to attitude and behaviour in society. However, the difference based on the gender behaviour itself is flexible in nature. It is reflected in the expression of "even though he is a man, if he has a feminine's nature, then he is a woman; and she is a woman, but a woman who has a masculine nature, is a man." (*mau'ni na woroané-mua na makkunrai sipa'na, makkunrai-mui; mau'ni makkunrai na woroané sipa'na, woroané-mu*) (Pelras, 2005). In short, the culture is open to other sexual orientations and gender identities (Graham, 2001).

The kinship system of Bugis society is based on the bilateral or parental circle, where both father and mother have the same rights and duties. The architecture of the culture also shows the unity and harmony of men and women. For example, the central pole of the house has a woman's character, where a woman must keep and manage the

husband's income while maintaining the harmony of the family's life in the house. In addition, the front pole for the front stairs of the house reflects the man's obligation to be the breadwinner of the family. In this case, a perfect house is built based on cooperation between husband and wife (Mardanas & Abu, 1985).

Siri is a unique concept in the culture of Bugis-Makassar in South Sulawesi, as the society treats women with full dignity as the culture promotes strict and strong attitudes to uphold *siri*. Therefore, insulting women means challenging *siri*, and thus the men (brothers) have the obligation to uphold *siri*. If not, they will be considered as having no *siri* just like walking corpses. Moreover, many cases in the name of *siri* involved murders using a traditional weapon, called *badik*. For example, defending women in the family could lead to conflicts or fights (Sulistyo, 2011).

The high dignity of women is also enshrined in the very famous Bugis epic, *La Galigo*, which tells how Bugis women have dominated social, cultural and political norms in the Bugis kingdoms. Bugis ancestor Tomanurung was narrated not only as a man called Batara Guru but also accompanied by a beautiful woman personification called We Nyilik Timo, his Queen. We Nyilik Timo was also believed to be very influential in producing great ideas about the foundation of early Bugis culture. Furthermore, it was mentioned in *History Of Java* (1817) by Thomas Stanford Raffles about his impression on the roles of Bugis women in the community, as reflected in this quote: "*Bugis Makassar women have more respectable positions than what has been suspected all this time, they do not experience violence, privacy breach or forced work, thus limiting their activities/fertility, compared to other people in another part of the world.*" (Nisafitri, 2013).

Women's position in Bugis Makassar culture (*We Tenriole of Tanete Kingdom*) showed how women played significant roles in the history of the culture. Marriage was not only the willingness of the God but also the Goddess. Women were riding horses, sailing boats, and expressing thoughts. They also had lands and authority in deciding wars, tied scarves to select soulmates without having to be seen as a taboo thing to do. In addition, the history of the founder of Gowa Kingdom noted that *To Manurung* (a person who came down from the sky) was a woman. In the 1860s, there were many female kings, such as in Bone, Barru, Tanete, Lamuru, Luwu, and Gowa. The history of the Tanete Kingdom recorded 9 female kings out of 20 kings (Sulistyo, 2011).

We Tenri Olle, for example, during the Dutch period was a woman who had a great desire for power and war. She was persistent and not easy to rule. She also did not like

to compromise. She even was contrary to Datu Baka, her husband. The kingdom's history also noted that We Tenrileleang, the 15th Queen of Tanete and Luwu left her husband due to menopause and her knowledge that her husband married her because she was old, not to mention her husband wanted to get a mistress. We Tenrileleang responded by saying "*Pekkumutono si aq, pekkumutoni tauwe*" ("You are like that, and I can also be like that too."). Then, off she went and married Luwu King, Ponggaungri Luwu (Sulistyo, 2011).

Apart from the progressive culture on gender relations in the past, along the way the gender relations have changed due to the Makassar War between the Gowa Kingdom and the Dutch East India Company which allied with the Bone Kingdom (1667-1669). During the war, the women were put inside and at the back of the house in the name of *siri* and to protect women from the enemy. Nonetheless, many women heroines went into the war, such as Karaeng Bainea during the war in Somba Opu (Interview with Halilintar Latief, Anthropologist at Muhammadiyah State University, Makassar, 19 September, 2015).

4.4. Bridging the Context Area to the Case Study of Oxfam's RCL Project (2010-2015)

In the South Sulawesi context, apart from the history of the past and the culture of Bugis-Makassar which upholds *siri* as well as respecting women, in reality, the mixed patriarchal and matriarchal culture has been interpreted differently particularly after the Makassar War, thus putting women in unfortunate positions. Based on my observation in the fieldwork and the responses from women beneficiaries, it seemed that women were not aware of gender relations and the importance of women's roles and positions in particular ways according to the cultural contexts.

Women were likely to point out the very deeply patriarchal nature of the culture which hinders women's empowerment. The culture has been misread through a patriarchal interpretation which put the men to represent the people, including the women. These perceptions of their culture might result from a lack of knowledge and understanding of women beneficiaries of their own culture as they seemed to have been taking the interpretation of the culture from the men for granted. In this case, some women might

not even think ‘the culture’ they understood from the men’s interpretation as problematic and seriously undermining gender equality and women’s empowerment.

From my observation, apart from the significance of culture in influencing gender relations, women experienced would also be significantly influenced by the personal, relational, multidimensional, and multi-layered aspects of gender (power) relations. Therefore, women had different stories of gender relations which they experienced individually and/or collectively. These stories can be seen in Chapter 6 of this thesis which shared various stories of transformation processes and perceptions of women’s empowerment based on the intersectionality which women experienced due to their resources, occupations, educational background, political activism, achievement, and their positions and roles in the project, as well as their relations with others both in the project, family, and wider community.

In relation to the cultural contexts, interestingly even Oxfam’s baseline study and other project documents (reports, evaluation, and publications) did not mention clearly and look at the cultural aspects specifically in undertaking their efforts to promote women’s empowerment through the RCL Project. In this case, Oxfam could have increased women’s awareness of the progressive and positive local cultural values which uphold gender equality and women’s empowerment by including the local culture at the beginning of the project. This is important to show that the development project was not solely imposed by external actors and interests, and that the project was relevant to the contexts where the beneficiaries were living, particularly in understanding gender relations and gender equality.

Thus, Oxfam could have also added its contribution by using the local culture in the project, and thus, contextualising development for the beneficiaries. Nevertheless, based on Oxfam’s baseline study, Oxfam also recognised the importance of promoting women’s empowerment by considering the complex social, economic, and political conditions in the project area, particularly with regard to gender inequality and poverty which positioned women in disadvantaged positions.

In addition, based on the elaboration of the contexts of the research area above, it can be seen that there is still need to undertake gender-sensitive development. Apart from the existing policy frameworks, supporting institutions and committed actors concerning women’s empowerment, and the history of progressive culture on gender relations of Bugis-Makassar people, Indonesian women, particularly in the study area are still facing the challenge both in its human and gender development aspects. Although women

make up a higher percentage of the population in various levels of territory in the country, meaningful participation, rewards, acknowledgement, and contribution of women in various sectors remain challenging.

Furthermore, poverty in the country also reflects the face of women especially those living in rural areas. Women are the primary stakeholders in dealing with the multifaceted problem of poverty directly. Culture and social relations also play significant roles in defining women's participation and access to various resources, which enable women to get equal rights and opportunities to participate just like men in general. Unfortunately, the social and cultural aspects of gender relations in the project area were not favourable for women to have activities outside their house.

Women were expected to have minimal education as it was widely believed that the men would take care of them. Women were also obliged to stay at home and take care of the family while men would be the main breadwinner and represent women's voice at public meetings. These situations contributed to women's lack of awareness about their rights and the importance of gender equality. The fact of their minimum background of education, lack of capacity and access to information, not to mention the lack of willingness from the authority to engage women in the policy process also further made women lack the confidence to participate in the public sphere.

Those contextual and situational conditions existing in the project area, including local conditions (geography, environment, demography, social interaction, economy, culture, governance, public participation, and empowerment) and local potentials (seaweed, sea and fishery products, farming, agriculture, mining, and land) had become considerations for Oxfam GB's field assessment and analysis to propose the Project of Restoring Coastal Livelihoods (RCL) in South Sulawesi to Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The next section will provide further information about the project.

4.5. Overview of Oxfam RCL Project in South Sulawesi (2010-2015)

RCL was a five-year project initiated by CIDA, Oxfam Canada, and Oxfam Great Britain. It was implemented on the West coast area of South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia with financial support from CIDA. The project was conducted in 4 districts

(Barru, Pangkep, Maros, and Takalar), 13 sub-districts, 61 sub-villages, involving 74 groups and 1,359 direct beneficiaries (Oxfam Canada, 2014c).

The project supported sustainable economic growth by working with communities and local partners to increase family incomes by sustainably using renewable natural resources (as seen in Figure 4.2.). The project has been able to establish economic groups which are active to find alternative sources of livelihood to improve the living standards of families, such as through domestic industry. The project was designed to improve economic security and women's rights in the project area (Oxfam Canada, 2014c).

The project was also conducted to promote women's participation in the policy processes by encouraging them to participate in activities such as village meetings because women sometimes outnumber the men. Therefore, such a development project was also designed to realize social change, particularly in gender relations, by providing opportunities for women's political engagement to change their power relations in society (McKinnon, 2007). However, women lacked capacity (reading and writing skills), awareness (knowledge), resources, and opportunity to participate in the public sphere in meaningful ways (OXFAM, 2014). These descriptions also showed the deficit-framing of women beneficiaries in the project.

Figure 4.3. Pictures of Economic Groups in Maros District and Pangkep District



Women activities in the economic groups, such as in snack food products made of crabs as produced by Ujung Parappa Group in Maros District (left), and snack food made of fish by Cahaya Soreang Group in Pangkep District (right). (Source: Author)

Oxfam and the local partners facilitated the creation of economic groups according to the local resources (see Figure 4.2. above) and training through the project so that women became confident in voicing their concerns and stating ideas, not only accessing but also controlling coastal areas' resources. Furthermore, Oxfam provided initial assistance for the economic groups so that they could be independent. Oxfam also introduced the social commitment to the beneficiaries so that they are also able to help non-beneficiaries of the project (OXFAM, 2015b, p. 13).

The overall goal of the project was to increase the livelihood security of vulnerable coastal communities in the project area. A special focus was placed on empowering women, securing their rights and enhancing the well-being of coastal communities (OXFAM, 2012). In addition, the project aimed to strengthen the ecological and economic resilience of these communities by restoring degraded mangrove forests, farming saline soil, stimulating the growth of small enterprise and helping women secure a voice in local development. Oxfam worked with two local partner organisations called Mangrove Action Project (MAP) and *Yayasan Konservasi Laut/YKL* (Marine Conservation Foundation) to organise economic groups in the project area. They also cooperated with the local government, private enterprise, aquaculture and agriculture teachers and specialists in undertaking the project (Oxfam Canada, 2014b, 2014d)

Women were the majority of the project's beneficiaries because women make up the majority of the members of village economic groups. Furthermore, many of these women earn their income by producing seaweed, vegetables, fish and crab crackers, using abandoned land and fish ponds for organic farming and aquaculture. In addition, on gender justice matters, through the RCL project, the local governments were accustomed to including consideration of gender equality in their practices, as well as to consider proposals from women's economic groups in policy planning and development (Oxfam Canada, 2014a, 2014c).

Furthermore, Oxfam's concern for gender issues has been part of the organisation's commitment to put gender at the heart of its activities. Oxfam is committed to working for a world free of poverty and injustice by highlighting the most persistent predictor of gender with regard to poverty and powerlessness in the world. Oxfam further believes that ending global poverty begins with women's rights because women and men experience poverty in different ways. Therefore, successful strategies to end poverty

must reflect and respond to these differences. For that, Oxfam's gender justice policy promotes an agenda for change by putting women's rights and gender equality at the centre of all the work Oxfam does with its partners and allies, as well as in their programmes and within its own organisation. Oxfam also plays a role in helping women and men in their own development so that they can build on their capacities and assets (Oxfam Canada, 2014a).

This commitment to gender equality is also shared by the donor of the project, which was CIDA. In this case, the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) of Canada, which is currently known as Global Affairs Canada, and has Policy on Gender Equality. The policy outlines eight principles on gender equality. Basically, gender equality is a cross-cutting theme and an integral part of all the policies, programmes and projects. Women's empowerment through promoting the equal participation of women and eliminating gender inequalities is central to achieving gender equality. In this case, external assistance can support processes so that women can empower themselves. For that, policies, programmes, and projects must address the differences of experiences and situations faced by women and men. In addition, gender equality can only be achieved through a partnership between women and men (Global Affairs Canada, 2016).

Through the RCL Project, Oxfam also promoted development planning processes which are participatory with gender justice perspectives. This perspective highlights Oxfam's internal and external commitment to put women's rights and gender equality at the core of their works. In this project, Oxfam encouraged women representation and participation so the women could speak up and raise their concerns, such as on increasing the capacity and economic capability of women: female adult and children's health, literacy, and so on. In the past, deliberation meetings for development planning were usually focused on physical development. In addition to the economic groups, the project also inspired women to be more active aside in taking care of the household. Women are able to manage their own businesses to earn additional income so that they are not always depending on the husband. Through the group activities, women were also trained to speak up and to actualize themselves, therefore, women are aware of their aspirations and development can be implemented in line with women's participation (OXFAM, 2015d).

In the RCL project, Oxfam collaborated with the local government to improve coastal resource management, livelihood, and gender issues as key components of the project.

Furthermore, the project also acknowledged that it was possible to empower both women and men in the communities to engage the government and develop the necessary social and political capital in order to manage those resources in a beneficial and sustainable way, for their own livelihoods as well as for their communities and society as a whole. Therefore in the project, Oxfam initially conducted a baseline study, as well as situational and contextual field assessment and analysis (including gender analysis) in the project area (OXFAM, 2014).

Oxfam also conducted gender training for beneficiaries and stakeholders of the project; workshops to strengthen women's leadership roles and training on government planning and budgeting for district leaders; training for key stakeholders on coastal environmental awareness, mangrove and coastal resource management, gender awareness, policy analysis, and community engagement; and training for selected implementing partners on community approach and participatory action plans, community planning, and gender mainstreaming. They worked with 64 coastal field schools in 16 villages over years 2-5 by ensuring women's participation, and to have partners' staff cooperate with village governments to facilitate gender-inclusive community planning meetings (OXFAM, 2014).

4.6. Discussion of the Context of the Research Area and the Case Study

Based on the components of the RCL project, it can be seen that Oxfam tried to promote various aspects of livelihoods, not only on economic and social resilience, but also gender justice aspects through women's empowerment. Oxfam also worked to raise community awareness through a group approach and public participation by promoting good governance and facilitating participatory and gender mainstreaming practices in policy processes. As highlighted by McKinnon (2007), the actions of development professionals are part of a political process to reframe development in order to bring positive promise of development as a project of hope toward emancipation and social justice.

Through the project, Oxfam also tried to promote environmental rehabilitation and protection through organic farming and mangroves' conservation in the coastal area. As explained in the RCL project overview, it can be seen that the project was a big and

multidimensional project which was implemented in four districts on the West coast of South Sulawesi, involving various development agencies, from Oxfam and local partners, the local government, and people in the project area with the support of the Government of Canada through CIDA.

As mentioned, Oxfam conducted a baseline study at the beginning of the project to understand the context of the area including the needs of the people, by looking at local resources, which were crucial to deal with the challenges faced by the people. Oxfam and the local partners promoted home industries in the villages through economic groups by making use of existing local potentials, such as seaweed, fish, vegetables, shrimps, and so on, which can be optimised to produce and increase income for the people. The economic approach of the project was chosen based on the reality of poverty, and environmental challenges faced by the people, particularly women living on the West coast of South Sulawesi.

In relation to this research, although the RCL project was not explicitly a women's empowerment project, it could be viewed as such. This can be concluded from several facts, such as: women made up the majority of beneficiaries involved in the project due to the challenging situations they were facing; women's empowerment was positioned as one component under the project in synergy with efforts to promote local women champions in public participation and development planning and implementation in a meaningful way.

The challenges faced by women can be seen from the reality of aspects such as poverty, domestic violence, women's representation and participation in various aspects of life. According to the record of *Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan/ Legal Assistance Institution, Indonesian Women Association for Justice (LBH APIK) Makassar*, there were 615 cases of domestic violence in 2014, in Makassar City alone. There were several factors which made the cases happened, for example, the strong patriarchal norms and the temperamental character of the men. Domestic violence is fragile and victims tend to feel embarrassed to report it because of women's high economic dependence on men; lack of awareness of, and access to, gender justice; lack of bargaining power; fear of losing privileges, facilities, and social status; and tendency to take domestic violence for granted as women perceive it as a way for husbands to educate their wives (Interview with Rosmiati Sain, Director of LBH APIK Makassar, 19 June, 2015).

Therefore, women's empowerment becomes a critical need for women in the project area. It is also a crucial aspect that development agencies should pay attention to in undertaking development intervention to promote public awareness on the importance of women's empowerment and gender equality.

In relation to the RCL Project and recalling the context of the project area from various aspects, Oxfam approached women's empowerment from an economic aspect as the main focus of the project through implementation of various workshops and training, field schools, provision of revolving of in-kind material, assistance through stay-in facilitators, creation of economic groups and business associations, as well as facilitating meetings between the groups, the government, and private sectors to open distribution channels and expand markets for the products. Oxfam also started the project by conducting literacy programmes after realising how urgent it was for the women beneficiaries prior to creating the economic groups.

In the project, economic empowerment, although not the only dimension of empowerment, has been seen as crucial in building women's confidence as they gained knowledge and skills and the ability to be involved in productive activities collectively, and thus earning their own income. However, economic empowerment has not been able to deal with the structural issues as women's agency is restricted and constrained by their gendered identity and entitlements (Friedmann, 1992). As argued by feminists, empowerment is not limited to economic targets alone, but also further is a means to create social transformation (Rowlands, 1999, p. 146). Feminists have also criticised empowerment, which complexity has been reduced to a simple act of transformation through the transfer of money and/or information (Cornwall et al., 2006).

In addition, under the Gender and Development (GAD) approach, women's empowerment became important and women have been seen not only as economic targets but also actors in promoting social transformation (Connel, 1999). This was also a point that made Oxfam consider the importance of involving women as the majority of RCL project's beneficiaries and to promote local woman champions through various project activities, namely, field schools, economic groups, training, workshops, community forum, women's forums, business associations, meetings with government and private sectors, as well as participation in public meetings, such as in village meetings or other development planning meetings.

As reflected in the RCL project, the economic approach to women's empowerment was seen as important and very meaningful as a stepping stone and breakthrough for the beneficiaries to challenge the previous gender relations and to deal with poverty issues in their community. Oxfam also always puts women at the heart of its activities. This was also the reason why Oxfam implemented a group approach in promoting women's empowerment, environmental rehabilitation, and good governance in the four districts. Such a collective-action approach is also in line with Kabeer's call for grass-roots participatory action to increase the ability to exercise choice (associated with access and claims on resources, agency) and achievement (Kabeer, 1999a, p. 437).

Furthermore, the collective aspect of empowerment is also highlighted by Rowlands. In the context of development, changes are needed in the collective abilities of individuals in identifying and fulfilling their own needs. Nevertheless, it has to rest on the individual empowerment of at least some people (Rowlands, 1999, pp. 143–4, 148). In this case, the collective approach to promote social transformation is also in line with the communal characteristics of the beneficiaries, who came from the villages where the spirit of togetherness and family acts as the utmost norms.

With regard to the context of the project, for example, there are villages whose population has family connections, and, the people are closely connected as relatives. The close social connection between the beneficiaries are reflected in phenomena, such as when the people helped the neighbours who were having a wedding reception or housewarming or helped when others were in unfortunate conditions; routine gatherings whether on social occasions or religious matters; the people worked together to clean the mosque or clear the field for public space, for example.

Although the beneficiaries considered matters, such as business plans and organisational management as new concepts for them to practice, prior to the RCL Project, they were already accustomed to working together. For example, the people were also involved in farmers' groups, particularly the groups created and facilitated previously by the local government. For the women, for example, they would feel more comfortable attending workshops and other relevant activities in a group rather than alone.

For example, although Oxfam would prefer that members of the groups took turns to attend meetings and training sessions rather than the leaders always being present, members would prefer to go to training sessions accompanied by the leaders. They even felt better to share rooms with more people in their rooms during training in the city rather than sleeping alone or sharing with only one person as they could help each other.

They were also more confident and brave talking in groups with the leaders of the groups present who would talk on behalf of the community, such as in workshops or village meetings.

4.7. Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the importance of understanding the context of the area and the case study and their interconnection in order to have a better understanding of how development intervention influenced women beneficiaries' perceptions of empowerment and being empowered (Cho et al., 2013; Green, 2002; Nussbaum, 2000). The chapter also shows the rationale as to why Oxfam proposed the RCL Project to CIDA by considering existing conditions in the context of its project area. This consideration is also in line with the constructivist paradigm and postcolonial feminist stance which emphasise the importance of context prior to implementing development intervention.

Based on the discussion in this chapter, it can be seen that Oxfam took into consideration the importance of understanding the project area from the beginning of the project implementation to ensure that Oxfam had sufficient knowledge of the project area and the needs of the beneficiaries. Recalling the context of the research area and existing challenges, Oxfam tried to support and complement government programmes both in the village development and women's empowerment by involving not only direct beneficiaries in the four districts, but also the local NGO partners, the government, the media, and the private sectors in undertaking the project.

Understanding the context of the area is also important to understand the voice of the beneficiaries of the project (Connel, 1999; Kabeer 1999b; Kitzinger 2004). In addition, understanding the context of the research area was also useful for me to understand why Oxfam included women's empowerment as one of the components of the Project and conducted necessary activities to prepare women to become active participants in the community. With regard to this study, understanding both the context and the case study was important to provide the necessary background to understand how development intervention was initiated and took place as well as women's perceptions of empowerment and being empowered after their involvement in the development project.

Furthermore, in order to address the questions of this research, the elaboration of the context of the research area and the case study needs to be connected to the discussion on the practice of aid relations within the RCL project which will be presented in the following chapter.

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Chapter 5. The Practice of Aid Relations in the RCL Project

5.1. Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings of the research on the practice of aid relations in the RCL Project. Based on the topic of the research, women beneficiaries were the centre of attention for the analysis of this study. It is important to understand aid relations by knowing the dynamics amongst various actors involved in the aid chain. This chapter will start with a literature review on development intervention to investigate how development intervention influenced women's perceptions of empowerment. This section will be followed by a discussion of findings of the practice of aid relations from the perspectives of various actors involved in the project to investigate the history of the project and to understand the women's position in the project design.

This discussion will be followed by a discussion on the women's empowerment component in the project design. The next section will review existing literature on aid relations which is intertwined with the literature on development interventions. The literature review will be followed by the findings on aid relations between women and other actors during the project period. This section will be followed by a discussion on the complexities, dynamics, and power relations in the RCL project. I conclude by arguing that women's position in the project and the aid relations experienced by women are crucial as the starting points to give a better understanding of how women perceive empowerment after their involvement in the project.

5.2 Development Interventions

As highlighted in the literature on development aid from post-colonial studies, the paternalistic nature of aid relations happens due to economic inequalities; identification of the donors and the recipients; as well as conflicts of interests amongst various actors (Baaz, 2005). The donors often have authority in applying aid conditionalities (Burnell, 2008; Diamond, 2008; Killick, 2008) and justifying intervention through superiority-inferiority aid relations (Gronemeyer, 2010).

In addition, intersectionality in the development aid industry should be seen as a result of the nature of the industry which is not homogenous due to the fragmentation of the development apparatus, and the variety of aspects, such as location, time, and organisations (Crewe & Harrison, 1998). This can be seen in the implementation of a participation approach, where development professionals have their own operational interpretation of the beneficiaries' needs and the project goals in which 'planned local knowledge' is created to match with the project's design (Cooke & Kothari, 2001, p. 24).

Development professionals also influence implementation of development approaches and strategies, particularly through their discursive practices and agency in perceiving development (McKinnon, 2007). Another example of the hierarchy and intersectionality of aid relations is that development organisations such as NGOs need to work according to the concerns and standards of the donors within their partnership with the donors (Tvedt, 1998, p. 213; Wallace et al., 2006).

However, I argue that these arguments need to go further and deeper by exploring and analysing the relational aspect of international aid, which goes beyond the focus on the state and high-level official actors. In relation to this research, there is a need to look at the relations between women and the aid agencies, the recipient government, and other beneficiaries and stakeholders in the development project.

As discussed in chapter 2, the existing literature also show that the authors tend to focus more on the formal entity of nation-states, such as the governments and formal actors such as the donors, the development workers, and the NGOs. Aside from post-development and post-colonial arguments on the importance of the voices of so-called 'non-existent' actors, not much has been said about the position and voices of women, particularly in international development aid, aid relations, and development projects which also had women's empowerment component.

In addition, there is still a lack of discussion in the literature on how development intervention influences women's perceptions of empowerment through the practice of aid relations (Pasteur & Scott-Villiers, 2006; Cornwall & Edwards, 2010; Cornwall, 2016). There is a particular lack in cases where the development project is not specifically focused on women's empowerment and, thus positions women's empowerment as just one of the components of the project as happened in the RCL Project.

However, apart from the nature of aid power relations where the donors are dominant, there have been changes in the practice of aid relations where executing agencies and development workers try to engage the recipient government, local stakeholders, and the beneficiaries during the project period (Haan, 2009). This is also what Oxfam applied in the project. Yet, in practice, and as acknowledged by development workers involved in the RCL Project, it was not always realistic to implement participatory processes from the very beginning of the project (Interview with Dini Widiastuti, Director of Economic Justice Goal Lead, Oxfam GB Indonesia Office, 20 August, 2015).

On the other hand, participatory processes are taken to create a sense of ownership for the development project and to ensure sustainability of the positive outcome of the project. Nevertheless, recalling the hierarchical nature of partnership in development interventions as argued by the authors included in the literature review, it is still challenging to practice participatory approaches from the beginning of the projects. In particular, recalling the fact that most development project proposals are designed initially by executing agencies (international NGOs) in consultation with the donors.

For this reason, it will also be challenging to achieve country ownership and sustainability aspects of the development intervention because the procedural practices in development aid involve the recipient government; other stakeholders (local partners); and beneficiaries as formalities (procedural matters) rather than the substantive process of development interventions. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the paternalistic nature of aid relations by understanding the background of development intervention.

Furthermore, the authors also advise the external agents to promote endogenous change from within and let the people take the lead in the development process in addressing existing challenges. In this case, it is crucial to have not only social empowerment but also political empowerment to support people's movement to ensure the humanization of development, which acknowledges, promotes, and protects human rights, citizens' rights, and "human flourishing" (Friedmann, 1992, p. 144). This understanding of the roles of the external agents and the importance to promote local initiatives is very important to ensure project relevance, meaningful participation, ownership, partnership, and the sustainability of positive outcomes of the project.

As discussed in the literature review chapter, the included authors argue for the importance of considering the multidimensional aspect of empowerment (Luttrell et al.,

2009). Empowerment is not limited to the economic aspect, it also relates to other aspects of life, including political empowerment. Empowerment also requires support and participation from various actors to realise its complex aspect at various levels. In other words, one aspect of empowerment is not sufficient to enable women to participate in a meaningful way to endorse social transformation, both as individuals and parts of the collectives. Empowerment also involves various actors (state and non-state actors) at various levels of development. Empowerment also promotes initiatives from the community, including the beneficiaries, who are directly affected by the development intervention.

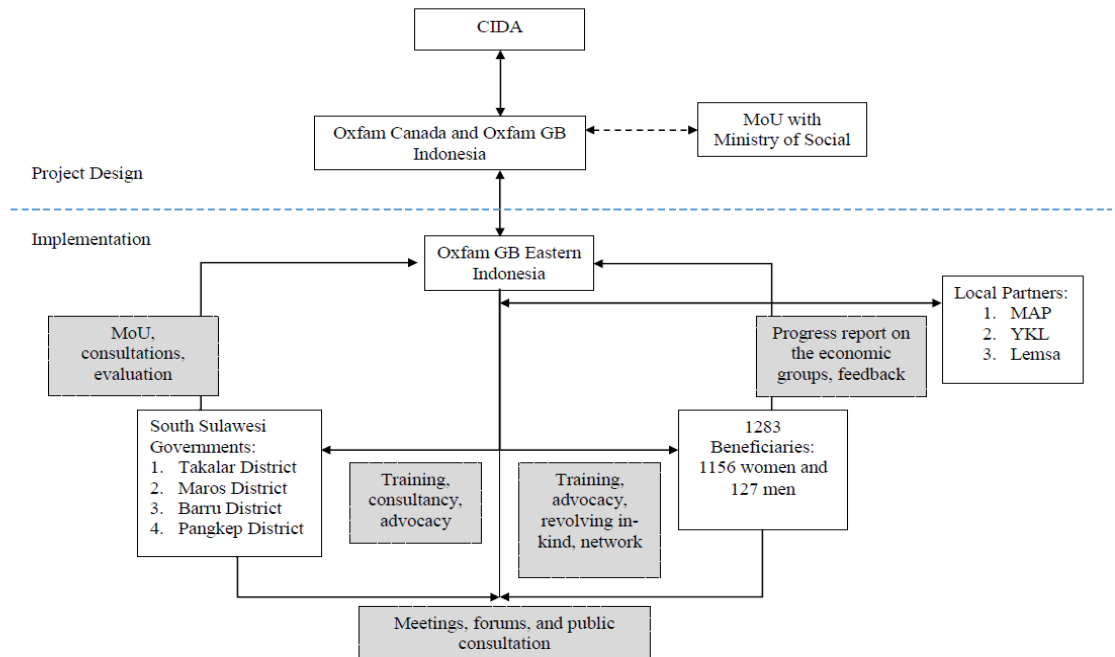
The literature review in chapter 2 is also reflected in the discussion on the findings of this research, particularly in the position of women in Oxfam's RCL Project Design. Recalling the history of the project, it is fair to say that the project was not specifically a women's empowerment project, as it was proposed originally for coastal community resilience. In relation to the women's empowerment component in the project, women were the major beneficiaries due to the fragile conditions they experience. Therefore, women's empowerment was put as one of the components of this large and ambitious project.

5.3. Position of Women Beneficiaries in the RCL Project Design

Before looking at the position of women in the RCL Project Design, it is also important to understand the background of the project. For that reason, it is important to look at the positions and perceptions of international aid in general and the project in particular from the point of view of the donors, executing agencies, local partners, and the recipient government.

Women themselves were introduced and began to engage with the RCL Project when the project was started in 2010. Women's position in the project can be seen in Diagram 5.1. below. Although women beneficiaries were not involved in designing proposal of the project, they were involved quite significantly in the project implementation. I elaborate aid relations of the project in the sub-sections following the diagram.

Diagram 5.1. Actors Involved in Oxfam's RCL Project



Notes: CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency); MAP (Mangrove Action Project); YKL (Yayasan Konservasi Laut); Lemsu (Lembaga Maritim Nusantara). (Source: Author).

5.3.1 The National Government

According to the research participants from the National Government, such as those representing the Division of International Cooperation Techniques and Planning Bureau of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the State Secretariat,² there are several common issues which need to be highlighted with regard to international aid and development intervention. Interestingly, the government officials were quite open, critical, cooperative and helpful in providing information and sharing their thoughts about the RCL project in particular, and international aid in general. They further linked the issues of international aid coordination with Indonesia's positions both as recipient and donor of international aid. I found these issues interesting to look at, especially when it comes to how these positions influence the Indonesian government in dealing with the donors as the recipient government.

² Amri Kusumawardana Sumodiningrat (Head of Subdivision of Technical Cooperation with the US and Europe) and Deni Abdullah (Analyst of Technical International Cooperation) at the State Secretariat. Muhammad Taher (Head of International Cooperation Division) and Shobirin (Head of Subdivision of Non-governmental Cooperation) at the Planning Bureau of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Table 5.1. presents several concerns regarding aid relations highlighted by the National Government official research participants. Basically, these concerns showed the critical opinion of the officials towards themselves internally as part of the National Government and their relations with the local government, and externally towards their relations with donors and executing agencies.

Table 5.1. Concerns of the National Government on International Aid and Development Intervention

Issues	Concerns
Internal coordination and institutionalisation	Lack of coordination and institutionalisation amongst the ministries, particularly in regulating relations between the government and the donors, and executing agencies and local stakeholders, including the beneficiaries.
Coordination with Donors and Executing Agencies	‘Business-as-usual’ aid relations. The government is not always involved at the beginning of the proposal making process (primarily designed by the executing agencies). Furthermore, the concern is that coordination meetings are basically discussing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), rather than regulating relations between aid stakeholders.
Relevance of Development Project	Donor-driven projects which make development aid are not necessarily relevant to the development programs of the recipient government. For example, the RCL project was more suitable with the Ministry of Sea and Fisheries, or the Ministry of Agriculture. However, recalling good relations and practicality, Oxfam had the MoU with the Ministry of Social Affairs.
Implementation of Development Project	Direct shortcut relations between the executing agencies and the local government. For example, donors tended to have direct coordination with the heads of the local government.
Reporting of Development Project	One-sided communication and reporting only between donors and executing agencies. Oxfam always submitted regular annual reporting to the government. However, detailed reports on its projects’ evaluation have never been shared with the governments.
Policy and Regulations on the NGOs	Positive comments on NGOs’ creative works such as through the support from the international development partners, but the government still wanted to ‘regulate’ more, particularly related to Law No. 17, 2013 on Civil Society Organizations. Amongst the concerns are the legal status of international development institutions, MoU, project extension, nature of project and resources, including foreign development workers and project activities.
Exit Strategy	The National Government would request the donors and the executing agencies to ensure aspects, such as project relevance, a clear period of the MoU, routine coordination with the government, accountability (source of funding, disbursement of funding), and implementing the project based on existing regulations.

From the concerns raised by the government officials as seen from Table 5.1., it can be seen that aid relationships and international aid are still undertaken as the same business as usual in practice. Formal procedures were applied accordingly, by involving related ministries, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the State Secretariat. They were followed by a presentation in front of and matching with related ministries and institutions, even based on preference (Oxfam and Social Ministry), which resulted in MoU and annual coordination meeting (monitoring and evaluation, along with regular reporting). The government has not been involved initially in the early stages of the proposal making as the executing agencies only presented the fixed proposals they made in agreement with the donors. This practice of aid relations have limited room for the recipient government to have positive intervention by linking the projects to the strategic planning of the government.

Lack of institutionalised coordination on foreign aid and the problems of classic ego-sectoral behaviour between existing ministries in charge of foreign aid have been the same classical problems which still need to be dealt with strategically by the Indonesian government concerning its position both as aid recipient and giver. For example, the technical unit of Social Affairs in the district has not always been made aware of the project especially if it was not directly relevant to the unit.

On the other hand, the Indonesian government through its interdepartmental coordination meetings has been trying to ensure that foreign aid and development projects are in line with the government's priorities and regulations. The government also tries to ensure that the donors and executing agencies will follow the rules and maintain good communication and cooperation with the national and the local government, in addition to involving the civil society and local NGOs as part of dealing with the exit strategy.

5.3.2 The Local Government

Based on observation and semi-structured interviews with related government officials involved in the RCL project, it could be seen that the government had positive comments on the project. The government gave Oxfam a good appraisal as they considered Oxfam has worked on various issues and maintained good relations with the government. The project had been very relevant in complementing existing

development programmes of the government, particularly in promoting welfare based on the existing local potentials (for example, fish, seaweed, prawns) through the provision of advocacy. The government thanked Oxfam for showing particular examples through the project, especially when the project could contribute more to the betterness of the people. The government also considered that Oxfam had conducted a project which was not overlapping with the government programmes. This was because the government has limited resources to disperse to the community (Interview with Sulkaf S. Latief, Head of Cultivation Affairs of Fisheries and Sea Technical Unit, South Sulawesi Province, 30 July, 2015). Another compliment for Oxfam and the project was also expressed by Abdul Ghaffar from Pangkep District, as he stated:

I was just aware of RCL project and Oxfam in 2012. The project is relevant to development programmes because Pangkep District started independent village programmes in July 2012 in 39 villages. We have good relations between Oxfam, partners, and the government. Head of the District welcomed Oxfam and even invited Oxfam to receive lessons learned. Oxfam often coordinated with me and contacted me in informal ways. Oxfam also helped the government in workshops and policy formulation. Through the project, Oxfam has provided assistance and organisational knowledge and support. The government provided infrastructures to support and complement that. In this case, Oxfam has strength in publication and advocacy. (Abdul Ghaffar, Head of Local Community Empowerment Agency, Pangkep District)

Oxfam was also considered able to build good relationships with the local government by involving the Local Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) in the project to coordinate other related technical units, including promoting gender mainstreaming, policy agenda, and public participation. Oxfam also earned credit from the government for initiating a statement of agreement with the local government to continue positive outcomes from the project after the project ended. This was strategic and necessary for the sustainability aspect of a development intervention. The fact that Oxfam also engaged village government and village owned enterprises (*Bumdes*) in the project also made the local government appreciate Oxfam and its contribution to village governance and development.

In addition, the relevance and positive comments on the RCL project were also expressed by the heads of the two villages where I did the fieldwork. Amrullah, Head of

Pitue Village in Pangkep District said that the project was relevant to the needs of the village as it provided assistance through the economic groups where the majority of the women were involved. The groups already existed but they needed facilitation to assist their work. The village government was very happy and grateful to Oxfam as the people gained knowledge from the project, such as in making compost (Interview with Amrullah, Head of Pitue Village, 12 August, 2015). The similar positive response was also expressed by the Head of Pitusunggu Village, Nurhayati:

I knew the RCL project of Oxfam from the beginning in 2010. Oxfam's project was in line with our needs. The village government was also involved in the socialisation of the project. We could also share our comments and state our concerns in this project as the project also had people stay in the village with the villagers particularly in the initial period of the project.

The positive comments from the heads of the villages also showed their acceptance to the project as they were being informed and engaged during the project period. They also welcomed the development intervention as the project took into account local potential and provided facilitation through the development workers who lived in the project area during the project period. They also considered the project as a complementary to and in line with the existing development programmes of the government.

5.3.3 Executing Agencies

This section will show the positions and voices from the executing agencies of the RCL Project. As mentioned, the RCL Project was executed by Oxfam Eastern Indonesia Office which is based in Makassar City, South Sulawesi. Oxfam Makassar initially involved three local NGO partners: Mangroves Action Plan (MAP); *Lembaga Maritim Nusantara* (Nusantara Maritime Institution/LEMSA); and *Yayasan Konservasi Laut* (Marine Conservation Foundation/YKL). However, due to financial fraud, LEMSAs was dismissed in the middle of the project period. Oxfam Makassar was supervised by the Economic Justice Goal Lead of Oxfam GB Indonesia, Jakarta Office. In this research, I interviewed the representatives from Oxfam GB Indonesia (Jakarta Office), Oxfam

Eastern Indonesia Office (Makassar Office), Local Partner (YKL), and the donors (CIDA).

Oxfam GB Indonesia (Jakarta Office)

Although CIDA as the main donor of the RCL project did not dictate to Oxfam in undertaking the project, the Economic Justice Goal Lead of Oxfam GB Indonesia Office stated that it should be acknowledged that across the programmes there were different interpretations of women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming in the project activities. Within this concern, it is important to know the power dynamics and contestation during the design and implementation phases of the project. In the beginning, women were positioned as the drivers in the project (Interview with Dini Widiastuti, Director of Economic Justice Goal Lead, Oxfam GB Indonesia Office, 20 August, 2015).

However, along the way, Oxfam decided that it was crucial to prepare women beneficiaries before involving them to take the lead in the project. Oxfam also has a strong commitment to putting women at the heart of its activities. Through the RCL Project, Oxfam also promoted local women champions to increase coastal community resilience by encouraging them to be active, productive, critical, aware, and capable actors. For that, Oxfam facilitated women's participation by setting up economic groups according to local potential in the coastal area. In this case, CIDA as the main donor of the project gave freedom for Oxfam to design and undertake the project (Interview with Dini Widiastuti, Director of Economic Justice Goal Lead, Oxfam GB Indonesia Office, 20 August, 2015).

Recalling the challenges of salt water intrusion, abandonment of land for rice cultivation due to establishment of shrimp ponds in 1993 (which caused increased soil salinity), Oxfam and its local partners provided advocacy for the local authorities to provide women with direct access to basic needs, such as fresh and clean water, electricity, and channels to market their products in the four project areas. Those challenges also forced women farmers who were particularly affected by this situation to find another source of income, such as by working as casual labourers for the shrimp farms. Therefore, through this project, one of Oxfam's local partners, MAP, created coastal farmer field

schools. These schools were meant to enable the community to conduct farm on saline soil and improve the efficiency and sustainability of aquaculture (Oxfam Canada, 2014d).

In relation to that, Oxfam's concern for women's issues was also in line with one of the pillars in CIDA, particularly on gender policy, which put women's empowerment as a crucial component. Oxfam's proposal was also based on the baseline with gender analysis that it initiated earlier to have a clear portrait of the area of the project contexts. The gender analysis revealed from the annual narrative report from Oxfam on the RCL project in 2012 (OXFAM, 2012) showed that there was still a lack of access and opportunities which enabled women to freely access and control resources. Women in the project area were very poor. They were usually single women who were leading the households and caring for the families. In addition, patriarchal structures in villages limited women's participation in public activities. Women's workload was also a factor that prevented them from active engagement in the public arena. Consequently, women had limited access to strengthen their capacities and had low status. To ensure that women engaged in project implementation, Oxfam implemented the gender strategy and gender action plan in the project. In short, the narrative report also underlined the challenging and poor conditions of the women in the project area.

On the other hand, there were different interpretations within Oxfam GB Jakarta Office as shared by the Director of Gender Justice Goal Lead of Oxfam Jakarta Office, Antarini Arna (Interview on 12 May, 2015). There were strong concerns about the RCL Project. Antarini suggested that the project had not done its homework on the real women's empowerment aspect. She argued that although the project claimed to have accomplished their efforts in empowering the women by increasing income and economic productivity, and promoting women's participation in public meetings, the project had not touched upon the efforts to increase women's critical awareness about the gender relationships which are socially constructed.

In this case, empowerment was translated and interpreted in a narrow sense as economic empowerment under the umbrella of the Economic Justice rationale of the project. Antarini further stated that this had missed Oxfam's very basic principle of putting women at the heart of its activities because it seemed that the RCL project just focused on economic aspect than the multidimensional aspect of empowerment, thus ignoring the power relations issues existing in the community.

The RCL project was still working within the Women in Development approach by measuring its efforts and impacts based on women's productivity and pioneering in the market economy. The project had neglected the fact that economic empowerment does not automatically empower women in other dimensions as argued by feminists. Empowerment is more than just about having access to resources, but also controlling the resources and ownership, not to mention acknowledgement and support for women to participate in the public spheres. Having additional income through the economic activities is one thing, but when women do not have control to use the money they earn as they want, it shows that women are not really empowered. (Antarini Arna, Director of Gender Justice Goal Lead of Oxfam GB Indonesia Office)

Therefore, realizing the lack of gender mainstreaming and critical awareness applied in the RCL project since the beginning, Antarini suggested that the project personnel should have also included local women NGOs in the project area and women other than the prominent and public figures to get the other real stories from the field and to have a better understanding about women in the targeted project area.

Oxfam Eastern Indonesia Office (Makassar Office)

Oxfam Eastern Indonesia Office is based in Makassar City, South Sulawesi Province. It was basically the main executor and coordinator of the RCL Project. The project was managed by a Project Manager, two Project Officers, one Livelihood Advisor, one Gender Advisor, a Media Officer, a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, and a Finance and Administrative officer. Personnel of the project came and went during the project period. Project officers were in charge based on the project district area. Oxfam Eastern Indonesia Office could also ask for support from the Economic Justice Goal Leader of Oxfam GB Indonesia Office, such as for gender training and monitoring and evaluation matters as the division was the one supervising Oxfam Eastern Indonesia Office in undertaking the project.

The RCL project was actually initiated by the MAP proposal to CIDA with the value of \$2.1 million CDN. However, due to CIDA's request to MAP to work with a local partner, Oxfam took the lead of the then called RCL Project (\$7.7 million CDN) in which initially MAP was hired as a technical advisor. Oxfam's proposal for the project

went through several reviews including by the local government in the province and districts, as well as the local development planning agency. This approach also helped Oxfam to get a memorandum of understanding with district governments of the four-project area, namely Barru, Pangkajene Kepulauan (Pangkep), Maros, and Takalar (Interview with Tua Hasiholan Hutabarat, Oxfam Eastern Indonesia Office RCL Project Officer, 1 June, 2015).

Along the way, MAP was put as a local partner and received the full grant. MAP was in charge of technical advice on mangroves restoration and the advocacy of the project from the first year until the fourth year of the project. Oxfam Eastern Indonesia Office at that time also got LEMSA and YKL to become its local partners for the project. After that, Oxfam GB Indonesia, with the support of Oxfam Canada took leadership of the proposal until the proposal received the approval from CIDA (Interview with Tua Hasiholan Hutabarat, Oxfam Eastern Indonesia Office RCL Project Officer, 1 June, 2015). On the background of the project, Tua further said:

Oxfam is new in livelihoods, it usually focused on emergency and basic rights, which used to relate to the Ministry of Social Affairs. Oxfam works through economic activities and revolving in-kind. West coast of South Sulawesi was chosen due to its fragile condition of the waves that hit the area and the level of poverty. RCL started with a 3-month literacy program for 8 groups in Maros and Takalar. Oxfam conducted baseline study according to poverty data from the province. The Project Implementation Plan of RCL only mentioned economic groups as part of gender mainstreaming. General language in the project is gender mainstreaming, having economic groups not women's groups for both men and women.

Furthermore, Tua also mentioned that women are seen as very fragile, under pressure and lacking support in the coastal area, as they are often left by their husbands who are away at sea. Women even have new families (communities of widows in which there are many young and old women, who lack attention from the government). Women often became the subject of joking as they were stereotyped as poor and pitiable (Interview with Tua Hasiholan Hutabarat, RCL Project Officer, Oxfam Eastern Indonesia Office, 1 June, 2015).

Oxfam had facilitated the establishment of the Village Coastal Forum which includes the village government, economic groups, and women's coastal network. Oxfam encouraged training on gender for the local government's agencies as part of the

sustainability strategy, in addition to the resilience agenda. Oxfam also undertook the strategy because of the request from the government (Interview with Tua Hasiholan Hutabarat, RCL Project Officer, Oxfam Eastern Indonesia Office, 1 June, 2015). With regard to the project's objectives, Jaya Tulha, the Acting Project Manager stated:

The objectives of the project were to enable vulnerable women and men to access control over natural resources, including lands, apart from the burden of debts and dependence on local loan sharks, by applying gender responsive policies and women's involvement in government strategic planning. Oxfam tried to promote an economic ladder by supporting only potential products which the groups already had. Whatever the project, Oxfam applies gender mainstreaming. For example, through gender training for stakeholders, beneficiaries, and executing agencies, clear monitoring in project design and implementation, and gender discussion such as in seaweed productions. In addition, women's empowerment was clearly mentioned in the project's component, such as women's participation both in practice and strategic aspects.

Based on the vast objectives of the project and the local contexts of the project area, in particular the condition of women, and Oxfam's commitment to put women at the heart of its activities, the inclusion of women's empowerment as one of the project components was considered as urgent element for the success of the project. To achieve the objectives, Oxfam cooperated with several local NGOs. One of them was *Yayasan Konservasi Laut* / Marine Conservation Foundation (YKL).

Local Partner (Yayasan Konservasi Laut/YKL)

I decided to interview project officers from one of Oxfam's local partners, YKL. YKL was still working towards the end of the project when I conducted the research. Another reason to interview these officers was because, a different local partner, MAP, had completed its work towards the final year of the project when this research was conducted. MAP also had a difficult relationship with Oxfam towards the end of its contract as Oxfam handled the livelihoods component of the project.

According to the semi-structured interviews with project officers of YKL for the RCL project, it can be seen how the local partner could take benefits from being a local partner with Oxfam. For example, Oxfam provided capacity building in finance and

project reporting, management, and gender awareness for the local partners. During project implementation, YKL was also involved in considering and defining the project area. As expressed below by Wahyuddin Opu, a Project Officer from YKL:

We also have the freedom to approach the groups such as in creating forums for coastal women, which were basically outside the project plans. Another benefit as Oxfam's partner was to have Oxfam's RCL project officer to accompany and assist YKL during the project period. We think the RCL project has been very useful for the beneficiaries as it has multidimensional components in its project activities, such as increasing economic income and community resilience, environmental awareness and protection, women's empowerment, and increasing the capacity of the village and the local government.

YKL focuses on a comprehensive advocacy in the project, not only on the income aspect but also the local development, and advocacy of the rights of the districts and the villages. During the project period, YKL also promoted women leaders in the village whether in economic fields and other issues. For example, YKL tried to inspire women to increase the spirit of entrepreneurship, to be active in the government and to participate in the policy process, whatever their contribution to the village (Interview with Wahyudin Opu, YKL Project Officer for the RCL Project, 25 May, 2015).

These local partners started the project in the first three years of the project, prior to Oxfam's stepping in for the stage of the livelihood aspect. The existing and previous connections which Oxfam had with the local partners were considered successful in building trust and relations with RCL Project beneficiaries as the personnel/facilitators lived with the beneficiaries. Oxfam's strategy in engaging various elements of the stakeholders also enabled it to gain acceptance from the beneficiaries. Oxfam through the project was considered successful, especially in affecting personal relations between women with their inner circles (spouses, families), as well as the community, the economic groups, and the government.

In addition to the women's empowerment component in the RCL project, Wahyudin added that the project also promoted women's participation through literacy classes and public speaking which inspired women to participate in village development planning meetings. Previously, women were occupied with domestic chores, and in the beginning, it was very difficult to invite women to attend training outside the villages. This situation also required YKL to explain further to the husbands or invite the

husbands to join the training to understand about the activities. YKL also required the training participants to share their knowledge with other beneficiaries who did not join the training (Interviews with Wahyudin Opu and Syamsuddin Cambang, Project Officers from YKL on 25 May, 2015 and 14 June, 2015).

Project Officers from YKL were aware that the project also aimed to increase women's income and women's roles in public affairs by promoting women's empowerment such as through the Coastal Women Network. Therefore, RCL was seen as a project which was concerned with more than reducing poverty and increasing income, but also in promoting economic activities, village government, gender awareness, ecological awareness, relations between village and National Government, and village access to national resources. Furthermore, women in Tanakeke Island (Takalar District) through the Coastal Women Network (the Network) were interested and proactive in providing advocacy at the village level on existing issues and following up initiatives they had by cooperating with other women. Being part of the Network also helped the women become noticed by the government as they were invited to participate in the local development meetings (Interviews with Wahyudin Opu and Syamsuddin Cambang, Project Officers from YKL on 25 May, 2015 and 14 June, 2015).

During the project implementation and from my observation in the field, I could see that the YKL project officers had good and close relations with the beneficiaries, as the beneficiaries treated and considered them almost as brothers and sisters. The relations were very close and informal. For the women, the availability of the facilitators was very helpful in providing them with technical assistance or other help, in accompanying and inspiring them to continue their activities, not to mention and importantly to become the mediators to bridge their concerns to Oxfam, the government, and other actors (the media, private sectors).

5.3.4 The Donors (CIDA)

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) gave freedom and flexibility to Oxfam to undertake the RCL Project as long as it was in line with the criteria set at the outset by CIDA. In addition, CIDA had its Policy on Gender Equality, which put women's empowerment as one of the eight guiding principles. The goal of the policy is

to support the achievement of equality between women and men to ensure sustainable development. Gender equality is the equal valuing by society of both the similarities and the differences between women and men, and the different roles they play. In order to achieve gender equality, women's empowerment becomes the central key, not to mention women's participation and partnership between women and men to eliminate gender inequalities. In this case, international cooperation agencies like CIDA can support women's empowerment to increase their self-confidence, develop self-reliance, and help them set their own agendas based on their own choices (Global Affairs Canada, 2016).

CIDA, as the main donor of the project had the ability to monitor and evaluate the project, to provide input, and to be invited to the project events. However, in general, CIDA left Oxfam to design and undertake the project according to Oxfam's expertise and experience. CIDA was also flexible with regard to the changes in the project as long as it did not exceed 20 percent of the approved budget and as long as it did not change the components and objectives of the original proposal which was approved by CIDA. With regard to the RCL Project, CIDA did not make any MoU with any ministry on the RCL Project as it was Oxfam which conducted the project directly. Nevertheless, CIDA was also involved and informed of the project design (Interview with Hari Basuki, Senior Development Officer CIDA, 26 November, 2015).

5.4. Discussion on Women's Position in the RCL Project's Design

Apart from the changes to promote aid effectiveness, in reality there are some of the stages in international aid which are still treated as business-as-usual, where the donors and international development agencies are still the leading and influential actors in regulating aid relations and managing development interventions (Crawford, 2003; Little, 2006; Veen, 2011). In practice, development aid principles such as 'country ownership' are still challenging to apply as there is still a lack of involvement by the recipient country in development projects (Buiter, 2007). For example, there are the usual preference-based relations between the donors and the technical ministries, proposal is made without including the National Government from the very beginning, and there is a procedural coordination meeting only once a year.

In relation to the procedural practices of international aid, the recipient governments criticised and commented on different beneficiaries of the project and irrelevant in-kind tools delivered through the project. As explained in the background and design of the RCL Project, it was clear that Oxfam played a significant and leading role in the design and implementation of the project, thus making Oxfam and CIDA powerful actors in development policy and agenda under the umbrella of the project. As argued by (Cavalcanti, 2007; Crawford, 2003; Killick, 2008), the reality of the practice of development aid projects also reveals the imposition of the design and management of the project by the executing agencies.. Therefore, it is fair to say that even after a decade of the Paris Declaration and five years since the Busan Declaration, efforts to put the recipient government in the driver's seat of international aid to create 'country ownership' and ensure relevance of development intervention is still a challenge both for the recipient government and the donors.

Furthermore, aside from the critiques on development concepts and empowerment, it seems like development agencies still tend to see women as weak and powerless victims. These arguments are used to justify development intervention and the need of aid (Heilman & Barocas Alcott, 2001; Sogge, 2002; Willetts et al., 2013). In this case, the post-development theorists and postcolonial feminist' critiques of development, which urge development actors to see the strength and potential in beneficiaries, are still challenging to be applied in development aid practices.

The tendency to start development projects with the deficit-based frame might need to be understood as part of project justification to convince the donors to support the funding for the projects. This can be seen from Oxfam's gender analysis in 2012 as mentioned above. The analysis showed that women in the project area were very poor. They lack opportunities to control resources and strengthen their capacities. Their public participation was also low due to the patriarchal structures and their low status (OXFAM, 2012). In this case, the implementation of development interventions to empower women such as the RCL Project was expected to recognise and enhance women's awareness of their equal rights as citizens to participate in the policy processes.

However, along the way, Oxfam also made sure that the project also considered the local context, including economic and social conditions of the targeted beneficiaries and the project area, local potential resources and gender relations. As explained in the

chapter on the case study of this research, Oxfam implemented efforts to empower women through activities, such as capacity building through training and managing economic groups, organisational capacity building, and public speaking.

Initially, Oxfam started the project by conducting a baseline survey and study to have a better understanding of the needs of the project beneficiaries. Oxfam also conducted stakeholders' mapping which involved women. In this case, approaches and sequences of project activities also showed how donors and executing agencies' framed women's empowerment in the project design.

Furthermore, it is important to note that even though there is still the procedural practice of aid relations, there have also been significant changes taking place to promote inclusive aid. This is also reflected in the findings of this research, particularly in how Oxfam practised the concepts of participation by cooperating with local NGOs, having a partnership with the local government and promoting women's empowerment through the project. In short, by practising inclusive aid in its development project, Oxfam has also recognised the complex development system (Groves & Hinton, 2004). Furthermore, Oxfam has brought positive impact through this project. In relation to the positive hope of aid, McKinnon (2007) argues that development aid also creates a zone for political engagement. In the case of the RCL Project, Oxfam facilitated women to participate in the policy process and brought positive social impact by promoting gender equality.

Based on the discussion of the project history and design, positions and views from various stakeholders in the project design from the beginning, it can be seen that the RCL Project originally was not intended to be a women's empowerment project. In addition, it was clear that the RCL Project proposal was not made using participatory processes from the beginning. The proposal which was initiated by MAP was then designed mostly and led by Oxfam in coordination with CIDA. As argued, by Sato et al. (2011), the ones who design development projects have significant influence in determining implementation of the projects. As mentioned in the history of the RCL Project, Oxfam was the main executor of the project and CIDA allowed Oxfam to execute the project implementation. For example, Oxfam created and established economic groups in the project as part of the economic approach to the project.

The groups operated according to the concepts introduced by Oxfam. For example, Oxfam only gave in-kind tools according to existing local potentials and the output of the economic groups. The groups were also obliged to practice revolving in-kind

assistance from Oxfam as part of the social commitment to the members and non-beneficiaries of the project. This is to say that development aid and its implementation are influenced by the actors who identify and analyse the project (Mwaura-Muiru, 2010; Tvedt, 1998; Wallace et al., 2006). This can be seen from the major theme of the project, the target beneficiaries, the objectives, the locations, activities, the indicators, and so on, which all in all reflect the ideas and preferences from those involved in the project formulation. In this case, it was Oxfam which had the most say in designing and implementing the RCL Project.

On the other hand, as explained previously, apart from the positive changes in the practice of international aid and development, the aid industry is still practised as procedural matters with limited involvement of the recipient government. This process also lacked women beneficiaries' involvement beginning with the making of the RCL Project proposal. They were involved in limitation during the baseline assessment at the initial stage of the project proposal,

Furthermore, Oxfam also acknowledged that it was challenging to apply participatory processes from the beginning of the project, such as during the proposal-making process and the initial year of the project implementation. Dini Widiastuti, Director of Economic Justice Goal Lead, Oxfam GB Indonesia Office, explained that it was Oxfam Canada, Oxfam GB Indonesia, and the Mangroves Action Plan which created the grand design of the RCL Project. It was not clear whether the proposal making process was participatory. However, the process became participatory after the proposal was granted (Interview on 20 August, 2015).

Dini further mentioned that the participatory approach would take a longer time to accommodate various actors and interests related to the project. With regard to the participatory level, Oxfam needed to consider its level of confidence in the project's stakeholders and their capacity, whether as partners or beneficiaries. In addition, the participatory approach could also result in changes in the middle of the project, which was not a big issue in this project. This happened because CIDA was quite flexible as long as Oxfam consulted the changes to the donor and as long as the changes were not against the project's log frame.

In addition, although the project itself was not a women's empowerment project, Oxfam committed to putting women at the heart of its activities. This was also reflected in the project which also consisted of a women's empowerment component. The fact that

women were positioned as the drivers of the project and recalling the contexts of the project area where women were most affected by poverty with lack of access and control to existing natural resources due to their lack of involvement in the policy processes, made Oxfam realize the importance of preparing women to be able to participate optimally during the project period.

Women comprised 90.1% (1156 people) out of 1,283 beneficiaries of the RCL Project and thus were the major beneficiaries of the project (Tulha, 2015). The project was quite comprehensive as it touched upon other aspects in addition to increasing coastal community household income. They were namely good governance and public participation, environmental rehabilitation and preservation, and women's empowerment, which all in all were expected to increase coastal community resilience. With the nature of the project empowerment, which was heavy on economics, it is crucial to note that this approach affected how women perceived empowerment through their involvement in the project.

For example, Oxfam conducted regular gender workshops involving both women and men to increase gender awareness and gender equality, particularly in the first two years of the project. Oxfam also implemented capacity building training, public speaking workshops, literacy programmes, and the creation of economic groups in which women were the major participants. It also created coastal women forums and facilitated the community and the government through the project to encourage women's participation in development planning meetings. This is to say that although the project was basically not a women's empowerment project, Oxfam and its executing agencies paid special attention to women and women's empowerment in the project framework. In this case, the existing economic groups became the main foundation and activities of the project to increase coastal community resilience, which at the same time worked to promote public participation, particularly women. In short, Oxfam tried to implement inclusive aid by considering the multidimensional aspect of empowerment and various actors and interests in the project.

In the project proposal, Oxfam also mentioned several aspects regarding women. The aspects to name a few were: gender analysis, monitoring and evaluation training, a baseline which involved women as participants, research on women's access to land tenure or other resources, and women's participation in public spheres. During project implementation, Oxfam also had several criteria which took into account the importance of women's involvement in the project. This could be seen from existing economic

groups, forums, leaderships/local champions, public meetings where women were present as active participants. The project also had gender mainstreaming targets to serve following objectives. The objectives were: to increase capacity of the people and the government in planning local development which is gender participative and sensitive; to increase access and control for both women and men who are fragile to coastal resources, and to increase capacity for entrepreneurship development in the targeted community and particularly with households which are headed by women. These targets can also be seen from the output of the project, such as the creation of a Coastal Women Forum in Maros District and Womangrove in Takalar District; formulation of eight village medium term development plans which were considered to be gender responsive in Maros District and Takalar District (Tulha, 2015).

Furthermore, the way the RCL project approached women can be seen from a variety of activities and project design which practically and basically involved women. Amongst others were the field schools on seaweed, mangroves, organic composting, food processing, and so on; literacy programmes, such as in Maros and Takalar, organisation, and public speaking. The fact that Oxfam and its local partners created economic groups, which were mostly comprised of women and were led by women also added to how the project positioned and treated women as important and active participants in the project.

With regard to the project activities, the research found that each project officer had different initiatives and follow-up on the project activities. As argued by Cooke & Kothari (2001) and Crewe & Harrison (1998), development workers also have their own operational interpretation of beneficiaries' needs and project goals aside from 'participatory approach' applied in development project. This can be seen from the implementation of the literacy programme which was not included in the activities of the project from the beginning.

However, knowing that the literacy program was crucial for women in several districts prior to introducing the field schools and the economic groups, and even the business plan, Oxfam's RCL Project Officer took the initiative to allocate project funding for this urgent matters. It would have been very difficult for the executing agencies of the project to introduce the concepts and implement the project if the beneficiaries were not able to understand the information. This was particularly true, especially for the written information related to the project, such as on the business plan. In this case, such

flexibility in implementing the project and different initiatives from different project officers also reflected arguments on development intervention from the postcolonial feminist argument regarding the non-homogenous nature of the aid industry.

5.5. Aid Relations

Applying the intersectionality theory in conducting a gender analysis of power relations in development approaches and in promoting gender mainstreaming in development planning is important (Rai, 2008; Rowlands, 2002). Moreover, it is crucial to consider social aspects in development approaches, which are looking at other aspects, not women-centric in gender analysis, and focusing on various stakeholders' relations (Green, 2002). In short, intersectionality is closely related to power relations between donors, executing agencies, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders under the aid industry. Therefore, the concept is relevant for this research, especially in understanding and explaining the nature of international aid, the aid power relations, and the relational aspect of aid and empowerment. Intersectionality is also useful to understand women's perceptions of empowerment which are influenced by their engagement in the development project's activities.

Furthermore, intersectionality theory looks at particular local dynamics which also have relevance to gender issues. The issues are also defined by multi-layered and intertwined power relations. By applying this theory and feminist works on power relations, I could provide comprehensive and appropriate analysis in this thesis (Patil, 2013). Based on the arguments from these authors, it can be seen how important it is to include power relations analysis in analysing development intervention such as the women's empowerment project. These authors have a common position, which highlighted the complexity of power relations faced by women.

Therefore, the positions and arguments of feminist thinkers are critical and important in approaching the research as I analysed interconnectedness amongst various actors and interests in the RCL Project. For that, the intersectionality theory was useful to investigate the influence of the aid power relations in the project which also involved the women's empowerment agenda. Given that donors had relatively more resources for project implementation than the recipients positioned them in a more influential position in defining agenda for the development intervention.

Feminist and postcolonial feminist works, such as Ammy Allen's on empowerment place a significant account on relationships and structures of power, particularly in theorising about change and understanding the disempowering effects of different relations on people in specific contexts. In other words, considering power as part of aid relations is actually useful and important to understand the rationale behind development projects and aid relations. In addition, a feminist approach perceives the intersection of power in multileveled and multi-layered networks of local, regional, and global relations. A feminist perspective stresses that power relations are also relevant to analyse how policy is informed and applied in reality, including in the global context. In this case, they argue that those who are in power or more powerful than others will have more influence to shape the agendas and policies of development projects. For example, the concept of empowerment which has been criticised for being used and mainstreamed to provide justification for development intervention by powerful global actors (Eyben, 2007; Koggel, 2008).

In relation to the justification of intervention by the donors, aid itself tends to use 'the problem' to highlight the need of aid to provide solutions although for risk of stigmatising and patronising the beneficiaries (Sogge, 2002). Beneficiaries become subject to external power and rule (ruling language, forms, and practices of aid effectiveness). Therefore, there is no neutral space outside the ruling relations for beneficiaries, particularly for women to occupy in the complex and dynamic setting of aid relations, which is also in line with the concern of postcolonial perspectives on the regimes of power (Campbell & Teghtsoonian, 2010; Nair, 2013). It can be seen that postcolonial perspectives on the regimes of power share similar concerns with post-development and feminists' perspectives on women, aid, development, and empowerment. Some of the similar concerns are the imposition of development jargons in the implementation of development projects; donor's Self and beneficiaries' Otherness along with the deficit-framing approach in development interventions, and the procedural practices of aid relations where powerful actors influence international development agenda.

Therefore, it is crucial to see gender issues in a wider context, by relating existing problems faced by women with their surrounding conditions, including the social structure, which affects roles and relations between men and women in society. This is to say that gender issues will find their relevance in the society especially when they

promote the universal agenda of common concerns and interests of both women and men. For example, on the joint efforts to alleviate poverty and to promote social transformation which promotes gender justice and gender equality.

Having a universal agenda also enables women's movement and national machinery to get broader support from others who share the concerns as they see the importance of having gender mainstreaming in politics and policies as necessities. In short, gender mainstreaming is seen as necessary for the wider community. It is not just jargon in everyday politics and development policies. In this case, inclusivity is useful in increasing public awareness of the importance and relevance of gender mainstreaming, gender justice and gender equality in the practice of democracy and good governance.

5.6. Relations between Women Beneficiaries and Other Stakeholders in the RCL Project

"Now I have the confidence to attend public meetings. I don't mind sitting at the back during the village meetings as I wanted to learn and to gain knowledge from others." (Sarmilah, Member of Siangkalingadae Group, Tamarupa Village, Pangkep District)

In the early years of the project, women beneficiaries admitted that they only followed the logics of the projects. However, when they gradually become well-informed and skilful, they became active and critical stakeholders in the project. They are now not afraid to attend public events, participate in development planning meetings or village meetings, or share their knowledge with other women (Interview with Nurhayati, Community Organizer of *Tamanlanrea* Group, Takalar District, 25 May, 2015). In short, women have become confident as they go through the project activities and have gotten used to participating outside their daily activities at home.

Through the RCL Project, Oxfam also managed to create economic groups in the four districts as well as women's forums, such as the Coastal Women Network and *Womangrove* in Tanakeke Island, Takalar District. Through the economic groups and as women gained skills and knowledge from the field school, women were encouraged to start a business, try and experiment with various products, such as mangroves' tea, syrup, jam, juice, organic farming; using local long-time traditions, potentials, by using the information they gained, and marketing through the government agency (Industry

and Trade Cooperative of the local government), trading agents, and modern markets (OXFAM, 2013, pp. 4-5, 7-8).

In addition, given that Oxfam started the project with one-time baseline also showed Oxfam's commitment and willingness to ensure the success and relevance of the project. One woman beneficiary also acknowledged Oxfam's contribution by saying:

Previously, women did not have anything to do after completing their domestic tasks, just sitting around, taking a nap, or gossiping with other neighbours. However, after Oxfam came with the project, women realised that they can make their own money by being involved in productive activities with the groups. The project also made us realise how we could have made use of existing natural resources (seaweed) to increase our income. (Nadia, Community Organizer, Sipakatau Group, Maros District)

Such a participatory process was also applied by Oxfam in evaluating the project. For example, after conducting the RCL project for four years, Oxfam with its two local partners, YKL and MAP tried to monitor and measure changes by involving related stakeholders (partners) and beneficiaries (groups from the 4 districts) to share their most significant change stories in February 2013. On the gender equality aspect, for example, interesting stories revealed that “wives now sell products at the market and husbands now take care of the children. Women's public participation increased to 80% from 40%, especially in Lawallu Village, Barru District” (OXFAM, 2015a, p. 3).

Another example was that women were involved in village meeting which involved five villages in Tanakeke Island. The meeting was facilitated by Oxfam to formulate a village regulation to build for mangrove preservation in Takalar District (OXFAM, 2015c, pp. 1-3). Apart from Oxfam's contribution to women's empowerment in the project area, it should be noted that the success of the project on women's empowerment was also possible because of the willingness and commitment of women in supporting the project.

5.6.1 Transformation of Women Beneficiaries' of the RCL Project

Below are several quotes which represent women's transformation with their involvement in the RCL Project. These quotes were some of women beneficiaries'

responses to the questions on their stories of empowerment and their aid relations with others throughout the project.

In the past, I was reluctant and afraid to collect my children's reports. However, as I learned how to read, write, and make a signature, I am confident to collect the reports with my own signature. I think such literacy programmes are still needed even until now. (Jamilah, Member of Anggrek Group, Maros District)

The project is relevant to the needs of the people on the island. My income also increases. I learned about the signature, know others, and confident to speak up in public. Previously, I used to sit at the back and silent during the village meetings. Now, I am confident to participate in public meetings, asking for electricity and a public boat for passengers. My parents have been supportive every time I went for the meetings or training. My mother is curious to know about the discussions I attended. (Sarmila, Member of Melati Group, Takalar District)

Apart from their acknowledgement of Oxfam's contribution to their transformation, women had their own terms in reflecting women's empowerment and how they were empowered through their involvement in the RCL Project. They confirmed the relevance of the project to the needs of beneficiaries by acknowledging Oxfam's significant contributions, mainly in the literacy programmes and the economic groups which made women economically productive by earning their own income.

These testimonies showed that some women seemed to connect empowerment with self and collective confidence as they became able to read and write, make their own signatures, and have their own income. These stories also showed that women felt confident as they were able to participate actively in the public meetings.

5.6.2 Women Beneficiaries' Transformation and Its Trickle-Down Effects

These transformations also affected women's gender relations with others, including with their husbands but also families, communities and most importantly the local government (village and district levels).

For example, as experienced by Sitti Rahmah (Leader of *Pita Aksi* Group), her husband Muhammad Al Arif, and her family often told me that they felt important and ‘popular’ because the local authorities and other stakeholders have taken them into account.

With regard to women’s relations with the men and women’s transformation, interestingly, the research found that the men were becoming helpful by watching the children when the women worked for the group activities, as expressed in the quotes below. The quotes below were some of the research participants’ answers to the question on gender relations, particularly in relation to women’s engagement in the project and their transformation following that.

I am supporting my wife. We are working the organic farm and gardening together. I am so proud of my wife self-actualization and achievement. (Muhammad Al Arif, husband of Sitti Rahmah, Member of Pita Aksi Group, Pangkep District)

Now wives can help husbands and earn income as they know how to tie seaweed. Men used to prohibit women from going out to take care of the children and houses and cook. But my husband has never prohibited me. He now even helps taking care of the kids, making coffee, and helping when I was away for the training. (Kasturi, Leader of Mutiara Laut Group, Barru District)

I am proud of my wife who is now active and brave enough to speak in front of a public group. I am not disturbed with my wife’s participation. I support my wife because the activities are useful, such as working in a group, organisation, having experience and knowledge from the project. (Haris, husband of Satria Daeng Rimang, Member of Setia Kawan Group, Tanakeke Island, Takalar District)

Furthermore, the research underlined that the involvement of the men would be crucial to support the success of the activities in which women participated. In this case, Tua Hasiholan Hutabarat, Project Officer RCL Project, Oxfam Eastern Indonesia Office, said, “Harmonious relations supported the success of the project and women’s involvement, brought empathy from the men.”

The importance of involving both women and men in the project meant that Oxfam involved the participation of the men in the RCL Project. On the one hand, the project has brought awareness for the beneficiaries, for example on the benefits of the organic farming and the importance of public participation in the policy processes. On the other hand, it should be acknowledged that the project would not have succeeded if the beneficiaries did not have their own motivation and commitment to sustain the positive outcome of the project.

My observation showed that what kept Sitti Rahmah (Leader of *Pita Aksi* Group) and her family motivated and committed to continuing the organic farming were also other considerations, such as healthy, safe, and nutritious food which they could consume themselves and sell to the neighbours, or surrounding markets, and other buyers. Her husband, Mohammad Arif also gave full support to her although he previously had not allowed her to do the farming as Sitti Rahmah originally came from the non-agriculture area. However, after both of them participated in the field school, they decided to plant their one hectare of land for organic farming. Moreover, from the organic farming, Sitti Rahmah could also earn additional income to pay for her daughter's diploma degree in midwifery in Makassar (OXFAM, 2015e). Rahmah's transformation was also acknowledged by Dini Widiastuti of Oxfam GB Indonesia through her statement:

The project evaluation notes in 2014 showed that women finally knew what they wanted (after literacy precondition from the project). Although women were ready to work in groups, they did not know what else they wanted. In this case, the project has created human and social capital through the groups' creation and increasing women's confidence in the first 2-3 years although the economic output was not significant. Just like Sitti Rahmah who used to be an ordinary farmer from Pangkep before begin heralded as a woman food hero. She was different from another woman from Kidul who was so outspoken. But now, she is very confident. This is why Oxfam tries to promote other champions as well for regeneration.

In relation to the constructive and positive transitions from the passive recipients to the active and critical actors and local champions, Oxfam also shared its notes of evaluation on this particular point of local champions and regeneration, thus the trickle-down effect of the project. Regarding the trickle-down effect of the project, women also supported the RCL Project as they were able to improve their performance and contribution from the economic groups' activities. These included various achievements they earned. In

this case, their achievement also gained acknowledgement from the government, as experienced by Sitti Rahmah. These acknowledgements were meaningful and prestigious for her individually, her family, and her community. The achievements also inspired other women and the wider community, particularly in continuing the practices of organic farming in the village.

Because of her commitment and persistence in maintaining organic farming, not to mention the awards she received, her garden often became a sample area for best practices of economic groups and organic farming. Moreover, these also brought trickle-down effects to women's families and communities. For example, Sitti Rahmah's daughter, Khaerunnisya was invited by Oxfam to join a forum organised by IKEA in Bangkok in August 2015 to discuss the involvement of the youth in promoting sustainable livelihoods.

With their success stories in cultivating organic farming at Pitusunggu Village, Pangkep District, Sitti Rahmah and her husband were asked several times to speak at the workshops on organic farming or to participate in several study visits to another area outside of Sulawesi Island. They also had motivated not only their members but also their neighbours to apply organic farming. Sitti Rahmah became one of the local champions created through the RCL Project. She also assisted Oxfam in implementing the project and maintaining the sustainability of the positive outcomes of the project.

Furthermore, Sitti Rahmah and her family often received visitors from outside the village, whether foreign development workers, local facilitators, government officials, media, organic agribusiness companies, up to local politicians and foreigners, including ambassadors. Sitti Rahmah, her family, and the members of *Pita Aksi* were also covered by a national private television *Trans 7* for their programme of *Tupperware She Can*, which basically shared successful and inspiring stories from local woman champions in Indonesia. A local newspaper, *Tribun Timur*, also covered these stories as more people heard about Sitti Rahmah's achievement.

On the other hand, Sitti Rahmah wondered if she would receive any more visitors after the RCL Project had ended. Below are similar comments, expressed by other women beneficiaries which reflect the needs if not dependency to have external actors involved. These responses below were in the research participants' opinion on and recommendation to the project in the future, particularly towards the end of the project in August 2015.

Women have critical awareness both individually and collectively through advocacy from RCL. However, I am wondering if I am still busy after the project ends? (Nurhayati, Community Organizer, Tamanlanrea Group, Tanakeke Island, Takalar District)

We still need assistance for marketing. We can also be independent after the project ended. However, we still need assistance. (Cahyani, Community Organizer, Jaya Sukses Group, Tanakeke Island, Takalar District)

Oxfam should continue its works, providing assistance, undertaking literacy programmes, and giving in-kind assistance. The group also still needs Oxfam. (Jamilah, Member of Anggrek Group, Maros District)

We still need the project as we are not successful yet in groups because of challenges, such as seasons, funding for other business, and to work on clean water access and toilets in each house. (Daeng Puji, Community Organiser of Setia Kawan Group, Tanakeke Island, Takalar District)

Another example of a successful economic group is *Kalaroang*. The group is located in Mandalle Sub-district, Pangkep District. *Kalaroang* produces fishnet and crab traps. The group received an acknowledgement from the Sea and Fishery Agency of the district in the form of the label of joint economic groups (*Kelompok Usaha Bersama*). The leader of the group, Syarifah, said that the group allows other groups to use the label to get assistance from the government. The group was also able to revolve the in-kind tools further by having another group which works on seaweed and consists of widows, *Siangkalingadae*.

These success stories of women's empowerment were also closely related to how women managed their aid relations with the stakeholders of the RCL Project. The next section below will discuss further women's experiences of their aid relations in the project and their perceptions of the external intervention to sustain the efforts to promote women's empowerment.

5.6.3 Aid Relations and Women Beneficiaries' Transformation

Based on observations from fieldwork and testimonies from the research participants, it can be concluded that the positive responses on the project were also closely related to how Oxfam and its local partners treated and related to the beneficiaries and stakeholders of the project. In this case, Oxfam which has been an experienced development organisation is well known for having good relations with various actors in implementing its activities.

Generally, research participants including both women beneficiaries, men beneficiaries, and other stakeholders, such as the government and local partners expressed good communication and cooperation with Oxfam and its local partners. As expressed in the quotes below, women from various economic groups gave credits to Oxfam and the local partners for the regular visits to the beneficiaries, close connections with the facilitators, and easy communication.

YKL friends routinely visited in the beginning to assist the project. Currently, they visit us once or twice a month. There is no distance and it is easy to communicate with them. (Nita, Treasurer of Tamanlanrea Group, Takalar District)

Oxfam is the one visiting in this area, especially Tua who is often visiting the group. It is easy to contact Oxfam, just send texts. Oxfam can visit the group 4-5 times a week. Oxfam is the one advocating the group. (Harlina, Treasurer of Pantai Bira Group, Barru District)

These positive impressions of good aid relations between women and the development workers were also reinforced by another women beneficiary, Jamilah, who considered the executing agencies of the RCL Project as a family. She said, “YKL people are like family and they are easy to talk.”

With such a good experience in aid relations with the executing agencies, women felt comfortable as they managed to communicate easier with Oxfam and the local partners, including to share their concerns and initiatives.

Oxfam visits us three times per month. The group shares their updates, complaints, and share proposals. We have close relations with the project people, just like Soni, one of the facilitators of the project. (Syarifah, Leader of Kalaroang and Siangkalingadae Group, Pangkep District)

From those testimonies, it could be seen that women were able to build good relations with Oxfam and its local partners as the project executors also tried to maintain good relations through intensive and regular visits, easy and friendly communication with the beneficiaries and other stakeholders, such as government authorities.

The good aid relations were also possible as the stakeholders and beneficiaries, including women, were willing to open up to external intervention for women's empowerment as they were aware of the project's relevance to their needs. Women also valued the benefits of having the facilitators live in their villages, not only in assisting them in optimising the local potentials but also in dealing with the power relations which women had to encounter in their everyday lives.

Furthermore, as argued by Irvine et.al. (2006), such immersion practices applied by Oxfam and the local partners were useful experiential learning for development workers to have a better understanding of the reality of the people living in poverty. Immersions also serve as a process to rethink policy and practice to have more effective efforts in promoting better lives of people living in poverty. In this case, immersions would be effective if integrated within a wider systemic process of personal and organisational learning, which values reflection and relationship building.

Oxfam also provided advocacy and facilitation, particularly by designating project officers and facilitators for the project to have regular visits to the project area and stay with the beneficiaries. Therefore, Oxfam and its local partners were seen as successful in building good relations with the beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Wahyuddin Opu, YKL Project Officer for the RCL Project said, "We communicate with women in informal everyday conversation to get further information. We also stay in the project area, collect data from each group, and encourage regular meeting in each group."

The testimony about Oxfam's ability to build good relations was also supported by Sitti Rahmah, Leader of *Pita Aksi* Group, Pangkep District, who said:

MAP and Oxfam routinely visited my village. They even stayed in my house. MAP was the one with an intensive presence at the beginning of the project,

especially during the field school. As with the government, we had good relationships with Mr. Ghaffar from the Protection Agency and Mr. Karya from the Agriculture Agency of the District Government.

In addition, such friendly and relaxed interactions also made women feel confident and at ease in sharing their concerns and ideas with the development workers as they felt no barrier in the communication as the facilitators and project officers had visited them regularly and even stayed in their homes for quite some time. The presence of the development workers was also helpful to bridge their communication with the authorities.

The easy communication was also built due to the good relations between Oxfam and its local partners in the project as expressed by one local official below. By having good relations with the beneficiaries and stakeholders, Oxfam and its local partners could gain support for the implementation of the project, including from the government officials who also asked for Oxfam's assistance in policy formulation.

The government also invited Oxfam for technical meetings to share Oxfam's expertise on relevant domain/expertise/resources. We were also invited both as participants and resource personnel. There is also synergy between Oxfam's works and the government's. The government will continue to facilitate. Thanks to Oxfam, women are now critical, brave, and aware of their rights. They are also independent because of their knowledge and capability. (Sulkaf S. Latief, Head of Fishery Cultivation Division, Sea and Fishery Agency, South Sulawesi Province)

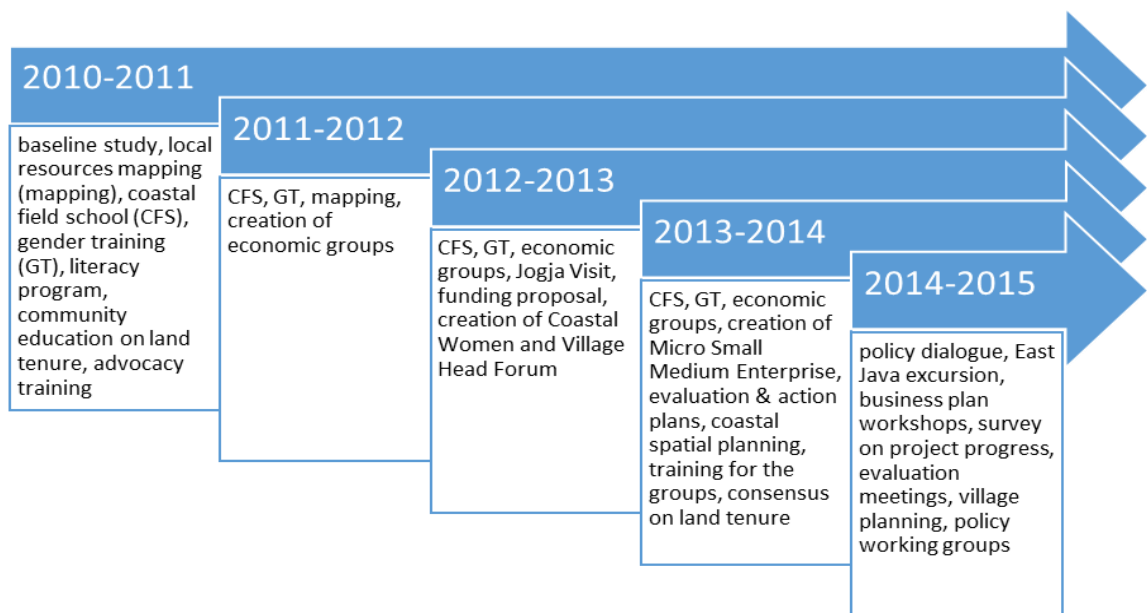
The good relations between executing agencies of the project with the authority also enabled Oxfam to connect women various levels of government. As stated by Amrullah, Head of Pitue Village, Pangkep District, "Through the productive activities, women became confident as 50 percent of them attending village meetings and speaking up through association, such as Women Farmers."

The immersion approach applied in the RCL Project was useful in promoting women's participation in the public sphere, not only through their economic contributions from the commercial activities of the economic groups, but also their participation in development planning meetings and other public meetings.

5.7. Women Beneficiaries and Empowerment in the RCL Project's Aid Relations

Apart from asymmetric relations between the donors, development workers, and beneficiaries, the findings from the fieldwork have revealed mostly positive comments from women on the project, particularly in promoting women's economic productivity in the project area. Women expressed their sense of empowerment and how they were also empowered in other aspects as they engaged in various activities in the project (see Diagram 5.2. below).

Diagram 5.2. Women's Engagement in the RCL Project



(Source: Author).

As illustrated in Diagram 5.2. and discussion in section 5.6. on women's aid relations, it can be seen that women beneficiaries participated in various activities from the beginning of the project. They experienced transformation processes as they were introduced to the RCL Project and involved in the project's activities. Diagram 5.2. also shows that women engaged not only as passive beneficiaries of the project with their participation in activities such as coastal field school, literacy program, and gender training. As confirmed by women in this study, they also participated actively, such as

in the creation of Coastal Women Network and business association; mapping of local resources; village development planning, and business plan of economic groups.

With their involvement in the RCL Project, women have raised their awareness of not only local potentials, but also women's empowerment, participation, gender equality, and their rights as citizens. These are reflected in their ability to organise, network, and mobilise through the economic groups and the Coastal Women Network. The findings also showed the practices of participation, partnership, empowerment, and ownership experienced by women throughout the project period.

With their awareness, literacy, contribution, and participation in the public spheres, women are empowered in various aspects of empowerment. Their transformation has been acknowledged. Their contribution has been rewarded. Women have become local champions not only for the resilience of the coastal community in general but also role models for women's empowerment in particular. These significant changes which women experienced and showed have further changed their gender (power) relations with others, including with the men, the family, the authorities, and wider society.

However, there are several crucial issues particularly on women's aid relations in the RCL Project to analyse in this research. First and importantly is about challenging dynamics and complexities of aid relations since the beginning of the project phase. As argued by Crawford (2003) and Sato et al. (2011), the reality of the practice of aid (power) relations also highlights the powerful positions of the executing agencies which come with project proposals and conduct development projects with their own interpretations.

Furthermore, the donor and the executing agencies were the ones which designed and defined the project implementation. Therefore, it was challenging to expect the the implementation of participatory approach which involved women beneficiaries from the beginning of the project proposal's formulation and at every stage of project implementation.

As mentioned in the previous section on development intervention, particularly in the history of the RCL Project, it was clear that women were not involved in the process although Oxfam did conduct one-time baseline prior to conducting the project. On the other hand, the baseline was part of Oxfam's investment which could be seen as Oxfam's commitment to understanding the project area context. In particular, as argued

by Green (2002), understanding the project area context should also be done by looking at various aspects in addition to gender aspects, such as various stakeholders' relations. In relation to that, the concern for women's empowerment of the RCL Project was also reflected in the elaboration of women's relations with other stakeholders, such as with the executing agencies (Oxfam and the local partners), the local government at village and district levels, and with their husbands and families.

In addition, although the project was not a women's empowerment project, Oxfam tried to ensure gender criteria and considerations, as suggested by Rai (2008) and Rowlands (2002), were fulfilled in the project. For example, during the project period, Oxfam and its local partners implemented gender analysis of the baseline, promoted local woman champions, created economic groups and the coastal women's forum, undertook gender training which involved men and women, and promoted gender mainstreaming in capacity building workshops for the government.

Secondly, as revealed by the research participants, women only followed what had been explained about the project by Oxfam and its local partners. Based on observation from the field, particularly in meetings with women from economic groups in Pangkep District, it could be seen that women mostly played their roles as passive participants of the project. They usually spoke and expressed their concerns in accordance with the project logics and intentions, which was particularly about economic empowerment and community resilience.

For example, women would say that the project intervention had been positive and still needed for them to have more 'doi' (money) to fulfil their households' needs. In this case, being empowered was mostly understood within economic empowerment frameworks. This also showed how the WID approach still dominates the Economic Justice Goal Lead of Oxfam Indonesia in undertaking the project, such as through economic focus activities, income, and productivity measurement.

Nevertheless, as noted by some feminist authors and researchers, women's voices are important factor in understanding the ideas, perceptions, and experiences which unique to each woman (Cornwall, 2016; Kitzinger, 2004; Naved, 1994). In this case, their confirmation of the positive impact of the project which was mostly expressed in economic terms, such as earning their own money and the ability to spend it without asking permission from their husbands, should be accepted and appreciated as part of their reflections and perceptions of empowerment based on their experience in the RCL Project.

On the other hand, throughout the project period, women also experienced transitions from being subjects of the project as they only absorbed information from the executing agencies and participated according to the design of the project (Campbell & Teghtsoonian, 2010; Nair, 2013), to the period when they became active participants in the project (Crewe & Harrison, 1998); as they learned quite a lot from the project. Namely on the business plan, organisational management, productive activities, gender relations, public speaking, and participatory development planning to name a few. Moreover, it is important to note that how women related to other stakeholders within the aid industry was also influenced by their positions, roles, and achievement in the project, such as in the economic groups and the coastal women network (Alsop et al., 2006). This aspect also underlines the intersectionality context of both gender relations and aid relations under the development intervention.

In relation to the intersectionality context, women who have positions in the groups, such as leaders, treasurers, and secretaries; and community organizers, are important figures due to their social and economic backgrounds. These local champions tend to be more active, confident, and outspoken in dealing with other stakeholders, including Oxfam, the local partners, and the government.

With their background and capacity, they became local champions in the project, the role models for the members, and motivators for the community. Based on my observational notes in the field, the members were confident to participate and to express their opinion when the leaders were present and encouraged them to do so. On the other hand, I also noted, the leaders were significantly needed to become facilitators and translators when the members wanted to communicate with outsiders due to language barriers.

Therefore, where women are positioned in the design of development project also influences their perceptions of empowerment and how they are empowered (Cornwall et al., 2006; Sato et al., 2011). As mentioned, through the creation of economic groups, coastal women's forum, titles of leaders, secretary, treasurer, community organizer, and facilitator, along with project officers, Oxfam also created complex, multi-layered, and dynamic power relations, if not another power gaps, not only between women and the existing development agencies, including the government, but further between women and the members of the groups and/or forums, and with other non-beneficiaries of the project. Therefore, it is very important to understand local dynamics (social economic

backgrounds, social relations, cultural contexts, and so on) which are relevant to gender issues, including women's aid relations with others related to the RCL Project.

As discussed, this is also where intersectionality was revealed with various participants, positions, roles, interests which influenced the degree of bargaining power and domain of empowerment. It is also important to notice and acknowledge that women engaged in aid relations throughout and after the project period with different actors and interests at various levels, whether individually and/or collectively with the groups where they belong. This is to say that considering intersectionality, local contexts with various aspects, and multidimensional and complex natures of empowerment, women would have unique experiences and stories about their transformation processes and their aid relations with others during the project period or even after the project ended, both individually and collectively.

For example, from their enthusiastic participation in the village meetings raising concerns of the community, women, and their economic groups. As argued by Rai (2008), women's transformation make their participation in public sphere visible and relevant. As found in this study, women's stories of transformation were also reflected in how women were accustomed to development concepts and responded to the questions of the research according to their knowledge which was gained from their involvement in the project and from their interactions with development workers.

However, apart from the positive comments and outcome of the project, there are lots to be done for the project when it comes to inclusion of women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming components in the project, not only from the economic empowerment point of view. This is important recalling the multidimensional, complex, relational and dynamic nature of empowerment. Being the majority of the beneficiaries of the project was an advantage for women to empower and actualize themselves individually and collectively as they became aware of their gender relations with others and their own potential. Women also benefitted as the main local champions promoted by Oxfam and the local partners to be leading and inspiring actors to promote coastal community resilience and environmental protection.

Women's confidence and achievement were also supported by good and close relations with development workers, such as facilitators from Oxfam and its local partners (MAP and YKL) from the beginning of the project. In this case, by investing in relationships with various local beneficiaries and stakeholders, Oxfam and the local partners were able to understand the local context and complexities through immersion experiences

and mutual communication. Therefore, as argued by Eyben (2006a), by investing in aid relationships, development agencies can contribute to the effectiveness of the project as they also learn from local knowledge and work with various actors in the project area (Eyben, 2006a). By practising immersions during the project period, Oxfam and the local partners managed to build close relations with women and convince them of the project's relevance.

Furthermore, informal communication and interaction with the development workers also made women feel that it was easy to talk to the project officers to express their concerns. The fact that the project facilitated them to interact in a meaningful way and be taken into account by the authorities also motivated women to continue their activities. They were also inspired to achieve better results to continue their activities and to ensure that their participation in the policy processes remained feasible and accounted by the government and their community.

On the other hand, the findings on women's aid relations also strengthen the arguments of Alsop et al. (2006), Cho et al. (2013), and Patil (2013) about the importance of knowing internal conditions of women to understand their positions and roles in the aid chain. As mentioned, support from the husbands and the families was crucial in helping them to reach success in their activities. The family members were also enthusiastic to learn new knowledge and information from these women as they attended various activities outside the house, and even outside the villages and districts. As mentioned, aid relations also created trickle-down effects from the women to their surroundings, not only as local champions who were able to mobilize the people (beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries) to join and practise activities for community resilience (Rai, 2008), but also to make other family members involved in activities outside the RCL Project, as experienced by Khaerunnisya, the daughter of Sitti Rahmah, Leader of *Pita Aksi* Group.

This research also found and confirmed how women expressed their confidence to participate in public spheres and in dealing with others was significantly influenced by their economic capacity and capability, particularly after their involvement in the project. However, it should be noted that the local champions promoted by Oxfam through the project were initially selected considering their individual background, which again makes the analysis on the intersectionality aspect matter.

Intersectionality is important particularly in exploring and understanding the complex aid power relations, gender and development, and empowerment, especially how

women perceive empowerment. In this case, women were able to show their existence particularly through economic contributions and play their roles according to their positions both in the community and within the RCL Project design, particularly in the economic groups.

5.8. Conclusion

Despite the transition from the WID to the GAD theoretical approach decades ago, there is still much to be done within the design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of development intervention to ensure that efforts for women's empowerment will start by approaching women beneficiaries with the strengths-based approach and by promoting the multidimensional and multilevel aspects of empowerment. Therefore, women will perceive themselves as the active and capable participants who should be involved from an early stage of the development intervention.

In addition, development efforts to empower women should note that women's empowerment should not be interpreted as limited in an economic aspect. However, economic empowerment, as highlighted in the RCL Project, should lead to other aspects of empowerment where women could take advantage of being the beneficiaries and play significant roles along with their involvement in the project and continue the positive outcomes of the project, particularly in promoting women's empowerment and creating gender justice in society.

Therefore, it is important to have a better understanding of how development intervention positions women in its design which will affect how women play their positions and roles within their aid relations with others. This is to say that, development interventions and aid relations are still facing challenges in applying the GAD approach, which is crucial to ensure the meaningful participation and contribution of women considering the multidimensional nature of empowerment.

Furthermore, aside from the strong promotion for gender mainstreaming in international commitments such as the MDGs and SDGs, in practice, women's issues are only attached partially in development projects. The economic approach has been and still is

dominating project logics with its economic indicators of measurement. This approach has somehow put aside the real needs to increase women's critical gender awareness, thus sending an incomplete signal about the real and multidimensional meaning of women's empowerment.

The research also found that it is still challenging to apply the participatory approach in every stage of the development project, which unfortunately leaves the aid industry as a procedural matter which is placing those who are in power and those who have the most resources to drive international development policy agenda. This includes the big theme, locations, approach, types of intervention, beneficiaries, and stakeholders of the project.

However, based on the finding of this research, apart from the limitation to apply the participatory approach in every stage of the project, it can be seen that Oxfam tried to apply principles of participation, partnership, empowerment and ownership in the RCL Project by involving various stakeholders and beneficiaries. Oxfam also facilitated interaction between the beneficiaries with the government and private sectors.

With regard to women's empowerment, the project with its limited scope, approach, and time was not enough to change the mindset about gender relations which has been socially and culturally constructed in the society within the project area. However, through the careful and intensive introduction and implementation of the importance of gender mainstreaming in the projects, the project has played a strategic intervention and breakthrough to integrate women's issues within its wider objective of coastal community resilience.

Therefore, apart from its limitation as a project which was not only about women's empowerment, Oxfam and its local partners were seen as 'heroes' in giving women real, clear, and strong positions which enabled women to become active participants not only during the project period but also after the project ended. The multiple-voices of women's stories of transformation processes and experiences of empowerment are reflected in their perceptions. The next chapter will further explore and analyse women's perceptions of empowerment after their involvement in the project.

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Chapter 6. Women's Processes of Transformation

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapter elaborated on how aid relations were practised in the RCL Project, including how women interacted with other actors. This chapter will share selected stories of women's processes of transformation during and after their involvement in the project. There are four stories selected for this chapter. These stories reflect women's various perceptions of empowerment. It is important for me to connect "the institutional" aspect of aid relations to the personal aspect of empowerment from the women's point of view to have a better understanding of both the women's journeys and perceptions of empowerment after their engagement in the development project.

I chose the stories of women in the RCL Project because each one reflected interesting and unique processes of transformation and various perceptions of empowerment as they came from different backgrounds and positions in the project. As argued by Allen (1998), Rowlands (1999), and Luttrell et.al. (2009), it is important to understand empowerment by starting to look at personal empowerment. The various stories of empowerment reflect the complexities of transformation processes which individual woman experiences in their everyday lives and relationships within different situations and circumstances (Cornwall & Edwards, 2010).

These stories are not meant to homogenise women beneficiaries' pathways of empowerment, but, to show different stories of empowerment due to the intersectionality which these women experienced and their own perceptions of empowerment according to their unique experiences. I will discuss these stories to answer the two sub-questions of this study which are on women's perceptions of empowerment and the relevance of the project to their needs.

I then discuss the findings by underlining the significance of understanding personal, relational, and multidimensional aspects of empowerment for development workers before promoting women's empowerment and social transformation through collective action. The chapter concludes by highlighting the importance of considering the multidimensional and multilevel nature of empowerment to have a better understanding of women's perceptions of empowerment after their involvement in the project.

6.2. The Stories of Women Beneficiaries' Processes of Transformation

In this section, I will talk about each woman using vignettes which show their stories of empowerment. These individual stories are important because, in reality, women's empowerment will highly depend on each women's personal empowerment (Rowlands, 1999). I interpreted these selected stories by looking at the intersectionality which women experienced, such as their different backgrounds (social; economic status; political participation; project engagement due to their roles and positions), as well as the context of the study area and their aid and gender relations with others.

In addition, the rationale for having these individual stories is that apart from the tendency of existing literature to promote collective action for social transformation (Esteva & Prakash, 1998; Rai, 2008), in reality, women's empowerment will highly depend on each woman's individual awareness, knowledge, capacity, capability, resources, and personal choice (Rowlands, 1999). Therefore, it is important to understand individual points of view as a starting point to understand women's empowerment and women's perceptions of empowerment.

The stories will be followed by a discussion which links to the literature on women's empowerment, aid, and development. The individual stories of women's empowerment are important as they provide insight into individual circumstances, experiences, and perceptions.

6.2.1 Story from Jamilah, a Member of an Economic Group

Women share a strong understanding that earning their own income is the main gate of opportunity to increase their gender awareness and to improve their gender relations in the family and the community. The importance of economic empowerment was also shared by Jamilah, a member of *Anggrek* Group which was created by Oxfam in 2010 (see Vignette 6.1).

Figure 6.1. Jamilah, the Empowered Member



Jamilah (in red t-shirt), standing beside me with other members of Anggrek Group, Maros District. (Source: Author).

Vignette 6.1 A Big Leap for a Woman

Jamilah joined *Anggrek* Group in 2014. The group began with the literacy class which she also participated in. The literacy class was continuing at the time of this thesis being written. Other members who are literate help to teach others who are illiterate. As for the economic activities, the group works on duck farming (eggs, salted eggs) and snack production (fish, shrimp). Jamilah worked in the group three times a week.

The members worked from 8 am until noon on the salted eggs and chips. The members did not feel burdened with the activities as the production place is located near their houses. They earned income based on the attendance list and the amount of production they made whenever they came to work in the group.

Jamilah confessed that she used to be shy. Now, she has become confident after getting more knowledge and experience from Oxfam. With other members of the group, Jamilah proposed installing water tanks, a road, and clean water during public meeting. She was very delighted to share her stories and the significant changes she experienced after participating in the RCL Project. She said:

“I used to just take a nap and watch television. After attending the literacy class, I can write and read. I could get the children’s report from the school because I could write my own signature. From the economic group, I have skills on ducks and chips. I also have knowledge in duck farming and feeding. I can earn my own money and spend the money freely for my children’s needs. My husband supports me as I used to have no activities at home. I need to complete domestic tasks first then go to the group.”

Jamilah's story shows that economic empowerment was the main stepping-stone to empower them both individually and collectively as they became confident by being economically empowered. However, some feminist scholars argued that empowerment is not limited to economic empowerment (Cornwall et al., 2006). Empowerment has other aspects, such as political, cultural, economic, environmental or natural resources, health, human, as well as social and spiritual (Luttrell et al., 2009). These arguments seemed to be relevant if we look at Jamilah's expression about making sure that she had completed the domestic tasks before joining the group's activities.

Jamilah's story mostly reflected the economic aspects of empowerment and slightly the political aspects of empowerment. However, with regard to the social aspects of empowerment in her own family, her story did not show gender equality relations where men and women do the household tasks together. In short, women seemed to try to make sure that they were available if the men needed them for the household matters. This was because the economic groups' activities usually took place nearby, so the women could easily come and leave when necessary.

Stories like Jamilah's also confirm that empowerment has been generally understood mostly in economic aspects both by the women and other stakeholders. In addition, women were seen as no longer stuck in working domestic chores or talking about other people (gossip). Husbands seemed to be willing to help their wives with household matters, such as taking care of the children; helping the children with doing their homework; feeding the ducks; when the women attended training facilitated by the project; or when the women went out for the groups' activities.

However, the findings of this research showed that economic empowerment was considered a realistic way and strategic breakthrough of the project in order to promote women's empowerment in other dimensions, such as social and political aspects. As expressed by Jamilah above, women have become confident in participating in the public sphere. This shows that women are empowered politically and socially. Women also showed their sense of being empowered by their ability to take advantage of the activities provided in the project, including the literacy programme and the economic groups. They also experienced a significant change in their gender relations with their husbands as they contributed to the family's economy. In other words, men also changed due to the influence of development intervention in women's empowerment.

With regard to economic empowerment, it is essential for women to earn and keep their own income, and use the money without having to ask their husbands' permission. Therefore, they consider economic empowerment meaningful for them as they have been able to contribute to the household economy. Being economically empowered helped them to improve their gender and social relations with others. It also brought pride to women individually and collectively as parts of the broader community. In addition, by having activities and experiences outside domestic chores, such as in the economic groups, the coastal women's forum, development planning meetings, village meetings, and coastal field schools, women felt that they had experienced significant changes in their lives.

Previously, women were too afraid to meet outsiders. They felt reluctant to go out as their husbands discouraged them from doing so. Women were used to feeling shy and lacking confidence as they realised that they did not have higher education and lacked skills. They were also not familiar with public meetings or working in groups in a more structured and organised way. Women were highly dependent on their husbands and family. Whereas old widows mostly relied on their family and help from others such as their neighbours to support their daily needs.

6.2.2 A Critical Reflection of a Young Woman in Tanakeke Island

Nurhayati is one of the community organisers in charge of the economic groups under the RCL Project. Oxfam and its local partners involved young people in the project area, including in Tanakeke Island, Takalar District, to participate in the project.

Figure 6.2. Nurhayati, the Enthusiastic Young Woman from Tanakeke Island



Nurhayati, a young woman leader in Tanakeke Island (left). Women of an economic group in Tanakeke Island were tying the seaweed. (Source: Author)

Vignette 6.2 Voice from an Enthusiastic Young Woman

Nurhayati is the community organiser for Tamanlanrea Group which works with seaweed in Tompotanah Village. The group was created in 2013 when Oxfam gave strings and seaweed as initial tools for the group's start-up. A graduate of the junior high school, Nurhayati was very excited about participating in the training provided by Oxfam through the RCL Project.

She admitted that the RCL Project made her busy with various activities and she was wondering if she would be as active as she was after the project ended. However, she was also confident to say that it is time for the beneficiaries to apply the knowledge and experiences gained from the five-year project and continue to nurture the positive outcome of the project. She strongly stated that women need to make sure that the village government continues to pay attention to women and involve women in the policy processes.

Nurhayati said that whatever position she had in the group, she was willing to learn from the beginning. Nurhayati was also enjoying the training on public speaking and gender issues. For her, the project has been successful in raising women's awareness on their rights and gender equality. Being fully aware of the significant influence of culture, Nurhayati said that the most important training was the gender training.

"The cultural norm was male domination in decision making. My mother will follow what my father says, such as on education for the children. My father said that women do not need to have a higher education because they will stay in another house (family) and end up in the kitchen. Where do women want to go and do what?"

Nurhayati looked sad and down when she shared the story. Such perceptions from her father and the domination of males in the culture were really disappointing her, especially when she knew that her father encouraged and supported her brother to continue to vocational school to become a sailor. Whereas in the past, the highest education she could get was only up to junior high school.

Nurhayati was excited to share women's active involvement in the village meeting in *Musrenbang* (development planning meeting) in 2013 as they became confident in public speaking. Women in Tanakeke Island have also increased their solidarity and awareness through the intervention of the project, both through the economic groups and the creation of the Coastal Women Network.

Apart from the active involvement and confidence of women in the village meetings, Nurhayati had a critique on the demands raised by women, although interestingly her critique seemed to bring women back to the domestic sphere.

"The roles between women and men are changing. With the existence of the RCL Project, the community become more caring. Women know the conditions faced by women but actually, the demands between men and women are still the same, on physical development (paving roads, water tanks). Women should be able to ask something to increase capacity, such as a sewing course."

Nurhayati demonstrated a transformation of a young woman who is enthusiastic and optimistic about women's empowerment after her involvement in the RCL Project. Her position as a community organiser also enabled her to contribute more to her community in a meaningful way by working together with women in the economic groups and gathering women to raise their concerns together through the Coastal Women Network. She said, "for empowerment, women need better capacity (education), experience, confidence, and awareness."

Interestingly, with regard to the influence of cultural norms, apart from the awareness of women beneficiaries like Nurhayati, there were some women who did not consider cultural norms as the significant factor which hinders women's empowerment and gender equality. On the other hand, they were also aware of the unequal treatment they experienced in their gender relations. They might not be aware of the progressive aspects of Bugis-Makassar culture in the past. The concept of 'siri' seems to be taken for granted as simply a cultural concept to protect women's dignity.

The concept of 'siri' is not understood critically by women, particularly in relation to women's rights, empowerment, and gender equality. Nevertheless, these women shared similar understanding about how they were empowered as they were exposed to gender training from the RCL Project. For example, they understood empowerment as having self-confidence and sufficient knowledge, being well-informed, and having the ability to speak in front of public.

6.2.3 Story of Sitti Rahmah, the 'Organic Lady'

Sitti Rahmah, the Organic Lady, is the leader of *Pita Aksi* Group in Pangkep District. The group focuses on organic agriculture.

Vignette 6.3 Voice from a Resourceful and Empowered Woman

Sitti Rahmah was one of the beneficiaries of the RCL Project. She is also the leader of *Pita Aksi* group, which focuses on organic agriculture. She is a mother of two and a wife to Muhammad Al Arif. Rahmah is an honorary teacher at a kindergarten in the Pitunggu Village. Both Rahmah and Arif became interested in organic farming since Oxfam came with the RCL Project. Both of them were participants of the field school conducted by Oxfam's local partner, MAP.

Their commitment to continue organic farming showed results as Rahmah earned several prestigious awards not only from Oxfam Regional, but also from the local and National Government. For example, Rahmah obtained the national award of *Adhikarya Pangan Nusantara* in 2014 from President Joko Widodo within the category of Food Security Development Actor. This also made her and *Pita Aksi* Group one of the best examples from the RCL Project.

The achievement also made her and her family well-known especially in the district and the province. People call her “Ibu Organik” (Madam Organic). Rahmah is also keen to assist the members of *Pita Aksi* to continue organic farming. She motivated non-beneficiaries in her neighbourhood to apply organic farming at home. She even helped to facilitate another organic farming group in Pitue Village, which is the *Mutiara Desa* group. Rahmah is able to maintain her commitment to organic farming as she is a resourceful person.

She has her own assets (land) both for the organic garden and fish ponds which she obtained from her parents and her own money. Rahmah is also well-known for being an active social figure in the community. Apart from being a kindergarten teacher, Rahmah is also interested in participating in local politics, whether at the village or district level. She supported her niece in the village election’s campaign. When her niece, Nurhayati, won the election, Rahmah was entrusted as one of the staff at the village office. In addition, her political activism was reflected in her enthusiasm to participate as a campaign coordinator for the district elections. With her husband, Muhamad Al Arif, she was eager to support good candidates for the better life of the people. With these resources, Rahmah was able to take the advantage of being one of the beneficiaries of the RCL Project by further improving her agency both as an individual and part of the economic group created by Oxfam.

Rahmah has approximately 10 ha of land. She makes use of the land for organic gardening, organic rice fields, and an organic fish and shrimp pond. Together with Arif, she also produces composted fertilizer. The harvests of these organic activities are sufficient to fulfil the daily needs for her family. She also sells the vegetables from the garden to the neighbours and to the markets within the district. For Rahmah, although she knows that organic products’ prices are higher than the non-organic ones, she chooses to sell these products at the same price. She said, “what matters is that the harvests are sold out. Consider it part of my worship and good deed to the neighbours.”

Being resourceful has also made Rahmah confident, especially with her achievement with organic farming. With the resources she has already had, Rahmah has managed to have quite equal gender relations with her husband as both of them help each other in doing the household and the organic farming tasks. Both of them also have other jobs. Arif is a part-time carpenter. He has actually been very helpful in assisting her with the cultivation of the land, which requires intensive and heavy labour. There were times, when Arif felt like giving up on organic farming as it took lots of time and energy, but Rahmah kept going and insisted on continuing. Along the way, her husband realized the benefits of organic farming and felt that he too had to help his wife.

Sometimes, she would jokingly say that Arif was her gardener as she is the one who owns all the land, including the house and the land where their house is built. Rahmah could be strict as well if she felt impatient when her husband delayed the work in the garden when she needed it done sooner. As a wife, it is easy for Rahmah to go everywhere she wants as her husband does not prohibit her from having activities outside the house. In fact, Rahmah is well active in the neighbourhood, recalling the fact that most of the villagers have family connections, and are therefore familiar to each other.

Rahmah's story represented a resourceful and empowered woman. In addition, recalling the dynamics of power embedded in aid relations which had been experienced by the women beneficiaries, empowerment also has both intersectionality and relational aspects (Rowlands, 1999, pp. 143–4). The relational aspect of empowerment refers to networks of power embedded relationships amongst various actors and interests (Alsop et al., 2006). The relational aspect of empowerment is also about women's positions in the project design, as well as their relations with other actors within the aid chain (Cho et al., 2013; Eyben, 2006b). The intersectionality and relational aspects of empowerment can be seen especially in looking at how other members of the community, such as the men, village government, and others perceive and position women in the community. For example, after Oxfam's RCL project came, there had been positive responses and appreciation from men (husbands, village leaders, the local government agencies) in seeing and acknowledging women's participation and contribution in economic activities outside the house.

For example, with the national award Rahmah received from President Joko Widodo in 2014 (Villagerspost.com, 2016), Pitue village and Pangkep District have become well-known. This area and the people got visits from local and foreign visitors. Local, national, and foreign media also covered the village. Oxfam itself committed to promoting the RCL project and the beneficiaries' work through the media. This kind of achievement also increased the confidence and pride of women and their surroundings, and was thus, an additional boost for the women to continue their activities, during and after the project. The enthusiasm to continue the economic groups' activities is also closely related to the fact that these groups are comprised of members who are actually close neighbours. They have known each other for a long time because some of them have family connections. This also makes it easy for them to coordinate, communicate, and cooperate with each other.

In Rahmah's stories, it can be seen that empowerment is personal, relational, and multidimensional (Luttrell et al. 2009; Rowlands, 1999). In her case, empowerment is reflected in various ways, such as mobility, expression, persistence, commitment, achievement, and agency. Furthermore, this story also shows the intersectionality of aid power relations and women's empowerment where women were positioned in the project design, as well as when they positioned and related themselves with other actors within the aid chain (Cho et al., 2013; Eyben 2006a). That is why empowerment stories are unique to each woman both individually and collectively.

Her story also shows how each woman has a different story of empowerment due to her conditions and positions prior to and after the project (Cornwall, 2016; Alsop et al., 2006). In Rahmah's case, her resources and agency reflect how resourceful she is as a woman even before the project came. With these circumstances and her social and political activism, it was relatively easy for Rahmah to play her role as the leader of *Pita Aksi* Group. She is also confident to speak up on behalf of the group and raise her concerns in public meetings. Oxfam also approached inspiring and resourceful people like Rahmah to be positioned as leader, organiser, or facilitator for the groups.

Furthermore, Rahmah is also able to use her position as a leader to promote organic farming by maintaining her own organic farming and assisting others (members and non-members) to practise organic farming. Her achievements as a leader of an organic farming group and an organic farmer have given her a sense of achievement. Her success stories have been noticed and acknowledged widely by the community and the government. With her success, Rahmah has been invited as a speaker and requested to host events related to organic agriculture, whether held by Oxfam or the local government. In short, Rahmah's story reflected women who were originally resourceful and these resourceful beneficiaries are usually the ones who are relatively more empowered and active compared to others.

Figure 6.3. Sitti Rahmah, the 'Organic Lady'



My picture with Rahmah, the 'Organic Lady' (left). Arif, Rahmah's husband worked on the organic farming beside the house. (Source: Author)

6.2.4 Syarifah, a Passionate and Enthusiastic Leader

Based on the findings of this research, the RCL Project has increased the beneficiaries' social awareness, belonging, and solidarity as a community. In this case, the increasing social capital has become another impact of the RCL Project. For example, the Coastal Women's Forum was created not only to discuss women's needs, but also the needs of the villagers as a whole, such as clean water, proper toilets, early childhood education schools, and small decks in Tanakeke Island, one of the project areas.

This reality of strengthening social ties and solidarity has also been experienced and confirmed by other groups such as in Mandalle Sub-district and Ma'rang Sub-district in Pangkep District. The story from Syarifah, the leader of two economic groups, *Siangkalingadae* and *Kalaroang* in Pangkep District reflected the importance of social capital created and nurtured by the groups.

Figure 6.4. Syarifah, the Passionate Leader



Syarifah (far left) with members of Kalaroang and Siangkalingadae Groups (left). Syarifah sitting in the middle, mediating the groups' meeting with the local government official at her house. (Source: Author)

Vignette 6.4 Increasing Social Solidarity through the Economic Groups

Syarifah has multiple roles. She is a wife, an elementary school teacher, and leader of two economic groups. Being aware of the benefits of the groups, Syarifah was enthusiastic to gather the women and men in her neighbourhood in Tamarupa Village to join the group. *Kalaroang* works on producing crab traps and fishing nets. *Siangkalingadae* whose members are widows focuses on seaweed and crab traps. With her position as a school teacher, she has sufficient information to support the group. Syarifah involves a facilitator from the local government to supervise the groups.

“Our groups were formed in 2013 when previously we had never received any assistance from the government and others. Many of us were unemployed and economically weak. Women were afraid of meeting new people, not familiar with public meetings, literacy, signature writing, and working in groups before. We have increased social solidarity through the groups and social gatherings. We are also committed to sharing our knowledge and assets with non-beneficiaries of the RCL project. We tend to prioritise using the group’s saving for fulfilling daily life and to support our members who are in need. We still need assistance from the government, Oxfam, and others to continue our activities.”

In addition, recalling her capacity as a teacher and leader, Syarifah is a woman who is brave and able to voice the groups’ concerns. She also made decisions in a deliberative manner by involving the members, such as on deciding on revolving assistance. She also had a good bargaining position with the local authority especially with the success stories of the groups she leads. Her capacities to nurture the groups and the members also made the members feel comfortable to stay in the groups.

The number of the members of *Siangkalingadae* even increased from 20 to 30 members because of the revolving mechanism. Meanwhile, *Kalaroang*’s number of members increased from 20 to 24 members because of her achievement in obtaining a label for the joint economic group in 2015 from the Sea and Fishery Agency of Pangkep District. This achievement made Tamarupa Village the only one to earn the label out of five villages in the Mandalle sub-district, Pangkep District.

“We will continue the revolving in-kind to non-beneficiaries and those who are in need so that they could also get the benefits of the economic groups. We also agree to allow other groups in the sub-district to use our label to get assistance from the government. We will also take the opportunity of 800 million IDR of village funds to continue our activities.”

With her passion and caring, Syarifah has made the groups like a big family for the members. She took the initiative to hold social gatherings twice a month for two hours. The gatherings were also meant to talk about the groups’ activities and plans. She also involved the men (husbands) in the groups to support women to have activities outside the home. Both women and men work together in the groups. Women are tying the seaweed and assembling fishing nets, while the men help to plant the seaweed. Syarifah is confident that the groups can continue their success stories as they feel like a big family who supports each other.

The story from Syarifah showed that someone who is a wife and school teacher was able to significantly transform to the leader of two economic groups. With her capacities, passion, and enthusiasm, Syarifah has succeeded in maintaining the groups and the members together. The members also trust Syarifah and feel comfortable to stay in the groups with her style in managing the groups. Based on these observations, it can

be seen that local women leaders are also the ones who are keen to take initiatives. On the other hand, apart from having the keen and helpful leaders, sustainability of the group activities will also depend on the awareness and willingness of the members.

Furthermore, the research found how trust and delegation of position and responsibilities to the women can become an important way to empower women as they can follow on the mandate and be in charge of the groups (Alsop et al., 2006). In addition, they are also playing important roles in inspiring members and representing groups. These are signs of empowerment as well as prestige, especially when they have been seen successful in leading the groups and bringing wealth and solidarity to the groups. These achievements have meant that these local women champions become elected as leaders or organisers. They also earned the trust from the members to lead and organise the groups.

Syarifah is one of the examples of an inspiring and enthusiastic local champion. She can convince the members to stay in the groups and continue the activities not only because of economic considerations but also most importantly the social solidarity. The economic groups' activities have linked the members to the market and the government. The RCL Project also exposed women to the organisational knowledge through the economic groups. The members felt that the income-generating nature of the groups has helped them personally to earn additional income to survive their daily life and to help those in need in the community.

Based on my observation and as expressed by Syarifah, the beneficiaries expressed that their involvement in the groups, the existence of the groups, and Oxfam, as well as local partners' facilitation, have helped them significantly in building social coherence and in enabling them to contribute to their surroundings in a meaningful way. Interestingly, this framework of empowerment did not necessarily match with the project's plan, which envisioned that the created economic groups would experience and reach the entrepreneurship stage of the economic ladder. This happened because some of the beneficiaries seemed to prioritise the asset for urgent, daily, and social needs rather than as an investment to expand their business.

Some of the beneficiaries also seemed to express that they were not too ambitious with business expansion although they were also interested in the potential benefits of expanding their markets. These expressions basically showed that they did not force themselves to undertake the activities. These expressions also reflected that women have their own perceptions in running their economic groups in their own ways. This

case also highlights that empowerment is not only limited to economic empowerment, but also other aspects of empowerment, including social empowerment. The story of Syarifah and the social solidarity of the groups set good examples about this.

6.3. Discussion: Personal, Relational, and Multidimensional Aspects of Empowerment

Based on the selected stories and discussions above, it can be seen that empowerment is personal, relational, and multidimensional. This is also the reason why I developed the conceptualisation framework of empowerment by highlighting the 5Cs and 4As. The conceptualisation of empowerment according to the 5Cs and 4As of empowerment are also rooted from the various life experiences and different pathways of women's empowerment. The 5Cs particularly shows the personal aspect of empowerment, whereas the 4As reflects the relational and multidimensional aspects of empowerment. Both 5Cs and 4As are intertwined in affecting how women in the research perceived empowerment based on their engagement in the project and their relations with others.

I highlighted the 5Cs and 4As based on the multiple voices of my research participants in reflecting their pathways of transformation both individually and collectively. These dimensions also result from my reflection throughout the research processes, in which I tried to connect the topic of the research, with existing literature, theories, and the multiple realities of empowerment which I found in the field along with the multiple voices of the research participants. As I learned about various definitions of empowerment, particularly the one from Rowlands (1999) on the personal and relational aspects of empowerment, and the multidimensional aspects of empowerment (Luttrell et.al), I also found these aspects from the research. However, I wanted to unpack these aspects into more specific dimensions of empowerment especially in its personal, relational, and multidimensional aspects. Here is why I came with the 5Cs and 4As conceptualisation of empowerment, which brings the whole aspects of empowerment together as an intertwined and mutually influencing aspects of empowerment.

Nevertheless, this conceptualisation of empowerment does not mean to homogenise the richness of women's stories of empowerment or simplify the complex and dynamics of

aid and development processes, as well as the multidimensional and multi-level aspects of empowerment. The 5Cs and the 4As are intertwined and reflected in the stories of these women's transformation processes. This section will discuss this framework by looking at the personal, relational, and multidimensional aspects of empowerment.

6.3.1 Personal Aspect

From the vignettes, it can be seen that each woman had different processes of transformation individually or collectively because of different roles and positions they had in the groups as well as their background (Cornwall, 2016; Alsop et al., 2006). The transformation of Rahmah, the 'Organic Lady' reflected the strong identity of an organic farmer and political activist. Her confidence has been increased particularly after her achievement in organic farming. Her achievement in sustaining the organic farming also showed her concerns for the environment and health issues.

From her participation in the project's training sessions, she learned about the danger of using chemical fertiliser in agriculture both to human's health and the environment. Therefore, she wanted to make sure that she was growing environmentally friendly and healthy food, especially for the family. She is also eager to promote the importance of organic farming and products to her neighbourhood. Rahmah is certainly a proud farmer as she realised that she brought a trickle-down effect to her family and her community through organic farming.

On the other hand, the story from Nurhayati highlighted an enlightened, enthusiastic, and critical young woman activist dealing with the challenging situation in an isolated island area of Tanakeke. In the past, she did not have the opportunity to participate in the village meetings as the local authority rarely involved women in the policy processes. Her active involvement as a community organiser in the project has brought her to a different level of awareness and confidence in dealing with the local authority, the executing agencies of the project as well as the people in her community. Her story also reflected the transformation of a once passive and unconfident young woman into an active and critical person who was enthusiastic in gathering and mobilising women to become involved in productive activities and policy processes.

Jamilah's story showed a significant transformation experienced by a member of the economic group as she is able to read and write. Being literate was a huge leap for

Jamilah. Literacy was her distinct story of transformation and empowerment in addition to having other activities outside the house and earning her own income. Jamilah's transformation also brought her confidence to participate in public meetings.

For Syarifah, the RCL Project was an opportunity to improve the welfare of the people in her neighbourhood. Syarifah is a good role model of a leader who is able to take initiative for the advancement of the members and increasing social solidarity amongst the members. She believes that the economic groups are not only about profit-making entities but an important social capital which keeps the members as a big family who cares for each other and those who are in need outside the groups.

The findings of the research showed that empowerment is experienced differently by different women. The findings also confirmed the arguments of Cho et al. (2013), Cornwall (2016), Everett & Charlton (2014), Kitzinger (2004), and Naved (1994) on the different experiences of different women. At this point, it is important to note the resources and agency aspects of empowerment. For example, women who have already had resources (education, profession, property, experience, acknowledgement, positions, roles, social status) tend to be the ones who were able to multiply their agency. Therefore, they can contribute to the community in various aspects (for example, political, economic, social) at various levels (village, sub-district, district, provincial, national).

As argued by Rowlands (1999), empowerment has to rest in individual empowerment for some people. In addition, as outlined by DFATD's Policy on Gender Equality, "Empowerment is not only a collective, social and political process but an individual one as well — and it is not only a process but an outcome too." (Global Affairs Canada, 2016). However, an important note to make based on the findings of this research is that women's participation in various sectors also depends on their personal choice to do so.

Therefore, empowerment is indeed very personal. Empowerment is a matter of choice and commitment to be aware of empowerment and to maintain an enabling environment to be empowered. This is also why based on the findings of this study and as highlighted by feminists, women have different experiences in various domains and levels. In this case, personal choice will also influence women's perceptions of empowerment and commitment in maintaining women's empowerment after their involvement in the development project.

6.3.2 Relational Aspect

Women's perceptions of empowerment and how they are empowered are also influenced by their relationships with other stakeholders (Cornwall & Edwards, 2010; Cornwall, 2016; Pasteur & Scott-Villiers, 2006; Rowlands, 1999). For example, the research found that the development project had introduced to the beneficiaries various development concepts according to the ideas and logic of the executing agencies and the donors (Campbell & Teghtsoonian, 2010), including the concepts of empowerment and gender relations (equality).

However, when it comes to sharing their knowledge on these particular concepts of development (empowerment, participation, and so on), it is not easy for women to promote women's empowerment and gender equality to wider public (non-beneficiaries of the project), even to the members of the economic groups. This happened particularly because of the strong and influential culture which influences gender relations in society (Alsop et al., 2006; Nussbaum, 2000). For example, women are still the ones who need to make sure that their domestic chores have been completed before going out to participate in groups or other activities outside the home. In this case, the relational aspect of empowerment was quite strong as there are limits, particularly in relation to the strong patriarchal culture, for women to promote women's empowerment and gender equality to the wider public.

Furthermore, this limitation of empowerment and the relational aspect of empowerment also happen because of the gender relations which women experienced with their husbands and families (Koggel, 2008; Rowlands, 1999). As argued by Foucault (1980), power is always relational and created in a network of relations (Alsop et al., 2006). The relational aspect of empowerment also reflected the intersectionality amongst women, particularly between leaders and members of the economic groups (Alsop et al., 2006; Everett & Charlton, 2014).

Usually, the prominent beneficiaries are the leaders, treasurers, secretaries, and community organisers or other active and outspoken members of the groups. They were also often invited to represent the groups. Furthermore, the dominant roles of these prominent beneficiaries could also be seen from how dependent the members were to the committee members to speak on their behalf and to represent the groups, if not to accompany them in the training. In short, members preferred to have the leaders around

when they attended the activities although Oxfam tried to arrange the leaders and the members to attend the training in turn.

Therefore, the relational aspect of empowerment is also influenced by the local context and women's social relations with others in their family and in the community. This aspect also influences women's perceptions of empowerment. In this case, women's involvement in the RCL Project both individually and collectively, and their social relations with other stakeholders in the community have also created their stories of empowerment.

6.3.3 Multidimensional Aspect

Apart from the multidimensional aspect of empowerment, this research found that women's understanding of women's empowerment is more determined by economic logics rather than gender awareness, particularly on women's rights, gender equality, and public participation. The economic dimension of empowerment influenced by the RCL Project seemed to be quite strong in influencing perceptions of women of empowerment. Nevertheless, Oxfam tried to promote other dimensions of empowerment by introducing economic groups as a breakthrough for women's empowerment in particular and the coastal community resilience in general.

In other words, the economic approach was selected strategically as a stepping stone by Oxfam to find an acceptable means to promote women's empowerment. As they participated in the project, women realised that economic empowerment and their involvement in the economic groups have made them confident to attend and participate in the public meetings. They also felt that their social solidarity has increased with their engagement in the project activities. In this case, the research found that in addition to the economic approach, Oxfam also introduced other aspects of empowerment, such as political aspects (public participation), environmental aspect (organic farming and composting, mangrove preservation), and social aspects (revolving in-kind).

Therefore, the findings answered feminist critics on the limitation of economic empowerment, by showing that economic empowerment was not only working as a strategic approach but also the realistic way and breakthrough to other aspects of women's empowerment. In this case, just like the 'participation' concept which is not

seen as a threat to authority, economic empowerment is considered ‘relevant’ to the needs of the beneficiaries, particularly in promoting resilience of the coastal community. Economic empowerment was seen as a way, process, and outcome in order to deal with existing challenges of power relations which women had to contend with.

6.3.4 Reflection of the Intertwined Aspects of Empowerment

As this study found, first, the RCL project has introduced particular languages and concepts to beneficiaries, such as gender equality, empowerment, participation, business logics, community forum, market, production, management, teamwork, and so on. However, as argued by Alsop et al. (2006) and Cornwall (2016), women have their own perceptions of empowerment. For example, with regard to the economic groups, these women would prioritise harmony within the groups and social solidarity. On the other hand, Oxfam expected that through the RCL Project, the groups can upgrade their business scale and become a real entrepreneurship by thinking strategically about aspects such as business expansion, profits, standardised products.

Secondly, empowerment is understood based on perceptions and priorities of the beneficiaries (Sweetman, 2004; Young, 1997). Although the RCL project was somehow intended to promote the spirit of entrepreneurship to the beneficiaries, it seems as if, during the five-year period of the project, the project has created and strengthened social solidarity through social enterprise where members care for each other and stay to support each other, even for daily and social needs. Capital and assets owned and earned by the groups are not necessarily used for business expansion.

As long as they can continue doing what they are doing and earn what they have earned all this time, the beneficiaries consider this situation sufficient. In addition, some beneficiaries or members of the economic groups would prefer to sell snacks and daily needs in their own kiosks, and buy organic products from the groups’ leaders rather than having to take care of organic gardening. For them, organic farming in the coastal area is very challenging as it requires highly labour intensive works and take a long time to harvest the products.

Thirdly, empowerment is conditional to the existing surroundings (Cho et al., 2013; Grabe, 2012; Kabeer, 1999a; Nussbaum, 2000). The conditions include government support and policies, private sector (markets, traders) involvement, particularly with

regard to quality control, distributing and marketing the products. In this case, the district government has been promoting social enterprise in the village. The challenges are the lack of assistance and situational facilitation by the government. For example, the government would visit the groups only when particular villages and groups received prestigious awards from the National Government or international recognition; and visits from foreigners. In such particular situations, some government officials would identify themselves and state that they had contributed to the success of the groups. Sometimes the assistance was used as political tool to get votes from the people.

All in all, the three aspects of empowerment (personal, relational, and multidimensional) are relatively intertwined aside of individually affecting women's perceptions of empowerment through their involvement in the development project (Everett & Charlton, 2014; Rowlands, 1999). In addition, based on the findings of the research, there are internal and external factors which influence these perceptions. Internal factors consist of things such as knowledge, awareness, willingness, capacity, and commitment and the responsibility of each individual woman. The internal factors also relate to domestic conditions such as family support, local culture, and existing norms with regard to gender relations and equality.

The external factors represent matters such as government policy, treatment of and relations with authorities, local politics (elections), culture and values, external actors and development intervention projects (for example, Oxfam, local NGO people, and facilitators from outside the village). Both internal and external factors are intertwined along with women's intersectionality according to their background which relates to the complex aspects of empowerment. This all in all influences how women perceive empowerment and how they are empowered through the development project.

The research found the importance of making empowerment and development interventions relevant and contextual to women. In relation to that, Connel (1999), Kabeer (1999a), and Kitzinger (2004) suggest relevant and contextual development interventions are crucial to enable sustainability of the positive outcomes of the project (Connel, 1999; Kabeer, 1999a; Kitzinger, 2004). Moreover, sustainability ideally should be maintained by the beneficiaries as a reflection of the sense of belonging to what they have earned from the project and the relevance of the project to their needs. Sustainability is also possible as the project beneficiaries share what they have obtained with non-beneficiaries of the project, thus the wider society.

6.4. Conclusion

Having the selected stories of empowerment is valuable in learning more in-depth from a few women and their personal experiences to illustrate broader contexts and processes of transformation. As mentioned, these stories are not meant to homogenise women's pathways of empowerment. These stories reflected personal aspect of empowerment which are useful to understand other aspects of empowerment, including the relational and multidimensional aspects of empowerment which are significant in this study.

As discussed, there are similar and different stories of transformation' processes which the selected women beneficiaries reflected. In general, women perceived empowerment as being able to earn and spend their own income, help the household economy, and participate in the public meetings. Women also shared similar perceptions of empowerment by referring to their involvement in the economic groups. In short, their stories show the personal, relational, and multidimensional aspects of empowerment.

These stories have influenced and shaped their perceptions of empowerment particularly after they were exposed to and involved in the project. The ways they perceive and practice empowerment are also shaped by the existing contexts in which they live as well as their personal processes of transformation and their relationships with others. The research also highlights that women have different perceptions of empowerment and how they are empowered due to their experiences and background.

In addition to the internal factors, this chapter also highlights the importance of external factors in influencing women's perceptions of empowerment and facilitating women's empowerment. Some of the external factors are family support and enabling social, economic, political, and natural environments along with social relations. Women's perceptions are also influenced by how women perceived the relevance of the project to their needs, especially in promoting women's empowerment.

Furthermore, the findings of the research showed that Oxfam and its local partners approached women's empowerment in the RCL Project based on the existing contexts in the project area, not to mention personal, relational, collective, multidimensional, and multilevel aspects of empowerment. Empowerment is both process and outcome, which goes through several sequences, which are unique to those who experience it. The project also introduced the multidimensional aspect of empowerment which affected women beneficiaries. Women started to be aware of gender relations and gender equality through the gender training provided by Oxfam. They also experienced

economic empowerment as they learned about entrepreneurship and organisation from the economic groups.

In short, women's empowerment requires both enabling internal and external environments. In addition, development intervention, along with the personal, relational, and multidimensional aspects of empowerment, has a significant influence on women's perceptions of empowerment after their involvement in the project. The next chapter will further discuss the influence of development intervention by linking this chapter and the previous chapter on the practice of aid relations in the RCL Project.

Chapter 7. Effects of Development Intervention on Women's Perceptions of Empowerment

7.1. Introduction

This chapter argues that development interventions affect women's perceptions of empowerment significantly through development projects. It also underlines the importance of having a common concern for gender mainstreaming in the institutions, human resources policy, and activities of related development agencies prior to conducting programmes or projects which involve women. The chapter links to the previous chapter on the practice of aid relations in the RCL Project and women's perceptions of empowerment after their involvement in the project. The chapter also highlights the 5Cs and 4As of empowerment in linking aid relations and women's empowerment. In this case, the donor and executing agencies provided opportunities and resources for women to actualize their self and collective agency while at the same time changing their social status and improving their gender relations at familial, community, and governmental levels.

This chapter will begin with a review of the literature on the influence of development interventions on beneficiaries' perceptions of empowerment. It will be followed by a discussion of the findings of this study which also relates to the discussion in the literature on the influence of development interventions. These findings relate to the introduction and promotion of development concepts through development interventions, women's ability to balance gender relations through aid relations, and different perceptions of empowerment by women. This section will be followed by a discussion on rethinking aid relations and gender power relations in promoting and sustaining women's empowerment. To conclude this chapter, I argue that apart from the significant influence of development interventions as a breakthrough to promote women's empowerment, women's perceptions of empowerment, not to mention sustainability of the positive outcomes of the project, will depend highly on the positions and roles of women in the intersectionality, complexity, and dynamics of aid relations.

7.2. The Influence of Development Interventions on Beneficiaries' Perceptions

The literature on international aid, women, development, and empowerment has acknowledged the influence of development interventions on women's perceptions of empowerment. Development interventions bring positive impact on women beneficiaries as women were involved actively and intensively in the project, they started to build self-confidence and awareness of their self-efficacy, as well as collective awareness and solidarity in promoting women's empowerment.

Studies on Women's Savings Groups (WSGs) programmes of Save the Children (SC) in Bangladesh in 1994 (Naved, 1994) and the watershed programme by Accion Fraterna in Andhra Pradesh, India (Reddy, 2011) discussed in chapter 2 also confirmed positive impacts of development interventions. In this case, the practice of aid relations through a development project has enabled external actors (donor and executing agencies) to implement project activities and engage the beneficiaries.

As argued by Kabeer (1999b), development projects which bring collective awareness will result in a social and economic transformation, such as through the equal wages in agricultural sectors. Collective awareness further promotes collective action which helps women to participate in the policy process and to connect with the current issues in society. Therefore, it can be seen that development interventions have brought positive impact in increasing women's awareness, participation, and leadership in the public spheres.

Therefore, it is crucial to have positive discrimination and intervention such as in the form of introducing equal pay in the project where development actors have authority. This kind of positive intervention leads to women's confidence to demand equal wages in agricultural sectors and participation in public spheres, improving their gender relations with others, not only men at the familial level but also authorities at various levels. Positive discrimination is also possible because the executing agencies also involve the government both as partners and recipients of international aid.

As argued by Alsop et al. (2006), the empirical evidence associating empowerment with positive development outcomes has been strongest in the political sphere. Increasing women's participation in the policy process is often one of the targeted outcomes of development projects, particularly in the political sphere. Although for example, the intervention itself applies the economic approach in nature as shown in the RCL

Project, it also brings impact to another dimension, including women's political awareness and participation.

Development interventions should focus more on fostering an understanding of common oppression and, informed by this awareness, shaping mutually beneficial approaches, activities, and interventions. These will continue to break down gendered prejudices and will eventually form the basis of healthier relationships between women and men through empowering activities. For example, by building alliances between women and men to deal with common issues. These approaches will have to be highly participatory, and concentrate on developing practical examples of the uses of power which focus on using 'power to' (where you situate yourself relative to other people, to issues, and to solutions), rather than 'power over' (where you situate other people). (Rowan-Campbell, 1999, p. 24)

In relation to efforts to promote gender equality, the donor and executing agencies can facilitate interactions between the government and local partners, as well as the beneficiaries and other stakeholders according to the project's framework. Based on this case of positive discrimination and the participatory approach of the development project, it can be seen that existing literature has highlighted the influence of development intervention in providing an enabling environment and relevant resources to empower women, thus assisting women in balancing their gender power relations with others in the family and in the community. As Rowan-Campbell (1999, p. 24) suggests:

With regard to aid relations, gender and development, development logic perceive empowerment as a dynamic process where the interaction of agency and opportunity structure has the potential to improve the capacity of individuals or groups in making effective choices. This concept has similarities to Sen's notion of expanding human capabilities and freedoms by focusing on people's ability to "enhance the substantive choices they have" (Sen, 1997, as cited in Alsop et al., 2006, pp. 15-16).

Empowerment requires an opportunity structure which enables people to translate their asset base into the effective agency, through more equitable rules and expanded entitlements. For example, people with a formal education can make use of their new skills, confidence, and knowledge to participate in the local level decision making when

there are available opportunities in the planning process. In short, at the programme and project level, development interventions can influence opportunity structures and agency through various sectoral interventions and activities (Alsop et al., 2006).

As argued by Hennink et al. (2012), opportunity structure provides enabling environment for empowerment. As found in this study, development intervention could provide the opportunity structure for women's empowerment and participation in meaningful ways. As the donor and the executing agencies design the project framework, they have the authority to select the major targeted beneficiaries and the approaches of the projects. For example, this could happen by creating income-generating groups which are mostly comprised of women; promoting local women champions; providing capacity building training for women; facilitating women to participate in public meetings; conducting gender training for women and men; and so on.

In order to promote women's empowerment, feminist such as Rowand-Campbell (1999) argues that it is crucial to ensure that related institutions and human resources also have gender awareness such as by institutionalising and practising it in internal development organisations to make an effective development project. Mainstreaming refers to the systematic application of a gender-aware vision to challenge the operation of patriarchy to corporate activities, government and agency policies, and to the introduction of routine management procedures to ensure implementation.

Gender mainstreaming has emerged as a strategy for addressing these issues, relevant to all states and public institutions. Gender mainstreaming and national machinery to ensure gender mainstreaming and gender equality are applied in public policy have been part of an international commitment as stipulated in the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions (1997). In addition, training and particular projects provided by global institutions and political pressure from international NGOs and the women's movements have also played crucial roles in pushing the gender mainstreaming agenda of the states forward (Rai, 2008).

On the other hand, there are several barriers to implementing gender mainstreaming in government. The foremost barrier is a lack of understanding by policy makers of the strategy itself and of the role of focal units on gender issues. Therefore, it is crucial to have change agents at the executive level to introduce change and at the operational level to ensure its sustainability and realisation in the policy (Rowand-Campbell, 1999).

This point to promote gender mainstreaming is critical in highlighting development in women and also in the wider context of relations between women and their surroundings, including workplace or houses where the challenges of gender bias remain fragile and justified. Therefore, as Rowand-Campbell (1999) highlighted, it is important to re-examine approaches for efforts to promote gender mainstreaming to make sure development with women is effective, productive, and inclusive.

I also think gender mainstreaming is essential to the sustainability, relevance, and sense of belonging of the project. Involving women and men in the development project with a gender perspective is crucial to support the efforts to promote women's empowerment, especially recalling the challenge of the hierarchical nature of both society and within the aid industry.

Furthermore, it cannot be denied that relativity of gender mainstreaming must also be taken into account as each environment in each project area has its own contexts and unique background, where the universalism approach or understanding can fit in well. What remains a challenge is whether the existing pressures and supports internally and externally can be effective, inclusive, and sustainable in representing the interests of women as beneficiaries and active participants in development intervention.

Apart from acknowledging the positive impacts of development interventions on women's empowerment, post-development authors also criticise the dominant positions of the donors (Killick, 2008, Fowler, 2008, and Mwaura-Muiru, 2010). The recipient government does have the authority to give license for the implementation of the project within its sovereign boundary. However, in practice, it is clear that the recipient government is still in a relatively weak position as they are not always engaged in the initial stage of the project design. This has meant that not every development intervention's agenda and targets are in line with the government's programmes or matched with the partnering technical ministries dealing with the donor and executing agencies.

In addition, as argued by post-colonial authors, such as Friedmann (1992), Crewe and Harrison (1998), Baaz (2005), and Tandon (2008), the aid industry is also a heterogeneous industry, where development professionals have different perceptions in interpreting and implementing the framework of the projects. A development project can come with one big umbrella to reach particular objectives, but along the way it is implemented in various approaches as long as it is still within the framework of the

project. For example, in the case of Oxfam's RCL Project, it was conducted mostly with the economic approach as it aimed to promote the resilience of the coastal community.

On the other hand, Oxfam also worked on another aspect, such as women's empowerment in the project area, by undertaking the gender training and creating economic groups which mostly comprised of women. Furthermore, Oxfam also targeted governance by promoting good governance through the facilitation of the public meetings which were inclusive, particularly in accommodating women's participation in development planning processes.

Furthermore, authors also highlight challenges in promoting women's empowerment through development interventions. One of them is the use of deficit framing (Heilman & Barocas Alcott, 2011) which frame women as weak beneficiaries. With such a deficit-based framing, beneficiaries might expect to be seen as incapable of taking responsibility and ownership of the programmes (Willett et al., 2013). This situation of putting women as weak beneficiaries is common, especially in framing women in the logics of development project's proposal to ensure the donors about the convincing rationale of the project. The practice of deficit-framing of women is also supported by the results of the initial assessment in the project. Some of them are the reality for women as they make up the majority of the community and given women's difficulties due to poverty and discrimination in society.

Another concern is the simple translation of gender issues into income-generating development projects for women and the labelling of certain projects as 'women's projects', which will not be sufficient to transform the marginal place assigned to women in development (Kabeer, 1999b). This is also why development interventions must concern the contexts of the project area, particularly on the gender analysis consideration from the beginning of the project. It is crucial to ensure that the project will be well-equipped in promoting gender equality and transforming social constructions which are unfavourable for women's empowerment and meaningful participation in various ways and different aspects.

With regard to aid relations and women's empowerment, the following sections will discuss the findings of this study, particularly how development project contributes to women's empowerment and its influences on women's perceptions of empowerment.

7.3. The Impacts of Development Project on Women's Empowerment

Through their relations with others during the project period, women were exposed to development concepts (gender, empowerment, participation, partnership, and so on), which made them aware of thinking critically about their relations with others. For example, their relations with husbands, parents, local authorities, the private sector, and even amongst themselves in the economic groups. These experiences and familiarity with those development ideas further made women beneficiaries of the RCL Project become confident through various capacity building exercises and their contribution to the economic groups, women's forums, and public meetings. Women began to play active roles especially starting in the second year of the project.

Although, based on the literature, empowerment is multidimensional (Luttrell et al., 2009), in practice, women's relations with Oxfam and its local partners influenced the way they responded to the questions on empowerment according to their involvement in the project. Women's expressions of empowerment did not always follow the ideal understanding of the multidimensional aspect of empowerment. In this case, the project has introduced empowerment through an economic approach, which affected the significance of economic empowerment on women's perceptions of empowerment.

Furthermore, the practice of aid relations in the project also framed how women played their roles as the majority of the beneficiaries, the local champions, and the drivers of the project. For example, women were able to be productive and earn their own income. As expressed by Raodah, Leader of *Mutiara Desa* Group, Pangkep District, "Women can have other activities, social gatherings, earn their own income, and spend the income based on their preferences." Gustiani, another group leader, said:

A women we can earn our own income, keep our own money and by our own clothes. Previously, women did not have any activities, just took a nap and did nothing. By earning my own income, I have become confident to speak up in public. As I organise the group, I have also become full spirited in working together with the members. (Gustiani, Leader of Cahaya Soreang, Pangkep District)

Therefore, economic empowerment was seen as a starting point for women's empowerment in public spheres, including their participation in the village meetings both as individuals and parts of the groups. Oxfam and its local NGO partners also

facilitated the partnership between women (economic groups), the government, and private sector to expand the economic scale of the groups' activities. Through these activities, Oxfam expected women to be able to gain confidence by earning their own income through the economic groups prior to participating in the policy processes. Therefore, women could be empowered economically, politically, and socially.

Through the project, Oxfam also promoted gender equality in every aspect of life through gender training both for the beneficiaries and the personnel of the project. As argued by Rowand-Campbell (1999), gender training is considered to be the most powerful tool of change. It is only through training and sensitising both women and men that the personal can be made political.

Introduction of gender equality also reflects the relational aspect of empowerment. This aspect of empowerment was also reflected in the gender relations between women and men (husbands). Syarifah, Leader of *Kalaroang* and *Siangkalingadae* Group, Pangkep District, confirmed this by saying, "Husbands support women to have activities outside the home. They also help in the economic groups' activities. Women are tying the seaweed and assembling fishnets, while the men are helping with the seaweed planting."

On the question of gender relations, another beneficiary, Jumriyah, Secretary of *Api-api* Group, Maros District, stated:

According to cultural norms, women take care of kids and home. After joining Oxfam activities and gender training, I asked my husband step by step to help out if I was out to take care of the kids, their homework, and our ducks.

As men became aware of the advantages of having women involved in the economic groups, they were also more willing to support the women and help them in domestic chores. In addition to introducing gender equality, the RCL Project also introduced development concepts to the beneficiaries through the project activities and the practices of aid relations. The project also endorsed women's participation in public spheres. In short, as women became accustomed to the development concepts and involved in the development practices brought by the development project, they became empowered and capable. Therefore, they are more likely to be able to participate in

public spheres and contribute to society as the practice of aid relations also provide opportunity structure for them to deal with gender relations in their community.

Women are eager to participate actively in public meetings representing women's concerns as expressed by one woman beneficiary below.

Due to the changes after the project, it is impossible to keep the women at home. Now, women have the willingness to make saving and participate in public meetings. In the past, women were afraid of the development plans' meetings as they didn't have knowledge about meetings. They were afraid to be asked during the meetings. Nowadays, more women are eager to come to the village meetings. For example, 11 members came to discuss fishery issues, only 1 male member of the group joined the meeting. (Harlina, Treasurer of Pantai Bira Group, Barru District)

Through their economic groups' contribution to the economy of the community, women also earned acknowledgement from the government which was rewarding for them and inspired other women and their community. Through their participation in the project activities, especially the gender training sessions, they also realised that they had been discriminated and belittled before the project came in.

In addition, through the knowledge, awareness, and capacity facilitated through the project, both women and men beneficiaries also learned from each other and shared information with non-beneficiaries of the project. As Esteva & Prakash (1998) point out, common awareness of women and men is crucial to promote cooperation between men and women in reaching common agenda, including women's empowerment and poverty alleviation. This was also reflected in the RCL Project with Oxfam's conditionality on the economic groups to practice social commitment through the revolving in-kind mechanism not only to the beneficiaries of the project or members of the groups but also to non-beneficiaries. This is to say that the beneficiaries became both local champions and role models for the surrounding community with their achievement after being involved in the RCL Project.

Based on the findings of this study, development intervention has proven to be an effective way to support and facilitate women to balance gender power relations. Development interventions, such as the RCL Project, have enabled women to engage with various actors and different interests at various levels. In this case, the

development project created aid relations which facilitated an enabling environment for women's participation according to the project framework designed by Oxfam.

With their participation in the project, women gained self-confidence and collective solidarity to raise their concerns in front of the public. These were also reflected in the quotes of women below. Their testimonies highlight that as the women became knowledgeable and skilful, their confidence both as individuals and collectives, grew and they became confident to participate in public meetings.

Women have become active and productive. We are also able to speak in public now. Women have proposed a health service unit in the village. We also have skills that we can share with other women (non-members) in other villages too. (Harnia, Member of Nelayan Bersatu Group, Maros District)

I used to be shy but now I am confident to speak up and attend public meetings. Our group participated in the village meeting in 2013. We asked for reconstruction of the road, establishment of a health service, and wells for water from the rain. We don't want to sit at the back, so people can hear us. (Salma, Secretary of Ujung Parappa Group, Maros District)

For women, being empowered is not only about taking the benefits of the development intervention for themselves, but also about sharing with their surroundings, including the non-beneficiaries in other villages. In addition, they learned to participate not only actively in the public meetings, but also to know the sort of strategic issues to raise in such forums. As suggested by Fatmawati, Secretary of *Assyura* Group, Pangkep District, "Don't ask what the people want, because they surely have a lot of needs. That was why I prefer to ask about critical issues, such as the seaweed's price."

Furthermore, through facilitation by Oxfam and its local partners, women are now able to earn their own income, participate in income-generating activities, contribute to the household needs, network with others, and communicate with the authorities. Above all, women showed how they are able to position themselves in relation to others (including their husbands, family, other beneficiaries, the authorities, executing agencies, and other relevant stakeholders). Women are aware that they have the potentials and the capability to speak up and participate in the public sphere and to contribute to society.

Women's increasing confidence in public participation is also in line with the arguments in the literature on the positive impacts of development interventions. As highlighted by Alsop et al. (2006), development projects have made women's participation in groups and women's mobility become common phenomena in the project area.

The impact of the RCL Project on women's confidence in public participation was also in line with the impact of the watershed programme in India, where women's active participation and leadership in the public meetings have been encouraged and appreciated both by the authority and the community. Women also became confident to share their concerns in public and in front of the government officials (Reddy, 2011).

Furthermore, the impact was also reflected in WSGs programmes of Save the Children in Bangladesh, where women's economic contribution to the family has been seen as the most crucial factor which allowed them to participate in the project. In short, economic empowerment experienced by women has brought them respect and better gender power relations within their families and the wider community (Naved, 1994).

With its credibility and expertise in working on development issues, and good relations and engagement with the government, particularly through heads of districts and local development planning agency offices in the four project area, Oxfam also obtained support from the local authorities to implement the RCL project and engage various official divisions, such as sea and fisheries, cooperatives, trade and industry, and agriculture.

The good relations between Oxfam and the Local Government were also expressed by several local government officials. Abdul Ghaffar, Head of Local Community Empowerment Agency of Pangkep District, stated, "The government had good relations with Oxfam. We invited Oxfam and other NGOs, academics, and our technical units for programme synergy. We supported and complemented Oxfam's project as it was relevant to our development programmes."

Below is another opinion from a local official about the local government relationship with Oxfam.

Our unit was invited both as participants and resource personnel of the project activities. Oxfam also invited and informed the government in their synergy meetings. The RCL Project was in line with our empowerment programmes. The project also had additional components which we

considered as an added point.” (Sulkaf S. Latief, Head of Cultivation Affairs of Fisheries and Sea Technical Unit, South Sulawesi Province)

Furthermore, women’s engagement in the project’s activities have raised women’s awareness, increased their knowledge and skills individually and collectively on economic empowerment. The project also introduced and promoted other dimensions of empowerment, such as politics, social, and the environmental. This positive impact of the project was also confirmed by Nurhayati, Community Organizer of Tamanlanrea Group, below.

The Oxfam project was excellent. I participated in the training and learning from zero no matter what my position I had in the group. I learned about public speaking and gender which made me confident to speak in public. Women participated actively in the development plan’s meeting in 2013 as we had critical awareness from the RCL advocacy and created solidarity amongst the members. (Nurhayati, Community Organizer of Tamanlanrea Group, Takalar District)

The egalitarian relations built between Oxfam, local partners, the women beneficiaries, and other stakeholders are also the important matters which made women feel comfortable to raise their concerns and participate in a meaningful way. As the women became aware of the deficit and negative frame of their social status, they experienced significant transitions from shy and weak members of the society to confident, critical, and active actors in the community both as individuals and parts of the collectives through their involvement in the project.

They also have sufficient knowledge, information, and achievement which they can share with others. Economic empowerment, particularly the ability to have activities outside the home, having skills and knowledge, and to earn, keep, and spend their own income was often and clearly mentioned by women as the foremost factor which made them confident in dealing with others. In short, economic empowerment has been the most crucial factor which built the sense of empowerment experienced by the women.

The men and the local authorities also acknowledged the valuable contribution of these women after their involvement in the project. They were also proud of the knowledge and skills that these women had earned, not to mention their achievement in

contributing to the economy and in receiving awards from the government. In short, aid power relations and development interventions, on the one hand, created power gaps between those who had the resources and authority to undertake the project and the recipient government, between the leaders and members of the groups, and between the beneficiaries and the authorities, as well as the intersectionality between them.

In short, the findings showed that development intervention had significant influence on women's perceptions of empowerment. In addition, the 5Cs and 4As of empowerment are clearly reflected in both the impacts of the project on women beneficiaries in various aspects of life and their power relations with others.

These 5Cs and 4As of empowerment are also reflected in the various perceptions of empowerment as revealed by women in this study. The next section will further discuss women's perceptions of empowerment in relation to their engagement in the RCL Project.

7.4. Women's Perceptions of Empowerment

As discussed in chapter 6, women in this study shared various perceptions of empowerment and the development project regardless of the knowledge they learned from the project. A number of factors may influence women's perceptions of empowerment, including: recipients' characteristics (both economic and non-economic criteria); policies of the host government; the ability of the people to participate in the development process; and rules, norms, and practices within specific cultural contexts, such as classic patriarchal system (Alsop et al., 2006; Atwood, 2005; Head et.al., 2015).

Based on the findings of the study, I developed the conceptualisation of empowerment with the key elements of the 5Cs (capacity, capability, confidence, choice, and commitment) and the 4As (awareness, achievement, acceptance, and acknowledgement). This framework specific to the case study as it highlights significant dimensions of empowerment according to the findings. These dimensions are intertwined. They also speak to the particular context of the research and the literature on women's empowerment as these dimensions reflect the personal, relational, and multidimensional aspects of empowerment, particularly with regard to women's participation in development interventions.

In this study, women's empowerment and their sense of empowerment were reflected in women through their choices and decisions they made in using the income they had earned; in managing the economic groups; and in getting external support to sustain and develop their economic groups. The leader of *Mutiara Desa* Group, Raodah, said:

Our group was initially created as a revolving commitment from Pita Aksi group. However, due to the challenge of the water condition in our village, we decided to change our activities from organic farming to food processing. We are still planting depending on the weather and the water. The group uses my cooking utensils and my place for production activities. There is no fee for the members as we thought it would be better to get the rewards in other forms, such as cooking pans so that we are not using up the money.

In short, although Oxfam's expected women to reach a stage on the business ladder higher than subsistence, not all women beneficiaries shared similar views. Furthermore, various perceptions of women's empowerment are also influenced by different agencies, resources, and achievements that existed before the RCL Project came.

7.4.1. Valuing Social Assets More

With regard to the RCL Project, women had their own perceptions in making use of the income they earned from the economic groups. For some of them, profit is seen as a significant form of social solidarity to help others who are in need, apart from also learning about the importance of saving the profit as an investment for the expansion of their economic groups. This is not to say that women were not aware of the profit aspect of their income-generating activities in the groups. They were aware of the benefit of keeping their groups' activities ongoing and productive so that they could increase their income and stay productive. In addition, with an increasing financial income, they could also expand their activities to a wider market and earn more to contribute to the family and the community.

However, values such as social solidarity and caring amongst each other were seen as more crucial. In this case, women expressed their excitement in participating in the

economic groups as a form of social gathering in which they enjoyed the opportunity to catch up with each other or the latest issues in the neighbourhood. Therefore, economic consideration was not the only motive which drove women to participate in the project activities. In this case, Nurhayati, Community Organizer of *Tamanlanrea* Group, Takalar District, “The economic groups make people closer. We have better solidarity, awareness and caring on health (not cooking water from the rain anymore), as we have become well-informed.”

The social capital that can be used to support social institutions or activities was seen as an unintended but positive impact on the creation of the economic groups, as expressed by Oxfam below.

The project has created human and social capital by creating the economic groups and in increasing confidence of beneficiaries in the first 2-3 years, although economic output was not that significant. (Dini Widiastuti, Director of Economic Justice Goal Lead, Oxfam GB Indonesia)

Thus, it was common to see that some groups were running based on the preference of the members, while there were also other groups which upgraded their business model. This can be seen from the statements of women beneficiaries. Sitti Rahmah, Leader of *Pita Aksi* Group, Pangkep District, said, “I continue doing the organic farming with my family and motivating the members. We sell our products by the highway (Jalan Poros) and keep going with or without Oxfam.”

Meanwhile, Gustiani, Leader of *Cahaya Soreang* from the same district, stated:

Production depends on orders and members' activities as well. There are no activities when members attend wedding receptions. We will continue the activities although we are just selling through nearby stalls with standard packaging and no label. We also ask assistance from Okko, a young village facilitator to bring our products to another store near the city, Cahaya Ujung.

7.4.2. Flexible Economic Activities and Groups' Management

In practice, there were also women who were not being overly strict about running the groups' activities. For example, they would take days off if there were social events, such as wedding receptions where they helped and/or just wanted to enjoy the entertainment at the events. They would sometimes not join the groups' activities because they wanted to go to the capital city of the province with other group members.

I don't mind working alone. Other members might come along and help. Others just informed me that they would join my husband who drove our neighbours to attend their daughter's graduation to Makassar so that they could go out and enjoy the city too. (Raodah, Leader of Mutiara Desa Group, Pangkep District)

In short, the economic groups ran their activities flexibly without having strict and disciplined agenda or targets. However, they did have routine days for activities but the leaders were being quite moderate if the members came up with those kinds of excuses. The leaders would even just continue the activities with some of the available members or even by themselves.

On the other hand, such flexibility also happened because the groups had notes on who was working, what they were doing, when and for how long to record each member's contribution to the groups and their profit sharing. Thus, apart from Oxfam's initial expectation to promote entrepreneurship or a business ladder to the beneficiaries, the RCL Project appears to have also resulted in a strong sense of social capital and solidarity amongst women.

7.4.3 Dependence on External Assistance

Apart from the fact that these economic groups had their own savings from their activities, the beneficiaries would expect to get more external assistance to support their productive activities and to expand their business rather than thinking to use the groups'

savings, even though the amount of money needed for the groups' assets was not that large.

As expressed by women beneficiaries in the following testimonies, although they were quite confident that the groups would be independent after the project ended, they also raised the groups' needs for continuing assistance from Oxfam. Harlina, Treasurer of *Pantai Bira* Group, Barru District, said, "The project is already good, but if it is continued, we need more advocacy or facilitation because we are still crawling in this year."

In addition, Syarifah, Leader of *Siangkalingadae* and *Kalaroang* Group, Pangkep District, expressed, "We still need assistance in making the proposals. We will also continue to revolve our saving to non-beneficiaries and those who are in need by arranging the percentage for saving in our groups." In short, there is still a strong dependency and need for external assistance to sustain the activities of the economic groups. Moreover, some women beneficiaries in this study considered keeping the groups' savings for social needs rather than for the groups' market expansion.

Women have become confident in conveying their messages especially as they are coming with other women from the economic groups or the coastal women's network. On the other hand, it must be noted that increasing women's participation was also enabled through external intervention by Oxfam and its local partners which tried to create an enabling environment, such as good governance and sufficient resources to promote women's empowerment and women's participation.

Furthermore, as explored in the previous chapter, it should be noted that there are always intertwined relations between internal (personal, familial) and external (community, government, NGOs) factors which influenced how women position themselves in the intersectionality of gender relations as well as within aid relations. In short, the positionality and intersectionality which women experienced have influenced how they perceived empowerment in the multidimensional aspects.

The dependency on external assistance, in addition to the concerns of the use of deficit framing and labelling of 'women's only' development projects also make it crucial to rethink aid relations and gender power relations in promoting women's empowerment by looking at and connecting the practice of aid relations and women's personal, relational, and multidimensional aspects of empowerment as can be understood through their unique transformation processes.

7.5. Rethinking Aid Relations and Gender Power Relations in Promoting and Sustaining Women's Empowerment

The discussion in this section will cover several important points which are useful to understand more about the practice of aid relations, particularly with regard to women's empowerment efforts and understanding the influence of development intervention on women's perceptions of empowerment. The points highlighted in this section below will look at the practice of aid relations in development intervention, power relations and empowerment, development intervention for women's empowerment, and momentum to improve the practice of aid relations for aid effectiveness and relevance for the women beneficiaries.

7.5.1. Aid Relations in Development Interventions

Recalling the positions and perceptions of related stakeholders of the RCL Project, it can be seen that the government and Oxfam shared similar concerns regarding the dynamics of aid relationships. Some of the involved concerns are: exit strategy; internal and external dynamics; coordination and cooperation; project relevance; different interpretations of empowerment and gender mainstreaming; tendency towards economic empowerment within the project intervention or in interpreting women's empowerment; different targets of development interventions; sustainability and ownership; selection of project area, and engagement of local stakeholders from both the government and civil society. Furthermore, based on the interviews with the government officials, it can be seen that the Government of Indonesia had been thinking about the right mechanism to manage and coordinate aid relations.

Apart from the changes in the practice of international aid which aim to promote aid effectiveness, the research found that the Indonesian government did not have a strong position. As the recipient government of the project, they were not fully engaged from the initial stage of the proposal making to the donors.

The recipient government is still in a weak position with regard to development aid, in which the global power asymmetric relations remain strong (Baaz, 2005; Crawford, 2003; Nair, 2013). The lack of involvement of the recipient government in the formulation of the project proposal and design affect its ownership and commitment with the development interventions brought by the donors (Sato et al., 2011). This situation also strengthens the hierarchical nature of international aid where the donors can justify their intervention by applying external standards according to the donors' criteria, thus creating superiority-inferiority relationships between the donors and the recipients.

In relation to the powerful position of the donors and the executing agencies, I strongly agree with the arguments of Buffardi (2013), Koggel (2008) and Nair (2013), with regard to the tendency of development interventions to position women as the objects or targets in their designs or frameworks due to limited time and resources, and the conditions in the project area to implement participatory approaches at the early stage of the project design. Furthermore, some literature (Cornwall et al., 2006; Luttrell et al., 2009; Rowlands, 1999) also points out critically how development interventions can reduce the complex nature of empowerment due to the approaches and the way development projects interpret the meaning of empowerment in a specific dimension, as seen from the economic approach of the RCL Project.

In addition, aside from the critiques on development concepts and empowerment, it seems like development agencies still tend to see women as weak and powerless victims. There are still remaining challenges faced by post-development theorists and postcolonial feminists to identify language and assumptions which can still be found in current development interventions. With regard to Oxfam's RCL Project, examination of existing project documents shows that there is still a tendency to use the deficit framing as project rationale.

Nevertheless, as I argued previously, the inclusion of the deficit framing in the project proposal might need to be understood as part of the project justification to convince donors to support funding for projects. The implementation of development interventions which also includes a women's empowerment component is expected to recognise and enhance women's awareness of their equal rights as citizens to participate in the policy processes. Initially, development projects start with a baseline survey involving needs assessment and stakeholder mapping and analysis which also involve women to ensure the project's relevance. The types and sequences of project activities

also show how donors frame women's empowerment. In this case, the RCL Project focused on economic empowerment to enable women to gain confidence prior to participating in the policy processes. Therefore, women could be empowered politically, socially, and in other aspects of life.

7.5.2. Aid Power Relations and Empowerment

Postcolonial feminist works on empowerment have placed special concern on power relations, as explained by Ammy Allen's work on the three modalities of power. Namely, power over; power to; and power with (Koggel, 2008). Naila Kabeer (1999a) previously suggested 'power within' to enrich the modalities of empowerment. This was also in line with Rowland's argument on the personal aspect of empowerment which has to rest in individual empowerment for some people (Rowlands, 1999). Alsop et al. (2006) also underline that empowerment depend on women to make use of existing opportunities and resources to participate in meaningful ways in various activities in the public sphere.

Understanding these modalities of power are crucial in understanding the context of multileveled and multi-layered relations, as well as how these modalities of power can lead to women's individual empowerment and collective solidarity against the gender-constructed power relations amongst various stakeholders.

In relation to this study, efforts to promote empowerment should be put in a wider context, by linking power relations with efforts to promote women's empowerment. In this case, it is crucial for the donors and development agencies to consider complexity and dynamics of aid relations as well as the multidimensional aspect of empowerment in implementing development interventions, including the ones which concern women's empowerment.

This can be done by learning several lessons and challenges from various studies on development projects and women's empowerment lessons learned (Brahic & Jacobs, 2013; Cavalcanti, 2007; Leve, 2009). Amongst others are the need to back up women in leadership position along with the time to make a significant change and the need to have structural change, such as an enabling law to promote legal empowerment.

Appropriation of development concepts such as empowerment, although widely used, is confusing. The concept of empowerment has a rich and complex meaning, although it tends to have been interpreted and realised through a limited economic approach in development intervention. In this case, empowerment is promoted through income-generating activities, saving groups, and so on. However, economic empowerment is not sufficient to challenge the power structure and the local contexts which are discouraging for women's empowerment.

Furthermore, based on my observation during the fieldwork, interestingly, apart from the heavy-use of 'empowerment', in reality, although women were aware of the concept and its meaning, they did not use the development jargon that much. They would express empowerment as a state of being able to do something. In Indonesian, the words are '*bisa*' and '*dapat*'. For example, empowerment is about being able to have other activities outside the house; to participate actively in the public meetings; to raise concerns; to earn, keep, and spend their own income; and to contribute to the family's economy.

As I mentioned above, when I asked women about their perceptions of empowerment, they would tend to describe and associate it with their everyday life, not necessarily by saying the word 'empowerment', which is *pemberdayaan* or *berdaya* in Bahasa Indonesia. I deduced that this might be because of the formality or uncommon use of the word itself and their familiarity to use an ordinary word like 'can' or 'able' ('*bisa*', '*dapat*'). This also showed how women had their own way in using and expressing themselves in relation to women's empowerment and the state of being empowered as part of the participants of the development project. They also seemed to enjoy and feel more comfortable in reflecting their perceptions with their own words based on their experiences.

In relation to women's pathways, Leve (2009) argues that with their engagement in the development project and experiences in relating with others during the project period, women also have their own perceptions of empowerment. These perceptions are also affected by the local contexts where they live (culture, history, policy). As explained, women beneficiaries of the RCL Project have different perceptions of the economic groups and their assets, which they value more as the social capital which strengthens the social bonds and solidarity between the members.

7.5.3. Development Interventions and Women's Empowerment

As argued by Ottaway (2003), development interventions can work effectively and find relevance if the local contexts of the project area are considered before applying 'external' norms and values, if not standards. In relation to the importance of understanding contexts, Nussbaum (2000) highlights that support from authorities, particularly men, and the system are very crucial as the instruments of human functioning and capabilities in undertaking development intervention

Local contexts of the project area, such as the economic, social, political, historical, cultural contexts; and the intersectionality of actors and interests at various levels also present significant challenges for women. These aspects have shaped their preferences and actions accordingly, including with regard to empowerment. As discussed in chapter 6, different women have different perceptions of empowerment due to their experiences, backgrounds, and the intersectionality they encountered in the aid power relations in the development project.

Apart from their outside-home and income-generating activities, some women still showed reluctance to speak up when their husbands were around and comment on their responses to the research questions. Or, women would look at the men to somehow ask for permission and confirmation when responding to the questions. Body language such as when women sat behind the men and participated less in discussions also reflected how the work to promote the multidimensional aspect of women's empowerment is not finished yet.

On the other hand, there were also women who were very confident and comfortable enough to share their concerns in front of public meetings actively and critically. Usually, these women were the ones who had achieved higher education and jobs other than activities in the economic groups. Therefore, they were more outspoken and confident in speaking up in public, taking initiatives, and participating in various ways according to their capacities.

Those significant changes clearly showed how women in this study are able to manage their bargaining position with other actors within aid relations, not only with development agencies but also with their family, the community, and the local authority. Furthermore, they also have individual and collective awareness about discrimination against women which they had experienced. Eventually, this condition in

which women felt empowered has created collective solidarity and actualization to address their common concerns together.

In addition, change takes time, not to mention trust, engagement, and commitment, as well as ownership to keep the human justice and gender sensitiveness situation on track. We need to admit that external intervention especially with the right approach and good strategies, as well as sufficient power and influence, are needed to change the balance of power at community or targeted area, particularly when it comes to disadvantaged women. Based on the findings of this study, it is clear that external intervention is crucial as a breakthrough to challenge the power structures in the community, not only to promote good governance and community resilience through economic approaches, but also to promote women's empowerment.

It should be acknowledged that the donor and executing agencies had a relatively significant power over the recipient government, beneficiaries and other stakeholders of the project. This influence enabled the development workers to undertake positive interventions which created an opportunity for women to participate in the public sphere in a meaningful way. On the other hand, what remains important are also women's willingness, awareness, capacities, and commitment to undergo the processes to effect positive change in their livelihoods.

The willingness, awareness, capacities, and commitment of women can be realised by introducing women's issues and gender relations as part of the bigger pictures and promoting common and joint agenda of men and women and the wider society. In this case, gender awareness is crucial to raise the sense of ownership in which men and authorities and the surrounding community also perceive the positive impact of development projects and support women's engagement in development. In short, this is where the 5Cs and 4As are significantly important in promoting empowerment by understanding the local contexts.

Rethinking aid relations and gender power relations in promoting women's empowerment is also following up international commitment (the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action, and the Busan Declaration on Inclusive Aid) to make international aid relevant and contextual to the beneficiaries. The next section will discuss momentum to improve the practice of aid relations.

7.5.4. Momentum to Improve the Practice of Aid Relations

The changes and momentum in the practice of aid relations have also countered post-development and postcolonial feminist critics on international aid and development as the international commitments allowed rooms for constructive critiques even from internal organisations of development agencies. These commitments have also enabled the transition of beneficiaries from the passive and weak recipients to the active and critical participants, although this positive argument should be investigated thoroughly according to the contexts. Moreover, the positive or negative framing of the beneficiaries is intersubjective and relational as the framing depends on who defines the framing, in which capacity and position, and from what interests.

In addition, the challenges for development projects which also promote women's empowerment occur when existing support and enabling infrastructures and facilities are not available or there is a lack of them. Further to this challenges arise when there is a lack of good governance and enabling environments for women's empowerment. Local contexts such as religion and cultures, therefore, should also be added to consideration in the development interventions so that the stakeholders from donors, executors, local development workers and beneficiaries, and the local government would understand each other's roles, positions, and expectations from the very beginning of the development interventions.

There is also the challenge of time constraint. However, recalling the complex contextuality, as well as multi-layered and multileveled power relations (Allen, 1998; Koggel, 2008), it is important for donors to take as much time as they can in planning their development projects. It is better to take preventive action and be flexible and responsive to ensure the project's relevance. Moreover, it will be wise for development workers to allocate sufficient time and efforts to create a sense of ownership in the beneficiaries and to promote the sustainability of the positive outcomes of the project.

As argued by feminist thinkers on empowerment, such as Connel (1999), Rowand-Campbell (1999), Rowlands (2002), Baaz (2005), and Rai (2008), empowerment is a process as well as the end, in which there are participatory approaches and mutual learning from both sides (recipients and donors). Therefore, women's issues should be approached by encouraging a strengths-based approach (Willetts et al., 2013) while at

the same time being aware of the challenging environment, just like the management mapping of strength, weakness, opportunities, and threats if not challenges.

In addition, engaging women from the beginning of a development intervention is also an enabling process for women as they are able to share their concerns (needs, expectations, and perceptions) on the project. Therefore, women can position themselves and contribute in a meaningful way through various opportunity structures facilitated by the institutions of the aid industry.

7.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I argue that apart from the significant influence of development interventions as a breakthrough to promote women's empowerment, women's perceptions of empowerment and the sustainability of the positive outcomes of the project will depend highly on the positions and roles of women in the intersectionality, complexity, and dynamics of aid relations. This chapter argues that development intervention affects women's perceptions of empowerment significantly through development projects.

The chapter also underlines the importance of having a common concern for gender mainstreaming in the institution, human resources, policy, and activities of related development agencies prior to conducting programmes or projects which involve women. Furthermore, the research also found that development projects have brought awareness to women beneficiaries about power relations within the aid industry and gender relations in the community.

For example, in the past, women only followed the traditions and norms which were very patriarchal. In short, they followed what the structure (through men) told them to do. After they participated in the project, women began to learn about gender power relations and gender equality. They became aware of their rights, capacity, and potential. They were not afraid to participate in the public spheres. With their achievements from their involvement in the project, women experienced a change of status as they were acknowledged by their families, their surroundings, and the authorities. In short, these reflections of empowerment are reflected by both definitions of power which complement each other as they highlight various aspects of empowerment.

This chapter has served to link the chapter on the practice of aid relations in the RCL Project with the chapter on the transformation processes of women after their involvement in the project. In this case, the donor and the executing agencies provided the opportunity and resources for women to actualize themselves and to build their collective agency while at the same time changing women's social status and improving their gender relations at the familial, community, and governmental levels. Further discussion on the conclusion of this research, the contribution, recommendations for future research and my final will be discussed in the final chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

8.1. Introduction

This chapter starts by sharing my reflections on the research journey. It shows that the positionality and the multiple voices (various perceptions) of the researcher and the research participants involved in this research have influenced the way this thesis is written. This section will be followed by the discussion on the three main findings of this research. They are the ‘hopeful’ critique of aid; the importance of agency to promote women’s empowerment; and the need to implement reflexive development interventions. This section will be followed by contribution of this study to Development Studies, particularly with regard to the 5Cs and 4As of empowerment which I developed based on the findings of this study, and post-development and postcolonial feminist thinking of women, development aid and empowerment.

I will also inform the limitations of this research with regard to the scope of the research area, the activities which I observed during the fieldwork, and the research period. Then, recommendations for future studies on the related issues of women, aid, development, and women’s empowerment will follow. I conclude this chapter with some final remarks regarding the thesis, such as the importance of understanding personal, relational, and multidimensional aspects of empowerment in understanding women’s perceptions of empowerment after their involvement in the development project.

The remarks will also underline the significant influence of development interventions in shaping women’s perceptions of empowerment. The findings show that efforts to challenge gender inequality and to promote social transformation and women’s empowerment still require external interventions which should be contextual, inclusive, participatory and relevant to the needs of women beneficiaries.

8.2. Reflection on My Research Journey

I divide this section into three parts to discuss the reflection on my research journey. I start the discussion with my interest in the voice of women beneficiaries in development

projects. Then, I share what I learned from the research participants during the fieldwork. I end this section with a discussion on learning and practising reflexive and ethical research.

8.2.1 Starting from an Interest in the Voice of Women Beneficiaries

This thesis began with my interest and lack of knowledge about the positions of women beneficiaries within the aid industry. My previous professional experiences at a US democracy NGO and a private public policy research institute in Indonesia also pushed me to move further to undertake this academic research from a Development Studies point of view, informed by post-development and postcolonial feminist paradigms.

Noting the primary objective of this research, which was to understand how development interventions influenced women's perceptions of empowerment, it was relevant and reasonable for me to undertake this research using feminist perspectives. I was also challenged to do the research differently from the research I had previously done as I conducted ethnographic research for the first time for this thesis. Doing feminist research also meant that I had to pay more attention to the varied voices of women as each woman had unique experiences and ideas to express her perceptions of empowerment. This focus of attention on the voices of women was crucial as women were the main focus of this study.

Such a focus on women's voices was crucial to the understanding of women's perceptions of empowerment after their involvement in the project. During the fieldwork, I also learned that women's perceptions were closely related to their critical and inter-subjective understanding of the aid relations and development intervention in which they had participated. The findings of the research also triggered an interesting question for me about "Who is using whom?" within the relational aspect of complex and dynamic aid relations. This question was related to the local context and the responses of the beneficiaries of development aid to external assistance.

This critical question also reminded me of the social actor approach and the social aspects highlighted in the literature on international aid (Baaz, 2005; Green, 2002). The social actor approach is useful to understand the inevitable nature of aid power relations and the influence of the practice of aid relations on women's perceptions of

empowerment. This approach highlights that development actors are active participants who process information and communicate with other institutions and personnel (Baaz, 2005).

Furthermore, the research also made me reflect on the negative framing used in development interventions, which portrayed women as weak and passive development recipients (Heilman & Barocas Alcott, 2001; Sweetman, 2004; Willetts et al., 2013). Although deficit-framing was made based on the initial baseline for the project proposal, development actors should have noted that changes did take place and development itself was a dynamic process. Based on the findings of this research, women transformed from weak and passive recipients to active and critical participants in development after their involvement in the project.

Therefore, women beneficiaries should not be seen as weak and passive 'recipients' of development although they should not be assumed to have complete knowledge or understanding of their social situation (Young, 1997). Women also experienced transformations after their participation in development interventions (Naved, 1994). Their transformation processes were also related to their aid relations during the project period. Aid relations are the main key in the aid industry which reinforce the social aspect of aid (Eyben, 2006b). This aspect includes women's responses to various actors and interests involved in the development project.

Having my first experience in conducting feminist research and an ethnographic approach in this qualitative study brought a new experience for me both as a researcher and as a student. Previously for me, undertaking research was just a matter of applying procedures. For example, this involved starting with writing the proposal; obtaining Human Ethics Committee approval; dealing with the research permissions; conducting the field research; exiting from the research area; and writing up the research. However, I did find myself very thoughtful and careful in undertaking these stages as they were crucial parts of the research processes.

In addition, I found it was challenging and difficult, as well as interesting to conduct reflexive research. It was challenging as I had to try to be aware all the time of our subjective perceptions and interpersonal knowledge in giving meanings to various aspects related to this research, such as women's empowerment, cultural norms, participation, and gender relations. It was difficult as the multiple voices and realities, and thus various positionalities, also influenced my relationships with the research participants, especially how they reacted and responded to my research questions.

As mentioned in the section of positionality, there were some research participants who thought that I was part of Oxfam despite from my initial introduction as a student who was undertaking research. Sometimes they seemed to give highly positive comments about Oxfam's work; their relationships with Oxfam; and their achievement after their engagement with the project. I also felt that they were trying to be careful when I asked them about their feedback for the project and the project relevance. I sometimes wondered if they were concerned if their answers would affect their relationships with Oxfam as they felt that Oxfam had been very helpful by involving them in the project.

In addition, initially I thought by conducting ethnographic research, I could easily make a good connection with the women and promote women to be more active and critical in promoting women's empowerment in their community. Although I often witnessed women's confidence to share their stories about their participation in the village meetings or their critiques of the village leaders or local government, I found it frustrating when they would avoid sharing these critiques when they met the local officials in person.

I recalled that there was one time when Sitti Rahmah made a gesture to somehow remind me not to share their concerns over the government programmes. On the other hand, it was challenging and confusing, when they shared their concerns with me and kept involving me in their meetings to somehow raise their critiques on their behalf without being obvious but at the same time they also tried to hold me from being upfront and keep the critiques to themselves.

I also realized that sometimes the research participants did not always give straightforward answers. As Mason (2002) suggested, it is important for the researcher to structure the interviews in ways which are meaningful to the interviewees (and still relevant to their research). They are also trying to minimize their own role in the process of structuring and in the sequencing of the dialogue. To deal with this situation, I usually tried to bridge the conversation to bring the interview on track while at the same time also providing flexibility and space for the research participants to talk about other stories before getting into the answers.

Nevertheless, I saw this process as a way to build a connection with them and to understand their perceptions and the local contexts. I had to respect their time and contribution to the research by not applying my own time frame expectations to the research interviews as I also needed to build connections and good relations with them

to enable me to obtain information and learn from them. That was why I was already aware of this situation by investing more time during the interviews because the time was not only allocated for the interviews but also other conversations which were outside the topic of my research.

Apart from the challenging and confronting experience in practising reflexivity in this research, I also found the research processes interesting and joyful (Higgs, 2012). I also played an active role during my fieldwork as I observed and engaged myself in their group activities and conversations. I also visited the groups informally and regularly, even when there were no group activities.

I considered such social visits as a way to maintain good relations with the research participants and to have a better understanding of their contexts and stories. Fortunately, in my case, most research participants welcomed my visits. They even invited me to just come over to their houses, not merely to observe the group activities, but also to taste local meals at their homes. I even had off-side conversations such as subdistrict gossip about the lives of widows nearby, domestic violence, local politics, wedding rituals and receptions, and so on.

8.2.2 Learning from the Research Participants during Ethnographic Research

During the fieldwork, I also realised that through ethnographic research, I was not only studying research participants and their contexts but also learning from them to have a better understanding about how women perceived empowerment after their participation in the development project. Even with my understanding of the importance of positionality and practising reflexivity, I had to admit that it was difficult and challenging to practice reflexivity and conduct ethical research throughout the entire research process.

I also observed confusing situations, for example, when I felt that women seemed to be quite ready to say that they were confident. However, their body language seemed to suggest different impressions. For instance, women could say confidently that they were empowered, but the way they positioned their seats behind their spouses, or when they looked first at their husbands when they spoke as if they were asking for approval and agreement, seemed to indicate different stories of empowerment. During the

observation, I tried to understand women's perceptions of empowerment not only through their statements but also their body language and interactions with others.

In short, I learned to appreciate the many voices, particularly women's voices about empowerment and how they were empowered through their engagement in the project. I tried to restrain myself from being too academically-minded when I found or heard something which I thought was not in line with what I had learned from the literature. I learned that empowerment has various dimensions (political, human and social, economic, and cultural). It is also personal, relational and collective.

Empowerment works at the individual, community, and organisational levels both in public and private spheres whether at local, district, provincial, national, and global levels. Women might express empowerment as a particular aspect of empowerment (economic empowerment) and still position themselves as the ones who should be in charge of domestic tasks apart from their contribution to the family and their statement of being empowered. In this case, I was still critical of the findings due to what I had learned, but at the same time, I had to appreciate the voices of women and their contribution to my research.

Moreover, I kept reminding myself about the objective of this research which was to have an in-depth understanding of perceptions of women of empowerment. Therefore, their diverse voices both in statements and actions were very precious and useful for this research. I also learned the importance of differentiating the findings from the positionality and the voices of the research participants from my own perceptions and analysis in approaching the questions of this research. For example, I separated the findings of the research (voices of the research participants) from the discussions of the findings where I analysed the findings based on the existing literature and my understanding of women's empowerment, aid, and development issues (Abbott, et.al., 2005; Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2007; Janesick, 1999, p. 506, as cited in Brinkmann, 2012, p. 79).

8.2.3 Learning and Practising Reflexive and Ethical Research

Conducting feminist research with post-colonial and post-development approaches also made me critical and cautious about the words or terms I was using in writing this

thesis. Using particular terms was also challenging as I was not only learning about positionality and conducting reflexive and ethical research but also practising reflexive and ethical research myself since the beginning of this research. I was aware that I would use different terms although they pointed out the same concepts, such as development aid. For example, I used 'development aid' in explaining the general background and context of international aid, and used 'development projects' to explain practical and technical matters of development aid, especially in referring to the case study of this research.

However, when I wanted to highlight and criticise the aid power relations and positions of women beneficiaries and other related stakeholders and beneficiaries in relation to the donor and the executing agencies of the project, I used 'development intervention'. I believe that using the term 'development intervention' was necessary and important to underline the embedded power, structural nature of and procedural approach to aid relations. Therefore, each term has different expressions in reflecting the relational, multidimensional, multi-layered, and structural nature of international aid, thus aid relations. The use of various terms to analyse development aid is also highlighted by post-development and postcolonial feminist thinkers.

Throughout the research period, I have found the process of reflexive and ethical research enlightening and critical, as well as enriching as I had a better understanding of the topic of international aid, women, development, and women's empowerment. In addition, I also obtained broader and comprehensive knowledge about aid relations and women's empowerment, and gender equality both in theory and practice which will be discussed in the next section.

On the other hand, with my positionality both as an insider and outsider, I also learned that it was confusing and confronting to practice reflexive and ethical research, particularly recalling the multiple perceptions and realities of myself and the research participants. In short, I found it challenging to undertake the research and to present the findings and analysis of the research in this thesis by being ethical and reflexive.

8.3. Positioning Women in Meaningful and Empowering Roles in Development Projects

This research highlights three main findings with regard to women's empowerment, international aid, and development. The findings are the 'hopeful' critique of aid, the importance of agency to promote women's empowerment, and the need to have reflexive development interventions. These findings are important and useful for development actors to position women in meaningful and empowering roles in development projects.

8.3.1 There is a 'Hopeful' Critique of Aid

This finding relates to the research questions on the position of beneficiaries in development projects and the practice of aid relations. This finding also reflects the relevance of the project as it shows the positive aspects of development interventions when they are implemented with inclusive and participatory approaches.

A 'hopeful' critique of aid means that apart from critiques on the way aid is practised, there is also a critique of aid which is constructive for improving the implementation of the aid industry. The 'hopeful' critique of aid also acknowledges positive outcomes and impacts that development aid has brought to the beneficiaries of the projects. The existing critiques on the practices of aid relations by various authors (Buffardi, 2013; Desai & Potter, 2008; Fowler, 2008; Wallace et al., 2006) are also reflected in the findings and discussions of this research.

Early post-development writers, such as Esteva, Sachs, Escobar were highly critical of development. On the other hand, later writers such as Gibson-Graham see scope for some positive change brought through development (Sachs, 2010). This is also what I argue based on the findings of this research, where I also complemented these critiques with the diverse voices of the research participants who expressed their appreciation and support to Oxfam and the local partners because of the positive outputs and outcomes of the RCL project on women's empowerment they experienced in particular and the coastal community resilience in general.

I also argued that the dynamic aspect of international aid and the practice of aid relations should be seen as a momentum or an enabling environment to promote effective aid, through inclusive and participatory approaches. This opportunity would likely be possible if accompanied by the good political will and commitment from the donors and the executing agencies as well as the recipient government to open the space for meaningful and empowering positions for women throughout the project period and after the project ended. Therefore, I want to highlight that there is a 'hopeful' critique of aid from the findings of this research.

However, this research also reasserts that international aid, development intervention, and aid power relations are still practised in conditions where the donors are still in a relatively powerful position. Apart from the commitment of the main international donors and related stakeholders of development aid such as in the Paris, Accra and Busan agreements, it seems like the road to fully inclusive and participatory approaches in development projects is still a big challenge. The bureaucratic processes of project proposals between the donors and the executing agencies are still dominated by the influence and authority of the donors and the executing agencies.

In addition, from the recipient government stance, apart from the points highlighted in the Accra Agenda, it seems still challenging to manage and coordinate international aid in effective and relevant ways. Political commitment, the sectoral competition of various related government institutions of the recipient countries which deal with international aid, and the National Government prioritised policies are the determining factors in influencing the recipient government's position and response to aid power relations.

As for the beneficiaries of the development project, the findings of this study revealed that, apart from the expectation from the donor to apply a participatory approach from the beginning and throughout the development project, it seems that it is still challenging and difficult for the executing agencies to implement the approach accordingly. Therefore, the practice of participatory approaches also require the commitment of the development actors and the readiness of the beneficiaries.

Furthermore, the fact that each development project has a time limitation should also be taken into account. This was not just about the implementation of the project, but also the preparation of the project in the internal organisation of the executing agencies as well as the local NGOs partnering in the project.

Therefore, these practical, technical, and strategic considerations in implementing the participatory approach also influenced development agencies in involving and positioning women in meaningful and empowering roles from the very beginning of the project.

8.3.2 Agency is Crucial in Promoting Women's Empowerment

Along the way, as the project proceeded, in line with the increasing awareness, capacity, and knowledge as well as confidence of women beneficiaries, women became sufficiently equipped in playing their roles as active participants (not only as weak and passive beneficiaries) of the project. Therefore, the implementation of the participatory approach in a development project is crucial to provide an enabling environment for women's empowerment.

The findings of the impact of the project on women brings me to the second point of the findings of this research, which is that agency is crucial in promoting women's empowerment. This point is closely related to the research questions on the position of women beneficiaries in development projects; the practice of aid relations; as well as women's perceptions of empowerment with their engagement in development projects. Therefore, this point about the importance of agency also answers the main question of this research regarding the influence of development interventions on women's perceptions of empowerment.

The findings of the research confirm the argument of the authors that development interventions also provide an opportunity for women's empowerment (Alsop et al., 2006; Eyben, 2006c; Haan, 2009). Development agencies and workers introduce empowerment through various approaches which capture the multidimensional and multi-layered aspects of empowerment, including economic empowerment which leads to other aspects of empowerment.

Apart from the multidimensional aspect of empowerment (Luttrell et.al, 2009), it should be acknowledged that women's economic empowerment has enabled them to participate in the public sphere as their economic contribution to the family has brought them respect and changed their gender power relations within their families and the wider community (Naved, 1994).

However, as argued by Alsop *et al.* (2006) and shown in the findings of the research, empowerment also depends on women's willingness and ability to use existing opportunities and resources to participate in meaningful ways in various activities in the public sphere. Therefore, women had their own stories and perceptions of empowerment based on their personal and relational experiences in their everyday life and the local contexts as well as their involvement in the project.

As mentioned in the previous chapter on women's processes of transformation, I argue that empowerment is about 5Cs (capacity, capability, confidence, choice, commitment) and 4As (awareness, achievement, acceptance, and acknowledgement). Both the 5Cs and 4As of empowerment reflect personal, relational, multidimensional, and multilevel aspects of empowerment as pointed out by Hennink *et al.* (2012), Luttrell *et al.* (2009), and Rowlands (1999). I will discuss further about the 5Cs and 4As later in the research contribution section.

8.3.3 There is a Need for Reflexive Development Intervention

Apart from the positive contributions and external agency of Oxfam and the local partners in promoting women's empowerment through the RCL Project, the findings of this study also underline the need for reflexive development interventions to promote efforts to position women in meaningful and empowering roles in development projects. This point answers the main question of the research, particularly the sub-questions of the practice of aid relations, the position of the beneficiaries in the project, and the project relevance.

Reflexive development intervention means that development intervention is carried out by understanding the complexities and dynamics of development processes and various actors and interests involved at various levels (Crewe & Harrison, 1998; Haan, 2009; ; Sogge, 2002). A reflexive analysis of international aid is also needed to address the challenges of aid management and the power and gender relations embedded in the practice of aid relations.

The reflexive analysis of international aid requires a critical understanding of the practices of aid which recognises the critiques, and opportunities, as well as the contributions of development intervention and external agency to development processes in general, and social transformation such as women's empowerment in

particular. Reflexive development intervention and analysis should also consider the positions and roles of women in the aid chain, gender (power) relations with others, and the context of the development interventions' area to conduct relevant interventions by taking into account and understanding women's perceptions of empowerment (Alsop et al., 2006).

This study highlights the two sides of a coin of the use of the deficit-based frame (Willetts et al., 2013) and its impact on women's perceptions of empowerment after their involvement in the project as women. On the one hand, the deficit-based frame is useful to justify the importance of development interventions in promoting women's empowerment. On the other hand, the frame tends to expose women as weak and passive beneficiaries rather than highlighting their potential to be active participants.

The findings of this study also show how women experience the significant transition from being weak and passive beneficiaries with a limited contribution in the initial year of the project to the active and confident participants following their involvement in the project. Learning from Oxfam's RCL Project, it is clear that those external interventions such as from international aid and international development agencies are still needed as breakthroughs in challenging the patriarchal nature of gender relations in society and in promoting women's empowerment.

Using Dynamics of International Aid to Promote Effective and Relevant Aid

Based on the findings of the research, aid power relations preserve the practice of 'elegant power' (Gronemeyer, 2010) where the donor and the development agencies are still the ones who have significant positions and roles in defining development agendas (Buffardi, 2013; Buiter, 2007; Crawford, 2003). This situation shows the reality and realistic nature of international aid. Therefore, even the project was acknowledged as empowering, the tendency of 'power over' through the framework of the project, still place women as the followers or passive objects of the logics of development intervention.

To deal with the 'power over' tendency in development interventions, the practice of aid relations needs to be more inclusive and participatory to enable a conducive environment for the efforts to empower women with the combination and synergy of the

local initiatives and considerations. In relation to the local contexts, it is important for development agencies to undertake development projects by starting with an initial baseline assessment to have a better understanding of the contexts of the project area and the needs of the targeted beneficiaries in order to ensure the projects' relevance.

With regard to the hierarchical nature of international aid and the practice of aid relations, it has been an accepted general norm for the recipients to welcome 'the elegance of power' of development interventions and their rationale for working according to the local context and the needs of the beneficiaries. However, it must be noted that international aid also has a dynamic nature which provides space for meaningful change, including the ones such as reflected in the Paris Declaration, Accra Agenda, and Busan Declaration (Haan, 2009; Patil, 2013; Veen, 2011). In this case, the recipient governments should take the driver's seat to improve their sense of belonging in development aid. This in turn would help to ensure the sustainability of the positive outcomes of the project by involving related beneficiaries and stakeholders, particularly women.

For that, positioning women in meaningful and empowering positions from the beginning of the project will also be possible if the recipient government does its job in balancing its relative power with the donors and the executing agencies. As discussed in the various literature of women, aid, and development, the sovereignty of the recipient government is critical to welcoming international aid and its related actors. Furthermore, the recipient government authority should ensure that development interventions are in line with the needs of the people, thus beneficiaries of the project. Development agencies should also conduct development intervention according to the contexts of the project area to make it relevant to the beneficiaries.

Understanding the Context Better in Implementing Development

Recalling the importance of context for effective and relevant development intervention, as argued by Atwood (2005), Kenny (2006), Grabe (2012), and Nussbaum (2000), it is important for development actors whether state and non-state actors, to have sufficient knowledge about the history and cultural norms of the project area. As underlined in this research, women were not totally aware of the fact that the Bugis-Makassar culture also has a history of the progressive culture of gender relations and women's participation.

Therefore, by introducing if not reminding us about the progressive aspects of gender relations in the history and in the culture, development intervention will find its relevance and understanding within existing contexts. Development intervention will also be able to continue positive messages which are rooted in the local context to its targeted beneficiaries. Therefore, development intervention can show that the project is also in line with the local contexts, including the needs of the beneficiaries, thus, making a development agenda is not something imposed solely by external actors and their vested interests.

In relation to the context of the project area, noting the importance and significance of the existing regional autonomy policy and the practice of good governance principles, it is, therefore, crucial for development agencies to promote bottom-up development initiatives by involving the people to ensure the project relevance. The implementation of inclusive and participatory approaches will become a strategic step to promote aid effectiveness, particularly in positioning women in meaningful and empowering positions in development projects.

To sum up, another point that this research has critically added is that development agencies and the workers should be aware from the beginning that they also need to be reflexive and ethical about their activities throughout the project period. They should acknowledge that they are also creating another set of power relations between them and the women, as well as between women beneficiaries and other women, and the wider community, in which gender inequality and the intersectionality of various actors, interests, and levels have already taken place and influenced women's perceptions of empowerment long ago before the development project began.

Based on the three main findings of this study, development agencies need to think through several considerations in their efforts to position women in meaningful and empowering positions. They are as follows: involving women at the very beginning of the project to ensure project relevance with the urgent needs of women both practical and strategic (baseline study, needs assessment, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions); designing projects which introduce various aspects of empowerment and various ways to empower women; and providing opportunities to promote women's participation to share their initiatives actively and to facilitate women to take meaningful roles in balancing their gender power relations with others in society.

Last but not least, it is very important to ensure sustainability of the positive outcomes of development projects by considering personal, relational, multidimensional and multi-layered aspects of empowerment not to mention the intersectionality (Koggel, 2008; Luttrell et al., 2009; Rowlands, 1999; Patil, 2013) which women have to experience. Therefore, women's empowerment will bring transformative change to society which acknowledges and upholds gender justice and equality (Everett & Charlton, 2014; Grabe, 2012). As argued by (Esteva & Prakash, 1998, Rai, 2008), the agenda to bring social transformation as the common agenda also requires support from other stakeholders, including men.

It is also why it is crucial to ensure that the creation of local woman champions is also followed by women with regeneration of the local champions and continuation of showing the best practices and role models. As this research highlighted, empowerment is also about empathy and solidarity, which is enabled by having the best examples and role models which will likely motivate other women and the wider society to support and promote women's empowerment.

8.4. Research Contribution

This section will explain the contribution of this research to Development Studies and development aid practices, particularly with regard to discourses of women's empowerment. I developed the 5Cs and 4As framework of empowerment based on the findings of this research. As for the theories applied in this research, the findings of this research both supported and argued against existing literature on international aid, women's empowerment, and development.

8.4.1 The 5Cs and 4As of Empowerment

As mentioned, I have developed the 5Cs (capacity, capability, confidence, choice, commitment) and 4As (awareness, achievement, acceptance, acknowledgement) of empowerment based on the research findings. This conceptual framework of empowerment also contributes to Development Studies, particularly on the concept of empowerment. The 5Cs and 4As of empowerment reflects particularly the topic of this

study and the context which women in this study live and experience. This framework highlights the key elements of empowerment as revealed from the multiple voices of the research participants and my observation during the fieldwork.

I previously explained that the 5Cs particularly underline the personal aspect of empowerment, whereas the 4As are mainly about the relational aspect of empowerment. However, both key elements of empowerment are intertwined as they interpret the multiple voices and the different experiences of women in this study. For example, apart from the tendency of women to express empowerment in economic terms, this was the voice of the research participants which I had to appreciate according to feminist research (Kitzinger, 2004; Naved, 1994). I also wanted to understand women's ideas, experiences, and perceptions of empowerment and how they empowered themselves individually and collectively after their involvement in the project (Cornwall, 2016).

Furthermore, the 5Cs and 4As can also reflect the collective aspect of empowerment as women in this study experienced transformation processes both individually and collectively. The 5Cs and 4As also reinstates that there is no single definition of empowerment due to the multiple voices of women in this study and their different stories of empowerment due to the different intersectionality they experienced, particularly related to their engagement in the RCL Project.

Furthermore, I developed the 5Cs and 4As of empowerment based on the existing literature on empowerment, particularly the works of Allen (1998), Alsop et al. (2006), Luttrell et al. (2009), Parpart, 2008, and Rowlands (1999), which highlight the personal, relational, and multidimensional aspects of empowerment. In relation to the the multidimensional aspect of empowerment as economic empowerment, the study showed that economic empowerment is not the only dimension of empowerment, but it could lead to other dimensions of empowerment. Development intervention through economic approaches had also provided other opportunities for women to engage in a meaningful way in other spheres and change their power relations with their surroundings as their contribution was also acknowledged by the wider society. This situation also confirmed the relational and multidimensional aspects of empowerment as women's empowerment could accumulate and capitalise economic empowerment through other aspects of empowerment.

The findings of the research further explained the relational aspect of empowerment (Kabeer, 1999a; Parpart, 2008; Rowlands, 1999). Women's perceptions of

empowerment were influenced not only by their involvement in the project but also by their relations with others, including with the executing agencies, the local NGOs, and the government agencies, not to mention their family and their surroundings. The importance of the relationship between humans and organisations in the aid industry as highlighted by Eyben (2006c) was also reflected in the findings of this research. An example of this is the social solidarity created from the economic groups and the good relations between the executing agencies and the women beneficiaries.

However, as shown in the findings of this research and as argued by Alsop et al. (2006) and Rai (2008), women experienced empowerment differently. This is where this research enriched the personal aspect of empowerment (Rowlands, 1999). As I argued previously, for women who already had the resources, the project was seen as a vehicle for them to further explore other opportunities for self-actualisation. For other women who did not have the same resources and capacity, they saw the project as a catalyst which was empowering for them as they were able to do other activities outside the house, to be involved in the economic groups and the coastal women network, and to participate in the public meetings.

Therefore, the findings of this study also confirmed the literature by underlining the importance of women beneficiaries' individual perceptions and stories of empowerment as well as the context where women live and work, their power relations with others, women's positions and roles in the project in order to understand particularly how has the development project influenced women beneficiaries' perceptions of empowerment.

Although empowerment is mostly understood to be working when it is realised in collective action (Allen, 1998, Kabeer, 1999b, Rowlands 1999), this study showed that the personal aspect of empowerment, especially the capacity, choice, commitment, and awareness are crucial in promoting women's empowerment and sustaining positive outcome of the project. The personal aspect of empowerment also leads to collective empowerment as women in this study became aware of their capacity, capability, and gender equality through their engagement in the project. They were able to capitalise their resources and capacity by sharing their knowledge and skills to other non-beneficiaries and by bringing an indirect trickle-down effect to the families and the surroundings as the local women champions earned various prestigious awards which acknowledged their achievement and contribution to society.

Along the way, women in this study transformed from weak and passive beneficiaries to active and critical participants of the project. They saw themselves both as the major

beneficiaries and main drivers of the project. On the other hand, the study also showed that women beneficiaries engagement in the project and their confidence and achievement were also possible due to wider support (acceptance and acknowledgment) from others (family, society, and authority). This particular finding also underlined the importance of harmony and mutual respect in understanding women's empowerment and life experiences as highlighted by postcolonial feminist authors (Friedmann, 1992, Mishra, 2013).

8.4.2 Talking Back to Post-development and Postcolonial Feminist Theories

The findings of this study both agreed and criticised post-development and postcolonial feminist thinking of women, development aid, and empowerment. With regard to international aid, the practice of aid relations explored in this research showed that the executing agency and the donor are still playing significant roles from the beginning of development projects as they are the ones who formulate the proposals (Sato et al., 2011). These findings confirmed the argument of authors such as Baaz (2005), Buffardi (2013), Gronemeyer (2010), Killick (2008), and Little (2006), particularly on the dominant roles and powerful positions of the donors and those with more resources in the aid industry. In this case, I argue that power and asymmetric power relations are inevitable in the aid industry.

In addition, post-development and postcolonial feminist theories are still valid in explaining international aid in particular contexts, such as in the making of the project proposal as discussed by Sato *et al.* (2011), where there is a lack of involvement on the part of the recipient government and limited involvement of direct beneficiaries at the early stage of the project. This is also in line with the arguments from Baaz (2005), Fowler (2008) and Riddell (2007) on the challenge of participation and participatory approaches due to the perceptions of donors over the capacity of beneficiaries, stakeholders, and their partners in development projects.

However, apart from post-development and postcolonial feminist perspectives of the practice of aid relations where external agency played a dominant and significant role in development intervention (Baaz, 2005; Crawford, 2003; Crewe & Harrison, 1998;

Killick, 2008; Nair, 2013), this research shows that development intervention has provided a breakthrough for women's empowerment and a strategic opportunity to deal with gender (power) relations in projects.

This is to say, apart from the critics on the binary of the Donor's Self and Recipient's Otherness with various actors and interests in the aid industry (Baaz, 2005; Haan, 2009; Veen, 2011), this research showed that international aid is dynamic, complex, and intertwined. There have been efforts to change the practice of aid to make it effective, relevant, and sustainable to the recipients, not to mention to put the recipients in the driver's seat of the project.

Furthermore, this research found that international aid is not sufficient to be explained and understood only within post-development and post-colonial feminist perspectives with all its complexities and dynamics. International aid and development actors along with the beneficiaries and other related stakeholders involved within the aid industry also experience changes in the practice of aid as parts of the global commitment to improve aid effectiveness (Haan, 2009; Patil, 2013). Although it is not always easy to apply the participatory approach at every stage of development aid it does not mean that there is no room at all for participation and partnerships to increase the recipients' sense of ownership.

These findings also confirmed the complexity and dynamics of: the practice of aid relations; changes in promoting participatory approaches; and increasing the sense of ownership to sustain the positive outcome of the project. In this case, serious commitments from the donors and executing agencies to place the women's agenda as one of the agenda items in the project by positioning them as the major beneficiaries and local champions of the project also demonstrates the contribution of external interventions to promote women's empowerment.

As revealed in this study, women who were the major beneficiaries of the RCL Project were also involved in the initial baseline survey. In the initial year of the project, they considered themselves to be weak and passive participants. Therefore, they just followed the framework of the project. These findings also confirmed the authors' arguments on when the executing agencies positioned women as weak beneficiaries, they would also affect how women perceived themselves as weak individuals (Heilman & Barocas Alcott, 2001).

Although this is also part of the findings of their baseline study to show the reality in the project area, I also want to argue that apart from the critiques of post-development and postcolonial feminism on the deficit-framing of beneficiaries in the aid industries (Baaz, 2005; Willetts et al., 2013), it seems that the deficit-frame is still being used as the main justification for development intervention.

In addition, I do not mean to say that the deficit-frame is totally bad and not useful if it is based on real conditions in the project area because the frame will help make the case to have a project with a women's empowerment component. However, I suggest to accompany the frame with a strengths-based approach to highlight the local potentials as suggested by Friedmann (1992), Nussbaum (2000), Rowlands (1999), and Willetts et al. (2013). The research found that development interventions and agencies should note that agency is crucial in promoting women's empowerment.

There is likely a potential danger if not a dilemma in aiming to empower women by disempowering them as weak and passive beneficiaries. Raising critical awareness of gender equality to women is one thing, but development workers should also be wise enough to switch their approach to encouraging women and men to challenge the existing gender inequality structure based on the local context, and their capacity and capability.

Furthermore, this research showed that the dominant roles could be seen in a positive way and a way to break through to deal with broader power issues as the intervention brought gender awareness to the beneficiaries and the stakeholders. The project also facilitated women and other stakeholders to deal with local authorities during the project implementation. It would have been a different case if the intervention was conducted by the local people.

This kind of positive intervention is also in line with the existing literature on international aid (Bedford & Rai, 2010; Burnell, 2008; Minogue & Kothari 2002; Rai 2008). The literature highlighted that the inclusion of women's issues such as empowerment and gender mainstreaming in the development agenda and the government's commitment were also due to external pressures. An example of this inclusion is the requirement of development agencies for the recipient government commitment to promote women's empowerment in the project.

Apart from the authors' critiques of the practice of partnership within asymmetric power relations and the fact that the partners should follow the template of the executing agencies (Crawford, 2003; Fowler, 2008; Mwaura-Muiru, 2010; Riddell, 2007), the findings of this research showed the positive effects of the partnership between Oxfam and the local partners. These positive impacts were also related to the good relations between Oxfam and the local partners (Eyben, 2006b). The local NGOs partnering with Oxfam also enjoyed relatively significant involvement in the project as they provided advice to Oxfam in the project area about the local contacts and the beneficiaries. The local NGOs also took initiatives in undertaking the project by using participatory approaches and settling in with beneficiaries. Furthermore, these local NGOs were also indirect beneficiaries of the project as Oxfam provided capacity building training for the partners, including gender training and project management training.

In short, the findings both affirmed the arguments of the authors of international aid, particularly on the still significant roles of the leading executing agency towards the local partners (Buffardi, 2013; Crawford, 2003; Mwaura - Muiru, 2010; Sato et al., 2011) as well as the importance to see stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project through the strengths-based approach as local NGOs have local knowledge about the contexts and the people in the project area. These findings also show the dynamics and complexities of the practice of aid relations as changes did take place apart from the substantial roles of the donor and the leading executing agency in designing and implementing the project.

8.5. Limitations of Study

There are several limitations of this study which should be noted. These limitations are also useful for reference for the future studies on related issues on international aid, women's empowerment, and development.

The first limitation is the scope of the research area. This study only focused on Pangkep District, particularly the land area. Pangkep is one of the four districts covered by Oxfam's RCL Project. I only focused on two villages in the district out of the 34 villages related to the project. The project also covered island areas such as Tanakeke Island in Takalar District. It would be interesting to see how a geographical area like

Tanakeke Island affected women's perceptions of empowerment and how they were empowered.

The second limitation is the variety of activities of the economic groups. This study focused mostly on organic farming and food production activities, whereas there were other activities covered by the project, such as related to seaweed, mangroves, and other sea and fishery activities. As argued by Oxfam's Livelihoods Advisor, the different nature or types of activities might have influenced women's engagement and empowerment.

The third limitation is that the research period was limited. The study was conducted toward the end of the project. However, it would be useful to have longer time to understand the local context of the study area, particularly to comprehend how culture and religion influence gender norms and gender relations, not to mention women's empowerment. Longer research time would also be useful to know the dynamics of aid power relations prior to the end of the project period in order to understand the significant changes and transitions experienced by women.

8.6. Recommendations for Future Study

There are several points which could be considered as recommendations for future studies related to international aid, women's empowerment, and development, recalling the contribution and limitations of this study. First of all, noting that this research is qualitative research, it is more important to get an in-depth understanding in addressing the research questions by focusing on a specific case study or a small number of economic groups. On the other hand, it would also be more interesting to look at other case studies and other economic groups' activities to see how different contexts influence women's perceptions of empowerment.

Furthermore, conducting ethnographic research in other districts of the RCL Project would further enrich the analysis of this research. The broader scope of the research area and the activities which were observed during the fieldwork certainly required a longer time for the research perhaps to follow women through a full project cycle. The challenge was also the research permission from the authority and the time limit to complete the thesis according to university regulation.

With regard to the research period, when possible, it would be better to undertake the field work during the project implementation. This is important as this research period time in the field might help the researcher to have a better understanding on the context area and existing research participants, the processes of the implementation of the project, aid relations, as well as women's participation and transformation processes during, towards the end, and after the project's completion.

However, in relation to this study, it was not possible to observe the project from the beginning as the study was conducted towards the end of the project and after the project's completion. Conducting the research at the end of the project worked well, as women beneficiaries could reflect on their transformations and share their stories of empowerment with me, which might have been difficult if I had conducted the research at the beginning and/or middle of the project.

Furthermore, a longer research period would likely be enlightening and enriching to the studies on women's empowerment, aid, and development, particularly by exploring more on the influence of local contexts such as history and culture on gender norms, gender relations, and women's empowerment. The longer fieldwork would possibly enable the capturing of significant challenges and transformation processes experienced by women beneficiaries in the different periods of the development intervention. These challenges and changes experienced by women could also show different stories of women's empowerment in the middle of the intersectionality of the aid power relations and gender relations in the community.

Last but not least, there are several potential areas for future research out of this study. Some of interesting and provocative topics for the research are: visionary studies on situating culture for women's empowerment; lessons learned of the 5Cs and 4As framework of empowerment for development practitioners; gender, place, and culture with regard to different women's transformation processes; sharing challenges in applying methodology in understanding complexities of aid relations and women's empowerment.

8.7. Final Remarks

This research shows the importance of understanding personal, relational, and multidimensional aspects of empowerment in understanding women's perceptions of

empowerment after their involvement in the development project by having the conceptual framework of the 5Cs and 4As of empowerment. These key elements of empowerment were highlighted in the different stories of empowerment of women in this study recalling the intersectionality and contexts which they had experienced.

The research found the importance of inner circle (family) support for women's empowerment. In addition, as highlighted by post-development authors, such as Burnell (2008) and Esteva and Prakash (1998), and feminist authors, such as Connel (1999), Kabeer (1999a), Parpart (2008), Rai (2008), and Rowand-Campbell (1999), empowerment and development require common awareness and effort of both women and men to cooperate together to reach a common agenda, including women's empowerment and poverty alleviation.

Furthermore, the research indicated that the development intervention had significant influence in shaping women's perceptions of empowerment. The research also showed that efforts to challenge gender inequality and to promote social transformation and women's empowerment still require external interventions. These interventions require friendly (acceptable) approaches and strategies, which are relevant and contextual, as well as inclusive and empowering processes which provide significant opportunity structures for women to contribute in a meaningful way according to their choices, priorities, and needs. In this case, the international commitments to improve the practice of aid relations should be practised seriously.

For example, the principle of ownership requires the need for mutual accountability; assessment of the performance of the frameworks to be shared between donors and recipients; and for assurance that incentive systems are in line (Haan, 2009). As suggested by the authors, it is important to ensure that domestic ownership and leadership to promote change are supported by the local champions. In relation to that, external facilitators are important to encourage the people to come up with their own initiatives and priorities and to take the lead in the development processes. In this case, development workers should create real empowerment by encouraging the people to come up with their own initiatives and promoting the local champions in leading the development processes (Connel, 1999; Rowlands, 1999).

If development intervention is practised in inclusive and participatory ways, it would likely increase not only a sense of belonging from the recipients but also their awareness to sustain the positive outcome of the project as they are the ones who define

the priorities and play significant roles in leading development processes. Country ownership also means that the donors should improve their practices by putting the recipients in the driver's seat and aligning their interventions with the priorities of the recipients.

As argued by Killick (2008, p. 513) domestic ownership is important for effective implementation of development interventions so the donors do not impose their interests on the recipients. In addition, Buffardi (2013) suggests the international commitments to improve the practice of aid relations by mapping the relations between the donors and the recipients. The mapping is made based on the capability for the preferred roles of existing actors and contextualization of involvement of actors in particular activities. The mapping is crucial to make deliberate decisions to relate the donors and the recipients accordingly for the sustainability of development gains. For this, there is a crucial need to have clear ideas of ownership and partnership, and perceptions of the donors towards the recipient governments and non-state actors.

This means that international efforts for aid effectiveness require the donors to provide meaningful space, authority, and involvement of the recipient country, the non-state actors, and the beneficiaries in order to avoid domination of the donors and to make the aid relevant to the recipients (Buffardi, 2013). The meaningful space for the involvement of the recipient country should be indicated in their involvement in the aid-related activities, such as in the decision-making process, prioritisation of the issue, and fund management (Zimmermann & McDonnell, 2008).

Serious efforts and commitments by the donors should also be reflected in a contextual development aid which takes into account and understands the heterogeneous and competing views and interests in a country (Buiter, 2007). In this case, the donors and the executing agencies of development projects should have a better understanding on the local culture and history, gender relations, local and national politics, economic and social conditions, not to mention characters of the targeted beneficiaries, potential local partners, and other related stakeholders.

Furthermore, as highlighted in the Busan Agreement in 2011, the donors must commit to apply the principles of 'inclusive development' by involving the participation of non-state actors as the donors are aware of the complexity of development aid which involves various actors, interests, and processes (Eyben, 2007; Sogge, 2002). The international commitments to aid effectiveness will work if the donors and the executing agencies of development aid are also supported by the recipient countries, the

beneficiaries, as well as other related stakeholders. These commitments must be seen as strategic momentum by all parties related to aid to promote the effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability of the positive outcomes of the aid. These commitments should also be seen as efforts to address the critics of post-development and postcolonial feminist authors on international aid, women's empowerment, and development.

On the other hand, there are factors which need to be considered and dealt with when it comes to the side-effect aspects of intervention. Some of the points are the creation of the new gaps of power relations which women experienced as a result of their participation in the development project due to the various roles and positions they played. In addition, there are also challenges in promoting the sustainability of the positive outcomes of the project with the tendency of relying on external intervention with the so-called and perceived weak beneficiaries positioning themselves in the deficit-frame to attract development assistance, the capability approach (strengths-based) assessed by development agencies, or a combination of both approaches to get funding from donors.

Instead of simplistically criticising how the aid industry works and whether aid works or not, it is critical to acknowledge that international aid is all about the industry working in multidimensional development sectors. International aid works in the intersectionality of various contexts, with embedded and inevitable power relations. The power relations reflect the strong identities of "Self and Otherness" of various actors and interests involved in the aid industry. The aid industry relies heavily on the contexts of the development project area and/or the already set-up contexts of development projects which follow the interests of those who hold the most resources.

In short, international aid has created a strong and sustainable industry as it entails both the 'positive and negative' relations between donors, recipient countries, development agencies, beneficiaries, related stakeholders, and also non-beneficiaries. The aid industry has created both dependency and interdependency between various actors and interests as it has gone through historical periods of experiments by the aid-giving industry.

While there have been efforts to improve how aid relations are practised, the aid industry also retains its procedural practices with the donors and executing agencies playing the more powerful roles and positions than the recipient governments and the beneficiaries. Nonetheless, such international commitments should be appreciated,

evaluated, and sustained as the international commitments through the development interventions and development agencies are also trying to promote humanization of development which acknowledges the different contexts and needs of beneficiaries, including by understanding the personal, relational, and multidimensional aspects of empowerment.

Furthermore, the humanization of development must also involve women in the development processes. In relation to efforts to empower women through development aid, the results of this study provide relevant recommendations for development interventions on women's empowerment which is to consider the positions and voices of the women's beneficiaries in the complexities and dynamics of aid relations. This is important to make their work relevant and sustainable to address the needs of their respected beneficiaries and to further place women in meaningful and empowering positions.

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List of Appendices

Appendix 1. Information Sheet



INFORMATION SHEET

Researcher: Adinda Tenriangke Muchtar, School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington

I am a PhD student in the Development Studies Programme at Victoria University of Wellington. As part of this degree, I am undertaking a research project leading to a thesis. The working title of the thesis is “Women, Empowerment and Aid Relations: A Cases Study of Oxfam Restoring Coastal Livelihoods (RCL) Project in South Sulawesi, Indonesia”. This research project has received approval from the Victoria University Human Ethics Committee.

Therefore, I would like to invite you to participate in the interview in this study. The interview should take no longer than one hour. It will take place at a venue (to be decided) close to your workplace or home. Detailed information on the date and place of the interview will be provided to you once you give your consent to participate in this research. Research participants will be asked to share their opinions and knowledge about the project, particularly to what extent and how efforts to empower women within development projects empower women. In this case, the researcher will get the consent from the research participant prior to conducting in-depth interviews. Furthermore, the researcher will ensure the confidentiality of the identity of the participants and make the summary of findings available to the participants if they request it. Should you feel the need to withdraw from the project, you may do so without question and please let me know.

Responses will form the basis of my research project and will be put into a written report on a confidential basis. It will not be possible for you to be identified personally unless you indicate your agreement to be identified. All material collected will be kept confidential. No other person besides me and my supervisors [Prof. John Overton and Dr Marcela Palomino-Schalscha] will see the notes of the interviews. The thesis will be submitted for marking to the School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences (SGEES) and deposited in the University Library. It is intended that one or more articles will be submitted for publication in scholarly journals. All interview notes, as well as similar materials of the research, will be destroyed three years after the end of the project.

If you have further questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me at [+62 812 950 7667 and adinda.muchtar@vuw.ac.nz] or my supervisor [Prof. John Overton and Dr Marcela Palomino-Schalscha], at the School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences at Victoria University [+64 4 463 5281 and john.overton@vuw.ac.nz; +64 4 4635899 and marcela.palomino-schalscha@vuw.ac.nz].

Thank you.

Adinda Tenriangke Muchtar

Appendix 2. Information Sheet (Indonesian)



LEMBAR INFORMASI

Peneliti: Adinda Tenriangke Muchtar, School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington

Saya mahasiswa PhD di Program Studi Pembangunan di Victoria University of Wellington. Sebagai bagian dari studi, saya tengah melakukan riset yang nantinya akan menjadi tesis. Judul riset yang saya lakukan adalah “Perempuan, Pemberdayaan dan Hubungan dalam Bantuan Luar Negeri: Studi Kasus tentang Proyek Oxfam untuk Perbaikan Kehidupan Tepi Pantai di Sulawesi Selatan, Indonesia”. Riset ini telah mendapatkan persetujuan dari Komisi Human Ethics Victoria University.

Untuk itu, saya ingin meminta kesediaan Anda untuk berpartisipasi dalam wawancara mendalam untuk riset ini. Wawancara tidak akan lebih dari satu jam dan mengambil tempat yang dekat dari kantor atau rumah Anda (akan ditentukan). Informasi detil tentang waktu dan tempat wawancara akan disediakan setelah Anda memberikan persetujuan untuk berpartisipasi dalam riset ini. Peserta riset akan diminta untuk memberikan pendapat dan pengetahuan tentang proyek Oxfam yang menjadi studi kasus dalam riset ini, khususnya tentang sejauh mana dan bagaimana upaya untuk memberdayakan perempuan memberdayakan perempuan. Dalam hal ini, peneliti akan mendapatkan persetujuan terlebih dahulu dari peserta riset sebelum melakukan wawancara mendalam. Lebih jauh, peneliti akan menjamin kerahasiaan identitas peserta riset. Peneliti juga akan membuat ringkasan temuan riset jika diminta. Jika Anda ingin menarik keikutsertaan dari riset ini, Anda dapat melakukannya tanpa memberikan penjelasan dan mohon untuk memberitahu kepada peneliti jika Anda memutuskan demikian.

Tanggapan dari peserta riset akan menjadi salah satu dasar untuk riset saya dan akan menjadi laporan tertulis berdasarkan pertimbangan kerahasiaan. Identitas personal Anda tidak akan dimunculkan tanpa persetujuan Anda. Semua materi yang dikumpulkan dari riset ini akan dijaga kerahasiaannya. Tidak ada orang lain selain saya dan kedua pembimbing saya [Prof. John Overton and Dr Marcela Palomino-Schalscha] yang dapat melihat catatan wawancara. Tesis yang dihasilkan dari riset ini akan dikumpulkan untuk dinilai ke School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences (SGEES) dan disimpan di perpustakaan universitas. Saya juga berencana untuk mengirimkan beberapa artikel berdasarkan hasil riset ini untuk publikasi di jurnal akademik. Semua catatan interview, juga materi yang serupa terkait riset ini akan dihapus dalam waktu tiga tahun setelah riset ini berakhir.

Untuk informasi lebih lanjut, silakan hubungi saya di [+62 812 950 7667 dan adinda.muchtar@vuw.ac.nz] atau pembimbing saya [Prof. John Overton dan Dr Marcela Palomino-Schalscha], di School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, Victoria University [+64 4 463 5281 dan john.overton@vuw.ac.nz; +64 4 4635899 dan marcela.palomino-schalscha@vuw.ac.nz].

Terima kasih.

Adinda Tenriangke Muchtar

Appendix 3. Informed Consent Form



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of project: Women, Empowerment and Aid Relations: A Case Study of Oxfam Restoring Coastal Livelihoods (RCL) Project in South Sulawesi, Indonesia

Hereby, I would like to give my consent to participate in an interview for this research. I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I may withdraw myself (or any information I have provided) from this project without having to give reasons.

I understand that any information I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher, the supervisor and the person who transcribes the tape recordings of our interview. I understand the published results will not use my name, and that no opinions will be attributed to me in any way that will identify me, unless with my approval. I understand that the tape recording of interviews will be wiped at the end of the project.

Therefore, I consent to information or opinions, which I have given being attributed to me in any reports on this research. I understand that I will have an opportunity to check the notes of the interview if I request it.

- ☐ I understand that the data I provide will not be used for any other purpose or released to others without my written consent.
- ☐ I would like to receive a summary of the results of the research when it is completed.
- ☐ I would like to show my consent to participate in this research through a verbal agreement.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.

Signed:

Name of participant:

Place:

Date:

Appendix 4. Informed Consent Form (Indonesian)



KESEDIAAN BERPARTISIPASI DALAM RISET

Judul riset: Perempuan, Pemberdayaan dan Hubungan dalam Program Bantuan Luar Negeri: Studi Kasus tentang Proyek Oxfam untuk Perbaikan Kehidupan Tepi Pantai di Sulawesi Selatan, Indonesia

Dengan ini, saya menyatakan kesediaan saya untuk berpartisipasi dalam wawancara untuk penelitian ini. Saya telah mendapatkan dan memahami penjelasan tentang riset ini. Saya juga mempunyai kesempatan untuk mengajukan pertanyaan dan mendapatkan jawaban yang memuaskan. Saya mengerti bahwa saya dapat menarik diri dari keikutsertaan saya dalam riset ini (begitu pula informasi yang telah saya berikan) tanpa harus memberikan alasan.

Saya memahami bahwa informasi yang saya berikan bersifat rahasia dan terbatas hanya untuk peneliti, pembimbing riset, dan orang yang membuat transkrip dari rekaman wawancara ini. Saya memahami bahwa hasil yang dipublikasikan tidak akan menggunakan nama saya, dan tidak akan ada pendapat yang dikaitkan dengan saya yang dapat menunjukkan identitas saya, kecuali dengan persetujuan saya. Saya mengerti bahwa rekaman wawancara ini akan dihapus di akhir riset.

Dengan demikian, saya menyatakan bersedia untuk memberikan informasi atau pendapat dalam riset ini. Saya memahami bahwa saya akan mempunyai kesempatan untuk mengecek catatan wawancara jika saya memintanya.

☐ Saya paham bahwa data yang saya berikan tidak akan digunakan untuk tujuan lain atau disebarkan tanpa persetujuan tertulis dari saya.

☐ Saya ingin mendapatkan ringkasan hasil riset saat sudah diselesaikan.

☐ Saya ingin memberikan kebersediaan saya untuk berpartisipasi dalam riset ini dengan persetujuan verbal.

☐ Saya setuju untuk ikut serta dalam riset ini.

Tanda tangan:

Nama peserta riset:

Tempat:

Tanggal:

Appendix 5. Interview Guide

Introduction

For the interviews, I will ask several questions on the development project (RCL project) regarding the knowledge, evaluation and recommendations from research participants. The questions will be addressed by research participants representing the donor, executing agencies, the recipient government, the women beneficiaries, as well as non-beneficiaries of the project.

Project knowledge is what participants know about RCL Project, such as donors, funding, management and their relations with other stakeholders. Questions on project evaluation will focus more on project relevance to the needs of the beneficiaries and how aid relations affect project relevance and impact. Project recommendations will explore criticisms and recommendations for the project or similar projects in the future.

Below are the lists of questions for the research participants:

Questions for Donors and Executing Agencies

1. On the project knowledge

- What was the original reason for the project?
- Who initiated or funded the project?
- How is the management of the project conducted?
- How did the donor and executing agencies arrive with particular selections and timing for the project?
- How did the donor and executing agencies involve the recipient government, beneficiaries and others in the project selection?

2. On the project evaluation

- Do you think the project has been able to address urgent needs of the beneficiaries? Please explain.
- In your opinion and based on your knowledge, what are the impacts of the project?

- Do you think this selected project has accommodated the interests of the government recipients, and women beneficiaries, as well as the donors?
 - How do you see relations between donors, executing agencies, and related stakeholders during the project? Please explain.
3. On the project recommendations
- What is your feedback on project and related stakeholders?
 - Do you have any criticisms of the project? Please explain.
 - What are your recommendations for a participatory and inclusive project?

Questions for the Recipient Government

1. On the project knowledge
- What do you know about the background of the project?
 - Who initiated the project?
 - Why did the government approve the project? Please explain.
 - How did the donor and executing agencies arrive with particular selections and timing for the project?
 - How did the donor and executing agencies involve the recipient government, beneficiaries, and others in the selection of the project?
2. On the project evaluation
- Do you think the project has been able to address the urgent needs of the beneficiaries? Please explain.
 - In your opinion and based on your knowledge, what are the impacts of the project?
 - Do you think this selected project has accommodated the interests of the recipient government as well as the beneficiaries?
 - How do you see relations between the donor, executing agencies, and related stakeholders during project planning, implementation and evaluation?

3. On the project recommendations

- What is your feedback for the project and the executing as well as partners and beneficiaries?
- Do you have any criticisms of the project? Please explain.
- What are your recommendations for participatory and inclusive projects?

Questions for Women Beneficiaries

1. On the project knowledge and women's empowerment

- How did you learn about this project? Please explain.
- Do you know the executing agencies of the project? Please explain.
- In your opinion, what do women need to make them empowered?

2. On the project evaluation

- Do you think the project has been able to address the urgent needs of the beneficiaries? Please explain.
- In your opinion and based on your knowledge, what are the impacts of the project in your area?
- What are the benefits of the project for you personally? Explain the changes you have experienced.
- How do you see relations between the executing agencies and government as well as beneficiaries during the project? Please explain.
- Do you think a similar project is still needed in the future with the support of the donor and executing agencies? Please explain.

3. On the project recommendations

- What is your feedback for the project?
- Do you have any criticisms of the project? Please explain.
- What are your recommendations for the participatory and inclusive project in the future?

Questions for Non-beneficiaries (Academic, NGO workers, and other non-beneficiaries of the project)

1. On the project knowledge and women's empowerment issues

- What do you know about the project? Please explain.
- Are you aware of the donor, executing agencies, local partners, and beneficiaries of the project? If yes, please explain.
- Please explain the main issues and needs on women's empowerment in the project area.

2. On the project evaluation

- Do you think the project has been able to address the urgent needs of beneficiaries? Please explain.
- In your opinion and based on your knowledge, what are the impacts of the project?
- How do you see relations between the donor, executing agencies, the recipient government as well as the beneficiaries of the project? Please explain.
- Do you think such a project still requires support from the donor and executing agencies in the future? Please explain.

3. On the project recommendations

- What is your feedback on the project and the executing agencies as well as related stakeholders?
- What are your criticisms of the project? Please explain.
- What are your recommendations for participatory and inclusive projects in the future? Please explain.

Appendix 6. Interview Guide (Indonesian)

Pendahuluan

Untuk wawancara, saya akan menanyakan beberapa pertanyaan mengenai proyek pembangunan (Proyek RCL), terutama tentang pengetahuan, penilaian, dan rekomendasi dari para peserta penelitian. Pertanyaan-pertanyaan ini akan dijawab oleh para peserta penelitian yang mewakili donor, pelaksana proyek, pemerintah penerima bantuan, para perempuan penerima manfaat, juga para pihak yang tidak termasuk penerima manfaat proyek.

Pengetahuan tentang Proyek RCL pada dasarnya adalah tentang apa yang diketahui oleh para peserta penelitian tentang proyek pembangunan, seperti donor, pendanaan, pengelolaan dan hubungan mereka dengan para pemangku kepentingan terkait. Pertanyaan tentang penilaian terhadap proyek pembangunan akan focus pada relevansi proyek dengan kepentingan para penerima manfaat dan bagaimana hubungan para pihak dalam proyek pembangunan mempengaruhi relevansi dan dampak proyek. Rekomendasi proyek akan mengangkat kritik dan saran untuk proyek serupa di masa mendatang.

Berikut daftar pertanyaan untuk para peserta penelitian:

Pertanyaan untuk Donor dan Pelaksana Proyek:

1. Pengetahuan tentang proyek
 - Apakah alasan awal dari proyek ini?
 - Siapa yang memulai atau mendanai proyek ini?
 - Bagaimanakah proyek ini dikelola?
 - Bagaimana donor dan pelaksana proyek sepakat akan pemilihan dan pelaksanaan waktu proyek?
 - Bagaimana donor dan pelaksana proyek melibatkan pemerintah penerima manfaat, para penerima manfaat dan pihak lainnya dalam pemilihan proyek?

2. Penilaian terhadap proyek

- Menurut Anda, apakah proyek ini telah menjawab kebutuhan mendesak para penerima manfaat? Tolong jelaskan.
- Menurut Anda dan berdasarkan pengetahuan Anda, apa sajakah dampak dari proyek ini?
- Menurut Anda, apakah proyek ini telah mengakomodasi kepentingan pemerintah penerima manfaat, dan para perempuan penerima manfaat, dan juga donor itu sendiri?
- Bagaimana Anda melihat hubungan antara donor, pelaksana proyek, dan para pemangku kepentingan selama proyek ini berjalan? Tolong jelaskan.

3. Rekomendasi untuk proyek

- Apa saran Anda untuk proyek ini dan para pemangku pihak terkait?
- Apa Anda mempunyai kritik terhadap proyek ini? Tolong jelaskan.
- Apa masukan Anda untuk proyek yang partisipatif dan inklusif?

Pertanyaan untuk Pemerintah

1. Pengetahuan tentang proyek

- Apa yang Anda tahu tentang latar belakang proyek ini?
- Siapa yang memulai proyek ini?
- Mengapa pemerintah menyetujui proyek ini? Tolong jelaskan.
- Bagaimana donor dan pelaksana proyek sepakat akan pemilihan dan pelaksanaan waktu proyek?
- Bagaimana donor dan pelaksana proyek melibatkan pemerintah penerima manfaat, para penerima manfaat dan pihak lainnya dalam pemilihan proyek?

2. Penilaian terhadap proyek

- Menurut Anda, apakah proyek ini telah menjawab kebutuhan mendesak para penerima manfaat? Tolong jelaskan.
- Menurut Anda dan berdasarkan pengetahuan Anda, apa sajakah dampak dari proyek ini?
- Apakah menurut Anda proyek ini telah mengakomodasi kepentingan pemerintah dan juga para penerima manfaat?
- Bagaimana Anda melihat hubungan antara donor, pelaksana proyek, dan para pemangku kepentingan selama perencanaan, pelaksanaan, dan penilaian proyek ini?

3. Rekomendasi untuk proyek

- Apa saran Anda untuk proyek ini termasuk untuk pelaksana proyek dan mitranya, serta para penerima manfaat?
- Apa Anda mempunyai kritik terhadap proyek ini? Tolong jelaskan.
- Apa masukan Anda untuk proyek yang partisipatif dan inklusif?

Pertanyaan untuk Para Perempuan Penerima Manfaat

1. Pengetahuan tentang proyek dan pemberdayaan perempuan

- Bagaimana Anda mengetahui tentang proyek ini? Tolong jelaskan.
- Apakah Anda mengetahui pelaksana proyek ini. Tolong jelaskan.
- Menurut Anda, apa yang dibutuhkan perempuan untuk membuat mereka berdaya?

2. Penilaian terhadap proyek

- Menurut Anda, apakah proyek ini telah menjawab kebutuhan mendesak para penerima manfaat? Tolong jelaskan.
- Menurut Anda dan sepengetahuan Anda, apa saja dampak proyek ini bagi pemberdayaan perempuan?

- Apa saja manfaat proyek ini untuk Anda secara pribadi? Jelaskan perubahan yang Anda alami.
- Bagaimana Anda melihat hubungan pelaksana proyek dan pemerintah juga para penerima manfaat selama proyek? Tolong jelaskan.
- Menurut Anda, apakah proyek serupa masih dibutuhkan di masa mendatang dengan dukungan dari donor dan pelaksana proyek? Tolong jelaskan.

3. Rekomendasi untuk proyek

- Apa saran Anda untuk proyek ini?
- Apa Anda memiliki kritik untuk proyek ini? Tolong jelaskan.
- Apa saran Anda untuk proyek yang partisipatif dan inklusif di masa mendatang?

Pertanyaan untuk Para Pihak Bukan Penerima Manfaat Proyek (Akademisi, pekerja LSM, dan para pihak lainnya)

1. Pengetahuan tentang proyek dan isu pemberdayaan perempuan

- Apa yang Anda ketahui tentang proyek ini? Tolong jelaskan.
- Apakah Anda tahu tentang donor, pelaksana proyek, mitra lokal, dan para penerima manfaat dari proyek ini? Jika ya, tolong jelaskan.
- Tolong jelaskan isu-isu utama dan kebutuhan untuk pemberdayaan perempuan di area proyek.

2. Penilaian terhadap proyek

- Apakah menurut Anda, proyek ini telah mampu menjawab kebutuhan mendesak para penerima manfaat? Tolong jelaskan.
- Menurut Anda dan sepengetahuan Anda, apa saja dampak dari proyek ini?
- Bagaimana Anda melihat hubungan antara donor, pelaksana proyek, pemerintah, juga para penerima manfaat proyek ini? Tolong jelaskan.

- Apa menurut Anda proyek seperti ini masih membutuhkan dukungan donor dan pelaksana proyek di masa mendatang? Tolong jelaskan.

3. Rekomendasi untuk proyek

- Apa masukan Anda untuk proyek ini dan pelaksana proyek juga para pemangku kepentingan terkait?
- Apa kritik Anda terhadap proyek ini? Tolong jelaskan.
- Apa saran Anda untuk proyek yang partisipatif dan inklusif di masa mendatang? Tolong jelaskan.

Appendix 7. List of Research Participants

Affiliations and Names	Number of Participant
<p>Ministry of Social Affairs and State Secretariat:</p> <p>Amri Kusumawardana Sumodiningrat (Head of Subdivision of Technical Cooperation with the US and Europe) of the State Secretariat.</p> <p>Deni Abdullah (Analyst of Technical International Cooperation) of the State Secretariat.</p> <p>Muhammad Taher (Head of International Cooperation Division) at the Planning Bureau of the Ministry of Social Affairs.</p> <p>Shobirin (Head of Subdivision of Non-governmental Cooperation) at the Planning Bureau of the Ministry of Social Affairs.</p>	4
<p>Pangkep District BAPPEDA (Local Development Planning Agency): Abdul Ghaffar (Head of Local Community Empowerment Agency).</p>	1
<p>Cultivation Affairs of Fisheries and Sea Technical Unit, South Sulawesi Province: Sulkaf S. Latief (Head of Fishery Cultivation Division).</p>	1
<p>Heads of the Villages:</p> <p>Nurhayati (Head of Pitussungu Village)</p> <p>Amrullah (Head of Pitue Village)</p>	2
<p>Oxfam's local partners (Marine Conservation Foundation/YKL):</p> <p>Wahyudin Opu (Project Officer of YKL for the RCL Project)</p> <p>Syamsuddin Cambang (Project Officer of YKL for the RCL Project)</p>	2
<p>Women beneficiaries (leaders, secretaries, treasurers, community organisers, members)</p> <p>Sitti Rahmah, Leader of <i>Pita Aksi</i> Group, Pangkep District</p> <p>Syarifah, Leader of <i>Kaloroang</i> and <i>Siangkalingadae</i> Groups, Pangkep District</p>	18

<p>Sarmilah, Member of <i>Siangkalingadae</i> Group, Pangkep District</p> <p>Jamilah, Member of <i>Anggrek</i> Group, Maros District</p> <p>Nadia, Community Organizer of <i>Sipakatau</i> Group, Maros District</p> <p>Sarmila, Member of <i>Melati</i> Group, Takalar District</p> <p>Kasturi, Leader of <i>Mutiara Laut</i> Group, Barru District</p> <p>Nurhayati, Community Organizer of <i>Tamanlanrea</i> Group, Takalar District</p> <p>Cahyani, Community Organizer of <i>Jaya Sukses</i> Group, Takalar District</p> <p>Daeng Puji, Community Organiser of <i>Setia Kawan</i> Group, Takalar District</p> <p>Nita, Treasurer of <i>Tamanlanrea</i> Group, Takalar District</p> <p>Harlina, Treasurer of <i>Pantai Bira</i> Group, Barru District</p> <p>Gustiani, Leader of <i>Cahaya Soreang</i> Group, Pangkep District</p> <p>Raodah, Leader of <i>Mutiara Desa</i> Group, Pangkep District</p> <p>Harnia, Member of <i>Nelayan Bersatu</i> Group, Maros District</p> <p>Salma, Secretary of <i>Ujung Parappa</i> Group, Maros District</p> <p>Fatmawati, Secretary of <i>Assyura</i> Group, Pangkep District</p> <p>Jumriyah, Secretary of <i>Api-api</i> Group, Maros District</p>	
<p>Male beneficiaries:</p> <p>Muhammad Al Arif, Member of <i>Pita Aksi</i> Group, Pangkep District</p> <p>Haris, Member of <i>Setia Kawan</i> Group, Takalar District</p>	2
<p>Donor (CIDA): Hari Basuki, Senior Development Officer</p>	1
<p>Oxfam (Director of Economic Justice, Director of Gender Justice RCL Acting Project Manager, and RCL Project Officer):</p> <p>Dini Widiastuti (Director of Economic Justice Goal Lead), Oxfam GB Indonesia</p> <p>Antarini Arna (Director of Gender Justice Goal Lead), Oxfam GB Indonesia</p> <p>Jaya Tulha (Acting Program Manager of the RCL Project), Oxfam Eastern Indonesia</p> <p>Tua Hasiholan Hutabarat (RCL Project Officer), Oxfam Eastern</p>	4

Indonesia	
Local NGO activist and academic: Rosmiati Sain (Head of LBH APIK Makassar) Dr. Andi Halilintar Latief (Anthropologist at Muhammadiyah State University, Makassar)	2
Total	37

Appendix 8. Ethics Approval



Phone 0-4-463 5676
Fax 0-4-463 5209
Email Allison.kirkman@vuw.ac.nz

MEMORANDUM

TO	Adinda Muchtar
COPY TO	John Overton
FROM	Dr Allison Kirkman, Convener, Human Ethics Committee
DATE	11 September 2014
PAGES	1
SUBJECT	Ethics Approval: 21238 Projects for Women's Empowerment: A Case Study of the Restoring Coastal Livelihoods (RCL) in South Sulawesi, Indonesia

Thank you for your application for ethical approval, which has now been considered by the Standing Committee of the Human Ethics Committee.

Your application has been approved from the above date and this approval continues until 11 September 2017. If your data collection is not completed by this date you should apply to the Human Ethics Committee for an extension to this approval.

Best wishes with the research.

Allison Kirkman
Human Ethics Committee

Appendix 9. Introduction Letter



Prof John Overton
School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences
Telephone +64-4-4635281
Email john.overton@vuw.ac.nz

17 March 2015

To Whom it May Concern

Re: Adinda Muchtar

This letter is to confirm that Ms Adinda Muchtar is fully registered as a PhD student in the Development Studies programme at the School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences (SGEES) at Victoria University of Wellington. As part of this degree, Adinda is currently undertaking a research project leading to a thesis. The working title of her thesis is: "Women, Empowerment and Aid Relationships: A Case Study of Oxfam Restoring Coastal Livelihoods (RCL) Project in South Sulawesi, Indonesia". This research project received approval from the Victoria University Human Ethics Committee on September 11, 2014 and has also been accepted by the Research Committee of SGEES.

I am one of Adinda's supervisors and also Director of the Postgraduate Programme in Development Studies. I fully support Adinda's proposal and we feel that this research is both important and interesting. It has much potential not only as an academic exercise but also it promises to be able to inform development policy and practice in Indonesia and elsewhere.

If you have any further questions or would like to receive further information about the research project, you can contact me as Adinda's primary supervisor [Prof. John Overton at +64 4 463 5281 and john.overton@vuw.ac.nz] or her co-supervisor Dr. Marcela Palomino-Schalscha [+64 4 4635899 and marcela.palomino-schalscha@vuw.ac.nz]. Adinda's contact details are: +62 812 950 7667 or +64 221 344 249 and adinda.muchtar@vuw.ac.nz.

We would be most grateful if you could offer any assistance you can to Adinda and her research.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'J Overton', written over a horizontal line.

(Prof. John Overton
Director of Postgraduate Development Studies Programme)

Appendix 10. Introduction Letter (Indonesian)



Prof. John Overton

School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences

Telephone: +64-4-4635281

Email: john.overton@vuw.ac.nz

17 Maret 2015

Kepada Yth.

Re: Adinda Muchtar

Surat ini untuk mengkonfirmasi bahwa Adinda Muchtar telah terdaftar sepenuhnya sebagai mahasiswa PhD di program Development Studies pada School of Geography, Environment, and Earth Sciences (SGEES), Victoria University of Wellington. Sebagai bagian dari studinya, Adinda saat ini tengah melakukan proyek penelitian yang akan menjadi tesisnya. Judul tesisnya adalah: “Perempuan, Pemberdayaan, dan Hubungan Bantuan Internasional: Studi Kasus tentang Proyek Oxfam untuk Memulihkan Kehidupan di Pesisir Sulawesi Selatan, Indonesia”.

Saya adalah salah satu pembimbing Adinda dan juga Direktur Program Pasca Sarjana Studi Pembangunan. Saya sepenuhnya mendukung proposal Adinda dan kami menilai penelitian ini penting dan menarik. Penelitian ini sangat berpotensi tidak hanya sebagai latihan akademik, namun penelitian ini juga menjanjikan untuk dapat memberikan informasi mengenai kebijakan dan praktik pembangunan baik di Indonesia maupun di negara lain.

Jika Anda memiliki pertanyaan lebih jauh atau ingin mendapatkan informasi lebih lanjut mengenai penelitian ini, silakan menghubungi saya selaku pembimbing utama Adinda (Prof. John Overton di +64-4-4635281 dan john.overton@vuw.ac.nz) atau pembimbing pendamping (Dr. Marcela Palomino-Schalscha di +64-4-4635899 dan marcela.palomino-schalscha@vuw.ac.nz). Kontak info Adinda di +62 812 9507667 atau +64221344249 dan adinda.muchtar@vuw.ac.nz.

Kami akan sangat berterimakasih atas bantuan yang dapat Anda berikan untuk Adinda dan penelitiannya.

Salam,

Prof. John Overton

Direktur Program Pasca Sarjana Studi Pembangunan

Appendix 11. Research Permission Letter in South Sulawesi Province (Indonesian)



31 Maret 2015

Kepada Yth.

Kepala Pelayanan Terpadu Satu Pintu (PTSP) Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan

Surat Permohonan Izin Penelitian

Melalui surat ini, saya, Adinda Tenriangke Muchtar (Nomor Identitas Mahasiswa: 300313069) yang telah terdaftar sepenuhnya sebagai mahasiswa PhD di program Development Studies pada School of Geography, Environment, and Earth Sciences (SGEES), Victoria University of Wellington, ingin mengajukan permohonan izin penelitian di Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan. Penelitian ini merupakan bagian dari studi saya yang akan menjadi tesis doctoral. Judul tesis tersebut adalah: “Perempuan, Pemberdayaan, dan Hubungan Bantuan Internasional: Studi Kasus tentang Proyek Oxfam untuk Memulihkan Kehidupan di Pesisir Sulawesi Selatan, Indonesia”.

Penelitian tersebut akan dilaksanakan dari bulan Mei hingga bulan Oktober 2015. Dengan ini, saya lampirkan pula rekomendasi penelitian dari Direktorat Jenderal Kesatuan Bangsa dan Politik Kementerian Dalam Negeri dan ringkasan proposal penelitian.

Jika Anda memiliki pertanyaan lebih jauh atau ingin mendapatkan informasi lebih lanjut mengenai penelitian ini, silakan menghubungi pembimbing utama saya (Prof. John Overton di +64-4-4635281 dan john.overton@vuw.ac.nz) atau pembimbing pendamping (Dr. Marcela Palomino-Schalscha di +64-4-4635899 dan marcela.palomino-schalscha@vuw.ac.nz). Kontak info saya di +62 812 9507667 atau +64221344249 dan adinda.muchtar@vuw.ac.nz.

Terima kasih banyak atas perhatiannya. Saya akan sangat berterimakasih atas bantuan yang dapat Anda berikan untuk saya dan penelitian ini.

Salam,

Adinda Tenriangke Muchtar

Mahasiswa PhD Program Kajian Pembangunan

Victoria University of Wellington, Selandia Baru

Appendix 12. Research Permission Letter in Pangkep District (Indonesian)



19 Mei 2015

Kepala Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah (BAPPEDA) Kabupaten Pangkajene
Kepulauan

Surat Permohonan Izin Penelitian

Melalui surat ini, saya, Adinda Tenriangke Muchtar (Nomor Identitas Mahasiswa: 300313069) yang telah terdaftar sepenuhnya sebagai mahasiswa PhD di program Development Studies pada School of Geography, Environment, and Earth Sciences (SGEES), Victoria University of Wellington, ingin mengajukan permohonan izin penelitian di Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan. Penelitian ini merupakan bagian dari studi saya yang akan menjadi tesis doktoral. Judul tesis tersebut adalah: “Perempuan, Pemberdayaan, dan Hubungan Bantuan Internasional: Studi Kasus tentang Proyek Oxfam untuk Memulihkan Kehidupan di Pesisir Sulawesi Selatan, Indonesia”.

Penelitian tersebut akan dilaksanakan dari bulan Mei hingga bulan Oktober 2015. Dengan ini, saya lampirkan pula rekomendasi penelitian dari Direktorat Jenderal Kesatuan Bangsa dan Politik Kementerian Dalam Negeri dan ringkasan proposal penelitian.

Jika Anda memiliki pertanyaan lebih jauh atau ingin mendapatkan informasi lebih lanjut mengenai penelitian ini, silakan menghubungi pembimbing utama saya (Prof. John Overton di +64-4-4635281 dan john.overton@vuw.ac.nz) atau pembimbing pendamping (Dr. Marcela Palomino-Schalscha di +64-4-4635899 dan marcela.palomino-schalscha@vuw.ac.nz). Kontak info saya di +62 812 9507667 atau +64221344249 dan adinda.muchtar@vuw.ac.nz.

Terima kasih banyak atas perhatiannya. Saya akan sangat berterimakasih atas bantuan yang dapat Anda berikan untuk saya dan penelitian ini.

Salam,

Adinda Tenriangke Muchtar

Mahasiswa PhD Program Kajian Pembangunan

Victoria University of Wellington, Selandia Baru

Appendix 13. Research Permission Letter from South Sulawesi Province Government (Indonesian)



PEMERINTAH PROVINSI SULAWESI SELATAN
BADAN KOORDINASI PENANAMAN MODAL DAERAH
Unit Pelaksana Teknis – Pelayanan Perizinan Terpadu
(UPT – P2T)

Nomor : 0308 /P2T-BKPMMD/18.25N/VII/OS/2015
Lampiran :
Perihal : REKOMENDASI

Kepada,
Yth, **Terlampir**
di,-
Tempat

- Dasar** :
1. Undang Undang No. 23 Tahun 2014 Tentang Pemerintahan Daerah.
 2. Undang Undang No.8 Tahun 1985 Tentang Organisasi Kemasyarakatan.
 3. PP. No. 25 Tahun 2000 Tentang Kewenangan Pemerintah dan Kewenangan Provinsi sebagai dasar otonom.
 4. Perda Prov. Sulsel Nomor 9 Tahun 2008 tentang Organisasi dan tata kerja Inspektorat Badan Perencana Pembangunan Daerah, Lembaga Teknis Daerah dan Lembaga Lain Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan (Lembaran Daerah Prov. Sulsel Tahun 2008 Nomor 9, Tambahan Lembaran Daerah Prov. Nomor 242) Sebagaimana telah diubah dengan perda Prov. Sulsel Nomor 12 Tahun 2009 (Lembaran Daerah Sulsel Tahun 2009 Nomor 12).
 5. SK Gubernur KDH Tk I Sulawesi Selatan No. 070.3236 Pem. Um Tanggal 22 Oktober 1986 Tentang Prosedur Permintaan Izin Rekomendasi Penelitian / Pengumpulan Data.
 6. Peraturan Gubernur Sulawesi Selatan Nomor 12 Tahun 2013 Tentang Penyelenggaraan Pelayanan Perizinan dan Non Perizinan Terpadu Satu Pintu Pada Pemerintah Daerah Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan
 7. Keputusan Gubernur Sulawesi Selatan Nomor 872/IV/Tahun 2014, Tanggal 01 April 2014 Tentang Pendelegasian Kewenangan Penandatanganan Perizinan dan Non Perizinan Kepala BKPMMD Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan.
- Memperhatikan** :
1. Surat Permohonan Rekomendasi Penelitian dari Kementerian Dalam Negeri Republik Indonesia Direktorat Jenderal Kesatuan Bangsa Dan Politik Atas nama Plt.Direktur Jendral Kesatuan Bangsa dan Politik Sekretaris DITJEN, Nomor : **440.02 / 0836 / kesbangpol**, Jakarta Tanggal 30 April 2015.
 2. Surat Permohonan Penelitian atas Nama Mahasisiwa PhD Program Kajian Pembangunan Victoria University of Wellington Selandia Baru (Adinda Tenriangke Muchtar) Tanggal 19 Mei 2015

Setelah membaca maksud dan tujuan kegiatan yang tercantum dalam proyek proposal maka pada prinsipnya Pemerintah Sulawesi Selatan tidak keberatan memberikan rekomendasi kepada :

Nama Penanggung Jawab. : **ADINDA TENRIANGKE M,S.SOS,MIS**
Tanggal Pelaksanaan : 19 Mei s/d 31 Oktober 2015
Jenis Kegiatan : **"Perempuan, Pemberdayaan dan Hubungan Bantuan Internasional ,Studi Kasus Tentang Proyek Oxfam Untuk Memulihkan Kehidupan di pesisir Sulawesi Selatan"**
Jumlah Peserta : 1 Orang
Lokasi Kegiatan : Terlampir 4 Kabupaten
Alamat Penanggung Jawab : Jl.Matahari No.20 Kelurahan Rawa Badak Utara Kecamatan Roja Jakarta Utara
No Hp : 081 295 076 67



Jl. Bougenville No. 5 Telp. (0411) 441077 Fax. (0411) 448936 Panakkukang
Website: <http://p2tbkpmmd.sulselprov.go.id> , Email: p2t_prov Sulsel@yahoo.com
Makassar 90222



Dengan Ketentuan :

1. Sebelum kegiatan dilakukan terlebih dahulu melaporkan diri pada Pemerintah Provinsi/ Kabupaten/Kota **SETEMPAT** dan berkoordinasi dengan instansi terkait.
2. Agar dapat menjaga keamanan dan ketertiban umum sesuai dengan peraturan yang berlaku serta tidak menyimpang dari kegiatan yang dicantumkan.
3. Semua biaya yang berhubungan dengan pelaksanaan kegiatan ditanggung oleh **Panitia Pelaksana**
4. Pembatalan jadwal/waktu pelaksanaan kegiatan tidak dapat dilakukan oleh Pihak yang bersangkutan tanpa alasan yang tepat dan terlebih dahulu berkonsultasi kepada kami dan aparat pemberi izin dan PAM lainnya.
5. Rekomendasi ini berlaku sejak tanggal dikeluarkan sampai **31 Oktober 2015**
6. Setelah selesai melaksanakan kegiatan agar menyampaikan laporan tertulis kepada Gubernur Sulawesi Selatan Up. Badan Koordinasi Penanaman Modal Daerah Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan dan Badan Kesatuan Bangsa dan Politik Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan dengan batas waktu 7 (tujuh) hari setelah pelaksanaan selesai.
7. Rekomendasi ini **tidak dapat/tidak berlaku** untuk **permintaan bantuan/sumbangan** .

Demikian rekomendasi ini dikeluarkan untuk dipergunakan sebagaimana mestinya.

Tembusan :

1. Gubernur Sulawesi Selatan (sebagai laporan)
2. Pangdam VII Wirabuana di Makassar
3. Kapolda Sul-Selbar di Makassar
4. Arsip

Diterbitkan di Makassar

Pada tanggal : 20 MAY 2015

a.n. GUBERNUR SULAWESI SELATAN

Pit. KEPALA BADAN KOORDINASI PENANAMAN MODAL DAERAH

PROVINSI SULAWESI SELATAN

Selaku Administrator Pelayanan Perizinan Terpadu



H. IRMAN YASIN LIMPO, SH

Pangkat Pembina Utama Madya

Nip : 19670824 199403 1 008



Jl. Bougenville No. 5 Telp. (0411) 441077 Fax. (0411) 448936 Panakkukang
Website: <http://p2tbkpmdu.sulselprov.go.id> , Email: p2t_provusulsel@yahoo.com
Makassar 90222



Lampiran : Surat Kepala Badan Koordinasi Penanaman Modal Daerah Prov. Sulsel
Nomor : 0308/P2T-BKPM/18.25N/VII/05/2015
Perihal : Rekomendasi

A. KEPADA YTH :

1. Bupati Maros
2. Bupati Takalar
3. Bupati Barru
4. Bupati Pangkep (Pangkajene Kepulauan)

B. KEGIATAN : IJIN PENELITIAN (PEREMPUAN,PEMBERDAYAAN DAN HUBUNGAN BANTUAN INTERNASIONAL ,STUDI KASUS TENTANG PROYEK OXFAM UNTUK MEMULIHKAN KEHIDUPAN DI PESIRIR SULAWESI SELATAN).

A.n. GUBERNUR SULAWESI SELATAN
Plt. KEPALA BADAN KOORDINASI PENANAMAN MODAL DAERAH
PROVINSI SULAWESI SELATAN
Selaku Administrator Pelayanan Perizinan Terpadu



H. IRMAN YASIN LIMPO, SH
Pangkat : Pembina Utama Madya
Nip : 19670824 199403 1 008



Appendix 14. Research Permission Letter from Pangkep District Government (Indonesian)



PEMERINTAH KABUPATEN PANGKAJENE DAN KEPULAUAN
KANTOR KESATUAN BANGSA DAN POLITIK
Jalan Sultan Hasanuddin ☎ (0410) 21200 Ext 146 Pangkajene

Pangkajene, 28 Mei 2015

Nomor : 036 /V/KKBP/2015
Lampiran : -
Perihal : Rekomendasi Penelitian

Yth. Kepada
1. Kades Boddie Kab. Pangkep
2. Kades Tamarupa Kab. Pangkep
3. Kades Tamangapa Kab. Pangkep
4. Kades Pitunggu Kab. Pangkep
5. Kades Pitue Kab. Pangkep
6. Kades Bontomanai Kab. Pangkep

Di, -
Tempat

Dasar : 1. Undang-undang Nomor 32 Tahun 2004 tentang Pemerintahan Daerah;
2. Undang-undang Nomor 17 Tahun 2013 tentang Organisasi Kemasyarakatan;
3. Peraturan Daerah Kabupaten Pangkajene dan Kepulauan Nomor 3 Tahun 2014 tentang Organisasi dan Tata Kerja Lembaga Teknis Daerah Pemerintah Kabupaten Pangkajene dan Kepulauan.

Memperhatikan : Surat Kepala Badan Koordinasi Penanaman Modal Daerah Provinsi Sul-Sel Nomor: 0308/P2T-BKPM/18.25N/VII/05/2015 tanggal 20 Mei 2015 perihal Rekomendasi Penelitian

Setelah membaca maksud dan tujuan kegiatan yang tercantum dalam Proposal maka pada prinsipnya Pemerintah Kabupaten Pangkajene dan Kepulauan tidak keberatan dan menyetujui kegiatan dimaksud.

Nama Penanggung Jawab : **ADINDA TENRIANGKE M, SOS,MIS**
Jenis Kegiatan : **Perempuan, Pemberdayaan dan Hubungan Bantuan Internasional, Studi Kasus Tentang Proyek Oxfam untuk Memulihkan Kehidupan di Pesisir Sulawesi Selatan**
Tanggal Pelaksana : 19 Mei s/d 31 Oktober 2015
Jumlah Peserta : 1 Orang
Alamat Penanggung Jawab : Jl. Matahari No. 20 Kel Rawa Badak Utara Kec Roja Jakarta Utara

Dengan Ketentuan :

1. Sebelum kegiatan dilakukan, terlebih dahulu dikoordinasikan dengan Pemerintah dan aparat Keamanan setempat;
2. Rekomendasi ini tidak dapat dipergunakan untuk meminta/memungut Sumbangan / Dana dari pihak manapun;
3. Mentaati semua Peraturan Perundang-undangan yang berlaku;
4. Tidak memasang Alat Peraga ditempat milik Perseorangan, Badan swasta, dan milik Pemerintah tanpa izin terlebih dahulu;
5. Tidak Melakukan Kegiatan yang mengandung Ketangkasn/ Judi
6. Tidak memperjualbelikan dan mengkonsumsi miras/obat terlarang ditempat Kegiatan;
7. Rekomendasi ini berlaku mulai Tanggal dikeluarkan sampai dengan tanggal **31 Oktober 2015**;
8. Rekomendasi ini akan dicabut kembali dan dinyatakan tidak berlaku apabila Pemegang Rekomendasi tidak mentaati ketentuan diatas.

Demikian Rekomendasi kegiatan ini dikeluarkan untuk dipergunakan sebagaimana mestinya,-



TEMBUSAN : Kepada Yth.

1. Bupati Pangkep sebagai laporan;
 2. Kapolres Pangkep di Pangkajene
 3. Dandim 1421 Pangkep di Pangkajene
 4. Camat Labakang Kab. Pangkep di Labakang
 5. Camat Ma'rang Kab. Pangkep di Ma'rang
 6. Camat Mandalle Kab. Pangkep di Mandalle
- Pertinggal---

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