Working paper 1.3

Working group Gender and conflict

ESTABLISHING THE LINKAGES BETWEEN GENDER AND FRAGILITY.

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Contents

Introduction

The objective of this working paper is to establish the linkages between gender and fragility. This paper builds upon the first two working papers (1.1 & 1.2). It aims at exploring the different possible linkages between gender and fragility, and identifying the gender(ed) dimensions of state fragility. The purpose is to establish a basis for further discussion, to open up interesting areas for investigation, and also to ask some critical questions. This paper is therefore not an end-product, but more of a scoping paper, to find out 'what's there' and 'what's missing' in the fragile states debate from a gender perspective. In order to do so, the following three questions will be addressed:

1. How does gender relate to fragility and vice versa?
2. Do fragile states exhibit certain gendered characteristics?
3. What are the gender dimensions of fragility.

There is a certain level of overlap and interconnectedness between those questions, and I will therefore not structure my paper accordingly. In the first part of this paper I will look at the concept of the 'fragile state' and show how and why such a state is gendered. I will use the definition established in working paper 1.1. as a point of departure. To establish the gender dimensions of fragile states, I will review literature that explicitly focuses on the linkages between gender and fragility. However, since the amount of literature on this particular subject is rather thin, I will also look at some more general articles addressing fragile states from a gender perspective. In the second part of this paper I will take a closer look at policies concerning fragile states (based on working paper 1.2) and show points of entrance for integrating a gender perspective. When possible I will try to illustrate this with relevant and concrete examples based on a gender analysis the main Dutch policy documents concerning fragile states: the general policy note 'Dutch Development Cooperation 2007-2011', 'Naar een menswaardig bestaan. Een mensenrechtenstrategie voor het buitenlands beleid' and 'Veiligheid en ontwikkeling in fragiele staten. Strategie voor de Nederlandse inzet 2008-2011'.

Chapter 1   The gender dimensions of fragile states.

Before I start the review on gender and fragile states, it is good to note that in the literature, different terminologies are used. Sometimes the focus is explicitly on so called fragile states, at other points the discussion is about state fragility. Also, many aspects of fragile states, may be discussed separately, without explicitly being framed in the fragile states discourse. To try and find a conclusive answer to the conceptual definition of fragile states, falls outside the scope of this paper. It is however useful to be aware of it. The objective of the Gender & Conflict working group is 'applying a gender perspective to fragile states'. I will therefore stick to the term fragile state, although the concept itself can be criticised[1]. In the literature review however, I have tried to also look at interesting literature that addresses certain aspects of fragile states, even when it might not explicitly use the fragile states language: e.g. literature about gender and state-building, gender and development etc.. Of course the term fragile states covers a whole range of topics, among which the ones named above. And just looking at one of those aspects could already provide for vast literature reviews and studies. I have tried to use parts of these literatures instrumentally and do not have the intention, nor the supposition of presenting a definitive picture of all the aspects that are intertwined with the fragile states debate.

Apart from the different terms used to refer to state fragility, the content of the term itself is rather vague as well. Just looking at the different lists of 'fragile states' used by different donors[2], it becomes clear that the term 'fragile state' can cover a whole range of different situations and contexts. Many of such lists for example include Afghanistan as well as Zimbabwe. Obviously, both countries face rather different problems. If the term fragility can refer to many different problems, it is safe to conclude that the gender dimensions of fragility, will also be different in different contexts. Gender is above all a fluid concept and gender relations can differ largely, not only within different contexts, but also within different policy fields and even among people in different age groups, with different ethnic backgrounds, different occupations, etc.. Therefore, the gender dimensions of fragility in Afghanistan are probably different from those in Zimbabwe. This makes the exercise of establishing the linkages between gender and fragile states a complex task. I will try to show how the dimensions and aspects of fragile states are gendered. This can provide a guideline for thinking about the gender dimensions in specific contexts.

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[1] Within the VVO network, there are discussions about the use of the term 'fragile state' or 'state fragility'. Apart from more theoretical and analytical objections to it the term is often not accepted by partner countries and is sometimes perceived by the countries at stake as insulting or condescending. The issue of terminology will be taken up in the overarching paper 1.0.
[2] For comparison see for example: CPIA and LICUS index, index of State Weakness, CIFP index and the Failed State Index.

In this chapter I will first take a look at the existing literature that explicitly addresses gender and fragile states. Although there is not a huge amount of thorough research available on the topic, there are some academic articles on the relationship between state fragility and gender equality. On top of that, there are some case-studies, NGO-papers, reports and other relevant articles, that address certain elements of fragile states from a gender perspective. After reviewing the more general linkages between state fragility and gender, I will address the most important characteristics of fragile states from a gender perspective and try to unravel the gender dimensions of fragile states. The working definition that was established in paper 1.1 will serve as the point of departure for this.

1.1   State of the art: what does the literature say about gender and fragile states?

A simple 'google search[3]' learns that there aren't many articles or reports that make the link between state fragility and gender issues. There is little literature that explicitly addresses the linkages between gender (in)equality and fragile states. On top of this, the 'mainstream' literature on fragile states, has largely neglected gender concerns, even though many of the characteristics of fragile states do have gendered aspects. This is not only the case for the more theoretical, conceptual articles, but also for most of donor's fragile states policies (Hollander, 2009, WP 1.2), as we will see in the next paragraph.

In the literature on fragile states, many different definitions and measurements of fragility are given. Most of these definitions focus strongly on the relative level of conflict in these states. A distinction for example, is made between tensions or threat of conflict, states experiencing conflict, and states recovering from it. Another common distinction is to speak about fragile states in terms of state failure (Di John, 2008). USAID distinguishes between failing, failed and recovering states. Most of the documents on fragile states, try to come up with dimensions and ways of measuring fragility. A common way of doing so, is to list economic, political, social and security indicators. Although most indicators might be gendered, this is mostly not recognised. Concepts like legitimacy, violence, political participation, democracy, civil society, social service delivery, poverty and governance are used, without thinking about the meaning of this in terms of gender (See e.g. Di John, 2009; Marshall, 2008; Fritz & Menocal, 2007; Stewart & Brown, 2009).

This 'gender blind spot' becomes very obvious in the CRISE working paper 51 (Stewart & Brown, 2009), which presents a framework for the approach of fragile states that at first glance seems to offer many points of entry for gender concerns. There is a whole section on the relationship between state fragility, human rights and horizontal inequalities (HIs), but a link with gender equality is not made. One could however argue that gender inequality is the most fundamental

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[3] I have 'googled' different word combinations to see whether there are articles, studies, papers, that address gender and fragility (gender, fragile states, fragility, women etc.).

horizontal inequality there is - it cuts across other inequalities regarding religion, ethnicity, age, etc. - yet the concept is defined in a more restrictive way to encompass the existence of culturally defined and socially excluded groups in terms of socio-economic, political and cultural status. It is even argued that states that are characterised by large horizontal inequalities or high poverty are per definition fragile. In the article, there is a lot of attention for 'political and social inclusion'. However, this term again does not cover exclusion or discrimination on the basis of gender. Although the authors offer an interesting framework to fragile states, which could at many points include gender dimensions, they miss the opportunity of doing so. This affects the meaning of terms like inclusive democracy, fair elections, even human rights, as it becomes clear from the case studies that attention to gender is not included. Other articles that try to establish the roots and causes of state fragility, also rarely or not at all, address gender. Not as a variable, let alone as a basic or fundamental aspect of fragile states (E.g. Marshall, 2008; Fritz & Rocha, 2007; Stewart & Brown, 2009). They do address issues of violence, discrimination, poverty and inequalities, but not from a gender perspective.

So why is this 'gender blindness' problematic? Some might argue that gender is just not that important in fragile states, or that there is a need to focus on other things before one can start worrying about gender issues. However, glancing over different indexes of state fragility and indexes on gender equality, fragile states do not only perform poorly on a political level (e.g. lack of government legitimacy and capacity) or economically (e.g. high poverty rates), but it is also shown that states classified as 'fragile', are lagging furthest behind on the Millennium Development Goals and are also performing badly in the field of gender equality (CIFP index, GDI, Dutch policy note DC 2007). From studies on development and poverty, we know that gender dimensions play an important role. There are also many gendered aspects to conflict and violence. This would imply that many gendered dimensions are at play fragile states. And although literature on the explicit linkages between fragile states and gender is scarce, some efforts are undertaken to link questions of gender to macro-level security concerns, conflict and violence[4].

In the work of Maria Caprioli the linkages between domestic gender equality and state behaviour are central. She explores the different correlations between gender (in)equality and intrastate conflict, state behaviour on an international level, and the severity of violence in conflict. Despite the fact that she doesn't explicitly place herself in the fragile states debate, her work is very relevant. Caprioli (2000, 2005) argues that based on statistical analysis, there is a correlation between gender inequality and conflict. She finds that domestic gender equality has a pacifying effect on state behaviour at the international level and that states characterized by gender inequality are more likely to experience intrastate conflict. On top of that Caprioli & Boyer (2001) show that the severity of violence during crisis decreases as gender equality increases. Conflict between, as well as within the state, is a

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[4] This is apart from the literature on different aspects of fragile states (e.g. violence or peace building) and gender, to which I will come back later. Here I specifically refer to literature that tries to link gender equality, or gender issues, to state fragility.

central problem in the fragile states debate, in which a gender perspective is most commonly absent (except for example references to the effect of violence and conflict on women). The findings presented above, make a strong case for incorporating gender as an integral aspect of fragile states, not just an add-on. Other research also shows that there is a significant linkage between the security of women and the security of states (Hudson, et.al., 2009). There is a statistically significant relationship between the physical security of women and three measurements of the peacefulness of states (Global Peace Index, States of Concern to the International Community SOCIC, Relations with Neighbours RN). All these correlations beg the question of what constitutes security[5]. It points out that any definition or account of security that doesn't take into account gender (e.g. gender based violence) is an incomplete view of security (Hudson et. al, 2008, p.42).

In other literature (case study oriented, policy recommendations, donor programs etc.) that does establish a linkage between gender and state fragility, the attention for gender is mainly restricted to the differential impact of conflict women and men, or the different roles of women and men in peace processes and reconstruction. The majority of reports and recommendations focus on women (not gender) as either victims and/ or peace promoters (Rao & Kelleher, 2006; SIDA, 2006). The dominant argument used in making the case for embedding gender in the fragile states debate, is that women and men are affected differently by situations of widespread human rights violations, poverty and physical insecurity that often characterize fragile states. Another argument that is often used is that men and women (and prevailing gender relations) can contribute to positive change, or undermine this (Baranyi & Powell, 2005). This argument is most relevant when we think of the ways in which men and women can contribute to peace processes, state building etc. (Koen, 2006; Greenberg & Zuckerman, 2009; Korac, 2006). In most of the work, attention for gender takes on the form of attention for women. As a consequence of this focus on women in these two respects, the interconnections between gender and conflict/ peace, or other gendered elements of fragile states, have not been adequately addressed.

It is necessary to look further than only the different impact of violence and conflict on men and women. It is necessary to look at gender from a more fundamental point of view e.g. how do gender relations structure conflict and violence, how do gender inequalities in one domain (e.g. economy, family law or politics) influence the way in which a state functions or fails. Although it is of course important to focus on women and children, as they have often been excluded from analyses and studies, it is also necessary to be aware of stereotyping men and women and also look at other groups like youth, the elderly and young men. Women and children can generally be considered the most vulnerable groups, but the failure of societies to address security and justice needs of youth and young men in particular, may push them into militia groups as a means of survival, which in turn, has devastating effects to communities, among which for example rape of women (Ismail & Hendrickson). To properly understand the gendered nature of conflict, one must look at the ways in which masculinities and femininities are (re)produced in

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[5] I will come back to the concept of security in paragraph 1.2.1.

relation to violence and conflict. And the other way around, how gender relations and gendered discourse influence the logic and discourse of conflict (SIDA, 2006; Barker & Ricardo, 2005).

If we look beyond the fragile states debate, there are many relevant discussions to be found that do address gender in relations to topics that could be put under the header of 'fragile states'. There is a broad literature for example on gender & conflict, gender & peace, gender & governance, gender & development. Given the fact that all these topics are relevant to the fragile states debate, it is even more striking that the gender component is largely absent when it comes to discussing fragile states. This is, in itself, an interesting observation. It goes to show that gender has far from taken root in day to day policy making and that new concepts and new policy approaches can be developed, without thinking about the gender components of it.

Considering the practical limitations of this working paper, it would go too far to discuss all these separate literatures, but I will present a number of interesting connections here. In the extensive literature on gender and conflict, there is a strong focus on the different sorts of violence experienced by women during times of conflict. Large scale rape and sexual violence committed by the military and other armed groups is at the centre of this. Linked to this are all sorts of studies exploring the linkages between different types of violence, violence against women and the construction of violent masculinities. Some articles point out that violence against women doesn't end when a conflict does, but that it often changes in character. Where forms of sexual violence, like rape, may decrease, levels of domestic violence often increase when combatants return home (Steans, 2006). The experience of having lived away from home for a long time, in a context where the use of violence is a legitimate way of solving problems, and where masculinity was connected with the use of violence, is something that these men take home with them (Kirsten, 2007; Barker, G. & C. Ricardo, 2005; Ismail & Hendrickson, 2009).

Another gendered element of conflict situations that is often mentioned, is that the traditional gender relations and the division of labour change during conflicts. Men often, though this is not always the case, have to go off to fight, and women have to develop means of surviving. To do so, women have to challenge tradition gender roles, and often take up typical men's jobs (SIDA, 2006; Koch, 2008). In this way, traditional gender patterns change, and women are presented with new opportunities. Apart from being passive victims of violence and conflict, we must not forget that women sometimes join fighting groups. Sometimes they do so as combatants, but more commonly, they will provide all kinds of services for the combatants, e.g. providing food supply, caring for the wounded etc.. There are many examples of women who fought in many different struggles. Nationalist revolutions have for example included women, like in Nicaragua. However, changes in the status of women were often short-lived. The participation of women can constitute a direct challenge to the privileged position of men. It is not uncommon that despite women's contribution to many nationalist struggles, the desire to achieve changes in the position of women is portrayed as a betrayal of culture and as endangering the nation (Steans, 2006). Of course there are many contextual factors that shape the specific gender roles and norms that can characterize nationalist struggles.

In the literature on peace processes and state building, there are some interesting gender aspects as well. To begin with, it is always underlined that the inclusion of women (or women's NGOs) is essential in peace negotiations, the drafting of new laws, transitional justice, governance structures etc.. Women should have an equal right to participate in these processes and to benefit from public and private resources and services. As we will see in paragraph 1.2, the reconstruction after conflict is often framed as an opportunity for women. Post-conflict situations provide extraordinary opportunities to set new norms, draft new rules, engage new leaders and build new institutions. In such circumstances it is very important that women's rights are recognised, and women's needs and demands included and supported (Greenberg, & Zuckerman, 2009).

Some observations:

Literature that explicitly addresses gender and fragility is hard to find. The closest to this were some articles by Maria Caprioli and others (2000; 2001; 2005; 2008; Hudson, 2008). She statistically shows that gender (in)equality and intrastate conflict, state behaviour on an international level and the severity of violence in conflict are correlated. She also shows a correlation between the physical security of women and the security of the state.

It was observed that despite the existing literature on gender & conflict, gender & governance, gender & development (poverty) etc., the fragile states discourse is mostly gender blind. This implies that gender concerns are not embedded strong enough to be translated into new policies. In other words, gender concerns are not structurally anchored in policy making, but still function as an add-on, something to be dealt with later.

The few articles that pay attention to gender in fragile states mostly focus on violence and conflict, and not at fragility as a whole. This begs the question whether a fragile states approach is something new, something with added value, or whether it is just a different name for states with increasing tensions, states in conflict and post-conflict states. If so, this new approach doesn't seem to be doing attention to gender any good.

The different impacts of violence and conflict on men and women is something that is most commonly recognised. In some articles the possible role of women in peace building is stressed. But fragility is more than just the absence or presence of (violent) conflict and the gender dimensions of it therefore go further than only the impact of violence on men and women, and their participation and roles in peace building and reconstruction. In the next paragraph I will therefore take a closer look at the definition of fragile states and see what other linkages there could be.

1.2 The gender dimensions of fragile states

As we saw in the previous paragraph, there are some interesting correlations between aspects of fragile states gender inequalities. In this paragraph I will focus on the working definition of the working group on Gender & Conflict and illustrate how the different elements of the definition have important gender aspects. I will do this by trying to 'make women and men visible' in the definition and show how the different aspects of it have certain gendered aspects and dynamics. But first I will theoretically explore the concept of 'fragile states', to show how the use of this term implies certain underlying (gendered) norms and ways of thinking, how concepts and categories in the fragile states debate are constructed in terms of gender, and how gender (inequality) is institutionalised in state (institutions) and is reproduced by it.

1.2.1 A critical look at the concept of fragile states: some food for thought.

Much of the trouble of gender blind concepts in general, and of the concept of the fragile state in mainstream literature more specifically, stems from the gender biased way in which international politics are conceived. In a world that is made up of 'sovereign, rational, unitary states' that strive to protect their 'national interests', it was often, and sometimes still is, argued that gender just doesn't matter much in international politics (Steans, 2006). Despite the fact that a lot has improved over the last decades, and attention for gender is more or less structurally integrated in for example development aid, and despite the fact that there is a large body of literature on women in peace building and state building, gender aspects of security, or gender and conflict, the moment a new concept, like fragile states, is introduced, the attention seems to have disappeared. Apparently, thinking of states in terms of fragility overshadows or pushes out of the way the attention for gender. Without wanting to repeat all of the existing critical discussions on the state, war, international politics, and gender, it is interesting to highlight some of the central ideas that are relevant to a critical discussion of the concept of the fragile state. My aim here is not to come up with a complete overview of all different elements of the genderedness of fragile states, or give the final or correct answers and solutions, but I'd like to raise some questions that could form the basis for further discussion and a better understanding of the gender dimensions of fragile states, and to point out interesting aspects to further investigate in the case studies.

A problem when taking the state as a point of departure (e.g. when using the term 'fragile state'), is that a state is often perceived as a unitary actor with clear national interests. It also defines what is important to analyse and what is not. Morgenthau for example argued that politics had to be seen as a autonomous sphere of action, because it would otherwise be impossible to distinguish between political and non-political, or between high and low politics. These distinctions are connected to the public – private distinction, and when drawn, they render gender relations (in the private sphere) invisible (Steans, 2006, p.25). When taking the state as a

point of departure, it is important to be aware that the state is not a unitary actor with clear national interest, but a site of contestation over what these national interests are. One should always ask the question whose interests are represented, and whose aren't, who has 'voice' to articulate the national interest and who hasn't.

From a historic perspective on the state, it is clear that men have dominated the state, the political processes and the state's institutions. In the process of state making, gender differences become institutionalised, e.g. by rendering certain decisions 'private' and others 'public'. Institutions are not neutral entities that are open to every person in the same way. Instead, institutions benefit some groups, while excluding others. Because women are historically very much restricted to the private sphere, they fall outside the scope of the political. The historical exclusion of women, leaves an imprint on the state and it's institutions. They are 'marked masculine' (Chappell, 2002). Things that have developed historically over long periods of time, can be difficult to change. The interests of one group might be better served by the state, than others. When trying to change these distributions of power, resistance can be strong. From the literature on institutions and institutional change, it becomes clear that change is a difficult thing to bring about. To make the state's institutions that have developed in a male dominated context, more responsive to women, is therefore not an easy task.

In fragile states, many of the state institutions may have collapsed, and large shifts in power relations within the state might occur. These moments of institutional collapse, shifts and instability, may open possibilities for transforming gender relations. In periods of conflict, traditional gender relations are often challenged, as women can enter into a realm that was previously largely the place of men, e.g. they can get into male jobs, because large groups of men are off fighting, they can get involved in local governance or even get involved in armed conflict and fighting. In post-conflict situations, where the creation of new state institutions, the drafting of new laws, the constitution etc. takes place, this offers opportunities for the integration of gender equality concerns. For example, Rwanda now is the country with the largest number of women in parliament. This has been made possible because gender quota were included in the newly drafted constitution. The participatory approach adopted by the Constitutional Commission made significant input by women and women's organizations possible. They were actively mobilized around the drafting of the constitution, and their participation ensured that gender equality concerns became embedded. Also, principles of gender equality and women's human rights, and a provision for at least 30% of women in all decision-making instances became legally anchored (Wellars, 2007).

Processes of state building, institutional reform, but also social security sector reform, offer major possibilities in the field of gender equality. In much of the literature on women in peace building, there is discussion about the opportunities for gender equality that are created by such processes (Koen, 2006; Waylen, 2007; Greenberg & Zuckerman, 2009; Castillejo, 2008; 2009). The idea is that a shift or change, or even collapse, of the existing institutions and dominant norms and powers, can open up possibilities for change. This idea is also presented in the World

Bank Issues Paper (2008), although not explicitly from a gender perspective. It is mentioned though that state-building efforts in fragile situations present important openings for more inclusive and representative institutions. However, if there are indeed so many opportunities for the integration of gender concerns, if women indeed have new chances of improving their situation, then we should see concrete examples of it. If we cannot find those, we should ask ourselves the important question why these opportunities are missed, if they are indeed present. Is it because these changes are openly resisted, because these processes are male dominated and women aren't included, or something else? It might be interesting for the fieldwork, to see whether women are involved in peace negotiations, the drafting of new laws, the reconstruction of institutions etc.. and whether the newly created institutions, laws etc. do reflect more gender equality.

The two main concepts in the fragile states debate are security and development. Gender and fragility can be connected through the gender and development debate, as fragile states often perform poorly on development and there is a large body of literature on gender and development. Gender and fragility can come together in the peace and security debate as well, although it is not as straightforward. Both development and security have extensively been researched and developed from a gender perspective. But where nowadays gender is mostly integrated in issues related to development, this is not the case with security issues. Although programmes that combine development and security concerns, for example DDR, increasingly show attention for gender concerns. The classical view on security as high politics, still seems to leave little room for gender concerns, despite the increasing attention to 'human security' over the last few years. The fact that the fragile states discourse is very much blind to gender issues, might be an indication that security is indeed perceived as more important than development, and that the security discourse is strong enough to overshadow the gender sensitivity of the development discourse. Because the idea that gender matters when it comes to development policies and aid, has taken root in most places, and because there is an extensive body of literature[6] that successfully makes this case, it is interesting to take a closer look at security matters.

As we saw before, what is seen as a 'national interest' can also be disputed. Also, the way in which people experience insecurity and security, might be rather different than viewed from state level. The term human security comes some way in mapping these feelings of insecurity. The degree to which people feel or are threatened varies according to their economic, political, social and personal circumstances. All of which have major gender aspects (Steans, 2006). Apart from the obvious physical security concerns of women (domestic violence, rape, etc.) there are other security dimensions as well. When it comes to food security for example, it is estimated that

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[6] Wendy Harcourt (2009), gives an overview of development policy frameworks addressing gender equality, from Women in Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD), UN frameworks, the CEDAW convention, the World Bank to the Paris Declaration.

women produce more than 50% of the food grown worldwide, up to 80% in developing countries, yet they are overrepresented among people living in poverty and hunger and own hardly any of the land they work on. With this in mind, hunger is not so much a consequence of under-supply but a consequence of the way that food is distributed and of problems of access and entitlement (Steans, 2006). Another major threat is the HIV/AIDS pandemic. There is a direct correlation between the low status of women and the violation of women's human rights and the transmission of HIV/AIDS.

One can also criticize the view of the military as a defender of a pre-given national interest. The military, in general, is viewed to be the provider and defender of security. However, as Enloe (1989) has shown, the presence of military forces can be a major threat to the physical security of women, for many different reasons. To give an example, in Mexico, the situation for many women is becoming increasingly insecure in areas where there is a military presence, as has been the case for mostly poor and indigenous women in the southern states, who have been raped and sexually abused by military men (Joan B. Kroc Institute, 2008). Also, it is calculated that an increase in military expenditure – which is mostly perceived as an investment in security – doesn't make the life of women more secure, rather it increases insecurity (Steans, 2006).

1.2.2 Gendering the definition: making gender visible.

In Working Paper 1.1 (Hollander, 2009) the following definition of 'fragile states' was developed and agreed upon by the working group Gender & Conflict (14-4-2009):

"Fragile States are those states which have severe social tensions with negative consequences to the population. The economy is underdeveloped (high levels of poverty) or declining and economic opportunities are unequally divided. The government lacks legitimacy and is incapable or unwilling to deliver basic public services; they lack the legitimate monopoly on violence and are unable or unwilling to safeguard the rule of law and the protection of human rights".

From this definition, I'd like to highlight some elements and show how these elements have gender aspects to them, or how they can mean different things to women and men in different situations. Of course there may be many other possible gender dimensions to it, but I'll try to present some of the most important ones. Most of the factors presented below are interconnected. The elements in the definition that have clearly gendered aspects are:

severe social tensions

Of course there can be many different social tensions, with many different causes, probably all with different gender aspects. What is important is that social tensions can be gendered. During times of severe social tensions between rivalling groups or between neighbouring states for

example, discourses on masculinity and femininity are sometimes employed to fuel hostilities between groups. Men of the 'other' community are portrayed in feminine terms and compared to women, and women of the 'others' are seen as inferior to the 'home' women. Ideas about femininity, norms, culture and nationality or ethnicity become entangled. Rape of women form the 'other' group for example becomes an act of war, to try to weaken and humiliate the enemy. Also, it is not uncommon that the nation is depicted as a woman. In nationalist ideology, the image of the homeland (the motherland) as a female body can be deeply ingrained, requiring citizens to come to her defence, the moment she is violated (Steans, 2006).

Apart from these more abstract, discursive dimensions, social tensions mean different things to men and women. When social tensions increase, women's ways and freedom of movement might be heavily restricted (Caprioli, 2000; SIDA, 2006; Moser, 2007). Also, when social tensions increase in the public sphere, this might have an impact on relations in the domestic sphere, e.g. in the form of an increase in domestic violence. Increases in gender inequality can be a harbinger of escalating conflict (Caprioli & Douglas, 2008).

negative consequences to the population

Conflict and crisis have different impacts on men and women. In some situations girls and women are vulnerable to many different forms of gender –based violence, as well as to forced displacement and when, involved in combat, also to the risks of battle. Men can also become victims of sexual violence, but most commonly, men are impacted through their involvement in battle, their adhesion to criminal organisations, or because they are targeted by recruiting militia's etc.. During times of conflict where men are away from home, women often carry the sole responsibility and burden of providing for the family, running the household and taking care of the sick and wounded. Although this double burden is of course difficult, the fact that men are away and women have to make a living for themselves, can also provide opportunities in the sense that women can take on 'male' jobs, that previously weren't open to them. However, when conflict ends and men return, it is not uncommon that (sometimes widowed) women are forced from their jobs and left without revenues (Ismail & Hendrickson, 2009). In other situations, women are able to make use of their new experiences in positive ways, e.g. running their own business, or entering politics (of course this very much depends on the rights of women in their respective communities). For men who return from battle it can be frustrating to find women that were previously restricted to tasks in the private sphere, running public affairs and upholding public functions. When they themselves are without work, or not able to provide for their families due to war injuries or trauma, this can have consequences for their self esteem and do damage to the way they perceive their masculinity. Again, this might result in violence against women. Of course not all men are actively involved in conflict, and they also make up large parts of displaced persons, as they flee with their families. In these situations the gender aspects can be rather different. Not being able to defend their families or to make a living for them, men may feel they fail as men, in relation to dominant norms of masculinity.

economy is underdeveloped

This factor also has many different gender dimensions. Research indicates that denying women property rights, excluding them from the labour market, and paying them less than men, is detrimental to economic development (World Bank, 2001). Fennell (2009 in Harcourt, 2009) argues that unequal gender relations impede women from making use of economic opportunities and participation in the public sphere, thereby missing out on possible economic growth. Research has shown that exclusion of women in the economy is a serious hold back to economic development. The 2001 World bank report (2001), on gender issues shows that societies with large gender inequalities and impediments to women's participation experience less rapid economic growth and poverty reduction. The experiences with microfinance initiatives for women, underline the importance of gender equality for economic growth.

But unemployment among men can also be an enormous destabilizing factor (Urdal, 2004), with important gender dynamics. Unemployed young men are particularly vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups and to involvement in criminal activity. Which in turn, has major impacts on societies. Starting cycles of violent conflict, for example, which can set some of the above mentioned processes in motion.

economic opportunities are unequally divided

Closely connected and causally related to an underdeveloped economy, is the unequal distribution of economic opportunities. As was already shortly mentioned, women are often discriminated against or even fully excluded from the labour market. But also customary law can be problematic. In some countries, laws dictate that land inheritance goes through the male members of a family. Women who have worked certain lands for their whole lives, might be evicted and left without ways of making a living, when their husbands die. Similarly, in many societies, women traditionally do not enjoy the right to own land.

government lacks legitimacy

Legitimacy is a central word in much of the fragile states literature. It is therefore interesting to think about what is actually meant by it. Do we mean that the government in a country enjoy the support of a substantial part of its citizens? Do we mean that the government is elected through 'democratic and fair' elections (Caprioli & Douglas, 2008)? Do we mean that the government is able to deliver basic public services to its citizens and is therefore legitimate? And who are these citizens? Who has a right to vote? Whose interests are represented?

In many countries, women are excluded from full political participation and decision making. Terms like democracy or legitimacy are not always conceptualised with attention for gender equality concerns. It was for example not uncommon in many measures of democracy that women's suffrage was excluded. This compromised dates that were identified for democratic

transitions and our understanding of the emergence of democracy and the cause of democratization (Caprioli & Douglas, 2008. p.48). What we mean by 'democracy' and how we've measured it, is therefore gender biased. When a measure for women's suffrage would be included in the measurement of democracy, dates of democratization would sometimes be placed more than 20 years later than originally identified (Caprioli & Doulgas, 2008, p.48). When legitimacy, governance and democracy are discussed in the fragile states debate, it is often unclear whether or not gender considerations are taken on board. It should be recognised that gender equality is an essential component of democracy and legitimacy. Furthermore, in post-conflict situations women are often excluded from formal peace processes and drafting of new (transitional) laws. When we look to the question of who benefits from government expenditure, who can enjoy the services provided, it is also important to look at the possible gender inequalities. In some fragile states, large groups of people might be excluded, not only from official government structures, decision-making and participation, but also from going to school or making use of certain other services (see also next paragraph). This can be on basis of their ethnic background, or because they practice a certain religion. In most of the literature it is recognized that such mechanisms of exclusion have implications for the legitimacy of the state. However, in many countries women from all different walks of life, are excluded, not only from the public sphere, but sometimes also from accessing services. If the exclusion of certain minorities is deemed illegitimate, the exclusion of large number of women should be viewed as equally illegitimate.

basic public services

Access to basic public services is of course essential for women and men. But there are differences in their access to services, as well as their needs. During conflict, men wounded in battle are of course urgently in need of medical assistance. When there are many wounded fighters that have to be taken care of, this may take priority over women's needs. However, women are (under 'normal circumstances') often more in need of accessing health-care facilities than men due to pregnancies and giving birth, in part as a result of the sexual violence that many women suffer in fragile states (including HIV/AIDS that may follow) and because they are more vulnerable to vitamin and iron deficiencies (Koch, 2008). In some countries, women are not able to get medical help in every hospital, but have to go to specific women's hospitals. On top of this, women are often in charge of caring for the sick and wounded, when public services aren't in place (Koch, 2008). This places an even greater burden on them. The lack of (access to) health services, hits women disproportionally hard. The worst example of this was Afghanistan where the Taliban insisted that women were only allowed to visit a few designated hospitals in Kabul. Many examples exist of women and children that are turned away from a "men's only" hospital because of their gender. Women who did manage to get to the few facilities open to them, often were no better off, as the women's hospitals were badly equipped, had no medication, even clean water was sometimes absent.

Increasing literacy is an important Millennium Development Goal. In many fragile states there is a gender gap in the education of girls and boys. Not only in the enrolment in schools itself, but as a consequence, their higher education, literacy rates etc.. Girls enrolment in schools has a tendency to decline strongly during periods of conflict. They are often needed to help their mothers out in the household.

monopoly on violence

In a Weberian definition of the state, the legitimate monopoly of violence is an ultimate defining principle. In fragile states, this monopoly of violence is often challenged by groups within the state that use violence, or threaten to use violence. In such times of increasing tension and perceived threat, 'masculine' ideals of behaviour often become more violent (SIDA, 2006). Control over women's ways of being and behaviour increase. Male violent behaviour against women in the home might also coincide with men's increased frustration in general climates of violence (Schmeidl & Piza-Lopez, 2002; Moser, 2007). The upholders of the monopoly of violence, the army, the police force, are often corrupted and may use force against the state's citizens.

rule of law

In many fragile states, the central state cannot uphold authority, and cannot protect its citizens. During conflict, many violations of human rights take place. In post-conflict situations it is important to find a balance between punishing the perpetrators, while at the same time trying to rebuild societies. Impunity for crimes can become a problem. In many conflict there is a large scale occurrence of systematic rape of women. Not seldom by the military itself. But as the military is directly linked to the state, and perceived as an expression of the state's monopoly of violence, it is even more difficult to address those violations, than violations committed by other non-state actors. In many countries, crimes committed by the military go unpunished. In Guatemala for example, during the conflict government forces were responsible for 85% of the human rights violations in which Mayans were disproportionally targeted. After the signing of the peace treaty however, violence didn't stop. Every year Mayan women are brutally raped and murdered, without anyone being brought to justice for it (Joan B. Kroc Institute, 2008). Impunity for abuses committed by the military is a huge problem and is often a reflection of a strongly male dominated culture.

Another problem with the rule of law in many fragile states is that customary law is still exercised in many parts of the country. Women are often not be aware of their human rights in national laws, and international treaties, but turn to local Chiefs, who judge on the basis of customary law (Castillejo, 2009). For many people in fragile states, the justice apparatus is perceived as corrupted, too expensive, too far away. Especially poor uneducated people (which women mostly are), do not know how their right, and where to go when their rights are violated (Ismail & Hendrickson, 2009).

human rights

In international human rights, it is recognised that all human beings, men as well as women, are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Despite this recognition, fragile states are characterized by high levels of inequality between women and men, discrimination and violations of human rights. Gender-based violence is of course a violation of women's human rights, yet it often goes unpunished. The most striking example is the large scale domestic violence that occurs, not only in fragile states, but also still in developed countries. This form of violence is hardly ever brought to justice and in many fragile states the dominant norms and attitudes regarding women, legitimise violence against women. In many societies and cultures it is accepted for men to beat their wives. During conflict, women's human rights, as well as men's human rights are often violated. The large scale rape witnessed in the DR Congo is a distressing example of women's human rights violations. Even though many women may not know what their rights are, and in many fragile states, they may not be able to get justice, there are many international conventions and treaties on women's human rights, that can offer possibilities for addressing women's rights (Koen, 2006) (e.g. CEDAW Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, the recognition of rape as an act of war, Security Council Resolution 1325 etc.).

1.2.3 Some observations.

After this overview, it is clear that all these different factors of state fragility seem to have gendered elements, and/ or have different impacts on the lives of men and women. This also means that indicators used to measure them, must be gender sensitive. This topic will be elaborately discussed in Working Paper 1.4, where the question is asked whether our indicators of fragile states are gender sensitive, if they should be, and if we need other indicators, and also whether gender equality indices correspond with indices on fragility.

Many concepts in the fragile states debate are used in a gender blind way. In the literature on fragile states for example, the concept of Horizontal Inequalities (HIs) is sometimes seen as an important aspect of state fragility, and is therefore measured as an indicator of fragility. Stewart & Brown (2009) for example argue that a state with large HIs will ipso facto be fragile. However, gender inequality, probably the largest possible horizontal inequality, is not included in the measurement of horizontal inequality. However, as was shown in the work of Caprioli, it seems that large domestic gender inequalities actually correlate with insecurity at state level, conflict and the use of violence. The same line of reasoning could be followed when it comes to indicators of violence and conflict in the fragile states literature. The occurrence of violence might be measured by those indicators, but domestic violence is mostly excluded. One might speak about discrimination on the labour market or in political spheres, but limit the discussion to

discrimination on the basis of ethnicity or religion and 'forget' about the discrimination of women. We may talk about exclusion mechanisms in the selection of possible candidates for public – private cooperation, and not think about the exclusion of women. Terms like 'democracy', 'legitimate government' or 'fair elections' and 'equal representations' are often used much in the same way, but again, mostly without addressing gender.

Most elements of the working definition of fragile states have important gender aspects. It becomes clear that gender is indeed a crosscutting theme. Many elements of the definition are directly connected with others, when seen from a gender perspective. E.g. the linkages between conflict, changes in traditional gender relations and different forms of violence against women.

Some of the genderblindness of the fragile states debate, can be traced to the way in which the central concepts used, are understood, defined and measured.

The priority that security matters (in a narrow definition) often take in international politics, may partly explain the absence of attention for gender equality concerns from the dominant discussions.

Where are gender and fragility linked? Some possible entry points for gender equality concerns and a gender sensitive way of conceptualising fragile states.

Economic:
- Inequality and discrimination on the labour market.
- Strong traditional division of labour.
- Property rights.

Social:
- Disproportionate number of illiterate and uneducated women.
- High maternal mortality rates and bad sexual and reproductive health conditions.

Cultural:
- Violent masculinities.
- Gender norms/ roles.

Political:
- Underrepresentation and exclusion of women in decision-making and participation.
- Interests and needs of women not represented.
- Government expenditure unequally distributed.

Security:
- Violence against women (domestic, sexual, rape).
- Impunity.
- Rule of law.
- Food security
- HIV/Aids

Chapter 2   Gender in policies concerning fragile states

In working paper 1.2 the striking observation was made that despite donor's impressive policy documents on gender equality, the attention for gender in donor's fragile states documents is largely absent or very superficial. Although most donors underline the importance of for example gender mainstreaming, the actual mainstreaming of gender concerns in fragile states policies seems to have been unsuccessful. Whether this is due to 'good enough governance' approaches, or not, the discrepancy between what donor's practice in their policy documents on fragile states and what they preach in their gender equality principles is large. This is even more surprising when you look at the actual quotes from the different gender equality documents (WP 1.2) because the arguments used to underline the importance of gender equality, directly touch upon some of the problematic aspects of fragile states. For example, AusAID, DFID, OEC DAC, the World Bank and USAID state that improving gender equality and the position of women in relation to issues of labour and productivity (e.g. property rights, access to land), would lead to economic growth and more prosperity for the poor. Most donor's also state that gender equality is a necessary precondition for achieving the MDGs. Both are central problems in fragile states. Not only do fragile states often have economic trouble and high poverty rates (see definition), but they also lag furthest behind on the realisation of the MDGs (CIFP 2007, Dutch Policy Note DC, 2007). On top of that, most of them have gender mainstreaming policies and say they view gender as an integral part of their policies.

In this chapter I will first address the question of gender in fragile states policies in general, by looking at overlapping concerns in gender equality policies and fragile states policies, thereby identifying the possible entry point. Secondly I will illustrate this by presenting concrete examples based on the main Dutch policy documents regarding fragile states.

2.1   Gender equality and fragile states policies: incompatible or connected?

Some people may argue that the development and implementation of policies on fragile states is 'difficult enough' as it is, without having to pay attention to gender. But does the integration of gender considerations necessarily make life more complex, or does it improve the quality of policies and programmes, does it improve effectiveness? Are gender equality goals and the goals in fragile states policies really that difficult to reconcile, or are they interconnected pathways to the same end? Working paper 1.2 showed that gender concerns are largely absent in donor's strategies for fragile states, despite donor's active involvement in gender equality policies in other fields. Many concepts, strategies and instruments used in policies addressing fragile states, are used in a gender neutral way. And although many donors officially have embraced a gender mainstreaming strategy, it seems this has not resulted in a gender sensitive approach to fragile states. This would suggest that gender equality is not viewed as a central part of fragility, or that it is not given priority. However, as was shown in the first part of the paper, there are

innumerable connections between state fragility and gender. When gender aspects are integrated in donor's fragile states programming, this is often on the level of specific policies aimed at for example women's groups, or help for victims of sexual violence (Baranyi & Powell, 2005; Rao & Kelleher, 2006). It is important to make clear that gender is more than just focusing on women, that it is about men too, about the relations between them and the constructions of what it means to be male or female. And that having attention for questions of gender is about optimizing policies. The failure of donor's to address gender inequalities in their policies and programmes may undermine the effectiveness of strategies to address fragility, because fragility affects men and women differently, but it may also mean a missed opportunity for engaging women and men as agents of change (Baranyi & Powell, 2005). Because gender is a crosscutting aspect in many different policy areas, and has different meaning and impacts across different settings, structurally integrating attention for gender in all policies, is a more effective and efficient way of tackling gender related problems, than trying to solve one aspect of the problem at one place, leaving the underlying, or connected problems untouched.

For example: Increasing girls enrolment in school is one thing, but if girls are afraid to go to school, because they face sexual violence (sometimes at the hand of teachers) or are raped on their way there (Ismail & Hendrickson, 2009), policy makers can try to come up with all kinds of measures to get girls to go to school, but without tackling safety and security issue, or failing to address impunity in relation to sexual violence, the problem will not be solved. To continue the example of one girl that has to go to school in a fragile state, we can already see many different gendered dynamics at play: from (often traditional) gender roles in the household and community (also those of men), to issues of security and violence, or stereotyping and discrimination. This goes to show that, although we would often like to think of gender issues in terms of concrete measures aimed at improving the situation or status of women, things are more complex than that. The only way of structurally tackling those problems is to have attention for gender in all different types of policies. According to Baranyi & Powell (2005) this is exactly what goes wrong in donor's policies on fragile states. Despite the fact that most of them have strong gender equality strategies in other domains, donor's do not systematically incorporate gender equality considerations when it comes to fragile states. This means that when gender is addressed, the focus is on narrow priorities of gender equity in service delivery and education, rather than linking gender equality considerations to broader issues of human rights, good governance or capacity-building.

In their report for the UNDG Task Team on gender equality, Rao and Kelleher (2006), signal a disconnection between analysis and proposed action when it comes to gender equality. Some of the documents and policy strategies that were analysed had quite strong analyses of gender inequalities, nevertheless most of the proposed strategies for action were restricted to narrow issues like supporting women's reproductive health, and improving girls' education. For example, in the UNDAF on Namibia, pervasive gender inequality was identified as one of the root causes or persistent high levels of poverty. It also stated that the root causes of violence against women and children and the

limited participation of women in the political process are general apathy to such violence, negative cultural attitudes, poverty, slow economic growth and job creation, the lack of education and inadequacy of policy frameworks and institutional capacities to deal with the violence and alcohol abuse (Rao & Kelleher, 2006, p. 13). Despite the fact that gender equality is directly linked to socio-cultural and economic problems, the solutions proposed are often limited to narrow 'women's issues', without seeing how these issues are related, or without addressing the root causes of inequality.

Despite the fact that the integration of gender equality goals might be perceived as a complicating factor in ***capacity*** and ***state-building*** processes, we could also look at that the post-conflict situation as a window of opportunity for female leadership and the integration of gender equality concerns. New constitutions, laws and procedures are developed. State-building efforts offer important openings for reconstituting the link binding state and society in ways that can be more inclusive and representative, especially in post-conflict contexts (World Bank, 2008, p.2). Where else are the chances of structurally embedding gender equality in the state's institutions this big? On top of that, it is probably easier to make new institutions responsive to men's as well as women's need from the beginning onwards, than to try and fix gender inequalities that have become institutionalized in the process. Political settlements sit at the heart of state-building processes, and they have the potential to lay the foundations for participatory and rights-based statecraft, bringing previously excluded groups to the table (World Bank, 2008, p.2). It is crucial that women and men are able to make use of these new opportunities, and that neither is excluded.

In the DAC principles it is stated that for effective state-building, donor's need to consider critically who they engage with. They shouldn't limit their engagement to government actors, but reach out to all sorts of actors within civil society and the private sector, as the government often lacks the necessary legitimacy. Involving different actors creates a broader basis of support, legitimacy and accountability. We can ask the question how legitimate these processes are without the inclusion of (at least) 50% of the population, namely women. It is therefore important that donor's try to actively engage with women (women's group) as well. In determining who to cooperate with, who to talk to, who to finance, donor's could make an important contribution to gender equality, which contributes to legitimacy and efficiency. Broad based democratic ownership requires participation by all stakeholders – women as well as men (DAC network on gender equality, 2008).

This links to discussion on ***good governance***. In working paper 1.2 it was argued that not 'good governance' but 'good enough governance' is the current doctrine in donor's policies on fragile states. But what does this mean? Can we indeed say that gender equality considerations complicate the governance debate, and that we must focus on other things before we can talk about gender equality?

Social contract. According to the World Bank (2008), state building efforts in fragile states represent important opportunities for reconstituting the link binding state and society in ways that can be more inclusive and representative. The so-called 'social contract' between state and society is often taken as a point of departure. Here we can ask the same question, namely, who constitutes society, with whom does the state hold a social contract? Who's interests are represented, who has voice? Are

women and women's concerns included in this? Here again, there could be major possibilities for making the states institutions more responsive to women as well as men. As institutions shape perceptions of the roles that women and men play in society, it is again very important to pay attention to female leadership. A rather similar argument can be made regarding the engagement with ***civil society.*** To create support for new government institutions and the build legitimate and sustainable government, it is important to engage civil society. When identifying actors to engage with in reform and reconstruction efforts, it is important not to overlook the potential of women and women's organisations. Women can be drivers of change, from their position in their respective communities, but also through their participation in peace processes, transitional justice, SSR and DDR. Security Council Resolution ***1325*** is important in the light of gender and peace building. This resolution addresses the impact of war on women and points at the value of women's contribution to conflict resolution and peace-building. It asks for the integration of gender into all aspects of conflict, peace-building and development.

It is sometimes argued that there is a certain level of tension between humanitarian development goals and a strong focus on ***security and justice*** in fragile states. Due to this strong emphasis on security, gender considerations are placed on a lower level and not given priority, whereas in most development programs attention for gender is mostly integrated. This could be an explanation as to why many donors do have elaborate gender equality documents, but have little or no attention for gender in the context of fragile states, where matters of security are placed first. Conflict and security problems take up the bulk of attention and resources in fragile states, and gender, for many, is not evidently an essential part of security. Although it is recognized that conflict may have different impacts on women and men, there is little attention for gender relations on a more basic level. In other words, when problems of a security are discussed on a more abstract macro level, issues of gender are often forgotten or neglected, whereas discussion on a micro level about the well being of people and protection of their human rights, it is much more obvious how gender plays a part in this.

As was mentioned, although women are nowadays mostly recognised as victims of war, they are not always included in peace and reconstruction processes. Women may have specific needs that might be neglected or overlooked if they cannot participate. On the other hand, involving women and taking into consideration the gendered dynamic of reconstruction, make these processes more legitimate and probably more effective as the outcomes are responsive to both men and women. Peace building and reconstruction processes also offer opportunities for changing dominant gender relations and for improving the subordinate position in which women in many fragile countries. An important element in post-conflict reconstruction is Security Sector Reform – ***SSR.*** It is important to have attention for gendered elements in this process, so that both men and women can benefit from a more secure environment. One could for example think about reforms of the police and armed forces. To begin with, policy officers could be trained to learn how to deal with problems of sexual violence or forced marriage. But it is also important to change the attitude towards women and these problems. For example, when sexual violence against women is committed by the police officers who are supposed to protect them. Problems relating to sexual violence, cannot be solved without addressing men and

working with men. Too often, programmes focus on the protection of women, or the juridical prosecution of acts of violence. Although this is of course the first concern when dealing with sexual violence, the roots of the problem can only be addressed if men are involved in prevention programmes on sexual violence. Secondly, one should work on the integration of female officers into the policy force, so that women who have problems can talk to a female officer. This can be important in cases of rape for example.

Discussions of SSR are intrinsically linked to the overarching discussions about the legal and justice systems. Under the header of _**transitional justice**_ a whole range of mechanisms and processes regarding a reform of the security and justice sector can be addressed. Post conflict situations pose a number of challenges to the reconstitution of justice. An important element is ending impunity that often characterises fragile states. The attainment of justice and reconciliation guarantees the rule of law and the protection of private and property. Achieving justice in post-conflict situations is only possible of women and girls have the benefit of such justice. This means that gender-based violence should be conceived as a war crime (Koen, 2006). If those crimes are not dealt with as war crimes, this could normalise violent attitudes and behaviour towards women. Post-conflict legal reforms present an historic opportunity to support women's rights and to overturn institutionalised gender inequalities and norms.

**DDR** programmes receive much of donor's resources. In DDR programmes, the target population was often defined in narrow terms as 'ex-combatants', those who need to give up their weapons. Gender blind perspectives sometimes led to a stereotypical perception of the 'combatant' as male. Such narrow definitions failed to recognize women who also fought, as well as women who lived with and served male combatants. Policymakers sometimes had the tendency to focus too much on the demobilization and reintegration of armed young men (Greenberg & Zuckermann, 2009). Also, when reintegrating combatants, women were sometimes pushed out of their jobs (Ismail & Hendrickson, 2009). As the reintegration of ex-combatants (and their families) involve whole communities, it is unavoidable that gender dimensions will play a role. In current practices this has changed significantly and many programmes have integrated gender concerns. This is however not always structurally and systematically done. It is important to keep gender in sight in the development and implementation of DDR programmes.

2.2   Problems and possibilities: Dutch policies on fragile states

To give a more concrete idea about the gender aspects of fragile states policies, I will present some examples based on a gender analyses of Dutch policy documents. I will show some of the shortcomings from a gender perspective, and also show some possibilities and points of entrance for integrating attention for gender within the existing policies.

The general conclusion in chapter 1 that policies concerning fragile states and policies concerning gender equality are two separate fields with little cross-fertilization also goes for the Dutch policy documents. Fragile states are an important component of the Dutch Development Cooperation policies. Gender and sexual and reproductive health and rights have also received increasing attention over the years. When analysing the main policy documents however, it becomes clear that both subjects are addressed separately, although there exist many linkages (as argued in this paper). Fragile states not only suffer from high poverty rates and lag behind on the MDGs, they are also characterized by large inequalities between women and men.

In the Dutch policy documents, fragile states are a problem in the light of human rights protection, which forms a central thread in Dutch Foreign Affairs (2007). In the policy document on human rights, the situation is fragile states is explicitly addressed. It is argued that the central characteristic of a fragile state, is it's incapability to take responsibility for its citizens. Whether it is in the form of inadequate protections of citizens, or nepotism and exclusions of groups in political processes, or the lack of functioning law and order, or in the form of failure to deliver the most basic service, these are all violations of human rights. Also, as was mentioned before, fragile states are a problem because they lag behind furthest on the MDGs. Another problematic side of fragile states is that they are seen as a destabilizing factor in international politics and that they might be harbourers of terrorist groups, due to the lack of law and order in the country. In other words, fragile states are not only problematic because of the consequences for the local population, but also because they have an effect on neighbouring countries and regional stability, and on the international community.

Do the documents show a sensitivity to questions of gender? When reading the documents, it becomes clear that there is attention for the position of women. The idea that problems may have a different impact on women and men, is obviously present, but not always carried through systematically. Most documents do pay attention to women, but this attention is very much focused at 'typical women's issues'. This is not the same thing as a systematic gender perspective. Also, we should make a distinction between the different documents. Where the document on fragile states shows very little attention to gender issues, there are specific parts in the other two documents dedicated to gender (actually to women's rights, and opportunities and specific problems of women). Also, the general Development Cooperation policy note, and the human rights strategy, 'remember' to include women in (some of the) topics that may have specific impacts on women e.g. when economic growth is discussed, the property rights of women are also discussed, or when religious and cultural norms and practices are discussed, the indivisibility and universality of human rights, and thus the rights of women, are stressed. In the fragile states strategy this 'reflex' is not so strong.

Despite the fact that gender considerations are not strongly present in the Dutch fragile states policies, there is attention for it at some points. The Dutch strategy aims at three dimensions: the improvement of security of citizens, contributing to legitimate government with sufficient capacity and the creation of peace dividend. All three dimensions have strong gender aspects, however,

only in the third dimension, the creation of peace dividend, gender considerations are clearly present (2008, P.13): *"It is important that women too, experience the effects of stability in their daily lives and that they are involved in the search for solutions".* It is also mentioned that maternal mortality is often high in fragile states, that there are many victims of sexual violence and that girls are often excluded from education. SCR 1325 is seen as an important tool in achieving a more equal role for women. Sexual and reproductive rights and health are also considered important.

Two things can be said about this. First: attention for women seems to be an add-on, which is clear from much of the vocabulary used. For example, of all the times women are mentioned in the three documents analyses, at least 70% was formulated as 'particularly women', 'women too', 'for example women' etc.. Second: when there is attention for women, it is restricted to women's issues. As shown in the previous paragraph, women are in the picture when sexual violence to the MDGs are discussed, but not in other subjects. This can be illustrated by a simple word count. Three quarters of the mentioning of women, can be traced to only a couple of pages.

The little gender sensitivity there is in the fragile states policy document (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2008), seems to be lost in the translation to specific country policies. The countries are discussed according to the three dimensions, and where there was still some attention under the third dimension in the general discussion, in the discussion per country not much is left. There are some exceptions: sexual violence and rape in DRC is mentioned as a big problem, and in Guatemala, the exclusion of indigenous women is mentioned. Also, when 'security' is addressed with regard to specific countries, the concept is very much discussed from a macro-perspective: in terms of stability, crime, monopoly on violence and terrorism and less from a human security perspective, despite the strong position of the concept of human security in the policy discourse of the different documents.

2.2.1 Possible openings

Despite the sometimes weak integration of gender considerations, and the gender blind use of certain concepts, it is encouraging that there is attention for specific gender issues, and that at other (general) points it is mentioned that 'there should be attention for women too'. On top of this, the policy strategies do offer possibilities for the inclusion of gender concerns.

To begin with, the human rights strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the policy document on human rights (..), human rights are presented as universally important. The universality – human rights for everyone, everywhere and always – is taken as a point of departure. Special attention is given to women's human rights, specifically in the discussion of freedom of religion. It is recognised that there is tension between many traditional and cultural customs and the universal norm that everybody is equal and should have equal opportunity and equal rights. This strong commitment to women's rights in this document, offers a solid basis for the need to integrate attention for gender equality in fragile states, where violations of the human rights of

men and women, form one of the biggest problems. The connection between human rights and security, is a good entry point for bringing in a discussion on gender equality. However, human rights are often strongly defended in the policy discourse, but difficult to translate to practice. It may appear strong on paper, but in reality there are many political factors that might obstruct this strong adherence to (universal) human rights. In many fragile states for example, there is a tension between customary law and the formal legal system. The co-existence of these laws often means that women's rights are compromised.

The National Action Plan 1325, is presented as a way of tackling specific gender issues in fragile states. The SCR 1325 does indeed offer great possibilities. Two points of concern are observed in regards to 1325. To begin with, the emphasis seems to lie on the protection of women from violence, on women as victims of violence, and less on the empowerment and active involvement of women. Secondly, 1325 is presented as a solution to almost every gender related problem in fragile states. But to attach all gender related issues and concerns to NAP 1325, restricts the possibilities of addressing gender, and may lead to a simplification of the problem.

Gender mainstreaming is still mentioned as one of the strategies for drawing attention to gender concerns. However, the question must be asked to what extent gender mainstreaming really does take place. There is often a large gap between commitment to gender equality and gender mainstreaming on paper, and the actual gender sensitivity of what is implemented. The fact that more than ¾ of the mentioning of women falls on only several pages and the fact that the word gender is seldom used, could be an indication that gender mainstreaming may not functioning that well. As was mentioned before, when gender is addressed this is mainly in the form of 'women's issues' (e.g. violence against women, rape, sexual and reproductive health). Specific actions targeted as women are presented as good examples of gender mainstreaming. Gender sensitive indicators can play an important role in the monitoring of gender mainstreaming, and help in translating gender sensitive discourse to gender sensitive practice.

Peace missions also provide opportunities, for example when engaged in reconstruction and reform operations. In the general Development Cooperation note (2007) it is stated that the Netherlands will set up a pool of well qualified personnel form the foreign, defence, and justice ministries and the police service, to join peace missions. they could help '*develop a democratically controlled, disciplined security sector, to foster stability, legal certainty and peace'.* Gender expertise can be a part of this as well. But it should be considered as an expertise and taken seriously

The concept of human security was shortly addressed in the previous paragraph. Despite the fact that it is not consistently translated in the implementation of policies, it does offer a good entry point for gender concerns. The World Bank report Voices of the Poor, provides a good example of this.

Conclusions

- The concept 'fragile state' is a fuzzy one, that can apply to very different contexts. In much of the debate, the defining characteristic of a fragile state is whether the country is pre-conflict, in conflict, or post-conflict, despite the fact that the concept has the ambition to cover a much wider array of problems, from economic trouble to lack of political legitimacy and state capacity.

- There is very little literature directly addressing the linkages between gender and fragility. Despite the fact that there is much literature on gender and different aspects of fragility. If we look beyond the concept, there is literature about gender & conflict, gender & development, gender & governance etc.. The discussions on state fragility are very much gender blind.

- The literature that does address gender in relation to fragile states, restricts its focus to: 1. the different impact of violence and conflict on men and women, and 2. the possible role that women (and men) could play in reconstruction (women as drivers of change). This is a restricted conceptualisation of relations between gender and fragility. There are many other linkages imaginable, beyond the gender aspects of conflict and post-conflict. On top of this, women are not just victims of violence, and not just drivers of change, just as men are not always fights and obstacles to peace.

- It is striking that with the introduction of a new concept (fragile state), existing gender knowledge in the field seems to shift out of side. This would imply that other concerns and perspectives received priority over gender concerns, or that gender was simple 'forgotten'. This means that policy development is still far from gender mainstreamed.

- There is a lack of research that explicitly addresses the link between gender and fragility, despite the fact that the underlying themes have been discussed from a gender perspective. Gender and development is a well elaborated field of research for example, as is gender and conflict. On a macro-level there is some research on the correlations between gender equality and state behaviour. This shows for example that there is a statistical correlation between the physical security of women and the security of states. According to Caprioli, states use less violence when there is more domestic gender equality, and is less likely to experience intrastate and international conflict.

- It was argued that all aspects in the definition of a fragile states, have gender dimensions. Some possible gender dimensions were discussed, and it was argued that the list of connections could be much more elaborate. The main conclusions was that it is important to think about how these elements are gendered in specific fragile state contexts and be aware of them in developing policy strategies and aid programmes.

- Despite the possible openings offered by the shift in perspective from 'state centred' security concepts to 'human security', gender is not an integral part in the discussions on security. It seems that there is a tension between the concept of human security, as brought forward in policy discourses, and the actual conceptualisation of security in relation to fragile states. The security problem in fragile states is for a large part constructed from a state centred macro-perspective: in terms of stability, crime, monopoly on violence etc., formulated in terms of shortcomings of the state. Even when human rights violations are mentioned, this is often still framed from a state centred view: 'failure to protect human rights' or 'severe human rights violations lead to state instability', e.g. through the loss of legitimacy, increase of violence etc.'.

- It is often argued that post-conflict contexts open possibilities for the inclusion of women's rights and gender concerns. Especially processes of state building and institutional reform could offer opportunities for the integration of gender concerns. However, there are not many examples of success in this respect in literature and case studies. If post-conflict reconstruction indeed offers so many openings and possibilities, then it is important to understand why we don't see this translated in practice.

- Many central concepts in fragile states policy are conceived as gender neutral. However, it was shown that these concepts can all have important gender aspects. In some fields this is mostly recognised nowadays: e.g. in DDR policies. But of course, all possible processes and strategies, from state- and capacity building to transitional justice and good governance, could integrate attention for gender.

- In the Dutch policy documents that were analysed, there was quite some attention for gender. It is encouraging to see that there is attention for specific gender issues, and that in other parts of the documents where 'general' issues are addressed, it is recognised that 'there should be attention for women too'. However, there are some critical remarks that can be made. To begin with, attention is not structurally integrated, and attention for women seems mostly to be no more than an 'add-on': e.g. 'particularly women' or 'for example women'. Secondly, when gender is addressed, it is mostly in relation to specific 'women's issues': e.g. when reproductive health or gender based violence is addressed. Thirdly, attention for gender seems to get lost in translation. In the specific country policies that are discussed, there was only some attention for women in 'the creation of peace dividend', but not on the other two themes. Again, it is restricted to women.

- Dutch human rights policies stress the universality of human rights, and state that all human rights are equally important, and there can be no reasons that would justify a restriction on them. However, this is mainly policy discourse, and is difficult to maintain in practice where a 'good enough governance' approach is dominant.

- National Action Plan 1325 takes an important place in gender policies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Sometimes so important, that it almost seems a goal in itself. But gender is of course a much broader issue, than the action plan can cover. On top of that, the focus of the action plan is very much on the protection of women, and less on their empowerment.

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