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A Divine License to Operate

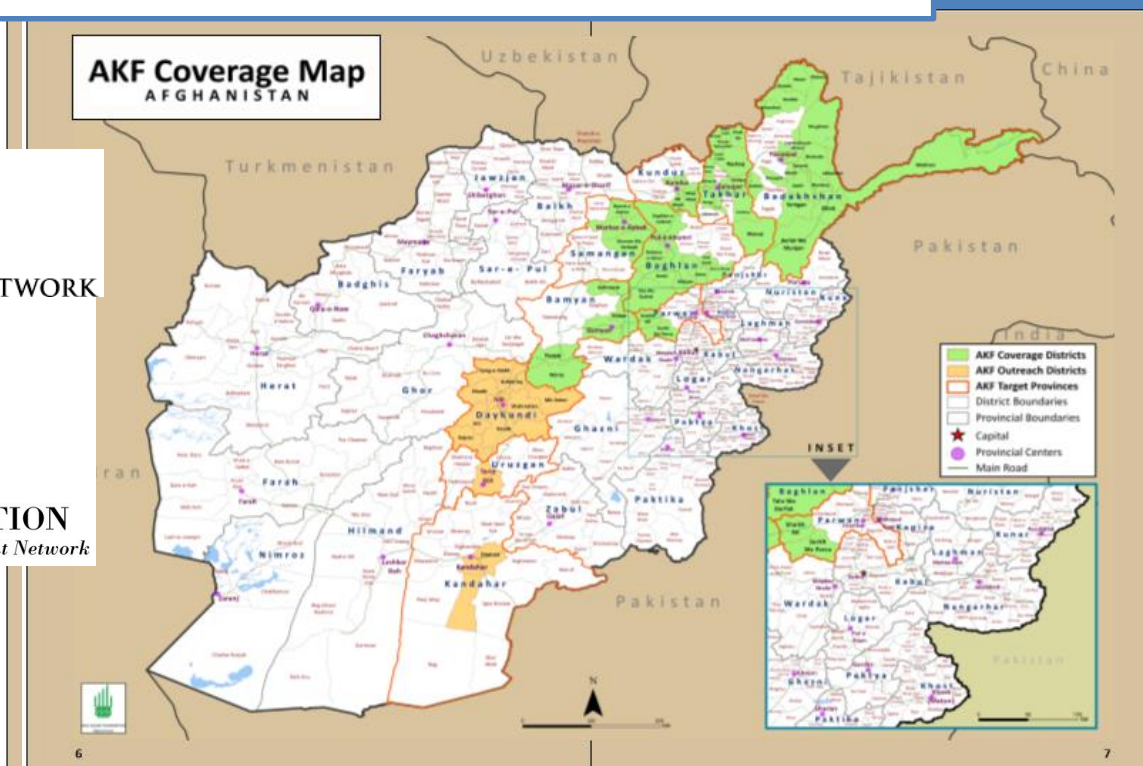
— *A study of AKDN's development-led intervention in Afghanistan*



AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION
An agency of the Aga Khan Development Network



En guddommelig legitimitet til at operere

— *En biopolitisk analyse af AKDN's udviklingsarbejde i Afghanistan*

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Kandidatafhandling af

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Resume

I de seneste årtier har vi oplevet et stigende antal filantropiske fonde, som engagerer sig i velgørenhedsarbejde i den såkaldte tredje verden. Imidlertid har forskning på området primært fokuseret på fonde inden for industrilandene, mens der er begrænset viden i, hvordan filantropi konstrueres i et konkret udviklingsland – særligt i Afghanistan.

Denne afhandling fokuserer på den private udviklingsfond Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) og deres arbejde i Afghanistan. *Formålet er at tilegne en forståelse af, hvordan organisationen konstruerer sine iagttagelser af det afghanske folks velfærd, samt hvorvidt engagementet i landet bliver "legitimeret" gennem organisationens selvforståelse.* Her tages der særligt afsæt i italesættelsen af den konkrete udviklingsstrategi (multi-input area development), der blev lanceret i forbindelse med fondens engagement i Afghanistan.

For at besvare den indeværende problemformulering, er afhandlingen delt i tre dele, bestående af to analysedele samt en diskussionsdel. Afhandlingens to første dele bygger henholdsvis på, Michel Foucaults governmentality-teori og Slavoj Žižeks studier af ideologi. I den første analysedel bliver engagementet analyseret i et biopolitisk blik, hvor analysen fandt frem til at den understøttes af en særlig islamisk selvforståelse. Herunder gøres de afghanske modtagere til genstand for en særlig styringsoptik, som undersøges i fondens arbejdsmetoder med de afghanske nærområder. I den anden del af afhandlingen, bliver organisationens selvforståelse analyseret som narrativer der revitaliserer organisationens velgørende arbejdsmetoder. Heraf konkluderede analysen, at visse forestillinger er med til at iscenesætte og legitimere et omfattende engagement i den afghanske kontekst.

Med afsæt i analysens delkonklusioner bliver de konstitutive effekter diskuteret. Dette i form af sammenligning med de teoretiske og praktiske implikationer for organisationen, hvor de lokale udfordringer og fordele anskues, i lyset af AKDN's særlige biopolitiske og ideologiske afsæt. Afhandlingen konkluderer med en afsluttende refleksion over analysens begrænsninger, samt en overvejelse af konkrete muligheder for fremtidige studier – inden for et knapt så udforsket felt.

Introduction

In the past few decades it has become increasingly common to see large-scale foundations raising global challenges¹ and engaging in international development (Anheier, Simmons & Winder 2007:117; Desai & Kharas 2008). Accordingly, these foundations have earned much research attention to better understand the challenges of philanthropy in the developing world (Marten & Witte 2008). Yet, most studies of philanthropy and its drivers have been emphasized within the scope of Northern countries, while there is limited knowledge on how Southern foundations construct their work and interact with underdeveloped societies (Anheier *et al.* 2007:3).

Moreover, most literature on foundational philanthropy seems to be interested in dealing with private foundations established by rich business leaders, particularly from the US² (e.g. Raymond 2004; Bishop & Green 2008; Hay & Muller 2014). However, this leaves some unanswered questions, for example, how a particular non-western movement constructs its charitable work in least developed countries – and how these gain legitimacies to operate within local communities? The few studies that deals with foundations in these contexts show that it distinguishes itself, especially, on their way of dealing with local needs and capacities (Anheier *et. al* 2007; Srivastava and Oh 2010;470). Hence, this calls for a study of a particular foundation and how it legitimises its work and copes with a local fragile state context – for example in the country of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan has been under international attention since 9/11 2001, in terms of military and political intervention. However, the empirical studies and focus on private sector development in the country are missed out and are almost non-existing (Azizi 2015:54). As a country, which has been ranked as a fragile state (HDI Report 2013; Fund for Peace 2014) and the lack of focus on the private sector development, I find it interesting to see how a foundation manages itself in a context such as Afghanistan.

Since 1995, the development organisation Agha Khan Development Network (AKDN) has been long-term committed in Afghanistan and engaged in the development of the country (AKDN 2013a). This is based on a **multi-input area development (MIAD) approach**, which seeks to respond to the development challenges of the country through social, cultural and economic development (AKDN

¹In October 2010 about 40 US billionaires signed the 'Giving Pledge' through which they agreed to donate half their wealth to philanthropic foundations, called the 'California Consensus' (Desai & Kharas 2008)

²Such as Bill & Melinda Gates foundation, Rockefeller Foundation and Ford Foundation

2013a). The MIAD approach is described as an approach, which seeks to build a mass of interventions in poor isolated areas and entails responding to a spectrum of livelihood requirements (AKDN 2013a:1).

For decades, AKDN has been engaged in development initiatives across Asia and Africa, based on the spiritual founder's (*Prince Shah Karim Al-Hussemi Aga Khan*³) outlook on Islamic ethics and improving the "quality of life". In an interview from 2003, the Aga Khan explains his position on AKDN in the following way:

The meaning of "quality of life" extends to the entire ethical and social context in which people live, and not only to their material well-being measured over generation after generation (...) It is about investing in people, in their pluralism, in their intellectual pursuit, and search for new and useful knowledge, just as much as in material resources. But it is also about investing with a social conscience inspired by the ethics of Islam (...) Today, this vision is implemented by institutions of the Aga Khan Development Network (Aga Khan December 2003 in AKDN 2016f)

According, to the Aga Khan these visions of improving the well-being of people are inspired by the ethics of Islam and implemented by the AKDN (AKDN 2016a). Based on this, I find a motivation to further examine AKDN's development approach and how the organisation positions itself in a local context, such as Afghanistan. The AKDN engagement in Afghanistan is mainly described on the official website, brochure and annual reports (AKDN 2016; AKDN 2013a; AKF 2012), while its ethical dimension is primarily found in the official ethical framework of the organisation (The Institute of Ismailis Studies 2000).⁴

³'Aga Khan' is a name used by the *Imam* (spiritual leader) of the *Nizari Ismaili Muslims* since 1818. It refers to an honorific title (Daftary 2007). For the sake of the thesis, he will be referred to as *the Aga Khan*.

⁴ My construction of the selected empirical data is treated in the chapter: "Empirical Material"

With the case of AKDN's MIAD approach in Afghanistan, as a departure point, it becomes possible to acquire nuanced perspectives on the emergence of philanthropy in a context, which is unexplored, and different from the perspectives in the global North (Anheier *et. al*/2007). Hence the current thesis builds upon a general curiosity on how AKDN constructs its targeted intervention (MIAD) and legitimises its engagement in a least developed country, such as Afghanistan. Here, it also becomes relevant to see what makes the AKDN do, as they do, and what difference and implications the self-understanding of AKDN has on its work in Afghanistan. This calls for a study of the MIAD strategy and a research of one of its specific programmes launched in the region. Here, I have chosen to observe the charitable work of AKDN's foundational branch, Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), and how it constructs its charitable work in the local Afghan communities.

In order to understand how AKDN constructs the MIAD intervention and targets the well-being of people, I will base my thesis upon *governmentality* studies, inspired by Michel Foucault. The purpose of using governmentality analysis is to see how the MIAD works as a particular biopolitical optic and uses knowledge to empower their beneficiaries. Furthermore, I will use an *ideology analysis* inspired by Slavoj Žižek to examine how the particular beliefs of AKDN legitimise the context of their approach and ultimately its concrete work in Afghanistan.

Before going into details of describing the theoretical standpoint, I find it relevant to define foundational work, followed by a brief section on the background of AKDN and the context of Afghanistan. This will lead up to my *problem statement* and further narrow the thesis in hand.

Definition of Foundation

For the purpose of the thesis, I have used an operational definition of private foundations based on Robert Marten and Martin Witte's (2008:5) conceptualisation as foundations fulfilling following minimal conditions: not profit oriented; not part of the public sector; use their own financial recourse (unlike NGOs); led by an independent Board of Trustees or CEO; aim to face issues for the common good (e.g. development, environment). Based on these criteria, I find that AKDN operates as a private

foundation – with an aim to face the common good, led by a CEO (Aga Khan), use its own financial recourse and not profit oriented⁵ (AKDN 2016b).

However, it should be noted that any definition varies depending on different regimes and the cultural context in which the foundation is established (Pratt, Hailey, Gallo, Shadwick & Hayman 2012:3f). For example, any understanding of Islamic philanthropy and foundations registered in Muslim countries: “requires a shift from examining the phenomenon through the lens of Western philanthropic trajectories to one recognising the role of philanthropy in a much wider and broader conception (...) (Tadros 2011). Thus one needs to bear in mind the conceptual differences of the perception of philanthropy, when dealing with philanthropic organisations from other parts of the world. For example, in the case of AKDN, it requires that one observes from its specific point of observation – in order to understand how the organisation construct its charitable activities and ideal framework.

This calls for a research of an epistemological art, which questions how a certain phenomenon (charity) emerges in the gaze of an organisation (the view of AKDN) (Andersen 2003:xiif).⁶ However, before unfolding this terminology and the theoretical stance of the thesis, I find it important to describe the background of AKDN and its foundational role in AKF.

Background: of AKDN and AKF

The AKDN is a group of private development agencies, including for-profit and not-for-profit entities, which have grown up or proliferated for more than a century. They now constitute one of the largest private development agencies, which operate in more than 30 countries (Ruthven 2011). The Network primarily works in the poorest parts of Asia and Africa and focuses mainly on following

⁵ Although one of its agencies, the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED) works on a commercial basis – it is claimed that it reinvests all profits in further development initiative, including contributions to social and cultural projects (AKDN 2016b)

⁶ This is further elaborated in the following chapter: “Theoretical Framework: Analytical Strategy”

areas; environment, health, education, architecture, culture, microfinance, rural development, disaster reduction, the promotion of private-sector enterprises and historic cities (AKDN 2016a). There are now more than 140 separate entities belonging to the Network and an overall staff of approximately 80.000 employees, which are mostly based in developing countries (AKDN 2016b).

A central feature of the AKDN's approach to development: "is to design and implement strategies in which its different agencies participate in particular settings" (AKDN 2016a). Building on the institutions of the founder Aga Khan III (1885-1957), it aims to serve the needs of the Ismaili community and has vastly extended to help people of all faiths, during the current successor Aga Khan IV (Ruthven 2011; AKDN 2016c). The current spiritual leader (imam), Aga Khan, claims to be a direct descent from the Prophet Muhammad and is a representative imam of Nizari Ismailism – following a 1,400-year history and heritor lineage (AKDN 2016c).

The principles of AKDN reflect the religious doctrines of Aga Khan, which is a faction within Shia Islam, called Nizari Ismailism. The Ismaili community has its roots back to the historical origins of the main divisions between Islam, Sunni and Shia, following the death of the Prophet Muhammad (AKDN 2016c). In recent centuries Ismailis have largely been a Pakistani, Afghan and Indian community, but Ismailis are also found in the Middle East, African countries and have in recent years emigrated to Europe and North America (Vali 2006:76).

During several centuries after the birth of Islam, the Ismailis have been evolving as a so-called "transnational" community and more recently has manifested itself in AKDN, as its public institutions (Karim 2011:206). Recent study by Daryoush Mohammad Poor (2014) has shown that the organisation has resulted in the institutionalisation of, what he calls, "authority without territory", through a Weberian⁷ conceptualisation of their leadership. Here it is hinted that there lies a difficulty of putting the Network in a conventional understanding of NGOs or faith-based movements, although it has some characteristics of both (Poor 2014:102). Furthermore, while, there are many scattered

⁷ Of or relating to the sociological theories of Max Weber

articles (mainly on the history or institutional development of the ismaili community) there is a lack of research on AKDN's contemporary presence in local communities (Mohammad Poor 2014:35).

The treatment of Ismailism, per se, requires a deeper scrutiny of a complex theological discussion of its community and has been done elsewhere (e.g. Daftary 2007; Karim 2011). Hence, it is not in the interest of the thesis to approach neither historical nor theological roots of ismailism. Yet, I will approach this with an “epistemological curiosity”, i.e. asking whether and how AKDN's specific beliefs are used in their self-understanding and its engagement in foundational work. Here, it becomes relevant to examine how AKDN constructs its particular engagement and how it position itself in a local Afghan setting.⁸

As mentioned before, the AKDN operates in more than 30 countries and works through a wide-range of sub-agencies dealing with development.⁹ Consequently, I find it relevant to delimit the analysis to one country and one of its agencies. Partly, due to an analytical interest of examining how AKDN positions and legitimise its activities in local Afghan communities, and partly, because I find it necessary to sharpen the problem in hand. Here, I will focus on the foundational branch of AKDN, which is the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF).

AKF is one of AKDN's constituent agencies, established by the current Aga Khan in 1967. It seeks sustainable solutions to long-term problems (e.g. poverty, hunger, illiteracy, health), with special emphasis on the needs of rural communities in mountainous, coastal and other areas of poor resources (AKDN 2016e). AKF has offices and affiliates in various countries and began working in Afghanistan in 2002 (AKF 2012). Its programmes are implemented primarily in seven provinces across central and northern Afghanistan: Bamyan, Parwan, Baghlan, Samangan, Takhar, Kunduz and Badakhshan (AKF 2012:6).¹⁰

The case of Afghanistan is an example of an area where most development agencies normally avoid to operate within, due to the instability of the country (Mohammad Poor 2014:48). According to

⁸ Ismailis constitute a religious minority in Afghanistan and a total population estimated to be between 150,000 and 180,000 (Emadi 1993:379), predominantly in the *Badakhshan* province and the Northern provinces.

⁹ See organisational chart: Appendix 1

¹⁰ See Appendix 2

Mohammad Poor (2014): (...) “The case of Afghanistan is a very good example. Despite the instability of the country and the regular threats to the AKDN institutions, he (The Aga Khan) has remained there and continued his work” (48). This leads me to the next section, where I will briefly introduce the context of Afghanistan and the role of AKDN.

Afghanistan: The Context

Afghanistan is located in a geographically and strategically important area between powerful nations such as India, China, Russia, Iran and Pakistan (appendix 2). Since the 1970's the land has been going through political conflict and instability, with decades of war against the Soviet Union, followed by a civil war and followed by a western-led intervention on the “war on terror”. The country has been characterized as least developed country with fragile state attributes. These labels are all emphasizing the multiple challenges that the country is facing (Azizi 2012:13), In the recent decade of war and turmoil, the role of Islam in Afghan politics has intensified and plays a principle role in the political system and the lives of Afghan people¹¹ (Sharani 2009:6f),

From 2001 there has been an international interest in rebuilding Afghan institution and the country as a whole, which among other things is reflected in the huge inflow of \$US billions, disbursed in the country (Global Humanitarian Assistance 2011). Despite the huge inflow of foreign aid, the Afghan state is considered a fragile state, as the provision of public goods, such as security, infrastructure, health services and education is weak and undermined (Rice et al., 2008; Fund for Peace 2014). The private sector in Afghanistan is also affected by the fragile state and the least development concerns in regard to human development (Azizi 2012:14). For example, a recent study in Afghanistan reveals that entrepreneurs are facing multiple challenges such as; lack of security, lack of access to capital, underdeveloped infrastructure, law enforcement (Kauffman Foundation 2011:34)

However, the focus on Afghanistan and on private sector development especially in certain industrial areas has been neglected (Egri and Ralston 2008). The academic insight on private sector development in Afghanistan is almost non-existing, while only few studies are focusing on the role of

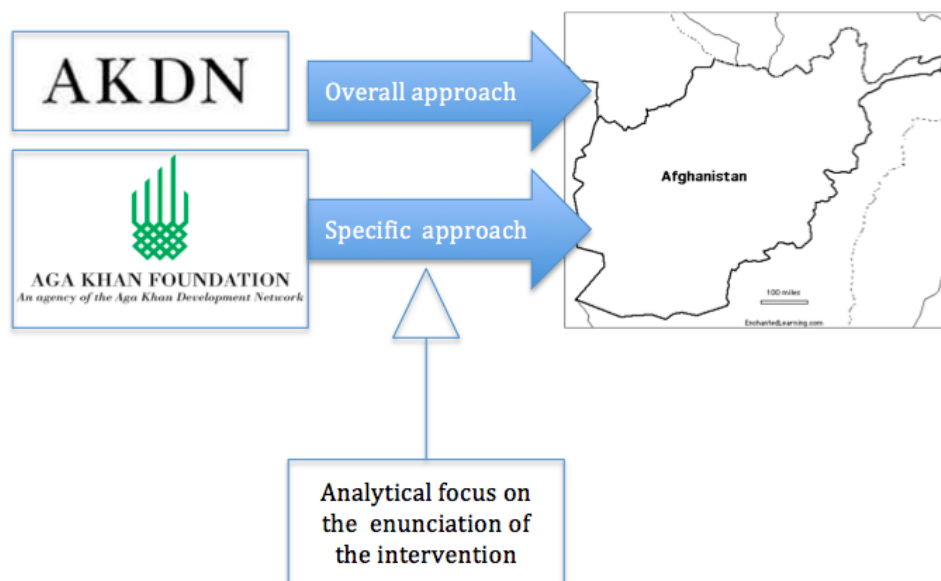
¹¹ Islam is the official state religion of Afghanistan with almost 99% of the Afghan population being Muslim. Retrieved 10 may 2016, from <http://www.pewforum.org/2013/04/30/the-worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-exec/>

business and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the Afghan mobile telecommunication industry (Azizi 2015).

The Problem Statement

The departure point of the thesis is neither an exclusive focus on AKDN nor the inherent Afghan context as such, but rather a focus on AKDN's enunciation of its engagement in the country. This is illustrated in the following way:

Figure 1



In this way, the thesis, examines the discursive approach in the overall AKDN approach (in MIAD) and the specific AKF activities in Afghanistan. Hence, the research attention is guided by certain enunciations of their practices (achievement, programmes, aims and visions) and how these are legitimised in the local Afghan context. Thus, the following problem statement:

*How is the MIAD intervention of AKDN constructed in the local context of Afghanistan?
What is the role of AKDN's particular beliefs in sustaining this? Which constitutive effect
does this have?*

This problem statement is tripartite, which is presented in the following section.

The Structure of The Thesis

The thesis is divided into three parts, where the first two parts entail four analytical sections and the third part is based on a discussion of these.

1. **The first part** is based on the observance of AKDN, where focus is on the general MIAD approach in Afghanistan and how it is constructed in the communication. This is followed by observing the specific activities launched through AKF. Accordingly, it is divided into two sections; 1) a research of how AKDN targets the general well-being of Afghan recipients 2) and which specific implications this has on their actions and the Afghan communities. With a theoretical approach inspired by Michel Foucault's studies of *governmentality*, I try to form an understanding of which governance forms are installed and whether and how it enables the Afghan communities.
2. **The second part** goes beyond a Foucauldian framework to have a more subtle understanding of the ethical context of AKDN's engagement. This part draws on a Žižek-inspired study of Ideology, in order to examine whether and how the current MIAD intervention is sustained and re-enabled by their particular beliefs. The analysis mainly focuses on the self-perception of AKDN, founded in the official ethical framework of the Network. Thus, it is guided by a focus on how certain work-related narratives are presented and, ultimately, how it enables an overall MIAD approach.
3. **The third part** is an output of the two previous parts and takes form as a section of discussion. The purpose of this section is to discuss my findings, based on the constitutive effects for AKDN and their engagement in Afghanistan. This will lead up to a discussion of the theoretical and practical implications of the current thesis.

Theoretical Framework: Analytical Strategy

As mentioned earlier one needs to bear in mind the conceptual differences of the perception of philanthropic work, when dealing with foundations from other parts of the world. For example, in the

case of AKDN, it requires that one observe from their point of observation – in order to understand how they construct their charitable activities.

In the following section, I will present the strategic premises of the thesis, and the choices and considerations, which form the basis of my analytical strategy.

Taking a Step Back

The theoretical standpoint of the current thesis is primarily influenced by post-structuralism and based on an epistemological oriented constructivism. This approach leads the gaze from an ontological questioning about, what there is in the world, onto an epistemological question of how the world can be constructed and perceived (Andersen 2003:xif). Hence, the current thesis aims to take a step back and ask how AKDN's engagement in Afghanistan is constructed from their own standpoint, and which constitutive consequences this leads to.

According to Niels Åkerstrøm Andersen, professor in politics and philosophy, the field of epistemology mainly operates with an *empty ontology*: (...) "*it gives an ontological subscription of emptiness. It is an ontology that is restricted in its approach to reality, to only saying 'reality is'. The object, however, is not presupposed.*" (Andersen 2003:xii) This means that there no correct way of comprehending and observing the object in focus and the choice will always be a matter of *contingency* (Andersen 2003:xii-xiii). In this way, epistemology is concerned with the perspectives held by individuals, organisations, or systems and how this causes the social world to emerge in specific ways. Therefore, an epistemological starting point poses not a question of method, but a question of analytical strategies (Andersen 2003:xiii). For example, the MIAD programme of AKDN is constructed based, on a given observation in the analysis. Through this, a scrutiny of an ontological being in the object is omitted.

Contrary to the scientific method, the observation of an object, analytical strategy focuses on how the observation of the observation is conditioned and conditions the social world (Esmark, Bagge Laustsen & Andersen 2005:10). Thus, the analytical strategy does not consist of methodological rules, but rather of a strategy that addresses how to construct the observations of others (e.g. AKDN), as an object for own observations, by describing from where they describe (Andersen 2003:xiii). Hereof, an epistemological starting point poses not a question of method, but a question of analytical strategies. The purpose of analytical strategy is to enable a research to obtain knowledge, which questions existing meaning (Andersen 2003:xii).

Hence, analytical strategy can be viewed as a *second-order observers* strategy for the observations of how the social emerges in observations (or enunciation and articulations) (Andersen 2003:93). The elaboration of an analytical strategy, involves, shaping of a specific gaze that allows, for the environment, to appear as consisting of the observations of other people.

Yet, these considerations also need to specify the premises that create the choice of the current analytical strategy. In the following section, I will describe how I construct my perspective, which consequences it has for my object, and what it makes me blind of.

Analytical Strategy: The Starting Point

In order to understand how the world emerges from the gaze of AKDN, specifically in relation to its engagement in Afghanistan, I find it relevant to use an epistemological approach to respond to this and frame my analytical strategy. Thus, with inspiration from Andersen, I structure the analytical strategic approach based on the following terminology: *point of observation, choice of guiding distinction and conditioning of observation* (Andersen 2003:94). This section will briefly emphasise, how this conceptual framework contributes to analytical sharpness to the research in hand.

The overall **point of observation** of the current thesis is the MIAD strategy of AKDN in Afghanistan. Here the point of observation is defined as the specific observation to which the second-order observer lays claim to (in his observations) in the shape of a specific discourse or observation (Andersen 2003:117). The approach applies a second-order observation on the MIAD intervention of AKDN in Afghanistan, which involves the focus on statements, associations and categorizations that appears as their own observations on this matter. Hereof, the analytical strategy is delimited to focus on this particular agent's observations, rather than other actors' views or general discourses. This is mainly due to the limited research on local philanthropists construction of their work, but also to support an analytical sharpness in the research.

The term **observation** is an indication within the frame of a distinction, meaning that it is the distinction that splits the world in observer and observed and thereby gets the environment to emerge in a specific way (Andersen 2003:94). When the observer draws a distinction and indicates one side, based on its difference to the other side of the distinction, one can speak of the guiding distinction.

The **guiding distinction** structures and maintains the gaze in the concrete analysis and crucial for, which criteria the second-order observer can use in the analysis. Since there is no predetermined

guiding distinction, one must choose a guiding distinction for each part of the analysis, which is characteristic for the gaze that directs the analysis (Andersen 2003:95).

Furthermore, the analytical strategy must describe the **conditioning** of the guiding distinction. That is the specification of the criteria for deciding when I as an observer can judge on one side of a difference and not the other side (Andersen 2003:95f). Thus, in each analytical section, I specify the criteria that decide on when there is talk about the one or the other, in order to obtain greater sensitivity of the analytical strategy to the empirical material (Andersen 2003:96).

By laying the premises for the analytical strategy, this leads me to the next section where I will look closer at the theoretical concepts and possible combinations of analytical strategies.

Michel Foucault: Governmentality Analysis

To understand the construction of AKDN's particular aim of improving the lives of its beneficiaries, it needs a particular theoretical approach inspired by Michel Foucault's studies of *biopolitics* and *governmentality*.

The Birth of Biopolitics

In a series of lectures on *The Birth of Biopolitics* (Foucault 1978-79), Michel Foucault makes an historical examination of how the notion of governance has been evolving from disciplinary to modern procedures and techniques: (...) "*which has as its primary target the population*" (Foucault 1978:102). With the 18th century population growth came a need for developing new forms of government rationalities, which operated through the economisation of the population as an entry for interventions, in terms of health status, age and income etc. (Rose 2001:7). Foucault characterized this as the rise of a *biopolitical* discourse, where life becomes the object of political technologies (Foucault 1976:147) and the population's wealth, longevity and health becomes the ultimate aim of governance (Foucault 1991:100).

This requires the exercise of what Foucault called *governmentality*, which pursues a series of specific finalities in the search for better ways of living (Dean 1999:33). The term refers to an: (...) "*ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics, that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power*" (Foucault 1991:102).

From this perspective, Foucault suggests that governance goes beyond the notion of sovereignty and is diffused in society as different technologies and rationalities (Carnera 2010:87f). This enables a breakdown of the 'state' as a singular source of power and recognizes the range of different actors involved in regulation on the conditions of life – which in a modern context not only includes diverse state agencies, but private organisations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well (Li 2007:276f). In recent development studies this has been identified as 'transnational governmentality', in which development is removed from state control and implemented by a diffuse network of non- and quasi-governmental agencies isolated from political accountability (Ferguson 2006 "Global Shadows":chap. 4).¹²

For Foucault power has no single centre but rather it is to be understood as power relations; which has the function of producing individual subjects through *technologies of power* and *technologies of the self* (Foucault 2000:329-331). Technologies of power are defined as an instrument that makes individuals object for specific goals and categories. While self-technologies enable subjects to observe themselves as active subjects, where various techniques are used to constitute self-management; in order to attain a certain state of happiness or immortality (Foucault 1988:18). The central aspect here is the way power operates through different forms and relations, which in various ways encourage subjects to shape them. Not by acting directly on others, but instead, as acting on the actions of others, upon future or present actions.

Governmentality Operationalised

Governmentality is defined as a coupling between technologies of power and technologies of the self. Namely, between totalising procedures and individualising techniques – which is why it is concerned with life of the individual beneficiary, empowerment and self-relation (Villadsen & Mik Meyer 2007:17). The stance of this analytical part is its focus on the relationship between **knowledge** and **power**, that is, how regimes of truth are constructed and how power- and self-technologies conducts certain practices and subject positions (Dean 2006:55).

¹² This has also been treated by a critical Foucault-inspired literature (See, for example, Dean 2012; Ilcan & Phillips 2010; Lemke 2001; Li 2007).

Based on this, it is assumed that the Afghan beneficiaries becomes subject to a specific use of knowledge and power. Hence, the current governmentality analysis is interested in observing the interplay between how the AKDN uses an “intimate” local knowledge, to justify the MIAD intervention and the concentrated empowerment programmes in Afghan communities. This is mainly observed through the official statements, achievements and goals described, in the annual report of AKF in Afghanistan (AKF 2012).

The overall **point of observation** is two-part; the first section is based on the targeted MIAD intervention in Afghanistan and how the well-being of individuals becomes object of a particular biopolitical discourse, followed by the second section; which entails a shift to the concentrated employment of the self-help programmes launched through AKF.

Foucault’s concepts are mainly polyvalent, meaning they are many-sided and often come into being through countless negative delimitations (Andersen 2005:1). However, within the current analytical framework I find it relevant to reduce it to a **guiding distinction** of respectively, *knowledge* and *power*. The relationship between knowledge and power plays an important role in understanding the rationality of the intervention and the interaction with local communities. Therefore, I **condition** knowledge, when I observe a specific use of knowledge that seeks to target the well-being of Afghans. On the other hand, I will condition power, when it is enunciated how their recipients are encouraged to enable themselves to become empowered subjects.

In line with underlying curiosity of the thesis¹³, I wish to have a more subtle understanding of ideological context of the current engagement. Here, it also, becomes relevant to see what makes AKDN do, what it does, and whether and how its ethical ideals construct and legitimise the context

¹³ On how the organisation constructs the targeted intervention and legitimises its engagement in a least developed context (e.g. Afghanistan),

of MIAD. This raises a new kind of problem that makes it relevant to draw studies of ideology and fantasy into the current analytical framework.

Slavoj Žižek: An Ideology Analysis

In this section I draw on the concepts of Slavoj Žižek, to get a nuanced perspective on the context of MIAD and to look beyond a Foucauldian framework. Theoretically, I draw on the concepts of Slavoj Žižek supplied by his particular understanding of Jacques Lacan, in terms of **fantasy** and **desire**. This involves an ideology analysis of the organisations' particular visions and how this activates the MIAD programme in Afghanistan. Here it is assumed that AKDN's particular *Islamic* association maintains an illusion, allowing them to direct all their work towards a broad and productive strategy in Afghanistan.

The section below will describe the theoretical associations of the Žižek-inspired Ideology analysis and, subsequently, how some aspects of this will be used in my analytical strategy.

Žižek and Ideology

A Žižekian understanding of ideology comes from a mix of sociological and philosophical idea. Žižek finds inspiration in the French philosopher and psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, from whom he draws on his interpretation of Freudian psychoanalysis. In addition, he draws from the German philosopher G.W.F Hegel's understanding of dialectics (Laustsen 2005:1999-200). This adds to a vast and complex field of concepts and theories ranging from Marxist commodity fetishism, Hegelian Idealism and French post-structuralism.

A Žižekian approach to ideology analysis is henceforth not easily applicable to a given analytical framework. Therefore, what is presented and utilized for my analysis does not necessarily reflect the entirety of Žižek's analytical approach, but merely the handpicked concepts, which I have found to be of use.

The Omnipresence of Ideological Fantasies

Ideology for Žižek differs greatly from the Marxist traditions of understanding 'representational ideology', as we have seen in 20th century thinkers of 'Frankfurter school' (Eagleton 1994:180; Laustsen 2005:1999). Rather than being a tool of repression, Žižek highlights its presence in the way we understand the world. Regardless of how we perceive it, we do it through ideology. Therefore, contrary to the representational understanding, ideology does not distort, twist or eschew reality (Žižek 1989:29). Rather, it is ever-present and fundamental to the way we think and act. This means that even if one desires to escape ideology, to be completely withdrawn, this essentially is Ideology par excellence (Žižek 1994:4). Furthermore, ideology is perceived at the level of language, but mediated through our practices. Ideology does not as such reside in the language and transfer through practice, but is reciprocally formed in this exchange.

Similar to the notion of Ideology, **fantasies** function not as being a 'false representation' of reality, but as the anchor of reality that stages subject positions and the fulfilment of desire (Žižek 1996:45). Hence Žižek's notion of ideology refers to the set of fantasies that structures the social reality, and which is maintained through a *dis-identification* with these (Bagge Laustsen 2005:212f, Žižek 1989). Thus, rather than being suppressed and undermined by the ideological fantasies, ideology functions through our cynical distance and awareness of its work (Žižek 1989:25)

As Žižek suggests, the dis-identification with ideology implies that there is an impossible kernel, structured around a fundamental *lack*, which resists and simultaneously activates ideological fantasies (Bjerg 2012:23). Hence, ideological fantasies provide the subjects a scenario of the fulfilment of **desire** and a cover-up for the on-going deficiency in the their being (Laustsen 2005:200). In a broad perspective, any society and organisation is also given by this *lack* (a fragile an incomplete structure) which means that every form of corporal power and intervention needs the pretext of ideological fantasies to ensure a wide approval and maintaining legitimacy within a context (Bagge Laustsen 2005:202). This is similar to the Foucaultian notion of power, where Žižek agrees that power is not something, which is repressive and coercive, but is productive and makes transgression available for its subjects through *enjoyment* of a *fantasmatic* projection (Sharpe & Boucher 2010:46).

Furthermore, Žižek maintains that the subjects' identification and choices are based upon a set of fundamental beliefs and fantasies formed outside in the *symbolic order*. However, beliefs and

fantasies are by far greater extend, than we consciously recognise, about what *others* believe and enjoy (Sharpe & Boucher 2010:50f). In this way the *Other*, for example a spiritual leader (a priest or similar societal figures), believes on the behalf of an assembly and provides the community an medium through which to believe. This is also called the *big Other*, which is inspired by Lacan's notion of an *Ego Ideal*; the self-image of subjects and the point that makes the social order into a closed totality of meaning (Žižek 1988:106 in Sharpe & Boucher 2010:48).

Thus, when Žižek speaks of ideological fantasies it is on the one hand to emphasize that these are "artificial" conceptions to break out of the dialectic of desire, and on the other hand, it lays the foundation for identity/actions and as such are "real" (Bagge Laustsen 2005:213f).

Combining Ideology Within the Analytical Strategy

As the Žižek-inspired ideology critique originates from Marxist roots and critical theory, it also has some normative implications¹⁴, which I find it necessary to look beyond to get a nuanced perspective of the case in hand. Thus, at first glance a Žižek-inspired analysis may be problematic to reconcile with the current thesis' epistemological position due to its extra-discursive approach (Laustsen 2005:216-217). However, I will mainly use the ideology analysis as a supplement to governmentality. By examining how the self-understanding of AKDN support the analysis of the current intervention, the ideology analysis supplements the governmentality approach. Here, it becomes interesting to see how the beliefs constitute a spectacle that allows the desire of an overall and specific approach in Afghanistan.

In this part of analysis, the **point of observation** is AKDN's references to its particular Islamic beliefs in terms of its ethical framework and visions. Here, the underlying question is whether and how the targeted intervention is sustained and how this becomes a productive framework for AKDN's work. Based on this, I define fantasy as a projection of specific spectacle, and what, structures and allow an extensive desire towards their work in Afghanistan. e

¹⁴ For example in its anti-capitalist agenda (Bjerg 2012:11f)

What is interesting here is the coupling between them, where fantasy is assumed to structure the desire in a particular direction towards the visions. With a **guiding distinction**, based on fantasy and desire, I **condition** fantasy when AKDN expresses certain narratives (e.g. visions or ideal associations) to legitimise its current practices. Moreover, I condition desire, when I observe an association with their enjoyment (e.g. will or motivation), for working towards these visions. Thus, I find my analytical focus in the specific self-perception of AKDN and whether and how it re-invests in producing an ideal framework for its philanthropic efforts and ultimately the Afghan engagement.

As an output of the two-part analysis, it opens up the possibility to discuss my findings and what it does in effect. The findings are both discussed in relation to the theory and its practical implications – in terms of what it constitutes and for whom it does. This is followed by a discussion of the practical limitations and advantages of AKDN, which will lead to a reflection on the limits of the thesis.

Empirical Material

This section explains how the primary and secondary data of my analysis is constructed and what it focuses on. Here I will present a number of official publications of AKDN and AKF, which are related to their overall intervention (MIAD) and specific programmes of AKF in Afghanistan. However, this material may also include personal beliefs/views of staff, recipients and the Aga Khan (the spiritual leader). Consequently, I condition their views as 'official statements', but only, when they are presented on the official website of AKDN or in their publication.

The Construction of the Empirical Material

The data I find relevant are mainly found on the official website of AKDN (AKDN 2016)¹⁵, in which specific publications on country programmes are available (for reading). Here it is possible to find publications concerning the MIAD approach of AKDN (AKDN 2013a), but also the specific country programmes of individual agencies, such as AKF's annual report in Afghanistan (AKF 2012). The latter is observed as the specific efforts of MIAD in the local communities, where the foundation is currently working.

As a starting point, the data concerning AKDN's approach (comprising AKF) in Afghanistan constitute the entire analysis. My primary sources are based on the publications, reports and documents, which have to do with the concrete intervention in Afghanistan. This is supplemented with the secondary sources about their views on development in general¹⁶. Thus, the division between primary and secondary data is measured in accordance with its relevance to the MIAD strategy in Afghanistan.

The primary data are assumed to be addressed to all relevant partners in the region, for example the organisations own staff, local institutions (donors), governments, multilateral institutions, private sector partners and not least, its beneficiaries. This is closely related to the aim of AKDN to actively seek to co-operate with like-minded institutions in the design, implementation and funding of innovative development projects: *"(...) They (AKDN) therefore need and welcome institutions and individuals throughout the world as partners to attain shared objectives. Individual AKDN agencies also work closely with local, state and national governments in each country in which they are active."* (highlight by me) (AKDN 2016g). This shows that its primary addressees are the international community, the local Afghan society and its own mandates (staff).

¹⁵ The specific references are unfolded below, within the sections "primary data" and "secondary data"

¹⁶ This includes official statements from the Aga Khan or stated agenda for AKDN etc.

Hence, the primary data are observed as an **archive** containing information and creating awareness about its efforts and achievements in Afghanistan. It is also observed as a way of positioning themselves in the local context, in terms of development of least developed countries (AKDN 2016a). From this, I construct the data as an expression of a certain interventional programme that partly makes the Afghan communities observable in a certain way, but also makes the organisation's perspective an object of observations.

Due to a *governmentality* standpoint in the current thesis, I furthermore observe the MIAD efforts as a way of enunciating a gaze for seeing "life", as an object for conduct and producing subject positions. I consider these efforts (described in the primary data) as a way of impacting the self-understanding of AKDN and its beneficiaries through power and self-technologies. The same goes for the following *ideology* analysis, where I observe the ideological context of MIAD in terms of its ethical and ideal associations. This is assumed to have constitutive impact on their work towards development.

In the following, I will make a brief presentation of the mentioned data divided into primary data and secondary: consisting reports, brochures, web-sections and excerpts from speeches by Aga Khan. The primary data mainly consist of reports, brochure and a document, while the secondary data are mainly related to website sections.

Primary Data:

"Social, Economic and Cultural Programmes of the Aga Khan Development Network in Afghanistan" (AKDN 2013a): A brief review of the MIAD approach in Afghanistan, concerning the social, economic and cultural development achievements. The report also constitutes the main source of the introductory section in the analysis.

"Aga Khan Foundation Afghanistan – Annual Report" (AKF 2012): A detailed report on the concrete initiatives and achievements made by AKF in Afghanistan, during the year of 2012. This report is also the background for section two in part one of the analysis. It is supplemented with the report from 2010.

“Aga Khan Development Network: An Ethical Framework” (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000): A framework on the visions and ethical framework prepared for the AKDN by the Institute of the Ismaili Studies.¹⁷ The framework constitutes the primary source, in part two of my analysis.

Secondary Data

“About Us – The Aga Khan Development Network” (AKDN 2016a): A brief overview of the organisation and the development aspects which the agencies are working on.

“Press Centre – Frequent Questions” (AKDN 2016b): Short and brief overview of answers to some common questions about AKDN and the spiritual leader, Aga Khan.

“About Us – Ismaili Community” (AKDN 2016c): Information and reviews on the history of the Ismailis and the evolvement into AKDN.

“Enabling Environment Conference – Effective private sector contribution to development in Afghanistan” (Aga Khan 2006 in AKDN 2016d): A web section presenting information about a conference on Afghanistan in January 2006. With relevant excerpts of Aga Khan’s speech at the conference.

¹⁷ This framework is presented on the official website of AKDN as its ethical framework (AKDN 2016a). Retrieved 13 May 2016, from <http://iis.ac.uk/aga-khan-development-network-akdn-ethical-framework>

“About the Aga Khan Foundation” (AKDN 2016e): A general evaluation of the AKF, on its main objectives and approach. It is considered a source that supplements the annual report (AKF 2012).

“AKDN – Quality of Life Assessment Programme (AKDN 2013b): A brochure on the core concepts and methodology in improving lives of their recipients.

“AKDN – Economic Development, Social Development and Culture” (AKDN 2007): A detailed brochure on the development areas of AKDN and different agencies.

“Press Releases – Opening of Alltex EPX Limited at Athi River” (Aga Khan December 2003, in AKDN 2016f): An excerpt of a speech made by Aga Khan in 2003.

“AKDN – Our Partners” (AKDN 2016g): A brief overview of its partners and the approach to partnership with other agents.

All the abovementioned data will be used in terms of the analytical sections and the following discussion. However, I observe the primary sources as the main input of resources and information about the MIAD strategy in Afghanistan. This leads me to the analysis where I will closely examine the construction of the latter – in terms of identifying the rationality and its implications.

Part 1 – Governmentality Analysis of The Intervention

In this analytical part, the AKDN engagement in Afghanistan is assumed to make the notion of life object of a biopolitical strategy. Here the focus is not on the practical implications of the intervention, but more on the enunciations of the overall intervention. Namely, the way it is constructed (enunciated) in the communication, through a coupling between knowledge and power. Here, my gaze is turned towards the rationality installed and how it targets the well-being of Afghans and their lives, as an object of improvement.

MIAD Strategy: A Biopolitical Construction

The approach of AKDN in Afghanistan is described in the report, *“Social, Economic and Cultural Programmes of the Aga Khan Development Network in Afghanistan”* (2013). The publication explains how AKDN is a group of nine private agencies working to **improve living conditions** and opportunities for people in some of the poorest parts of the developing world (AKDN 2013a:1). It is argued that the engagement of AKDN in Afghanistan began in 1995 during the civil war, with the distribution of aid from Tajikistan. It has since 2002 changes from humanitarian assistance to long-term and sustainable development (AKDN 2013a:1).

Furthermore it is highlighted that the commitment to Afghanistan is long-term and based on the **MIAD approach**, which is explained as follows: *“(...) It employs a multi-input area development (MIAD) approach, which seeks to build a critical mass of interventions in poor, isolated areas, connecting them to wider national and regional investments”* (AKDN 2013a:1). It is argued that the MIAD approach is responding to a spectrum of livelihood requirements, including several areas that seek to enable a prosperous development in Afghanistan:

(...) economic, human, social, natural, physical and cultural “capital”. These efforts are complemented by simultaneous investments in enabling instruments, such as microfinance, telecommunications, small-scale energy and infrastructure. AKDN also advocates for the creation of enabling environment for private initiative (...) which it believes contributes to dynamic, prosperous, stable and pluralistic nations (AKDN 2013a:1).

Accordingly, the MIAD includes social, economic and cultural development efforts. These efforts are being conducted by different agencies of AKDN, which also work in Afghanistan (AKDN 2013a). For example, in terms of social development it claims to have been impacting more than 2.8 million people through services and programmes (AKDN 2013a:2). In the economic development it refers to large-scale investments in Afghanistan’s growth (through AKFED) and has mobilized finance and expertise for companies like “Roshan” (telecom development), Kabul Serene Hotel and Banking (AKDN 2013a:3). In the areas of cultural development it is highlighted how the sub-agency of AKDN (AKTC) has preserved Afghanistan’s cultural heritage, particularly in the historic areas (AKDN 2013a:4). For example, it is expressed how AKTC has restored war-damaged quarters of the old

city, preserved an important “Timurid” shrine complex and supported the growth of classical Afghan music (AKDN 2013a:4).

Based on these examples, it is observed that AKDN constructs a particular observation and incorporates several efforts (economic, human, social, natural, physical and cultural) into one strategy (i.e. the MIAD approach). Moreover, the organisation considers its MIAD approach in terms of its overall aim of improving “living conditions” in the developing world (AKDN 2013a). This is described in the brochure about “Quality of Life Assessment Programme” (2013b) as follows:

The overall goal of the AKDN is the improvement of Quality of Life (...) AKDN therefore has a holistic view of what constitutes progress that goes beyond material benefits or only poverty alleviation, and which encompasses a more rounded view of human experience and aspirations (AKDN 2013b:2).

The statement implies a broad focus on improving the wealth, but also one that encompasses a broad view on human capacity. Here, I observe a particular **bio-political** optic, where “life” becomes an entry for intervention and an object of conduct. In a governmentality perspective, the MIAD approach seeks to make the well-being of Afghans object for conduct and operates as a optimising logic of improving life. This also means that the interventions’ focus, on a spectrum of “livelihood” areas, carries a *totalising* character that relies on specific **knowledge**.¹⁸

Consequently, the organisation observes its overall approach to have a convergence with its relationship with faith and knowledge of the Aga Khan: *“For the Aga Khan this has led to a deep involvement with development, as a process grounded in the ethics of Islam, in which economic, social and cultural factors converge to determine the quality of life”* (AKDN 2007:5)¹⁹. The relationship with faith here is associated with having long-term commitment and collective investment in self-reliance and sustainable physical, social and cultural environment. This is also explained in

¹⁸ See Carnera 2010:75, on the topic of biopolitical intervention.

¹⁹ See Appendix 3

the forewords of the report (AKDN 2013a): *“Philosophically, the Network is grounded in Islam’s ethics of (...) self-reliance, respect for health and life, the cultivation of a sound and enlightened mind, and mankind’s collective responsibility for a sustainable physical, social and cultural environment.”* (highlighted by me) (1). As the quote implies, the organisation links its optimising rationality with a particular Islamic understanding. This is also found in AKDN’s self-perception of its responsibilities related to its *ismaili imamat*: *“AKDN is therefore a contemporary endeavour of the Ismaili Imamat to realise the social conscience of Islam through institutional action”* (AKDN 2016a; The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000).

Hence, it is observed that the philosophy of AKDN draws on a particular Islamic discourse. This means that it combines the optimising logic (of maximising the productive potential of the Afghan population) with the guidance of a particular knowledge – i.e. provided by Aga Khan and the organisations’ ethical dimension.²⁰ Here I find that this combination plays an interesting role in terms of defining a long-term commitment to Afghanistan. In this regard, the Aga Khan stated the following on AKDN’s commitment in the country:

We would like to reiterate our long-term commitment to this region, of which Afghanistan and we are an integral part of its peoples. The Development Network is already scaling up its efforts (...) to enable Afghans to transform their existence from extreme poverty to choice and opportunity within a context that safeguards, for each of them, their right to their own identities, and to preserve and practise their faiths and traditions. (See quote in AKDN 2013a):

This statement from Aga Khan addresses the importance of ‘enabling’ the Afghans to take part in the development process. Through the long-term focus, the Aga Khan argues to see an opportunity in enabling the Afghans to change their state of poverty on their own terms. From this statement, I observe that the MIAD strategy’s goal is to make the Afghans co-responsible of their future. This

²⁰ This is further analysed in part two of the analysis

leads to this sections' partial conclusion, which is followed by a closer look on the specific approach of MIAD and how it operates at the local community level.

Partial Conclusion

The abovementioned examples provide this sections' analytical conclusion; that the multi-input area development (MIAD) approach in Afghanistan is a **biopolitical** construction. This means that the approach instrumentalises the notion of 'life', based on an optimising logic that is concerned with the welfare of people.

Additionally, I found that it combines an optimising logic (of maximising the productive potential of the Afghan population) with the guidance of a particular religious knowledge – i.e. provided by an Islamic self-perception. Consequently, this constructs a specific biopolitical gaze and a legitimising ground for the long-term commitment in Afghanistan. Yet, as the statement of the Aga Khan indicates, the goal of AKDN is to enable the Afghans to become self-reliant in developing their communities.

The following section will examine the latter closer, through one of AKDN's specific agencies. Here, I will examine the output of the rationality in terms of specific methods used to interact with the Afghan communities.

The Governmentality Approach: In The Work of AKF

In this section, the point of observation is shifted to the gaze of Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) to observe a concrete example of social development launched in Afghanistan. Here, the bio-political construction of MIAD is assumed to lay the grounds for AKF's response to development challenges in Afghanistan. The guiding distinction of this section is also of knowledge/power in order to examine how a certain use of knowledge takes place to empower the beneficiaries at a community level.

The largest country programme of AKF is taking place in Afghanistan²¹ (AKDN 2016e), where its activities are more concretely described in the *"Aga Khan Foundation Afghanistan – Annual Report 2012"* (AKF 2012). This report is the starting point of the following section, supplied with the paragraphs from one previous report (AKF 2010), and the official web-section about AKF's general objectives (AKDN 2016e).

²¹ Mentioned under following section: "geographic areas of focus"

The Empowerment of Local Afghan Communities

The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) in Afghanistan is said to deliver the MIAD approach in seven of the country's 34 provinces, working primarily in central and northern Afghanistan (AKF 2012:8). It is described that AKDN and AKF consider the most effective way to stimulate socio-economic development to be through promotion of improvements and the involvement of a range of development actors (AKF 2012:10). The foundation's approach is described as being built on partnerships between government, business and civil society where this is assumed to be "the surest way to secure Afghanistan's transition into stability and prosperity", followed by a hope of making long-term commitment and to respond to local priorities (AKF 2012:11). In this regard AKF works together with other AKDN-agencies to support the MIAD approach and through this work to reinforce each other:

For instance entrepreneurialism and long-term economic development. Likewise, improvements in healthcare will enable a healthier population, support for education to increase literacy and vocational skills will help to stimulate to seek gainful employment or take more active role in civil society and social regeneration (AKF 2012:10).

In this way, the specific AKF approach is corresponding to the overall MIAD approach and viewed as enabling 'tools' to stimulate development in particular, geographic areas. This is done through targeting a number of programmes in the areas of governance, civil society, market development, natural resource management, infrastructure, education and health.

Through the **subnational governance** programme, the foundation works closely with local civil society organisations and business associations to train and strengthen their positions in society "With training in human and institutional development and in other areas (...) AKF is strengthening the institutional fabric of rural Afghanistan." (AKF 2012:12). It is claimed here that AKF provides support to different institutions by developing special programmes of activities. This includes for example training of Community Development Councils (CDCs) and supports the identification of development issues: "These institutions have achieved this fund-raising ability though skills gained from AKF-training focused on building awareness of development needs, improving proposal writing skills and cultivating relations with possible donors (...)." (AKF 2012:12). As proposed by the quote, this is done through a process of transferring certain **knowledge** and creating awareness that seeks to upgrade the beneficiaries' ability to address development needs, which is prioritized by their local communities (AKF 2012:12). This means that the training programmes provide a platform of

knowledge sharing, which in turn ‘nurtures’ the local institutions to become **self-empowered** and promote development in their respective areas (AKF 2012:12).

Here, it is observed that the governance programme is dependant on an awareness of local differences and knowledge of local discourses, which the AKF implies to have an insight on:

Afghan society is profoundly conservative in matters related to gender, particularly in the rural areas where most of AKF’s programmes are implemented. While taking into account of local social traditions, AKF encourages the inclusion of women in all its activities, as participants, as decision-makers and as leaders (AKF 2012:13).

It is observed that AKF claims to show its concern for local social traditions, which again is measured by its knowledge on local norms and the goal of making the institutions self-empowered (AKF 2012:12). Here, I assess that an “intimate” cultural knowledge plays a key role for engaging the locals in their communities, especially when it operates on the border of local social constraints.

This is also emphasized in the **civil society programme**, where AKF claims to have been assisting NGOs with establishing local solutions through knowledge and transferring of skills: “(...) *knowledge and skills are transferred to local institutions*” (AKF 2012:14). For example, the sub-programme *community-based savings groups*, provides relevant education and courses to ensure effective and ‘self-governing’ saving groups (AKF 2012:13). In this context, AKF is referring to one of it’s successful, supported organisations (GWO), which has been expanding its operations of for example female and human right awareness through an Afghan-centric focus: “(...) *with the help of AKF’s civil society capacity building programmes, the organisation has been able to expand its operations and offer Afghan-centric, Afghan-led projects*” (AKF 2012:15). The quote refers to how the assistance of AKF has been enabling a ‘growing’ organisation, which is simultaneously responding with local offers – in coherence with Afghan values.

Firstly, it is observed that AKF uses its knowledge of local discourse to enable their long-term commitment, but also that it becomes a development on the local’s own premises. Hence, I condition that it *appears* as the Afghan’s own responsibility to change their future where they are imposed to take care of their own communities, but without experiencing this as managed by others. Namely, that the Afghans are encouraged to observe themselves as **active subjects**, who have the responsibility of shaping themselves.

In terms of the **market development programme** it is emphasized that economic empowerment of local institutions aims at strengthening an effective market system. The programme works through vocational training (with local institutions and business associations), which focuses on upgrading the beneficiaries' skills by enhancing their employability and entrepreneurial abilities (AKF 2012:18). In the annual report from 2010, it is stated that the capacity building of the market development is an important factor in empowering individuals: *"Through capacity building and linkages to effective market systems, people are enabled to become economic actors, not merely beneficiaries."* (AKF 2010:14). Hence the AKF perceive the vocational training as a transformation from mere 'beneficiaries' to 'economic actors', which implies that it shapes individuals to perceive themselves as **active subjects**. For example, one of the things, which is also emphasized about the market development programme, is that AKF recognizes the importance of empowering women for social change. AKF argues that it continues to incorporate women into its activities of the programmes, despite socio-cultural constraints faced by rural women (AKF 2012:19). Furthermore, in the annual report from 2010, it is stressed that the enterprise programmes can effectively improve women's economic well-being, in addition to more traditional activities: *"AKF has worked with partners to promote women-accessible and women-only markets in conservative areas"* (AKF 2012:15).

This shows that AKF is working at the borderline between cultural limitations and local discourses. Hence, I condition that AKF works to create active subjects, by shaping self-relying men/women through the market development initiatives. This is directly linked to the aim of the programme, which is: *"(...) to promote inclusive economic growth (...) that support economic activity by increasing the capacity of local actors to generate income independently"* (AKF 2012:16). From a governmental perspective I find that it reflects a specific **self-technology**, where AKF enables individuals to become self-relying "independent" subjects – through its knowledge of coping with local discourses. This is manifested in the example of women-only markets, as suggested above. In this way it manifests AKF's understanding of socio-cultural norms of some of the local, remote areas. Based on this, I find that the market programme suggests that they establish legitimacy through a close tie with local community rules, by working towards economic empowerment of Afghans.

This is also demonstrated in AKF's **infrastructure programme** in Afghanistan (AKF 2012: 26). In the annual report from 2012 it is emphasized that AKF works closely with local residents and argues to reflect local needs rather than assumptions: *"(...) not only to ensure that new constructions are high quality, but also that the process of selecting and building is participatory and reflects*

local needs, not international assumptions.” (highlighted by me) (AKF 2012:26). Here I find that AKF explicitly enunciates a difference from the international community, in responding to local priorities. As an example, AKF claims to rehabilitate essential infrastructure through the work of its own engineers, or subcontracting to private Afghan companies to carry out these community projects: “(...) *Using Afghan companies channels development funds directly into the local economy and helps to keep costs low*” (AKF 2012:26). Again, I condition that a certain coupling between **knowledge/power** is used to **empower** the locals in different projects. Most of the infrastructural projects are built through the CDCs, formed under the sub-national governance programme and with assistance of AKF (AKF 2012:28). The different programmes are claimed to be chosen through the communities, for example with the ‘construction and rehabilitation of schools’: “*Most projects chosen through district-level decision-making processes are schools, highlighting the importance which communities place on education*” (AKF 2012:28). This implies that there is a close communication with the local community in deciding a certain construction-site or building, and an importance in gaining the local’s approval/legitimacy. Again, I condition a specific use of power-relations that refers to having close ties with government, society and remote area communities in order to promote development. Through the CDCs and partnerships, the foundation is governing the local initiatives at a ‘distance’, while it appears as the beneficiaries’ own decision-making. This is a crucial point, which perhaps largely resembles the overall approach of AKDN through the specific programmes of AKF.

AKF considers **education** the most essential investment that the international community can make for the future of Afghanistan (AKF 2012:12). Here AKF implements a range of educational interventions in Afghanistan, aimed at strengthening the government’s capacity to deliver high-quality education. Another aim of these interventions are promoting access for particularly girls, in the most remote rural areas of central and North-eastern Afghanistan. For example to overcome the obstacles of girls who stop attending school because of social or economic constraints, AFK argues to repair school infrastructure and dialogue with community and religious leaders: “(...) *To overcome these obstacles AKF provides (...) incentives and accelerated learning programs for women teachers; and promotes dialogue with community and religious leaders to promote a better understanding of the importance of education.*” (AKF 2012:31). Based on this example, it is observed that AKF interacts with local religious authorities in order to gain a ‘license to operate’. From these methods of dialogue, I condition that a particular exercise of a “communicative technology” is taking place in order to engage local community in the progression of education.

A particular focus during 2012 was the work to improve community ownership of local education to help ensure the long-term sustainability of educational improvements (AKF 2012:30f). Similar to the sub-national governance programme, I assess that the educational programme indicates a transformation of Afghans to observe themselves as empowered and **self-responsible** individuals for their development in general. AKF also engages with educational bodies at the government level and considers this as an important part of AKF's education activities. Here they take part in a number of working group meetings to influence education policies (AKF 2012:31-32). Here, AKF area using its specific power relations – through close partnerships with administrative bodies of the country – to influence legislative politics and hence the field of possible actions, related to educational policies.

Improvements in healthcare in Afghanistan are according to AKF, one of the country's most significant successful stories of the past decade (AKF 2012:33). With the **health programme**, AKF aims to increase access to health and bring sister agencies of AKDN and other partners around shared objectives. It is argued that AKF has been launching health programmes in different provinces, for improving mother and child health (AKF 2012:33). These activities include improving the skills of existing health professionals and a specific focus on female workers (nurses and midwives). For example, this has been done through local visits and training via e-health: *"E-health is particularly useful for training female staff in Afghanistan because it means that women trainees do not have to travel far."* (AKF 2012: 34). The local community is also involved in promoting health at the community level, where AKF argues to provide training to community leaders, religious clerics, community health workers etc.: *"(...) These community leaders then lead health campaigns and awareness sessions in local villages"* (AKF 2012:34). As an example of a "successful story" shared in the annual report (AKF 2012), a woman tells her story of how her self-perception of health has changed through a specific training to enhance the understanding of health practices. The woman called *Waseema*, states:

Ultimately my twins were born. Now my children are healthy and I also feel quite well (...) I also pay more attention to their hygiene and cleanliness as instructed by the AKF health team. If I properly consider these hygiene measures, I will not need to pay the doctor unnecessarily (AKF 2012:36).

Here I find an interesting example of how AKF affects the self-relation of the locals. This suggests that AKF is using knowledge to create awareness in remote areas and empower the women/men to become self-caring. Based on this I assess that a certain **self-technology** is at work, which affects the self-management of the woman to take actively care of her health status and ultimately becomes a measure of changing her self and the local community.

AKF: Governing From a Distance

The heart of all these programmes lies in the imperative to allow local people and their institutions to take the *lead* (AKF 2012:12). On the website section on AKF generally the ultimate objective of its programmes: *“is to enable community members to undertake well-informed activities for sustainable and equitable development”* (AKDN 2016e), where AKF then assists by linking them with local governments through collaboration on development issues. I observe that the role of AKF is to **govern at a distance**, where through the sharing of knowledge it *empowers* the local civil society organisation to become equipped, when responding to local discourses and taking the matters into their own hands. Hence, this case proves that it is through the assistance (knowledge sharing) of AKF that certain development issues are highlighted and implemented.

This fact is closely related to what the AKF considers of themselves in general: *“The Foundation is largely an implementing organisation rather than a grant-making foundation”* (AKDN 2016e) in which its activities are intended to improve the quality of life of beneficiary communities. Thus, as stated on the web section, the main areas and AKF’s objectives of its programmes are to be directed by the following goals:

- *Make it possible for the poor to act in ways that lead to long-term improvements in their income and health, in the education of their children and in the environment;*
- *Provide communities a greater range of choices and the understanding necessary to undertake informed actions;*
- *Enable beneficiaries to develop confidence and competence to participate in the design and operation of activities that affect the quality of their lives; and*
- *Put institutional, management and financial structures in place to ensure activities are sustainable without AKF assistance within a reasonable timeframe. (AKDN 2016e).*

All these objectives suggest to work on the **future actions** of its beneficiaries, whether it is about *providing* possibilities and awareness, *enabling* beneficiaries or *putting* structures in place to *ensure* a sustainable activity level. In a Foucauldian term, I find that the programmes in Afghanistan operate on the *field of possible actions* and function as **self-technologies** enabled by the certain use of knowledge and understanding of the local context. Through the training of local institutions and investment in capacity building it enables the beneficiaries to observe themselves as active subjects. Here the beneficiaries can become *self-responsible* actors by taking AKF's knowledge into the formula of developing strong institutions, which the AKF is claiming is based on their (the Afghans) own indigenous standards. This is apparently in compliance with the overall approach of AKF in Afghanistan: "(...) AKF hopes to foster a strong network of capable Afghan individuals and institutions that can drive their own indigenous development process" (AKF 2012:10). The quote clearly indicates an overall belief that the AKF approach in Afghanistan requires a transfer of responsibility into the hands of Afghans themselves. The commitment of AKF is hence long-term, while the overall approach is based on a belief that lasting change can only be achieved through the Afghans themselves.

Partial Conclusion

Through the abovementioned programmes, I condition a coupling between **power** and **knowledge** appears, where certain knowledge sharing is used to enable self-governing communities and individuals. I find that it does not appear as an outside intervention, but becomes the beneficiaries' own will and responsibility to lead the development. Furthermore, the diffusion of knowledge enables the beneficiaries to become active subjects, through the focus on specific areas. Each one of these areas carries out specific programmes and encompasses certain **self-technologies**. These aim at affecting the recipients' way of observing themselves, as either *economic actors*, *independent individuals*, *self-reliant*, *self-caring* or *self-responsible*. This involves close dialogue with local, religious authorities and government but also an "intimate" knowledge of local norms.

The self-technologies are not working directly, but instead acting in the field of (possible) actions of their beneficiaries. Using power relations, it becomes possible to produce and in various ways encourage their beneficiaries to shape themselves, towards becoming active agents of social change in Afghanistan. Here the overall MIAD approach not only appears as a general bio-political strategy,

but also as a specific governmental strategy that produces entrepreneurial subjects organized in self-managing communities. However, the question of whether and how AKDN's overall strategy is sustained by other than a certain use of knowledge/power insofar, remains unclear and unanswered. This calls for a look beyond the governmentality analysis to see whether and how the bio-political intervention is gained by AKDN's specific beliefs. With the purpose of this thesis, to understand the legitimisation of AKDNs engagement in Afghanistan the next section will draw upon studies of ideology to have a more subtle understanding of how the MIAD-intervention is sustained and re-enabled. As an output of the governmentality analysis it becomes interesting to see whether and how the current intervention (MIAD) is driven by AKDN's particular beliefs. This raises a new kind of problem that makes it relevant to draw studies of ideology into the analytical framework of the thesis.

Part 2 – An ideological Supplement To The Intervention

In this section I draw upon ideology analysis to examine how the context of MIAD is sustained and re-enabled. Theoretically, I draw on the concepts of Slavoj Žižek supplied by his particular understanding of Jacques Lacan, in terms of **fantasy** and **desire**.

The empirical starting point is the ethical substance presented in the "Aga Khan Development Network: An Ethical Framework" (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000)²² and supplied by official statements from Aga Khan and the network.

Towards Wholeness

In the Ethical Framework (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000) the aim of the agencies are described as: *"a contemporary endeavour of the Ismaili Imamat to realise the social conscience of Islam through institutional action."* (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:1). It is furthermore described that it brings different programmes whose combined mandate is to help relieve society of ignorance, disease and deprivation. The self-reference to the 'social conscience of Islam' is exemplified in the following quote:

²² The ethical framework is prepared for the AKDN by the Institute of the Ismaili Studies London (2000) and presented on the official website of AKDN, as its own point of view (AKDN 2016a)

In societies where Muslims have a significant presence, its mandate extends to efforts to revitalise and broaden the understanding of cultural heritage in the full richness of its diversity, as the quality of life in its fullest sense extends beyond physical wellbeing (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:1).

The quote suggests that this approach is mainly exercised in Muslim societies (e.g. Afghanistan), and *qua* this, it becomes an object of the all-encompassing strategy.²³ From this perspective their efforts in Muslim countries are not only aiming at the material well-being, but also seeks to extend beyond the physical well-being. In this regard, Aga Khan claims that it is sustained by a holistic vision:

*To the Imam, the meaning of “quality of life” extends to the entire ethical and social context in which people live, and not only to their material well-being measured over generation after generation. **Consequently, the Imam’s is a holistic vision of development, as is prescribed by the faith of Islam.** It is about investing in people, in their pluralism, in their intellectual pursuit, and search for new and useful knowledge, just as much as in material resources. **But it is also about investing with a social conscience inspired by the ethics of Islam** (Aga Khan 19 December 2003 in AKDN 2016f).*

Based on the Aga Khan’s view, I observe that the meaning of ‘quality of life’ takes form of a holistic perspective, which is seen as investing in different areas of intellectual conditions. Furthermore the quote suggests that it is through an Islamic discourse that AKDN can direct their activities towards an extensive approach. As already argued in the governmentality analysis, the relationship to faith and a collective biopolitical intervention is conditioned as a total approach – i.e. in the sense that it becomes an extensive approach supported by a religious knowledge. However, here I observe that

²³ This is despite AKDN’s claim of having a non-denominational approach and the fact that they are working in non-Muslim settings (AKDN 2016b). However, as the quote states, the ‘extensive’ approach is mainly taking place in societies with a Muslim significance.

not only does the intervention not only receive motivation from the pretext of Islamic faith, but also *needs* this, to provide a totalising aspect to its work. This is illustrated in the following way:

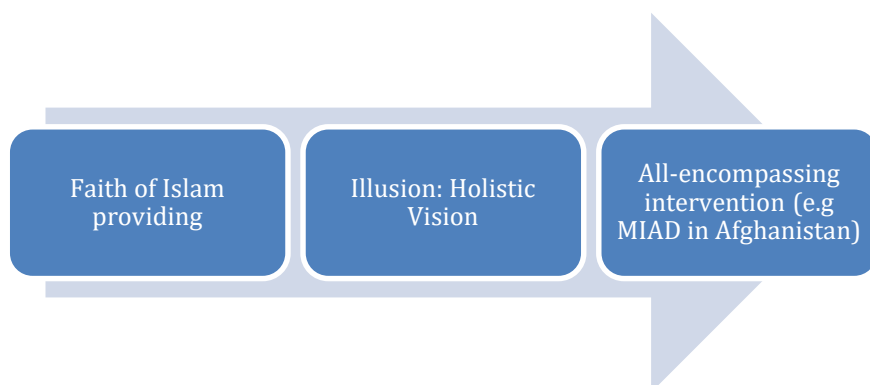


figure 2

As the figure shows, AKDN's interpretation of Islam provides a sense of 'wholeness' and accordingly supporting an all-encompassing intervention (e.g. in Afghanistan).

To paraphrase Žižek, ideology is not a dreamlike illusion that we build to escape insupportable reality, instead it is a fantasy-construction which serves as a support for our social reality itself: "(...) *an 'illusion' which structures our effective, real social relations and thereby masks some insupportable, real, impossible kernel*" (Žižek 1988:45). Žižek's point is that ideological fantasies are the core of our social reality that enables a holistic fantasy and produces a framework for identity and actions (Bagge Laustsen 2005:214).

This above point also leads me to take a closer look at the concepts presented in the official ethical framework of AKDN. The underlying sections are hence inspired by the framework's own topics, but supplied with an ideology analysis of these topics.

The Spirit and Matter in a Ideological Formation

The impetus of the Network derives from the ethics of Islam, which is claimed to bridge the two realms of faith, *din* and *dunya*²⁴: "*Islam is, therefore both din and dunya, spirit and matter, distinct but linked, neither to be forsaken*" (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:1). In the perspective of

²⁴ Translated to Spirit and Matter, based on the framework's own terminology (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000)

Jacques Lacan, the reference to Islam here functions as the symbolic order of the AKDN that interweaves the relation between the two concepts:

Din (...) the spiritual relationship of willing submission of a reasoning creature to his Lord who creates, sustains and guides (...) the earthly life, dunya, is a gift to cherish inasmuch as it is a bridge to, and preparation for, the life to come.” (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:1).

As the quote suggests, the ideal association of the Spirit (willing submission to the ‘Lord’) involves an attachment to a spiritual aspect (mainly referring to God). I observe that this involves what Žižek calls a passionate attachment to the symbolic big Other (Sharpe & Boucher 2010:49). The reference to the notion of Spirit, involving God is here determining a relationship between AKDN and their relation to the *matter*. This is done through a self-reference to the its (AKDN) social order:

“Service of God is not only worship, but also service to humanity, and abiding by the duty of trust towards the rest of creating. Righteousness, says the Quran, is not fulfilling one’s religious obligations. Without social responsibility, religiosity is a show of conceit” the rest of creation.(The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:1).

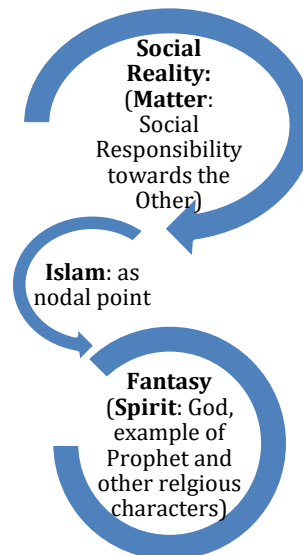
The service of God is here linked with the service of humanity, turning the attention towards the other, as in a moral responsibility of servicing fellow human beings. Here I observe that AKDN’s self-understanding of ‘social responsibility’ becomes idealised, by referring to a symbolic identification with the sayings of the Quran²⁵ (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:2). The responsibility towards humanity becomes an ideal for the AKDN and through the reference to “Islam and God”, it is experienced as a divine order (the big Other). This is expressed in the following quote: *“By grounding societal values in the principle of human moral responsibility to the Divine, Islam lifts the sense of public and social order to a transcendent level”* (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:2). Thus the ‘human moral responsibility’ is maintained by responding to a ‘divine principle, and through Islam

²⁵ The holy book of Islam

they claim that it becomes transcendental. Here, I observe that the work towards development gets a divine legitimisation, by referring to the big Other (Spirit). This relationship is best illustrated in the following figure:

figure 3

This figure illustrates the link between fantasy and social reality in the case of AKDN



This is furthermore supported by AKDN's references to the example of the Prophet Muhammad and his hereditary legatee in the Imam (Aga Khan). Thus, its (AKDN) observance of his example of leadership is that, it is based on a divine insight in Islam: *"In a world of flux, the Imam gives leadership in the maintenance of balance between the spiritual and the material in the harmonious context of the ethics of the faith, of which he is the guardian"* (The Institute of ismaili Studies 2000:2). Here I observe that the exaltation of the leader's role suggests that he is a "personified" version of the big Other, but also, that his guidance is the medium through which to believe.

I find that this point exemplifies the Žižekian notion of 'belief as belief through the Other. Žižek's hypothesis is that we believe through the Other, when we subscribe to an ideology, and that belief is externalised and shapes how we actually behave (Žižek 2001). In Lacanian algebra, this is also called the **Ego Ideal**, which on behalf of the big Other, allocates the subject a place in the socio-political totality and gives it a definite role in worldly affairs (Sharp & Boucher 2010:52). In this case, the belief of AKDN is transposed into the ideal character of Aga Khan, as the Ego Ideal, which in a sense *believes for the community* and provides the guidance to realise the vision of Islam.

The Ethical Traits and Distance in Actions

The philosophy of AKDN is described in ethical terms such as “respect for human dignity and relief to humanity”, “combined endeavour towards empowering individuals to become self-reliant” and “harnessing a culture of philanthropy and voluntary sharing of time and talent” etc. (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:2). This is linked with what AKDN states about the ideal of realising the social vision of Islam:

Notionally, the AKDN seeks the ideal of social action, of communitarian strategy, to realise the social vision of Islam. Although the outcome of its action is pragmatic, the motivation for it is spiritual, a universal ethic whose purpose is to elicit the noble that inheres in each man and woman.” (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:2).

As the quote suggests the actions has a rather ‘pragmatic’ outcome while the motivation is found in a spiritual ethic inspired by Islam. As mentioned previously, I observed that AKDN is needs the pretext of ideology to sustain its motivation. Here, I find that the emphasis on a pragmatic outcome of their work implies a *distance* to the official ideology in their actions. This is what Žižek calls the cynical detachment to the big Other; a certain strategy to transgress the official ideology which simultaneously sustains and keeps it functioning (Bagge Laustsen 2005:212-213; Sharpe & Boucher 2010). Comparing this to the annual reports of AKF (AKF 2012, 2011, 2010), I find no direct expression about Islamic ethical traits. Therefore, I observe that it is proposing a certain ‘distance’ to the ethical ideals in the enunciation of its practices in Afghanistan.

In the question of what the concrete traits of Islamic ethics are, it is responded with a list of ethical concepts such as an *ethic of inclusiveness ethic of education and research, the spirit of Inquiry, ethic of compassion and sharing, ethic of self-reliance, ethic of respect for life and health care, ethic of sound mind, ethic of sustainable environment: physical, social and cultural, ethic of governance*. In the following sections, I will analyse the ethical traits and the visions represented within these segments.

The Idealisation of Inclusiveness and Knowledge

On the section about **ethic of inclusiveness**, it is emphasised that Islam provides the Network an inclusive vision. Thus it is highlighted that the Quran and the Prophetic example gives the basis for a pluralist societal vision: *“The Prophet sought to harness religious groups, among whom he encouraged a spirit of harmony and toleration as constituents of a larger community of his time”* (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:2). Here, it is observed that the narrative functions as a pretext for promoting a pluralist society and idealising a society that binds people together. In this way the narratives (of “prophetic programmes”) projects a spectacle that enables a particular understanding of ‘service’. I observe that this societal vision also entails a belief in a ‘shared’ enjoyment of a fantasmatic past, which might explain the references to Quranic and prophetic narratives. As Žižek suggests, fantasy provides a spectacle and tells us how to desire (Žižek 1989:118). Hence I condition that its (AKDN’s) vision of an “inclusive” society is a fantasy that keeps certain desire of working (towards this vision) intact.

With regards to the topics concerning the **ethic of education and research** and **the spirit of inquiry**, I find that a certain notion of knowledge-sharing is legitimised by referring to the sayings of Muslim icons such as Hazrat Ali²⁶:

Those who believe and have knowledge are the exalted ones (...) “the most self-sustaining wealth is the intellect” which “gives one mastery over one’s destiny”, are among the sayings attributed to Hazrat Ali (...) But the person of knowledge and wisdom carries the greater obligation of sharing it (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:3).

The quote is followed by Muslim scientists’ view and how the Network considers the gathering of knowledge and the use of intellect as their duty (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:2-3). The excerpts from ideal icons apparently support the idealisation of possessing knowledge, whereby the sharing of it is considered a religious obligation. I find that this provide “knowledge-sharing” a

²⁶ Hazrat Ali was the first Imam within Shia Islam; a prominent character in Islamic history, which was related to the prophet Muhammad.

legitimation and revitalizes the work of “conducting awareness”, which is practiced in the concrete work in Afghanistan²⁷. Consequently, I find that the narratives (concerning knowledge) are what provide a spectacle for the analysed technologies in the MIAD programmes. This suggests that the empowering strategies in Afghanistan cannot be reduced to governmental forms (calculative rationalities), but are underpinned by an ideological backdrop.

The Vision of Charity and Self-Reliance

Within the **ethic of compassion and sharing**, the concept of aiding the general welfare of society is presented. Wealth is here considered a blessing according to scriptural tradition, but it is considered nothing without *social consciousness*:

The pious are the socially conscious who recognise in their wealth a right for the indigent and the deprived whom they help for the sake of God alone, without any desire for recompense or thankfulness from those whom they help (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:4).

The vision of an enlightened society not only encourages a religious duty towards charitable activity, but also, structures a fantasy of the ‘perfect society’ where the **desire** of all (God, AKDN, the deprived) is assumed to be fulfilled. Here, I condition that an ideal vision of society constitutes a desire for the charitable work. However, as Žižek indicates, fantasies are an unreachable or unsatisfied dream, which keeps us from fully enjoying what we have already have and always gets us to want more (Žižek 1989). This suggests that the ideological beliefs of AKDN constantly need to remobilise the desire through religious fantasies, to keep its actions active and productive.²⁸

In addition, charity is described as a matter of sharing intellectual, spiritual and material wealth and that this is underpinned by those who are more blessed by God: “(...) ‘One who is more blessed by

²⁷ Referring to the concrete use of knowledge in the work of AKF (AKF 2012)

²⁸ I find that its ideals are supposedly playing a role in the reproduction of their activities, but also through the saying and knowledge sharing of the Aga Khan.

God', goes an Alid tradition²⁹, 'is needed more for people'. The ethic of voluntary service is, thus, a strongly marked trait of Muslim tradition (...)" (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:4). Firstly this quote suggests that the one who is blessed (with intellectual and material wealth) are "needed" more for people. I observe that his quote is self-referring and idealises the work of AKDN. Secondly, it also provides a legitimisation of its work. As suggested before, I find that it is through a visionary projection of Muslim traits that its charitable activity becomes ideologically significant.

The same ideological support is found in the **ethic of self-reliance**. Here it is emphasised that the Muslim ethic discourages a culture of dependency but instead promotes the encouragement to self-help:

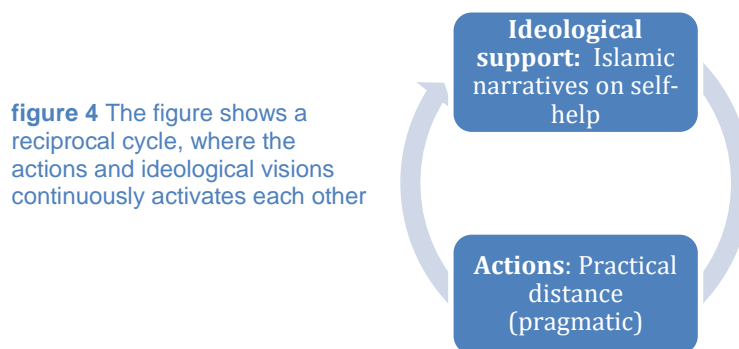
*But Muslim ethic discourages a culture of dependency since it undermines one's dignity (...) "Man shall have only that for which he labours", says the Quran. That encouragement to **self-help is reinforced in Prophetic traditions** (...) From the time of the Prophet, therefore, the greater emphasis of the charitable effort has been to help the needy to become self-reliant. (highlighted by me) (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:4).*

According to Islamic tradition, the help must then be provided at a level where the poor become self-reliant. For example, the work of AKF to produce self-reliant Afghan communities is hence justified through certain visionary descriptions of what former Islamic legends have done. In the following narrative there is a visionary analogy to this:

During his tenure as the last of the four rightly-guided Caliphs, Hazrat Ali helped, for instance, to fund a self-help scheme, voluntarily proposed by a group of residents of an area, to improve irrigation potential. He preferred that people should prosper, he explained, to their remaining economically weak (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:4).

²⁹ Referring to Hazrat Ali

I observe that the narration of Hazrat Ali resembles some of the exact programmes implemented in Afghanistan, for example in the areas of rural development and natural resource management (AKF 2012:21). At first glance this implies that the notion of self-help is helped sustained by a narrative of religious characters, reproduced in the development programmes in Afghanistan. Moreover, it suggests that it is through the concrete activities of AKF that the fantasies are bred and reproduced – i.e. by exercising these practices, the illusionary narratives is given life to and vice versa.³⁰ However, I observe that is also through the suggested “pragmatic distance”³¹ that it enables a spectacle to believe. This means that by keeping a practical distance to the official ideology, it re-enables the particular ideological support. This becomes an on-going reciprocal cycle, which is best illustrated in the following figure:



The Vision of Health Care and Sustainability

In the guidelines of **ethic of respect for life and health care**, good health is considered a divine gift just like knowledge is: *“Good health, like knowledge, is a divine gift says the Quran, which forcefully*

³⁰ As Žižek suggests, by giving Pascal’s formula a further twist ‘*kneel down and pray, and you will believe you knelt down because your belief*’, our deepest beliefs are shaped by the ‘external’ institutions and repeated practices (See Žižek 1989:12 in Sharpe & Boucher 2010:46).

³¹ The quote: (...) “*Although the outcome of its action is pragmatic...*” (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:2).

urges the sanctity of human life, equating the saving of one life to the saving of the entirety of humanity” (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:4). Additionally, the science of medicine and learning medicine is here stated to be a “duty of sufficiency”: *“(…) which is incumbent upon, not every individual, but a sufficient number of people to serve the health needs of a community*” (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:4). In a Foucauldian sense, I observe that AKDN are responsabilising itself, in terms of serving the needs of a given community by promoting knowledge. Here, I find that the self-governing strategies analysed in part two are sustained through the ideological lens that exalts the notion of knowledge.

It is a belief that only knowledge (of medicine) can bring health to serving the poor, by referring to Quran and a historical Muslim patronage of researching medicine: *“Under Muslim patronage medicine made far reaching strides (...) Hospitals flourished as did mobile dispensaries, which were, not uncommonly, staffed by both male and female health personnel”* (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:4). The narrative and vision of ‘flourishing hospitals’ seems to resemble a lot of the achievements enunciated, in terms of the health care programme in Afghanistan (AKF 2012:36).³² Following this, I find that it produces an idealises the framework and achievement of the foundation in Afghanistan (AKF 2012:33).

The emphasis on the care of the environment is described under the **ethic of sustainable environment: physical, social and cultural**. Here it is highlighted that the care of environment, is a duty of trusteeship which humankind owes by virtue, due to its status of being “viceroy and successor in the earth”. Any kind of actions that corrupt the balanced order of nature”, is regarded as something highly criticisable: *“(…) wastage and acts that corrupt the balanced order of nature, which is a sign of divine beneficence, earn a severe reproach”* (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:5). Based on this, I observe that the resources are given a sanctuary status by belonging to the big Other. Following this, it is described that:

³² See *Aga Khan Foundation – Annual report 2012* under the Health section and

Hence, *those* who create wealth in its diverse forms, intellectual and spiritual, cultural and material, are raised to a position of honour, but only if they recognise and respect the element of trust in what they create (highlighted by me) (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:5).

Here, I observe that the quote is self-referential to AKDN.³³ Hence the transpose, onto a certain “those”, shows a mirroring of the self-image and projection of enjoyment onto an Ego Ideal (See Lacan 2006 in Muhr & Kirkegaard 2013:108). By referring to its own activities here, a certain form of legitimisation is gained. Not only allowing an all-encompassing development approach, but also that the Network is deriving a self-perception of being the ‘true divine trustee’ This means that although the big Other forbids “wastage”, *enjoyment* is permitted – as long as it is done by maintaining its (the big Other of AKDN) order. Hence, I observe that this self-understanding permits “*those*” (self-reference to AKDN) a certain enjoyment of the resources, and structure a desire towards creating more diverse forms of wealth.

The Vision of Governance

In the section about **the ethic of governance**, it is emphasised that: “*those who control and administer recourses for the benefit of others are bound by the duty of trusteeship*” (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:5). The quote continues by referring to the principles of governance and what the scripture considers as defraud:

The Muslim tradition of religious law, thus, firmly grounds the ethic of governance in the principles of trust, probity, equity and accountability. The scripture, for instance, sternly warns corruptly inclined citizens and authorities against collusion to defraud others (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:5).

³³ Since it is proclaimed as the Network’s own ethical approach (See AKDN 2016a).

Through the self-reference to “religious law” and what is owed to the Imam, I observe that the Network presents a projection of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ governance – in terms of its responsibilities and duty of trusteeship. This is expressed as follows: “*Guardians of orphans and the weak are similarly warned not to compromise their fiduciary obligation, and to keep away from their wards’ property except to improve it.*” (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:5). This analogical example suggests that an intervention in people’s property is only legitimised through a *will*, to improve it. In other words, I observe that AKDN justifies a given interference; insofar it is intended to improve the wealth of its beneficiaries.

This example also ‘obliges’ the charitable foundations to sustain its charitable commitments and maximise their yield: “*The tradition, hence, obliges administrators of a charitable foundation not only to maintain, but to seek to enhance, the value of its corpus and maximise its yield in order to sustain its charitable commitments.*” (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:5). Here it is observed that it stages a vision of avoiding a status quo in their activities, but instead to further invest and maximise its productivity towards charitable commitments.

Partial Conclusion

The abovementioned examples provide this sections’ analytical conclusion; the self-understanding of AKDN provides the grounds for sustaining a commitment to its concrete practices. Consequently, this means that the context of MIAD is constructed as an all-encompassing effort and legitimised qua the particular visions of AKDN. The analysis found that the specific narratives work as **fantasies**, which are also enabling a **desire** in a holistic engagement with its work in “Muslim” countries.

Through AKDN’s particular optic of *spirit* and *matter*, a discourse of moral responsibility towards others is raised. Here, I find that the combination operates as divine order. Namely, as the **big Other** of the organisation. Within this framework, I found that there lies a vision of an Islamic past and narratives from religious characters, providing the ideal significance to the ethical traits. Furthermore, I conditioned that these visions provide the ideological texture for the overall strategy (e.g. MIAD strategy in Afghanistan). For example, I observed that the self-understanding idealises the act of *sharing knowledge, charity and self-reliance* and revitalizing its concrete practices of the organisation. However, I also found that a practical distance takes place in the communication of its

ethical traits. Based on this, I found that by keeping a 'practical distance' in the concrete practice, it reinvests in the specific fantasies in a reciprocal cycle and re-enables the work.

As an output of my analysis of this case, it opens up the possibility to discuss my findings and what it does in effect. Namely, what constitutive effect my findings have – and for whom?

Part 3 – Discussing The Constitutive Effects

In this section, I will discuss my findings based on the final question from the thesis statement: "*Which constitutive effects does this have?*". The findings are both discussed in relation to the theory, but also what it constitutes and for whom it does. This will lead up to a discussion concerning the limits and advantages to the MIAD strategy and ultimately leading to a reflection on the analytical strategy.

Productive Biopolitics

This study shows how AKDN engagement instrumentalises the notion of life and enunciates a "will" to maximise the human and material potential of the Afghan population. To paraphrase Foucault's view on this regard, the will to improve the well-being of population is expansive and concerned with 'men in their relations' with every aspect of life:

"The things with which this sense of government is concerned are in fact men (...) in their relations, (...) which are wealth, resources, means of subsistence, the territory with its specific qualities, climate, irrigation, fertility, etc; men in their relations to that other kind of things, customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking etc; lastly, men in their relations to that other kind of things, accidents, misfortunes such as famine, epidemics, death etc." (Foucault 1991:93).

The biopolitical discourse therefore concerns the social, cultural, environmental, economic and geographic conditions under which humans live and die (Dean 2001). This is exactly what I conditioned of the MIAD strategy. Namely, as a totalising form of biopolitical governmentality, which has an all-encompassing way of targeting their Afghan beneficiaries: "*The MIAD approach entails*

responding to a spectrum of livelihood requirements, including the need for economic, human, social, natural, physical and cultural "capital". (AKDN 2013). Hence, the MIAD approach can be observed as another way of rationalising the body of populations, through a particular combination of power and knowledge.

According to a Foucauldian framework, the biopolitical discourse draws out three characteristics, based on the concept of governmental technologies (Rabinow and Rose 2003). Firstly, it entails *truth discourses* about the 'vital' character of human beings, which are taken charge of by experts authorised to speak the truth. In this case, it would be the exaltation of improving "quality of life" based on a particular Islamic discourse and through the expert knowledge of Aga Khan. Secondly, it involves *strategies for intervention* upon collective existence, power relations that take 'living' humans as their object – which is expressed through the MIAD strategy in Afghanistan. Finally, it involves *modes of subjectification* in which individuals work on their self-relation in relation to these truth discourses, in the name of individual or collective life. This is observed in AKF's hope of creating self-reliant Afghan communities and attempt to make the beneficiaries co-responsible of their future.

In the case of the Network, I assess that it also uses local cultural knowledge to position itself in the local communities. This means that the religious predicate and cultural awareness becomes a productive asset for AKDN. Here, I find that it provides a "license to operate", in a context, where perhaps other organisations (especially movements that lacks a cultural affiliation) do not have the same advantage, due to a lack of local perception. Furthermore, the close collaboration with local and government influence paves the way for AKDN and gains it further access to carry out programmes in the remote areas. Here, I find that the all-encompassing approach becomes a useful asset. Especially in the fragile Afghan context, which is avoided by private initiatives, due to uncertainty and instable circumstances. Thus, the use of certain knowledge/power relation in MIAD, works productively in terms of activating and expanding AKDN's operations to several work segments (AKDN 2013).

However, as any other strategy plan, there is a complexity between what is envisioned and how it is carried out in practice. This leads me to the next section, where I will take a closer look at governmentality and its limitations in practical and theoretical terms.

The Limits of MIAD and Biopolitical Governmentality

Applying governmentality, or the art of governing as a means to govern a population, entails acting on the freedom of the population – by making some actions more likely more than others. In the analysis, I found that this is done through the work of organising local Afghan communities in a particular way and applying techniques, which form preferable identities. However, the preferences here also outline ‘how things are optimally envisioned’ and what is hoped for, if the Afghans become co-responsible for their development. Although the MIAD strategy and annual reports of AKF are outlining their achievements, it is basically a strategy plan outlining the *continuous* multi-input approach and long-term commitment:

As we closely observe the process and contemplate the coming years, AKF and its sister agencies in the Aga Khan Development Network continue their long-term commitment to the people and country of Afghanistan. Looking forward, AKF will continue with multi input implementation, working with government, civil society partners and the local community.
(AKF 2012)

The multi-input strategy is hence a plan of long-term commitment, in order to work for sustainable communities. However, as suggested the work is also dependent on for example government, civil society and international partners’ role in the planning of the MIAD-strategy. Namely, it is a strategy designed in a web of a wider political system, which is carried out in a cooperative way with local and international institutions.³⁴ Thus, concerning some aspects of the MIAD engagement (AKDN 2013; AKF 2012), it might be described the best as a strategic approach, which is dependant upon different actors – i.e. in order for these objectives to be realised.

Consequently, governmentality is a complicated process of realising its objectives, which accordingly, also illustrates the complexity of transferring intentions to actual realisation. Even with

³⁴ For example, the MIAD-strategy has received funds and support from international agencies such as USAID. (<http://www.akfusa.org/our-work/miad/>).

the political system's (government and public institutions) intervention in the AKF operating communities, this does not mean that the objectives of "fostering an indigenous development process" (AKF 2012) will be realised. Nor will the Afghans necessarily become self-reliant, as envisioned. Partly because of the complexities of transferring a vision to practical implications, but also due to the fragile setting of Afghanistan where risk and uncertainty is high.³⁵

Another more fundamental aspect is the use of governmentality in these settings, which are contextually different from 'modern' neo-liberal societies. Foucault developed the concepts of governmentality through detailed attention on the particular aspects of western governance in specific historical periods. This is derived from his observations on what he characterized as 'modern' neo-liberal societies and mainly based on western contexts (Dean 1986). Hence, some critics argue that a Foucauldian analysis of power relations is focused on a narrowly European frame, which fails to fully conceptualise bodily and social location (Gandy 2006;498).

The post-war and fragile context of Afghanistan is marked by its own specificity (Azizi 2012:13). In addition, its governance is highly influenced by local cultural norms or tribal codes (Sharani 2009:5f), most likely also in the rural and remote areas where AKDN is operating. Although it seems like the network is aware of these local differences³⁶, its ultimate governmentality aim of producing "modern" self-responsible communities may clash with different local perspectives, for example, on the matters of governance or local norms. Thus, in the longer term, this could lead to many obstacles and challenges on the road to change Afghan communities to self-reliant ones. In addition, the approach of AKDN could also be observed as a "reproduction" of the contemporary NGO's working with philanthropy. Although, I would argue that AKDN's particular use of its religious discourse (knowledge) might gain its legitimisation ground in the local "Islamic context" of Afghanistan. Maybe also provide a point of difference and advantage in realising its goals of development.

³⁵ This has also been declared on the website of Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A. (<http://www.akfusa.org/our-work/miad/>).

³⁶ Based on the examples of its 'sensitive' approach to the local sociocultural constraints and norms, in their social development programs (AKF 2012)

Ideology At Work – But For Whom

Where governmentality analysis could not provide an answer to what ultimately legitimises the strategy in Afghanistan, I find that ideology analysis does. Consequently, I observe that the MIAD approach is enabled by a certain self-understanding of AKDN. This is founded in the ethical dimension, which is inspired by particular narratives. In the analysis, I found that these visions work as fantasies, which constitutes a spectacle of ‘wholeness’ in MIAD and re-enables a desire for its charitable practices.

However, when confronted by such fantasy constructs, Žižek suggests that our priority should not be to challenge them from the perspective of ‘reality’, but to ask for whom they are being staged: *“Apropos of a phantasmic scene, the question to be asked is thus always for which gaze it is staged? Which narrative is it destined to support?”* (Žižek 1997:21). As observed in the analysis, I would argue that the presented narratives and visions in the ethical framework are primarily staged for their own mandates (Ismaili community and staff), to provide a strong ideal support and *enjoyment* of doing charity.³⁷ But beyond this, I would also argue that they are staged for their stakeholders (governmental bodies, local movements and individuals), in order to gain an extensive legitimacy to work in the local Afghan communities.

Another addressee might be the broader population of Western societies, yet, rather than merely seeking to legitimate its interventions in developing countries – it is also a matter of expressing a fundamental difference in terms of “entrepreneurship or philanthropy”. This is conveyed in a statement by Aga Khan from 2006:

³⁷ See section: “The vision of charity and self-reliance”

*I am fascinated and somewhat frustrated when representatives of the Western world (...) try to describe the work of our Aga Khan Development Network in fields like education, health, the economy, media, and the building of social infrastructure. Reflecting a certain historical tendency of the West **to separate the secular from the religious**, they often describe it either as philanthropy or entrepreneurship. What is not understood is that this work is for us a part of our institutional responsibility — it flows from the mandate of the office of Imam to improve the quality of worldly life for the concerned communities.* (highlighted by me) (Aga Khan 20 may 2006).

From this statement it seems that there is a particular self-understanding at work, both in the ethical framework (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000) and visions of Aga Khan (AKDN 2016a). However, to paraphrase Žižek these visions are not simply ‘false representations’ of reality in a Marxian term, but an illusion that structures the social world. Žižek’s specific point is that: *Ideology is not a dreamlike illusion that we build to escape insupportable reality; in its basic dimension it is a fantasy-construction which serves as a support for our 'reality' itself: an 'illusion' which structures our effective, real social relations (...)* (Žižek 1988:45). Thus, it is the way the social world emerges in the observance of AKDN, which constitute their self-perception.

While the use of certain narratives makes the MIAD appear as a “holistic” vision, Žižek reminds us that fantasy is a fragile construct and constantly needs libidinous investment in order to function and remain its wholeness (Žižek 1988:91). Thus, when AKDN and the Aga Khan envisions a holistic MIAD approach, it depends on how it is constantly re-invested with a sense of ‘wholeness’ – in order to sustain their work. In this case, I find that it is done through the figure of the Aga Khan and his leadership – as the representatives of a divine order – an ultimately functioning as the big Other of the organisation.

Furthermore, the ethical dimension of AKDN provides a set of imaginary narratives, which enables a framework to the foundations’ work in developing countries. However, it was observed that it also enables an extensive approach, especially: *“In societies where Muslims have a significant presence, its mandate extends to efforts to revitalise and broaden the understanding of cultural heritage in the full richness of its diversity* (The Institute of Ismaili Studies 2000:1). Through AKDN’s particular self-perception, I find that it allows the holistic engagement to happen and extend its efforts in Afghan

communities. Hence, it functions as a “productive framework” that maintains and directs their efforts towards an all-encompassing approach.

However, AKDN is working within a complex web of different political as well as local actors in order to gain an extensive legitimisation. Consequently, the ideal support founded in the ethical dimension, alone, might not be sufficient for legitimising AKDN’s holistic engagement in Afghanistan. In this way, I find that AKDN also needs to interact and identify local discourses and ideologies. The close collaboration of AKF with local people and institutions (AKF 2012), indicates that discourses/norms need to be identified and recognized (AKF 2012:9). Hence, in order to appeal to and incorporate local partners, AKDN needs to address its beneficiaries in a certain way to combine its visions with local societal visions – i.e. in the use of Islamic narrative to address their activities in a “Muslim society” (e.g. Afghanistan). In this way, the legitimacy process appears as a complicated procedure that contains, both, a network of actors and a web of different discourses, which needs to be addressed in a certain (legitimising) way.

However, this point also leads me to the next section, where I will consider the analytical implications of combining ideology analysis with governmentality-studies and a general reflection of my thesis.

Reflections On Analytical Strategy

This study shows that ideology mean something, in terms of both sustaining and legitimising a holistic approach in Afghanistan. This means that the MIAD approach is not merely based on biopolitical optimisation. Yet, it is sustained by a web of ideal fantasies, which mobilise AKDN’s desire for improving the well-being of their beneficiaries. In a Foucauldian sense, MIAD becomes a biopolitical technology (based on a particular *Ismaili* worldview), which constitutes AKDN’s self-perception and the actions of its beneficiaries.

The thesis has hence largely focused on the legitimising aspect, within the current interventions’ use of knowledge and the ideological enablement of this approach. Due to this focus, however, I would also argue that the analysis runs into some blind spots, both in terms of theory and practice.

My research attention has been largely directed at the governing aspects of MIAD and less on the question how specific subject positions are formed by this intervention. Here, a thorough analysis of the interventions subject positions could have provided an understanding of how employees or Afghan beneficiaries identify themselves with the concrete work. As well as examining which discursive positions the governing technologies entails. Thus, where I have largely focused on the *instrumentalising* aspect of power and ideology, a study of the above problem could be interesting to bring in future studies.

Furthermore, this thesis has not gone in depth with how the MIAD takes shape in practice. In this context, one could examine the concrete work within the Afghan communities and to which extent the organisations' practices are affected by ideology and the use of knowledge. For example, how they practically manage to cope with local discourses and legitimise its activities? If they experience any dilemmas, working in a 'fragile' Afghan state? Whether and to which extent their ideological narratives affect their self-perception? Or to which extent workers keep a pragmatic distance and how this works productively on their actions? These questions carry a practical glance, which would require a broader empirical selection of the foundational activity of AKDN – or any other of its mandates working with development in Afghanistan (AKDN 2013a).³⁸

In order to grasp this problem, a larger field research or interview with the specific agents (employee/beneficiary) could have enabled an understanding of whether and how they associate to the self-perceptions of the organisation or the strategy of MIAD. Moreover, this kind of approach could shed light on the structural level of ideology. Namely, in an examination of how the social fantasies works productively in staging subject positions (identity and actions) – through a research of the agents' "personal" perceptions of the context of MIAD or their concrete practice.

Thus, the thesis has primarily moved in an operational direction, in which, the aim has been to unfold the MIAD intervention, with an inspiration from governmentality studies and a Žižek-inspired

38 This could also be supplemented with a comparative study of different NGOs, working in the Afghan context, to see how AKDN distinguish themselves in terms of their particular approach and ideology.

ideology analysis. This is also due to the epistemological stance in the thesis, where it is guided by how the world emerges, as a result of the specific perspectives held by the organisation and individuals³⁹ (Andersen 2003:xiii). This combination is assumed to have constructed insights and increased my observation on how AKDN's work in local Afghan communities is legitimised. It also reflects the constitutive effects that the work of AKDN has on its beneficiaries and its own actions.

Conclusion

The driving motivation of this thesis was a general curiosity of how philanthropic practices emerges in a developing context. This is mainly due to the limited research on how local private foundations constructs its charitable work and gains a legitimacy to operate within local communities of a least developed country – especially in the context of Afghanistan. Here, I chose to focus on AKDN and its multi-input area development (MIAD) approach in Afghanistan. This was in order to understand its particular way of constructing its approach and how the context of this approach is sustained and legitimised. Based on the analysis and discussion, I will now conclude and consider how I have responded to the problem statement of the thesis:

*How is the MIAD intervention of AKDN constructed in the local context of Afghanistan?
What is the role of AKDN's particular beliefs in sustaining this? Which constitutive effect
does this have?*

The thesis has found that the MIAD-intervention of AKDN in Afghanistan is constructed as a specific biopolitical discourse. This means that the intervention is concerned with the notion of life and produces a certain gaze, in targeting the welfare of Afghans. Here, I observed the way AKDN addresses its activities in Afghanistan and the objectives of the general development approach. This was supplied with official statements from the Aga Khan (the spiritual leader), in terms of addressing the “quality of life” and the objective and methods of doing so. The analysis also showed that a

³⁹ Here, the Network and the Aga Khan's statements.

particular Islamic discourse is at work, in support of the optimising logic. This means that it operates as a form of biopower, based on a fusion between a rational calculation and religious rationality, which targets the optimisation of several areas concerning human and material condition in the Afghan context.

This gives rise to the constitution of the actual work with the Afghan communities. Here I found that a local knowledge is used to enable self-governing communities and individuals. Consequently, the thesis has examined how a specific coupling between power and knowledge takes place, in relation to the construction of the MIAD intervention. As shown in the analysis, this was expressed through a particular use of knowledge in terms of interacting with the local Afghan communities. The use of knowledge enables the beneficiaries to empower and observe themselves as self-relying subjects. This was observed in the annual report of AKDN's foundational branch (AKF), where the programmes and methods are unfolded. I found that these programmes carry out special technologies, which involves knowledge sharing and dialogue with locals, in order to encourage individuals to become co-responsible of leading the community development. Here, I concluded that AKF's work is not working directly on its subjects, but instead acting on the field of (possible) actions of its beneficiaries. Using power relations, it becomes possible for AKF to produce and encourage its Afghan recipients to shape themselves, towards becoming active and self-responsible of the future of Afghanistan. Here it was assessed, that the overall MIAD approach has a specific governmental approach that produces entrepreneurial subjects organised in self-managing communities.

In the second part, the thesis has found that the specific self-understanding of AKDN sustains a productive framework of its actions, which idealises and ultimately legitimises its governmental practices. This means, that the work to improve the well-being of Afghans is gained by its ideal association with a set of organisational beliefs. By observing the ethical framework of the AKDN, it was shown that its Islamic beliefs provide an illusion of 'wholeness' towards the all-encompassing intervention in Afghanistan. Subsequently, the analysis found that the ethical framework provides specific narratives that operate as 'fantasies'. The analysis found that the narratives produce a holistic spectacle to desire work towards. Furthermore, the analysis found that the specific combination of spirit (*din*) and matter (*dunya*) is experienced as divine order (the big Other). Hereof, the analysis found that specific visions and self-references provide an ideal significance to the ethical traits. Consequently, it was conditioned that the ethical framework stages a desire for a holistic

approach and ultimately, providing the ideological legitimising for the current intervention in Afghanistan.

The output of the analysis led to a discussion of the constitutive effects of, both the theoretical and practical limitations. Here the implications of the MIAD programme were discussed, in the shade of being a particular governmentality. This showed that the AKDN works in a complex network of a political system, which it needs to address in order to carry out its multi-input programmes. It was argued that the realisation of MIAD is a complicated process to carry out in action, partly because of transferring a vision to practice, but also due to the fragile setting of Afghanistan. In the longer term this could lead to challenges in the goal of changing the Afghan communities into self-reliant ones. Furthermore, it was argued that the founded fantasies are staged for different viewers. Primarily for AKDN's own community, but also its stakeholders – in order to gain an extensive legitimacy of working in the different communities of Afghanistan. However, this also led to final reflections on the limitations of the thesis and analysis. Here, I found that a practical glance of the field could have enabled a deeper understanding of how the MIAD approach affects the self-perception of ADKN and its beneficiaries. In the future one could examine the relationship between the organisation and its context, including a comparative study or how the outside world is constructing its philanthropic practices and affects the engagement of AKDN in the underdeveloped world.

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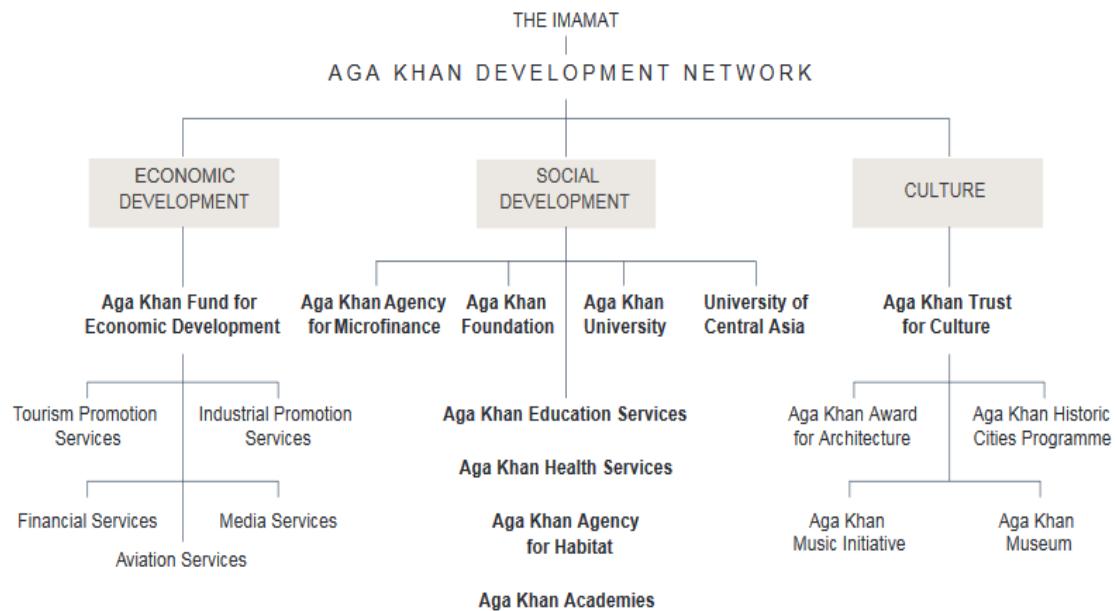
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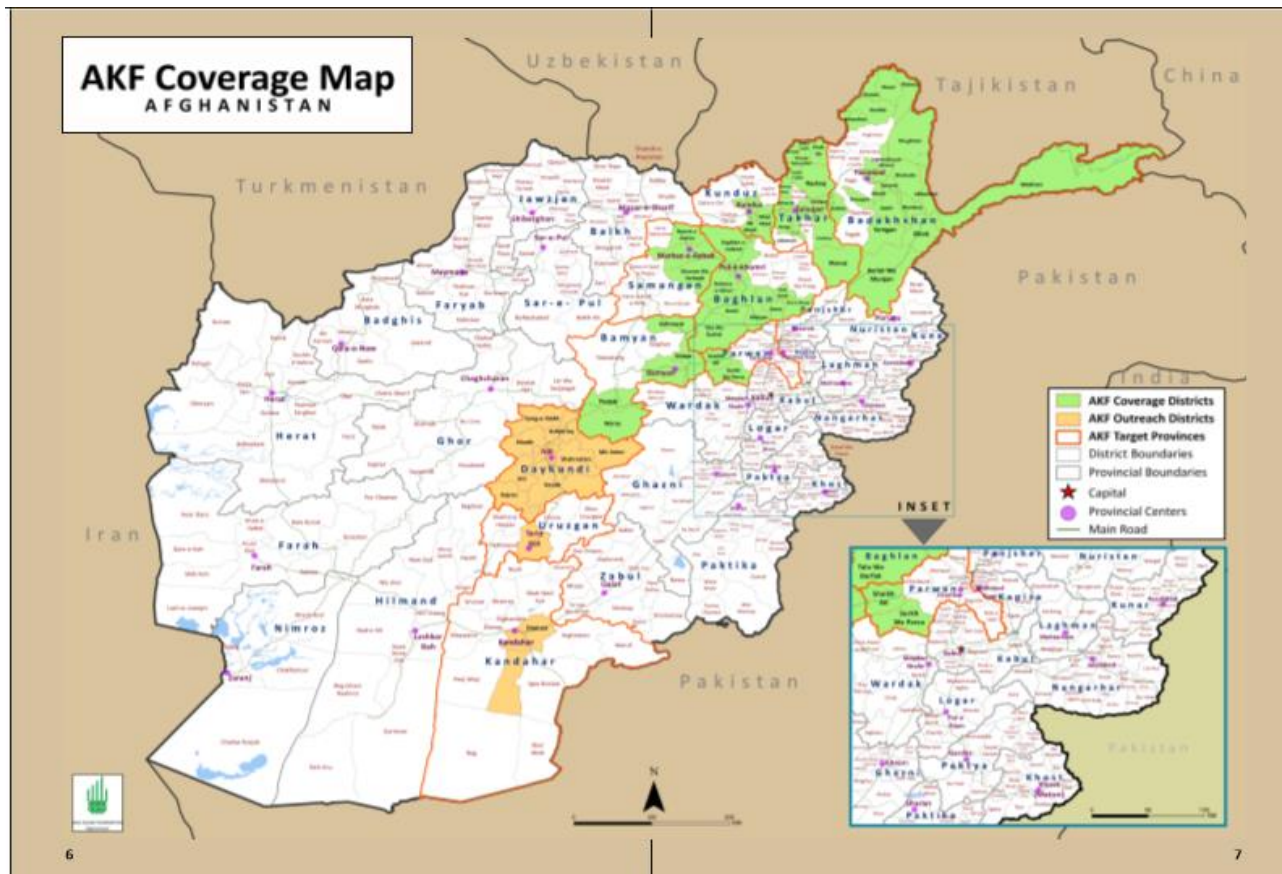
Appendices

Appendix 1



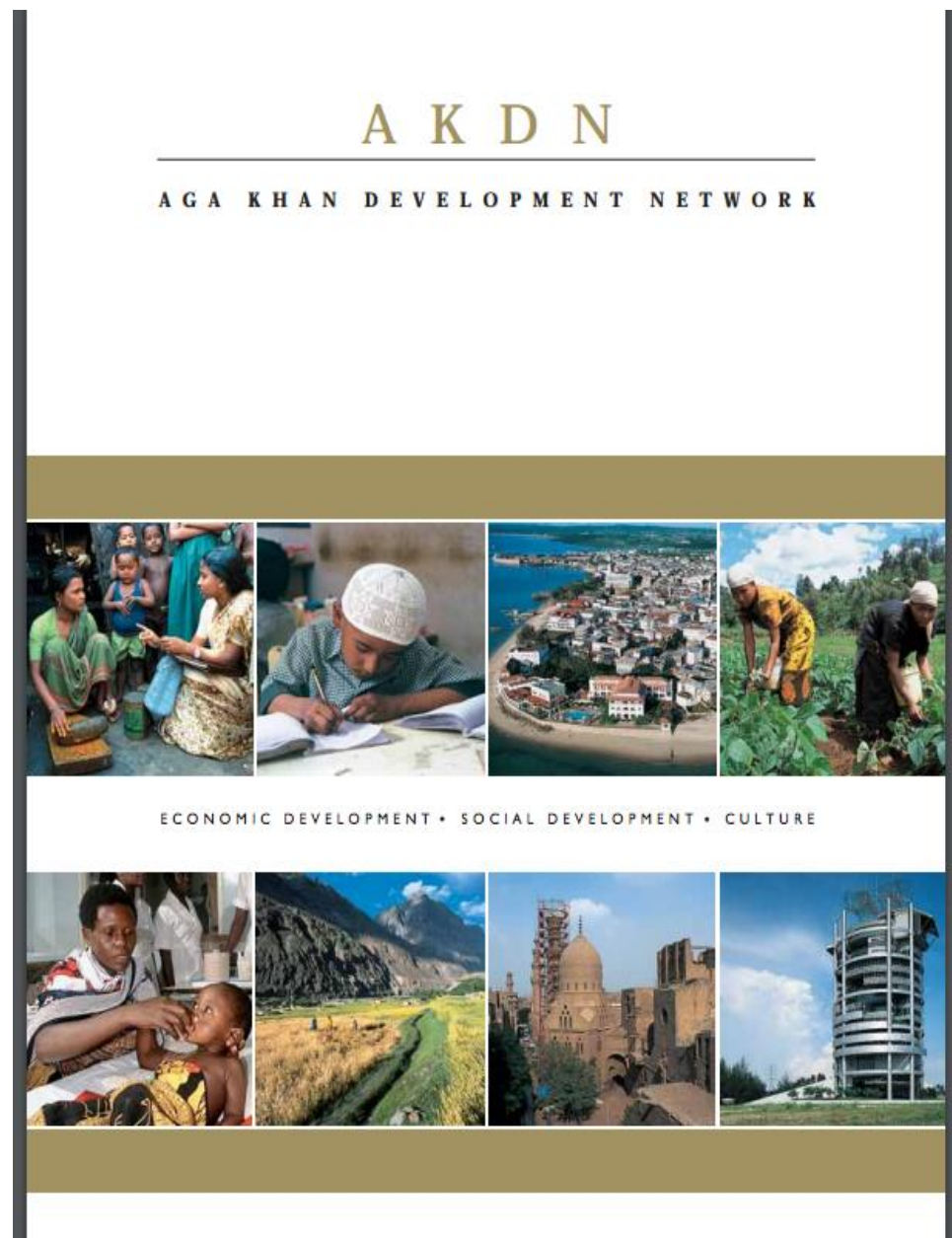
Source: <http://www.akdn.org/sites/akdn/files/media/documents/organogram.pdf>

Appendix2



Source: (AKF 2012:5-6)

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and the scope of their work, and have been brought into a system to create the Aga Khan Development Network. The Network maintains political neutrality in all the countries in which it operates, and its services are open to people of all faiths and origins. The fulcrum of the Network's activities, however, remains the Ismaili Community – its traditions of volunteer service, self-reliance, generosity and the leadership of the hereditary Imam.

In the Ismaili tradition, the Imam's responsibilities involve not only the interpretation of matters of faith for the Ismaili Community, whose members now live in more than 25 countries spanning the industrialised and developing worlds, but also the relationship of that faith to conditions in the present. For the Aga Khan this has led to a deep involvement with development, as a process grounded in the ethics of Islam, in which economic, social and cultural factors converge to determine the quality of life. The institutions that the Aga Khan has founded since 1957, when he was designated by his grandfather to succeed him as Imam, reflect this sense of development as a complex process. While all the agencies work in specific fields, they also work to identify ways in which their efforts can interact so as to mutually reinforce one another.

LEFT TO RIGHT:

IN AREAS OF TAJIKISTAN WHERE AKDN WORKS, FOOD SECURITY ROSE FROM 15 TO 76 PERCENT OVER 10 YEARS.

TO HELP REVITALISE THE FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTOR, AKFED RECAPITALISED THE DIAMOND TRUST BANK, KENYA, AS PART OF A REGIONAL NETWORK COVERING BANKING, INSURANCE AND PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT.

AT AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY'S MEDICAL COLLEGE, 50 PERCENT OF THE MEDICAL STUDENTS AND 44 PERCENT OF THE TEACHING FACULTY ARE WOMEN.

AKDN AGENCIES OFFER AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICES TO HELP EAST AFRICAN FARMERS GROW, PROCESS, PACKAGE AND MARKET THEIR PRODUCE FOR EXPORT.

