

**The Political Economy of ‘Empowerability’:
A Critical Discourse Analysis of the ‘Gender
Equality as Smart Economics’ Policy Agenda**

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Abstract

Gender equality initiatives in international development are increasingly dominated by messages about the 'Smart Economics' of empowerment and the economic benefits of capitalizing on women's 'untapped' labour power. Which women are represented as most 'empowerable' in gender and development discourses, and what structures and processes shape them? This thesis interrogates how women are made visible as development objects by empowerment discourses; to this end, it develops the concept of 'empowerability' to critically analyze the discursive terrain of the 'Smart Economics' agenda. It uses critical discourse analysis of policy documents, publicity material, and public statements (supplemented by interviews) to examine the World Bank's 2012 World Development Report, Global Private Sector Leaders Forum, Adolescent Girl Initiative, and Nike Foundation's Girl Effect campaign.

I develop the 'empowerability' framework by providing a feminist reading of Foucault's critique of human capital, in order to map the relationship between bodies, subjectivities, and empowerment interventions. In the empirical chapters that follow, I apply this framework. With reference to the 2012 World Development Report, I demonstrate that empowerment discourses rely on highly exclusionary categories in order to identify 'empowerable' subjects, which reproduce essentialist tropes about maternal altruism as an engine for economic growth. They furthermore represent women as altruistic but irrational, non-market actors who require responsabilization through job and life skills training. Drawing on analysis of Bank public-private partnerships, my analysis shows that the narrative of empowerment that emerges from 'Smart Economics' literature works to legitimize corporate authority in the development process and position corporations as the actors best placed to catalyze the empowerment process. The 'empowerability' framework shows that the dominant mode of empowerment deployed in 'Smart Economics' policy engenders a development discourse that is highly exclusionary and produces a restrictive neoliberal conception of the bodies and subjectivities who 'matter' for development.

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Author's Declaration

- Major elements from Chapters 1, 2, 4, and 5 have been combined into an article summarizing the contribution of the thesis; this is under review under the title “‘Tapping’ Women for Post-Crisis Development: Evidence from the 2012 World Development Report“ in the journal *International Feminist Journal of Politics*
- Part of Chapter 1 is included in a larger article, currently under review under the title “Feminism, Interrupted? Gender and development in the age of ‘Smart Economics’“ in the journal *Progress in Development Studies*
- Elements of the feminist global political economy literature review in Chapter 1 are included in a comment piece titled “Impacts and Alternatives: Young feminist scholars and the politics of austerity”, forthcoming in *Feminist Review* no. 109 on the Politics of Austerity
- A condensed version of Chapter 6 is under review under the title “Globalizing ‘Girl Power’: Corporate Social Responsibility and Transnational Business Initiatives for Gender Equality “ in the journal *Globalizations*
- Elements of the visual analysis from Chapter 6 are included in an article titled “Go on, really imagine her’: Post-feminist spectatorship and the Girl Effect”, currently in preparation for submission to the journal *Third World Quarterly*

I hereby declare that I have read and understood the University of York’s regulations on plagiarism and academic misconduct.

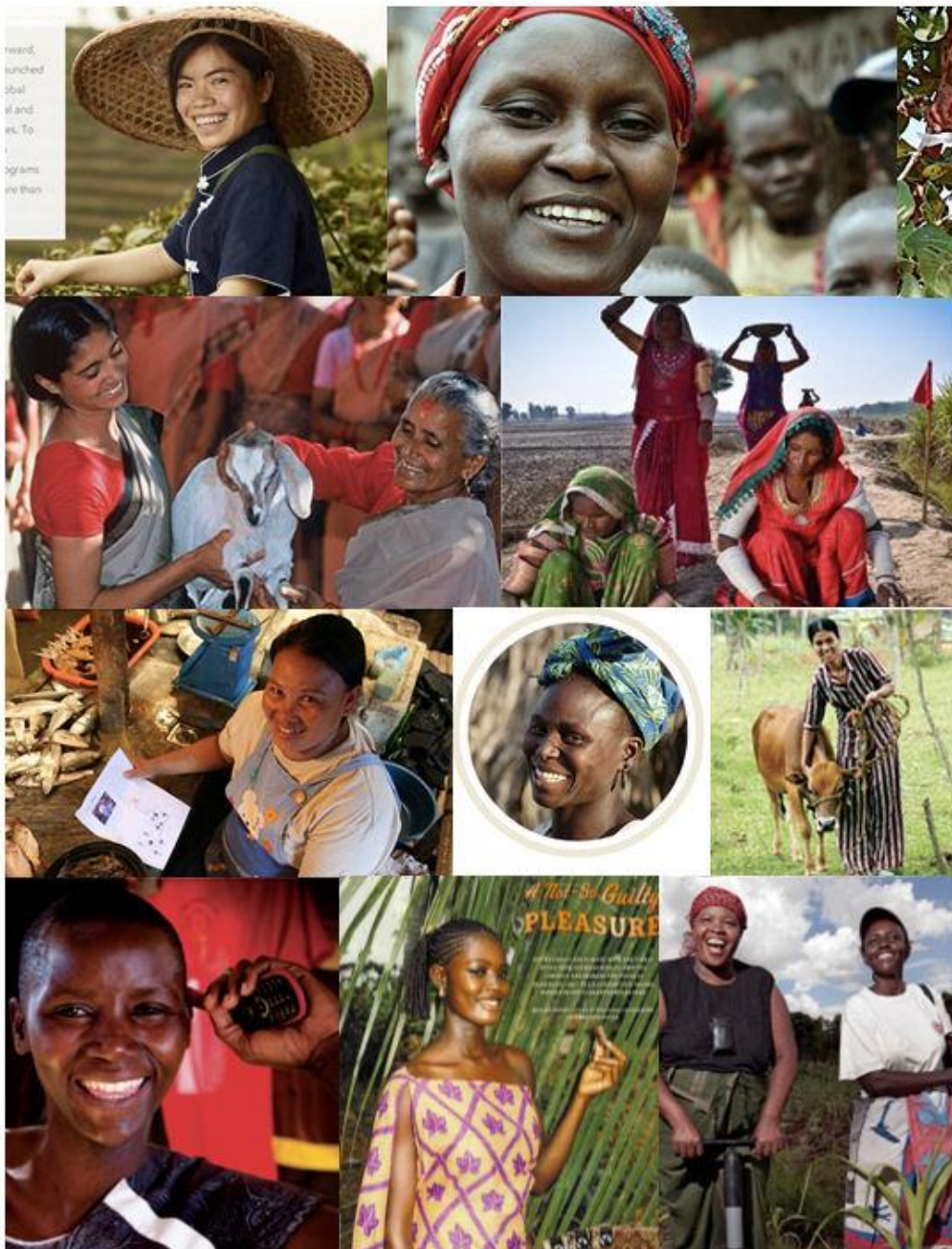


Figure 0.1 Images of the 'Empowerable' Woman

Source: Compiled by the author. Images listed from top to bottom and right to left: ExxonMobil 2014a; Care International 2014a; Heifer International 2014; Care International 2014b; Kiva 2014; Heifer International 2014; WorldVision 2014; ExxonMobil 2014b; Divine Chocolate cited in Wilson 2011; ExxonMobil 2014b

Introduction

“As the pan-ethnic personality of [Kiva.org] evolved, so did an unusual cross-cultural form of competition. Our users, given an array of choices, voted with their wallets. Every business on the site thus far has been funded at an average rate of 2.2 days per business, but with significant variance. Lenders showed unambiguous preferences according to region, gender, and business type: Africans first, women first, and agriculture first. A female African fruit seller? Funded in hours. A Nicaraguan retail stand? Funded in days. A Bulgarian taxi driver? Funded in weeks.”

- Matthew Flannery, co-founder of Kiva microfinance charity (2007: 50)

The woman stands outside, facing the camera, and smiling. She is dressed in brightly colored clothes that immediately signal an exotic – yet authentic – ‘otherness’ associated with her particular part of the global South. She might be holding some tools, handicrafts, or perhaps a small child. She may be photographed engaged in physical labour, crafting or farming (See Figure 0.1, opposite).

Who is this woman? She is familiar and easily identifiable, although we do not know her name. She is a singular presence in the visual life of the ethical consumer, philanthropist, and activist of the global North, who consume her image and her labour. Although her ethnicity, clothing, location, and activity may change, she is known to us as a metonymic image of women’s empowerment. She is an example of the “visible” poor of the global South whose life is familiar in the global North via her mediation by development and philanthropic organisations whose audio, visual, and textual materials surround us (Roy 2010: 2). She has become ubiquitous because of the narrative of empowerment that her photograph is intended to telegraph. The repetition and accumulation of images of this racialized ‘Third World Woman’ produce

a sense of the global South as a place where “poor women’ are constantly, diligently, and happily engaged” in labour for global markets (Wilson 2011: 323). Her image often accompanies a request to click, to donate money, to loan her money, to buy a product in order to donate to her, and thereby empower her to provide for herself and her family. Her image is sometimes accompanied by the exhortation to ‘invest in her’; she is called the ‘world’s greatest untapped resource’ and with ‘unlimited potential.’ As the comments in the above epigraph demonstrate, the ‘Third World Woman’ carries strong gendered, geographic, racialized, and entrepreneurial associations that make her the popular ‘face’ of international development. In the case of Kiva’s microfinance marketplace, this woman is overwhelmingly favoured by donors for their charitable donations.

Who is this woman?

The Research Problem

The process by which this ‘Third World Woman’ has acquired singular visibility in development discourse is the product of a particular institutional, political, and discursive context. The dominant discourses of ‘Gender Equality as Smart Economics’ (GESE) and the ‘Business Case for Gender Equality’ represent the primary modes by which women have acquired visibility and agency in global governance.

The post-Washington Consensus turn to focus on ‘social’ issues and human development has accorded gender issues prominence on development agendas, and has taken place in the context of continued processes of global restructuring characterized by ‘roll out’ neoliberalism in which new neoliberalized governance forms are developed through the creation of socially interventionist policies and the delegation of authority to non-governmental agents (Peck and Tickell 2002; see also Griffin 2007b; Mahon 2010). The offloading of governmental authority to other actors has resulted in the emergence of corporate actors as major influences and sources of authority in the development process, not

least because the prevalence of a 'business ontology' has created pressure for public institutions to strive for private-sector values of efficiency (Fisher 2009); in the area of gender and politics, this trend is manifested in the shrinking space for feminist political action or feminist claims which are made outside of market logic (Kantola and Squires 2012). Increased corporate authority in the development process, and the expansion of Corporate Social Responsibility programs, has converged with the prominent visibility of girls and women in the development process.

Since the popularization of 'empowerment' frameworks in the mid-1990s, language around gender equality and women's empowerment has reached the status of ubiquitous development buzzword and thereby been diluted in its meaning; 'empowerment' now functions as a widely accepted and non-binding goal that diverse groups can support without subscribing to any specific feminist principles (see Moore 2001; Cornwall and Brock 2005). Given the confluence of these forces, recent years have witnessed the emergence of what Adrienne Roberts calls "transnational business feminisms", characterized by broad agreement around the message of the 'Business Case' for gender equality, thereby linking feminist claims to the broader interests of global capitalism (2012, 2014a; see also Koffman and Gill 2013). This 'faux feminism' has rejuvenated feminist language in popular media and political discourse, although it has re-articulated feminist claims through neoliberal values (McRobbie 2013; Fraser 2013).

Development discourses today are replete with images of the empowered woman: she is the altruistic mother, the savvy entrepreneur, and/or the resourceful breadwinner. The language of neoliberal empowerment is pervasive in development discourse and the goal of women's empowerment is taken for granted as part of a global (rhetorical) consensus. Yet feminist scholars have long suggested that empowerment frameworks instrumentalize feminist rhetoric to legitimate neoliberal policy goals, reducing a transformative framework to an individualistic and truncated conception of empowerment as economic participation.

Women's visibility tends to be accorded a prominent position within problematic neoliberal discourses that envision women as ideal entrepreneurial subjects, and in promotion of a framework that fits women to extant development models. In this way, feminist rhetoric has been taken up in service of non-feminist goals; by this I mean policy goals that are insufficiently transformative in their approach. It is therefore apparent that neoliberal prescriptions to remedy gender inequality are insufficiently transformative because they so often rely on the assumption that neoliberal capitalism will eradicate gender inequalities (Molyneux and Razavi 2002; Walby 2011). Although committed first and foremost to the eradication of patriarchy, feminists are committed to a broader project of social justice. A feminist conception of gender justice encompasses this focus on gender inequalities – and the gendered relations of power and violence that reproduce patriarchal oppression – but is centered within a broader commitment to social and economic justice, anti-homophobia, anti-racism, and anti-colonialism (see Goetz 2007; Mukhopadhyay and Singh 2007).

Feminist development research has long claimed that empowerment interventions function to transform women for development, rather than altering or challenging dominant notions of development. In this thesis, I extend these critiques and contribute to this literature by presenting the problem from a different angle. My research moves on these discussions by taking a new approach to the topic: I ask who is 'empowerable' in these discourses and how their empowerment is represented. Not only does the dominant neoliberal notion of empowerment present a reductively economic and individualistic idea of empowerment, divorced from a robust conception of gender equality, but my research shows that it presents a highly exclusionary mode of empowerment that imagines certain *kinds* of women – bodies, subjectivities, identities – as more conducive to empowerment interventions. To this end, I introduce a new feminist framework for the analysis of development discourse and 'Smart Economics' discourses in particular, and I apply it to two important sites of the current neoliberal

gender agenda in the World Bank. Empirically, this thesis analyzes the World Bank's 2012 World Development Report (WDR) on Gender Equality and three public-private partnerships between the Bank and private sector actors that have emerged as part of the Bank's 'Smart Economics' Gender Action Plan.

The research problem here is complex and contains within it a few strands. On one level, it is motivated by the ongoing feminist debates about the possibilities of collaboration and transformation *within* development institutions, accompanied by the recognition that feminists and 'femocrats' (feminist bureaucrats) have made significant gains in terms of making women visible to policy makers and making gender a central concern of development institutions. The current visibility of girls and women as subjects of global governance policy is highly contested and inspires ongoing debates about co-optation and appropriation of feminist language and ideas. Although feminist knowledge about violence and development has "acquired a measure of authority" in international policy, the changes wrought by feminist influence have fallen short of expectations and given rise to concerns that this 'global' feminism is "essentially doing violence itself" (Zalewski and Runyan 2013: 299). This research is therefore motivated in part by the ambiguity of the current visibility which girls and women have in global governance and development discourse. What is the substance of this visibility? On what discursive terms are women present in this agenda and what are the policy implications of these representations?

A second motivation for this research stems from feminist critiques of empowerment and a concern over the continued prominence of empowerment discourses in development. Empowerment is today a 'common sense', taken-for-granted term in development discourses, widely embraced by disparate audiences. A consensus exists around the need to empower women, but the substance of this agenda is unclear and demands scrutiny. What does empowerment mean in this context? Versions of this question have been asked by feminists for many years now, as various policy agendas arise to address the failures of economic development policy to eradicate poverty and to address the

gendered dimensions of poverty. I take up this research focus now because of the urgency of the contemporary context. There has long been the tendency for development institutions to instrumentalize women and appropriate feminist language, to make women productive *for* development. However, the current dominance and salience of ‘Smart Economics’ and ‘Business Case’ narratives means that sustained feminist engagement with the issues outlined here is especially urgent.

The Research Question and Aims

The prevalence of empowerment discourse in development has been noted by scholars in recent years, most of whom have critiqued the narrow ‘neoliberal’ construction of empowerment that characterizes development policy. There has been, so far, less attention paid to the way that empowerment discourse constructs the yet-to-be-empowered woman and the process by which one can be designated as ‘ripe’ for empowerment. Feminist critics have identified the co-optation and re-signification of empowerment as deeply problematic and worthy of further study; I will extend this critique and push the debate into new areas with a focus on the purported objects of empowerment interventions. Currently, critics ask *how* empowerment is promoted in development interventions and whether or not this is effective. I will ask *who* is the current target of empowerment interventions, how they are constructed as such, and what the implications of this construction are for theory and policy. My primary and secondary research questions follow as such:

- What qualities are perceived to be most conducive to empowerment, and how are they used to designate ‘empowerable’ subjects in gender and development discourses?
 - How are women and their agency constructed both before and after empowerment interventions?
 - Which groups/ actors are represented as best-placed to intervene and facilitate the empowerment process?

The aim of this study is to develop theoretical tools for the study of development discourses about women's empowerment; to this end, I introduce a new conceptual framework. 'Empowerability' is the conceptual framework I develop to critically analyze the mechanisms by which empowerment functions in development discourse and to highlight the discrepancies and inequalities that it perpetuates. I use this concept to explore how some groups are understood as better targets for development interventions, based on a construction of their 'inborn qualities', 'learned or acquired skills' and their ability to be developed along neoliberal lines; I outline this 'activation' narrative of empowerment through a feminist critique of human capital.

Drawing on previous critiques that have discussed empowerment's implication in a range of neoliberal governance technologies, I theorize that empowerment cannot be understood as a process of gaining power or a state of human flourishing, but as a discourse in the Foucauldian sense. Discourse works to prescribe as 'real' that which it designates 'meaningful' (George 1994); ideas about 'empowerment' and the empowered woman work to valorize and produce a particular kind of neoliberal subjectivity. I do not use the concept of 'empowerability' as a genuine metric for use in development policy, but instead use this concept to critique the way that hierarchies which structure empowerment discourses perform and legitimize violent erasures and interventions. Furthermore, it is not the intention of this thesis to deconstruct dominant empowerment discourses in order to provide an alternative, normative account of the empowerment process, as robust theoretical accounts of the empowerment process already exist in the feminist literature (see Rowlands 1997, 1998; Batliwala 1994; Kabeer 1994; Khader 2011).¹ Instead my aim here is to examine the discursive

¹ Within the feminist literature, there tends to be a recognition that feminist accounts of empowerment as Consciousness Raising and/or micro-level social processes to shift power relations are distinct from institutional accounts of empowerment as economic participation; in other words, feminist and neoliberal accounts of empowerment are engaged in different conversations (see Ferguson 2004; Sardenberg 2008; Parpart, Rai and Staudt 2003). "Liberating" empowerment

terrain of ‘empowerment’ as a development keyword, to trace its ascent to ‘common sense’ in development, and to consider its implications for feminists engaged in theorizing about gender justice in the contemporary context of the ‘Smart Economics’ agenda and corporatized gender and development policy.

Theoretical and Empirical Contributions

The critique that I will present in this thesis proceeds in three steps. First, it begins from the recognition that ‘women’s empowerment’ occupies a consensus position in development discourses, where empowerment is imagined as a universal process (catalyzed by development interventions) to make women economically powerful. Empowerment is the dominant mode of visibility for women under the development gaze, which is to say that the iconic ‘Third World Woman’ has become visible through her visual and discursive association with the empowerment process and her transformation from disempowered victim to empowered entrepreneur. Second, I show that the framework of human capital underlies this empowerment narrative and I provide a feminist reading of Foucault’s critique of human capital to illuminate the gendered categories and concepts that comprise it. Human capital, I show, is a deeply gendered mechanism for identifying potentially ‘empowerable’ women that relies on gendered essentialisms and a series of biopolitical interventions to empower. Third, I use the human capital critique and the categories established therein to analyze empirical data from the World Bank. I show that narratives of women’s empowerment that dominate development discourse are predicated on highly constricted and reductive assumptions about the ‘empowerability’

is a process of collective Consciousness Raising which focuses on identifying the operation of power relations on daily life and on transforming power relations through collective action; “liberal” empowerment, also referred to as “neoliberal” empowerment, is focused on individuals gaining power and resources to achieve self-interests (Ferguson 2004). This thesis therefore engages with the latter, exploring neoliberal accounts of empowerment as they appear in development discourses, rather than theorizing feminist approaches to Consciousness Raising.

of different kinds of women, based on the extent to which women conform to neoliberal notions of femininity, productivity, and market rationality. Discourses that construct the 'empowerability' of women work to constitute particular discursive subjects and therefore work to replicate exclusions and silences based on gendered hierarchies.

My feminist reading of human capital presents a conceptual framework for feminist analysis that is not limited to the World Bank, but can be productively employed across discourses and institutions to interrogate the discursive terrain of the Smart Economics agenda and to analyze on what discursive terms women have gained such visible prominence in neoliberal development discourses.

This thesis, while broadly situated within the feminist political economy literature, makes specific contributions to several sub-fields within that literature and contributes to timely debates. It makes theoretical or empirical contributions to three sub-fields: a) gender in global governance literature that analyzes the World Bank; b) feminist political economy analysis of 'Smart Economics' discourses and corporate-led development initiatives for gender equality; and c) feminist post-structuralist analysis of the global political economy and international relations.

a) Feminist Analysis of the World Bank and the 2012 WDR

This thesis contributes to the growing feminist political economy literature on gender norms, discourses and policies in global governance institutions; specifically, it contributes to the feminist analysis of the World Bank. Previous analysis has demonstrated that the Bank's embrace of gender has been, to a large extent, instrumental and its gender and development work has tended to reinforce policy decisions consistent with the Bank's neoliberal agenda (Bergeron 2003, 2006; Barker and Kuiper 2006; Bedford 2009a; O'Brien et. al. 2000). More recently, feminist researchers have employed the conceptual framework of heteronormativity to explore Bank discourse and policy: Griffin (2007b, 2009) examines the construction of gendered, sexed,

and racialized bodies in neoliberal discourses of productivity, while Bedford (2005, 2007, 2008, 2009a) explores the Bank's promotion of heterosexual partnerships to privatize social reproduction. These two works find that heteronormative constructions of productive bodies and subjectivities determine the World Bank's vision of gender equality. Building on their work, I employ heteronormativity as one aspect of the 'empowerability' framework and link sexuality to other categories like age, sex, and reproductivity. Furthermore, the works by Bedford and Griffin on this theme, published up until 2009, do not engage directly with the Bank's 'Gender Equality as Smart Economics' agenda and my work therefore serves to extend their critiques into more recent Bank policies.

Secondly, I make an important intervention in extant analysis of the World Bank's gender agenda by engaging with the recent World Development Report on gender equality. The 'Smart Economics' discourse has come to the attention of a greater range of feminist political economists with the publication of the World Bank's 2012 World Development Report on gender equality, which has 'Gender Equality as Smart Economics' as a dominant theme. Leading feminist political economists reviewed the report, most of them taking a critical perspective and highlighting a few dominant themes relating to the WDR's continued embrace of a market fundamentalist approach to development and reliance on neo-classical economic framework. They show that the report makes gains in its acknowledgement of the intrinsic value of gender equality, the socially constructed nature of gender, and (partial) advocacy of child care provision. Nonetheless, it perpetuates major flaws in its analysis, concentrated primarily in its failure to account for unpaid social reproductive labour, consider the gendered dimensions of markets, engage with feminist critiques of macroeconomic policy, or acknowledge the Bank's role in advocating harmful neoliberal policies in the past (see Razavi 2012; Elson 2012a; Beneria 2012; Chant and Sweetman 2012; Bedford 2012; Mahon 2012; Evans 2012; Harcourt 2012; Chant 2012, 2013). Most review pieces tended to highlight these themes and lament the fact that, even when focusing specifically on

gender, the Bank fails to seriously engage with the enormous body of research produced by feminist political economists.

I contribute to this literature in three main ways: first, my study of the report is the first (to my knowledge) to conduct a detailed critical discourse analysis of the WDR 2012 in its entirety; many of the extant review pieces were written on the basis of early drafts, previews, or summaries of the report. Second, I enrich the current discussion on the WDR 2012 by using the 'empowerability' framework to draw attention to the highly exclusionary narratives of empowerment that pervade it and to demonstrate the narrowly circumscribed mode of neoliberal productivity that the report imagines for empowered women. Third, my analysis contributes to the extant literature by providing insights from interviews with four of the report's thirteen member team; these interviews revealed some of the tensions at work in the report's team around editorial independence, data collection, and the Bank's role as an authority in the GAD field.

b) Feminist Analysis of 'Smart Economics' and Corporate-Led Gender and Development

Given the recent emergence of the 'Gender Equality as Smart Economics' policy agenda and its spread across institutions, feminist political economy analysis on the subject has developed over the past five years but is still in its early stages. Literature that directly critiques the 'Smart Economics' discourse has been primarily located in the historical materialist strand of feminist political economy critique, conceptualizing the 'Smart Economics' agenda in terms of a mechanism to normalize and embed capitalist relations of exploitation and domination (Roberts 2012, 2014a; Roberts and Soederberg 2012) and in the institutional GAD literature, where 'Smart Economics' is placed in a historical context in terms of its rejuvenation and popularization of an instrumentalized approach to putting gender 'on the agenda' (Chant 2012; Chant and Sweetman 2012).

I make several contributions to this literature: first, I introduce a feminist reading of Foucault's critique of human capital that provides scope to link analytical and programmatic aspects of current empowerment discourses. Second, given the prevalence of the 'human capital' approach to analysis within the 'Smart Economics' discourse, my empowerability framework introduces a feminist critique of human capital that illuminates the essentialist assumptions and narrative of 'activation' that constitute this discourse. Human capital frameworks have been overlooked in the feminist literature, although human capital is a structural feature of 'Smart Economics' discourse; my research fills this gap. In this way, I contribute to the research pathway discussed by Kate Maclean, who argues that the apparent contradictions and instrumentalist constructions that dominate the 'Smart Economics' policy agenda demonstrate "importance of a discursive analysis of the terms upon which women are being included" (Maclean 2013: 458). Although the instrumental and market-efficiency themes of the 'Smart Economics' discourse have been present in development discourses for some years now, the current moment of dominant visibility and influence for these discourses presents a strategically significant opportunity for feminists. My thesis is among the first to undertake a detailed qualitative and critical discourse analysis of numerous policy documents produced by the World Bank under the 'Gender Equality as Smart Economics' policy agenda.

Addressing the implications of the 'Smart Economics' agenda, feminist analysis has highlighted the growing power of corporate actors in the development process. Research in this field has attempted to theorize the emergence of a transnational (neo)liberal feminist movement comprised of a network of states, charities, corporations, and powerful elites who work to promote gender equality through the market (Roberts 2012, 2014a; Fraser 2013; Kantola and Squires 2012). In particular, the emergence of transnational business initiatives (TBIs) for the governance of gender (also known as 'public-private partnerships') has provoked significant interest in the feminist political economy literature, where scholars have examined TBIs involving the World Bank (Bexell 2012; Roberts 2014a), the United Nations (Gregoratti 2010, 2012;

Kilgour 2007; Soederberg 2007), the World Economic Forum (Elias 2013), and developed a typology for the study of TBIs broadly (Prugl and True 2014; Ferguson 2014). In this thesis, I contribute to this literature through a critical discourse analysis of TBIs for empowerment initiated by and involving the World Bank. Drawing on the empowerability framework to conceptualize the tropes about women, empowerment and productivity that structure TBI discourses, I ask how corporate power is constructed and legitimized in these emergent partnerships. Furthermore, I extend the current feminist political economy analysis by bringing in tools from the critical sociological and IPE literature on corporate social responsibility and 'greenwashing' to consider the material effects of TBI discourses on corporate power in the development process.² A robust literature exists on critical approaches to corporate-led development and corporate citizenship initiatives (Dauvergne and Lebaron 2014; Fleming and Jones 2013; Shamir 2008, 2010; Charkiewicz 2005; Sadler and Lloyd 2009) which can, as I demonstrate, be productively employed in a feminist critique of the recent spate of TBIs for empowerment. This thesis contributes to extant critiques of TBIs by demonstrating the way that discourses of CSR and gender equality produce material effects on corporate behaviour, governance, and expansion, thereby commodifying current public interest in gender equality.

c) Feminist Post-structuralism in GPE and IR

This thesis contributes to the field of post-structural feminist International Relations, Political Economy and development studies. Positioned along V. Spike Peterson's "continuum of feminist knowledge building" (2003) and employing Penny Griffin's discourse theoretic method for feminist political economy research (2009), this thesis is situated within the growing body of feminist post-structuralist literature on the global political economy (Peterson 2003, 2005; de Goede 2006;

² 'Greenwashing' is a critical term which refers to public relations efforts to present corporations as driven by sustainability concerns and committed to social/ environmental outcomes (Banerjee 2008; Dauvergne and Lebaron 2014; Vos 2009).

Griffin 2007a, 2009, 2011). My approach is also influenced by post-modernist approaches to International Relations, developed by feminists in order to destabilize dominant assumptions about 'what counts' and 'who counts' in politics. Post-modernist feminist political analysis illuminates the impossibility of analyzing events 'out there' and rather asks us to critically engage with the way that power produces dominant ways of thinking about the world which are codified as 'reality'; furthermore, it asks us to challenge dominant notions of 'serious' and 'substantive' issues in international politics and to be attuned to what is left out of this definition and why (Zalewski 1996: 351; see also Zalewski 2006a, 2006b).

In a related research stream, a linguistic turn in feminist development studies has produced a rich literature on dominant language in development discourse and the material effects of powerful discourses *about* development. Literature on "buzzwords" (Cornwall and Brock 2005; Cornwall and Eade 2011), "cheap talk" (Moore 2001), "feminist fables" (Cornwall, Harrison and Whitehead 2008) and gendered "myth-making" (Prugl 2012) has drawn attention to the process by which particular linguistic and narrative constructs shape understandings of reality and produce major silences. The ontological and epistemological orientations of feminist IR and GPE direct attention to the relationship between power and knowledge, their mutually constitutive nature, and the role of language in producing particular power structures. Influenced by this linguistic turn, this thesis contributes to this literature by exploring the discursive terrain of 'empowerment' and 'Smart Economics'. In doing so, I demonstrate the discursive and rhetorical devices by which dominant empowerment narratives marginalize and silence particular groups while legitimizing and normalizing a neo-classical economic framework. This thesis contributes to the development of feminist discourse analysis by theorizing the material effects of discourse disseminated by powerful institutions; in doing so, it sheds light on the process by which 'knowledge' about gender and development is produced and acquires authority.

Furthermore, within the field of feminist post-structuralist GPE and IR analysis, this thesis productively engages with Foucauldian approaches to development by introducing a feminist reading of human capital. Feminist engagement with Foucault has produced insightful critiques of neoliberal empowerment interventions, many of them through the lens of biopolitics and disciplinary power (Cruikshank 1999; Sawicki 1991; Ong 2006). Feminist readings of Foucauldian biopower have demonstrated, particularly in the area of microfinance, how empowerment interventions work to produce docile bodies and elicit particular entrepreneurial behaviours (Rankin 2001; Lairap Fonderson 2003; Kunz 2011; Brigg 2001; Bexell 2012). I contribute to this literature by introducing a feminist reading of Foucault's critique of human capital to shed light on the relationship *between* those biopolitical interventions and the analytical categories deployed to identify ideal objects of intervention. Feminists have not so far (to my knowledge) engaged with Foucault's critique of human capital but, given the prevalence of human capital analytical frameworks in development policy discourses, this is an important gap in the literature. In this way, this thesis bridges a gap between contributions to the feminist political economy literature that examine 'Smart Economics' discourses through historical materialist lenses and those that engage with post-structural and Foucauldian critiques of gender and development interventions.

Structure and Content of the Thesis

The thesis proceeds in six chapters, which begin by developing the theoretical framework and move to applying it to empirical material. The chapters proceed as such:

Chapter One provides a conceptual and literature review to introduce and frame the research problem. It does so by undertaking an overview of women 'under the development gaze', using the lens of visibilities to explore the ways that women have been understood and imagined as subjects of development intervention. It then introduces the feminist political economy literature and central contributions of that literature

which will recur as important themes throughout the thesis. It next introduces the current GESE context by exploring the various institutional and discursive manifestations of the 'Smart Economics' agenda, current feminist approaches to the topic, and the paradoxical representations of women that characterize the discourse.

Chapter Two lays out the theoretical contribution of the thesis, outlining the feminist reading of Foucault's human capital critique. It begins by explaining how human capital has become a dominant development framework and how it underpins much of the GESE frameworks through which women are imagined today. It next introduces Foucault's critique of human capital and, drawing on the substantial feminist political economy and gender and development literature, re-interprets Foucault's critique through a feminist lens and thereby develops categories that frame the later analysis.

Chapter Three sets out the methodological position of the thesis and introduces the subject of the empirical work to follow. It introduces a feminist interpretivist approach and discusses the use of interpretivist methods in the study of the GPE. It next introduces the World Bank case study and explains why the Bank provides the most appropriate subject of study: given the Bank's size, financial power, discursive power, global influence, role as a 'Knowledge Bank', and position as a leader in gender and development, the Bank's discourse matters. The final two sections of the chapter explore the WDR 2012 on gender equality and the Bank's TBIs for gender equality and empowerment.

Chapter Four constitutes the first of two empirical chapters on the WDR 2012. Using the first part of the feminist human capital critique, it examines the inborn qualities ascribed to women in the report and considers the representations of female bodies, subjectivities, and labour that underpin the report. It discusses categories of sexuality, age, reproduction, subjectivity, and gender as they feature in the report. This chapter argues that the representations of the empowerable woman depend on the ascription of intrinsic 'femininity' to female bodies, assumptions about the characteristics that are supposedly inherent in a

feminine subjectivity, and the narrative of 'dormant' potential related to those intrinsic feminine qualities which can be instrumentalized for the inculcation of an empowered subjectivity. By extension, the empowerment in the report narrowly circumscribes the characteristics of the 'empowerable' woman and designates a range of subjectivities and bodies 'unempowerable'.

Chapter Five constitutes the second of the empirical chapters on the WDR 2012. It explores the empowerment interventions that are advocated to activate the qualities ascribed to women. It considers the kind of market mentalities that are supposedly inculcated into pre-market subjectivities and the kind of activation processes that are proposed to harness women's dormant labour. The narrative of activation in the report is premised on the contention that women are both physically and mentally marginal to market life, but that their inborn qualities may be activated through a series of biopolitical interventions to inculcate empowered and entrepreneurial mentalities. The chapter discusses a few empowerment interventions considered in the report, including entrepreneurship and access to global financial institutions.

Chapter Six builds on this argument by bringing in analysis of the Bank's transnational business initiatives and private sector agenda. This is an integral part of the broader GESE discourse and therefore is essential to understand both what kind of woman is represented as 'empowerable' in these discourses and which institutions are imagined as the actors who can best intervene to 'activate' women's empowerment. This chapter provides analysis of documentation from three Bank TBIs and considers: a) the empowerment narratives that feature in these programs, b) the way that empowerment tropes are employed to legitimize corporate involvement in the development process, and c) the use of TBIs to 'greenwash' companies and affect their branding and expansion, by virtue of their association with empowerment narratives. It argues that transnational business initiatives for the governance of gender represent gender equality as unproblematically conducive to economic growth; they thereby inscribe

corporate citizenship on empowerment issues as an extension of the corporation's drive to profit.

The Conclusion brings together the theoretical and empirical research findings of the thesis to answer the research questions, returning to the questions about the 'empowerable' woman that opened the thesis. It considers the contributions the thesis has made to relevant literature and the insights it has provided to expand and alter our understanding of empowerment and 'Smart Economics'. It concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the research and possible directions for future research that emerge from the thesis.

The Research Methods Appendix provides details on the methods employed in data collection and analysis. It includes a detailed discussion of the qualitative coding process, coding framework, and textual analysis; it discusses the interviews with Bank staff and the difficulties encountered in accessing interview participants. It concludes with reflection on researcher position and the methodology of 'studying up'. The remaining appendices provide details of public-private partnerships under study and the interview questions used in data collection.

Chapter One: Women Under the Development Gaze

“Eighteen years ago the World Bank rarely talked about gender. Some said it was too political. Today we know that gender equality is smart economics”

- Robert Zoellick, former President of the World Bank (2011)

Attention to gender issues in the development process has dramatically increased in recent years: while a few decades ago development policy imagined women as marginal actors or passive potential beneficiaries of economic growth, over the past ten years the concept of women’s empowerment has been identified as the key to global development through the emergence of salient political narratives that foreground the economic advantages of empowerment.

The unprecedented attention accorded to gender issues on the international stage signals a “strategically crucial moment” for feminists (Harcourt 2012: 308), though it is an ambiguous moment. On the one hand, the near universal recognition of the centrality of gender equality to development and social justice constitutes a significant accomplishment for feminists, as it marks a turning point in the decades-long struggle to convince policy makers that gender equality matters for development and, moreover, that women are agents – and not merely victims – in global political and economic processes. Feminists have been very successful in efforts to develop policy narratives and discourses that resonate with policy makers, the result of which is evident in the widespread uptake of gender language and public-facing gender equality messages from international financial institutions. On the other hand, these ostensible gains are complex and ambiguous because much of the gender equality policy discourse is so closely tied to the advancement of a neoliberal economic policy agenda characterized by market fundamentalism, deregulation, and corporate-led development.

For decades, women were considered marginal actors in the development process, either as victims of ‘underdeveloped’ cultures, passive recipients of aid, or vessels for overpopulation and its harmful byproducts. The policy and discursive process by which women have become visible actors in development spans decades and demonstrates the shifting (and overlapping) subject positions they have occupied: oppressed wife, dutiful mother, empowered entrepreneur. The shifting visibility of women in development discourses— and the process by which they moved from margin to center – provides essential context for understanding the salience of particular narratives that dominate in the current moment of ‘Smart Economics’.

This chapter provides an introduction to the main themes of this thesis and an introduction to the relevant literature, debates, and contributions that frame the research. The chapter proceeds in four sections. In Section 1.1, I consider the evolution of women under the ‘development gaze’ and discuss the shifting policy frameworks introduced to address gender issues in the development process. I suggest here that empowerment and ‘Smart Economics’ discourses provide the dominant mode of visibility for women under the development gaze today. Next, in Section 1.2, I examine the field of feminist political economy and discuss three strands of research in the field that provide the foundation for this thesis: critiques of neoclassical economics, explorations of social reproduction and care work, and study of gender in global governance. In Section 1.3, I introduce the ‘Gender Equality as Smart Economics’ context and the debates therein, laying out four main approaches in the feminist GPE literature for explaining and responding to the current development policy discourses. In Section 1.4, I lay out the paradoxes of women’s representation that characterize GESE discourses and explore the contradictory tropes that underpin the visibility of women and girls. Combining elements of chronological and conceptual analysis of the field, this chapter lays out the research ‘puzzle’ for the thesis and introduces the most important concepts and themes that will recur throughout.

1.1 'Discovering' Women in the Development Process

What does it mean to be a subject of development discourse, and how have women acquired this status? In order to understand the shifting position of women within development discourses and the long-term changes in the way that women's subjectivity and agency is represented, I employ the concept of 'visibilities' from post-development literature (Escobar 1995). The manner in which objects are rendered visible or invisible under the development gaze is a product of the 'enframing' processes and the insertion of objects into pre-existing discourses of economic development.³ Women gained visibility as agents in the development process, I will demonstrate, through their insertion into pre-existing policy frameworks and by their redefinition as efficient, but inactive, labour power.

Women were largely invisible to early development planners of the 1950s and 60s and, when made visible, discussed largely in passive, welfarist terms. This invisibility stemmed from basic assumptions about the gendered division of labour and women's supposed absence from productive labour, and was reproduced by the models and theories that emerged from these assumptions (Kothari 2001). Representations of women were characterized by passivity and based in the assumption that while women could not contribute to growth, once growth was achieved they too would progress along the trajectory of modernization towards a Western model of womanhood, thereby identifying gender oppression in outmoded and traditional forms of pre-development (Escobar 1995; Cowen and Shenton 1995). Social change, as a byproduct of economic growth, would allow women to 'catch up' with men and achieve social status equal to that of men (Greig et. al. 2002; Kabeer 1994). Early development models, centered around relief work and 'welfarism', primarily envisioned a role for women as the recipients of aid (Moser 1993). These efforts focused on traditionally 'feminine'

³ Similarly, feminist discourse analyses have employed the lens of visibilities to understand the way that women and girls become 'visible' to authority, and the way that dominant discourses of femininity reflect the power relations inherent therein (McRobbie 2009; Bexell and Gregoratti 2011).

areas closely related to the reproductive sphere (health, nutrition, family planning) with a focus on social welfare. Structured by the belief that women were dependents without the need for independent income, development programs tended to focus on “temporary and supplementary” income for women or on ‘feminine’ skills that did not generate income (Mehra 1997: 141-2).

Women first became visible as targets of development interventions in terms of their reproductivity: links between overpopulation concerns and issues of fertility, maternal and child mortality, and food provision accorded women more significance under the development gaze. Beginning in the mid 1970s, international efforts to curb overpopulation through family planning acknowledged the centrality of women to any “effective” policy (Pietila and Vickers 1994: 77-8; Joachim 2008; Goldberg 2009). Although largely unsuccessful, efforts to curb population growth formed part of an overall economic growth strategy that identified a “conceptual link” between women, development, and economic growth (Kabeer 1994: 4; see also Wilson 2012). Simultaneously, international bodies concerned with food policy acknowledged the importance of women to family and child nutrition and food provision. The agency ascribed to women during this early phase of development interventions was heavily circumscribed as it was limited to their involvement in curbing population growth, and was therefore largely negative or preventative. Women’s visibility in development discourses as instruments of social reproduction prompted greater efforts to engage them for child and family welfare, though not in terms of women’s own rights, choices, or capabilities. Subsequently, with the introduction of the Women in Development framework, this instrumental approach was strategically embraced by liberal feminist economists who sought to highlight women’s economic agency.

Women in Development

During its first Decade of Development (1961-70), the UN in 1962 commissioned a report from the Commission on the Status of Women

about the role of women in the development process.⁴ At the same time, liberal feminists in Washington sought to pressure the American government to direct attention towards women in development, with the goal of integrating “women into the national economies of foreign countries... improving their status and assisting the total development effort” (Tinker 1990: 31). These combined efforts provided the basis for the Women in Development (WID) framework, which sought to reduce inequality between men and women by integrating women into the development process (see Tinker 1990; Jain 2005; Sen 2006).

The first generation of WID analysis began in 1970 with Esther Boserup’s groundbreaking study, *Women in Economic Development*, which emerged from the report commissioned by the UN in 1962 (Rai 2002). It highlighted women’s marginalization from economic structures by their confinement to reproductive and non-wage labour and drew the attention of development planners to the need to bring women’s labour into the formal sector. Boserup’s study focused on the mechanisms by which women’s productivity could be mobilized for more modernized and ‘productive’ work than the typically ‘feminine’ sectors to which they were confined: she argued that women’s labour was generally underreported and therefore invisible to policy planners, drawing on a comparative analysis of women’s agricultural work.

WID marked a major conceptual shift in development thinking: where once women had been understood as potential beneficiaries of development – but peripheral to the process itself – they were now conceptualized as an important and under-utilized resource whose integration was essential to the success of the development enterprise; WID furthermore highlighted ways in which existing development paradigms were harmful to women. The contention that women needed to be further integrated into development to benefit development itself

⁴ A detailed account of the various feminist activist groups and women’s movements that worked inside/ outside international institutions to ‘put women on the agenda’ is beyond the scope of this literature review, but provides important context for the developments discussed here (see Jain 2005; Joachim 2007; Pietila and Vickers 1990; Berkovitch 1999; Reilly 2009).

was premised on the belief that development, although gender neutral, had so far failed to benefit women because they were external to economic structures. WID therefore proved popular in mainstream development institutions and its language and aims became (ostensibly) widespread in development. Once the case for women's engagement in development was couched in economic language – as opposed to the language of equality – it was swiftly incorporated into institutional documents and agencies (Tinker 1990; Jaquette 1990). By arguing that not only did women need development, but development needed women, these advocates tapped into agencies' primary concerns with efficient resource allocation. In combining equity and efficiency rationales, WID advocates created a powerful and influential liberal feminist paradigm that continues to influence development policy, not least because it was underpinned by the (persistent) claim that women could improve the function of existing development models and institutions (Kabeer 1994; Razavi and Miller 1995; Rai 2002). Women's visibility to development planners therefore proceeded from visibility as instruments of reproduction and family welfare to instruments of production and as an 'untapped' labour market.

WID frameworks, although introducing critical new analysis into development studies, operated largely within the development-as-economic growth paradigm that characterized the field. Women's development 'problem' was identified as a lack of productive capacity; analysis of the way the gendered division of labour and gender inequalities more broadly contributed to women's impoverishment was not prominently considered. For WID's critics, its modernization framework endorsed an unproblematic association between improvements in women's status and economic growth, without considering structural critique of harmful gendered implications of capitalism (Beneria and Sen 1981; Jaquette 1990; Sen and Grown 1985). Women's status could not be transformed within a capitalist system, socialist feminists argued, because their subordination is so integral to the working of capitalist regimes of accumulation (Mies 1998). Post-structural and post-colonial critiques, moreover, pointed to the way that WID functioned to catalogue vast quantities of development data for

use by Northern experts, in order to draw conclusions about development solutions for 'Third World women' (Parpart 1995; Mueller 1991). Proponents of this view sought to correct for the flaws of the WID approach by introducing a new framework with socialist and post-colonial feminist leanings and a critical focus on gender relations.

Gender and Development

Critics of WID highlighted the failures of liberal feminist frameworks and attempted to re-focus the discourse on gender and power relations between men and women. To this end, they formulated the Gender and Development (GAD) framework. Central to GAD is the shift from a focus on women (and women's group interests) to gender, meaning both gender as a social construction and gender relations *between* men and women. Derived from socialist and Third World feminist perspectives, GAD contested WID's formulation of the problem and solution of women's exclusion from and integration into development. Women's subordination, GAD proponents argued, is inbuilt and naturalized within capitalist growth models where unequal distribution of power makes substantive equality impossible. GAD cast a focus on the gendered division of labour within the household, differential access to and inequality within wage work, access to and control over resources, and the social status of men and women (Rai 2002: 71). It therefore sought to move beyond a focus on women's absolute status (i.e. access to paid work and the status accorded to that work) towards an appreciation of their relative state (i.e. social status in the household, work, and community) and the gendered structures that enabled and constrained transformation. This framework has, in the words of Cynthia Enloe, highlighted the ways in which the 'modern' economy is dependent upon highly 'traditional' gender roles, particularly for women (Enloe 1989: 185). In the short term, GAD sought to promote women's education, access to credit, and improved access to the legal system; in the long term it focused on transformative challenges to gender ideologies and institutions that reproduced subordination, embodied in dominant norms and structures of development governance (Parpart 1995: 235).

Despite GAD's transformative aims, it too has been subject to harsh criticism by those who perceive its impact to be limited to rhetorical uptake. While defenders of WID have objected to the loss of a focus on women and move towards the poorly understood concept of gender, others have highlighted the collapsing of these two frameworks, so that women and gender are understood as synonymous (Baden and Goetz 1997; Harrison 1997; Sardenberg 2007; Jackson and Pearson 1998). Critique of GAD comprises two main strands: the first reflects a debate among feminists about the relative merits of a woman or gender focus, given the difficulties of articulating a unified set of 'women's interests' and the likelihood that introducing 'gender' concerns will shift focus onto men. The second reflects ongoing concerns about rhetorical co-optation and the suspicion that, regardless of the specific terms employed, feminist language will be appropriated for other purposes. Overall, feminist appraisal of GAD has recognized its potentially transformative elements but acknowledged that it has largely been embraced in terminology but not in policy terms (Rai 2002: 73). Gender discourse has been, in many ways, "overtaken by its own success" (Porter and Verghese 1999: 132) as donors are eager to present their own gender sensitivity and gender focused programs, though this often results in the uptake of language which has been stripped of critical focus on power relations *between* groups.

This debate still resonates in the feminist literature because, although its two main positions were staked out years ago, they have been broadly institutionalized in powerful development and global governance institutions (WID) and feminist development and political economy research and activism (GAD). The issue of policy salience lies at the heart of the WID-GAD debate, due in no small part to the rapid institutional uptake of WID policy language. Institutional resistance to feminist approaches, stemming in part from a fear that demands for gender equality would require power redistribution, necessitated institutionally-sensitive and policy-oriented language (Moser 1993; Staudt 1990; Miller and Razavi 1995). WID frameworks, accordingly, promoted an efficiency rationale that sought to 'sell' gender to policy makers by demonstrating "what development needs from women" as

opposed to “women’s needs and interests in development” (Goetz 1994: 30). In practice, gender policy was made less threatening to bureaucrats and policy-makers by focusing on the ‘poorest of the poor’ (rather than intra-household gender power relations), productive employment (rather than basic needs) and an instrumental emphasis on women’s role in providing for the family’s basic needs (Buvinic 1983, 1986; Miller and Razavi 1995). Framing gender issues in widely acceptable policy language was successful, therefore, to the extent that it raised the visibility of women in the development process, although it came at a steep cost. Although GAD emerged in response to the shortcomings of WID, and sought to foreground feminist concerns about relational inequality, GAD has too been the subject of co-optation, in feminist analysis. For many, the radical potential of GAD has been diminished by its reduction to mere policy language (re-labeling of WID) or institutionalized in problematic gender mainstreaming approaches (see Rai 2002; Mukhopadhyay 2007; Rao and Kelleher 2005).

This debate is particularly acute around the issue of ‘empowerment’, a term which rose to popularity as part of the GAD critique of WID and the turn towards more ‘participatory’ approaches in development. During the 1980s, empowerment became an important tool for feminist activists who drew upon its emancipatory origins in the philosophy of radical pedagogy and developed the feminist process of Consciousness Raising (see Rowlands 1997; Longwe 2000; Agarwal 1995; Kabeer 1994). During the 1990s, and in response to the criticism of dominant development approaches that perpetuated Northern control of the development process and imposition of development ‘solutions’ upon Southern contexts, development institutions sought out more participatory approaches, of which women’s empowerment became an important part (Batliwala 2011). As part of its wide institutional uptake, ‘empowerment’ underwent a shift in meaning which removed much of its association with radical, emancipatory movements and critiques of capitalism, and was instead re-signified along neoliberal lines. This reductive liberal empowerment reconfigures its subjects as rational economic actors and potential entrepreneurs in a global capitalist economy who pursue their own self-interest (Ferguson 2004: 6). As a

“motherhood” term, its positive, participatory, and vague content gave empowerment language significant appeal (Parpart, Rai, and Staudt 2003; Cornwall and Brock 2005; Moore 2001). As such, empowerment has become a dominant mode of visibility for women under the development gaze.

Economic imperatives so thoroughly dominate mainstream development priorities that the successful uptake of any new development concept will depend on the extent to which it can be re-formulated in order to align with these priorities (Parpart, Rai and Staudt 2003; Sardenberg 2008; Batliwala 2011). Empowerment in mainstream institutions is therefore characterized today by an emphasis on the development of self-reliance and economic independence. ‘Empowerment’ and ‘economic empowerment’ are often used interchangeably, and empowerment outcomes are reduced to economic solutions by which women could increase their personal wealth and family’s wealth. UN Women, for instance, frames its mission as the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment; in its literature, however, “economic empowerment” is the only aspect of this concept that is explored in depth. Women’s empowerment, referenced throughout the organization’s materials, is only conceived of in policy terms as reducing obstacles which “prevent women from seizing economic opportunities” (UN Women 2012). This conceptual slippage demonstrates the narrowing of empowerment’s meaning, as well as its re-signification through association with particular terms; reduced to economic participation this neoliberal conception of empowerment is stripped of its relationship to political, social, and economic power relations. Feminist accounts of empowerment endorse a broader conception of empowerment that stresses its links to multiple identities and categories of social exclusion: “Empowerment is a gender issue, not simply a women’s issue; it is also a class issue, a race issue, and so on... it is about transforming social relations” (Rowlands 1997: 131).

Women’s visibility as objects under the development gaze has undergone a major shift from the early decades of development, in which women appeared as marginal, passive recipients of welfare or

vulnerable victims of tradition, to the public faces of more recent development discourses focused on women's empowerment. Through various incarnations of WID and GAD, the issue of gender equality has gained increased visibility in development discourse and policy, although the process of feminist engagement with mainstream development institutions has been continually fraught by debate over the limits of cooperation and the extent of co-optation.

1.2 Feminist Global Political Economy

Feminist Global Political Economy (GPE) represents the most current iteration of GAD research, reflecting GAD's legacy of feminist historical materialist and Third World approaches to political economy. However, feminist GPE literature departs from GAD in a few significant ways: it reflects the need for comprehensive gendered analysis of global political and economic relations to take into account the shifts brought about by globalization and, therefore, to examine *global* development and governance through a feminist lens.⁵ In this way, feminist GPE moves beyond the implicit North/ South divide in 'development' literature and integrates GAD's core concerns, along with feminist economics critiques, into a literature on the global political economy of gender (see Waylen 2006; Rai and Waylen 2013). Global processes of restructuring, labour flexibilization, migration, international trade, free movement of capital, global chains of caring labour, and international tourism mean that the tendency to analyze gender in 'developing' countries in isolation is no longer tenable (Waylen 2000). Additionally, feminist GPE challenges and extends understandings of "what counts" as the economy, both by relating analysis of the household to the wider economy and by analyzing economies as socially constructed and

⁵ The field is alternately referred to as feminist international political economy (IPE) or global political economy (GPE), often used interchangeably and both used by feminist political economists to characterize the focus of their work. I use 'global' political economy here to reflect the broadening scope of political economy and to move past the distinction between 'developing' and 'developed' regions. The move away from a state-centric political economy embodied by feminist interest in supra-national institutions, non-state groups, and everyday lives demands a focus on the global rather than international (see Rai and Waylen 2013).

gendered spaces (Waylen 2000: 28-9).⁶ In order to outline the main areas of focus in this field, I follow Juanita Elias' (2011) claim that its main contributions lie in the areas of social reproduction and global governance, to which I add a discussion of feminist critiques of orthodox economics.

Core Critiques of Orthodox Economics

Any review of feminist political economy literature must begin with the conceptual 'building blocks' of the discipline, rooted in a feminist critique of the assumptions of classical/ neo-classical theories of economics. I identify four central contributions of feminist economics: critiques of scientific rationality, *homo economicus*, the public/ private binary, and the presumption of gender-neutral markets. The first, and most fundamental, aspect of this critique is a challenge to the epistemological claims of economics and its reliance on a problematic notion of scientific objectivity. From a feminist standpoint, scientific methods are never neutral, but inextricably situated in a system of values and interest (Harding 1986). The study of economics is laden with gendered bias embedded in a series of hierarchical dualisms through which economic life is understood. In these dualisms – mind vs. body, reason vs. emotion, objectivity vs. subjectivity – gender functions as a metaphor to associate masculinity with rationality and efficiency, thereby rendering natural and necessary patriarchal power structures (Harding 1986; Nelson 1992a; discussed further in Chapter 3).

⁶ Waylen here is careful to distinguish between a gendered and feminist political economy: while a feminist political economy account will necessarily be gendered, it is possible to imagine a gendered political economy account that is not feminist (2000: 31). Even given the multitude of *feminisms* and disagreements within feminist research, a feminist political economy approach is characterized by its shared belief in women's subordination and its emancipatory commitments. I am strongly committed to a feminist approach, which employs *gender* as a conceptual lens and is underpinned by emancipatory commitments with an explicit focus on transforming gendered hierarchies.

The masculinist bias⁷ of neoclassical economic theory extends beyond epistemology into methodology and subject of study. Methodologically, the field is reliant on models of rational economic man, *homo economicus*, who operates as an autonomous interest maximizer. *Homo economicus* is conceived, firstly, in terms of his ability to make rational decisions independent of social influences or socially shaped preferences; this is clearly reflective of an androcentric bias which either ignores or devalues social relationships (England 1993; Folbre 1994; Nelson 1992a; Waylen 2000). Secondly, *homo economicus* is constructed in neoclassical economic theory as embodying different kinds of behaviour in the public and private spheres. In the marketplace, rational economic actors are selfish, while in the home, they are altruistic towards the family and in the intra-household distribution of resources. Feminists have challenged the patriarchal power structures reproduced by this model: it not only assumes that men are the natural heads of households and that women are confined to economic inactivity in the home, but promotes a deeply problematic assumption of benevolent paternalism in the family (Waylen 1997; England 1993).

Neoclassical economic theories are premised upon and reproduce a gendered public/ private binary, where the activities of rational economic man are associated with the public sphere, political life, and economic productivity. Conversely, women are associated with the private sphere, absence from public life, and invisible 'unproductive' activities of social reproduction. Women's work is denigrated in this model, because it is taken for granted and therefore not counted (Waylen 1997; England

⁷ It is important to clarify that the category of masculinity does not necessarily relate to the characteristics of men, but is a product of a social construction attributed to the category of 'man' (Nelson 1992a: 105). Important work in the field of masculinities studies has demonstrated the complex and uneven terrain of masculinities, where bodies and subjectivities which do not conform to the standards of hegemonic masculinities are themselves subject to patriarchal violence. It is clear, Raewyn Connell argues, that men continue to benefit from a "patriarchal dividend", but that this dividend is unequally distributed: "the men who receive most of the benefits, and the men who pay most of the costs, are not the same individuals" (Connell 2005: 1809; see also Parpart and Zalewski 2008; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

1993; Power 2004). Economic theories based on the androcentric model of the rational, unencumbered and self-interested individual are underpinned by the (unacknowledged) social reproduction work carried out by women which is essential for human life. The devaluation of the feminine and the unproblematic 'default' masculine economic actor work to normalize and de-historicize assumptions about men's superior capacity "to produce, provide for, and perpetuate modern economic society" (Griffin 2009: 71). The inextricably interlinked nature of unpaid caring labour to paid labour outside the home, and the essential processes of care that reproduce the labour force, demonstrate the serious flaws in models that presume economic actors to operate as autonomous individuals independent of social relations (Beneria 2003).

Related to critiques of scientific objectivity and neutrality, the final pillar of feminist economist critique of neoclassical economic theory reflects the embedded gendered value system that underpins economic thought. Neoclassical economic theory understands markets as gender neutral, socially dis-embedded arenas for competition and exchange, occupied by rational interest-maximizing individuals. Discrimination on the basis of gender (or ethnicity, sexuality, religion, etc.) is irrational in this system, because it is too expensive: neoclassical economic models claim that competition in free markets will eliminate discrimination because rational profit-maximizing employers will not make adverse employment decisions on the basis of prejudice. Under this model, the issue of gender discrimination and the persistent issue of the gender wage gap or gender segregation in employment is explained as resulting from women's preferences for lower paying and lower status jobs, a lack of adequate job skills and training, or too much time spent out of the labour market for childbearing. In short, this model promotes a 'blame the victim' model and wholly ignores structural factors that reproduce inequalities (Waylen 2000). While this model ignores the processes that determine the allocation of skills and capital, and the role of preferences in shaping economic decisions (Folbre 1994), it moreover uses the language of scientific objectivity and the efficiency of free markets to mask the ways in which women's labour and work are devalued precisely because they are associated with women (Razavi

2012). Those who work as nurses, teachers, social workers, and care workers face poor conditions, low pay, and low social status, although their work is undeniably essential to the function of society; this line of critique opens up a robust feminist literature on social reproduction.

Social Reproduction

Feminist analysis of social reproduction is premised on the idea that the “productive” economy depends on divisions and inequalities embodied in the gendered division of labour and devaluation of the “reproductive” economy (Peterson 2003). It has therefore sought to demonstrate the relations between the reproductive and productive economies and to contest the invisibility and devaluation of social reproduction. Social reproduction has three main aspects: biological reproduction, reproduction of labour power, and social practices connected to caring, socialization, and the fulfillment of human needs (Bakker and Gill 2003). Processes of social reproduction do not simply reproduce the labour force necessary for continued production, but they reproduce the very social institutions that make life possible (Pearson 2004).

Much of the research on social reproduction (and its undervaluation) in Gender and Development literature takes as its starting point early critiques of Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs), economic measures introduced by international financial institutions as loan conditionalities during the 1980s which mandated cutbacks and restructuring of state services. Women, as primary recipients of state services like child and health care, were disproportionately impacted by these policies (Elson 1989; Moser 1989; Safa 1995; Bakker 1994). Most notably, feminists critiqued SAPs for their reliance on the assumption that women’s capacity for caring labour is “infinitely elastic” and can compensate for state withdrawal (Elson 1992; Elson 1995). In other words, neoliberal restructuring hinges on the contention that state rollback of social provision is possible, and indeed desirable, because women can re-absorb those care tasks and re-privatize them. Structural Adjustment packages were subjected to vocal criticism and were somewhat modified in response, although research suggests their basic principles

have been institutionalized and continue in contemporary processes of global restructuring (Rai 2002; Griffin 2007b).

Similar effects of state rollback have been documented in North America and Europe where neoliberal restructuring and the dismantling of the welfare state have taken place since the 1980s. The re-privatization of social reproduction involves a dual movement, returning care work to its 'natural' place in the home while simultaneously commodifying care relationships (Bakker 2007; Bakker and Gill 2003; Lebaron 2010; Steans and Tepe 2010). This is evident in increased dependence on global chains of caring labour (Yeates 2009; Gutierrez-Rodriguez 2007), remittances from migrants to their home countries (Kunz 2012), and the increased interest in the figure of the entrepreneurial 'home worker' woman (Gregoratti and Allison 2013; Batliwala and Dhanraj 2007). Although the era of the post-Washington Consensus is marked by greater attention to gender and other 'social' issues in anti-poverty programmes, feminists have raised concerns that current policies simply institutionalize the increased care burdens placed on women and idealize female resilience while allowing for a "neoliberal dumping of responsibility" (Maclean 2013: 456; Molyneux 2006; Chant 2006). This literature reveals a crisis of social reproduction (Bakker 2007) wherein the contradictions of global capitalism are manifest in its reliance on social reproduction and simultaneous efforts to undermine of the conditions within which social reproduction occurs; this is particularly evident in austerity policies adopted in the wake of the global financial crisis (see Elson 2012b; Fawcett Society 2012; Brodie 2003; Enloe 2013).

Much of the literature on social reproduction is related to efforts to correct for the privatization, invisibility, and undervaluation of social reproduction. It begins from the acknowledgement that the 'natural' or 'unconscious' position of care work renders it marginal to mainstream analyses of the global economy, while compounding the double burden of paid and unpaid labour which is expected of women. Social reproduction is under-researched in the work of mainstream and critical political economists and is not accounted for in national statistics

(Bedford and Rai 2010; Waylen 2006). Recent research advances efforts to measure and quantify the value of social reproduction in terms of the implications of its undervaluation and depletion at the level of individual, household, and community (Hoskyns and Rai 2007). The consequences of depletion are significant: when inputs to social reproduction are lower than outputs, increased pressure on the domestic sector to provide unpaid care can deplete human capabilities, resulting in exhaustion and gendered harm (Elson and Keklik 2000; Rai, Hoskyns and Thomas 2014). The function of the global political economy is inextricably dependent on the reproduction of life, the labour force, and the institutions of social life that make capital accumulation possible; feminist GPE literature on social reproduction renders care work visible and in doing so it raises serious concerns about the implications of neoliberal economic policy on social reproduction and gender relations. It reveals, on a micro-level, the processes of reproduction and care that allow for the function of the global economy; on a macro-level, these same gender norms structure global governance systems and entrench a gender bias in the institutions which govern global political and economic life.

Gendering Global Governance

The global governance strand of feminist GPE literature explores the “gendered norms and identities” that form part of the discursive production of global governance (Elias 2011: 108). The study of global governance therefore focuses on both practices and institutions of global governance, using gender as a conceptual lens to explore the extent and variation of “discursive and structural bias” in favour of men in the development process, and the implications of this bias (Rai and Waylen 2008: 2). Further reflecting the disciplinary changes that have brought about a distinct body of feminist political economy literature, global governance research addresses shifting relations between states, markets and civil society and their gendered dimensions.

As feminist global governance literature is a diverse body, Meyer and Prugl (1999: 4-5) characterize it through three approaches: the first

addresses institutions in which women have been able to attain power, articulate 'women's interests' in the policy arena, and advance feminist agendas. This literature on gender mainstreaming and 'femocrats' (feminist bureaucrats) examines gender in state, regional and global governance structures, finding that the success of gender mainstreaming depends on the institution's political culture, analytical frameworks, and resources dedicated to gender (True 2003; Walby 2005; Goetz 1997; Miller and Razavi 1998). The second approach explores relations between international institutions and global civil society, with a focus on the international women's movement. Research in this area has tended to focus heavily on global institutions like the United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions, exploring social movement strategies to mobilize constituencies and influence institutions (O'Brien et. al. 2000; Joachim 2007; Keck and Sikkink 1998). Emergent exploration of Transnational Business Initiatives (TBIs) for the governance of gender also partly falls into this category (Prugl and True 2014; Roberts 2014a).

The third and final strand identified by Meyer and Prugl is the most relevant for this thesis, as it employs gender to contest "rules and discursive practices" across issue areas, for example challenging the gendered power relations embedded in global economics (1999: 5). It examines not only the gendered implications of particular policy discourses, but illuminates the way that gender acts as a constitutive and "governing code" in the global political economy (Peterson 2003, 2005). Feminist scrutiny of institutions of global economic governance like the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organisation is essential not least because these institutions perform a symbolic separation of the economic and political, thereby de-politicizing and "taking the heat out of macro-economic policy" (Rai 2004: 3). If we are to understand global governance as a process of rule and norm making at the global level, characterized by hegemonic neoliberalism, a feminist analytical approach to its formations and implications is imperative to re-politicize the global economy and reveal its socially embedded, gendered nature. Within this research stream, this thesis is located in the emergent feminist GPE literature that examines the

norms, rules, and discourses that govern 'knowledge' about gender in the GPE, focused on the emergence and implications of the 'Smart Economics' and 'Business Case' agendas.

1.3 'Gender Equality as Smart Economics'

Feminist GPE research is closely attuned to the perils and promise of institutional integration and efforts to work for feminist goals through the extant global institutional machinery. Paradoxically, feminist knowledge has acquired authority in international institutions and among policy makers, although feminist critiques target the "neoliberal and militarized world order" that these institutions and policy-making groups perpetuate (Zalewski and Runyan 2013: 299). Institutional action by "market" feminists (Kantola and Squires 2012) to mediate feminist claims via the market in neoliberal institutions has achieved visibility for gender issues, albeit at the cost of critical feminist perspectives; as noted above, feminists have long contended with the dilemma of institutional integration and the possibility of resource capture versus the (likely) process of co-optation and de-politicization that accompanies it. The newest iteration of this debate in the feminist political economy literature surrounds the emergent policy agenda of 'Gender Equality as Smart Economics' and associated discourses.

The Gender Equality as Smart Economics policy agenda has emerged, broadly, since the 1990s and is linked to an expanding range of international development and financial institutions, NGOs, and governments. Although it first appeared in its present form in the World Bank's 2007-2010 Gender Action Plan, Sylvia Chant attributes its origins to the 1995 United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, where the language of the "pay-offs to investing in women" first crystallized (2012: 200). The "clever confluences" of gender equality and neoliberal development that underpin the GESE discourse have long been employed in efforts to 'sell' gender to economic institutions (Chant 2013: 205); World Bank staff, in particular, are notorious for their recourse to a 'business case' narrative of gender (O'Brien et. al. 2000; Bergeron 2006). Despite the long evolution of these discourses and

their development over the past twenty years, the current moment is characterized by the notable dominance of ‘Smart Economics’ discourses across national governments, development institutions, financial institutions, and major corporations.

The language of ‘Smart Economics’ and the ‘Business Case’ for women presents a paradigmatic example of the potential for particular narratives or “buzzwords” to travel across institutions, audiences and policy discourses (see Cornwall and Brock 2005; Cornwall and Eade 2011). In the current context of hegemonic neoliberalism, a prevailing “business ontology” contributes to the salience of discourses that align with the rhetoric of corporate efficiency and investment (Fisher 2009: 17). In the business ontology, it becomes “simply obvious” that everything in society should be run as a business (Ibid); the salience of GESE and similar narratives can therefore be partly attributed to their adherence to this model. Table 1.1 demonstrates the widespread use of GESE messages across public and governmental bodies, international financial institutions, corporations, and civil society organisations.

Table 1.1 The Spread of ‘Smart Economics’

“The business case for investing in [Millennium Development Goal 3] is strong – it is nothing more than smart economics” (World Bank, Global Monitoring Report 2007: 145).

“The energy, talent and strength of women and girls represent humankind’s most valuable untapped natural resource” (Ban Ki Moon 2012).

“Women may well be the dominant source of economic growth in the near future—and organizations that are able to capitalize on the roles women play as economic actors will most likely have a competitive advantage as the world pulls out of the global recession” (Deloitte n.d.)

“The [World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap] index continues to track the strong correlation between a country’s gender gap and its national

competitiveness. Because women account for one-half of a country's potential talent base, a nation's competitiveness in the long term depends significantly on whether and how it educates and utilizes its women" (World Economic Forum 2013a)



Figure 1.1 'Invest in Girls' (Women Deliver 2014)

"When you lend to a woman [y]ou can set off an amazing chain reaction... Invest in her potential. She will do the rest" (Kiva n.d.)

"Investment in women has a multiplier effect... called Women Effect Investment. Notice I used the phrase 'invest in women' not donate to charities supporting women [sic]. Donating is important, but sometimes you want/ need a financial return. Investing for both return and social good is called impact investing. You're getting a two-fer: financial and social return" (Stengel 2012, published in the 'ForbesWoman' section of Forbes Magazine)

"We know that educating girls is the smartest investment of our time. When girls are educated, communities thrive and economies grow. Yet 66 million girls are missing from classrooms worldwide, and tremendous opportunities are lost" (Girl Rising n.d.)



Figure 1.2 Stills from Care International appeal (2010)

The popularity of ‘Gender Equality as Smart Economics’ and ‘Business Case’ narratives represents the most powerful incarnation of the challenge I discuss above, wherein women are highly visible subjects of global governance but their visibility is severely constrained and contingent on their position in relation to the market. A robust body of feminist literature has emerged to contend with this challenge, and it is within this literature that I locate my work. Feminists approaches to the challenge of GESE take four dominant perspectives: 1) post-structuralist critiques of heteronormativity; 2) Foucauldian governmentality critiques of biopolitics and disciplinary power in development interventions; 3) historical materialist critiques of empowerment as an accumulation strategy of neoliberal capitalism; and 4) provocative debate about the current state of the feminist political project and its relation to neoliberalized, corporatized feminisms.

Contributions through the lens of heteronormativity point to the function of ‘gender equality’ policy to re-introduce familiar policies under friendlier language and through the promotion of normative heterosexuality. Heteronormativity, and the conceptual tools of queer theory, contribute to the feminist project of breaking down the public/ private barrier and exposing the gendered and sexed nature of power relations by attempting to (re)discover the body in politics (see Harcourt 2009, 2012; Smith and Lee 2014). It is particularly attuned to the reproduction of gender essentialisms that ascribe productivity and assign moral value to certain bodies and subjectivities. Policies employing a neoliberal gender equality approach work to shift gender relations *within* the family and

enact minor re-distributions of care work within the home, albeit while working to re-privatize social reproduction (Bedford 2005, 2007, 2009a). Equally, economic heteronormativity serves to circumscribe lives and bodies in terms of their proximity to the market and their ability to participate as active market citizens; a limited conception of women's empowerment imagines women as productive market actors, in so far as they can embody masculinist entrepreneurialism (Griffin 2009). This analysis of gender in the global political economy highlights the ways in which androcentric assumptions about economic rationality persist and differently position bodies and subjectivities in relation to the market.

Alternately, a Foucauldian perspective allows for a focus on the ways in which a GESE agenda permits the further expansion of governmental interventions into everyday life and the body. In line with a biopolitical analysis, it explores the ways that particular gender policies and discourses aim to shape and constrain behaviours to promote a feminized form of neoliberal responsabilized citizenship. The idea of biopolitical, disciplinary power that works to create disciplined and productive bodies is a helpful lens, under which empowerment interventions to "make women productive" appear as mechanisms to create neoliberal responsabilized subjects (Kunz 2011: 165-6). This literature considers the construction and promotion of a 'rational economic woman' through GESE policy interventions as a manifestation of the operation of biopolitical power which aims to create docile and productive subjects (Rankin 2001; Bexell 2012; Woehl 2008). This perspective is particularly evident in literature that grapples with financialized development, illuminating the production of (feminized) neoliberal subjects in the areas of remittances (Kunz 2012, 2011), microcredit (Rankin 2001; Brigg 2002; Lairap Fonderson 2003; Aitken 2010; Shakya and Rankin 2008), conditional cash transfers (Molyneux 2006; Ballard 2013; Hickey 2010), and public-private partnerships (Bexell 2012; Bexell and Gregoratti 2011). Under a governmentality lens, women appear to be highly visible subjects of neoliberal governance because they embody the quintessence of the responsabilized, entrepreneurial and docile subject.

Historical materialist approaches to the Gender Equality as Smart Economics literature are more attuned to the agendas *alongside* (and in service of) which GESE travels; they highlight its constitutive role in broader privatization agendas. New incarnations of “transnational business feminisms” work to obscure the gender and class power relations of the GPE while legitimizing and reproducing neoliberal policies (Roberts 2012, 2014a). The current gender agenda institutionalized in IFIs, particularly in the partnerships between public development institutions and the private sector, opens up new spaces of exploitation by creating greater scope for corporate leadership in the development process (Roberts and Soederberg 2012; Prugl and True 2014; Bexell 2012). Moreover, critical sociological and IPE literature has examined the way that corporate citizenship and social responsibility discourses legitimize corporate authority in the development process, appease pressures for tighter regulation, and commodify resistance to corporate practices (Dauvergne and Lebaron 2014; Soederberg 2007; Gregoratti 2010). In policy terms, a historical materialist critique of capital accumulation is often targeted at microfinance and the financialization agenda that aims to ‘bank the unbanked’ by enmeshing the poor in global financial institutions (Weber 2002, 2004; Hudson 2008; Keating, Rasmussen and Rishi 2010; Roy 2010). It links current gender approaches to new modes of capital accumulation through which the reach of hegemonic financial institutions can expand and consolidate their reach, infiltrating previously marginal spaces and populations. While recognizing the regressive conception of gender relations imagined in this agenda – which similarly imagines women in terms of their reproductivity and ‘natural’ feminine care roles – this feminist historical materialist approach locates this phenomenon within the broader processes of capitalist accumulation and suggests that it represents a response to the crisis of capitalism.

One further debate in the literature that responds to the ‘visibility’ challenge, as I have labeled it, revolves around the question of to what extent these new, institutionalized manifestations of gender equality policy can be considered as neoliberal co-optation of feminism or distinct manifestations of feminism itself. Most notably, Nancy Fraser

(2009, 2013) has lamented the neoliberalization of second-wave feminism and the re-signification of feminism in service of neoliberal globalization. Feminism, Fraser suggests, reflects certain “elective affinities” with neoliberalism and its critiques of the economism, androcentrism, etatism, and Westphalianism of the welfare state have been taken up and resignified to provide neoliberalism with a “romantic” gloss. A sizeable body of literature reflects the concern that feminist language and theory has become complicit – or been co-opted – for the promotion of neoliberalism (Eisenstein 2009; McRobbie 2013; Prugl 2013).

Conversely, and noting the problematic nature of attempts to identify ‘real’ feminism or ‘co-opted’ feminism, other contributions approach the dominance of (neo)liberal feminism from the perspective of multiple *feminisms* and diverse incarnations of feminist thought. Feminist political and cultural theorists have introduced new terms to capture recent feminist incarnations, including “transnational business feminism” (Roberts 2012, 2014a), “market feminism” (Kantola and Squires 2012), “faux feminism” (McRobbie 2013), and “post-feminist” politics at the level of global governance (Elias 2013). In contrast to co-optation narratives, contributions from this perspective emphasize the multiple and sometimes contradictory strands of feminism, noting in particular the success of liberal feminism to “rehabilitate” some feminist discourses and goals, albeit in support of a broadly neoliberal agenda (McRobbie 2013: 120). The visibility of girls, women, and gender equality issues on the global governance agenda is the product of the efforts of a powerful coalition of elite women across governments, international institutions, private sector actors, and NGOs who have embraced market mechanisms for pursuing liberal feminist goals (Roberts 2014a; Kantola and Squires 2012).⁸

⁸ Debates about the *nature* of contemporary feminism are refreshingly present in mainstream media, thanks in part to the proliferation of a few high profile feminist figures and groups. In particular, Facebook CEO Sheryl Sandberg’s liberal feminist manifesto *Lean In* generated significant controversy because of its failure to engage with a structural critique of gender inequality in the corporate world and its function as an advice manual for elite, wealthy women (see McRobbie 2013).

While acknowledging the serious flaws of a liberal feminist approach and the complicity of this new liberal feminism in neoliberal policy, analyses which contend with diverse strands of feminism and pose critiques from within the movement take us significantly further than a concerned reflexivity about the extent to which feminist action is forcibly co-opted. The ongoing concerns with co-optation, appropriation, and the limits of feminist engagement with hegemonic neoliberalism reflect longstanding dilemmas in the field and embody core narratives of loss and return that characterize feminist reflection on the field (Hemmings 2011). Furthermore, a concern with the ideological purity of the feminist project is evident in these debates, although this search for purity has the potential to perform its own “disciplining violence” (Zalewski and Runyan 2013: 310).

1.4 Paradoxes of empowerment discourse

The co-optation debate outlined above – contending with the question of feminism’s appropriation, complicity, or fragmentation – is the result of the intricacies of the current visibility of girls and women that I laid out at the beginning of the chapter. Undoubtedly, issues of gender equality enjoy unprecedented visibility on the global stage. Yet, feminist analysis makes apparent the policy processes that underpin this visibility and their general failure to incorporate feminist critiques at a deeper level. Instead, the language of gender equality decorates policy documents and speeches that employ a new grammar of ‘Gender Equality as Smart Economics’ in promotion of the same policy prescriptions: deregulation, privatization, and state restructuring. Women and girls are the current face of this policy agenda, where women’s empowerment has been identified as a silver bullet to eradicate poverty, and yet their position remains highly contested.

Publications from Sheryl Sandberg, Anne Marie Slaughter, and others have reinvigorated a conversation in the USA and UK about employment, career success, and sexism, situated within a broader reemergence of a popular feminist movement (see Rottenberg 2013).

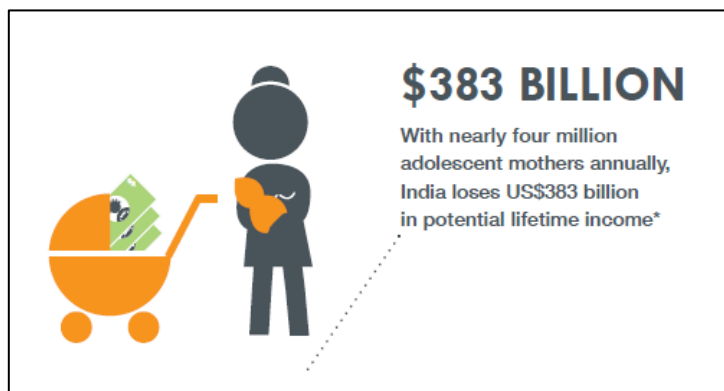
Women, Juanita Elias remarks, appear today as the “archetypal neoliberal subject” (2013: 153), although representations of empowered women and girls are riddled with contradictions. Representations of women in GESE discourse are comprised of contradictory narratives in which women represent both vulnerable victims and empowered leaders; altruistic, loving mothers and autonomous rational economic individuals; dormant development power ready to be unleashed and untrained, unskilled and unproductive non-market actors; and risk-averse actors lacking business skills and promising investors who will drive ethical growth. In short, although images of women’s and girls’ empowerment pervade development discourses the construction of women’s empowerment is underpinned by a series of significant tensions that alternately deploy gender essentialisms, neo-classical economic logic, and entrenched development fables⁹ to articulate a grammar of neoliberal empowerment. Three main paradoxes emerge from the development discourses of the GESE agenda: the paradoxes of female entrepreneurship, feminine difference in the marketplace, and market rationality.

First, the *paradox of female entrepreneurship* reflects images of women as both uniquely vulnerable and responsible. GESE discourses, as I have demonstrated, rest on the contention that women are in fact better and more sustainable sources for economic growth. Women’s supposedly ‘natural’ maternal and family obligations, the frequently repeated narrative contends, means they are likely to re-invest a far higher share of their income in family and children than men are. Women’s empowerment and entrepreneurship are framed as essential solutions to intergenerational poverty precisely because their economic agency is “a natural extension of women’s caregiving responsibilities” (Gregoratti and Allison 2013: 7; see also Bedford 2009a; Maclean 2013). However, this narrative is contradicted by alternate accounts of

⁹ A rich literature on gendered fables and myth-making explores the advantages and disadvantages of embracing particular reductive gender tropes to achieve political aims, variously termed “affirmative essentialisms” (Helms 2003), “feminist fables” (Cornwall, Harrison and Whitehead 2008), “buzzwords” (Cornwall and Brock 2005) and “gendered myths” (Prügl 2012).

economic agency which assume a clear separation between economic and social realms (public/ private), and therefore imagine women's reproductive capacities and caring obligations as direct threats to their economic empowerment (Bergeron 2003). For example, publicity material for the Nike Foundation's Girl Effect campaign features a stylized image of a woman holding a baby next to a baby carriage full of cash to visualize the apparent contradiction between productivity and reproductivity: accompanying text explains that "[w]ith nearly four million adolescent mothers annually, India loses US\$383 billion in potential lifetime income" (Girl Effect n.d. 'Smarter Economics': 3)(See Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3 Image from Girl Effect n.d. 'Smarter Economics'



Premised on an essentialist image of women as naturally altruistic mothers and wives, the paradox of female entrepreneurship that appears in the GESE literature contends that on the one hand, a woman's altruistic and loving ties to family members mean she is a particularly potent source of economic growth; on the other hand, her reproductive and family obligations pose a direct threat to her productivity because they relegate her to the 'social' realm and prevent full engagement in the 'economic' realm. Here, women appear as ideal neoliberal subjects both because and in spite of their reproductive obligations.

The second paradox that appears in the development policy literature is the *paradox of feminine difference*, which makes claims about the essential 'difference' of women and the extent to which that difference

makes women more successful in the marketplace. The GESE discourse is premised, as I suggest above, on the understanding that women are essentially different from men and that this difference is primarily evident in women's altruistic behaviour towards family and children. This innate female altruism is imagined as a crucial distinguishing factor that makes women ideal neoliberal subjects and makes them a more sustainable source of growth for the future, particularly in the post-crisis period (Prugl 2012; Lee 2014). For instance, a new body of management literature (sometimes called 'Womenomics') enthusiastically promotes an "asset-to-estrogen" ratio that leads to "pink profits" to be made from employing women (Shipman and Kay 2010 quoted in Roberts 2012: 90). However, neoclassical economic thought imagines markets as socially dis-embedded, gender-neutral spaces in which rational economic agents compete; the market recognizes no gender. Gender discrimination, under the neoclassical lens, results from women's general lack of appropriate skills or ambitions, but not from any market discrimination against women in particular. Apparent contradictions exist in the competing narratives of gender-neutral "technocratic equality" and "women as saviours" of the global economy (Roberts 2014b: 9). The second paradox therefore lies in the tensions between representations of empowered economic women whose innate feminine difference predisposes them to responsible, sustainable capitalist success and the competing contention that market success is not dependent on gender but on market rationality and skills.

The third paradox – *the paradox of market rationality* – revolves around the problematic notion of the rational market actor and the extent to which market rationality is, in fact, inherent to all people. Williams (1999) introduces the paradox of economic rationality as a critique of contradictions inherent in the policies of neoliberal development institutions. Market rationality is assumed to be inherent to all people, as this forms the very basis for neoclassical models of *homo economicus* and models to predict economic behaviour. However, Williams argues that the policies of development institutions demonstrate attempts to inculcate market rationality, therefore contradicting claims of its

universal innateness and undermining economic theories which assume rationality. Moreover, the paradox of market rationality is gendered, racialized, and culturalized because women are frequently represented as requiring special interventions to instill market rationality and facilitate market success (Bedford 2009a). This gendered paradox is apparent in the extraction metaphors of empowerment that pervade the discourse. The 'Smart Economics' discourse is replete with suggestions that women's economic power is dormant, hidden, or in need of interventions to extract it: an appeal produced by the charity Care International advises viewers that "...often [women's] talent and potential remain untapped... It's a source of power the world can no longer afford to overlook" (Care International 2006; see also Sjoberg 2014). Yet the mode of economic agency envisioned here tends to overlook the intensive labour women already perform, instead conflating "tapping" her potential with financialized entrepreneurship and interaction with lending institutions (see Weber 2004; Roy 2010). The paradox of market rationality pervades the GESE discourse, where dominant neoliberal narratives promote the notion that market rationality is intrinsic to women and must therefore be unleashed so it can contribute to economic growth; simultaneously, GESE discourses imagine women as lacking essential market skills and aptitudes that should be instilled through interventions.

These paradoxes demonstrate that GESE discourse is comprised of a series of competing and contradictory tropes about women and their productivity. On the one hand, the images of women in development are underpinned by deep essentialisms about women as caring mothers, faithful wives, and responsible family providers who are more reliable and better investments, relative to men, because they are naturally responsible and family-oriented. They are imagined as having a dormant entrepreneurial potential that, if harnessed properly, can save the global economy and eradicate poverty. On the other hand, women are continually represented in terms of their vulnerability, precarity, marginality from markets, and unsuitability for productive work because of their lack of socialization or training in business, their reproductive obligations, and their distance from market cultures. Furthermore,

feminine difference and the idealized feminine neoliberal subject clash with entrenched neoclassical economic theories which understand markets and market rationality as socially dis-embedded and gender-blind institutions.

I suggest, however, that the tropes about women's empowerment that form the GESE discourse are not in fact paradoxical or in tension with each other, but that they are representative of a particular mode of visibility accorded to 'empowerable' women in development discourses. I demonstrate in the next chapter that a feminist reading of Foucault's human capital critique reconciles these paradoxes and demonstrates the ways in which apparently contradictory representations are in fact reflective of the complex subjectivity of the 'empowerable' woman. A critical examination of the discursive terms upon which women have been accorded visibility in global development discourses – through the lens of human capital – demonstrates the links between analytical and programmatic aspects of empowerment discourse; in other words, it sheds light on the relationship between the categories employed to represent women and the policy interventions that those representations legitimize. There is no contradiction between the tropes that deploy essentialist constructions of female bodies, ascriptions of altruistic maternal responsibility, claims about women's lack of adequate market mentalities, and assertions about the gender-neutrality of markets and productivity. Through a feminist critique of human capital, we can see the relationship of 'activation' between the two, wherein particular essentialist characteristics ascribed to women are positioned as ideal qualities to be harnessed and developed by interventions to socialize women into the market and thereby inculcate a neoliberal feminized subjectivity, an 'entrepreneur of herself'.

Conclusions

Feminist efforts to publicly and effectively link gender equality to the broader project of socio-economic justice currently face a 'strategically crucial' moment characterized by visibility, influence, and peril. From the

earliest incarnations of Women in Development and Gender and Development frameworks, feminist efforts to effect transformative change through global development institutions have been fraught with tension and characterized by frequent self-reflection over the nature of engagement, co-optation, and de-politicization of feminist goals. This challenge endures today in a more acute form, given the public prominence and increased funding of gender equality initiatives which reflect changes wrought over decades of feminist research, policy engagement, and activism. The Gender Equality as Smart Economics policy agenda which dominates so many powerful institutions poses significant challenges because of the extent to which it incorporates feminist language and ideas in order to re-formulate and perpetuate neoliberal economic policies. Particular strands of liberal feminism have been successfully incorporated into development policy, with the result of shoring up corporate power in the process, instrumentalizing feminist goals, and mediating demands through a market rationale. The result is a largely de-politicized and de-contextualized faux feminist façade that serves as a widely accepted and comfortable (read: unthreatening) policy discourse for the continuation of a neoliberal macroeconomic policy agenda that is so detrimental to the project of gender justice.

Feminist global political economy literature contends with these challenges and addresses the economic components of gender justice, presenting critiques of orthodox economics, highlighting the crucial role of social reproduction, and illuminating the gendered norms that underpin global governance. Within this literature, the paradoxical discourses of GESE raise a challenge for interpreting and mapping the implications of dominant gender equality policies and the powerful tropes they engender. As such, an analysis of the discursive construction of women and the ways in which their empowerment and economic agency are conceived is essential. In the next chapter, I make a theoretical contribution to this literature by introducing the framework of 'empowerability' through a feminist critique of human capital.

Chapter Two: 'Empowerability' and Human Capital

"To the question whether a Foucauldian feminism is a contradiction in terms, a Foucauldian feminist might reply; 'No, not a contradiction but a continual contestation.'"

(Sawicki 1991: 66)

In a series of lectures delivered in 1979, and recently published in English as *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Michel Foucault suggested that economic thinking about global poverty was undergoing a shift. In the future, he suggested, economists and policy makers would think of the "problem of the failure of Third World economies to get going, not in terms of the blockage of economic mechanisms, but in terms of insufficient investment in human capital" (2008: 232). This shift has undoubtedly come to pass. The concept of 'human capital' is now pervasive in development, business, and management discourses where it signals long-term human resources strategies to improve productivity and output through investment in the workforce. Notably, the human capital discourse is especially prevalent in discussions of women's empowerment, where the conceptualization of supposedly economically inactive women as 'untapped' human capital resources has acquired political salience.

Critics of neoliberalism, and Foucault in particular, have been interested in the discursive power of the human capital approach and its implications for governance for several decades. Foucault has long been a source of inspiration for critical development and feminist scholars and his thinking about different forms of power and their circulation in social relationships is fundamental for understanding the function of gender as a governing code. I have demonstrated in the previous chapter that the current economic gender equality discourses are premised on the oft-repeated notion that girls and women should be the subjects of investment in order to increase their

earning power. Furthermore, dominant narratives of empowerment purport to activate women's dormant qualities through a range of interventions to inculcate women and girls with market skills and mentalities, in order to promote their full participation in productive labor. This discourse has acquired significant visibility and policy power. In this context, Foucault's human capital critique is more relevant than ever. However, there has so far been little feminist engagement with the topic of human capital and its role in broader empowerment discourses. In this chapter I offer feminist engagement with Foucault's critique that bolsters his theory by way of a challenge, addressing its failure to engage with gender. I suggest that the activation narrative of human capital appears, under feminist eyes, to reflect the notion that the supposedly intrinsic responsible and maternal nature of women can be harnessed to produce more profitable and sustainable development outcomes and, by extension, 'rescue' global capitalism.

This chapter proceeds in four parts. In section 2.1, I review feminist engagement with Foucauldian analysis of power and outline the contribution of the empowerability framework to the current literature. In section 2.2, I discuss the relevance of 'human capital' for development today and Foucault's critique of the human capital framework. I then offer a feminist reading of the human capital critique. In sections 2.3 and 2.4, I provide a detailed re-interpretation of the two parts of the human capital critique – inborn qualities and acquired skills – with reference to dominant discourses of development policy literature and the most prominent tropes about women's empowerment that circulate within it. In doing so, I demonstrate the value of a critique of human capital for an analysis of 'empowerability'. I conclude by outlining the relationship between the critique of human capital and the 'empowerability' framework.

2.1 Foucauldian Critiques of Empowerment

Foucauldian thought has been extensively employed by feminists across disciplines to illuminate different forms of power and their exercise on the body. Broadly, feminists have found a Foucauldian

approach to power helpful to understand the complex nature of gender relations and women's subordination. His ideas about the co-constitution of power and knowledge – and the role of discourse in the exercise of power – provide tools for understanding the operation of gender as a governing code in social life. Furthermore, Foucault's notion of the body (and sexuality) as the principal site of power is useful to explore mechanisms of social control that function through gendered hierarchies and social structures (see Deveaux 1994; McNay 1992; Sawicki 1991; Hekman 2007).

However, there has been significant feminist critique of Foucault; these critiques follow a few main lines. First, and perhaps most significantly, comes from modernist feminists who fear the post-modern turn in feminist theory (and the destruction of the subject) and by extension identify Foucault's influence as wholly destructive and de-politicizing for feminism (Zalewski 2000). In a related critique, feminists express concern that Foucault's rejection of universal claims or norms diminishes the possibility for an emancipatory politics. Finally, Foucauldian accounts of subjectivity, agency, and power have come up against charges of nihilism; feminists fear that a Foucauldian perspective on subjectivity as completely determined by social forces – and the co-constitution of power/knowledge – erases the possibility of acquiring transformative knowledge and removes the potential for resistance (McLaren 2002; see for example Hartsock 1990; Fraser 1989).

Despite his central contributions to theorizing sexuality and power, Foucault's analysis fails to engage with gender: he treats the body, and bodily experiences, as though men and women "bore the same relationship to the characteristic institutions of modern life" and thereby reproduces the sexism of Western political theory (Bartky 1990: 65). This thesis is therefore situated in that growing body of feminist literature which acknowledges the fruitful potential for feminist engagement with Foucault, while taking a critical stance towards some of the most glaring flaws and silences in his analysis; his unproblematized androcentricity is only one among these. In this regard,

I align myself most closely with the group Margaret McLaren calls “extenders” of Foucault: while they see limits and incompatibilities, these feminists “draw on Foucault’s work and apply it to women’s experience” while acknowledging reservations about other aspects of his work or overall project (2013: 14). Despite the limitations of some aspects of Foucault’s thought and potential incompatibilities with feminist theory, Foucauldian analysis of neoliberalism and the changes wrought by globalization is essential for understanding new dynamics of social regulation and biopolitical intervention (Fraser 2003; Heyes 2013; Oksala 2013).

Empowerment has been theorized in terms of Foucauldian biopolitics and disciplinary power (see Deveaux 1994). Initially, Barbara Cruikshank’s work on democratic citizenship opened up a rich field of analysis by theorizing new ‘empowering’ technologies of citizenship that regulated and instilled the capacity to act “as a certain kind of citizen with certain aims” (1999: 4).

“The logic of empowerment targets the capacities of the ‘powerless,’ measures and seeks to maximize their actions, motivations, interests, and economic and political involvements. Here power works by soliciting the active participation of the poor in dozens of programs on the local level: programs that aim at the transformation of the poor into self-sufficient, active, productive, and participatory citizens” (Cruikshank 1999: 69)

Development studies literature similarly employs a Foucauldian approach to biopower in order to illuminate new technologies of development governance and to make links between the sovereign power of the colonial with the biopower of the post-colonial (Brigg 2002, 2001; MirafTab 2004; Nielsen and Triantafillou 2001). Feminists have used Foucauldian tools to argue that empowerment interventions, and microfinance interventions in particular, function to responsabilize women and cultivate a particular subjectivity: a self-maximizing entrepreneur who functions efficiently in the market and addresses her

own needs outside of state provision (Rankin 2001; Schild 2000, 2002; Molyneux 2006; Lairap Fonderon 2002; Ilcan and Lacey 2006; Walker et. al. 2008). However, a significant gap exists in this literature: although feminist analysis of empowerment has productively integrated a Foucauldian critique to illuminate the disciplinary functions of empowerment, feminist analysis has overlooked the centrality of human capital to empowerment discourses. By extension, feminists have so far overlooked Foucault's critique of human capital and the analytical potential of a feminist reading of this concept to deconstruct dominant empowerment discourses.

A Foucauldian approach to power allows us to grasp the shifting forms that power takes – from sovereign power to disciplinary, biopolitical power – and to apprehend the linkages between knowledge and power that work to normalize particular social structures.¹⁰ By extension, this Foucauldian perspective sheds light on the potential limits of empowerment approaches and the possibility for neoliberal governance to work *through* empowerment mechanisms to produce self-governing subjectivities. The 'empowerability' framework here builds on the extant literature and employs Foucauldian tools to study empowerment discourses, but it departs from previous work and contributes in three specific ways. First, rather than re-engaging with Foucauldian critiques of biopower, this thesis addresses Foucault's critique of human capital and is the first (to my knowledge) in the feminist literature to do so. As the lectures containing this material have only been available in English since 2008, and there has been as yet little feminist engagement with these lectures (Oksala 2013), this represents a new contribution to this body of literature. Second, engagement with Foucault's critique of

¹⁰ Although it is beyond the scope here, theorizing the nature of power in empowerment is an important task for feminist theories of empowerment, consciousness raising, and feminist pedagogy. Most prominently, Amy Allen (1998) has established a typology to understand the kinds of power encompassed within empowerment theories: power over (constraining the power of others), power to (the ability of an actor to act towards an end), and power with (solidarity and collective action); (See also Cheater 1999; James 1999; Wong 2003; Rowlands 1997; Carr 2003).

human capital highlights the gendered links between ‘inborn qualities’ and ‘acquired skills’ that underpin the human capital framework in ‘Smart Economics’ discourses. The framework’s effort to articulate the relationship between the supposedly intrinsic qualities ascribed to women and the proposed interventions to harness those qualities enriches the feminist literature by extending extant critiques of governmentality and further theorizing the connection between affirmative essentialisms deployed to increase the visibility of women on the development agenda and the instrumentalization of these essentialisms. Furthermore, it illuminates the highly exclusionary mode of empowerment and productivity inscribed in dominant empowerment discourses and highlights the people who are marginalized in these discourses. Third, the empowerability framework contributes to a timely debate in the feminist political economy literature on the dominant ‘Gender Equality as Smart Economics’ agenda. So far, much of the critique in this body of literature has taken a feminist institutionalist or historical materialist approach; Foucauldian analysis has been less prominent in the debate.¹¹ The empowerability framework contributes to the extant literature and provides a relevant contribution to empowerment critiques because it derives from a feminist critique of human capital.

2.2 Empowerment and Human Capital

The human capital framework today constitutes one of the primary modes of visibility for women in development: the re-formulation of gender inequality as ‘insufficient investment’ in women’s human capital has provided a salient narrative by which gender equality can be ‘sold’ to policy makers. The concept of human capital re-imagines the human

¹¹ Magdalena Bexell’s 2012 article on public-private partnerships is a notable exception. She employs a Foucauldian power analysis to demonstrate the way that the discourses deployed by public-private partnerships for gender equality function as technologies of governmentality and aim to cultivate self-regulatory subjectivities in women. However, she does not engage with the concept of human capital.

as a form of capital, where a person can invest in herself to increase the income she earns; human capital therefore understands the acquisition of skills and knowledge as “an investment in one’s labour productivity” (Robeyns 2006: 72).

Human capital is a popular framework among international financial institutions and development banks. For instance, the Inter-American Development Bank is committed to contributing to human capital accumulation through “training, social support and good health” that contribute to boosting incomes (IADB 2013). The World Economic Forum in 2013 published a “Human Capital Report” that sought to measure human capital and rank countries in terms of their investment in the “capacity of the population to drive economic growth”, using indicators to evaluate four categories: education, health and wellness, workforce and employment, and enabling environment (legal and physical infrastructure) (World Economic Forum 2013b). In the management literature, human capital management (closely associated with human resources management) approaches a firm’s staff as a “high level strategic issue” and seeks to systematically “analyse, measure and evaluate how people, policies, and practices create value” (Task Force on Human Capital Management 2003 cited in Baron and Armstrong 2007: 1). It is concerned with integrating human resources into business strategy in order to pursue a competitive advantage; its management strategy is therefore shared across fields and demonstrates, to some extent, the convergence of development with management literatures and the blurring of lines between the two. Given the current popularity of the concept and its association with civil society and the private sector, some observers have noted that human capital has been “rejuvenated” in a privatized form (Walker et. al. 2008: 538; see also Robeyns 2006).

In the development literature, the recent emphasis on human capital is indicative of a ‘human development’ perspective that emphasizes the beneficial outcomes on economic growth that result from investment in health, education, and wellbeing of populations and reflects the advent of a post-Washington Consensus (Mahon 2010). Human capital has

been popularized as a social investment approach in post-Washington Consensus development policy, promoting the linkage between investment in human capabilities and resources (through health, education, and population) and economic growth (Jenson 2010). Within the World Bank, human capital is employed to shed light on human dimensions of development while demonstrating the economic value of various ‘social’ interventions. It gained prominence as a result of criticism of ‘trickle down’ growth models and therefore provided a corollary to dominant economic growth strategies (Hall 2010). The World Bank formally took up a human capital framework in 1995, outlining its approach in two reports that conceived of human capital investment as the most efficient way to increase economic participation and growth (Psacharopoulos 1995; World Bank 1995).

This approach proposed investment specifically in the most disadvantaged groups – girls, indigenous peoples, and the poorest – to allow them to take advantage of economic opportunities. Among these vulnerable groups, women and girls were particularly targeted for human capital-building interventions: women because they were mothers who shaped the quality of future human capital and girls because they constituted “human capital in the making” (Mahon 2010: 178). Accordingly, girls and women gained visibility in development policies, and particularly in education policy, as ideal targets for interventions to develop their human capital. By demonstrating the ‘social externalities’ of investment in women’s human capital – investments in women’s health are linked to lower fertility, higher life expectancy, and better nutrition levels – gender equity advocates were able to successfully ‘sell’ gender expertise to Bank policy makers. As a result, Bank funding for projects with ‘gender related components’ has increased substantially in the areas of health, population and education (O’Brien 2000: 48).

Returning to the popular understanding of women’s labour power as ‘untapped’ or ‘undiscovered’, I suggest that a human capital approach structures this conceptualization and proposes mechanisms by which a greater income can be generated from women. Moreover, the human

capital approach is consistent with the World Bank's concern to promote public-private partnerships and reliance on private provision to improve 'efficiency' of resource allocation (Mahon 2010: 179; see also Bergeron 2003). Human capital continues to feature prominently in the World Bank's discourses around girls, women, and education; it is employed throughout the 2012 World Development Report, whose primary goal is to understand the occurrence of "gender gaps in human capital" and suggest policy solutions to allow women to "build their human capital and take up economic opportunities" (World Bank 2012d: 6; see Chapters 4 and 5). The human capital framework therefore represents an important aspect of the World Bank's efforts to integrate social policy into its economic frameworks and, moreover, constitutes a particularly important site for the analysis of dominant gender and development discourse.

The development of the concept of human capital in economic analysis is associated with the work of neoliberal economists of the Chicago school,¹² who from the 1950s and 1960s onward sought to challenge the classical economic assumption that labour was "given" and "non-augmentable"; instead, they argued that individuals could, on the basis of cost-benefit analysis, decide how much to invest in their health, education, training, and other inputs (Becker 1997).¹³ Human capital, in

¹² The key neoliberal thinkers in this field include Theodore Schultz, Gary Becker, Jacob Mincer and Irving Fisher. Foucault's analysis concentrated especially on Gary Becker, whom he saw as the most radical proponent of American neoliberalism (Lemke 2001: fn 5). Becker's work is particularly interesting for a feminist political economy perspective, because of his contention that economic analytical frameworks could be extended to analyze marriage, divorce, fertility, and relations between members of the family in terms of economic rationality and utility-maximizing behaviour. Becker's work on the family has been extensively critiqued by feminist economists (see Ferber and Nelson 1993; Ferber 2003; Woolley 1996; Bergmann 1995).

¹³ The human capital framework was the subject of serious debate in its early years and well into the 1970s when Foucault's lectures on the subject were delivered. It is notable, therefore, that by the time Gary Becker delivered his 1992 Nobel Laureate Lecture on human capital, he could remark that human capital was at that point "so uncontroversial" that it may be difficult for the audience to "appreciate the

neoliberal thought, is constituted by a shift between the relations of capital and labour: in place of a relationship where wages are exchanged for labour power, they imagine wages as income and labour power as capital. That is, all the “physical and psychological factors” that make a person able to earn a wage comprise capital, from which income is generated (Foucault 2008: 224). This re-conceptualization of labour power as capital means that capital is inseparable from the person who possesses it, so that the “worker himself appears as a sort of enterprise for himself” (Foucault 2008: 225).

Human capital is thus situated in the broader context of neoliberalism as a tool for shaping the economic subjectivity of individuals. It further embeds neoliberalism’s expansion of economic analysis into all spheres of life as it blurs the boundaries between the economic (wealth) and the social (humans): human beings are reconfigured as subjects into which investment can be placed to produce an economic result in the future. This critique of human capital formed part of Foucault’s larger concern in the 1979 lectures to conceptualize neoliberalism as a form of governmentality and to explore its eradication of borders between economic and social realms (Oksala 2013).

Foucault took particular interest in neoliberal discourses of human capital and the way they reconfigured everyday practices in terms of the need to be an entrepreneur of one’s self. In particular, Foucault used human capital as an example of linkages between the analytical and programmatic axes of neoliberal rationality: he sought to illuminate the extent to which, under the neoliberal lens, the economic is not “firmly outlined and delineated” but comes to include all forms of human action and behaviour (Lemke 2001: 197-8). The move to analyze human action through the lens of economic rationality, in order to understand individual choices, therefore blurs the disciplinary boundaries of economics so that it comes to include all forms of human behaviour.

hostility... toward the approach” in its early days. While early critics saw the human capital approach as demeaning because it conceptualized humans as machines, Becker in 1992 claimed that economists now accepted it as a valuable tool for social and political analysis (Becker 1997 [1992]).

Foucault observed the prevalence of human capital models and this mode of neoliberal economic rationality and developed a critique in order to propel a broader argument about the totalizing economic logic of neoliberalism (see Lemke 2001; Dilts 2011; Read 2009; Gordon 1991).¹⁴

Human capital comprises the idea that income is a wage allocated to a particular capital; this capital is inseparable from the human who bears it, and therefore, in Foucault's analysis, the human is an "ability-machine" within the analytical grid of neoliberalism (Foucault 2008: 226). How, then, is human capital formed? At the most basic level, Foucault suggests, human capital is comprised of "innate elements" and other "acquired elements". The first half of the human capital model comprises the inborn, hereditary/ genetic predisposition of individuals. The qualities that inhere within the labourer are dormant to the extent that they cannot be fully realized without appropriate investment and promotion by external forces; they are "specific attributes, abilities, and natural endowments" that predispose *homo economicus* to particular kinds of economic behaviour (Dilts 2011: 138).

The second half of the human capital model, what Foucault refers to as the more "voluntary" aspects that contribute to the formation, revolves around educational investments. These investments include, but are not limited to, education and training; more broadly, Foucault describes a variety of investments in human capital that essentially correspond to the processes of social reproduction, although he does not use that term. Foucault imagines social reproduction as the "machine of freedom-production and character management" and thereby

¹⁴ This line of critique is clearly influential in contemporary feminist critiques of instrumentalist 'efficiency' accounts of women in development that subject women's capabilities to a cost-benefit analysis in order to determine them suitable for inclusion as *agents* of development. While the efficiency rationale perhaps currently provides powerful and institutionally salient narratives of women's labour power, as Jane Jaquette illustrates, the instrumentalist logic upon which it is based also contains within it the logic to justify women's exclusion from the development process on the basis of an economic analysis (1990).

represents mothering as a strategy of governance (Goodman 2013: 97-8; see also Ong 2006); as a result, he anticipates that the evaluation of human capital will involve a wide-ranging “environmental analysis” which may involve a whole-scale reconceptualization of social institutions in terms of the extent to which they improve human capital (Foucault 2008: 230; Feher 2009). In this context, investment is not limited to financial resources but covers a wide range of activities that increase the capacity to “earn income or achieve satisfaction,” including activities like nutrition, education, and training (Read 2009: 28). The central relationship here is between those qualities that are inborn in the labourer and the use of investment to harness and activate them.

While Foucault’s critique of human capital does not directly address gender, the above discussion illuminates the deeply gendered themes that run through it, in the allusion to processes of social reproduction. His discussion of human capital is ‘gender blind’ insofar as he does not draw out specifically gendered implications for the concept and does not consider the way that human capital is mapped differently onto gendered and sexed bodies. Moreover, the supposed ‘gender blindness’ here can be instead read as androcentricity, given the reliance on the model of *homo economicus*, for which he provides a critique that does not address gender, and repeated (default) use of ‘him’ and ‘his’. His critique works to destabilize the notion of human capital by exposing its core components and situating it within a broader neoliberal rationale, though it simultaneously works to reify the androcentricity of economic analysis. Considering this significant silence in Foucault’s work on human capital, I therefore propose to provide a feminist reading of the human capital critique that accounts for the gendered aspects of the concept and its political implications.

A feminist critique of human capital is, furthermore, essential because of the gendered implications of the human capital theory’s challenge to the classical liberal distinction between productive and reproductive spheres. The erosion between these spheres occurred as a result of the shift from focus on the “free labourer” who exchanges her labour for a price, to the human capital model, in which the labourer is the

entrepreneur of her own capital; this is the model that constitutes “the target and basis of neoliberal policies” (Feher 2009: 31). Human capital does not presuppose a separation between realms of production and reproduction, but conflates the two by re-imagining *all* human behaviours and activities in terms of their impact on the value of one’s human capital. The work of social reproduction is thus rendered visible to the extent that it impacts human capital: “The various things I do, in any existential domain (dietary, erotic, religious, etc.), all contribute to either appreciating or depreciating the human capital that is me, no less than does my diligence as a worker or my ability to trade my professional skills” (Feher 2009: 30). The formulation of economic agency and productive subjectivities – in terms of human capital investment – has accorded particular visibility to girls and women as disempowered, yet ‘empowerable’, subjects.

In line with the shift from state- to market-based order, development rationality has undergone a shift away from state provision and intervention in poverty-eradication to a neoliberal rationale that devolves responsibility onto citizens as customers, clients, or entrepreneurs. These citizen-entrepreneurs are responsible for securing their own economic survival (Rankin 2001; Schild 2002; Molyneux 2006; Pupavac 2005; Chant 2008; Ong 2006). Consequently, focus is re-located towards the identification and cultivation of development subjectivities at the individual level; in this context, the new agents of development are “women entrepreneurs” who are attributed “cultural propensities to invest widely and look after their families” (Rankin 2001: 20). The human capital approach reconfigures the relations between labourer, capital, and the economic system in ways that reflect the trends in gender and development today. Empowerment-centered development programs similarly shift the focus on economic efforts away from a separation between labourer and capital towards an entrepreneurial system of individual responsabilization aimed at self-sufficiency. Through investment in skills, enhancement of capabilities, and promotion of behaviours, the labourer becomes a form of capital.

I suggest a feminist reading of Foucault's human capital critique serves as a useful tool for feminist political economists concerned with the dominant development discourses around gender and 'Smart Economics', because it sheds light on the way that gender, sexuality, and economic viability are constructed and deployed. I therefore proceed by mapping the two halves of Foucault's human capital critique – inborn qualities and acquired skills/ learned behaviours – onto development policy discourses about women's empowerment.

2.3 Inborn Qualities

As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, women's visibility as subjects of the development gaze has long been predicated on particular narratives of their reproductivity and productivity. When accorded particular visibility in development discourses, women's subjectivity and agency is narrowly circumscribed and mediated by its relation to pre-existing and culturally resonant narratives of femininity, womanhood, and motherhood. In other words, women are highly visible subjects of development, and frequently represented as an 'under-utilized' or 'untapped' resource, not only because of perceptions that they are economically inactive or marginal, but because of the claim that they possess particular qualities that are conducive to sustainable growth and poverty eradication. For Foucault, the innate aspects of human capital inhere in biological and hereditary qualities that are unconsciously acquired; I break with this understanding and instead approach the question of 'innate' aspects from a social constructivist perspective. I do not endorse a biologically essentialist account of sex or gender, as these categories have long been problematized and deconstructed by feminists (see Butler 1993, 1999). Instead, I propose to re-interpret Foucault's focus on innate qualities in terms of the attributes and characteristics that are ascribed to women within development discourses in order to analyze their role in representations of 'empowerability'. In particular, I will explore the function of three familiar essentialisms that feature heavily in the discourse and which predicate (and circumscribe) a particular understanding of the 'empowerable

woman' through her human capital: maternal altruism, responsibility, and risk averseness.

Maternal Altruism

In dominant development discourses, women are ascribed innate characteristics of altruism and maternal care. Tropes around motherhood, self-sacrifice, and innate maternal responsibility abound in the literature; observers of gender and development literature will be familiar with the frequently repeated claims about women's tendency to re-invest income in their families, in contrast to men's wasteful spending. Current incarnations of empowerment in development discourse are underpinned by the assumption that women are "necessarily attached" by loving and altruistic bonds to family members, with whom they will naturally share income (Bedford 2009a). Studies find that women who control family income spend more on their family's needs than their own needs (Agarwal 1995; Chant 1997); women are more likely to save their income for family use, as opposed to men (Brickell and Chant 2010); migrant women also remit at higher rates than men (Kunz 2011). From a feminist political economy perspective, this is reflective of long-observed gendered division of labour, and its association with an innate female altruism is deeply problematic. Leaving aside the essentialisms that underpin the discourse, a feminist political economy analysis of this purported 'altruism' immediately raises the issues of the undervaluation of social reproduction, gendered division of labour, and constraints of patriarchal structures. Attributing women's performance of social reproductive work to altruism – and further validating the unpaid nature of care work by associating it with voluntarism – fundamentally misrecognizes the impact of patriarchal social structures on labour and gender relations and in doing so, conflates 'natural' manifestations of femininity with symptoms of patriarchal control (Kabeer 1999; Wilson 2013; Molyneux 1998).¹⁵ In

¹⁵ Furthermore, Sylvia Chant notes, cultural expectations of female altruism can severely constrain women's ability to negotiate obligations and entitlements in the home, and can have serious consequences for women who deviate from expectations in this regard. In this way, she suggests, culturally-condoned ideas

strategic terms, a discourse that valorizes women as natural, altruistic carers but does not acknowledge the social and political implications of gender roles and structures provides little conceptual space for a critique of structural inequality (and ideas for transforming those structures); instead it reproduces the expectation that women will continue to carry the care work burden out of altruism or maternal affection.

Discourses valorizing the “good mother” have emerged, not uncoincidentally, since the 1980s alongside policies of economic restructuring and state rollback which re-privatized social reproduction on the assumption that would women re-absorb the care burden. Narratives of the “good mother” are not innocent of their political contexts but perform an important legitimizing function for particular economic agendas (Hart 1997; Jackson and Pearson 1996). The discourses tend to dichotomize the “irresponsible individualist man” and “cooperative, community-minded, caring woman” (Cornwall 2000: 22), evident in the oft-cited (and heavily moralized) images of women’s “good” spending on children’s needs and men’s “bad” spending on sensual pleasures like alcohol and cigarettes (Wilson 2013: 90). The image of the caring and self-sacrificing mother is powerful and culturally resonant across contexts, which makes it a salient and effective mode of visibility for women in development discourses. Discourses that valorize motherhood are unassailable and easily gain traction across institutional and policy contexts, where “comfortable and unquestionable” terms and narratives can conceal a range of possible meanings or dissent (Parpart, Rai and Staudt 2003: 3). Essentialist discourses around maternal care that unproblematically equate womanhood with altruistic motherhood, and naturalize a gendered division of labour with reference to innate maternal nature, serve in part to legitimize a policy agenda of privatization of social reproduction. Women’s incorporation into development policy in terms of their maternal altruism and voluntaristic performance of social reproduction

about natural female altruism compound the feminization of responsibility and poverty (Chant 2007, 2008).

risks facilitating further exploitation by allowing programmes to capitalize on the “altruistic burden” (Brickell and Chant 2010: 146; see also Maclean 2012, 2013; Molyneux 2006; Elias 2013; El Yachar 2002). Nonetheless, ascriptions of natural, maternal altruism to women are pervasive in dominant development discourses that articulate a case for women’s productivity and responsibility as functions of their maternal obligations.

Responsibility

Tropes of maternal altruism are closely connected to those discourses that imagine women as innately responsible. Dominant ideas about women’s maternal and self-sacrificing nature have been translated, in policy terms, into the construction of a particular development subject who is the ideal target for investment. Tropes of responsibility valorize and legitimize the notion of the “altruistic burden” and women’s voluntaristic performance of social reproduction (Brickell and Chant 2010). Discussion of the responsible and resourceful agency of disempowered women “fill the institutional reports” of development agencies, reflecting both increased interest in the poverty experienced by the ‘Third World Woman’ and the articulation of her responsibility to overcome that poverty (Madhok and Rai 2012: 649; see also John 1996). Furthermore, there is a significant ambivalence between empowerment and “neoliberal dumping” of responsibility and risk-management in development interventions, where responsibility for care work is offloaded to women and simultaneously valorized in terms of caring, altruistic family relations (Brush 2002; Maclean 2013). Similarly, Sylvia Chant suggests that within the recognition of the “feminization of poverty” and attempts to measure that trend, there has been a significant undercurrent of “feminization of responsibility and obligation” whereupon women’s work is diversified and intensified, but this has not been accompanied by a shift in men’s contribution to caring labour, an increase in women’s negotiating power within the home, or an increase in corresponding rights and rewards (Chant 2006, 2007, 2008). There appears, therefore, to be significant slippage between tropes that valorize women’s innate ‘responsibility’ and efforts to ‘responsibilize’

women in the Foucauldian sense – to produce self-governing citizens who are empowered, entrepreneurial, and above all else, self-sufficient. Moreover, the nature of female responsibility that emerges from these discourses constructs a subject who is not only responsible for self-care, but care of others in her family and community.

The concept of responsibility, particularly in its ascription to women in the context of development interventions, has been extensively problematized by feminist research in the area of microcredit. Microcredit literatures and credit institutions target women in particular for loans because of the notion that women are a low-risk group of borrowers, because they are seen as more responsible, more likely to repay, and less likely to default. Women's proportionally higher rates of repayment are lauded in microcredit literatures as evidence of their management skills and willingness to self-sacrifice in order to cope with debt obligations (Moodie 2013). These discourses of female responsibility, however, hide "toxic synergies" between patriarchal and financial structures (Karim 2008). High repayment rates result, in part, from structural features of microfinance like solidarity borrowing, where commitments to the borrowing group serve as collateral on an individual's loan, which employs social pressures to coerce repayment through extant social inequalities (Shakya and Rankin 2008; Rankin 2002; Keating, Rasmussen, and Rishi 2010; Roy 2010; Rahman 1999; Bergeron 2003). Furthermore, women's representation as low-risk and responsible borrowers stems in part from the notion that women are easier to control (Karim 2008; Chakravarti 2008). In the context of economic crisis and instability, discourses that valorize women's perceived responsibility and resilience have come to represent sustainable economic development (see Pupavac 2005), embodied by the opposition between gendered modes of development, entrepreneurship, and risk.

Risk-averseness

In the current financial system, risk taking is highly valorized and masculinized: risk-taking in general (and physical/ sexual risk-taking in

particular) is associated with the performance of masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Connell 2005). In this context, financial risk occupies a privileged position and financial risk-takers assume a highly valued status on par with those who take physical risks in pursuit of adventure (de Goede 2004). This reflects a gendered value system in which danger and uncertainty are made distinct from risk, because rewards accrue to profit-worthy risks; furthermore, the construction of profit-worthy risks assigns value to activities that men do (Moodie 2013). Despite the neoliberal valorization of risk taking, or perhaps because the heavily masculinized discourse around risk and post-crisis gendered narratives of risk and finance, women in the development literature are often ascribed a natural risk-averseness that corresponds to their family responsibility. Women have been targeted on the basis of their assumed responsibility and risk averse nature, particularly in the area of microcredit (Maclean 2012, 2013). Indeed, the institution credited with founding the microcredit 'revolution', the Bangladesh-based Grameen Bank, operates on a set of assumptions about "good women" and "risky men", thereby managing risk by "gendered and intimate techniques of rule" (Roy 2010: 50). Reflecting the globalization and financialization of microcredit, many of the gendered discourses of risk and responsibility long common to microfinance literatures and institutions are now visible in governments, banks, and corporations in wealthy western countries in the aftermath of the global financial crisis.

Much of the post-crisis economic discourse on gender and risk positions the moderating figure of the female investor/ entrepreneur as the solution to global financial crisis and underdevelopment, through narratives underpinned by similar gendered assumptions and constructions of risk-taking. In the post-GFC political discourse, a binary has been established between "reckless man" and "responsible woman", where women are understood as moral agents able to mediate between the supposedly male desire for profit and the unpredictability of the market (Prugl 2012: 23-4). These same gendered essentialisms are pervasive in post-GFC analyses and prescriptions, where women are attributed a 'natural prudence' that makes them well suited to act as agents of economy recovery (Elias 2013; Roberts 2012; Griffin 2013).

The most prominent post-crisis narrative has centered around the two related contentions that women could have prevented the crisis, had they been represented in greater numbers at troubled financial institutions and that, going forward, women embody a more responsible and ethical approach to finance which can prevent future crises.

Furthermore, post-crisis narratives of gender have coalesced around the articulation of feminine difference in terms of women as profitable and sustainable investors who can pioneer a new form of ethical, post-crisis capitalism. In the popular literature on women investors (particularly self-help books), gender essentialisms are employed to demonstrate women's superiority as investors. Women will "nurture" their investments and make "calmer, more disciplined" decisions; women are "bargain hunters" who, by virtue of their role as brand-conscious consumers, "know the value" of expensive products (Lee 2014: 6; see also Roberts 2014b). Particularly in the aftermath of the GFC, this idea of a natural feminine financial prudence has been used extensively to advocate for the inclusion of more women in positions of power within corporations and government, articulating an equality argument from a position of feminine difference, though this discourse extends beyond the realm of finance and characterizes development literature broadly.

The image of feminine subjectivities that emerges from a critical reading of the development literature is characterized by a series of essentialisms that, firstly, conflate women's subjectivities with a range of reproductive activities which are naturalized as the product of feminine altruism. By extension, it reads reproductivity as constitutive of increased responsibility, productivity, and sustainability. These characteristics are imagined, however, as 'dormant' (or 'untapped' in the current development parlance) and women's potential as yet-to-be-realized by the global economy. As such, representations of natural female altruism and productivity are bound up with claims about which women are most 'empowerable' and the empowerment interventions needed to harness their power.

2.4 Acquired skills

The neoliberal notion of human capital is, for Foucault, premised on the identification of particular innate qualities and their activation through interventions to bring forth specific skills and qualities that are conducive to economic productivity. Human capital is formed when innate attributes are harnessed in such a way as to transform humans into “abilities-machines” whose abilities will “produce income” (Foucault 2008: 229). In the neoliberal conception of human capital, proposed interventions to capitalize on inborn qualities include parental care, education, training, health and hygiene, environmental factors, and mobility. In a feminist reading of the human capital critique, and one that takes into account the current discursive context of ‘Smart Economics’ and the visibility of particular gendered constructions in development, I suggest first, that a narrative of activation underpins the discourse and second, that a range of interventions appear as mechanisms for the activation of dormant potential. These interventions support Foucault’s claim that the framework of human capital will become so influential in development economics that it will become the dominant policy framework through which the global South will be imagined; that economic, social, cultural, and educational policies will be viewed through the lens of human capital and that economic challenges will be analyzed in terms of insufficient investment in human capital (2008: 232). Dominant development discourses around gender equality and women’s empowerment are premised on a modernization narrative that proposes to harness the dormant labour, entrepreneurial, and financial power of the world’s poor women, and to capture that power by way of development interventions. I will elaborate on three of dominant narratives of empowerment intervention that appear in the development literature: promoting efficiency by way of ‘activation’, instilling market mentalities into market-marginal women, and increasing women’s proximity to and interactions with financial institutions.

Activation of Efficiency

The concept of “market citizenship” is helpful in understanding the kind of interventions encompassed in this ‘activation’ process, as it illuminates some of the new neoliberal subjectivities that emerge from shifting state-market relations, and identifying the particular interventions formulated to produce those subjectivities. Neoliberalism has reformulated the concept of citizenship, Veronica Schild argues, so that citizenship is conceived of in relation to the market, rather than the state: the “market citizen” lives according to the values and norms of the market, focused on individual choices, responsibility, and self-government (Schild 2002: 172). This form of citizenship distributes privileges and resources on the basis of marketable skills and knowledge, rather than state membership (Ong 2006). Market citizenship is gendered and racialized insofar as processes of restructuring depend on the existence of a precarious ‘flexible’ workforce of women and minorities and on the ability of women to re-absorb caring labour in the home when social provision by the state ceases (Schild 2000, 2002; Molyneux 2006). The discourse of market citizenship renders invisible its gendered and racialized effects, however, by representing poverty as a failure to properly access and participate in markets:

“The poor are defined as those excluded, because of lack of skills or opportunities, from effectively participating in the market and becoming masters of their own destiny. The thrust of social policy is therefore to help individuals and communities access the market. In other words, this framing of poverty considers the poor not as objects of charity, or as being personally deficient, or as subjects of universal rights, but as *untrained, and unmarketable, and therefore as remediable*” (Schild 2000: 286, emphasis my own)

Designations of poverty are thus linked to moral claims about the failure to build one’s human capital through skills acquisition and training for market participation. With reference to discourses on the dormant potential of women, this is particularly magnified by the pervasive assumption (discussed above) that women are uniquely productive and responsible economic actors. Market citizenship is therefore predicated

on active, full participation in the market and on the citizen's ability to function as an entrepreneurial individual in the market place; it proscribes various forms of non-market activity and non-market subjectivities, while prescribing a series of interventions to train and responsabilize (Griffin 2009). It imagines the empowerment process as one comprised of self-actualization and self-knowledge, alongside the acquisition of market-compatible skills (Leve 2007; Klenk 2004).

This conception of market citizenship is fully compatible with the neoliberal understanding of a gender-neutral, socially dis-embedded market in which discrimination is an irrational market failure and, by extension, the marginalization of women (as a group) from the market is reflective of a general lack of appropriate training or skills by women. Women feature in the discourse not in terms of any inherent inferiority; indeed, the innate qualities ascribed to them are framed in terms of their unique *potential* for market success. Instead, women are positioned as marginal to markets, unfamiliar with their codes, and untrained in the requisite skills that full market citizens need to flourish. Women in this discourse, I argue following Schild, are imagined as “untrained” and yet “remediable” (or ‘empowerable’) on the basis of their (perceived) feminine nature. The acquired skills and behaviours of the human capital framework purport to activate dormant potential and to remedy women's marginality by socializing them into market cultures and training them in the requisite market skills.

The activation narrative so pervasive in current development discourses is premised, first, on the essentialist construction of innate feminine responsibility and maternal altruism that I discussed above and, second, on the contention that these qualities predispose women to greater productivity and efficiency. Therefore, extending Schild's notion of market citizenship, I suggest that the interventions to train, skill, and make the poor ‘marketable’ are not conceived in universal terms, targeting an undifferentiated group of ‘the poor’. Instead, these interventions identify and prescribe development solutions for a particular group of ‘empowerable’ women.

I argue that a particularly gendered notion of market citizenship aims to identify particular 'innate' aspects of these 'empowerable' women and advocate interventions to inculcate women with appropriate market skills, thereby constructing a relationship of 'activation' of human capital whereby particular dormant qualities can be harnessed and instrumentalized for growth, producing ideal market citizens. This activation metaphor is apparent in the discourse of gender equality and empowerment in development, in which the rhetorical construction of the 'business case' often relies on imagery of natural resource extraction, imagining women as resources whose potential should be 'unlocked', 'unleashed', 'tapped' and 'harnessed' (see Roberts 2014b). Furthermore, as Laura Sjoberg suggests, the narrative of 'tapping' women is "deeply violent", not only because it renders women's work wholly invisible by imagining women as economically inactive, but because of the sexual connotations of its language. Women, when re-written as resources or commodities, lack agency and require potentially exploitative interventions to forcibly extract their value (Sjoberg 2014). Moreover, efforts to harness women's supposedly dormant potential are not only advocated on the basis that women are currently inactive, unproductive, or that their labour power is being wasted; they are imagined as particularly, uniquely powerful agents of economic growth who will be more responsible and efficient than men, on the basis of their feminine nature.

Inculcating market mentalities

Activation narratives that propose to integrate women into market cultures and subjectivities start from two interlinked assumptions. First, they presuppose that women are physically distant from markets and market activity because, reflecting the ongoing theme of the undervaluation and invisibility of social reproduction, the kind of work that women perform is not considered as such. Development planners have "started to notice" women's role in production, reproduction, and provision, to the extent that they have been identified as ideal target groups for interventions like microcredit, but women are nonetheless generally located "outside the purview of capitalist markets" (Rankin

2001: 28). Second, narratives of women's supposed marginality to market work further promote the idea that women are also external to market cultures and market 'rationality', itself a deeply gendered and problematic concept (see Section 1.2). With reference to World Bank interventions in Latin America, Kate Bedford demonstrates the institutional belief that women, and other marginalized groups, lack "market mentalities" and would therefore be unable to succeed in capitalist markets until they were adequately trained (Bedford 2009a). Moreover, women's subordination is imagined, in part, as a result of their lack of "sufficient contact" with modern ideas and markets (Bergeron 2003: 408). Therefore, rendered in terms of the 'empowerability' framework, I suggest that 'Smart Economics' discourses propose to activate women's dormant economic potential by training them in market skills and socializing them into market rationality, so that they function as better employees and entrepreneurs.

Education and training interventions, particularly those specifically targeted at women, have been implicated in efforts to construct a particular form of economic rationality and to instill certain market aptitudes. In order to contest "women's assumed passivity", empowerment interventions aim to expose women to cultures of market responsibility and self-reliance (Bedford 2009a: 140). Among these practices, development policies propose a range of micro-level efforts to instill a particular form of market subjectivity including training in market, administrative, and business culture targeted at ethnically marginalized women (Bedford 2009a: 139); interventions to teach self-help, personal responsibility and accountability to poor, unemployed groups (Schild 2000: 293); and training to accompany, or as a condition of, credit provision (Rankin 2001; Isserles 2003; Lairap Fonderson 2003; Maclean 2012, 2013). Education, training, and other interventions therefore function to transform humans into 'abilities-machines', thereby transforming the individual into an entrepreneur of her own human capital. Under a feminist lens, I suggest that these interventions to elicit particular behaviours and instill skills are manifest in efforts to inculcate women – who are assumed to be external to markets and market rationality – with suitable market mentalities.

Financial Access

Finally, development discourses of ‘Smart Economics’ and the ‘business case’ for gender equality propose to transform supposedly non-market women into active and empowered market citizens by facilitating their participation in global financial institutions, and through credit and debt in particular. Within a neoliberal economic framework, gender inequalities are attributed to women’s insufficient skills, training, and access; empowerment interventions therefore focus significant efforts on activating particular ‘feminine’ qualities through training in market skills, socializing into business culture, and acquiring access to inputs for market participation. Microfinance has emerged as a popular and highly visible development intervention, promoted with “evangelism” by the development community and presented as a “magic bullet” for women’s empowerment (Kabeer 2005: 4709). In line with a neoliberal responsabilization agenda, microfinance has introduced a new vocabulary for describing credit recipients, particularly women who are considered better credit risks than men: women are described with the language of increased confidence and self-esteem, because they receive “a hand up instead of hand out”, moving from “charity to empowerment”, reflecting the belief that “all humans are entrepreneurs” (Isserles 2003: 44; see also Ferguson 2004). Furthermore, the public and popular nature of microfinance has been particularly influential in the construction of an empowered “Third World Woman” as the face of development (Roy 2010; Moodie 2013).

The discourse that surrounds microcredit, and indeed the logic that underpins it, imagines the provision of small loans to entrepreneurs in poor countries as a manifestation of the democratization of credit. Drawing on anti-statist narratives of credit as freedom, professional financial institutions increasingly “outflank” governments and socially-focused NGOs involved in credit provision (Roy 2010: 47). While early microcredit schemes pioneered by the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh employed pre-existing social structures in the community to provide collateral and ensure repayment through social pressure, a new

marketized microfinance rejects this socially embedded approach and instead employs risk assessments of individuals to score and assess borrowers (Roy 2010: 47). Credit, which is of course “debt by another name”, functions as a mechanism of crisis management to respond to the vulnerabilities of surplus labour, the negative impacts of neoliberal social and economic policy, and declining living standards (Keating et. al. 2010: 159; Lebaron and Roberts 2010; Weber 2004;); debt serves as a means of managing emerging tensions in neoliberal capitalism, operating within a discursive context where women have been identified as the group most able to “cope” with poverty and display resilience (Pupavac 2005; Wilson 2013). Empowerment interventions, when viewed under the feminist critique of human capital, demonstrate the discursive process by which women are transformed into ideal neoliberal subjects and their incorporation within global markets is facilitated.

Against feminist accounts of empowerment as a process of building power from within, or building power through solidarity with others, the empowerment narratives that pervade global development discourses today represent empowerment as a process that must be catalyzed through external intervention. Language about ‘tapping’ and ‘harnessing’ women’s potential signals the dominant interventionist understanding of empowerment and the prevalence of an activation metaphor to communicate the empowerment process. Moreover, empowerment is advocated as a process of external intervention because women are represented as external to markets and market rationality; interventions to train women in market skills, equip them with business mentalities, and connect them to global financial institutions represent popular techniques of empowerment in the ‘Smart Economics’ discourse.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have undertaken a feminist reading of Foucault’s critique of human capital and proposed this critique as the basis for an

analysis of 'empowerability.' Simply put, this critique proceeds in three steps. First, it begins from the recognition that 'empowerment' represents a powerful development discourse that specifically focuses attention onto women and girls as (potentially) powerful sources of global growth. Empowerment is discussed as a universal process that can be applied to activate the power of girls and women around the world. Empowerment discourses operate on the assumption that women of the global South are currently disempowered, and yet they can be empowered in order to capitalize on their dormant potential; this popular trope is therefore premised on the idea that women of the global South are disempowered yet 'empowerable.'

Second, I introduce a critique of human capital to understand the relationship of activation that underpins the empowerment discourse. Human capital is a dominant framework for understanding human development because it proposes to identify the most valuable investments to make people more 'productive'. With regard to women, the human capital approach is prevalent because women and girls have become identified as sources of 'misallocated' productive power whose subordination stems from lack of sufficient investment in their capital. I introduce a feminist critique of human capital to understand the relationship of activation in human capital discourses that proposes, firstly, to identify (or prescribe) a range of inborn qualities in humans which are associated with their potential for productivity. In the case of women, these are a series of essentialisms about how women behave as inherently altruistic and responsible economic actors. Secondly, the human capital approach proposes to produce income from inborn qualities by instilling particular behaviours or skills into people and eliciting actions that contribute to productive economic participation. In the case of women's empowerment, this activation process appears in the discourse in terms of instilling market mentalities into women and integrating them into global financial networks to harness their supposedly dormant power.

Third, I use this feminist reading of human capital to mount a critique of empowerment discourses through the lens of 'empowerability'.

Empowerability is a unique framework because it approaches empowerment from a new perspective and generates new insights, by asking *who* and *what kind* of woman is made more visible by neoliberal empowerment discourses. Empowerment, I demonstrate, is not a universal process of becoming powerful, but an influential neoliberal discourse that is premised on the activation of particular qualities and behaviours to promote certain subjectivities; in other words, some women appear as more empowerable than others in the discourse. The highly contingent and uneven nature of the empowerment discourse is made visible through the conceptual lens of human capital because it highlights the kinds of subjectivities that are targeted and created in this process.

In order to demonstrate the usefulness of this framework and to demonstrate its contribution to the current literature, I will apply it to textual and visual materials that constitute the World Bank's 'Smart Economics' discourse. The following chapter moves one step closer to empirical analysis and considers *how* we might identify and study one particular site of a discourse in order to produce more generalizable findings about that broader discourse. It introduces the empirical material under study in this thesis, justifies the choice of case study, and discusses its relevance to the major debates and developments discussed in Chapter 1, continuing to focus on the interrelated themes of knowledge/ power in gender and development.

Chapter 3: Gender, Discourse, and the World Bank

“If we accept that our world is socially constructed, then it can be changed by challenging – de-constructing – constructions which have effects we wish to reduce or eliminate”

(Bacchi 1999: 62)

The language of ‘empowerment’ has its roots in critical pedagogy and radical social movements of the 1970s, though from the mid 1990s it became popular in the World Bank where it was employed to telegraph an increased interest in participatory and social development approaches. By 2001 the Bank’s major publications on poverty employed empowerment as the most prominent concept to frame discussions of poverty reduction (Moore 2001). By 2005, over 1,800 World Bank lending projects specifically mentioned empowerment (Alsop et. al. 2006: 1). ‘Empowerment’ has acquired “expansive semantic range” in development policy and occupies a special place in the Bank, where it has been coupled with a range of other buzzwords in order to appeal to diverse audiences (Cornwall and Brock 2005: 1046). The rapid ascent of ‘empowerment’ from a marginal concept of radical pedagogy to prominent buzzword of development consensus demonstrates, in microcosm, the power of language to construct and shape what we ‘know’ about development, poverty, and global politics. Understandings of how development is ‘done’ or what development ‘is’ are fluid and constantly shifting, sometimes dramatically so; the history of development as a concept, policy agenda, and industry is one replete with linguistic and conceptual shifts that radically re-focus to minimize some issues while highlighting others (see Cowen and Shenton 1995; Leys 1997; Rojas 2004; Brigg 2002; Escobar 1995). Language matters deeply for our understanding of global politics, as linguistic and discursive representations frame the world and our ability to apprehend it.

This chapter is framed by two central questions whose answers inform the epistemological and methodological approach of this thesis. The first question asks *why* we should study discourse: Why does discourse matter for the study of gender in the global political economy? In the first section of the chapter, I will address this question by drawing on feminist GPE literature and providing a justification for my epistemological and methodological choices by way of an exploration of the significance of discourse in the study of gender in the global political economy. Having established the importance of a discourse and a feminist interpretivist approach to its study, the second core question asks *how* we should study discourse. How is it possible to identify, isolate, and qualitatively analyze a discourse, which by its very nature is amorphous and intangible? The second half of the chapter therefore addresses the particular examples of discourses under study and provides a justification for the choice of the World Bank and the specific documents/ programmes analyzed in this thesis. The chapter proceeds as such: after discussing feminist discourse analysis and its importance in the GPE in Section 3.1, I will address the discursive and political significance of the World Bank and review its approach to gender and development in Sections 3.2 and 3.3. In Sections 3.4 and 3.5, I will provide a detailed discussion of the documents and programmes under study and justify their relevance for analysis in this thesis: the 2012 World Development Report (WDR), the Global Private Sector Leaders Forum, the Adolescent Girl Initiative, and the Girl Effect campaign.

While this chapter is limited to a discussion of epistemology, methodology, and case study selection, a detailed discussion of methods and the data analysis process of the thesis is located in the Research Methods Appendix (Appendix A). This appendix addresses three main components of the data analysis: qualitative coding analysis, interviews, and researcher reflexivity. Because the methodological approach of this thesis centers on the importance of text, talk, and discourse to produce particular notions of 'reality' and forms of 'knowledge' about empowerment, the data analysis process required a

large amount of textual analysis.¹⁶ To this end, I employed qualitative thematic coding (with the assistance of coding software) to organize the large amounts of data and to allow me to sort and analyze numerous themes that emerged from the text. The Research Methods Appendix gives a detailed discussion of the coding process, codebook, and examples from the coding software to show the analysis process. In addition to qualitative coding of texts, I interviewed some of the World Bank researchers responsible for writing the WDR 2012, although my access was limited. My methodological approach was designed with the two central questions of this chapter in mind: Why discourse? How to study discourse?

3.1 Feminist Global Political Economy Research

Epistemologically, this research is inspired by V. Spike Peterson's continuum of feminist knowledge building projects and the feminist interpretivist epistemological position she lays out for critical feminist GPE (Peterson 2003, 2005). The first task of feminist scholarship that Peterson identifies, and the first position along the continuum of feminist knowledge building, is "noticing androcentrism": this requires an acknowledgement both of women's invisibility from certain bodies of knowledge and their construction as deviants from the male model (2003: 29). The second task is to further investigate these omissions and to "add women" to existing frameworks (2003: 30). After noting women's invisibility, this absence is rectified by either identifying where women were (in historical contexts) or what women do (in current contexts) within the frameworks where they are made invisible. The third position on the continuum extends the above approaches: it not only "adds women", but also "adds gender", by which Peterson means adding in a critical approach to gender as a social construct and a

¹⁶ The texts under study include the 2012 World Development Report, numerous documents associated with the Global Private Sector Leaders Forum, text and video material released by the Girl Effect, and reports on the Adolescent Girl Initiative.

rejection of pre-given binaries that dichotomize men, women, and their associated characteristics (2003: 31-2).

The use of ‘gender’ as a research tool first requires some conceptual clarification. Gender exists in relation to sex and the two cannot be understood in isolation. At its most basic, the distinction between sex and gender is accepted as such: sex refers to the biological differences between male and female bodies, while gender refers to the social practices and norms that are understood to be manifestations of those biological differences (Dietz 2003). Gender therefore designates the range of norms, behaviours, and assumptions that produce masculine and feminine identities and allow for the performance of these identities. The distinction between sex and gender is now well-established and widely recognized, even by those who do not aim to do feminist research, though it is a complex and contested issue among feminists, some of whom reject a binary distinction between biological sexes (see Butler 1993). While the recognition of the sex/ gender distinction opens up space for interpretivist work to dismantle the binary system of masculinity/ femininity, this analysis is incomplete without an understanding of the operations of power within the sex/ gender system. While we may recognize that biological differences have given rise to social constructions around the *meanings* and *implications* of those differences, we must also acknowledge that the sex/ gender system does not merely construct difference, but *hierarchy*, through which it systematically separates and devalues the feminine. Julie Nelson represents these gendered binaries as such (1992b: 140):

Table 3.1 Gender and Metaphor in Economics

Masculine (+)	Feminine (-)
Violent	Peaceful
Public	Private
Reason	Emotion
Subject	Object
Science	Nature
Mind	Body

(Source: adapted from Nelson 1992b)

In each case, these gendered dualisms operate through a devaluation of that which is symbolized by the feminine and positioned as subordinate to the symbolically male qualities (Harding 1986). Gender is therefore relational and constructions of gendered identity make manifest women's subordination in relational power structures (Lovenduski 1998). To use gender as an analytical concept for research acknowledges the location of gender in a matrix of power relations and its function as a disciplinary tool.

Feminist GPE research fully accepts the socially constructed nature of these masculine/ feminine categories: it is instead concerned with the relationship *between* these categories and "the complex deployments of each" (Peterson 2003: 34). In this way, gender acts as a governing code: it privileges the symbolically masculine while devaluing the symbolically feminine. There are two important distinctions here: firstly, by privileging the masculine, the gender system does not privilege all men or only men, but those that fit within the symbolic territory of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005). Secondly, by privileging the symbolically masculine, this value system extends to everything in this conceptual hierarchy (structured by the binary of masculine/ feminine and corresponding to it). In economic terms, gender operates a governing code insofar as it privileges the capacities, bodies, and economic capabilities of normatively masculine identities while subordinating the symbolically feminine. In GPE today, hegemonic masculinity is central to the international business class and therefore exists in relation to a subordinated and feminized class of 'others'. Those marked by racial, sexual, ethnic difference, and marginality from hegemonic masculinities often perform 'surplus' labour (Barker and Feiner 2009: 249). Gendered economic norms serve to normalize subordination through the discursive privileging of the masculine and naturalized subordination of the symbolically feminine.

The fourth and final position on Peterson's continuum of feminist knowledge building asks feminist scholars to add gender and politicize

gendered hierarchies (2003: 33-4). It asks researchers to provide a wider context for gender inequality by linking gender inequalities to other forms of oppression, as a corrective to the assumption (present in some strands of feminist theory) that patriarchy exists independently of other forms of domination. Crucially, this intersectional approach asks Northern feminists to examine their imbrication in oppressive economic and political structures and the ways they benefit from and participate in oppression of others.¹⁷ A critical focus on gender relations and intersectional politics is impossible within a positivist objectivist framework, because the very notion of gender as a governing code disrupts understandings of the world as pre-given and able to be apprehended by the researcher through observation of social reality. An interpretivist methodology recognizes no fixity of meaning, but instead pays close attention to the role of discourse in constructing objects and knowledge. The research presented in this thesis therefore follows from Peterson's claim that analysis and transformation of structural hierarchies demands a methodological approach that is both feminist and interpretive (2003: 36).

Feminist Discourse Analysis in GPE

Feminist GPE displays a methodological heterogeneity and advocates an interdisciplinary and pluralist approach to research, occupying a somewhat contested position between critical political economy and

¹⁷ This approach draws heavily on postcolonial critique and non-Western feminisms, using the concept of intersectionality to highlight the way that different forms of oppression overlap and magnify each other. Intersectionality was originally introduced by Kimberle Crenshaw to understand "intersecting patterns of racism and sexism" and to account for the failure of feminist literature to represent the experiences of non-white women (Crenshaw 1991: 1243). It illuminates different forms of oppression and the specific effects that they produce in combination, challenging the conflation of intragroup difference. For instance, the intersection of sexist and racist forms of oppression mean that the experiences of Black women cannot be understood with reference to independent categories of sexism and racism, but in terms of the effects produced when these forms of oppression interact and magnify each other (see Crenshaw 1991; Collins 1999; Anthias and Yuval Davis 1983; Yuval Davis 2006).

feminist IR (Waylen 1997). Accordingly, a few strands have developed within this field, ranging from more methodologically traditional 'feminist economics' to post-structuralist and interpretivist approaches to GPE more closely related to feminist IR.¹⁸ The strand of feminist GPE in which this thesis locates itself is concerned with the production and circulation of gendered discourses around development and therefore takes an interpretivist approach, relying on document analysis, discourse analysis, and elite-level interviews. Research on gender in global governance, within the feminist GPE literature, generally reflects an interest in institutions, elite-level processes, and policy-making, topics which they approach with a focus on the relationship between discourse and power. In particular, in her 2009 monograph *Gendering the World Bank*, Griffin proposes a "discourse theoretic" methodology for the study of neoliberalism in global governance; I adopt much of her methodological framework for this thesis (Griffin 2009).¹⁹

The "discourse theoretic" methodology uses genealogical political inquiry to "probe and decenter 'common sense' in global politics" (Griffin 2009: 23). It begins from the assumption that all objects in the world, including institutions, ideas, practices, and data, are objects of discourse; in other words, the meaning of all things is derived from their embedded position in structures of power. Discourse theory and the body of discourse scholarship is centered around three key concerns: 1) that discourse can be used to enquire into society, 2) that the key concern of discourse is the "formation and application" of human knowledge, thus rejecting the notion of language as a vehicle or medium of meaning, and 3) that discourse must be understood beyond language, in terms of the way it is a product and producer of social, political, and economic knowledge (Griffin 2009: 24). A discourse generates categories of meaning by which reality can be understood and circumscribes reality by making "'real' that which it prescribes as meaningful" (George 1994: 29-30). From this perspective on social

¹⁸ See Waylen 2006 for a discussion of these different strands and their relations to related disciplines.

¹⁹ For a detailed explanation of research methods, including samples of the qualitative coding analysis, see the Research Methods Appendix.

reality emerges a focus on the power of language and discourse to construct 'reality' and convey meaning, against the idea of language as a transmitter for pre-given meaning.

Because a discourse analysis rejects the possibility of locating 'truth', it is interested instead in "who claims to have truth" and how these claims are justified in terms of narratives of authority (Carver 2002: 52). This is particularly important for feminist research concerned with a critical analysis of gender power relations, as gender inequality is (in part) structured and perpetuated by linguistic practices, discourse, and the relationship between discourse production and power. Feminist discourse analysis is therefore concerned with the (re)production, negotiation, and contestation of gender ideology and gender relations of power in representations (Lazar 2005: 11). *Feminist* discourse analysis does not entail a change in method or a shift in epistemological stance from discourse analysis more broadly, but reflects a special focus on feminist emancipatory aims and an overriding concern with gender as a 'governing code' that has a constitutive and disciplinary effect on social formations.

Discourse matters: it designates what is (perceived as) real and possible in policy terms. A discourse theoretic methodology, by allowing for purchase on slippery and amorphous discourses, allows for a systematic and specific analysis that maps the bounds of a discourse and its impact. The discourses around women's empowerment and gender equality that dominate development institutions, for instance, are intangible but immensely influential, evident in the policy language of an ever-increasing range of powerful actors and organizations. How, then, can this discourse be identified, pinned down, and examined? My methodology consists of a critical analysis of texts firstly because of the feminist contention that social practices, institutions, and norms are socially constructed, and therefore should be critically appraised in terms of the discourses that render these practices and institutions 'real' and powerful. The second reason I use discourse analysis of texts is because I aim to interrogate the dominant discourses in international development and high-level policy texts embody the most powerful

incarnation of these discourses. In order to locate, identify, and analyze the particular discourses under study, I have chosen in this thesis to study the World Bank and the documents, programmes, and publications associated with its 'Gender Equality as Smart Economics' policy agenda.

3.2 The World Bank and Knowledge Production

The World Bank is among the most powerful development institutions operating today; the Bank and institutions like it “frame the world” with regard to economic policy in global governance (Weaver 2010: 70). Established as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) in 1944 at the Bretton Woods Conference, the Bank’s original remit was limited to providing funds for reconstruction in post-conflict states. In the following decades its focus has shifted from post-war reconstruction to development and anti-poverty lending; today it lends in a wide variety of outside sectors, including rural development, education, health and institution building (Weaver 2008; Phillips 2009). Referred to, and self-described, as the “world’s premier development institution”, the Bank comprises five separate entities²⁰ under the label ‘the World Bank Group’ and has 185 member states. In terms of resources, the Bank is the leader among global development institutions, lending more than any other: during fiscal year 2013 alone, it committed US\$52 billion in loans, grants, investments and guarantees

²⁰ The Bank includes five related agencies: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Development Agency (IDA), the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). Their functions are as follows: The IBRD lends to middle income countries to support development and reconstruction; the IDA provides interest-free loans and grants to the poorest countries; the IFC lends to and takes private equity in companies; the MIGA provides a range of services to foreign investment in developing countries, including insurance, technical assistance, and dispute mediation; the ICSID provides facilitation for arbitration and mediation of disputes between members states to promote investment in developing countries (adapted from Marshall 2008: 9).

(World Bank 2013a). It also possesses staff and research resources that surpass any academic institution, with over 10,000 employees in Washington alone and 109 mission offices worldwide (Bedford 2008; Weaver 2008).

The power of the Bank is amplified by its proximity (physical and ideological) to powerful institutions of the American government: the Bank's president is, by tradition, chosen by the US government and as a member state, the US has the largest share of vote and the only (occasional) veto power (Wade 2002). Political economists have recognized this proximity in terms of the confluence between ideology, policy, and discourse of these institutions; for instance, the Washington Consensus policies,²¹ around which "everyone in Washington" agreed, understood "everyone" as the American congress, senior members of the administration, international financial institutions located in Washington, economic agencies of the US government and Federal Reserve, and major think tanks (Williamson 2009: 7-8). Its position in the field is the product of both the unparalleled financial and personnel power of the Bank, links with sources of American governmental power, and its reputational position in the development community as a key

²¹ The Washington Consensus was a general informal agreement between powerful institutions and states upon the principles of neoliberalism – free markets, deregulation, privatization – embodying a market fundamentalism at its most powerful between the 1970s and 1990s. The Washington Consensus overturned the earlier developmentalist thinking that placed the state at the heart of economic development; neoliberal advocates of the Washington Consensus instead identified the state as the main problem and sought to diminish its influence through policies of liberalization and privatization. The Consensus came under scrutiny in the wake of destabilizing neoliberal financial shocks and the emergence of alternate development models, among other factors. The World Bank did acknowledge these flaws and sought to move towards a poverty-reduction approach that affirmed the importance of the state and institutions in market reforms, as well as the importance of some social indicators in economic analysis (Onis and Senses 2005; Clegg 2010). The emergence of a 'post-Washington Consensus' is closely related to the Bank's turn towards more 'social' aspects of development, including gender.

disseminator of good practice and authoritative “Knowledge Bank” for development.

The Bank is a relevant subject for critical discourse analysis of development discourse because it is arguably the most powerful producer of development knowledge; in short, *its discourse matters*. Critical discourse analysis is premised on the contention that discourses impact the social world by shaping the reality to which they refer; development discourses therefore shape perceptions of poverty and inequality, the processes that have brought them into being, and the policy solutions required to eradicate (or cope) with poverty (see Escobar 1995). With the World Bank, this analysis is particularly important because the relevance and power of its discourse is so readily visible: there is no more influential actor in the business of producing knowledge about development. Development scholars cite the Bank as the most influential source of development expertise with the power to shape conventional wisdom (Weaver 2008; Tzannatos 2006). The Bank, by virtue of its resources (human and financial) produces publications, reports, and discourses that influence development practice worldwide; it serves as a repository of development knowledge and its staff members are often called upon by developing countries for expertise (Griffin 2006; McGrath and King 2004).

Indeed, this is not simply a byproduct of the Bank’s aforementioned resources, but an explicit institutional goal. The Bank has long aspired to a “leadership role in the intellectual realm” of development but, due to institutional and contextual constraints, this goal has been a highly publicized aspect of Bank work only since the mid-1990s under the leadership of James Wolfensohn (Bayliss et. al. 2011: 26-7). Since this time, the Bank has sought to position itself as a “Knowledge Bank”, broadening its mandate from the transfer of capital to the production and transfer of knowledge about and for development; in its mission statement it makes clear that knowledge, not financial capital, is now the Bank’s greatest asset for global development (Mehta 2001). This position was formalized in the 1998-1999 World Development Report on ‘Knowledge for Development’ where the Bank outlined its new agenda

for reducing ‘knowledge gaps’ in the development process. In the 1998-1999 WDR, the Bank considers the role of knowledge in international development, conceptualizing ‘knowledge gaps’ between North and South as a primary cause of underdevelopment, and subsequently conceiving of the Bank’s role in facilitating the spread of information. This narrow conception of knowledge, critics argue, has resulted in the promotion of a prescriptive and universalist form of ‘knowledge’ as capital for economic growth, at the expense of indigenous knowledges and heterodox development approaches (Enns 2014; Mehta 1999).

In the nearly two decades since Wolfensohn’s announcement of the Bank’s transformation from a traditional financial institution to the world’s “Knowledge Bank”, the Bank has sought to consolidate this position, putting its financial and reputational power behind its knowledge production agenda. The Bank continues to dedicate 25-30% of its total annual budget toward knowledge activities²² (amounting to US\$4 billion dollars annually), is the recipient of knowledge management awards, and scores highly on citation impact measures (Enns 2014: 2; see also Kramarz and Momani 2013). The Bank’s efforts to position itself as an intellectual leader in the development field are evident in its recent work on gender and development, particularly in the 2012 World Development Report on Gender Equality and the recent proliferation of transnational business initiatives for empowerment.

Mehta (2001) suggests that the knowledge gathered and disseminated by the Bank aims to set the agenda for academics, donors, and practitioners in the global North and South. However, given the Bank’s increasing focus on links with private finance and partnerships with corporations, its role in knowledge production has broadened the scope

²² According to a 2014 report, the Bank spent 25% of its 2012 country services budget on knowledge services/ products, an area in which expenditure has steadily increased over the past ten years. Its core knowledge activities are: i) economic and sector work; ii) technical assistance; iii) the World Development Report; iv) external training and capacity development; v) research; vi) impact evaluations; vii) global monitoring; viii) new product development; and ix) internal reports (Doemeland and Trevino 2014: 3).

of its audience (Bayliss et. al. 2011: 11). The Bank now presents itself as a uniquely positioned institution with the economic credentials and resources to communicate with the private sector on development issues and to foster partnerships between public and private sectors. This is evident in the publication of the Bank's *Doing Business Report* which ranks countries based on their regulatory environments; the most recent report measures eleven indicators of business regulation including employment regulations, investor protection, credit, taxation, and property laws among others (World Bank 2014a).²³ Moreover, in the area of gender and development, the Bank emphasizes its capacity to make the "business case" for gender equality and present lessons about the 'Smart Economics' of gender to private sector leaders. In this way it serves as an important gatekeeper, legitimizing certain forms of development 'knowledge' and framing them in terms of market efficiency, productivity, and corporate profit (discussed in Chapter 6). It asserts authoritative knowledge about development and, by virtue of its position as the most well-funded and powerful global development institution, has significant ability to shape the body of development knowledge; this process is particularly evident in the area of Gender and Development.

3.3 Gender and Development in the World Bank

In 2011, the then World Bank president Robert Zoellick delivered a speech where he spoke about the Bank's newfound focus on gender: "Eighteen years ago, the World Bank rarely talked about gender... Today we know that gender equality is smart economics" (Zoellick 2011). This revelation prompts important questions: How was gender 'discovered' by the Bank? How did the Bank go from being an institution renowned for its technocratic and resolutely economic approach to poverty, of which gender analysis was not a part, to the institution which

²³ The *Doing Business Report* is one of the Bank's most influential publications and its most widely circulated (Bakvis 2009). The 2014 report suggests that, since the first report was published in 2003, over 530 regulatory reforms have been informed by *Doing Business* (World Bank 2014a). For a feminist analysis of the *Doing Business* reports, see Bedford 2009b.

today aims to be the leading source of development knowledge on gender equality?

In its early years as a Bank for post-war reconstruction and development, the initial focus was limited to providing loans to the governments of post-conflict states. As such, women were not viewed as important actors in this process or as a group that should receive special focus. For over thirty years, from its founding in 1944 until the appointment of its first Women in Development advisor in 1977, women as a group and gender as a concept were perceived as largely irrelevant to the World Bank's work. This attitude began to change during the late 1970s and early 1980s though progress remained slow; the Bank's WID unit was founded in 1986 and it introduced statistical indicators for gender in 1988 (Long 2006; Kuiper and Barker 2006; Weaver 2010). By its own estimation, the Bank began serious gender work during the 1980s, though this work still saw women as mothers confined to the social realm and uninvolved in the process of economic development. This understanding of women as mothers/ instruments of child welfare and as potential beneficiaries (still marginal to the development process) characterized the general position of women in Bank discourse until the mid-1990s. The Bank lagged behind comparable institutions in its willingness to accept gender as an important economic and political category, a lag which has been attributed to its gender-skeptic institutional culture, unwillingness to shift from a neoclassical economic approach, and failure to mainstream women into positions of power within the Bank itself (O'Brien et. al. 2000; Griffin 2009; Bedford 2009a; Weaver 2007, 2010). When the Bank did change its position and made concerted efforts to integrate a gender lens into its policies, albeit a conservative one, this shift was prompted by a change in leadership and development climate.

Four primary drivers contributed to the Bank's transition towards gender and development policy during the 1990s, comprised of a combination of external pressures and internal institutional shifts: the emergence of the post-Washington Consensus, pressure from activists, a shift in the

Bank's mission to anti-poverty lending, and the presidency of James Wolfensohn created a context in which gender issues gained attention.

First, and perhaps most significantly, the shift to the post-Washington Consensus created a new context for the Bank and challenged many of its previously fundamental principles. The Post-Washington Consensus reflects a few shifts in thinking: it acknowledges the role of the state in securing basic services, imagines a greater role for civil society and community participation, and concedes the significance of social issues like health and education in development. The PWC emerged partly as a response to critics of earlier structural adjustment and debt conditionality approaches and as an acknowledgement of the adverse impacts of market fundamentalism (Tzannatos 2006; Bergeron 2003). The newfound focus on participation, empowerment, and social capital in PWC discourse provided space for the consideration of gender, insofar as it allowed the Bank to accord importance to 'social' dimensions, like health and education, that are seen to fall into the realm of women's issues.²⁴

Second, the emergence of the PWC coincided with the Bank's 50th anniversary and a shift in mission from adjustment lending to poverty reduction (Phillips 2009; Marshall 2008). This was accompanied by greater attention to social determinants of poverty and the impact of social factors on economic development. Changes in the Bank's institutional climate and economic approach slowly created more conceptual space for the consideration of 'social' aspects of development and the inclusion of non-economists on the Bank's staff (Bergeron 2006).

²⁴ An extensive debate over the substance of the PWC continues to rage among academics, with many Bank critics contesting the extent to which the PWC marks a significant shift away from neoliberal ideology (see Baylis et. al. 2011); among these Bank critics, feminist researchers tend to express skepticism of the PWC and suggest that the PWC represents more a rhetorical shift than a change in policy (O'Brien et al 2000; Bergeron 2003; Griffin 2009; Roberts and Soederberg 2012).

Third, engagement with non-governmental groups and pressure from the women's movement during the anniversary 'Fifty Years is Enough' campaign and initiatives that emerged from the 1995 UN Conference on Women in Beijing prompted change (Bergeron 2003; O'Brien et. al. 2000). Fourth and finally, World Bank President James Wolfensohn's personal influence in this area proved considerable in helping to shift Bank discourse. His speech at the 1995 Beijing conference, during which he acknowledged feminist criticism of the Bank and committed it to increasing funding for girls' primary and secondary education, is frequently acknowledged as a turning point in the Bank's turn towards gender (see Wolfensohn 2005). Wolfensohn shifted Bank discourses around women by making them "rhetorically central" to the Bank's claims on inclusive and progressive development, peppering his speeches and statement with images of women and girls (Bedford 2009a: 7). This rhetorical shift created a discursive climate in the Bank in which women could be lauded as key agents of development who had yet to be adequately engaged in the process, laying the rhetorical groundwork for the dominance of the business case for gender that pervades the Bank today. This combination of external pressure from critics of the Washington Consensus, combined with internal shifts in the institutional climate worked to produce a change in Bank thinking and promote greater willingness to engage with gender in development.

The period between 1995 and 2001 saw the Bank formulating a new attitude towards gender and development, with two primary features: firstly, the Bank began to encourage consideration of the non-economic aspects and measures of wellbeing, and secondly, began to stress the importance of gender relations for economic growth (Tzannatos 2006; Kuiper and Barker 2006). In 1994, the Bank's Board endorsed a policy paper on women's participation in economic development (which included a discussion of the 'pay-offs' of investing in women) and the Bank issued an Operational Policy statement establishing the goal of reducing gender disparities and enhancing women's participation in development. Nonetheless, significant gaps existed: this Operational Policy statement on gender did not require all investments to address gender aspects and it did not include Structural Adjustment Policies

(Tzannatos 2006). By 2001 and the publication of its first major gender report, *Engendering Development*, the Bank was positioning itself “as the disseminator of ‘good practice’” in the GAD community (Bedford 2008: 86; see also Kuiper and Barker 2006).

In 2006, the World Bank launched its 2007- 2010 Gender Action Plan (GAP), which first set out the “Gender Equality as Smart Economics” framework and sought to promote the business case for expanding women’s economic opportunities. It committed the Bank “to improve women's economic opportunity” through investment to improve women’s access to jobs, land rights, financial services, agricultural inputs and infrastructure (World Bank n.d. “Gender Equality as Smart Economics”).²⁵ In response to civil society critics who highlighted the harmful and gendered impact of the Bank’s loan conditionalities, the GAP introduced guidelines to “engender” policy-based loans (World Bank 2006). Nonetheless, the GAP did not take action to challenge loan conditionality or acknowledge that policy based loans remained exempt from efforts to “engender” them (Zuckerman 2007: 1). Moreover, the 2007-2010 GAP marked a shift towards engaging the private sector in the Bank’s gender equality agenda, as it was the first set of Bank gender guidelines which applied to the International Finance Corporation (previous guidelines were confined to the IBRD and IDA); the GAP outlined the IFC’s role in increasing the numbers of women participants and beneficiaries of private-sector development projects.

Near the end of the 2007-2010 GAP, the Bank chose to dedicate the 2012 edition of its flagship report, the World Development Report, to the

²⁵ Its ‘roadmap’ involved five aims: “1) To intensify gender mainstreaming in Bank and IFC operations and in regional economic and sector work; 2) To mobilize resources to implement innovative projects that empower women economically; 3) To facilitate the transition from school to work for girls through the Adolescent Girls Initiative; 4) To improve knowledge and statistics on women’s economic participation and the relationship between gender equality, growth, and poverty reduction; 5) To create global partnerships for women’s economic empowerment with governments, multilateral organizations, the private sector and civil society” (World Bank 2006).

issue of gender equality, in line with the GAP agenda of ‘Gender Equality as Smart Economics’. At the close of its 2007-2010 GAP, the Bank produced a “Road Map” for 2011-2013 to evaluate the success and apply the lessons of the GAP; the evaluation placed focus on “managing risk and vulnerability” for women and girls, as well as on “harnessing demographic opportunities for economic growth” through gender-related interventions (World Bank 2010b). It committed to continuing to mainstream gender in the Bank’s work, continuing the focus on economic empowerment, expanding the scope for country-led program design, and expanding the Bank resources dedicated to gender-related work, including “knowledge creation and dissemination” (World Bank 2010b), though it maintained a severely constrained focus on economic empowerment at the expense of a human rights framework (see Arend 2010).

The World Bank as “Knowledge Bank” has dedicated resources to disseminating knowledge about gender and development, but what of lending activity? In terms of gender-focused spending by the Bank, accurate (and widely accepted) numbers are difficult to obtain because the Bank lacks a clear coding system²⁶ to assess gender spending; Bank staff admit that “it is not possible to accurately estimate the amount of funding from the Bank’s core budget that goes to mainstreaming gender” (Bibler and Zuckerman 2013: 7; see also Lauterbach and Zuckerman 2013). As such, significant disagreement

²⁶ Gender Action’s 2013 report on gender spending in the Bank contains an interesting side note, and one that is perhaps indicative of the institutional difficulties of gender mainstreaming. A Bank staffer interviewed by Claire Lauterbach explained that “given the limitations of the existing coding system and that the very essence of mainstreaming gender is to make it the job of all Bank staff, it is not possible to accurately estimate the amount of funding from the Bank’s core budget that goes to mainstreaming gender” (quoted in Lauterbach and Zuckerman 2013: 8). The idea that gender mainstreaming requires all staff to engage with gender in their work means, for this Bank employee, that gender is somehow sufficiently diffused within the organization so that it cannot be easily measured. This highlights the difficulties of the integrationist approach and the potential for gender mainstreaming to lose a focus on women (see Mukhopadhyay 2007; Walby 2005).

exists over the Bank's gender-focused expenditures. In May 2011, the Bank's four-year progress report on the GAP claimed to have "allocated more than \$65 billion ... to improve girls' education, women's and mothers' health, and women's access to credit, land, agricultural extension services, jobs and infrastructure services" (World Bank 2011b). The NGO Gender Action contested these numbers, however, claiming instead that social development, gender and social inclusion investment by the Bank have decreased from US\$1.25 billion in 2007 to US\$952 million in 2010 (1.6% of its 2010 annual budget) according to its 2010 annual report (Arend 2010; Bretton Woods Project 2011). Another report from UN Women in July 2011 criticized the Bank's gender spending on public administration, law and justice projects during the 2000-2010 period, because only 0.001% of the Bank's grants and loans allocated in this sector had a gender equality component (UN Women 2011; Bretton Woods Project 2011).

The troubling signs of continuity here between a 'gender neutral' and 'gender sensitive' Bank raise questions about the extent to which institutional and cultural shifts discussed above have had substantive impact on Bank policy and the position of women and gender within its discourse. Given the Bank's tendency to "adopt the language of its critics in order to silence them" (Bergeron 2003: 404), recent developments in the Bank's gender policy leave feminist research in an important but challenging position. The Bank's rhetorical turn towards gender, embrace of the 'business case' and 'Smart Economics' discourses, and emergent partnerships with private sector actors for the promotion of empowerment demand critical engagement by feminist political economists.

3.4 The 2012 World Development Report

Given the Bank's influence as a producer of development 'knowledge' and its (relatively) recent attempts to position itself as a leader in the field of Gender and Development, this institution constitutes an important subject of study. The first 'site' of World Bank gender discourse selected for analysis in this thesis is the 2012 World

Development Report on gender equality and development; this section therefore provides a justification for the choice of the report as a focus of study, by way of exploring its position within the institution and broader development community and the circumstances of its publication.

The Bank's desire to become a leader in the production of Gender and Development 'knowledge' is evidenced by its dedication of substantial resources to the research and publication of the World Development Report 2012. World Development Reports, like most World Bank publications, are highly influential and debate-shaping contributions that have significant impact; that the Bank chose gender equality and women's empowerment as the subject for this report signals its intention to extend its expertise – and to use its “unique position of authority” (Weaver 2008: 9) – in this policy area. The reasons for a close study of the World Development Report 2012 are closely related to the above justification for a study of the Bank more broadly: like the Bank, the WDR reflects a unique level of influence in development discourses and resources for its publication.²⁷ The yearly WDR represents the most well-resourced and widely disseminated publication in the development field: on the research side, its budget ranges from US\$3.5 to US\$5 million and it is written by a large team of Bank economists with outside consulting from national development agencies and NGOs. In terms of its publication, over 100,000 copies are produced in eight languages (Wade 2002; Mawdsley and Rigg 2002; Weaver 2008).²⁸ As the most accessible of the Bank's publications, it acts as the “public face” of the Bank and derives authority from this status, although it does not commit the Bank to any particular policies (Mawdsley and Rigg 2002: 93).

²⁷ As stated previously, the World Development Report is one of the Bank's “core knowledge services” which constituted 25% of its country services budget in 2012 (Doemeland and Trevino 2014: 3).

²⁸ However, the full report is not accessible in languages other than English. With regard to the WDR 2012, the ‘report overview’ and ‘key messages’ sections are the only portions that are available in languages other than English.

As a high profile and widely publicized Bank publication, but one whose ambiguous status within the Bank gives it uncertain policy impact, the WDR is often viewed with skepticism by Bank watchers. Robert Wade (2002: 220) summarizes this critical view as such:

The WDR is both a research-based document and a political document, in the sense that as the Bank's flagship its message must reflect back the ideological preferences of key constituencies and not offend them too much, but the message must also be backed by empirical evidence and made to look 'technical'.

Given the power of the WDR to prioritize new policy areas and to shape the direction of funding trends among governments²⁹ and institutions, the Bank's decision to dedicate its 2012 report solely to gender equality attests to the strategically critical moment for gender in global governance. The Bank announced in April 2011 that its 2012 report would focus on the topic of gender equality and development. In a blog post, Chief Economist Justin Yifu Lin explained:

Gender was chosen as the focus for next year's WDR in part because gender equality can lead to better development outcomes and because, as Amartya Sen asserted, development is a process of expanding freedoms equally for all individuals (Yifu Lin 2011).

The World Development Report 2012 marked significant progress in feminist efforts to influence the Bank and to promote gender mainstreaming in its policies. Until the publication of this report, the Bank had conceived of gender equality solely in terms of its economic value and its role in the achievement of economic growth. The WDR

²⁹ Clegg (2010) demonstrates the importance of World Development Reports (and press releases) in shifting the Bank's focus towards poverty reduction. As with the Bank's turn towards gender, the *50 Years Is Enough* campaign, criticism of the impact of previous Bank policy, and the Presidency of James Wolfensohn were instrumental in moving the Bank towards poverty reduction (2010: 480-1).

2012 marked the first time the Bank acknowledged the intrinsic, in addition to instrumental, value of gender equality and expanded its analysis of gender in economic development to the recognition of (some) value of unpaid work (see Harcourt 2012; Razavi 2012; Elson 2012a; Beneria 2012). From its first to final draft, the report was very much a product of the dominant Gender Equality as Smart Economics framing promoted by the Bank during the period of the GAP 2007-2010. The report, in its final form published in September 2011, sought to a) analyze the factors that have contributed to changes in gender relations and obstacles that have slowed progress, b) identify priority areas for change, and c) make recommendations for policy change at the domestic and international level. To this end, the report explores differences in health, education, agency, and access to opportunities; it identifies households, markets, and institutions as interlocking structures that aid or impede progress.

The report was researched and written by a core team of thirteen Bank employees; in addition, an extended team of eleven contributed materials and all were supervised by a ten-member advisory board. As is customary with WDRs, the core team members were drawn from a variety of departments and areas of specialty from around the Bank, meaning few of them had backgrounds in gender work. The core team comprised thirteen members: eight lead researchers (four men, four women) and five research analysts (all women). The report was co-directed by Ana Revenga and Sudhir Shetty, both economists. Seventy-five percent of the team members were economists by training and, although the team consisted mainly of members from Europe, Asia, and Latin America, all had earned graduate degrees from American or European higher education institutions and among the core team, four have PhDs from Harvard (see Chant 2013).³⁰ The team only included

³⁰ Chant also demonstrates that the extended team and advisory board were dominated by economists (Chant 2013: 106). The team's composition reflects Penny Griffin's contention that, even as the Bank's staff becomes more diverse and includes more women and non-Anglo/ American members than ever before, it is still culturally homogenous and comprised mainly of staffers with PhDs from North American and European institutions (Griffin 2009: 97-101).

one gender specialist and the other members of the leadership had not previously worked on gender issues (Interview WB2). The composition of the team matters enormously for a critical analysis of the report and is particularly important in terms of the report's editorial independence: in interviews, team members often stressed the editorial independence of the team and the freedom the Bank gave them to "write whatever we wanted" (Interview WB1). However, as another team member commented, the report's directors and lead economists are long-time Bank employees and are thus shaped by the institution in which they work; although the Bank did not tell the team what to write, she explained, they didn't need to: the findings were shaped by the team's institutional background (Interview WB3).³¹ The dominant features of this institutional culture that emerged from interviews revolved around a preference for quantitative data and metrics and a belief in the team's responsibility to 'let the data speak' (Interviews WB1, WB2, WB4). Furthermore, the composition of the core team is important as it reflects the internal culture of the Bank which is economic and somewhat skeptical of "soft" issues like gender (Arend quoted in Panagoda 2012; Weaver 2007).

This skepticism persists in the Bank and is evident in the publicity campaign that surrounded the launch of the report. Perhaps in order to anticipate the reluctance of 'mainstream' economists to engage with issues like gender, much of the launch material for the WDR 2012 framed its findings in terms of surprising, unexpected evidence that challenged the skepticism of its team. The report's co-director, Ana Revenga, wrote a blog post on the Bank's development blog where she described her 'conversion' to gender:

³¹ In his analysis of the writing process of the notorious 2000 WDR, Robert Wade makes a similar claim about the relationship between the principle of the freedom of researchers to reach their own conclusions and the Bank's institutional culture: "You do not get to be a Bank research economist without having demonstrated your commitment to the presumptions of neo-liberalism and to the analytical techniques of Anglo-American economics" (2002: 233).

Before I started working on the World Development Report 2012 (WDR), I often thought of gender equality being at the periphery of my work on development. Like many other World Bank colleagues, I would have told you: ‘Yes, gender equality matters and it is a good thing.’ But in my mind gender equality was something that happened pretty much automatically with economic development... (Revenga 2011).

Similarly, Markus Goldstein, another economist from the WDR 2012 core team, wrote a blog post asking if “we should believe the hype” about adolescent girls. In it, he explains that he was skeptical about the impact of adolescent girls on development until a recent report (Chaaban and Cunningham 2011) forced him to “rethink [his] skepticism” (Goldstein 2012). Given the institutional culture of the Bank and its reluctant (and delayed) acceptance of the importance of gender to development, these public-facing materials to accompany the launch of Bank gender publications and programs provide important information about how the Bank continues to see gender and attempt to ‘sell’ it to its audience.

As previously mentioned, the WDR occupies a somewhat strange institutional position: it is the flagship report of the Bank, well-funded and highly publicized, but is not underpinned by direct policy commitments. It is produced by the Bank and its content approved at multiple levels, yet, as one team member stressed, the fact that WDR core team members are selected from a variety of departments and re-assigned for two years to work full-time on the WDR team means that they are simultaneously “inside and outside” of the Bank (Interview WB1).

Issues around editorial independence are highly contested and there is significant tension in the relationship between the WDR and the Bank, especially given the revelations in the 2006 Deaton report which cited Bank staffers discussing interference into their research process and pressure to conform to Bank message. World Development Reports in particular were cited as a prime example of research in which

conclusions were “either predetermined or negotiated in advance” (Deaton 2006: 127-9 cited in van Waeyenberge and Fine 2011: 38).³² Indeed, evidence from Sylvia Chant and my own interviews with staff suggests that much of the report’s content was pre-agreed before the research and consulting process had finished. The report had already been drafted by the time consultation with gender and development experts began in autumn 2010, and before the results of its multi-country qualitative survey had finished (Chant 2013: 103). A junior member of the team explained that the report’s framework and main areas of focus was pre-determined in initial meetings and was not closely related to the results of the qualitative study; this was evident, the interviewee suggested, in the cursory way the results from that study were used to provide first-person ‘quotes’ throughout the text but not integrated into the body of the report (Interview WB3).

Taking into consideration the status of the Bank, its political position, and the location of the WDR within the Bank’s policy machinery, any analysis of the World Development Report requires careful attention to the complexities outlined here: not all parts of the report are created equal. The Bank is an enormous and complex institution whose numerous policies, programmes, and sub-divisions cannot be easily assessed through the reading of its publications. Kate Bedford argues that any analysis of Bank documents needs “institutionally sensitive reading practices”, by which she means the researcher must pay close attention to the writing codes that are common to the Bank (2009a: xxvi). This requires the researcher to focus particularly on abstracts, summaries, and conclusions of Bank documents in order to apprehend the prevailing discourses in the Bank; these beginning and ending pieces are frequently the only parts of long documents that Bank staff read, so authors of Bank publications put significant efforts into shaping them. By extension, staff can sometimes manage to include dissenting arguments by hiding them in the middle of large documents. Although the resulting publications can appear contradictory, Bedford advises

³² For more on the complex dynamics between Bank leadership, research, and critical voices see Mawsdley and Rigg 2002, 2003; Bayliss et al. 2011; van Waeyenberge and Fine 2011; Chant 2013.

researchers to interpret the location of particular arguments as indicative of their perceived centrality and the degree to which they are embedded in Bank narrative (2009a: xxvii). The positioning and framing of various arguments gives some indication of the contestation involved in the drafting process and the diverse audiences of Bank publications. The position of arguments within the WDR 2012 is particularly notable, as Sylvia Chant demonstrates, in the disappearance of ‘smart economics’ language from drafts of the report and its subsequent reappearance in the final published version. ‘Smart Economics’ appears in the 2012 report as a “headlining term”, evident in its frequent appearance on the report’s cover, foreword, and main messages (Chant 2013: 109).³³

The World Development Report reflects continuity and change in the Bank’s gender work, advancing the instrumental account of gender equality as ‘Smart Economics’ while acknowledging the intrinsic importance of gender. It served to advance the prominence of gender work within the Bank itself (Interview WB3) and lend the Bank’s voice to the discussion among policy-makers at the global and national level on gender issues (Interview WB4). Nonetheless, the WDR 2012 simultaneously serves to entrench the Bank’s corporatized gender agenda where gender equality is ‘sold’ as part of a broader privatization strategy, evident in the extent to which the WDR 2012 is consistent with corporate gender agendas of private sector actors (Roberts and Soederberg 2012). Within the Bank’s broader Gender Action Plan and ongoing agenda derived from it, the 2012 World Development Report is situated alongside emergent transnational business initiatives for empowerment that forge formal partnerships between the Bank and prominent corporations.

3.5 Transnational Business Initiatives for Empowerment

³³ The positioning of ‘Smart Economics’ language in the report is particularly important in light of its limited translation into languages other than English. As mentioned above (footnote 28), the only parts of the report that were translated were the ‘report overview’ and ‘key messages’ where ‘Smart Economics’ messages were prominently featured.

The 2012 World Development Report constitutes the first empirical focus of this thesis; the second is the World Bank's range of public-private partnerships focused on gender equality and empowerment. These partnerships function, like the WDR 2012, as prominent and highly visible manifestations of the Bank's (self-professed) expertise on gender and development. This section provides a justification for the selection of this second empirical focus, as well as an exploration of the emergent role of TBIs for gender equality within the World Bank. Appendix B contains detailed tables of the funding, membership, and activities of these initiatives.

Public-private partnerships are a new emerging form of global governance that have risen in prominence and number on a global scale since the 1990s. These kinds of partnerships have long been common to issue areas like global public health, sustainable development, and environmental protection, though they have recently emerged in the area of gender equality and empowerment (Bexell 2012). Recent joint ventures include: the Nike Foundation's partnerships with the UK Department for International Development (the 'Girl Hub', 2009) and World Bank (the 'Adolescent Girl Initiative', 2008), UN Women's partnership with Coca Cola (the '5by20 Strategic Partnership', 2011), the United Nations Foundation's partnership with ExxonMobil (the 'Roadmap for Women's Empowerment, 2013), and a variety of partnerships between corporations and non-profits for empowerment including Goldman Sachs ('10,000 Women', 2008) and Hindustan Unilever (the 'Shakti Amma' program, 2008). In characterizing these partnerships, I follow the lead of Elisabeth Prugl and Jacqui True who refer to these entities as "transnational business initiatives" (TBIs) governing gender to create space for their multiple and diverse forms, including: hybrid governance networks, transnational networks, business partnerships, transnational advocacy and knowledge networks, and so on (2014: 5-6).

Within the Bank, TBIs for women's empowerment have only begun within the last five years, prompted by the 2007-2010 Gender Action Plan's explicit focus on generating public-private partnerships. This

thesis examines three TBIs launched by the Bank and corporate partners since 2007: the Global Private Sector Leaders Forum, the Adolescent Girl Initiative, and the Girl Effect. In 2008, the World Bank established the Global Private Sector Leaders Forum, comprised of business leaders from around the world and aimed at promoting women's economic empowerment through support of the World Bank's Gender Action Plan (Bexell 2012). Also in 2008, as part of activities by the Coalition for Adolescent Girls, it established the Adolescent Girl Initiative (in collaboration with the Nike Foundation and twelve national governments), which comprises a series of country-based programs that aim to help girls transition between school and work. The GPSLF and AGI both emerged from commitments made in the Bank's 2007-2010 Gender Action Plan, which was launched alongside several national government and with the support of the Nike Foundation. The Girl Effect campaign, a highly publicized online media campaign established by the Nike Foundation and partners (including the World Bank) to raise awareness about the value of investment in adolescent girls, also stemmed from this collaboration and has been publicized alongside it.

These three initiatives take different forms and the Bank is differently positioned within each, though they are closely connected. The World Bank convened the Global Private Sector Leaders Forum, selecting members and convening the forums in which members share best practices. The Adolescent Girl Initiative is supported by US\$23 million from the Bank's Adolescent Girls Initiative Trust Fund and the Gender Action Plan Trust Fund, in partnership with the Nike Foundation and the several national governments. The AGI includes initiatives in seven countries, several of which collaborate with GPSLF members for in-country initiatives. The Girl Effect and AGI reflect many of the same funders, goals, and discourses, although the two take different forms and target different audiences; the AGI produces reports for policy makers and development donors, while the Girl Effect is a highly public 'viral' awareness-raising campaign. Similarly, the publications of these programs frequently cross-reference each other and reproduce research findings in different contexts. For instance, data from the pilot programs of the Adolescent Girl Initiative is reported in the World Development

Report 2012, which is then reproduced in promotional material for the Girl Effect. The Girl Effect website publishes blog posts reporting World Bank findings and commenting on their implications, using the Bank to shore up the legitimacy of the online campaign.³⁴ To the extent that these programs reference each other's findings, programs, and documents, the publications for these three TBIs gives the impression of various parts of a single, coherent project. For this reason, I will treat these three TBIs as parts of a unified "discursive assemblage" reflective of the transnational business feminism agenda (Roberts 2012, 2014a).

The Global Private Sector Leaders Forum

The Global Private Sector Leaders Forum (GPSLF) is a Bank initiative launched in 2008 at Davos with the goal of "expanding economic opportunities for women worldwide" (World Bank 2009b, 2009d). It is a public-private partnership between the Bank and "some of the world's leading private sector companies" (World Bank 2009b) including Goldman Sachs, Cisco, Boeing, Nike, Hindustan Unilever, and others (See Appendix B). The GPSLF emerged as part of the Bank's Gender Action Plan and commitments made by President Robert Zoellick to engage with the private sector in order to "advance women's economic opportunity" (World Bank 2011c). Forum members were envisioned as "ambassadors" for the Gender Action Plan in the private sector (GPSLF n.d.). Their commitments have two parts. First, the GPSLF gathers members to meet and share "best practices and lessons learned" and present evidence to "support the business case for increasing women's opportunity" in the private sector and to strengthen connections between gender policies in the Bank and private sector (Ehrenpreis 2011). Secondly, the members of the GPSLF make commitments to launching initiatives within their own organisations to promote economic opportunities for women; these commitments take various forms, from diversity and mentoring programs to increase opportunities for women within the corporate structure, to the launch of initiatives for women in

³⁴ For example, the following Girl Effect post reports on Bank findings and discuss joint projects between the Bank, Nike Foundation, and Girl Effect campaign (Girl Effect 2013)

developing countries to increase their business skills, access to credit and entrepreneurship. For example, Forum member Goldman Sachs has launched an initiative, called 10,000 Women, to assist women in developing countries in obtaining business and management education, while Forum member Boeing committed to an initiative providing mentoring and leadership training for women employed in the company.

The GPSLF quietly came to a close in 2011 but the World Bank's International Finance Corporation announced that in October 2012 it would launch, as a follow up, *WINvest* (women-specific investments) to "demonstrate where and when better working conditions for women can also lead to improved business performance" (IFC 2013). In December 2013, *WINvest* launched a report titled 'Investing in Women's Employment: Good for Business, Good for Development', demonstrating that the agenda and work of the GPSLF continues after the end of the 2007-2010 Gender Action Plan in the Bank's Gender Unit, in pursuit of its 'Gender in the Private Sector' agenda.

The Adolescent Girl Initiative

The Adolescent Girl Initiative (AGI) is a World Bank program launched in 2008 and funded by the Nike Foundation and several national governments.³⁵ It includes pilot programmes in eight countries: Afghanistan, Haiti, Jordan, Lao PDR, Liberia, Nepal, Rwanda, and South Sudan, launched between 2010-2012 and three of which are still ongoing. The stated aim of the initiative is to help girls make the transition from school to "productive employment" so they can "succeed in the labor market", through a variety of context-specific interventions (World Bank 2012c). Generally, AGI pilot programs involve vocational and technical skills training, life skills training, and sometimes include specific financial literacy, savings, or credit skills training (See Appendix B). The AGI also represents a collaboration between the Bank and

³⁵ The governments of Afghanistan, Australia, Denmark, Jordan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Nepal, Norway, Rwanda, Southern Sudan, Sweden, and the United Kingdom also funded the Adolescent Girl Initiative. It has US\$20 million total funding.

several members of the Global Private Sector Leaders Forum. Of those GPSLF members who committed to launching initiatives in developing countries, the Nike Foundation has contributed US\$3 million, while forum members Cisco Systems, Goldman Sachs and Standard and Chartered PLC are among partners participating (World Bank 2009a, 2009c) though the extent of their collaboration is unclear.³⁶ These initiatives focus on providing business education for adolescent girls in developing and post-conflict countries. With most of the pilot schemes ended, the AGI is now engaged in adapting its results in order to be “replicated and brought to scale” (World Bank n.d. ‘The Adolescent Girl Initiative’). The future of the program is unclear at present.

The Nike Foundation’s Girl Effect Campaign

A collaboration between the Nike Foundation and partners, including the World Bank, the Girl Effect campaign was launched at the World Economic Forum in 2008. The Girl Effect provides small grants to organisations that work with adolescent girls but is largely a publicity-oriented campaign focused on branding and public awareness; it aims to serve as a “catalyst to drive demand action,” in the words of the Foundation’s Brand Creative Director (quoted in Kylander 2011: 2). Although it constitutes a charitable project by the Nike Foundation and an effective piece of corporate branding, the Nike Foundation often refers to the Girl Effect as a ‘movement’ rather than a campaign (see Girl Effect n.d. ‘About’; Kanani 2011). It consists mainly of a website which includes glossy publicity materials and a viral video campaign of YouTube videos promoting the impact of the ‘Girl Effect’.³⁷ It provides

³⁶ In GPSLF publicity material, Cisco Systems and Standard and Chartered PLC explicitly commit to initiatives collaborating with the Adolescent Girl Initiative, though the extent of their participation is not clear in AGI documentation or evaluation. Cisco Systems ‘Networking Academy’ and Standard and Charter’s ‘Goal’ program both contribute to girls’ business and IT education in developing and post-conflict countries.

³⁷ The first video (‘The Girl Effect’, 2008b) was debuted at the 2008 World Economic forum and appeared on the Girl Effect website at its launch in May 2008; the second video (‘I dare you to see I am the answer’, 2008a) also appeared on the

space to donate and merchandise for purchase, though the campaign's online presence is primarily focused on raising awareness and encouraging individuals to use their social networks to "make the case for girls" (Girl Effect n.d. 'About'), which it does in part by producing blog posts and brochures that reference World Bank reports and initiatives. The Girl Effect campaign is important in the area of TBIs to the extent that it represents the most explicitly corporatized and public-facing of the three programs discussed here. Beyond the online presence occupied by the campaign, the Girl Effect constitutes a powerful agenda that has managed to engage key players in development and the private sector; the policy influence of this campaign has been significant, as the Girl Effect has since been a focus of the World Economic Forum (see Elias 2013) and helped to spark the 2010 launch of the Girl Hub, a partnership between the Nike Foundation and the UK's Department for International Development (see Roberts 2014a; Koffman and Gill 2013).

Each of the three TBIs outlined here functions as one piece of the broad discursive assemblage of transnational business feminisms; each constitutes a different manifestation of this discourse and targets a different audience in the international development community, broadly conceived. The Global Private Sector Leaders Forum promotes the 'business case' for gender equality to private sector companies, creating a forum in which corporations can disseminate research and launch corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives aimed at targeting women and girls, whether as employees, customers, or beneficiaries of charity. Its audience, beholden to narratives which revolve around 'Smart Economics', are targeted with gender equality messages that explicitly emphasize the (supposedly) synergistic nature of corporate profit and women's empowerment. The Adolescent Girl Initiative represents the development policy facet of this campaign, albeit a corporatized policy approach. The AGI aims to engage an audience of policy makers and corporate actors alike and emphasizes, in its publicity

website in May 2008; the third video ('Clock is Ticking', 2010) was released at a Clinton Global Initiative meeting in September 2010 (Kylander 2011: 2; Nike Foundation: 2012). Two of these videos ('The Girl Effect' and 'Clock is Ticking') were also aired by Oprah Winfrey on her talk show (Kylander 2011: 3).

material (as opposed to policy evaluation documents) the extent of the collaboration between the World Bank and Nike Foundation. It heavily stresses that the AGI's outcomes satisfy the business case for gender equality by promoting economic empowerment. Lastly, the Girl Effect is a public-oriented 'viral' media campaign whose online presence aims to engage everyday viewers interested in contributing to gender equality.

Conclusions

Discourse is the product of power relations, where the exercise of power is evident in the ability to render particular discourses 'real' reflections of the social world. Power is expressed through the production and dissemination of dominant discourses. This analytical perspective on discourse is essential for gender research, as it illuminates the way that ideas about gender roles and hierarchies translate into powerful forms of social control. A feminist discourse analysis – that is, a discourse analysis with emancipatory feminist commitments – emphasizes the social construction of gendered power relations. In doing so, it illuminates "how much power it takes to maintain the international political system in its present form" (Enloe 1990: 3). To this end, a feminist discourse analysis attempts to probe and disrupt the discourse that legitimates the global political order as it exists today, in order to reveal the power relations that are so often made invisible and normalized.

Given the World Bank's financial resources, global influence, prominence as a 'Knowledge Bank' for development expertise, and role in the production of gender and development knowledge, the discourses produced and disseminated by the Bank matter enormously for understanding the function of gender in the global political economy. Furthermore, given that the 'Gender Equality as Smart Economics' policy agenda originated in the Bank's 2007 Gender Action Plan and has spread to numerous public and private institutions since, the gender policies and publications disseminated by the Bank are paradigmatic of the current gender discourses in the development field. In the following chapters, this thesis moves to analysis of data drawn from the

documents and programmes discussed above, in which it asks about the representation of the 'empowerable' woman through the theoretical lens laid out in Chapter 2.

Chapter Four: Empowerable Bodies and Subjectivities

Conceptually structured by the human capital critique developed in Chapter 2 and empirically based on discourse analysis methodology presented in Chapter 3, this chapter presents the first of three empirical chapters that draw on the qualitative textual analysis carried out on World Bank documents, and the first of two chapters specifically focused on the WDR 2012. This chapter uses evidence from the World Development Report 2012 to explore the function of development discourses to represent certain kinds of women as ‘empowerable’, with a focus on the ‘inborn qualities’ ascribed to women by GESE discourses. In this chapter (and Chapter 5), references to the WDR 2012 are cited with page numbers only in square brackets [xx].

The analysis in this chapter considers the qualities and characteristics, assumed to be dormant or pre-existing, that are ascribed to women and the manner in which these qualities are understood to contribute to a process of (economic) empowerment; I will demonstrate here that the representations of the empowerable woman depend upon the ascription of a ‘natural’ femininity to female subjects, assumptions about the feminine characteristics attributed to women, and the instrumentalization of those characteristics. I make the case in this chapter for a critical appraisal of empowerment as a highly politically contingent and neoliberal project that aims to intervene and instrumentalize *certain kinds* of women for *certain kinds* of economic activity. The chapter therefore contributes to the overall critique of empowerment – through the framework of ‘empowerability’ – by demonstrating the analytical categories through which women’s bodies and subjectivities are understood in relation to their productivity.

The chapter proceeds thematically, with each section corresponding to a particular characteristic of the ‘empowerable’ woman as she appears in the WDR 2012. The first section (4.1) addresses heteronormativity and sexuality, while the second section (4.2) proceeds by exploring

constructions of maternal altruism. Section 4.3 focuses on age groups and young women in relation to empowerment. Section 4.4 explores the ascription of pliancy and resilience to women. These four sections elaborate on the kinds of bodies and subjectivities which are foregrounded in the report as those with 'untapped' potential or dormant power; in other words, the first four sections demonstrate the way that particular bodies and behaviours are represented as being conducive to empowerment. Section 4.5 approaches the question from the other side, exploring those bodies and subjectivities who are not represented as 'empowerable' subjects and are therefore made invisible within the discourse.

4.1 Heterosexuality and Marriage

Empowerment in the WDR 2012 is predicated on compulsory reproductive heterosexuality. Heteronormativity in the report primarily serves to circumscribe the kinds of bodies that can be represented as productive, in line with the overall aim of harnessing women for 'productive' work, and to designate heterosexual couplehood as the most economically viable mode of life. Empowerment takes place within the context of the heterosexual partnership, where woman's independent control of income signals the possibility of shifting gender relations within this unit rather than outside of it.

Heteronormativity does not necessarily operate by explicitly asserting the superiority of heterosexuality but instead operates by normalizing heterosexual relations as universal, morally righteous, and natural. It renders the duality of sex and complementarity of man and woman as "prediscursive" and therefore outside the bounds of debate (Bedford 2009a: xx). A critical lens on heteronormativity demands an analysis of embedded ideas about sexuality and bodies: what do bodies *do*, and which bodies count? Neoliberal discourse is predicated on heteronormative gender binaries that associate successful economic behaviour with heterosexual masculinities and therefore render "non-men and non-masculine bodies" unproductive (Griffin 2009: 153). It pre/proscribes bodies, establishing the bounds of what bodies do and

how they exist in relation to each other (Griffin 2009: 41). Heteronormativity within the WDR 2012 functions to align heterosexual bodies with productivity, to marginalize non-heterosexualities in terms of vulnerability and unproductivity, and to embed normative relations of heterosexual couplehood.

The normative heterosexuality of the empowerable woman is most immediately evident in the WDR 2012's tendency to collapse the categories of woman and wife, and to assume they are interchangeable markers of empowerable womanhood. These categories are conflated insofar as the report uses both terms to refer to the same subject without comment; it assumes that the woman of which it speaks is, by default, both heterosexual and married. At various points in the report, 'women' and 'wives' are used interchangeably and effectively collapsed:

About 20 percent of the participants in the WDR 2012 study said that husbands have complete control over their wives' autonomous earnings (the share was a little more pronounced in rural areas). Participants also reported that when women do not keep control over their earnings, the potential empowering role of autonomous earnings is limited [169].

What might appear a minor linguistic point instead reflects conceptual slippage that is pervasive throughout the report and contributes to a blurring of lines between distinct categories. This represents entrenched heteronormativity, in that it unreflexively makes a claim about the nature of womanhood: empowerable women are heterosexual and married to (or at least partnered with) men. The compulsory heterosexuality here is not necessarily consciously discriminatory or homophobic, but by failing to recognize the way it privileges heterosexuality and excludes alternatives, it normalizes heterosexuality as a precondition for human relations. Furthermore, beyond normative heterosexuality, it proscribes marriage as the only acceptable structure for sexual relations. The report imagines households as synonymous with nuclear families (married couples with dependent children) and even urges states to enact legislation to formalize 'customary' marriages and thereby confer

the responsibilities of the nuclear family onto this relationship [309-10] (see also Bedford 2012). It proposes recognizing customary marriages and a wide variety of forms of co-habitation as marriages for legal purposes:

The key [to legally formalizing customary marriages] is to keep evidentiary requirements to a minimum to take into account the wide range of circumstances in establishing a relationship. The starting point could be a presumption that couples are in a customary marriage if they are living together, a presumption that could be left up to the contesting spouse to refute. This registration provides a key step in women's access to legal systems [310].

Reproductive heterosexuality functions as an organizing principle of the report. Bodies are imagined in terms of their dual reproductive/productive functions and the complementarity of the sexes. The life course is further mapped out along a pathway of heterosexual couplehood and reproduction from which there is little recognition of the possibility of deviation. For example, a discussion of women and men's different time allocations to productive and reproductive work appears under the sub-section title: "First comes love, then comes marriage, then comes a baby sitting in a carriage" [218]. Explaining the reproduction of gender inequality, the report claims that "by the time girls and boys become adults and form households, women typically have fewer years of education than men..." [46]. Marriage and reproduction are understood as key points along the life course which might be delayed for further investment in human capital or economic opportunity, but never avoided entirely. The extensive discussion of delayed pregnancy (discussed further below) signals the report's tendency to imagine women's bodies in terms of their reproductive milestones and the deep and unreconciled tension that exists between its idealization of motherhood and emphasis on delayed and/or reduced fertility.

Compulsory heterosexuality is further normalized and rendered unproblematic throughout the report by the invisibility of alternatives and the failure to establish sexuality as a category within which multiple identities exist. Heterosexuality occupies a prediscursive position in the report to the extent that sexuality is not acknowledged as a feature of social life or a category within which diversity exists. The word “heterosexual” only appears once in the report, in the context of HIV/AIDS transmission [135]; the word “homosexual” never appears. The concept of sexuality thus appears here only in terms of its proximity to risk taking behaviours and the transmission of disease. The confluence of bodies, sexuality, risk behaviour, and vulnerability is an important and recurring theme in the report, particularly in the way it conceptualizes male bodies and masculine subjectivities (see Section 4.5). Sexual orientation as a category or concept appears only three times in the report, each time listed among other “factors of exclusion” that contribute to gender inequality:

...gender gaps remain particularly large for groups for whom ethnicity, geographical distance, and other factors (such as disability or sexual orientation) compound gender inequality [13].

Ethnicity, distance, disability, or sexual orientation, among other factors, further compound gender inequality [55].

Other factors of exclusion, such as caste, disability, or sexual orientation, also tend to compound disadvantages [76].

The report’s inability or unwillingness to consider sexuality in any capacity other than vulnerability is problematic and serves to other non-heterosexual bodies. Here heteronormativity serves to circumscribe bodies and their role in productivity, where non-heterosexual bodies exist as invisible in reproduction or production. Furthermore, the pairing of sexual orientation with disability represents a deeply problematic conflation and demonstrates the way that non-heterosexual bodies are marginalized from the report’s conceptualization of empowerable,

productive bodies (as well as the conflation of unproductivity with disability). Sexuality instead aligns with risk and marginality.

The third manifestation of heteronormativity in the report is the centering of the empowerment process on heterosexual couplehood. The report imagines a model of women's empowerment premised on a reconfiguration of women's agency within the confines of heterosexual partnership in which income allows for greater voice inside the household, and thereby works to "shore up intimate relations" (Bedford 2009a: 109). While it theorizes that independent income will empower women inside and outside of the home, marriage and heterosexual partnership remain at the core of this process. This is further reflected in the extent to which empowerment is narrowly circumscribed as a re-signification of gender roles within marriage and household through income generation.

Women turned income earners may be able to leverage their new position to change gender roles in their households by influencing the allocation of time and resources among household members, shifting relative power within the households, and more broadly exercising stronger agency [268].

Cash employment is also strongly associated with women's empowerment. Not earning a cash income is most consistently associated with married women not making decisions—on topics such as their health care, large household purchases, purchases for daily needs, and visits to family or friends [88].

Income and control of assets are conceptualized as bargaining chips to promote change within household gender relations, rather than a challenge to these relations. This reflects an underlying tension in the Bank's empowerment rhetoric: despite its tendency to envision women as independent economic actors empowered by income generation, the Bank feels "deep unease" at the prospect of undermining normative relationships and therefore maintains an emphasis on the liberatory

power of income *within* the heterosexual partnership (Bedford 2009a: 113). Kate Bedford suggests that this represents the “core tension” in the Bank’s vision of empowerment via employment (2009a: 109).

The goal of shifting gender norms and changing gender roles is valorized throughout the WDR 2012 but only to the extent that changes in these roles will free up women for productive labour. When the report discusses changing gender roles, it continues to imagine gender and sex as mutually constitutive, although it acknowledges that gender roles can be damaging to freedom and agency. For instance, the report acknowledges the potentially “transformative” role of paternity leave on gender roles, although this discussion is primarily concerned with the impact of leave policies on women’s economic opportunities [298-9]. While maternity leave policies “enhance the prospects for women to participate in economic activity opportunities” but entrench social norms that make women the primary carers, paternity leave policies, on the other hand, give men “incentives to take on more care duties” and thereby changes care norms [299]. The report does suggest the possibility of minor shifts in the distribution of care work and income earning, though it generally concedes that men’s care work share will not significantly increase when women’s market work share increases [171].

The move to reconceptualize women as productive actors and economic agents opens up two strands of the marriage discourse that complicate its normative embedding of married partnership. Firstly, in line with my earlier suggestion that marriage and reproduction are considered to be inevitable points in the life course, the report encourages “later” and “delayed” marriage (alongside lower fertility) in order to allow for a higher rates of labour force participation among women and to increase their agency [11, 158].³⁸ This points to a

³⁸ A member of the WDR 2012 core team explained that arranged marriages were considered in this discussion, but criticism of the practice of arranged marriage was later removed in order to avoid controversial linkages between cultural practices and gender inequality. The Bank staffer explained that the Bank must remain sensitive to its many member states and their customs and therefore is obligated to

contradiction in the report's narrative of empowerment that will also be reflected in the discussion of motherhood and fertility: while the report valorizes marriage and reproduces normative heterosexual partnerships, it also understands marriage as a potential obstacle to a woman's economic participation. While heterosexuality is seemingly compulsory for the empowerable woman, the potential for marriage to limit her economic participation is a continual source of concern. The report associates later marriage and childbearing with an increase in education, earnings, and labour force activity [159, 315, 316]: "For example, job training for an adolescent girl not only can improve her access to employment but may also delay pregnancy, which in turn can enable her to spend more time acquiring skills" [289].

Secondly, the report considers divorce within the range of options for economically empowered women to exercise their agency [95] and advocates for "exit options" to provide women with a "bargaining chip" in the home [8, 159, 313]. To this end, the report suggests strong legal frameworks to protect women's property rights in marriage and in case of divorce or a husband's death; it continually operates around, within, and for the promotion of heterosexual marriage which it establishes as the ideal unit for women's empowerment. The report's treatment of marriage is complex and contradictory, though underpinned by a strong heteronormativity that encourages marriages as pathways to stability and the privatization of social reproduction.

The representation of the empowerment process – and the 'empowerable' woman – in the WDR 2012 is thus predicated on reproductive heterosexuality and perceived complementarity between the sexes to the extent that women's empowerment is conceptualized in terms of shift in reproductive and productive obligations. Marriage in the report functions primarily to circumscribe the boundaries within which the process of empowerment can take place. It works to embed normative heterosexual relations, promote re-distributed care work

avoid offending these countries by denigrating their cultural practices [Interview WB3].

within the family unit, and allow women to allocate more time to 'productive' labour. The subject of the 'empowerable' woman in the report coheres through her association with heterosexual relationships, reproductivity, and maternal care.

4.2 Motherhood and Maternal Care

Closely related to the theme of normative heterosexuality that runs through the report, I suggest that motherhood is a central feature of empowerability in the WDR 2012, because its emphasis on the centrality of biological processes of reproduction is closely linked to the valorization of the gendered social practices of mothering. There are two primary reasons for the centrality of motherhood in the report's empowerment framework: firstly, its conceptualization of gender is predicated on the construction of two kinds of bodies – female/ feminine and male/ masculine – which perform different functions. Motherhood and maternal nature are dominant characteristics that the report attributes to female subjects, and motherhood is seen to prescribe particular female behaviours (both productive and reproductive). Secondly, the report's overall GESE framework is concerned with long-term intergenerational outcomes, for which women's human capital is represented as a powerful point of intervention and investment in order to achieve better outcomes for children and the transmission of different (empowered) norms. However, the valorization of motherhood exists in tension with a competing discourse around fertility and the potential for childbearing to negatively impact a woman's productivity.

Just as the report tends to collapse the categories of women and wives, it similarly conflates women and mothers. This is primarily evident in the report's assumption that motherhood is intrinsic to womanhood and women can therefore be understood either as mothers or mothers-to-be. Mothers are the norm in the report, throughout which women are unproblematically assumed to have children and a special inclination to care for children. Throughout the entire report, "childless women" receive one mention [205], while "women without children" are

mentioned seven times in three consecutive pages [221-3], in relation to the impact of “family formation” (marriage and childbearing) on women’s formal and informal employment. These few exceptions aside, throughout the report the categories of women and mothers are collapsed. The conflation of motherhood and womanhood is further evident in the graphics used to represent women in different age groups, where the figure representative of women 15-49 is represented as a pregnant woman (Figure 4.1 and 4.2).

Figure 4.1 Image from the WDR 2012: 15, 77, 121



Figure 4.2 Close of up Figure 4.1



Female bodies here are starkly reduced to their reproductive capacities. This graphic is used throughout, as are the phrases “reproductive years” and “reproductive ages” to designate women ages 15-49. The pregnant ‘stick figure’ in a dress provides a striking representation of the deeply essentialist representations of women that persist: while the report purports to imagine new roles for empowered women, it instead relies on already entrenched gender hierarchies and reductive essentialisms in order to understand womanhood and motherhood.

Reproduction is assumed to be both the defining feature of a woman's life and the dominant force on shaping her subjectivity:

For example, many conditional cash transfer programs initially targeted women because – cognizant of how women were likely to spend money differently from men – it seemed a way to get more of the transfer spent on children's endowments [34].

Women's exercise of agency improves their children's welfare. Gender differences in preferences are reflected in different patterns of expenditure and consumption within the household, with women more strongly favoring investments in children's human capital [151].

A maternal, caring nature is attributed to women as a natural feature of womanhood and further employed as an implicit marker of female difference. The report finds that women's control of income "changes spending in ways that benefit children" [5, 48], reflecting gender differences in spending patterns with changes in income distribution resulting in greater expenditure on child wellbeing. The implications of this characterization are twofold: firstly, it collapses the report's earlier distinctions between sex and gender, instead promoting an unproblematic binary narrative in which female bodies express feminine (reproductive) behaviours and male bodies express masculine (productive) behaviours.³⁹ Furthermore, the representation of maternal care as both natural and intrinsic to femininity serves to normalize unpaid care work as a "product of altruism" (Brickell and Chant 2010: 151), and a distinctly feminine altruism at that.

The altruism that is assumed in these excerpts is more broadly reflective of the report's tendency to position women as the moral core of the family and community. The report is concerned with preventing the intergenerational transmission of poverty, for which it identifies women

³⁹ The report articulates a distinction between sex and gender, in a discussion of gender norms as a powerful informal institution: "Gender roles provide guides to normative behaviours for each sex within certain social contexts" [8].

as the key agents, and so the transmission of norms between mother and child is another important theme of its maternity narrative:

Because many norms are learned at an early age, obsolete or disliked norms can be transmitted across generations. Recent studies have emphasized the intergenerational transmission of attitudes and views, as in the United States, where studies show evidence that women pass on their beliefs about the importance of nurturing to their children [172].

Women are responsible for passing on norms about care [172], education [106], gender [152, 315, 317], and social norms in general [24], in addition to the educational and health outcomes that result from women's different spending decisions. The repeated assertion that women are responsible for the transmission of norms (and a variety of other outcomes like health and education) positions women as guardians of morality, drawing on deeply ingrained beliefs about women as symbols of the community and the repositories of its moral code. The discussion of norm transmission and motherhood is also structured by an implicit comparison between women and men. Although the report valorizes heterosexual couplehood and proposes to shift the care burden within the household, fathers occupy an unstable position in the discourse, almost entirely present as a point of comparison for women's maternal nature:

In a world where women care about different things from men (and women do appear to care for children more than men do), it may be that when women have more voice, they can drive institutional investments in a way that favors children [68].

The report's repeated assertions of difference between men and women's 'preferences' and spending habits works to normalize gendered differences, as a product of nature. It is reflective of the broad drive in GESE discourses to isolate and identify the most 'efficient' investments: in this case, mothers who present the opportunity to affect present-day and future outcomes by shaping future human capital

(Mahon 2010). Claims about 'natural' female difference which often appear in this discourse do provide an essentialized picture of a universal female subject, although they tend to do so in ways that emphasize the natural goodness of women as mothers or caregivers.

Furthermore, these essentialisms support assertions that increases in women's agency will allow them to direct spending and therefore benefit children. To this end, the report's conceptualization of agency risks 're-labeling' the effects of inequality as empowered choice (Wilson 2013: 85, see also Kandiyoti 1988). What if women's tendency to spend a greater share of resources on children were not the product of her intrinsically altruistic and maternal nature, but an effect of a patriarchal social order? This is another tension that bubbles beneath the surface of the report: despite its discussion of socially constructed gender norms and advocacy of shifts to gender norms that confine women to reproductive care work, the report continually reinforces the notion that women are natural carers and that the performance of care work is attributable, at least in part, to a 'natural' feminine altruism.

Motherhood occupies a central role in the report because of the emphasis GESE narratives place on women's instrumental role in the achievement of development outcomes. The report acknowledges the intrinsic value of gender equality, but this case is outweighed by the extensive discussion of the instrumental importance of gender equality and the potential for women's empowerment to achieve secondary outcomes. This instrumental case is built on two related claims: firstly, that because women allocate a greater share of their resources to children than men do, women's control of income will improve children's outcomes. Secondly, because women's labour is currently "misallocated" [4, 47] in low paying or unpaid jobs (read: reproductive work), their employment in high quality, higher wage jobs will raise family incomes and by extension, national economic growth (discussed further in Chapter 5). In this way, Bank discourse works to re-inscribe women's productivity "as part of their reproductivity" and duty to the family (Griffin 2009: 154-5). Indeed, the harnessing of the double burden to extract productive and reproductive labour from empowered

women rests on the premise that productivity and efficiency are natural manifestations of their responsible, family-oriented feminine nature.

The dominant narrative of altruistic and economically empowered motherhood is simultaneously undermined by a secondary narrative running throughout the report that positions childbearing as an obstacle to economic empowerment. The report frequently asserts that economic empowerment is dependent on lowering fertility and delaying childbearing. In doing so, it reinforces the productive/ reproductive labour distinction and represents the two as existing in tension; for instance, discussions of female employment consider women's efforts to "reconcile work and home responsibilities" [341] or gender differences in the ability to "substitute market inputs for home time" [221]. Reproductive labour obligations (whether a manifestation of preference or a social obligation) are presented as major obstacles to women's economic participation and, by extension, overall economic growth, while at the same time representing one of the primary characteristics of women that make them better investments for development funds. At numerous points in the report, childbearing is represented in terms of its potential to constrain or prevent women from full economic participation [66, 151, 158, 159, 288, 314, 367]. Accordingly, delayed childbirth is equated with women's greater ability to exercise agency and acquire skills necessary for economic success.

The decline in fertility that has come with higher incomes has helped lower the number of deaths associated with maternal mortality. And bearing fewer children has given women more time to invest in acquiring human capital and to participate in the economy [11, 62].

The language used to discuss reproduction, particularly in considering how best to delay reproduction, imagines that child-bearing is an inevitable and fundamental part of womanhood. For example, the report repeatedly stresses that one of the main benefits of job training is its potential to delay pregnancy and reduce the number of early pregnancies [33, 289, 314]. Similarly, labour force participation and

decreased fertility are frequently paired as evidence for the positive outcomes of development policies [55, 66, 265]: “For example, a land titling program in Peru increased joint ownership rates by including provisions to lift constraints women faced. It also increased mothers’ participation in the labor market and decreased fertility” [345]. In this way, fertility and productivity form a pair of complementary opposites which together fuel the economic empowerment envisioned by the report.

The framing of reproduction as an obstacle to successful economic production further evidences Penny Griffin’s claim that the Bank’s neoliberal discourse is reliant on the embedded notion that male bodies are naturally inclined towards successful economic behaviour and female bodies confined to the reproductive realm. Women must therefore enter the productive economy on fundamentally different terms, wherein their productivity is understood as an extension of women’s reproductivity and ‘natural’ caregiver role (2009: 153-5). I suggest, building on Griffin’s claim, that women’s productivity is here represented both in and against her reproductivity: while her maternal caring nature makes woman an efficient and altruistic economic agent, her reproductivity also presents a threat to her productive capacities. Many of the interventions promoted by the report therefore work to facilitate reproduction while minimizing its negative impact on productivity: fewer children [12, 33, 55, 62, 317], child care provision [26, 32, 214, 222, 297, 299], redistributed care within the family unit [173, 338], and flexible work arrangements [181, 198, 220, 222, 236, 263] aim to allow for social reproductive work to take place without displacing productive work.

The report presents feminine subjectivities as intrinsically maternal and altruistic; at its core, the GESE narrative relies on this narrative to align a particular construction of ‘feminine nature’ with existing models and to ‘add’ women in a manner within the bound of acceptable practice (Bergeron 2006). Simultaneously, the report imagines fertility as a potential obstacle and imagines women unencumbered by family obligation to be better economic actors. The empowerable woman is

undoubtedly maternal, family and community oriented, but her empowerment corresponds to the ability to replace care work with productive work:

Enjoying ever higher education, women have greater control over their life choices. They use those choices to participate more in the labor force; have fewer children; diversify their time beyond housework and childcare; and shape their communities, economies, and societies [55].

This text excerpt clearly lays out a vision of the empowered woman and her priorities: given increased agency, she redistributes her time between productive and reproductive obligations, minimizing time spent on “housework and care” by having fewer children and dedicating more time to the labour force, community, and economy. Here we can see how the human capital orientation of development operates: the perceived inborn quality of maternal altruism is activated in order to harness the power of feminine difference. This is one of the central tensions in the report and reflects the extent to which the representation of ‘empowerability’ is complex and at times contradictory.

4.3 Youth and Reproductivity

Age is an important category in the report’s representation of the ‘empowerable’ woman, and different age groups appear in distinct subject positions throughout depending on the extent to which these groups of women fit within a narrow notion of economic productivity. Broadly, three age group categories appear in the report, each positioned differently in terms of their relationship to production and reproduction: elderly women, women of ‘reproductive age’, and adolescent girls/ young women. Bodies of varying ages are understood in relation to their physical capacity for productive and reproductive labour and their potential to adapt to changing norms.

Women of “reproductive age” are central to the report because of their position as mothers, caregivers, and workers; they feature throughout the report’s analysis and its efforts to move this group from economic inactivity or informal activity into formal employment through investment in (and activation of) human capital. The report generally disregards older women who, along with disabled women, it understands as unable to work and therefore unproductive (see Section 4.5). Lastly, girls and young women are rhetorically and visually central to the report, featuring heavily in images used on the front and inside covers and in the most highly read summary and overview sections of the report. In asking *who* is empowerable and *what kind* of women are perceived as ideal targets for intervention, adolescent girls continually emerge as subjects of sustained attention throughout the report.

Visually, adolescent girls (and younger girls) are often featured in the report, particularly in the most prominent portions.⁴⁰ The report’s front cover and main messages feature the image of a young girl walking across a sandy landscape and looking into the distance (see Figure 4.3). The inside front cover that prefaces the overview features a secondary cover page (see Figure 4.4) that shows the faces of thirteen young children (mostly girls), most of them fitting within the visual language of “Third World Girl (read: Brown or Black)” so common to development and humanitarian imagery (Sensoy and Marshall 2010: 301; see also Manzo 2008; Wilson 2011; Switzer 2013).

⁴⁰ Drawing on Bedford’s analysis of the institutional “writing codes” that are common to the Bank, my analysis highlights the messages that appear in the abstracts, summaries, and conclusions of the report (see Section 3.4).

Figure 4.3 WDR 2012 front cover

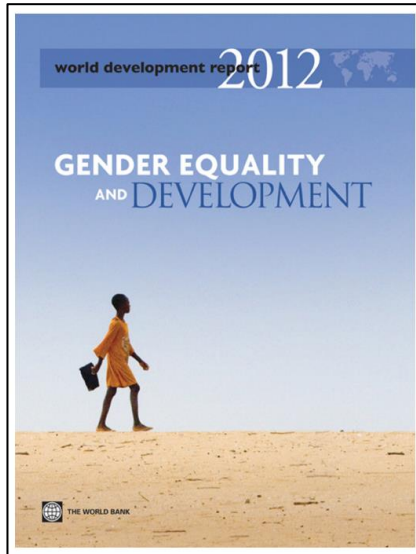
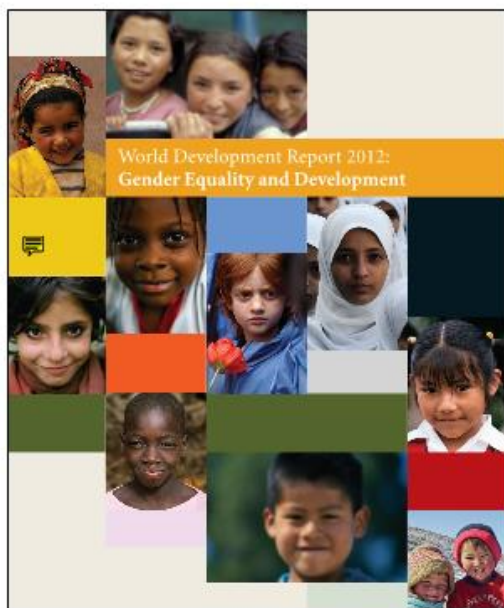


Figure 4.4 WDR 2012 inside cover



These images typify the 'positive' visual representations of development that reproduce a notion of 'agency' which is both consistent with and necessary for neoliberal empowerment approaches (Wilson 2011: 328). The style of image here reflects the established visual language of humanitarian communication, whose framing conveys an effort to exploit the affective subjectivity of the spectator (see Dogra 2006; Chouliaraki 2010). The images here work to elide contradictions embedded in contemporary development practices and instead focus attention on empowered subjects, who, in the case of images of children, are

positioned as potentially empowered subjects who await intervention by individuals and institutions. These images are consistent with the report's focus on the agency of women and young girls but also represent a rejection of negative appeals which employ images of suffering that emphasize victimhood. Images situated within the discourse of empowerment operate on a different logic: while negative appeals ask the viewer to feel guilt, indignation, and perhaps complicity in suffering, positive appeals instead present images of "distinct individuals" and work to construct a relationship between this distant individual and the spectator as "potential benefactor" (Chouliaraki 2013: 61-3). This visual narrative is therefore reflective of the report's overall claims about the nature of empowerment, the 'undiscovered' status of women and girls' agency, and the role of intervention to capitalize on dormant but empowerable subjects.

The report makes the case for the importance of girls' empowerment as part of its broader GESE message. I suggest that girls appear in the report primarily in terms of a relationship articulated between their vulnerability and empowerment. The agency of adolescent girls and young women is 'discovered' in the report in much the same way that the agency of women more broadly has become visible in development discourses: that is, through the contention that their labour power is currently untapped and their human capital is insufficiently developed to empower them for economic activity. The prominence of girls in the WDR 2012 occurs in the midst of a broader trend in development governance granting adolescent girls and young women "new visibility in global policy making" (Elias 2013: 162; see also McRobbie 2009; Koffman and Gill 2013) and through the recognition of the so-called 'Girl Effect' which contends that 600 million adolescent girls have a "unique potential" to "end poverty for themselves and the world" (Nike 2012). The 'Girl Effect' and similar narratives of global social and economic change via the empowerment of young girls are prominent themes in global governance institutions and corporate social responsibility initiatives, particularly notable in the recent spate of public-private partnerships between development institutions and corporations for the

promotion of girls' empowerment. This girl-focused global governance trend is the subject of Chapter 6.

The report's narrative of girls' empowerment advances the claim that girls are particularly vulnerable to poverty and disempowerment, while simultaneously particularly empowerable because of their natural qualities and capabilities and the potential to shape these early in their lives. The relationship between vulnerability and empowerment posed here reflects the assumption that, without intervention, women and girls will fail to benefit from development and their potential power will go unharnessed. This is especially interesting given the concern with boys falling behind and exhibiting vulnerability,⁴¹ although it is a vulnerability which has failed to prompt glossy corporate campaigns promising to harness the power of the 'boy effect'. Why do girls appear as particularly empowerable subjects in the WDR 2012 and GESE narratives more broadly? First, the report asserts that girls exist in a ripe moment for intervention at which point their subjectivities and capabilities can be shaped; secondly, and subsequently, it promotes such intervention on the basis that empowering girls will promote growth and eradicate poverty.

Across countries and cultures, adolescence is a period where horizons for boys often expand while those for girls may shrink, especially for poor girls or girls in rural areas where distance and norms around mobility can be a significant constraint. So, interventions in this area need to focus on building life skills, including social capital for adolescent girls, improving their aspirations and agency, and reducing risky behaviour [317].

⁴¹ Increased attention to gender equality issues on the global stage has resulted in significant attention to the issue of engagement of men and boys in the gender equality process. Though this has long been an area of concern for gender and development researchers (see Cornwall 2000; White 1994, 2000; Chant and Gutman 2000; Win 2001), an emerging body of grey literature from NGOs, global governance institutions, and research centers signals the current interest in the subject (see Esplen 2006).

The report envisions adolescent girls and young women positioned on a threshold between different life trajectories, as is evident in its tendency to envision girlhood as a ripe moment for intervention. The report stresses the importance of intervening early, during adolescence and early adulthood [289, 315]. The language of urgency and early intervention externalizes development agency by contributing to the assumption that, lacking appropriate intervention from the Bank and the WDR's audience, the potential of adolescent girls will go unharnessed; it further implies a pre-determined life trajectory which inevitably awaits all 'Third World Girls'. Girlhood designates vulnerability in the report insofar as vulnerable girlhood stands in as the precursor to disempowered womanhood, but it also signifies opportunity. This period is particularly significant because of the potential to affect changes in norms and behaviours, before harmful norms become "binding" [21, 32, 172, 201]. The continual emphasis on girls' aspirations and attitudes confers importance on adolescence in terms of the potential for interventions to re-shape girls' aspirations and develop empowered subjectivities.

The report is particularly concerned with a generational change of norms that relate to women's activity in the public sphere [33, 317], their economic participation [155, 32], attitudes towards competition [74], and educational aspirations [21]. Norms in these issue areas can be altered so that girls are empowered to aspire to education, employment, and entrepreneurship. Again, and in line with promotion of norm shifts throughout the report, gender norms are imagined mainly in terms of their harmful impact on women's economic agency and employment potential. On the one hand, girls and girlhood are inextricably linked to womanhood because as the same characteristics that appear to make adult women ideal targets for empowerment (maternal care, family attachment, altruism) are ascribed to girls. This reflects a familiar focus on women and girls of the developing world and their "gendered propensity for hard work and altruism" as the reason why girls' empowerment is worthwhile for development investment (Wilson 2011: 325).

On the other hand, and in line with some of the contradictions discussed above, much of the report's discussion of young girls aims to delay marriage and pregnancy in favour of investment in job skills and years in employment [159, 289, 315]. In this way, it expresses a concern to get away from "traditional female difference" in order to enable girls to reach their "full human potential" (Bexell 2012: 401). Once again, the acquisition of necessary skills and human capital is set in opposition to the reproductive function of female bodies. The report continually counterposes the acquisition of skills, agency, and voice with biological reproduction, while equating the performance of 'good' womanhood with motherhood and heterosexual couplehood.

The agency of adolescent girls and young women has been discovered and granted visibility within development policy via its insertion into the broader discourse of empowerment as 'Smart Economics'. Girls' empowerment is framed in terms of future-oriented investment strategies and future growth:

Greater access to economic opportunities and, in some cases, higher returns to economic activity provide stronger incentives to accumulate human capital, particularly for women, and are likely to increase investments in the skills of girls and young women—tomorrow's workers [259].

Much of this 'Girl Effect' narrative is premised on the claim that adolescent girls possess unique potential to end poverty for themselves and others. Empowered girls are "more likely to work when they become older, have fewer children, and exercise more voice in their households—feeding the cycle of change" [11-12]. This discourse is problematic, however, because of its displacement of responsibility for development onto young girls and continual embedding of the assumption that female gender roles express the 'natural' reproductivity of female bodies (empowered girls make altruistic mothers). The emphasis on the power and potential of adolescent girls to eradicate poverty shores up a discourse of individualism and choice:

Empowering adolescents to make better choices for themselves can make a big difference to their lives, to their families, to their communities, and, as future workers and citizens, to society more broadly. Interventions need to build human and social capital; facilitate the transition from school to work; and increase their aspirations and agency. Efforts to influence and reduce risky behaviour are also important [32-33].

In this way, girls are given access to a “highly conservative mode of feminine ‘empowerment’” characterized by new (economic and sexual) freedoms, although situated within limits, and disarticulated from a broader feminist movement (McRobbie 2009: 27). Under the report’s human capital framework, adolescent girls appear prominently as human capital *in progress*; by extension, adult women (of ‘reproductive age’) appear in the report as maternal agents who should be “enlisted (and trained)” to ensure the development of the human capital of the next generation (Mahon 2010: 176). Adolescent girls and young women appear as empowerable subjects in the report both because of and in spite of an inherent vulnerability that is ascribed to them.

4.4 Pliant, Docile Subjects

The empowerable woman in the report is characterized by her pliant and flexible subjectivity, closely related to the assumption that women possess innate maternal and familial altruism. This is manifest in the assertions that women are more easily adapted to new norms and shifting social patterns, including shifting patterns of productive/reproductive work, and that they are more resourceful and therefore better able to ‘cope’ with instability. In this way, empowered women are positioned in opposition to men as the ideal leadership figures in sustainable development, securing a future for the family through resourcefulness and entrepreneurship. This image is consistent more broadly with the “productive woman” who has been the dominant image in Gender and Development policy for some time: this woman is “active, productive, flexible, docile, a source of cheap labour and a good investment” (Harcourt 2009: 69).

The female subject envisioned in the report is a pliant subject who is easily incentivized to take on new responsibilities or behaviours. Young women are represented in the report as more easily adapted to new social and gender norms, adapting to change faster than men do [194]; they value flexibility in work arrangements and move between unpaid, informal, and formal employment [220-2]; and they are easily incentivized to adopt new behaviours or skills, evidenced in the report's repeated citations of the positive impact of conditional cash transfer programmes (CCTs). CCTs and similar mechanisms are encouraged and their impact, particularly on women, is stressed: "many conditional cash transfer programs targeted women, in part because women were likely to spend more of the transfer on children's endowments" [320, 34, 113, 315]. Much of the report's narrative of empowerment is premised on the notion that women are more likely to adapt to changing economic, political, and social contexts, and to pass on these new norms to the next generation [172]. In contrast to men, who are represented as less easily adaptable and thus less suitable development subjects (see Section 4.5), women are understood to possess natural characteristics that enable them to cope in precarious conditions and to exercise responsibility and secure the needs of their families.

This trope is particularly evident in a short section on changing gender roles in Georgia shortly after the collapse of the USSR. Drawn from an internal Bank case study, this text appears in a chapter that is dedicated to promoting a (limited) shift in gender roles that enables women to participate in formal economic life more fully, so we can interpret this case study as one introduced to provide positive examples and/ or guidance through the valorisation of a certain kind of female subjectivity.

[Georgian women] realized long before men that there was no return to secure state employment, and they proved more flexible in adjusting to occupational change. They often took jobs below their qualifications, opting to be unskilled workers in informal activities such as street vendors, running shuttle

services to Turkey, sitting babies, or cleaning houses. Petty trade remains the largest arena of self-employment for women, who were ready to “downgrade” their work to provide for their families, while their husbands and other men remained at home and refused to take jobs that did not match their status and educational training [332].

The construction of womanhood in this passage reveals some of the core assumptions that underpin the report’s representation of women’s engagement and its economic potential. Firstly, the text affirms women’s willingness to “downgrade” their work and accept precarious, low paying jobs; women were willing to do this, the text suggests, in order to meet their reproductive obligations and provide for their families. In this way, it draws on tropes of self-sacrifice and subordination of one’s own needs for the family, a familiar narrative theme of female altruism. This valorisation of women’s willingness to take up informal work sits uncomfortably with the report’s human capital framework that advocates investment in women’s skills and alternative care arrangements to enable them to compete with men for highly skilled and paid jobs in the formal labour market.

Secondly, the text sets up an implicit comparison between men and women, finding flexible feminine subjectivities are better suited to succeed in this economic context. While men stayed at home and “refused” to take jobs that they didn’t feel matched their status, women “realized” the constraints of the economic context and expressed willingness to forfeit concerns of status by demonstrating flexibility and resilience. Male and female subjectivities thus exist in opposition in this passage, where male subjectivities are characterized by stubbornness, pride, and a refusal to sacrifice in order to provide for the family. Female subjectivity, by contrast, is primarily understood with reference to reproductive obligations and willingness to sacrifice anything in order to fulfil those obligations and the relative ease with which women can be trained in new economic skills and forms of income generation. As I expand upon in Chapter 5, representations of the ‘empowerable’ woman

stress her underdeveloped market mentality, upon which empowerment interventions are prescribed to ‘activate’ and train her.

The tropes of female flexibility and adaptability in the context of economic precarity are familiar from previous Bank publications that cultivated a similar notion of female subjectivity. The World Bank’s 2000 *Voices of the Poor* report provides an early example of the narrative tropes of the “dysfunctional” male subjectivity and resilient female subjectivity who is better able to cope with insecurity and provide for the family:

Many men are collapsing, falling into domestic abuse and violence [...] Women, on the other hand, seem to swallow their pride and hit the streets to do demeaning jobs to bring food to the family table (Narayan et al. 2000: 219 quoted in Pupavac 2005: 176).

In the *Voices of the Poor* report, men are characterized by aggression and instability, and women by flexibility and resourcefulness; the report advocates policy which “seeks to empower the female personality against the male as a more appropriate personality to secure sustainable household and communities” (Pupavac 2005: 175). It stresses the difference between men and women, framing this difference in terms of its manifestation as altruism and fulfillment of family obligation. As in the WDR 2012, the valorisation of certain personalities and subjectivities is overlaid by a concern to empower those best suited to securing families and communities in the face of precarious economic circumstances.⁴²

⁴² Pupavac contends that female subjectivities who are represented as resourceful, pliant, and better able to cope with insecurity are currently valorized in the context of “anti-development” policy. This development model aims at “reconciling people to a world without expectations of material progress” and therefore focuses on risk management and securitizing impoverished regions and populations (2005: 163; see also Chandler 2007; Duffield 2007).

The WDR 2012 similarly employs affirmative essentialisms to valorise assumptions about women's self-sacrificing and adaptable nature in order to position women at the centre of a sustainable development agenda. In this way, it does not so much challenge gender binaries as re-signify and invert them by positioning women and 'feminine' nature as the ideal neoliberal economic subjectivity. It operates through these affirmative essentialisms and thus subverts, to some extent, the tendency to relegate women to private/ non-productive spheres while embracing deeply problematic assumptions about women's affinity to care, their altruism, and their superior ability to cope in precarious contexts. Within the WDR 2012 and GESE discourses more broadly, the supposedly innate feminine characteristics of altruism, resourcefulness, and duty to family are unproblematically ascribed to women and mapped onto discourses of crisis and precarity in order to signify women's position as the ideal subject of neoliberal governance.

4.5 Unempowerable Subjects

Certain kinds of women, I suggest in this thesis, come to be understood as 'empowerable' subjects when they conform to a series of characteristics outlined in the human capital critique: altruistic, maternal, and responsible. In other words, women gain visibility as 'empowerable' subjects when they conform to expectations about the qualities and behaviours of 'good' mothers, wives, and caregivers. The discourse operates to circumscribe the bounds of the 'empowerable' woman and certain groups necessarily fall outside of these bounds. Conversely, therefore, 'out of place' subjects who do not conform to these representations "suffer severe sanctions" (Zalewski 2000: 42). The 'empowerable' woman who is constructed in the report is defined by several inborn qualities ascribed to her – she is heterosexual, married, a mother, and a flexible, resourceful subject. This construction contains within it numerous points of exclusion and invisibility. In this section, I will consider the subjects who are rendered invisible, and 'unempowerable' because they are not identified as possessing the 'inborn qualities' which are continually represented as pre-requisites for

empowerment. Groups which are implicitly designated 'unempowerable' by the report include: non-heterosexual people, childless women, disabled women, elderly women, and vulnerable, risk-taking men.

Young women and adolescent girls are a primary focus of the report in their representation as future human capital. Women of what the report calls 'reproductive age' (15-49) are made visible in terms of their status as mothers, wives, and workers. Women who fall outside of the 'reproductive age' bracket (over 49) feature in the report only in terms of their vulnerability and unproductivity. As evidenced in Figure 5.1, women over the age of sixty are not represented as an important or visible category in the report. Older women appear primarily as vulnerable widows [163, 154, 156], family members who require burdensome care [47, 328], or as conservative elders who perpetuate oppressive norms [354, 170].⁴³ Empowerment is circumscribed to exclude women in this category, who fall outside of the models of productivity employed in the report. Similarly, disability appears in the report only as a marker of vulnerability and as a factor that compounds inequalities [xxi, 12, 13, 26, 55]. The report's conception of empowerment, which is reduced to a crude measure of economic 'productivity', subsequently excludes those bodies or subjectivities which are not understood to contribute productively in the economy.

Sexuality, as I demonstrate in this chapter, is a category which is not frequently acknowledged in the report. Instead sexuality is represented in terms of a default and deviation: default heterosexuality is unproblematically assumed throughout the report. By extension, non-heterosexualities appear only to telegraph marginality and vulnerability. Ironically, the report serves to reinforce this marginality and vulnerability by rhetorically associating non-heterosexual orientations with a range of other markers of marginality and social exclusion, which are further conflated with non-productivity.

⁴³ In the chapter focused on education and health [Chapter 3, p. 120], the report explains its decision to exclude women over 60 from its analysis because women under 60 represent the greater share of lost life years caused by maternal mortality. The exclusion of older women is not explained in other chapters.

“...gender gaps remain particularly large for groups for whom ethnicity, geographical distance, and other factors (such as disability or sexual orientation) compound gender inequality” [13].

Heteronormativity in the report not only limits the visibility of non-heterosexual orientations, but also of unmarried women. It continuously assumes that marriage is a normatively good and inevitable stage in the life of women (although it should be delayed to allow for productive market participation) and that economic empowerment will most directly impact on gender norms within heterosexual couples by increasing women’s earning power. Unmarried women therefore fit uncomfortably in the report’s conceptualization of gender equality.

Heterosexuality is central to the report’s conception of empowerment because of what it signals about women’s bodies, behaviours, and capacities. Heterosexual bodies are imagined within partnerships and webs of caring obligations, both in terms of proximity to a complementary partner of the opposite sex and reproductive heterosexuality and the production of the nuclear family. Conversely, therefore, bodies which do not conform to heterosexual norms are positioned outside of the realm of ‘empowerability’.

The empowerable female subject constructed in the report, characterized by the balance of altruistic care work and market work whose profits are subsequently reinvested in the family, exists in opposition to the vulnerable and violent male subject who signifies risk and instability. This reflects a broader tendency identified by Andrea Cornwall in GAD policy literature to represent gender relations in terms of an implicit comparison between “cooperative, community-minded, caring” women and “irresponsible individualist” men (Cornwall 2000: 22). Indeed, this comparison runs throughout the WDR 2012 (and GESE discourse more broadly), stressing that women are *more* likely to spend their income on family expenses and invest in children’s welfare. For instance, as discussed in Section 4.2, the report establishes the

assumption that we live “in a world where women care about different things” than men do, and they care for children more [68].

It is related, by extension, to the frequent characterization of vulnerable male subjectivities which are inflexible, unwilling to adapt, and unable to modernize – in short, poorly suited to the current economic context. This is cast in the report in terms of men’s vulnerability, risk-taking, and refusal to countenance gender norm shifts; more broadly, it signifies the report’s positioning of women as sustainable subjects and investment targets, while men are unstable subjects who need interventions to contain their vulnerabilities.

In contrast to women’s flexible and pliant subjectivities, men’s resistance to changing norms accords them an ambivalent position in the report. This is apparent in the excerpt about Georgian women and men discussed in Section 4.4, which valorizes the apparent flexibility of female subjectivities in contrast to rigid, outmoded masculine subjectivities which are unproductive because of their unwillingness to change or compromise [322]. The report promotes shifting gender roles for men that involve a greater share of care work, noting that men may enjoy “positive psychological and health benefits provided by greater engagement with their families” [173]. Nonetheless, the report acknowledges that increases in women’s productive activity outside the home have rarely resulted in increased contribution from men inside the home [171]. In couples where women earn more money than men, the partners seem to “compensate with a more traditional division” of labour: “Perhaps it is more acceptable for women to adopt masculine behaviour, such as working for pay, than it is for men to adopt feminine behaviour, such as doing housework and care work” [219].

Men are therefore represented both in terms of their capacity to act in the mold of *homo economicus* and respond to market signals; conversely, men also appear in the report in terms of their inability to adapt to changing patterns of employment, household structure, and division of labour. Men are beginning to adapt to this change, the report suggests, “but in many cases not as fast as women are changing...

While women are gaining power and freedom, men are resisting change” [194]. Interestingly, the report takes a considerably more nuanced approach to the concept of gender when discussing the impact of norms on masculine behaviour than it does in its approach to gender norms and women. Norms drive men to perform aggressive or violent forms of masculinity and thus “dictate their roles and behaviours, their ability to make choices... and control their lives” [171, 173, 105, 112, 117]. While the report tends to conflate female bodies and feminine behaviours, it takes a more critical stance on masculinity and repeatedly attributes male violence or aggression to harmful norms that are internalized, rather than to subjectivities or behaviours intrinsic to male bodies.

Vulnerability, risk and violence exist in a complex and gendered relation here, mapped onto men and women differently. Whereas vulnerability is ascribed primarily to young girls and women who are characterized by forms of exclusion such as “ethnicity, caste, remoteness, race, disability, or sexual orientation” [12], male vulnerability is understood in terms of social norms, attitudes, and risk behaviours. Risk, like vulnerability, is an ambiguous concept in the report, alternately understood in terms of positive risk-taking entrepreneurial instincts that women generally lack and negative risk-taking behaviours that characterize male vulnerability (see Section 5.3). Economic pressures, “high unemployment and lack of job security so prevalent in today’s world” [195] can result in male-risk taking behaviour in the form of alcoholism and substance abuse, as it did in Central and Eastern Europe where excess male morality is the result of risky behaviours, first among them alcoholism [79, 86, 105, 134, 173]. Furthermore, vulnerable boys and men may engage in a range of “risky sexual behaviours” [173, 33, 363] like “visits to commercial sex workers” [134]. While the report’s discussion of vulnerability masculinities has a distinctly regional focus on post-Soviet Central and Eastern Europe, Russia, and central Asia, it also uses this material to generalize arguments about masculinities more broadly.⁴⁴ In

⁴⁴ I am indebted to Kate Bedford for highlighting the regional aspect of the report’s lens on masculinities and pointing out the distinctions between the Bank’s conceptions of masculinity between Central/ Eastern Europe and South America.

the report, male vulnerability is frequently represented in terms of risky sexual and health behaviours that men take, either as a result of vulnerability, pressure to conform to masculine norms, or in response to economic pressures. Although (potentially) profitable financial risk is gendered masculine in the report, so too are 'at risk' bodies, often men, who embody "antisocial ways of living". While some *take* risks, others "are risks simply by existing" (Moodie 2013: 283, emphasis in original).

In this chapter, I suggest that understandings about investment in human capital in the WDR 2012 produce an influential discourse around empowerment that constructs an idealized, 'empowerable' woman; while illuminating and valorizing particular ideas about femininity, maternal care, and (re)productivity, the narrow bounds of empowerment discourse cast out other bodies and subjects who do not fit within these categories. Characterized by risk, vulnerability, and ultimately rendered invisible, groups like older women, childless women, homosexual women, and men are represented as disempowered and without the potential for empowerment.

Conclusions

From a close textual analysis of the WDR 2012, the figure of the 'empowerable' woman emerges: she is the resilient, pliant, and resourceful woman whose ability and willingness to adapt to new gender norms, division of labour, and market signals position her as a leader in sustainable development efforts and intergenerational transmission of new norms. She is a married, heterosexual mother or adolescent girl whose future will also entail marriage and motherhood. She is the subject of optimistic and future-orientated discourses that

Early on, the WDR 2012 establishes the claim that gender roles are relatively similar across the world [4, 7, 172] and so although it draws on examples from around the world, it tends to generalize these and draw lessons for policy makers across regions. That being said, the discussions of risky male sexual and health behaviours are geographically specific; alcoholism and associated risks are discussed almost exclusively with reference to men in Central and Eastern Europe and Russia [70, 86, 105, 134].

encourage investment in her capabilities and promise profitable payoff from future generations of enterprising and responsible women. This construct, underpinned by affirmative essentialisms and gendered tropes, is a highly valorized but exclusionary model of empowerment. Women who are not heterosexual, married, or mothers are conceptualized as external to the notion of productivity cultivated in the report. Similarly, women (and men) marked by “factors of exclusion—such as ethnicity, caste, remoteness, race, disability, or sexual orientation” [12] are made visible largely in terms of their vulnerability and marginality.

The characteristics of an empowerable woman come into sharp focus when contrasted with other, unempowerable subjects in the report. In this chapter, I have demonstrated that neoliberal empowerment discourses not only serve to prescribe particular feminine characteristics and behaviours, but also circumscribe the bounds of empowerment, outside which exist unempowerable subjects and surplus populations. The resulting ‘empowerable’ figure who emerges from a critical reading of the report appears to correspond to a liberal feminist notion of the autonomous individual who can succeed within pre-given institutional structures; others are characterized by marginality, disempowerment, and vulnerability. Empowerability, however, designates not vulnerability or ‘at-risk’ life forms but as-yet-unempowered subjects whose qualities are represented as potentially productive and profitable.

In this chapter I have critically examined the WDR 2012’s conception of the empowerable woman through the lens of human capital, exploring the ‘inborn qualities’ ascribed to her. To this end, I have asked *who* appears in the report as the most empowerable subject. In order to answer this question, I explored a variety of categories: sexuality, reproductivity, age, subjectivity, and even gender. I have argued that representations of empowerment work to ascribe a particular notion of feminine subjectivity to female bodies, attributing essentialist notions of maternal care and altruism to women, and subsequently proposing to instrumentalize those qualities in the service of a neoliberal economic project.

The narrative of empowerment and 'Gender Equality as Smart Economics' is premised on an activation metaphor, where women's potential labour power and leadership lays dormant. The empowerable woman represents the woman who, while the ideal subject of empowerment interventions, exists in a pre-empowerment stage. Her qualities are appropriate for instrumentalization, although her potential has yet to be captured. However, the analysis in this chapter has demonstrated that not all supposedly disempowered women are 'empowerable'; instead, women are made visible in empowerment discourses through particular constructions of their human capital and the potential value that can be extracted from this capital. In the next chapter I will explore the acquired skills and learned behaviours that are positioned as central to 'unlocking' the potential of these empowerable women and transforming them into economically empowered actors.

Chapter 5: Market Mentalities and Empowerment Interventions

The previous chapter discussed the supposedly inborn qualities that are ascribed to empowerable women in the WDR 2012. These qualities, the WDR claims, make women particularly suitable targets for empowerment interventions to ‘harness’ and ‘unlock’ their potential productivity. My analysis demonstrates the way that these categories and constructions of empowerability provide a highly exclusionary and constrained vision of empowerment and one premised on a narrow vision economic agency alone. Structured by the human capital critique, the previous chapter demonstrated the way that a series of gendered essentialisms operate in the discourse to identify a particularly ‘empowerable’ woman; this chapter reflects the second portion of the human capital critique and therefore demonstrates the way that empowerment discourses propose to activate those ‘inborn qualities’ through a range of interventions to instill ‘acquired behaviours and skills’.

The central relationship in the human capital critique I introduce in this thesis is the relationship of activation, whereby the ‘inborn qualities’ ascribed to women are targeted through a variety of interventions that aim to responsabilize women and instill them with market skills and mentalities. This relationship calls to mind the paradox of market mentalities outlined in Chapter 1 (Section 1.4). The entrenched and unproblematized notion that market-based relations are natural and that humans are naturally rational actors is given lie by the overt attempts at inculcating a market rationality that Bank interventions entail (Williams 1999). Myriad interventions to teach practices of business skills, accounting techniques, and management practices, among others, aim to change individual and community behaviour and thereby instill a particular form of market subjectivity. Women’s empowerment discourses propose myriad forms of gendered intervention proposed to activate women’s economic power, enmesh them in global markets, and socialize them into dominant business cultures. To paraphrase Simone

de Beauvoir, one is not born a rational economic woman, but rather becomes one.

Informed by this paradox of market rationality and its gendered dimensions, and structured by the second part of the human capital critique – focusing on acquired skills and learned behaviours – this chapter presents the second of the two data chapters focused on the 2012 World Development Report. I will argue in this chapter that the report's model of empowerment is formed broadly through a narrative of activation that begins from the contention that women are external to markets (both physically and in terms of their subjectivity) and should therefore be inculcated with a market mentality; subsequently, their inborn characteristics and qualities will be activated to promote a model of empowered entrepreneurship. In spite of the valorization of certain 'feminine' characteristics and the contention that women's flexible, family-oriented subjectivities are better placed for economic engagement, the report still contends that these subjectivities need adapting in order to best unlock their potential. This chapter contributes to the overall critique of 'empowerability' because it highlights the disjunctures between supposedly disempowered women and 'empowerable' women who can be responsabilized into market cultures and entrepreneurship.

The chapter proceeds thematically, in four sections: Section 5.1 addresses the report's neo-classical economic conceptual framework and its assumption that women are marginal to markets. Section 5.2 explores the kinds of interventions proposed to 'inculcate' women with market mentalities. Section 5.3 considers the complex and often contradictory notions of risk and entrepreneurship and their gendered constructions in the report. Section 5.4 explores the role of financialization and credit in the model of economic empowerment envisioned by the report. In this chapter, references to the WDR 2012 are cited with page numbers only in square brackets [xx].

5.1 Women and Markets: Marginality and Rationality

The paradox of market rationality encapsulates the deeply embedded tensions that structure much of the Bank's gender discourse, highlighting the highly contingent and specific market subjectivities that development interventions aim to shape, all while maintaining the natural occurrence of market rationality in people. Within the WDR 2012, market fundamentalism and a presumption of socially dis-embedded markets is most evident in the discussions of the relation between gender inequality and free markets. The focus on women's human capital, furthermore, re-conceptualizes human bodies and subjectivities in terms of their potential instrumentalization for income generation.

The rhetorical style of the WDR 2012 is important for demonstrating its market fundamentalist economic approach and the narrowly circumscribed field within which World Development Reports broadly can articulate new pathways for development thinking. Given that one of the key de-politicizing mechanisms of neoliberal economic policy is the recourse to an economic discourse of value neutrality and scientific objectivity, it follows that the WDR's approach to rhetoric reflects this approach. WDRs tend to suggest a consensus around hotly contested issues by referring to 'standard' economic theory or 'broad opinion' of experts: reading WDRs alone may likely leave one with the impression that economists and political theorists are "pretty well of one mind" on the main aspects of development and change, the sources of difficulty in implementation of policy, and the main constraints to effective development (Mawdsley and Rigg 2002: 100). WDRs employ rhetorical methods to frame their conclusions as reflective either of broad consensus or as the sole acceptable option between two extreme options (Ibid 98-99).

This approach is particularly apparent in the WDR 2012, for example, with regard to its understanding of employment discrimination. It uses references to economic theory and market forces to externalize gender discrimination. The WDR 2012 explains that "economic theory says that

greater competition in product markets should reduce discrimination in factor markets” and that “stronger competitive pressures from greater economic integration should force employers to reduce costly gender (and other) discrimination” [264]. Gender discrimination is therefore impossible or illogical in a perfectly functioning market system. Furthermore, discussion of “economic theory” [264] and the early declaration of the narrow economic focus of the report’s research and analysis [6] serve as legitimizing mechanisms by which its findings are rendered scientific and neutral.

This reflects the report’s overall market fundamentalist approach and reliance on a conceptualization of markets as socially dis-embedded and gender-neutral. Indeed, throughout the report, discrimination against women is primarily imagined in terms of a market failure that produces “information problems” wherein employers do not have adequate information about women’s skills and talents [101, 22, 28, 231, 300, xxii, 18]. The report thereby expresses faith in the rationality of markets and, although it is willing to concede the possibility of discrimination existing within a market system, it attributes this to poorly or improperly functioning markets. According to this logic, in truly free markets discrimination should not exist because competition will create incentives to hire the cheapest workers and therefore disincentivize discrimination. It therefore imagines gender equality and marketization in a virtuous circle:

If labor markets work well, educated women will enter the labor force and contribute their talents and skills [100].

Reducing barriers to more efficient allocation of women’s skills and talents can generate large (and growing) productivity gains [47].

Asserting that markets are the most natural and efficient allocator of resources, the report ascribes natural market rationality to employers who exclude women from employment (through the ‘information deficit’ claim) and to women who are marginalized from markets and have *not*

yet had the chance to prove their value in the marketplace (Folbre 1994). Gender discrimination in markets is explained by disparities in human capital [215, 239] and thus by the argument that when women do face employment discrimination, it may be a result of an employer's rational calculation about the relative skills presented by men and women [300]. This skill disparity may not itself be natural (and the report suggests that better education can close the 'skill gap') but discrimination nonetheless occurs on the basis of an economic calculation.

Additionally, among the mechanisms proposed for the activation of female labour power, the report accords a prominent position to discussing the benefits of globalization and restructuring on women's economic empowerment. Globalization, it argues, has worked to "lift some of the constraints" to gender equality but women are still affected by existing constraints and "risk being left behind in the absence of public action" [102]. Women are therefore positioned as potential beneficiaries of the forces of globalization, if only its forces can reach them:

In today's globalized world, forces such as trade openness and the spread of cheaper information and communication technologies have the potential to reduce gender disparities by connecting women to markets and economic opportunities, reshaping attitudes and norms among women and men about gender relations, and encouraging countries to promote gender equality. But their impact will be muted without effective domestic public action [xxi].

It demonstrates the urgency of market openness (on the premise that it empowers women) through the language of 'competitiveness' and the demands of 'a globalized world. In this way, the 2012 WDR can be read as a move to employ gender equality language and analysis to further the Bank's pre-existing policy aims by normalizing and de-politicizing those goals (Roberts and Soederberg 2012; Chant 2012); feminist observers of the Bank have long noted the way it has employed gender

to pursue neoliberal policies (Bedford 2009b; Bergeron 2003; Kuiper and Barker 2006).

Throughout the report, this classical economic framework obscures and elides gender inequalities and gendered harm that occur in markets. For instance, it explains that female-dominated jobs pay lower wages than male-dominated ones “largely because of their (unmeasurable) skill-related characteristics and tastes” and because these jobs are more flexible, requiring fewer skills [206]. By assuming that markets efficiently ascribe market-value to skill, it hides the way that women’s work is devalued *because* it is done by women; it conflates low pay with low productivity, compounding the undervaluation of care work (see Elson 2012a; Bedford 2012). Although it acknowledges the importance of care work to sustaining capitalist production, it does not interpret the unpaid or underpaid status of care work as a reflection of gendered markets or a devaluation of female labour (Razavi 2011, 2012). In general, it represents gender inequality as external to markets and the product of irrationality in social institutions and therefore remedied by market mechanisms.

Furthermore, the reliance on a market fundamentalist conceptual framework is apparent in the relationship posed between markets and gender norms or, more specifically, the mutually reinforcing nature posited between properly functioning markets and gender equality. Shifts to gender norms are imagined here primarily in terms of *homo economicus* responding to the market, to the extent that the report frequently refers to the power of “market signals” [12, 14, 21, 289], the “functioning of markets” [7, 21, 27, 5, 238], market-based “incentives” to shift gender norms [8, 62, 99, 100, 174, 181, 198, 200, 215, 238, 299, 301], and the power of the market to “reshape attitudes and norms” [xxi]. Market incentives to shift gender norms are considered primarily in terms of the financial incentives parents have to invest in a daughter’s education and husbands have to permit their wives to work outside of the home. To this end, market logic is positioned as an enlightening force with the power to reshape gender relations; however, when “market signals are muted”, barriers will remain to the empowerment of

women within severely disadvantaged groups [13, 21, 215]. The report thus imagines individuals and institutions as rational economic actors responding to incentives and promoting gender equality on the basis of self-interest, situated within the broader narrative of 'Smart Economics' which similarly claims that once the economic advantages of gender equality are 'discovered', market forces will speed its arrival.

On the one hand, therefore, the report operates on the presumption that free markets are efficient, gender-neutral, and socially dis-embedded. If discrimination or inequality occurs, it is represented as the product of market failures or flaws in communities which have not been fully exposed to market forces. It assumes that people interact with markets in rational and self-interest maximizing ways, where individuals and households form their preferences in response to market incentives (Razavi 2012: 431-2). However, on the other hand, the report implicitly represents women as lacking a market mentalities and requiring significant interventions to train, educate, and inculcate women with market mentalities and skills. This is evident in the dominant narrative of marginality and activation that runs throughout the report, advancing the argument that women are intrinsically external to markets and can (and should) be brought into those markets where their skills and labour power can be harnessed.

Marginality from Markets

'Smart Economics' development strategies, dependent as they are upon the promise of profitability and mutually beneficial relations between corporations and poor populations, are discursively structured around the notion of discovering new markets and facilitating greater inclusion into the market (Weber 2002). On these terms, women represent one of the primary spaces that have yet to be "colonized by the formal market" and therefore the claim that women exist outside of markets features prominently (Roberts and Soederberg 2012: 958). This marginality is alternately attributed in the WDR 2012 to cultural prejudice, gender disparities in human capital, and women's lack of knowledge about business culture.

The relationship between women's marginality from markets, the process of their discovery, and the profitability of their integration rests on an unproblematized and depoliticized notion of development as a teleological process in which various groups are enveloped and thereby developed [8, 264]. This discourse mirrors foundational WID assumptions insofar as it imagines women as a group who have benefitted to some extent from development gains, but in some areas have failed to benefit because of 'muted' market signals, their marginality from the market, and the changes wrought by markets [76, 270, 272, 254].

Within the WDR 2012, women's apparent marginality from markets is evident in its conceptualization of discrimination in labour markets and its erasure of social reproductive work. The report's tendency to imagine women as predisposed to market marginality is demonstrated by its occasional use of the terms "inactive" and "inactivity" to describe periods where women are not employed in informal or formal markets. Though the report acknowledges that social reproductive work contributes to the economy overall, it does not challenge the undervaluation of this labour and continues to envision care work as substantially *less* productive than other forms work. Social reproduction is discursively excluded from the realm of activity or participation, as the report represents it in the terms of "inactivity and informal self employment" [221, 222], describing women who do not participate in the labour force as "economically inactive" [65]. Social reproduction occupies a contested space in the report, described with a wide range of labels including "care work", "unpaid work", "unpaid family employment", "family responsibilities" and "home time", among others (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Social Reproduction in the WDR 2012

Term used in report	Number of mentions	Rank
Category: Care		
“Care work”	18	=1
“Housework and care”	18	=1
“Care and housework”	13	=3
“Care activities”	1	=11
“Family care”	1	=11
“Burdens of housework and care”	1	=11
Category: Unpaid work		
“Unpaid family employment/work”	13	=3
“Unpaid work”	12	=5
“Domestic work”	4	7
“Unpaid care”	1	=11
“Unpaid housework”	1	=11
Category: Responsibilities		
“Care responsibilities”	12	=5
“Family responsibilities”	3	=8
“Domestic responsibilities”	1	=11
Category: Others		
“Reproductive activities”	2	10
“Inactive” or “periods of inactivity”	3	=8
“Home time”	1	=11

(Source: compiled by the author)

That the report fails to fully conceptualize social reproduction (and in fact never uses the term 'social reproduction') is indicative of its piecemeal approach to care work, which is alternately valued for its impact on children's welfare and devalued for its apparent lack of 'productivity'.

The report instead imagines female employment in terms of women incentivized to enter markets (formal employment or informal entrepreneurial endeavors). The report explains that expanding opportunities have "drawn large numbers of new female workers into the market" [66, 9-10]. Despite this, low numbers of women in certain markets creates "barriers to knowledge" and reinforces women's lack of access to these markets [239].

The representation of women's marginality from markets is complemented by the narrative of activation or 'unlocking' of women's economic potential. The WDR 2012, while not a policy report in itself, is written in a policy-focused language that employs this activation narrative which works to acknowledge women's marginality and present a solution to it. In the report, women's labour is generally understood as "under used or misallocated" [3, 47] in low wage or low productivity jobs. Throughout, the report conflates low wage and low productivity jobs, so the claim that women's work is misallocated refers to their confinement to low-wage formal employment, informal or entrepreneurial employment, and unpaid care work [26, 80, 201] (see Bedford 2012; Elson 2012a; Razavi 2012). It places heavy and repeated emphasis on the potential contribution that women's "talents and skills" can make when properly applied: when markets work well women's talents and skills can be allocated to "activities which make the best use of those abilities" [3, 47, 100]. Countries and companies that fail to recognize the potential value of women's talents and skills and therefore fail to "capitalize" on this potential will face high and rising costs [254, 271, 272, 47, 3, 331, 334]. This is the most basic and structural principle of the GESE policy agenda and constitutes its central claim: women's empowerment is 'Smart Economics' precisely because of its potential to increase profits, generate productivity gains, and secure competitive

advantage for countries and companies operating “in a more competitive and globalized world” [3].

The activation narrative purports to empower women in two specific ways: firstly, it promotes the idea that women represent an as-yet-undiscovered pool of labour power which can be harnessed for growth. Secondly, it presents women as a large and powerful consumer group whose customer loyalty should be secured by women-friendly policies.

Women – especially educated women – present an untapped pool of resources in the search for talent and skills [238].

... [G]ender equality has become a desirable trait that customers and investors look for. Corporate social responsibility is an avenue for firms to enhance competitiveness by differentiating products and capturing the loyalty of women’s growing market share [331].

Though dominant in the report, the narrative of activation and its central claim that women possess as-yet unharnessed labour power is in no way unique to the World Development Report 2012. It is characteristic of corporatized development strategies that operate in many development institutions today and which center around the contention that women are a “vast untapped market” (Roberts and Soederberg 2012: 958) who are currently “ripe for development” (Elias 2013: 153). Yet, as the lens of ‘empowerability’ demonstrates, the drive to harness the talents and skills of women is a highly contingent and exclusionary process, where women are identified as part of this ‘vast untapped market’ on the basis of their association with certain essentialist traits and the promotion of interventions to shape their subjectivities.

5.2 Inculcating Market Mentalities

The model of economic agency within the Bank is normatively masculine insofar as it employs a classical model of *homo economicus* that associates economic productivity, rationality, and interest-

maximizing behaviours with masculinity and men; non-men and non-masculine people are attributed an unproductive, pre-market subjectivity. Although the Bank's logic of growth implicitly valorizes masculine economic behaviours, it does advocate that (some) women can be "inculcated with a limited rationality such that they operate as better workers" (Bedford 2005: 295). Despite the presumed naturalness of market relations and mentalities, Bank development interventions begin from the premise that women are insufficiently rational and require specific interventions to instill market mentalities. As the feminist critique of human capital demonstrates, gendered human capital narratives which dominate the 'Smart Economics' agenda identify women with a range of dormant but 'empowerable' qualities that can be harnessed through intervention. This section therefore undertakes an analysis of the 'acquired skills' and 'learned behaviours' that the report proposes for women in order to catalyze the empowerment process.

Because it begins from the premise that women are predisposed to activity in the domestic sphere and largely confined to reproductive work, the WDR 2012 assumes that women require "job training" and "life skills training" in order to transition into productive work in the labour force. It follows, then, that the report imagines job training as an important piece of the agenda to promote gender equality. It suggests that successful interventions that enable women to enter or reenter the workforce will require job training, broadly conceived [28, 30, 35, 203, 300, 303], marketing training [27], financial literacy training [302, 303], among other forms of training. Job and skills training is advocated in order to improve employment opportunities [314], increase earnings in the formal sector [28-9], correct the gender skills gap [270], increase overall firm revenue [302] and promote economic empowerment [33]. Training interventions are associated with increased economic and social agency: "...interventions in [rural areas] need to focus on building life skills, including social capital for adolescent girls, improving their aspirations and agency, and reducing risky behaviour" [317].

This panoply of interventions constitute "micro-level attempts to create economic rationality" and are characteristic of Bank policy, insofar as

they aim to change individual and community behaviour into more rational modes of being (Williams 1999: 93-4). Business, finance, and the 'professional' realm are constructed as masculine domains and women are assumed to require training in order to overcome their innate unfamiliarity with the skills needed to enter these domains. In the report's reading of gender inequalities, wage and job disparities are the product of women's lack of familiarity with markets and their lack of market skills. Beyond job training, the report advises that women should be socialized into gendered business networks. Most prominently, on-the-job training or apprenticeship placements are understood to function as mechanisms for moulding women into effective entrepreneurs and business people, while correcting for "information deficits" among employers:

For example, a recent female graduate in industrial engineering may fail to get a job in a private company because the potential employer is not sure how well a female worker will fit into an otherwise all-male company. In other words she may not get the job because the employer has too little information about her potential performance [231].

Programs like this therefore address barriers to employment by "allowing participants to overcome information problems by communicating their abilities to employers" [300]. The report repeatedly contends that discrimination results from information deficits, where women are less able to communicate or convey their skills to employers or are insufficiently represented in the firm to provide this information [18, 231, 239, 300]; training is suggested to remedy this problem [342, 300, 29, 301]. Echoing Evans' (2012) suggestion that the WDR 2012 aims broadly to change women to integrate them into pre-existing development strategies and practices, rather than to alter dominant development strategies, the report's discussion of employment and training further suggests that women be coached and introduced to male business networks in order to "help them master the dominant social codes and nurture their ambition" [342]. The empowerable woman is represented here as existing on the fringes of masculine

business networks, but possessing the requisite pre-market mentality and ambition which can be cultivated; furthermore, the gendered language of “nurturing” ambition signals an association between maternal and market subjectivities.

The report places great emphasis on the need to socialize empowerable women into market cultures to unlock their potential productivity; to this end, it presents an example from a successful programme in Peru where women received training on “business strategy”, “managing the firm”, and “finance and enterprise training” which led to increased revenues and helped to overcome “gendered networks” from which they had been excluded as women [302]. In a Liberian programme, girls attended a job fair where “private sector human resource and career development specialists” met individually with girls to coach them on “professionalism” [34]:

Private sector human resource and career development specialists met with trainees individually to impart their knowledge about the industry, coach them on professionalism in the workplace, and give constructive feedback on the skills demonstrated [34].

Markets are continually represented as neutral mechanisms for distribution, although the report acknowledges the social networks around markets may be masculinized and marginalize women; however, by proposing to socialize women into dominant (masculine) social codes in order to promote their advancement within these institutions, it works to reify and de-politicize the linkage between masculine subjectivities and rational economic modes of interaction.

Inculcating market mentalities extends beyond the provision of training, coaching, mentoring, or socialization into masculine networks; it involves the development and promotion of new subjectivities, or ways of interacting with the market. It promotes a skill set compatible with the ethos of responsabilization and self care. Training in employment, financial, and ‘life’ skills works to instill this rational economic subjectivity

in women and to responsabilize them. By targeting certain groups (assumed to be) marginal to markets for training in appropriate market mentalities, these interventions serve to “culturalize” rationality and attribute capitalist failures to “attitudinal inadequacies” (Bedford 2009: 139). This is evident firstly in the report’s frequent references to “job and life skills training” for women and secondly in its tendency to represent women’s subjectivities as insufficiently market-oriented and to prescribe interventions for creating more aspirational, ambitious women.

The report identifies a gap in aspirations between men and women, both in adolescence [317, 32-2] and later in their careers [235-6]. Training and other interventions are advocated to instill “professionalism” [34], “positive thinking” [29, 301], “nurture their ambition” [342], and enable women to “better communicate their abilities to employers” [28-9, 300]. Ambition, aspiration, and overall mentality are represented as integral pieces of a rational economic and empowerable subjectivity:

Employability skills training augments the technical skills graduates learn in community college with the practical skills for finding and succeeding in employment. Employers often say recent graduates lack interpersonal and other basic job skills. So, students in the pilot program received 45 hours of instruction in team building, communications, presentations, business writing, customer service, resume writing, interviewing, and positive thinking [29, 301].

In the previous chapter, I showed how the ascription of flexibility or pliancy to women’s subjectivity contributed to their representation as ‘empowerable’ in the report. The ease with which women are perceived to adapt and conform to new norms prominently features in the report’s discussion of women as ideal subjects of empowerment. Here, the report advocates empowerment interventions to shape this subjectivity, albeit interventions designed to cultivate particular forms of market-compatible subjectivity characterized by business skills.

Shifts in aspiration and attitude are paired with, and complementary to, a further range of “life skills” training interventions promoted in the report that constitute a range of expanding techniques to manage and discipline the self. The report moves between promoting job training, employability skills, and “life skills”, sometimes conflating these [xxiii, 33, 34, 35, 315, 316, 317]. Interventions to teach life skills to girls are frequently associated with a reduction in pregnancies [33, 317] and risky sexual behaviour [317]; this life skills training is linked to the goal of increasing women’s economic independence [34].

...the Adolescent Girl Initiative, a public-private partnership, is in the process of evaluating a number of interventions in several low- and middle-income and post-conflict countries; these interventions include both ‘hard skills’, such as vocational training, and ‘soft skills’, such as life-skills training and mentoring [316].

Life-skills training for girls, promoted alongside ‘hard’ skills training, aims to shape girls’ subjectivity and activate their dormant potential in order to promote economic participation. This skills training programme is advocated in order to make girls and women more employable, by training them in ‘soft’ skills – “team building, communications, presentations, business writing, customer service, resume writing, interviewing, and positive thinking” [29, 301] – that complement ‘hard’, technical skills. ‘Employability’ here refers to a broad spectrum of attributes that extend beyond financial skills or literacy training and comes to encompass general attitude and personality; it reflects the notion that capitalist success requires a particular attitude characterized by ambition, aspiration, and willingness to take on risk in order to pursue profit.

Moreover, the kind of economic subjectivity cultivated in the WDR 2012 provides evidence for Griffin’s claim that the Bank imagines productive bodies as normatively male bodies (2009: 153-4). Much of the report’s discussion of job training programmes directly asserts that the outcome of these programmes will be delayed pregnancy among participants.

Job training, the report asserts several times, can result in a “significant reduction in pregnancies among participants” [33], thereby allowing women to “spend more time acquiring skills” [289] and helping to shape “the future human capital and voice of these women” [314]. The contention that pregnancy is incompatible with, or at least a major obstacle to, economic agency and therefore preventative efforts should be undertaken in job training illustrates the tensions that pervade the report’s representation of motherhood. The valorization of motherhood and maternal care sits uneasily alongside repeated proposals to delay pregnancy in order to improve economic productivity. At various points, the report appears to make the argument that women are empowerable both *because of* and *despite* their feminine (read: maternal, reproductive) nature. This contradiction sits at the heart of the GESE narrative.

5.3 Entrepreneurship and Risk

The human capital critique that structures my analysis of the WDR 2012 highlights the relation between the ascription of certain gendered essentialisms to empowerable women and the interventions that propose to activate those essentialisms in order to shape particular subjectivities. This relationship is succinctly demonstrated by the position of entrepreneurship in the report. Women’s entrepreneurship is understood in the report as less productive and profitable than men’s entrepreneurial enterprises, in part because risk-taking behaviours are linked to gendered bodies and thus to the suitability of certain kinds of bodies and subjects for economic success. However, women’s perceived risk-averseness (represented as a product of maternal responsibility) is continually validated in contrast to male risk-taking behaviours, and women are therefore held up as ideal borrowers who are responsible and therefore ‘bankable’. The female entrepreneur features in the report as the archetypal empowerable woman, whose inborn qualities predispose her to particular forms of responsible, sustainable economic activity, although this depends on the presence of interventions to harness her potential.

The female entrepreneur⁴⁵ is a recurrent subject in the report who reflects a broader trend within development discourses. The ‘entrepreneurial woman’ is a highly visible subject of global governance interventions; indeed, the promotion of women’s entrepreneurship is one of the main development policies which has survived and been “re-invigorated” in the post-GFC context (Gregoratti and Allison 2013: 2). Broadly, female entrepreneurship discourses are characterized by a paradoxical dual emphasis where, on the one hand, women are “castigated” for their failure to fulfill masculinist notions of entrepreneurship and, on the other, women’s entrepreneurship is imagined as a natural extension of women’s caregiving responsibilities (Gregoratti and Allison 2013: 7). Within the WDR 2012, female entrepreneurship is continually emphasized as a central focus of the report’s analysis, particularly in terms of increasing women’s access to markets and harnessing their dormant agency. It reflects the dual emphasis suggested by Gregoratti and Allison: on one hand, it continually measures female entrepreneurs against a standard male entrepreneur and suggests interventions to inculcate more entrepreneurial subjectivities into women, while on the other hand, the report represents women’s supposedly natural caregiving obligations as the main motivating factor for entrepreneurship.

The report’s discussion of female entrepreneurship revolves around concerns with the subjectivity itself and women’s failure to naturally conform to modes of male entrepreneurship; the relative lack of profitability of women’s entrepreneurial ventures is of central emphasis here. In the first instance, the report repeatedly stresses the difference in productivity and success between female and male entrepreneurs: Female owned enterprises “perform less well” than male-owned enterprises and they “tend to be less profitable” and they “generate lower sales” [201]; female entrepreneurs exhibit “lower productivity levels” than their male counterparts [201]; and they tend to be

⁴⁵ The report defines an entrepreneur as such: “... the term entrepreneur refers to individuals who are self-employed with no employees (own-account workers) and with employees (employers)” [39, 240].

concentrated in less profitable “female’ occupations and sectors” [16, 208]. Despite the differences in productivity, however, the report repeatedly stresses that women are “not worse” entrepreneurs than men, but that they have less access to productive inputs and human capital [198, 203, 204]. Furthermore, the discussion of differences in entrepreneurship centers around a consideration of differences in male and female entrepreneurial subjectivities; in other words, to what extent do women possess the requisite entrepreneurial skills and mentalities?

The figure of the woman entrepreneur and the obstacles to her economic success draw on two tropes that run throughout the report: firstly, that a lack of access to financial institutions or productive inputs hinder productivity and prevent the realization of women’s full economic capacities (see Section 5.4). The report makes a few mentions of external obstacles like lack of access to credit [228, 302], information communication technology [263], and land resources [229] that hinder women entrepreneurs. Women’s enterprises are more likely to be concentrated in “female’ occupations and sectors” where they own businesses that conform to female roles, like beauty parlors, food vending, and sewing [208, 16]. The report attributes the smaller size, lower profits, and lower survival probabilities among female-owned businesses to women’s perceptions of their own abilities or harmful social norms that undermine women’s “self-efficacy and potential” [204].

Secondly, it claims that women generally lack the appropriate mentalities for entrepreneurship, as their self-perception, self-efficacy, and confidence diminish their opportunities [204, 207, 181]. Although it repeatedly stresses the socially ingrained nature of harmful gender norms [8, 171, 173], the report nevertheless makes numerous mentions of the deficiencies of women’s entrepreneurial subjectivities and the interventions required to correct this. Initiatives to overcome the structural obstacles to women entrepreneurs (land, credit, etc.) are frequently accompanied by “business training, social networking, and group activities to educate and empower them” [238]; in order for women entrepreneurs to succeed in gendered business networks, they

require finance, business, and firm management training [203, 233, 302, 342].

Prevailing narratives position the ideal and normative entrepreneur as male, thereby allowing women to gain legitimacy within this discourse only to the extent that they can adopt and reproduce male attitudes and behaviours. Women are accordingly constructed as potential but deficient entrepreneurs in need of business advice, training and support to give them the necessary attitudes and skills (Ahl and Marlow 2012: 546). Male entrepreneurship occupies a dominant and disciplinary role in which men are persistently positioned as the referent object of entrepreneurship and business-oriented subjectivities. Women, the report suggests, are not naturally predisposed to entrepreneurship and it is instead largely a product of their intimate attachment to family and their reproductive obligations.

Female entrepreneurs are also more likely than their male counterparts to be 'necessity' entrepreneurs (to view entrepreneurship as a choice of last resort) and less likely to be 'opportunity' entrepreneurs. In the United States, women are underrepresented among high-growth firms, where growth orientation is measured by whether the entrepreneur was pushed or pulled into entrepreneurship. In developing countries, women often cite *the need to supplement household income* as the main reason to enter entrepreneurship, whereas men cite *the desire to exploit market opportunities* [207, emphasis my own].

This construction firstly reinforces the notion that women are marginal to markets and enter reluctantly, even employing the imagery of entrepreneurs as either "pushed or pulled" – either by economic necessity or in pursuit of economic opportunity. The discussion of entrepreneurship here serves to reproduce gender binaries and consign female subjectivities to the domestic realm. By contrast, men's subjectivities are positively associated with savvy financial risk taking and eagerness to "exploit" market opportunities. Male bodies and

subjectivities again represent the unquestioned norm to which female entrepreneurs can aspire and mold themselves (Ahl and Marlow 2012: 545). Given the report's contention that women's empowerment and increased agency allow women to "take advantage of economic opportunities" [151], the risk-taking, opportunity-seizing male entrepreneurial subjectivity described here seems to represent an ideal type to which women should aspire. Entrepreneurship discourses in the report, and the continual focus on empowering women to function as productive and profitable entrepreneurs, highlights the paradoxical emphasis on women as irrational, marginal, and family-oriented actors while promoting a range of mechanisms to instill market rationality and transform their subjectivities.

Gender and Risk

The deeply gendered notion of risk in the report further evidences the unproblematized association between male bodies, subjectivities, and successful entrepreneurship on the one hand, and female bodies, reproduction, and altruistic behaviour on the other. Risk occupies a complex and contradictory role in the report, in part because risk is differently conceptualized between chapters dealing with different kinds of risk taking, whether health risks or financial risks. Risk is mapped onto male and female bodies as follows: agential and entrepreneurial (profitable) risk-taking aligns with hegemonic masculinities, while risk-averseness and passivity are associated with femininity and maternal obligation.

This contradictory narrative is present in the WDR 2012, wherein women are represented as intrinsically risk averse, less naturally entrepreneurial, and yet more financially prudent and therefore a safer investment. As discussed above, the report differently positions men and women in relation to the market, entrepreneurial, and risk-taking behaviours in terms of factors that "push" and "pull" them into the market [207]. Women are therefore represented as reluctant entrepreneurs who enter the market in order to fulfill obligations to the family, wherein their productivity is understood as a result of reproductive responsibilities.

While women's entrepreneurship is understood as a manifestation of their natural affinity to care work, men's entrepreneurship is instead positioned as a product of entrepreneurial, risk-taking nature. Furthermore, this language imagines men as better able to compete in the market environment, detect market opportunities, and capitalize on those opportunities. Gender difference is therefore manifested in terms of entrepreneurship and affinity to market behaviours. Although the report tentatively concludes that women "are not worse" farmers or entrepreneurs than men but that they face different constraints [198, 203], it hedges and concludes by saying that the evidence is mixed [204]. In this discussion, however, it suggests that the poor performance of women-owned enterprises might be explained by gender differences in attitude:

Some authors argue, however, that gender differences in management and business performance reflect differences in women's and men's attitudes toward risk and competition, as well as toward personnel management and business organization—where these differences could be innate or learned [204].

Thus while the report creates some conceptual space for a social constructivist account of gender and entrepreneurial behaviour, it nonetheless accepts the alignment of female bodies, feminine nature, risk-averseness, reproductive obligations, and general lack of market mentality. Early in the report gender inequality and gender differences are elaborated in similar terms:

A substantial body of research documents such male-female differences in risk aversion, social preferences, and attitudes about competition. It follows that if men and women differ, on average, in attitudes, preferences, and choices, then not all observed differences in outcomes can be attributed to differences in opportunities [3].

Risk averseness is repeatedly ascribed to women, in contrast to men's risk-taking behaviours. Given the report's tendency to understand women's entrepreneurship as a manifestation of feminine reproductivity and family obligation, this risk-averseness is generally looked upon favorably, particularly considering the broader narrative of women and girls as a safe investment. Women may lack the natural entrepreneurship inherent in men, in this discourse, but their risk-averseness in part contributes to their status as figures of global financial stability and the oft-cited claims about women's ability to help "mitigate the effects of current and future financial crises" (World Bank 2014a; see Prugl 2012; Elias 2013; Griffin 2013). Moreover, men's risk-taking behaviour occupies an ambiguous place in the report.

Risk, a deeply gendered concept, appears throughout the report in various manifestations and is employed to support several, sometimes contradictory, narratives.⁴⁶ Risk alternately stands in for successful entrepreneurship and men's willingness to take on business risks connotes their suitability for market work and entrepreneurship; conversely, men's association with risky sexual and health behaviours signals their vulnerability and unsuitability to stand in as subject of empowerment (see Section 4.5). Furthermore, notions of entrepreneurial and profit-pursuing risk are distinct from perceptions of creditworthiness, where male bodies are associated with profit-seeking risk and female bodies (and subjectivities) with creditworthiness, low-risk borrowing, and docility (Moodie 2013: 282; see also Karim 2008; Chakravarti 2008). Women's risk-averseness at times signals their externality to markets and the importance of inculcating market mentalities into women to enable them to thrive in productive, market work. Alternately, women's risk-averseness connotes their reliability, responsibility, and family-oriented nature which contributes to their representation as central to the future of global finance and poverty eradication. Risk occupies multiple contradictory positions in the report, always aligned with gender and notions of entrepreneurship or empowerability. Empowerability is therefore ascribed to women whose

⁴⁶ On gender and the concept of risk, see de Goede 2000 and 2004.

(supposedly intrinsic) maternal nature can be transformed into a particular of empowered entrepreneurship.

5.4 Financial Access

Closely related to the position of entrepreneurship in the report, financial access is continually centered as a key mechanism for women's economic empowerment and an integral piece of the process by which women become empowered market actors. Within the WDR 2012, financial access for women generally refers to microfinance initiatives and occasionally to other banking services like savings accounts. In this section I will examine the operation of paradoxical market rationalities through the prism of financial access, microfinance, and the construction of relationships between women, girls, and financial institutions.

The continual impulse to expand financial services underpins much of the expansion of microfinance, which now constitutes a highly visible and growing industry; the expansion in financial services represents a new opportunity for capital expansion (Weber 2002; Keating et. al. 2010). Microfinance is currently in flux, in the midst of a shift from non-profit social services and Grameen-based models to financialized relations with global institutions and markets (Roy 2010).⁴⁷ In particular, this capital and debt accumulation model of the micro-financialization of development operates in specifically gendered ways. Donors continue to aggressively target women for microcredit (and similar interventions) because they perceive women as the target group who "will contribute most effectively to the broader goals of deepening financial markets" into previously marginal areas (Rankin 2001: 29). Furthermore, as

⁴⁷ The transition from Grameen-style microcredit to financialized microcredit reflects a change in the geographical scope and actors involved in the process: while the Grameen model is based on service delivery and credit provision managed by local NGOs, newer forms of microfinance aim to construct a global financial industry. The shift is also evident in the development of new indicators used to measure financial performance, so that financial imperatives come to occupy a higher priority than social norms or human development goals (Roy 2010: 47).

discussed in Chapter 2, women appear as targets of financial services— as docile, responsible borrowers – that reflect particular formulations of their human capital and ‘untapped’ potential. In line with its synergistic narrative of GESE, the WDR 2012 frames financialization of development in terms of the mutually beneficial relationship between the empowered recipient of credit and socially responsible financial service providers.

The report finds that: “Financial institutions are recognizing that women, who account for half of all entrepreneurs, represent a large and underserved market opportunity” [303]. It showcases examples of financial institutions who have introduced new processes or products to increase the number of their women clients, recognizing that women are less likely to have access to credit and therefore represent an ‘untapped’ market [302, 303, 344]; these initiatives provide financial services to women entrepreneurs, “while supporting superior business outcomes for member financial institutions” [344]. The business case for development is thus expanded to promote a synergy between financialization and women’s empowerment.

Financialization and financial access are represented as solutions to the marginality and activation narratives that are dominant in the report, but further reflect gendered assumptions about women, responsibility, and empowerability. The political rationality of neoliberalism that underpins microcredit approaches aims to provide market-based solution to a variety of problems through the language of self-help rather than public responsibility. Furthermore, in “distancing itself from economic responsibility, [the neoliberal state] has been involved in promoting a rhetoric of self-help or responsibility (especially) among (female) citizens” (Keating et. al. 2010: 165). Discourses of entrepreneurship, risk, and responsibility are mapped onto subjectivities and bodies in constructions of credit-worthiness and ability to be integrated into global financial systems. Women, as this thesis demonstrates, are positioned at the centre of these discourses and their representations are conditioned by a complex and contradictory mix of traits and behaviours ascribed to them, from natural maternal altruism and absence of rational

market mentalities, to a valorized notion of feminine risk-averseness and responsibility. In particular, there are two elements of financialization and its discourse that I will unpack in this section: the first is the equation of financial access with economic modernity and the achievement of an empowered, modern female subjectivity; the other is the notion that women are intrinsically ‘bankable’ subjects who represent the best investment for financial institutions.

Bringing women into relationships with financial institutions is a core component of the report’s suggestions for economic empowerment and it repeatedly stresses the need to engage women in microfinance [228, 28, 35, 230], savings accounts with banks [34, 229, 303], and the need for financial institutions to develop other new products specifically designed for and targeted at women [302, 344, 366]. Access to credit and financial services is represented as a mechanism for increasing the productivity, profitability, and empowerment of female entrepreneurs. However, beyond this it connotes women’s entry into markets and market-based lifestyles, problematically associated with the achievement of modernity.

Another promising innovation from the Liberia pilot was a formal savings account at a local bank for all participating girls, with an initial deposit of \$5. The savings accounts not only enabled the girls to practice their financial literacy skills beyond the classroom but built trust with formal financial institutions, and girls expressed satisfaction with being connected to the modern economy for the first time [34].

This image of women’s relationship to financial institutions is representative of the most fundamental assumptions that structure the report, where women are imagined as fully external to market life and market rationality; by extension, it suggests interventions to ‘modernize’ women and inculcate them with market mentalities. Before their access to financial institutions and products, the Liberian girls enrolled in this program were spatially and temporally displaced from modernity, existing in a pre-modern state external to economic life.

Furthermore, the development of relations between women and financial institutions serves a range of other purposes. In addition to providing new market opportunities for financial services providers to expand their customer base [28, 35, 229, 302, 303, 344], financial services for women allows financial institutions to access women's information and credit history, which is currently "underrepresented in these databases" [318]. In line with the report's conceptualization of discrimination or inequality as a market failure owing to information deficits, the addition of women's credit information in credit bureaus promises to "alleviate" the information problem and "improve gender equality" [318]. The contention that women's missing data should be collected and centrally stored in order to promote gender equality is reflects longstanding claims about the relation between 'knowledge' about gender and gender equality, dating back to the early years of WID.⁴⁸

Women are prominently positioned as an underserved market base for corporate engagement, whether as customers of financial services or consumer goods, through the narrative of empowerment and the 'double bottom line' of profit and social impact. Firstly, in the sale of consumer goods, women are a potentially loyal customer base whose market share will be courted by wise corporations. The WDR 2012 enthusiastically describes Hindustan Unilever as seizing upon the "next big opportunity" by moving "to reach the really small villages that were not part of their distribution network" [238]. The company built a distribution system through a network of women micro-entrepreneurs who sold its product door to door.⁴⁹ In doing so, it was able to "tap"

⁴⁸ As Adele Mueller demonstrates, the establishment and spread of WID frameworks served to centralize knowledge *about* women and technologies of control over women within development bureaucracies of the global North, in which the lives and experiences of women of the global South were recast as data for development in centralized information systems (Mueller 1991, 1986; see also Arnfred 2001).

⁴⁹ The WDR 2012 references social initiatives developed by Hindustan Unilever, a member of the Global Private Sector Leaders Forum. Hindustan Unilever and its

hard-to-reach markets to sell its products, increase Unilever's profits, and increase the profits of the women entrepreneurs [238]. The desire to attract women customers is also continually associated with corporate social responsibility (CSR) and gender equality, on the basis that consumers (and women consumers more specifically) will be likelier to become loyal customers of a company that demonstrates commitment to gender equality issues [36, 286, 331, 341, 344]. Women here signify as-yet-unaccessed markets where financial services and corporations can seize an opportunity to expand their consumer base.

The discovery of women's agency in development and microfinance is premised on a series of shifting visibilities, whereby the "Third World Woman" who once signified victimhood and disempowerment has now become an "icon of indefatigable efficiency and altruism" (Roy 2010: 69). Bedford contends that the efforts to inculcate market mentalities and responsabilized savings cultures aim to "contest" women's assumed passivity (2009), though it seems that this passivity is not so much contested or challenged as instrumentalized. Poor women, while perhaps traditionally conceived of as too risky or credit unworthy to receive loans, have in fact become visible as ideal subjects for microfinance initiatives precisely because they are perceived to be "easy to control" (Moodie 2013: 282). Here again, the ascription of empowerability to particular groups of women is associated with their representation as both pliant and productive, flexible and resilient. Indeed, feminist critics of micro-credit initiatives have highlighted the overlapping and mutually reinforcing disciplinary tactics employed by patriarchal family structures and capitalist financial institutions, wherein oppressive gender relations are deployed to coerce loan repayment (Roy 2010; Karim 2008; Chakravarti 2008). Acknowledgement of these critiques or broader critiques of microfinance do not appear in the WDR 2012, which presents women as ideal credit recipients because of their repayment rates.

Shakti Amma programme (along with other GPSLF activities) are discussed further in Chapter 6.

High repayment rates are often cited as a reason for microfinance institutions to target women specifically; within the WDR 2012, women borrowers are approvingly cited as taking out larger loans and posting better than average repayment rates [28, 302, 344]. Furthermore, it advocates the scaling up of microcredit initiatives with the end goal of total financialization and the forging of relationships with (commercial) global financial services providers:

The next stage in policy evolution is helping borrowers to exit (or even skip) microfinance and go to larger formal sources of credit. The International Finance Corporation's (IFC) Women in Business program... works with large commercial banks in Africa to extend credit to female-owned businesses. Interventions include developing new products such as loans that are collateralized with equipment or based on cash flow—as well as training and strategic assistance for the staff of financial institutions to help banks increase their numbers of woman clients. Initial experience shows an increase in women entrepreneurs using financial services and taking out larger loans, with better- than-average repayment [302].

The cultivation of market subjectivities does not just consist in inculcating a rational market mentality or training women in business skills, but in enmeshing them in a range of relationships within global financial and governance institutions. Although access to credit undoubtedly has the potential to contribute to women's economic independence, feminist researchers and activists have raised concerns over the 'silver-bullet' reception of microfinance schemes because "the proliferation of market dependency through debt... has tied individuals to an unequal and insecure financial market" (Lebaron and Roberts 2010: 32). Additionally, the use of credit as a means of dealing with the withdrawal of state social provision and of increasing the power of private capital reflects the function of credit as a "crisis management" technique in the context of global restructuring (Weber 2004).

In the WDR's discussion of financial services, empowerment is conflated with modernity and acting as a modern subject of financial governance, whose data is held in credit bureaus, whose savings are formally lodged in a financial institution, and whose entrepreneurial activities are financed by credit obtained from global commercial banks. The female entrepreneur is therefore not represented as a fully empowered subject until she exists in relation to institutionalized finance providers and is set on the pathway of financialization.

Conclusions

This chapter unpacks and analyzes the interventions to inculcate 'acquired skills' and 'learned behaviours' that are associated with empowerment in the World Development Report 2012. It demonstrates that the WDR 2012 proposes a panoply of interventions which aim to instill market rationality, market behaviours, and market-compatible subjectivities into women who are represented as marginal to markets and insufficiently rational for capitalist success. The report represents women as insufficiently trained and adjusted to succeed in the market, instead associating female bodies and subjectivities with reproductive labour in the domestic sphere, characterized by altruistic and maternal behaviours. Moreover, it tends to understand women's market activity as an extension of their reproductive obligations. Nonetheless, women's primarily reproductive subjectivity, while external to market rationality, is not always understood as detrimental to market participation and women's success in the market is occasionally attributed to their maternal and caring nature. In other words, women are understood to lack market rationality but possess instead a more reliable, responsible, and altruistic character that makes them attractive clients for financial institutions.

This chapter's discussion of the variety of interventions advocated by the WDR 2012 to economically empower women contributes to a critique of 'empowerability' in three main ways. First, it demonstrates the linkages between analytical and programmatic aspects of the human

capital framework through which women are visible in GESE discourse, demonstrating the relation between analytical categories employed to understand women and 'women's interests' and the interventions legitimized by those categories. In doing so, it highlights the exclusionary implications of the 'activation' narrative that underpins empowerment. Empowerment operates, as I suggest, by valorizing particular gendered essentialisms in terms of their power to make women more productive and by intervening to capitalize on those qualities. It follows, therefore, that those women are not associated with the specific valorized inborn qualities will be represented as falling outside of the bounds of empowerment and productivity in relation to the interventions proscribed by the report. For instance, the valorization of entrepreneurship in the report continually associates women's risk-averseness and responsibility with maternal altruism, which makes her an ideal recipient for credit. When the representation of entrepreneurship depends on essentialist readings of women-as-mothers, the narrow bounds of empowerability are further reinforced. The dominant conception of empowerment introduced in the report aims to empower (and responsabilize) certain groups of women for certain forms of economic activity.

Second, this chapter highlights the subjectivity that empowerment interventions produce, by inculcating market mentalities into women who are represented as pre-market or external to market rationality. Through a range of interventions to socialize women into masculine business cultures, 'nurture' their ambition, and train them in employability skills, interventions advocated in the report stem from a market fundamentalist reading of gender discrimination as a product of the lack of information, or an imperfectly functioning market. Empowerment discourses function to identify particular kinds of 'empowerable' women as the subject of interventions, and to cultivate within them particular kinds of empowered subjectivities. The data in this chapter demonstrates the features of this subjectivity: entrepreneurial, risk-averse, family-oriented and 'bankable' recipients of credit. In this way, the empowered subjectivity prescribed for women works to responsabilize them as empowered entrepreneurs, while also imagining

a global community of empowered women consumers who will constitute a consumer base for goods, services and credit.

Third, it contributes to the critique of dominant empowerment discourses as reductively centered on promoting economic and individualistic forms of 'empowerment' that do little to mount a critique of structural inequalities or transform gendered hierarchies. Interventions to inculcate women with better 'communication' and 'positive thinking' skills, so that they can better communicate their value as employees to their employer, address concerns with gender equality only in the sense that they aim to increase the number of women in formal employment. These interventions are, however, representative of the report's conceptual framework which imagines freely functioning markets as the most efficient allocation mechanism for resources and contends that women can be better skilled and socialized to participate in the market. It therefore delineates a conception of empowerment based on participation in formal employment or entrepreneurship, and theorizes income as the most efficient mechanism for improving women's social status.

Representations of the 'empowerability' of women in the development discourse are reliant on particular constructions of women's human capital and its as-yet-unharnessed productivity/ profitability. This discourse deploys an activation narrative of intrinsically feminine qualities and empowering interventions in acquired skills and learned behaviours, through which these inborn qualities are transformed into humans-as-capital. On the one hand, interventions are promoted to instill in women a market rationality that will allow them to succeed in capitalist markets; this market mentality involves job skills training to socialize women into male business networks, 'life skills' training, attitudinal shifts, and delayed reproduction. On the other hand, interventions aim to draw rational economic women into the structures of global finance by promoting relationships between women entrepreneurs and global financial institutions through banking products, loans, and financialization of a range of economic activities. The transformation of the empowerable woman into the empowered

entrepreneur therefore entails the inculcation of a market mentality into women and the enmeshment of marginal women into the structures of global capital. The next chapter picks up on this thread and expands on the role of corporations in gender and development governance through an analysis of public-private partnerships for empowerment.

Chapter 6: 'Harnessing' Global Girl Power

Recent developments suggest that corporations have identified women and the issue of gender equality as a new source of legitimacy, competitive advantage, and ethical concern. This trend is evident in the adoption of gender sensitive principles of corporate conduct; a focus on sourcing products from businesses owned by women; the upsurge in 'pink' philanthropic programmes and, finally, the proliferation of transnational business initiatives (TBIs) for the governance of gender that join public and private institutions across the world.

I have suggested throughout this thesis that women are rhetorically and visually central to development, as is the concept of women's empowerment (although it is ridden with ambiguities). In relation to TBIs for empowerment, this visibility is somewhat distinct in its focus and generally positions adolescent and teenage girls as the central subjects of its discourse. Girls have gained new visibility in the area of global governance as subjects of policymaking through the claim that they represent the most powerful potential force for economic growth, although their power is represented as yet-to-be-harnessed. The turn to a focus on girl power and the newfound policy visibility enjoyed by empowered girls do not signal a shift away from development's gender preoccupation but instead represents "a prominent theme within it": the "girl-powering" of development is a wave within policy along the lines of WID and GAD (Koffman and Gill 2013: 87). The 'discovery' of global girl power is a recent phenomenon, roughly dating to the launch of the Nike Foundation's Girl Effect campaign⁵⁰ in the mid-2000s and now characterized by the proliferation of girl-focused programmes across bodies of global governance, development and financial institutions, NGOs, corporations, and charitable foundations (Koffman and Gill 2013; see also Hayhurst 2011).

⁵⁰ The Girl Effect refers both to a specific initiative launched by the Nike Foundation (and partners) and to a broader discourse that emerged from this initiative and spread to numerous institutions (Koffman and Gill 2013; Hayhurst 2011).

Empirically, this chapter focuses on three transnational business initiatives for gender equality and women's empowerment in which the World Bank is a major or significant partner: the Global Private Sector Leader's Forum (GPSLF), the Adolescent Girl Initiative (AGI), and the Girl Effect campaign.⁵¹ Structured by the empowerability framework and empirically based on discourse analysis of policy documents, publicity material, speeches, and other publications produced by these partnerships, I argue that these TBIs for the governance of gender imagine corporate citizenship as an extension of the corporation's natural drive to profit; in corporatized gender and development discourses, the 'empowerable' girl is positioned as a prominent source of corporate profit and global economic growth. The model of corporate citizenship inscribed within TBI discourse is framed, I suggest, in terms of the need to develop and harness the human capital of women and girls: insofar as global girl power is dormant and unharnessed, corporate growth strategies that purport to capture this power work to legitimize *and moralize* uninterrupted expansion.

This chapter draws on the human capital critique established in Chapter Two, and echoes many of the themes established in the data analysis of the World Development Report in Chapters Four and Five. It examines the representation of 'empowerability' and narratives of 'activation' that constitute corporate discourses around girl power and corporate power in gender equality initiatives. This chapter builds on the previous analysis in the thesis and expands it in two primary ways, both expanding out to include new literature and focusing down in one specific area: first, it employs literature from critical sociology and political economy to provide analysis of the corporate social responsibility agenda, as this literature has not been sufficiently integrated into extant feminist GPE analysis. Recent contributions to this field reject the notion of corporate citizenship or the potential for a corporate-led emergence of a new 'ethical' capitalism, but instead they

⁵¹ See Chapter 3 for detailed discussion of these TBIs, their members, funding, and goals and for a discussion of the emergence of TBIs in the area of gender and development. See Appendix B for detailed breakdowns of particular initiatives.

develop a conceptualization of CSR as “a mechanism to minimise resistance” while maintaining profitability, and an attempt to reconcile contradictions inherent in late capitalism (Raman 2010: 3; see also Dauvergne and Lebaron 2014; Fleming and Jones 2013; Hanlon and Fleming 2009; Sadler and Lloyd 2009). Secondly, it focuses in and expands on the theme of adolescent and ‘girl power’ in development discourses which are emergent across a network of governments, global governance institutions, corporations, and charitable organizations. I discuss the particular discursive constructions of girls’ human capital that underpin corporate social responsibility initiatives in this area.

I first argue that corporate TBI discourses hinge on an activation narrative by which the perceived dormant potential of ‘empowerable’ girls can be harnessed for economic growth, in a win-win synergy between gender equality and corporate growth. I then demonstrate that these discourses deployed by corporate partnerships work to moralize the profit drive, close off regulatory pathways, and employ gender equality as a branding tool. The chapter proceeds as such: addressing the first main argument in the first two sections, Section 6.1 explores the ‘activation’ narrative of global girl power that imagines girls as uniquely vulnerable and powerful sources for future growth. Section 6.2 employs the framing of ‘post-feminist development fables’ to examine the way that girls are positioned in relation to markets and the global financial crisis. Addressing the second main argument in the chapter, Section 6.3 employs critical political economy literature to explore the moralizing functions of CSR discourse in the area of TBIs for empowerment. Section 6.4 extends this by examining the material effects of CSR discourse, demonstrating the ways in which TBIs for gender equality ease pressures for binding regulation, effect corporate branding and facilitate expansion and increased power in the development process.

6.1 ‘Global Girl Power’ and (Dis)empowerment

Within the discursive assemblage of ‘transnational business feminisms’ and its ‘Smart Economics’ narrative, a distinct strand focused on ‘girl

power' and the 'Girl Effect' has emerged. The term 'Girl Effect', which now brands the Nike Foundation campaign, has also been used by the World Economic Forum, World Bank, and other institutions to reflect the 'dividend' produced by investment in girls. Although girls have been a special focus in human rights and development work since the mid-1990s, the current political context of the post-GFC and post-9/11 world has made the discourse of global girl power a "focal point" in North South relations. It is constituted by a diverse group of "transnational policy discourses, novel corporate investment priorities, biopolitical interventions, branding and marketing campaigns, charitable events... and designer goods" (Koffman and Gill 2013: 84). It therefore reflects convergence between development and corporate discourses around the "luminous" figure of the girl (McRobbie 2009).

In this section, I draw on the empowerability framework to examine the tropes about 'global girl power' and empowerment that underpin the discourses of TBIs for gender equality. I demonstrate the narratives of girls' 'inborn qualities' that rely on complementary notions of vulnerability and empowerability to imbue girls' bodies with meaning *about* development and underdevelopment. Subsequently, TBIs advocate interventions to promote skills acquisition and incentivize girls to adopt certain behaviours in line with a specific conception of neoliberal economic agency. Employing the two linked aspects of the human capital framework – inborn qualities and acquired skills – I therefore trace the 'activation' process imagined in discourses about global girl power and map the kinds of empowerment envisioned therein.

In line with the broader narrative of 'Gender Equality as Smart Economics', claims about the power of global girl power to end poverty are premised on the dual logic of vulnerability and empowerability which posits two opposed life trajectories for empowerable girls. The visibility of global girl power is a phenomenon that occurs within broader neoliberal tropes about women as subjects of development, and therefore girls' dormant economic power is represented in familiar terms: dutiful family-oriented girls represent a savvy strategic investment because of their future impact on family and children. The language of

the Girl Effect continually stresses the links between “girls’ life trajectories” and future generations (Nike Foundation CEO Maria Eitel quoted in Nike 2008), girls’ impact on “families and communities” (former World Bank president Robert Zoellick quoted in Ross 2010) and girls’ contribution to the “economic and social growth of their countries” (World Bank 2011a). Similarly, assumptions about the life trajectories and subjectivities of girls produce familiar statements about investment in girls and their likely reinvestment in the family (Girl Effect 2008a; GPSLF n.d.; McKinsey & Co. 2010: 11). The Girl Effect discourse therefore reflects the ‘Smart Economics’ narrative focus, as it advocates the harnessing of girls’ dormant potential for generational and financial outcomes:

The program targets girls specifically because of the girl effect – the ability of adolescent girls in developing countries to bring unprecedented economic and social change to their families, communities and countries. For example, research has shown that girls and women reinvest 90 percent of their income back into their families, as compared to 35 to 40 percent for males (Nike 2008).

Investments in girls are an investment in everyone’s future. It is girls’ life trajectories that determine the health, education, wealth and success of each generation. The AGI will unleash older girls’ potential as powerful economic actors and ultimately prove the girl effect (Maria Eitel quoted in Nike 2008)

Girls are thereby ascribed the same mode of traditional, maternal feminine subjectivity assigned to older women, though intervention into girls’ lives is represented in more urgent terms. The instrumental case for girls’ empowerment rests on tropes about feminine goodness and family-orientation that reflect enduring essentialist assumptions and deterministic notions of ‘empowerable’ girls as either economically empowered or reproductively disempowered. The empowerability framework illuminates a few particular aspects of this discourse: first, it

serves to highlight the way that affirmative essentialisms about womanhood and motherhood are ascribed (in miniature) to girls who are imagined largely in terms of their role as future-mothers and the ways in which their reproductivity is visualized as a threat to empowerment. Secondly, it demonstrates the activation narrative that pervades 'global girl power' discourse and the sharp dichotomized view of empowered and disempowered lives envisioned here. Discourses about adolescent girls and their dormant power (closely tied to concerns about their vulnerability) are highly interventionist because they are underpinned by a temporal urgency that imagines girls as *either* empowered producers for local and global markets *or* disempowered mothers whose reproductive activities contribute to and perpetuate underdevelopment.

In Chapter 4, I argued that the kind of empowerability attributed specifically to girls and women in 'Smart Economics' discourse is bound up with claims about their vulnerability and the perils of non-intervention; this claim is further evidenced in the discourse of global girl power produced by TBIs where the idea of adolescence is represented as an urgent moment for intervention. Women feature prominently in human capital discourse deployed by the World Bank, insofar as women represent a particularly disadvantaged category within poverty-eradication programmes; girl children are especially foregrounded in this framework because they represent "human capital in the making" and therefore the future of economic growth (Mahon 2010: 178).

Representations of girls are structured by dualities: the competing discourses of "can do" and "at risk" girls demonstrate the way that girls stand in for "possibilities and anxieties" of contemporary identities more broadly (Harris 2004: 2; see also McRobbie 2009). The notion of a ripe moment for intervention is a recurrent theme in the discourse of 'global girl power' for two reasons: first, because adolescence is represented as a crucial turning point in the life trajectory of girls, after which point they will either be disempowered young mothers or empowered entrepreneurs. Secondly, the ripe moment notion is consistent with the idea that intervention into the lives of adolescent girls is conducive to "stop[ping] poverty before it starts" (Girl Effect n.d. 'About'). Much of this

discourse promotes the notion that adolescent girls can end poverty, given a timely intervention that empowers them before they reproduce poverty in the next generation, via early marriage and motherhood.

Reaching girls during adolescence is critical – decisions made and behaviours established during this period affect their horizons later in life... During this formative period in their lives, it is important to provide adolescent girls with the tools they need to become economically empowered young women (World Bank 2012c, 2014b).

A 12-year old girl is right on the edge. What happens to her in the next three years – 36 months – will set the course of her whole life, her future children’s lives, her future grandchildren’s lives (Girl Effect n.d. ‘The World’s Greatest Untapped Solution’).

The prominence of a human capital framework is evident in these excerpts, which signal a focus not on *relations* of gender, economic, or social inequality but on decisions made by individuals and the actions they take. Adolescent girls appear in the discourse as victims of circumstance and agents of change, to the extent that they are imbued with a unique potential for empowerment; the narrative of dormant girl power and its activation hinges on a temporal framework that imagines adolescence as a unique period of vulnerability. Girlhood appears here terms of the duality of empowerability and vulnerability, where girls’ divergent life trajectories stand in for the “promise” or “peril” of development writ large (Switzer 2013: 347). To this end, the Girl Effect campaign articulates a visual language of girlhood that employs a highly dichotomized conception of empowerment and disempowerment. Its mode of visual communication is highly reliant on two sets of images: the first depicts the empowered, productive girl and the second depicts the disempowered, reproductive girl. These representations heavily stress a distinction between economic productivity and biological reproductivity, and the apparent incompatibility of the two.

Images of women's productive bodies are common currency in the visual communication of international development, where women's role in economic development is demonstrated through images of them "literally bearing the burden of economic growth" (Harcourt 2009: 69). In the GESE literature, productive, empowered girlhood is signaled visually through images of girls employed in activities like collecting water, bee-keeping, or agriculture. Images associated with education are also used to signal increased income earned by educated girls (see Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 Images from Girl Effect Material



(Source: Images compiled from Girl Effect n.d. 'The World's Greatest Untapped Solution'; Girl Effect n.d. 'Smarter Economics', Girl Effect 2008a).

Figure 6.2 Images from Girl Effect Material



(Source: Images compiled from Girl Effect n.d. 'Smart Economics'; Girl Effect 2008b; Girl Effect 2010)

Disempowerment is visually represented through pregnancy and reproductivity (see Figure 6.2). Pregnant bodies, in the discourse of global girl power, communicate disempowerment and the loss of productive capacity. These images clearly reproduce the misrecognition of social reproductive labour that is characteristic of the discourse more broadly, wherein reproductive labour is envisioned as a lack of productivity or the absence of labour. Furthermore, they perform a narrative closure in which the persistence of global poverty is reduced to the reproductivity of individual women and their ability (or inability) to delay pregnancy.

The visual representation of empowerment here constructs adolescence as a crucial moment for altering girls' life trajectories and preventing their disempowerment. This deterministic and reductive narrative of empowerment and disempowerment is problematic in itself, given the neo-colonial overtones of a representation premised on the assumption that intervention is warranted into the lives and bodies of girls to prevent their disempowerment (see Manzo 2008; Wilson 2011). The visual language of the Girl Effect campaign and the narrative of 'global girl power' more broadly therefore serve to re-entrench highly essentialist notions of female bodies and lives, while denigrating social

reproduction; despite its repeated references to girls leading “the revolution” (Girl Effect, n.d. ‘The World’s Greatest Untapped Solution’), the dualistic narrative of disempowerment versus economic empowerment reproduces familiar tropes about the power of maternal, feminine nature to save the global economy.

6.2 Activating Dormant Girl Power

Because the ‘global girl power’ narrative is premised on the notion that girls’ potential must be effectively and urgently harnessed for growth, the centerpiece of the policy agenda is a series of interventions to promote business skills and education. The inborn qualities ascribed to vulnerable girls – responsibility, maternal nature, family-orientation – signal ‘empowerable’ attributes for activation in the narrative of global girl power. These inborn qualities will be harnessed, the discourse of global girl power suggests, through investment in human capital, training in job and life skills, and participation in the ‘productive’ economy. In this section, I demonstrate the discursive emphasis on the activation of dormant girl power by first exploring examples of proposed empowerment interventions and second considering the focus on harnessing girl power in the post-Global Financial Crisis context.

Interventions to activate girls’ dormant power by inculcating them with basic business and market skills promise to unlock their economic potential and help girls transition into ‘productive’ adulthood. In line with the overall ‘Smart Economics’ framing of the global girl power discourse, this narrative presents girls’ in terms of human capital investment and future productivity. It therefore establishes a narrative of empowerment where girls’ subjectivity is constituted in terms of their relation to the market: Girl Effect publicity materials promise that empowered girls will move “from burden to breadwinner” (Girl Effect n.d. ‘Smarter Economics: 4-7, Girl Effect n.d. ‘The World’s Greatest Untapped Solution’). This is evident in the interventions proposed by the Adolescent Girl Initiative and corporate social responsibility initiatives of the Global Private Sector Leaders Forum.

The Adolescent Girl Initiative trains girls in a variety of skill sets, including business development, job, vocational, employability, and life skills. Within AGI pilot programs, the various skills training programmes are tailored to context (see Appendix B), but they broadly aim to address “crucial barriers to the development of adolescent girls’ economic independence” (Nike 2008). Life skills training focuses on non-cognitive emotional, social and attitude dimensions and promotes skills like “reproductive health, rights awareness, problem solving techniques, communication and negotiation skills, and knowledge on how to manage personal finances” (World Bank 2012c, 2013b). Employability skills include business communication, time management, team-work, presentations, business interviewing, leadership, and “positive thinking” skills (World Bank 2011a, 2012c). Business, entrepreneurial and business-development skills training focuses on finance, marketing, book-keeping, cash-flow and inventory management (World Bank 2011a, McKinsey & Co. 2010: 23). Furthermore, the schemes also often involve access to savings accounts, credit facilities, microfinance and/or financial literacy training (World Bank 2011a, 2012b, 2010a, 2012d). The skills training interventions rest on the contention that training in a variety of transferable skills “especially critical thinking, mathematical reasoning, and communication skills” will “broaden the types of jobs open to women” (World Bank 2011a).

The AGI pilots are building girls’ assets – human, social and financial – and supporting girls who want to venture into self-employment. Many of the pilots are teaching girls budgeting and business development skills combined with the opportunity to practice saving (World Bank 2012c).

Similarly, the Corporate Social Responsibility interventions implemented by members of the Global Private Sector Leaders Forum are directed at teaching girls and women business skills to “boost entrepreneurial achievement”. Cisco Systems’ initiative encourages women to develop skills in “math, computing and technology”; Goldman Sachs’ 10,000 Women initiative provides “business and management education” to

women in Liberia; and PricewaterhouseCoopers' Faranani project "empowers rural women to generate their own income" by teaching them skills "such as marketing, financial management, pricing and drafting business plans" (GPSLF n.d.). The interventions teach a variety of 'hard' and 'soft' skills to assist female entrepreneurs. GPSLF member Hindustan Unilever's (HUL) direct sales programme, Shakti Amma (heavily promoted in GPSLF publicity materials), engages women entrepreneurs as door-to-door saleswomen who bring HUL products into remote areas.⁵²

It is difficult for women on low-incomes to visit the homes of those who are better off. [Caste differences] add an extra layer of complexity. This meant teaching a lot of 'soft' skills, such as confidence-building, as well as 'hard' skills, such as selling and book-keeping (Neath and Varma 2008).

Corporate initiatives under the umbrella of the GPSLF comprise a range of interventions to 'skill' girls based on the contention that women lack access to economic opportunities, as well as the "skills needed to pursue" those opportunities; empowerment interventions therefore aim to enable women to "develop marketable skills" (McKinsey & Co. 2010:

⁵² Hindustan Unilever uses its Shakti Amma programme as evidence of a corporate culture devoted to women's empowerment and gender equality. However, the company is well-known for producing a skin lightening product range – Fair & Lovely – that perpetuates deeply racialized beauty standards. Fair & Lovely has a 50-75% market share in the skin-lightening market in India and is the world's top selling skin-lightening cream (Poonamallee 2011; Karnani 2007). HUL defends its product as "aspirational", explaining that "fair skin is like education, regarded as a social and economic step up" (quoted in Karnani 2007). The brand's notorious advertising has come under criticism for selling skin-lightening creams with the message that dark-skinned women will be unable to advance in their careers, get married, or give birth to sons (Glenn 2008; Shevde 2008). Hindustan Unilever thus positions itself as a company committed to the empowerment of women, despite the fact that one of its leading products offers women the ability to alter their skin colour and markets the product by associating light skin with beauty, marriage, fertility, and career success. I am grateful to Madhusri Shrivastava for bringing this contradiction to my attention.

5). Running through these initiatives to adequately ‘skill’ girls and socialize them into business cultures is the same market fundamentalist understanding of gender inequality as ameliorated by its exposure to market forces.

Global girl power, Girl Effect and similar materials assert, will not only serve to increase productivity and economic output, but will also serve as a powerful force to eradicate discrimination against women. The Girl Effect publicity material is replete with anecdotes of girls who proved their economic value to families and communities, and subsequently leveraged economic power into political power: “Molly’s uncle laughed when she asked for \$150 to start a restaurant in their Nairobi slum. She asked again. Now her business supports three generations” (Girl Effect n.d. ‘Smarter Economics’: 7; see also Girl Effect n.d. ‘The World’s Greatest Untapped Solution’, 2008a, 2010). The ‘Gender Equality as Smart Economics’ agenda is committed to increasing private sector involvement in the development process by building the ‘business case’ for empowerment. It therefore reflects the classical economic assumption that discrimination and inequality are inefficiencies that result from market failures and, by extension, endorses the notion that “the logic and rationality of the market” can best mitigate gender inequality (Roberts and Soederberg 2012: 953).

This narrative dichotomy that positions disempowered victims and empowered entrepreneurs against each other, on opposite sides of liberating market forces, is best evidenced in the Girl Effect promotional videos.⁵³ These videos present a glossy and emotive picture of women’s empowerment, albeit one that is wholly detached from political, social, and economic structures. For example, the video clip titled ‘The Girl Effect’ presents a picture of disempowerment contrasted with a liberatory income-as-power narrative. It evidences my claim that the discourse of global girl power represents girlhood as a state ridden with vulnerability and potential, precariously positioned between disempowered victimhood and empowered entrepreneurship. The

⁵³ See Appendix D for full transcripts of the three Girl Effect videos.

perceived empowerability of girls is focused on the conjuncture of vulnerability and potential as a site of intervention to instrumentalize girl power. The video locates this dichotomy in the body of the adolescent girl who will, without intervention, fall victim to a variety of stereotypically 'Third World' ills (see Figure 6.3). Here, a 'GIRL' figure holds a 'BABY' while flies buzz around; she is literally crushed by a 'HUSBAND' figure, soon joined by 'HUNGER' and 'HIV'. Imagine, the video asks the viewer, if "you could fix this picture": the husband, baby, hunger, and HIV disappear and the girl's life 'rewinds' to adolescence (Girl Effect 2008b).

Figure 6.3 Still from Girl Effect 2008b



The aesthetic style of this particular video and its move away from photo-realistic representation of poverty and suffering reflects an apparent effort to de-racialize and de-contextualize the instance of poverty depicted. Yet, through the deployment of familiar visual tropes (like flies buzzing around a baby), the videos draw on entrenched narratives common to the 'pornography of poverty' style of humanitarian communication (see Cameron and Haanstra 2008; Chouliaraki 2013). The visual language of the Girl Effect campaign leaves little doubt that empowerable girls are "Third World (read: Brown and Black)" (Sensoy and Marshall 2010: 301) for whom Western interventions are urgently required.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ In a notable example of the persistence of imperialist discourses of 'saving' the Other and the rejuvenation of this discourse in corporatized terms, the clip described here provides a literal visualization of Gayatri Spivak's (1988) famous critique of the silencing of the Subaltern, with one notable difference. Rather than imagining white men "saving the brown women from brown men", the Girl Effect videos (and discourse of global girl power more generally) envision a role for white women in saving brown women from brown men.

The video continues to imagine that, instead of marriage and pregnancy, the girl completes school, starts a business, and becomes an influential entrepreneur in her community. It suggests that, given investment in her human capital and her profits from the business, she changes gender norms in her community and “makes men respect her good sense and invite her to the village council where she convinces everyone that all girls are valuable. Soon, more girls have a chance and the village is thriving” (Girl Effect 2008b). This narrative trope is further evident in ‘The Clock is Ticking’ video that uses the visual metaphor of a young girl running back and forth around the face of a clock, in order to ‘rewind’ her life to the age of 12, to demonstrate the stark dichotomy between the life trajectories of empowered and disempowered girls (Girl Effect 2010).

Discourses of global girl power rest on the contention that girls represent an enormous supply of untapped power whose potential contribution is excluded to the detriment on the global economy. The power of girls and women is framed as “one of the most powerful development multipliers” (World Bank 2011a), “the world’s greatest untapped resource” (Girl Effect n.d. ‘Smarter Economics’: 3), and therefore an advisable business strategy: “Unlocking the economic potential of half the world’s population is nothing short of sound strategy” (McKinsey & Co. 2010: 31). The conceptualization of girls’ economic potential as dormant is a familiar narrative trope in GESE literature and reflects a set of deeply embedded and gendered assumptions about the very nature of productivity and participation. Narratives of global girl power, as they appear in the Girl Effect and TBI discourses, extend this logic by positioning global girl power as a force for economic growth that can be activated and harnessed, absent large structural change, through small-scale interventions like CSR initiatives. This framing is problematic in two ways: first, it imagines the potential of global girl power as a sort of development ‘silver bullet’ with the power to end poverty. Second, it frames this development solution as emerging in isolation, or in opposition, to other approaches and thereby performs important closures.

Forget China, India, and the internet: economic growth is driven by women (The Economist, quoted in GPSLF n.d.).

The world is a mess. Poverty. AIDS. Hunger. War. So what else is new? So what if there was an unexpected solution? That could turn this sinking ship around? Would you even know it if you saw it? It's not the internet. It's not science. It's not the government. It's not money. It's (dramatic pause) a girl (Girl Effect 2008b).

This narrative of the 'discovery' of global girl power, at the exclusion of all other approaches to understanding global poverty, thus works to depoliticize and legitimize global structural inequities while legitimizing neoliberal intervention. Just as the language of CSR closes off space for legislation and regulation by claiming that corporate creativity and innovation can best close the governance gap, so too does the discourse of global girl power occlude a discussion of structural inequalities or the causes of deprivation. Instead, it posits girls – and the previously undiscovered potential of girls – as the singular solution to underdevelopment.

Lastly, the narrative of discovery of global power is particularly important in the post-global financial crisis context. Girls and women are represented here as the ideal neoliberal subjects who can come “to the rescue of global capitalism” and perhaps prevent future financial crises (Elias 2013). Within the discourse of global girl power, this message occupies an ambiguous space again reflective of the duality of empowerment. Girls in the post-GFC context are both uniquely vulnerable and uniquely empowerable:

At this time of economic turmoil, investing in women is critical... A host of studies suggest that putting earnings in women's hands is the intelligent thing to do to aid recovery and long term development. Women usually reinvest a much higher portion of their earnings in their families and

communities than men, spreading the wealth beyond themselves (Robert Zoellick, World Bank president, quoted in World Bank 2009b).

Women and girls need to be protected because they are suffering disproportionately from the economic recession. But more importantly, women can be the engine for recovery. If done right, we can emerge from the crisis with healthier growth and be on a faster track to reducing poverty and boosting development. Investing in improving women's lives is critical (Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, managing director of the World Bank, quoted in World Bank 2009b).

The subject of the global girl is underpinned by a tension between her vulnerability and empowerability, and the narrow window of intervention that supposedly separates the two and determines her life course; moreover, the discourse of global girl power to the rescue of the post-crisis economy is similarly underpinned by a central contradiction. While the 'business case' agenda makes clear that women can and should be socialized into market mentalities and cultures in order to participate as fully 'productive' economic subjects, and promotes the notion that gender inequality is an inefficient flaw to be corrected by market forces, it simultaneously promotes the notion that global girl power and inherent feminine goodness can be brought to bear on the instability of the global economy.

Women and girls' reproductive obligations are positioned as primary obstacles to empowerment but also highlighted as model behaviour for a new kind of capitalism that will produce stability and healthier growth. This apparent contradiction is reconciled in the instrumentalization and valorization of the double burden, where the perceived 'value for money' of women and girls is actually a product of the undervaluation (and invisibility) of social reproductive work (Elias 2013; Pearson 1997, 2004). The 'discovery' of global girl power as a mechanism for the rescue of the post-crisis economy serves only to further close off discussions about structural features of the global economy that

perpetuate inequality, underdevelopment and financial instability. The promotion of empowerment as the 'silver bullet' for economic growth is troubling when promoted by governments and policy institutions, but even more so when it is used in the promotion of a corporatized development agenda in which power is reconfigured and development authority marketized.

6.3 TBIs for empowerment and corporate authority

Addressing the second part of the argument in this chapter, the next two sections move to unpacking the implications of dominant narratives of global girl power and empowerability that are propagated by TBIs. The discourse employed in TBIs reflects the highly exclusionary, individualistic mode of neoliberal empowerment I have critiqued throughout this thesis; what are the effects of this discourse on TBIs and the corporate actors involved? I argue here that the material effects of discourses of global girl power include the moralization of corporate authority and the legitimation of increased corporate authority in governance of gender and development.

The changes wrought by globalization have produced significant shifts in the location and concentration of power, which has increasingly shifted away from democratic actors towards technocratic and private sector actors. In this context, businesses are taking on new powers and developing new sources of authority, within which corporate initiatives in 'social' areas feature prominently and gender has taken a central role. The relationship between governance institutions, corporations, charities, and the discourses which circulate between them is complex, not least because these diverse actors draw on each other for legitimacy and reproduce each others' discourses, creating a mutually reinforcing web of claims about gender and development (Bexell and Morth 2010; Prugl and True 2014; Soederberg 2007; Gregoratti 2010). The narrative of empowerment inscribed within TBI discourse is characteristic of the broader GESE agenda insofar as it deploys essentialist constructions of girls and women through market

fundamentalist logic to propose interventions to ‘harness’ ‘untapped’ global girl power. The TBI discourse is notable, however, for the role which corporations play in the process of activating the supposedly dormant power of girls and women. Not only are corporations positioned as the actors “best placed” to recognize girls’ potential and to catalyze the empowerment process (Elias 2013: 162) but, as I will suggest in the following sections, corporate authority in the empowerment process is represented as the natural and logical outcome of the corporate profit drive, as is gender equality.

Many of the recently launched TBIs for gender equality and empowerment have emerged as part of what is broadly known as the corporate citizenship or corporate social responsibility (CSR) agenda. CSR includes a diffuse range of practices relating corporations to the communities in which they operate and the broader environment; CSR entails corporations ‘exceeding’ their legal responsibilities by making commitments to integrate social and economic concerns into their business practices and doing so within a voluntary/ discretionary framework (Banerjee 2008: 64). It therefore constitutes a range of practices, initiatives, and commitments made by corporations to take actions which will promote the sustainability of their business and the broader wellbeing of the community, albeit outside of formal regulation or legislation. CSR is underpinned by the idea that profit and beneficial social impact are closely linked, mutually reinforcing goals: the popular language of ‘the double bottom line’ and ‘doing well by doing good’ encapsulate the conceptual link posited between profit and social outcomes.

The discourse of CSR represents the contemporary capitalist order as an ethical order, characterized by two shifts: first, whereas previously governments and international agencies were the primary providers to the poor, today philanthropic organizations and corporate actors are understood as legitimate interveners; second, the governance structure of this ethical order is one premised on self-regulation and absence of government intervention into corporate practices (O’Laughlin 2008: 946-7). As a result, CSR can work to screen off questions of labour

practices, supply chains, and human rights in the production process – in other words, to deflect questions of precisely *how* corporations make profit.

Ronen Shamir (2005, 2008, 2010) argues that the construction of the idea of “corporate conscience” works to moralize the corporation with two main implications. First, the ascription of the status of ‘moral agent’ to a corporation further embeds the notion that corporations respond to norms, rather than regulations, and can therefore be counted upon to integrate social values into business practices out of enlightened self-interest. Second, the moralization of the corporation provides a justification for the drive to profitability: when the pursuit of social aims can be construed in terms of a synergistic ‘business case’ which benefits all parties, then the pursuit of profit comes to affirm “the moral side of business” (Shamir 2010: 536). This dynamic functions as a dual process: on the one hand, the moralization of economic action means that commercial enterprises perform tasks that were once the purview of the state. On the other hand, the economization of the political means that goods that might have previously been considered public are now embedded within a competitive economic system (Shamir 2008: 1-2). By depicting a confluence of interests between governance institutions, corporations, and NGOs, particularly around issue areas like gender equality, the assumption that self-interested private sector actors will pursue (profitable) social goals closes off formal regulatory approaches (Charkiewicz 2005).

In line with this critical political economy perspective on CSR as capitalizing on crisis, I suggest that the gender equality CSR initiatives discussed here do not function merely as a response to criticism but an attempt to capitalize on resistance. They do so by framing corporate action in such a way that legitimates its practices and justifies their expansion, positioning women as an ‘untapped’ group of customers, employees, and entrepreneurs. The discourse of TBIs for gender equality works to moralise corporate-led development and corporate citizenship interventions through the construction of a synergistic ‘win-win’ narrative that frames women’s empowerment as conducive to

economic growth. Their success is contingent on the development of a coherent and narrowly circumscribed narrative of empowerment as wholly compatible with, and indeed necessary for, the success of corporate business models. The profit motive, “axiomatic” to corporations, means that any activities which do not have profit-making at their core will not flourish in a corporate climate and will not gain approval (Fleming and Jones 2013: 87). As such, the dominant model of corporate citizenship inscribed within TBI discourse is framed in terms of the benefits of the ‘double bottom line’, harnessing the market power of girls and women to deliver dual returns (Roy 2010; Maclean 2012, 2013).

The Gender Equality as Smart Economics agenda ascribes moral authority and legitimacy to actors involved in the pursuit of growth because it conflates growth with a variety of social outcomes; its narrative of corporate citizenship is highly dependent on the construction of a narrative of social action- as- profit. Insofar as it appeals to corporations’ social responsibility obligations, it does so on purely instrumental grounds through repeated emphasis on the ‘business case’ and the confluence of gender equality and profit agendas. The moralization of corporate action does not always occur through the explicit attribution of moral agency to the corporation, although this is an occasional feature of the discourse, but more subtly through the repeated suggestion that gender equality, economic growth, and corporate profit are all related and mutually reinforcing goals. While explicitly subordinating moral considerations to market ones – gender equality is discovered *via the recognition of its profitability* – this narrative also works to conflate moral duties and market rationality: ‘doing good is good for business’ and the responsible corporation therefore asserts moral authority (Shamir 2008: 13). The GPSLF, AGI, and Girl Effect initiatives, by positioning gender equality, corporate profit, and global economic growth alongside one another as coterminous outcomes of economic modernization, serve to legitimise corporate power in the development process and close off questions of structural economic inequalities.

Perspectives on Corporate Social Responsibility, within the management and business fields, have tended towards a divide between those who argue that business should adopt CSR policies on the basis of ethical or instrumental rationales, and those who argue that business should not adopt CSR policies because this violates the corporation's primary duty to the shareholder and, moreover, the corporation can best aid society by increasing profits (Fleming and Jones 2013). The development of a synergistic narrative of gender equality as economic growth works to resolve the tension between these two perspectives by assuring corporations, in the words of Nike Foundation CEO Maria Eitel:

Taking action is simple. It doesn't mean changing everything. It just takes including girls in what you are already doing (quoted in Girl Effect, n.d. 'Smarter Economics').

The synergistic 'win-win' narratives of TBIs are underpinned by some significant exclusions and silences. Most significantly, they occlude discussion of incompatibilities between neoliberal growth strategies and gender equality, instead relying on a modernization framework that imagines development as a smooth and even transition to more equal social structures. There is, of course, no such easy linkage between economic growth and gender equality, nor can globalization be unproblematically associated with transformation of gender relations. Neoliberal restructuring, as feminists have demonstrated, is an often profoundly violent and unequal process with harmful impact on women (see Bakker 2007; Molyneux and Razavi 2002; Marchand and Runyan 2010). Furthermore, claims about consensus and benefits for all parties involved in the 'Smart Economics' agenda hide significant inequalities between members in public-private partnerships and the intended beneficiaries of their CSR initiatives; partnerships like these aim to produce development solutions for 'distant others' although their voices are absent (Bexell 2012).

6.4 Corporate Regulation, Branding and Expansion

The remainder of this chapter outlines the practical implications of the TBI discourses discussed previously, using insights from critical political economy literature to analyze these particular PPPs and CSR initiatives for empowerment as mechanisms to capitalize on resistance. Critics of CSR have long argued that voluntary regulatory codes and corporate citizenship initiatives are little more than the “greenwashing of business as usual” (Dauvergne and Lebaron 2014: 150-1). The ‘green’ in the term greenwashing originally referred to the tactic of using green, leafy motifs to associate a product with environmentally sound practices (Vos 2009). Thus, the explosion in products and services marketed in terms of the power of the consumer to empower global girls and promote gender equality has been said to herald a new era of ‘pinkwashing’.⁵⁵ I demonstrate the discursive mechanisms and recurrent tropes that enable TBIs for empowerment and gender equality to a) close off the space for regulation by encouraging self-audit and ‘best practice’ knowledge sharing; b) improve branding by associating the brand identity with gender equality; and c) increase corporate authority and power in the developing world.

Voluntary Initiatives and Corporate Expertise

The discourse of TBIs for empowerment works to construct the corporation as a moral agent in pursuit of enlightened self interest, thus

⁵⁵ ‘Pinkwashing’ is a term used to criticize the use of support for women’s rights and LGBT rights to promote militarism, military intervention, human rights abuses, and corporate commodification of gender and sexual rights issues. Most prominently, the term has been used to critique the “cynical promotion” of women’s and LGBT rights issues by the Israeli state to represent Israel as a modern democracy and thereby justify its oppression of the Occupied Palestinian Territories (Puar 2013). Similarly, US foreign policy has undergone ‘pinkwashing’ in the post-9/11 era, in which gender equality discourses are employed to legitimize militarism and interventionist foreign policy (Mason 2013). Furthermore, the term has also been used to criticize corporations who use pink ribbon imagery to associate their products with breast cancer research (Lubitow and Davis 2011).

contingent on the claim that empowerment is profitable and will be pursued by savvy corporate entities in pursuit of profit. This constitutes a shift in the way that authority is deployed, to the extent that laws and regulations are partially replaced by guidelines, principles, and codes of conduct; law becomes “a shared problem-solving process coded by notions such as ‘multi-party cooperation’, ‘constructive dialogue’, ‘multi-stakeholder consultation’, ‘task sharing’ and ‘democratic participation’ rather than an ordering activity” (Shamir 2008: 7).

This economization of authority is particularly evident in the Global Private Sector Leaders Forum, whose members have made commitments to “create opportunities for women” as part of their “core business, corporate social responsibility agendas or diversity and inclusion initiatives” (World Bank 2011a). The GPSLF members act as “ambassadors” for the Bank’s Gender Action Plan and provide “research and project-based evidence to support the business case for increasing women’s opportunity in the private sector” (World Bank 2011a). Because members do not commit to any core principles, key initiatives, or specific codes of conduct, their involvement is limited to launching their own initiatives and sharing “best practices and lessons learned” (GPSLF n.d.). The GPSLF is thus characteristic of corporate citizenship practices more broadly, as it is a voluntary initiative which serves to raise the profile of corporations and legitimate their position as ‘socially responsible’ actors without subjecting themselves to regulation, audit, or legislation.⁵⁶ In doing so, it strengthens the notion that regulation would stifle the socially responsible activity of corporations by positioning GPSLF members as innovators and inspired leaders. The Forum’s discursive position as a place for knowledge sharing is important because it demonstrates the belief that corporations are best placed to develop policy solutions for women’s empowerment; it is further

⁵⁶ This line of critique has been employed to investigate other manifestations of corporate power in global governance. Most notably, feminist research on the United Nations Global Compact (and its Women’s Empowerment Principles addendum) has concluded that these TBIs serve to “cement hegemony and deflect demands for more radical and democratic change” (Gregoratti 2010: 191; see also Kilgour 2007; Soederberg 2007).

instructive, however, in its enclosures and silences. Many of the GPSLF's publications stress its role as a site for knowledge sharing by corporate leaders:

The peer-to-peer exchange [of the GPSLF] evolved from a knowledge sharing exercise to a cross-industry and geographic pollinating incubator and is resulting in some innovative collaboration that will help drive women's economic empowerment (World Bank 2011a, 2011c).

[GPSLF members] are providing research and project-based evidence to support the business case for increasing women's opportunities in the private sector. Forum members are exploring new ideas and partnerships that challenge traditional paradigms. Leading by example, their work can serve as an inspiration for all (GPSLF n.d.).

The moralizing function of CSR discourses, which serve to conflate profit motives with social initiatives, is evident in the GPSLF discursive construction of its membership as innovative leaders in their field: these companies are "enlightened" (World Bank 2011a, 2011c); they are "recognized leaders and role models" who gain advantages from their "first mover" position (Ellis 2010); and they engage in ambitious and innovative practices that are "not for the faint-hearted or short-sighted" (Neath and Varma 2008: 15).

The language of the GPSLF and its CSR initiatives employs the notion of corporate innovation, knowledge sharing by leaders in the private sector and 'best practice' to frame corporate interactions while occluding discussion of regulatory codes, legislation to mandate specific practices, or concrete enforcement mechanisms. In short, it relies on a narrowly circumscribed notion of corporate expertise which rests on the claim that regulation can only serve to hamper corporate creativity and social initiative. This is not a coincidence but a product of the discursive turn in CSR literature where corporate power and knowledge is continually reinforced as the most (and indeed only) effective agent of change. It

reflects the belief that a significant governance gap exists in development which can best (or perhaps only) be closed by corporate citizenship and the “natural, inevitable, and rational” power of corporate citizens (Roberts and Soederberg 2012: 951).⁵⁷ The GPSLF provides knowledge of ‘best practice’ and resources to demonstrate the business case for gender equality to others, and its role is therefore circumscribed in terms of knowledge sharing and inspiration.

Branding Gender

Firms are acutely aware of the ‘dilemma’ for growth that they face, wherein they aim to increase the global reach of their products while confronting public resistance towards big business and the forces of globalization; companies are increasingly using branding to address this dilemma, linking products to a particular cause and encouraging consumers to use “the power of consumerism” to finance their favourite cause (Dauvergne and Lebaron 2014: 52). The adoption of voluntary codes of conduct similarly legitimises corporate social responsibility as ‘good governance’, even as it works to institutionalize and de-politicize anti-corporate struggles (Soederberg 2007). From a critical political economy perspective, CSR represents, to some extent, propagandistic discourses that deflect attention from certain corporate practices onto philanthropic efforts, but it is more characteristic of a parasitic move to capitalize on crisis and resistance to corporate hegemony. CSR initiatives therefore function as a mechanism through which corporations can seek “new sources of legitimacy and value” outside of their traditional business (Fleming and Jones 2013: 89; see also Hanlon and Fleming 2009). This trend is evident in a range of practices: corporate moves to appropriate ‘ethical’ brands to gain access to new markets, the use of ‘social entrepreneurship’ to access previously marginal consumer

⁵⁷ Conversely, Sadler and Lloyd (2009) suggest that this governance gap has opened up purposely to allow for the entry of corporate power into spaces of governance. This constitutes, they argue, a manifestation of Peck and Tickell’s ‘roll out neoliberalism’ to the extent that public-private partnerships and CSR work to “delimit a space outside international regulatory intervention” (Sadler and Lloyd 2009: 618).

groups, and the commodification of resistance to corporate practices (Fleming and Jones 2013: 91-93; see also Dauvergne and Lebaron 2014).

TBIs for empowerment present an opportunity to assist corporations in developing or changing the nature of their 'brand'. CSR is widely recognized as a tool for improving corporate branding and attracting customers to what they perceive as ethical products; brand appropriation provides a mechanism for gaining "added value" from social movements that oppose dominant corporate practices (Fleming and Jones 2013: 91). Given the widespread consensus on the importance of (a vague notion of) women's empowerment, and the visual and rhetorical centrality of girls and women to global governance and development agendas, the branding advantages of TBIs for empowerment are evident. Of the many buzzwords that permeate development discourse – participation, poverty reduction, good governance – 'women's empowerment' is the most visible and widely embraced. Its popularity derives, however, from its "expansive semantic range" and ability to reflect a range of contingent meanings to a wide variety of audiences (Cornwall and Brock 2005: 1046, see also Cornwall and Eade 2011). Empowerment is, in this sense, an empty vessel into which a variety of meanings can be inserted.

Gender equality and women's empowerment can thus be very easily 'sold' as part of a brand identity, of which corporations engaged in the World Bank's TBIs are well aware. In its white paper on *the Business of Empowering Women*, GPSLF member McKinsey & Company⁵⁸ argues

⁵⁸ Although it was not primarily authored by Bank staff, the white paper produced by McKinsey & Company on the 'Business of Empowering Women' is a frequently cited source in GPSLF documentation. It is promoted by McKinsey & Company as having been written with GPSLF World Bank staff and consultation from some corporate members of the GPSLF (McKinsey & Co. 2010). Bexell (2012) also cites the McKinsey report as essential documentation for the study of the GPSLF because of the frequency of its citations in GPSLF speeches and documents. Because the GPSLF initiative did not produce a great amount of publication

that “investing in making life better for women in developing countries can be an effective way to enhance a company’s reputation and brand” (McKinsey & Co. 2010: 14). This echoes the discussion of brand reputation featured in the WDR 2012 which similarly asserts that gender equality is a “desirable trait that customers and investors look for” and encourages corporations to see CSR as an opportunity to differentiate their product and “capture the loyalty of women’s growing market power” (World Bank 2012a: 36). The Nike Foundation’s participation in the GPSLF, AGI, and Girl Effect demonstrate the relationship between TBIs for empowerment, CSR discourse, and branding.

In [Nike Inc. and the Nike Foundation], a realization took hold several years ago that women were being underserved and underrated — whether as consumers of sports apparel or as people who could help break the cycle of poverty in poor nations. A new kind of thinking has made women more central to Nike’s strategy on both fronts. Nike has long supported female athletes. The company is also committed to supplier diversity and to sourcing from women-owned businesses. However, to capture more of the growing, multibillion dollar women’s sports apparel market, different organizational, product and marketing strategies were necessary (GPSLF n.d.).

This excerpt demonstrates the function of CSR as a mechanism to expand and capitalize on crisis, while simultaneously deflecting criticism. Nike calls upon the idea of a global community of women who are Nike customers, business owners, athletes, and engines of economic development, shoring up its brand image with reference to a synergistic discourse of empowerment and market expansion. Charitable initiatives therefore serve multiple functions: engaging consumers concerned with ‘ethical’ brands, expanding into new markets of women consumers, and pursuing a profitable growth strategy. Simultaneously, the Nike Foundation’s Girl Effect campaign serves to

materials detailing its aims and scope, the McKinsey report provides the most detailed account of the Bank’s vision private sector partnership.

deflect attention from other features of the company's supply chain. Its CSR commitments allow for the brand to promote itself as such:

Nike Inc... is the world's leading designer, marketer and distributor of authentic athletic footwear, apparel, equipment and accessories for a wide variety of sports and fitness activities. The Nike Foundation is a non-profit organization supported by Nike Inc. that is dedicated to investing in adolescent girls as the most powerful force for change in the developing world (Nike 2008).

The Nike Foundation's Girl Effect campaign presents an instructive example of the branding function of CSR to capitalize on crisis while improving the public reputation of a corporation by its association with gender equality and empowerment initiatives. Given the history of labour practices used by Nike Inc. and the continued accusations made against the corporation of use of child labor, worker abuse and other forms of unfree labour, the Girl Effect CSR campaign also functions as a diversionary tactic which aims to rehabilitate the image of corporations like Nike.⁵⁹

The Girl Effect campaign promotes a glossy and inspirational narrative of empowered adolescents generating income for their communities through entrepreneurship in a world wholly detached from Nike's own workers and practices. It is therefore a notable closure that the Girl Effect videos position women's empowerment in terms of small-income generating entrepreneurship and community-based commerce. In the narrative of empowerment espoused in the Girl Effect's video appeals, the empowered girl buys a cow, raises a herd, and opens a small business: she does not take a job at a Nike factory or other

⁵⁹ Nike Inc. has, for the past two decades, faced accusation of unfree labour practices in their factories worldwide, including accusations of exploitation of child labour in certain factories. It has since implemented stricter codes of supplier conduct, auditing processes, and a wide variety of CSR initiatives, but nonetheless continues to face accusations of unethical labour practices and worker abuse; on this issue, see Boje and Khan 2009; Spar and Burns 2002.

manufacturing plant (Girl Effect 2008b; see Figure 6.4). In fact, despite marketing strategies which purport to promote a singular image of the empowered 'global girl', companies like Nike depend on heterogeneous constructions of femininity. Nike has a long history of exploiting female labour in South East Asia for the manufacture of its goods.⁶⁰ Nike relies, moreover, on the persistence of particular constructions of femininity – docile, 'respectable' women – which make female labour *cheaper* (Enloe 2004: 68). Furthermore, the feminist observer of the Girl Effect discourse must note the deep irony of a company who has, in the past, been implicated in the abuse of child labour developing a highly publicized CSR campaign premised on the need to make adolescent girls more economically productive.

Figure 6.4 Still from Girl Effect 2008b



The Girl Effect campaign positions itself outside of Nike Inc., as an initiative that aims to draw on the corporate culture, funds, and resources of Nike Inc. in order to promote a charitable initiative that supposedly stands “outside of the company’s commercial interests” (Kylander 2011: 2); the foundation aims, it explains, to leverage its resources in order to create attention and demands behind gender equality issues, in contrast to other corporate foundations who are “interested in their corporate brand image” (Creative Director of the Nike Foundation Emily Brew, quoted in Kylander 2011: 2). There are, however, some obvious tensions in its approach that undermine this claim and significant inconsistencies that seem to reflect a confluence of Girl Effect, Nike Foundation, and Nike Inc. brands. The Nike Foundation’s brand is heavily featured in the Girl Effect campaign and,

⁶⁰ For more analysis of Nike’s gendered labour practices and pursuit of *cheapened* and ‘docile’ female labour around South Asia, see Enloe 2004, 2007.

by extension, the Nike Inc. brand by virtue of their shared name; there is little to distinguish the two for a general audience. Furthermore, two out of three Girl Effect campaign videos are animations rendered entirely in Nike corporate colors: orange, black and white (see Figure 6.5). This color scheme is also reflected in some of the World Bank's AGI materials (World Bank 2010a).

Figure 6.5 Stills from Girl Effect 2008b and Girl Effect 2008a



The Nike Foundation represents the Girl Effect campaign as an initiative outside of its core business interests and detached from its corporate interest, but this claim is seriously undermined by the nature of its branding. The Foundation's campaign is discursively positioned as engaging with female consumers, athletes, and entrepreneurs, all of whom presumably are potential Nike customers; the campaign's branding reflects the Nike corporate image and name. The campaign thereby serves to promote the Nike brand through its association with an empowerment-focused CSR initiative aimed at engaging young women to raise awareness of the potential impact of the 'Girl Effect'. On the other hand, the Nike Foundation's partnerships shore up its legitimacy as a partner in the development process, positioning the corporation as a moral agent in service of development goals.

Expanding markets and developing countries

The third element of the CSR 'business case' for gender equality reflects the belief that expansion into emerging markets is the future for corporate growth; TBIs for empowerment are understood and represented in corporate discourses as effective mechanisms for

expansion into developing countries, in terms of their ability to build reputation, relationships, and customer base. This is closely related to brand strategy, based on the recognition that attempts to open up new markets and do business in developing countries will require that corporations are perceived as legitimate and responsible (Hanlon 2007; Fleming and Jones 2013). Furthermore, building on my earlier suggestion that the ‘buzzword’ nature of empowerment allows its meaning and implications to shift among different audiences in the CSR area, it is evident in this context that empowerment has been narrowly construed in a form that will render it broadly acceptable among diverse corporate stakeholders. Empowerment (in CSR terms) has come to stand for a vague notion of women who operate as efficient employees and community economic leaders:

A commitment to women – as employees or as participants in local economic development programs – can build goodwill that eases companies’ entry into new markets, establishes and protects access to suppliers, and helps ensure uninterrupted operations (McKinsey & Co. 2010: 16).

A “commitment to women” here functions in a symbolic sense as a goodwill gesture that will benefit developing countries and corporate power alike, though the ambiguities encompassed in this vague notion of ‘commitment’ reduce it to little more than cheap talk. Nonetheless, a corporate commitment to women is positioned as strategically crucial facet of the growth plan of successful “enlightened” private sector companies: GPSLF documentation emphasizes the “long term” and “strategic” nature of corporate engagement with TBIs for empowerment (Ellis 2010; McKinsey & Co. 2010). McKinsey & Company suggests, following on from the claim that women’s empowerment initiatives can improve brand reputation, that these initiatives and their impact on perception of corporations is essential to their growth:

Private sector organizations that operate in developing and emerging economies can face many reputational and regulatory risks – from global consumer concerns about working

conditions to local questions about the impact of industry on the environment. The stronger a company's reputation, the better it will be able to manage these risks (McKinsey & Co. 2010: 16).

Similarly, in a presentation at the 2010 UN Summit of Women in Beijing, the World Bank's GSPLF coordinator Amanda Ellis demonstrated how each GPSLF member was expected to "capture value" through participation: benefits to corporations included "reputational impact", "brand equity", "access to new markets" and a "positive spillover on core business". Furthermore, Ellis asserted that GPSLF members were selected in part for their "significant presence or ability to influence in developing countries" (Ellis 2010). Successful TBIs, GPSLF documentation suggests, emerge from the development of "convergence" between developmental and commercial activities. This is reflected, for instance, in the Shakti Amma direct sales program run by GPSLF member Hindustan Unilever; as a result of its experience with this program, Hindustan Unilever argues that development depends upon the public and private sectors "working together and sharing infrastructure... for the benefit of all" (Neath and Varma 2008: 16). Engagement with CSR initiatives for empowerment is therefore 'sold' to corporate actors in terms of its potential to assist their expansion via improvement to branding with customers and reputation with governments. It suggests that successful companies will effectively use their CSR activities to demonstrate their social commitments to governments while developing convergences between public and private goals.

In summary, the discourses of TBIs for empowerment work to moralize corporate action by positioning corporate expansion, profit, and women's empowerment as mutually reinforcing and synergistic goals. It rests on the premise at 'doing good is good for business' and that the rational, self-interested corporate actor will therefore be driven by a cost-benefit calculation towards morally responsible actions. They promote initiatives like the GPSLF, AGI, and Girl Effect in terms of their potential to widen the scope of corporate expertise in the development process, improve 'brand' perception, and assist in expansion into new

markets. Following Ronen Shamir, I have argued that CSR and corporate citizenship initiatives aimed at the empowerment of women and girls work to moralize the corporate profit motive while economizing governance authority. The Gender Equality as Smart Economics agenda which 'sells' gender equality in terms of a corporate growth strategy therefore entrenches, de-politicizes, and legitimizes corporate power under the guise of gender equality and empowerment.

Conclusions

Partnerships between public institutions and corporate actors demand feminist scrutiny, not just because they represent the current moment in the neoliberal development agenda or they are an emergent policy area with a strong focus on gender, but because they are characteristic of broader shifts in political economy. TBIs represent a significant shift in policy discourses, or perhaps merely a logical extension of the current trajectory, by which women's potential is advertised to corporations in terms of their untapped labour power, growing market share, the potential for positive 'responsible' branding, and now as a mechanism for avoiding regulation by partnering with governance institutions and signing up to voluntary codes of conduct. The study of TBIs requires both recognition of the newfound policy visibility that women have achieved and a critical focus on the emergence of new discursive assemblages, governance regimes, and technologies of power that emerge therein:

This is not to say that CSR and partnerships never assist the needs of the less powerful and marginalized, but they do so through concessions that maintain intact and further the authority of markets in delivering development (Gregoratti 2010: 193).

Catia Gregoratti's comment highlights some of the complexity that feminists confront in global governance regimes, and TBIs focused on gender in particular. (Voluntary) regimes that seek to encourage

corporations to improve labour standards, eliminate discrimination, and improve the health and safety of women workers have the potential to produce positive outcomes. The objection stems from the invisibilities and closures enabled by the regime of voluntary codes and CSR initiatives, as well as the kinds of knowledge and agency legitimized in these discourses.

The analysis in this chapter demonstrates that TBIs for empowerment operate within, and in service of, a neoliberal regime in which governance power is shifting from public institutions to private sector actors and in which the logic of the market is understood as a neutral, rational force that can be used to tame the irrationality of non-market spheres. Within this context, the notion of global girl power as a site of intervention is particularly marked out as a space of corporate power, to the extent that corporate citizenship campaigns have seized on the girl as a subject of intervention and promoted her visibility as a focus of global policy. The apparent contradictions in this agenda are smoothed over through the framing of the 'business case' and 'smart economics' approach to gender equality, which portrays girls and women globally as 'untapped' resources who are currently marginal to economic life, and thereby serves to produce a narrative of empowerment and corporate power as mutually reinforcing goals.

Furthermore, this narrative serves to moralize the corporate profit drive through the repeated claims that efforts to achieve gender equality do not deviate from the corporate goals, but further it by seizing on a newly discovered resource for growth. This discourse of global girl power, and its central position in the corporate citizenship and CSR agendas, serves to shore up corporate power in the development process, legitimize the economization of governance and authority, and de-politicize neoliberal economic interventions by shrouding them in a neutral language of 'market efficiency' and private sector expertise. By de-politicizing and individualizing poverty and locating it in the bodies of marginalized girls in the global South, the discourse of global girl power performs a violent rhetorical closure that renders invisible the structural causes of poverty and gender inequality.

Conclusion

Answering the Research Questions

Inspired and troubled by the current global political context in which women's empowerment is positioned as the 'solution' to global poverty, this thesis explores the discursive terrain of this empowerment agenda to identify the kinds of women it focuses on and constructs. Who is this 'empowerable' woman who animates political discourses about the 'Smart Economics' of gender equality and the 'Business Case' for investment in girls and women? Although broad questions about powerful discursive constructs and their effects can never be easily satisfied with a single definitive 'answer', the findings which emerge from the theoretical and empirical work of this thesis have addressed the research questions and contributed to extending current debates in the field. Additionally, the thesis provokes several questions and opens up new directions for research. It therefore reflects the "apparently inexhaustible feminist propensity to keep questioning (rather than 'satisfactorily' answering)" that so often frustrates disciplining efforts of mainstream political economy and International Relations (Zalewski 2006a: 56). As such, this thesis produces 'findings' in the sense that it illuminates particular areas of inquiry that may have been invisible before, while producing questions that further probe these areas.

What qualities are perceived to be most conducive to empowerment, and how are they used to designate 'empowerable' subjects in gender and development discourses?

This thesis sought to address the main research question by developing the 'empowerability' framework, based on a feminist critique of human capital and applying that framework to data from the World Bank's 'Smart Economics' policy agenda. The framework employs a feminist reading of human capital to probe and disrupt representations of women's 'inborn qualities' and 'acquired skills' that underpin claims about the 'untapped' power of women and their status as the greatest

'undiscovered' resource for development. Applying these conceptual categories to empowerment discourses, the framework allows for an analysis of the extent to which women are understood as 'empowerable' subjects of global governance, and the ways that they are made visible as sites for development intervention. An analysis of 'empowerability' draws attention to the co-constitution of power/ knowledge in empowerment discourse and its ability to illuminate certain groups of women while marginalizing others. In other words, it demonstrates the power of empowerment discourses to produce and construct a particular 'empowerable' subject who achieves visibility only to the extent that she conforms to certain gendered tropes and neoliberal assumptions about productive bodies and subjectivities.

The empowerability framework allows us to problematize her representation and understand her construction in empowerment discourses. It demonstrates the linkages between analytical categories through which women are made visible in development discourses – as loving mothers, caring wives, responsible and altruistic providers – and the empowerment interventions proposed to harness those qualities for global markets – interventions to teach business skills, provide her with credit, and promote her entrepreneurship. The application of the empowerability framework to the discourses of 'Smart Economics' exposes the assumptions and implications of the current visibility of the 'empowerable' woman in development discourses.

The empowerability framework draws attention to the silences and exclusions produced by empowerment discourses. It finds that the 'empowerable' woman is represented in the discourse in terms of the instrumental potential of her body and subjectivity to conform to a particular set of ideas about productivity and profitability. Conversely, those persons who fall 'outside' of the empowerment discourses are made invisible and represented as unproductive bodies and subjectivities.

'Empowerable' bodies are characterized by their dual functions of reproductivity and productivity, and in particular by their ability to

instrumentalize reproductivity for productive outputs (Chapter 4). Heterosexual couplehood and reproduction appear as mandatory functions of the 'empowerable' body because they are associated with a perceived intrinsic maternal altruism that motivates women's actions. Marriage and childbirth sometimes appear as threatening to empowerment when they inhibit the productivity of young women, but women's lives are represented almost solely in relation to their reproductivity and family life. Conversely, therefore, women who fall outside of empowerment discourse are those marked by some form of 'otherness'. Homosexual, childless, or disabled women are all but erased from the discourse because they fall outside of the conceptual boundaries of productivity; these bodies are rendered invisible by their association with vulnerability and marginality (Chapter 4).

Women's bodies occupy a central role in empowerment discourses insofar as they locate the promise of development and danger of *underdevelopment* in the bodies of women, a duality often visualized in terms of productive bodies engaged in labour *or* reproductive bodies who become pregnant and are thus imagined as being 'lost' to development (Chapter 6). The empowerment process is therefore presented as interventions upon the subjectivity and body to discipline, train, and educate in order to elicit productive labour from female bodies and to promote particular market-compatible subjectivities.

Empowerable subjectivities in the discourse are characterized primarily by the assumption that they are responsible and resilient sources of labour and productivity. In the mode of *homo economicus* who is the entrepreneur of himself, and who is governed by an ethic of self-care, the mode of feminized empowerable subjectivity that appears in the discourse is an 'entrepreneur of herself'. She is governed by an expanded ethic of care that requires both self-care and care for others (Chapter 2). Resilience, flexibility, and resourcefulness are ascribed to this empowerable woman to demonstrate her ability to absorb care work into the home and to care for herself and her family independently (Chapter 4). Furthermore, the flexible subjectivity ascribed to the empowerable woman is related to the contention that she should be

inculcated with market skills and socialized into business cultures; interventions to shape her aspirations and attitudes attest to the understanding of empowerable subjectivities as that which can be shaped in order to govern herself according to a certain ethic and to participate productively in 'masculine' spheres of business (Chapter 5). Subjectivities which fall outside of this empowerable framework are therefore those which are associated with being inflexible, rigid, and outmoded.

How are women and their agency constructed both before and after empowerment interventions? Which groups/ actors are represented as best-placed to intervene and facilitate the empowerment process?

Women's economic agency appears in empowerment discourses as an 'untapped' resource for growth which requires interventions to unleash and profit from it. Processes of social reproduction are made invisible in this discourse and associated with inactivity or a lack of productivity, as social reproductive labour is subsumed under a narrative that represents women's labour as misallocated or distributed in inefficient arrangements. Their agency is represented as derived not from an intrinsic economic rationality but an intrinsic maternal altruism and associated with reproductivity.

The conception of women's agency developed here is a wholly marketized one. 'Smart Economics' discourses purport to achieve gender equality by harnessing market forces to raise the costs of discrimination and to provide greater incentives for gender equality. However, the prevailing understanding of gender equality in the discourse is limited to economic participation and the possibility of norm shifts brought about through market processes (Chapter 5). This is evident in the widespread use of the human capital framework to conceptualize women's economic agency and skills, where inputs like health and education are considered significant mainly for the ways that they contribute to earning potential (Chapter 2). It is therefore apparent that these discourses collapse 'equality' with 'efficiency' and, by imagining gender equality only in terms of women's employment in so-

called 'productive' economic activities, represents a truncated conception of equality.

The 'Smart Economics' discourse represents a shift toward concern with human development, embodied in a focus on education and healthcare for women. The WDR 2012, for instance, recommends public action to improve education and healthcare, imagining a role for the state in some provision of child-care (Chapter 3). The empowerment process, however, is largely associated with private sector actors who employ women or who engage in CSR initiatives to 'empower' women along their supply chain. In the WDR 2012 and TBIs under study in this thesis, empowerment interventions to train women in market skills and socialize them into business cultures are represented largely as investments by and for businesses. The 'Smart Economics' discourse imagines corporations as the actors who are best-placed to catalyze the empowerment process, because it suggests that they will be major beneficiaries of the 'harnessing' of women's labour (Chapter 6). I demonstrate in this thesis that 'Smart Economics' discourses around TBIs and CSR imagine gender equality and profit as mutually reinforcing goals, and therefore position the pursuit of gender equality as the logical and natural task of the corporation.

Originality of the thesis

'Empowerability' and Human Capital

The main contribution of this thesis is the 'empowerability' framework, which articulates a critique of the concept of women's empowerment that permeates development discourses. The framework employs a feminist critique of human capital to critique dominant empowerment discourses. The neoliberal version of the women's empowerment concept, and its use in development interventions, has long been the subject of feminist scrutiny for its role in legitimizing a range of harmful policies and interventions. This thesis approaches the concept of empowerment from a different angle and produces a distinct critique, by asking *who* is represented as 'empowerable'.

In this thesis, I articulate a critique of empowerment by advancing the argument that the discourse of empowerment functions as a highly exclusionary and interventionist set of categories that aims to identify particular qualities in women and 'harness' those qualities in a specific mode of economic agency. The critique of 'empowerability' starts from the contention that there is a chasm in the empowerment discourse between those women of the global South who are represented as 'disempowered' and the women who are understood as uniquely 'empowerable'. In other words, while tropes about the 'Third World Woman' and the oppression of women in the global South has given rise to the idea that disempowerment characterizes broad swathes of the world's women, neoliberal empowerment discourses do not imagine all of these women as objects of empowerment interventions, or as equally 'empowerable'. Instead, empowerment discourses work to illuminate/ construct a particular kind of woman and promote a particular form of economic agency.

In order to explore empowerment discourses and interrogate their effects, I employ a feminist critique of human capital. Human capital is a popular conceptual framework in human development and constitutes a particularly visible framing for women's empowerment, because it represents women as profitable targets for investment. Human capital frameworks in gender and development have been successfully employed to advance the idea that women's human capital – though currently under-valued – can be productively enriched through investment which will produce both socially beneficial and profitable outcomes.

Through a feminist reading of human capital, inspired by Foucault's critique of neoliberal theories of human capital, I demonstrate the way that empowerment discourses operate by identifying (and associating) women with a range of inborn qualities like maternal altruism and responsibility. By extension, empowerment discourses propose to harness these qualities for productivity through a series of interventions to teach acquired skills and behaviours, through inculcating particular market mentalities. A feminist reading of human capital, when mapped

onto discourses of empowerment, demonstrates the linkage between analytical and programmatic aspects of dominant ‘Gender Equality as Smart Economics’ discourses; it shows the way that particular categories of analysis produce understandings of problems and solutions, and thereby facilitate certain forms of intervention. The conceptual framework developed in this thesis therefore illuminates the discursive terrain of ‘Smart Economics’ and the modes of visibility by which women have become central subjects of policy, by exploring how gender inequalities are problematized in such a way as to necessitate a range of neoliberal policy interventions.

Within neoliberal empowerment discourses, gender inequalities – and disempowerment – are problematized so as to legitimize certain forms of intervention to responsabilize women. By extension, the analytical categories of neoliberal empowerment (and programmatic interventions that follow) are highly exclusionary and operate to narrowly circumscribe the boundaries of ‘empowerability.’ Women and girls gain visibility as empowerable subjects to the extent that they conform (or are represented as conforming) to norms around motherhood, heterosexuality, entrepreneurship, responsibility, and altruism. Women who fall outside of these categories are rendered invisible in empowerment discourses because they do not conform to the mode of productivity prescribed therein.

Development discourses around women’s empowerment are replete with contradictory images and paradoxical constructions of empowered women; these contradictions indicate the need for a discursive analysis “of the terms upon which women are being included” (Maclean 2013: 458). In Chapter 1, I outlined three broad paradoxes that characterize the literature: the paradoxes of female entrepreneurship, feminine difference, and market rationality (Section 1.4). Through the empowerability framework, my analysis suggests that the apparent contradictions in the representations of women provide evidence of the ‘activation’ narrative that underpins empowerment. They demonstrate the gendered tropes that imagine women as naturally altruistic, pre-market subjects who can nonetheless be instilled with market rationality

in order to function as successful entrepreneurs and productive capitalists. The analysis in this thesis demonstrates that there is no incompatibility between the images of the loving, maternal, pre-market woman and the empowered market entrepreneur; instead, analyzing these discourses through the critique of 'empowerability,' it is evident that this relationship is premised on the narrative of interventions to 'activate' and 'tap' women's labour power.

The World Bank and 'Smart Economics'

The empirical contribution of this thesis is concentrated in analysis the World Bank and its gender equality agenda since 2006. Since the launch of its 'Gender Equality as Smart Economics' Gender Action Plan, the Bank has been a powerful disseminator of neoliberal empowerment discourses and an influential source of new 'knowledge' for gender and development. The thesis contributes to current feminist research in global governance by making links between empowerment discourses, the visibility of (certain) gender equality issues in global governance, and the shifting modes of governance authority that have served to empower corporations in the process.

At the institutional level, this thesis contributes to feminist research on the Bank and the process by which it produces 'knowledge' about gender and development. Documentary analysis and interviews with Bank staff demonstrated the Bank's continued reliance on market fundamentalist frameworks to conceptualize gender in economic activity. It contributes to the growing body of literature on the Bank's public-private partnerships and raises important questions about the way that these partnerships facilitate 'greenwashing' of business practices and reduce regulatory pressures. Furthermore, the research on TBIs conducted for this thesis raised serious concerns about the lack of transparency and accountability of TBIs associated with the Bank (see Appendix A). The World Bank is the most prominent – and powerful – producer and disseminator of 'Smart Economics' discourse and policy; through original analysis of current Bank documents and programmes, this thesis makes a timely intervention into the extant

feminist literature on the Bank, which has so far insufficiently engaged with the 'Smart Economics' agenda.

Analysis of the Bank's WDR 2012 evidences the Bank's continued reliance on a market fundamentalist approach to gender and development. Even in the era of the 'gender sensitive' Bank, there is significant continuity between the policy approaches and economic frameworks used to study gender in the global economy. Representations of women's economic agency continue to rely on the assumption that biological reproduction equates with maternal altruism, and that maternal nature underpins women's productive capacities. Conversely, and despite the valorization of motherhood, social reproductive work remains uncritically labeled as unproductive or 'misallocated' labour. Similarly, gender discrimination in the labour market is continually attributed to imperfectly functioning markets, compounding the understanding of gender inequality as a market flaw which could be corrected by liberalization. Overall, the gender approach evidenced in the Bank's 'Gender Equality as Smart Economics' agenda demonstrates a sustained commitment to changing women in order to better fit within extant neoliberal development frameworks and to demonstrate how the neoliberal policies favoured by the Bank contribute to gender equality, rather than engaging in more critical analysis of gender inequalities which are produced and sustained by neoliberalism.

Empowerment discourses shore up the Bank's privatization agenda and legitimize the offloading of authority to private sector partners. Discourses around gender equality and empowerment, this thesis shows, work to moralize corporate action by representing gender equality and profit as synergistic, mutually reinforcing goals. Moreover, equating gender equality with market logic promotes the idea that corporations will pursue ethical policies out of self-interest, thereby eroding the pressure for binding regulatory action. Transnational business initiatives, while common to areas like health and sustainable development, have only recently emerged in the area of gender and development. Nonetheless, they represent a growing area of interest for the Bank and a target area for expansion in future. The analysis in this

thesis therefore presents a timely contribution to feminist research on neoliberal development and shifts within it. Additionally, the recent upsurge in 'gender equality' branding by global multinationals indicates the significance of a feminist political economy analysis to critique neoliberal empowerment discourses broadly and trace linkages between public and private sector discourses in this area.

Limits of the Research and Future Directions

This research is limited in its scope for reasons related to methodological choices and breadth of the subject area. Here I outline the main limitations on this research and suggest three future directions for research based on these limitations and findings that emerged from the thesis.

The focus of this thesis on discourses and use of textual analysis (supplemented by interviews) provides a limited analysis of institutional processes within the Bank and the politics of its gender policies. Although originally I aimed to be able to discuss the policy processes behind the WDR 2012 and TBIs in the Bank in some depth, issues of access prevented me from getting a large enough sample of interviews to do this (see Appendix A). Access to World Bank staff and their corporate partners in the Bank's TBIs was a major challenge and, in the end, resulted in relatively few interviews. Although document analysis provides helpful insights into the power of a discourse and its material effects, and as I have demonstrated, the Bank's gender discourses are more powerful than most, there are limits to the use of documentary analysis to study complex institutions like the Bank (Bedford 2009b). A discursive analysis serves a different purpose, by focusing on the entity of a 'discourse' and its transnational, trans-institutional manifestations and its role in the construction and normalization of particular forms of 'knowledge.' A rigorous institutional analysis of gender across the institutions of the World Bank Group that draws on organizational anthropology, though beyond the scope of this thesis, would illuminate the detailed process by which particular kinds of 'knowledge' about GAD

are produced and disseminated. By extension, a multi-institutional comparison could map the widespread uptake of 'Smart Economics' discourse and explore differences in its effects across different sites of global political and economic governance using the empowerability framework.

Using this thesis as the starting point for a new research trajectory, while taking into account the limitations discussed here, I propose three directions for future research. The first fruitful direction for future research would be to conduct institutional analysis of the actors behind the 'Smart Economics' agenda. In particular, detailed analysis of the policy design and implementation process behind transnational business initiatives for gender equality is much needed to enrich our understanding of TBIs and their governance structures. In this vein, Lisa Prugl and Jacqui True raise a number of valuable questions that must be asked of TBIs: "Whose cause do they advance? Who speaks for women in these programs? To whom do the partners answer?" (2014: 22). Future research should investigate the actors involved in 'Smart Economics' and TBI policy making, in order to explore the extent of feminist involvement and the way feminist claims are made and mediated in this context. Future research could ask: Where are the 'femocrats' in this policy process?⁶¹ Where are the feminist activists? This line of research is particularly important considering the lack of accountability and issues around transparency that such partnerships raise (Prugl and True 2014; Bexell and Morth 2010). As I show in Chapters 3 and 6, numerous TBIs have emerged in recent years and they occupy an increasingly important space in global governance, where authority is being offloaded and privatized to invest new actors with greater influence. These partnerships demand greater feminist scrutiny, as do the projects that they fund.

Research into the impact of GESE discourse in the growing arena of transnational business initiatives at the level of policy-making in public

⁶¹ I am grateful to Elizabeth Evans for raising this question and suggesting this as a future direction for research.

and private institutions should be complemented by research to explore the 'local' manifestations of TBIs and to investigate the projects that they implement in the global South. By extension, research should also examine the impact of GESE discourses on feminist organizations and activists who pursue funding from larger supra-national institutions. Do organizations feel pressure to adopt the language of 'Smart Economics' and 'the Business Case' in order to secure funding? Do they feel pressure to focus their funding bids on the 'empowerable' subjects of adolescent girls and young mothers? The Association for Women in Development reported in 2013 that "vast resources" are becoming available under the umbrella of "investing" in women and girls, yet these initiatives often produced effects that were short-term and easily measured but failed to effect meaningful change (Arutyunova and Clark 2013: 15; see also Ferguson 2014). The pervasiveness (and permeability) of GESE discourses has undoubtedly impacted the funding environment for work on gender equality, although the extent of this impact is currently under-researched.

Although the narrow institutional scope of this thesis is a potential limitation for the research findings, it also opens a productive avenue for future research. I have argued, in Chapter 3, that the World Bank is the most appropriate focus for this thesis because it is the most influential producer of 'Smart Economics' discourse and positions itself as the pre-eminent GAD expert, but as I have also demonstrated throughout the thesis, the 'Smart Economics' discourse is rapidly spreading across global governance institutions, corporations, charities, and national/regional governmental bodies. The Bank is the most powerful disseminator of the GESE discourse, but it is by no means the only one.

Another fruitful line of research would therefore employ the empowerability framework to investigate and map the global manifestations of the GESE discourse and investigate the way that it travels across institutions, audiences, and contexts. How is this discourse employed at the global and regional levels? To what end is it deployed by different actors, and which policy mechanisms is it used to promote? For instance, Juanita Elias (2013) has employed feminist

critiques of 'Smart Economics' discourses to analyze the World Economic Forum's work on gender equality and women's empowerment; the WEF is now a leading promoter of the human capital approach for development. Future research could therefore productively apply the 'empowerability' framework to the WEF's gender discourses. Similarly, the UN Global Compact Women's Empowerment Principles aim to engage corporate partners in voluntary codes of conduct and regulations with the aim of empowering women (Kilgour 2007); how is 'empowerability' determined in these discourses? What are the material effects of the regulatory codes on the activities of signatories to the Women's Empowerment Principles? A potential challenge for this research direction is access to relevant policy makers and actors, as I detail in my discussion of the research methods and process of this thesis (Appendix A); transparency and accountability is a significant concern in TBIs, with serious implications for research.

The thesis is also limited in scope to a critical account of the GESE discourse and as such does not articulate an alternative narrative for feminist activists or make normative claims about the best discursive strategies for feminists to effect institutional transformation. The debate between feminists about the possibilities of achieving feminist goals within mainstream institutions – and about employing instrumentalist narratives of gender equality – has persisted for many years and today reaches a particularly important moment with the unprecedented visibility of girls and women on the development agenda (Chapter 1). This visibility has been accorded to women, as I demonstrate throughout the thesis, on the premise that their labour power can be instrumentalized for other ends and their caring labour can continue to be exploited for economic growth. It is therefore apparent that the usefulness of 'Smart Economics' narratives that employ strategic essentialisms to 'sell' gender to policy makers is seriously limited and risks further marginalizing transformative feminist accounts of gender justice.

'Smart Economics' may have increased visibility for gender issues, increased funding to gender-mainstreaming policy initiatives, and

garnered commitments for formal gender equality measures from states, organizations, and corporations, but for the numerous reasons detailed throughout this thesis, it has failed to transform the dominant economic and political structures that reproduce gender inequality. Moreover, the unproblematic synergy represented between women's empowerment and economic growth has served to de-politicize particular policy agendas. How can feminists interact with institutions and policy makers, basing their claims on intersectionality and solidarity rather than marketized, instrumentalized gender equality claims? To what extent has the influence of new neoliberal, managerial feminisms closed off space for feminist work that encompasses critiques of the inequalities produced by global neoliberal capitalism? The salience and dominance of (neo)liberal feminist narratives presents a significant challenge, but also provides space for resistance and counter-narratives.

Concluding Thoughts

Girls and women are currently highly visible subjects of global governance, corporate social responsibility, philanthropy, and 'ethical' branding. Women's empowerment, we are told, is the solution to global poverty because women are the world's greatest 'untapped resource'. At the beginning of this thesis, I introduced images of the familiar figure of the 'Third World Woman' who animates global discourses about empowerment, development, philanthropy, and gender equality (See Figure 0.1 in the Introduction). I asked who this woman is, and how we can make sense of the pervasive (and contradictory) images of her. We now know more about this 'empowerable' woman and have the critical tools to understand her significance as a popular and visible symbol of empowerment in development governance.

First, in line with the shifting visibilities of women under the development gaze, we can better understand the current mode of representation of this woman. In contrast to earlier understandings of women limited to passive victims of traditional cultures and inactive mothers consigned to domestic work, women today are visible to development policy makers through the 'discovery' of their productive capacity and economic

agency. Similarly, the visual presence of the 'empowerable' woman is characterized by an emphasis on her economic power and potential to carry out both reproductive and productive labour. The mode of representation employed to communicate the agency of the 'empowerable' woman speaks to the salience of broader narratives that encourage governments, corporations, and the general public to recognize the potential economic power of women and its role in global economic growth. Although the 'empowerable' woman possesses a narrowly circumscribed form of economic agency, the power to 'activate' her empowerment is externalized.

Second, we can understand the representation of the 'empowerable' woman through her entanglement in activation narratives of empowerment. Using the feminist critique of human capital to analyse representations of the 'empowerable' woman, we can see the inborn qualities that are ascribed to her: she is represented as responsible, resourceful, hardworking, and maternal. Underlying and accompanying her image, however, is the claim that her labour power is currently 'untapped', 'unharnessed', or 'undiscovered' by global markets. The inborn qualities ascribed to her are therefore represented as characteristics of an 'empowerable' subject who requires interventions to empower her and facilitate her full productivity. Furthermore, as I have shown with reference to the proliferation of TBIs in the area of gender, attention to gender equality in development discourses has been achieved through a synergistic narrative that imagines empowerment and economic growth as closely linked, mutually reinforcing goals. The popular case for empowerment is not articulated through claims about human rights or global justice, but through the reductive narrative of gender equality as a 'Smart Economic' strategy that will efficiently achieve extant economic goals.

Third, using the critical tools of the empowerability framework, we are now better equipped to understand the political context in which the 'empowerable' woman is represented, and to map the implications of these representations. The 'empowerable' woman, I have demonstrated, is a discursive construct who acquires visibility and

subjectivity through her mediation by marketized discourses of gender equality. She is a construct whose visibility and popularity serve to advance a particular neoliberal policy agenda, and this agenda is normalized and de-politicized through its association with issues of empowerment and gender equality. Empowerment discourses, given newfound prominence through the popularity of 'Smart Economics' and 'Business Case' narratives, reproduce and embed claims about the power of global neoliberal restructuring and corporate-led development to 'tap' the supposedly dormant power of women around the world.

I hope in future to expand the 'empowerability' framework and apply it in other contexts; as I have demonstrated throughout this thesis, critique of neoliberal gender equality discourses is urgently needed as the 'Smart Economics' and 'Business Case' approaches to gender equality continue to gain power and expand their institutional reach. I hope this conceptual framework can be productively employed by other researchers to extend critiques of neoliberal gender discourses in other institutional and geographical contexts and to identify points of weakness in the discourse that open up space for resistance.

Appendix A: Research Methods Appendix

Methodologically, this research aims to synthesize theoretical and empirical work by devising a critical conceptual framework and then applying it to case study material. The framework of empowerability was designed by engaging with critical feminist development literature, identifying a conceptual gap, and theorizing a new conceptual tool to understand the occurrence of this gap. The framework was refined and reworked through its application to the World Bank case study documents. Empirically, this thesis is based primarily on documentary analysis conducted through qualitative coding and supplemented with interviews. In this research methods appendix, I provide detailed information about the data analysis process (textual analysis through qualitative coding and interviews) and consider questions of researcher standpoint and objectivity.

The decision to adopt a qualitative coding approach for discourse analysis was made in an effort to organize large amounts of data and facilitate a thematic analysis; my empirical analysis includes several hundreds of pages across thirty-five documents. My approach to discourse analysis is advantageous because it allowed me to easily compare all documents within the hermeneutic unit in the coding software; it allowed me to easily group coded quotations and draw out themes within and across codes. Furthermore, given the complexity of the conceptual framework I develop in this thesis, the use of coding software made it easier to conceptualize the links between themes and codes in the framework, and therefore to understand how they related in the data. Discourse analysis is done in many ways, with some researchers using coding software and others only employing manual coding techniques (i.e. paper, pens and highlighters) to analyze themes in the data; as a result, discourse analysis sometimes comes under criticism for being less than rigorous or overly subjective. Therefore, mindful of these critiques, my use of coding software and qualitative social science methods references was employed to make the analysis more rigorous, in the sense that it ensured that I could easily access all

pieces of the data and compare them. This is not to say that the coding was 'objective' or 'scientific', because qualitative coding, like all research, is highly subjective and depends enormously on researcher interpretation.

My conceptual framework – which structured my coding framework – is the product of interpretation and critical analysis; I applied it to the data and modified the framework on the basis of my reading of the documents under study. Other researchers using this framework may produce slightly different readings, although if they were to use the 'empowerability' framework I expect that similar themes would emerge. This is the inevitable product of interpretive work, where theoretical frameworks help us insofar as they bring out one particular interpretation of 'what matters' for understanding a phenomenon or set of data. My qualitative coding analysis is rigorous in the sense that it closely and carefully engaged multiple times with the data and sought to organize that data to ensure my analysis provides an accurate representation of the documents and their themes. I do not, however, lay any claim to a notion of 'scientific objectivity' in this research, as I understand this positivist approach as incompatible with a critical feminist perspective (discussed in Chapter 3). Moreover, the aim of this research is not to provide an 'objective' or authoritative explanation of 'what is', but to provide a critical feminist reading of a particularly influential economic and political discourse, to highlight the way that power functions within it, and to consider the material effects of that discourse.

Qualitative Coding

Within the methodology of discourse analysis, my analysis follows the method of 'frame' analysis. The frame approach asks questions about "how problems such as gender inequality are framed, what issues are ignored/left out of such framings, and how specific representations of issues grant authority to particular actors/legitimate particular policy directions" (Elias 2013: 154). Critical Framing Analysis is an approach

for the study of policy discourses that assigns particular importance to the process of problematization by which problems, solutions, relevant actors, and policy boundaries are established. This approach is relevant to my theoretical and empirical material because of its focus on the power of language to legitimize and normalize certain structures and its attention to the ability of language to create silences and closures, removing ideas from 'reality' by removing them from a text.

Furthermore, it is particularly relevant for Bank policy documents and the WDRs because of the use of language in these reports to suggest consensus and locate the Bank in an "unchallenged space in the debate" (Mawdsley and Rigg 2002: 100). This approach is inspired, in part, by Cynthia Enloe's claim that "[f]or an explanation to be useful, a great deal of human dignity has to be left on the cutting room floor" (Enloe 1996: 188). Enloe's "cutting room floor" image creates a helpful tool for imagining the way that (seemingly) coherent narratives about 'reality' are produced and working to uncover the dissonant or conflicting 'realities' that must be excluded in order to produce particular explanations of politics. Looking beyond/ through the construction of consensus, what are the assumptions, claims, and silences that allow for this?

The qualitative coding for this research was an iterative process that involved several stages. It started from a small initial codebook based on the conceptual framework and expanded upon engagement with the data. The coding process moved back and forth between concept-driven and data-driven coding (see Gibbs 2007). I coded the documents three times: the first time for language, the second time for concepts based on the 'empowerability' framework, and the third time for in vivo codes. The first time, I read through the documents without close attention to themes but with an awareness of particular words or phrases and their appearance. For instance, my first reading of the WDR 2012 was particularly attuned to the way that "empowerment", "Smart Economics", "human rights", and "human capital" were featured and positioned. For the second reading, I approached the documents with my 'empowerability' framework in mind and used a codebook

developed from the framework. The third round of coding was more data-driven and codes were developed in vivo, reflecting on the gaps that emerged in the framework from the previous rounds of coding. The third reading also allowed me to adjust the framework based on new themes that emerged from the documents. I used Atlas.TI software for the coding process.

I assigned codes to pieces of text with a few things in mind: first, I am interested in the use of language, so particular words or phrases were coded throughout the documents. For example, I looked for ‘empowerment’ language and the concepts/ words it was linked to; was empowerment mainly associated with economic, political, or social change? Second, I coded for concepts and assumptions that underpinned the documents. For example, discussion of marriage, heterosexual partnership, and naturalized gendered division of labour signaled an unreflective heteronormativity and was therefore coded for ‘heteronormativity’. Lastly, I looked for the Bank’s main claims in the documents and their implications. For example, the documents contend that public-private partnerships should be central to public policy on gender equality, so discussion of the relations between corporations, corporate social responsibility, and public-private partnerships for empowerment were coded for ‘PPP’. Codes were therefore assigned through a process of close-reading and analysis of the data, moving back and forth between the coding framework and the documents.

Table 7.1 Codebook

Codes based on language used in the documents:

Main Theme	Sub-Themes
Empowerment	Disempowerment
	Who can ‘empower’?
Human Rights	
Human Capital	
Smart Economics	

My initial set of codes came from the ‘empowerability’ framework and looked for representations of ‘empowerable’ qualities and women’s empowerment in the documents. The first set of codes were adapted directly from this framework:

Main theme	Sub-Themes
Productivity	Efficiency
	Entrepreneurship
	Gender differences in productivity
Reproductivity	Maternal altruism
	Care work
	Pregnancy
	Subjectivity
Market mentalities	Job skills
	Life skills
	Risk
Economic participation	Microfinance and CCTs
	Formal vs. informal employment
Agency	Empowerment as ‘from within’
	Empowerment as ‘from outside’
	Actors who empower

I coded the documents using these codes but found them limited in scope and unable to grasp the complexity and contradictions in the documents. Furthermore, I found them limited in terms of their potential to engage with the economic framework of the documents. For instance, the conceptual framework for the report relies heavily on a neo-classical economic perspective on markets and the power of market incentives to eradicate discrimination. This theme was not present in my original coding framework and so earlier readings of the WDR 2012 did not highlight this. Upon the third reading of the documents, when I derived

codes from the text, themes like “market failures” and “markets changing norms” emerged.

I expanded the codes in two directions to capture this complexity. The first set of codes I developed from a reading of the feminist GPE literature and drew from its critiques of orthodox economic approaches. The feminist GPE conceptual framework helped to illuminate some of the most important assumptions behind the documents (like the devaluation of reproductive labour and assumption of market neutrality and efficiency). The feminist GPE codes complemented the original empowerability codes by helping to move to a more analytical level. While the empowerability codes helped to show *how* the documents understood women and empowerment, it proved somewhat descriptive; adding in the feminist GPE codes showed *why* the documents conceived of women in the ways they did. The codes that I added initially included the following:

Main theme	Sub-Themes
Function of markets	Market failures
	Markets changing norms
	Discrimination
	Financial Crisis
Social reproduction	Unpaid work
	Gender division of labour
	What is ‘work’?
Economic rationality	Gender differences in business
	Gender of markets
Policy prescriptions	Globalization
	Regulations
	Corporate actors (PPPs)

I was later able to integrate ‘empowerability’ and feminist GPE codes together to provide a more robust analytical framework for the data analysis. The combination of these codes and the addition of a feminist

GPE level of analysis allowed me to link up concepts and provide a more evaluative network of codes. For example, the category of ‘efficiency/ productivity’ moves from being descriptive to analytical when linked up with corresponding binaries that feminist GPE scholars aim to identify and disrupt. Here, the ascription of ‘efficiency/ productivity’ to women is nuanced by its association with feminist GPE critiques of devaluation of reproductive labour and the disruption of the productive/ reproductive binary. Furthermore, ‘efficiency’ exists in tension with representations of ‘maternity’, which is alternately represented as a cause of female efficiency and a barrier to their productivity.

The concepts I coded for in the documents exist in complex relation to each other, aligning with some of the prominent tensions in the documents. These analytical categories work together in coding and analysis, supplementing the original codes with feminist GPE conceptual tools. For instance, I coded this piece from the WDR 2012:

The focus here on productivity and earnings as the main characteristic that determines whether a job is “good” or “bad” assumes that jobs where men and women can be more productive and earn higher wages are preferable. Qualitative evidence suggests that this assumption is not far from reality, although individuals also take into account other dimensions when evaluating the desirability of a particular job [WDR 2012: 210].

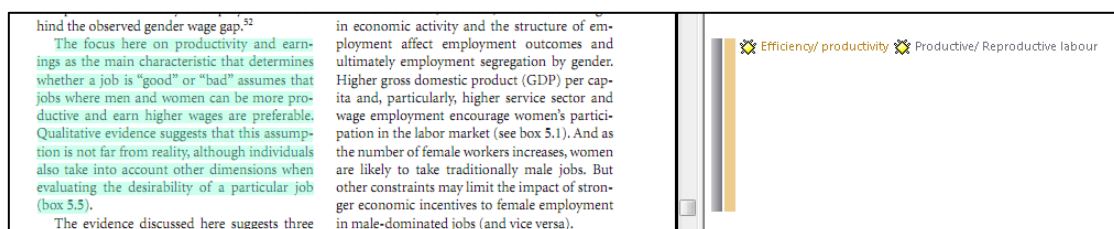


Figure 7.1 Example of coding in Atlas.TI

I coded this piece of text with ‘efficiency/ productivity’ and ‘productive/ reproductive labour’. I coded it with ‘efficiency/ productivity’ because it explicitly refers to the report’s focus on productivity and productive jobs.

It makes normative claims about 'good' and 'bad' jobs on the basis of a conflation of high wages and high productivity. Accordingly, it accords low value to low wage jobs and imagines them as less productive. I therefore also coded it for 'productive/ reproductive labour' in order to capture this understanding of productivity and the ascription of value to paid 'productive' jobs. Throughout the report, this hierarchy of 'good' and 'bad' jobs associates unpaid care work with low productivity and little value. While reproductive labour is not explicitly referenced, it is implicated in the discussion of levels of productivity and the relationship between wages and productivity.

The coding process therefore resulted in the augmentation of original codes and the development of a more nuanced and expansive set of codes that accounted for the complexities and contradictions of the report. I coded again after re-working the framework; the subsequent round of coding was much more attuned to the contradictions and competing discourses in the report, and to fine-grain details in language use. It also paid more attention to the positioning of material, noting the contradictions buried in the fine detail versus the conclusions/ messages that have been foregrounded. The expansion of the codes therefore developed in vivo and sought to map the diverse and often contradictory messages that ran throughout the report.

After the rounds of coding were completed and the framework expanded on that basis, I began analysis of the many themes and narratives that emerged from the data. Because I used Atlas.TI for coding, I was able to easily compile long lists of quotes from the report, separated by code. I created documents for each code which listed all the instances of that code in the documents and I read through each several times to look at the themes and language that recurred. From there, I made lists of dominant themes in the documents and sought to map the way the themes interlinked to produce 'knowledge' about empowerment and empowerable women.

Interviews

In the design of this research, I aimed to supplement textual analysis with interviews with the World Bank and Nike Foundation employees responsible for researching and writing these materials. Access was difficult and as such the interviews obtained were able to supplement only analysis of the WDR 2012, but not the GPSLF, AGI or Girl Effect. This research was approved by the University of York ELMPS Ethics Committee, approval dated 30 May 2013.

World Development Report 2012 Interviews

Access to Bank staff proved somewhat difficult: of the thirteen members of the WDR 2012's core team, I was able to interview four: three senior level team members and one research analyst (See Table 7.2 for details). Of the remaining staff on the WDR 2012, several declined to be interviewed because of workload and time pressures. Others, mainly the junior research analysts involved in the report, were hired only as temporary staff for the project and had since left the Bank. I contacted several members of the report's extended team as I hoped to interview some researchers who had been involved in gathering the qualitative survey data used in the report; I was unable to obtain contact information for these staff and/or did not receive responses to requests to interview.

One possible limitation on my interviews, and a factor that might have made it more difficult to obtain interviews with Bank staff, was my location in the UK and the spread of WDR 2012 team all over the world. Although some staff were concentrated in the Washington DC headquarters, others were spread across several continents. Given these logistical difficulties, I decided that phone and Skype (VoIP) interviews were the best way to proceed. Goldstein (2002) suggests that for elite interviews, in-person interviewing is essential to build rapport with interview participants; as the geographical dispersal of my interview subjects made this impossible, my interviews may have been limited because of the difficulty of building such rapport over the phone. Conversely, many interview participants cited their busy work schedules and frequent work-related travel as potential obstacles to being interviewed; Stephens (2007) and Holt (2010) suggest that in these

circumstances, phone interviews which are conducted from their home or office make it easier for the participants and should not be considered 'second best' to in-person interviews.

Interviews with Bank staff were illuminating but at times frustrating. The Bank staff I interviewed were eager to talk about the report's findings, but they were largely unwilling to discuss the process behind the report. Instead, the three senior staff members tended to heavily emphasize the role of data in driving the WDR's findings, frequently telling me that the report was a straightforward reflection of the available data and that further data was required. Interestingly, it was only in my interview with a junior research analyst on the team that I learned more about the politics behind the report and the process by which it came to be. Senior researchers talked about the report's data-driven nature and its strict grounding in economic methods, while the junior researcher discussed (with a tone of some frustration) the way that she felt the report's findings had been somewhat pre-determined by the team's leadership. As such, the interview with WDR 2012 team members were illuminating in some respects but also demonstrated the difficulty of apprehending institutional processes from the outside.

The interview portion of this research was therefore limited by my lack of access to all WDR 2012 members, the two years that had passed between my interviews and the final draft of the report's publication, and the lack of transparency in the research process for WDRs. This lack of transparency is manifested in a few ways: first, contact information is not easily available for team members and repeated emails to the official WDR 2012 address were always unanswered. Second, while much of the report relies on peer-reviewed articles in development economics journals and other publicly available Bank reports, significant portions of the report cite internal Bank reports prepared specifically for the WDR 2012. These documents are not available online (see also Chant 2012, for more on the WDR's bibliography at various draft stages).

Table 7.2 Interviews conducted with WDR 2012 team

Interview	Code	Position on WDR 2012 team	Date	Duration	Interview method	Interview recorded?
Interview 1	WB1	Senior Researcher	6 September 2013	30 minutes	Phone	Recorded and transcribed
Interview 2	WB2	Senior Researcher	16 September 2013	34 minutes	Phone	Recorded and transcribed
Interview 3	WB3	Research Assistant	26 September 2013	31minutes	Phone	Not recorded, notes taken during interview
Interview 4	WB4	Senior Researcher	25 October 2013	30 minutes	Phone	Recorded and transcribed

GPSLF, AGI, and Girl Effect Interviews

For the portion of the thesis concerned with the World Bank's corporate partnerships, I attempted to access actors involved with TBIs on the corporate side. I encountered some serious obstacles to interviews with these groups, and although the World Bank staff were difficult to contact or reluctant to agree to an interview, they were among the most forthcoming and easily accessible groups. I was unable to access Bank staff who had worked on the Global Private Sector Leaders Forum, as there was only one publicly identified Bank employee associated with the program who has since left the Bank; after a few weeks of email exchanges with her staff and a few cancellations, she declined to be interviewed. I was in contact with two Bank staff members who worked on the Adolescent Girl Initiative project, both of whom declined to be interviewed.

I contacted employees of the Nike Foundation, both at the Nike corporate headquarters and on the Girl Effect project team. The Nike Foundation directed me towards their global communications director who then explained that because of "policies in place for these kinds of requests", they had to decline my request for any interviews within the Nike Foundation, Girl Hub, and Girl Effect programs. Similarly, contacts at McKinsey and Co. explained that none of the authors of the 'Business of Empowering Woman' report still worked at the firm and directed me to contact the World Bank. Access to these elite actors and policy makers was difficult, time consuming, and drawn out, with lots of contact and very few interviews granted. This raises some serious issues of transparency and accountability in public-private partnerships. There is very little publicly available information on the staff involved in these projects and the institutions appear reluctant to respond to request for interview, particularly by academics. The programs all have sophisticated press pack materials and contact points for journalists who wish to write about them; I was also directed to these public relations and global communications contacts, at which point they declined interviews.

Interview Structure

I relied on several sources to prepare for my interviews, structure the questions, and develop an interview style compatible with the World Bank. I drew on a small but growing body of literature in politics that considers issues and approaches in elite interviewing (see Harvey 2011; Aberbach and Rockman 2002; Leech 2002; Berry 2002).⁶² Following Stephens, I understand my respondents – all World Bank economists and researchers – as elites, both in relation to the social position of the researcher and “relative to the average citizen in society” (Stephens 2007: 205). In some of the interviews, dynamics based on age and gender differences between myself (young, female) and the respondent (older, male) produced a tangible hierarchy in the conversation and manner of response. Interviews, like any social interactions, produce a variety of dynamics based on social status, power relations, and the perceived ‘authority’ status of certain figures; in this situation, the interviewer may find herself adopting different positions or tones to relate to the respondent and facilitate the discussion (see McDowell 1998).

Two of my interviews were with senior men and two with women (one senior, one junior); observable gender dynamics developed in interviews with men, who sometimes expressed some skepticism about the questions I asked. In one instance, the respondent rephrased my question, telling me “I think what you mean to ask is...”; he then answered his own question. Of course, this dynamic cannot be entirely attributed to differences (hierarchies) in gender and age between the respondents and me; the respondent may simply have not understood

⁶² I am also very grateful to Sara Wallin for sharing her experiences of interviewing staff at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Sara provided me with helpful insights about doing feminist research – and asking critical questions – in institutions that perceive themselves as strictly economic, and therefore ‘gender neutral’. This dynamic no doubt complicates the process and puts the researcher in a difficult position, in which she must be honest about the nature of her research and her perspective without seeming critical of the respondent’s institution and its work.

my question or thought it poorly worded. However, the Bank is somewhat notorious for its male-dominated, economic internal culture that tends to regard 'social' issues as irrelevant to its work. By virtue of my stance as a feminist politics researcher (rather than an economist) and the nature of my questions about the report, respondents may have disagreed with my approach or the focus of my research. Additionally, the researchers on the WDR 2012 are drawn from across the Bank, and all but one (whom I was not granted access to interview) had no special background in gender and development; after working on the WDR 2012 they were again dispersed through the Bank and were not working specifically on gender issues when I interviewed them.

These interviews took place by phone over September and October 2013; some were recorded and transcribed, when the participant gave consent to record the interview, whereas in other interviews I took careful notes. The interviews were semi-structured, broadly focusing on a set of six questions (see Appendix C) that probed the WDR 2012 core team's views on the role of the report, its key messages, and the writing process. These questions developed over the course of the interviews and I adjusted them slightly during this process. Most respondents asked to see the questions before agreeing to be interviewed, and one WDR team member declined to be interviewed after she saw the questions. I therefore aimed to write questions that would provoke conversation, allow the respondent to direct the conversation, and allow me to include more specific follow up questions about empowerment and 'Smart Economics' depending on the tone of the conversation. I employed a semi-structured interview style to prompt respondents and allow them to talk freely about the issues that they perceived as most important.

The interviews started with some opening questions about the respondent's role on the WDR 2012 team and their other roles in the Bank; these questions aimed to put the respondent at ease by inviting them to discuss their own background before getting to the substance of the WDR process. Next, I moved on to questions about the research and writing process of the report, before closing with some questions

about their perception of the report's impact in and outside of the World Bank. The respondents tended to agree on some issues (related to the report's data analysis and its findings) although they gave very different answers when asked about the Bank's gender work and its status as a source of gender 'knowledge'.⁶³ This diversity of perspectives was very interesting and, with access to more Bank staff, could provide an interesting direction for further research.

Researcher Standpoint

The discussion above on the issue of rigour and objectivity in research reflects the feminist interpretivist stance that while research can be designed in order to be conceptually, ethically, and methodologically sound, it cannot be understood as objective or situated outside of social context. This thesis, while designed with careful attention to theoretical and methodological precision, is therefore inevitably influenced by the social position and experience of the researcher; any thorough discussion of methodology necessitates a consideration of this position and its effect on the research. This is especially important when the research relates to the politically contested and fraught area of 'development'. As a white, heterosexual woman born and raised in the

⁶³ Because most Bank publications are written in the 'voice' of the institution, and do not emphasize the role of particular authors except as representatives of the institution, it is rare to see material that reflects internal dissent about Bank gender policy. One such example of this dissent appears in the brochure published to reflect on the 2007-2010 Gender Action Plan: 'buried' at the very back is a section called 'How do you feel about the GAP?' which includes feedback from Bank staff on the GAP itself, in the form of direct quotes pulled from interviews with team leaders (World Bank 2011a: 61-64). This section provides a fascinating insight into sometimes radically different perspectives that exist within the Bank. For instance, when asked what more the Bank could do to integrate gender into its operations, one Bank staffer responds: "The gender agenda is not something that has developed organically within the institution. Rather, it was pushed from above. It will take time to build genuine support at the [Task Team Leader] level". Another responds: "We are a patriarchal and hierarchical institution. That attracts people who have a certain world view and social concerns don't sit so comfortably within the dialogue of the Bank" (2011a: 64).

global North, I am differently positioned in relation to the topic and documents under study than a researcher from a different background in the global South might be. Most immediately, it is apparent that the documents under study here are *for* and not *about* women like me; in other words, they reflect the long history of Gender and Development 'knowledge' being created by privileged women in the global North about, and for the 'development' of women in the global South. Decades of post-development critique have thoroughly illuminated the extent to which international development discourses and NGO communication rely on a deeply internalized understanding of who is the subject and object of development. This dynamic of feminist paternalism – termed “maternalism” (Ferguson 1998) or “sororalism” (Spivak 1999) – is a significant site of feminist violence that requires reflection in research design (Peterson 2003).

Reflection on this dynamic and concerns about the long history of Northern feminists *speaking for* other women influenced my decision to study the discourse of a powerful global governance institution. In this approach, I am inspired by methodologies of 'studying up', developed in the discipline of anthropology, which suggests that dominant knowledge and theories produced in the field would be radically different, were we to study “the colonizers rather than the colonized, the culture of power rather than the culture of the powerless” (Nader 1972: 289). Similarly, inspired by Cynthia Enloe's insights about the “amount of power” required to preserve the international system as it exists today (Enloe 1990: 3), my research approaches this question through the discourses of powerful institutions and aims to shed light on the multiple and intersecting forms of power that produce and sustain the patriarchal global political, social, and economic order in which we live.

Appendix B: Details on World Bank TBIs

Table 7.3 The Global Private Sector Leaders Forum Members

Source: Compiled by the author from GPSLF n.d.; World Bank 2009b, 2009c, 2011a, 2011c

GPSLF Company Name	Region	Country	GPSLF Member Rep.	Initiative Name	Initiative Type	Initiative Description
Goldman Sachs	North America	USA	Lloyd Blankfein (Male)	10,000 women	Developing country initiative	Education (business MBA education)
Boeing International	Europe	Poland	Henryka Bochniarz (Female)	Global Diversity and Employee Rights	Corporate diversity program	Mentoring for women, corporate leadership programme
Belcorp	South America	Peru	Eduardo Belmont (Male)	No name	Component of core business	Direct sales of cosmetics products aimed at women's

Table 7.3

						entrepreneurship
INSEAD	Europe	France	Frank Brown (Male)	Social Entrepreneurship Program	Business Education (elite)	(Fee-paying) business educational program
Accenture	North America	USA	Kevin M. Campbell (Male)	WeConnect International (co-founder)	Business education (elite)	Training corporations and women business owners
Cisco Systems	North America	USA	John T. Chambers (Male)	Cisco Networking Academy	Developing country initiative	Academies teach IT skills (at least 30% female enrollment)
Norfund	Europe	Norway	Kristin Clement (Female)	Gender investment portfolio	Gender sensitive finance	Gender-sensitive investment portfolio, microfinance
Tupperware Brands	North America	USA	Rick Goings (Male)	No name	Component of core business	Direct sales of kitchen products aimed at women's entrepreneurship
Heidrick and Struggles	North America	USA	Kevin L. Kelly	Women's Executive Network	Corporate diversity program	Provide research about women in

Table 7.3

			(Male)			corporate leadership
Sungjoo Group	Asia	South Korea	Sung-joo Kim (Female)	No name	Corporate diversity	Internships for women and business education
Women Private Equity Fund	Africa	South Africa	Wendy Luhabe (Female)	WIPHOLD	Developing country initiative, gender sensitive finance	Investment fund (vaguely) aimed at empowerment of black women
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	North America	USA	Samuel A. DiPiazza (Male) and Denis Nally (Male)	Full Circle, Women's Leadership Program	Corporate diversity	Mentoring and women's corporate leadership
"	"	"	"	Rural Women Training Program, "Faranani Project"	Developing country initiative	Trains South African women in business skills
Carlson Industries	North America	USA	Marilyn Carlson (Female)	No name	Corporate Diversity	Program to ensure minority owned business are

Table 7.3

						suppliers
Finansbank Turkey	Asia	Turkey	Hüsnü M. Özyeğin (Male)	Ozyegin University, Mother and Child Education Foundation	Developing country initiative	Education, business education, parenting and literacy education
Hindustan Unilever	Asia	India	Nitin Paranjpe (Male)	Shakti Ama Program	Component of core business	Direct sales model with network of female microentrepreneurs
Nike Foundation	North America	USA	Mark Parker (Male)	Girl Effect, AGI	Developing country initiatives	Provides funding to AGI, funds Girl Effect campaign
Standard Chartered	Europe	UK	Peter Sands (Male)	No name	Gender sensitive finance	Participates in funding microfinance schemes
Ernst and Young	North America	USA	James S. Turley (Male)	Entrepreneurial Winning Women program	Women's entrepreneurship (elite)	Funding for women entrepreneurs

Table 7.3

Grupo Inter Quimica	South America	Dominican Republic	Elena Viyella de Paliza (Female)	No specific initiative	No specific initiative ⁶⁴	
Sun Media	Asia	China	Yang Lan (Female)	No specific initiative	No specific initiative	
Shalakany Law Office	Middle East	Egypt	Mona Zulficar (Female)	No specific initiative	No specific initiative	

⁶⁴ Grupo Inter Quimica, Sun Media, and Shalakany Law Office are led by high profile businesswomen, but they do not have specific gender-equality or empowerment-focused corporate initiatives listed in their GPSLF profiles that are funded by the corporation/ organization. The profiles instead refer to the specific achievements of the businesswomen, their philanthropic efforts, or successful aspects of their businesses that target women customers.

Table 7.4

Table 7.4 The Adolescent Girl Initiative Pilot Programmes

Source: Compiled by the author from World Bank 2011d, 2012b, World Bank 2014b

Country	Pilot launch	End date	Objective	Project components
Afghanistan	Summer 2012	Ongoing	Provide job skills and training to 1,300 adolescent girls and young women (18-30) leading to increased access to employment.	Skills training; Life skills training; Community outreach; Social marketing; Capacity building
Haiti	Summer 2012	Ongoing	Socially and economically empower adolescent girls and young women aged 17-20 with skills development in order to increase their employability and their earning potential.	Technical skills training; life skills training; internship and job intermediation; mentorship; stipend
Jordan	September 2010	February 2012	Improve the employment prospects of 900 female community college graduates in Jordan, focusing on	Employability skills training; job vouchers to subsidize employers

Table 7.4

			alleviating barriers that prevent young women from finding jobs.	
Lao PDR	March 2011	December 2012	(i) To identify and support women and young entrepreneurs (ii) To provide employment services to unemployed and recently graduated people looking fo employment in the private sector.	Supports young entrepreneurs with business skills training, mentorship, seed grants; piloting careers centers to provide internship and job placements
Liberia	March 2010	December 2012	To promote entry into wage and self-employment for 2,500 girls and young women (age 16 to 27) via the provision of business development skills, job skills and life skills.	Training in job skills for high demand sector or business development skills; job placement or microcredit; life skills training; mentorship; savings account; job placement services
Nepal	February 2010	December 2012	Promote access to employment and improve incomes for 3,500 young women (age 16 to 24) by scaling-up and modifying an existing skills	Technical skills training in high demand areas; life skills training; outreach to vulnerable youth; financial incentives for businesses

Table 7.4

			training and placement program	
Rwanda	Summer 2012	Ongoing	Improve employment and increase incomes for about 2,000 adolescent girls and young women (age 15 to 24) in two urban and two rural districts	Technical training for self-employment, psychosocial support, life skills, and business development training; mentorship with entrepreneurs; links to microfinance institution
South Sudan	February 2011	December 2012	Improve employment and increase incomes of 3,000 adolescent girls and young women (age 15 to 24) through demand-driven training and linkages to market opportunities.	Safe spaces for girls to receive training; training in job skills, financial literacy; access to savings account and microcredit; training of adolescent leaders

Appendix C: Interview Questions for WDR 2012 Core Team

[This set of questions provided a guide for interviews, but I used a semi-structured approach that allowed respondents to direct the discussion. I therefore did not adhere rigidly to this set of questions and some respondents were asked only a few of these particular questions].

1. Can you tell me a bit about your role in researching and writing the WDR 2012?
2. What was the process of researching and writing the WDR 2012 like? Can you give me a sense of how the report came together? For instance, did the chapter structure and conceptual framework exist first or did these derive from the research?
3. What do you think is the main audience for WDRs? Is it primarily intended to shape public opinion or Bank policy?
4. Since the presidency of James Wolfensohn, the Bank has sought to be a leader in the area of gender and development. Do you think it has been successful here? What are the Bank's strengths and weaknesses in this area?
5. I'm interested in the institutional culture of the Bank and the dynamics of the WDR 2012 team. I understand that team members came from a variety of different sections and backgrounds within the Bank. What kind of dynamic did this create? What were the main areas of debate within the team?
6. How do you think the WDR 2012 has been received in the development community? How has it been received within the Bank?

Appendix D: Girl Effect Video Transcripts

The Girl Effect: I Dare You to See I Am the Answer (2008a) Uploaded 22 May 2008

[Text on screen:] “I dare you”

[Voiceover speaks, over images of women looking at the camera]

[Voiceover, spoken by a woman with an African-inflected accent:] “I dare you to look at me and see only a statistic, someone you’ll never meet, a tragedy, a commodity, a child bride. I dare you to look at me with pity, fatigue, dismissal. I dare you to look at me as more than a poster for your cause, a promise you want to keep. I dare you to look at me and see I am the answer. I dare you to rethink what it means to look at a girl, not a burden, not an object, but the answer.”

[Text on screen:] “The most powerful force for change on the planet is a girl. A girl with 7 years of education marries 4 years later and has 2.2 fewer children. The population’s HIV rate goes down. And malnutrition decreases 43%. If 10% more girls go to secondary school, the country’s economy grows 3%. When an educated girl earns income, she reinvests 90% of it in her family, compared to 35% for a boy.”

[Text appears on screen over top of images of girls engaged in physical labour – plowing a field, carrying water, etc.]

[Text on screen:] “Yet 99.4% of international aid money is not directed to her. The answer is right in front of us. Dare to see this girl. Count her. Invest in her. Advocate for her. Nike Foundation.” [End]

The Girl Effect (2008b)

Uploaded 24 May 2008

[Text on screen:] “The world is a mess. Poverty. AIDS. Hunger. War. So what else is new? So what if there was unexpected solution? That could turn in this sinking ship around? Would you even know it if you saw it? It’s not the internet. It’s not science. It’s not the government. It’s not money. It’s (dramatic pause) a girl. Imagine a girl living in poverty. No, go ahead, really imagine her.”

[Stylized text used to represent figures in a scene: GIRL figure, FLIES buzz around. BABY appears on the GIRL figure. HUSBAND text falls onto girl, crushing her, then HUNGER and HIV crush her.]

“Now, pretend that you can fix this picture” [HUSBAND, BABY, HIV, HUNGER disappear]. “OK. Now she has a chance. Let’s put her in a school uniform. And see her get a loan to buy a cow and use the profits from the milk to help her family. Pretty soon, her cow becomes a herd. And she becomes the business owner who brings clean water to the village, which makes men respect her good sense and invite her to the village council. Where she convinces everyone that all girls are valuable. Soon, more girls have a chance and the village is thriving. Lower HIV, healthier babies, education, commerce, sanitation, stability.”

“Which means the economy of the entire country improves and the whole world is better off. Are you following what’s happening here?
GIRL → SCHOOL → COWS → \$ → BUSINESS → CLEAN H2O
SOCIAL CHANGE STRONGER ECONOMY BETTER WORLD”

“It’s called the Girl Effect. Multiply that by 600 millions girls in the developing world and you’ve just changed the course of history”

[Ends with Girl Effect logo.]

The Girl Effect: The Clock is Ticking (2010)
Uploaded 13 September 2010

[Text appears on screen:] “Hey there, it’s us again. We have a situation on our hands and the clock is ticking. When a girl turns 12 and lives in poverty, her future is out of her control.”

[Black figure of girl spins downwards in spiral out of frame and disappears. The images that are described by the text are accompanied by stylized graphics representing the girl child, her pregnancy, her baby, her running to escape HIV.]

“In the eyes of many, she’s a woman now. No, really, she is. She faces the reality of being married by the age of 14. Pregnant by the time she’s 15. And if she survives childbirth, she might have to sell her body to support her family which puts her at risk for contracting and spreading HIV. Not the life you imagined for a 12 year old, right? But, the good news is there’s a solution. Let’s rewind to her at 12, happy and healthy. She visits a doctor regularly. She stays in a school. Where she’s safe. She uses her education to earn a living.”

[Girl running around a clock to her different ages, always pursued by outstretched arms reaching for her that she manages to avoid. Stylized images of girl represent her growing, going to school, having a child, raising the girl child and sending her off to school.]

“Now she’s calling the shots and it looks something like this: She can avoid HIV, she can marry and have children when she’s ready and her children are health like she is. Now imagine this continuing for generating after generation. You get the picture right? 50 million girls in poverty equal 50 million solutions. This is the power of the Girl Effect. An effect that starts with a 12 year old girl. And impacts the world. The clock is ticking. Girleffect.org.” [End.]

Abbreviations

AGI	Adolescent Girl Initiative
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
HUL	Hindustan Unilever
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IDA	International Development Association
IFI	International Financial Institution
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IPE	International Political Economy
IR	International Relations
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GAD	Gender and Development framework
GESE	'Gender Equality as Smart Economics'
GPE	Global Political Economy
GPSLF	Global Private Sector Leaders Forum
PPPs	Public-Private Partnerships
PWC	Post-Washington Consensus
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
TBIs	Transnational Business Initiatives
WEF	World Economic Forum
WID	Women in Development framework
WDR	World Development Report

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