

THE WORLD BANK, DEVELOPMENT POLICY, AND THE  
PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY: NEW WAYS OR OLD  
TRICKS?  
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## Abstract

This paper provides a critical examination of the World Bank's development document, "World Bank Group Gender Strategy: Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction, and Inclusive Growth". The rationale for this is that, while the World Bank suggests that this is a distinction from past practices, some scholars posit that it is a continuation of previous neoliberal strategies (Prügl 2017). Thus, the aim of this analysis is to elucidate the implications of the proposed strategies on both gender equality and health equity. The analytical framework derives from the following disciplines: political economy, feminist political economy, and political economy of health. The philosophical underpinning of this examination reflects the tenets of critical realism. In relation to this philosophical paradigm, a critical discourse analysis is employed. Within the document there is a direct emphasis on privatization (private enterprise and financialization) and deregulation. Moreover, there is a clear re-articulation of both the state and female citizenship, whereby the former is presented as an 'enabling agent' and the latter becomes depoliticized. Within this paper, it is argued that these strategies lead to the further exaggeration of gender inequalities due to their impact on income and social inequalities. There is a relation between unequal income distribution and health equity: an increase in the former leads to a direct increase in the latter. These health inequities are compounded by the World Bank's promotion of a 'reduced state' that is focused on constructing a 'workfare' based liberal welfare state and a citizen whose political engagement is limited to the community. Thus, instead of promoting gender equality, these strategies reproduce them due to the World Bank's tendency towards primitive accumulation.

## Chapter 1- Introductory Remarks

### *1.1 Introduction*

Considering that this MRP is focused on equity a note on terminology must be made in relation to the ‘equality’ and ‘equity’ debate. While equality relates to the *equal* distribution of resources (income), equity focuses on the distribution of resources according to need- need here being a product of a social environment characterized by power differentials and hierarchal structures. Throughout the literature terms used include: gender equality (Armstrong and Armstrong 2010), social equality (Coburn 2001), and health equity (Hofrichter 2003; Maio 2010; Taket 2012). Accordingly, these shall be used within this MRP.

The World Bank’s (2015) development strategy titled, “World Bank Group Gender Strategy: Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction, and Inclusive Growth”, is the main focus of this examination. Specifically, this investigation examines if the proposed strategies are sufficient in promoting both gender equality and health equity. This strategy document has been articulated as a new approach to development practice and thus a reflection of the World Bank’s reorientation towards a socially embedded model. However, given the historical practice of this International Financial Institution, specifically its promotion of structural adjustment programs, the document requires critical scrutiny.

In chapter 2 a review of relevant literature is presented from the respective disciplines: political economy, feminist political economy (including feminist materialism), and political economy of health. It situates the examination and highlights key insights pertinent to this investigation. Following this, in chapter 3 the research questions and methodology tools utilized are presented- specifically critical discourse analysis (Fairclough et al. 2004). This includes an examination of their ontology and epistemology parameters and means of application. In chapter 4 the findings are presented and finally in chapter 5 these findings are critically examined through the application of relevant literature. Accordingly, this analysis shows how the World Bank emphasizes privatization (private enterprise and financialization), and deregulation. Moreover, there is a clear re-articulation of both the state and female

citizenship, whereby the former is presented as an 'enabling agent' and the latter becomes depoliticized. It is argued that these strategies lead to the further exaggeration of gender inequalities because of their impact on income and social inequalities. Due to the relation between unequal income distribution and health equity, an increase in the former leads to a direct decrease in the latter. These health inequities are compounded by the World Bank's promotion of a 'reduced state' that is focused on constructing a 'workfare' based liberal welfare state and a citizen whose political engagement is limited to the community. Thus, instead of promoting gender equality, these strategies reflect a historical proclivity of the World Bank towards primitive accumulation.

### *1.2 Background: The World Bank, Crisis, and Women*

Historically women have been absent from development discourse, specifically those propagated by International Financial Institutions e.g. the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Chant and Sweetman 2012). This is due to these organizations advocating a monetarist narrative that draws a clear distinction between economic and social policy and perceives the former as superior (Kentikelenis et al. 2016). However, during the latter half of the twentieth century the incorporation of women into development policy began to occur (Chant 2012). With the building critique of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPS), the World Bank, and by consequence its focus on monetarist policies, was in crisis. Moreover, with a growing recognition of the gendered contours of development, there was a rapid extension and incorporation of feminist ideas and concepts into these strategies (Berik 2017a).

Stiglitz (2002) provides a detailed account of the crisis in legitimacy that the World Bank experienced in his book, 'Globalization and its Discontents'. Stiglitz proposes that the actions

of specific development agencies, notably the promotion of the Washington Consensus by both the IMF and World Bank, led to the further impoverishment and indenture of recipient countries. Stiglitz argues that in order to become a recipient of ‘financial assistance’ countries were required to fulfil specific obligations, specifically market privatization and liberalization. While, studies have shown that this has been associated with slight increases in productivity (Schadler et al. 1993), the majority have illuminated the negative implications of SAPS: sustained impoverishment, increased social inequalities, decreased competitiveness of local products etc. (Dreher and Gassebner 2012; Waweru and Kalani 2009).

Due to the proclivity of development policy to produce environments of further impoverishment and immiseration – reflecting its overt neoliberal contours – there has been an observable reorientation towards a social investment model. This socially embedded model has been defined by Birdsall and Fukuyama (2011) as the antithesis of the 1980’s Washington-Consensus and has thus been termed the ‘Post-Washington Consensus’. This apparent shift can be seen in the recent proliferation of development strategies that focus on “win-win developmental solutions” (Bernstein 2005: 119). These solutions focus on alleviating poverty and its experience by marginalized persons, e.g., women. A clear example of these solutions is the World Bank’s exposition of “gender smart [economic] solutions” (2015:12), a solution that acknowledges “realizing women’s full economic potential is good for business and for development” (2015: 11). Consequently, it may be argued that ‘Post-Washington Consensus’ development policies are premised upon the belief that development strategies can promote both economic growth alongside and through poverty alleviation.

However, Berik (2017a) suggests that the acknowledgment of women in development strategies not only reflects a crisis in monetarism but also relates to a growing interest in the feminist critique (see also Hawkesworth 2006). The *partial* incorporation of this critique (Razavi 2017) shifted the focus from equality to gender equality, highlighting the gendered

contours of ‘win-win developmental solutions’ and ‘smart economics’ (Berik 2017b). This reorientation included the acknowledgment of health and education investment; the provisioning of childcare to enable market access; changes in family law; and the enfranchisement of women. Moreover, concerns regarding sexual violence and reproductive rights became central. While positive, Berik (2017a) maintains that these development strategies still fail to acknowledge the way in which gender inequality derives from the Bank’s continued emphasis on promoting free-market principles: privatization, deregulation, and austerity politics. Consequently, due to their restricted definition of gender equality and failure to acknowledge the role of income inequality, the World Bank is unable to truly promote the needs of women.

This point has been reiterated by Cammack (2004) in his conceptualization of ‘deeper-neoliberalism’. Cammack proposes that this reorientation was undertaken by what he articulates as the ‘Wolfensohn-Stiglitz project’ (2004:194), whereby the previous ‘Washington Consensus’ became socially embedded through its *discursive appropriation* of social justice principles. It is a process that “intervenes in the formulation of social policy [...] to soften the political and social costs of SAPS” (Laurell and Arellano 2002:191-192). Yet, Cammack maintains that these policies have no actual effect on progressive social mobility because they continue to promote economic policies that exacerbate and further exaggerate social inequalities within and between countries. Alternatively, he suggests that it is a method by which to promote capital’s access to cheap labour and materials.

Cammack’s critique has been reiterated by Toussaint (2008) in his historical examination of the World Bank. Toussaint suggests that the development of the World Bank is intimately related to the formation of global capitalism under ‘American management’; from the inception of the Bretton Woods agreement, through to the Cold War and the ‘Volcker Shock’, and finally to its current socially embedded model. Toussaint argues that the World Bank,

alongside other development banks, have focused on the extension of capital through (1) prompting the conversion of non-capitalist societies into capitalist ones, and (2) their politically strategic positioning e.g., their ability suppress labour power on a global scale (socialism/ communism) through financial leveraging. Toussaint consequently argues that the World Bank and its various development strategies must be seen as principally focused on the pervasion of capitalism and the transferal of non-capitalist states into the capitalist ether. Accordingly, this Major Research Paper (MRP) critically examines the strategies proposed within the following document: 'World Bank Group: Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction, and Inclusive Growth' (2015).

## Chapter 2- Literature Review

### *2.1 Political Economy: Marx and Dependency Theory*

The use of a political economy lens provides a number of benefits for the examination of the World Bank's gender equality strategy. The historical study of political economy is diverse in nature and its application as a methodological tool has been manifold (Hayek 1944; Marx 2013 [1867]; Mill 2004 [1848]; Smith 2003 [1776] Ricardo 2014 [1817]). Thus, the exact theoretical stream that shall be utilized requires further specification. However, prior to that, a description is required that highlights both the explicit principles and implicit assumptions within this discipline and their relation to one another. Armstrong et al. (2001) posit that "political economy understands politics and economies as integrally related [in which] states, markets, ideas, discourses and civil societies are not independent variables but interrelated parts of the same whole" (2001:VII). Yet, how do these categories interact and how do they influence the social environment? To answer this question, one must turn to Marx.

The philosophical methodology developed by Marx, historical materialism or dialectical materialism, derives from his critical engagement with Hegel and his subsequent attempt to relocate the dialectical process of negation within the material world (Hughes, Sharrock, and Martin 2012). The consequential outcome of this engagement was the construction of a theory based on the dialectical interaction between capital and labour- both plural and manifold concepts (Poulantzas 1975). Furthermore, this interaction, or more accurately this conflict, is one over the means of production (MOP) that, according to Marx, occurs between those that are in ownership of the MOP (bourgeoisie) and those which have only the capacity to sell their labour power (proletariat) (Marx 2013 [1867]; Marx and Engels 1998 [1932], 2004 [1848]). Through this summation it is clear to see that the social environment within capitalist arrangements is one riddled with, in fact built on, social inequalities. Thus, it is

clear to see that by adopting a theoretical framework influenced by Marx, and marxism generally, one must consequently articulate the social environment as characterized by inherent power inequalities. This, will be key to understanding the role of development agencies and their associated strategies in relation to the propagation of social inequalities.

In accord with Marx's position one can suggest that inequalities, which manifest between the owners of capital and bearers of 'labour power', fundamentally define existence. Marx states that these unequal relations are key to the dialectic process and the evolution of capitalism (Marx 1998 [1932]). The dialectical evolution of capitalist relations and thus inequalities is key to this analysis as it highlights specific stages of capitalism (Aglietta 2000 [1976]; Offe 1985; Lash and Urry 1987), particularly developmental stages such as 'primitive accumulation' or 'accumulation by dispossession' (Harvey 2004). Marx clearly articulates the conceptual importance of primitive accumulation when he states:

“We have seen how money is changed into capital; how through capital surplus-value is made, and from surplus-value more capital. But the accumulation of capital presupposes surplus-value; surplus-value presupposes capitalistic production; capitalistic production presupposes the pre-existence of considerable masses of capital and of labour power in the hands of producers of commodities. The whole movement, therefore, seems to turn in a vicious circle, out of which we can only get by supposing a primitive accumulation (previous accumulation of Adam Smith) preceding capitalistic accumulation; an accumulation not the result of the capitalistic mode of production, but its starting point.” (Marx 2013 [1867]:873)

In relation to this quotation one can see that primitive accumulation is seen as setting the stage for the capitalist MOP e.g. establishing a system of value. Yet, Harvey (2004) posits that while conceptually useful, primitive accumulation should not be confused with an initial form of capitalism alone. Instead Harvey maintains that this form of accumulation characterizes contemporary capitalistic arrangements generally, and establishes imperialism through what he terms accumulation by dispossession. While some have argued that this process is typically a non-state affair (see “Empire”, Hardt and Negri 2001), scholars such as Panitch and Gindin (2014) have suggested a diametrically opposite position. These authors

maintain that the ability of capital and capitalism generally to 'go global' is dependent on the ability of nation-states and the political apparatus to enforce and consolidate – whether through coercion or force – capitalist relations of accumulation. One dimension within this process pertains to the promotion of development by supranational bodies e.g. the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organization in countries seen as on the periphery of 'industrialized' capitalist states. It is through the actions of these agencies and their promotion of market liberalization and privatization that capital is able to access non-capitalist societies (Peet 2009).

A key tool by which to understand the role of International Financial Institutions in global capitalist arrangements is dependency theory. Dependency theory, in opposition to the modernization thesis, suggests that countries found on the periphery of the 'global system' are impoverished through a process of wealth extraction which flows to the centre (Prebisch 1950, 1959). This system of asymmetrical power relations leads to the appropriation of value from countries where these values are created. The appropriation of this wealth is enabled through legal arrangements (trade 'agreements'), financial borrowing (indenture), and military intervention- more often than not all of these together. The outcome of this periphery-centre relationship is the continued dependency and underdevelopment of periphery countries (Rodney 1972). Thus, according to this model it is market inclusion and not exclusion that causes underdevelopment and social inequality. However, it is important to note that the periphery-centre dichotomy, while useful, fails to acknowledge power differentials within countries. Navarro (1999) posits that the dichotomy proposed within the nationalist argument is not only reductionist, but analytically fails to acknowledge the hierarchal structures and modes of exploitation that exist within a given country- specifically in relation to class. Alternatively, Navarro suggests that in order to understand the global system of exploitation class is central.

Consequently, by utilizing these insights, these agencies, and by association their strategies, may be articulated as representatives and/or enablers of capital within and outside of bounded nation-states. Consequently, due to the inherently critical nature of this study, the theoretical insights of Marx and Marxist theory shall be of fundamental importance. Moreover, the use of this framework is fundamental to this analysis given that marxism focuses on the contradictory processes that characterize capitalist development.

## *2.2 A Feminist Critique*

While the above theoretical postulations are critical to the understanding of development strategies and their location within global capitalist, there are observable failures and absences. One of particular importance to this study is the failure of some marxist positions to address the particular experience of women. This is a pertinent absence considering that the World Bank strategy under investigation focuses on women's particular context.

Furthermore, the necessity in addressing the effects of development policy on women is that they are more often located in vulnerable social positions (Fredman and Goldblatt 2015).

Consequently, in order to develop a theoretically robust position that addresses these inconsistencies, one must examine the contributions of alternative theorists such as those located within the field of feminist political economy (including feminist materialism).

Within their book, 'Troubling Care: critical perspectives on research and practices', Armstrong and Braedley (2013) provide a nuanced understanding of feminist political economy. In their critique of mainstream political economy, the authors suggest that:

“While critical political economy has concerned itself with the production and distribution of goods and services in relation to the distribution of costs and benefits for people, feminist political economy takes these concerns further to include the relationship between market relations and domestic relations, including the vexing question of how to account for the sexual division of labour throughout human activity” (Armstrong and Braedley 2013: 11)

Within this extract there is an emphasis on the particular position of women- specifically their location within a sexual division of labour and its ramifications. This point has been reiterated by Sevenhuijsen (2003) who commenting on '*women's work*' states that it is "regarded as only a support for paid labour, instead of a social activity in its own right" (Sevenhuijsen 2003:188). This process of naturalization is premised upon a 'feminine moral worth' (Chivers 2013) and the ability of women to attain this distinction. If they do not, they are deemed, from a societal perspective, amoral or 'bad women' while those that do so are perceived as 'good women'. The distinction between what is viewed as women's work compared with men's is clearly represented by the productive / reproductive divide. Productive labour is seen as the primary mode of accumulation in capitalist societies characterized by wage-labour relations. Reproductive labour is supportive, unpaid and relegated to the household (Meyer 2000).

This point has been reiterated by the feminist marxist Vogel (2014 [1983]). In an attempt to integrate both marxist and feminist discourses, Vogel locates women's relegation to unpaid activities within capitalist arrangements. Vogel, posits that the needs of capitalist accumulation are not restricted to the immediate labour process and the circulation of surplus capital, but must include the household. Thus, the importance of the household as a site of reproductive labour is gendered. The utilization of this approach – specifically the location of gendered exploitation within capitalist arrangements and specific institutional configurations – shall be key to this MRP.

While the critical examination of the productive / reproductive divide is key to understanding the experience of women in capitalist societies, this should not be conflated with a market / non-market dualism. The persistence of non-formalized reproductive work illuminates the importance of this point, yet a shift towards the marketization of reproductive work and the integration of women into the wage-labour nexus (Newman and Clarke 1997) requires one to

examine market-based exploitation. This point has been reiterated by Charlesworth (2010; 2012) in her examination of care work and the regulatory framework associated with it.

Charlesworth maintains that the marketization of work once located within the household has specific implications for those individuals who are now within a formalized working environment. However, according to Charlesworth (2012), the regulatory framework that relates to marketized reproductive work, reflects a continuation of gendered norms and the devaluation of caring practices due to their apparent alignment with female ideals (see also Meyer et al. 2000). In light of this, one must examine the conditions that characterize this form of work and the ability of employees to participate in collective bargaining as a means to improve these conditions. Consequently, utilizing this framework one can see the necessity in examining the particular situation of women and how the current societal and institutional arrangement affect the sexual division of labour within and outside of the marketplace.

The value that one can draw from this theoretical position is its ability to highlight the multifaceted nature of exploitation and its spatiality e.g. within and outside of the market.

This is clearly reflected within its focus on the intersecting experience of women- particularly between class and gender. A key proponent of this position is the scholar Smith (1987, 1990a, 1990b). Within her detailed explication of the ruling apparatus, Smith states:

“The ruling apparatus is that familiar complex of management, government administration, professions, intelligentsia, as well as the textually mediated discourses that coordinate and interpret it. Its special capacity is the organization of particular actual places, persons, and events into the generalized and abstracted modes vested in categorical systems, rules, laws, and conceptual practices. [...] A mode of ruling has been created that transcends local particularities but at the same time exists only in them” (Smith 1990a: 109).

The postulations put forward by Smith reveal the plural character of the ruling apparatus, specifically its textual mediation and its manifestation within differing localities.

Furthermore, another key tenet within Smith’s (1990b) work pertains to ‘ruling relations’.

This principle, intimately related to the ruling apparatus, illuminates the abstract forces that

govern the everyday world in which individuals are situated. In their summation of this concept, DeVault and McCoy (2002) suggest that the role of ‘ruling relations’ is to coordinate persons, actions, and activities across and within multiple localities. Thus, within an environment characterized by gender- (patriarchal) and class- (capitalism) based modes of exploitation one may begin to identify differing ‘locations of dominance’ (Connell and Pearse 2014), for example how the workplace or home have convergent and divergent ramifications for women.

While the model presented by Smith presents a sophisticated summation of the interlinked power structures that limit choice for women, specifically linking micro and macrostructural processes, it does not sufficiently account for race and ethnicity. Thus, it may be argued that it is Eurocentric, a similar critique made of Marx. However, this does not make it analytically useless. Alternatively, one needs only to introduce a conceptual understanding of the ‘ethnoracial hierarchy’ (Waquant 2008, 2009) and its implications for the process already developed within Smith’s thesis. Consequently, one may define the social environment as a “white-supremacist-capitalist-patriarchy” (hooks 1981) arrangement. The feminist critiques of labour will be central to the analysis in this MRP.

### *2.3 Political Economy of Health: Social Determinants of Health*

The above theoretical postulations provide a conceptual framework from which to understand and situate the World Bank’s strategy. However, it does not detail the way in which it relates to health and health trajectories. Maio (2010) in his recent examination into health and social theory provides the required link. Maio’s basic argument is that social inequalities, inherent within capitalist structures, directly lead to poor health outcomes for specific parts of a given population. While this argument has been made by notable epidemiologists e.g. Wilkinson and Pickett (2009), there has been a failure to examine the materiality of poor health

outcomes, specifically income inequalities and its relation to poverty. Alternatively, Maio proposes that income must be central to our understand of health equity.

This understanding has been similarly advocated by Coburn (2001). Within his critical examination of neoliberalism, Coburn maintains that there is a need to examine health in relation to poverty and its location within a multiplicity of power structures; invested interests and the structural constraints which they produce; and the ways in which political and welfare arrangements can either alleviate or exacerbate these issues. Simply, Coburn is concerned with the reintroduction of a materialist or critical realist methodological framework to understand health and health equity. This is clearly articulated within his discussion on income inequality:

“Income inequality is itself the consequences of fundamental changes in class structure which have produced not only income inequalities but also numerous other forms of health-relevant social inequalities. Welfare measures in turn reflect basic social, political and economic institutions tied to the degree to which societies take care of their citizens or leave the fate of citizens up to the market i.e. neoliberalism.” (Coburn 2004: 43).

Through this reintroduction, as revealed in the above quote, Coburn aims to externalize the process of health production— this is particularly pertinent given the current internalizing discourse dominant within contemporary health and epidemiological narratives (Raphael 2011). Through this externalization, he illuminates the various structural constraints that prevent people from accessing resources and power- a process that consequently leads to poor health outcomes. This point is reiterated by Wiktorowicz (2006) who suggests that healthcare, health provisioning, and welfare are unmistakably political matters. Furthermore, Wiktorowicz, suggests that these matters are political because they are outcomes of social struggles (class, gender, race/ethnicity, religious etc.), which occur within and outside of political institutions.

Raphael (2009b) has emphasised the role of social and political struggle within his explication of the social determinates of health model (SDoH). Within his text, 'Social Determinants of Health: Canadian perspectives', Raphael proposes that health is directly related to such issues as housing; employment and working conditions; ability to unionize; geographical location. Furthermore, these are compounded by one's social location: gender, race, class, sexual orientation. Moreover, Raphael (2012) suggests that inequalities associated with these SDoH can be minimized or exaggerated by welfare structures - reflecting the work of Esping-Andersen (1990). This point is further developed by Bryant (2009) in her explication of the 'structural-critical' position on health policy. Bryant posits that the structural-critical framework relates health to the unequal distribution of power and economic resources within a given society. Bryant locates the source of these inequalities within the dominant politico-ideological framework and its structural instantiation.

Within Bryant's summation there is a clear understanding of the political determinants of health - specifically the way in which power distribution effects social equality. Bryant proposes that countries that distribute social resources according to need, through government policy, are able to greatly reduce inequities as they relate to class, gender, and ethnicity. Thus, if equitable distribution promotes and enables choice, and this consequently confers power, then it may be assumed that political action is key to one's experience of equality.

Navarro's (1999) examination into 'globalization' and its implications for health equity illuminates the role of ideology. Navarro proposes that through the use of discursive arrangements, developmental agencies are able to obscure the actual causes of inequality: the distribution of power within and outside of nation-states. The dominant ideological framework that does this emphasises: reducing public deficits through the limiting of social spending; deregulating both labour and financial markets; and finally, the privatization of once public programs (all of which are supported by the development bodies e.g. the World

Bank, and IMF). Thus, according to Navarro, obscuring these causes enables the consolidation of neoliberal capital accumulation, the exaggeration of class based inequalities, and the destruction of social support arrangements.

Moreover, in relation to neoliberal globalization and the role of International Financial Institutions throughout the Global South, Kolko (2002), like Stiglitz above, suggests that the implementation of SAPs (specifically their promotion of liberalization and privatization) leads to increased social inequality. This is due to the erosion of material wealth for working class and marginalized communities. Importantly, SAPs have specific significance for women as they are more likely to be impacted by intersecting social inequalities – both income related and those pertaining to gendered and racial hierarchies – and are similarly more likely to be recipients of the public services being undermined (social services and welfare arrangements) (Williams 2012). Lastly, the promotion of deregulated financialization will further exacerbate the gendered dimensions of social inequalities. Roberts and Soederberg (2012) highlight the contradictions that exist between the promotion of unregulated financialization and gender equality. The authors note that this process can undermine women's economic viability, reflected by the sub-prime mortgage crash of 2007/08 that disproportionately affected Black and Latin women from socio-economically deprived neighbourhoods (see also Harvey 2011).

Consequently, utilizing the political economy of health paradigm alongside the aforementioned literature will provide a robust method by which to understand the link between health equity and the political apparatus – specifically how the latter impacts the former through income inequalities. A critical engagement with the World Bank's strategy, specifically its ramification for both social and gender equality, will reveal potential health implications.

## Chapter 3- Methodology

### 3.1 Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

- What socio-political context is the World Bank's strategy situated within?
- How does the World Bank's gender equality strategy compare with its past development programs?
- How do the World Bank's strategies affect social and gender inequalities?
- How do the proposed World Bank strategies effect the health of women, specifically those from poor and marginalized communities?

### 3.2 Methodology

#### 3.2.1 Introduction

This study uses a '*critical discourse analysis*' (Fairclough 2003). The ontological and epistemological framework that informs this investigative tool is '*critical realism*' (Bhaskar 2008 [1975]). This section details the methodological tool utilized.

#### 3.2.2 Critical Realism and Critical Discourse Analysis

Fairclough et al. (2004) attempts to integrate critical realist insights with that of semiosis (the intersubjective production of meaning). Within this examination, the authors illuminate the need to understand the discursive parameters of 'meaning construction' through the close examination of it in situ e.g. text. By doing this they aim to understand the way in which meaning and reality may differ, the way that the world is articulated within and through discourse, and how this can subsequently obscure the primary mechanisms of reality. By this, Fairclough et al. are suggesting that the way we understand the world, including its causes and effects, may be based on something other than reality (discourse). An example of this is

the proclivity of some to attribute poor health outcomes to individual behaviours and not to a political environment that exacerbates social inequalities. Consequently, the authors advocate for the use of critical discourse analysis. The utility behind using such a philosophical position is that it permits one to provide a critical appraisal of a text and furthermore to elucidate its connection to obscured causal processes such as capitalist and patriarchal arrangements.

This form of analysis derives from Foucault's (2002, 1988) investigation into the nature of power and its circulation throughout society. For Foucault, the social environment – including its institutional and political arrangements – is characterized by various power structures that are historically situated (1991 [1977], 1998 [1978], 1998 [1985], 2006 [1964]). Power is not a singular and hierarchical structure, but it is an all-pervasive phenomenon, although it does express a subordinate and ordinate position. In his application of Foucault's insights and his attempt to formulate a means of methodological inquiry, Fairclough (2003) developed the critical discourse analysis; through the application of this methodological tool one may be able to illuminate the ideological parameters of a given text and thus situate it within a wider socio-political context e.g. neoliberal globalization. Consequently, the rationale for its adoption is that it permits one to examine the discursive construction of meaning and the ways in which this conveys a form of reality or truth which is distinct from its causal mechanism. For example, utilizing a critical discourse analysis enables one to illuminate the dominance of a neoliberal discourse that perceives women's injection into an unregulated market as sufficient to reduce gender inequality. Through the utilization of this methodological tool one may be able to highlight the ideological parameters of a document and its relation to the current socio-political context; and to illuminate the contradictions that exist between the suggested means of alleviating social inequalities and how these obscure the actual causal mechanisms of inequality e.g. capitalist accumulation.

### 3.2.3 Methods

The literature review used specific search terms and databases. The search terms included ‘globalization and gender equity’, the ‘World Bank and gender equity’, ‘development and gender equity’, health and globalization’, and ‘the World Bank and health’. Moreover, the databased used included ProQuest, JSTOR, ESCOhost, and Expanded Academic ASPAP. The acquired literature was supplemented by literature already known. The World Bank’s document, “World Bank Group Gender Strategy: Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction, and Inclusive Growth”, is accessible online.

To conduct a critical discourse analysis, the document was printed and a highlighter was used. This enabled a close examination of the text by illuminating key themes relevant to the topic and the ways in which they relate to the construction of meaning. The initial process included the procurement of codes – initial concepts within the data – which subsequently became a dimension within an emergent theme. Emergent themes related to overarching concepts within the text.

The investigative focus of this project was influenced by the literature detailed above: political economy; feminist political economy; and political economy of health (including the social determinants of health framework). Accordingly, the themes that emerged directly related to these disciplines and their relation to health equity. For example, the relationship between the promotion of privatization and gender inequality has been critically examined within the feminist political economy discipline. This similarly applies to issues of political participation and the role of government in promoting health equity. After these themes were identified they were critically examined through an engagement with relevant literature, conceptual tools, and theoretical frameworks. This derives not only from the literature detailed above but similarly includes that acquired through the process outlined above.

## Chapter 4- Findings

### 4.1 Document Outline

The World Bank's document, "World Bank Group Gender Strategy: Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction, and Inclusive Growth" is divided into three distinct, yet complementary sections. These include *Human Endowments*, conceptualized as the availability and accessibility of health and educational services; *Economic Opportunities*, as measured by citizens' participation in paid employment and their access to and ownership over 'assets'; and finally *voice and agency* which relates to one's freedom from gender based violence (GBV), citizens' ability to influence local governance systems, and control over marriage, sexual activity, and child bearing. Within these three sections a multiplicity of strategies are proposed that, according to the group, shall meet their "twin goals of eliminating extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity by 2030" (2015: 7). In order to do this, the World Bank's "[...] strategy builds on the conceptual framework of the World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development (World Bank 2011), which posits that households, markets, and institutions, and the interaction between them, influence gender equality economic development" (2015: 8).

The inclusion of issues such as these reflect the World Bank's recent shift towards a socially embedded model that incorporates feminist narratives. The World Bank must be congratulated for its outline of a plan to eradicate gendered poverty, the exploitation of women, and the gendered ideals and norms that sustain the status quo. However, this does not mean the strategy is free from critical examination. The literature and theoretical frameworks detailed above shall be utilized to assess the implications of the proposed strategies on poverty, social inequalities, and health equity. The themes that emerged relate to the promotion of privatization (private enterprise and financialization), and deregulation.

Moreover, there is a clear re-articulation of both the state as well as female citizenship, whereby the former is presented as an ‘enabling agent’ and the latter becomes depoliticized.

#### *4.2 Privatization and Market Deregulation: private enterprise and the gendering of financialization*

A key theme is the World Bank’s advocacy of privatization as a mechanism of promoting gender equality. The twin pillars of this process relate to: (1) the promotion of private enterprise (the transferal of services to private sector organizations) and (2) the gendering of financialization and the integration of global financial markets. Furthermore, these mechanisms are closely related to the deregulation of both markets. The findings are explicated below.

##### 4.2.1 The Promotion of Private Enterprise

The promotion of the private sector within this document is premised upon the assumption that private business is singularly responsible for employment and is consequently the primary mechanism by which to eradicate poverty. Moreover, the role of the private sector and privatization generally is seen as a multifaceted, all-encompassing necessity that should not be limited to the market. Alternatively, it is proposed that private enterprise should be extended into societal arrangements such as social assistance (see section 5.2.1). The importance that the World Bank gives to the private sector, alongside the public sector, in providing economic opportunities and as being the main employer within client countries is articulated within the following two extracts.

“The private sector plays a critical role because it creates the majority of jobs and economic opportunities and helps provide access to capital and technology.” (2015:11).

“The private sector is an important avenue for efforts aimed at increasing women’s economic empowerment. The 2001 Gender Strategy acknowledges the importance of the private sector as an engine of economic growth and collaboration between the

World Bank and the International Financial Corporation (IFC) as a means to strengthen effectiveness” (2015: 27)

While the quotes detailed above are not immediately problematic there are issues that require close observation. These statements articulate how the World Bank favours the dominance of market players in providing economic opportunities, amongst other services. This however raises an important question: what form of employment is being spoken of? Within the text there is a proclivity towards private sector employment as a means of promoting gender equality. Noting that employment as a mechanism of poverty alleviation is important, the strategy nonetheless fails to acknowledge the need for a supportive regulatory framework that relates to various sectors- particularly those deemed ‘low-skill’ or “low-productivity activities” (2015: 17). The relevance of this occupational category to the study is that women, specifically from working class backgrounds, are more likely to be employed within this sector e.g. care work. The importance of the private sector is clearly detailed below.

“Partnerships with the private sector are critical to advancing economic opportunities for women and including men in supporting gender equality in the workplace. One such partnership led by the IFC is SheWorks, a global private sector partnership to improve employment opportunities and working conditions for more than 360,000 women by 2016 through knowledge sharing and best practices. [...] [they] have pledged to implement a minimum of three measures to support women in the workplace: flexible work, effective anti-sexual harassment mechanism, and programs to accelerate women in leadership.” (2015: 43)

These three measures – flexible work, anti-sexual harassment, and programs that promote women leadership – have intrinsic value and are pertinent to the improvement of women’s experience in the workplace – specifically policies focused on anti- sexual harassment and the promotion of women in leadership positions. However, how flexible work is related to overall working conditions requires examination. While, flexible work may support women in their capacity as care providers, it may simultaneously be used by employers to reduce wage-pressures and labour costs, prevent effective collective bargaining, and limit workers security under a regulatory body that is typically provided to full-time employees. This will

directly lead to their experience of precarity and thus poor health outcomes (Tremblay 2009). Consequently, it may alternatively be suggested that flexible work will intensify women's experience of precarity in the workplace and thus their general impoverishment. The likelihood that women may experience pervasive income insecurity may be correlated to the private sector's failure to commit to supportive labour regulations. Labour regulations would provide security for all women through wage stability (including set wages, hours of work, overtime pay, paid vacation leave) and other supportive mechanisms including, but not limited to, termination of severance pay, and rights to unpaid family, pregnancy and parental leave. While the above list is by no means exhaustive it does illuminate the limitations of the World Bank's proposed strategies, as the document does not address labour regulation as a means of improving working conditions.

In relation to the promotion of "good" and high "quality" employment the strategies proposed focus on women's access to high earning skilled employment (private sector) and the promotion of entrepreneurialism through the availability of finance and credit (detailed further below). This is revealed within the quote detailed below.

"[...] gender inequality in the world of work has been stubbornly persistent across multiple dimensions. Women are more likely than men to engage in low-productivity activities, be unpaid family workers, work in informal employment, and transition more frequently between informal employment and being out of the labour force. [...] Large differences persist between the type of work than men and women do. In wage employment, men tend to dominate manufacturing, construction, and transport whereas women are concentrated in health, social work, education, and communication services. Differences in education and training, a preference for job security, and the need for flexible working hours help explain this segregation, alongside gender stereotypes." (2015: 17)

The World Bank must be credited for their commitment to gender equality through the promotion of women's access to higher paying occupations and the deconstruction of restrictive gendered norms. However, the belief that this shall singularly reduce gender inequality and improve the material circumstances of *all* women is misguided. This quote

reflects how the World Bank's strategies are weak given their failure to address the need for comprehensive labour regulations. These labour regulations are of particular importance for those sectors classified as "low-productivity activities" within which women often work. Thus, given that women from working class and marginalized communities generally work in 'low-productivity activities' it may be argued that the failure to address labour regulations will only exacerbate social, gender, and health inequities.

The point above clearly reveals the intersection of both gender and class as determining one's experience in the labour market. This is further revealed when the World Bank outlines the importance of care in promoting the access of women into high paid occupations. The document states:

"Evidence is building on the importance of the provision of quality, affordable child care for children younger than age three, early child education for children between three and five years old, and full day school for the first grades of primary school."  
(2015: 44)

A key barrier to women's access to high earning positions, or paid work generally, is the pervasion of societal norms that leave them caring for vulnerable populations - 'work' that is typically informal and unpaid. The familialization of caring practices is further accentuated by the "[...] low quality of care services for children, the sick, and the elderly dependents [...]" (2015: 44) within client countries. While this extract emphasises the importance of high quality and affordable care for the promotion of market access, a point not denied here, the World Bank fails to address how women working within "low-productivity [care] activities" will provide high quality care. If care is relational (Benoit and Hallgrímsdóttir 2011) then failing to address labour regulations and the needs of care providers will not only fail to address gender inequalities but will simultaneously lead to poor care practices. Thus, if the World Bank truly wished to tackle the issue of pervasive gender inequality and the impoverishment of women globally, then it would need to promote both market access and

progressive labour regulation within these sectors, thus addressing the needs of women from differing classes. Instead, the World Bank suggests that “the private sector can invest in care services for better business outcomes and promote approaches that help workers of both sexes balance their work and family responsibility” (2015: 44).

The implications of a strategy that focuses on the promotion of privatization and fails to regulate markets requires analytical consideration. The inclusion of women into paid work is a key mechanism by which to reduce gender inequality and promote health equity. However, favouring the private sector to provide these may be problematic. Moreover, the private sector’s commitment to the development of ‘flexible work’ may have specific implications for job security and the proclivity of women to experience precarity. The failure to acknowledge the necessity of effective labour regulations – both general and those that address gender specific issues – reduces the capacity of these strategies to promote gender equality in actuality. The importance of this critique is further illuminated when one examines the World Bank’s solutions to poverty alleviation, specifically the access of women into high earning occupations. While the World Bank argues that the promotion of women into high earning occupations promotes gender equality a political economy position provides an alternative insight. Utilizing this framework, one may argue that it entrenches a exploitative system whereby women’s equal footing with men leads to the further impoverishment of millions of women who stay in low-income occupations. Furthermore, this strategic focus fails to acknowledge the intersection between gender and class. The absence of market regulations, specifically within ‘low-skill’ sectors e.g. care work, will lead to the further impoverishment of most women and will serve to reinforce social inequalities and health inequity.

#### 4.2.2 The Gendering of Financialization

The World Bank document, “World Bank Group Gender Strategy: Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction, and Inclusive Growth”, reinforces and rearticulates the World Bank’s macroeconomic imperatives of market liberalization and privatization. Like its promotion of private enterprise, the second dimension relates to financialization. The World Bank argues that due to the “[...] changing institutional and financial landscape” (2014:10) the integration of global financial markets is fundamental. The apparent importance of financial capital – both as an entity and in terms of access to it – in the promotion of gender equality is clearly articulated throughout the World Bank’s strategy. Emphasising the importance of “[...] boost[ing] access to bundled products from insurance, credit, and saving providers” (2015: 40) for entrepreneurs. Within this quotation there is a clear emphasis on women’s access to credit lines. The importance of financialization and the ability of individuals to access such ‘bundled products’ is argued in relation to female entrepreneurship and the barriers that inhibit their access and control over assets.

“Women entrepreneurs often have more restricted access to finance and sometimes borrow at less favourable terms than men, such as higher interest rates and shorter time frames. Given the relative size and structure of women-owned SMEs [small and medium-sized enterprises], they are often excluded or marginalized from the credit infrastructure of their country, further inhibiting their ability to borrow or even enter the market.” (2015: 47)

The World Bank suggests that in order to overcome these barriers to financial inclusivity specific strategies can, and currently are, be taken by International Financial Institutions. This is articulated within their comments on the ‘Framework for Action’ strategy:

“Through its Framework for Action to achieve the Universal Financial Access goal for working-age adults by 2020, the World Bank group will target the closure of this gap as part of its commitment to universal financial inclusion. The Framework for Action seeks to scale up support to financial access and inclusion in 25 priority countries where 73 percent of all financially excluded people live, and catalyse significant new private sector investment and innovation.” (2015: 53).

Yet, this process, financialization, is not limited to potential entrepreneurs but is seen as fundamental for all women no matter what class she is positioned. Highlighting the necessity of ubiquitous financialization, it is clear that the World Bank is focused on promoting entrepreneurialism through women's integration into the global financial market. This process is not limited to entrepreneurs but is extended, albeit in a limited manner, to those on social assistance. This process also illuminates the World Bank's emphasis on integrating both commercial and private banking structures. While not inherently problematic, the context of financialization is of critical importance. As eluded to by the World Bank, the strategy was developed in response to, a period of "[...] changing institutional and financial landscape[s]" (2015: 10). What are these changes? The document may be referring to a period of institutional and financial instability from the global financial crisis of 2007/08.

To support entrepreneurs and the SME sector generally within this changing landscape, four issues are emphasised: "developing fairer credit institutions, [...] ensuring access to capital and financial services, [...] increasing access to technology and markets, [and] prompting progressive legal and regulatory framework" (2015: 48-52). While the first three points focus on the promotion of financial tools and services, the latter focuses on regulatory reforms that facilitate financial inclusivity. This latter point is encapsulated within the remark that:

"Regulatory reforms that help women entrepreneurs establish good credit histories can help those who lack property gain access to loans. Credit information bureaus and public credit registries that record transactions that meet certain threshold often prevent smaller female entrepreneurs from building credit histories." (2015: 50).

Further detailing the constraints that inhibit women's access to financial services, the World Bank illuminates the regulatory reforms that are required to enable access:

"Reforms in laws and policies can help women pursue entrepreneurial activities. [...] Secured-transactions regulations determine who is creditworthy and often use land and property as typical forms of collateral. However, inheritance and marriage laws may constrain women's access to these assets [...]. In the short term, reforming secured transactions regimes, allowing for alternative forms of collateral, and creating collateral registries for moveable assets such as livestock, inventory, jewellery, and

other household items would benefit women by enabling them to overcome their lack of titled land and use of assets they have to unlock access to formal credit markets” (2015: 48)

The quote above suggests that in order to stimulate the entrepreneurial activity of women and their general ability to acquire credit, regulatory tools must be manipulated and/or developed. Regulatory reforms that redistribute assets and resources within the household can be inherently emancipatory, subvert gendered conceptions of dependency, and reflect wider patriarchal structures. However, if we situate this within the wider context, the normative overtone of this statement is not an end within itself but is related to the simultaneous promotion of women’s commodification and their injection into the global capitalist apparatus (Kentikelenis et al. 2016).

In light of this, one can see how rather than promoting female independence the World Bank is articulating a method by which to sustain market dominance through the creation of alternative accumulation terrains. Of critical importance here is the distinction between ‘primitive’ and ‘primary’ accumulation. While the former pertains to an initial form of accumulation, as articulated by Marx, the former relates to a method by which to create new modes of accumulation. Harvey’s (2004) ‘accumulation by dispossession’ illuminates that this process is forced and thus fosters a relationship of dependency. This consequently leads to a loss of autonomy and the expansion of global relations of exploitation. Moreover, the World Bank’s failure to promote structural regulations that focus on the curtailment of hazardous banking practices, will put women from working class communities at greater risk. Arguably, if the primary aim of the World Bank’s financial inclusivity strategy was to promote gender equality, it would specify the regulatory tools required to safeguard the most vulnerable – specifically poor women from marginalized communities – from speculative banking practices. It does not. Alternatively, the universal financial framework promotes the unencumbered access of women into a global market prone to systemic and cyclical crises, a

process that is further exacerbated by the lack of appropriate regulations. Thus, what one sees is the World Bank promoting deregulation to enable the circulation of capital. Given the consequential implications of the 2007/ 08 financial crisis, specifically in relation to the intensification of social inequalities, can the promotion of an unregulated private and financial sector be deemed unproblematic?

#### *4.3 Government as an ‘Enabling Agent’: Public and Private Partnerships (P3s), Human Endowment, and Welfare Provisioning*

Within this document the state and public sector are presented as being inherently supportive to the private sector, they are presented as ‘enabling agents’. The capacity of the state and public sector to support the private sector is through their ability to develop a specific regulatory field; their adoption of unproductive (or unprofitable) activities- these activities include the construction of infrastructure and the preparation of individuals for the marketplace; and finally their promotion of private enterprise. This point is particularly illuminated within the World Bank’s conceptualization and promotion of public-private-partnerships (P3s). Of critical importance is the role that each sector is destined to play in enabling gender equality and poverty alleviation. The strategic utility of these partnerships and the role of each party is revealed in the statement below.

“An area that is emerging as critical for both a more strategic focus and achieving results is partnership between the public and private sectors to support a coordinated approach to economic opportunities. Governments can work with the private sector to ensure that laws, policies, and regulatory frameworks that mandate certain policies (for example, parental leave) do not have unintended consequences. At the same time, the experience of the private sector in creating jobs, offering transport, or providing child-care services can provide lessons on service delivery. The Bank can leverage its convening power to help connect seemingly sparse efforts by governments and the private sector to tackle these constraints.” (2015: 29).

This quote highlights the roles that the World Bank deems appropriate for both the private and public sectors - the former as the primary employer and the latter as a supporting agent.

The idea that client governments will “mandate [certain] laws, polices, and regulations [to prevent] unintended consequences” (2015:29) is illuminating. The ambiguity of this statement, particularly in regards to the prevention of ‘unintended consequences’ requires the historical examination of what is deemed important to developmental agencies, specifically the World Bank, and the contradictions that exist between the aims and strategies proposed. The World Bank’s report, ‘World Development Report: Attacking Poverty’, (World Bank 2001) reflects these contradictions that exist between the stated aims and strategies.

Wolfensohn, the ninth president of the World Bank Group, states that the Bank “recognize[s] the need for much more emphasis on laying the institutional and social foundation for the development process and on managing vulnerability and encouraging participation to ensure inclusive growth” (2000: VI). Yet a focus on ‘inclusive growth’ did not mean the abandonment of monetarist macroeconomics: inflationary stability through public sector retraction, privatization, and market liberalization. Consequently, it may be posited that the ‘supportive role’, which the state apparatus plays within these ‘socially inclusive’ programs, is not distinct from its role in previous Washington Consensus strategies. It may be argued that the role of client governments and the public sector generally is to prevent potential obstacles to private sector proliferation and profit-making.

The role of recipient states and the public sector, specifically in relation to the adoption of unprofitable activities, is further detailed in the excerpt below.

“The availability and design of infrastructure, and the services it provides, are key to accessing jobs and economic opportunities- as well as being a potential source of jobs. Infrastructure expansion and service provision can play a role in mitigating important constraints on women’s time and physical mobility. Investments in electricity, water, roads, ICT, and transportation can free up time that women need for home production; paid employment; entrepreneurship; and access to education, health, and other services.” (2015: 42)

The idea that the design and construction of infrastructure is, firstly, a way of supporting the private sector and, secondly, a source of income, is telling. Moreover, this statement suggests

that the state and public sector shall be responsible for infrastructure and though their provisioning, shall enable workers to access economic opportunities located within the private sector. This point reflects the role of the public sector to reduce the implications of ‘demand side constraints’ and their tendency to prevent individuals from accessing the marketplace. While an emphasis on private sector involvement in the provisioning of services pervades this document, as highlighted in previous sections, it is conspicuously absent within this segment of the report. Thus, the World Bank is suggesting that unproductive or unprofitable tasks e.g. infrastructure should be undertaken by the state and not by the private sector. This consequently reinforces the belief that the public and state sector is subordinate to the market and is there to support the accumulation process in whatever capacity is required.

The marginalization of the state and public sector within the economy and its subsequent reconceptualization as an ‘enabling agent’ has various manifestations. Another example of this process, not distinct from those mentioned above, relates to social assistance and welfare arrangements. Within the “improving human endowment” (2015: 31-41) section it is clear that the key focus is developing individuals for the marketplace. A strategic focus on human endowment is not new to development strategies from the Washington Consensus period and has been related to neoliberal welfare arrangements. Within the human endowment section three points are addressed: health, education, and social protection. Throughout all three sections there is a focus on ‘supply’ and ‘demand’ barriers and the ways in which these can be overcome; clearly articulating the importance of market principles in the World Bank’s strategy. This is revealed in the discussion on ways to promote labour supply. It is stated that:

“On the Labour supply side, programs supported by the Bank Group and development partners are adopting a mix of counselling and life-skills training to try to change behaviours and instil confidence, business training, vocational training, and follow-up support.” (2015: 35)

Additionally, commenting on the constraints to women's participation in the labour force, and the failure of research to measure this, it is stated that:

“[...] in contrast to education and health, and despite ongoing research and impact evaluations, rigorous evidence is limited on what works in general to promote access to jobs; and on the relative emphasis between supply- or demand- side constraints; best fit of specific interventions to specific contexts; and cost-effectiveness, More work is needed to address regulatory and policy distortions than constrain labor demand and inhibit job creation, especially in the formal sector and for young men and women of different educational backgrounds. Few supply-side interventions report costs, and many of those that do are expensive.” (2015: 35).

These quotes clearly illuminate the importance to which the World Bank and its partners give to the development and implementation of programs that focus on preparing individuals for the workplace, specifically through personalized programs. Furthermore, the World Bank expresses a distinct hostility towards government intervention that it views as “creating distortions which constrain labor demand and inhibit job creation” (2015: 35). This extract presents another example of the World Bank's emphasis on marketplace deregulation. While it may be argued that this ‘deregulation’ refers to the systematic deconstruction of gendered norms, it may similarly be related to mandates that prioritize wealth redistribution (taxation), wage security, collective agreements etc. Consequently, it may be suggested that what is being discursively advocated by the World Bank is a state/ public sector that is focused on getting people to an unfettered market.

Moreover, of importance within the ‘human endowment’ section is the role that states are articulated as having in providing social security and welfare support. As posited by the World Bank “Social protection and social safety nets (SSNs) play a critical role in addressing and preventing poverty and vulnerability, sustaining income, and fostering economic inclusion.” (2015:39). With social assistance programs, one is able to promote economic inclusivity. The role of SSNs to develop and sustain ‘human endowment’ is further articulated within this quote:

“During crises, social safety nets can help mitigate the gendered effects of harmful coping practices such as girls’ school dropout and female reduced food intake, which have long-term consequences for their human capital.” (2015: 39)

The report then articulates the World Bank’s role:

“The WBG [world bank group] will continue to support client countries in expanding SSNs for the world’s poorest women and men. Ensuring that sound gender analysis feeds into the design of by providing information about different vulnerabilities and risk-management strategies, as well as opportunities for employment and income generation, will help strengthen the implementation of the related actions for win-win delivery mechanism for both women and SSN-implementation agencies.” (2015: 39)

From these two quotes, it is clear that the World Bank articulates a sophisticated understanding of welfare arrangements and the need for social security services that maintain an individual’s ‘human capital’. Furthermore, the quotes highlight the complex issues that affect women. Yet, through a critical examination one can see particular issues that need further explication. For instance, an emphasis on “risk-management [and] crisis [aversion programs for the] world’s poorest women and men” (2015: 39) means the construction of policies that have specific effects on social inequality. These policies tend to generate hostility and stigma towards those receiving assistance because with the dominance of an individual-behaviour health narrative, recipients are seen as blame worthy (Tjepkema, Wilkins, and Long 2013). It may be argued that this SSN is limited to the extreme poor and only during periods of crisis. Moreover, these SSN are not only restricted in regards to who they cover but also what they aim to promote. This is clearly reflected in the below quote.

“A growing number of SSN programs provide economic and social opportunities for females through investment in income-generating activities, redistribution of paid and unpaid work, and participation in social networks. Innovative program design and coordination with other sector ministries, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector can help enhance access to these economic and social opportunities.” (2015: 39)

Within this quote the World Bank is advocating a welfare system that is focused on getting women into work by managing their ‘human endowment’ or ‘human capital’. While this is not an inherently negative thing, the promotion of workfare policies has been associated with the exaggeration of social inequalities. This is because workfare policies tend to push welfare

recipients into poorly paid jobs that are not regulated and are thus not conducive to good health (Jessop 1994).

Additionally, a critique can be made in regard to whom the World Bank perceives the provider as being. Again, as with the rest of the report, the World Bank advocates and emphasises the importance of the private sector in SSNs. This is clearly articulated within the two quotations detailed below.

“Partnerships with the private sector can enable social protection systems to provide a more integrated continuum of services from disaster risk management, to social assistance, to credit and insurance. For example, they can help individuals and households manage the risks brought about by disasters and climate change; help make social assistance more productive and inclusive in FCS context; and boost access to bundled products from insurance, credit, and saving providers.” (2015: 40)

“[...] the experience of the private sector in creating jobs, offering transport, or providing child-care services can provide lessons on service delivery.” (2015: 29)

Thus, one can see that there is an emphasis on utilizing the private sector in the organization and/or provisioning of services and the adoption of delivery models associated with privatization. As commented on in the previous literature review these have been known to further accelerate and intensify social inequalities, specifically for those deemed as vulnerable: poor women from marginalized communities. Arguably, the conceptual understanding of social security that the World Bank is advocating, may be described as a workfare liberal welfare state - known for the promotion of market values in guiding and structuring social arrangements e.g. the adoption of managerial social assistance programs. Consequently, there is concerted effort within the World Bank’s report to limit the role of the public apparatus by restricting the state to the role of ‘market enabler’. This role includes: the construction of a regulatory apparatus that supports capital; the adoption of unproductive and unprofitable enterprises such as infrastructure investment and the cultivation of individuals

prepared for the market; and finally, their active promotion of private agents as organizing and providing traditionally state sponsored services.

#### *4.4 Depoliticized Citizenship: A Re-articulation of Women's Political*

##### *Engagement*

There is a tendency of the World Bank to reduce the influential involvement of the state and its political apparatus to an 'enabling agent'. This tendency is similarly linked to the reduced role which the individual, specifically women, are perceived as having. The last theme which shall be examined within this section relates to the promotion of 'depoliticized citizenship'.

Within the report, there is an observable promotion of women's engagement in localized civil society actions and not nationally organized political representations. This, one may argue, is a direct attempt to depoliticize engagement with the political process - the key mechanism known to redistribute power within society, reduce social inequalities, and minimise the "diseases of circumstance" (Feldberg and Vipond 2006: 235) associated with poverty and deprivation. The promotion of localized engagement – implementation of programs on a community based scale – is clearly articulated within the extract detailed below.

“Thus far the Bank has leveraged its capacity to support women's roles in decision making at the local level unevenly across countries. CDD [community driven development programs] projects and Bank-supported consultations generally involve women participants and try to ensure that they have a significant role in governance of CDD projects. However, in some countries, entrenched social norms circumscribing women's roles in the public sphere negatively affect women's capacity to effectively participate in local decision making and infrastructure and service-delivery management bodies. Yet research shows the benefits of active participation by women.” (2015: 59)

Community Driven Development Programs, or CDDs, are promoted by the World Bank as the principle tools by which to involve women within recipient countries. The importance of these inclusive development programs is revealed within the World Bank's statement:

“The World Bank Group will continue to support the collection of evidence about legal gender differences-building the base for changing adverse masculinity norms

and promoting positive behaviours-and the effective representation, participation, and decision of women in local service delivery governance structures, notably water, energy, schools, health centre management committees, and local development committees” (2015: 9-10)

The document’s advocacy of including women in decision-making governance structures through direct representation and participation is necessary for gender equality and must be supported. However, the structural exclusion of women within the formalized political process cannot. These exclusionary practices lead to masculinized interventions that fail to address female specific needs, such as the need to shift care responsibilities from the family to the state. Moreover, they further exacerbate and exaggerate gendered norms that limit the ability of women to choose, including women’s ability to choose not to care, and increase the dependency of women on the family structure - a process that reflects a tendency towards familialism. Lastly, the form of representation and the limitations put on female participation can reinforce these issues.

The question must be asked: what does the World Bank consider a “significant role in governance” for women (2015: 59)? The promotion of community-centred programs by the World Bank illuminates the limited role of women in development programs. While, the participation of women within the implementation of programs is positive, it fails to acknowledge the need for female influence within the entire political process- particularly in parliament where the development of policy occurs. The limiting of female influence to “local service **delivery** governance structures” (*my emphasis* 2015: 9) reflects this failure. Thus, rather than this becoming a progressive mechanism by which to promote female voices and thus their access to resources, it may alternatively be articulated as a method by which to limit women’s ability to actualize *effective power*. Moreover, this may similarly be articulated as a means of suppressing potential political mobilization and unrest through the provisioning of *limited* material concessions (see Jessop 1990).

There is an observable contradiction between the strategy's key aim - the deconstructing of gendered conceptions of normality – and the community programs that the World Bank advocates so as to increase female participation. The document contains a normative focus on deconstructing oppressive norms, which limit women's opportunities. However, engaging women in “[...] water, energy, schools, health centre management committees, and local development committees” (2015: 9) only reinforces these gendered constructions. The quotation clearly reflects a conception of women as being inherently caring; an issue which consequently limits them to these roles - typically underpaid and precarious. This contradiction illuminates the problematic nature of the document under examination and the need for critical engagement. Therefore, it may be argued that the promotion of ‘depoliticized citizenship’ and the limiting of female's participation to the delivery of community programs is of issue. Moreover, the form of political engagement advocated fails to address power discrepancies, which are intimately related to the reduction of social inequalities. As well, the contradictions that exist within the document – particularly between the proposed aims and alleviatory strategies – bring to light the need to be sceptical of the World Bank and their developmental practices.

## Chapter 5- Discussion

The main findings that emerged out of this analysis relate to the promotion of privatization (both private enterprise and financialization) and deregulation; the articulation of the state as an ‘enabling agent’; and the limiting of women’s political engagement so that they become ‘depoliticized citizens’. These reflect a proclivity towards the continuation of a neoliberal economic agenda (Prügl 2017). Given that neoliberal economic policy is directly related to the expansion of social inequalities, which precipitate the experience of poor health outcomes (Coburn 2001, 2004; Maio 2010; Raphael 2009), the succeeding discussion will focus on the health consequences of neoliberalism. This shall be done through the utilization of appropriate literature from the following disciplines: political economy, feminist political economy, and the political economy of health.

### *5.1 Economic Policy, Social Inequalities, and the Experience of Health*

The promotion of privatization and deregulation within the World Bank’s report reflects an inherent inclination towards neoliberal economics, something not new to this International Financial Institution (Stiglitz 2002). Neoliberal economics and neoliberalism generally, has been associated with the skewed distribution of income and the persistence of health differences between higher- and lower-income earners. This is due to the favouring of capital over labour and the subsequent impoverishment of the former (Coburn 2001). Thus, we can see a direct relationship between one’s class position and one’s health experiences (Maio 2010). However, this is not limited to one’s class position alone but is similarly influenced by an individual’s gender and race, amongst other identifiers (Bambra 2004; Pederson and Raphael 2006; Raphael 2016). Thus, utilizing Smith’s (1990b) conceptualization of ruling relations, it is clear that the experience of good or poor health reflects specific power relations that favour some people over others. In order to understand the effects of neoliberal

privatization on women's experience of health equity, one must engage with empirical findings and observations associated with both feminist political economy and political economy of health literature. Of critical importance here are the potential implications of women's participation in the private marketplace. Since women are disproportionately located within the healthcare sector, as noted by the World Bank (2015), attention shall be given here. The access of women into the marketplace and the replacement of unpaid reproductive labour with paid employment is not inherently negative (Vogel 2014 [1983]). Yet, the question must be asked: during a period of neoliberalism under what conditions are these newly proletarianized women working?

### 5.1.1 Neoliberal Economics: Free Market Capitalism and the Failure to Address Health Equity

The dichotomy proposed within neoliberal economics perceives poverty as a product of market 'exclusion' and thus posits that to promote economic prosperity and social equality market 'inclusion' is required. Consequently, societal and individual wellbeing and health are seen as a direct result of one's inclusion in a capitalist market (Selwyn 2014). This 'exclusion vs. inclusion' model is not restricted to economic policy and theorization - particularly those associated with development strategies and agencies - but has permeated all facets of society, thus giving it social legitimacy. If one accepted this model then it may be assumed that market access would lead to a direct reduction in inequalities related to gender, class, and race. However, this model fails to acknowledge the differing types of capitalism and the conditions they produce. In this regard, Coburn (2004) suggests that neoliberalism undermines the health of its population by promoting an economic system that further entrenches inequalities related to income. Moreover, neoliberal expansionism effects health equity through its promotion of deregulation, liberalization, and the transnationalization of

healthcare services – a phenomenon which can similarly be observed in care services (Navarro 1999; Hochschild 2000; Hochschild and Ehrenreich 2003; Meyer 2000). Countries that are characteristically neoliberal have seen noticeable changes within employment relations - specifically due to the promotion of privatization and the associated managerial practices, workplace deregulations, and deunionization. All of which have been associated with the intensification of social inequality and health inequity (Navarro 2002).

McDonough (2001) provides an insightful examination into the forms of work that characterizes contemporary (market orientated) societies. Utilizing the work of Karasek (1979) she makes a distinction between *active, passive, high-strain, or low-strain jobs* (2001: 199). She states that those individuals working under conditions of low control and high demand experience earlier mortality and higher cardiovascular morbidity, higher levels of depression, sickness and thus absenteeism, and chronic pains associated within musculoskeletal pain (Karasek et al. 1988). This form of work has been associated with a number of environments; however, it has become synonymous with the care environment - an environment which is exceedingly gendered (Armstrong et al. 2001).

Tnijn (2000) has reiterated this point and provided a specific examination of marketization and its implications for care practices and environments. Utilizing the typology initially developed by Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999), Tnijn examines the care practices and workplace relations associated with countries defined as 'liberal' (market driven health systems). Tnijn posited that due to changes within wider economic relations and the mode of service allocation (ascendency of the tender process), liberal countries tend to adopt Taylorist managerial models. Taylorist management derives from the engineer Fredrick W. Taylor (1856-1915). Within this managerial model Taylor advocated efficiency through the compartmentalization of labour and the establishment of strict managerial control within the workplace, summarized within his text 'The Principles of Scientific Management' (2014

[1911]). Through the development and implementation of “management science” (Armstrong 2001: 127), Taylor argued that this would lead to greater labour productivity and thus greater output. However, Braverman (1999 [1974]) in his critique of labour arrangements under capitalism, illuminates the destructive and alienating capacity of this form of management. Braverman’s ‘degradation thesis’ emphasises that the demeaning nature of this form of organization leads to the estrangement of labour and, ironically, unproductivity.

The implementation of managerial techniques that emphasises efficiency, specifically in occupations categorised as “low-productivity activities” e.g. care, have potential repercussions. Armstrong and Armstrong (2010; see also Armstrong, Armstrong and Coburn 2001; Armstrong and Braedley 2013) provide a robust explication of these repercussions. Through a critical examination into the managerial schemes implemented within the Canadian healthcare system e.g. total quality management (TQM) and continuous quality improvement (CQI), the authors detail the destructive potential that these practices have on the care provider / care recipient relationship. Not only do these tools fail to measure the effectiveness of a given organizational strategy, but they lead to the intensification of work through their promotion of ‘down-sizing’. Due to the relational character of care work (Benoit and Hallgrímsdóttir 2011) intensification directly leads to poor care practices. Thus, it may be argued that the promotion of privatization and the associated managerial models can lead to (1) a reduction in jobs within this sector, (2) an increased proclivity of women to be working in poor conditions, and (3) bad care practices which effect both the care provider and care recipient.

Alongside issues of workplace arrangement and structure, the legal framework within which women work is of critical importance to understanding their experience of inequality during a period of neoliberalism. While privatization is directly related to women’s experience of social inequality, due to low wages (Cohen and Cohen 2006), the wider legal context in

which these wages are produced is key. Legal regulations which enable unproductive agents to become productive e.g. access to markets, are fundamental to promoting gender equality. Yet, while legal regulations may be seen as enabling equality in opportunity and income, the injection of women into unregulated markets is highly problematic. Charlesworth (2010) highlights that while having paid employment is important to reducing inequalities, issues of employment standards and rights to unionization etc. are just as significant. The document's failure to address workplace and labour regulation highlights the World Bank's inability to comprehensively address gendered inequalities and thus health inequity.

Neoliberalism is associated with a policy environment that emphasises workplace deunionization and deregulation. Each of these have specific implications for social inequalities and thus require explication. Unionization is key to the reduction of workplace-based exploitation and inequality (Bennett and Kaufman 2007). However, the promotion of privatization has been noted to coincide with declines in union participation (Jones 2011). Card, Lemieux, and Riddell (2004) in their comparative examination into unionization and wage inequality within Canada, the UK, and the USA have illuminated the consequential implications of deunionization on wage equality- the rise of the first leads to the direct reduction in the latter. This point has been reiterated by Raphael (2009a), who notes that one can trace an observable relationship between declining unionization and increased rates of social inequalities. Consequently, one may argue that the deregulation of private markets and thus the promotion of deunionization will directly lead to increased social inequalities and thus poor health outcomes amongst women.

Deregulation similarly applies to financial markets and the amalgamation of both private and commercial banks ('small banks' and 'big banks'). Navarro and Muntaner (2014) in their detailed account of the 2007/08 financial crisis explicate the potential impacts of this process, and the attempts to overcome this structural flaw, on both social inequality and health

inequity- as the latter is seen as deriving from the former. Navarro and Muntaner suggest that the financial crisis led to the further impoverishment of working class and marginalized communities - particularly Black and Latin women from disadvantaged areas throughout Europe and the USA (Roberts 2016). This was not singularly due to poor banking practices but was related to the integration of both banking enterprises – big and small banks – and various global capitalist societies. Moreover, the subsequent focus on austerity and fiscal constraint further exacerbated these issues (Schrecker and Bambra 2015). The injection of privatized and unregulated markets into a newly established capitalist society can, and will, be detrimental to both social and gender equality (Roberts 2017).

Navarro (1999) further illuminates the role of class distinction in understanding neoliberal expansionism, the strategies and practices proposed by development agencies, and the health consequences of these strategies. Utilizing Navarro's work, it may be posited that the document under investigation contributes towards the consolidation of class differences within recipient countries and their experience of impoverishment. The regulatory framework proposed by the World Bank may be seen as having specific class effects. While the failure to acknowledge the need to introduce labour laws for "low productivity activities" (2015:17) will undoubtedly lead to the impoverishment of workers, the promotion of financial services to small businesses may provide a level of choice and prosperity for middle to upper class individuals. Thus, exaggerating existing class-based inequalities. The resulting inequalities reveal a more nuanced picture of global accumulation, the division between a global labour force, its implications for social equality, and the role of development agencies within this process. Consequently, the World Bank's proposed methods of 'equal' development will likely exacerbate social and gender inequalities.

The exaggeration of social inequalities will directly lead to the further entrenchment of health inequity. While the promotion of women's inclusion into paid employment may be seen as

facilitating women's economic independence and thus their experience of improved health, this alone will not suffice (Daly 2015). The observable absence of any substantive regulatory framework or institutionalized collective bargaining e.g. unionization, for occupations deemed "low-productivity levels" will continue their low economic status. Moreover, the neoliberalization of work organization and managerial practices, disproportionately experienced by these women, will further intensify their experience of poor health. Thus, in an environment characterized by neoliberal reforms – privatization and deregulation – women from working class backgrounds are likely to see a deterioration in their health trajectories due to low earnings and their interaction with a damaging work environment. If the World Bank was genuinely concerned with enabling fair market access and income equality, it would promote collective bargaining, unionization, and a working environment conducive with good health- because of the tangible effects this has on both social and health equity (Charlesworth 2010; Raphael 2009b). Yet it does not. Consequently, not only do the World Bank's strategies consolidate social inequalities but they simultaneously perpetuate health inequity.

## *5.2 Politics in a Period of Neoliberalism: enabling agents and depoliticized citizens*

The other two themes that emerged relate to the role of both the political apparatus and individual citizen. The World Bank promotes a reduced role of both the state and citizen, turning the former into an enabling agent and the latter into a depoliticized citizen. Thus, the question must be asked: what does this mean for women and health equity?

If we are to accept the thesis put forward by Lynch (2000) that social inequalities are politically produced and mediated, then governments are key to our understanding of women's experiences of health inequity. Furthering Lynch's point, Coburn (2001) posits that nation-states that express an inclination towards neoliberalism exacerbate health inequity by undermining welfare structures and provisions. According to Coburn, neoliberalism is associated with a declining welfare state. While this is useful, it might be more helpful to articulate neoliberalism as being associated with a specific form of welfare regime rather than a declining one. Within their document the World Bank articulates a restricted welfare system that focuses on the development of human endowment, reflecting key tenets of a 'workfare' liberal welfare state (Esping-Andersen 1999, 1990; Jessop 1994). Thus, in order to understand the way in which an institutionalized neoliberalism effects health equity one must examine the implications of a welfare system that focuses on 'selective relief' and not 'comprehensive welfarism' (Navarro 2002).

The third theme that emerged, closely related to the second, reflects an orientation towards 'depoliticized citizenship'. Within the World Bank's document there is a clear focus on promoting the voice of women, however this is restricted to community-level participation rather than centralized government decision-making. As political engagement is key to the distribution of power and thus the reduction in both income inequality and health inequity

(Raphael and Curry-Stevens 2009), then what are the consequences of reduced political engagement? Within the following section both issues will be addressed; firstly, looking at the changing role of the state in welfare provisioning and then examining the health consequences of depoliticized citizenship.

### 5.2.1 Enabling Agents: The State and Welfare Provisions

The World Bank's conceptualization of SSNs clearly reflects the changing role of the state as an '*enabling agent*'. Enabling agent here refers to the state's role in promoting and facilitating capital accumulation. While the World Bank advocates supporting the continued development and implementation of SSNs, it expresses an explicit interest in (1) promoting private interests in welfare provisioning; (2) limiting its provisions to at risk populations or individuals in crisis; and (3) implementing schemes that prepare individuals for the marketplace e.g. workfare. These have been closely linked to liberal welfare state structures and the undermining of both social and health equity.

According to Esping-Andersen (1990), there are three welfare regimes that are categorised by their capacity to decommodify citizens; here decommodification being "the extent to which individuals and families can maintain a normal and socially acceptable standard of living regardless of their market performance" (Esping-Andersen 1987:86). Socio democratic regimes (e.g. Sweden and Denmark) are the most likely to promote decommodification while liberal welfare regimes (e.g. Canada, UK, and USA) are the least likely. Moreover, conservative welfare regimes (e.g. Germany and Italy) are found between these two poles and rely upon the family to provide social services e.g. care work. By utilizing this welfare regime typology, one can identify some structural factors that can produce deleterious health consequences (Raphael 2012).

While Esping-Andersen's typology is useful, it has been critiqued for being gender blind (Daly 1994; Hobson 1994; Lewis 1992). Accordingly, Bambra (2004:203) suggests measuring the gendered contours of a welfare state by its propensity towards defamilisation: "the extent to which the welfare state undermines women's dependency on the family and facilitates women's economic independence". Within this model a country's defamilisation score is based on four indicators: (1) relative female labour participation rate; (2) maternity leave compensation; (3) compensated maternity leave duration; (4) average female wage. While there were minor differences between the two models, the legitimacy of Esping-Andersen's regime typology is upheld. Moreover, given the World Bank's failure to address issues of maternity leave compensation and recommend a regulatory framework that increases women's average wage e.g. unionization, it may be argued that the World Bank indorses a liberal welfare state.

Given that the World Bank is promoting a liberal welfare state model, one must examine its potential ramifications. Government's support of citizens through public spending can measure the extent of a welfare state (Raphael 2012). The financing of public spending occurs through the acquisition of revenues (taxation and fees) and their subsequent distribution in the form of universal or targeted benefits. Liberal welfare structures produce health differences between classes through their failure to implement progressive taxation policies and income distributive mechanisms (Navarro and Muntaner 2004; Muntaner and Lynch 1999). A key example of this is Canada. Between 1990 and 2005 the declining tax burden of the top 1 percent of the population was directly correlated to an increased tax burden of the bottom 10 percent (Raphael 2012:142). This was compounded by a political discourse of individualism that promoted individual responsibility for health; the idea that health is a product of a person's behaviours and lifestyle choices (Hofrichter 2003). The failure to implement progressive taxation and public transfers led to an increase in social

inequality throughout this period (Raphael 2012). Due to the relationship between income and health, this exaggeration of social inequality directly led to increases in health inequity. It is important to note that the World Bank fails to acknowledge the role of progressive taxation and distribution within the document. Thus, it may be suggested that the World Bank's advocacy of a liberal welfare state will further contribute towards working class women's experience of poor health.

Alongside issues of reduced taxation and the elimination of progressive distributive mechanisms, liberal welfare arrangements advocate utilizing private-sector enterprise in the provisioning of services, something that is explicitly promoted by the World Bank. While the implications of privatization have been detailed above – specifically efficiency managerial techniques, deunionization, and market deregulation – there are particular aspects of welfare privatization that require investigation. In her critical examination into development policies that focus on “growth with equity” (2000: 229), Vergara (2000) highlights the implications of free-market reforms on social inequality in Chile. Vergara states that the privatization of welfare structures undermines the capacity of the state and state policy to act as a tool of redistribution. Furthermore, the injection of market principles and incentives within welfare arrangements creates a dual system whereby one's ability to access services depends on their earning capacity. This privatization leads to the further underfunding and erosion of state sponsored systems which are subsequently labelled inefficient and ineffective. Since women disproportionately work within and use healthcare services (Perrons et al. 2007), which in welfare states tend to be publicly funded services, this could lead directly to their experience of precarious working environments. This is particularly the case when deunionization occurs alongside the underfunding of public healthcare. This experience will be particularly heightened for working class women and thus will precipitate an increase in both gender and social inequalities.

The adoption of private sector arrangements within the provisioning of SSN services can further entrench various forms of social inequalities – gender, class, health etc. – through the establishment of a two-tier healthcare system (Pollock 2006; Hertzman 2000; Armstrong et al. 2001). Within a two-tier healthcare system class becomes a greater predictor of both mortality and morbidity, compared to those that promote universal access and comprehensive coverage (Lynch et al. 2000), because in a market orientated welfare system the interests and needs of private enterprises (profit) are given precedence (Armstrong et al. 2001). The need to maintain profitability can undermine the ability of the organization to sustain the needs of staff (Armstrong and Braedley 2013). Furthermore, within periods of instability and low profitability, fiscal constraint (austerity) can be enforced on to the system (Kentikelenis et al. 2014). For example, in Greece the demands of the Troika (IMF, World Bank, and the European Central Bank), specifically for fiscal constraint, have limited the ability of individuals to access health and social care services. Consequently, the World Bank's promotion of a liberal welfare state will lead to increased health inequity either indirectly through the exaggeration of income inequalities or through the privatization of healthcare.

### 5.2.2 Depoliticized Citizenship

Within the World Bank's document, the reorientation of political engagement is not limited to the state but similarly relates to changes in the way individuals engage politically. This is exemplified by the rise of the 'depoliticized citizen'. As detailed within the findings this process relates to limiting women's political activity to the community-level while not promoting their inclusion into formalized processes e.g. parliamentary membership or activist groups. Limiting women's political engagement is problematic for the promotion of health equity because of the direct relationship between the two (Raphael 2009a).

The role of formalized political participation in shifting power to marginalized and working-class communities, through the development of leftist institutions, has been noted to significantly reduce income inequalities (Brady 2003). Western and Healy (1999: 233) suggest that the three key mechanisms that promote equality are “unionization, collective bargaining centralization, and labour governments [because they provide] collective control over wage growth”. The establishment of labour governments precipitate the two former mechanisms. A primary dimension of labour orientated governments is that they construct welfare arrangements that promote equality (Kenworthy 1999; Orloff 1996). This consequently highlights the health benefits of an institutionalized social democratic society that focuses on social equality (as noted above). Given the relationship between income and health equity, it may be stated that political participation and the subsequent construction of leftist institutions is key to promoting the health of women generally and those from working class communities specifically.

It is important to emphasize the role that political participation has in establishing these political and policy environments (Schrecker and Bambra 2015). In democratic societies, political institutions are established through (1) pressure from organized labour and (2) voting. Thus, the failure to do either of these will significantly reduce one’s ability to influence the political process. This will lead to one’s interests being ineffectively represented. A key example of this relates to gender equality and democratic participation. While democracy does not directly precipitate gender equality, it is still a fundamental mechanism. Inglehart et al. (2002) posit that the promotion of gender equality derives from both the development of democratic institutions and cultural shifts regarding gender norms. While the World Bank does address gendered norms, they fail to advocate for women in political office. Within the report, women are articulated as means by which programs and strategies –configured under public-private partnerships – are implemented. Not developed.

the CDDs are clear examples of this. While women are presented as having a key role in implementing community programs, the World Bank does not address the importance of women in developing them. Consequently, limiting the role of women to the implementation of community programs and not their development minimizes women's role in formalized political structures e.g. parliament, and their ability to promote their interests.

Limiting the participation of women to community-level politics will intensify gender inequalities (Delgado-Márquez et al. 2014). Moreover, considering that the formalized political participation of marginalized and working-class women can affect income distribution and thus health equity, their absence from this process is troubling. This issue is compounded by the effect of income on political participation. Income levels significantly shape the form of political participation, with those in lower income brackets participating less in formal or conventional political processes e.g. voting (Cicatiello et al. 2015). Thus, this becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby increases in income inequality reduce political participation, which consequently leads to the further entrenchment of unequal distribution. One can see that direct representation in the formalized democratic process is key to promoting health equity for women from working class communities. Alternatively, limiting women's political activity, as the World Bank advocates, will have the opposite effect.

### 5.3 *Primitive Accumulation: Economic Policy, the State, and Women*

As illuminated above, The World Bank's focus on privatization (both the promotion of private enterprise and financialization) and deregulation further entrenches social inequalities and working-class women's experience of poor health trajectories. These are further amplified by the World Bank's advocacy of a reduced state and a depoliticized citizen. If the proposed strategies do not reduce inequalities but in fact perpetuate them, then how may the World Bank's promotion of them be explained? The promotion of market inclusivity within developmental policy has been closely associated with the extension of market principles and capitalist accumulation through 'primitive accumulation' (Selwyn 2014; Brenner 1977, 1986; Wood 1991, 2003). Harvey (2005b) in his text, 'Imperialism', provides a detailed description of this process. Commenting on the needs of capital expansionism, Harvey states that:

"Access to cheaper inputs is, therefore, just as important as access to widening markets in keeping profitable opportunities open. The implication is that non-capitalist territories should be forced open not only to trade (which could be helpful) but also to permit capital to invest in profitable ventures using cheaper labour power, raw materials, low-cost land, and the like. The general thrust of any capitalist logic of power is not that territories should be held back from capitalist development, but that they should be continuously opened up." (Harvey 2005b: 139).

The process of accumulation requires the conversion of non-capitalist territories into capitalist ones that are typically locations of *low cost*. The flow of capital to a given location may be due to structural constraints – specifically overaccumulation and overproduction (Grossman 2005 [1929]). The ebbs and flows and capital from one location to another is due to the barriers and constraints in various locations (Mandel 1977). As illuminated by Toussaint (2008) these barriers to capital growth may manifest as stagnation and/or inflation within the country of origin. Cammack (2002, 2003, 2004) articulates how primitive accumulation and the strategies proposed are a means of 'proletarianization' (Thompson 2002 [1963]). This reiterates the postulation by Marx that in order for production to occur one

needs to “[make] the majority of people in the nations into a commodity” (Marx 2010 [1896]: 382). Thus, one can see that the expansion of capital through primitive accumulation is not restricted to the liberalization and privatization of markets but similarly relates to the cultivation of a ‘productive agent’ - reflecting the World Bank’s promotion of a workfare liberal welfare state. Consequently, it may be argued that the World Bank’s strategy under examination – a representation of the liberal trend within developmental policies – and the mechanisms proposed are developed in relation to the needs of capital expansionism.

If one is to interpret the strategies proposed within the document as reflecting the needs of accumulation, then this must be conceptualized as a form of ‘primitive accumulation’. The promotion of privatization, including private enterprise and financialization, as well as deregulation are key features of primitive accumulation. These strategies are not new to developmental practice but have been associated with it since the inception of global development departments and agencies (Harvey 2005a; Peet 2009). This historical association – between development policies and private capital – reflects the dichotomy inherent within liberal economics between market inclusion and exclusion, as well as the promotion of market inclusivity as a means of enabling poverty eradication. A key feature of development policy is the liberalization of domestic markets and their opening up to foreign capital. Thus, development within liberal development politics mandates liberalization and deregulation.

The transferral of productive systems and services from the public to the private sector has specific consequences. The process of primitive accumulation or ‘accumulation by dispossession’ (Harvey 2009) has been associated with specific social phenomenon - impoverishment and immiseration (Guerrero 1997- 98; Marx 2013 [1867]). These two processes occur due to the need to promote high yielding ventures through the exploitation of non-capitalist locations and populations. As suggested by Lebowitz (1992: 85) “capital does

not merely seek to realize its own goal, valorization; it must also seek to suspend the realization of the goals of wage-labour". Within this quotation Lebowitz is illuminating what is arguably the most explicit contradiction within capitalist societies, specifically the destruction of those (wage-labourers) that produce societal wealth, which is emblematic of the accumulative process. When Lebowitz talks about preventing wage-labourers from realizing their goals he is communicating their need for survival and prosperity.

In relation to the state, there is a clear attempt to redirect its role and limit its capacity amongst the World Bank's plans, specifically in relation to SSNs and public and private partnerships (see section 5.2.1). Yet this reorientation does not mean the direct evaporation of the state or its 'hollowing out' (Jessop 1994). Instead it refers to changes to its role. This is echoed by Selwyn's analysis of neoliberal development policy. Selwyn (2014:2) postulates that "[...] behind the ideology, neoliberal policy relies heavily upon the states to reshape class relations in favour of capital, in particular finance capital [...]". In relation to this summation one may argue that the role of the state is not reduced but its direction and manner of action have changed. Thus, instead of the state focusing on developing mechanisms that promote both gender and health equity as detailed above, including the construction of a welfare state that attends to both decommodification and defamilisation, it focuses on enabling primitive accumulation through the construction of an environment supportive of capital and hostile to labour.

A key example is the World Bank's advocacy for public-private-partnerships. It is argued that public-private-partnerships provide an effective mechanism of inequality reduction due to the ability to harness both private-sector 'insight' and public-sector 'power', according to the World Bank. However, there are a number of criticisms of this development approach, specifically from those located within the critical political economy discipline. This point has been given close scrutiny by Harvey (2005a) in his seminal text, "Neoliberalism: a brief

introduction”. Within this critical appraisal, Harvey suggests that the promotion of public-private-partnerships is a direct attempt by capital to reduce the influence of labour as well as its influence over constructing economic and public policy. Additionally, Harvey proposes that these public-private partnerships force states and their populations to assume much of the risk associated with a given venture, specifically in relation to financial loss, while the private sector remains free to profit from these ventures. Consequently, it may be argued that the promotion of these partnerships provides businesses and corporations a direct mechanism by which to influence public policies, legislation, as well as setting regulatory framework while the ability of civil society to partake in these processes is significantly marginalized.

Developing Harvey’s point, one may argue that the role of the state as articulated by the World Bank is the adoption of risky, unproductive, and more importantly unprofitable practices, such as the construction of infrastructure related to roads, schools, electricity, water, ICT, and transportation. This is closely related to the document’s promotion of primitive accumulation and the ability of newly proletarianized workers to access the marketplace. Moreover, the document’s focus on developing ‘productive agents’ through schooling and access to education illuminates this point. Equality in education is not being questioned. However, the failure to complement this access with adequate policies that focus on constructing good working environments is. Consequently, in relation to the literature detailed above, one can suggest that the reconceptualization of recipient governments as ‘enabling agents’ is focused on creating an environment conducive with the needs of capital.

The World Bank’s emphasis on depoliticized citizenship is similarly important here. It may be suggested that the construction of a depoliticized citizen reflects a shift away from government and towards *governance*. Governance is a process whereby a power structure and its means of dominance become dispersed throughout typically non-political societal arrangements – simply a means of power ‘decentralization’ (Jessop 2015). In his examination

into the governance and the promotion of community engagement, Harvey (2005a) highlights the implications of this apparent dispersal of power throughout civic society. Harvey proposes that within a period of neoliberalization, the means of collective action and representation are structured in accord with individual characteristics. Furthermore, this form of representation is premised upon the belief that all forms of mobilization should derive from society and thus should be in direct opposition to, in fact antagonistic towards, the state apparatus. Furthering this, Wood (1990) states that the promotion of individualism, civil society engagement, and non-governmental forms of representation are mechanisms by which to neutralize potential threats from the labouring classes. This antipathy towards the state and its form of representation subsequently leads to the failure of individuals to win any form of substantive power to orientate social formations towards social justice principles. Consequently, the shift toward governance and the articulation of the depoliticized citizen is an attempt to promote the needs of capital, not equality, in a period of primitive accumulation.

Within this section a critical examination of the findings have been presented. Through an engagement with traditional political economy it may be suggested that the strategies advocated within the document are premised upon the enablement of a specific form of neoliberal expansionism, namely 'primitive accumulation'. These strategic goals are embedded within a regulatory framework that enables their effective application. A focus on primitive accumulation through the promotion of an unregulated labour market leads to impoverishment and immiseration. Consequently, the proclivity of these strategies to further entrench health inequity is unsurprising.

## Chapter 6- Conclusion

### *6.1 Concluding Remarks*

A critical examination of the World Bank's (2015) development strategy, "World Bank Group Gender Strategy: Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction, and Inclusive Growth", yields a number of conclusions. In a period of neoliberal crisis there has been a notable shift towards a socially embedded developmental strategy. This has been closely related to the rise of a feminist discourse that illuminates the gendered effects of development. The promotion of a socially embedded model is focused on developing and implementing programs that enable growth through social investment. This period has been defined as the Post-Washington Consensus (Birshall and Fukuyama 2011). While the promotion of development strategies that focus on social investment may be seen as progressive, this study illuminated some of the tensions and issues within the World Bank's strategy. The failure to acknowledge the role of neoliberal economics in consolidating social inequalities leads to the World Bank advocating the perpetuation of gender inequality. Moreover, due to the relationship between social inequality and health equity it may be suggested that the exaggeration of the former will lead to a reduction in the latter. Consequently, the World Bank's strategy may be described as a discursive construction, which veils its true motivation towards sustaining capital accumulation during a period of structural crisis.

Within the document the promotion of privatization – both private enterprise and financialization – and the unexamined identification of women's labour as being central to these markets does little to resolve poverty and gender equality. The document fails to acknowledge the implications of introducing private enterprise into occupations deemed "low-productive activities". For example, the implementation of Taylorist organizational forms undermine good health because they intensify work. Within the feminist political

economy literature, particularly pertaining to care work and welfare arrangements, authors have illuminated the propensity of private firms to develop labour processes including those reflecting Taylorist modes of organization, which focus on efficiency and labour accountability. This consequently leads to a failure to meet the actual care needs of both recipients and providers. Alongside problematic workplace arrangement, the relationship between privatization and the failure to implement a supportive regulatory system is troubling. The absence of legal regulations that provide labour with bargaining power e.g. unionization, will disable them from effectively negotiating their wages and working conditions. The document's failure to address workplace and labour regulation highlights the World Bank's inability to comprehensively address gendered inequalities and thus women's experience of health equity.

Moreover, the integration of women into the financial market, while not negative per se, can have damaging consequences when done in an unregulated fashion. As highlighted by Navarro (1999), financialization has specific class consequences. While financialization may provide a mechanism of social mobility for middle- and upper- class women, the promotion of deregulation within the financial sector will have negative implications for working class women. This is clearly exemplified by the gendered effects of the 2007/08 crisis (Roberts 2016). Thus, it may be argued that due to the absence of regulations within both private enterprise and financial markets the World Bank's strategy is focused on promoting unregulated capital and the continued exploitation of women.

The other key findings related to changes in political intervention, both by the state and women. The parameters of action for both the state and women are minimized within the report; the former is seen as an 'enabling agent' and the latter as a 'depoliticized citizen'. In relation the state, the SSNs promoted by the World Bank are telling. Rather than advocating a welfare state that focuses on both decommodification and defamilisation, the World Bank

instead promotes a 'workfare' based liberal welfare state. The limiting of welfare arrangements to the cultivation of 'agents of capital' will have specific ramifications for women as they are disproportionately more likely to work within and use these services. Evidence from the political economy of health literature has illuminated the negative health consequences of liberal welfare structures. It is noted that they produce health differences between classes through their failure to implement progressive taxation policies and income distributive mechanisms. Due to the relation between unequal income distribution and health equity, an increase in the former leads to a direct decrease in the latter. This health inequity is compounded by the development of a two-tier healthcare system- a direct consequences of healthcare privatization.

The second key aspect of this reorientation relates to the discursive promotion of community engagement and what here is termed 'depoliticized citizenship'. The document restricts the representation of women to the community level and fails to acknowledge the need for intervention within all levels of government, specifically at the level of policy development. The limiting of real political engagement and the shift from government to governance will lead to the failure of policies to reflect the needs of women from disadvantaged communities. Additionally, considering that the formalized political participation of marginalized and working-class women can affect income distribution and thus health equity, their absence from this process is troubling. All of these aspects taken together – both privatization and the reorientation of political intervention – may be seen as not only failing to promote both social and gender equality but also exaggerating health inequity amongst women.

If the strategy does not promote gender equality, then the question must be posed: what is it advocating? Though an engagement with marxist principles, it is argued that these strategies reflect a historical proclivity of the World Bank towards primitive accumulation or accumulation by dispossession. Primitive accumulation may be described as a means of

absolute surplus extraction through the acquisition of cheap resources and labour. The promotion of privatization (private enterprise, and financialization) and deregulation have been historically associated with the practice of primitive accumulation as they help constitute an environment conducive with the needs of capital. Moreover, this favouring of capital over labour is similarly reflected in the documents articulation of the state and its role in promoting 'public-private-partnerships'. Within these partnerships, the state is presented as a 'enabling agent' that focuses on: developing a regulatory field conducive with the marketplace; the adoption of unproductive and unprofitable activities (related to the construction of infrastructure and the readying of people for the marketplace); and finally, the promotion of private enterprise within the provisioning of traditionally state sponsored programs. Lastly, the limiting of women's political participation similarly reflects the documents proclivity towards primitive accumulation. Due to the internal conflict between capital and labour in capitalist arrangements, the promotion of community engagement and non-governmental forms of representation is a mechanism by which to neutralize potential threats from the labouring classes.

As posited by Smith (1990a) the ruling apparatus and its associated relations is textually situated and mediated within and through discourse. Consequently, one may argue that this text is a reflection of a concerted effort to reformulate and reconstitute the structures of dominance in favour of capital. As highlighted above, a crisis in the neoliberal Washington Consensus has led to a re-articulation of development strategies. This re-articulation has been towards a 'socially embedded model of growth' that focuses on poverty alleviation and gender equality. However, while the discursive parameters may have changed, its promotion of neoliberal economic policy has not. Thus, this document may be seen as reflecting and advocating the needs of capital accumulation. Within this strategy women are articulated as the new locus or mode by which accumulation occurs. Women are perceived as subjects who

require market injection and access to financial capital. While this may seem progressive, the actual mechanisms that promote both social and gender equality and safeguard women against the market, including regulation and political engagement, are either absent or limited. The failure of the World Bank to limit inequalities will have deleterious effects on women's health. Accordingly, while the discursive dimensions of this document focus on the 'liberation' and 'equality' the true consequences of the strategies do the complete opposite. By providing this analytical inquiry into the World Bank's development strategy, this MRP highlights key contradictions between the discursive parameters of this text and its actual implications.

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