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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DECONSTRUCTING *DEMAND* FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS' EDUCATION

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

PROGRAM IN CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY STUDIES

BY

LINDA LU

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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It has been a long and wonderful journey getting to a place where I am even able to conceive of the ideas set forth in this thesis. The concepts, ideas and different meanings written in this thesis are a unification of the classes, lectures, and readings undertaken throughout these past few years. Along the way, I have been fortunate enough to have amazing family, friends, and professors who have supported and guided me.

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Each of us carries around those growing up places, the institutions, a sort of backdrop, a stage set. So often we act out the present against the backdrop of the past, within a frame of perception that is so familiar, so safe that is terrifying to risk changing it even when we know our perceptions are distorted, limited, constricted by that old view.

-Minnie Bruce Pratt

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFA	Education For All
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
SDGH	Sengcham Drukmo Girls' Home
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WB	World Bank

ABSTRACT

There is an increasing focus on the international recognition of women and girls' education as a universal right. Many feminist scholars have questioned this rights-based approach to gender education and evaluated the outcomes, challenges, and solutions based on the international policy discourse. While this scholarship is valuable and telling, what is notably absent is a comprehensive examination of how women and girls' *demand* for education is constructed through such universal declarations.

This thesis uses a postcolonial feminist conceptual framework to analyze international gender education policy such as the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All to answer, how is women and girls' *demand* for education constructed? What does a poststructural analysis, grounded in a postcolonial feminist framework, tell us about the way in which third world women's "wants" and "demands" are constructed through these policies? Ultimately, through an analysis of policy and an exhaustive assessment of the feminist scholarship on gender education, this thesis unpacks four implicit conditions which underpin *demand* and reinforce a modern, neoliberal governmentality. These conditions are the essentialization of third world women, the unchallenged authority of Enlightenment philosophies, the focus of gender and education in an isolated sphere, and the problematization of women's bodies.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In 1948 the international community¹ declared that “everyone has a right to education” (United Nations, 2012). Through this universal call to action, the world has seen a far-reaching spread of global declarations and policies, such as the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 2 and 3, which seek to create an international commitment to a universal *demand* of education for women and girls.

The notion of “demand” for women and girls’ education has taken on several mixed meanings within international policy documents. At times, international policies reference demand for education as a consumer demand reflecting a commodity based, elastic model of a good or service demanded. Take for example the 2010 Education for All Global Monitoring Report which states, “the misalignment between education supply model and livelihood realities means demand for schooling are often unmet” (2010, p. 178). Similarly, the Millennium Development Goal 2 states, “providing enough teachers and classrooms is vital in order to meet demand” (UNMDG Fact Sheet 2, 2010, p. 1). However, another meaning of demand is also located within international gender education policy. This notion of demand is a more intuitive understanding which

¹ International Community is defined in this paper as the bureaucratic organizations that structure a global way of being. They are put themselves in charge of instituting and monitoring global citizenship through policy and administration. This community consists of international organizations such as the UN and WB and extends to organizations that support the declarations these international organizations

assimilates *demand* for women and girls' education with the notions of "rights to" education. Essentially this *demand* is marked as an exigency, need and opportunity. Take for example the Dakar Framework for Action which states, "All children must have the opportunity to fulfill their right to equality education in schools" (2000, p. 15). Further, the Framework expresses concern for the factors that become barriers to the *demand* for education which ultimately exclude women and girls (p. 13). Because this reference to *demand* for education includes a specified concern for women and girls to achieve access and parity in education, and further correlates this access to a specific value of empowerment, *demand* becomes equated with notions of equality and rights. Consistent to this is the titling of policies such as "Education for All," and goals such as "Achieving Universal Primary Education." These declarations imply a global need conflated as a global *demand* for women and girls' education.

The pattern of international commitment to meet education for all is illustrated in The United Nations Children's Funds' (UNICEF) country program assessments. UNICEF monitors and intervenes in "developing nations" in order to help them meet the gender and educational goals established in the MDGs and EFA (UNICEF, 2012). Take for example, the concern for quality basic education for all in Tajikistan. UNICEF states that quality education in Tajikistan is unequal for women and girls and is inadequate to the standards set forth in the MDGs and EFA. It states as its mission to "reverse the declining demand for education among girls and stem the rise in the share of girls among drop-outs" (UNICEF, 2012). Further, UNICEF aims to improve the quality of schooling for girls and to create a more gender sensitive curriculum and pedagogy. UNICEF

establishes that with the support of the World Bank (WB), they will prepare a strategic plan to improve learning in Tajikistan and that extensive initiatives are being taken to create effective data collection and measurements to monitor their progress.

There are certain concerns to note based on UNICEF's assessment and summary of Tajikistan's efforts towards education for all. The first issue to note is the use of the term "demand for education" by UNICEF when it states as a concern the "declining demand for education among girls." There is a subtle indication of both a quantitative requisite for education and an inherent need and right to education. This inherent need is further seen when UNICEF notes that "an integral part of the process is an effort to help girls gain a better understanding of their right to education, which, in turn, will create a demand for better education." It can be evinced here that "demand" is not just defined by a quantitative assessment of interest, but it takes on a larger embedded notion consisting of "rights to" and obligation towards education for women and girls.

Another issue to note is to ask who is clearly defining and creating the standards of, and the *demand* for, education for Tajiks? UNICEF states that in partnership with the WB a strategic plan will be undertaken for educating women and girls. However, there is no indication that any of the women and girls in Tajikistan are a part of creating, contributing or implementing this plan. Additionally, there is an ethnocentric presumption of what education, learning and schooling means for Tajiks. Empirical assumptions of standards and progress are undefined, but seemingly presumed in UNICEF's summary. Education is never expressed as a desire for women and girls in Tajikistan; rather, it is expressed as something women and girls in Tajikistan *should*

desire. This can be seen in UNICEF's statement that their efforts are "leading to greater awareness and more political commitment locally and nationwide to the systematic change in support of the education for girls." Ultimately, UNICEF gives itself not only the capacity to problematize, but also to intervene in establishing and increasing *demand* for education for women and girls.

The case of UNICEF demonstrates not only a pattern of international commitment, but also a larger pattern of concern which is set up through gender education policy. Using a postcolonial feminist lens, this thesis takes on an examination of this larger pattern of concern by tracing how *demand* is constructed in international gender education policy and the implications that the rhetoric of *demand* has for third world women.¹

This study is important because despite the global declarations and the efforts by the international community, including organizations like UNICEF, the gap between enrollment and completion for girls is considerable, and political, social and economic inequality is still large in number (UNESCO, p. 6). Take for instance a recent report which notes that in Sri Lanka, despite increases in education for women, unemployment rates have increased for women in Sri Lanka (Perera, 2012). The gap between rhetoric and reality compel a reevaluation of policy and a different look into why increased enrollment and access to education for women and girls has not translated into larger

¹ My own use of third world women should be situated as I use it not in place of "other" or an essentialized idea of poor, vulnerable women in "developing" worlds. My own notion is a deconstructed version which borrows from Mohanty to constitute women in oppositional alliance to hegemonic discourses and have a common context of struggle. They constitute one of the other multiple centers which have been neglected in gender education policies.

socio-cultural and economic gender parity. What value do assessments with a presumed orientation of standards and progress really have for third world women? While many feminist educational scholars have examined the problems with international gender education policy, what is notably absent from this current feminist scholarship is a comprehensive look at the construction of women and girls' *demand* for education. By looking at *demand*, the tacit conditions embedded within the term can be analyzed to see how they affect socio-cultural equality for third world women and add to the dialogue examining gender education and social justice for women. Moreover, this deconstruction of *demand* provides a framework to find alternatives for reconceptualizing the meaning and purpose of education for women and girls.

Research Methodology

I center the arguments presented in this thesis within a postcolonial feminist framework which uses feminist standpoint theory and the role of historically situated and located experiences. This framework serves not only to situate my own perspective, but it also serves as a framework to evaluate the outcomes and intentions resulting from international gender education policies such as the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All. Additionally, I use this postcolonial feminist scholarship to evaluate the methods and practices used to measure, monitor and organize gender and education goals. After situating the framework I use, I assess the current feminist scholarship on gender educational policy. In this assessment I highlight what is notably absent from the literature is a comprehensive analysis of the notion of *demand* for women and girls' education.

Following this discussion, I use Michel Foucault's concepts of governmentality and biopower as tools to deconstruct how international gender education policies have framed *demand* for women and girls' education. From there I take from David Scott's (2005) discussion on the reconfigurations of modern power and historically trace how education has functioned as an apparatus of governmentality. I use these post structural tools to analyze and interpret international policies such as the Millennium Development Goals, Education For All, and United Nations International Conference on Population and Development. This deconstruction of *demand* through the lens of governmentality sets up my argument that *demand* for education for women and girls serves as an apparatus for neoliberal power.

Using the studies and analyses from current feminist scholarship on gendered education, I interweave the principles of postcolonial feminist theory with the mechanisms of governmentality and biopower to make the case that there are four common conditions embedded in international gender education policy which serve to maintain neoliberal power. These four conditions I identify as the essentialization of third world women, the unchallenged authority of Enlightenment philosophies, the treatment of gender and education in isolated spheres, and the problematization of women's bodies. Then, through a postcolonial feminist lens I emphasize why these conditions are harmful to third world women and goals of social justice. Finally, I use the same postcolonial feminist lens to reconceptualize alternatives of education for women and girls.

This thesis is a theoretical study using qualitative data collection tools to address the research problem, but also uses grounded social and cultural contexts to formulate the ideas behind finding an alternative model for conceptualizing and understanding *demand*.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature in two parts. The first section looks at the postcolonial feminist discourse I use to deconstruct *demand* for women and girls' education and evaluate international gender education policy. The second part of the literature review maps out the contemporary feminist scholarship examining international gender education policy. This latter section not only highlights valuable insights in the current discourse on gender education, but this second section also notes what is currently absent from this discourse.

Review of Postcolonial Feminist Theory

Feminism is a discursive space. There is no universal feminist discourse and there is no common framework for the construction of feminism. As such, it is important to note that while this thesis adopts arguments posited by postcolonial feminists, the feminist framework that I use should not serve as an essentialization of all postcolonial and/or third world feminist perspectives. Within postcolonial feminism there are multiple discourses and viewpoints which serve to both support and contest the framework used in this thesis.

As a start, this literature review draws upon a theoretical framework evinced by Uma Narayan, Chandra Mohanty, and Gayatri Spivak in framing some of the ideas which underpin postcolonial feminism. In Uma Narayan and Sandra Harding's (2000) edited

book, *Decentering the Center*, I pull from a handful of feminist scholars in order to merge a common dialogue on feminist moral imperatives. In pulling from this dialogue I pose the questions: What role does postcolonial feminism have in framing our thinking? How does a postcolonial feminist discourse highlight the ways in which structures of power/knowledge tuck themselves into notions of *demand* for women and girls' education?

In *Feminism Without Borders*, Chandra Mohanty (2003) provides a collection of work incorporating over 20 years of her ideas on postcolonial feminist theory. In "Under Western Eyes," she expresses concern over the essentialized identity of third world women and highlights the ways in which western narratives have codified and positioned third world women as "other" (p. 61). As a result, postcolonial feminism serves to decolonize ideas of third world women and to find a framework that prevents a monolithic, "discursive homogenization" of third world cultural difference which erases the complexities of third world women (p. 63). Uma Narayan (Narayan & Harding, 2000, p. 84-85) has similarly argued against an essentialization of third world women as being historically marginalized and underprivileged. She takes a postcolonial interest in finding the tools to deconstruct and reclaim the term.

In *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Gayatri Spivak (1999) positions the concern for the non-elite more broadly. Spivak highlights those invisible and silenced as the subaltern and does not limit the identity of the subaltern to gender and third world women; rather, the subaltern is a group that has historically been essentialized by its difference from the dominant group. The language and rationality of the subaltern has

often been unrecognizable by the “representing intellectual.” Spivak asks, “How can we touch the consciousness of the people, even as we investigate their politics? What voice-consciousness can the subaltern speak?” (p. 272-273). These authors describe a homogenized, colonial narrative of the third world subject and call upon a postcolonial feminist imperative to give “voice consciousness” to third world women.

Duly noting this postcolonial imperative, how can we create a space open to the subaltern consciousness? Sandra Harding (2004) argues that “some social situations are scientifically better than others as places from which to start off knowledge projects” (p. 48). As such, feminist standpoint theory argues that projects concerning local women should start with the voices of local women. Another approach that Harding uses is the concept of decentering or the practice of recognizing that there is no single center of knowledge production. Decentering removes the ethnocentric myopia of cultural legitimacy and breeds new agents of knowledge (p. 50). Further, this practice of decentering makes visible the subaltern consciousness and opens the world up to alternative understandings.

Mohanty (2003) similarly embraces the notion of decolonizing our perspectives, institutions, and power structures from the “bottom up.” By identifying the historical processes which have led to the resistance, domination and colonization of ideas and people, we can better understand ourselves and society. Mohanty states, “History, memory, emotion, and affectional ties are significant cognitive elements of the construction of critical, self-reflective, feminist selves and....decolonization coupled with emancipator collective practices leads to a rethinking of patriarchal, heterosexual,

colonial, racial, and capitalist legacies” (p. 8). While Harding’s process questions social centers, Mohanty questions the historicity of colonial structures. In arguing this process of decolonizing as methodology, Mohanty cites the importance of situating differences in historical contexts and to provide contextual understanding, not necessarily as truth, but as valuable considerations. She argues, “Historicizing and locating political agency is a necessary alternative to formulations of the universality of gendered oppression and struggles” (p. 107). This process engenders reflexivity in policy making and global interactions. This process also provides a space of negotiation and understanding which recognizes the complexities of third world women. Narayan (2000), likewise, argues that in order to resist cultural hegemonies and cultivate a stance friendly to third world women we must “restore history and policies to prevailing ahistorical pictures of ‘culture’” (p. 86). She describes the importance of historically tracing the construction of ideas and cultures to reveal colonial and hegemonic patterns and projects.

Having a clearer idea of the postcolonial rationale and the approaches these feminist theorists evince, it is important to position how these ideas have been implemented into working postcolonial feminist projects. Alison Jagger states in, “Globalizing Feminist Ethics,” that as a result of women being centered in global development discourses, third world women are often essentialized as symbols of tradition and their bodies become sites for political and social intervention. Pulling from Narayan and Spivak’s discussions about the silence and invisibility of the subaltern, Jagger (2000) expresses that what the subaltern needs is a “conceptual framework, a language capable of articulating her injuries, needs, and aspirations” (p. 6). In realizing

this, Jagger envisions her own project of creating a feminist discourse. This discourse is meant to serve as a common practice to open up global space for negotiating a cultural difference grounded in “postconventional moral objectivity” (p. 2). She positions the difficulties of insider/outsider status as the fundamental challenge to developing a global feminist moral discourse. As an example, Jagger asks: Do Western feminists have a say in the North African practice of clitoridectomy? Can straight European women participate in a discussion concerning South Asian lesbian practices? Can we close off outsiders to third world women dialogue? How can we justify this exclusion as it demonstrates a double standard and also violates feminist principles of creating open, democratic discourses? Jagger insists that the answer to these concerns exist in identifying how and where power is situated which will enable the manner of inclusion for those with insider/outsider status. Historically, third world women have been muted by the discussion of western discourse and, in realizing this, third world women are compelled to enforce exclusionary measures to maintain autonomy. Simply put, because first world, western societies maintain an asymmetry of power in their favor, the discretion to exclude their meanings can be interpreted as resistance of hegemonic opinion and allows third world insiders to strengthen communal beliefs.

Jagger does take into account that if “assumptions are never opened to challenge, the system based on them become a form of dogmatism” (p. 9). Under these circumstances and ideas, she argues that there is a way that outsiders can effectively participate without maligning insiders. Jagger, recognizes a negotiation between insider/outsider status through a cross-cultural negotiation grounded in feminist

principles of reflexivity. She states, “Global feminism means that feminists in each culture must re-examine our own commitments in light of the perspectives produced by feminists in others, so that we may recognize some of the limits and biases of our own beliefs and assumptions” (p. 15). Within this commitment should be an acceptance of contention and disagreement, but to also embrace difference rather than push for a universal morality. This feminist conception of a practical moral discourse should decenter the position of discourse so outsiders can reflexively situate themselves so that women, who have been historically silenced, can be heard.

Similar to Jagger’s feminist discourse is Ofelia Schutte’s (2000) project of creating a “global feminist ethic” (p. 47). However, where Schutte’s analysis differs is in its emphasis on the relationship between power and knowledge. Schutte argues that a postcolonial feminist perspective can serve to “balance the struggle against the legacy of colonial-imperial domination with the struggle for the creation of feminist and feminist compatible societies” (p. 49). It is to understand how dominant cultures have constrained not just the understanding of third world women’s experiences, but also the legitimization of their knowledge. Schutte further describes the importance of understanding the power involved with narration and, as such, it is important to incorporate the postcolonial perspective as well as to “deactivate the colonial legacy” by repositioning power so third world women are at the forefront of language and knowledge making. The challenge of Schutte’s postcolonial feminist project is in what she defines as the “principle of (cross culture) incommensurability,” which is the impossibility for one culture to ever be able to fully translatable to the other. She states, “There is always a residue of meaning that will

not be reached” (p. 50). At times this principle has led to essentialism and dominant cultures only acknowledging certain parts of third world women’s meaning and dismissing other parts. How then can the principle of incommensurability coexist with postcolonial feminist principles? Schutte acknowledges that the best practice towards reconciling this deficit is to historically locate dominant discourse and language to uncover furtive hegemonic interests in order to create transparency for third world women. This practice of historically locating power, being mutually self-reflexive, and acknowledging incommensurability frames a global feminist ethic which balances the asymmetries of power and language.

In line with both Jagger and Schutte is Lorraine Code’s (2000) piece, “How to Think Globally: Stretching the Limits of Imagination.” Code describes her own feminist project of an “ecologically modeled epistemology” (p. 73). Code differs slightly from the other authors in her moderate reliance on cultural relativism, which Jagger and Schutte both caution against. Code, however, argues that there is room for a “mitigated epistemological relativism,” (69), but she cautions that within this use of relativism there should also be a “healthy skepticism” of knowledge construction. Similar to Schutte, Code recognizes that any knowledge and understanding is not culture-free. Against the critics of relativism, Code pulls from Mohanty to parallel her notions of a “mitigated relativism” to the historic and locally situated ways of knowing. Where Code’s project is unique is in her distinct focus on the relationship between nature and a postcolonial feminist conception. She argues an “ecologically modeled epistemology” deconstructs “naturalized” assumptions about women’s bodies and its essentialized connection to labor

and tradition. More specifically, this approach “map[s] local ecological relations by exposing the conditions, both physical and discursive, that sustain and/or threaten human lives and agency within the specificities of habitats, institutions, regions, environments, societies, and their interrelations separately traced and charted” (p. 73). Code focuses on a mapping of bioregional narratives; these narratives, she states, will help remove the assumptions about the benefits of global optimization which are unsustainable and ecologically destructive. It situates the assumption that distinct local ecologies cannot be universally extended to the global.

In contrast to the postcolonial feminist approaches I have described is a concern that feminist epistemologies and standpoints will manifest as cultural relativism. Joan Wallach Scott (1991) in “The Evidence of Experience,” is critical of the role that experience can play in perverting fragments of subjects into totalizing images that give “lie to hegemonic constructions of social worlds” (p. 776). The ability to degrade voice parallels the rise of dominant discourses and creates, what Michel de Certeau refers to as, an “authorized appearance of the ‘real’” (as cited in Scott, p. 777). Because of this relativistic authorization of knowledge, Scott argues that the use of experience can only serve to reproduce hegemonic ideologies.

Narayan (2000) also cautions other scholars about the line between feminist epistemologies and the pitfalls of cultural essentialism. According to Narayan, some feminists, at the expense of avoiding gender essentialism, inadvertently yield to cultural essentialism. Consequently, the consideration of voice and local perspective produces a “synecdochic move,” where parts of a tradition become representative of the whole.

Narayan argues the danger of synecdoche as cultural relativism, where third world women are constructed into rigid, homogenous identities which correspond into rigid, homogenous solutions (p. 80).

These concerns of the role of experience and standpoints are more specifically reflecting a concern of *how* experience is used. These critiques indicate that standpoint, valorized as truth and unmediated by the recognition of hegemonic power, can be harmful to third world women. Fortunately, Shari Stone-Mediatore (2000) tackles these concerns by bridging Scott's critique with Mohanty's approach. In "Chandra Mohanty and Revaluing Experience," Stone-Mediatore states that the biggest setback described in Scott's article is in the ways which experience has been used by dominant groups to represent truth to totalize the experiences of the marginalized. However, Stone-Mediatore explains that Mohanty's historically situated approach towards experience warns against relativism and that experience should not be used as emblems of truth; rather, they should be used to create space for negotiating difference. Stone-Mediatore argues for historically and locally situated voices and states that "if we read a text as a creative response to globally situated, experienced tensions, then we confront it neither as a representation nor a fiction but an invitation to reconsider the historical world from the perspective of that narrative" (p. 123). This translates into a practice of self-reflexivity for questioning the power formations of your own knowing. Additionally, if narratives are socially, historically and politically located, a negotiated space occurs for decentered and decolonized knowledges. Likewise, Mohanty (2003) acknowledges that the existence of third world women's subjectivities are not in themselves evidence of truth, but "it is *the*

way in which they are read, understood and located institutionally that is of paramount importance. After all, the point is not just to record one's history of struggle, or consciousness, but how they are recorded; the way we read, receive, and disseminate such imaginative records" (p. 77).

At the heart of this literature review is an examination of the fundamental goals and methods highlighting a postcolonial feminist ethic. Using Mohanty, Harding, Narayan and Spivak I explain how the goal of postcolonial feminism is necessary to deconstruct and reimagine the complexities of third world women, and to make visible those marginalized by the hegemonies of dominant discourse. In order to leap up from the fringes, a global dialogue should begin with the voices of third world women. Their standpoint should be historically, politically and socially located in order to highlight the asymmetries of power that have led to the masking of their narratives. If we thread together the essays by Alison Jagger, Ofelia Schutte, and Lorraine Code, a coalition of important themes, methods and considerations come together. They demonstrate, first, that there is a more ubiquitous need for a transnational feminist ethos to mediate between third world women and the elite. In coalescing these feminist scholars' projects I highlight how international gender education policy constructs a notion of *demand* for women and girls' education. I also use these feminist ethics to trace the conditions and rationalities embedded in *demand* as an apparatus of neoliberal governmentality. Then, I use this framework to look at alternatives for reconceptualizing *demand*.

*Current Feminist Literature on International Gender and Education Policy*¹

Following the Jomtien Conference in 1990, an increased amount of attention has been paid to looking at gender equality in education. Not to mention, a considerable amount of research and scholarship has been focused on perspectives of quality, relevance, gendered pedagogies, and the construction of gender in schooling. Many feminist researchers have analyzed the construction of gender, the inadequacies of gender education policies, and the socio-cultural reproductions that contribute to gender inequity in education. What is notably missing, however, is a comprehensive look at the construction of *demand* for women and girls' education. The critique of *demand* and the ideologies of "education" are occasionally addressed in passing, or as a supplement, but more often than not a discursive analysis of *demand* does not emerge. This section of the literature review takes a look at the contemporary layout of feminist scholarship on gender and education and gives recognition to how current feminist research has contributed to the insights of this thesis.

The Focus on Quality

One current pattern within feminist scholarship on gender education is a shift away from looking at access and parity to a focus on quality of education for women and girls. This focus on quality consists of interventions aimed at providing gender sensitive trainings for teachers, creating better gender inclusive curriculum, establishing relevant outcomes for women and girls, and developing gender sensitive pedagogies. In Sheila

¹ Because this thesis focuses on an international context, my analysis is focused on feminist scholarship measuring and analyzing international gendered education policy and contexts

Aikman and Elaine Unterhalter's (2007) book *Practicising Gender Equality in Education*, the authors discuss the need to look beyond access and look to qualitative approaches for improving education for women and girls. They use specific case studies to demonstrate a call for making schools safer for girls, creating a more gender sensitive school environment, establishing a more relevant value to education for girls, and including a gender-responsive budgeting.

The *Sage Handbook of Gender and Education* is similarly dedicated to articles and studies looking at the challenges of schooling for girls and how gender is constructed through the culture of schooling (Skelton, Francis, & Smulyan, 2006). In "Out of the Ruins: Feminist Pedagogy in Recovery," Gaby Weiner (2000) looks at the role that a feminist pedagogy has in schooling and how a well thought out feminist pedagogy can contribute to better quality of education for women and girls. Likewise, in "School Culture and Gender," Fengshu Liu (2000) looks at the culture of schooling and highlights the effects gender has on teacher-student relationships and the dynamics of a classroom. Liu also emphasizes the need for better gender sensitive teacher training to improve the quality of education for girls.

Although these authors look at the quality of education, they let a constructed notion of education go unchallenged, and as a result, presume a certain unassailable value in the *demand* for education. What is absent from their analysis is a look at the construction of the "need" and "want" for education and what power/knowledge conditions might be embedded in such a specific *demand* for women and girls education.

The Focus on Specific Challenges and Solutions

Another pattern within current feminist scholarship is the focus on gender and education in explicit contexts. This pattern of research has centered on the specific challenges that women and girls face and the specific solutions to those challenges. In 2004, *Comparative Education Review* put out a special issue on global trends in comparative research on gender and education. In it the focus was exclusively on the effects of international gender education policy on third world women and girls (Assie-Lumumba & Sutton, p. 348). The editors for the issue state, “Contributors to this special issue were called upon to problematize the commonly accepted notions about barriers to educational access and to address the question of how increased educational attainment among girls and women has (or has not) led to changes in the social construction of gender roles and in the economic and political participation of women (and men) in local, national, and international communities in the context of global forces” (p. 349). Take for instance an article by Fida Adely (2004) entitled, “The Mixed Effects of Schooling for High School Girls in Jordan: The Case of Tel Yahya,” which addresses the effect access to schooling has on girls in Jordan. Adely argues that although schools have the ability to reproduce uneven gender outcomes, they also have the power to become a forum to discuss social justice and help uplift women and girls in society. In “Impossible Fictions: The Lived Experiences of Women Teachers” Jackie Kirk (2004) looks at women teachers in Karachi. Kirk examines the challenges facing women teachers and argues for using women’s standpoints to inform and create a better understanding of alternative gender strategies in teacher education.

In 2008, a special issue of *Compare* similarly focuses on the specific challenges and solutions centered on distinct regions. The editors in the issue express as the rationale of the issue to look at the impact that international gender education policy has had on national educational systems and gender and women's rights. The issue does not address the construction of demand and how demand embeds rationalities through policy. Rather, this issue looks at the outcomes resulting from an international compliance to *demand* for education. Madeleine Arnot and Shalajja Fennell (2008) highlight some of the important needs that gender education research should begin to work towards. They point to the flaws in methodology of gender education research and point to the need for research to better consider the micropolitical and historical contexts. The authors describe the importance that gendered experiences have in informing better educational policy. They argue that Education For All ends up "furthering a homogenous educational policy rather than differentiated treatment to deal with the non-uniform impact on girls or children of religious or ethnic minorities" (p. 517). They also argue that EFA masks the nuances and complexities of women's lives through statistics. They state that "the use of rights based approach was limited to powerful community gender norms that supported the subordinate status of women" (p. 518). While their critique is significant and accurate in many ways, they do not look at the construction of *demand*. Rather, they carefully critique the outcomes of such rights-based policies and recommend a postcolonial feminist approach to correct the inadequacies of policies such as EFA. In Kate Greany's (2008) article, "Rhetoric versus reality: exploring the rights' based approach to girls' education in rural Niger" she studies a region of Niger and questions the implementation,

adoption and understanding of a universal rights discourse. Greany describes a linguistic gap wherein the term “right” is recognized by everyone in the local region of Niger, but the power afforded to realize those rights are not. She describes how not everyone, “is entitled to the ‘power to’ even if that person may have the ‘right to’” (p. 557). Her case study is valuable in looking at the specific outcome of rights’ based approaches to gender education and the problem of isolating gender in a fixed sphere. Furthermore, her study demonstrates the way ideas of “rights” are grounded in specific Western, Enlightenment principles and the asymmetry that develops from such rhetoric. However, her study is also particular in its challenges and solutions which do not examine the construction of *demand*. Likewise, Donna Sharkey’s (2008) study, “Contradiction in girl’s education in a post-conflict setting” looks at specific conflict, challenges and outcomes when she examines the nuances in how girls in Sierra Leone understand their own schooling experiences and the value of education. In “Gender, education and the possibility of transformative knowledge,” Nelly Stromquist (2006) lays out a more inclusive approach to gender education which challenges the content of schooling to reflect the various layers in which gender operates and lists, as an alternative to formalized notions of schooling, the importance of incorporating nonformal schooling. While I note the important observations of the specific challenges and outcomes that come from the inadequacies of gender education policy, what is absent from these studies is a more comprehensive understanding of the construction of *demand* for women and girls’ education and the conditions that become embedded in that *demand*.

In 2010 *Gender and Education* put out a special issue looking at the way international gender education policies create resistance as well as regulation. In “Kartini’s children: on the need for thinking gender and education together on a world scale” Raewyn Connell (2010) examines the relationship between globalization and gender educational policies. She argues a need for decolonizing our ideas on gender education and incorporating third world women’s viewpoints and experiences into gender education policy. In “Resisting dominant discourses: implications of indigenous, African feminist theory and methods for gender and education research” Bagele Chilisa and Gabo Ntseane (2010) look at the how international gender education policy has not incorporated indigenous feminist standpoints.

The 2011 special issue of *Research in Comparative and International Education* focused on the issue of women’s empowerment through education. This issue examined the relationship between education and larger socio-cultural processes. Many of the articles looked at the contextualized challenges and outcomes that stem from international gender education policy. Take for instance in “The Dialectic between Global Gender Goals and Local Empowerment: girls’ education in Southern Sudan and South Africa” Halla B. Holmarsdottir, Ekne, & Augestad (2011) examine the gap between educational goals and reality in South Africa and Sudan. The article challenges and critiques policies such as the EFA and the MDGs as being disconnected from the realities of third world women’s lives and suggests a more nuanced look at the outcomes of education. In “What Matters for Marginalized Girls and Boys in Bangladesh: a capabilities approach for understanding educational well-being and empowerment” Joan

DeJaeghere and Soo Kyoung Lee (2011) provide a case study looking at how gendered educational policy is dealt with in an isolated manner –removed from the socio-cultural realities –the effect of which are inadequate, irrelevant, and unachievable outcomes for women and girls in Bangladesh. Similarly in “Education, Employment and Empowerment: the case of a young woman in northwestern China,” Mary Ann Maslak (2011) examines the way in which formal notions of education affect women in the Gansu Province. Maslak makes the case that informal education should play a larger part in gender education policies.

Similarly, in *Gender, Education & Development*, Christine Heward and Sheila Bunwaree’s (1999) examine specific challenges and solutions stemming from gender education policies. Christine Fox’s (1999) study, “Girls and Women in Education and Training in Papua New Guinea” looks exclusively at the way women and girls’ are “othered” in Papua New Guinea and how that has translated in low literacy rates and educational attainment for women. In “The schooling of South African girls,” Elaine Unterhalter (1999) gives autobiographical accounts of gender discrimination and how it has affected pedagogy and practice. Unterhalter notes the importance of women’s standpoints to inform policies and critiques international gender education policy. She states, “The narratives the women construct undermine the simplistic certainties of numbers.” Sheila Aikman’s (1999) article, “Schooling and Development: Eroding Amazon Women’s Knowledge and Diversity” presents an ethnographic look at the dynamics of gender and education for indigenous Arukmbut women in the Southeastern Peruvian Amazon. Aikman describes the effect of globalization on the balance of gender

relations within the region and calls upon gender education policy to incorporate local knowledge. Likewise, in *Race, Ethnicity and Gender in Education*, Joseph Zadjia and Kassie Freeman's (2009) present case studies and research which look at the specific challenges that women and girls face in gender equity in education and examine specific cause and effect factors.

Ultimately, all of the above literature presented demonstrates a growing field which looks at the importance of integrating the feminist perspective and women's experience into gender education policy. However, thus far a feminist ethic has only been applied in addressing the specific, isolated challenges or concerns of gender education. What is still missing from this research is the application of a feminist ethic in deconstructing the notion of *demand* for women and girls' education and unpacking the way in which the "need" for education has been embedded in international education policy. My critique and analysis of current feminist scholarship is not to suggest that these authors are ineffectual by using specific contexts, challenges and outcomes. In fact, their methodologies, approaches, and analyses are valuable and in line with a feminist ethic of incorporating situated perspectives and factoring in positionality. Rather, I note what is absent from this discourse in order to build upon and add to it.

CHAPTER THREE:

DEMAND AS A TACTIC OF GOVERNMENTALITY

In 1994 the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) asserted that “the right to development is a universal and inalienable right and integral part of fundamental human rights, and the human person the central subject of development.” The report further states as principle that “population-related goals and policies are integral parts of cultural, economic, and social development, the principal aim of which is to improve the quality of life of all people” (p. 11). Further in the ICPD report, it argues the importance of education for women in order to achieve equality. The ICPD states that women need equal access to education in order to have equal opportunity to become resources for development. Moreover, education helps women reduce their commitments at home, give them awareness of their rights, and “enhance their decision-making capacity at all levels in all spheres of life, especially in the area of sexuality and reproduction” (p.20). At this conference ICPD not only established a shift in the tactics positioning population as the ultimate end of global development, it also signified a neoliberal shift patterning a correlation between population, development, women and education. The International Conference on Population and Development positioned a reconfiguration of power and the tactics of neoliberal governmentality.

Governmentality and Biopower

Governmentality is the “art of government” or a systematic way of thinking about the method and mode of governing (Burchell, Gordon, & Miller, 1991, p. 3). Inherent to governmentality is the reinforcing relationship between power/knowledge and individual/state – meaning how the government manages, patterns, disciplines and authorizes not just the actions of individuals, but also the rationalities of individuals. Governmentality obliges the individual with the preservation of the population through rationalities of self-determination and ties the ideological with the political and rationalizes it as the ultimate end of the individual (Lemke, 2001, p. 203).

Biopower has served a complementary role to governmentality by extending the mechanisms and tactics which pattern the conditions of life and population (Foucault, 1978, p. 140-141). Pheng Cheah (2007) states that, “Biopower enables the maximization of the state’s resources by organizing the population into the bios, a system of means and ends in which the contribution of each member is reciprocated with benefits and rewards” (p. 98). With the shift in political objective from the sovereign to the population, governmentality –reinforced by tactics of biopower –broke down the biological and individualized the body as a resource for optimization to organize, manage and control the conditions of life and the body to benefit and compel a global economic society. It is biopower that “designate[s] what brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life” (Foucault, p. 143). The connection between assessment and biopower provided

modern governmentality with the apparatus to control not just lives, but women's lives, bodies, sexuality, and fertility which extended into the control of community and family.

To a Neoliberal Governmentality

Western, market-based societies are often seen as the place where modern hegemonic constructs of power, legitimating language, and prevailing principles of reason and equality were formed. David Scott (2005) traces the ambitions of colonial governmentality to show how colonizers actively tried to shape and change the political, social, and economic rationalities of the colonized through tactics of power that attempted to reorient indigenous, "barbaric" societies into western language, thinking, political rationality and liberal economy. One tactic of colonial governmentality was the technology of self-regulation for self-interest. That is to say informal institutions (public opinion), formal institutions (markets), and rationalities of freedom inherently constrained the behavior of individuals to discipline themselves and their actions. Accordingly, this tactic worked because it was colonial power which "produce[d] the conditions of self-interest or desire in which these wants would tend to be of a certain kinds and not others" (p. 39). Public opinion was mutually reinforcing wherein colonial power would legitimate the standard for which the "rational public" would intermediate and become self-fulfilled. This tactic established knowledge in the image of the "rational public," ultimately discrediting indigenous knowledges. In order for these rationalities and conditions to be self-regulating, and in the image of improvement and self-interest, they had to be articulated as rights based on reason. Simply put, governmentality enabled power by embedding its own constructed ideas and obscuring them as reasoned

principles; modern governmentality is similarly defined by the relationship between reason and economy through ‘action at a distance’” (Miller & Rose, 1990, p. 1).

Traces of colonial tactics of power still have influence on neocolonial relationships and rationalities, but with the addition of globalization, modern governmentality now reflects a rationality of an international neoliberal power.¹ The influence of neoliberalism is no longer limited to north/south and east/west divides. An unbounded acceptance of market rationalities is no longer fixed as western. The conquest for wealth and economic progress is now also scattered within and throughout third world countries, between urban and rural geographies, and manipulated by global institutions. This is not to suggest that there is not an asymmetrical order of power that leans towards western, market-based societies, but neoliberal power is now enabled by more players in much more diverse spaces. As such, the mechanisms of neoliberal power exist not only in west/north geographies, but in intermittent neoliberal pockets. If we look back at an earlier quote from the INDP which establishes the universal “right to development” it conflates the relationship between the right to development and the individual as a decisive end of development.

Schooling as an Apparatus of Governmentality

Mass schooling and methods of assessment have been traced as tactics and technologies of governmentality (Alves, Morgado, & Pacheco, 2009; Hunter, 1996). The emergence of schooling began as a way to monitor and discipline people as early as

¹ My use of neoliberal is defined by its foundation in Enlightenment principles of reason and also the authority of capital and free markets.

possible towards certain conditions of life. Schools served as a technology to discipline and universalize social relations, reinforce hegemonic knowledge, and legitimate principles of capitalism. Education was characterized by the rationality of “knowledge capitalism” and a utilitarian vision of schooling. The rationality undergirding formalized schooling embodied knowledge capitalism as the ultimate principle of learning (Alves, et al., p. 150). As such, mechanisms of governmentality shaped not only what was “authorized” knowledge, but also the reasoning behind why individuals should *demand* this knowledge.

A key technique behind schooling as an apparatus of governmentality was the creation of “administrative sciences” The introduction of statistics was responsible for a specific historical transformation and augmentation of the capacity of the individual. Hunter (1996) states, “the role social statistics derives is not so much to represent reality as to problematize it” (p. 154). As a result, problematization creates justification for intervention, allowing systems in power to regulate a standard, impose order, and legitimate uniformity (Alves, et al., p. 156).

An illustration of this relationship between assessment and governmentality can be seen in UNICEF’s assessment of Tajikistan; wherein it problematizes the current state of quality basic education for all by listing its inadequacies and failures to meet the standards set forth in Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals. By problematizing the current situation in Tajikistan it gives cause for intervention or “support” from UNICEF and the World Bank to implement plans, overhaul the educational infrastructure, and enlist numerous measurements of learning achievement.

Likewise, the MDGs and EFA put out facts and figures charting “progress” and comparing country’s abilities to meet this constructed “standard” of gender parity in education. These measurements establish a global gender scale wherein third world women and girls are evaluated and measured based on a standard not created or informed by them. Then, these women are further impelled, if not obligated, to be intervened upon as a global problem in need of global effort.

“Representation” and “Intervention”

Thomas Lemke argues the reconfiguration of neoliberal power can be traced to two-sides of governmentality – “representation” –defined as concepts, rationalities and government enabled problems, and – “intervention” – defined as the institutions and policies that enable the rationalities (Lemke, 191). I use those two sides to shape my fundamental argument that *demand* for women and girl’s education is a “representation” of neoliberal power, and policies such as the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) are the “interventions.” The process that is created between “intervention” and “representation” is a tactic of governmentality which centers power and knowledge construction. Central to that process are the mechanisms and apparatuses of language and education used in the MDGs and EFA. These governing policies manage, pattern, discipline, and authorize not just the actions of individuals, but also the rationalities of individuals.

In order to highlight how *demand* for women and girls’ education has been patterned as “representation,” it is important to show how *demand* has been positioned

both inwardly as an ideology and inherent rationality of the individual; and outwardly as a global concern and public doctrine necessitating international support and intervention.

Within several policy reports and statements, *demand* for education is positioned as an inherent need, necessity, and opportunity for women and girls. UNICEF (2000) asserts that “an integral part of the process is an effort to help girls gain a better understanding of their right to education, which in turn, will create a demand for better education.” Further, the rhetoric used by UNICEF implies that girls need to “gain a better understanding” and thus, be convinced of their own needs. Similarly the World Declaration on Education for All states, “individual learners themselves constitute a vital human resource that needs to be mobilized. The demand for, and participation in, learning opportunities cannot simply be assumed, but must be actively encouraged” (p. 11). Likewise, the Dakar Framework reports that, “the new millennium demands that education, which is a right of all, be the object of State policies” (2000, p. 35). These policies as “intervention” demonstrate that there is a coercive element to the positioning of *demand*, wherein the international community is imposing *demand* on behalf of third world women.

While the notion of *demand* shifts towards a concept encompassing an ideological appropriation, it does not mutually exclude a market-oriented concept of requisite. In fact, it is more telling that the neoliberal rationalities embedded in *demand* merge both the ideological and the economic principles obliging women and girls towards the need for formalized education, as third world women are seen as a resource for economic development and education as the mechanism to activate them as resources.

As *demand* for education has been positioned as an apparatus of power, it is important to elaborate further on how *demand* for women and girls' education has become a tactic of governmentality which outwardly allows neoliberal power to monitor, intervene, and pattern third world women's lives. The 2010 Education for All Global Monitoring Report states that "Education is one of the strongest antidotes to maternal and child health risks. Women with higher levels of education are more likely to delay and space pregnancies, and to seek health care....linking health and education agendas is crucial" (UNESCO, p. 10). Similarly, the 2010 Millennium Development Goal Report states, "Lack of education is another major obstacle to accessing tools that could improve people's lives. For instance, poverty and unequal access to schooling perpetuate high adolescent birth rates, jeopardizing the health of girls and diminishing their opportunities for social and economic advancement" (UN, 2010, p. 5). These policies conflate the concern of global inequality and social injustice with women's bodies and a lack of education. These policies argue that if women receive more education they will make "better" decisions concerning their reproductive choices because the conditioning of women's lives means higher economic development. One may consider these declarations by the international community to be of good intention, but many feminist scholars have indicated that the relationship between education and reproduction is a complex and unclear one, and studies have shown "that there are thresholds of development, below which education has little effect on fertility" (Heward & Bunwaree, p. 6). In light of that knowledge it can be seen how gender education policies purporting the outcomes and need of *demand* for education for women and girls is an implicit tactic

of governmentality and biopower to manage and pattern women's bodies in order to encourage global development.

Further, as a tactic of governmentality, it is important to note the use of *demand* as an apparatus ushering in western, neoliberal thinking. *Demand* for women and girls education acts as a project or program legitimating a specific hegemonic notion of schooling as an apparatus of neoliberal governmentality and requisitioning it on behalf of the third world. As seen in the example with UNICEF, the *demand* for education for women and girls is being appropriated by the international community on behalf of Tajik women as something they should strive for or achieve. The voices of women and girls in Tajik are left out of policy and strategies being implemented. Further, international gender education policies do not define what education means and ethnocentrically presume what learning should mean and what purpose education should have. As mentioned before, early patterns of schooling were meant to oblige people towards specific improving conditions of life. In both the EFA and MDG documents the structure of education is described or patterned in terms such as *primary and secondary schooling, grades, age-grading, teacher training, and literacy*. These terms are recognizable to those that have experience in systems defined by those terms, but remain unachievable to those that may define learning differently. Preconceived assumptions about formal education discredit informal education by making that kind of learning unrecognizable and hidden within the rhetoric of the policies. These semantic methods have been central to discerning gender education policies as tactics of legitimating a norm and centering neoliberal knowledges. As a result, in contrast to what appear to be commendable ideas

of *demand* for women and girls' education, is the tacit acceptance of all the conditions that are defined in the image of neoliberal rationality.

CHAPTER FOUR:
THE FOUR CONDITIONS

In arguing that *demand* for women and girls' education is one side of neoliberal governmentality it is important to examine how the "intervention" side patterns an acceptance of the conditions that undergird *demand*. The "art" and the "science" of *demand* is that in adopting and exercising *demand*, and the conditions underpinning it, comes a neoliberal power/knowledge constellation operating as a particular form of reason.

Through my analysis of the international policies on gender education, I discern four reoccurring conditions embedded in the acceptance of the international policies which structure *demand* for women and girls' education. The first is the essentialization of third world women. The second is accepting the unchallenged authority of Enlightenment philosophies. The third is the Focusing of gender and education in an isolated sphere, and the fourth is the problematization of women's bodies. I understand these conditions to be the rationalities that undergird *demand* and reinforce modern power. I use a postcolonial feminist lens to explain what these conditions are, how these international policies enable such conditions, and the effects of accepting *demand*.

Essentializing Third World Women

A lingering consequence of colonization is an essentialized notion of third world women. This essentialization continues today in the universalized way women in the

third world are portrayed in international policies. Third world women are the intended targets of policy and the subject to which *demand* for education is meant to be embraced, but they are often portrayed as backwards, traditional, and needy. For instance, the ICPD declared 1993 as *The International Year of the World's Indigenous People* and asserted that, “many countries have made substantial progress in expanding access to reproductive health care, lowering birth rates, as well as lowering death rates and raising education and income levels, including the educational and economic status of women.” It concludes that there is still a lot that needs to be accomplished (UN, 1994, p. 8). First, this statement portrays indigenous people in need of improvement and progress. Secondly, rather than specify which people the report regards as in need of improvement it applies that need to all indigenous peoples. The report further adds women as a secondary and even more vulnerable group. The language used by international policy is unclear and confuses the relationship between reproductive health, birth rates, and economic and educational attainment for women. There is an assumption about being uneducated, though it is never made clear who and what standards of education the targeted individuals should strive for. However, what we do see directly is how indigenous women are the intended targets of policy.

The ICPD report mentions a need to create “*balance and integration* of the population dimension into other development-related policies” (p. 8, my emphasis). It notes specific geographic regions and discloses them as a part of the “indigenous populations.” The ICPD establishes the geographic nodes of where improvement is needed and which populations are “vulnerable.” As the language establishes women in

the third world as the intended targets of policy it also indistinctly obscures where the direction of evaluation is coming from and who is accommodating the “needs” of these populations. The rhetoric presents the outflow of “help” as a philanthropic ghost rather than openly disclosing the public, ideological, and political personas of those “giving.” An example of this is seen in the EFA Global Monitoring Report which identifies and lists the specific countries in need and their specific deficiencies. However, when referencing those in the position to help, the report simply labels them as “donors,” “international multilateral framework,” and “the international community” (UNESCO, p. 3). The report hides where, and from whom, the recommendations are coming from and instead conceals it in rhetoric of “the spirit of consensus and international cooperation” (p. 9). In other words this policy specifically notes and then universalizes who are in need, but hides who is structuring “improvement.”

Mohanty (2003) argues that colonial discourse discursively appropriated a monolithic idea of third world women so as to privilege western ethnocentrism as the normative and all else as an homogenized idea of “other” (p. 63). In the writings and policies concerning the third world, she argues that a part of creating an essentialized other is “the discourse that sets up its own authorial subjects as the implicit referent” (p. 64). Similarly, international gender education policy sets up in its own image of third world women as the intended subjects of need by authoring them as vulnerable, uneducated, impoverished, bound by tradition, ignorant and victims. As essentializing third world women is an embedded condition of *demand* for women and girls’ education, the tacit privileging of western ethnocentrism is the outcome of *demanding*. The

acceptance of *demand* is ultimately the centering of power and knowledge construction towards those authoring *demand*. The acknowledgement by third world women of themselves as vulnerable and impoverished is not the main design of *demand*; rather, and more importantly, it is the implied authorization of neoliberal power/knowledge construct as the “implicit referent” that serves as the main accomplishment of *demanding* education for women and girls. This authorization of neoliberal knowledge by third world women serves two functions. First, as development models have historically discriminated against women, the authorization of neoliberal knowledge allows women to be co-opted into the emancipating discourse that *demand* for education espouses; thus, erasing any historical patterns of exploitation or oppression that unrestrained economic growth may have propagated onto third world women. Second, authorizing neoliberal knowledge flattens cultural distinctions which in turn homogenizes purpose, and authorizes uniform goals, needs, and rights among all third world women.

An example of this flattening of difference is seen when the ICDP states, “as women are generally the poorest of the poor and at the same time key actors in the development process, eliminating social, cultural, political and economic discrimination against women is a prerequisite of eradicating poverty, promoting sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development, ensuring quality family planning and reproductive health services, and achieving balance between population and available resources and sustainable patterns of consumption and production” (UN, 1994, p. 18). In this principle goal of the ICDP, difference between “developing” women is erased and third world women are essentialized as the “poorest of the poor” without distinguishing

between socio-economic, cultural, historical, and regional causes. This statement does not indicate the role that economic exploitation has had upon different types of women with regards to their specific contexts to agriculture, family and culture. Rather it jumbles the notion of third world women as not only the most impoverished, most vulnerable, most discriminated against, but also the panacea for growth and development. Through *demand* of education, third world women implicitly position themselves as custodians of “progress” and “growth.”

Additionally, the statement made by the ICPD includes the concern for family planning and fertility measures, which adds to the essentializing of third world women as not only poor and vulnerable, but also as caretaker and mother. The ICPD also states, “achieving change requires policy and programme actions that will improve women’s access to secure livelihoods and economic resources, alleviate their extreme responsibilities with regard to housework.improving the status of women also enhances their decision-making capacity at all levels in all spheres of life, especially in the area of sexuality and reproduction” (p. 22). This assertion establishes an understanding that women are overly burdened by their “extreme responsibilities with regard to housework,” though this distinction of what housework is remains unclear. Then, the statement argues that improving women’s lives comes from reducing domestic responsibilities and improving decision making abilities on reproduction. This characterization of needs and assumptions is loaded with presumed meanings and removes agency from third world women by erasing any individual value and meaning they give to “housework.” Take for instance, Aikman’s (1999) case study of the

Arambkut tribe women. In the study it is explained how in their community the Arambkut women were in charge of farming and agricultural duties –tasks equally valued to men’s tasks. The Arambkut viewed “household” work with different meanings and values than the embedded presumptions of oppression often appropriated by western interpretations. However, when we look at the way policies position *demand* it can be noted that *demand* for education becomes conflated with the demand to be relieved of domesticity. Accepting the condition of *demand* antagonizes domestic tasks as an obstacle to development and enables the ability to pattern women’s lives at a distance.

Policy also essentializes third world women as bound by tradition, ignorant and uncommitted to receiving education, or poor as a result of not having education. This essentializing of third world women happens in the “strategic location or situation of the category of ‘women’ *vis-à-vis* the context of analysis” (Mohanty, p. 64). In other words, without the context of the discourse of *demand* for education as a “universal right” and “basic need,” third world women would have no basis to be problematized. Further, in the way that *demand* has been positioned among third world women, not accepting or *demanding* education is the conditional admission that one is pejoratively traditional.

Take for example, the Millennium Development Goal 2 (2010). The Fact Sheet states how many “school-age” children are not going to school and as a result makes the corollary assumption that they are uneducated, or are uncommitted to received education. This remark attempts to demonstrate a sort of “lack.” Further on in the MDG 2 it identifies a geographic distinction of “lack.” It states, “About 69 million school-age children were not going to school in 2008, down from 106 million in 1999. Almost three-

quarters of children out of school are in sub-Saharan Africa (31 million) or Southern Asia (18 million)” (p. 1). They point to the absence of education and imply a certain ignorance and impoverishment. Then the MDG 2 fact sheet notes “more than 30 percent of primary school students drop out before reaching final grade.” Again, there is a presumption of a “lack” of education or “lack” to the commitment of education. MDG 2 also frames education as an elusive achievement for developing nations. It uses statistics to hide what, if any, actual benefit is received from formalized “education,” and instead highlights poorer countries deficiencies to justify why these countries should *demand* a specific notion of education while neglecting the recognition of any informal learning that communities may receive. This Goal 2 also makes an essentialized assumption that *all* education has remained elusive rather than just the dominant discourse of formal education. Without recognizing informal, nonformal, and indigenous knowledge transfers, much of the claims within these policies generalize all indigenous societies as simple and uneducated.

Similarly, the Dakar Framework states that if formal education measures are met by developing nations and efforts are made by the international community to monitor their progress then “they [third world nations] can improve their lives and transform their societies” (UNESCO, 2000, p. 2). There is a grand assumption about the value of the formalized education that is made concerning the improvement and transformation of lives. In making those assumptions of the value of transformative education it is to correlate the counter –that third world nations are indigent and needy. Also in the Dakar Framework is the comment that developing nations need education to “make more

informed choices about family size” (p. 11). This statement makes the assumption that third world women are currently too ignorant to make “appropriate” decision about their own families and bodies. As a result of policy, the monolithic ideas about third world women are linked to monolithic struggles of third world women which lead to generalized notions that they are “ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, religious, domesticated, family-oriented, victimized” (Mohanty, p. 65).

As the saying goes “a picture is worth a thousand words.” On the cover of the 2010 Education for All Global Monitoring Report is a female child of color sitting by herself. The setting behind her is dilapidated and she is positioned to look in need, impoverished, vulnerable and alone. This image essentializes those in need, as captioned along with the picture is the heading “Reaching the Marginalized.” Further on in the report it gives the statistic that “43% of Kurdish-speaking girls from the poorest households have fewer than two years of education, while the national average is 6%, in Nigeria, 97% of poor Hausa-speaking girls have fewer than two years of education” (UNESCO, 2010, p. 5). This remark geographically spans Kurdish-speaking areas to Hausa-speaking areas; the report collapses the cultural, contextual, historical distinctions of women in such a widespread area and relegates them to no more than poor and uneducated third world girls. Not only are the girls flattened into two essentializing characteristics, but through the acceptance of the conditions underpinning *demand*, intervention into specific geographic nodes by neoliberal powers is tacitly authorized.

Essentialized notions of women are dangerous to women. This rigid, outside construction of women puts them in the position to be continually exploited and subject

to hegemonic domination. In the essentialization of difference, third world women get erased and solutions and policies often “replicate rather than challenge essentialist notions” (Narayan, 2000, p. 84). This allows the continued privileging of western knowledge and neoliberal ideals of what constitutes the values of the global. Aikman, in her study of the Arumbkut women, shows how essentializing indigenous cultures risks devaluing practices which provide agency to women. For instance, household tasks are productive tasks for the Arakmbut and there is an equal valuation of work between men and women; they are viewed as empowering to women. Western assumptions, however, perceive the tasks of the Arakmbut women as bounded by and “clinging” to tradition. As a result, the international community tried to usher in a market based economy to help “development.” What resulted was the dismantling of an egalitarian society built around a bio-diverse way of living and an ushering in of women marginalized by gendered divisions of labor. Furthermore, their local knowledges were depreciated by the value that education for economy replaced (Aikman, p. 71-72). Essentializing third world women makes it easier for hegemonic discourses to exert themselves as the norm. Through the lens of a dominant discourse, third world women are viewed as vulnerable, poor and in need of neoliberal, modern ways of thinking and living.

Unchallenged Authority of Enlightenment Philosophies

Another condition embedded in the *demand* of education for women and girls is the tacit acceptance in the authority of Enlightenment philosophies¹—that is the beliefs

¹ I use Enlightenment principles rather than “western” or “first world” principles because Enlightenment philosophies are foundational to neoliberal beliefs. Neoliberal policies are no longer exclusively western or first world. As a result, the use of Enlightenment philosophies is more broadly fitting.

grounded in the irrefutable value of development and modernization. It is a conviction that human progress is marked by a certain economic model of growth (Harding, 2000, p. 245). As a result, progress is marked by an unwavering belief in the economic models patterning production and consumption. Neoliberal ideology is derived from these same Enlightenment principles which center economic growth as progress. As such, it behooves neoliberal power to position these principles as unchallenged reason.

Embedding an incontrovertible position requires a certain amount of rhetorical presumption and semantic confusion. As such, international policy often confounds development and modernity as equality and freedom. The ICPD states, “Sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development will enhance the ability of countries to meet the pressures of expected population growth.” Two sides of Enlightenment philosophies are being presumed. First, development and growth are assumed as natural goals of any nation. Second, Enlightenment philosophy takes up modernization theory’s claim of population growth as the major obstacle of progress for developing countries; as such modernization is presumed as the key for pulling countries out of poverty.

The rhetoric of rights, as laid out by Enlightenment philosophy, presumes a universal idea of quality that is often used within policy statements as universally proven and undeniable. The ICPD states, “The right to development is an universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights” (UN, 1991, p. 11). The language of development in this example not only goes unchallenged but is being established as an inherent need. It should not only be universally desired, but universally

demanded. In the 2010 Education For All Global Monitoring Report it identifies itself as a call to action to reach the marginalized and to create an “inclusive” education system because this type of education system has the ability to develop the “skills needed to build the knowledge societies of the twenty-first century.” Further on, the report states the role of education as to “lay the groundwork for productive lives” (UNESCO, 2010, p. 3). Both statements ostensibly presume, through its occlusion, that many developing countries do not have the skills or the groundwork needed for productive lives. Moreover, there is a presumption in the value of those skills needed. Because these presumptions go unchallenged, they become naturalized as rational principle undergirding a universal standard of needs and wants.

In accepting *demand* for women and girl’s education there is an implicit legitimation in the value of economic development. Harding (2000) states, “Development policies and their scientific and technological questions primarily continue to advance European expansion and not the societies that are the policies’ overtly intended beneficiaries” (p. 250). Simply put, third world women are ultimately not the intended beneficiaries of *demand* for education. Rather, neoliberal power becomes the inherent benefactor from *demanding* education. By *demanding* education, third world women are responsible for disciplining themselves and adhering to specific notions of progress and reason. International education policy rationalizes that the compelling need for women and girls’ education is so women and girls can participate in economic development. In realizing this, women and girls *demanding* education becomes synonymous with their *demanding* participation in economic development. As such, *demanding* education

becomes the mechanism through which third world women are conditioned and reoriented into an acceptance of their roles as necessary and instrumental to neoliberal notions of progress.

The integration of Enlightenment notions into platforms of gender equality have created a standard of gender precipitated on those same ideas of development and modernity. As such international gender policies presume the goals of gender equality to reflect the idea of an “equality benchmark” (Hausman, et al., 2010, p.4). Gender when co-opted by modernization theory looks at equality in terms of equal numbers. Simply put, gender platforms influenced by Enlightenment principles position women to equalize themselves to men; equal numbers in political representation, equal economic outcomes, equal access in school, equal wages. International gender education policy positions *demand* for women and girls’ education as requisite for global gender equality. However, by angling the movement of gender equality as the desire of women to catch up to men, the neoliberal terrain being pivoted goes unchallenged. As such, *demanding* education becomes the mechanism in which notions of gender equality and social justice are constrained to the deference of an “equality benchmark.”

This is seen in how Enlightenment principles, when applied to gender equality, position women into economic models of human progress. It can be inferred that if women’s bodies are seen as a part of nature and economic principles see nature as a resource, then it is within Enlightenment principles that women’s bodies are resources. Modernization theory further takes this inference and capital notions of the commodified individual and conflates its purpose with freedom. This is evidenced in The Global

Gender Gap Index 2010, which specifically provides a measure linking gender gaps and economic performance of countries. It takes as unchallenged the importance of equal economic outcome for women as the ideal standard for women. It states as one of its four fundamental categories of evaluation: economic participation and opportunity. Within this category, participation, remuneration, and advancement are measured in terms of labor force participation and male-to-female income ratios. The Index establishes the ideal for women as to advance, integrate and elevate themselves to the same level as men. It creates a one sided trajectory for women as it does not challenge the rationality of modernization and development. Another example is seen in The World Declaration for Education for All which emphasizes “recognizing that sound basic education is fundamental to the strengthening of higher levels of education and of scientific and technological literacy and capacity and thus to self-reliant development.” The Declaration reiterates later on the purpose of educational opportunities, especially for women, is “to participate fully in development” (UNESCO, 1990, p. 3).

Policies drawing from Enlightenment principles often posit tradition as a constraint for third world women and an obstacle for their development and access to economic growth. Take for instance the Millennium Development Goal 3 which states as a concern “the share of women employed outside of agriculture remains as low as 20 per cent in Southern Asia, Western Asia and Northern Africa” (UN MDG Fact Sheet 3, 2010, p. 1). Goal 3 emphasizes the disparities, but also describes, as “effective” practices for reducing gender disparities, the use of gender quotas to monitor and measure gender development and methods for reducing “the most time-consuming chores for women” (p.

2). It is indicated in this remark that “functional” solutions to achieve gender equality must be to add women into the current language of development and stir; while ideas about the value of development” remains unchallenged. Goal 3 presumes this addition of women in development as the objective standard. It acts to only incorporate women as consumers and producers. Additionally, Goal 3 indicates “chores” as an obstacle which opposes progress from women. It never presumes the value of “chores” or household work as functional in other realms other than in terms of the value to development. Goal 3 and various other international gender education policies fail to challenge an economy built on principles which devalue the contributions of the domestic. I say this not to valorize domesticity, but to note how neoliberal economic systems have devalued domestic contributions by forcing a tradeoff between market notions of labor and housework. As such, *demanding* education similarly forces a tradeoff for third world women between “tradition” and “modernization.”

As schooling is a site for knowledge reproduction, adhering to *demand* for women and girls’ education becomes the institutionalization of knowledges grounded in neoliberal rationalities concerning freedom, reason and progress. Education is an important conduit between the enlightenment philosophies and the reproduction of its unchallenged authority. “Reason” and “progress” are embedded in education as authoritative presumptions. The ICPD states, “The reduction of fertility, morbidity and mortality rates, the empowerment of women, the improvement in the quality of the working population and the promotion of genuine democracy are largely assisted by progress in education” (UN, 1994, p. 76). The Global Gender Gap Index 2010

emphasizes girls' education as an investment and that educating women and girls is the "highest-return investment that a developing country can make" (Hausman, et al., p. 30). Later in the report it states the purpose of the Index is to track gender gaps to determine national competitiveness as educated women "account for one-half of the potential talent base through the world" (p. 32). Ultimately it is the *demand* for education, created by international policy, which links education as the tools for women and girls to achieve equality in the labor force and economic growth.

Not challenging the authority of Enlightenment philosophies can be harmful to third world women. Principles of capitalism are grounded in competitiveness and individuality which is often seen as anti-community and anti-family. Harding (2000) explains that "the problem with Enlightenment philosophies was not only that women had been excluded from articulating them and overtly maligned in them, but that Enlightenment standards of the human, the good, progress, social welfare, and what counted as important scientific problems, were all defined in terms of masculine and bourgeois interests and meanings" (p. 243). Moreover, postcolonial feminists criticize the assumption that advancement in the labor force for women is a universal aim for all women, especially third world women. Mohanty (2003) terms this ethnocentric assumption as "protocapitalist feminism." She argues that neoliberal powers attempt to embed free market rationality as representative of global values. This naturalization of Western corporate culture attempts to narrow the complexities of feminism to an unfettered accumulation of wealth and corporate advancement (p. 6). Consequently, recent research has show that access to education for women and girls has not always

translated into access in the labor market or economic advancement. This divide is the result of gender education policies abstracting the historic and socio-cultural contexts within communities. Take for example Anise Waljee's (2008) case study of the efforts of Tajikistan to transition from a planned economy to a market economy, which resulted in a reduction in the amount of educational expenditures and a decrease in access, enrollment, and quality of women and girls' education. The international community attempted to usher in neoliberal, market principles which removed the welfare policies enacted under Soviet rule. Women were the most affected as they no longer received assistance in healthcare, child care and family resources. Additionally, there was increased unemployment, urban migration and a sexual division of labor which arose due to the inequalities associated with a market economy. This analysis of Waljee's study should not be read as an endorsement of a planned economy, nor does it erase the problems faced in Tajikistan under Soviet rule. However, what can be seen from her case study is that the unchallenged authority of market ideologies, grounded in Enlightenment principles, abstracted the need for a more nuanced historical and cultural look at the educational needs for women in Tajikistan. Challenging the principles of Enlightenment and neoliberal rationalities gives space to value third world women's knowledges and experiences. It balances the negotiations of what should count in informing practice and policy.

Focusing on Gender and Education in an Isolated Sphere

Gender education policy is often constructed, implemented, and measured as if the construction of gender is not relationally defined through its interactions with the

political, social, and cultural. Arnot and Fennell (2008) state, “the social reality of discrimination and exclusion that mar the educational experiences of the subordinated women or man and that obstruct, even oppose, their entry into the modern economy does not usually find a place in official documentation of provision of education in developing countries” (p. 517). Gender education policies do not take into account the different impact religion, socio-cultural factors and historical context can have for the educational outcome for women and girls. As a result, *demanding* education for women and girls puts blinders onto the larger hegemonic and patriarchal structures affecting third world women. By looking at gender in isolation to education, the broader institutions and systems discriminating against women go unchallenged.

Take for example the World Declaration for Education for All which states, “the most urgent priority is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of, education for girls and women, and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation. All gender stereotyping in education should be eliminated” (UNESCO, 1990, p. 3). This statement narrowly addresses gender inequality, and isolates a specific approach to addressing gender discrimination, which does not ask how removing obstacles and stereotypes within education will ultimately translate to a larger environment still entrenched in discrimination? Perhaps more importantly, looking at gender and education in an isolated sphere hides the question of why did those obstacles exist in the first place?

EFA presumes discrimination of gender within education as solvable within the sphere of gender and education. Without situating gender in various historic and social contexts it is hard to measure other outcomes of those isolated policies. To explain,

unequal division of labor and vulnerable forms of employment for women were a result of the patterns of economic development which valued certain types of work and capital over others. If education is to increase women's employability, how would the increase of education for women affect their relationships within their households? within their communities? *Demanding* education allows the focus of gender and education to exist in isolation because the policies undergirding *demand* are also narrowly isolated.

The World Declaration on Education For All states as one of its commitments to provide long term support through creating gendered education programs "designed to eliminate the social and cultural barriers which have discouraged or even excluded women and girls from benefits of regular education programmes, as well as to promote equal opportunities in all aspects of their lives" (p. 3). This appears to be a circular statement as it notes that education should be designed to remove social and cultural barriers, but if those social and cultural barriers exist to prevent education then how will they achieve access? Moreover, this statement confines itself to the social and cultural barriers to education, but not the intangible costs created as a result of achieving education. In a case study published by Dejaeghere and Lee (2011), the authors found that while boys and girls in various "marginalized" communities in Bangladesh had access to schooling, girls did not feel as if they were emotionally supported by their families in attending school. Nearly half of the girls involved in the study did not believe their education was useful and many of them did not feel safe walking to school.

The Millennium Development Goal 2 aims to "ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary

schooling” (UN MDG 2 Fact Sheet, 2010, p. 1). MDG 2 goes on to define achievement in terms of enrollment and access. Within this brusque assessment and recommendation there is no mention of the effect of enrollment on families or how a formal education will affect the relationships between a girl and her environment. Similarly, Millennium Development Goal 3 states as its goal to *Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women*. MDG 3 only touches upon solutions isolated within gender and employment, gender and education and gender and representation. It states as a quick fact that “in 2008, there were 96 girls for every 100 boys enrolled in primary school, and 95 girls for every 100 boys in secondary school in developing regions” (UN MDG 3 Fact Sheet, p. 1). This statement only presents girls’ enrollment numbers in schooling, rather than how and why enrollment for women and girls are lower, or the socio-cultural and historical factors influencing this outcome. Additionally, there is no discussion of the “after,” or why these numbers are relevant except to presume that the outcome enables employment. If construction of gender education policy is done in isolation, then solutions for gender equity in education struggle to be relevant and useful in a broader, more complex setting.

Further example of this is seen when MDG 3 states that “poverty is the main cause of unequal access to education particularly for girls of secondary-school age. Women and girls in many parts of the world are forced to spend many hours fetching water, and girls often do not attend school because of a lack of decent sanitation facilities. Also, if they get pregnant, many are not allowed to continue school” (p.1). Gender is isolated here and not discussed in its relationship with the historical, religious, socio-cultural contexts of how and why this occurs. These patterns of isolation are seen again in

the EFA GMR 2010, which states “the policies behind these gains include changing attitudes to girls and women’s place in society, offering financial incentives for school participation, providing water and sanitation in schools, recruiting female teachers and increasing their deployment to rural areas, and gender sensitization training of teachers” (UNESCO, 2010, p. 13). Although the report seemingly tries to incorporate a larger context, it only mentions the need to change attitudes on the role of women and girls, but not how their existing roles were constructed or relationally defined. As a result, *demanding* education permits a confined focus on issues of gender equality. This confined focus not only obscures the hegemonic and patriarchal systems which caused the gender inequality in the first place, but it also abstracts any effects resulting from *demand*. When third world women are constructed to *demand* education, which embed specific conditions such as the treatment of gender in isolation, they are equivocatingly being asked to authorize the abstraction of their own historical and socio-cultural circumstances.

Conceiving of gender in isolation can be harmful to finding realistic solutions for gender equality in education. Gender when isolated from its historic, religious, and socio-cultural contexts hides the difficulties and complexities of women’s experiences. Isolating gender in specific spheres homogenizes solutions concerning the outcomes of gendered educational experiences. Isolation also allows the incorporation of gendered policies which have no intention of dismantling patriarchal and hegemonic center. Take for instance some of the common policy recommendations of international gender education policy which look at attainment, access, enrollment, quality, increasing

demand, creating “girl-friendly schools,” opening up curricula, and training teachers as the notable solutions to gender equality in education. Because an analysis of gender and education is done in isolation, approaches addressing gender and education neglect larger socio-cultural relationships defining gender. Kate Greany (2008) illustrates an example of this in her study evaluating the rhetoric and reality of schooling in Niger. She describes the disconnect between the acceptance of the language of educational rights and the capacity to fulfill those rights. She argues that the World Bank has focused on access and outcomes of attainment and overlooked “the constraints of underlying social structures, which remain unchallenged and unchanged” (p. 559).

Another way that isolating gender and education is harmful is that gender in isolated spheres presents false and mythologized notions about the outcomes of education. In a study describing girls in post-conflict Sierra Leone, Donna Sharkey (2008) notes the disappointment these girls have when their attainment for education is not met with the “the myth of education’s empowering results” (p. 575). The girls did not account for the various complexities of violence, shame, and lack of opportunity that fooled the myth. Simplistic, homogenized mythologies about the totalizing effects of education produce simple and flawed policy that do not address larger socio-cultural inequalities. Looking at gender and education in isolated spheres cannot address larger socio-cultural inequalities because gender equality in education is segmented to specific rationalities meant to incorporate gender into neoliberal principles rather than challenge a totalizing center of power relationships.

Problematization of Women's Bodies

International gender education policies use statistics and numbers to problematize and monitor populations, which is a defining method used to maintain governmentality. Numbers not only problematize issues for third world nations, but they also depict these nations as inherently inferior –needing to be improved or transformed. Take for example the EFA GMR 2010 which shares the following measures: “The share of girls out of school has declined 58% to 54%, and the gender gap in primary education is narrowing many countries.” Moreover, the report states that “around 54% of children out of school are girls. In sub-Saharan Africa, almost 12 million girls may never enroll. In Yemen, nearly 80% of girls out of school are unlikely ever to enroll, compared with 36% of boys,” and “literacy remains among the most neglected of all education goals, with about 759 million adults lacking literacy skills today. Two-thirds are women” (UNESCO, 2010, p. 4). These statistics are used to problematize women in order create a disciplining of themselves and their self-interests, and also to create a rationale for managing and patterning the conditions of population. By *demanding* education, third world women authorize the problematization of themselves through a filtered neoliberal rationalization of self-improvement.

Additionally, assessment gives legitimizing power to governing bodies to intervene, monitor and manage populations other than their own. The ICPD states, “population-related goals and policies are integral parts of cultural, economic, and social development, the principal aim of which is to improve the quality of life of all people” (UN, 1994, p. 12). The language used in this statement attempts to conflate a correlating

relationship between population, development and the quality of life. As such, it problematizes population control and growth as an issue of quality of life. This individualization of the body as capital creates the basis for monitoring and patterning the conditions of women's lives as the bearers and controllers of population. Moreover, the report expresses belief that "widespread poverty as well as serious social and gender inequities have significant influences on, and are in turn influenced by, demographic parameters such as population growth" (p. 12). These statements serve to represent women's bodies in two ways: as the bearers of "demographic parameters," and as the sole agents of gender equality. By *demanding* education, third world women conditionally acknowledge the relationship that policy has conflated between women's bodies, population growth, education and development. As *demand* has been positioned as a right to development and a right to education, it has also been positioned as the solution to sustaining population growth because education prevents women from making irresponsible decisions concerning their own bodies. If third world women *demand* education they are *demanding* the knowledge to make informed choices about their own fertility and the potential contributions of themselves as educated individuals.

An even more telling understanding of the problematization of women lies in the conference's concern for the "girl child":

Since in all societies, discrimination on the basis of sex often starts at the earliest stages of life, greater equality for the girl child is a necessary first step in ensuring that women realize their full potential and becomes equal partners in development. In a number of countries, the practice of prenatal sex selection, higher rates of mortality among very young girls, and lower rates of school enrollment for girls as compared with boys, suggest that 'son preference' is curtailing the access of girl children to food, education and health care. This is often compounded by the increasing use of

technologies to determine foetal sex, resulting in abortion of female fetuses. Investments made in the girl child's health, nutrition and education, from infancy through adolescence, is critical (p. 25).

In this statement, we see a clear break down of the biological at the earliest stages. There is problematization of the girl child and an explicit intertwining of education, biology, health, progress, modernization, and equality. This statement not only sets up the concerns, but it also sets up a requisite for intervention and monitoring. MDG 3 acts similarly when it states "poverty is the main cause of unequal access to education particularly for girls of secondary-school age. Women and girls in many parts of the world are forced to spend many hours fetching water, and girls often do not attend school because of a lack of decent sanitation facilities. Also, if they get pregnant, many are not allowed to continue school" (UN MDG 3 Fact Sheet, p. 1). Likewise, the Global Gender Gap Index states, "Research demonstrates that investment in girl's education has significant multiplier effects: it reduces high fertility rates, lowers infant and child mortality, increases women's labour force participation rates and earnings and fosters educational investment in children" (Hausman, et al., p. 30). The ICPD also similarly reports that "the reduction of fertility, morbidity and mortality rates, the empowerment of women, the improvement in the quality of the working population and the promotion of genuine democracy are largely assisted by progress in education." It states further on "there is a close and complex relationship among education, marriage age, fertility, mortality, mobility and activity. The increase in the education of women and girls contributes to the greater empowerment of women, to a postponement of the age of

marriage and to a reduction in the size of families. When mothers are educated, their children's survival rate tends to increase" (UN, 1994, p. 76).

Two things are authorized by *demanding* education in this section. First, the acknowledgement of *demand* is the acceptance of any subsequent presumptions embedded in the condition which problematizes women's bodies. As such, *demand* for education is handcuffed to the supposition that third world women should *demand* education because there is currently a problem with their knowledge of their own bodies which is evidenced in the high mortality and fertility rates among the third world. Moreover, third world women should *demand* education because there is value in participating in the labor force and contributing economically which is impeded by pregnancy and fetching water. The second thing *demanding* education authorizes is the justification for women's bodies to be patterned, monitored, and intervened as a result of acknowledging the concern and role of women's bodies as an obstacle and resource to development.

The problemization of women's bodies is harmful to women as statistics and indexes privilege those that center the benchmarks, and those at the center oblige all others to meet those standards. Who is in charge of measuring and monitoring? Who sets the standards for what is accurate and proper to a meaningful comparative analysis. These standards are not informed or set by those that it is meant to control. As a part of the standards set, "developed" countries will be considered achieving the highest in the most "meaningful" manner. It is the "logics of performativity that result in a prescription of knowledge and in control of the assessment" (Alves, et al., p. 156). In realizing this, it

can be evinced when international governing bodies use statistical methods to measure the magnitude and scope of gender inequity they are essentially breaking down the biological and individualizing the body as capital – human, social and cultural. This connection between assessment and biopower provide an apparatus to correlate the economic and political with sexuality, fertility and the control over family and community. The science in maintaining neoliberal power involves being able to create the standards in which all else is compared. Ian Hunter notes the role of “social statistics is not so much to represent reality as to problematize it.” As such, assessment has become the “undeniable central position as a legitimating, control and uniformity device.” While Alves, et. al. describe it as a device, I would describe it as a tactic; a tactic of neoliberal governmentality to construct a model which sets the rationalities of universal conformity and where local difference is eschewed in lieu of global competitiveness.

‘Demand’ as a Damaging System of Means and Ends

Demand is evinced in this chapter as a tactic of governmentality and biopower. This tactic serves to essentialize third world women, reinforce enlightenment principles, treat gender in isolated spheres, and problematize women’s bodies. As such, *demanding* education serves only to maintain neoliberal power by creating and legitimating the rationale to control population growth, manage fertility, family, and community in order to pattern third world women in the image of neoliberal ideology.

As schools are the site of knowledge production, global governmentality co-opts women and girls’ education and prevents the replication of indigenous understanding by

prefabricating the desire to learn towards a specific subjectmaking. Thus, the *demand* that is set up is formed under certain conditions of learning for the subaltern –further obliterating the recognition of the heterogeneity of indigenous rationale for learning. The clamor to represent and understand the voice of the subaltern is still a continuation of the tactics of power complicit with the prolonged development of capital through the international division of labor (Cheah, p. 81). While the international community tries to be inclusive of third world voices, they do it through the perpetuation of the same neoliberal objectives of positioning the third world women as the subject of development. Further, the language of international gender education policies creates a space for agencies to control the capacities of women and valorize women's economic productivity by setting up enlightened ideas of economic growth as rhetoric of global gender equity, progress, and freedom. Neoliberal power coercively positions *demand* for women and girls' education by setting *demand* up as a human necessity and an individual exigency; despite the fact that *demand* is really shaped as a political instrument to maintain modern power. As *demand* for gender education has been shown as a technology of neoliberal governmentality, it can be affirmed that the four conditions enabling governmentality are damaging to women and to feminist solidarity.

CHAPTER FIVE:
ALTERNATIVE VISIONS OF *DEMAND*

Towards a Feminist Ethic

In considering the conditions that maintain neoliberal power/knowledge centers, what kind of feminist practice can confront those rationalities? How can we resist tacit reinforcement of the conditions embedded within *demand* of education for women and girls? How can we reimagine *demand*?

To start, I coalesce a decentered feminist ethic that threads together some of the most interesting and critical approaches argued by several postcolonial feminist scholars. This coalesced notion is a useful conceptual framework for evaluating international gender education policy and for reimagining *demand* of education for women and girls. The fundamental idea that frames this feminist ethic is the importance it places on the role that women's experiences serve as the starting point for knowledge construction (Harding, 2004). The role of class, ethnicity, race, geography, sexuality, and gender distinguish a complexity of needs and recognition. Postcolonial feminists Chandra Mohanty (2003) and Uma Narayan (2000) argue that in order to decolonize perspectives and approaches it is important to historically locate and contextualize identity and difference within local contexts. This allows for a more genuine representation distancing third world identity from a colonial construction of third world cultures and third world women. Mohanty argues that historically located experiences decolonize and remove the

privileging of western knowledge. Furthermore, the threat of not recognizing the subaltern experience enables an ethnocentric appropriation of difference that masks the complexities of women's lives. As a result, a feminist ethic should work to question dominant discourses and engage in "pivoting the centers" of knowledge by recognizing that there are multiple centers of knowledge production. The concept of decentering removes the imbalance of who can serve as agents of knowledge.

A feminist ethic can provide a space for legitimating other knowledges and knowers. The feminist principle that should underlie this space is one that is grounded in self-reflexivity. The role of experience is not to relativize truth or essentialize third world women, but to socially, historically, and culturally situate our own perspectives so others have more information in evaluating their own discourses. Alison Jagger (2000) states that global feminism means that feminists in each culture must re-examine their own commitments in light of the perspectives produced by feminists in others, so that we may recognize some of the limits and biases of our own beliefs and assumptions. A decentered feminist ethic serves as a method and not a doctrine.

Alternative Visions of 'Demand'

A decentered feminist ethic can help us to reconceptualize the implications and expectations of *demand* of education for women and girls. As research should begin with the experiences and knowledges of the marginalized so should educational policies centered on the lives of third world women. The incorporation of the experiences of woman, children, and third world voices are not used to define what "education" is or the conditions that underlie *demand* for education. The EFA states as the call for action, "[to]

convene a high level meeting on Education for All financing in 2010 to elaborate strategies for making more resources available” (UNESCO, 2010, p. 3). Who is ultimately informing these actions and strategies? Which voices will contribute to the high level meeting? From the UN MDGs and the Dakar Framework there is no mention of where the voices of the indigenous fit in or how the voices of women have been included. Furthermore, these policies never mention incorporating indigenous, poor, marginalized voices in determining their own needs. When the Dakar Framework states as one of its goals as “improve[ing] all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcome are achieved by all.” Who is defining quality? What counts as education? Who defines the intended outcomes of education? As a result, *demand* becomes a fixed neoliberal desire towards a specific, formalized institution of schooling.

Based on the policy outcomes that have been harmful to third world women and the examination of the four conditions undergirded in *demand*, a reconceptualized notion of *demand*, guided by a decentered feminist ethic is necessary. As such, third world women can reimagine the purpose of learning to reflect ideals not centered on neoliberal principles. Others may see the purpose of learning to be centered on their visions of community and reinforcing cultural integrity.

In a study I conducted in 2010 at Sengcham Drukmo Girls’ Home (SDGH), an all girls’ school and home in an independent Tibetan prefecture, the director of the school stated that the priorities of education at SDGH revolved around empowering women, preserving culture and forging community. The school day was often complete with

female empowerment talks and cultural performances – notions of community overstepped notions of individual ambition. This is not to say there were not difficulties or barriers for SDGH, but acknowledging the complex history of Tibet, the beliefs of the community, and the importance of cultural preservation were the significant and fundamental goals for learning.

Beyond learning outcomes and intentions, *demand* of education should recognize learning that exists in informal and nonformal settings. Biodiverse understandings and oral traditions should be valued and accepted as knowledge for communities that value it. By removing barriers for what counts as education, indigenous values, traditions, and knowledges can formalize their own educational systems. For the Arakmbut community, education, as they historically and practically experienced it, was embedded in physical and spiritual worlds which took into account an understanding of the ecology of their environments. My aim is not to romanticize indigenous communities or essentialize them as purveyors of the natural world; rather, my aim is to demonstrate that education in a decentered negotiated space does not force a tradeoff of indigenous knowledge in lieu of education for global development.

CHAPTER SIX:

CONCLUSION

The international community has created a global call to action for all women and girls' to be educated. As a part of this call to action, a universal, rights-based approach to the *demand* of education for women and girls has been created. Current feminist scholarship has studied the outcomes and implications of such policy, but has overlooked the deconstruction of *demand* for women and girls' education and the implications of rationalities underpinning the notion of *demand*. The purpose of this study is to examine the construction of *demand* and to build and add to the feminist scholarship trying to create alternatives to of the current recognition of a global educational *demand*.

Using postcolonial feminist theory as a conceptual framework I have highlighted how *demand* of education for women and girls has been constructed through international gender education policy and served as a tactic of governmentality and biopower. Ultimately, the recognition of a universal “need” and “want” of education set up by international policy serves as the tacit acceptance of the four conditions undergirding *demand*: essentializing third world women, unchallenged authority of Enlightenment philosophies, focusing on gender and education in isolated spheres, and problematization of women's bodies. These conditions are harmful to feminist solidarity and principles of social justice as these conditions are tactics embedded by neoliberal power/knowledge

structures to give rationale for the insertion of neoliberal principles into third world women's lives. Further, these conditions and tactics allow the international community to monitor, pattern and intervene in third world women's lives and conflates their bodies as obstacles of progress. In deconstructing *demand*, alternative ways of conceptualizing education and learning can be imagined which are inclusive of third world women and in line with democratic principles of social justice and feminist solidarity.

Limitations

To provide an analysis tracing all variable impacts imposed upon gender is out of the scope of this paper. As a result, I notably leave out a lengthy discussion of the intersectionality between race, class and gender. In my discussions I have isolated gender and education and the policies that pertain to *demand* of education for women and girls. Even in my own critique I argue that gender is not an isolated sphere and that its identity and construction is situated in its relationships with and to race, class, religion and a whole host of other spheres. In acknowledging this there are fundamental weaknesses to my alternative visions which require a more in depth look and evaluation of gendered education policies and practices which consider these other spheres more in depth. Moreover, the analysis of the policies and practices of the international community are not meant to discredit the accomplishments that have been achieved or disparage their intentions. In this evaluation I leave out a historical engagement with the role and achievement of the international community; I also consolidate them into one essentialized mass of bureaucracies, which abstracts some of the more philanthropic intentions of some organizations. As a result, I have also abstracted some of the more

specious acts of other organizations. However, I specified the intended target of my evaluation of policy and consolidated it as the international community because they are interconnected and support each other through laws and other financial mechanisms.

Finally, my analysis did not engage the criticisms of postcolonial feminism or feminism in general. I address some concerns with cultural essentialism and relativism, but there is an extensive amount of critique on the use of experience and the symptoms of language as argued by some authors such as Judith Butler and Donna Haraway. There is also a considerable lack of critique of Foucauldian post structuralism. However, I believe that even if one completely disavows the notion of governmentality, the argument I evince of the conditions embedded within international gender education policies and of a need for a postcolonial feminist ethic still hold strong.

Steps Going Forward

In going forward, the analysis I evince provides reorientation in the way of thinking about *demand* of education for women and girls. Thus far it has been viewed as a global panacea which will solve poverty, malnutrition and global inequality. However, we know that gender does not exist in isolation and is affected and constituted by the relationships it has to its communities, families, religion, culture, environment, and historic underpinnings. In considering this, I lay out a feminist ethic which coalesces all the fundamental points that I take from several feminist scholars. Further, a feminist ethic is not only valuable for women but for all those whose knowledges and voices have been abstracted by hegemonic systems of power.

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