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**Gendered Hierarchies and World Order: A critical analysis of the instrumentalization of
gender within the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS**

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Gendered Hierarchies and World Order: A critical analysis of the instrumentalization of
gender within the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS

Sara Anne Jenkins

Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Table of Contents

Thesis Abstract.....	v
Acronyms and UN Symbols.....	vi
Introduction: Unequal Vulnerability to AIDS.....	1
Rationalization of Research Topic and Case Study	6
Guiding Research Question and Argument.....	7
Outline.....	12
Chapter 1: A Theoretical Review of Gender, Hegemony and the Maintenance of World Order.....	14
1.1 Gender	16
1.1.1 Mainstream (Liberal) Feminism and Gender	17
1.1.2 Critique of (Liberal Feminist) Individualism.....	19
1.1.3 Critical Feminism and Gender	24
1.1.4 Gender as an Analytic Category	27
1.2 World Order, Hegemonic Discourse, and the Role of International Institutions vis-à-vis Gender.....	31
1.3 Gender and Neoliberal World Order.....	36
1.3.1 Gender and Capital Accumulation	38
1.3.2 Gender in the Context of Neoliberal Globalization: Feminization and housewifization.....	39
1.3.2.1 Feminization and the Normalization of Multiple Structural Hierarchies	40
1.3.2.2 The Generalization of Housewifization and Flexibilization in the New IDL	42
1.4 Instrumentalization: The push for participatory/inclusive development/globalization.....	45
1.4.1 WID: “Benefits” of development—benefits for development.....	46
1.4.2 Gender and Neoliberal Globalization: The role of WID in flexibilization	49
1.5 Whitworth’s <i>Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping</i> : An illustrative study	51
Conclusion.....	55
Chapter 2: Contextualization, Problem-solving Over Critical Approaches, and the Promotion of the Neoliberal Globalized Model of Development.....	56
2.1 Contextualization	56
2.1.1 A Note on Methodology.....	57
2.1.2 The UN Response to AIDS: Benchmark documents	58
2.1.3 The UN Response to AIDS: Evolution of issue definition and policy prescriptions.....	60
2.2 Suggestion of a Critical Approach: AIDS as a turning point.....	68
2.2.1 Five Themes Which Justify Initial Optimism for a Critical Approach..	68
2.2.2 The Persistent Privileging of a Problem-Solving Over a Critical Approach.....	73

2.3 Development as Infallible Response and Ultimate Goal <i>par excellence</i>	75
2.3.1 Meaning of Development.....	77
2.3.2 Development as Response <i>par excellence</i>	77
2.3.3 Infallibility of Development: Denial of the problems connected to and subsequent championing of liberalization policies.....	79
2.3.4 Hierarchy of Goals: Development as the ultimate goal	91
2.3.5 Minimum Compatibility With Development	98
Conclusion.....	102
Chapter 3: The Instrumentalization of Gender: Insufficient understandings of gender, the promotion of individualism, and a push for participatory development	104
3.1 Not taking gender seriously	104
3.1.1 Spectrum of Definitions and Usages of ‘Gender’	106
3.1.2 Insufficiency of Programmatic Solutions.....	111
3.1.3 Silence on the Origins and/or Interests Served by the Maintenance of Gender Hierarchies	119
3.2 Individualism.....	121
3.2.1 Vulnerability Constrained Under an Agency Related Logic of Risk/behaviour—Paves the way for liberal individualism	122
3.2.2 (In)equality	124
3.2.3 Rights	126
3.3 Participatory/Inclusive Development/Globalization	129
3.3.1 Push for Participatory/Inclusive Development/Globalization vis-à-vis General Vulnerability to AIDS	130
3.3.2 Push for Participatory/Inclusive Development/Globalization vis-à-vis Gender Vulnerability to AIDS.....	131
3.3.3 Women’s Obscured Contemporary Inclusion and Participation in Globalization and Development	133
3.3.4 Silence on the Consequences of or Interests Served by the Denial of Women’s Inclusion and Participation in Globalization and Development	136
Conclusion.....	139
Conclusion: Spaces in the UN System for Alternative Understandings of Gender With Respect to World Order.....	142
Bibliography.....	148

Thesis Abstract

This thesis is primarily concerned with the concept of gender. It is interested in gender both insofar as it shapes vulnerability, as well as the degree to which particular understandings of gender are instrumental to the functioning of the current world order. This thesis argues that the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS is an example of the manner in which gender is instrumentalized and made to support a neoliberal globalized model of development and thus of a neoliberal world order. This argument is based upon a discourse analysis of key UN documents on the topic of gender vulnerability to AIDS which is guided by a critical gendered theoretical framework. While it is clear that no established counter-hegemonic or transformative discourse which would appreciably threaten the status quo is present, the existence of spaces for critique points to the potential for the emergence of sites of resistance within the UN.

Acronyms and UN Symbols

- AIDS – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
GAD – Gender and Development
GID – Gender in Development
HIPC – Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDL – International Division of Labour
ILO – International Labour Organization
IMF – International Monetary Fund
INGOs – International Non-Governmental Organizations
MDGs – Millennium Development Goals
ODA – Official Development Assistance
OHCHR – Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
SAPs – Structural Adjustment Programs
SARS – Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
STIs – Sexually Transmitted Infections
UN – United Nations
UNAIDS – Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP – United Nations Development Program
UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund
UNIFEM – United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNOSAA – United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa
WHO – World Health Organization
WID – Women in Development
- A/ – General Assembly
S/ – Security Council
E/ – Economic and Social Council

Introduction: Unequal Vulnerability to AIDS

Although statistics can be misleading, those concerning the global HIV/AIDS¹ pandemic leave little doubt that vulnerability is not equally shared. Although vulnerability to AIDS is much broader than infection, the data in that direction is revealing nevertheless. Between 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2004, the number of people infected with HIV worldwide rose from 10, to 19.5, to 36.1, to 40 million people; 90-95% of whom live in developing countries². By 2006, total infections reached 65 million people, 25 million of whom have died³. While sub-Saharan Africa makes up only roughly 10% of the world's population, it is burdened with between two thirds and three quarters of infections⁴. It was estimated in 2006 that there are nearly 16,000 new infections of HIV daily on a global scale, most of which occur in sub-Saharan Africa⁵. By 2001, for all of Africa, AIDS had become the number one cause of death, exceeding conflict-related deaths⁶.

Researchers are also beginning to acknowledge and address the increasingly gendered nature (otherwise known as the feminization) of the pandemic, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2001, women made up 55% of new infections in sub-Saharan Africa. In

¹ With the understanding that the connection between HIV and AIDS has been established as a fact, from this point on I will refer to this problem in the form of 'AIDS' or the AIDS pandemic.

² For 1990 and 2000, see SHAHABUDIN, Sharifah H. (2001). "Gender and HIV/AIDS – the Human Rights and Security Perspectives." <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/Shahabudin2001.htm> (12/07/2007); KRISTOFFERSSON, Ulf (2000). *HIV/AIDS as a Human Security Issue: A gender perspective*. Windhoek, Namibia. <http://www.un.org.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/womenwatch/daw/csw/hiv aids/kristoffersson.htm>. (12/07/2007). For 1995 and 2004, see, BARROSO, Carmen (2005). *Gender, Youth and AIDS*. Baku, Azerbaijan: U.N. Division for the Advancement of Women. p. 3.

³ A/RES/60/262 (2006). *Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS*. (15 June). par. 2.

⁴ FLESHMAN, Michael (2005). "Women: The Face of AIDS in Africa." *Africa Renewal* (August). p. 12. Also A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). *Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS: Global Crisis—Global Action*. (2 August). par. 3; an estimated 67% in UNAIDS (2008). *2008 Report on the global AIDS epidemic*. Geneva, (August). p. 32.

⁵ MURPHY, Elaine M., Margaret E. GREENE, Alexandra MIHAILOVIC, and Peter OLUPOT-OLUPOT (2006). "Was the 'ABC' Approach (Abstinence, being Faithful, using Condoms) Responsible for Uganda's Decline in HIV?" *PLoS Medicine* 3 (9). p. 1445. For a detailed account of the factors contributing to the uniquely fast spread of the virus in Africa, see KALIPENI, Ezekiel, and Njeri MBUGUA (2005). "A Review of Preventative Efforts in the Fight Against HIV and AIDS in Africa." *Norwegian Journal of Geography* 59.

⁶ SHAHABUDIN (2001). "Gender and HIV/AIDS." online; KRISTOFFERSSON (2000). *HIV/AIDS as a Human Security Issue*. online.

2005, of all infected Africans between the ages of 15 and 25 (common age of new infections), roughly 75% were women⁷. This meant that by 2007, women made up 60% of total infections in sub-Saharan Africa⁸. The prevalence rates for 15-49 year old men and women in sub-Saharan Africa are 6.4 and 8.6 percent respectively and young women (aged 15-24) are three times (six times in some countries) more likely to be infected than their male counterparts⁹.

In light of the information above, it is evident that vulnerability to AIDS is not equally shared among the populations of the world. Africans and especially sub-Saharan African women are disproportionately vulnerable to the pandemic.

Several explanations for AIDS vulnerability focus narrowly on economic determinants. While certainly valid, economic determinants alone fail to explain not only the multiple forms of vulnerability, but also the uniqueness of contemporary patterns of AIDS vulnerability. Poku however, offers a more nuanced explanation which, although still closely related to economic determinants, provides context for the contemporary shape of those determinants. He suggests that AIDS is closely paired with globalization: “the changes in the distribution of income and poverty and the impact of neoliberal economic strategies, which characterize globalization, have a direct impact on human well-being and thus provide the context for the rampant spread of HIV/AIDS”¹⁰. Similarly, Robbins offers a more tailored explanation for the patterns of AIDS vulnerability. He argues that “Each age, it seems, has its signature disease [. . .] AIDS is very much the signature disease of the latter quarter of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century, serving as a marker for

⁷ FLESHMAN (2005). “Women: The Face of AIDS in Africa.” p. 12.

⁸ UNAIDS (2008). *2008 Report on the global AIDS epidemic*. p. 33.

⁹ BARROSO (2005). *Gender, Youth and AIDS*. pp. 4-5.

¹⁰ POKU, Nana K. (2007). “HIV/AIDS in a Globalized World: An uneven pandemic in an unequal world.” in *Globalization, Development and Human Security*, eds. Anthony MCGREW and Nana K. POKU. Cambridge: Polity Press. p. 152.

the increasing disparities in wealth between core and periphery and the accompanying disparity in susceptibility to disease”¹¹. He explains that there is sufficient previous research which documents “the link between economic inequality and the susceptibility to infectious disease [. . .] But AIDS has affected not only the economically marginalized but also those who are socially and politically marginalized—homosexuals, women, and children”¹². Therefore, vulnerability to AIDS is not only determined by factors related to wealth and economic disparities, but also to wider socially determined factors. This thesis brings together both economic and social determinants of AIDS vulnerability through the application of the notion of gender to the case of sub-Saharan African women.

It is true that females are more vulnerable to AIDS infection due to their biological makeup¹³. However, this point of difference is not sufficient to explain the gender disparity revealed in the statistics presented above. To understand this disparity, we need to appreciate the extent to which women in sub-Saharan Africa are disproportionately vulnerable to AIDS infection and to the negative impacts of the pandemic due to gender norms and practices. Given that approximately 70% of infections worldwide occur through sexual intercourse, the socially constructed subordinate gender roles which influence women’s decisional power with regards to sexual relations are crucial. Not only does this gender inequality contribute to women’s disproportionate vulnerability to infection and the

¹¹ ROBBINS, Richard H. (2005). *Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism*. 3rd ed. Boston: Pearson Allyn and Bacon. p. 234.

¹² ROBBINS (2005). *Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism*. p. 256. Robbins adds that “Socially marginalized members of the capitalist world system face another danger: Once infected with HIV, they are the ones least likely to receive treatment or to receive information to enable them to take measures to avoid the onset of AIDS” (258).

¹³ FLESHMAN (2005). “Women: The Face of AIDS in Africa.” p. 12; POKU, Nana K., and Alan WHITESIDE (2004). “Introduction: Africa’s HIV/AIDS Crisis.” in *The Political Economy of AIDS in Africa*, eds. Nana K. POKU and Alan WHITESIDE. Burlington: Ashgate. p. xix.

negative health impacts of infection, but gender inequality also increases women's vulnerability to the harmful socio-economic impacts of the pandemic.

There are several examples of gender norms and practices which contribute to women's disproportionate vulnerability to AIDS. Women and girls have less access to education about sexual health and there is an under-investment in the research and development of affordable women-controlled methods of prevention and protection against STIs. The feminization of poverty, often caused or at least compounded by women's inferior economic status vis-à-vis wages and property, also aggravates gender vulnerability because poorer women must sometimes resort to sex work (local or abroad) often with older partners and are (in and out of sex work) less able to negotiate safer sex or fidelity with their partners due to the threat of physical violence. In fact, married women are more vulnerable to infection than unmarried women and it is very likely that the greater part of HIV-positive African women were infected by their spouses. Furthermore, women, who are treated as bounty during periods of conflict, can become targets of systematic rape. In conflict (as well as post-conflict) situations, women are also vulnerable not only due to breakdowns in social structures and aggravated poverty but partially due to the presence of military personnel (domestic and foreign) which fuels increases in sex work. Also, young women are even more at risk (to rape and sexual coercion) due to the perception that they are less likely to be infected compounded by the belief that sex with a virgin can cure an infected man¹⁴.

In terms of socio-economic impacts, AIDS is a comprehensive threat for women regardless of their HIV status. Those who are infected face a greater risk of dying sooner

¹⁴ SHAHABUDIN (2001). "Gender and HIV/AIDS." online; SY, Elhadj (2001). "Gender, HIV/AIDS, and Human Security." <http://www.un.org.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/womenwatch/daw/csw/Sy2001.htm> (12/07/2007); KRISTOFFERSSON (2000). *HIV/AIDS as a Human Security Issue*. online; FLESHMAN (2005). "Women: The Face of AIDS in Africa." pp. 13-14; BARROSO (2005). *Gender, Youth and AIDS*. p. 5; POKU and WHITESIDE (2004). "Introduction: Africa's HIV/AIDS Crisis." p. xix.

because they are weakened by their gender defined responsibilities and duties both at home and at work. In the household, they are habitually expected to eat last when food is scarce. Women agricultural labourers are often exposed to harmful substances at work which can significantly aggravate their condition because due to social constraints, women's wearing of protective gear which is perceived as masculine is restricted. And finally, stigmatization and discrimination sometimes await women who become infected. Despite the fact that men tend to have more extensive sexual networks than do women, this practice is more commonly accepted. Therefore, infected women, rather than men, are branded as promiscuous for which they are then often abused and/or abandoned¹⁵.

Even for those women who are not infected, the negative socio-economic impacts of AIDS are significant and insidious. At the household level, increased burdens of care and income generation most often fall on girls and women (young and old)¹⁶. This burden of care situation is aggravated when girls are taken out of school to care for the sick or to save/generate income¹⁷. As such, AIDS poses a barrier to gender equality and female empowerment¹⁸. At a macro-economic level, reductions in public spending due to economic downturn brought about by high national or regional morbidity and mortality, disproportionately impact women. As above, the services which are cut at the national level must be made up at the household level and this burden generally falls on women¹⁹.

As can be clearly discerned from the above description of patterns of vulnerability to AIDS, it becomes evident that vulnerability towards the pandemic is unequally shared

¹⁵ SHAHABUDIN (2001). "Gender and HIV/AIDS." online; SY (2001). "Gender, HIV/AIDS, and Human Security." online; KRISTOFFERSSON (2000). *HIV/AIDS as a Human Security Issue*. online; FLESHMAN (2005). "Women: The Face of AIDS in Africa." pp. 13-14; BARROSO (2005). *Gender, Youth and AIDS*. p. 5; POKU and WHITESIDE (2004). "Introduction: Africa's HIV/AIDS Crisis." p. xix.

¹⁶ SHAHABUDIN (2001). "Gender and HIV/AIDS." online.

¹⁷ SHAHABUDIN (2001). "Gender and HIV/AIDS." online.

¹⁸ BARROSO (2005). *Gender, Youth and AIDS*. p. 2.

¹⁹ SHAHABUDIN (2001). "Gender and HIV/AIDS." online.

throughout the world, both between and across societies. The specific vulnerability experienced by sub-Saharan African women can be understood to be determined by gender.

Rationalization of Research Topic and Case Study

Patterns of vulnerability reveal the identity-based nature of social inequalities. The patterns of sub-Saharan African women's vulnerability to AIDS are illustrative of this point. As such, the patterns of vulnerability to, and negative impacts of, the AIDS pandemic can be seen as indicators of identity-based social inequalities²⁰. It is precisely due to the multiple forms of vulnerability put in relief by the AIDS pandemic (and specifically its effects on the women of sub-Saharan Africa) that it may contribute to an understanding of the interconnectedness between multiple forms of vulnerability. More specifically, this thesis argues that the structural hierarchy of gender is at the core of that interconnectedness.

Countless local, national, international, and non-governmental bodies have responded to the AIDS pandemic²¹. In addition to providing relief to cushion the effects of the crisis, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, many organizations have attempted to reduce gender vulnerability to both infection and the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic.

I have chosen to focus my study of gender-based vulnerability on the UN because of the role it plays through its position as an international institution in the current world order. As we will see later, within a Coxian theoretical framework, the UN is a concrete manifestation of an international institution. Institutions (such as the UN) as well as ideas (such as those which pertain to gender), are two of the key forces which constitute the

²⁰ This idea is hinted at in KRISTOFFERSSON (2000). *HIV/AIDS as a Human Security Issue*. online; SHAHABUDIN (2001). "Gender and HIV/AIDS." online.

²¹ These include but are by no means limited to: the Global Fund, various INGOs, or even on national institutions with a global agenda such as USAID (United States Agency for International Development), PEPFAR (U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief), and CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency).

historical structure of world order. The manner in which the UN addresses gender vulnerability to the AIDS pandemic has significant theoretical implications for the stability and expansion of the current world order.

Guiding Research Question and Argument

I have chosen to look at AIDS and its effects on sub-Saharan African women as an empirical anchor for a predominantly theoretical study. I am interested in the triangulation between world order, gender, and vulnerability (to AIDS here). I am interested in gender both insofar as it shapes (multiple forms of) vulnerability as well as the degree to which it is instrumental to the functioning of the current world order. By exploring these links, I hope to complete the triangulation just noted and expose the role that gender plays in the maintenance of the current neoliberal globalized world order.

The question which guides the research of this thesis is the following: *How does the UN discourse understand the notion of gender in the context of its relationship to AIDS vulnerability and why?*

This thesis argues that *the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS is an example of the manner in which gender is instrumentalized and made to support a neoliberal globalized model of development and thus of a neoliberal world order.* There is certainly no established counter-hegemonic or transformative discourse pertaining to gender which would appreciably threaten the neoliberal globalized model of development and thus of world order. With respect to gender, the UN has failed to become a clear site of contestation or source of transformative change. Moreover, the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS opportunistically capitalizes on the situation of gender vulnerability to AIDS in order to promote a neoliberal world order which is gender biased.

This argument is substantiated by the presence of a foundation for the support of a neoliberal model of development and thus of world order—support which consists of the privileging of problem-solving over critical approaches, as well as the promotion of development as solution and goal *par excellence*. Furthermore, gender is instrumentalized via three problem-solving themes which ultimately support a neoliberal globalized development model and thus a neoliberal world order: not taking gender seriously, pushing the notion of individualism, and the promotion of participatory development. The UN policy on gender vulnerability to AIDS from which these themes emanate is clearly gender biased.

First, the dominant pattern of not fully taking gender hierarchies seriously reflects the liberal feminist understanding of gender. This dominant pattern helps to normalize the privileging of that which is identified as masculine over that which is associated with femininity. The hegemony of the current world order is constructed in part on the normalization of the subordination of the feminine. Next, the privileging of the agency-oriented logic of individualism over vulnerability precludes any significant discussion of the structural nature of AIDS vulnerability. The promotion and acceptance of the supposedly gender-neutral nature of individualism is necessary to the maintenance of gendered hierarchies and harnesses gender in order to promote neoliberal development. Finally, the push for inclusive/participatory development/globalization, including its implicit denial of the role already played by feminized others in the global economy as well as the silence on the consequences of or interests served by this denial, supports the role of patriarchy in the maintenance and expansion of the current world order via flexibilization.

The principle argument of this thesis is nuanced by the conclusion that, while there is a clear liberal bias in this discourse and although no signs of truly transformative change have been detected, there are several exceptional junctures at which alternative

understandings of gender, and consequently its relationship to world order, take root. Although those understandings of gender have not been translated into UN actions, policies, or recommendations, this thesis concludes that the existence of these spaces for critique points to the potential for the emergence of sites of resistance within the UN.

Underlying this argument is the perspective from which it emerges. This perspective is essentially comprised of two theoretical points of departure: a belief in the superiority of critical over problem-solving approaches, and a subsequent critical understanding of gender as an analytic category.

Whereas problem-solving theory seeks to affect change within a received system, thus reinforcing that system, critical theory seeks to call into question the seemingly objective and neutral power and social relationships as well as the institutions of that very system in order to affect transformative change²². Problem-solving theory accepts the established hegemonic perspective as the unchallenged point of departure and makes claims to universal validity with respect to its findings. It is most useful when trying to resolve a problematic within the established order. Its adherence to a fixed order and claims towards objective conclusions lead it to reify that order through its methods. Thus, it is ideologically biased, conservative and value-bound. On the other hand, critical theory identifies *the established perspective* (neoliberalism here) as the problematic to be confronted. Whereas problem-solving theory is ahistorical, critical theory uses a dialectic method which requires first to synchronically identify the origins of the established order and second to diachronically identify its inherent contradictions which could serve as potential frameworks

²² BOOTH, Ken, ed. (2005). *Critical Security Studies and World Politics*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. p. 4; KRAUSE, Keith, and Michael Charles WILLIAMS, eds. (2003). *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and cases*. New York: Routledge. p. xi.

for action towards alternatives²³. Whereas problem-solving theory claims to be objective and value-free, critical theory is consciously and unashamedly normative and partially utopian in the sense that it seeks more favourable alternatives to the current order. However, critical theory avoids idealism because it is bound by historical structures which limit and help to narrow the range of possible alternatives; historical structures are recognized as 'limited totalities'²⁴.

The distinction between problem-solving and critical theory is also fundamental here because of the prevalence of problem-solving approaches found in the case study. It is essential to support the argument that the solutions put forth by the UN with respect to the relationship between AIDS and gender vulnerability reflect a problem-solving rather than a critical approach. In the context of a problem-solving approach, some immediate improvements can be made. However, the very structure which sustains the gendered nature of the pandemic is protected and the status quo maintained. A critical approach rather, would entail a questioning and deconstruction of that structure, allowing for the potential of transformative change²⁵.

My understanding of gender vulnerability to AIDS is essentially guided by a theoretical conceptualization of gender as an analytic category. This means that the man/woman structural hierarchy is not the only conceptual opposition which is informed by the social construction of gender. Rather, there are multiple structural and hierarchal conceptual oppositions which are informed and interconnected by the masculine/feminine opposition which constitutes the social construction of gender. These oppositions are

²³ COX, Robert W. with Timothy J. SINCLAIR (1996). *Approaches to World Order*. New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 8, 88-89.

²⁴ COX with SINCLAIR (1996). *Approaches to World Order*. pp. 8, 90.

²⁵ The foundations of these arguments (specifically those referring to problem-solving and critical approaches) are taken largely from the works of Robert Cox. See for example COX with SINCLAIR (1996). *Approaches to World Order*. pp. 88-89.

informed by the masculine/feminine opposition in such a way that their second term, the 'other', is feminized²⁶. This feminization of the other takes place therefore not only within the gendered opposition between men and women but also within other oppositions which are gendered such as ethnicity (white/non-white), colonial history (colonizer/colonised), class (rich/poor), and sexual orientation (heterosexual/homosexual)²⁷. Therefore, the social construction of gender contributes to shaping AIDS vulnerability through its influence over a multiplicity of identity-based structural and hierarchal conceptual oppositions.

In light of this expanded reading of gender vulnerability to AIDS, gendered structural and hierarchal conceptual oppositions can be understood as major contributors to AIDS vulnerability. A comprehensive approach to reducing vulnerability towards the AIDS pandemic requires an unyielding incorporation of an expanded interpretation of gender which includes an understanding of the multiplicity of gendered structural hierarchies. However, the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS does not include such an understanding of gender and the manner in which it plays upon and connects multiple structural hierarchies. The UN discourse recognizes that AIDS vulnerabilities are shaped by multiple forms of social inequalities including gender inequality. What is lacking from the UN understanding of gender however is that the multiple inequalities which shape the patterns of negative impacts of the AIDS pandemic are interconnected by the structural conceptual opposition of masculinity/femininity.

²⁶ This understanding of the gendered aspect of the multiple oppositional hierarchies suggested here is found in the works of V. Spike Peterson as well as (but to a lesser extent) Sandra Whitworth, and Edward Said.

²⁷ There are several other binaries which can also be gendered but which I feel are adequately represented among those already listed. They include: first/third world, North/South, occident/orient, developed/underdeveloped, modern/traditional, capitalist/pre-capitalist, and science or reason/emotion. Another hierarchy to which gender can equally be applied is nature. While the subordination of human gendered others and that of nature are connected, that link has not been further explored here. For these arguments see TICKNER, J. Ann (1992). *Gender in International Relations: Feminist perspectives on achieving global security*. New York: Columbia University Press. pp. 97-126.

Despite some initial impressions that the relationship between gender and AIDS presents an opportunity for transformative change, this thesis shows that the relationship between gender and AIDS is harnessed as an opportunity to instrumentalize gender in the promotion of neoliberalism. This instrumentalization is executed in a manner which not only strips gender of its critical transformative potential, but silences alternatives and becomes a mechanism in the very system which profits from gendered structural hierarchies—gender becomes a tool in the maintenance, rather than the destruction, of those hierarchies. The goals towards which gender is instrumentalized are in fact at the root of (and increasingly require, under globalization) the many problems they purport to solve, such as gendered structural hierarchies.

Outline

In order to be able to address the research question and make the argument presented above, this thesis presents the theoretical underpinnings necessary to make the connections between gender and the current neoliberal globalized world order, as well as documentation and analysis of the empirical findings from the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. The following is a brief outline of the structure of this presentation.

The first chapter establishes the foundations required to theoretically understand and move beyond the problem outlined above. It provides the theoretical tools necessary in order to understand how and why gender is instrumentalized in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. It outlines both liberal and critical understandings of gender and individualism; the relationship between world order, hegemonic discourse, and the role of international institutions with respect to gender; the role of gender in the maintenance of neoliberal world order, both prior to and in the contemporary globalized economy; how the

push for participatory/inclusive development/globalization instrumentalizes gender; and finally the findings of an illustrative study of the instrumentalization of gender in another area of the UN discourse.

The second and third chapters document and analyse the empirical findings from the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. They confirm that while gender vulnerability to AIDS is an important issue for the UN, the manner in which the UN confronts this issue is of a problem-solving nature and largely derived from a liberal feminist orientation. This approach instrumentalizes gender to support a neoliberal model of development and thus of world order. In addition to some remarks on methodology and an overview of the UN response to AIDS and gender vulnerability to it, the second chapter exposes the foundation for this support which consists of the privileging of problem-solving over critical approaches thus precluding transformative change, as well as the promotion of development as solution and goal *par excellence*. Subsequently, the third chapter builds upon the groundwork revealed in the second chapter by exposing how gender is instrumentalized in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. It will expose that gender is channelled towards three problem-solving themes which ultimately support a neoliberal globalized development model and thus world order: not taking gender seriously, pushing the (supposedly gender-neutral) notion of individualism, and the promotion of participatory development.

The theoretical foundation laid out in the first chapter along with the empirical findings and analysis offered in the second and third, support my argument that the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS is an example of the manner in which gender is instrumentalized and made to support a neoliberal globalized model of development and thus of a neoliberal world order.

Chapter 1: A Theoretical Review of Gender, Hegemony and the Maintenance of World Order

Those whose identities make them victims of social inequalities are the same individuals who are most vulnerable in times of crisis. In other words, when a crisis occurs, the patterns of vulnerability made visible through its impacts reveal the identity-based nature of social inequalities. As a crisis, the AIDS pandemic is no exception and the patterns of sub-Saharan African women's vulnerability to it are illustrative of this point. The patterns of vulnerability to, and the negative impacts of, the AIDS pandemic can be seen as indicators of identity-based social inequalities¹. As stated in the introduction, it is precisely due to the multiple forms of vulnerability put in relief by the AIDS pandemic (and specifically its effects on the women of sub-Saharan Africa) that it may contribute to an understanding of the interconnectedness between multiple forms of vulnerability.

As we saw in the introduction, this thesis seeks to address how and why the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS understands the notion of gender. What I mean by gender vulnerability is that women both have less control over whether or not they are infected with the disease than men (through the subordination of women in sexual relationships, both consensual and non-consensual), and bear the greater burden of dealing with the consequences of the disease (in terms of an increased burden of care—for themselves, their family, their community, their country—as well as in terms of the socially attributed responsibility for the disease). To reiterate, my argument is that the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS is an example of the manner in which gender is

¹ This idea is hinted at in KRISTOFFERSSON, Ulf (2000). *HIV/AIDS as a Human Security Issue: A gender perspective*. Windhoek, Namibia. <http://www.un.org.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/womenwatch/daw/csw/hivaids/kristofferesson.htm>. (12/07/2007); SHAHABUDIN, Sharifah H. (2001). "Gender and HIV/AIDS – the Human Rights and Security Perspectives." <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/Shahabudin2001.htm> (12/07/2007).

instrumentalized and made to support a neoliberal model of development and thus of a neoliberal² world order³. This theoretical review presents the conceptual foundations which, when applied to the empirical findings (as we will see in the subsequent chapters), allow me to make the connections between gender and the current neoliberal globalized world order which substantiate this argument.

This study uses a post-positivist critical gendered framework. This means that it uses a gendered approach which privileges critical over problem-solving theory. More specifically, it entails the application of gender as an ‘analytic category’ in the context of globalization which is informed by both feminism and critical theory. Furthermore, this

² I have decided to use the term neoliberalism when referring to the currently world order. Despite the similarities between liberalism and neoliberalism, there are certain nuances which are significant enough that I wish to acknowledge the difference by using the more precise word. Furthermore, a significant focus of my argument is on globalization which is much more closely associated with neoliberalism. Finally, neoliberalism is the most common term currently used to describe the present form taken by development and world order.

My understanding of neoliberalism is primarily drawn from Peterson. According to Peterson, neoliberalism “takes classic liberalism’s separation of politics from economics and belief in individual market rationality to the global level” (p. 174 n.5). Neoliberalism has prompted a “*structural* shift in processes of capital production and accumulation” (p. 174, n.5). It is “typically cast as economic restructuring in the north and structural adjustment programs in the south. In both developed and developing countries this involves deregulating labor relations and industrial practices, maximizing exports and reducing imports, and enhancing private capital in support of expanding international trade” (p. 70). The “market reforms promoted by neoliberalism are also characterized as supply-side economics, ‘the Washington consensus’, or market fundamentalism. Liberalization is the code word [defined as] the degree to which ‘articles, financial instruments, fixed assets, messages, and ideas can circulate throughout the world economy free from state-imposed restrictions.’ Policy reforms are variously aimed at eliminating such restrictions: deregulation (to remove existing regulatory constraints); privatization (to replace the ‘inefficiencies’ of public ownership and control); and free trade (opening borders to the flow of goods and capital). Complementing these supply-side reforms are fiscal and monetary ‘stabilization policies’ (to reduce government spending, deficits, and aggregate demand). Finally, specialization in economic activities is promoted, based on the assumption of comparative advantage, and export-oriented policies are favored in pursuit of economic development and growth” (p. 5). PETERSON, V. Spike (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy: Integrating reproductive, productive, and virtual economies*. New York: Routledge.

³ To explain briefly, Cox describes world order as one of three interrelated spheres or levels of activity (the other two are forms of state and social forces of production). As with any of the three spheres, world order can be analyzed through the application of the method of historical structures. This method consists of an analysis of the content and interaction among a configuration of forces: ideas, material capabilities and institutions. The direction and intensity of influence between the three spheres of activity as well as the three categories of forces of historical structures are in a state of constant change and therefore must be determined through an analysis of the particular circumstances. It is important to understand that these components are interrelated and mutually dependent – a change in one has the potential to produce change in the others. See COX, Robert W. with Timothy J. SINCLAIR (1996). *Approaches to World Order*. New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 97-101.

study requires an understanding of the Coxian notion of hegemony as it relates to world order. My framework is primarily based on the work of Robert W. Cox, Sandra Whitworth, V. Spike Peterson and Maria Mies.

This theoretical review begins with an outline of both liberal and critical understandings of gender and individualism. It then establishes the relationship between world order, hegemonic discourse, and the role of international institutions with respect to gender. Furthermore, it reveals the role of gender in the maintenance of neoliberal world order, both prior to and in the contemporary globalized economy. Subsequently, it illustrates how the push for participatory/inclusive development/globalization instrumentalizes gender. Finally, this chapter concludes with the findings of an illustrative study of the instrumentalization of gender in another area of the UN discourse. Each of these components build upon one another and collectively they form the theoretical underpinnings central to the argument of this thesis.

1.1 Gender

In order to understand the manner in which the UN instrumentalizes the concept of gender in its discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS, we first need to understand the meanings which can be attributed to the concept of gender. While there are many ways of understanding gender, this theoretical review will focus on two of these. The first mirrors the liberal feminist way in which the UN has tended to understand gender. I will draw upon the work of Sandra Whitworth, V. Spike Peterson and Zillah Eisenstein to outline this mainstream (liberal feminist) understanding of gender. I will then return to Whitworth and Eisenstein, in addition to Sarah Brown, Naila Kabeer, and Chantal Mouffe, to critique it.

The second understanding of gender discussed in this theoretical review presents a more critical understanding of the concept, useful because it allows us to explore the way in which the UN understanding of gender leads to its instrumentalization. In order to introduce this second approach, I will once again draw on the work of Sandra Whitworth as well as that of V. Spike Peterson. I will sketch an understanding of gender as an ‘analytic category’ as well as illustrate the value of such an expanded understanding of gender. These insights are essential to this thesis as they provide a framework for understanding and problematizing the manner in which gender is instrumentalized in the UN discourse.

1.1.1 Mainstream (Liberal) Feminism and Gender

The liberal variant of feminism dominates feminism. In fact, where other forms of feminism are acknowledged, the liberal variant is frequently referred to as ‘mainstream’ feminism. The dominance of liberal feminism is evidenced by the observation that “both feminists and nonfeminists often mistakenly assume that it *is* feminism”⁴. The result of equating liberal feminism with feminism is that other feminisms “are rendered nonexistent”⁵.

Much of mainstream liberal feminist scholarship, despite its professed understanding of gender as a social construction, has been limited to the analysis of the man/woman conceptual dichotomy. This is primarily due to its understanding of gender. While the UN understanding of gender as a social construction which subordinates women to men serves to shed some light on women’s disproportionate vulnerability to AIDS in general, when taken alone, it fails to explain why, for instance, the women of sub-Saharan Africa are so much more vulnerable than other women around the world. What other forms of inequality do

⁴ EISENSTEIN, Zillah R. (1981). *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism*. New York: Longman. p. 4.

⁵ EISENSTEIN (1981). *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism*. p. 4.

they face which may contribute to their disproportionate vulnerability to AIDS? Or rather, along the lines of what other structural hierarchies are the women of sub-Saharan Africa subordinated? Furthermore and most important here, is there a significant connection between the other forms of inequality and that which they face in relation to the man/woman conceptual dichotomy?

Peterson argues that while the work which has come of liberal feminist analyses has been an instrumental “corrective” to androcentric gender bias across both social and theoretical spheres, this limited use of gender analysis has several significant drawbacks. First, the insistence upon gender as the difference between only men and women leads to a conceptual homogenization of, as well as universalizing claims about, women. This homogenization implies that the experiences of women under patriarchy are equally felt across other differences and hierarchies such as race/ethnicity, class etc. The result is that the differences and diversity among women are obscured⁶. Second, this preoccupation with the man/woman dichotomy also implies that sexism is the primary oppression (‘primary’ understood as both most important and as sufficient towards an understanding of other forms of oppression)⁷. Furthermore, a disproportionate concentration on the man/women dichotomy, despite insistence that gender is a social construction which is pervasive to all of social life, nevertheless tends to reify and reinscribe gender as a biologically determined factor⁸. What’s more, and most important to this thesis, is that the tendency of feminist scholarship to focus on and regress back to the man/woman dichotomy, if not consistently

⁶ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. pp. 33-34.

⁷ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. pp. 33-34.

⁸ WHITWORTH, Sandra (1994). *Feminism and International Relations: Towards a political economy of gender in interstate and non-governmental institutions*. Hampshire: Macmillan. p. 20.

justified where it is merited, restricts the development of a comprehensive gendered analysis of the intersection of structural hierarchies.

The restricted understanding of gender exemplified by mainstream liberal feminism is inadequate towards a comprehensive understanding of the interconnectedness of multiple gender hierarchies, the vulnerabilities they create, or their relationship to the stability of world order. This is also the understanding of gender most often demonstrated by the UN, which argues, for example, that women are more susceptible to AIDS because of an inadequate adherence to notions of individualism such as inequality and rights. The failings of this approach are obvious, however, for they do not allow us to understand why vulnerability, particularly gender vulnerability, cannot be fully accounted for by these factors. Rather, even in situations where equality and rights have been achieved, gender vulnerability persists. In part, the limitations of the liberal feminist approach are to be found in its assumption that individualism is gender-neutral. We will now turn to an analysis of how individualism harnesses gender in order to silence critique and promote neoliberal development.

1.1.2 Critique of (Liberal Feminist) Individualism

Individualism is one of the pillars of liberal theory⁹. It is no surprise that liberal feminists tend to adopt the notion of individualism provided to them by liberal theory (and thus the interrelated notions of rights and equality)¹⁰. From a critical perspective though, even a so-called feminist account of individualism, is problematic. This is because,

⁹ “[. . .] now the dominant political ideology of twentieth-century Western society. Because the liberal values of independence, equality of opportunity, and individualism are the predominant and accepted values of Western society [. . .] They are accepted as the norm rather than as a specific ideology”, EISENSTEIN (1981). *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism*. p. 4.

¹⁰ EISENSTEIN (1981). *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism*. p. 5.

according to Eisenstein, “the patriarchal underpinnings of liberal theory are [. . .] indispensable to liberalism”¹¹. She describes liberalism as “a specific ideology seeking to protect and reinforce the relations of patriarchal and capitalist society”¹². From this critical perspective, it becomes clear that a discourse which is dominated by liberal feminism will not be in a position to affect transformative change with respect to gender. While liberal feminism may influence significant short-term improvements, it precludes change which is of a more long-term and transformative nature¹³. It follows that the same is true of even a feminist vein of individualism.

One of the primary tenets of liberal individualism, equality, rests on the public/private dichotomy. Liberal feminists maintain that women have been historically relegated to the private realm, and therefore seek to integrate women into the public realm¹⁴. Women have been mistakenly restricted to the private realm as a group and rather want to be judged as individuals in the public realm¹⁵. Liberal feminists maintain that equality will be achieved through equal participation and inclusion in the public realm¹⁶. They make their demands based upon the liberal notion of equality which is derived “from a conception of

¹¹ EISENSTEIN (1981). *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism*. p. 5.

¹² EISENSTEIN (1981). *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism*. p. 5.

¹³ Brown also suggests that the liberal feminist approach not only fails to threaten but actually contributes towards the maintenance of the (liberal) state (system) and consequently of gender inequality. She argues that owing to its liberal roots, the liberal state presupposes gender inequality and plays a significant role in the “maintenance and reproduction of patriarchy” (p. 463). She maintains that liberal feminists “make extensive use of, and indeed rely upon the state to enforce liberty, equality and justice for all” (p. 463). In addressing their appeals for reform to the liberal state, liberal feminists legitimize not only the state’s jurisdiction over the public sphere but also the public/private division of labour as “‘natural and progressive”” (p. 463). See BROWN, Sarah (1988). “Feminism, International Theory, and International Relations of Gender Inequality.” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 17 (3).

¹⁴ EISENSTEIN (1981). *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism*. pp. 5-6; BROWN (1988). “Feminism, International Theory, and International Relations of Gender Inequality.” pp. 462, 463.

¹⁵ BROWN (1988). “Feminism, International Theory, and International Relations of Gender Inequality.” p. 463.

¹⁶ WHITWORTH (1994). *Feminism and International Relations*. p. 14; Brown refers to this belief as a “beguiling fiction” in BROWN (1988). “Feminism, International Theory, and International Relations of Gender Inequality.” p. 462.

human nature and of society that is radically individualistic”¹⁷. Equality should be determined with respect to the ability to reason (defined as the ability to choose the optimum means to achieve one’s goals). According to liberal philosophy, rational individuals are the basic units of society. Humans are fundamentally the same irrespective of class or culture, and are therefore deserving of equal treatment. Liberal feminists quite simply extend these arguments to women¹⁸. It follows that from a liberal feminist perspective, gender inequality is ‘*irrational*’, ‘counterfactual’, ‘an anachronism’¹⁹. It “constitutes a violation of all of liberalism’s fundamental values [. . .] The extension of liberalism then, is seen to provide the solution to women’s oppression”²⁰.

Implicit in the aspirations of liberal feminists is a belief that, aside from the historical exclusion of women, there is nothing “that is *inherently* unfair or unequal within politics or international relations” (emphasis mine)²¹. Critics contend however, that “inequalities are a defining characteristic of the very structures in which women might participate, and as such their participation alone will not change this fundamental fact”²². In other words, the public (productive) and private (reproductive) realms are masculine and feminine respectively, where the second is subordinated to the first. The public realm, the basis for equality and rights, is based on a masculine image and is predicated on the exclusion of femininity (which is relegated to the private realm)²³. Consequentially, “the adoption by liberal feminists of a

¹⁷ BROWN (1988). “Feminism, International Theory, and International Relations of Gender Inequality.” p. 463.

¹⁸ KABEER, Naila (1994). *Reversed Realities: Gender hierarchies in development thought*. New York: Verso. p. 27. Kabeer notes that these arguments are the foundation for much of WID advocacy and that the contribution of WID to these arguments was to extend the notion of the rational individual to women all over the world.

¹⁹ BROWN (1988). “Feminism, International Theory, and International Relations of Gender Inequality.” p. 463.

²⁰ BROWN (1988). “Feminism, International Theory, and International Relations of Gender Inequality.” p. 462.

²¹ WHITWORTH (1994). *Feminism and International Relations*. p. 14.

²² WHITWORTH (1994). *Feminism and International Relations*. p. 16.

²³ MOUFFE, Chantal (1993). *The Return of the Political*. New York: Verso. p. 79. Rather than merely accepting that those in the public realm are rational actors, Kabeer sheds some light on the characteristics of the public/private relationship that facilitate this condition: “Women’s labour in the home relieves men of the tasks

theory of power predicated upon the public/private disjunction means that feminism is constrained by liberalism to misrecognise the basis of women's subordination; to pursue an 'equality' whose implicit referent is a male norm"²⁴. What's more, Brown critiques the mere possibility of 'gender equality'. She argues that liberal feminism

[. . .] ignores rather than addresses the tension that exists between the concept of 'equality', which presupposes sameness or equivalence, and the concept of gender, which is socially constructed as difference. When this tension is explicitly confronted, 'gender equality' stands exposed as a contradiction in terms: 'something of an oxymoron, which may explain why we are having such a difficult time getting it'²⁵

Several critics of liberal feminism and its understanding of individualism are concerned about its potential to both co-opt feminist analysis and silence critique; strategies that would ultimately reinforce and maintain gender hierarchies. Given the dominance of liberal theory and of its feminist variant discussed above, these concerns are well founded. In terms of co-optation, Brown warns against accepting approaches which seek merely to "accommodate women within the prevailing conception of international relations"²⁶. Whitworth asserts that "once women have been assimilated into [International Relations] in liberal feminist fashion, critique may thereby be silenced: a 'feminist' approach can be taken into account without fundamentally transforming existing assumptions"²⁷.

A form of silencing is achieved by the privileging of individualism over structure. Liberal theory generally privileges individualism not simply over but *at the expense of* structural considerations. Evidence of privileging individualism over structure, not only in the more obvious multiple ways that gender is pushed into categories of rights and equality

associated with maintaining both their own bodies and the domestic locations where such maintenance takes place, thereby freeing them to behave 'as if' they were indeed the disembodied rational agents of liberal theory", KABEER (1994). *Reversed Realities*. p. 29.

²⁴ BROWN (1988). "Feminism, International Theory, and International Relations of Gender Inequality." p. 463.

²⁵ BROWN (1988). "Feminism, International Theory, and International Relations of Gender Inequality." p. 470.

²⁶ BROWN (1988). "Feminism, International Theory, and International Relations of Gender Inequality." p. 461.

²⁷ WHITWORTH (1994). *Feminism and International Relations*. p. 16.

but also in the general emphasis on individual behaviour, will be seen in the final chapter. When individualism is privileged over structure, considerations of structural causes for gender vulnerability are all but erased:

There is no space here to consider power as a structural relationship, as socially entrenched asymmetries in rules and resources that enable some categories of individuals to constrain and shape the options and actions of others. Inequality is perceived only in terms of individual endowments; conflict takes the form of competition between individuals; and power implies decision-making power. The structural dimensions of gender and other inequalities are not merely ignored [in mainstream neo-classical economics here] but are *inconceivable*.²⁸

Similarly,

abstract individualism discourages liberals from conceiving of either individuals or social institutions as constituted or defined by structured relations of gender inequality [. . .] it removes accounts of gender inequality that include structures and processes of subordination as part of their explanation.²⁹

More specifically, Brown argues that the uncritical acceptance of a liberal feminist understanding of ‘gender equality’ is “part of the process of misrecognition of gender which is necessary to its maintenance”³⁰. To avoid the pitfalls of co-optation and the silencing of critique, Brown proposes an alternative recognition of gender inequality from a critical perspective:

When gender is viewed as *essentially an inequality*, constructed as a socially relevant difference in order to keep that inequality in place, then gender itself can be seen as an outcome of social processes of subordination, and issues of gender in international relations can be approached and treated as questions of systematic dominance. (emphasis mine)³¹

This analysis of the liberal feminist understanding of gender, and subsequently of individualism, has shown that it is not gender-neutral. Rather, not only is individualism

²⁸ KABEER (1994). *Reversed Realities*. p. 133.

²⁹ BROWN (1988). “Feminism, International Theory, and International Relations of Gender Inequality.” p. 464.

³⁰ BROWN (1988). “Feminism, International Theory, and International Relations of Gender Inequality.” p. 470.

³¹ BROWN (1988). “Feminism, International Theory, and International Relations of Gender Inequality.” p. 471.

inadequate to eliminate gender subordination, but it also paves the pathway for women's integration into the processes of neoliberal globalized development which is not always advantageous to those it purports to help. Individualism harnesses gender in the service of neoliberal globalization. The promotion of individualism permits discursive moves such as to co-opt feminist analysis and silence critique, as well as to push for participatory development. As we will see, the UN adopts this stance in its discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. In addition to the inherent and implicit compatibility between individualism and neoliberal development, there is also an explicit promotion of participation in the processes of globalization as a solution to vulnerability. In order to move beyond the limits of the liberal feminist understanding of gender, we will turn our attention to the development of a more critical understanding of gender.

1.1.3 Critical Feminism and Gender

Despite allusions to the socially constructed nature of gender under liberal feminism, it is still primarily understood as a biological and natural binary. To the contrary, Peterson explains that as a social construction, gender is recognized under more of a constructivist (as opposed to a positivist) lens. Understood in this fashion, rather than the natural result of being born either male or female, gender is composed of a dichotomy which is learned. Gender not only "dichotomizes men-women but also identities, behaviours, and expectations as masculine-feminine"³². Not only is gender a trait which can be assigned to individuals, but it is also "an institutionalized, structural feature of social life"³³. Gender is thus involved

³² PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 31.

³³ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 31.

in shaping “concepts, practices, identities, and institutions”³⁴. Whitworth adds that the social construction of gender (and its constituent masculinities and femininities) is not static, nor is it based on any concrete facts. Rather it must be “constantly [. . .] produced and reproduced” through discourse so as to maintain its legitimacy³⁵. This process facilitates the naturalization of gendered dichotomies and the silencing of opposition³⁶.

Whitworth explains that gender “both *is* a social relation and is constructed *through* social relations”³⁷. This means that not only is gender a set of relations which exist socially, but also that the nature of those relations are constructed through daily interactions between people. In other words, gender relationships refer, “to both the content of the relationships and the manner in which they are constructed”³⁸. The content of gender relationships is “a product of both the daily reproduction of meanings within particular structures and the struggles to change those meanings against particular structures”³⁹. As such, the actions of gendered individuals simultaneously shape and are shaped by gender relations. Furthermore, these processes all occur within the context of contemporary historical and material conditions⁴⁰.

This understanding of the mutually constituted nature of agency (gendered individuals) and structure (gender relations) is important to my study of the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS, because this thesis argues that the UN gender discourse is largely derivative of liberal feminism. Consistent with this liberal feminist perspective, UN policies often display an inadequate understanding of the structural nature of vulnerabilities.

³⁴ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 31.

³⁵ WHITWORTH, Sandra (2004). *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping: A gendered analysis*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. p. 28.

³⁶ WHITWORTH (2004). *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*. p. 28.

³⁷ WHITWORTH (1994). *Feminism and International Relations*. pp. 67, 65.

³⁸ WHITWORTH (1994). *Feminism and International Relations*. pp. 65, 67.

³⁹ WHITWORTH (1994). *Feminism and International Relations*. p. 67.

⁴⁰ WHITWORTH (1994). *Feminism and International Relations*. p. 67.

For example, in this discourse, vulnerability is constrained under an agency focused logic which presumes that vulnerability is determined by choice. Therefore, it is argued that vulnerability would be reduced if there were a stricter adherence to the liberal individualism notions of equality and rights. The result of this inadequate understanding of the importance of structure is that while many of the proposed policies and programs of the UN may rectify immediate material inequalities which can lead to disproportionate vulnerability towards the pandemic, they fail to address the persistent underlying causes of vulnerability which are of a more structural nature. I am not arguing here that these changes would not contribute to a significant improvement in the lives of those they directly affect. Rather, the argument is that immediate material changes are insufficient to affect more permanent structural change and thus to eliminate the pervasive hierarchal nature of gender difference which causes gender vulnerability. Without a deeper understanding of the structural nature of vulnerability, any analysis of (and consequently any attempt to alter) power relations with respect to social structures is limited⁴¹.

Gender is not power-neutral. Peterson explains that the patriarchal binary construction between masculine and feminine embodies an implicit hierarchy which valorises the masculine and denigrates the feminine. As such, difference is not compatible with equality but is structured under a gender hierarchy wherein that which is feminine is seen to be inferior to that which is masculine⁴². Because the UN does not understand gender

⁴¹ WHITWORTH (1994). *Feminism and International Relations*. p. 67.

⁴² PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 9; MARCHAND, Marianne H., and Anne Sisson RUNYAN, eds. (2000). *Gender and Global Restructuring: Sightings, sites, and resistances*. New York: Routledge. p. 12. This, as well as other modern dichotomies identified under postmodernism, are necessarily hierarchal such that the first term is always privileged over the second. See DEVETAK, Richard (2005). "Postmodernism." in *Theories of International Relations*, ed. Scott BURCHILL. 3rd ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan p. 168.

hierarchies as a privileging of the masculine over the feminine, it is unable to conceptualize the application of gender analysis to anything other than the man/woman dichotomy.

1.1.4 Gender as an Analytic Category

In order to move beyond the man/woman conceptual dichotomy, we need to develop an understanding of gender as an ‘analytic category’; as well as illustrate the value of such an expanded understanding of gender. Peterson argues that the manner in which the mainstream notion of gender obscures the interconnectedness of structural hierarchies contributes to the stability of the current world order. To counter, she provides a blueprint for an expanded understanding of gender which denaturalizes and politicizes those hierarchies and lays the groundwork for the conditions under which transformative change could eventually occur. It should be further noted, that an understanding of gender as an analytic category is foundational to both the research question and argument of this thesis—it is this understanding which most substantiates the choice of empirical case study and significantly contributes to the construction of the central argument.

Peterson contests that gendered analysis has the potential for “theorizing power more generally”, including but also beyond the man/woman conceptual dichotomy⁴³. Instead of limiting feminist scholarship to the analysis of the man/woman dichotomy, Peterson argues that we can and should apply it more broadly and in doing so, seek to identify both “the interconnectedness as well as the specificity of each oppression”⁴⁴. In accordance with the above outlined thinking which argued that gender is present in all of social life, gender permeates language and meaning systems by symbolically, discursively and culturally

⁴³ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 14.

⁴⁴ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 34.

normalizing the privileging of that which is identified as masculine over that which is associated with femininity. As such, the subordination of femininity orders our ways of thinking and consequently, our ways of acting. Once these ideas about gender are normalized, consensus rather than coercion becomes the means by which actors are disciplined. Notions of privilege and subordination are unquestioned and virtually self-sustaining. Peterson argues that at this point we can recognize gender to be a ‘governing code’ of social life which informs multiple structural hierarchies⁴⁵.

Gender, when understood in this way, becomes an ‘analytic category’ which extends beyond the limits of the empirical man/woman dichotomy. Whereas gender analysis understood empirically is restricted to men and women, gender as an analytic category allows for an analysis of social life in its entirety. This understanding of gender, when used for analytical purposes, is transformative because it lends itself to a more sophisticated understanding of the naturalization of domination common to all structural hierarchies⁴⁶. The pervasiveness of the gender governing code is such that it not only devalues women but the identities, ideas and practices of any ‘others’ who are feminized⁴⁷. The primary argument taken from Peterson here is that the naturalization of unequal power relations inherent to various structural hierarchies is dependent upon what she terms the “denigration of the feminine”. “In other words, casting the subordinated as feminine — lacking agency,

⁴⁵ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 14.

⁴⁶ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 14.

⁴⁷ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 28. Additionally, Razack argues, through a discussion of Theweleit, that racial domination is in fact the most extreme form of patriarchal domination. The fear of the other is an extension or manifestation of and is encompassed in the fear of the feminine. See RAZACK, Sherene H. (2004). *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, peacekeeping, and the new imperialism*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. p. 59.

control, reason, skills, or culture — devalorizes not only women but also racially, culturally, or economically marginalized men”⁴⁸.

Another way to explain the significance of understanding gender as an analytic category is through a discussion of politicization/depoliticization. The governing code of gender has led to widespread acceptance of the devalorization of the feminine and feminine attributes as ‘common sense’⁴⁹. We are most familiar with this governing code through the man/woman dichotomy naturalized in multiple discourses⁵⁰. Gender is therefore “a historically contingent structural feature of social relations”⁵¹. The man/woman gender hierarchy which is taken as a ‘given’ serves then as the model for depoliticizing hierarchies more generally⁵². This deeply ingrained and collectively internalized ‘common sense’ towards which we are all variously complicit is invoked and applied to other structural hierarchies; to “naturalize the marginalization, objectification, and corollary exploitation of all who are denigrated by association with the feminine [. . .] legitimizing them as equally ‘natural’ hierarchies.”⁵³. The power relations of domination inherent to all structural hierarchies linked by the denigration of the feminine are thereby naturalized, normalized and most importantly depoliticized. This depoliticization of structural hierarchies serves to legitimate, reproduce and cast them as inevitable. It simultaneously produces and obscures inequalities as well as undercuts critique of, and resistance towards, exploitative

⁴⁸ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 14.

⁴⁹ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. pp. 28-29.

⁵⁰ “In the west, this naturalization of gender hierarchy is most visible in patriarchal religious dogma, political theory, scientific instrumentalism, and reification of the heteronormative family as pre-political (ahistorical, natural) and the basis of masculinist states”, PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 36.

⁵¹ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. pp. 28-29. Furthermore, Bannerji argues that despite many differences between East and West, the hegemonic themes of gender as well as class, and the ways in which they constitute and mediate one another, are common and historically contingent. See BANNERJI, Himani (2000). *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on multiculturalism, nationalism and gender*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press. p. 162-3.

⁵² PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 36.

⁵³ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 36, see also p. 10.

hierarchies⁵⁴. By conceptualizing gender as an analytic category, the ‘common sense’ of structural hierarchies can be politicized and challenged. Politicization of structural hierarchies linked by the denigration of the feminine requires a disclosure of “the historical, material, and ideological production of masculinism” as it relates to multiple hierarchies⁵⁵.

This section has outlined the relative shortfalls and strengths of the (liberal feminist) mainstream and critical understandings of gender, respectively. It argued that due to its patriarchal underpinnings, a discourse dominated by liberal feminism will not be in a position to affect transformative change with respect to gender, but will rather uphold an understanding of gender which maintains gender hierarchies. While liberal feminism may contribute to significant short-term improvements, it precludes change which is of a long-term and transformative nature⁵⁶. Not only is this equally true of individualism, but the promotion of individualism additionally serves to promote the tenets of the current neoliberal world order. Therefore, we can see that an understanding of gender informed by liberal feminism, particularly its notion of individualism, instrumentalizes gender in support of the current neoliberal world order by silencing critique about the role played by gender in the maintenance of multiple hierarchies.

Conversely, understanding gender as a governing code which links multiple structural hierarchies, as Peterson does, allows us to recognise not only the role which the denigration of the feminine plays in the construction of those multiple hierarchies, it also allows for an

⁵⁴ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. pp. 28-29.

⁵⁵ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 28.

⁵⁶ Brown also suggests that the liberal feminist approach not only fails to threaten but actually contributes towards the maintenance of the (liberal) state (system) and consequently of gender inequality. She argues that owing to its liberal roots, the liberal state presupposes gender inequality and plays a significant role in the “maintenance and reproduction of patriarchy” (p. 463). She maintains that liberal feminists “make extensive use of, and indeed rely upon the state to enforce liberty, equality and justice for all” (p. 463). In addressing their appeals for reform to the liberal state, liberal feminists legitimize not only the state’s jurisdiction over the public sphere but also the public/private division of labour as “natural and progressive” (p. 463). BROWN (1988). “Feminism, International Theory, and International Relations of Gender Inequality.”

increased understanding of the intersection of and interconnectedness between them. They are mutually constituted, mediated and maintained. The transformative potential of these insights exists in the possibility of denaturalizing, politicizing or subverting those structural hierarchies which hinge upon a denigration of the feminine⁵⁷. This approach casts gender as an analytic category and expands upon other frameworks which are critical towards understanding structural hierarchies⁵⁸. It aims to use, and argues that, a current of feminism which recognizes that “the dichotomy of gender underpins—as the denigration of the feminine naturalizes—hierarchies”⁵⁹, is essential to a critical analysis of power relations, such as those which underlie AIDS vulnerability.

Now that we have outlined the two understandings of gender relevant to this study, several questions emerge with respect to the role and significance of the UN in promoting or silencing these understandings.

1.2 World Order, Hegemonic Discourse, and the Role of International Institutions vis-à-vis Gender

In order to understand how and why the UN in particular instrumentalizes gender in its discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS, we must also be familiar with the relationship between international institutions and world order, particularly insofar as it pertains to the promotion of a hegemonic gender discourse. In any world order, international institutions are vehicles of the hegemonic discourse. The UN is one of those institutions in the current

⁵⁷ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. pp. 14-5, 37.

⁵⁸ Peterson claims that the “specific feminist lens [she] advocate[s] *builds on* even as it advances marxist, anti-racist, and postcolonial critiques”, See PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 15.

⁵⁹ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 29.

world order—a world order which is articulated around the neoliberal economic project. Therefore, the UN propagates a gender discourse which supports neoliberalism.

The following explanations are drawn from the works of two critical theorists; Robert Cox as well as Cox through Sandra Whitworth. Through them, I will first illustrate the manner in which, and mechanisms through which, the meanings surrounding ideas such as gender (for instance the privileging and denigration of masculinity and femininity respectively) are circulated and naturalized as part of the hegemonic discourse and ideology. Then, I will outline the role of institutions such as the UN in both the maintenance and challenging of these ideas in relation to the stability and expansion of the current world order. The role of bodies such as the UN is explained here through an analysis of their position as components of historical structures. Within a Coxian theoretical framework, the UN is a concrete manifestation of an international institution⁶⁰. Institutions (such as the UN) as well as ideas (such as those which pertain to gender), are two of the key forces which constitute the historical structure of world order. The liberal or ‘mainstream’ understanding of gender is instrumental to the maintenance of this world order. These explanations are important to the argument of this thesis because they help illustrate that the manner in which the UN addresses gender vulnerability to the AIDS pandemic has significant theoretical implications for the stability and expansion of the current world order. Furthermore they help us understand why international institutions such as the UN are inclined to promote a discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS which supports the current neoliberal hegemonic order.

⁶⁰ Cox refers specifically to the UN as an institution in COX with SINCLAIR (1996). *Approaches to World Order*. p. 149.

Discourse is the foundation of the consensual aspect of hegemony. According to critical theory, hegemony is twofold in that both consent and coercion form the basis of power. The consensual aspect of hegemony is evident in the degree to which the tenets of the hegemonic discourse are received as universal and representative of the general interest.⁶¹ In fact, coercion is primarily latent and the extent to which consent dominates can be used to determine the strength of the hegemonic order⁶². Ideas about gender such as the subordination of the feminine are key components of the current hegemonic discourse. The degree to which gendered hierarchies are naturalized contributes to the coercive aspect of power.

In order to illustrate the role of institutions, such as the UN, in both the maintenance and challenging of hegemony within a Coxian framework, I will now turn to a discussion of the position of bodies such as the UN within historical structures. In a given historical structure, the structural component is comprised of material conditions, ideas, and institutions. Material conditions, ideas, and institutions are mutually dependent and constituted. As such, influence runs in both directions, the force of which is contingent upon the parts and particular historical case of the given historical structure⁶³. Illustrative of the interconnected nature of the three components of historical structures, institutions such as the UN exemplify the material conditions and ideas which actors bring to their practices as well as the hegemonic power relations promoted and required by their creators. Consequently, institutions tend, at least at the onset, to encourage the reproduction of these power relations

⁶¹ COX with SINCLAIR (1996). *Approaches to World Order*. pp. 56, 99.

⁶² COX, Robert W. (2000). "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An essay in method." in *International Relations: Critical concepts in political science*, ed. Andrew LINKLATER. Routledge. p. 1209.

⁶³ COX with SINCLAIR (1996). *Approaches to World Order*. p. 98.

through collective images and discourses. As such, they legitimize and reinforce dominant perceptions⁶⁴.

Although institutions tend to perpetuate the status quo of the hegemonic system, “they may also acquire a degree of autonomy, take on their own life, and serve as agents of change”⁶⁵. In order to illustrate the oppositional aspect of institutions such as the UN within historical structures, I will now outline the manner in which the tension between agency and structure is understood within a Coxian framework. According to a Coxian framework, “structure and agency are mutually constituted”⁶⁶. The triad of social forces which make up a given historical structure does not simply determine, but rather constrains and informs action. Individuals or groups within an historical structure can either conform to or oppose these forces, reproducing or challenging them⁶⁷. Historical structures are limited totalities; they are historically located in a particular field of human activity and can be altered through agency⁶⁸. Institutions both shape and are shaped by ideas and material capabilities⁶⁹. Therefore, these three forces are sites for both the creation and change of the contemporary historical structure⁷⁰.

Therefore, under a Coxian framework, institutions such as the UN are both sites of stability and contestation. The contestation aspect can come into play when, in pursuit of a narrower goal (such as combating gender vulnerability to AIDS), institutions such as the UN develop ideas and/or discourses which are counter-hegemonic vis-à-vis the dominant

⁶⁴ COX with SINCLAIR (1996). *Approaches to World Order*. p. 99.

⁶⁵ SINCLAIR, Timothy J. (1996). “Beyond International Relations Theory: Robert W. Cox and approaches to world order.” in *Approaches to World Order*, Robert W. COX with Timothy J. SINCLAIR. New York: Cambridge University Press. p. 10.

⁶⁶ WHITWORTH (1994). *Feminism and International Relations*. p. 67.

⁶⁷ COX with SINCLAIR (1996). *Approaches to World Order*. p. 97-8.

⁶⁸ COX with SINCLAIR (1996). *Approaches to World Order*. p. 100.

⁶⁹ COX with SINCLAIR (1996). *Approaches to World Order*. p. 99.

⁷⁰ COX with SINCLAIR (1996). *Approaches to World Order*. p. 98.

system⁷¹. As such, institutions *may* take up a position of mediation between two historical structures⁷². The UN is one of the foremost institutions borne of the current historical structure. As such it is a significant point of study within a Coxian framework⁷³. According to Cox, “a significant change in world order is [. . .] likely to be traceable to some fundamental change in social relations”⁷⁴ and Whitworth asserts that international institutions are “an avenue through which we may begin to locate sources of change within the international system”⁷⁵. Given the degree to which gender hierarchies are crucial to the stability and expansion of world order and in light of the above explanation of the role of institutions, such as the UN, within hegemony, it is evident that the manner in which the UN frames gender is significant. This thesis (as well as a previous study by Whitworth outlined below) will show that with respect to gender, the UN has failed to become a site of contestation or source of transformative change.

Given that the “differences between one structure of world order and its successor are shaped by forms of state and of production”⁷⁶, we can understand the capitalist mode of development to be an integral component shaping the current world order. As such, any discourse which threatens the smooth functioning of capitalist exploitation (including the

⁷¹ WHITWORTH (1994). *Feminism and International Relations*. p. 73.

⁷² COX, Robert W. (1980). “The Crisis of World Order and the Problem of International Organization in the 1980s.” *International Journal* 35 (2). p. 377.

⁷³ Whitworth argues that one measure of the hegemonic influence of an institution is its reach outside of its own formal forums. She affirms that knowledge claims which are made by the UN are not confined to that organization. Rather, they are reproduced as authoritative through many alternative avenues of communication such as NGOs and scholars. Noteworthy is that not only is the discourse emanating from the UN branded as truth and communicated to a wider audience. That discourse is adopted and recycled back to the UN via studies and advising committees which are both commissioned by the UN but also by those seeking UN recognition/legitimation. As such, the UN plays an agenda setting (and rubber stamping) role within the global hegemonic production of knowledge claims. See WHITWORTH (2004). *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*. p. 138.

⁷⁴ COX (2000). “Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations.” pp. 1219-1220.

⁷⁵ WHITWORTH (1994). *Feminism and International Relations*. p. 74.

⁷⁶ COX, Robert W. (1987). *Production, Power, and World Order: Social forces in the making of history*. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 7.

expansion of this system via neoliberal development), threatens the stability of the current world order by extension. Therefore, the UN must protect and promote a status quo discourse which serves the interests of and reflects an ideology consistent with neoliberal globalization (i.e. capitalism, market fundamentalism, Washington Consensus, *laissez-faire* etc). This includes, but is not limited to, the instrumentalization of gender.

This section has explored how and why the UN in particular instrumentalizes gender in its discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. As we saw in the previous section, gender serves to naturalize multiple structural hierarchies. The following section will proceed to show that gender hierarchies are instrumental to the stability of the global capitalist system and, by extension, to the current world order. This is why the UN, even in its pursuit of improving the situation of those most vulnerable to the pandemic, fails to develop a discourse which adequately questions the gender-based structural hierarchies which sustain the AIDS pandemic—it is those same hierarchies which contribute to marginalization which sustain capitalist exploitation⁷⁷. According to the role of bodies such as the UN within a Coxian framework, it is reasonable to hypothesize that the UN discourse does not take specific gender vulnerabilities sufficiently into account precisely because this would jeopardize the normalization of those hierarchies necessary to the current world order. As such, it is logical that the UN discourse pertaining to AIDS vulnerability does not contain an understanding of gender as an analytic category. Rather, it instrumentalizes gender in such a manner which supports the status quo of the current world order.

1.3 Gender and Neoliberal World Order

⁷⁷ This is not to suggest that the UN favours the exploitation facilitated by patriarchal gendering. Rather, it is to suggest that, according to a Coxian framework, the role of organizations such as the UN dictates that they are unlikely to develop a discourse which would disrupt that exploitation.

Now that we have outlined the relationship between international institutions and world order, particularly as it pertains to discourses on gender, we can move on to a discussion of the value of gender for the maintenance of that world order. An appreciation of the value of gender in the maintenance of the current world order is necessary to understand why gender in particular is instrumentalized in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. We must then ask, what is the relationship between gender and neoliberal hegemony? Although its importance has been previously mentioned, this section will argue in detail that gender is one of the defining social relations of any world order. It is of particular significance in the current neoliberal world order, however, in which gender is hierarchically defined. The hegemony of that world order is constructed in part on the subordination of the feminine. To explain, the current neoliberal world order is largely defined by capitalism. Capitalism in turn depends upon the existence of a gendered division of labour which facilitates the maximization of profit. Moreover, this is especially the case in the context of globalization⁷⁸.

⁷⁸ I will take this opportunity to clarify that for the purposes of this thesis, globalization refers to the current stage of the capitalist system. I am aware that the timeline delimited by the term globalization is in dispute: "Some scholars consciously limit the historical scope of globalization to the last four decades of postindustrialism in order to capture its contemporary features. Others are willing to extend this timeframe to include the ground-breaking developments of the 19th century. Still others argue that globalization really represents the continuation and extension of complex processes that began with the emergence of modernity and the capitalist world system some five centuries ago. And a few remaining researchers refuse to confine globalization to time periods measured in mere decades or centuries. Rather, they suggest that these processes have been unfolding for millennia", STEGER, Manfred B. (2003). "Is Globalization a New Phenomenon?" in *Globalization, A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 18.

While I will not enter into a debate on the validity of these differing points of view, it is important to note that globalization here will be understood in a manner which most closely approximates the first articulated above. This is because, I am interested in the stage of globalization which several authors (such as Marchand and Runyan) refer to as 'global restructuring', a process which is restricted to the latter part of the 20th and early 21st centuries. Although 'global restructuring' may be more appropriate than 'globalization' I have chosen to use globalization throughout primarily because it is the most commonly used term and therefore will minimize confusion.

Globalization, as will be understood from this point on, is orchestrated under neoliberal doctrine which corresponds and marks a return to market fundamentalism. In this stage, capitalism covers the globe and affects most if not all global interactions. One of the defining features of globalization is the accelerating pace of those processes. Peterson provides a list of other terms used to describe or indicate globalization: "New

The primary argument here is that while gender has always been instrumental to the smooth functioning of the liberal capitalist world order, it has become increasingly so in the current context of neoliberal globalization. Therefore, the manner in which gender is integrated in the neoliberal globalization discourse has become increasingly sophisticated. These arguments are essential to my thesis because as we will see in subsequent chapters, the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS is constructed in a fashion which supports the current neoliberal globalized world order, primarily via development. The following arguments, drawing primarily from the work of Maria Mies as well as that of V. Spike Peterson, will illustrate the essential role of gender in the maintenance of capitalism and more specifically its expanded role and subsequent increasing relevance in the context of neoliberal globalization.

1.3.1 Gender and Capital Accumulation

Maria Mies argues that gender is essential to capitalism. Mies faults both liberal and orthodox Marxist accounts of capitalism for overlooking what she believes are the very foundations of capitalism. To illustrate what has been omitted from these analyses, she uses the metaphor of an iceberg. What is visible above the surface—capital and wage labour—makes up only a small portion of what is essential to the system. Below the surface, however, is where we find the foundations of the capitalist system. For Mies, the smooth functioning of this system is dependent upon continued accumulation or growth which is not

Times, the new global cultural economy, post-Fordism, flexible specialization, flexible accumulation, disorganized capitalism, the end of organized capitalism, new constitutionalism, the rise of new network society, complex connectivity, the world economy, the end of the nation state, the new international economics, and neoliberalism or market fundamentalism”, PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. pp. 2-3, 5.

sufficiently guaranteed through wage labour. This accumulation is made possible by the ‘colonization’ of women, nature and other geographic areas and peoples⁷⁹:

[. . .] it became increasingly clear that the capitalist mode of production was not identical with the famous capital-wage-labour relation, but that it needed different categories of colonies, particularly women, other peoples, and nature, to uphold the model of ever-expanding growth.⁸⁰

According to Mies, capitalism and patriarchy are one in the same system which she appropriately calls capitalist-patriarchy. Capital accumulation cannot be achieved without patriarchy:

[. . .] capitalism cannot function without patriarchy [. . .] the goal of this system, namely the never-ending process of capital accumulation cannot be achieved [without patriarchal relations] [. . .] Patriarchy thus constitutes the mostly invisible underground of the visible capitalist system.⁸¹

Patriarchy is essential to colonization (as Mies applies it) which is in turn essential to capital accumulation; therefore, patriarchy is essential to capitalism⁸².

1.3.2 Gender in the Context of Neoliberal Globalization: Feminization and housewifization

V. Spike Peterson and Maria Mies advance complimentary arguments which illustrate the increasing relevance of gender in the context of globalization. Both Peterson and Mies essentially build upon an understanding of gender as an analytic category as well as the understanding, as seen above, that patriarchal gendering was an important component of the capitalist world system even prior to globalization. For instance, Peterson points out that

⁷⁹ MIES, Maria (1998). *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the international division of labour*. London: Zed. p. xi.

⁸⁰ MIES (1998). *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. p. 35

⁸¹ MIES (1998). *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. p. 38.

⁸² Whereas Peterson deals less with nature and goes more directly to the gendered character of these exploitative relationships (she speaks of ‘feminization’ as will be seen below), Mies uses the term ‘naturalization’. In this framework, those who are exploited ‘under the surface’ in the capitalist system, are discursively ‘defined into nature’ (the earth, women and geographical colonies). See MIES (1998). *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. p. 75.

the actual need for advanced and new means of analysis, which includes making theoretical connections between economy, identity, power and discourse, preceded the onset of globalization. However, the accelerated pace of uneven effects aggravated by the processes of globalization (such as those brought about by the AIDS pandemic) has served to further highlight the need for new analytic tools⁸³.

These arguments will show how globalization, a stage of capitalism, has contributed to the increasing importance of understanding gender as an analytic category. Furthermore, they provide a theoretical bridge between more familiar explanations about gender and capitalism and those about the relationship between flexibilization and the push for participatory development which is so prevalent in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS.

It should be noted at this juncture that although Peterson and Mies apply their analyses of gender and globalization (Mies speaks more specifically to the new IDL) primarily to global capitalism, their analyses can be pushed further to world order. They relate their discussions of globalization to various forms of capitalism and to global capitalism more widely. Cox's analysis of globalization also speaks to various forms of capitalism and the capitalist mode of development but frames it as a constituent element of the current world order. It is in the wider applicability of globalization, as a manifestation of world order, that Peterson and Mies' analyses are to be understood in relation to this thesis.

1.3.2.1 Feminization and the Normalization of Multiple Structural Hierarchies

Globalization is a manifestation of world order. It is relevant to this thesis because, as Peterson argues, the feminization of multiple 'others' for the purpose of exploitation has

⁸³ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. pp. 2-3.

become increasingly crucial to the stability of the global capitalist system. Peterson perceives globalization as a stage of capitalism which reflects both a continuity of modernity and a change towards post-modernity. It reflects continuity in its normalization of structural hierarchies for capitalist advancement, and it reflects change in that the gendered dimension of the normalization of those structural hierarchies has, under globalization, become both more entrenched and instrumental⁸⁴.

The uneven effects of globalization are distributed along the lines of structural hierarchies. Peterson argues that hierarchies and their interconnections are “a *structural* feature of globalization”⁸⁵. What permits the virtually unchallenged existence of these hierarchies is that “their uneven effects are mystified by neoliberal discourse” which casts them as merely inevitable side effects of the “common sense”, rather than the “ideological constructions”, of neoliberal reform principles⁸⁶. Furthermore, hierarchal oppositions which were previously deeply institutionalised and internalized in modernity, such as gender hierarchies, were readily available to be deployed in the service of neoliberal reform by application to other emerging hierarchies in post-modernity⁸⁷. The gendered normalization and consequential concealment of these structural hierarchies has become increasingly instrumental for the maintenance of the globalized capitalist system. In short, globalization, as a manifestation of world order, has raised the stakes for the effective naturalization of all structural hierarchies linked by the denigration of the feminine.

⁸⁴ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 4. Similarly, Marchand and Runyan suggest that that globalization “represents nothing less than the construction, reconstruction, and transformation of categories of knowing which tend to produce new gender biases as well as reifying others” and that “the relations of domination entailed in global restructuring [globalization] could not be sustained without gendered symbolism and metaphors, which serve to ‘naturalize’ hierarchies”. MARCHAND and RUNYAN (2000). *Gender and Global Restructuring*. pp. 2, 12.

⁸⁵ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 2.

⁸⁶ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. pp. 4, 7.

⁸⁷ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. pp. 8-9.

1.3.2.2 The Generalization of Housewifization and Flexibilization in the New IDL

The integrated nature of capitalism and patriarchy are further understood through Mies' understanding of the interdependence between the sexual division of labour and the IDL, in both its old form (pre) and new form (globalization)⁸⁸. Mies establishes the gendered component common to the exploitative relationships of capital to women, nature and the colonies. She argues however that the convergence between the IDL and the sexual division of labour is increasing in the new IDL⁸⁹.

The patriarchal nature of obscuring capital accumulation below the surface can be seen in three steps: housework, low wage-labour and flexibilization. The first two were already present in the process of modernization in the North as well as in the old IDL but the third is unique to the new IDL. At each of these steps, the utility of artificial gender categories or the sexual division of labour, becomes increasingly instrumental. In all three cases, labour performed by the feminized other is not counted and is thus made invisible. Mies calls this process *housewifization*. This refers to the manner in which women, regardless of marital status are categorized as housewives. Housewifization means that women's work, paid or unpaid is "considered to be only supplementary to that of her husband, the so-called breadwinner, and thus devalued [. . .] defined as a free resource"⁹⁰. "The economic logic of this *housewifization* is a tremendous reduction of labour costs"⁹¹.

Housework is generally attributed with use-value but not commodity value. Mies argues however that housework (including reproduction) subsidizes wage-labour—it is "the

⁸⁸ Mies does not make this direct connection between the new IDL and globalization. However, I believe this connection to be merited due to both the characteristics of the new IDL and the explicit connection she makes between the new IDL and neoliberalism.

⁸⁹ MIES (1998). *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. p. 116.

⁹⁰ MIES (1998). *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. p. ix.

⁹¹ MIES (1998). *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. p. 119.

precondition for the productivity of the (male) wage-labourer". Therefore, it is essential to capital accumulation—it *is* productive and produces capital even though it is not remunerated.

Low wage-labour for women has relied on essentially the same assumptions about women's role as housewives to determine the value of their work. Cynthia Enloe outlines four strategies for making women's wage-labour cheap. First, the categorization of certain tasks as 'women's work' is coupled with the implication that these sorts of tasks come naturally to women. Therefore, they are not 'skills' and do not need to be rewarded as such. Second, jobs which are considered as skilled jobs are reserved for men. Third, and much closer to the notion of housewifization, women are imagined to be dependents in a family structure (either as wives or daughters) and therefore not primary wage earners. Finally, women are prevented, through social norms, and through more direct interventions, from organizing⁹².

Flexibilization of labour is a process which follows the logic of housewifization to obscure what was often previously considered productive work. Labourers are pushed out of the formal sector and "reintegrated into capitalist development in a whole range of informal, non-organized, non-protected production relations, ranging from part-time work, through contractual work, to homeworking, to unpaid neighbourhood work"⁹³. Mies argues that in order to avoid the end of continuous economic growth, the new IDL was born and flexibilization was more generalized. The new IDL involved the exportation of labour-cost-intensive work to the developing countries in order to minimize the cost component of

⁹² ENLOE, Cynthia H. (2000). *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making feminist sense of international politics*. Berkeley: University of California Press. pp. 160-166.

⁹³ MIES (1998). *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. p. 127.

production⁹⁴. She suggests that at this point, housewifization was taken to a new level. The sexual division of labour and IDL increasingly converge in the new IDL, thus housewifization becomes important to the exploitation of multiple feminized others: “not just that housework and housewifization were models for women’s labour, but that transnational capital [. . .] would eventually also housewifize male labour: that is to say, men would be forced to accept labour relations which so far had been typical for women only”⁹⁵. Therefore, the profit-maximizing strategy of housewifization could be applied not only to women but to multiple feminized others in the form of flexibilization⁹⁶.

This section has argued that the global capitalist system, and the current globalized world order by extension, relies heavily on patriarchal gendering for the purposes of marginalisation and exploitation. Whereas the manner in which gender contributes to the subordination of women is familiar to us through the works of many Marxist-feminist scholars, the manner in which gender informs other hierarchal identity-based oppositions is less so. Furthermore, the instrumentality of gender for these purposes has become increasingly crucial in the context of globalization (a manifestation of world order) where the exploitation of ‘other others’ has become more and more integral to the functioning of the global capitalist system. Therefore, despite the fact that this expanded role played by gender is less obvious, it is increasingly relevant in the context of globalized world order because it is through the feminization of the other in the various structural hierarchies previously mentioned, that exploitation of the other is naturalised.

⁹⁴ MIES (1998). *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. p. 113.

⁹⁵ MIES (1998). *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. p. ix.

⁹⁶ For Marchand and Runyan, the result of what Mies calls housewifization is referred to as the ‘feminization of labour’ which includes “‘flexibilization’ and ‘casualization’ of (especially women’s) labor to keep labor costs down and productivity up in the mane of free trade, global competitiveness, and economic efficiency”. MARCHAND and RUNYAN (2000). *Gender and Global Restructuring*. p. 17.

Such an appreciation of the role played by gender in the maintenance of the current world order is necessary to understand why gender in particular is instrumentalized in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. The exploitation of the other just mentioned is reflected in labour relations which can be largely described as flexibilization. Gender is instrumentalized through the normalization of these labour relations. As we will see in the next section, this normalization is established, in part, through the notion of 'integrating (third world) women into development', or WID.

1.4 Instrumentalization: The push for participatory/inclusive development/globalization

Finally, in order to understand the way in which the UN instrumentalizes the concept of gender in its discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS, we must grasp what is meant by 'instrumentalization'. Instrumentalization here means that when there is a problem (such as AIDS) which has a gender dimension to it, gender will only be addressed insofar as it serves the interests of the current world order (which in this case, is the neoliberal world order). In other words, the UN will acknowledge that women are more vulnerable to AIDS (in ways which cannot solely be explained by biological differences between women and men). However, the UN will only propose solutions to this vulnerability which will affect change which does not threaten, but rather promotes neoliberal world order. It will not propose any sort of transformative change. In the context of the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS, the instrumentalization of gender is executed primarily through the promotion of the neoliberal model of development.

We saw above that gender has always been essential to the smooth functioning of the liberal capitalist world order and has become increasingly so in the current context of neoliberal globalization. This section will provide the theoretical components required to

understand how the push for women's integration into development, so prevalent in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS, supports that framework and is therefore essential to the instrumentalization of gender. First, I will explore the competing claims that development and women are mutually supportive entities—while the benefits women derive from development are assumed, there is also a justificatory emphasis on the advantages for the development project of integrating women. Furthermore, I will explore critiques of participatory development as well as the discursive reactions to its failures. Finally, I will provide the background necessary to argue that the instrumentalization of gender through the push for participatory development contributes to the promotion of flexibilization which is necessary for the smooth functioning of the current neoliberal globalized world order.

1.4.1 WID: “Benefits” of development—benefits for development

Those initiatives which primarily aim at integrating women into development fall under the category of Women in Development (WID). Proponents of WID fervently assert that women benefit—even more than men—from the growth brought by development. “It is open to men to debate whether economic progress is good for men or not, but for women to debate the desirability of economic growth is to debate whether women should have the chance to cease to be beasts of burden, and to join the human race”⁹⁷. However, not only do proponents of WID argue that development is good for women (to the degree that it becomes undisputable) but also that women are good for development. The WID approach is associated with (feminist) liberalism (as well as positivism)⁹⁸. Therefore, in line with the

⁹⁷ Quote taken from KABEER (1994). *Reversed Realities*, p. 19.

⁹⁸ Peterson contrasts WID to Gender and Development (GAD) which she explains as having grown out of critiques of WID and describes as displaying a “more critical, relational, and structural orientation”. See

earlier arguments that the public (productive) realm is privileged over the private (reproductive) realm, WID development priorities are biased towards productive activities. As such, equality is sought in this realm alone. In order to attain equality in this privileged public realm, the strategy of WID initiatives becomes to demonstrate the efficiency of integrating women into the development process—to show that they are equally as capable in the marketplace⁹⁹ and that their inclusion in terms of participation and benefits improves the efficiency of the development project itself¹⁰⁰.

When women fail to benefit from development initiatives, it does not prompt a re-evaluation of the model of development itself. It is “not the mainstream model of modernization that [is] under attack, but the fact that women [do] not benefit[] from it”¹⁰¹. Correspondingly, the cause of the problem is believed to emanate from an imperfect application of liberal principles (such as individualism). Thus, “the solution lay in improving women’s access to the market and the public sphere”¹⁰². In fact, the two (women’s failure to benefit from development and their insufficient integration into development) are presented synonymously¹⁰³.

Critics of the liberal WID approach soon concluded that “‘adding women’ left the most significant problems intact. It did not address the structural privileging of men and masculinity, the naturalization of women’s subordination in the family and workplace, or the

PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 32; KABEER (1994). *Reversed Realities*. p. 19.

⁹⁹ KABEER (1994). *Reversed Realities*. p. 29. These efficiency arguments are problematic in several ways: critics argue that “‘equality should be argued on its own merit’. It should not be based on a history of women’s equality that is vulnerable to historical refutation or on claims about women’s productivity that could be overturned by future studies that ‘prove’ that men have higher productivity”, KABEER (1994). *Reversed Realities*. p. 30.

¹⁰⁰ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 32.

¹⁰¹ KABEER (1994). *Reversed Realities*. p. 20.

¹⁰² KABEER (1994). *Reversed Realities*. p. 20.

¹⁰³ KABEER (1994). *Reversed Realities*. p. 20.

increasing pressure on women to work a triple shift (in familial, informal, and formal activities)”¹⁰⁴. This is unsurprising when one considers the inherently unequal nature of development. Despite the rhetoric that development is possible for all, one which ‘floats all boats’ or rather has a trickle down effect, Mies contests that equal or universal development is inherently impossible. She explains that development is always one sided—it has winners and losers. The relations between developed and so-called developing states for instance, “are based on exploitation and oppression [. . .] these relations are also dynamic ones in which a process of polarization takes place: one pole is getting ‘developed’ *at the expense of* the other pole, which in this process is getting ‘underdeveloped’”¹⁰⁵. It follows then that development is not simply a positive teleological process. Rather

the law of this ‘progress’ is always a contradictory and not an evolutionary one [. . .] The rise of some means the fall of others. Wealth for some means poverty for others [. . .] there cannot be unilinear progress [. . .] no general progress for all, no ‘trickling down’, no development for all is possible.¹⁰⁶

Accordingly, Peterson contends that the WID approach lost favour in scholarly circles by the 1980s¹⁰⁷. However, although the labels did change over time, I will show that the WID approach continues today to be a strong force in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS¹⁰⁸. The remaining subsections will provide the theoretical foundation needed to explain why.

¹⁰⁴ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 32.

¹⁰⁵ MIES (1998). *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. p. 39.

¹⁰⁶ MIES (1998). *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. p. 76.

¹⁰⁷ PETERSON (2003). *A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy*. p. 32

¹⁰⁸ According to Rathgeber, the WID (women in development) approach was first introduced in the late 1970s. The 1980s saw the introduction of GAD (gender and development), “approaches to women and development became more nuanced, with the introduction of ‘gender’ as a conceptual tool and the recognition that the ‘integration’ of women into development could not be undertaken separate from an understanding and consideration of their roles as daughters, wives, mothers, and individuals with aspirations and hopes that went beyond the economic realm” (p. 580). However, despite the adoption of these conceptual changes, the usage of gender indicated a male/female dichotomy. “In essence, the word ‘gender’ was substituted for ‘women and except in rare instances, the focus has continued to be on providing women with tools”(p. 580). Mirroring our earlier discussion on the limits of the liberal feminist understanding of gender, the tools proposed in the context

1.4.2 Gender and Neoliberal Globalization: The role of WID in flexibilization

Harsher critics of the liberal WID approach, such as Geeta Chowdhry, go much further and contend that these initiatives “are strategic tools of capitalist expansion”¹⁰⁹. The following arguments will justify this statement and show why, despite the failures of the WID approach, it continues to be a cornerstone of the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS.

Mies questions the seemingly coincidental engineering of the new IDL (discussed in the previous section) and the emergence of the need to ‘integrate women into development’. She argues that within the rhetoric of “integrating women into development” lies a profound interest in “universalizing the housewife ideology”¹¹⁰. First from Northern to Southern women and then to Southern men as well. This move is necessary to the flexibilization discussed previously. Rather than defining women’s work as free wage-labour (deserving of an hourly wage), it is defined as ‘income-generating activities’. Integrating women into development “defines Third World women *not as workers, but as housewives*. What they do is not defined as work, but as an ‘activity’”¹¹¹. In the context of neoliberal globalized

of this limited understanding of the GAD approach (which for all intensive purposes was equivalent to WID) “[. . .] fail to address the central feminist critique of the continuing oppression of women within patriarchal systems. As such they are necessary ameliorative measures but insufficient in themselves to provide serious challenge to the existing social construction of gender relations”(p. 580). Rathgeber argues that men are rarely taken into consideration in the development industry. This “undermines the possibility of undertaking real gender analysis”(p. 589). Essentially, Rathgeber argues that gender analysis “has been adopted by the international development agencies but has been implemented in such a way as to reinforce the core business of development rather than to bring about fundamental changes in the existing social structures”(p. 589). RATHGEBER, Eva (2005). “Gender and Development as a Fugitive Concept.” *Canadian Journal of Development Studies* 26 (special).

¹⁰⁹ CHOWDHRY, Geeta (1995). “Engendering Development? WID in International Development Regimes.” in *Feminism/Postmodernism/Development*, eds. Marianne H. MARCHAND and Jane L. PARPART. New York: Routledge. p. 35. We will see more arguments along these lines later with Mies.

¹¹⁰ MIES (1998). *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. p. 118.

¹¹¹ MIES (1998). *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. p. 118. It is important to understand here that the defining of women as housewives has little to no empirical basis. “On the contrary, the more the material

development, women continue to perform the same tasks at home and in the community (unpaid of course) but would now (cheaply, following flexibilization) begin to produce export/market commodities as well—it is no coincidence that the triple work day translates into triple (or more) capital accumulation. Mies, similarly to the argument made by Chowdhry above, argues that “This mystification that women are basically housewives, is not an accidental side-effect of the new IDL, but a necessary precondition for its smooth functioning: it makes a large part of labour that is exploited and super-exploited for the world market invisible. It justifies low wages”¹¹²—not only for women but also for feminized men.

This section has helped us understand both how and why the UN instrumentalizes the concept of gender in its discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. It has done this by explaining that the push for participatory/inclusive development/globalization is consistent with the arguments in the previous section on the importance of gender to the maintenance of the current neoliberal globalized world order. This section began by presenting the claims that development is good for women and that women are good for development. The subsequent critiques of WID outlined here point to the mistakenness of the former and the accuracy of the latter claim. However, the theoretical underpinnings here suggest that it is not the increase in efficiency gained towards the development project which is the most significant objective of the push for women’s participation in development. Rather, it suggests that that this push for participatory development instrumentalizes gender because it contributes to the promotion of flexibilization, a process necessary for the smooth functioning of the current neoliberal globalized world order.

base for the emergence of the classical capitalist couple—the ‘free’ wage earner or ‘free’ owner of production and his dependent housewife—is undermined in Third World countries, the more this factual reality is mystified by propagating and universalizing this model. It is indeed the structural and ideological core around which development programmes and plans are constructed”, MIES (1998). *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. p. 119.

¹¹² MIES (1998). *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. p. 120.

The following section will outline the findings of an illustrative study of the instrumentalization of gender in the UN discourse.

1.5 Whitworth's *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*: An illustrative study

We have now outlined the essential theoretical components which support the argument of this study on the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. At this juncture, it is not only important to acknowledge but also instructional to discuss the findings of an illustrative study of the instrumentalization of gender in another area of the UN discourse. The following draws from Sandra Whitworth's, *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*. In that text, Whitworth is looking at the UN understanding of gender in the context of responses to armed conflict in the form of peacekeeping missions and speaks to the UN security discourse more generally. I would like to highlight some of Whitworth's findings for two reasons. First, because I feel that our studies complement one another. This is because they both ask the question 'who/what does 'gender' work for?'¹¹³ in the context of UN discourse. As such my conclusions on the instrumentalization of gender will contribute to a body of research in that field. Second, I wish to highlight some of the findings in Whitworth's study because it provides a concrete illustration of the limits of and interests served by taking a problem-solving rather than a critical approach in relation to gender. Overall, Whitworth's study is illustrative of the role played by institutions in world order to protect and promote the status quo by distorting gender and silencing critique.

Whitworth finds that the manner in which the UN has integrated gender into its security discourse has been done following a problem-solving rather than a critical approach. This is not simply to suggest that more work is to be done in order to push a critical agenda

¹¹³ WHITWORTH (2004). *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*. p. 140.

(that we have come so far but need still go further). Rather, a problem-solving approach to gender means that a barrier has been created against critical analysis. The manner in which the UN has adopted gender is consistent with the role of institutions in world order in that counter-hegemonic ideas have been absorbed and manipulated so that they become not only consistent with but contribute to the objectives of the hegemonic ideology.

Whitworth's study finds that the UN has increasingly acknowledged gender in relation to security concerns. However, "the manner in which it has done so has largely emptied gender concerns of their critical content"¹¹⁴. Gender-based critiques have been made to adopt, "the UN's 'way of doing business' without transforming how that business is done"¹¹⁵. This absorption approach is more effective than outright dismissal because it both acknowledges and purports to deal with the problem before us. The simple act of acknowledging the 'gender problem' and the use of (even an ill adapted) 'gender perspective' serves to legitimate and naturalize the UN discourse about not only gender but also other concepts to which it can be related (such as security)¹¹⁶. The result is that critique

¹¹⁴ WHITWORTH (2004). *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*. p. 17.

¹¹⁵ WHITWORTH (2004). *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*. p. 17.

¹¹⁶ WHITWORTH (2004). *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*. p. 135. Whitworth implies that attempts to infiltrate UN discourse (to affect change from within) can often do more harm than good in the sense that (as indicated above) the integration of problem-solving approaches serve to silence further critique. It is important to note that those who have an interest in critique of gender discourse (such as critical feminist scholars and NGOs) also tend to be compassionate towards the plight of gendered others. They are not necessarily duped or convinced by the UN discourse. Rather, faced with dire situations and few alternatives, cooption is difficult to resist (p. 17). One strategy which has been used involves gearing arguments for taking gender seriously towards the UN goal of 'effectiveness'. Critics will frame their recommendations in such a manner that speaks to their contribution to the effectiveness of UN initiatives. This approach is flawed on several levels. First, gender is transformed into an instrument of problem-solving goals. Once the end of one's critique is redefined in terms of effectiveness, a vast array of questions are pushed out of bounds; "any alternatives for radical change" which are not geared towards 'effectiveness' "will be dismissed as impractical, idealistic" and so on (pp. 120-121, 137). Gender is reduced to part of a repertoire of available (read not essential) problem-solving approaches. Second, when effectiveness becomes the ends, the focus is shifted from those affected by the problem and the proposed initiatives to those creating and implementing those initiatives. "Even in attempting to make the former visible, it is the latter whose priorities, limits, and concerns shape the questions that are posed and the boundaries of the responses" (p. 121). Thus, despite original intentions to affect transformative change, many critics eventually resort to the very problem-solving methods they originally endeavoured to critique. Whitworth found that efforts informed by bureaucratic imperatives rather than critical questions serve

is effectively silenced¹¹⁷. Larger critical questions are dismissed and the only form of critique which is allowed is that which aims at improving the UN approach, not changing it¹¹⁸. Within such a context, broader critiques, which aim at challenging rather than supporting the established framework, sound absurd and out of tune¹¹⁹. In fact, to even suggest that there are problems with the current approach or that there may be superior approaches, “can be met with moral outrage, as though raising such issues trivializes the horrors”¹²⁰. Gender is thus emptied of its radical political potential¹²¹. Debate is effectively derailed towards discussions about whether the UN is living up to its commitments and if so, how to improve upon the (problem-solving) initiatives in place.

Whitworth goes so far so as to suggest that not only does the UN approach (and the programs it bears) bar other approaches and maintain the status quo, but that it even promotes the interests of liberal world order. According to her, UN programs can be understood, in part, as “vehicles through which Western values, and in particular liberal democratic market ideology, is delivered to [. . .] countries of the global South”¹²².

Therefore, despite the increased visibility of gender within UN language, Whitworth found that the framing of that discourse, “narrows dramatically the possibilities for gender to be a transformative analytical and political concept”¹²³. Owing to the manner that it has been used in the UN security discourse, gender has become a “safe idea” which supports rather than challenges prevailing assumptions and practices related to security and gender. It

to reinforce and facilitate the status quo (p. 121). WHITWORTH (2004). *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*.

¹¹⁷ WHITWORTH (2004). *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*. p. 17.

¹¹⁸ WHITWORTH (2004). *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*. p. 18.

¹¹⁹ WHITWORTH (2004). *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*. p. 137.

¹²⁰ WHITWORTH (2004). *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*. p. 24.

¹²¹ WHITWORTH (2004). *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*. pp. 120-1, 137.

¹²² WHITWORTH (2004). *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*. p. 18.

¹²³ WHITWORTH (2004). *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*. p. 109.

has been transformed from a critical to a problem-solving tool¹²⁴. By way of its particular method of incorporation of a gender perspective, the UN gender discourse in actuality serves to marginalize critical gender analysis¹²⁵. Who/what does gender work for? Whitworth found that in the instance of the UN security discourse, it works for the status quo¹²⁶. As we will see in subsequent chapters, I have essentially come to the same conclusion with respect to the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS.

The conclusions drawn by Whitworth highlighted here are useful to my own work because they provide a concrete illustration of the limits of and interests served by taking a problem-solving rather than a critical approach in relation to gender. Whitworth's study is illustrative of the role played by institutions, specifically the UN, of instrumentalizing gender

¹²⁴ WHITWORTH (2004). *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*. p. 139.

¹²⁵ Many UN initiatives studied by Whitworth which aim to incorporate gender (such as Resolution 1325 and the Platform for Action from the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing) can be categorized under the umbrella of 'gender mainstreaming' (p. 124). Gender mainstreaming is intended to mandate an "assessment of the distinct implications for women and men of all planned UN actions, legislation, policies, and programs" (p. 119). It is more sophisticated than previous liberal policies which were limited to simply including more women (such as balancing strategies). Gender mainstreaming recognizes gender identities as social constructions which differ across time and location (p. 124). Despite the fact that gender mainstreaming is more complex than previous UN initiatives to acknowledge gender, it presents several obstacles. The most glaring problem is that it is limited to an interpretation of gender which strictly refers to the structural hierarchies between men and women. Therefore, it remains an empirical category rather than an analytic one. Moreover, even within the confines of a men/women gender category, gender mainstreaming is problematic in its understanding of difference. UN gender mainstreaming initiatives have tended to focus on the ways in which women are (read naturally) different from men; both in terms of vulnerabilities and contribution potential. This focus is far from the emphasis on gender relations and dominant notions of masculinity and femininity which is implied as the intent of gender mainstreaming (pp. 125-126). In the same volume (released in 2004), Whitworth asserts that there are no UN documents in her study which discuss masculinities (p. 137). Such a shift in focus leads to a further reinforcement of the assumption that gender identities and structural hierarchies are restricted to the men/women opposition and furthermore it marks a return to essentialism which denies the socially constructed nature of gender.

Whitworth discovered that even this limited understanding of gender has not been consistently applied and gender mainstreaming remains a secondary consideration in UN operations (pp. 120, 132). Whitworth suggests, however, that this seemingly inconsistent treatment of gender is characteristic of the UN gender discourse. Indeed, she argues that the fact that the UN has framed gender mainstreaming as a problem-solving activity (optional towards improving effectiveness) has served to legitimate its inconsistent taking of gender into account. Furthermore, it legitimizes and reinforces the postulation that a gender approach can simply be grafted onto existing methods, barring the possibility of questioning those methods or the concepts upon which they are rooted (such as security or gender itself) (pp. 133, 136). WHITWORTH (2004). *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*.

¹²⁶ WHITWORTH (2004). *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*. p. 140

in such a manner which silences critique and promotes the status quo of the current world order.

Conclusion

The theoretical underpinnings described in this chapter are central to this thesis because they provide the foundation necessary to make the connections between gender and the current neoliberal globalized world order. They are critical to my thesis because they are the tools required to explain both how and why gender is instrumentalized in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. They allow me to argue that the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS is an example of the manner in which gender is instrumentalized and made to support a neoliberal globalized model of development and thus of a neoliberal world order. Essentially, the theoretical underpinnings presented here allow us to proceed to the documentation and analysis of the empirical evidence contained in the remaining two chapters.

Chapter 2: Contextualization, Problem-solving Over Critical Approaches, and the Promotion of the Neoliberal Globalized Model of Development

At first glance, the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS appears to offer a wealth of innovation. On the surface, it seems to take the crisis of AIDS as a turning point in how we understand our global system. More specifically, it seems to take the gender vulnerability that AIDS highlights as an opportunity to rethink how gender is related to world order. Rather than treating AIDS as an isolated problem which can only be understood through a problem-solving lens, there is evidence to suggest that AIDS will force the global community to adopt a more critical approach to this problem. However, as this and the following chapter will attest, these initial impressions are misleading.

This chapter, as well as the next, documents and analyzes the empirical findings from the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. This chapter begins with some contextualizing remarks on methodology and an overview of the UN response to AIDS and gender vulnerability to it. It proceeds to expose the groundwork for the instrumentalization of gender to be fully explored in the final chapter. This groundwork consists of the privileging of problem-solving over critical approaches as well as the promotion of the neoliberal globalized model of development as both infallible response and ultimate goal *par excellence*. This chapter also draws upon the introduction and theoretical review to highlight how the consistency between its findings and the distinction between critical and problem-solving approaches supports the argument of this thesis. Furthermore, it underlines the position of the UN within a Coxian framework as well as the importance of development to the maintenance of the current world order.

2.1 Contextualization

2.1.1 A Note on Methodology

The empirical findings outlined in this chapter have been made in the context of a discourse analysis of approximately sixty key UN documents to trace the development and framing of the concept of gender in relation to vulnerability to AIDS. In a concrete sense, I have looked at documents which have been published by the UN such as resolutions, policy statements, reports, programs and terminology guides. These documents are derived from a broad range of organizations within the UN¹. Globally, these components constitute a larger UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS.

More specifically, the choice of documents, was driven by the research question. I am foremost interested by the manner in which the concept of gender vulnerability is understood as it relates to AIDS. Therefore, I focused on documents which directly addressed gender vulnerability to AIDS. However, in recognition of the fact that the absence of any discussion pertaining to gender vulnerability is also relevant to an analysis of how the UN addresses this topic, I also included several documents in which gender was either absent or played a much more subdued role. Documents which refer to gender in addition to AIDS are particularly relevant in that gender is a concept which very much highlights the connectedness between vulnerability and AIDS. Although most of the documents covered were not specific to any geographical region, some chosen have a focus on Africa (oftentimes Sub-Saharan Africa). Africa is a logical choice as it is the region of the world most impacted by AIDS in general as well as the region where the feminization of the

¹ These include: the General Assembly, The Security Council, The Economic and Social Council, UNAIDS, the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS (A UNAIDS Initiative), the WHO, UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNICEF, OHCHR, the ILO, UNDP, the U.N. Department of Public Information, the World Bank, the UNOSAA, the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change as well as the Secretary-General's Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa.

pandemic is most stark. As such, a focus on Africa simultaneously compliments my research question and allows for a richer sampling of documents.

2.1.2 The UN Response to AIDS: Benchmark documents

The UN response to the AIDS pandemic has been considerable but highly problematic. AIDS first appears on the UN agenda in 1985². Since then, the UN has generated several benchmark documents addressing the pandemic which provide some insight into the degree to which AIDS is perceived as a major issue by the UN. However, many of these documents did not emerge until the new millennium. One notable exception is the 1994 UNDP *Human Development Report* which established the notion of human security of which AIDS was made a prime example³. For those UN documents which treat AIDS as a human security issue (regardless of whether gender is considered), the manner in which the concept of human security is framed itself is problematic. Rather than being treated as a free standing concept of equal or greater importance, human security is subordinated to, and its relevance determined with respect to, its impact on traditional security. For instance, although Resolution 1308 links AIDS to global peace and security, it speaks of AIDS as a threat to more traditional concerns (it could indirectly cause war being the most basic example) rather than a concern in itself⁴. Later, the 2001 *Declaration of*

² Although I was not able to establish a clear date, this conclusion has been drawn from the fact that AIDS appears in the index of the Yearbook of the United Nations for the first time in 1985. It points to a passage that states: "To co-ordinate global surveillance activities and to assess the international health implications of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), consultations, meetings and workshops were organized and a network of collaborating centres was established by WHO following an April international conference on AIDS held at Atlanta, Georgia, under joint United States/WHO sponsorship", Department of Public Information (1988). *1985 Yearbook of the United Nations*. (January). p. 1304.

³ UNDP (1994). "New Dimensions of Human Security" in *Human Development Report 1994*. New York: Oxford University Press.

⁴ S/RES/1308 (2000). [addresses the responsibility of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security with respect to HIV/AIDS and international peacekeeping operations]. (17 July). Of course, there are several reasons why human security is framed in this manner. First, the UN is predominantly an

Commitment on HIV/AIDS states that the AIDS pandemic “constitutes a global emergency”⁵. Similarly, the 2006 *Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS* states that the pandemic constitutes “an unprecedented human catastrophe” which “requires an exceptional and comprehensive global response”⁶. Furthermore, the UN has recognized the fact that Africa, and specifically sub-Saharan Africa, is disproportionately affected by the pandemic⁷.

The UN has increasingly acknowledged the gendered dimension of the pandemic. Where the 2001 *Declaration of Commitment* simply stated that women and girls are “disproportionately affected” and among those “most vulnerable” to AIDS⁸, the 2006 *Political Declaration* went further and confirmed that “gender inequalities [. . .] increase their vulnerabilities” and contribute to the “feminization of the pandemic”⁹. Accordingly,

interstate institution. As such, it is to be expected that as an entity comprised of states, the conceptual frameworks generated in its discourse would reflect a state-centric set of interests. The interests most obviously reflected in the concept of traditional security are those of sovereignty and national security. Second, a slightly nuanced version of the first explanation would point to the fact that framing human security within the context of traditional security, in satisfying the state-centric framework, is a strategy to engage and rally support (discursive and financial) from the states of which the UN is comprised. Despite the fact that this method is likely to lead to support, human security is unfortunately emptied of its transformative potential; the cost outweighs the benefits.

For a much more detailed discussion of the securitization of AIDS, see for example ELBE, Stefan (2005). “AIDS, a Global Security Stake.” *Politique étrangère* (1): 163-175; ELBE, Stefan (2005). “AIDS, Security Biopolitics.” *International Relations* 19 (4): 403-419; ELBE, Stefan (2006). “HIV/AIDS: A Human Security Challenge for the 21st Century.” *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations* 7 (1): 101-113; ELBE, Stefan (2006). “Should HIV/AIDS be Securitized? The Ethical Dilemmas of Linking HIV/AIDS and Security.” *International Studies Quarterly* 50 (1): 119-144; ELBE, Stefan (2008). “Risking Lives: AIDS, Security and Three Concepts of Risk.” *Security Dialogue* 39 (2-3): 177-198.

⁵ A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). *Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS: Global Crisis—Global Action*. (2 August). par. 2.

⁶ A/RES/60/262 (2006). *Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS*. (15 June). par. 2, 3.

⁷ A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 8; A/RES/60/262 (2006). par. 10; Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change (2004). *A more secure world: Our Shared Responsibility*. United Nations Department of Public Information, (December). par. 7; UNOSAA (2005). *Human Security in Africa*. (December). par. 108.

⁸ A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 4, 59. See also UNAIDS (2004). *2004 Report on the global AIDS epidemic: 4th global report*. Geneva, (June). p. 12.

⁹ A/RES/60/262 (2006). par. 7. Other factors contributing to AIDS vulnerability listed in the *Declaration of Commitment* and *Political Declaration* are, among others, poverty and underdevelopment. See A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 11,62; A/RES/60/262 (2006). par. 13.

the UN has created several branches whose mandates deal either directly or indirectly with AIDS as it relates to gender-based vulnerability¹⁰.

Despite the degree of recognition that the UN has granted the AIDS pandemic, the actual UN response has been problematic. Even official UN documents are critical of the inadequacy of the UN response to AIDS. For instance, the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change 2004 report deplors that the, “International response to HIV/AIDS was shockingly slow and remains shamefully ill-resourced”¹¹. For instance, despite 2002 estimates which quoted the cost of stemming the pandemic to be \$10 billion annually, 2002 resources aimed at this task totalled only \$2.8 billion¹². I will now provide a more detailed overview of the evolution of the UN response to AIDS, including its gender vulnerability dimension.

2.1.3 The UN Response to AIDS: Evolution of issue definition and policy prescriptions

The UN response to AIDS has involved an evolution of issue definition and policy prescriptions. The trends in the UN response to AIDS, and specifically to gender vulnerability to it are overlapping and interconnected. The following provides a breakdown of this evolution into three categories of trends: issue definition, the debate between

¹⁰ Some of these branches were created explicitly to deal with AIDS and others existed previously and have incorporated AIDS issues into their working mandates. These include but are not limited to UNAIDS, UNIFEM, UNDP, the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, and the Millennium Development Project.

¹¹ In the report, the panel laments that “The first major international initiative on HIV/AIDS, the Global Programme on AIDS, came only in 1987, six years after the first cases of HIV were identified and after it had infected millions of people worldwide. Nine years and 25 million infections later, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) was created to coordinate United Nations agencies working on HIV/AIDS. By 2000, when the Security Council first discussed HIV/AIDS as a threat to international peace and security, the number of deaths per year from HIV/AIDS in Africa had outstripped the number of battle deaths in all the civil wars fought in the 1990s. By 2003, when the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria was created, there were more than 11 million children orphaned by HIV/AIDS in Africa”, Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change (2004). *A more secure world*. par. 48.

¹² Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change (2004). *A more secure world*. par. 64.

prevention and treatment/care/impact reduction, and finally the tension between risk and vulnerability.

Initially, the pandemic was perceived as a health issue and was therefore addressed from a health approach¹³. Eventually, it was understood that AIDS is not exclusively a health issue¹⁴. AIDS required an understanding that health has underlying determinants which are outside the parameters of the health system¹⁵. There emerged a “need to understand HIV/AIDS as a social and development issue and not just one of health”¹⁶. Therefore, “Whereas HIV was initially perceived as a health issue, today it is increasingly recognized as a cross-cutting issue of development, security and human rights that impacts differentially on all segments of the population”¹⁷. Interestingly, the gender dimension of the pandemic was one of the definitive triggers for this change of approach: “The acknowledgement of how deeply gender permeates the enormous scope of the HIV/AIDS pandemic has forced many to admit that this is more than a ‘health matter’”¹⁸. Consequentially AIDS became defined not only as a human security issue (as noted previously), a rights issue, and a development issue (discussed below), but also as a gender issue:

Since the mid-1990s, programme planners and implementers, policy makers, and donors have recognized the gender dimensions of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It has been recognized that for effective results, the incorporation of gender considerations must permeate programmes and policies at all levels.

¹³ In terms of where research must be focused, see A/55/779 (2001). *Review of the problem of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome in all its aspects: Report of the Secretary-General*. (16 February). par. 49.

¹⁴ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa: Three scenarios to 2025*. Geneva, (January). pp. 32, 129.

¹⁵ WHO (2003). *The World Health Report 2003: Shaping the Future*. p. x.

¹⁶ UNAIDS, Best Practice Collection (1998). *Expanding the global response to HIV/AIDS through focused action: Reducing risk and vulnerability: definitions, rationale and pathways*. Geneva. p. 10.

¹⁷ E/CN-4/2005/72 (2005). “Integration of the Human Rights of Women and the Gender Perspective: Violence Against Women” and “Intersections of violence against Women and HIV/AIDS” in *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, causes and consequences*. (17 January). par. 19.

¹⁸ WHO, Family and Community Health, Department of Gender and Women’s Health (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes: a review paper*. p. 44.

Integrating gender into existing and new HIV/AIDS programmes and policies must not be considered to be a ‘side show’, luxury ‘accessory’ or a second-thought ‘add-on’. Consideration of gender must form the very centerpiece of all policies and programmes aimed at slowing the spread of HIV and mitigating the impact of AIDS.¹⁹

However, “to date the majority of initiatives to integrate gender into effective programming have been small and experimental”²⁰. Similarly, some documents argue that despite the rhetoric, AIDS is largely still addressed as a health issue²¹: “One of the major problems was—and still is—the way in which HIV and AIDS has been treated only as a medical phenomenon”²².

Once it was decided that AIDS was not only a health issue, it was also framed as a rights and overwhelmingly a development issue. In the earlier phases of the rights approach, this perspective was limited to the rights of those who were HIV positive²³ and was primarily framed in terms of how respecting the rights of HIV positive individuals would be effective towards prevention²⁴. The adoption of this approach can be attributed to the fact that there was “sufficient evidence to prove that HIV/AIDS related stigmatization and discrimination were instrumental in thwarting efforts to reduce risk through education and service delivery”²⁵. Eventually, the rights perspective was expanded from those who were HIV positive to the general population with an emphasis on those who are considered to be among

¹⁹ WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. p. 44.

²⁰ WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. p. 44.

²¹ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 17, 22, 56, 58.

²² UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 129-130.

²³ A/RES/46/203 (1991). *Prevention and Control of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)*. (20 December). par. 3; A/55/779 (2001). par. 89; UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNIFEM (2004). *Women and HIV/AIDS: Confronting the Crisis*. p. 25; A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 58; WHO (2003). *The World Health Report 2003*. p. 49; A/58/184 (2003). *Progress towards implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS: Report of the Secretary-General*. (25 July). par. 21.

²⁴ A/58/184 (2003). par. 6.

²⁵ UNAIDS, Best Practice Collection (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS: Taking stock of research and programmes*. Geneva, (March). p. 6.

the most vulnerable²⁶. The final section of this chapter will provide a much more detailed exploration of how AIDS has been subsumed under the umbrella of development.

The debate between prevention and treatment/care/impact reduction has been in constant flux but prevention seems to retain the primary focus²⁷. That is to say that prevention has been the mainstay of the response²⁸—it “has remained central to efforts to reduce the spread of infection”²⁹. This is further evidenced by the fact that following a brief emphasis on treatment³⁰, there was a shift back to prevention which included a degree of reproof for the temporary deviance³¹. While it is noted that “prevention of HIV/AIDS and provision of care/treatment for those already infected were treated as separate goals”³², I have also found that treatment (or care) has often played a subsidiary role in the larger context of prevention. First, there is little emphasis on how treatment affects the individual being treated. Rather, other impacts, such as increased productivity and contribution to family life as well as reduced discrimination and poverty, are valued³³. Treatment is evaluated with respect to its contribution to prevention. This is evidenced by graphs which make the case that while prevention on its own produces a superior result than treatment on

²⁶ This shift is evidenced in the many documents which contain or even have titles targeted at bringing several topics related to gender vulnerability to AIDS under a ‘rights perspective’, a ‘rights-based response’ or a ‘rights approach’: UNAIDS, Inter-Agency Task Team on Gender and HIV/AIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS: A rights-based approach*; UNAIDS, Reference Group on HIV and Human Rights (2005). *Rights-Based Responses to HIV: Human Rights Indicators: Issue Paper for the Session*. (August); UNIFEM (2006). *Transforming the National AIDS Response: Mainstreaming gender equality and women’s human rights into the “three ones”*: Executive Summary. New York.

²⁷ A/RES/46/203 (1991). par. 2b; A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 47; E/2007/56 (2007). Report of the Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). (7 May). par. 95d.

²⁸ A/RES/60/262 (2006). par. 22.

²⁹ UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 5.

³⁰ WHO (2003). *The World Health Report 2003*. p. 49.

³¹ UNAIDS (2005). *Intensifying HIV Prevention: UNAIDS Policy Position Paper*. Geneva, (August). p. 13; A/60/737 (2006). *Towards universal access: assessment by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS on scaling up prevention, treatment, care and support*. (24 March). summary; UNAIDS (2006). *2006 Report on the global AIDS epidemic: Executive summary: A UNAIDS 10th anniversary special edition*. Geneva, (May). p. 20; UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 17, 106, 125.

³² UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 6.

³³ UNAIDS (2001). *The Global Strategy Framework on HIV/AIDS*. Geneva, (June). p. 11.

its own, treatment accompanied by prevention is merited because the two combined produce an even greater result³⁴. What is most important to note about these graphical examples is that the criteria for ‘superior results’ is decreased rates of new infections—a prevention-based criteria is used to measure the effectiveness of treatment. Further indications of the subordination of treatment to prevention include: statements that although treatment reduces mortality and morbidity, it most importantly contributes to prevention efforts³⁵; as well as the provision of proof of the effectiveness of treatment towards prevention as a condition of international commitments to it³⁶. Impact reduction by itself has received even less attention than treatment (or care). In general, “efforts to reduce the impact of the epidemic have typically been separate from prevention efforts, which have remained the dominant focus given limited resources to address the epidemic”³⁷.

In the current decade, a series of combination approaches to policy prescriptions have begun to emerge. It is argued that there is a synergy between prevention, treatment/care and impact reduction—that these are mutually supportive³⁸. For instance, earlier in the decade, there was a call for an ‘Expanded Response’ which would entail a triangulated approach including simultaneously decreasing risk, vulnerability, and impact³⁹. More recently, there has been a push for what is termed ‘Universal Access’ to treatment, prevention and care⁴⁰. The access approach is largely built on an understanding of the ‘drivers’ and those factors

³⁴ UNAIDS (2005). *Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 14; A/60/737 (2006). par. 4.

³⁵ UNAIDS (2005). *Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 12.

³⁶ WHO, UNAIDS and UNICEF (2007). *Towards Universal Access: Scaling up priority HIV/AIDS interventions in the health sector: Progress Report*. (April). p. 9.

³⁷ UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 21.

³⁸ UNAIDS (2005). *Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 14; A/60/737 (2006). par. 4; UNAIDS (n.d.). *Follow-up to the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS: 2007-2010 Strategic Framework for UNAIDS support to countries’ efforts to move towards universal access*. Geneva. p. 10; UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 189; A/RES/60/262 (2006). par. 23.

³⁹ UNAIDS (2001). *The Global Strategy Framework on HIV/AIDS*. p. 8.

⁴⁰ E/2007/56 (2007).

which ‘fuel’ the pandemic⁴¹. What is notable about the access approach is that rather than targeting the structural factors which generate vulnerability, it is still focused on finding inroads (i.e. gender-sensitive) to reach vulnerable populations⁴²—focused on connecting individuals with tools and services so that they can essentially dodge (rather than be rid of) those factors which make them vulnerable.

Within the narrower context of prevention-based policy prescriptions, there emerges a tension between risk and vulnerability. Risk is associated with behaviour and the individual while vulnerability is associated with the sociocultural and socioeconomic factors that fuel the pandemic. To clarify what is meant by risk: “Individual risk of HIV/AIDS is influenced by cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural factors - what people know and how they understand it, what people feel about situations and about others, and what people do”⁴³. It is clearly established that risk dominated in the first decade of the pandemic: “By and large, the public health response to epidemiological data has relied on individual behaviour change interventions to control the transmission of HIV, given the lack of a vaccine or cure. From the mid-1980s until the early 1990s, the risk reduction model became central to these efforts”⁴⁴. Eventually, there was a shift whereby it was acknowledged that AIDS was also aggravated by vulnerability: “transmission of the virus is related to sexual interaction and to

⁴¹ To clarify: “‘Access’ is a broad concept, which, measures three dimensions of key health sector interventions: • Availability, defined in terms of the reachability (physical access), affordability (economic access) and acceptability (sociocultural access) of services that meet a minimum standard of quality. Making services available, affordable and acceptable is an essential precondition for universal access. • Coverage, defined as the proportion of a population needing an intervention who receive it. Coverage is influenced by supply (provision of services) and by demand from people in need of services. • Impact, defined as reduced new infection rates or as improvements in survival. It results from the coverage of services, modulated by the efficiency and effectiveness of interventions and changes in other relevant factors. Impact goals have been set in the context of the MDGs”, WHO, UNAIDS and UNICEF (2007). *Towards Universal Access*. p. 12.

⁴² UNAIDS. *Follow-up to the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS*; UNAIDS (2006). *Setting National Targets for Moving Towards Universal Access*. (October). sect. 1.4.

⁴³ UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 3.

⁴⁴ UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 5; see also UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 30.

basic social and economic patterns in society, the epidemic has a social character”⁴⁵.

Therefore,

Since the early 1990s, HIV prevention has been concerned with two main objectives: implementation of the risk reduction model to ever-wider sectors of society and improvement of the delivery of services to those at risk; and the development of more strategic approaches to HIV/AIDS through consideration of the contextual factors that foster vulnerability, including integrating care and support with prevention. The first of these objectives focuses primarily on the individual and on promotion of changes in behaviour to reduce risk of HIV transmission. The second stems from the development of the concept of vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, which is influenced by sociocultural, economic and political factors that constitute the context of individual behaviour. These contextual factors also create barriers or otherwise constrain a person’s ability to protect him/herself from HIV infection and to cope with the consequences of HIV/AIDS.⁴⁶

Accordingly, the *Declaration of Commitment* states that there should be, “in place in all countries strategies, policies and programmes that identify and begin to address those factors that make individuals particularly vulnerable to HIV infection”⁴⁷. With respect to gender vulnerabilities, this document pushes for “gender equality and the empowerment of women”⁴⁸, “the advancement of women”⁴⁹, to “challenge gender stereotypes”⁵⁰, and the integration of a gender perspective into all national strategies⁵¹. Just as risk was closely associated to behaviour, the notion of vulnerability has recently become closely tied to that of ‘drivers’⁵². ‘Drivers’ are intended to take the wider context of the epidemic into account. The term “relates to structural and social factors such as gender inequality, human rights

⁴⁵ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 32.

⁴⁶ UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 6.

⁴⁷ A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 62.

⁴⁸ A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 14.

⁴⁹ A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 59.

⁵⁰ A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 47.

⁵¹ A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 37.

⁵² Although it is certainly not the most common use for this term, there are some rare texts wherein risk or behaviour are listed as drivers, see UNAIDS (2006). *Setting National Targets for Moving Towards Universal Access*. sect. 3.2; UNAIDS (2007). *Practical Guidelines for Intensifying HIV Prevention: Towards Universal Access*. Geneva. p. 18.

violations and stigma and discrimination that are not easily measured that increase people's vulnerability to HIV infection"⁵³. Drivers are perceived as a barrier to universal access (because they decrease the effectiveness of programming)⁵⁴. Despite the contention that both risk and vulnerability are essential to an optimal response to AIDS⁵⁵, most documents still implicitly favour risk⁵⁶. Some exceptional documents explicitly disparage that there continues to be an undue overwhelming emphasis on risk (and subsequently behaviour and the individual) over vulnerability⁵⁷.

This section has supplied a contextualization for the remaining bulk of this and the following chapter. The remainder of this chapter consists of a detailed account of my findings and analysis of the empirical content of the UN discourse. This account and analysis establishes the groundwork necessary to the instrumentalization of gender to be explored in further detail in the final chapter. The following section substantiates but ultimately repudiates initial impressions of a critical approach—it ultimately exposes the

⁵³ UNAIDS (2008). "Drivers." <http://www.unaids.org/en/PolicyAndPractice/DriversOfTheEpidemic/default.asp> (15/04/2008); Another definition includes poverty but not stigma or discrimination, see UNAIDS (2007). *Practical Guidelines for Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 10.

⁵⁴ UNAIDS (2008). "Drivers." online; see also UNAIDS (2007). *Practical Guidelines for Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 18.

⁵⁵ UNAIDS (2007). *Practical Guidelines for Intensifying HIV Prevention*. pp. 6, 10; A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 62; UNAIDS (2001). *The Global Strategy Framework on HIV/AIDS*. pp. iv, 12; WHO (2003). *The World Health Report 2003*. p. 44; WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. p. 22; UNAIDS (2005). *Intensifying HIV Prevention*. pp. 15, 20; UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 17, 42-43, 125; UNAIDS (1998). *Expanding the global response to HIV/AIDS through focused action*. pp. 4, 5, 15; A/55/779 (2001). par. 106-107; UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNIFEM (2004). *Women and HIV/AIDS*. pp. iv, 1, 10, 17; UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 4; UNAIDS (2005). *Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 13; A/60/737 (2006). par. 6

⁵⁶ A/RES/46/203 (1991). intro, par. 2b; A/55/779 (2001). par. 95; A/54/2000 (2000). *We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century: Report of the Secretary-General*. (27 March). par. 129; A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 23; A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 52; UNAIDS (2001). *The Global Strategy Framework on HIV/AIDS*. pp. iii, 9; UNAIDS (2008). "Sub-Saharan Africa." <http://www.unaids.org/en/CountryResponses/Regions/SubSaharanAfrica.asp> (14/04/2008); A/60/736 (2006). *Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS: five years later: Report of the Secretary General*. (24 March). par. 5, 10f-g, 21a; A/RES/60/262 (2006). par. 22.

⁵⁷ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 129-130.

privileging of problem-solving over critical approaches which pervades the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS.

2.2 Suggestion of a Critical Approach: AIDS as a turning point

The dynamics of gender vulnerability to AIDS provide a potential turning point in how we understand the relationship between gender and world order. As noted in the introduction of this chapter, the UN discourse on gender vulnerability appears at the onset to present an opportunity to choose a critical over a problem-solving approach. Five themes emerge which justify this initial optimism for a critical approach: a sense of urgency to act; an understanding of the importance of perspective, discourse, and a united response; a sense of the interconnectedness between the processes and problems surrounding AIDS which therefore necessitates a broad response; the manner that AIDS can be perceived as a catalyst for change; and finally an emphasis on long over short term initiatives that should be taken to address it.

What is most important to note however, is that these themes which invoke optimism for the application of a critical approach are both scarce and non-committal. Accordingly, this section concludes that while the AIDS crisis may appear to have triggered a critical response, the principle response continues to privilege a problem-solving over a critical approach. These findings are consistent with the explanation of critical and problem-solving approaches vis-à-vis world order outlined in the introduction. The consistent privileging of a problem-solving over a critical approach serves to consolidate the status quo of the current neoliberal world order.

2.2.1 Five Themes Which Justify Initial Optimism for a Critical Approach

One of the main themes to emerge in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS is an explicit sense of urgency to act rather than simply pontificate. For instance one of the documents uses a fable to highlight some of the pitfalls associated with words which are not followed by action: “The proceedings started with a long, time-wasting speech by Big Bully Elephant about how he had this and that dream, and how he had organized this and that family occasion. By the time the real debate started, most of the animals were convinced that it would all be a waste of time”⁵⁸. This textual example makes a strong commentary that an excess of words and speeches without action brings about fatigue and resignation in participants. Other documents make indirect pleas for action by implying that there is a responsibility to do so. Accordingly, they imply that failure to do so effectively results in culpability: “In the future, historians must record that world leaders in 2006 did everything in their power to end AIDS”⁵⁹; and much more directly, “If, by 2025, millions of African people are still becoming infected with HIV each year, [. . .] it will not be because there was no choice. It will not be because there is no understanding of the consequences of the decisions and actions being taken now, in the early years of the century. It is not inevitable”⁶⁰.

Another theme which emerges and provokes optimism for a critical response is an understanding of the importance of perspective, discourse and a united response. For instance, one of the texts analysed reflects a unique understanding of the decisional consequences of what could be termed assumptions, point of view, or perspective: “The decisions we make about the future are guided by our view of how the world works and what

⁵⁸ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 104, see also p. 182.

⁵⁹ A/60/737 (2006). summary.

⁶⁰ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 12.

we think is possible.”⁶¹ and “How the crisis confronting Africa is defined, and by whom, will make a fundamental difference to the outcome of tackling the crisis [. . .] definitions and explanations of the cause and effect of the epidemic, its magnitude, and the nature of effective solutions may be shared, imposed, ignored, or accommodated”⁶². The same document displays an impressive understanding of the role played by manipulated discourses in silencing others. In this example, it is imagined that after years of failed development, the argument that aid does not work might begin to gain significant ground in donor countries. In the context of this projection it is argued that “Of course, the real story was much more complex, and some journalists and academics, both within Africa and outside it, struggled to tell it. But the simplistic messages were the ones that grabbed the headlines”⁶³. The same text again displays an understanding of the importance of a united response: “Global civil society is unable to unite effectively to place pressure on Western governments—its members have splintered around single issues or, if they can agree on the end they want, divided around the means to reach it”⁶⁴.

Also found in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS is a general sense that the AIDS crisis has effectively highlighted, more than other challenges before it, that there exists an interconnectedness between issues, processes and problems⁶⁵. For instance: “*seemingly* disconnected events and trends (for example, patterns of global trade, the education of girls and women, terrorist attacks on the other side of the world, the rise to power of a certain political regime) can work together to expand or limit an epidemic”⁶⁶.

⁶¹ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 4, see also p. 13.

⁶² UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 180.

⁶³ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 122.

⁶⁴ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 124.

⁶⁵ A/56/326 (2001). *Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration: Report of the Secretary-General*. (6 September). par. 3.

⁶⁶ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 5.

Furthermore, there is an explicit interest in the ‘distribution of power and authority’ as a ‘driver’:

This driver describes the different ways in which power and authority are distributed in society and how they may interact with each other. It asks who has power in any given situation and whether power is centralized or shared. This driver relates particularly to the importance of gender and age in the impact of, and response to, the epidemic.⁶⁷

Subsequently, the current response to AIDS is critiqued for being too narrow⁶⁸, and several arguments are made that AIDS requires “broader social and cultural changes to reduce vulnerability”⁶⁹. More specifically, the response must be very deep at the level of gender: “Across all levels of society, we need to see a deep social revolution that transforms relationships between women and men”⁷⁰.

Related to the above sense of interconnectedness and calls for a broader response, AIDS, although certainly a crisis in itself, is presented as a catalyst for more generalized change. For instance, AIDS is referred to as a “metaphor for global crisis [. . .] AIDS is a catalyst for a reconfiguration of international and national priorities”⁷¹. AIDS is almost framed as a sort of litmus test for how we are doing. For instance, it is maintained that “Today’s global health situation raises urgent questions about justice”⁷², that “the impact of HIV highlighted the inequities and vulnerabilities leading to increased rates of infection among women, children, the poor and marginalized groups, and thereby contributed to a renewed focus on economic, social and cultural rights”⁷³. Consequentially, AIDS has forced

⁶⁷ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 15.

⁶⁸ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 14, 17, 179.

⁶⁹ A/60/736 (2006). par. 25.

⁷⁰ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together: Report*. p. 3; see also UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 19, 180.

⁷¹ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 58, see also pp. 68, 196.

⁷² WHO (2003). *The World Health Report 2003*. p. vii.

⁷³ OHCHR and UNAIDS (2006). *International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights: 2006 consolidated version*. Geneva, (and 1996, 2002). foreword.

us to address issues which were previously believed to be beyond the scope of intervention. It has “necessitated public policy consideration of matters that were previously seen as determined by market activities or political processes beyond policy, including the structure of social and economic conditions, as well as issues of violence and war”⁷⁴. Essentially, it is argued that since “It would be extremely naïve and complacent to assume that there will not be another disease like AIDS, another Ebola, or another SARS, sooner or later”⁷⁵, we need to learn from AIDS by being receptive to the problems that it has highlighted. Therefore, since,

the AIDS epidemic acts as an overarching symbol of many other problems facing Africa and the world [. . .], including the potential collapse of the regulation of world trade; the failure to meet the Millennium Development Goals; continuing global inequality; the undermining of the multilateral order; the growth of terrorism; and urgent evidence of continuing climate change⁷⁶,

it is hoped that “Addressing HIV and AIDS may act as a catalyst for addressing these broader socioeconomic and political dynamics”⁷⁷.

To complement the emphasis above on a broader response and change, there is also a notable push to encourage a prioritization of long term interventions⁷⁸ rather than “shortcuts and magic bullets”⁷⁹ or “swift dividends”⁸⁰. It is argued that

HIV prevention needs long-term investment and sustained engagement in order to have maximum impact. There are no easy solutions or ‘quick fixes’ to promoting and sustaining safer forms of sexual and drug-related behaviour over time, or to changing contextual factors that drive the HIV epidemic. In addition, HIV prevention programmes have to be continuously reinforced to meet the needs of new generations.⁸¹

⁷⁴ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 32.

⁷⁵ WHO (2007). *The World Health Report 2007: A Safer Future: Global Public Health Security in the 21st Century*. p. xii.

⁷⁶ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 19.

⁷⁷ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 14, see also p. 146.

⁷⁸ UNAIDS (1998). *Expanding the global response to HIV/AIDS through focused action*. pp. 3, 10; UNAIDS (2001). *The Global Strategy Framework on HIV/AIDS*. p. 12; World Bank (2005). *The World Bank's Global HIV/AIDS Program of Action*. Washington, (December). p. 3.

⁷⁹ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 17, 106.

⁸⁰ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 116-117, 122, 181.

⁸¹ UNAIDS (2005). *Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 21.

It is conceded that “Short-term projects may have local and individual benefits, but measuring out the future of the epidemic in three-year time horizons will not have a significant overall impact. Short-term solutions can cause the very thing they are meant to prevent”—action should certainly not be tied to political terms of office or swift returns⁸².

2.2.2 The Persistent Privileging of a Problem-Solving Over a Critical Approach

As stated above, these examples seem to take the AIDS crisis as a turning point in how we understand our global system and more specifically to take the gender vulnerability that it highlights as an opportunity to rethink how the relationship between gender and world order is addressed more widely. In short, there appears to be grounds for optimism for a critical approach and transformative change. However, these examples are rare and concentrated. Evidence of this is twofold. First, these themes emerge from less than one quarter of the documents analysed from the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS⁸³. Second and most importantly, this optimism for a critical approach is often embedded in what are otherwise very status quo friendly texts. The themes presented here are never the focus of the documents from which they emerge but are rather most often included as broad statements of intent and aspiration (often in introductory paragraphs) rather than as policy. Therefore, by way of their scarcity and the non-committal nature of their presentation, these

⁸² UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 187.

⁸³ These documents emanate from several branches of the UN relevant to the scope of my study. The distribution of documents is as followed: UNAIDS (6), the General Assembly (3), the WHO (2), OHCHR (1), the Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (1), and the World Bank (1). UNAIDS (and particularly the document entitled *AIDS in Africa: Three scenarios to 2025* which accounts for roughly two thirds of citations) dominates in this regard. Approximately three quarters of the citations in this section are from UNAIDS documents. This is unsurprising however because UNAIDS makes up a large portion of the documents studied.

themes are by no way representative of the dominant discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS.

What dominates the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS is a problem-solving approach. For instance, there is a large emphasis placed on (entire documents devoted to) the design of quick and cheap solutions (in terms of prioritizing and cost-effectiveness). To illustrate, one document argues that “the best approach to control [the pandemic] in the long term will be an effective vaccine”⁸⁴. Although it is certain that an accessible vaccine would be a wonderful thing and would save many lives, this statement runs contrary to the emphasis on AIDS as a catalyst for more transformative change or of treating AIDS as an exceptional but not isolated issue. It seems that despite the occasional hint towards a critical response and transformative change, there is still a focus on short term goals/results and a problem-solving approach which dominates.

This section has outlined the grounds for the initial impressions that AIDS could instigate a critical response. However, as already implied and as the remainder of this thesis will attest, a problem-solving approach continues to be privileged. Drawing upon the conceptual distinction made between critical and problem-solving approaches in the introduction, it is possible to reason that rather than identifying the established perspective as the problematic to be confronted and seeking transformative change, the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS accepts the established hegemonic perspective as the unchallenged point of departure and seeks to affect change within the received system only. As suggested in the theoretical review, the privileging of a problem-solving over a critical approach creates a barrier against critical analysis. Potentially counter-hegemonic ideas, such as those pertaining to the need for an urgent and broad response to AIDS as well as the

⁸⁴ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 41.

importance of gender vulnerability to it, have been absorbed and manipulated so that they become not only consistent with but contribute to the objectives of the hegemonic ideology of the current world order.

More specifically, this section has shown that the dominant threads of the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS are either explicitly or implicitly geared towards a problem-solving response which supports a neoliberal globalized model of development and thus of world order. Even when AIDS is perceived as a catalyst, its potential as a transformative turning point is limited to promoting development: “the AIDS epidemic acts as a catalyst, helping people and institutions across the world to perceive the wider international peace and *development* crisis” (emphasis mine)⁸⁵. Likewise and more specifically, the same applies to the gendered vulnerability put in relief by the epidemic: “possibly more than any other *developmental* challenge to date, HIV/AIDS brings into sharp focus the particular socio-economic, political, labour, cultural and legal position of women and girls” (emphasis mine)⁸⁶. The following section will outline in further detail the overwhelming volume of direct support for the neoliberal globalized development model as the response to AIDS as well as how that support contributes to the preservation and expansion of the current world order.

2.3 Development as Infallible Response and Ultimate Goal *par excellence*

In the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS, development is presented simultaneously as the infallible response and ultimate goal. Development is promoted as the response *par excellence* to all problems—once properly achieved, all other problems,

⁸⁵ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 22, see also p. 179.

⁸⁶ UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. pp. 11, 43.

including AIDS and gender vulnerability to it, will be solved. To be sure, critiques of the unevenness and intensity of liberalized development are made. However, there are no documents which directly address the inherently problematic nature of the neoliberal globalized development model. In line with the reverence granted to the goal of development, other more modest goals than that of development (such as the elimination of gender hierarchies or AIDS) are presented in a fashion which highlights their effectiveness towards achieving development—their value or usefulness is directly (and often exclusively) measured by their contribution to achieving the final goal of development. Even in cases where the more modest goals are not always explicitly aimed at development, they must at least be compatible with it.

The direct support for the neoliberal globalized development model as the response to AIDS is outlined here in five parts which address: the meaning of development, the value attributed to development as a response, the supposed infallibility of development, the position of development at the top of a hierarchy of goals, as well as minimum compatibility with development. Each of these contributes to the construction of the neoliberal globalized development model as infallible response and goal *par excellence*. This explicit support for neoliberal globalized development is consistent with the position of the UN in a Coxian framework as well as the importance of development to the maintenance of the current world order. As we will see in much further detail in the following chapter and as was discussed in the theoretical review, the promotion of the neoliberal development model as a response to gender vulnerability to AIDS instrumentalizes gender to facilitate the profit-maximizing strategy of flexibilization which allows for the continuous growth necessary to the maintenance of the current world order.

2.3.1 Meaning of Development

First it is important to outline what is meant by development as it appears in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. Since a definition of development is not explicitly provided, its meaning must be deduced from an analysis of its usage. Upon careful observation of usage patterns, I have concluded that in the UN discourse, development effectively means neoliberal globalization. The types of liberalization policies which characterize globalization are presented as the optimal and in fact, only path to development to the extent that the three terms (development, liberalization, and globalization) are virtually synonymous. For instance, it is argued that failures to develop can be attributed to insufficient liberalization—if development is impossible without liberalization then they discursively become one and the same. Few documents are explicit about the choice to favour liberalization policies. One justification in support of neoliberal globalization however, is that we have moved from an international to a global system. According to this argument, although what has been referred to as embedded liberalism, Keynesian economics, interventionism and so on, may very well have been appropriate in the post war period, it is no longer so. Rather, a much more aggressive and global development model is required⁸⁷. There is no acknowledgement of alternative models of development or meanings of globalization.

2.3.2 Development as Response *par excellence*

There is a significant degree of conviction about what positive changes will result from development—this conviction lends to development an almost utopic character.

⁸⁷ A/54/2000 (2000), par. 30.

Development is *the solution par excellence*. For instance, development is said to reduce⁸⁸ or even end poverty⁸⁹, improve human rights⁹⁰, security⁹¹, and state stability⁹². Essentially, development promises to improve people's lives and grant them control over their destinies⁹³. Development is framed as a right⁹⁴ which will bring "Africa into the mainstream of the world economy"⁹⁵. With specific reference to the advantages of globalization, it is argued that "globalization offers great opportunities"⁹⁶ and insisted that "The benefits of globalization are plain to see: faster economic growth, higher living standards, accelerated innovation and diffusion of technology and management skills, new economic opportunities for individuals and countries alike"⁹⁷. Aside from some scant critiques of the usefulness of economic indicators (critiques that they do not always reflect wellbeing because mere economic growth does not always translate into improvements on the ground⁹⁸), there are very few exceptions to these favourable reviews of the positive outcomes which result from neoliberal globalized development.

With more specific reference to the topic of gender vulnerability to AIDS, development is presented as the only sensible response. It is argued that development yields not only particular benefits to women⁹⁹, but that development would deal a significant blow

⁸⁸ A/56/326 (2001). par. 80; Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change (2004). *A more secure world*. p. 3.

⁸⁹ UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 9.

⁹⁰ A/56/326 (2001). par. 202; UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 9

⁹¹ A/54/2000 (2000). par. 200-202; Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change (2004). *A more secure world*. p. viii; UNOSAA (2005). *Human Security in Africa*. par. 9, 26; S/RES/1625 (2005). [on threats to international peace and security – Africa]. (14 September). intro.

⁹² Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change (2004). *A more secure world*. p. 3.

⁹³ UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 9.

⁹⁴ A/RES/55/2 (2000). *United Nations Millennium Declaration*. (18 September). par. 24.

⁹⁵ A/RES/55/2 (2000). par. 27.

⁹⁶ A/RES/55/2 (2000). par. 5.

⁹⁷ A/54/2000 (2000). par. 21.

⁹⁸ A/56/326 (2001). par. 151.

⁹⁹ A/54/2000 (2000). par. 81, 83.

to the AIDS pandemic¹⁰⁰. In fact, it is insisted that with development, AIDS would not have become nor would it now be such a problem—thus, development is the necessary response to AIDS¹⁰¹. In this discourse, AIDS is framed primarily as a symptom of underdevelopment, and it follows then that development must be the solution. This point is clearly illustrated in the following excerpt found in a document written from a perspective twenty-five years into the future of the optimal scenario,

The crisis that most African leaders saw confronting their countries was one of development. Certainly HIV and AIDS added a sense of urgency, but most understood that despite its horror, the epidemic was also a symptom of a far larger problem facing Africa. They realized that the context of the epidemic—their country's extreme underdevelopment—had to be tackled.¹⁰²

This excerpt is a lucid example of the persuasive language used to firmly establish the neoliberal globalized development model as the solution *par excellence* to the AIDS pandemic as well as more specifically to gender vulnerability.

2.3.3 Infallibility of Development: Denial of the problems connected to and subsequent championing of liberalization policies

As just noted, development is framed as the only and flawless response—not only to AIDS but to virtually all of the challenges facing underdeveloped regions, especially sub-Saharan Africa. We also saw that, according to the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS, development is synonymous with neoliberal globalization. Now, I will proceed to outline the lengths gone to in order to deny any nefarious effects resulting from neoliberal globalized development policies (past, present or future), and to promote liberalization. In

¹⁰⁰ A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 11; A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 62; A/RES/58/236 (2004). *Follow-up to the outcome of the twenty-sixth special session: implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS*. (25 February). intro; Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change (2004). *A more secure world*. p. 3; UNAIDS (2001). *The Global Strategy Framework on HIV/AIDS*. p. 9; UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 18.

¹⁰¹ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 18, 20.

¹⁰² UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 73.

order to do this, I will first show how the negative effects of neoliberal globalized development are silenced through both the denial of opposing opinions and the insistence that it is indeed inherently equitable. Of course there are exceptional critiques of liberalization policies. However, these critiques are not only rare but are limited to: the unevenness and intensity of liberalization. Then I will illustrate how reasons for African underdevelopment are either ignored or explained away by bad leadership and insufficient liberalization—as we saw previously, increased liberalization is consequently championed as the optimal solution. This will be followed by some acknowledgements of historical misfortunes. Again, these sorts of references are both rare and limited to the direct effects of historical events on developing states, thus precluding any significant discussion of the influence of the global market over these events (in the case of the latter). The overarching themes here are the relentless denial of the inherent problems resulting from (and subsequent championing of) liberalization policies coupled with an understanding of development that erases (just as it champions) the interconnectedness of the globalized market economy.

In the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS, the negative effects of globalization are both explicitly and implicitly denied and thus silenced. The mere suggestion that liberalization policies may generate even some non-beneficial effects, such as contributing to the evolution of the AIDS pandemic or underdevelopment more generally, is unequivocally refuted. This denial is achieved first by renouncing the very existence of opposition or debate: “Few people, groups or governments oppose globalization as such”¹⁰³ and “There is growing consensus on what must be done”¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰³ A/54/2000 (2000). par. 23.

¹⁰⁴ A/54/2000 (2000). par. 75.

The silencing of opposition is also achieved through a general insistence that globalization is inherently equitable. Even when glaring problems linked to the processes of globalization are acknowledged, they are presented as exceptions that can and will disappear aided by time, patience, and sure enough more liberalization—the increasingly unmistakable uneven distribution of the costs and benefits of globalization are dismissed as merely temporary: “Globalization offers great opportunities, but *at present* its benefits are very unevenly distributed while its costs are borne by all”¹⁰⁵; as well as: “*at present* its benefits are very unevenly shared, while its costs are unevenly distributed”¹⁰⁶; and finally: “the benefits and opportunities of globalization *remain* highly concentrated among a relatively small number of countries and are spread unevenly within them”¹⁰⁷ (all emphasis mine). In each of these cases, there is a clear attempt not only to disassociate globalization from its negative effects but to assert that only continued neoliberal globalization itself (not only in its current manifestation, but magnified) will set things right.

Nevertheless, there are some exceptional instances which indicate that globalization is in fact not intrinsically equitable. Some examples are more obvious and argue that development policies can cause inequality¹⁰⁸ through such trends as increased migration¹⁰⁹ and (thanks to export-driven policies) gendered labour segmentation in manufacturing¹¹⁰. In other instances, the wording of the text betrays that in order to achieve a more even distribution of costs and benefits, globalization cannot be simply permitted to run its course but must instead be regulated: first, the central challenge facing the UN is to *make*

¹⁰⁵ A/54/2000 (2000). par. 13.

¹⁰⁶ A/RES/55/2 (2000). par. 5.

¹⁰⁷ A/54/2000 (2000). par. 23.

¹⁰⁸ UNAIDS (1998). *Expanding the global response to HIV/AIDS through focused action*. pp. 7, 8.

¹⁰⁹ UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 3; UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 37.

¹¹⁰ UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 14

globalization a positive force for all¹¹¹; second, the equal distribution of benefits of globalization will require *management*—in other words, the strong must help the weak¹¹²; third, rights must be *assured* so that people can enjoy the benefits of development¹¹³; and finally, the benefits of development must be *distributed* with a human rights approach¹¹⁴ or fairly¹¹⁵. These exceptional examples insinuate that, rather than inherently equitable and internally self-governing, globalization is so inequitable that it requires vigilant external attention and adjustment.

Most documents favour rapid and comprehensive liberalization. However, subsequent to arguments that liberalization policies have been implemented in such a fashion which disadvantages developing regions, some rare documents favour a more controlled liberalized development model. Nevertheless, while these documents question the speed and intensity of liberalization, they do not question its foundations.

These arguments are rooted not only in contemporary theory but also in a historic context. It is conceded that states which are now considered developed were able to become so in part because they were free to implement cushioning policies against the market—a freedom which contemporary developing states have not genuinely been granted¹¹⁶. With this precedent in mind, it is argued that unregulated rapid integration “creates dependence among African nations on richer countries and multilateral institutions—and this undermines or blocks the economic, cultural, and political reforms that are needed to ensure more

¹¹¹ A/RES/55/2 (2000). par. 5.

¹¹² A/RES/55/2 (2000). par. 6; A/54/2000 (2000). par. 362.

¹¹³ A/RES/55/2 (2000). par. 6.

¹¹⁴ A/56/326 (2001). par. 202-203.

¹¹⁵ A/RES/45/87 (1990). *World Social Situation*. (14 December). intro.

¹¹⁶ A/54/2000 (2000). par. 33; specific on health sector and AIDS UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 13.

inclusive and sustained development of individual countries, and erodes regional cooperation”¹¹⁷.

Accordingly, several texts advocate a softened and more controlled form of liberalized development—one which is less infused with the dogmatic neoliberal model of accelerated integration. The following is framed in the context of a best case scenario from a perspective twenty-five years into the future:

It was no longer a case of pursuing open borders at any cost. Full multilateral integration would not bring benefits to Africa: it had to be paced [. . .] provide the least developed African exporters with preferential market access: no tariffs, phasing out of escalation tariffs, and above all, very light and non-restrictive conditionalities [. . .] growing pressure to enable more poor countries to engage in the governance of the world economy helped to shift agendas [. . .] More sophisticated, fairer, and integrated rules ensured that the poorest countries in Africa did not lose out [. . .] there was a discernable move towards pursuing a global economic agenda that calibrated the freeing of markets with poverty reduction programmes, and balanced the rules of global trade to protect the interests of the poorest and middle-income countries, rather than only the well-being of the richest ones. There were also developments in the trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS) agreement, further ensuring that it was compatible with public health and welfare, and offering poorer countries the flexibility to decide when, and in what sectors, they wanted to use patent protection¹¹⁸

—even if this means that the vulnerabilities and shocks are more equally shared¹¹⁹. Some more specific proposals to compliment moderate liberalization include: fair representation in decision making bodies¹²⁰, improved and equitable market access, more fair and transparent terms of trade, and less disadvantageous conditionalities¹²¹, adjustments to intellectual

¹¹⁷ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 181.

¹¹⁸ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 159-160.

¹¹⁹ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 181.

¹²⁰ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 149.

¹²¹ A/RES/55/2 (2000). par. 13; A/56/326 (2001). par. 80, 138, 141-142; A/54/2000 (2000). par. 169, 172, 175, 364; A/RES/55/2 (2000). par. 28; UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 55, 76.

property rights in order to lower drug prices¹²², efforts to end the brain drain¹²³, as well as reducing conditions on and increasing debt relief¹²⁴ and ODA¹²⁵:

Once a credible and sustainable plan is in place, limiting conditions imposed by donors to generally agreed areas such as governance, financial accountability and sustainability would quicken the utilization of funding and support greater alignment with national priorities [. . .] an end to all conditionality except normal fiduciary requirements.¹²⁶

While at first glance these recommendations may appear to offer a significant form of opposition to the neoliberal globalized development model, we must recall that first, they emanate from only a small handful of documents, and second, they are by and large targeted at the particulars of liberalization but not at liberalization itself. Rather than liberalization policies themselves, it is the nature of their implementation which has primarily come under fire. The above critiques are targeted at the uneven implementation of liberalization in different states or regions and/or the ideal intensity of liberalisation in general, rather than at the fundamentals of liberalization. Therefore, although calls for more equitable or controlled liberalization are indeed significant, they are certainly not transformative.

In the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS, explanations of how Africa came to be so underdeveloped are either absent, or blame some combination of bad leadership and/or governance or insufficient liberalization. In all three cases, the current situation in Africa is generally understood without reference to the past or even current external market forces that have shaped it. The problems are framed in such a fashion which

¹²² OHCHR and UNAIDS (2006). *International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights*. par. 51, 52; A/RES/60/262 (2006). par. 43.

¹²³ UNAIDS (2005). *Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 30; A/RES/60/262 (2006). par. 35.

¹²⁴ A/54/2000 (2000). par. 169, 179-181, 364; A/RES/55/2 (2000). par. 28; OHCHR and UNAIDS (2006). *International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights*. par. 48.

¹²⁵ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 55, 158-159; A/56/326 (2001). par. 80; A/54/2000 (2000). par. 169, 186, 364; A/RES/55/2 (2000). par. 28; A/60/736 (2006). par. 11a; OHCHR and UNAIDS (2006). *International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights*. par. 48.

¹²⁶ A.60.737, par. 19.

implies either that they have no origin or are simply the result of bad choices. Consequently, it is up to Africans to sort it out (this sentiment comes from both Northern¹²⁷ as well as Southern perspectives¹²⁸). What should also be noted here is that liberalization policies are framed as new options for Africa—as if they have never been implemented there before and as if the choice has always lain with African leaders. There is very little space to debate whether Africa has (perhaps involuntarily) followed liberalization policies for some time (under Structural Adjustment Programs for instance) and even less space to question whether it is perhaps due at least in part to very similar types of policies, now being ‘offered’ as solutions, that Africa is in its current state.

Accounts of the state of affairs in Africa are largely plainly stated as facts in isolation from contextual explanations. What I mean here is that there is very little suggestion that there could be some relevant inverse relationship between the favourable conditions elsewhere and the unfavourable realities in Africa. For instance, some texts simply impart that Africa has been on the losing end of an unequal share of the benefits of globalization¹²⁹. It is likewise stated that sub-Saharan Africa is the only region of the world to have grown poorer in the last 25 years¹³⁰. When wider reasons for underdevelopment are offered, what is often implied is bad leadership and/or governance¹³¹ (and more specifically inefficient use of funds vis-à-vis AIDS¹³²). Only one thin exceptional example takes some blame from the leadership explanation: “Leadership in the response to HIV and AIDS is vital. However, leadership without the backing of institutional capabilities and resources, available systems capacity, or effective policy will not be able to deliver a successful response to the AIDS

¹²⁷ A/54/2000 (2000). par. 148.

¹²⁸ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 69.

¹²⁹ A/56/326 (2001). par. 137.

¹³⁰ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 38.

¹³¹ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 109, 110.

¹³² UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 53.

epidemic”—what is required are “new global policy and programming synergies”¹³³. While this example certainly does not place any particular blame for the patterns of poor leadership in Africa on outside influences, it does imply a degree of outside responsibility to assist in rectifying the situation.

There are several disputable explanations for the dilapidated state of the African economy (which subsequently contributes to the AIDS crisis) which are put forward without any sense of irony or hypocrisy. These include: insufficient social sector infrastructure¹³⁴, insufficient health sectors¹³⁵, inadequate mechanisms to distribute even the meagre benefits of growth¹³⁶, and an excessive reliance on export revenue (undiversified, low-value primary exports)¹³⁷. Again, these explanations are offered devoid of any acknowledgement that they have been caused by the same neoliberal-style policies often presented as solutions in the same documents. In fact, with the exception of very few instances of debate on the merits or demerits of liberalization policies vis-à-vis African poverty and inequality¹³⁸, there is an overwhelming sense that underdevelopment (specifically African underdevelopment¹³⁹) can be entirely attributed to insufficient liberalization¹⁴⁰.

Consequently and as just indicated, solutions overwhelmingly fall under the umbrella of increased liberalization. These neoliberal style solutions are primarily related to trade and conditionalities on ODA and debt relief. For instance, in terms of trade, there are calls for developing states to reduce tariffs and taxes (on drugs in order to lower prices)¹⁴¹. In terms

¹³³ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 182

¹³⁴ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 17, 66, 106.

¹³⁵ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 56, 110.

¹³⁶ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 110.

¹³⁷ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 39, 106, 118.

¹³⁸ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 110.

¹³⁹ A/54/2000 (2000). par. 79.

¹⁴⁰ A/54/2000 (2000). par. 74, 171

¹⁴¹ A.60.737, recommendation 4; UNAIDS (2006). *2006 Report on the global AIDS epidemic*. p. 22.

of ODA¹⁴² and debt relief, conditionalities are often unclear and contradictory—policies which have been proven to increase poverty are touted as strategies for poverty reduction. For instance, to qualify for both ODA¹⁴³ and debt relief, states must integrate policies which exhibit “demonstrable commitments to poverty reduction”¹⁴⁴ and the “HIPC Initiative requires debtor countries to pursue macroeconomic adjustment and structural and social policy reforms and provide for additional finance for social sector programmes, primarily basic health and education”¹⁴⁵. The contradiction that emerges here is that the explanations for the economic problems faced by Africa are often mirrored in the solutions provided. At the same time that neoliberal policies are blamed for Africa’s failed development, they are championed as the only solutions.

Nevertheless, there are some notable exceptions in which liberalization policies are critiqued based on both past and potential future negative repercussions¹⁴⁶. The primary message that these exceptional documents tries to communicate is that “it [is] not just Africa that need[s] to change, but rather the global system that ha[s] exploited it for years”¹⁴⁷. Essentially, these documents argue that despite the rhetoric of open markets and promised prosperity for all, this has not been the case. Rather, it is argued: first, that neoliberal globalized development has been uneven, discriminatory, and effectively unfair; and second, that regulations need to be altered in order to level the playing field.

According to several documents, liberalization policies have been unevenly implemented in such a fashion which disadvantages developing regions. The most common

¹⁴² A/60/737 (2006). recommendation 1.5.

¹⁴³ A/56/326 (2001). par. 136,138

¹⁴⁴ A/54/2000 (2000). par. 181; A/RES/55/2 (2000). par. 15; see also A/56/326 (2001). par. 136, 138.

¹⁴⁵ A/56/326 (2001). par. 144

¹⁴⁶ A/54/2000 (2000). par. 23.

¹⁴⁷ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 90.

and familiar critiques are made of SAPs¹⁴⁸. SAPs are critiqued in both their preceding and current form. Although most documents seem to suggest that the mistakes in SAPs have been rectified, some documents maintain that the IMF and World Bank have failed to significantly improve adjustment policies and continue to follow a one-size-fits-all model¹⁴⁹.

One specific critique of adjustment policies is that they tend to foster brain drain:

While recognizing the importance of promoting sustainability, maintaining macroeconomic stability and fostering rapid growth [. . .] excessively tight deficit reduction and inflation-reduction targets constrain the hiring and retention of the doctors, nurses, community health-care workers, teachers and administrators who are needed to scale up [AIDS programs].¹⁵⁰

A few documents specifically critique the role of the North in abetting the brain drain problem by increasingly relying on cheap labour from the South¹⁵¹. Other critiques related to unfair liberalization primarily address unfair terms of trade:

by far the main beneficiaries of trade liberalization have been the industrialized countries. Developing countries' products continue to face significant impediments in rich countries' markets. Basic products in which developing countries are highly competitive are precisely the ones that carry the highest protection in the most advanced countries.¹⁵²

More specifically, critiques address drug regulations¹⁵³, as well as the marginalization of Africa in trade rounds¹⁵⁴, tariffs and subsidies¹⁵⁵. There are also several critiques aimed at the unrealistic, counter-productive and much too stringent debt repayment schemes¹⁵⁶, as well as several critiques aimed at the contradictory and excessive conditionalities attached to

¹⁴⁸ UNOSAA (2005). *Human Security in Africa*. par. 84, 107; UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 152.

¹⁴⁹ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 121-122.

¹⁵⁰ A.60.737, par. 18.

¹⁵¹ Secretary-General's Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 27; A/60/737 (2006). par. 28

¹⁵² A/56/326 (2001). par. 137; see also A/RES/45/87 (1990). par. 5; A/54/2000 (2000). par. 170-171.

¹⁵³ A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 26.

¹⁵⁴ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 17, 106.

¹⁵⁵ A/54/2000 (2000). par. 170-171.

¹⁵⁶ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 66, 77, 159; A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 30; A/54/2000 (2000). par. 178

ODA¹⁵⁷ (as well as the fact that it has been consistently decreasing¹⁵⁸). More specifically, there are a handful of critiques targeted at the HIPC sustainable debt repayment plans. The following critiques are framed in the context of a worst case scenario from a perspective twenty-five years into the future (were we to continue to deal with the AIDS pandemic as we are at present): “all that was really sustainable was [states’] ability to repay the loans”¹⁵⁹ and

slowly, the mechanisms being used to address debt were recognized as being unsustainable and unfair. By 2010, the failure of the *HIPC* process to deliver what it called ‘sustainable levels of debt’ had discredited the process. Many countries in Africa were still paying more back in debt service than they were receiving in grants and new loans. Moreover, many indebted countries had paid their debt off two or three times over, yet still spent more on debt servicing than on health.¹⁶⁰

Most documents in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS are curiously silent on the historical legacy of Africa. Furthermore, those few which do acknowledge that legacy do so in such a manner which fails to draw any effective links between that history and the divergent development patterns of developed and developing states. It is suggested for instance that contemporary conflicts have arisen in part as the result of historically imposed divisions:

partitioning meant the indiscriminate bundling of distinct and autonomous political, cultural, and religious groups into one geopolitical territory, forcing them to coexist under centralist colonial regimes, irrespective of their differences, were they sociopolitical, cultural, religious, or due to traditional practices. These imposed and arbitrary divisions are the source of some of the major conflicts that afflict Africa today.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 17, 21, 55, 68, 73, 185; World Bank (2005). *The World Bank's Global HIV/AIDS Program of Action*. p. 3; UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 19, 66, 73-74, 122.

¹⁵⁸ A/54/2000 (2000). par. 185.

¹⁵⁹ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 77.

¹⁶⁰ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 159

¹⁶¹ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 35, see also pp. 17, 106.

The same document draws attention to the multiple and compound events in which Africa has been exploited in one way or another such as slavery, the colonial period, the cold war etc:

over the centuries, slavery has imprisoned 40 million Africans and killed millions more. How can we ignore the impacts of slavery on the contemporary social, economic, and political landscape? The colonial period changed [the African] continent in profound, perhaps irrevocable, ways—many of them for the worse. In the 30-year period that followed, many countries in Africa became pawns in the Cold War struggle. In many places, the legacy is division and instability at best, and political, social, and economic chaos at worst. In many countries, it exacerbated strife; recast, disrupted, or destroyed communities and traditional cultures; and damaged lives. Little of use was left behind, in terms of education, health care, physical infrastructure, or state administration.¹⁶²

Again, it must be noted that these kinds of historical explanations for underdevelopment are extremely rare.

Furthermore, and more significantly, these rare historical references are limited to explanations of the contemporary situation of underdevelopment in Africa and are for the most part devoid of the possible connections between this underdevelopment and the situation of developed states. Their exceptionality is limited in that although they may hint at a degree of historical interconnectivity between developed and underdeveloped regions, the analysis stops there. Although underdevelopment is discursively linked to development respectively as problem and solution to the challenges faced by Africa, these terms are not discursively connected in a way which points to the interconnectedness between developed and underdeveloped regions.

In both the dominant pattern of silence on the historical legacy of Africa and the rare exceptions where some interconnectivity between Africa and developed states is suggested but not carried through, the effect remains the same. This effect is to imply that development

¹⁶² UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 109.

is a teleological process—different states and regions develop independently from one another and development is inherently beneficial to all who accept its principles and policy prescriptions. Furthermore, analyses which would suggest continuity between these historical events and global market processes are silenced. Therefore, the notion of development as solution (inherently positive) is largely protected at the expense of the notion of development as cause (inherently inequitable).

What is most important to witness throughout the above description of the infallibility of development, is the combative denial of the problems connected to (and subsequent championing of) liberalization policies coupled with an understanding of development and underdevelopment that assumes autonomy and erases (even while it simultaneously promotes) the interconnectedness of the globalized market economy.

2.3.4 Hierarchy of Goals: Development as the ultimate goal

The following will address what I have come to understand as a hierarchy of goals. This hierarchy of goals can be imagined as a sort of webbed pyramid with development sitting at the top. Other more modest goals are connected in a manner which underscores their effectiveness towards achieving development—their value or usefulness is directly (and often exclusively) determined by their contribution to the final goal of development. The primary relationships that I wish to highlight here are those between gender, AIDS and development. Although I will not expand upon these findings here, it is noteworthy to mention however, that the connections between these more modest goals (those related to AIDS and gender) and that of development are not only directly but are often also indirectly mediated by other goals related to security, the state, poverty and rights. What is also important to underscore at this juncture is not only that the value of attaining the modest

goals is *primarily* framed in reference to their usefulness towards attaining development, but also that it is more often than not *exclusively* framed as such. This means that the modest goals (such as the elimination of gender hierarchies or AIDS) are not presented as sufficiently important on their own.

AIDS is primarily understood as a barrier to development. For instance, AIDS is framed as “an unstoppable epidemic impacting the future development of Africa”.¹⁶³ As such, effective steps towards its elimination are understood, in an overwhelming number of documents and statements, as contributing to the goal of development¹⁶⁴. Rarely is AIDS understood as a significant problem in and of itself.

As with AIDS, gender (most often framed in terms of inequalities), is also seen as a barrier to development; both directly, and also indirectly as a result of the effect of gender on AIDS vulnerability. As such, the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS is replete with textual examples which argue that gender equality is an important goal because of its effectiveness towards directly¹⁶⁵ and indirectly (via AIDS¹⁶⁶) achieving development. In

¹⁶³ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 191.

¹⁶⁴ A/RES/46/203 (1991). par. 7; A/55/779 (2001). par. 23, annex II par. 11; A/56/326 (2001). par. 254; A/55/779 (2001). par. 1; A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 2, 8, 11, 68; A/RES/58/236 (2004). intro; UNAIDS (2001). *The Global Strategy Framework on HIV/AIDS*. pp. 2, 4; WHO (2003). *The World Health Report 2003*. p. 53; WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. pp. 7, 26, 38; UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. pp. 28, 42; A/60/736 (2006). par. 2, 7, 16; A/RES/60/262 (2006). par. 3, 13; World Bank (2005). *The World Bank's Global HIV/AIDS Program of Action*. pp. 6, 8; UNAIDS (2006). *2006 Report on the global AIDS epidemic*. p. 6; UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 189, 191; UNAIDS (1998). *Expanding the global response to HIV/AIDS through focused action*. p. 9.

¹⁶⁵ A/56/326 (2001). par. 95; A/56/326 (2001). par. 121; A/54/2000 (2000). par. 90, 101; A/RES/55/2 (2000). par. 20; UNAIDS (2001). *The Global Strategy Framework on HIV/AIDS*. p. 11; WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. p. 35; UNAIDS, Inter-Agency Task Team on Gender and HIV/AIDS (n.d.). [Fact Sheets for HIV/AIDS and Gender]. sheets 4, 12; UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 183.

¹⁶⁶ UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNIFEM (2004). *Women and HIV/AIDS*. pp. 9, 43, 47, 57, 59, 60; A/56/326 (2001). par. 121; UNAIDS (1998). *Expanding the global response to HIV/AIDS through focused action*. p. 7; E/CN-4/2005/72 (2005). par. 80; A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 14, 37, 47, 62; A/RES/58/236 (2004). par. 5c; A/RES/55/2 (2000). par. 20; UNAIDS (2001). *The Global Strategy Framework on HIV/AIDS*. pp. 2, 8, 10; WHO (2003). *The World Health Report 2003*. pp. 43, 45; WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. pp. 6, 7, 26, 38, 41, 44, 46, 46; A/58/184 (2003). par. 32; UNAIDS (n.d.). [Fact Sheets for HIV/AIDS and Gender]. sheets 3, 6; UNIFEM (2006). *Transforming the National AIDS Response*. p. 7; E/2007/56 (2007). intro, par. 5, 46, 65, 95c; UNAIDS (2008). “Gender.”

fact, the virtual absence of statements to the contrary implies that achieving gender equality is *only* important insofar as it contributes to development.

As mentioned above, in addition to those documents which address the usefulness of gender equality in directly achieving development, what is more common are texts which address its indirect (via AIDS) effectiveness towards achieving that goal. For instance, one text argues that “If we want to save Africa from two catastrophes [famine and AIDS], we would do well to focus on saving Africa's women”¹⁶⁷. Yet another maintains that

addressing gender equality is possibly the most effective strategy in reducing vulnerability to HIV infection and in enhancing the capabilities of individuals, households and communities to cope with the consequences of HIV/AIDS [. . .] when women and girls are able to engage their male counterparts as equal partners in the household, the community, the workplace, at school and in politics, the epidemic will cease to spread so rapidly and will no longer cause such devastation¹⁶⁸

In addition to AIDS and development, the goal of gender equality is also subordinated to other goals. For instance, it is asserted that: women’s education will lead to economic, social, and environmental gains¹⁶⁹; women’s empowerment will lead to numerous benefits and multiplier effects, (particularly in food production)¹⁷⁰; and improving women’s social and economic status will improve the sexual health of communities¹⁷¹.

<http://www.unaids.org/en/PolicyAndPractice/Gender/default.asp> (14/04/2008); UNAIDS (2008). “Drivers.” online; UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 5; Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 5, 11, 14, 46; UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. pp. 8, 10, 42; A/60/736 (2006). par. 59; UNAIDS (2005). *Intensifying HIV Prevention*. pp. 10, 12, 23, 26, 31; A/60/737 (2006). recommendation 5.2; A/RES/60/262 (2006). par. 7, 15; UNAIDS (n.d.). *Follow-up to the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS*. pp. 9, 10; UNAIDS (2007). *Practical Guidelines for Intensifying HIV Prevention*. pp. 1, 6, 19, 35; UNAIDS (2004). *2004 Report on the global AIDS epidemic*. p. 12; Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, a UNAIDS Initiative [post 2003]. *Keeping the Promise: An Agenda for Action on Women and AIDS*. p. 3; UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 21, 183.

¹⁶⁷ UNOSAA (2005). *Human Security in Africa*. par. 53.

¹⁶⁸ UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 4.

¹⁶⁹ UNOSAA (2005). *Human Security in Africa*. par. 52.

¹⁷⁰ UNOSAA (2005). *Human Security in Africa*. par. 53.

¹⁷¹ UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 26.

As we can see, the discursive relationship established between gender, AIDS and development (as well as some other goals) is such that the value of addressing gender hierarchies is determined with respects to its effectiveness towards the higher goals of slowing the spread of AIDS and achieving development¹⁷². In fact, this dynamic allows us to infer that were it not for its usefulness in achieving development (again, via AIDS), gender equality would not be ‘worth’ addressing on its own and furthermore, that it is only because of AIDS that gender has gained such increased attention. Illustrative of this point is the repetitious manner in which gender is repeatedly (and often exclusively) referred to as a ‘driver’¹⁷³ of (or as ‘fuelling’) the pandemic¹⁷⁴—as if gender had no other (negative) manifestations. Clearer corroboration of this line of reasoning is present in the pervasive demand for evidence (as a condition for action) that gender inequality merits being confronted as a means of addressing AIDS. These include: appeals for “tools and materials that make a case for the value of integrating gender (especially the use of sound research data that demonstrates the incontrovertible evidence of the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS)”¹⁷⁵, appeals for evidence on the economic, social and health costs of violence against women in their connection to AIDS¹⁷⁶, as well as appeals for evidence proving the effectiveness of including men in the response¹⁷⁷. Yet another example which illustrates the hesitancy to deal with gender outside of its effectiveness in addressing the pandemic becomes apparent in the

¹⁷² UNAIDS (2007). *Practical Guidelines for Intensifying HIV Prevention*. pp. 31-37. There is a section in this document which outlines what measures should be pursued at varying stages of the pandemic. More ‘transformative’ interventions (such as changes in gender norms, education, involving boys and men etc) are only suggested when the epidemic is quite bad. These initiatives are not seen as important out of the context of AIDS.

¹⁷³ “[Driver] relates to the structural and social factors, such as poverty, gender, and human rights abuses that can increase people’s vulnerability to exposure to HIV. It is often reserved to describe underlying determinants”, UNAIDS (2008). *UNAIDS’ Terminology Guidelines*. (February). p. 8.

¹⁷⁴ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*; UNAIDS (2008). “Drivers.” online; A/55/779 (2001). par. 88.

¹⁷⁵ WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. p. 41.

¹⁷⁶ UNAIDS (n.d.). [Fact Sheets for HIV/AIDS and Gender]. sheet 6.

¹⁷⁷ UNAIDS (2007). *Practical Guidelines for Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 48.

following statement on human rights: “Anti-discrimination and protective laws should be enacted to reduce human rights violations against women *in the context of HIV*, so as to reduce vulnerability of women to infection by HIV and to the impact of HIV and AIDS” (emphasis mine)¹⁷⁸. As we can see the importance of women’s human rights is restricted to the context of AIDS.

Of course there are some noted exceptions in which achieving gender equality is granted some value independent of other goals or considerations. However, in most of these cases, it is implied that this value would remain insufficient to merit attention were it not for the pandemic. For instance, some documents argue that the elimination of violence against women¹⁷⁹ as well as vulnerability in general (whether related to gender or not)¹⁸⁰ is already important *but is especially so* in the context of AIDS. Several examples include the following: “The statistics on infection rates are in themselves cause for alarm, but so too are the circumstances of girls and women who have sex for too many reasons other than love and self-respect”¹⁸¹; that (in reference to mother to child transmission avoidance programs) “the right to health of women and girls needs to be recognised. In other words, their health and well-being has intrinsic value; it should not just be promoted as an instrumental strategy to save the lives of their babies”¹⁸²; and also that gender inequality should be addressed as a

¹⁷⁸ OHCHR and UNAIDS (2006). *International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights*. par. 22f.

¹⁷⁹ Global Coalition on Women and AIDS [post 2003]. *Keeping the Promise*. p. 10.

¹⁸⁰ UNAIDS (1998). *Expanding the global response to HIV/AIDS through focused action*. p. 9; UNAIDS (2007). *Practical Guidelines for Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 12.

¹⁸¹ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 46. It is certainly debatable whether sex motivated by any other reasons than ‘love or self respect’ is the consequence of gender inequality. It is outside the scope of this thesis but I would argue that there are several reasons for women to engage in sexual activity apart from ‘love and self-respect’ which are not the result of gender subordination. In any event, this quote is relevant in the sense that it argues that we should not only be concerned with gender equality because of its associated negative impact on AIDS statistics but also because of its impact on choice when it comes to sexual intimacy.

¹⁸² UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 41.

problem in itself but especially in view of multiple other positive effects¹⁸³. The most exceptional cases place gender and AIDS on equal footing. For instance, rather than pointing out how addressing gender would positively impact on the pandemic, several documents argue that the beneficial relationship between the two is reciprocal¹⁸⁴ and that dealing with AIDS will improve gender equality and reduce vulnerability¹⁸⁵. As we can see, even in these more exceptional cases where gender equality is granted some value in itself, its value is never completely independent from its relationship, and most often remains subordinated, to other goals.

From the examples above, it becomes clear that in this discourse, there are two very separate ways of perceiving the connection between gender inequality and AIDS. In the dominant understanding, the value of addressing gender is not determined by the degree of its impacts on gendered others (reducing *their* vulnerability in general and/or to AIDS, for *them*) but rather via the potential of eliminating gender as a driver or fuel *for the pandemic*—gender equality is consequentially never a worthwhile project in itself and is largely only given attention insofar as working on it will bring about positive change vis-à-vis AIDS and consequently vis-à-vis development.

In most cases, this rationale is assumed as the accepted wisdom and its discord with the alternative remains unexplored. However, there are some instances when the two rationales are at least explicitly laid out. For instance, Stephen Lewis, speaking on the importance of addressing gender inequality, maintains that “For the African continent, it means economic and social survival. For the women and girls of Africa, it’s a matter of life

¹⁸³ A/56/326 (2001). par. 95.

¹⁸⁴ E/CN-4/2005/72 (2005). summary; UNAIDS (n.d.). [Fact Sheets for HIV/AIDS and Gender]. sheet 15.

¹⁸⁵ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 5; UNAIDS (2005). *Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 12.

or death”¹⁸⁶. In addition, the following excerpt sets up a distinction between an equity/fairness and an efficiency/instrumental rationale:

There are many rationales in making a case for gender integration into HIV/AIDS programmes. In particular, initiatives to integrate gender can and should rely on equity and efficiency rationales [. . .] By equity, we are referring to advocacy based on human rights, appeals to justice, or other fairness-related arguments. The more instrumental efficiency approach maintains – and rightfully so – that gender integration maximizes the effectiveness of programmes by reaching more people and reducing constraints to accessing and using information, technologies and services for all. It yields more sustainable long term results in terms of lowering the incidence of infection and mitigating the negative consequences of AIDS.¹⁸⁷

Unsurprisingly however, the efficiency/instrumental rationale is privileged over the equity/fairness rationale. For example, one document argues that gender vulnerability to AIDS must be addressed “Both from the point of view of effectiveness and from the perspective of social justice”¹⁸⁸. However, the remainder of that document is focused on effectiveness. Likewise, another document argues that although gender equity (as well as human rights) should be respected, interventions should be prioritized according to the characteristics of the epidemic and effectiveness criteria¹⁸⁹. Yet another example shows that while “Both rationales should be used, as appropriate for particular settings or audiences, to justify integration”¹⁹⁰, advocates can pick and choose which is more appropriate to convince a given target—after all, “even if gender is not the focus of attention for ideological or human rights reasons, there are entirely pragmatic economic and social reasons to address the status of girls and women in the context of national development and the lowering of

¹⁸⁶ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 3.

¹⁸⁷ WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. pp. 41-42.

¹⁸⁸ UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 4.

¹⁸⁹ UNAIDS (2006). *Setting National Targets for Moving Towards Universal Access*. sect. 4.3.

¹⁹⁰ WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. p. 42.

HIV prevalence”¹⁹¹. Finally, the primacy of the efficiency/instrumental rationale over that of equity/fairness is evident in the insistence that experts on gender-analysis be geared towards efficiency: “The training used to promote such knowledge and understanding should be hands-on, practical, related to a specific type of intervention, and presented in the context of maximizing a programme activity’s effectiveness”¹⁹². While the pragmatic approach of valuing the potential of eliminating gender as a driver or fuel for the pandemic has its merits over that of valuing the degree of its impacts on gendered others themselves, it is symptomatic of the more general trend discussed in the previous section to privilege problem-solving over critical approaches in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS.

2.3.5 Minimum Compatibility With Development

We just saw an outline of the hierarchy of goals present in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS wherein the more modest goals (related to gender and AIDS) are subordinated to development. I will now demonstrate that even in instances where the hierarchy of goals aimed towards development is not clearly established, the privileging of development over other concerns prevails. It is implied that any programs or initiatives which address AIDS (including those addressing gender hierarchies) should not disrupt, even if they do not contribute towards, development. Essentially, it is insisted that AIDS initiatives be part of a broader development agenda¹⁹³: “The response to AIDS cannot succeed if it occurs in isolation from mainstream development”¹⁹⁴. This insistence on

¹⁹¹ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 183.

¹⁹² WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. p. 42.

¹⁹³ UNAIDS (n.d.). *Follow-up to the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS*. p. 5.

¹⁹⁴ UNAIDS (n.d.). *Follow-up to the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS*. p. 6.

compatibility with development emerges primarily through three discursive mechanisms: an ‘exceptional’ response; mainstreaming; and finally, framing several initiatives as ‘development issues’ as well as alignment.

Several documents contend that AIDS requires exceptional rather than isolated treatment. This means that while AIDS must be treated as an exceptional issue, it does not mean that it should be treated in isolation from other issues. Rather than a restricted focus on AIDS, the response must be broad and comprehensive. These arguments for an exceptional response seem promising at first. However, an exceptional response is clearly framed as one which must be rooted in and therefore compatible with development¹⁹⁵:

A line must be drawn between treating HIV as an exceptional disease (exceptionalism) and paying attention only to HIV (isolationism) [in an ideal scenario] AIDS engenders an exceptional response, but it is not treated in isolation from its wider social and economic context. The funding for AIDS takes place in the context of much a much wider developmental response¹⁹⁶

—”solutions are devised not as a response to AIDS, but with the goal of securing sustained, more autonomous development”¹⁹⁷.

Other documents use the term mainstreaming (as well as integration) to advocate a degree of compatibility between AIDS and gender, and (primarily) development. I must take this opportunity to clarify what is meant by ‘mainstreaming’ here. Although a more general definition of mainstreaming was not found, the definition of gender mainstreaming¹⁹⁸ seems

¹⁹⁵ U.N. Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*; UNAIDS (1998). *Expanding the global response to HIV/AIDS through focused action*. p. 3; A/60/737 (2006). summary; A/RES/60/262 (2006). par. 3; UNAIDS (2006). *2006 Report on the global AIDS epidemic*. p. 17.

¹⁹⁶ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 21-22.

¹⁹⁷ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 180

¹⁹⁸ “Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementations, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to

to indicate that were AIDS to be mainstreamed into development, for instance, this would mean that all development programs would be vetted for any negative impacts on the pandemic before meeting approval¹⁹⁹. On the contrary, I have discovered through careful observation that the way that mainstreaming is primarily used in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS indicates that when one issue is mainstreamed into another, the first should not interfere with but rather support the second. As such, the customary usage runs contrary to that which is purportedly intended and is rather a mechanism for assuring the compatibility of subordinated goals with those considered more important such as development. Having established this meaning of mainstreaming, I can now proceed to enumerate the circumstances under which it is used. There are many texts which call for AIDS initiatives to be mainstreamed into development²⁰⁰ as well as those which call for gender to be mainstreamed into AIDS²⁰¹ programs and development²⁰². There are also texts which call for: gender to be mainstreamed into human rights, education access and curriculum (so as to effectively address AIDS)²⁰³; human rights to be mainstreamed into AIDS²⁰⁴; and AIDS to be mainstreamed into all of the UN system²⁰⁵, poverty reduction²⁰⁶,

achieve gender equality”, A/52/3/Rev.1 (1999). *Report of the Economic and Social Council for the year 1997*. p. 24.

¹⁹⁹ Even if this were the case, gender mainstreaming in the context of AIDS can be very problematic: “Faced with the immediate challenges posed by HIV/AIDS, the realisation of gender equality and the process of gender mainstreaming may be perceived as optional extras, rather than integral to development programming”, UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 43.

²⁰⁰ UNAIDS (1998). *Expanding the global response to HIV/AIDS through focused action*. pp. 8, 13; A/55/779 (2001). par. 44, 121; UNAIDS (2001). *The Global Strategy Framework on HIV/AIDS*. p. 14; E/2007/56 (2007). par. 45; A/60/736 (2006). par. 16; OHCHR and UNAIDS (2006). *International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights*. par. 43; UNAIDS (2005). *Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 29; UNAIDS (2007). *Practical Guidelines for Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 32; World Bank (2005). *The World Bank's Global HIV/AIDS Program of Action*. p. 3; UNAIDS (2006). *2006 Report on the global AIDS epidemic*. p. 18; A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 38, 85.

²⁰¹ UNIFEM (2006). *Transforming the National AIDS Response*. title, pp. 3, 48.

²⁰² UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. pp. 11, 43; UNAIDS (2007). *Practical Guidelines for Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 32.

²⁰³ UNAIDS (n.d.). [Fact Sheets for HIV/AIDS and Gender]. sheet 3.

²⁰⁴ Framed as integrating rather than mainstreaming UNAIDS (2005). *Rights-Based Responses to HIV*. par. 2.

²⁰⁵ A/RES/58/236 (2004). intro.

gender²⁰⁷, as well as several other sectors (education, transport, infrastructure, youth, law, and the private sector)²⁰⁸.

Finally, another mechanism which argues for compatibility between development and other subordinated issues is that of framing those issues as ‘development issues’. As such, in several documents a variety of challenges such as women’s rights²⁰⁹, gender violence²¹⁰, AIDS²¹¹, (gender, human rights and AIDS)²¹², (poverty, gender, and security²¹³) are all assumed under the framework of development. Yet other documents (specifically those dealing with ‘access’ to AIDS programmes and ‘intensifying the response’ to the pandemic) use the term ‘alignment’ to achieve the same end. They argue that AIDS programmes need to be “aligned with national development plans”²¹⁴, strategies²¹⁵, and priorities²¹⁶.

This section outlined the insistence that AIDS is a symptom of underdevelopment and that the neoliberal globalized development model is the infallible response and ultimate goal *par excellence*. This insistence was outlined in five parts which addressed: the meaning of development, the value attributed to development as a response, the supposed infallibility of development, the position of development at the top of a hierarchy of goals, as well as minimum compatibility with development. The pattern of support for neoliberal globalized development reflected here is unsurprising when one allows for both the position of the UN

²⁰⁶ UNAIDS (n.d.). *Follow-up to the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS*. p. 4.

²⁰⁷ World Bank (2005). *The World Bank's Global HIV/AIDS Program of Action*. pp. 4, 5.

²⁰⁸ World Bank (2005). *The World Bank's Global HIV/AIDS Program of Action*. pp. 4, 5.

²⁰⁹ UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNIFEM (2004). *Women and HIV/AIDS*. p. 55.

²¹⁰ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 33.

²¹¹ World Bank (2005). *The World Bank's Global HIV/AIDS Program of Action*. pp. 2, 4; UNAIDS (2006). *2006 Report on the global AIDS epidemic*. p. 24.

²¹² UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 5.

²¹³ UNAIDS (n.d.). *Follow-up to the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS*. p. 6.

²¹⁴ A.60.737, recommendation 1.1; UNAIDS (2007). *Practical Guidelines for Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 5.

²¹⁵ UNAIDS (n.d.). *Follow-up to the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS*. p. 5.

²¹⁶ UNAIDS (2006). *Setting National Targets for Moving Towards Universal Access*. executive summary, sect. 1.2.

in a Coxian framework as well as the importance of neoliberal development to the maintenance of the current world order. Recall from the theoretical review that the UN effectively fulfills its role as an institution of world order by protecting and perpetuating the status quo of the hegemonic system. The capitalist mode of production is a vital component shaping the contemporary hegemonic system. Accordingly, the expansion of that mode of production via neoliberal development is equally essential. Therefore, the UN must protect and promote a status quo discourse which promotes neoliberal globalized development. Furthermore, as was also established in the theoretical review and will be discussed in much greater detail in the final chapter, the neoliberal development model promoted as a response to gender vulnerability to AIDS allows for the continuous growth necessary to the maintenance of the current world order because it facilitates the profit-maximizing strategy of flexibilization.

Conclusion

This chapter has begun to document and analyse the empirical findings from the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. It began with some contextualizing remarks on methodology and an overview of the UN response to gender vulnerability to AIDS. More importantly, however, it proceeded to expose the groundwork for the instrumentalization of gender. This groundwork consists of the privileging of problem-solving over critical approaches as well as the promotion of the neoliberal globalized model of development.

This chapter has shown that in spite of initial impressions that AIDS offers a turning point in the UN understanding of how gender is related to world order, these impressions are misleading. Rather than adopting a critical approach, this chapter has illustrated that gender vulnerability to AIDS continues largely to be treated through a problem-solving lens—

specifically one which promotes a neoliberal globalized model of development. This chapter has also revealed an overwhelming volume of direct support for the neoliberal globalized development model. Development is presented simultaneously as the infallible response and ultimate goal. Development is promoted as the response *par excellence* to all problems—once properly achieved, all other problems, including AIDS and gender vulnerability to it, will be solved. Furthermore, this chapter has underlined the consistency between these findings and several of the arguments made in the introduction and theoretical review such as: the distinction between critical and problem-solving approaches, the position of the UN in a Coxian framework, and the importance of the neoliberal development model to the maintenance of the current world order.

The next and final chapter will build upon the groundwork revealed here by exposing how gender is instrumentalized in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. It will expose that gender is channelled towards three problem-solving themes which ultimately support a neoliberal globalized development model and thus world order: an understanding of gender which is not of a serious nature, a corresponding push for liberal (purportedly gender-neutral) individualism, and finally a push for inclusive/participatory development/globalization via a silence on the full extent of women's participation in the economy as well as on the consequences of or interests served by this silence. Together, these patterns will demonstrate that the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS is an example of the manner in which gender is instrumentalized and made to support a neoliberal globalized model of development and thus of a neoliberal world order.

Chapter 3: The Instrumentalization of Gender: Insufficient understandings of gender, the promotion of individualism, and a push for participatory development

The previous chapter provided a contextualization of the documents analysed in this study and revealed the foundation for the instrumentalization of gender—a foundation which consists of the privileging of a problem-solving over a critical approach as well as the championing of the neoliberal globalized development model as the infallible response and ultimate goal *par excellence*. This final chapter continues to document and analyse the empirical findings from the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. It builds upon the groundwork revealed in the second chapter by exposing how gender is instrumentalized in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. It will demonstrate that gender is channelled towards three problem-solving themes which ultimately support a neoliberal globalized development model and thus a neoliberal world order. These themes are: an understanding of gender which is not of a serious nature, a corresponding push for liberal (purportedly gender-neutral) individualism, and finally a push for inclusive/participatory development/globalization.

Throughout this chapter, I will once again underscore the recurrent compatibility between, and explanatory capacity of, the arguments outlined in the theoretical review and the empirical findings of this study. Such an analysis will allow me to demonstrate that the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS is an example of the manner in which gender is instrumentalized and made to support a neoliberal globalized model of development and thus of a neoliberal world order.

3.1 Not taking gender seriously

In this section on the understanding of gender, I will show that the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS creates as well as reinforces a more dominant pattern, albeit with scant exceptions¹, of not taking gender hierarchies seriously. My criteria for taking gender seriously is two tiered. The optimal scenario entails a reformulation of gender which understands gender as an analytic category, as outlined in the theoretical review. This reformulation would provide the foundation necessary for transformative change which could then be translated into recommendations, policies and programmes. The minimum criterion for taking gender seriously would be met if the more progressive recommendations about gender made by the UN were adopted and consistently implemented throughout its own documents—essentially, were the UN to follow its more innovative guidelines, thus achieving internal consistency within the discourse². I believe, although the first would be obviously superior, that the satisfaction of either of these criteria would be sufficient to

¹ One of the most notable exceptions is UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa: Three scenarios to 2025*. Geneva, (January). In this document, gender relations are considered to be so important that they are explored as one out of three “Interactions that create the scenario dynamics” which are the focus of that document, pp. 58-59.

² Although I believe that most of the more progressive recommendations about gender found in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS (such as gender mainstreaming) fall under the category of problem-solving approaches, their consistent application would satisfy my criteria of taking gender seriously for two reasons. First, although the real changes that could occur from their implementation would be small compared to those brought about by transformative change, they would nonetheless contribute to significant positive change in the lives of women (it should be noted that these already limited impacts would of course be restricted once again to women rather than to all feminized others). Second, were the more progressive gender related recommendations made by the UN consistently applied, this consistent application would be contrary to the finding of previous studies such as that completed by Whitworth cited in the previous chapter. To review, Whitworth suggests that the seemingly inconsistent treatment of gender is characteristic of the UN gender discourse. Whitworth discovered that in the context of UN peacekeeping operations, even a limited understanding of gender had not been consistently applied. Gender therefore, remained a secondary consideration in UN operations, WHITWORTH, Sandra (2004). *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping: A gendered analysis*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. pp. 120, 132, 137. Indeed, she argues that framing gender as a problem-solving activity has served to legitimate the inconsistent taking of gender into account. Furthermore, it legitimizes and reinforces the postulation that a gender approach can simply be grafted onto existing methods, barring the possibility of questioning those methods or the concepts upon which they are rooted (such as gender itself), WHITWORTH, Sandra (2004). *Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping*. pp. 133, 136. Therefore, if the more progressive gender related recommendations were applied consistently in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS, then it would constitute a deviation from previous findings and perhaps the foundations for a space to be more critical within the UN discourse.

constitute a space to be more critical within the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS.

The following is an outline of three significant characteristics found in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS which all create as well as reinforce a pattern of not fully taking gender hierarchies seriously. First, I will show that there is a spectrum ranging from comprehensive to more constrained definitions and usages of the term ‘gender’ present in the UN documents on gender vulnerability to AIDS. However, the great majority are limited to the man/woman dichotomy. Furthermore, I will demonstrate that the programmatic solutions offered to address gender vulnerability are for the most part restricted to those which either plainly ignore or tolerate gender hierarchies. Finally, I will establish that while there are some notable exceptions, there is a significant silence on the origins and/or interests served by the maintenance of gender hierarchies. Recalling the theoretical review of this thesis, I will also outline the degree to which this dominant pattern of not fully taking gender hierarchies seriously reflects the liberal feminist understanding of gender and subsequently invokes its critiques.

3.1.1 Spectrum of Definitions and Usages of ‘Gender’

Even when the definition of gender is explicitly addressed, this is often done in a dismissive tone—in short, the unique content of ‘gender’ does not receive much explicit attention. In fact, in some cases the meaning of the term gender is assumed to be commonly understood—so much that a definition is deemed unnecessary. For instance, in discussions surrounding the Platform for Action about the meaning of gender, it was decided that “the word ‘gender’ had been commonly used and understood in its ordinary, generally accepted usage in numerous other United Nations forums and conferences” and would be used that

way in the Platform as well³. In this case, although the definition was questioned, it was reaffirmed *without* the provision of a clear definition. Furthermore, the distinction between sex and gender is trivialized. For example, in the UNAIDS Terminology Guidelines where sex and gender are addressed, it is noted that the usage of gender as distinctive from sex is particular to English. “Since many languages do not have the word gender, translators *may* have to consider other alternatives to distinguish between these concepts” (emphasis mine)⁴. What is noteworthy here is that the proposal that some action be taken in order to distinguish between gender and sex in languages other than English is made merely as a suggestion or consideration rather than a necessity.

Since the content of ‘gender’ is so rarely questioned, its meaning in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS must be deduced from an analysis of its usage. The following is an outline of the spectrum of meanings drawn from such an analysis. On the most restrictive end of the spectrum, there are a surprising number of texts which speak explicitly (although not necessarily exclusively) in biological language (i.e. male/female⁵, sex⁶).

³ A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1 (1996). *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women*. Beijing, China, 4-15 September 1995. annex IV par. 2.

⁴ UNAIDS (2008). *UNAIDS’ Terminology Guidelines*. (February). p. 9.

⁵ UNAIDS, Reference Group on HIV and Human Rights (2005). *Rights-Based Responses to HIV: Human Rights Indicators: Issue Paper for the Session*. (August). par. 7; UNAIDS and WHO (2008). *Sub-Saharan Africa: AIDS epidemic update: Regional Summary*. Geneva, (March). p. 8; E/2007/56 (2007). *Report of the Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)*. (7 May). par. 5; UNAIDS, Best Practice Collection (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS: Taking stock of research and programmes*. Geneva, (March). p. 5; Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together: Report*. p. 5; UNAIDS, Inter-Agency Task Team on Gender and HIV/AIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS: A rights-based approach*. p. 39.

⁶ UNOSAA (2005). *Human Security in Africa*. (December). par. 54; UNAIDS, Inter-Agency Task Team on Gender and HIV/AIDS (n.d.). [Fact Sheets for HIV/AIDS and Gender]. sheet 4.

As stated above however, the definition and usage of gender is overwhelmingly used (or implied to be used) in reference to men/women⁷. Even within this men/women context however, there are variations as to what degree the socially constructed nature of gender is portrayed. On the more socially constructed understanding end of the spectrum for instance, some texts touch on notions of masculinity and/or femininity⁸. Furthermore, while gender inequities are presented as a quasi universal problem (present in most societies to varying degrees)⁹, gender is nevertheless understood to be contingent upon such factors as time and place as well as age, class, race, ethnicity, religion, economic status, and political environment¹⁰. Some more restricted uses of gender within the men/women context also exist. For instance, some texts essentialize men and women with respect to their roles and characteristics. For instance, one document states that women (as opposed to men) are

⁷ UNAIDS distinguishes between gender and sex: “‘sex’ refers to biologically determined differences, whereas the term ‘gender’ refers to differences in social roles and relations between men and women. Gender roles are learned through socialization”, UNAIDS (2008). *UNAIDS' Terminology Guidelines*. p. 9. See also A/55/779 (2001). *Review of the problem of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome in all its aspects: Report of the Secretary-General*. (16 February). par. 28. UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 3; ILO (2001). *An ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work*. Geneva. p. 2.

⁸ WHO, Family and Community Health, Department of Gender and Women's Health (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes: a review paper*. pp. 5, 9, 11; UNAIDS (2008). “Gender.” <http://www.unaids.org/en/PolicyAndPractice/Gender/default.asp> (14/04/2008); UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. pp. 8, 39; UNAIDS (2005). *Intensifying HIV Prevention: UNAIDS Policy Position Paper*. Geneva, (August). p. 26; UNAIDS (2004). *2004 Report on the global AIDS epidemic: 4th global report*. Geneva, (June). p. 12; Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, a UNAIDS Initiative [post 2003]. *Keeping the Promise: An Agenda for Action on Women and AIDS*. p. 10.

⁹ UNAIDS, Best Practice Collection (1998). *Expanding the global response to HIV/AIDS through focused action: Reducing risk and vulnerability: definitions, rationale and pathways*. Geneva. p. 6; UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNIFEM (2004). *Women and HIV/AIDS: Confronting the Crisis*. pp. 7, 48, 52; UNDP (1994). “New Dimensions of Human Security” in *Human Development Report 1994*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 31; WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. pp. 9-10; UNAIDS (n.d.). [Fact Sheets for HIV/AIDS and Gender]. sheet 13; UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 39; UNAIDS (2007). *Practical Guidelines for Intensifying HIV Prevention: Towards Universal Access*. Geneva. p. 21; UNAIDS (2004). *2004 Report on the global AIDS epidemic*. p. 12; UNAIDS (2005). *Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 10.

¹⁰ Gender roles “vary widely within and between cultures. Gender roles are also affected by age, class, race, ethnicity and religion, as well as by geographical, economic and political environments.”, UNAIDS (2008). *UNAIDS' Terminology Guidelines*. p. 9; UNAIDS (1998). *Expanding the global response to HIV/AIDS through focused action*. p. 8; WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. pp. 9, 11; UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 5; UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. pp. 8, 39; ILO (2001). *An ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work*. p. 2.

committed to peace rather than power, more community and family oriented, less hierarchal, better listeners, communicators, and negotiators, as well as more forgiving and prone to reconciliation¹¹. While these generalizations may very well be rooted in real patterns of behaviour, what makes them essentializing is that their inclusion is devoid of any discussion on how these gender-based behavioural patterns emerge. One lone exception to this essentialization is observable however, in the argument that “The assumption that all women are gender experts is erroneous. Thus, both gender balance and gender expertise are critical to ensure effective allocation of resources and outcomes for women”¹².

Another common restricted use of gender emerges when gender is equated with women. Indicative of this point is the fact that several agencies working within or in collaboration with UNAIDS which reportedly deal with gender, have specific mandates vis-à-vis women (such as UNFPA, Global Coalition on Women and HIV/AIDS, and UNIFEM). Likewise, gender (in)equality and women’s (in)equality are frequently used interchangeably. This move suggests that matters of gender (in)equality only affect women and femininity. There is no evidence in either case to suggest a conscious understanding that this pairing of gender and women not only excludes men but also contributes to a narrower understanding of gender which overlooks masculinity. However, there are some cases in which it is acknowledged that acting out masculinities (i.e. promiscuity, risk taking, ignoring health and emotional problems) places men, as well as women, in a position of vulnerability¹³. Furthermore, Although far from explicitly applying gender to issues of class, race or so on, one document specifically on the topic of gender insists that men can also be placed at a

¹¹ UNOSAA (2005). *Human Security in Africa*. 47, 53.

¹² Global Coalition on Women and AIDS [post 2003]. *Keeping the Promise*. p. 24.

¹³ UNAIDS (n.d.). [Fact Sheets for HIV/AIDS and Gender]. sheets 4, 5; Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 11; UNAIDS (2005). *Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 26.

disadvantage because of such factors: “gender, class, race, sexuality and age (among other factors) oppress men as well as women – albeit in different ways and with different consequences”¹⁴.

There are some instances where the meaning of the term gender is exceptionally more open than its restricted men/women adaptation and thus does not necessarily preclude the possibility of gender as an analytical category, but is never made explicit as such. These cases include both when the definition or usage is quite vague as well as when it is applied either directly to or in association with non-men/women issues such as children, same-sex issues and gender role issues. Some vague statements about gender claim that “gender permeates all aspects of society and societal relations”¹⁵ and that “[gender inequality] exists at all levels”¹⁶. These statements are sufficiently vague that they remain open to interpretation. Although there is no explicit reference to children being perceived as feminine, they are often lumped in with discussions on women (‘women and children’ is a category in itself¹⁷). In other cases, women’s status is compared to that of adolescent boys. Similarly, same-sex issues¹⁸ and more specifically issues pertaining to men who have sex with men are sometimes stated as gender issues (insofar as they are included in sections of

¹⁴ WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. p. 30.

¹⁵ UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 7.

¹⁶ UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 39.

¹⁷ A/56/326 (2001). *Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration: Report of the Secretary-General*. (6 September). executive summary, par. 225; A/54/2000 (2000). *We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century: Report of the Secretary-General*. (27 March). par. 209, 210; A/RES/58/236 (2004). *Follow-up to the outcome of the twenty-sixth special session: implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS*. (25 February). intro; Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. pp. 10, 33; OHCHR and UNAIDS (2006). *International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights: 2006 consolidated version*. Geneva, (and 1996, 2002). par. 103; A/60/737 (2006). *Towards universal access: assessment by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS on scaling up prevention, treatment, care and support*. (24 March). recommendation 5; UNAIDS (2007). *Practical Guidelines for Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 6.

¹⁸ WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. p. 26; UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 52.

texts which explicitly address gender)¹⁹. Likewise, there is one case which mentions the rape of lesbian women intended to ‘prove’ their womanhood²⁰. Finally, other exceptional uses of the term gender appear in discussions of the upsetting of traditional gender roles. For instance, in one document, there is an example of a boy who is mocked (called girl names) for doing ‘womanly’ tasks. In the document, this instance is also linked to homophobia²¹. Moreover, although there is no analysis of the circumstances which contribute to such situations, there is also some treatment of the emasculation/feminization of men which can lead to a reinforcement of hyper masculinities. For example, it is stated that “breakdowns in men’s ability to meet some masculine norms, such as providing for the family, can result in men seeking self esteem by fulfilling other masculine norms, such as engaging in sex with multiple partners”²². Likewise, there is a discussion about increased acts of spousal violence by male heads of household in refugee camps where they are “stripped of their traditional patriarchal power and roles”²³.

3.1.2 Insufficiency of Programmatic Solutions

In a discursive climate where the content of gender is not taken very seriously, it is unsurprising that the programmatic solutions offered to address gender vulnerability to AIDS are predominantly restricted to those which either simply ignore or tolerate gender hierarchies. Examples of these programmatic solutions appear in several UN documents on

¹⁹ UNAIDS (n.d.). [Fact Sheets for HIV/AIDS and Gender]. sheet 5; UNAIDS (2008). “Gender.” online; UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 13.

²⁰ E/CN-4/2005/72 (2005). “Integration of the Human Rights of Women and the Gender Perspective: Violence Against Women” and “Intersections of violence against Women and HIV/AIDS” in *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, causes and consequences*. (17 January). par. 27.

²¹ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 38.

²² WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. p. 13.

²³ E/CN-4/2005/72 (2005). par. 54.

gender vulnerability to AIDS. Interestingly, there are even a few documents which much more explicitly (and exceptionally critically) outline the range of programs. *Facing the Future Together* from the Secretary-General's Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa, as well as the WHO's *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes* describe and review a spectrum of four principle types of programmatic solutions. Drawing primarily from those two documents, I will present the spectrum of programs along with the critiques and praises made of them in these UN documents themselves.

The first type of programs is referred to as 'gender stereotypes'. These are programs which aim mostly at curbing behaviour but also reinforce gender stereotypes about both men and women. They reinforce and foster perceptions that men are assertive and women are passive in sexual relations²⁴. Furthermore, "women are often seen as 'repositories' of infection and disease, responsible for bringing illness and death into their households and communities"²⁵. Examples of gender stereotype programmes are "prevention efforts that portray sex workers as harbingers of death, and condom promotion efforts that employ macho stereotypes of male virility"²⁶, as well as messages such as "good girls wait to have sex"²⁷. Fortunately, these kinds of programs appear less frequently in more recent documents²⁸.

²⁴ Secretary-General's Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 47.

²⁵ WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. p. 29.

²⁶ WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. p. 29.

²⁷ Secretary-General's Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 47.

²⁸ With the exception of one document in which it is maintained that masculinity can be harnessed for positive purposes "While some elements of masculinity can make men vulnerable, others represent valuable potential. For example, strength, leadership and the desire to be a reliable partner and good father are all positive characteristics. Creating opportunities to discuss issues related to masculinity, with women's participation in some cases, is a valuable step. Perceptions of gender roles start at a very early age, but dominant notions of masculinity can change over time. Risky behaviours can be addressed by offering men and women alternative models of masculinities that are not based on unequal power relations. Both women and men must nurture and support **positive expressions of masculinity** and promote the core concepts of inner strength, respect and care

The next category of programs is called ‘gender neutral’ and also targets behaviour. Although gender-neutral programs (such as the very well known ‘ABC approach’ used in Uganda) are certainly the most common²⁹, they are critiqued for ignoring gender norms, realities and relations³⁰. They are critiqued at a more general level because they are not tailored to address the nature of gender relations for either women or men: “Many interventions continue to be aimed at an imaginary boy or man or a fictional gender-neutral public”³¹ and “Programming sometimes provides women and men the same interventions when their needs are different”³². Gender-neutral programs are mostly critiqued however with respect to their lack of usefulness for women. For instance, it is argued simply that “partner reduction and condom use are unrealistic prevention options for women”³³ and that

Most AIDS plans assume an idealized world in which men and women are equal and able to make empowered choices—a world in which people can decide freely to abstain from sex, ensure the fidelity of their partner, remain faithful themselves, or use condoms consistently. In the real world, women face a range of HIV-related risk factors that the majority of men do not.³⁴

It is important at this juncture to point out that although these critiques imply that gender-neutral programming is insufficient and does not go far enough, they imply that this insufficiency is unintentional:

While these programmes do not seek deliberately to exclude women, they are often based on research and messages that have been tested on men, or work better for men [. . .] This means that most of what women and girls hear and

for partners and children”, UNAIDS (n.d.). [Fact Sheets for HIV/AIDS and Gender]. sheet 5. I would argue that even initiatives which seek to emphasise positive aspects of masculinity can be reinforcing in a negative way. This is because when these positive characteristics are attributed to men, men are being defined in opposition to women who implicitly, do not possess these characteristics. If both genders possess these positive characteristics, then they would not need to be disaggregated by gender.

²⁹ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 47.

³⁰ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 92.

³¹ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 6.

³² WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. p. 29.

³³ UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 11.

³⁴ Global Coalition on Women and AIDS [post 2003]. *Keeping the Promise*. p. 13.

learn about HIV/AIDS through peer education, or through the mass media, does not wholly apply to them. This has the overall effect of leaving women and girls under-equipped to protect themselves against HIV infection³⁵

What is important here is that none of these critiques of gender-neutral programming, which are exceptions to begin with, argue or even suggest that gender-neutral programs may in fact have a nefarious effect which goes beyond mere insufficiency or that their dominance in the UN discourse may serve some interests. For instance, the emphasis on behavioural change present in gender-neutral (and partially in gender-sensitive) programming, is reminiscent of the emphasis on the individual to be explored in the next section.

Yet another category of programmes are referred to as ‘gender-sensitive’ (and also include empowerment initiatives). Gender-sensitive initiatives are those which take gender into account in their design because to do so purportedly increases their effectiveness. They “respond to the different needs and constraints of individuals based on their gender and sexuality”³⁶. They focus on meeting ‘practical needs’ through ‘service delivery’. Gender-sensitive programs often involve the dissemination of different messages and actions targeted at men and women separately. Examples of these programs abound³⁷. Simple examples include the supply of, and counselling related to, female-controlled methods of prevention³⁸. A more complex example of a gender-sensitive program aimed at women is one which offers them educational opportunities so that they may become financially independent and thus

³⁵ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 47.

³⁶ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 47.

³⁷ For examples of and praise for gender-sensitive/empowerment programming, see: A/56/326 (2001). par. 97, 124-125; UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNIFEM (2004). *Women and HIV/AIDS*. pp. 15, 17, 19, 20, 57; E/CN-4/2005/72 (2005). summary, par. 84; UNAIDS (2001). *The Global Strategy Framework on HIV/AIDS*. Geneva, (June). p. 14; WHO (2003). *The World Health Report 2003: Shaping the Future*. p. 50; UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 4; A/60/736 (2006). *Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS: five years later: Report of the Secretary General*. (24 March). par. 44; A/RES/60/262 (2006). *Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS*. (15 June). par. 30; Global Coalition on Women and AIDS [post 2003]. *Keeping the Promise*. p. 22.

³⁸ UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNIFEM (2004). *Women and HIV/AIDS*. p. 20.

avoid dependence on ‘sugar daddies’³⁹. Comparable gender-sensitive programming aimed at men provides “education that is based on their roles as decision makers in their relationships with women”⁴⁰.

Gender-sensitive programmes however, are also critiqued for their short-sightedness. Although they certainly take gender into account, often resulting in statistical improvements, they work within, rather than disrupting, the boundaries imposed by gender hierarchies and therefore, also fail to go far enough. For instance:

Although effective, it is important to remember that gender sensitive programmes do very little to change those conditions that create gender-related barriers in the first place. If we are to think in terms of a long term set of goals for the creation of successful and sustainable HIV/AIDS programmes, we must recognize that gender-sensitive interventions, while critically important for meeting the needs of women and men in the epidemic, cannot be the ‘end of the line’.⁴¹

These programmes may very well, “impact on the immediate lives of women, but seldom directly challenge the gender status quo. In this regard, they fail because they do not question men’s ability to hold decision-making power and use their masculinity to control the sexuality and rights of their partners”⁴². For instance, it is argued that “microbicides (if and when they become available) will find their main use in situations where women need to hide their attempts to control their reproductive health and will not address the root causes of gender inequality”⁴³. More specific critiques of empowerment measures argue that, “Programmes that seek to empower women sometimes fail to recognize that social norms

³⁹ UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNIFEM (2004). *Women and HIV/AIDS*. p. 15.

⁴⁰ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 47.

⁴¹ WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. p. 33.

⁴² Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 47;

⁴³ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 20. See also p. 22.

still inhibit most women from challenging the behaviour of their partners”⁴⁴. As we saw previously with gender-neutral programs, critiques of gender-sensitive initiatives, which are even rarer than those of gender-neutral initiatives, are limited to illustrating the lacunas and do not push the analysis further to explore the possible negative ramifications of these programs which go beyond insufficiency.

The final group of programs described are called ‘transformative’⁴⁵. It is claimed that ‘transformative’ programs “seek to change the underlying conditions that cause gender inequities”⁴⁶ and “address the systems, mechanisms, policies and practices that are needed to support such genuine change.”⁴⁷ One document contends that although many argue that gender-sensitive programming is best or good enough, “For governments and for the United Nations, there can be no debate”⁴⁸—they are not. It is argued that to combat gender vulnerability to AIDS, it is not sufficient to focus on meeting needs. Rather, ‘transformative’ programming places a strong emphasis on human rights—in fact, advocates of the ‘transformative’ approach point to existing human rights legislation as the foundation for the legitimacy of that approach⁴⁹. More substantively, ‘transformative’ programmes are aimed at changing laws as well as attitudes and norms. Most examples of ‘transformative’ programming found involved interactive discussion rather than the mere imparting of information. Sessions take place with couples as well as in larger co-ed groups⁵⁰.

⁴⁴ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 115.

⁴⁵ I will retain the inverted commas throughout to distinguish between the UN use of the word ‘transformative’ and that which is derived from critical theory.

⁴⁶ WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. p. 33.

⁴⁷ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 48.

⁴⁸ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 48.

⁴⁹ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 48. The rights approach to gender vulnerability to AIDS will be explored in a later section.

⁵⁰ WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. pp. 33-38.

'Transformative' initiatives are praised certainly for going beyond gender-neutral and even beyond gender-sensitive programming because they distinguish between practical (gender-sensitive) and strategic gender needs:

addressing practical gender needs does not automatically mean that the power relations between women and men, girls and boys are challenged and changed [. . .] Addressing strategic gender needs means challenging the power relations and division of labour between women/girls and men/boys and promoting gender equality at home, at work, in the legal and political arena and in society at large.⁵¹

Although certainly the most promising and innovative candidates, even 'transformative' programmes, championed in the two documents noted above, fail to satisfy the criteria for taking gender seriously. First, regardless of the label 'transformative', these programs fall significantly short of being transformative (in the critical sense). Despite the evident understanding of gender as more than just biological difference, gender is not understood as an analytic category in these programs. This means that even 'transformative' programmes contain no understanding of the manner in which gender plays upon multiple gendered hierarchies (thus contributing to AIDS vulnerability) and consequently are limited to gender relations between men and women. Neither do they reflect any of the complex connections between gender and world order which flow from an understanding of gender as an analytic category (such as a recognition of the origins or interests served by the maintenance of gender hierarchies in capitalism, let alone of the increased importance of the feminization of multiple subordinated others in the current phase of neoliberal globalized world order). Second, these programs derive their legitimacy largely from the purportedly gender-neutral notion of human rights which will be explored and analysed in the following section on individualism. Finally, 'transformative' programmes fail to satisfy the criteria for

⁵¹ UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 11.

taking gender seriously because the 'transformative' approach is inconsistently applied. Despite the innovative policy prescriptions of the 'transformative' approach, the enthusiasm for 'transformative' programming is found in only a small handful of UN documents⁵² and the majority of the programmes which have emerged to date do not reflect it.

The programmatic solutions offered to deal with gender vulnerability to AIDS just outlined are consistent with the pattern of not fully taking gender hierarchies seriously found within the UN understanding of gender in its discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. Most programmes fail to satisfy this criteria because they fall under the categories of stereotypes, gender-neutral or gender sensitive programming which, even by UN standards, are insufficient to affect significant change. It seems fairly well accepted that the stereotyping programmes have nefarious effects. However, regardless of the critiques contained in a small selection of UN documents that gender-neutral and gender-sensitive initiatives are insufficient, what is not addressed is that there may actually be some negative repercussions and interests served by their promotion. Furthermore, even those programs which are labelled 'transformative' fail to take gender seriously because firstly, they do not understand gender as an analytic category, secondly because they rely too heavily on problematic notions of human rights, and third because they are very inconsistently applied. That being said, the 'transformative' approach is relatively new. Despite its flaws, it may in time evolve in content and gain significant influence in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. As such, although it is not possible to draw conclusions at this time, 'transformative' programming may develop into a space of resistance in the future.

⁵² In addition to the two documents mentioned previously, see UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNIFEM (2004). *Women and HIV/AIDS*. pp. 17, 41, 48, 58; Global Coalition on Women and AIDS [post 2003]. *Keeping the Promise*.

3.1.3 Silence on the Origins and/or Interests Served by the Maintenance of Gender Hierarchies

Regardless of the volume of documents in which gender and gender hierarchies⁵³ are often dealt with, they are rarely questioned. Subsequently, despite the number of documents which speak to gender subordination, the origins of gender hierarchies remain unaddressed. Even more specifically, the negative state of gender relations in Africa is usually presented without any explanation. There are, however, some scant examples of exceptions to this trend with respect to property rights and gender violence. In terms of property rights, there is some acknowledgement of a colonial legacy whereby a strict patriarchal private property system of land control was imposed where an already somewhat patriarchal system existed⁵⁴. Similarly, in terms of gender violence, it is noted that, “The high levels of violence in southern Africa are often attributed to the legacy of recent civil wars and of apartheid, with its destabilising effect beyond the borders of South Africa. This history intersects with the legacy of colonialism and indigenous patriarchy to the detriment of women in powerful ways”⁵⁵.

Not only do the origins of gender hierarchies remain largely unaddressed, but so do the interests served by their maintenance. There are only some weak exceptions which hint at the interests served by the maintenance of gender hierarchies. Although they do not explicitly reflect interests served, some promising exceptions touch upon the global nature

⁵³ As we saw in the first chapter, gender hierarchies are the manifestation of the patriarchal binary construction between masculine and feminine. This binary construction embodies an implicit hierarchy which valorises the masculine and denigrates the feminine. As such, gender difference is not compatible with equality but is structured under a gender hierarchy wherein that which is feminine is seen to be inferior to that which is masculine. Under the theoretical framework of this thesis, gender hierarchies refer to all structural hierarchies linked by the denigration of the feminine.

⁵⁴ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 35.

⁵⁵ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 29.

and modes of dissemination of gender hierarchies. For instance, despite the frequent tendency to isolate discussions of gender related problems to Africa and other developing geographical regions, gender inequities are sometimes presented as a quasi universal problem which is present in most societies but to varying degrees⁵⁶. It is also explained that the dissemination of “Gender norms that create an unequal balance of power between women and men are deeply rooted in the sociocultural context of each society and are enforced by that society’s institutions, such as schools, workplaces, families, and health systems”⁵⁷. In a more explicit, although isolated case, the interests served by the maintenance of gender hierarchies are highlighted: “there remains a substantial gap in our understanding of male sexuality and the *social and economic forces* that sustain forms of male sexuality that foster risky sexual behaviour” (emphasis mine)⁵⁸.

This section has outlined three significant characteristics found in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS which all create as well as reinforce a pattern of not fully taking gender hierarchies seriously. I first showed that within the spectrum of definitions and usages of the term ‘gender’ present in the UN documents on gender vulnerability to AIDS, the majority are limited to the man/woman dichotomy and those which are not are unclear. Second, I showed that the programmatic solutions offered to address gender vulnerability are for the most part restricted to those which either plainly ignore or tolerate gender hierarchies. While ‘transformative’ programming offers the most innovative

⁵⁶ UNAIDS (1998). *Expanding the global response to HIV/AIDS through focused action*. p. 6; UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNIFEM (2004). *Women and HIV/AIDS*. pp. 7, 48, 52; UNDP (1994). “New Dimensions of Human Security.” p. 31; WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. pp. 9-10; framed in terms of care economy UNAIDS (n.d.). [Fact Sheets for HIV/AIDS and Gender]. sheet 13; UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 39; UNAIDS (2007). *Practical Guidelines for Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 21; UNAIDS (2004). *2004 Report on the global AIDS epidemic*. p. 12. “In all contexts men continue to be key drivers of the epidemic”, UNAIDS (2005). *Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 10.

⁵⁷ WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. p. 10.

⁵⁸ UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 30.

approach, it too does not adequately take gender seriously. Finally, I demonstrated that despite some notable exceptions, there is a significant silence on the origins and/or interests served by the maintenance of gender hierarchies.

This dominant pattern of not fully taking gender hierarchies seriously both reflects the liberal feminist understanding of gender and invokes its critiques as outlined in the theoretical review of this thesis. This liberal feminist understanding of gender is restricted to the man/women dichotomy and is thus inadequate towards a comprehensive appreciation of the interconnectedness of multiple gender hierarchies, the vulnerabilities they create, or their relationship to the stability of world order. The silence on the origins and/or interests served by the maintenance of gender hierarchies helps to normalize the privileging of that which is identified as masculine over that which is associated with femininity. While an understanding of gender as an analytic category is critical to a comprehensive analysis of power relations such as those which underlie AIDS vulnerability, the UN liberal feminist account of gender does not contain such an understanding. Therefore, the UN liberal feminist derived pattern of not fully taking gender hierarchies seriously serves to encourage the reproduction of these power relations through collective images and discourses. We will further explore the utility of such a discourse on gender towards the stability of world order in subsequent sections. For instance, the following section will provide a detailed account of the push for individualism present in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS.

3.2 Individualism

As discussed in the introduction to the previous chapter, risk/behaviour is privileged over vulnerability in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. Another way of understanding this dynamic is that agency-related understandings are privileged over

structural considerations. This section will first show how this move is discursively executed. What this section will further reveal is that when vulnerability is constrained under a risk/behaviour logic, this paves the way for a push towards liberal individualism. Specifically with respect to gender, we will see in this section how the notions of (in)equality as well as rights are evoked to promote liberal individualism. This is significant because, as we saw in the theoretical review, liberal individualism is not gender-neutral and is an important component of a liberal world economy. The promotion of individualism outlined here harnesses gender in order to promote neoliberal development. The discursive move to constrain vulnerability under a risk/behaviour logic precludes any significant discussion on the structural nature of AIDS vulnerability. The acceptance of the supposedly gender-neutral nature of liberal feminist individualism is necessary to the maintenance of gender hierarchies.

3.2.1 Vulnerability Constrained Under an Agency Related Logic of Risk/behaviour—Paves the way for liberal individualism

Upon a close examination of the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS, it becomes evident that vulnerability is essentially constrained under the logic of behaviour/risk taking. Granted, there is repeated recognition that vulnerability is unequally distributed across societies and the world⁵⁹. Consequently, there is a considerable degree of lip-service given over to discursively separating risk/behaviour from vulnerability⁶⁰: “There is growing

⁵⁹ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 30.

⁶⁰ For more on this issue, see the section entitled “The UN Response to AIDS: Evolution of issue definition and policy prescriptions” in the second chapter. The following documents argue that behaviour/risk taking are only part of the equation and that we have to take factors such as economic and social determinants or ‘drivers’ including inequalities and marginalization into consideration because they determine vulnerability: A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). *Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS: Global Crisis—Global Action*. (2 August). par. 62; UNAIDS (2001). *The Global Strategy Framework on HIV/AIDS*. pp. iv, 12; WHO (2003). *The World Health Report 2003*. p. 44; WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. p. 22; UNAIDS (2005).

recognition that the HIV/AIDS epidemic thrives on and exacerbates socio-economic inequalities. HIV infection is spreading most rapidly in both rich and poor countries amongst populations who are socially and economically marginalized”⁶¹ and “patterns of behaviour lie below the surface of events, and the structure of the system lies deeper still”⁶².

However, the dominant explanation for AIDS vulnerability remains constrained by an agency-focused logic—people are vulnerable because of the choices they make⁶³. Therefore, similar to what we saw in the earlier discussion on programmatic solutions, even when the stated objective is to reduce vulnerability, behaviour/risk taking remains the focus of most programs. Although most sources are silent on the focus chosen, there are some exceptions:

governments and their donor and civil society partners discussed the need to address people’s underlying vulnerability to HIV exposure. Many said they were committed to addressing the deeper drivers of the epidemic [. . .] But programmes continued to emphasize prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS in the narrowest possible sense, focused on addressing ‘high risk individual behaviour’ and the possibilities of personal behavioural change, rather than putting into practice the wider learning about the context of the epidemic.⁶⁴

The result is that vulnerability becomes virtually synonymous with behaviour/risk taking.

While a few documents address the shortcomings of a risk/behaviour approach, few point to

Intensifying HIV Prevention. pp. 15, 20; UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 17, 42-43, 125; UNAIDS (1998). *Expanding the global response to HIV/AIDS through focused action*. pp. 4, 5, 15; A/55/779 (2001). par. 106-107; UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNIFEM (2004). *Women and HIV/AIDS*. pp. iv, 1, 10, 17; UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 4; UNAIDS (2005). *Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 13; A/60/737 (2006). par. 6.

⁶¹ UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 40.

⁶² UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 5.

⁶³ There remain however, some notable exceptions to this trend: “Societal vulnerability to HIV/AIDS stems from sociocultural, economic and political factors that limit individuals’ options to reduce their risk”, UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 3; “Societal vulnerability stems from the confluence of sociocultural, economic and political factors and realities that compound individual risk by significantly limiting individuals’ choices and options for risk reduction. These include discrimination and marginalization of certain groups of people, illiteracy and lack of educational opportunity, poverty and income disparity, lack of work or economic opportunities, law and the legal environment, political will to mount effective responses to the epidemic, and the state’s willingness to protect and promote the full range of political, economic and social human rights”, UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 6-7.

⁶⁴ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 129.

the nefarious effects this approach can have. One exception argues that too much emphasis on behaviour can result in a decrease in women's rights and other civil freedoms as well as increased xenophobia. While it is evident that the UN favours a risk/behaviour centered response, the same document maintains, without a hint of irony, that for the UN the ends (of decreasing AIDS statistics) would never justify the means (reduced rights and civil freedoms for instance)⁶⁵.

Individual behaviour/risk taking in the context of gender vulnerability, is then understood to be affected, or rather choices are constrained, by an absence or inadequate application of the liberal notions of individualism to gender issues— notions such as individual/human/women's rights and equality. This means that rather than finding fault with the general emphasis on agency over structure, it is determined that there is a more isolated, albeit certainly rectifiable, constraint on agency. Therefore, notions of liberal individualism are presented as both partial explanation (their absence) and logical solution (their implementation) to the problem of gender vulnerability to AIDS. It is implied that once these are achieved, behaviour/risk will be freely determined by individuals. Structural factors outside the realm of liberal individualism which may contribute to AIDS vulnerability are rarely acknowledged. Furthermore, this discourse is silent on the problematic notion of gender-neutrality implicit in liberal individualism, as well as the gender implications of its privileging of the public over the private.

3.2.2 (In)equality

⁶⁵ It is maintained that for there is an assertion that "Our *United Nations* friends would say never". UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 94.

Most discussions on gender vulnerability are framed in terms of gender (in)equality such that gender vulnerability is mediated by inequality. This implies that it is because of inequality that women are vulnerable—they would not be vulnerable if equality were achieved. There is very little mention of the inherently hierarchal nature of gender relations. Some very rare examples include a textual separation of gender equality from gender norms and relations⁶⁶ as well as the understanding that regardless of other factors, “Simply by fulfilling their expected gender roles, men and women are likely to increase their risk of HIV infection”⁶⁷. Gender vulnerability is further mediated by the implication that inequality can and should be addressed via legal and policy avenues—the problem of vulnerability can be solved by the implementation of equality directed legalistic and policy changes⁶⁸. For instance, it is claimed that “strengthening legal, policy, administrative and other measures” will reduce vulnerability⁶⁹ and that “*principally* through the provision of health care and health services” (emphasis mine), the vulnerability of women and girls will be reduced⁷⁰. Some exceptions to this trend exist however, such as those which contest that laws are not enough on their own⁷¹, those which suggest a combination of legal/policy and structural/norm/cultural initiatives⁷², and those which agree that while laws are necessary for purposes of redress, changes in norms are crucial⁷³.

⁶⁶ UNAIDS (2005). *Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 25.

⁶⁷ UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNIFEM (2004). *Women and HIV/AIDS*. p. 7.

⁶⁸ A/56/326 (2001). par. 123-124, 213; Global Coalition on Women and AIDS [post 2003]. *Keeping the Promise*. p. 5.

⁶⁹ A/RES/60/262 (2006). par. 31.

⁷⁰ A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). par. 60; A/RES/60/262 (2006). par. 30.

⁷¹ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. pp. 31, 35; UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 42; Global Coalition on Women and AIDS [post 2003]. *Keeping the Promise*. p. 11.

⁷² UNAIDS (1998). *Expanding the global response to HIV/AIDS through focused action*. p. 7; A/55/779 (2001). par. 114; UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNIFEM (2004). *Women and HIV/AIDS*. pp. 17, 54; UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 41.

⁷³ E/CN-4/2005/72 (2005). par. 77.

3.2.3 Rights

While the discourse on gender equality is very prevalent in the UN discourse on vulnerability to AIDS, so is that of rights. Illustrative of this point are the many documents which contain or even have titles targeted at bringing several topics related to gender vulnerability to AIDS under a ‘rights perspective’, a ‘rights-based response’ or a ‘rights approach’⁷⁴, or which refer to certain issues as ‘rights issues’ (i.e. AIDS⁷⁵, gender⁷⁶, development⁷⁷, poverty and security⁷⁸). The guidelines of a rights-based approach to AIDS include such measures as the review and reform of states’ criminal law and correctional systems to verify that they satisfy human rights requirements and are not being misused in the context of AIDS, as well as the creation and enforcement of new anti-discrimination laws and policies for people with or affected by AIDS in both the public and private spheres⁷⁹.

More interesting, however, is the manner in which rights are presented as being of higher import than other social standards referring to gender. Notions of equality for instance are subordinated to human rights; after all, “gender inequality issues are fundamentally about human rights”⁸⁰. Although gender equality is certainly instrumental towards the achievement of human rights, gender equality is subsumed under human rights. For instance one document argues that HIV prevention programmes “must have as their

⁷⁴ UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Gender and HIV/AIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*; UNAIDS (2005). *Rights-Based Responses to HIV*; UNIFEM (2006). *Transforming the National AIDS Response: Mainstreaming gender equality and women’s human rights into the “three ones”: Executive Summary*. New York; OHCHR and UNAIDS (2006). *International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights*.

⁷⁵ UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Gender and HIV/AIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*; UNAIDS (2005). *Rights-Based Responses to HIV*.

⁷⁶ UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Gender and HIV/AIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*; UNAIDS (n.d.). *Follow-up to the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS: 2007-2010 Strategic Framework for UNAIDS support to countries’ efforts to move towards universal access*. Geneva. p. 6.

⁷⁷ A/56/326 (2001). executive summary, par. 82.

⁷⁸ UNAIDS (n.d.). *Follow-up to the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS*. p. 6.

⁷⁹ OHCHR and UNAIDS (2006). *International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights*. pp. 17-18.

⁸⁰ UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 9.

fundamental basis the promotion, protection and respect of human rights *including* gender equality” (emphasis mine)⁸¹. Moreover, even within the rights sphere, there appears to be a hierarchy which privileges ‘human’ over gender or women’s rights. Illustrative of this point is that in some documents, human rights are discursively separated from women’s rights (and women’s equality)⁸² and an important human rights-based approach to development document does not even explicitly refer to women’s rights (or gender equality)⁸³.

Still on the topic of rights, there is a strong and explicit push to reinforce the relationship between rights and individuals: “we cannot move forward without restoring the credibility and effectiveness of our human rights mechanisms and refocusing ourselves on the protection of individual rights”⁸⁴. This statement implies that while rights advocacy on behalf of groups or identity issues (such as gender, ethnicity, class, and so on) is important, individual rights always take precedent.

This section has shown that vulnerability is constrained under a risk/behaviour logic in the context of AIDS. It further illustrates that particularly in reference to gender vulnerability, the agency-related notion of risk/behaviour is privileged over that of the structure-related notion of vulnerability—a discursive move which allows for the promotion of liberal individualism through the notions of both (in)equality and rights.

Drawing upon the theoretical review, we can surmise that the promotion of individualism is not an effective solution to gender vulnerability to AIDS, but rather essentially harnesses gender in order to promote neoliberal development. This is because notions of individualism rest on the public/private dichotomy wherein it is held that equality

⁸¹ UNAIDS (2005). *Intensifying HIV Prevention*. p. 17.

⁸² UNAIDS (n.d.). [Fact Sheets for HIV/AIDS and Gender]. sheet 1; A/60/736 (2006). par. 13.

⁸³ Not mentioned in the not in the 2003 “United Nations Common Understanding on the Human Rights Based Approach to Development”, UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 9.

⁸⁴ Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change (2004). *A more secure world: Our Shared Responsibility*. United Nations Department of Public Information, (December). p. ix.

will be achieved through equal participation and inclusion in the public realm. However, these claims ignore that the public realm is inherently unequal. A push towards individualism as a solution to vulnerability reveals a misrecognition of the basis of gender subordination in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. It fails to highlight that notions of individualism have a male norm as their implicit referent. There exists a contradiction between 'equality', which presupposes sameness or equivalence, and the concept of gender, which is socially constructed as difference. Gender is therefore essentially an inequality and, 'gender equality' is an oxymoron.

This discursive move to essentially disregard vulnerability precludes any significant discussion on the structural (and therefore identity and group) nature of AIDS vulnerability. Whereas agency and structure should be understood to be mutually constituted, a form of silencing on the relevance of structure is achieved by the promotion of individualism because of its association with agency. Without a deeper understanding of the structural nature of vulnerability, any analysis of (and consequently any attempt to alter) power relations with respect to social structures is limited.

The uncritical acceptance of the supposedly gender-neutral nature of liberal feminist individualism is necessary to the maintenance of gender hierarchies. The purportedly gender-neutral nature of individualism and implied gender-neutral nature of vulnerability certainly sidelines any meaningful discussion on the multiple ways in which gender plays upon vulnerability to AIDS and contributes to the hierarchal nature of structural dichotomies more widely.

The following section will provide a detailed account of the manner in which gender vulnerability to AIDS is instrumentalized towards a push for what is referred to as both participatory development and inclusive globalization.

3.3 Participatory/Inclusive Development/Globalization

As we saw in the previous chapter, AIDS is framed primarily as a symptom of underdevelopment. This approach firmly establishes the neoliberal globalized development model as the response *par excellence* to the AIDS pandemic. This section will show that when applied to the more specific case of gender vulnerability to AIDS, the push for development as the solution *par excellence* to AIDS is channelled into a push for what is referred to as both participatory development and inclusive globalization. While this push for participatory/inclusive development/globalization is advanced as a response to gender vulnerability to AIDS more specifically, it is also encouraged as a response to gender vulnerability more generally (for problems other than AIDS).

This section will illustrate how inclusive/participatory development/globalization is promoted as the optimal response to AIDS vulnerability first in general and second in its more specific gender manifestation. By way of addressing the implication that women are not already included in development or participants in globalization, I will then outline a spectrum of the relative degrees of understanding of women's contemporary participation in and contribution towards development. Finally, I will demonstrate the silence on the consequences of, or interests served by, this denial of women's inclusion and participation in development and globalization.

The push for inclusive/participatory development/globalization, including its implicit denial of the role already played by feminized others in the global economy, will be shown to be consistent with our discussion in the theoretical review (as well as above) pertaining to liberal feminist individualism, the role of patriarchy in the maintenance and expansion of the

current world order via flexibilization, as well as the connection between that role of patriarchy and the push for development

3.3.1 Push for Participatory/Inclusive Development/Globalization vis-à-vis General Vulnerability to AIDS

In terms of more general inclusion or participation, there is a continual insistence that inclusion/participation in the market will benefit those involved. There is a strong conviction that “the full and equal participation of all members of society in the process of development” will achieve “the objective of improving the wellbeing of the world’s population”⁸⁵. It should be noted at this juncture that these improvements are essentially equated with political liberalization. Furthermore, and as is also evident in these excerpts, it is implied that these positive changes will almost exclusively result from participation in neoliberal globalized development: “disparities [. . .] reflect unequal access to global market opportunities”⁸⁶. Only participation in economic liberalization will lead to political liberalization: “Inclusive globalization must be built on the great enabling force of the market”⁸⁷. Conversely, just as economic liberalization is necessary to achieve political liberalization, the current runs in the opposing direction as well:

globalization must mean more than creating bigger markets. The economic sphere cannot be separated from the more complex fabric of social and political life, and sent shooting off on its own trajectory. To survive and thrive, a global economy must have a more solid foundation in shared values and institutional practices — it must advance broader and more inclusive social purposes.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ A/RES/45/87 (1990). *World Social Situation*. (14 December). intro.

⁸⁶ UNDP (1994). “New Dimensions of Human Security.” p. 35.

⁸⁷ A/54/2000 (2000). par. 14.

⁸⁸ A/54/2000 (2000). par. 25.

A more specific illustration of this pattern is the insistence that human rights are essential to full participation in the market⁸⁹. As we can see, political liberalization (which is presented as the ideal objective for improving people's lives) is essentially equated here with participation/inclusion in neoliberal globalized development.

3.3.2 Push for Participatory/Inclusive Development/Globalization vis-à-vis Gender Vulnerability to AIDS

As mentioned previously, while this push for participatory/inclusive development/globalization is applied to AIDS vulnerability more generally, it is markedly advocated for women as a response to gender vulnerability to AIDS⁹⁰. How then, are we to be convinced that participation/inclusion in development/globalization will yield benefits vis-à-vis gender vulnerability to AIDS? We saw previously in the individualism section that gender vulnerability is understood via legal and policy-based (in)equality. This understanding of gender vulnerability is further limited to materialistic considerations such that the gender dimension of gender vulnerability is mediated by material (in)equality—as if gender vulnerability were primarily determined by material considerations such that “The imbalance in power created by a differential access to productive resources translates into an unequal balance of power in sexual interactions”⁹¹. Or rather that gender subordination only manifests itself in material ways and that it is those material inequities which determine AIDS vulnerability: “Gender norms ascribe distinct roles—both productive and reproductive—to women and men. By doing so, gender norms also influence women's and men's access to

⁸⁹ UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. pp. 9, 39.

⁹⁰ This is prevalent throughout the discourse. For some examples, see A/RES/45/87 (1990). par. 8; UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. pp. 75-76.

⁹¹ WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. p. 10.

key resources. In this way, gender norms affect both individual risk and societal vulnerability to HIV/AIDS”⁹².

Further illustrative of this point is that there seems to be an exception in the relationship established between gender and poverty with respect to AIDS vulnerability⁹³. The relationship between the two is presented as multiple layers of or compound vulnerabilities⁹⁴. It seems then that there is a separation between gender subordination and material considerations and that therefore, there could be gender vulnerability without material considerations (this would differ from the previous point that gender vulnerability must be mediated by material considerations). However, the relationship between gender vulnerability and poverty is not explained in a manner which maintains that separation. Rather than showing that the same factor (gender subordination) which makes women poor also makes them vulnerable to AIDS (in addition to the fact that being poor certainly aggravates vulnerability), normalcy is implied (women tend to be poor—that, and only that, is why they are vulnerable. Therefore, materiality retains its position as mediator between gender and vulnerability—the position is reaffirmed that there can be no gender vulnerability prior to material considerations.

We can draw from these arguments the implication that gender means that women are materially disadvantaged more often than men and it is then because of this material disadvantage that they are more vulnerable to AIDS. This implication means that a poor man and poor woman, or wealthy man and wealthy woman, would in each case be equally

⁹² UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 3.

⁹³ WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. p. 21; Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, a UNAIDS Initiative [post 2003]. *Economic Security for Women Fights AIDS*.

⁹⁴ UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNIFEM (2004). *Women and HIV/AIDS*. p. 1; UNAIDS (2001). *The Global Strategy Framework on HIV/AIDS*. p. 4; WHO (2003). *The World Health Report 2003*. p. 44; WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. p. 17; Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 10; Global Coalition on Women and AIDS [post 2003]. *Economic Security for Women Fights AIDS*.

vulnerable to AIDS. Aside from its role in determining material considerations, gender plays no role in contributing to gender vulnerability. Therefore, in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS, the argument for participatory development and inclusive globalization is as follows: if women were integrated into the market they would have more material stability and would consequently be less/not vulnerable to AIDS, just as are men with material stability⁹⁵.

Nevertheless, there are the usual exceptions to these dominant discursive patterns. Specific to gender vulnerability, it is acknowledged in rare exceptions that regardless of economic status, women are disproportionately vulnerable to AIDS by virtue of gender roles⁹⁶. For instance it is argued that family income levels do not determine infection rates among women⁹⁷. There are also some hints at broader exceptions wherein materiality is not the only determinant of AIDS vulnerability. These include: a discursive separation between social and economic vulnerability⁹⁸, the acknowledgement of an intersection between multiple, compound forms of inequality (more than just gender and poverty but many that women can face which contribute to vulnerability)⁹⁹: “the escalating impacts of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on women and girls globally is occurring in the context of profound gender, class, age and other inequalities”¹⁰⁰.

3.3.3 Women’s Obscured Contemporary Inclusion and Participation in Globalization and Development

⁹⁵ Global Coalition on Women and AIDS [post 2003]. *Economic Security for Women Fights AIDS*.

⁹⁶ UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNIFEM (2004). *Women and HIV/AIDS*. p. 15.

⁹⁷ UNAIDS (1999). *Gender and HIV/AIDS*. p. 15.

⁹⁸ A/55/779 (2001). par. 114.

⁹⁹ E/CN-4/2005/72 (2005). summary, par. 19, 22, 58; WHO (2003). *Integrating Gender into HIV/AIDS Programmes*. pp. 19, 22; UNAIDS (n.d.). [Fact Sheets for HIV/AIDS and Gender]. sheet 2.

¹⁰⁰ UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 3.

What is implicit in the above push for participatory development is not only the argument that inclusion in globalization is inherently beneficial to those included (in terms of both general gains in the form of political liberalization as well as more specific reductions in gender vulnerability to AIDS) but also that those targeted by these arguments are not already participating in development and globalization—that so far, their activities have not contributed to development and have taken place outside of the context of globalization. The following is an outline of a spectrum showing the relative degrees of understanding of women's contemporary participation in and contribution towards development found in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. This outline will illustrate that even in those accounts nearest the sophisticated end of the spectrum, there is little which explicitly indicates a comprehensive grasp of the full extent of women's participation in the economy—their work (productive, and especially reproductive) is undervalued and even ignored.

Most commonly observed is a general understanding that the impacts of AIDS disproportionately increase women's workload at home (caring, subsistence farming, and child rearing) and perhaps outside the home (volunteer and paid work)¹⁰¹. Although the great majority of cases attribute these patterns to the pandemic, there are some exceptional suggestions that the increased burden is due to development policies¹⁰². Although the situation of women's increased burden is presented in a negative light, there is generally no sense that the situation should or could change. In most instances, it is merely stated as an accepted (an acceptable) fact—a necessary side-effect of progress. Sometimes, it is even put forward as a credit to these women's capacity to fulfill their responsibilities—we should

¹⁰¹ This is prevalent throughout the discourse. For an example, see UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 42.

¹⁰² UNAIDS (2005). *Operational Guide on Gender & HIV/AIDS*. p. 43.

‘support’ them where they are, rather than seeking to change their situation¹⁰³. Although this ‘support’ strategy customarily passes as adequate and effective, there is some exceptional understanding that merely supporting their unfortunate position, rather than questioning or seeking to change it, could in fact “reinforce values, attitudes and beliefs that inhibit the effective management of HIV and AIDS”¹⁰⁴.

A bit further along the spectrum, there emerges a more explicit recognition of the gendered division of labour:

The traditional gender division of labour clearly differentiates between ‘men’s work’, which is seen primarily as work outside the home for payment, and ‘women’s work’, which revolves mainly around the household— taking care of children, cooking, cleaning and other domestic chores, as well as subsistence farming. Women are more likely than men to take on additional roles in the community, often voluntarily and in their ‘free time’.¹⁰⁵

However, these dynamics are generally stated as facts. Ordinarily there is neither explicit understanding that women’s work is undervalued nor any suggestion that women’s work should be valued. To the contrary, in several instances, it is implied that women’s work (housework, caring and child rearing) does not, whereas participation in the formal economy does, contribute to the economy. Illustrative of this point are the calls to provide infrastructure so that women would not have to pick up as much slack and could *then* “contribute to our countries’ economic potential”¹⁰⁶.

Of course, there are certainly exceptions to these general trends. In some cases, the undervaluation of women’s work is explicitly stated: “Although women work significantly longer hours than men – taking into account both household work and income-generating

¹⁰³ E/CN-4/2005/72 (2005). par. 84d; A/RES/60/262 (2006). par. 32; Global Coalition on Women and AIDS [post 2003]. *Keeping the Promise*. p. 5.

¹⁰⁴ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 45. This argument mirrors the objections made of gender-sensitive programming in the section entitled “Insufficiency of Programmatic Solutions” in this chapter.

¹⁰⁵ A/54/2000 (2000). par. 103.

¹⁰⁶ UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 76.

activities – the reality is that men’s work is valued while women’s work is not”¹⁰⁷ as well as: “girls are a traditional source of free household labour”¹⁰⁸. Furthermore, some documents not only highlight that women’s work is undervalued, but also insist that it does in fact make a significant contribution to the economy:

The value of the time, energy and resources required to perform this unpaid work is rarely recognized by governments and communities, despite its critical contribution to the overall national economy and society in general. The devastating effect of HIV/AIDS on women’s work is even less recognized. Poverty reduction strategies and national AIDS plans seldom take women’s caregiving into account; it remains unpaid and therefore undervalued in economic terms¹⁰⁹

as well as “Women constitute a substantial part of the global workforce and their contribution to the care economy, the informal sector as well as within formal, paid work is recognised but poorly quantified in both economic and numerical terms”¹¹⁰. Moreover, several documents advocate for the valuation of women’s work, particularly in the care economy¹¹¹.

3.3.4 Silence on the Consequences of or Interests Served by the Denial of Women’s Inclusion and Participation in Globalization and Development

Despite these exceptional and rare understandings of the gendered division of labour, the undervaluation of women’s work, and even calls for an appreciation of their contribution to development, there is nothing which suggests any understanding of the possible consequences or interests served by the much more common denial of women’s economic participation in globalization and development. Granted, some documents make fairly

¹⁰⁷ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 38.

¹⁰⁸ A/54/2000 (2000). par. 103.

¹⁰⁹ UNAIDS, UNFPA and UNIFEM (2004). *Women and HIV/AIDS*. p. 31.

¹¹⁰ UNAIDS (n.d.). [Fact Sheets for HIV/AIDS and Gender]. sheet 12.

¹¹¹ UNIFEM (2006). *Transforming the National AIDS Response*. p. 2.

specific reference to how decreases in public spending are shifted onto women who are then required to pick up the slack. There is even some implication that this system saves money and therefore must benefit someone. However, these implications are restricted to savings for the state, development partners, and programs:

Most of the care for people living with HIV takes place in the home. Home- and community-based care is less expensive for health systems, mainly because many costs are displaced onto care-givers, patients and their kin. Those costs include expenditures on medicines, health service fees and transportation, the opportunity costs of lost earnings or abandoned education, as well as trauma and stress. The financial and emotional burden it creates can cause caregivers, who are already poor, to fall into a state of destitution¹¹²

as well as “Communities, families, governments, and development partners cannot continue to rely on ‘women’s resilience’ to provide safety nets for the sick and orphaned”¹¹³ and finally “Current programmes are highly subsidized by women’s labour and the capacity of women and girls to support the sick and care for families is simply assumed to be infinite. As AIDS deaths escalate, this is becoming an increasingly untenable situation for women and girls”¹¹⁴. There is certainly no discussion which suggests that the undervaluation of women’s labour could in fact serve the interests of a larger economic system.

As we can see from these examples, there is no explicit discussion pertaining to the possible interests served by the normalization of the undervaluation of feminized labour—not in terms of women’s labour and certainly not in terms of that performed by feminized others. In fact, the closest instance of such an understanding is rooted rather in an

¹¹² Global Coalition on Women and AIDS [post 2003]. *Keeping the Promise*. p. 21; see also UNAIDS (2005). *AIDS in Africa*. p. 76.

¹¹³ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 5.

¹¹⁴ Secretary-General’s Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa (2004). *Facing the Future Together*. p. 40.

acknowledgement of the undervalued 'work' performed by the environment¹¹⁵ and the economic interests served by its devaluation¹¹⁶.

This section has illustrated that when applied more directly to the case of gender vulnerability to AIDS, the push for development as the solution *par excellence* evolves into a push for what is referred to as both participatory development and inclusive globalization. This is because the instrumentalization of gender is executed primarily through development. We first saw that inclusive/participatory development/globalization is promoted as the optimal response to AIDS vulnerability, first in general and second in its more specific gender manifestation. Subsequently, through an analysis of the spectrum of the relative degrees of understanding of women's contemporary participation in and contribution towards development, I illustrated that there is little which explicitly indicates a comprehensive grasp of the full extent of women's participation in the economy. Finally, I demonstrated that there is a silence on the consequences of or interests served by this denial of women's inclusion and participation in globalization and development.

The push for inclusive/participatory development/globalization, including its implicit denial of the role already played by feminized others in the global economy as well as the silence on the consequences of or interests served by this denial, is consistent with liberal feminism. It can be explained by drawing upon our discussions in the theoretical review pertaining to liberal feminist individualism, the role of patriarchy in the maintenance and expansion of the current world order via flexibilization, as well as the connection between that role of patriarchy and the push for development.

¹¹⁵ "The natural environment performs for us, free of charge, basic services, without which our species could not survive", A/54/2000 (2000). par. 255.

¹¹⁶ In recognition that climate change has economic roots, A/54/2000 (2000). par. 270.

First, according to liberal feminists, vulnerability results from an imperfect application of the notions of individualism (equality and rights). Correspondingly, participation in the public sphere (discussed here as integration into the processes of development and globalization) would contribute towards the rectification of that imperfection.

Second, the hegemony of the current world order is constructed in part on the subordination of the feminine. Capitalism has always depended upon the existence of a gendered division of labour which facilitates the maximization of profit through the logic of housewifization. In fact, continued accumulation is made possible by the patriarchal 'colonization' of women, nature and other geographic areas and peoples. This is especially the case in the context of globalization where we saw that continued accumulation is achieved in the new IDL through the generalization of flexibilization.

Finally, there is a close connection between the emergence of the new IDL and the WID approach. In the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS, the liberal WID approach is embodied in the push for inclusion and participation in the processes of globalization and development. Through this embodiment, the WID rhetoric of integrating third world women into development is generalized to multiple feminized others. This move obscures an even larger part of labour that is exploited and super-exploited for the world market via the profit-maximizing strategy of flexibilization, thereby facilitating the continuous growth necessary to the maintenance of the current world order.

Conclusion

This final chapter continued to document and analyse the empirical findings from the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. It built upon the foundation revealed in the

second chapter—a foundation which consists of the privileging of a problem-solving over a critical approach as well as the championing of the neoliberal globalized development model as the infallible response and ultimate goal *par excellence*. This chapter exposes how gender is instrumentalized in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. It has shown that gender is channelled towards three problem-solving themes which ultimately support a neoliberal globalized development model and thus a neoliberal world order. These themes are: an understanding of gender which is not of a serious nature, a corresponding push for liberal (purportedly gender-neutral) individualism by means of emphasizing notions of risk/behaviour over vulnerability, and finally a push for inclusive/participatory development/globalization including a silence on the full extent of women's participation in the economy as well as on the consequences of or interests served by this silence.

Together with the theoretical foundations laid out in the first chapter of this thesis, these patterns demonstrate that the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS is an example of the manner in which gender is instrumentalized and made to support a neoliberal globalized model of development and thus of a neoliberal world order. First, the dominant pattern of not fully taking gender hierarchies seriously reflects the liberal feminist understanding of gender. This dominant pattern helps to normalize the privileging of that which is identified as masculine over that which is associated with femininity. Next, the privileging of the agency-oriented logic of individualism over vulnerability precludes any significant discussion on the structural nature of AIDS vulnerability. The promotion and acceptance of the supposedly gender-neutral nature of individualism is necessary to the maintenance of gendered hierarchies and harnesses gender in order to promote neoliberal development. Finally, the push for inclusive/participatory development/globalization, including its implicit denial of the role already played by feminized others in the global

economy as well as the silence on the consequences of or interests served by this denial, is not only compatible with liberal feminist individualism, but most importantly, supports the role of patriarchy in the maintenance and expansion of the current world order via flexibilization, particularly through its connection to the push for development.

Conclusion: Spaces in the UN System for Alternative Understandings of Gender With Respect to World Order

Vulnerability to AIDS is not equally shared among the populations of the world. Even the statistics on infection alone point to this disproportionate vulnerability. In terms of global vulnerability, while sub-Saharan Africa makes up only roughly 10% of the world's population, it is burdened with between two thirds and three quarters of infections¹. Furthermore, it was estimated in 2006 that of the nearly 16,000 new infections of HIV daily on a global scale, most occur in sub-Saharan Africa². With respect to gender distribution, women made up 55% of new infections in sub-Saharan Africa in 2001³. In 2005, of all infected Africans between the ages of 15 and 25, roughly 75% were women⁴. This meant that by 2007, women made up 60% of total infections in sub-Saharan Africa⁵. It is evident that Africans and especially sub-Saharan African women are disproportionately vulnerable to the pandemic.

This thesis has been primarily concerned with the triangulation between world order, gender, and vulnerability (to AIDS here). I have been interested in gender both insofar as it shapes vulnerability as well as the degree to which it is instrumental to the functioning of the current neoliberal globalized world order. It is precisely due to the multiple forms of vulnerability put in relief by the AIDS pandemic (and specifically its effects on the women

¹ FLESHMAN, Michael (2005). "Women: The Face of AIDS in Africa." *Africa Renewal* (August), p. 12. Also A/RES/S-26/2 (2001). *Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS: Global Crisis—Global Action*. (2 August), par. 3; an estimated 67% in UNAIDS (2008). *2008 Report on the global AIDS epidemic*. Geneva, (August), p. 32.

² MURPHY, Elaine M., Margaret E. GREENE, Alexandra MIHAILOVIC, and Peter OLUPOT-OLUPOT (2006). "Was the 'ABC' Approach (Abstinence, being Faithful, using Condoms) Responsible for Uganda's Decline in HIV?" *PLoS Medicine* 3 (9), p. 1445. For a detailed account of the factors contributing to the uniquely fast spread of the virus in Africa, see KALIPENI, Ezekiel, and Njeri MBUGUA (2005). "A Review of Preventative Efforts in the Fight Against HIV and AIDS in Africa." *Norwegian Journal of Geography* 59.

³ SHAHABUDIN (2001). "Gender and HIV/AIDS." online; KRISTOFFERSSON, Ulf (2000). *HIV/AIDS as a Human Security Issue: A gender perspective*. Windhoek, Namibia.

<http://www.un.org.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/womenwatch/daw/csw/hiv aids/kristoffer sson.htm>. (12/07/2007).

⁴ FLESHMAN (2005). "Women: The Face of AIDS in Africa." p. 12.

⁵ UNAIDS (2008). *2008 Report on the global AIDS epidemic*. p. 33.

of sub-Saharan Africa) that it is appropriate for understanding the interconnectedness between multiple forms of vulnerability. More specifically, this thesis has reasoned that the structural hierarchy of gender is at the core of that interconnectedness. It has furthermore argued that, in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS, the relationship between AIDS and the structural hierarchy of gender is harnessed as an opportunity to instrumentalize gender in the promotion of neoliberalism.

This thesis contributes most generally to a body of research that is conducted from a critical perspective which understands gender as an analytic category – one which pushes and moves beyond the more conventional application of gender analysis which is limited to the man/woman dichotomy. This approach in no way seeks to deny the extremely valid study of that dichotomy. Rather it seeks to add to it and argues that a critical application of gender is not only more inclusive but also more effective. In a more specific sense, my thesis contributes to research on the understanding of gender in international institutions/organizations and in the UN in particular. Even more specifically, my research contributes to research on the understanding of gender in the UN. My conclusions on the instrumentalization of gender contribute to a growing body of research in that field.

The theoretical review of this thesis provided the conceptual tools necessary in order to understand how and why gender is instrumentalized in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. It outlined both liberal and critical understandings of gender and individualism; the relationship between world order, hegemonic discourse, and the role of international institutions with respect to gender; the role of gender in the maintenance of neoliberal world order, both prior to and in the contemporary globalized economy; how the push for participatory/inclusive development/globalization instrumentalizes gender; and

finally the findings of an illustrative study of the instrumentalization of gender in another area of the UN discourse.

The second and third chapters documented and analysed the empirical findings from the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. They confirmed that while gender vulnerability to AIDS is an important issue for the UN, the manner in which the UN confronts this problem is of a problem-solving nature and largely derived from a liberal feminist orientation. This approach instrumentalizes gender to support a neoliberal model of development and thus of a neoliberal world order.

In addition to some remarks on methodology and an overview of the UN response to AIDS and gender vulnerability to it, the second chapter exposed the foundation for the support of a neoliberal model of development and thus of world order—support which consists of the privileging of problem-solving over critical approaches thus precluding transformative change, as well as the promotion of development as solution and goal *par excellence*. Subsequently, the third chapter built upon the groundwork revealed in the second chapter by exposing how gender is instrumentalized in the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. It exposed that gender is channelled towards three problem-solving themes which ultimately support a neoliberal globalized development model and thus a neoliberal world order: not taking gender seriously, pushing the (supposedly gender-neutral) notion of individualism, and the promotion of participatory development. Together, these patterns have demonstrated that the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS is an example of the manner in which gender is instrumentalized and made to support a neoliberal globalized model of development and thus of a neoliberal world order. Nevertheless, these two chapters also revealed some noteworthy exceptions.

There are several exceptional junctures at which alternative understandings of gender and its relationship to world order take root. The most notable messages emanating from these alternative voices address three themes: the meaning of gender, the liberal globalized development model, and the role of perspective in determining the response. Falling under the first theme are discussions pertaining to alternative uses for the notion of gender, the implication that vulnerability is not equivalent to inequality (either gender or material inequality), the position that gender vulnerability is an important problem independent of other considerations, a recognition of the historical origins of gender subordination, critiques of the more common types of gender programming and the promotion of the 'transformative' approach, and a questioning of the social and economic forces that sustain gender relations. Falling under the second theme are critiques of the unequal nature of liberalization and the effects of development policies on women, critiques of the undervaluation of women's labour and calls for its valuation, and an acknowledgement of both historical and contemporary external negative influences on Africa. Falling under the third theme are discussions pertaining to an understanding of the role of perspective, a recognition of the roles of institutions and discourse in the spread of ideas, the importance of a united opposition, and finally, an emphasis on the value of a long-term response.

Although this may seem like a substantial collection of alternative ideas, I would like to be clear that these alternative voices are not only rare but are certainly not transformative. What I mean is that even the more notable exceptions fall far short of establishing a clear and significant debate on any topic such as the meaning of gender, an alternative model of development or world order, nor of the importance of perspective in determining the response. Rather than directly confronting the status quo, these alternative voices indirectly facilitate spaces to be more critical within the UN discourse.

Furthermore, upon careful analysis I have discovered and find it particularly important to note that these spaces for critique emanate from a constellation of documents and from virtually all branches of the UN relevant to and therefore included in the scope of my study. What I mean by this is that there are no discernable patterns which would indicate that there is one source which is primarily responsible for these alternative voices⁶. Rather, they are spread out and detectable throughout the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. For instance, the broader understandings of gender are often embedded in what are otherwise very status quo friendly texts. Conversely, even what I have come to consider as the most exceptional of all the documents analysed, UNAIDS' *AIDS in Africa: Three scenarios to 2025* (2005), is nonetheless replete with status quo discursive content in support of neoliberal globalized development.

Clearly there is a predominantly liberal bias which guides the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS. As is clearly observable throughout the documentation and analysis of that discourse, there is certainly no established counter-hegemonic or transformative discourse pertaining to gender which would appreciably threaten the neoliberal globalized model of development or thus of a neoliberal world order. Therefore, with respect to gender, the UN has failed to become a clear site of contestation or source of transformative change. That does not mean however, that there is no space in the UN system for alternative understandings of gender with respect to world order. What this analysis reveals then is that while those understandings of gender have not been translated into UN

⁶ The pattern of UN branches from which the three themes of alternative ideas emerge is unsurprising. For instance, it is only from UNAIDS that the third theme on the role of perspective emerges. Similarly, the alternative ideas which appear in UNIFEM documents are restricted to the first theme on the meaning of gender. Additionally, the Security Council does not include any alternative ideas. Clearly, these patterns are unsurprising considering the mandate of each of these branches.

actions, policies, or recommendations, the existence of these spaces for critique points to the potential for the emergence of sites of resistance within the UN.

Drawing upon the theoretical review, it is reasonable that the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS contains both the emergence of alternative understandings of gender as well as the much more dominant promotion of the current hegemonic world order. Under a Coxian framework, institutions such as the UN are both sites of stability and contestation. Therefore, it is tenable that the UN simultaneously advances spaces for critique while it protects and promotes a status quo discourse which serves the interests of and reflects an ideology consistent with neoliberal globalization. This includes, but is not limited to, the instrumentalization of gender.

This thesis has found that *the UN discourse on gender vulnerability to AIDS is an example of the manner in which gender is instrumentalized and made to support a neoliberal model of development and thus a neoliberal world order*. While there is a clear liberal bias in this discourse and although no signs of truly transformative change have been detected, it is encouraging nonetheless that alternative understandings of gender and its relationship to world order are present. The existence of these spaces for critique points to the potential for the emergence of sites of resistance within the UN.

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