The World Bank and Public-Private Partnerships in Education

Framing, problem representation and the construction of gender equality

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Abstract

Education is commonly agreed upon as being one of the main drivers of national economic development which has led to a greater incorporation of education policies in development projects. Internationally, the World Bank is the single largest provider of expertise knowledge and financial aid to education development and as such they can play a key role in shaping policies and how problems are understood and thought of. The inclusion of private actors in the provision of education services is a frequently recommended strategy by the World Bank for developing countries to meet the demands of universal education provision.

This thesis adopts a discursive approach to the World Bank's policies on Public-Private Partnerships in Education (ePPPs) and the construction of gender equality. Frame analysis and the 'What's the problem represented to be?' approach are applied to investigate problem representations. The analysis reveals a discrepancy between the policy frame and the policy discourse on ePPPs and gender equality. World Bank discourses are suggested to be based on a liberal form of governance where education is given an instrumental value and the question of gender equality is left unproblematized.

Keywords: Public-Private Partnerships in education, the World Bank, problem representation, gender equality, discourse analysis

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1 Introduction

In the last couple of decades, development policy has received increased attention and involvement from international financial organizations. Education is commonly agreed upon as being one of the main drivers of national development which has led to a greater incorporation of education policies in development projects. Internationally, the World Bank is the single largest provider of expertise knowledge and financial aid to the development of education (Menashy, 2013: 749) and in that way the Bank can play a key role in shaping policies and how problems are understood and thought of. The way a policy problem is perceived determines what policy solutions are put forward which in turn will have an impact on those affected by the policy (Bacchi, 2009a: 2).

Since the 1990s, in the aftermath of structural adjustment programs, the international aid community, with the World Bank in the forefront, has focused on alternative ways to structure education provision. Arguing that the public sector alone is not enough to meet the demand of providing universal, quality education in developing countries, a collaboration between the public and the private sector has been explored (Verger, 2012: 110). These institutional relationships are commonly known as Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and they include a variety of contractual solutions where the public and private sector share both responsibility and risk in the provision of social services. Public-Private Partnerships have become an important part of the World Bank's development agenda and the inclusion of private actors in service provision is today a general policy recommendation as well a common condition for receiving loans (Verger, 2012: 109). By 2007, 57 % of education projects provided or supported by the World Bank involved Public-Private Partnerships in different ways making it one of their most prioritized activities (Patrinos et al., 2009: 58).

This thesis focuses on the World Banks's discourses on Public-Private Partnerships in education (ePPPs) from a social constructionist perspective with a focus on problem representation. Analyzing the representation and underlying premises of policy problems rather than studying the policy itself steams from the 'What's the problem represented to be?' approach introduced by Carol Bacchi. The approach suggests that by discursively analyzing policy formulations in terms of their underlying presumptions one can discern the conceptual logics that legitimize them and make them possible to suggest (Bacchi, 2009a: 5). Accordingly, the World Bank's policies on ePPPs are assumed to contain problem representations that reveal the conceptual logics that underpin their proposed policy solutions. Based on the Bank's status as a leading international agency for development and a key actor in education policy, the assumptions they make will influence policy-making and have effects on those who the policy is aimed at. In this sense,

international organizations can be said to have an influence on shaping development discourses.

1.1 Aim of the study

The aim of this thesis is to analyze World Bank discourses on ePPPs. When exploring the field of the Bank's discourses and of ePPPs, a research gap became clear, namely gender equality. Much has previously been written about gender implications of PPPs as well as about gender and education, but the connection between gender and PPPs *in education* is more difficult to find. Accordingly, the second aim of this thesis is to explore how the question of gender equality is constructed in World Bank discourses on ePPPs.

The overarching interest of this thesis lies in how international organizations are able to influence development policy thorough discourse and how problems are represented. The use of the World Bank's discourses on ePPPs and gender equality will in this sense serve as an example and expression of this.

1.1.1 Research questions

The research questions that will be answered are:

How is the problem of Public-Private Partnerships in Education in developing countries framed and represented by the World Bank?

How is gender equality constructed in the World Bank's framing and representation of Public-Private Partnerships in Education?

As the research questions suggest, the analytical tools used for the analysis are framing and problem representation. These concepts will of course be explained exhaustively and operationalized in the analytical framework and the methodology section of the thesis. Further, the research questions do not address the implementation of ePPPs nor do they seek to determine what is 'right' and 'wrong' with the policy. The aim is rather to critically asses the problem representations and the assumptions they contain.

2 Review of the field and analytical context

In the field of policy analysis, different problem representations are embedded within each other and each one contains various suggestions for reform. When analyzing policy through problem representations one must be aware of, and take into consideration, the context in which a certain policy exists and how it relates to other policies. Key concepts and topics that help inform the problem representation of the policy investigated thus need to be reflected upon (Bacchi, 2009: 21). For instance, the question of PPPs in education and its implications for the perception of gender equality holds conflicting understandings of the 'problem' of development policies, the 'problem' of education policies, as well as the 'problem' of gender equality. As policies are not shaped in a vacuum, the background and context of their existence must be recognized. In the following section I will review previous research on the topic as well as introduce the context in which ePPPs originated.

2.1 Introducing the field of research

The current dominant paradigm for policy analysis is a problem-solving approach. This has been apparent in public policy making in the last few decades as a part of a larger evidence-based approach to knowledge and policy problems (Bacchi, 2009a: xvi). Policies are seen as a natural result of an explicit problem identification in a society where interests and solutions can be clearly stated (Paul, 2009: 243). The approach employed in this thesis is critical towards such assumptions. The following section introduces different ways of thinking about development policies and governance.

   With a new governance approach to international development policy, influenced by neoliberalism, Gupta (2016) argues that three shifts in attitudes in the field of development can be identified; 1) a changing focus from the importance of the state to that of individuals and groups, 2) an increasing number of active NGOs and organizations, and 3) policy recommendations for partnerships between state agencies and private/local actors as a method for efficient management and participatory solutions (p. 17). New governance informs development policy by reducing a "*complex social and political problem (…) into merely a micro-economic problem*" and believes that such problems can be solved with technical solutions (Gupta, 2016: 14). This understanding of development issues as being economic ones, is adopted by the World Bank, and other International Financial

Institutes, and helps support ideas of decentralization and participatory management which are used as benchmarks for success within development projects. However, when the terms of the participation are set by the IFI, the approach becomes a target for criticism (Gupta, 2016: 16ff).

International organizations (IOs) exercise power and authority through bureaucratic rule-making, but also by making moral claims and creating expertise knowledge. From a constructionist viewpoint, the interest in IO power over policy making has been investigated through their capacity to discursively frame problems and set the policy agenda (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004: 16). For instance, the expertise of the World Bank goes beyond merely collecting data and statistics on national development but instead connects the data with articulated policy problems, thus defining what constitutes development. Through their expert authority, IOs can turn neutral information into knowledge by assigning it meanings and values. They can do this in two ways; Firstly, IOs can affect the behavior of both states and non-state actors by creating incentives for 'good governance'. Secondly, IOs can use their expert knowledge to exercise power by socially constructing the world through "*creating new interests, actors and social activities*" (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004: 7). As a result, we find powerful IOs responsible for both defining policy problems and their solutions, and they tend to do this in a way that favors their social interests and involvement in international policymaking (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004: 43).

Building on a social constructionist worldview, Bacchi (2009a) goes beyond the traditional study of policy analysis and agenda setting and investigates what makes the defining of a policy problem possible in the first place. She introduces the 'What's the problem represented to be?' (WPR) approach. The approach assumes that governments and policymakers shape our understanding of social problems. This is done through the way they represent policy problems and through suggesting certain policy solutions, and this influence is argued to have consequences for those affected by the policy in question (Bacchi, 2009a: 2). This way of analyzing policy introduces the element of problem questioning rather than problem solving, making it possible to identify the assumptions that make certain policy formulations possible to place on the agenda. This can be compared to traditional policy analyses where the goal is rather to link assumptions with actual outcomes, thus measuring results and intentions (Bacchi, 2009a: xix). Instead, the WPR approach goes deeper into the context in which policies are introduced and understood and it questions the presumptions made about the nature of our society and the world we live in. Furthermore, it can shed light on the role governments and international organizations play in shaping how we understand social problems and policies. By focusing on problem representation, it is possible to say something about how a certain policy problem is thought of and how the people affected by it are viewed (Bacchi, 2009a: 1). The WPR approach encourages comparison of policy development over space and time and is applicable to studies beyond state boundaries as it focuses on the wider concept of 'governance' rather than government (Bacchi, 2009a: xx), which makes it a suitable approach for my study.

This way of thinking about problem representation put forward by Bacchi is influenced by a Foucauldian school of thought. Accordingly, Foucault focused on

problematizations rather than on policy problems to understand the reasoning found behind certain forms of rule, and by doing so illustrating that there are assumptions made in policy making that needs to be questioned. The idea of focusing on problematizations indicates the need for questioning and criticizing. In this regard Bacchi goes one step further in stating that all problematizations could be problematized and proposes a methodology for such analysis. She thus differentiates from a Foucauldian understanding of problematizations as a way into the assumptions behind forms of rule and suggests that problematizations are at the very core of policy making. Every policy is a problematization and as such it holds an understanding of the problem through which we are governed. Further, Bacchi's approach encourages that all assumed problems and their accompanied policy solution ought to be recognized as problematizations and thus need to be problematized, while the Foucauldian school of thought assumes some initial societal difficulties which governments subsequently react to when creating policy (Bacchi, 2009a: 29-31).

In her earlier book "*Women, Policies and Politics: the construction of policy problems*", Bacchi explores problem representation in the field of education in relation to gender equality. She argues that applying the WPR approach to these questions will widen the policy analysis. By focusing on gender issues and the discursive construction of gender equality in relation to other policy problems she argues that other agendas and problematizations will reveal themselves (Bacchi, 1999: 112). It follows by this logic that this thesis explores the construction of gender equality in relation to World Bank policy discourses on ePPPs.

2.1.1 Public-Private Partnerships in Education

The governance of education has seen significant changes in the last couple of decades, including a variety of both public and private solutions (Robertson et al., 2012: 21). The concept of Public-Private Partnerships was first coined in the 1970s as a result of a growing neo-liberal influence and ideas of New Public Management (NPM) in economic policy. In the context of international development, the role of the state was during this time period questioned, and government inefficiency was understood as intrinsic to public bureaucracy and something hindering economic growth and development (Jomo KS et al., 2016: 2).

The practice of these Partnerships, however, started to gain substantial ground in the early 1990s – then introduced as a middle way to bridge the gap between the public and private divide. PPPs where thus presented to appeal to a wider audience by including key elements of the liberal market economy while still underlining the importance of a strong state in order to enhance economic performance. This way, international donor agencies and development networks could endorse the use of Partnerships as a way of exhausting all possible resources and knowledges by letting public and private actors do what they do best respectively. PPPs were thus argued to be the answer to the common criticism in governance regarding "too much state (Keynesianism), on the one hand, and too little state (privatization), on the other" (Robertson et al., 2012: 26).

Defined by the World Bank, the general concept of PPPs constitutes *"a long-term contract between a private party and a government entity, for providing a public asset or service, in which the private party bears significant risk and management responsibility, and remuneration is linked to performance"* (World Bank, 2015). When they first emerged, Public-Private Partnerships where used to help governments of the developed world to enhance state financed infrastructure and later in projects for technology and agriculture amongst others. However, over time the concept came to expand to involvement in welfare services such as health care, education and prison incarceration and later it became a popular tool in development policy (Jomo KS et al., 2016: 3).

More specifically, PPPs in education (ePPPs) are defined as a contractual process in which governments *"procure[s] education or education-related services of a defined quantity and quality at an agreed price from a specific provider"* (Patrinos et al., 2009: 9). Accordingly, these partnerships can take many different shapes as they span over a wide range of sectors as well as jurisdictions. What can be found as a common between the very broadest understandings of PPPs and the somewhat more specified ones on educational PPPs is that they involve a contractual relation between the state and the private sector. This implies the need for clearly stated responsibilities of the parties involved as well as defined goals and expected outcomes that can be measured and evaluated after the course of the contract. Since the level of collaboration between the parties can vary significantly from simply contracting out construction work on schools or teacher training to running and managing schools in full, this is not always a clear distinction to make. It is difficult to find agreement on what actually constitutes an ePPP. Yet, when examining the ePPP discourse in the international development community, and especially in World Bank policies, a clear emphasis is made on the role of the private sector in delivering the full range of 'core education services', thus diverting focus from the heterogenous nature of ePPP solutions. IOs tend to favor technical, comprehensive solutions where the decision making and the managerial activities are placed with the school and provision is driven by competition. Such solutions are argued to enhance school choice, which is considered a desirable principle in the management of education (Verger, 2012: 116-117).

In the common debate, however, opinions on ePPPs vary considerably. Scholar interest revolves around questions on what ePPPs are, how they became the preferred tool of education management for many development organizations and how they should best be implemented. According to some observations, ePPPs represent innovation and creative thinking in the management of public services in a time of higher demands on government performance. They have the ability to remedy some of the practical issues of government bureaucracy in creating sufficient access to, and quality of, education, which otherwise hinders rapid economic development (Robertson, et al., 2012: 21). Thus, research defending such a position turn to evidence-based arguments to establish a scientific approach to the use of ePPPs. Theoretically, their arguments are based in economic theory with an understanding that introducing private actors in the field of education will spark competition, which in turn leads to increased quality of the education provided. This line of thought is related to the idea of school choice where the freedom of choice

is allocated with the consumers of the market, i.e. the parents. Empirically, the effects of ePPPs in such research tend to be measured quantitatively using standardized testing (Verger, 2012: 118-119).

On the other hand, others argue that ePPPs are part of a politically persistent agenda to privatize education services which is placed within a larger paradigm of neoliberal reconstruction. They see a corporate industry emerging where education is diminished from being "*complex social and political activity*" in the hands of the government to becoming a technical problem that can be solved rationally. Thus arguing, that research should not only focus on how ePPPs are constructed and managed but on critically assessing the emergence of a new art of governance in which the education system is reconstructed (Robertson et al., 2012: 22).

2.1.2 The World Bank Economics of Education Thematic Group

As expressed by Newman (2001) "*Partnerships emerged in the early 1990s promising to smooth over the damage done by earlier forms of privatization whilst not abandoning them. Most importantly, partnerships enabled multiple framings, multiple interests, and multiple objectives to be realized*" (cited in Robertson et al., 2012: 26). This statement encourages questions on what made this emergence possible and in what ways the idea of partnerships differentiated from already tested strategies of privatization in order to make new frames and interests possible.

Public-Private Partnerships in education appeared in a time of economic constrains while at the same time discussions on the Millennium Development Goals and the achievement of universal education gave rise to increased pressure on both governments and international development organizations to provide quality education. Policy-makers realized the need for change in educational development and the importance of finding new ways of combining the efforts of states, international organizations and the private sector. This approach entailed a more inclusive take on education than previous privatizations since it included contributions from different actors with different expertise. The result of partnerships was privatization *in* education instead of privatization *of* education (Robertson et al., 2012: 27-28).

Responsible for this change in discourse and the promotion of ePPPs globally, was an identifiable group of experts active in the international community serving as policy entrepreneurs. The group consisted of key personnel from the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the International Finance Corporation, amongst others, and together they formed the World Bank Economics of Education Thematic Group. The initial purpose of the group was to open up for discussions and research on new ways for the private sector to contribute to the provision of education in developing countries. Their interest was to evolve the privatization agenda, though framed in a new way. Even though, the main goal was to increase learning outcomes, they wanted to explore partnerships as a means for the private sector to remedy what the state had failed to accomplish (Robertson et al., 2012: 28). The main assumption made by the Thematic Group was that education is a consumer good. However, the idea of ePPPs introduced a key role to be played by

the state which differentiated it from previous privatization reforms. In some ways, the state was argued to become more powerful through partnerships even though less visible by redefining its responsibilities in education provision. Its main responsibilities in a partnership would be to protect against market failures while providing a suitable environment for policies and contracts to be made. Thus, a strategic role of planning and enabling was envisioned for the state rather than practical involvement (Robertson et al., 2012: 32).

The network of policy entrepreneurs constituting the Thematic Group is responsible for most of the published material available on ePPPs and stand behind several events held where ePPPs were discussed with policy-makers and donor agencies (Robertson et al., 2012: 29). The joint efforts of the Thematic Group resulted in a seminal document, with co-founder Harry Patrinos as the main author – *The Role and Impact of Public-Private Partnerships in Education* – which is the material to be analyzed in terms of problem representations in this thesis.

2.1.3 World Bank discourses and education policy

The World Bank holds the position of a highly influential international organization for global development and economic growth. As such, the Bank is considered the main provider of knowledge, resources and aid to the advancement of education internationally. Since the beginning of the new millennia, the World Bank itself has placed a particular focus on its role as an international knowledge bank where all recommendations, policies and conditional loans are based on an evidence-based approach to education research. As a bank of knowledge, the World Bank is able to determine the way forward in education development by controlling the knowledge produced and the management of its realization process. What the Bank recommends is argued to be based on results of what works, and in the process, they become influential in determining also what does not work, and thus does not receive funding and loans. The self-declared knowledge of what is best in education development can open up for some potential biases. World Bank analyses and databases are built on and driven by the agenda of the Bank which could affect what research is chosen to represent their empirical evidence (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012: 6). From this perspective, the World Bank is understood in terms of being a social system of its own which creates legitimacy through "*a clearly defined mandate, a strategy, a set of actors and a set of beneficiaries*" (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012: 4). It is within this understanding with the Bank as a global system, that their discourse on ePPPs will be analyzed in the realm of this thesis.

Focusing on World Bank discourses specifically in education policy, Menashy (2013) investigates and reflects on the political and ideological conceptual framework in place which helps inform the Bank's policies (749). The rationale behind its formulated policies on education is found to be in contrast with that of United Nation bodies such as UNICEF and UNESCO who adopt a rights-based approach to education. A rights-based approach views quality education as a human right that is ascribed to every child and protected by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thus, the goal in this approach to education is the realization of

every child's legal right to education and to be treated with respect in the process as they are considered to be right-holders. From this perspective, education holds an intrinsic value and the responsibility for its realization is ascribed to the government who is the best provider and financer (Menashy, 2013: 752). In contrast to this approach is the economic-instrumentalist approach to education which is adopted by the World bank. It mainly perceives education as an investment in human capital with the ability to create growth and development through increased productivity with the population. In that regard, education is considered a service with an instrumental value and therefore the responsibility for its provision can be removed from the state. When the goal is to create the greatest returns with the lowest possible risk and level of investment, education services are opened up to market competition with for profit, as well as not for profit, private providers (Menashy, 2013: 751).

A tension between these contrasting views can be detected as a result of their different theoretical foundations. The assessment of education as a human right is based on a legal and moral ground where the child's right to education ought to be respected regardless of its effects on society and the national economy. Further, having an educated population is argued to have positive effects in other areas than strictly the economy. It may create critically aware citizens who become empowered, which in the long run can be argued to affect also the economy positively. On the contrary, the assessment of education as a human capital investment is based on economic theory where policies depend on their effects on economic development and outcomes (Menashy, 2013: 752). The tension between these two foundational frameworks is thus caused by their different definitions of what education is and consequently their different problem representations and accompanying solutions.

Menashy (2013) investigates the acceptance of an economic-instrumental approach to education by the World Bank in its policy discourse in two ways. Firstly, the 'feasibility critique' is explored as an explanation to the lacking human rights perspective in World Bank discourse. This argumentation entails that in order for education to be viewed as a human right, its fulfillment must be feasible under current circumstances in all states and at all times. The critique argues that if a right is not considered attainable under these conditions it cannot be understood as a human right (Menashy, 2013: 756). Secondly, the role and mandate of the World Bank serves to explain the discursive omission of a human rights perspective. As an international financial institution, the Bank has assumed the role of an economic agency in the international development arena and one that is driven by its own organizational agenda. However, in that regard, the discourse on their mandate and purpose has over time changed from strictly focusing on 'economic considerations' to including also social and political factors when they are relevant for the Bank's action in the question at hand (Menashy, 2013: 758).

Verger (2012: 110) explores how the introduction of ePPPs in international development policies was made possible by assessing it as a programmatic idea. Positioned as such, public-private partnerships in education constitute a technical idea that includes "*interpretation of a policy problem and its causes and prescribe a precise course of policy action to solve the problem*". In this process,

programmatic ideas contain tools that can be used to make nonconforming thoughts and solutions unfeasible. The actors responsible for promoting and mobilizing programmatic ideas in the policy process are commonly referred to as policy entrepreneurs; a concept initially coined by John W. Kingdon. Such policy entrepreneurs are recognized by their ability to create causal beliefs, from an identified problem to a packaged policy solution in a way that makes it appealing to a wide audience in both the political and the private sphere. They do this from a position of expertise knowledge, for example by being placed in an international organization, with some political skills and with the endurance to wait out the ups and downs of the policy process (Kingdon, 2010: 181). Once a programmatic idea is introduced, the process in which these ideas or policies are packaged in an alluring way by its policy entrepreneurs is a process of framing. At this stage, frames should not be considered policy ideas but rather as a "*discourse that helps political actors to sell policy choices to the public*" (Verger, 2012: 112). Successful framing of a programmatic idea is required for it to resonate well with policy makers and the international community. The idea (policy) needs to be both familiar and innovative, clearly presented and feasible while holding some empirical credibility in the shape of tangible results (Verger, 2012: 120).

Verger's investigation of ePPPs as a programmatic idea shows that the concept was introduced in a time of desperate need for new policy solutions within the international development community. While privatization policies where hard to sell in the 1990s, ePPPs offered an inclusive discourse where the concept of 'partnerships' was found to create positive associations amongst stakeholders and policy makers. The idea of keeping the state as a key actor while proclaiming that market forces will help meet the demands of new international education goals contributed to a successful framing process (Verger 2012: 120). However, some ambiguity can be identified when it comes to the content of the ePPP framework itself which contributes to the common conception of PPPs as a somewhat fussy concept in terms of definition and implementation. This ambiguity can be understood as a strategic tool used by policy entrepreneurs to enhance the positive effects of their policy idea without providing too much details that might raise questions (Verger, 2012: 122).

3   Analytical framework

Within discourse analysis, theory and methodology are inevitably intertwined; discourses must be understood and interpreted in relation to the context in which they are produced, thus relating them to the researcher's understanding on the production of knowledge (Jorgenson & Phillips, 2002: 4). In the following sections I will introduce the ontological and epistemological positions, as well as the theoretical assumptions and traditions that will inform the analysis of the thesis. Some of the introduced concepts will be discussed further in the methodology section.

3.1   Interpretivist policy analysis - a discourse theoretical approach

There is a growing body of literature in political science employing discourse analysis, but the field is broad and includes a variety of methodologies, theoretical assumptions and aims. When approaching the comprehensive concept of discourse analysis, it is important to make clear the ontological and epistemological stances that make up the discourse theoretical approach. This will help distinguish how the concept is understood and used in the present case.

In conventional policy research, commonly found in the positivist realm, the policy process is depicted as linear with a clear distinction between actors and those affected by the policy (Paul, 2009: 242). Such research portrays policy-making as a process in which objective problems exist and policies represent reactionary solutions to those identified problems (Lombardo & Meier, 2009: 141). As the approach of this thesis falls in line with an interpretivist, post-structuralist discourse theory, such assumptions are rejected. Ontologically, a discourse theoretical approach denies the belief that there is a real, world that can be objectively discovered and measured. Instead, discourse theory accepts the existence of numerous realities and believes them to be socially constructed. Thus, knowledge is created within certain contexts and can therefore be influenced and shaped by the social and political processes surrounding them (Furlong & Marsh, 2010: 190).

Epistemologically, an interpretivist approach rejects the idea that knowledge can be gained which objectively explains social and political events. Unlike positivist research, in which causal explanations are considered a desirable outcome, discourse theory is "*concerned with understanding and interpreting socially produced meanings*". By digging deeper into the dynamics of the policy processes, including the underlying causes of the emergence of a policy and how it was made possible, the process is found to be anything but linear. Instead of making

general claims, discourse theory seeks to understand the world through exploring how and why certain discourses are produced, but also why others are not (Paul, 2009: 242-243). This interest in what is not said i.e. the silences in policy analysis could be considered as one of the strengths of a discourse theoretical approach and is also found in the 'What's the Problem Represented to be?' approach employed in this thesis.

3.2   Frame theory

Frame theory is concerned with the conceptual interpretation of linguistic expressions, that is, how signs of communication move from being merely signs to assume meanings through the process of reinterpretation. Such a process evokes different knowledges, which are of course highly dependent on contextual factors (Ziem, 2014: 9). For the study of political science and policy analysis, frame analysis can help inform problem representations and to analyze assumptions behind key concepts in the policy debate thus making it a useful complement to the WPR approach (Bacchi, 2009b: 19).

The concept of framing and frame analysis is used in a variety of fields of study and with different methodological aims and interests between them. The early interest in studying frames is commonly linked to the work of sociologist Erving Goffman who believed frames to be at the core of human communication as to how we cognitively interpret and understand information. From this perspective, frames are understood to be an unintentional part of human interaction rather than as something that can be constructed in a social context (Bacchi, 2009b: 20). Thus, Goffman's study of frames differs from how the concept is used and understood in interpretivist research of policy frame analysis.

This theoretical tradition steams from social movement theory where the frame interest is moved towards *content* rather than cognitive *form* of communication. The focus of study lies in who has influence over such content and how their arguments are shaped. Unlike in the sociological and linguistic field of study, these frames are understood as intentional expressions shaped to achieve certain (political) goals, thus moving the frame analysis to the field of political science and policy analysis. Here, frames are perceived as ways for social, political or institutional actors to shape desired outcomes by adapting their linguistic expression and their arguments (Bacchi, 2009b: 21). Strategical frames attempt to create bridges between current frames and the desired change needed to reach certain policy goals (Verloo, 2005: 15). Such strategic framing often entails some sort of adjustment to a higher paradigm or agenda which raises the question of to what extent actors within a certain institutional context are able to influence how issues are framed (Bacchi, 2009b: 21). In this sense, the study of frames is closely linked to that of discourses. Within governments and international institutions, policy documents and statements are discursively framed to fit with the overarching political agenda at place while still adhering to expectations and assigned mandates in the organizational structure (Menashy, 2013: 750).

This way of thinking about frames can be linked to Foucauldian thoughts on discourses and knowledge. His interest was in how arguments are shaped and how certain knowledge can make it possible for some arguments to be made and other not. Foucault's 'order of discourses' suggests the management of discourse, meaning that the production of knowledge is controlled through the control over discourses, thus constituting an expression of power. The process of producing discourses, which holds understandings and perceptions of knowledge, is managed through a system of domination and exclusion. The discourse order thus enables what is said while dictating what is not said, implying that power rests within discourses rather than being a result of them (Hook, 2007: 101). This production of knowledge is thought to be seated in 'institutional meaning systems' where certain institutions contribute to creating or reproducing frames of understanding (Bacchi, 2009b: 24).

3.2.1 Policy frame analysis

A policy frame is a framed expression that is connected to politics and to policy making. The construction of policy frames is closely linked with the construction of policy discourses. Thus, policy frames should be understood not as images of reality but rather as constructions that shape how we understand reality. Verloo (2005) defines policy frames as "*an organizing principle that transforms fragmentary or incidental information into a structured and meaningful policy problem, in which a solution is implicitly or explicitly enclosed*" (: 20). In order to become successful, policy fames must structure this discovered information in a certain way, which can be said to be the challenge for policy entrepreneurs (Verger, 2012: 120).

Accordingly, policy frames are always linked to a policy problematization but unlike other policy analyses, the frame analysis assumes the existence of several interpretations to policy making (Verloo, 2005: 18). These interpretations contribute to the construction of policies, thus assuming that policy problems and policy frames are indeed constructed, irrespective of what empirical data or knowledge initially informed it (Lombardo & Meier, 2009: 141).

In line with the concept of strategical framing, as discussed above, policy frames and policy discourse may contain elements of inconsistency. The unintentional dimension of such inconsistency is the result of human nature and the ways in which our perception of reality is limited by our social context and our access to information (Lombardo & Meier, 2009: 140). Intentional inconsistency, however, relates to policy discourses that are produced to create an appearance beyond actual intentions, and in that way fit with a higher agenda. Such strategic framing can be referred to as strategic shifting where a policy issue might be addressed due to public demand or to portray a certain image without intending to take action or having a thought-out plan on how to go about it (Lombardo & Meier, 2009: 142).

In accordance with the WPR-approach employed in this thesis, all policy frames hold information on how a certain policy problem is thought of and what solutions are suggested to solve it. In this sense, the policy frame analysis can be used to

determine whether the understanding of any given problem in a policy formulation fits with its proposed solution. In this thesis, the frame analysis will be applied to a World Bank webpage on ePPPs and gender. This is thought to provide an overarching image of how the issue is perceived by the World Bank and what knowledges contribute to the construction of their policies and of the concept of gender equality. This image may then be analyzed in relation to World Bank discourses and problem representations found in the policy document.

3.3 The 'What's the problem represented to be?' approach

The second analytical and methodological tool employed in this thesis is, as mentioned earlier, the 'What's the problem represented to be?' approach established by Australian professor Carol Lee Bacchi. The approach draws on a Foucauldian understanding of discourse and power and on forms of governance in terms of governmentality. Much can be said about Foucault and governmentality, but in the scope of this thesis it not possible nor the interest to scrutinize or expand Foucauldian research further. However, since this understanding lays the foundation of the theoretical tools employed I believe it is important to say something about this widely used and referenced analytical perspective for the study of governance and government behavior.

There is no single definition of governmentality, and Foucault himself used and referred to the concept in different ways in his lectures, and studies of governmentality have produced even more (Walters, 2012: 10). However, to give a comprehensive picture, governmentality can be described as a 'cluster of concepts' that one can use to understand and critically reflect on different forms of governance (Walters, 2012: 2). In the broadest of meanings, governmentality entails the study of power relations and conducts of power in all spheres of society. It investigates the rationalities that are used to shape certain forms of governance in a defined context but it can be employed to settings far from the political life. Though, in a more confined understanding, Foucault used governmentality as a framework to gain knowledge about the modern state and its historic development. His idea of state governance moved away from the mere view of the state as a combination of institutions and instead focused on the deep-seated conditions that made its existence possible (Walters, 2012: 12). Even further defined, governmentality has been used for the study of the emergence of (neo)liberalism as a form of governance, thus narrowing it down to a specific act or technique of governance. In the liberal governmentality, political economy is a key feature. Governments will seek to enhance their economic performance without engaging in too much governing as the market holds a seemingly natural place in society, though kept separate from the political process. This relationship between the state and the market entails certain freedoms of movement and trade, however, it demands constant monitoring and management by the government. According to Foucault, a

liberal government will manage society in accordance with its economic aspirations through the practice of security. Consequently, liberal governmentality has the ability to transform and reinterpret societal problems through the way they are framed and remedied in produced policies. Welfare problems such as unemployment can be defined as market failures which makes the process of governing one of tradeoffs (Walters, 2012: 30-35).

From a political science perspective, Walters (2012), offers a critical encounter with the idea of governmentality. One of his main lines of criticism relates to the misuse of governmentality as a complete theory rather than understanding it as an analytical toolbox; something he refers to as *applicationism.* Such a singular acceptance of a 'governmentality theory' risks losing important features of a dynamic analysis consisting of several different theoretical tools. Using an inclusive perspective of governmentality recognizes the heterogeneous nature of governance. Governmentality should thus be seen as one of many theoretical tools to use when one seeks to interpret society rather than to explain it (4).

Even though the work of Foucault's focuses mainly on the matters of the state, he recognizes that there is 'political power beyond the state' which affect the creation of and affairs of the state (Walters, 2012: 51). As is made clear by Foucault himself, a distinction is made in his original research between liberal governmentality and neoliberalism. Nonetheless, as Dean and Hindess (1998) define governmentality simply as a 'mentality of rule', neoliberalism can be seen as one such mentality, thus making the approach applicable in a modern, international setting (cited in Bacchi, 2009a: 31). For the purpose of this thesis, governmentality will be used to build an understanding of governance and the creation of policies, but in analyzing international policymaking one must remain open to several interpretations and forms of governance. The theoretical principles of governmentality lay the basis for the main theoretical and methodological approach employed in this thesis, namely, the WPR approach.

In a traditional perception, the policy process assumes that society holds identifiable problems and that policies are formed as responses to these. This includes some idea of the causes of the problem, who is expected to be responsible for its solution and in what way this should be done (Verloo, 2005: 22). In this mainstream idea of policy-making, this is seen as a government activity aimed at fixing, or correcting, societal problems. In this sense, policies have a positive value in their ability to fix things. Accordingly, creating policies to solve problems suggests that there is a problem that needs to be solved. This logic holds information on how a certain problem is understood and what assumptions can be found behind them. True to its poststructuralist foundations, the WPR approach believes problems in society to be constructed through the act of policy-making (Bacchi, 2009a: 34). This way, talking about problems in society as unquestionable facts that exist independently of their surroundings means seriously simplifying reality. Thus, the WPR approach suggests introducing a new paradigm of problem *questioning* rather than problem *solving* (Bacchi, 2009a: 46).

The concept of problematization is central in a WPR analysis as it refers to the process of governance. Since problem identification and policy-making entails assumptions about how a social problem is thought of and talked about as well as

some premises that make this problem representation possible, one could argue that we are governed by problematizations rather than by policies. The way in which these representations displays a simplified image of the world, the WPR approach can be linked to a framing process and strategic framing. However, while framing is concerned with the deliberate shaping of arguments aimed at persuading, there is an important difference in objectives. Although the two analytical tools can be combined to visualize different perceptions of a policy problem, as is the case in this thesis, they should not be used interchangeably. The WPR approach asks a different set of questions than a frame analysis, namely: what makes it possible to shape and produce this kind of arguments? (Bacchi, 2009a: 213). The underlying interest in the WPR approach is to understand how governing takes place. Studying problem representations will give an insight to the construction of policies and the assumed conditions under which they are made possible (Bacchi, 2009a: xi). With this in mind, it is argued to be of an analytical interest to combine the two perspectives of framing and representation to first get an idea of how the problem is presented and then backtrack its origin and rationales.

The WPR model of analysis consists of six questions presented below. The questions are designed to challenge how certain problems are discursively framed, including an agent for change. They dig deeper into the presumptions behind policy proposals and the structures that make them possible while they expose potential silences of certain policies and what effects this problem representation might have (Bacchi, 2009a: x). How to practically apply these questions to the analyzed material will be further explored in section 4.2.

1. What is the problem represented to be in a specific policy?
2. What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the problem?
3. How has this representation of the problem come about?
4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the problem be thought about differently?
5. What effects are produced by this representation of the problem?
6. How/where has this representation of the problem been produced, disseminated and defended? How could it be questioned, disrupted and replaced?

For the purpose of this thesis, these six questions will serve as an entry point to analyzing the World Bank's policies on ePPPs, how gender equality is constructed and how we are governed through problem representations. The introduction and recommendation of PPPs in education by the World Bank suggests that they see a problem with current or previous arrangements of education and the way they shape their solutions contains information on how the problem is perceived i.e. a *problem representation*.

3.4 Gender equality in policy analysis

In the scope of a discourse theoretical analysis of problematizations from a leading international financial agency for development, this thesis seeks to explore the construction of gender equality within the framing and problem representation of ePPPs. Based on the theoretical assumptions made and the discursive analytical approach, gender equality policies are understood to be social constructions where relevant actors and policy-makers are able to give meaning to different issues of gender (in)equality (Lombardo, Meier & Verloo, 2009: 186). The international community is found to be an important actor in the framing of gender equality as a policy problem and the promotion of gender equality strategies. However, there are some potential risks associated with the increased influence of IOs and numerous actors involved in policy-making. The shift from government to governance means that a wide range of new actors are influencing the content of policies and meanings ascribed to specific policy problem, such as gender equality (Lombardo, Meier & Verloo, 2009: 192).

To investigate gender equality as a policy problem internationally, one can study how or to what extent gender issues have been politicized, i.e. if the question of gender equality is represented in a political dimension. To politicize a question means to recognize that there are power relations in society, and that political discourses and arguments hold information on how politics is organized. This occurs when the question is formulated in a collective way, is situated at the public agenda and is articulated in terms of existing power relations. Thus, the politicizing of gender issues can be considered a key feature in feminist policy theory (Rönnblom, 2009: 106-108). In the process of politicizing policy and organizing politics, the concept and meaning of gender equality is shaped through discursive processes to fit in the context of different policies. It may sometimes be diminished as to what it contains, its interpretation can be fixed to a certain meaning in some contexts and it can be expanded to be include in other policy goals (Lombardo, Meier & Verloo, 2009: 186).

According to Verloo (2005), it is possible to distinguish between three dominant strategies in gender equality policy; *Equal treatment in legislation, specific or targeted gender equality policies* and *Gender Mainstreaming.* The different strategies hold different frames of understanding and subsequently, different problem representations and policy solutions. What should be done and by whom ranges from individual responsibility to including all actors involved in policy-making (Verloo, 2005: 23).

The idea of equal treatment in legislation is focused around creating access in order to make citizens of all genders equal in a legal sense. This understanding is ascribed to a liberal discursive logic where the responsibility to utilize one's rights lies with the individual. Further, it assumes that inequalities exist only in a formal sense through legislation. On the other hand, specific or targeted strategies recognize that gender inequalities have structural foundations at a societal level and thus propose policies to counterbalance such structures. The solutions within this strategy seek to create conditions for equal outcomes and opportunities for women,

who are considered to be the disadvantaged group, where they would otherwise not occur. The final, and most recently introduced strategy for gender equality is gender mainstreaming. The strategy seeks to tackle inequality in a fundamental way by addressing it at the structural level. It provides tools for reorganizing the policy process to avoid reproducing inequalities of current policies and for measuring impacts (Verloo, 2005: 23). Further, the strategy assumes that no policy problem can be viewed as neutral and separated from gender issues and that a gender perspective should be applied to every policy. It also demands that the first step in any policy development should be to assess the current situation for both men and women and that new proposals need to investigate the possible impacts it will have (UN Women, 2001).

Since 1997, gender mainstreaming has been adopted as the main strategy for gender equality globally. The aim is to include a gender perspective in all stages of the policy process and in all activities of the international community for development so that actual outcomes can be influenced (UN Women, 2001). Thus, the rationale for its success internationally, is to link the goal of the strategy (gender equality) with the goals of an international organization to create a mutually beneficial situation in policy areas that are not originally focused on gender issues (Verloo, 2005: 17). By framing and selling the strategy in a way that integrates it with existing goals of any given organization, gender mainstreaming has become a globally accepted idea. In some instances, gender mainstreaming has been introduced as means to achieve goals of efficiency rather than equality. By emphasizing the potential gains to be made by including a gender perspective in policy-making rather than adding on gender specific initiatives, the strategy has been adopted by a wide range of governments and international organizations (Lombardo, Meier & Verloo, 2009: 6). Within the World Bank system, gender mainstreaming is a recognized strategy that was officially established as a part of the Bank's work in 2001. Through the 2002 publication "*Integrating Gender into the World Bank's Work: A strategy for action*", gender mainstreaming became an integrated part of the Bank's lending activities and development projects. The argument made is that inequality is found to slow down development and growth and leads to inefficient labor markets (The World Bank, 2002: ix). The adoption of a gender mainstreaming strategy in the World Bank system can thus be understood as an example of an adaptation towards their own goals and mandate.

The adaptation of the gender mainstreaming strategy can be seen as a part of the (de)politicizing process where gender equality is discursively shaped to fit in a certain political dimension with certain goals. It can in this process either strengthen the political representation of gender equality or diminish it. Thus, the interpretation and construction of what constitutes gender equality and how it should be achieved may still vary considerably between policy-makers even within the frame of a globally established strategy.

4 Methodology

An interpretivist discourse approach to research aims at understanding the meaning of behavior, which according to Furlong & Marsh (2010) can only be done by interpreting the meaning of discourses and social contexts in relation to the social phenomena being studied (200). It thus believes that our knowledge about the world and our realities are products of discourses (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 5). In the following section, the methodological understanding of discourse analysis will be discussed, followed by a review of how policies can be analyzed using the WPR approach.

4.1 Discourse analysis

Discourse, or discourse analysis, is a contested approach in the social sciences since it can be applied in numerous of analytical traditions, and it can have different meanings between them. A general understanding is that discourses constitute structured patterns of communication. However, each analytical approach has its own definition on how these patterns are created and how they should be analyzed (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002: 1). There is a need to distinguish between two analytical traditions within the broad term of 'discourse analysis'. The first being the more conventional analysis of text with the aim of discovering patterns of communication which are to be analyzed. The focus here is often with actual linguistics and rhetoric that construct meanings. The second one, however, can be understood rather as an 'analysis of discourses' where certain issues are given a conceptual, discursive meaning in a social context. These meanings, or representations, can be institutionally or politically influenced which effects the understanding of the issue at hand (Bacchi, 2009b: 22). Analyzing discourses, in terms of their given meanings, falls in line with the WPR-approach used in this thesis and it demonstrates the interconnectedness of the analytical tools of framing and discourses.

In post-structuralist analysis, discourse is a key concept which refers to socially constructed forms of knowledges. These knowledges control what is possible to express. Even though they are socially produced, these knowledges become powerful as they are accepted as the truth in society (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010: 5). Accordingly, because of their truth status it is difficult to make claims outside of the dominating perception (Bacchi, 2009a: 35). This idea of discourses as an expression of power and with the ability to govern springs from a Foucauldian discourse analysis. It returns to Foucault's 'order of discourse' and the process of domination and exclusion as discussed earlier. The creation of what is true and false

is one mechanism of exclusion that can be identified and is considered an important feature in successful discourses the creation of frames. When engaging in Foucauldian discourse analysis it is important to pay attention to the workings of certain institutions, structures and social norms and practices which enable this exclusion. In this way, the researcher is able to factor in the workings of certain circumstances and conditions in place which gives specific knowledges meaning and dominance and the status of truth (Hook, 2007: 103-105). When knowledge is understood as a product of discourse and power, the discourse analysis becomes analytically and methodologically widened. As the focus is shifted from merely analyzing what is said towards what premises make this discourse possible, a new set of questions become available for analysis; What motivates a certain knowledge? Or, who benefits from this discourse? Further, asking questions regarding underlying criteria and feasibility of discourses with an awareness of structures of power, increases the generalizability of discourse analyses. By tracing the production of discourses backwards it becomes possible to link texts based on their shared premises (Hook, 2007: 106).

An attempt to make such a shift in focus from that of policies as responses to problems towards instead the construction of those 'problems' is found in the WPR approach, which builds on a Foucauldian understanding of discourse.

4.2   Analyzing problem representations

As discussed earlier in this thesis, policy analysis can be done in a multitude of ways and many scholars have previously written about the different approaches to policy studies (Bacchi, 2009a: 32). With its post-structuralist foundation, the WPR approach places focus on the political dimension of policy-making where problems are constructed. Bacchi (1999) states that "*every postulated 'solution' has built into it a particular representation of what the problem is, and it is these representations, and their implications we need to discuss*" (21). The WPR approach studies the discursive construction of problematizations. It thus assumes several competing issues within a policy formulation, which subsequently highlights that such constructions leave other problematizations unrecognized (Bacchi, 1999: 4). The WPR approach provides a methodology for critical investigation of such problematizations by identifying the problem representations placed within them. Using such an approach to tackle the research questions of this thesis effectively connects the ontological and epistemological stances with the analytical tools of the study, thus operationalizing the research process.

The WPR approach can be applied to any chosen policy for analysis. The first step in a WPR analysis is to identify problem representations. According to Bacchi, all policy statements and texts constitute 'prescriptive' texts, meaning that they hold information on what needs to be done and they are produced by someone who has power to operate. This way, studying policies and their suggestions for solutions gives a starting point to identifying problem representations (Bacchi, 2009a: 34).

Once a policy is chosen, the researcher can apply the six questions of the WPR approach to critically scrutinize it.

Question 1 (*What is the problem represented to be in a specific policy?*) provides the basis for further analysis. It initiates a backtracking process where looking at what the policy proposes to do will reveal information on how the problem is thought of (Bacchi, 2009a: 3).

With Question 2 (*What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the problem?*), the analysis starts to identify the conceptual logics behind the policy, i.e. the political rationales and meanings that are in place to make the problem representation possible and coherent. This means detecting discursively formed knowledges as key concepts and binaries. Such knowledges may be shaped internationally and cross-culturally which opens up the analysis to multiple actors and forms of governance (Bacchi, 2009a: 35, 48). It is these political rationales, or mentalities, of governance that make up the concept of governmentality (Bacchi, 2009a: 6).

While question 2 holds a somewhat neutral stance to the production of knowledge and how it can make certain problem representations possible, Question 3 (*How has this representation of the problem come about?*) moves towards the power of discourses, thus asking, how a certain problem representations came to assume dominance. As discussed above, discourses entail power in terms of what may be said and how some are given authority to say it. In this sense, power is understood as an operating power with the ability to make things happen. Accordingly, Question 3 focuses on the operations of productive power and what problem representations it is able to produce rather than focusing on who has the power (Bacchi, 2009a: 37-38).

Based on identified conceptual logics found in Question 2, Question 4 (*What is left unproblematic in this problem representation?*) assumes that a single-sided problem representation of a policy problem entails limitations and unexplored alternative representations. Thus, the researcher should identify and reflect upon what perspectives are silenced and consider the role discourses play in the inclusion and exclusion of knowledges (Bacchi, 2009a: 40).

In contrast to the interest in operations of power in Question 3, Question 5 (*What effects are produced by this representation of the problem?*) addresses the effects of power. True to its critique towards evidence-based policy methods, the WPR approach does not refer to effects in terms of measurable evaluation outcomes. Rather, the effects are created in the way problems are represented and they can be more harmful for some social groups than others. Policy discourses frame how different social groups are perceived and they usually contain some indication of who is considered to be responsible for the 'problem'. Thus, social policies targeting vulnerable groups may consolidate already existing power relations and reproduce vulnerability with the recipients. The goal of Question 5 is to draw attention to potential consequences a problem representation can have which entails a need for questioning of the conceptual logic that informs it (Bacchi, 2009a: 15-17, 43).

Question 6 (*How/where is this representation of the problem produced, disseminated and defended?*) is related to Question 3. Once a certain representation

gains dominance, how is it legitimized through certain publications, actors and institutions? The last question in the WPR approach encourages reflexivity and contextual awareness in the analytical process (Bacchi, 2009a: 19).

The six questions of the WPR approach are created to make policy analysis methodologically clear and coherent while including all the elements of the approach. However, the questions must not be followed systematically and posed one by one in order to constitute an exhaustive analysis of the chosen policy (Bacchi, 2009a: 205). As is the case in this thesis, the questions are used as a part of an integrated analysis where the proposed idea of each question is applied when deemed appropriate and useful for the analysis. For some identified problematizations it may not be necessary to apply all available questions.

Throughout the analysis, the questions will be marked in parentheses e.g. (Question 1) when they are applied. This will serve as a validity check that makes it possible for the reader to follow the arguments and interpretations made and provides the analysis with a sense of transparency.

4.3   Material

Before turning to the analysis, something must be said about the empirical material on which the frame analysis and the WPR approach will be applied. It is important to note that the selection of which policy or what material to analyze is a process of interpretation in itself, and as a researcher one is already analytically engaged through the choices made, thus making it all the more important to motivate one's choices.

The aim of this thesis is to understand how policies on ePPPs in developing countries are framed and to investigate how the problem is represented. It further seeks to explore how the concept of gender equality is constructed through this problem representation. The underlying interest lies in visualizing what assumptions are in place for this problem representation to be made and the discursive power that enables it. To accomplish this, I have chosen to analyze empirical material which is presented/published by the World Bank, using their own words, rather than turning to the plentitude of second hand material available. The assumption made here is that the chosen material will represent an image of how the Bank *wants* to be perceived and include *their* preferred policy solutions. Since my analytical framework is based on (strategic) framing and problem representation I am not interested in discovering what the Bank or its individual employees 'really think' or in evaluating the policy solutions but rather in the construction of dominant policies. Analyzing such policy texts would reveal information on how the World Bank perceives the problem of education in developing countries and consequently how they believe the problem ought to be solved.

Firstly, the World Bank's webpage "Gender & Education Projects" will provide an overarching presentation on how the Bank wants to be perceived since their webpage is a way for them to communicate what they do to the world (The World

Bank, 2017). The available online information on ePPPs and gender equality is limited and as mentioned earlier not much research is produced that combines PPPs in education and gender issues specifically. The policy idea and research started with the introduction of PPPs in infrastructure projects but later PPPs came to include projects in other areas such as education development as well. Therefore, most of the World Bank's online resources focus on infrastructure projects. In this sense, the chosen webpage is unique and an important piece of material to analyze as it represents the main online resource on the World Bank's framed perception on gender impacts of PPPs in education.

The webpage contains an overview describing gender roles in education in developing countries and it demonstrates how the introduction of ePPPs affects them. It also features a list of nine research and policy documents on topics relating to ePPPs and gender. Through the selection of published material, I believe it is possible to say something about how the World Bank want to portray themselves and the policy problem in question.

Secondly, one document has been chosen to be the subject of an in-depth analysis according to the WPR approach. This is the document called "*The Role and Impact of Public-Private Partnerships in Education*" and was produced in 2009 by Harry Patrinos, Felipe Barrera-Osorio and Juliana Guáqueta. The publication is considered to be one of the most complete and referenced documents on ePPPs as it contains reviews made of 22 academic studies and a total of 92 practical experiences. Below, table 1 demonstrates the main publications on ePPPs since its initial introduction as well as the organizations that stand behind them.

Table 1

Organization	Year	Title	Authors
ADB and WB	2000	*The New Social Policy Agenda in Asia*	Y. Wang (editor)
IFC	2001	*Handbook on PPPs and Education*	N. LaRocque, J. Tooley and M. Latham
CfBT	2008	*Toolkit on PPPs and Education*	M. Latham
CfBT	2008	*PPPs in basic education. An International Review*	N. LaRocque
WB and IFC	2008	*The evolving regulatory context for private education in emerging economies*	J. Fielden and N. LaRocque
IFC-Edinvest	2009	*Public-Private Partnerships in Education*	M. Latham
WB	2009	*The Role and impact of PPPs in education*	H. Patrinos, F. Barrera-Osorio and J. Guáqueta

Source: (Verger, 2012: 114).

For the purpose of my analysis, the chosen document becomes a clear choice as it is produced by the World Bank alone. It becomes especially useful as it is produced

by World Bank employees and members of the network of experts initially involved in the introduction of ePPPs in the 1990s. The main author, Harry Patrinos, is the co-founder of the World Bank Economics of Education Thematic Group, responsible for the framing and selling of the ePPP idea. Therefore, this document is expected to be representative of the Bank's discourse and understanding of ePPPs thus containing problem representations suitable for analysis. Beyond 2009 most World Bank publications on ePPPs or on PPPs and gender equality have been case studies that tries to determine outcomes and results from a specific ePPP program rather than comprehensive books and articles on the policy topic. As I am not interested in the implementation or evaluation of ePPPs but rather how the policy is discursively framed and represented by the World Bank, such case studies as discarded.

4.4   Limitations

A social constructionist, interpretivist approach to social science holds some contestation as to the production of scientific results. The divide between positivist and interpretivist research relates in part to their different epistemological claims and thus their relation to causality (Parsons, 2010: 80. Where positivist research tends to seek explanations of the world by asking questions of *why*, more interpretivist focused research desires an understanding of meanings in the world by asking questions of *how*. Whereas one could choose to see this division as an inevitable limitation to the production of knowledge based on which approach is chosen, it is possible to simply view this as a "*division of labour*" where the two scientific approaches can cooperate and produce different contributions to the field of research (Parsons, 2010: 84).

Due to the scientific interest and aim of this thesis, an interpretivist approach is superior. The contribution made will be in the sense that taken-for-granted assumptions are questioned and discursive silences which are assumed to have implications and effects on what a policy is able to do will be highlighted. In order to answer questions on how social phenomena are constructed, one needs to engage in the study of processes in this construction. This demands a set of tools that are not available to the positivist researcher (Parsons, 2010: 87). However, it remains important to show an awareness of potential limitations in the chosen scientific approach. Such limitations can be tackled through establishing some criteria of validity which gives the reader a sense of what is intended to be achieved. What criteria that are considered as important for the creation of validity in a certain context depends on the researcher's relation to the production of scientific knowledge as well as in what ways the knowledge is intended to be used (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002: 173).

In discourse analysis, determining criteria of validity is not straight-forward. Due to the sometimes inconsistent nature of discourses and the variety of possible interpretations, criteria of coherence can be difficult to achieve in interpretivist approaches. Further, attaining coherence in a discourse analysis may on the contrary

defeat the purpose of exposing contradictory and opposing truths which can be important results in a discourse analysis (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002: 172). On the other hand, an important criterion of validity in interpretivist research is transparency. By giving the reader access to the empirical material used and to continuously document the interpretations made throughout the analysis a sense of claims testing is made possible (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002: 173). Transparency becomes especially important as interpretivist research accepts the role and influence of the interpreter in the analytical process. Based on its epistemological assumptions, the idea of attaining neural knowledge is dismissed and as researchers we cannot be separated from our context and previous experiences. The criteria of transparency makes it possible to show an awareness of the impacts this might have on the analysis (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002: 175). In line with this, the WPR approach encourages self-analysis and awareness of the problem representations that contribute to shaping our own logics and perceptions of the world we live in (Bacchi, 2009a: 19). Further, in interpretivist research it is important recognize the existence of multiple interpretations – in this case frames and problem representations beyond the ones identified in this thesis.

An advantage of perceiving all practices in society as constructed is that one effectively accepts that things do not have to stay this way permanently (Parsons, 2010: 81). The possibility for change is a key part of the normative feature in the WPR approach. By questioning the construction of problems and how we are governed opens up for the possibility of thinking how this could be done differently (Bacchi, 2009a: 44).

5 Analyzing World Bank framing and discourse on ePPPs

In the following section, the empirical material will be analyzed according to a discourse theoretical and methodological approach using the analytical tools of framing and problem representation. I seek to understand how the World Bank has framed and represented the use of Public-Private Partnerships in education in developing countries and how the concept of gender equality is constructed through this discourse. Does the framed image fit with the representation of the problem? How problems are understood affects how we think about them and which policy solutions are possible to put forward. In this sense, discourses are argued to shape the production of knowledge and thus how we are governed.

Firstly, frame theory will be used to analyze the overarching perception that the World Bank wants to convey in the question of ePPPs and gender equality. Secondly, the WPR approach will be applied to a key document on ePPPs produced by the World Bank to discursively analyze how the problem is represented and how the question of gender equality is constructed.

5.1 Frame analysis of the World Bank webpage "Gender & Education Projects"

Based on the post-structuralist premise of this thesis, all public statements and publications are considered to be products of a process of discursive framing in the creation of knowledge. This makes an official website by a leading international financial organization an appropriate place to start when wanting to analyze this process. In addition, the chosen webpage reveals the image presented by the World Bank on the two key concepts of this analysis – ePPPs and gender equality. As previously mentioned, the interest in gender implications of educational PPPs is fairly unrecognized in the World Bank's knowledge production. In that sense, how the Bank frames these questions can provide new and useful insights when I turn to the document analysis where the WPR approach will be applied.

The webpage can be divided into two main parts. As a main online resource for the concepts of ePPPs and gender, it begins with presenting an overview of the field, followed by a collection of links to research and guidelines on the topic. The overview touches upon gender issues in relation to ePPPs and why this is important to pay attention to. The very first sentence highlights that public-private partnership projects can affect women and men in different ways which is why it is important to have knowledge on such impacts and to include a gender perspective throughout

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the project. The overview continues by arguing that education is the "*primary driver of national economic development*" and that it creates opportunities for both men and women to live more productive lives (World Bank, 2017). The argument for using education projects for economic development is supported by referencing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This serves to legitimize the Bank's work with education provision in terms of an internationally determined goal, thus making opposing views difficult to express. A discourse on education as a human right established in various conventions is not present. Nor is any reference to Women's Rights, anti-discrimination legislation or gender mainstreaming made. Women's education is framed as an unutilized resource with the ability to increase national economic capacity. This discourse can be said to enhance dominant agendas of economic growth and perceive women's education as a means to achieving a goal.

The problem with the current education systems is presented to be differing enrollment rates between boys and girls. According to the webpage the reason why PPPs can affect men/boys and women/girls differently is because of their different "*societal roles and household responsibilities*". This divide is argued to be caused by gendered cultural norms where parents may choose to not send their girls to school (The World Bank, 2017). To overcome this gender gap, private sector cooperation is presented as a solution that can increase access and efficiency in the education sector and in that way reduce inequality. The idea is framed through an evidence-based approach to knowledge which is based on what works. They state that "*a number of governments*" have used ePPPs to overcome problems in the education sector suggesting that private sector solutions are becoming the norm.

The second part of the webpage consists of "*Sector-Specific Tools and Case Studies*". A "*rich and diverse*" set of "*key resources*" are made available by the World Bank Group's PPP in Infrastructure Resource Center" (PPPIRC) (World Bank, 2017). They have gathered research and policy documents on the different PPP areas where the Bank is involved and this specific webpage, of course, contains references to education resources. Here readers are referred to read more about the gender impacts of PPP projects targeting education specifically. There is a total of nine resources made available and the authors range from international organizations such as the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and United Nations Committee on the elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to education experts and researchers on international development. They contain Gender Action Plans, checklists for gender mainstreaming and lessons learned. This heterogenous mix suggests a framing process in which the World Bank wants to convey a comprehensive understanding of education and gender issues and that their production of knowledge rests on an inclusive gender awareness.

Looking closer at the resources made available, however, not much of the research connects PPPs in education with gender equality specifically nor do they represent how the World Bank intends to work with these questions. One of the resources presented (CEDAW) highlights the negative gender effects that privatization in education can have. These results are reframed on the webpage by the World Bank in the sense that they write their own summary of the research

stating that the results target complete privatization of education. Accordingly, these results are argued to not be applicable to ePPPs which instead can be presented as a solution to the gender gap in education.

Returning to the analytical understanding, policy frames are constructed images that shape how we understand our reality. Through the framing of a policy issue, knowledge on how we think about it is created which makes it a discursive expression of power. When studying framing and the intentional construction of images it can therefore be useful to think about the audience which the frame is created to attract. With the wide range of member states of the World Bank follows several political, cultural and traditional opinions to consider. The World Bank holds the position of an international development agency and a bank of knowledge, but it is highly dependent on member states and of retaining its mandate as a financial institute. As previously concluded (Menashy, 2013; Steiner-Khamsi, 2012), the World Bank is driven by its mandate. But it still has the responsibility to comply with international norms, standards and goals when these intersect with its projects. Further, the Bank has adopted the gender mainstreaming strategy into its operation which makes it obligated to include a gender perspective in all activities and projects. Together, this enables a strategic framing where some ambiguity is necessary to meet the interests of stakeholders while still adhering to its own organizational agenda. Accordingly, the way the World Bank frames the issue of gender equality in ePPPs corresponds with the image they want to convey, but not necessarily with what they actually intend to do.

In the next section a key policy document with recommendations and guidelines on ePPPs from the World Bank will be analyzed to critically asses the assumptions and logics behind the policy.

5.2   What's the problem represented to be? in 'The role and impact of public-private partnerships in education'

"*The Role and Impact of Public-Private Partnerships in Education*" is a well recognized document within the field of privatization of education. It was written as a comprehensive book by a selection of World Bank staff and education experts in an attempt to provide answers and suggestions on how to move forward with ePPPs, roughly a decade after their introduction. It claims to contain "*a detailed review of studies with rigorous evaluations and guidelines*" (Patrinos et al., 2009: 1). The agency responsible for producing this book is the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development which is one of the five organizations that together constitute the World Bank Group. In that sense, it is targeted towards low-income countries and countries where the government has problems with fulfilling its responsibility of providing education for its citizens.

According to the authors, the document is formulated to address four types of ePPPs and assess their strength in relation to four main goals. These goals are to

increase enrollment, improve learning outcomes, reduce inequality and to reduce costs (Patrinos et al., 2009: 31). These goals contain important problem representations and they will be reviewed throughout this analysis. However, an analysis of what the problem is represented to be in ePPP policy must go beyond the image presented by the authors themselves and critically question all possible problematizations. When reading the document critically, with the WPR approach in mind, two overarching problem representations with underlying presumptions can be identified. These presumptions are what makes the production of this document possible in the first place and can therefore say something about the discursive power through which we are governed.

Firstly, when an international bank for the advancement of development and growth engages in education management it is assumed that education is a driving force of development and is an important means to reaching internationally formulated goals of prosperity. This is of course a widely accepted conception and a founding idea of many local, national and international development projects, beyond the World Bank. Not least through the Millennium Development Goals where the achievement of universal primary education is emphasized. Education is understood as being necessary for the advancement of nation states, both economically, politically and socially and as a way for people to improve their situation and to fully participate in society. Further, this entails a view of education as the solution to a wide range of different problems in the sense that it can create opportunities, and once universal education is achieved these problems are believed to be solved (Question 2). This idea of a problem-solving education policy contains problem representations which needs to be scrutinized. First, the most foundational representation of the problem is *lack of education* in a general sense. If the solution is education, then it is a problem that people lack education. A second problem representation is *lack of access* to education which entails the understanding that providing equal access to opportunities will result in equal outcomes (Question 1). This understanding of the problem entails a dominant perception of the division of responsibility. When the problem is understood as lack of access it is the responsibility of the government to create access. However, when education is made available, the responsibility shifts back to the individual to receive and assimilate the provided opportunity to become active participants of the labor market (Question 2).

The perception of education as a social equalizer is thus the dominant discourse in education policy and is reproduced in World Bank discourses on ePPPs. As such, the belief has gained a 'truth status' and is a taken for granted assumption which makes other notions difficult to express (Question 3).

Secondly, a policy proposal produced to reorganize the management of education provision through partnerships assumes that there is something inherently wrong with the way traditional public school systems are organized, i.e. that there is a need for a new policy. The introduction of the ePPP idea came at a time when privatizations had a bad track record in the Bank's development policies after failed experiences with Structural Adjustment Programs. By framing the new policy as a partnership where the state would continue to play an important role, the introduction of ePPPs became successful. As previous research has touched upon

(Verger, 2012), the ePPP idea was strategically framed as a partnership to attract adherents from both sides of the public/private divide – an argument that is visible in the document analyzed here as well. The partnership idea suggests that both public and private qualities are deemed important which is the framed image presented by the policy entrepreneurs when introducing ePPPs. However, the discourse in the document still reveals a public/private binary.

Public provision of education is presented to be inefficient in its allocation of resources, to produce low test scores and to have less autonomy which hinders it from being flexible. Further, public provision of education is stated to be harmful and ill-serving of marginalized groups such as low income citizens (Patrinos et al., 2009: 4-6). By claiming that public provision is inefficient, inflexible and unequal, private solutions can be presented as the opposite of those results and thus become a higher valued and more attractive policy alternative. The problem is represented to be the *fundamental organizational structure and management of public schooling,* making it an inherent problem with publicly provided services (Question 1). A key assumption made when pursuing privatization as a policy solution and through the introduction of ePPPs is consequently that market solutions are superior to public solutions (Question 2). The bias towards private sector solutions is expressed further when potential risks with ePPPs are presented. The main problems and potential reasons for failure with ePPP programs is presented to be lacking regulatory conditions for the private sector to operate or governmental resistance towards accepting private actors (Patrinos et al., 2009: 43). The discursive focus on government inefficiency leaves other explanations to why developing countries might struggle with providing quality education unrecognized. Contextual factors such as post-conflict recovery, corruption or political instability are not considered and the ability of the private sector to address these issues are not problematized. The possibility of such problems to prevail and continue to affect the education sector after the introduction of ePPPs is consequently not considered (Question 4).

The assumptions found in the Bank's discourse on education policy makes it difficult for other views and opinions to be made. In this sense, the binary relationship between public and private provision of education can be argued to still be present in partnership discourse and constitutes an important underlying presumption that helps create the World Bank's discourses on ePPPs (Question 3 and Question 6).

The introduction of private actors is presented to be the solution to perceived problems of the education sector in developing countries and the answer to the four goals stated in the document. The conceptual logic behind this understanding is based in economic theory (Question 2). Accordingly, the private sector is argued to contribute to increased enrollment and quality while reducing costs by introducing the elements of competition and consumer choice. The idea is to create a market of schools where the students and parents can choose the best available option. When the different schools compete for the same students they will have to make themselves attractive in order to be chosen. This means that schools will be forced to increase the quality of the education provided to meet the demands of the 'consumers'. In the long run only the best performing schools are argued to prevail,

thus increasing the overall quality and outcomes of education (Patrinos et al., 2009: 34). Further, the private sector is able to operate more freely which encourages innovation. This will be expressed through the introduction of new pedagogical tools, effective management of operations, curriculum design and the absence of teacher unions that hinders efficiency (Patrinos et al., 2009: 22).

As previously mentioned, there are many different variations of ePPPs and ways for governments to contract out service provision to private providers. The analyzed document contains reviews of the most commonly used alternatives along with their potential for success. The contractual type that is found to be most successful and recommended by the World Bank is a voucher system. Vouchers are the strongest or 'integral' form of ePPP where the public sector provides students with vouchers to cover their education costs at the school of their choice. This contract type is considered to be the strongest ePPP system since the public sector is only present as a financer and consumer choice is encouraged while the organization and management of education provision is placed with the private sector (Patrinos et al., 2009: 18). Further, voucher systems are argued to be the best alternative for reducing inequality since they allow for otherwise marginalized groups to freely choose which schools they attend. This means overcoming constraints of access to high quality education and is argued to result in a "*diverse student body*". Vouchers can be universal by giving all students the ability to choose, or they can be targeted towards disadvantaged groups and in that sense reducing inequality. Targeted voucher systems are recommended by the World Bank in low-income contexts where received subsidies can be linked to income level or area of residence (Patrinos et al., 2009: 19-20).

Regardless of how a voucher system is designed, its premises contain problem representations and underlying assumptions that needs to be examined. The rationale for the perceived success of voucher systems is that the freedom of choice is given to consumers where market forces will increase the quantity and quality of education opportunities. By placing the act of 'choice' with the consumes, in this case the parents, an idea of human beings as independently functioning beings that can make rational decisions based on preferences and utility is assumed (Question 2). Consequently, the possibility for children to receive high quality education depends on the ability of their parents to make informed choices for them. This representation of the problem and its posed solutions can have consequences for those affected by the policy. Even when targeted, the element of choice requires the knowledge and ability of consumers to make informed decisions that will actually lead to a better outcome. Increased choice could risk enhancing already existing segregation as privileged families tend to be better informed to choose the education that results in better outcomes. A second segregating effect could be produced from the side of the schools. Private for-profit providers receiving funds for each educated student might be inclined to choose students that are easy to educate thus rejecting students with different disabilities who are more costly to educate (Question 5).

The Word Bank discourse on ePPPs contains no universal solution for reducing inequality in education at a structural level or any recognition that inequality can have different causes (Question 4). Instead, targeted vouchers are represented as the

solution to the goal of reducing all forms of inequality and the problem represented is the *lacking ability of the public sector to target resources* to reduce inequality (Question 1).

The results presented in the document rests on the rationale of what has been proven to work in previous cases i.e. empirical evidence that is used to determine success rates of the different ePPP alternatives. The results include extensive quantitative measures of enrollment statistics, learning outcomes in terms of standardized test results and budgetary improvements. This grounds the discourse in an evidence-based approach to knowledge which is a contested view in the WPR approach. By accepting that results can be produced quantitatively, assumptions must be made that limits the image of the world and what can be perceived in it. In this sense, education is understood as having a technical value for governments in that it can create economic growth and international competition. Further, economic theory suggests that privatization of education is the best way to achieve this (Question 2). An understanding suggesting that education can have an intrinsic value or create a sense of value for the individual is not visible in World Bank discourse on ePPPs and thus left unproblematized. Previous research (Menashy, 2013) has concluded, that World Bank discourses tend to lack a human rights perspective. This omission is apparent in the analyzed document as well as it makes no reference to human rights or a rights-based approach to education (Question 4).

The way the World Bank is able to produce results that strengthen their recommendations and assumptions needs to be examined from a larger perspective. The evidence-based approach gives room for the production of uncontested 'truths' in the sense that the results are difficult to question and are reproduced by both researchers and politicians. It assumes that results can be produced objectively which equals neutral information about the world we live in. It is of course difficult to argue that access to education is not a good thing or that we should not try to enhance the quality and outcomes of education. But the way the problem is represented contains underlying assumptions and accompanying policy solutions which makes it a dominant discourse. As an international organization, the World Bank holds power over the policy making process through the production of research where they have positioned themselves as a knowledge bank. The role of the World Bank in the promotion of ePPPs is reflected on in the concluding section of the document. It is stated that they play an integral part in providing equity through capital loans to private education projects and contribute to increase the attractiveness of private sector involvement in education provision in developing countries (Patrinos et al., 2009: 69). Through their mandate as a financial institute for development the World Bank creates incentives with member states and loan takers. This contributes to legitimizing their discourse to strengthen their mandate which makes 'truth claims' based on empirical evidence and policy recommendations possible (Question 3 and Question 6).

The overall impression of the analyzed document reveals some inconsistencies. As presented above, the main body of the report aligns with the conceptual logics and underpinnings of economic theory and liberalism. However, the foreword and the backside of the document demonstrates a slightly different, more inclusive perception of education aims. This includes issues of equality and the "*well-being*

of children", and it argues for the relevance of the book to convince both policy-makers and researchers who are ideologically critical to the idea of ePPPs (Patrinos et al., 2009: ix, backside cover). This discourse is not found within the main text of the document which suggests a strategic ambiguity. Accordingly, the document seeks to give the impression of providing an extensive review of the problems and possibilities with education policy while such discourses are not actually present in the policy text.

5.2.1 The construction of gender equality

True to the WPR approach, I do not seek to determine what gender equality *really* is or how it best should be achieved. Rather I want to discover what shape it takes and what meanings it is ascribed in a certain discourse.

As mentioned earlier, one of the main objectives of the document "*The Role and Impact of Public-Private Partnerships in Education*" was to assess the ability of different ePPPs solutions to reduce inequality. This objective suggests the existence of an understanding of what (in)equality means, what causes it and how it ought to be tackled. The analyzed document reveals a somewhat limited understanding of inequality in the sense that it is vaguely defined. The problem of existing inequalities in education provision is represented to be "*constraints to access*" which in turn will lead to a gap in outcomes between the 'ordinary' students and those who are disadvantaged (Question 1) (Patrinos et al., 2009: 20).

This problem representation entails an underlying assumption of inequality as being the result of unequal access to education institutions suggesting that creating access will reduce inequality (Question 2). Further, when inequality is mentioned it refers to all types of inequalities, assuming that it is possible to generalize between different types of inequalities. The groups of disadvantaged students identified in the document that are assumed to be potential victims of such inequality are 'hard-to-reach students', minority students, girls and disabled students (Patrinos et al., 2009: 20). Accordingly, the concept of gender equality specifically is not mentioned thus constituting a silence in the current problem representation (Question 4). Issues of gender equality is instead reflected on in terms of defining 'girls' as a disadvantaged group amongst others which is to be addressed with similar solutions. The way we talk about different groups in society contributes to what meanings they are ascribed and how they are viewed be the public. Policy discourses play a key role in this process. By referring to girls as a disadvantaged or marginalized group, the discourse creates a sense of an identifiable 'problem' group that will be addressed with policy solutions and it fails to recognize girls as 50 % of the student body. This problem representation informs what solutions are proposed and the problem is thought of, consequently affecting those that the policy is directed at (Question 4 and Question 5).

In the sense of equating gender with the marginalization of girls, the problem is mentioned on several occasions and the proposed answer is private sector solutions in terms of targeted vouchers systems or subsidies. As mentioned above, vouchers enable freedom of choice for the consumer while private actors provide and manage

education with the public sector as a financer. The document contains a case study from a, according to the Bank, successful system of targeted vouchers in Bangladesh. There the program gave stipends to girls who maintained good grades and test scores, had high attendance rates and who remained unmarried throughout primary and secondary school (Patrinos et al., 2009: 20). The success of this targeted program was measured in terms of increased enrollment rates amongst girls thus addressing the represented problem of lack of access to education. However, the suggested solution contains another problem representation that relates to how disadvantaged groups and the idea of education are thought of. Introducing conditions that need to be met in order to receive stipends as a policy solution, suggests that the girls are a part of the problem. Are they unable to get good grades or too lazy to show up to the provided education? Do they prioritize marriage and families over a quality education? (Question 2). Further, this suggests that girls' right to education is conditional thus contradicting the stated goal of universal education.

The limited understanding and problem representation of gender equality in World Bank discourses leaves important dimensions of gender issues untouched. The introduction of choice as a solution to inequality suggests that when girls are able to choose between different schools, education will become more gender equal (Question 2). This assumption fails to recognize the structural level of inequality nor address its causes (Question 4). Instead it reduces the question to being a disadvantage caused by a lack of access to education institutions. This understanding contains measurable outcomes and results based on the conceptual logics that underpins its assumptions of rather than asking why and how inequality occurs. Accordingly, the question of gender equality cannot be said to be politicized in World Bank discourses. Gender roles are not addressed at a structural level and in a collective way. Instead they are accepted as neutral facts that can be reproduced through the Bank's evidence-based approach to knowledge and position as a knowledge bank (Question 3 and Question 6). Even though the concept of inequality is to some extent placed on the agenda through the four objectives of the document, it is done so in a general way that does not target gender issues in education policy specifically. The inequality discourse fails to problematize gender equality in a political dimension where structural power relations take place. In this sense, the concept of gender equality is both diminished, in terms of how gender issues are understood, and stretched in order to be included in targeted policies towards reducing inequality generally through World Bank discourses.

Returning to the three strategies of gender equality presented in the analytical framework, the discourse of the World Bank can be investigated. It corresponds mainly with the first strategy – equal treatment in legislation – through its fundamental understanding of the problem of gender inequality as being caused by lack of access. When access is provided, the issue of inequality is expected to disappear. An equal access strategy coincides with (neo)liberal discourses of gender equality where it is the responsibility of the individual to claim their formal rights (Question 3). The second strategy of targeted policies is also adopted to some extent by the World Bank in the sense that it seeks to create opportunities for disadvantaged groups. Their recommended policy solution for inequality is to

introduce targeted vouchers. However, this recommendation is not directed towards gender inequality specifically nor does it recognize gender issues at a structural level. Lastly, the discourse contains no reference to gender mainstreaming even though it is considered to be the leading global strategy for working towards gender equality (Question 4) and as previously discussed it is a strategy that is adopted by the World Bank and an important feature of their policy framing.

The construction of gender equality through discourse is made to fit within the objectives and the mandate of the World Bank's general education policy assumptions. Their role as a knowledge bank and a financial institute for development, mandates them to focus on finding ways to create access and not to address deep structural dimensions of inequality.

5.3   Discussion

The analysis has examined World Bank discourses on Public-Private Partnerships in education in three ways. Firstly, how the question of ePPPs and gender is framed on the Bank's website. Secondly, a key policy document has been analyzed according to the WPR approach to discover how the problem is represented and the underlying assumptions that make this representation possible. Thirdly, how gender equality is constructed through the representation of the problem. The analytical and theoretical interest of this thesis lies in recognizing and critically questioning the assumptions found behind the dominant discourses through which we are governed. In the following section I will discuss my analytical findings further.

The frame analysis of the "Gender & Education Projects" website reveals a possible interpretation of an ambiguous view from the World Bank on the impacts of ePPPs on gender equality. The mere fact that the World Bank has a webpage that addresses these questions suggests that gender equality is an important issue for them. In this sense, they communicate an image of gender awareness in relation to ePPPs. This framing mechanism is present in their listed resources as well where the impression of a comprehensive knowledge base is given. However, when analyzing the overview texts provided, a narrowed image of gender and education is revealed. Gender issues are addressed in terms of recognizing their existence, but their causes and structural workings are not explored. This policy frame presented by the World Bank is vague in the sense that is does not present in what ways the Bank is working to address the issues. Development policy for education is rather identified as a driving force for national economy where the inclusion of women is framed as a resource that needs to be utilized in order to reach a higher set goal. Accordingly, education and women's inclusion is understood as having an instrumental value. This is a discourse found in the analyzed document as well.

Moreover, the frame analysis suggests that this ambiguity could be a strategic display of the framing tool *intentional inconsistency*. A strategic frame tries to overcome barriers between current frames and the desired policy outcome which could entail that some adjustments have to be made. In this case, the desired

outcome of the "Gender & Education Projects" webpage would be to convince an audience that ePPPs are a good alternative to public education provision and that they result in increased gender equality. Through the Bank's position as an international organization for the enhancement of development and their adoption of the gender mainstreaming strategy in 2002, they have a responsibility to adhere to international goals of democracy and justice and to show a gender awareness. However, as a financial institute and an organization driven by its own agenda, their main focus is not on gender equality but rather on promoting the ePPP policy. Further, in order to appeal to a broad collection of member states the statements made in relation to gender issues could be interpreted as being the lowest common denominator. Thus, while the recognition of gender issues exists in the policy frame it lacks a deeper level of analysis of gender issues which suggests the working of an intentional inconsistency.

The document analysis of "*The Role and Impact of Public-Private Partnership in Education*" reveals several problem representations with underlying presumptions that inform and legitimize them. Two dominant discourses are identified that lay the basis for making the policy possible to introduce – education as a problem-solving and equalizing mechanism and public sector inefficiency. As previously mentioned, discourses are understood as socially produced knowledges that shape how we are governed. The identified assumptions can thus be perceived as dominant power discourses in the sense that they make claims of being the 'truth' which makes opposing views difficult to express. This understanding rests on a Foucauldian idea of a productive power rather than suggesting that power is held *over* someone else. World Bank discourses are in part legitimized by their position as a knowledge bank where they produce 'knowledge' on what policies will be formed and implemented. In this sense, the production of knowledge is a key feature of the Bank's power and influence over governance. Through an evidence-based approach to knowledge their results are portrayed as extensive research and neutral knowledge of what has previously been proven to work, making it easy to convey as being the truth. Since their produced knowledge is used to inform their policies, World Bank discourses influence the governance of developing countries who receive their aid. Through their status as an international aid agency, member states rely on their support and loans which makes them inclined to accept conditionalities. This can be said to contribute to legitimizing the assumptions and problem representations of the World Bank.

The World Bank's privatization agenda is framed to benefit marginalized groups by creating new opportunities. The concept of choice is represented as a positive feature and a way to even out differences between high and low income families since choice is made available to everyone. However, the idea is embedded in a conceptual logic of liberalism and economic theory which relates to the Bank's mandate as a financial institute. This understanding entails a shift in responsibility from the government to the individual. In order to escape poverty and marginalization the individual has to educate themselves to be eligible in the labor market where the effects of education are utilized. The individual is also expected to make an informed decision when choosing between available education services to receive the best quality education. While choice in education is presented as the

policy solution to lacking and unequal access to education in the analyzed document, the webpage, on the other hand, presents the idea that the choice of parents to prioritize boys over girls is a problem for equality in education. This suggests an inconsistency in discourses and entails a problem representation that is not present in the analyzed policy document. Further, the idea of choice is not problematized in relation to its potentially segregating effects and in relation to reducing gender equality. Rather, choice is presented as a one fix for all solution.

When it comes to the construction of gender equality, the analysis produced some important findings. In the World Bank's framing process, gender equality is presented as an important feature and a natural part of their development activity while in the policy document the concept of gender equality is absent. Instead, it targets inequalities in a general sense where girls are identified as a disadvantaged group. In neither of the empirical materials are gender issues addressed as a structural problem but rather accepted as a neutral fact – the way it is – which can be remedied through the introduction of ePPPs. As an international organization for development, the World Bank has adopted the gender mainstreaming strategy into its operations but none of the analyzed empirical materials contain references to how the strategy will be used. The webpage, which is targeted towards gender issues specifically, only includes the gender mainstreaming strategy in its listed resources. This list refers to research produced outside of the World Bank system, and the analyzed policy document makes no reference to gender mainstreaming. The problem of gender equality in education is represented to be the same as with education generally – a lack of access – and the introduction of private actors in education provision is considered to be the solution. This understanding of the problem corresponds with an 'equal treatment approach' to gender equality, which places the responsibility of claiming formal rights with the individual.

Returning to the ideas of governmentality, the neoliberal feature and economist logic assumed by the World Bank is understood as a form governance. In liberal governmentality, market forces play an important role in society where choice and competition are key elements. In order to adhere to the market while focusing on enhancing economic performance such governance involves making trade-offs. In this sense, the introduction of ePPPs with the element of choice to address problems of access and education quality could entail that a trade-off is made with ensuring gender equality in education. However, World Bank discourses suggest that ePPPs are a solution to all of their defined goals – increasing enrollment, improving outcomes, reducing inequality and reducing costs. A process of policy framing is therefore assumed to be in place working towards making the policy appear appealing to its audience.

6   Conclusion

This thesis has focused on the World Bank's discursive policy framing and problem representation of ePPPs and gender equality. The discursive approach assumes that policy frames and representations contain knowledges as forms of governance. By understanding the assumptions behind policies, something can be said about the way we are governed. Thus, the contribution of this thesis is to identify the assumptions made in the ePPP discourse and the conceptual logics that legitimizes them, recognizing its potential effects and to detect silences within it that leaves other issues unproblematized.

My main findings suggest that the World Bank perceives education first and foremost as having an *instrumental value* through its ability to drive economic development and growth. In that sense, universal education is argued to be the goal of every development project for education. The problem with achieving this in developing countries is represented to be a *lack of access* to education institutions which is caused by public sector inefficiency to allocate resources. This interpretation of the discourse reveals a public/private binary where the private sector is assumed to be superior in creating access to quality education at the lowest cost by introducing the elements of competition and choice. The rationale, or conceptual logic, on which this assumption rests and is made possible is found in *economic theory* which as a dominant discourse serves as a form of governance. By this logic, the 'consumers' on the 'education market' are assumed to be rational individuals with access to full information that makes them capable to choose between different education services provided. This discourse and the assumptions made by the World Bank in the analyzed material suggests that they are informed by a *liberal understanding of governmentality*. Even though the role of the state is emphasized through the idea of partnerships, the discourse suggests a *private solution bias*. Accordingly, the main interest of the World Bank lies in economic advancement and not in questions of education or gender equality.

Due to the way the problem of public provision of education is represented and defended through a liberal governmentality, the policy proposal of PPPs in education reveals a simplified image of the world. This simplification enables a discourse where other knowledges or perspectives can be left unproblematized. The omission of a human rights perspective is one example of this, the lacking recognition of contextual country-specific circumstances is another and the narrow understanding of gender issues is a third.

In the early stages of topic exploration for this thesis the connection between ePPPs and gender equality was found to be fairly unexplored in relation to the World Bank's discourse, making it an interesting perspective to apply. The analysis has revealed a discrepancy between the process of policy framing and the policy recommendations in the analyzed document, which suggests an intentional

inconsistency. While the framed image presented by the Bank is interpreted to suggest that gender equality is presented as an important feature of their operations, the analyzed policy document includes no reference to the concept of gender equality nor the gender mainstreaming strategy. Instead, gender is equated with 'girls' who are perceived to be a disadvantaged and marginalized group. Accordingly, World Bank discourses suggest that gender equality is not a prioritized question in ePPP policy.

The findings of this thesis show that the assumptions and underlying logics which inform the World Bank are important in shaping what policy recommendations are made and how the problem is represented, as the theoretical perspectives applied would suggest. This thesis has focused on discourses on ePPPs and my analytical findings corresponds to the empirical material used. However, the way in which the World Bank is able to influence and control discourses through their status as a knowledge bank suggests that some conclusions could be applied to other research topics within the World Bank system as well.

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7.1 Electronic resources

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