Girls' Education in Policy Discourse

The Case of Chad in Representation of the Problem in International

Organizations' Strategic Development Plans, its Silences, and Effects

Alina Gineityte

Abstract

Education, particularly girls' education, is essential for personal and national development, addressing issues such as poverty, and political instability. However, gender disparity in education remains a significant problem, leading to increased interest from governments and international organizations in addressing the issue through policy implementation. This study, therefore, investigates the persistent barriers to girls' education in Chad by analyzing the problem representation in the discourse of international organizations' strategic development programs. The study employs Carol Bacchi's "What is the 'Problem' Represented to be?" (WPR) methodology, relying on constructivism, poststructuralism, and feminist theories. The research question focuses on the representation of the problem of low female education in Chad, its silences in discourse, and its repercussions within strategic development programs. The findings indicate that problem representations in analyzed documents on girls' education programs have limitations and omissions, prioritizing objectives such as health and economic development while marginalizing or ignoring crucial issues such as early marriage, patriarchal societies, inadequate curricula, and violence against women. By analyzing problem representations critically, the study demonstrates the need to challenge existing power dynamics and promote gender equality in education.

Keywords: girls' education, international organizations, problem representation, strategic development plan, Chad, WPR approach.
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Acknowledgments

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1. Introduction

1.1. The Role of International Organizations and Promoting Girls' Education

Education is the foundation for a lifetime of study. It is a basis for both personal and national growth, helping people set socio-cultural, economic, and political development values and understandings. In fact, studies showed that through education, a person can change and adapt to any circumstance. It also helps a person make knowledgeable decisions regarding things like family planning, food production, sanitation, and health and nutrition (Gartner, 2010; Watkins, 1999). Girls' or women's education, in particular, has a variety of positive effects, including a reduction in poverty, sickness, violence, and political instability. It also ensures knowledge transmission between generations and provides the foundation for social transformation and long-term gender equality (Victor and Ombati, 2012). Despite this knowledge, gender disparity still prevails as a major problem for girls' education globally, especially in Chad. Governments and international organizations are now more interested than ever in people's learning processes.

Researchers who study the worldwide discussion around lifelong learning rapidly discover that international organizations are key players in the creation of all types of global education policy (Jakobi, 2009, pp. 3). International organizations rose to prominence for engaging in various types of work, such as providing basic services to those in need or planning policy lobbying and awareness campaigns (Lewis, Kanji, and Themudo, 2020, pp. 1-2). According to Bacchi (2009, pp. 33) and her approach to "What is the "Problem" Represented to be?" (that will be used in this thesis), international organizations have a significant role in the creation of "problems" since every method taken by them to solve a "problem" is impacted by the governing texts employed for governance. Since national education reforms are greatly influenced by international developments and policy recommendations originating from international actors, how education is ideologically framed on a global scale may have significant implications for domestic educational systems (Martens et al., 2010). No state exists in isolation within a global civilization (Meyer et al., 1997). States are urged to respond to efforts at the international level and behave in line with recognized or proper conduct as part of a globalized educational subsystem.

Additionally, this implies that globally accepted standards serve as models for structuring domestic educational changes (Niemann, 2022).

Making sure that all girls and boys have access to and finish their basic education is one of the key challenges addressed by UNICEF. Since 1995, tremendous strides have been made in achieving universal education and closing the gender enrollment gap. More than two-thirds of countries worldwide have gender parity regarding enrolment in all forms of schooling (defined as having a GPI value between 0.97 and 1.03), but in those that do not, notably in Africa, girls are more likely to face disadvantage than boys. Africa has the highest rates of women's absenteeism worldwide. According to data from UNICEF (2022), the number of primary school-aged women who are not enrolled in school in Africa decreased by 44% between 2000 and 2018, from 57 million to 32 million. Boys' numbers decreased by 37% within the same period, from 42 million to 27 million. Despite this advancement, 59 million primary school-aged children (of whom 55% were female) skipped school in 2018. Girls are more likely than boys to never enroll in school, despite progress in lowering the number of schoolchildren stagnating for both genders since 2007, as expanded access to education has barely kept up with the expansion in the world's child population.

1.2. Research Question, Aims, and Focus

The thesis aims to investigate why obstacles to girls' educational participation are still prevalent in Chad. To do this, international organizations will be examined with the idea that they pay attention only to some gender equality issues when it comes to implementing policies for girls' education development and not to all the most frequent ones. Therefore, the researcher will explore the literature on the main obstacles girls are facing in education and, afterward, look at the international organizations' policy documents or strategic plan reports to see how many issues they include in the plan for the country's education improvement. The research question that the study aims to respond to is the following:

- *When it comes to strategic development programs, how can we understand the representation of the problem of low girls' education in Chad, its silences in discourse, and its effects?*

The basis for forming the research question is Carol Bacchi's "What is the "Problem" Represented to be?" (WPR) technique. According to Bacchi (2009, pp. 1-2), "problem" in the research question refers to a change that a policy proposal suggests, and "problem representation" refers to a "problem" implied in any policy or rule (Bacchi 2009, pp. XII). A specific "problem" in the WPR context arises because a policy proposal depicts it (Bacchi 1999, pp.1). This essay makes an effort to identify issue representations, also known as problematizations, which refer to the process of presenting something as a problem (Bacchi 2009, pp. 277). The author is interested in determining the representation and meaning construction of gender (in)equality in education reform programs since the goal of the WPR approach is to identify the meaning construction or representation of "truth", not the "truth" itself (Goodwin 2011, pp. 170-172).

1.3. Disposition

The thesis first presents the background on the case of Chad relating to women's literacy and the significance of promoting girls' education. The next section illustrates a literature review. In order to better understand the barriers that girls face in educational settings, this thesis looks at the socio-demographic environment, the patriarchal nature of society, as well as internal school issues including curriculum and gender-based violence. Subsequently, feminist theory, constructivist and poststructural methods, as well as the "What is the 'Problem' Represented to Be?" approach by Bacchi (2009), are all incorporated into the theoretical framework. The fifth section depicts the methodology, which includes data gathering and analysis along with qualitative research techniques through a case study. The research findings and analyses look at how the problem representation has been created, spread, and defended, as well as what is left out as unproblematic. Finally, insight and suggestions for confronting and changing the problem representations are provided in the concluding discussion and conclusions.

2. Background and Significance

2.1. The Case of Chad

Africa continues to be one of the world's poorest continents despite significant advances in legislation, political pledges, and growth in some parts of the continent. As a result, governments do not have enough funds to improve education, particularly for females, even though, in most countries on other continents, the most considerable portion of the investment in human capital is education (Schultz, 2022). The Human Development Index (HDI), therefore, indicates that education level is crucial for attaining progress (UNDP, 2023). The HDI was developed to highlight the importance of considering people and their potential rather than only economic growth when assessing a region's or nation's performance (UNDP, 2023). The data for the country's literacy levels may then be presented by the HDI. An education index that contributes to a country's total growth would be produced by the knowledge dimension, which would display the median and anticipated years of schooling.

The HDI level and its education index have long been among the lowest in the world in northern-central Africa. In this region, Chad continues to be one of the poorest, with the lowest HDI scores. Chad's position is illustrated in Figure 2.1 (UNDP, 2023), where the comparison of Chad and the world rates is presented. In this figure, the levels are: low (< 0.550); medium (0.550-0.699); high (0.700-0.799); very high ($\geq$ 0.800). The 2021 HDI value for Chad is 0.394, while the mean HDI value for the world is 0.732. Chad has the second-least number of individuals who graduate or attend school, according to UNDP (2023). In Chadian civilization, women's education was not given much attention, and they commonly experienced second-class status (Norah, 2009). This encouraged women to take part in home tasks, take on reproductive duties, or work to support their families. As a result, most schools started to be dominated by men. Over 50% of girls in Chad are not attending school, according to the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2020), with discrimination based on gender being the main cause. Girls' access to education is hindered by cultural conventions and prejudices that prioritize males' education, limit girls' mobility, and encourage early marriage. In order to enhance access to primary school education, the government has made strides in enhancing education and actively collaborates with development organizations like UNICEF and the World

Bank. Since progress has been inefficient, more work is necessary to guarantee that all girls in Chad have the chance to pursue an education and realize their true potential.
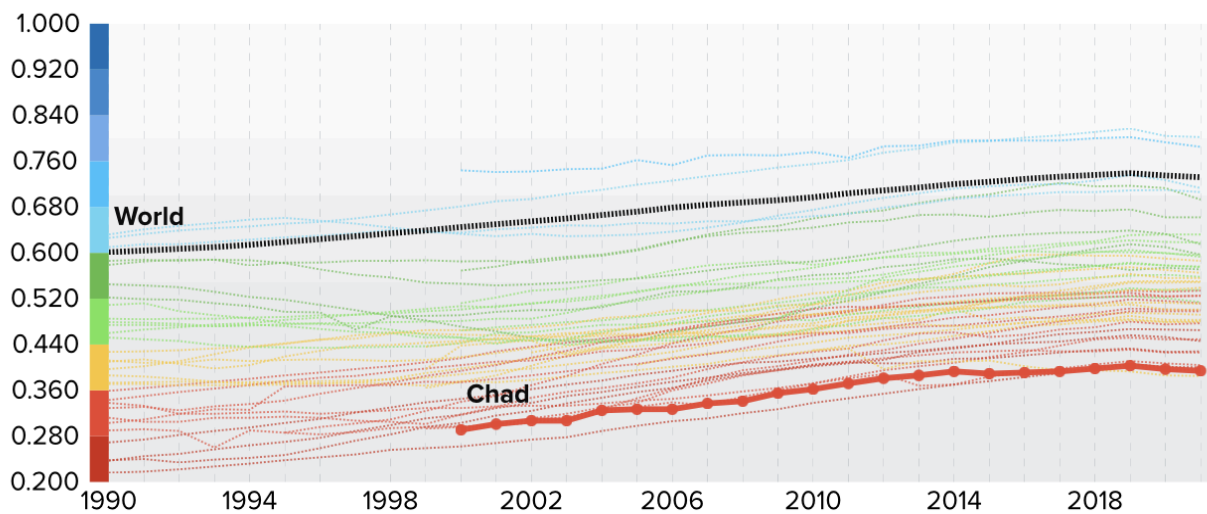
Figure 2.1 HDI in the initial year. Source: UNDP (2023).

2.2. Significance of Girls' Education

The importance of girls' education as a means of advancing economic and social development was highlighted at the 1990 World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand (Haggis, 1991, pp. 45–51). Evidence from a rising number of nations across all continents shows that countries wishing to boost both economic growth and human welfare should prioritize promoting expenditures in women's human capital, particularly education (Schultz, 2022). When examining the very wide variety of vital areas where educating girls and women brings about favorable consequences, it can be argued that investing in girls' education is the one that will provide the biggest return for developing countries. Girls' education has enormous advantages across a range of contexts and generations, including improving women's and children's health, reducing population growth, defending rights, and empowering women (Sperling and Winthrop, 2015, pp. 17). It also contributes to national investments and is a key step in ending the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

According to Sperling, and Winthrop (2015, pp. 17-19), the importance of this study for development, economics, and politics lies in the positive outcomes (see Figure 2.2) of paying

more attention to girls' education. These include an increase in economic growth, women's empowerment, better employment and remuneration for women, protection of the lives of mothers and children, and more sustainable and smaller households. Girls' education can contribute to the closing of the gender pay disparity, boost employment and earnings for women, protect mothers and children from domestic violence, and result in more sustainable and smaller households. Education for girls has numerous benefits, such as reducing population growth, lowering the rate of marriage among minors, producing healthier and more intelligent children, reducing the prevalence of malaria and HIV/AIDS, preparing families to deal with shocks caused by climate change and natural disasters, and increasing the number of women in political leadership positions. Girls with higher levels of education have fewer children, are more likely to use healthful reproductive methods, and are less likely to be married off as minors. In addition, children of mothers with higher levels of education are generally healthier and smarter, receive the recommended amount of nutrition and vaccinations, attend school more frequently and for extended periods of time, and study more. Lastly, education is associated with fewer injuries and deaths, as well as increased family and community resilience to the hazards of natural disasters and extreme weather resulting from climate change.
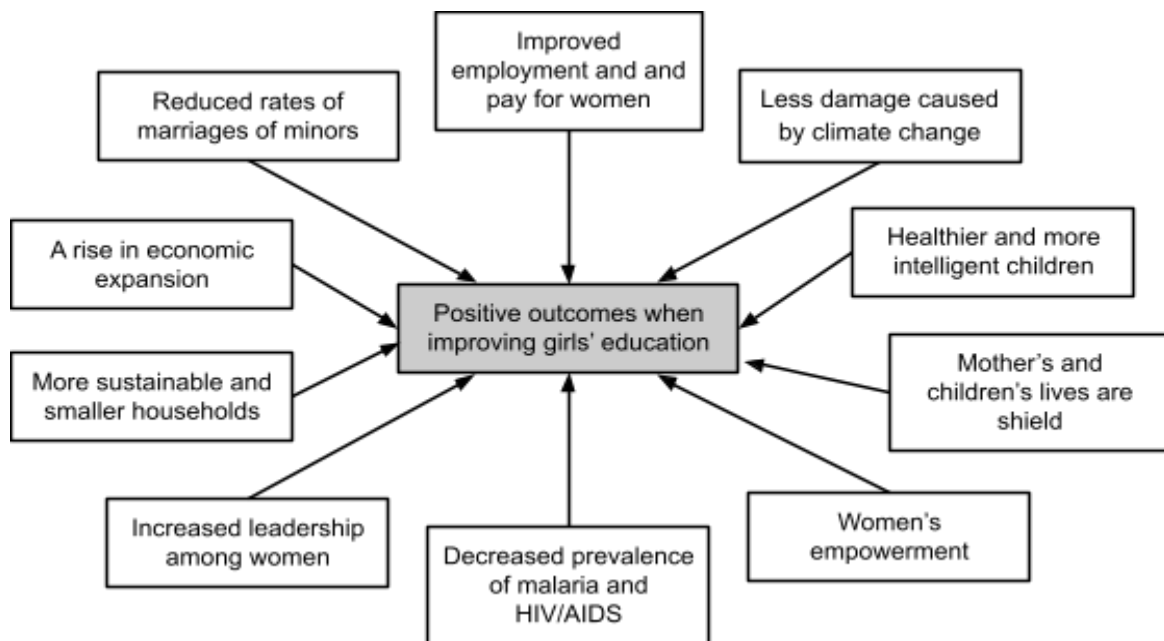

Figure 2.2 Top benefits of developing girls' education. Source: Sperling, and Winthrop (2015, pp. 17-19).

3. Literature Review for Obstacles to Girls' Educational Participation

This section illustrates the problems girls are facing while trying to attain an education. The sub-sections stand for the most frequent issues of girls' educational participation found in articles and books that remain unsolved and neglected. There will be an inferred narrative evaluation as a result. The narrative evaluation would only include research that directly relates to how policies for the advancement of girls' education in Chad are implemented (Bryman, 2012: 110).

3.1. Socio-demographic Context

3.1.1. High Poverty Level

One of the factors contributing to the poor enrollment of Chadian girls in education is poverty. Even if it might not seem as obvious, this component is closely related to all the others. Compared to boys, girls from impoverished homes have far more labor to perform at home, which significantly affects their chances of continuing their education (Ersado, 2005; Kane, 2004). Some parents lack the financial resources to cover both boys' and girls' tuition up until the end of their education. Because they are aware that females will eventually get married and that would bring an end to their education, they opt to continue with boys while ignoring girls. According to Zacharia (2014), gender disparity in Chad is a result of poverty since most parents who earn a modest income from jobs like farming, carpentry, and masonry cannot afford to keep their daughters in school for a longer period of time. His research indicates that parents in these circumstances struggle to pay for books, uniforms, and transportation. To get a job and support their families financially, girls who live in such circumstances often have to cut back on their education. When the authors claimed in their study that children whose primary source of income comes from farming activities are less privileged in school, Evans and Yuan (2022) provided evidence for the same assertion. They said that when parents cannot afford to send both their children to school, they often choose to send their sons instead of their daughters since they know that the females will quickly get married.

3.2. The Role of Patriarchal Society

3.2.1. Early Marriage and Household Responsibilities

The majority of the chosen literature emphasizes the persistently poor status of women in society as the initial point when attempting to address the study topic of the failure of implementing policies on girls' educational development. The inability to attain gender parity in Chad is mostly attributed to early or child marriage owing to socio-cultural traditions, according to the paper by Delprato, Akyeampong, Sabates, and Hernandez-Fernandez (2015). In Chad, child marriages predominate globally. Additionally, when poverty is prevalent, the effects of sociocultural norms, notably child marriage, on educational exclusion are amplified. Girls with no education are three times more likely to marry as children than girls with some education, and girls from poorer households are more than three times as likely to marry before the age of 18 as those from wealthier homes.

The majority of Chadian areas continue to endorse and practice early marriage, according to UNICEF (2020). The legal age of marriage is 15 for girls and 18 for guys. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is broken when children as young as 13 are given a marriage, which is not the case with traditional marriage. Education is impacted when women stop going to school after getting married to take care of their houses and work several jobs to make money. According to the Ministry of Education, girls in Chad have fewer opportunities for education than men do, and they leave school sooner. Barh El Ghazal, Batha, Guéra, Kanem, Ouadda, Salamat, Sila, and Wadi Fira are the eight northern regions of the country that have been recognized as being severely affected by this problem (UNICEF, 2020). In these regions, the net percentage of girls enrolled in school increased from 41.4% in 2008 to 35.0% in 2012. These rates, according to the same source, grew very slowly and hide a variety of regional, geographical, lifestyle, social, and other disparities, notably in urban, rural, or mountainous areas. The gender pay gap in schools was influenced by factors such as the lack of educational institutions as well as economic and social factors.

3.2.2. Patriarchal Societies

Patriarchalism in Africa has been challenged by Shoola (2014) as the primary cause of the poor enrollment of girls in education. In patriarchal societies, females confront lovely marriages that

are fully supported by customs and traditions, greater domestic labor as they get ready for marriage, and pregnancies brought on by damaging cultural practices that expose them to underage sex and intergenerational connections. Across sub-Saharan Africa and in Chad, social and cultural issues have largely contributed to the low rates of girls attending school. Investments in childrearing made by families and communities are influenced by traditional ideas of male and female roles. The boys will benefit from being sent to school, which may open up work opportunities since they are oriented toward extracurricular activities and as future lenders. Females are less likely to pursue their education since they are more focused on earning a living (Kobiané, Calvès, and Marcoux, 2005).

Research has also shown that in regions with strong patriarchal systems, there is little encouragement for girls to continue working on their literacy since there is no favorable attitude toward their education. In comparison to keeping girls in school, Africa and the developing world valued the opportunity cost of their time spent at home or getting married off for a greater bride price (Boyle et al., 2002, pp. 51). Ramalingaswami, et al. (1996) assert that gender inequality in the home, such as male-dominating decision-making, has been linked to higher rates of domestic violence or fewer possibilities for women in life. Patriarchal dominance is frequently linked to low rates of girls attending school, poor status for women, early marriage, and high rates of childhood malnutrition.

It is still a problem that Chadian girls and society are badly influenced by the gender imbalance in schools. Turning a blind eye to the problem is the same as endorsing gender inequity.

3.3. Internal School Issues

3.3.1. School Curricula

One of the reasons why women still do not achieve empowerment and are not on the same social level as men is the lack of pro-women curricula that the Ministry of Education has not adequately designed. Sperling and Winthrop (2015, pp. 10-14) contend that even when girls are attending school well and performing well in their core subjects, the stories in the textbooks or the perspectives of their professors may teach them that their place in the family and society is not in leadership roles. The curricula in Chadian or other sub-Saharan African public schools

frequently depict women in a passive and discriminatory way, with a lack of guides in an educational system that does not place sufficient focus on the interpersonal abilities, participation in sports, and leadership skills that are crucial for job success, a more honorable family life, and advancing political change. Sperling, and Winthrop, (2015, pp. 1-14) contend that because rules and codes of conduct were not supported by curriculum reform, institutional-level change, or individual-level change, the enforcement of laws to apply new policies has not been done efficiently. This indicates that the sub-Saharan African government is unable to keep up with global trends and the expansion of women's rights, which results in the adoption of ineffective policies. The majority of school curricula around the world continue to be gender-differentiated, and when given the choice, both boys and girls choose courses that fall into the traditional male/female division, which is supported by educators, parents, and peers. This is shown by Ombati et al. (2012). Research shows that sub-Saharan African, or in this case, Chadian, school curricula and instructional materials continue to be significantly biased against women and seldom take into account the particular needs of girls and women. A close examination of the curriculum and educational materials used in schools revealed that girls and minorities are asked to respond to materials that were not created from their perspective, were not presented from their perspective, and tended to overlook their presence.

Although educational efforts and texts often favor women's domestic or submissive obligations, discrimination based on gender stereotypes can take many different forms in schools. That could occur, for instance, as a consequence of teachers' critiques and recommendations, examples of group projects, and activity assignments. According to Ombati, et al. (2012), since these are public schools with gender-equal curricula, it is the responsibility of the government or international organizations to put new policies into place regarding what should and should not be covered in new, pro-women curricula, in addition to the required programs for teachers and students on how to behave. The likelihood is strong that sexism-related curriculum changes and other legal policy changes will ensure that female students fully engage in and perform better in science and technology-related courses. Groth, May, and Turbat (2019) propose that policies governing the education of young girls should be founded on gender-equitable principles to promote this viewpoint. When combined with policies that support women, female education initiatives will be more effective at encouraging young women to have fewer children and participate in the economy.

3.3.2. Violence Against Women

Even in the early years of school, there is disparity and a general sense of unease. The lack of protection is another reason why women do not attend school. According to figures provided by Evans, Hares, Holland, and Acosta (2023), 28.8% of females between the ages of 15 and 19 experience various forms of violence at school. One of the causes of girls dropping out of school and starting either an early marriage or a career is the issue of feeling unsafe in the school environment. According to the study in the article (Evans, Hares, Holland, and Acosta, 2023), violence against teenage girls causes significant problems both within and outside of the classroom.

The amount of violence on a national and regional scale can be better understood by the government and international organizations (Evans, et al., 2023). The number of sub-Saharan nations that compile statistics on violence in schools is lower, and many of them would not compile any data at all. Without this data, it will be difficult to tell whether conditions are improving. Additionally, far too many development organizations do not create or even execute comprehensive policies to deal with violence against adolescent females. There are at least a few tried-and-true programs that have been shown to reduce violence in both communities and schools. Gender-based violence is underreported in police reports or health system data anywhere between 11 and 128 times, depending on the nation. This finding may help to explain why women are usually reluctant to disclose abuse through official channels. International organizations can play a supporting role while being cautious not to push for the replication of projects from other contexts without sufficient local adaptation. Finally, according to Sperling and Winthrop (2015, pp. 101-188), eliminating a range of overt and covert threats, behaviors, and harassment of girls within and outside of schools is another aspect of making schools more hospitable to females. School violence can take various forms, such as when a teacher demands sex from a student in exchange for better grades or threatens to punish a student with poor grades if she or he rejects the instructor's advances in the sexual area.

4. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this thesis will be discussed in this part. Constructivism, poststructuralism, and feminist theory are just a few of the theoretical stances that Carol L. Bacchi's WPR method of policy analysis draws on. The theoretical methods that underpin the WPR are therefore incorporated into the conceptual framework of this thesis. First, a succinct introduction to poststructuralism will be given, along with an explanation of how it relates to policy analysis. Feminist thought will subsequently be discussed. The inclusion of feminist viewpoints is extremely important because it helps us understand how subject positions affect individuals in real life, giving lived effects (Bacchi 2009, pp.43; 93; 265). Because gender and gender (in)equality are the subject of the study and are essential to feminist analysis, feminism theory is employed in this thesis to identify discourse silences (Enloe 2007, pp. 99). Results from studies of gender that do not include a feminist perspective are insufficient (Enloe 2007, pp. 101). It is crucial to clarify what the idea of policy as speech means later since this thesis approaches policy as discourse. The paper offers a conceptual explanation of problematization, acknowledging that the WPR's goal is to examine problematizations through problem representations rather than "problems" (Bacchi 2009, pp. 47).

4.1. Constructivist Perspective and Poststructural Approach

The constructivist perspective should be adopted to help understand how gender ideas can influence politics and create power. One of the constructivist understandings of 'power' is that institutions can create our world and delimit possibilities (Locher and Prügl, 2001). Our actions and way of life are shaped and influenced by legislative laws and regulations. According to Bacchi and Goodwin (2016), a poststructural perspective on these laws and rules might put into play professional knowledge that has a substantial influence on how we are governed and the subjects that we are urged to become. Since social policy is a highly normative discipline that creates ideal models of society based on concepts of social justice, which conceal the actual functioning of power, it is crucial to question knowledge and see it as constructed or "made" (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). A poststructural approach to policy might focus on conceptions that

are generally accepted and dispute the idea that policies solve problems; instead, this approach explores how policies can create issues. This is significant because policies are human creations that have effects, and by looking at how girls' education issues are represented in documents about policies, one can see the underlying presumptions that give rise to these representations and the consequences that follow (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). Discourses make up the issue representation that policies incorporate. This indicates that the discourse relates to constrained and socially created kinds of knowledge that may place restrictions on what might be considered appropriate to think, say, or write in a given situation (Bacchi, 2010).

4.2. Feminism Theory

Feminism, according to Cynthia Enloe, is a "multidimensional yet coherent worldview" that examines how power functions and is maintained (Enloe 2007, pp. 99). The "patriarchal structure of society" is the starting point for feminist criticism since it is predicated on the social meanings of biological sex difference and leads to the subjugation of the category of women to males in institutional and social practices (Weedon 1987, pp. 2-3). Feminism investigates how power relations and institutions give rise to the category of women (Butler 1984), criticizes how women are marginalized in politics and the world of power and maintains that patriarchy controls and shapes women's behavior (Enloe 2007, pp. 100).

Using this framework, the researcher can transmit her thoughts and ideas without being biased and be selective on what is most important and how to analyze the data (Robson and McCartan, 2016, pp. 68). The importance of this work is to look through the feminist approach to international organizations' policies and strategic plans toward women's rights. To stop the marginalization of women's lived experiences is the goal of feminist research. This brings us to the importance of "action" in research. This means that a common element in feminist studies is the desire to empower people of oppressed groups to take charge of their own lives (Robson and McCartan, 2016, pp. 39).

Given that the lives of women are "misrepresented or not represented at all" by the dominant culture, feminist theory calls for the creation of a language that adequately represents women to

increase their visibility in politics (Butler, 1990, pp.1). In a similar vein, the WPR method helps locate that language.

4.3. "What is the "Problem" Represented to Be?" Approach

Before understanding the WPR approach, it is important to establish that in this thesis, when talking about international organizations' programs and projects that they are trying to implement, a policy is also understood as a discourse. The policy-as-discourse perspective regards policy as a component of a larger system of social relationships that frames what is said and thought. Policy texts concurrently develop from specific policy discourses while also producing such discourses. The acceptance, rejection, or alteration of these texts and discourses shapes how groups and people place themselves and are positioned by them (Blackmore, 2005, pp. 98). According to Goodwin (1996, pp. 67), a policy-as-discourse perspective "frames policy not as a response to existing conditions and problems but rather as a discourse in which both problems and solutions are created." Therefore, problematization rather than 'issues' is the emphasis of policy-as-discourse theory.

There is no unified "method" for studying policy as speech, despite the rising popularity of this concept. In such a situation, Bacchi created an effective framework for examining the discursive elements of policy and said that policy issues are social constructs that emerge at certain moments and in particular policy contexts (Goodwin, 2012).

This method assumes that some issue representations benefit the members of some groups at the expense of others and evaluates policy from a problem-questioning viewpoint as opposed to a problem-solving one. It also supports people who suffer from negative consequences. Intervening to counter problem representations that have these negative impacts is the aim (Bacchi, 2009, pp. 44). Therefore, the goal of WPR analysis is to examine how representations emerge and how they affect solutions and subjectivities rather than to identify the "real" problem and the "right" answer (Bacchi, 2012, pp. 21-24).

The challenges raised by a WPR approach expand beyond the "problem of government" to include a "wider conceptualization of politics as including struggles around identities and

"different", including issues related to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or "race", and everyday life" (Mottier, 2001, p. 332). In the case of girls' education and gender equality, for instance, such an approach enables us to look beyond the documentation of obstacles to gender justice and explore how gender policies unintentionally reinforce the equality they are meant to address by framing the issue as a problem. It also enables a new view of how gender education failed to challenge preexisting power dynamics between the sexes.

5. Methodology

5.1. Research Design

The research design is based on the theoretical framework. Using a constructivist perspective, the author sets the ontological and epistemological groundwork in the case of Chad. As mentioned before, Chad is one of the poorest countries in the world and, therefore, needs a lot of external help when it comes to governance and policy implementation (Schultz, 2022). Due to this fact, the programs or projects that are carried out by international organizations should be critically analyzed using discourse analysis. Referring to constructivism, when international organizations in Chad have such a significant role, it is important to analyze in what ways social knowledge on girls' education issues is constructed by these organizations (Locher and Prügl, 2001). Moreover, the study is concerned with how much international organizations in Chad implement their policies or new programs for development depending on the reality the girls are facing when achieving an education. Therefore, the research is designed as a single case study, including qualitative methods to conduct the research. The reason for using qualitative research methods is that they allow researchers to concentrate on the meanings formed by social experiences and attempt to conduct a value-laden inquiry (Robson and McCartan, 2016, pp. 20-24). The qualitative approaches are seen as feasible because the purpose of this work is to investigate how the notion of gender (in)equality in education is produced. Moreover, when wishing to learn more specifically, contextually, and in-depth information on a particular real-world topic, a case study is a suitable research design. The researcher can investigate the

main traits, significance, and ramifications of the case. A case study is defined by the notion that only one specific occurrence, rather than a wider spectrum, will be the subject of the inquiry (Robson and McCartan, 2016, pp. 150-151).

5.2. Data

This thesis will analyze strategic development programs and their reports made by international organizations that work in Chad. The chosen international organizations implement their projects either specifically for Chad or in one of the countries that the project focuses on. In addition, to see the difference, the projects were either oriented on improving girls' situations in education or concerned with basic education development. However, the researcher selected information by focusing only on what the programs or projects say about girls' education and how much attention they pay to improving girls' access to school, gaining knowledge, and attaining an adequate literacy level. Therefore, the keywords for finding data in the reports were related to women and their main issues described in the literature review: "girls" or "women"; "high poverty level"; "early marriage"; "household responsibilities"; "patriarchal societies"; "school curricula"; "violence towards women"; and "feminism".

Having selected projects on girls' education, the researcher found reports that were fleshed out rather than summaries of the real policy documents. In this thesis, unlike policy briefs, reports were more suitable due to the details provided. The documents were found online, either on the organization's original website or on the statistical data website "d-portal.com," which presents all implemented development programs in Chad. Moreover, the chosen programs were already finished to check their efficiency, yet they were implemented no earlier than 2019. In general, two programs or projects were selected. The number of programs to analyze was established after the search for official documentation. While trying not to go beyond the scope of the bachelor's thesis, the researcher decided to pick two projects.

The names of the documents are:
- ***Breaking Barriers for Girls' Education (BBGE) Programme in Chad and Niger***
  (2022): funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC); jointly implemented by the World Food

Programme (WFP), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA);

- ***Girls' Education and Women's Literacy Project (PEFAF)*** (2020): funded by the Transition Support Facility; implemented by the Cellule de Suivi des Projets Education and the Ministère de l'Education Nationale et de la Promotion Civique, and reported by the African Development Bank.

5.3. Data Analysis

The critical method of policy analysis developed by Carol Bacchi will be applied to examine the data. This method, often referred to as the WPR approach or "What's the 'problem' represented to be" approach, tries to emphasize how problems are represented and, therefore, what meaning that 'problem' is given inside a certain policy or document (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010, pp. 110). The prevalent idea about public policies appears to be that they are responses to societal issues that already exist and are ready for policy interventions to address them. The WPR method thus contests this widespread perception of public policies and draws attention to the social construction of 'issues' inside policies. Therefore, one might conceive of policies as being productive and envisioning issues, which implies that "policies and policy proposals give shape and meaning to the 'problems' they purport to 'address'" (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010, pp. 111). Therefore, it is crucial to understand that this perspective on 'issues' as not being in society does not negate or downplay problematic situations like women's subordination. However, it contends that how 'issues' are portrayed in policies may influence how a particular 'problem' is understood as well as what is considered troublesome and, as a result, what is hushed (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010, pp. 111).

Bacchi has developed a set of six questions that urge one to begin the analytical process of critically analyzing a WPR policy. These are the inquiries (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010, p. 117):

1. ***What's the 'problem' represented to be?***
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 analysis, the researcher will be using only questions <u>one</u>, <u>four</u>, and <u>five</u>. Due to the scope of the study and its limitations, question 2 will be excluded due to the avoidance of redundancy with the background and the literature review of this thesis. As for questions 3 and 6, since they are related to the genealogical tracing of a problem and who can access this problem representation, which is not the aim of this research and its main question, they will not be included. Moreover, at the end of the analysis, the researcher briefly compares the problem representation between international organizations' documents and the understanding in the literature review.

The fourth question aims to promote a type of critical thinking and to call attention to omissions or unproblematized portions of the text or policy. To put it another way, question number four allows the researcher to examine beyond the policy document to understand, for instance, how a policy and document might be formed around heteronormative gender assumptions and how an issue could be approached in a different way (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). The fifth question examines how the problem's portrayal has an impact. The discursive effects, subjectification effects, and lived impacts are three overlapping potential policy effects that Bacchi discusses. Discursive consequences are first and foremost concerned with potential restrictions on what may be expressed or not. Second, the impacts of subjectification relate to how individuals are seen and/or perceive themselves. Thirdly, lived impacts refer to the tangible repercussions that government decisions may have on people's lives, i.e., the influence that a decision may have on someone's life or death (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010, pp. 118). The data material has been reviewed many times with the WPR questions in mind to begin the analysis.

Moreover, the analysis part will be targeted at the themes that were taken from the literature review. This means that the meaning of "problem" is considered to be girls' education issues relating to a high poverty level, early marriage and household responsibilities, patriarchal societies, school curricula, and violence towards women. Each sub-problem will be analyzed

using the WPR methods' three questions seeking to find representation in strategic development programs.

5.4. Ethical Considerations

The technique of this study proposal may be a little tricky in terms of ethical concerns. The term "ethical concerns in research" refers to a set of guidelines that govern the design and methods of your studies. These guiding principles include voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, risk of harm, and outcome communication. The researcher must be conscious of consent, anonymity, and vulnerability when conducting document analysis. However, in this instance, since the utilized document was discovered online, the content is regarded as public, and it is thus not necessary to safeguard the creators' privacy and confidentiality (Morgan, 2022). Moreover, to establish if a certain research approach raises ethical issues, Bryman (2012, pp. 135) outlines some criteria. These criteria include whether the research technique in question hurts participants in any manner, requires their informed permission, invades their privacy, or misleads people. None of these issues are present here since no participants or interviews were done as part of the study procedure. There are a few possible ethical issues because the data is in the form of official documents and reports.

5.5. Limitations

The study has a constrained scope because it is being conducted for a bachelor's thesis. Firstly, the thesis is only able to demonstrate how representations are produced by the discourse of international organizations since it only uses data from international organizations' strategic development programs for education. Since the official languages of Chad are Arabic and French, the researcher is using discourse founded online and only written in the English language or officially translated by the same organizations. Due to this fact, the scope of the data is limited to only a few international organizations' programs and their reports.

The analytical part of this thesis will consist of a more general summary utilizing the WPR approach rather than an in-depth analysis due to the prior restrictions as well as the fact that it is

a small-sized case study. It is also crucial to keep in mind that the findings of this thesis cannot be applied to the entire population. As a result, rather than being unique to this study, this might be considered a common issue and constraint in qualitative research (Bryman, 2012). Instead of generalizing to populations, findings from qualitative research should do so to theory (Bryman, 2012).

6.   Analysis of the Findings

This thesis tries to determine how girls' education issues underlie international organizations' strategic development programs for education by using the WPR approach. Therefore, the first part of the analysis will present strategic development programs for Chad's education that were implemented by international organizations and their general goals using question 1 from the WPR approach. The rest of the analysis will be divided into three parts, one for each of the chosen WPR questions. The sub-sections will be as follows: 1) Question 1: *What's the 'problem' represented to be?*; 2) Question 4: *What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the 'problem' be thought about differently?*; 3) Question 5: *What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?* The questions will be answered individually while comparing the programs with each other. Moreover, while answering the questions, all of the themes from the literature review will be taken into consideration to examine how many of the most common girls' education issues were taken into consideration for a new strategic development for an education program or project. The themes are: Nr. 1: high poverty level; Nr. 2: early marriage and household responsibilities; Nr. 3: patriarchal societies; Nr. 4: school curricula; and Nr. 5: violence towards women.

6.1. Question 1- *What's the 'problem' represented to be?*

The first question from the WPR approach is applied to the policy documents in this section. The initial job of portraying a "problem" is more of a descriptive exercise meant to explain (Bacchi

2009, pp. 2; Bacchi 2012, pp. 22). What is suggested as a policy intervention will disclose how the issue is being thought about, according to the primary premise of the first assignment. Since "problems" are implied in what is suggested as a change in policies (Bacchi 2009: 2-3), the author attempts to pinpoint "problems" as the goals and objectives of the project and program.

When it comes to the Breaking Barriers for Girls' Education (BBGE) Program (2022), the question 1 analysis will find out what the program's objectives were and whether they were tackled or not. By doing this, the researcher presents how, according to international organizations, the problem of girls' education is represented. In spite of that, targeted barriers include attitudes toward girls' education, gender-based violence, the economic opportunity cost of not attending school, gaps in school-based health and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services, a lack of school nutrition, ignorance of sexual and reproductive health rights, and a lack of capacity at the local and national levels of government to address the unique educational needs of girls (BBGE, 2022, pp. 1-2). In the case of Chad, the program achieved quite a few improvements. Firstly, through increased school enrollment, attendance, and retention, as well as increased availability of wholesome food for all school-age children, it enhanced access to education for women, particularly teenage girls. Secondly, to reduce school morbidity, malnutrition, anemia, and gender-based violence among adolescent girls, it improved access to an integrated package of school health, deworming, protection, WASH, and nutrition services. This was done by promoting better hygiene infrastructure for the benefit of beneficiaries and enabling girls to fully benefit from educational opportunities that will allow them to make a healthier transition into adulthood while lowering the school dropout rate. Moreover, parents', communities', teachers', and students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors around health, nutrition, sexual and reproductive health, and gender-based violence have all improved.

As for the Girls' Education and Women's Literacy Project (PEFAF, 2020), owing to the fact that the project is still in process, the initial analysis task is to find out in detail all of the objectives that the project is planning to tackle. According to the document, the overarching goal of the project is to develop Chad's human capital by promoting equality and equity in access to high-quality education for girls and functional literacy for women. As a whole, the project will 1) make it easier for girls to enroll in middle school, general secondary school, or vocational training; 2) offer functional literacy programs for women with an emphasis on teaching them a trade associated with income-generating activities; and 3) improve the standard of education and training for girls and women. In particular, the project's goal is to build or renovate two schools

(a new all-girls high school in Massakory and the renovation of a school complex). In order to improve the quality of education and training provided to girls and adult women in particular, PEFAF will 1) furnish the two schools with furniture and educational, scientific, and technological equipment; 2) provide the schools with safe drinking water, electricity from solar energy, school clinics, women-friendly latrines, computer laboratories, and science laboratories; and 3) strengthen gender mainstreaming in the educational services provided, including the strength of the gender equity framework. The project's three complimentary parts are as follows: 1) improving access to education and the learning environment for girls; 2) enhancing the standard of girls' education and fostering functional literacy; and 3) gaining institutional backing for project administration.

6.2. Question 4- *What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the 'problem' be thought about differently?*

After establishing the objectives and goals of the documents, the author can compare them to the most frequently recurring issues (listed in the literature review part of the thesis). The fourth question in the WPR approach to policy analysis aims to raise a reflection and to consider issues and perspectives that might have been silenced in the problem representation that was presented in the literature review of this thesis (Bacchi, 2009, pp. 12-14). For example, when conducting the analysis, the researcher can ask, "What fails to be problematized?" in this problem representation, and by doing so, one can discuss issues and perspectives that are silenced (Bacchi, 2009, pp. 12-14). In the following sections, the author argues that the programs and projects are limited in their ability to include or address all of the problems that girls are facing in educational participation. In this case, issues that are "silenced" or "left unproblematic" refer to the international organizations paying attention and trying to solve some of the problems rather than absorbing and tackling all of the shortcomings that girls are facing in education.

The findings illustrate that BBGE (2022) and PEFAF (2020) are constrained and limited. This can be seen in the way that the most common issues that girls are facing in education (high poverty level, early marriage, patriarchal societies, school curricula, and violence towards

women) are the positive outcomes of the primary targets. This means that instead of listing issues in the literature review as their main objectives, international organizations would rather put another, more general target and mention the problems as the consequences or additional benefits of the results. For example, the main aims of BBGE (2022, pp. 6) could be understood as access to better food, health, and hygiene and raising others' awareness about it. However, when talking about the main goal and result that the program achieves, the document mentions the promotion of Chad's economy. On the same perspective, PEFAF (2020, pp. 3) says, *The project's overall objective is to promote equality and equity in access to quality education for girls and functional literacy for women to strengthen Chad's human capital.* From the quote, it can be seen that even though the objective is women's literacy, the reason for doing this is to increase Chad's human capital, which makes it a primary goal. Therefore, even though both of the documents were related to girls' education, issues like high poverty levels, early marriage, patriarchal societies, school curricula, and violence towards women appeared to be secondary goals, while increasing human capital was a primary one.

When targets are other than the ones listed in the literature review, some of those issues become "silenced". In the documents analyzed, "silenced" issues that girls are facing are either barely mentioned or not included. The examples can be found in both documents. The BBGE program talks about improving girls' access to education; however, when analyzing the document, one can find that the program is mostly concerned with matters related to health. Therefore, even though it talks about violence against women or mentions patriarchal societies, it only absorbs themes relating to food or hygiene. For example, the literature presents the matter of violence towards women as girls feeling unsafe in the school environment and that too many development organizations fail to formulate or even carry out thorough policies to address violence against teenage females (Evans, et al., 2023). BBGE (2022, pp. 38) mentions gender-based violence only as one of the factors that will be included in the activities, yet the activity was once again related to health matters only. The outcomes of Chad include:

> *Improved [...] protection of gender-based violence among adolescent girls through better hygiene infrastructure promoted for the benefit of beneficiaries allowing girls to fully benefit from educational opportunities that will lead them to a healthier transition to adulthood while reducing the school dropout.*

In this way, the problems of early marriage or changing school curricula (except for adding new subjects about women's health) are barely tackled.

A similar situation can be seen in the PEFAF project. As well as the BBGE program, PEFAF is only concerned with problems related to one theme, excluding the rest of them. The project's description says that the main goal is to promote equal access to education. However, the tactic for doing this is "rehabilitation of a school complex and the construction of a new all-girl high school". Therefore, as mentioned in the paragraph above, the problems are not only secondary but issues like patriarchal societies or early marriage are barely mentioned as well. Building two new schools for girls creates a safe environment for some of them, yet it does not solve the problem of society's traditional thinking. The only common aspect was that even though the problems mentioned before were not included or adequately addressed when it came to similarities between the program and the project, both documents included the problem of the high poverty level in Chad and how it affects girls' access to sufficient literacy levels. BBGE and PEFAF refer to solving the poverty issue in girls' education as a factor in increasing Chad's economy.

6.3. Question 5- *What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?*

This thesis will continue a critical analysis by answering the fifth WPR question that should be used with the given content. The key objective of this section is to find out what kinds of subject positions and consequences the discourse of the texts causes. Question 4 is built upon in question 5. In order to account for the consequences created by problematizations, Bacchi specifically mentions question 4 (Bacchi and Goodwin 2016, pp. 23; 34 -37). As mentioned in question 4, the issue of girls' education is displayed in the documents with some limitations. These silences change the representation of the problem by creating a new understanding of what the issue is about and who is facing it. In this case, question 5 helps to answer what kind of effects international organizations put on people's knowledge when presenting problem representation that is constrained.

First of all, according to Bacchi (2009, pp. 16), one type of effect of girls' education representation is discursive. These effects propose that it may be terrible for certain people if certain opportunities for social help are blocked by how a "problem" is portrayed. When it comes to the BBGE program and PEFAF project, their limitation of putting human capital as a primary

goal makes the other problems that girls are facing in education still prevail. Both documents mention making it possible for girls to access education; however, by excluding issues such as early marriage in patriarchal societies, it can be assumed that despite new schools being built to increase space for women, girls from poor households will remain at home. This problem was reflected in the literature review. Evans and Yuan (2022) said that because girls would soon be married, parents who could not afford to send both of their children to school frequently decided to send their sons instead of their daughters. This can be explained by the lack of money in poor families or the traditional gender roles of women being housewives and staying home. Therefore, when international organizations' documents do not highlight the importance of tackling all of the issues as equally important, girls are "blocked" from opportunities for help from society. As a consequence, this form of silencing leads to another effect of subjectification.

The second effect that Bacchi (2009, pp. 16-17) presents is the subjectification effect when discourse makes certain subject positions available. Looking at it from a poststructural perspective, the researcher acknowledges that these documents play a significant role in constructing how society sees the problem and how international organizations govern it. Since social policy is a highly normative field that creates ideal models of society based on concepts of social justice, which conceal the actual working of power, it is crucial to challenge knowledge and recognize how it is built or "made" (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). From the discursive effect, it can be seen that when the representation of the problem is limited, it creates difficulties in subject positioning (in this case, the subject refers to girls and women who are trying to get an education). Silencing some of the issues that girls experience stimulates people to make sense of the social world from this standpoint. While putting girls' education issues of early marriage, patriarchal societies, school curricula, and violence toward women as secondary goals, the BBGE and PEFAF documents create the impression that these problems are not as urgent as increasing human capital and therefore do not require special acknowledgment. This leads to the last effect of the WPR approach.

Lived effects come as a result of discursive and subjectification effects, concluding question 5. Attention is directed to the material impact of girls' education representation. The way the problem of girls getting access to education is represented directly affects women's lives (Bacchi, 2009, pp. 18). As mentioned above, the limitation of listing issues presented in this thesis' literature review as secondary targets and not including all of the most common problems creates difficulties for Chadian women, especially for girls from poor households. When BBGE

and PEFAF present these silences in their documents, it leaves a mindset in society that problems are not urgent to solve. Eventually, it comes back to affect women's and girls' lives, keeping issues prevalent.

7. Discussion

The results demonstrate that the problem representations in the analyzed documents, such as the Breaking Barriers for Girls' Education (BBGE) Program and the Girls' Education and Women's Literacy Project (PEFAF), contain limitations and omissions. The primary aims of these programs are to improve access to education for females and promote gender equality, but they also tend to prioritize other objectives, such as improving health and hygiene, boosting human capital, and promoting economic development.

Consequently, crucial issues for the education of girls, such as high levels of poverty, early marriage, patriarchal societies, inadequate school curricula, and violence against women, are marginalized or ignored. The programs primarily address health-related issues and provide access to improved food, hygiene, and health services, while downplaying or ignoring the systemic obstacles that impede girls' participation in education.

These representations have substantial effects on the comprehension of the issue and the subject positions they produce. Due to the limited problem representation, there are discursive effects in which certain opportunities for social support are obstructed or neglected. By not emphasizing the issues of early marriage and patriarchal societies, for instance, the programs indirectly perpetuate traditional gender roles and impede girls' access to education.

In addition, subjectification effects are observed as the documents shape how society perceives and regulates the problem. By relegating certain issues to secondary objectives, the programs influence how individuals perceive and rank the challenges associated with girls' education. This can contribute to a lack of urgency in confronting marginalized issues, thereby impeding the advancement of gender equality in education.

In the end, these limited representations of the problem have real-world consequences for girls and women. By ignoring or downplaying certain concerns, the programs do not adequately address the structural barriers that prevent women from gaining access to education. This disproportionately affects females from low-income households, who encounter multiple obstacles in their pursuit of education. The influence of these depictions on the societal perspective perpetuates the marginalization of certain issues and impedes efforts to create meaningful change.

8. Conclusions

The purpose of this thesis was to explore why Chadian girls are still facing problems when it comes to educational participation. In order to do that, the research investigates girls' education representation of the problem in the discourse of the strategic development programs and projects implemented by international organizations. The overall findings were based not only on the material from two policy documents: the Breaking Barriers for Girls' Education (BBGE) Programme in Chad and Niger (2022) and the Girls' Education and Women's Literacy Project (PEFAF) (2020) but on the literature review for the most common issues in girls' education in Chad as well. The literature presented shows that girls from impoverished homes have to exclude schooling from their lives due to poverty and lack of financial resources, which leads to getting married early to support their family and give a lead to the patriarchal system. Moreover, the literature also illustrated that a lot of girls drop out because of gender-based violence at school and the traditional mindset of women's inferiority depicted in the school curricula.

When the literature review was compared to the BBGE (2022) program and PEFAF (2020) project by using the "What's the 'problem' represented to be?" method by Carol L. Bacchi, the results of the research question were seen. The problematization question could be answered in the way that, when it comes to strategic development programs, international organizations represent the problem of low girls' education in Chad with limitations and effects that make the problem still prevalent in Chadian women's lives. The limitations involved international

organizations focusing on a more general problem of increasing human capital and not solving each of the problems mentioned in the literature review equally (some of them even excluding). Finally, the problem representations in the researched documents contain limitations and silences that affect the comprehension of the problem, the positioning of the subject, and the lives of girls and women. To ensure comprehensive and effective policies and programs that address the diverse obstacles females face in gaining access to education, it is essential to examine and question these representations critically.

As stated in the introduction, studying the effectiveness of policies or proposing more effective ones is not the focus of this thesis; however, because the WPR method facilitates the development of novel perspectives when examining an issue, its application inevitably produces valuable insights into governance (Bacchi 2009, pp. 34). Thus, the author of this thesis believes that the results provide policy employees and those involved in policy analysis with invaluable information for self-examination and reflection. This thesis contributes to gender (in)equality studies and discursive policy analysis studies, in terms of its contribution to the body of knowledge.

Regarding suggestions for future investigations, the author would suggest taking more documents for analysis. In this way, the argument could be supported by more evidence. Moreover, even though in this thesis, three questions from the WPR approach were enough to answer the research question, future studies could also include the rest of the questions suggested by Bacchi.

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