

Philanthropy as Gendered Global Governance: Philanthrocapitalism, Branded  
Citizenship, and the Selling of Corporate Social Responsibility

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## **Abstract**

Every decade since their inception in the 1940s, the United Nations and the World Bank have advocated for increased investments in educational opportunities for women and girls, claiming that education is necessary for the development of full personhood (Jain, 2005). A series of studies funded by Goldman Sachs and the Nike Foundation during the mid-2000s offered a different perspective on investments in women's education: instead of arguing that education is important to human development, these corporations argued that women's education was important to markets and profits. World Bank President Robert Zoellick called this renewed push for gender equality "smart economics" and incorporated this reasoning into global education policy. My dissertation develops the argument that this form of corporate social responsibility (CSR) expands the neoliberal paradigm (the process of privatizing and creating market incentives for services previously provided by the state) by relegating efforts to achieve gender justice to the private sector, where they serve corporate profit-making agendas over those of social justice.

In my dissertation, I theorize global CSR partnerships and the financialization of women's lives and argue that recipients of corporate aid are defined as valuable insofar as they are vehicles for corporate profit. I show how corporations use these campaigns to add value to their brands in two ways. First, they construct global networks of business and government officials when they launch global philanthropies and later rely on these networks to obtain profitable business contracts in developing nations. Second, they rely on coverage in mainstream and social media to increase brand value among consumers in first world nations.

Media are central to this project as they are vital to the construction and dissemination of definitions about the appropriate roles for women in a society; as such, my dissertation strives to show how media contribute to the construction of citizenship for women and girls in the Global South.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction: The Virtue of Profit**

In January 2009, Taliban officials in Mingora, a militant controlled region of the Swat Valley in northwestern Pakistan, banned girls over the age of nine from receiving an education, claiming girls' schools violated Islamic principles by disseminating too many Western ideologies. Though the ban formally prevented approximately 40,000 girls from attending school, informal tactics such as bombing or burning girls' schools and beheading, beating, and throwing acid on proponents of girls' education had already limited the number of parents who allowed their daughters to attend (Siddiqi, 2009; "Turnout Low," 2009). Ziauddin Yousafzai, the head of the community's private school association, spoke against the ban in local media outlets and criticized the national government for failing to protect residents from Taliban forces. He also allowed film crews to document his 11-year-old daughter Malala's final days in school, despite initially refusing out of fear of possible Taliban retaliation. The crew coached Malala through the process of starring in a documentary film and taught her to command a camera presence in interviews. They also encouraged her to publish a diary of her experiences online, which she did using a pseudonym (Brenner, 2013). After the documentary aired in international media outlets and Malala's true identity surfaced, she became the face of the girls' education movement and received the first National Peace Prize in Pakistan.

Her notoriety also brought trouble, and the Yousafzai family soon began receiving death threats. Despite the danger, she insisted on continuing her crusade, telling a

reporter, “Even if they come to kill me, I will tell them what they are trying to do is wrong, that education is our basic right” (Peer, 2012, para 7). On October 9, 2012, the Taliban followed through on their threats. A lone gunman stopped a bus carrying Malala and her classmates home from school, asked the girls to identify her, and then opened fire. A bullet pierced Malala’s skull and lodged just above her spine, and government officials arranged for a complex, life-saving surgery in Birmingham, England. Her family received asylum there and now lives and works in Birmingham.

Syed Irfan Ashraf, the reporter who convinced Ziauddin to let film crews follow his daughter, went into shock when he saw headlines describing the attack. He had persuaded Ziauddin to let them film his daughter by incorrectly assuring him that Taliban officials would not harm Malala because Islamic law states that children are sacred. After the assassination attempt, Ashraf was critical of his role and his work, stating that focusing on Malala provided a singular human narrative that deflected attention away from the structural and institutional failures that enabled her narrative in the first place. But more importantly for Ashraf and his partner Adam Ellick, they regretted coaching Malala to be the voice of the issue. Ellick questioned the ethics of using her story and regretted his role in encouraging her to be “more public, more brash, more outspoken” (Brenner, 2013, para. 78). Ashraf concurred, stating,

We had to get the story out. No one was paying attention to what was happening in Mingora. We took a very brave 11-year-old and created her to get the attention of the world. We made her a commodity. Then she and her father had to step into the roles we gave them. (Brenner, 2013, para. 10)

But Malala's status as a commodity in the spotlight was just beginning. She celebrated her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday by giving the keynote address for "Malala Day" at the United Nations. She has become the face of the movement for girls' education worldwide, and her presence draws crowds and fundraising opportunities (Brenner, 2013). Many corporations and celebrity brands used Malala Day to hype their own images. For example, educational publishing giant Pearson promoted a blog post from the winner of the 2012 Pearson Prize for Higher Education that offered a personal reaction to Malala's speech (McGirt, 2013). MTV's Act blog, which highlights a plethora of community service and philanthropic activities, offered their support for Malala's work and encouraged readers to continue the fight by purchasing cupcakes and cupcake jewelry from an organization raising money for girls' education (Davidson, 2012). Literacy for Life, a corporate partnership between the United Nations, the World Bank, and Microsoft, used Malala's speech to draw attention to their own mission, which states that "it is not enough to develop literacy skills without the related digital literacy skills to enable people to productively participate in an increasingly digital society" (Harnick, 2013, para 4). And not to be outdone, Beyonce posted a photo of herself with a handwritten card congratulating Malala on her bravery (Gruttadaro, 2013).

Meanwhile, Malala's classmate, Kainat Riaz, who was also shot on that fateful bus ride, sits at her home in Pakistan. Due to inadequate medical care, her arm has still not recovered from the gunshot wound she sustained in the incident. Due to a lack of money, her family cannot escape from Pakistan. And due to the constant threats from the Taliban, she cannot leave her home. Armed guards watch her house day and night, but

Kainat lives in constant fear while community members blame her when Taliban officials bomb buildings near her home (Jilani, 2013).

The contrast between the post-shooting paths for Malala and Kainat shows the power that donations, philanthropic attention, and pressure from global governance organizations like the United Nations can have on individuals who are victims of human rights violations. As Malala was whisked away to England for life saving surgery, Angelina Jolie encouraged citizens of the Global North<sup>1</sup> to join her in exclaiming “We are all Malala” and donated \$200,000 to a charity started in her name (Almond, 2013). Meanwhile, countless numbers of families like Kainat’s endure threats, house arrest, and community ostracism as governance, philanthropic and media organizations look away.

The contrast also points to the structural concerns associated with making individuals and basic humanitarian concerns into commodities that can be traded in the *marketplace of philanthropy*, a term that describes the saturated marketplace of charities competing for resources and media coverage to better deliver privatized social services. Malala’s narrative holds much value in this marketplace, and many corporations and celebrity brands used her recovery as a conduit for their own public relations posts. Conversely, narratives that are threatening to the dominant order, including stories like Kainat’s that challenge U.S. drone policy, are not readily ushered into the marketplace. As a consequence, narratives of need that do not support the dominant framework but that are no less important to the health and well being of global populations are frequently ignored. The value given to Malala’s narrative in this marketplace highlights several growing trends in media studies and corporate philanthropy, including the media’s growing tendency to capitalize on individual sensational narratives (pushing the

focus on systemic concerns out of the frame) and to serve as public relations vehicles for corporations that use philanthropy to raise the profile of their brands.

My dissertation develops the argument that this form of corporate social responsibility (CSR) expands the neoliberal paradigm (the process of privatizing services previously provided by the state and encouraging individualized solutions to systemic problems) by relegating efforts to achieve gender justice to the private sector, where they serve corporate profit-making agendas over those of social justice. To reach this conclusion, I trace the historical trajectory of corporate influence in global humanitarian efforts within the United Nations and the World Bank, showing that the much-lauded models for corporate philanthropy in the Global South actually serve as profit-producing development projects that pad the corporate bottom line. The two most prominent models for corporate philanthropy include the *10,000 Women* campaign started by Goldman Sachs and the World Bank and the *Girl Effect* campaign made possible by the Nike Foundation and the United Nations. I analyze these case studies because they are regarded as *the* models of global corporate philanthropy in the business community and because they are contributing to rapid changes in how we define the need for privatized philanthropic work. Both campaigns direct much-needed international attention toward improving educational opportunities for women and girls in the Global South, but do so using individualized narratives that deflect attention away from corporate roles in exacerbating global inequality. Media regularly project success narratives, aiding the corporate public relations efforts and deflecting attention away from women whose lives are not made better by such limiting interventions. Central to this project is a concern for how the media constructions surrounding these initiatives help to define the avenues of

citizenship open to women who support these campaigns and to women who receive aid through the projects.

### **Privatizing (and) Education**

The attention paid to increasing educational access for women and girls is not without merit. Article 26 of the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (UDHR) proclaims free primary education as a fundamental human right and suggests that such education is necessary for the "full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" (UN General Assembly, 1948). International governance organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank have adopted pro-education mandates every decade since the UDHR was published, but thus far have had only minor successes in increasing educational opportunities for women and girls in developing countries. After six decades of policy interventions arguing that education is necessary for the development of full personhood, 32 million girls still lack access to basic primary education (Davidson, 2012).<sup>2</sup>

A series of studies funded by Goldman Sachs and the Nike Foundation during the mid-2000s offered a different perspective on investments in women's education: instead of arguing that education is important to human development, these corporations argued that women's education was important to markets and profits. For example, Goldman Sachs' 2005 *Womenomics* report stated that investments in women's education could have a substantial multiplier effect in countries with the fastest emerging economies, which would create new global business markets and increase women's consumer spending capacity. Within the next five years, several major corporations launched

philanthropic initiatives to foster economic empowerment of women in the Global South, and each published reports to shareholders explaining that their philanthropic investments doubled as business strategies designed to increase profits. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton lauded these activities and made similar expansions of entrepreneurial opportunities for women and girls a key part of U.S. foreign policy (Clinton, 2011). Similarly, World Bank President Robert Zoellick called this renewed push for gender equality “smart economics” (Clinton, 2011, para. 13). With the support of international governance organizations and national foreign policy leaders, corporations have signed onto international philanthropic projects in droves. In 2011 alone, U.S.-based corporations invested \$37.5 billion in development projects in the Global South (Cruz, 2011).

Goldman Sachs and the Nike Foundation used their reports as the basis for two new models of philanthropic campaigns aiming to improve the social and economic conditions of women in the Global South using the private sector. These corporations teamed with the United Nations and the World Bank to fund major pro-capitalist educational programs in the Global South, touting such campaigns as vital to helping women receive some of the benefits of global capitalism (Walker, 2008). The rationale for these new policies and practices includes the idea that women’s health, education, and economic services are more efficiently controlled through the private sphere than through public policy, creating a system where access to social and economic services is provided on a cost-benefit analysis instead of through a humanitarian approach that justifies services based on how they will impact a population’s quality of life. These companies spend millions of dollars on multi-year projects in the Global South while professing to

shareholders that the investments they make in education and infrastructure abroad will lead to increasing long-term corporate profits at home (Marquis et al., 2010). For executives of corporations such as Nike and Goldman Sachs, these policies are a win-win: they serve as excellent public relations tools for companies as they simultaneously advance public-private business partnerships in countries with the fastest emerging economies. Less noted, however, is the way corporate efforts to use capitalism to solve social problems also serves as a means of governance that impacts how governments conceptualize and develop avenues for women's citizenship, both within the U.S. and abroad. As societies are increasingly interconnected, examining these new policies will shed light on the ways that neoliberalism and consumption-based activism are changing the way populations are governed.

### **Brands of Philanthrocapitalism**

This study focuses on two prominent corporate philanthropy campaigns: the *Girl Effect* campaign launched by Nike and the United Nations, and the *10,000 Women* campaign launched by Goldman Sachs and the World Bank. The Harvard Kennedy School of Business has proclaimed both programs to be models of corporate philanthropy worth emulating and has published case studies highlighting what business students and executives can learn from their successes (Murphy, 2009; Marquis et al., 2010). Both programs allow corporate philanthropy departments to construct learning spaces in other countries that are funded and controlled largely through the private sphere, allowing corporations to hold unprecedented power in the type of schools created and content of the curricula disseminated to women.

The Goldman Sachs *10,000 Women* project launched in March 2008 after the company pledged to invest \$100 million in short-term business and management education for women in the Global South over the next five years. The project grew out of the company's internal research, including the 2005 "Womenomics" report published by Goldman Sachs' Tokyo office and the 2007 "Women Hold Up Half the Sky" report, both of which suggested that investments in women could increase Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by as much as 0.2 percent per year in the 15 fastest emerging countries ("Womenomics," 2005; Lawson, 2008). The *10,000 Women* project is a global effort, and Goldman Sachs chose to invest in countries based on where their investment would have the most significant impact on GDP. As such, Goldman Sachs focused their efforts in Brazil, Russia, India, China, and other countries with substantial economic growth potential, despite research by the World Bank and the United Nations urging companies to focus international aid efforts in countries with the lowest GDPs (Marquis et al., 2010).

Goldman Sachs' decision to focus on small to medium-sized businesses is based on a series of new studies suggesting that smaller businesses offer a higher return-on-investment than more common investments such as microfinance programs and MBA scholarship programs (Lawson, 2008). Additionally, Goldman Sachs wanted to invest in business education for women who could not afford to attend graduate school or who did not need the theoretical framework offered by such programs.<sup>3</sup> The project aimed to provide women entrepreneurs with short-term, practically oriented courses that would help them manage their businesses and create a more stable base for future growth and expansion ("Fact Sheet," 2008).

Because the program launched during the 2008 financial crisis, Goldman Sachs CEO Lloyd Blankfein had to ensure the program would also be good for the company's bottom line in order to appeal to shareholders, many of whom lost money when stock prices fell. Blankfein stated that the initiative not only helped the company chase GDP, but also actually created GDP in emerging nations (Walker, 2008). More than half of Goldman Sachs revenue currently comes from markets outside the U.S., so increasing the GDP of emerging nations serves to increase the corporation's potential business pool (Marquis et al., 2010). Additionally, the company hopes to spread what it sees as the benefits of globalization to countries and populations who have typically not been on the receiving end of financial benefits, enabling Goldman Sachs to simultaneously establish business education and relationships in new areas. Because the 10,000 Women project relies heavily on partnerships with educational institutions and nonprofits for the actual program administration, as well as on the volunteer hours of Goldman Sachs employees for its mentoring and networking role, the corporation stands to gain immense profits through the program.

Similarly, the Nike Foundation's *Girl Effect* campaign uses an investment model in its crusade for girls' education. According to studies and media pitches published by Nike, the UN, and other philanthropic partners, the solution to intergenerational poverty prevalent among women and girls in the Global South is simple: "Invest in a girl and she will do the rest." A viral video announcing the campaign claims investing in girls' schooling has a substantial multiplier effect on communities because education enables women to become valuable members of the town's business and governmental network. Drawing from research funded by the Nike Foundation and the World Bank and

conducted by the Population Council and the Center for Global Development, the *Girl Effect* materials state that girls are the best investment because they are more likely to give the money they earn back to their families and their communities. In fact, these studies have quantified the financial incentives corporations, philanthropists, and policy officials will receive if they just educate girls in developing countries: “Girls are the world’s greatest untapped resource. Investments in girls have significant economic returns. These returns have the potential to uplift entire economies. Recent work shows just how powerful the girl effect dividend is” (“Smarter Economics: Investing In Girls,” 2012).

Despite the Population Council and the Center for Global Development Council’s calls for government-level solutions that demand systemic changes to the ways that educational systems operate in the developing world, the *Girl Effect* seems to have a much different agenda. The *Girl Effect* campaign in the United States is largely disseminated via its official website ([www.girleffect.org](http://www.girleffect.org)) and its Facebook page, both of which relegate activism and power to sharing viral videos about girls living in poverty and purchasing products to benefit the cause. Unlike hypercharities that offer consumers a feeling of involvement through products, the *Girl Effect* is a philanthropic hub that offers online users an array of materials they can use to engage in a branded philanthropic experience.

I focus on these two campaigns as examples of how corporations sell public-private partnerships as the ideal form of privatization within Western-based news and social media. Studying the campaigns *and* their uptake in mainstream and social media enables an analysis of how the public relations language of philanthrocapitalism aids in

constructing the ideal women citizen of global philanthropy. Before conducting this analysis, I explore the theoretical foundations for such inquiry. This study is situated within the research frameworks of neoliberalism, feminist political economy studies, and transnational feminist critiques of international development. In the following sections, I highlight relevant research from these paradigms.

### **Neoliberal Lifestyles**

The rise in public-private partnerships between U.S.-based multinational corporations and organizations like the UN and the World Bank is no accident. In fact, the UN has encouraged such partnerships through the United Nations Global Compact, a program launched in 2000 that encourages ethical corporate business practices and corporate partnerships for international development. In 2003, the UN launched a Private Sector and Development Commission aimed at increasing public-private partnerships and assessing the impact of major corporations. Similarly, the World Bank issued its official mission statement in 1999 pledging to fight poverty by “providing resources, sharing knowledge, building capacity, and forging partnerships in the public and private sectors” (“Historical Chronology,” 2006). In 2005, the World Bank released a first-of-its-kind report that applied standards of social responsibility in for-profit companies to the work its own organization does to reduce global poverty. In other words, the World Bank made it official policy to hold itself accountable to a for-profit business model when engaging in efforts to solve social problems.<sup>4</sup>

The push for for-profit philanthropy projects has its roots in neoliberal theory, a phrase that is surprisingly absent from popular discourse despite it being the dominant political economic system of the last 30 years. Neoliberalism is a contested term with

several competing definitions, but I use it here in line with the work of David Harvey (2005) and Robert McChesney (2008) who conceptualize the neoliberal turn as the push to privatize goods and services, such as transportation infrastructure and education, previously under the purview of the state. Though this philosophy had been around for decades, President Reagan ushered it into the mainstream early in his first term as president when he asked business leaders to help solve social inequalities by directing private capital into promising local non-profit organizations (Reagan, 1981). As Reagan argued, “the private sector still offers creative, less expensive, and more efficient alternatives to solving our social problems” (Reagan, 1981, para. 9), and business leaders should put those skills to use by helping nonprofit organizations administer social programs previously offered through the government. In his time in office, Reagan tapped into this newly created corporate interest in administering and designing social welfare services by counting on businesses to pick up the operating costs for programs he defunded with promises of profits to be made for doing so. Subsequent U.S. presidents have continued with Reagan’s crusade, often by outsourcing public assistance programs directly to corporations that have established public-private partnerships with government agencies (Ouellette & Hay, 2008).

For Harvey (2005) and McChesney (2008), this privatization coincides with other key characteristics of the neoliberal turn, including the idea that social programs work best when they are privatized because competition in the free market will ensure that social programs are implemented efficiently and respond better to consumer demand. Using this logic, “privatization and deregulation combined with competition...eliminate bureaucratic red tape, increase efficiency and productivity, improve quality, and reduce

costs, both directly to the consumer through cheaper commodities and services and indirectly through the reduction of the tax burden” (Harvey, 2005, p. 65). The role of government, then, is to ensure free markets and free trade for corporations, and to ensure that tax dollars are not wasted on social welfare services that limit individual consumer freedoms (Harvey, 2005). Under neoliberalism, social welfare programs such as municipal water services and schooling are bought and sold in the private market, making the capitalist economic system primarily responsible for ensuring the well being of the citizenry (McChesney, 2008).

In addition to privatization, neoliberalism is also characterized by a commodification of services, meaning that services previously thought to be off-limits for corporate enterprise are increasingly subjected to a market mentality. For example, as a condition of foreign aid, many poor countries are forced to sell municipal water infrastructure to private companies. Citizens of these nations, then, must pay for water based on the ebbs and flows of the market instead of receiving water as a public good provided by the local government, and there is no governmental safety net to protect citizens should corporations decide to discontinue or change such services (Stiglitz, 2003; Harvey, 2005).

The current water privatization initiative in Detroit does just this. In June of 2014, Detroit city council members approved a rate increase to cover the cost of necessary upgrades and repairs to existing infrastructure and elected to turn off water service for residents who cannot afford to pay their bills (Guillen, 2014). UN officials claim the water shutoffs amount to a violation of international human rights, stating:

Disconnection of water services because of failure to pay due to lack of means constitutes a violation of the human right to water and other international human rights. Because of a high poverty rate and a high unemployment rate, relatively expensive water bills in Detroit are unaffordable for a significant portion of the population. (Ahmed, 2014, para. 2)

Welfare rights groups claim the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department “is attempting to rid itself of low-income customers in an effort to make the utility more attractive for private takeover” (Ahmed, 2014, para. 10). Though the city denies the charge, they do acknowledge they are reviewing privatization proposals to help eliminate debt. Because Detroit’s water infrastructure is already being run on a market model, essential water services are available only to those who can afford the higher price tag, and there are no safety nets for those who cannot.

Citizens are also encouraged to think about themselves as *consumers* of public goods, facilitating a financial mentality as the primary means of making sense of the world. Not even education is protected from this mentality. A 1998 World Bank policy statement referred to students as “consumers” of higher education and advocated that governments offload the cost of higher education onto students in the form of higher tuition and fees (Johnstone, 1998). Rising tuition is partly to blame for the rise in student loan debt in the U.S., so students are encouraged to be savvy consumers of education in a number of ways. For example, students are encouraged to select majors that lead to jobs with higher starting salaries so they get the highest return on their investments, and several news sources rank colleges that offer the best “bang for the buck” (Klechen, 2013; Lobosco, 2014; Walia, 2013).

This system has evolved into what Laurie Ouellette and James Hay (2008) call the “entrepreneurial government,” which replaces the so-called bureaucratic public model with a government supervised by a civic manager and a citizenry encouraged to think of themselves as consumers. Correcting the problems of the bureaucracy “involves not only making private agencies more responsible for public assistance...but also transforming individuals into more responsible, accountable, and enterprising managers of themselves” (Ouellette & Hay, 2008, p. 24). Responsible citizens, then, are those who make life choices using a cost-benefit analysis to ensure that they are not reliant on the bureaucratic, taxpayer-funded system for services. In this way, using a financial mentality to define citizenship moves people away from thinking about finance as the accumulation of wealth and toward thinking about finance as a means of regulating and monitoring our bodies and minds (Martin, 2002; Schowalter, 2012b). Those who properly monitor themselves are therefore “good” citizens, and those who do not are considered burdens on the system.

The hyper-attention paid to encouraging individuals to self-govern and to view themselves as assets and commodities has occurred alongside a push for privatization and outsourcing (Ouellette & Hay, 2008). This system demands that individuals conduct themselves in such a way as to successfully navigate uncertainties in the market caused by privatization and outsourcing, while simultaneously suggesting that individuals themselves are to blame for failing to succeed amongst the instability. Indeed, all choices, including choices about when and where to work, how to invest, and whether and when to marry become choices amenable to a market rationality (Martin, 2008). Making “wise” consumer choices—including decisions surrounding employment, household purchases,

and more general acts of consumption that contribute to our lifestyles—are central to successfully navigating the tensions created by financialization and governmentality. This conflation of consumerism and citizenship has been on the rise since early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and it demands that practices of “good citizenship” include decisions that prevent a reliance on any form of government support. Enterprising consumer citizens have “become key actors within neoliberalism, expressed not only through a retreat from collectivity and public spheres, but also...through a normalizing of individual entrepreneurialism and the branding of the neoliberal self” (Mukherjee & Banet-Weiser, 2012, p. 11). The conflation between economic principles and individual governance means that “economic life can be governed and entrepreneurial aspirations realized, through the choices consumers make in their quest to fulfill themselves” (Rose, 1992, p. 155).

The neoliberal moment also asks that brands reimagine “capitalist practices and strategies to better accommodate the self-interest of consumers” (Mukherjee & Banet-Weiser, 2012, p. 9). As such, an increasing emphasis on choice coincides with “the growing influence of a more personalized culture of consumption,” whereby the emphasis on mass culture is replaced by efforts to appeal to niche audiences (Binkley, 2007, p. 112). Consumption-based citizenship renders “personal identity a product of personal choosing” and asks that corporations inform audiences about their products and practices in order to give the act of choosing a tangible value among consumers (Binkley, 2007, p. 112). For example, consumers might choose to buy shoes from Tom’s, a company that donates one pair of shoes to a child in need for every pair purchased. Through this practice, Tom’s aligns itself with alleviating the impact of poverty in

developing nations, equating shoelessness with suffering and free shoes with the solution to suffering. Consumers can then rationalize their acts of conspicuous consumption through the philanthropy inherent in their choice, so that purchasing Tom's shoes is a more moral choice than purchasing shoes from a company that does not donate to the deserving poor. At no point are consumers encouraged to think about the reasons why children are living in extreme poverty, how free gifts of shoes might negatively impact small businesses in the area, or the working conditions in which Tom's shoes are produced (Stupart, 2012). In this way, practices of consumption stand-in for political actions in the public sphere as shorthand for expressing identity in relation to one's personal beliefs and devotions.

Of course, these "choices" are limited by factors such as class and access to financial, social, and cultural resources. The rise in transnational business models has coincided with a push for companies to outsource labor, often choosing to manufacture goods in nations with low wages and few regulations. As employment instability increases and benefits decrease, the gap between the rich and the poor has increased worldwide, meaning that fewer and fewer people are able to contribute to the types of consumption demanded in the neoliberal model of personal lifestyle management (Conroy, 1998). Participation defined by a capacity to consume is especially alienating for "marginalized constituencies—women, nonwhites, and the poor"—because these groups have a more difficult time meeting the "challenges that become legible within historical and institutional particularities of neoliberalism" (Mukherjee & Banet-Weiser, 2012, p. 9). This inequality enables particular consumers to signify their adherence to a certain way of life or political ideology by purchasing affiliated goods and services and

leaves others to fend for themselves in a sea of shrinking communal resources and safety nets.

Sam Binkley (2007) sums up this relationship between individual lifestyle management and neoliberalism, stating:

Individuals are increasingly instructed in ways of acting (at work, in the family, among friends) that replicate the logics of the market. They are encouraged to consider their careers in terms of the maximization of profit, to evaluate personal relationships in terms of emotional “pay-offs,” to embrace life in terms of its experiential “benefits,” etc. And most importantly, they are encouraged to approach these challenges alone, as solitary “enterprises,” and to refuse any collectivist traditions previously fostered by the state. (p. 119)

As citizens make life choices within an economic framework and attempt to maximize their assets as individuals in the marketplace, corporations have much to gain. By marketing their goods and services as socially, ethically, and environmentally responsible, corporations can attract consumers eager to vote with their dollars.

### **Responsible Profits**

The ability to profit from managing goods and services previously under the purview of the state was the final selling point for business involvement in philanthropic and social welfare initiatives. Before companies realized they could earn a profit for this work, a large contingent of the business community rejected the idea that corporations would spend a portion of their profit doing community service and social welfare work. Milton Friedman and other economists felt engaging in this type of large-scale philanthropy would dip into dividends, and early economists rejected company-wide

corporate giving initiatives, claiming that the only “social responsibility of business is to increase its profits” (Friedman, as quoted in Richey & Ponte, 2011, p. 125). Many shareholders demanded that companies limit philanthropic and social welfare engagement if it would impact the dividends they received from their investments (Bradford, 2012). However, Reagan (1981) sold his philosophy to private enterprises by suggesting that engaging in philanthropic work might eventually lead to “a buck for business” (para. 11). Reagan’s policies—including tax breaks for philanthropic giving and opportunities to invest in privatizing global economies—helped to ensure that CSR was seen not only as a way to increase positive public perceptions of expanded corporate activities, but also as a means to increase corporate profits. As such, many corporations made philanthropic initiatives part of their overall business strategy during the 1980s (Richey & Ponte, 2011).

Early CSR efforts involved campaigns that directed attention toward a particular aspect of their brand identity or that aimed to empower new pockets of potential consumers (King, 2006). For example companies that market their products as environmentally friendly might partner with a river cleanup organization to highlight their green product line, and those that hope to appeal to women consumers might fund local organizations that focus on women’s health. Because these philanthropic efforts were integrated into the media branding strategy and annual business plans, corporate watchdog organizations could easily assess whether these corporate social responsibility initiatives matched up with their business activities outside the media spotlight. As a result, a number of high profile exposés documented the stark contrast between corporations claiming to invest in reducing inequality within the United States while

engaging in business practices that violated basic human and labor rights standards in the Global South. Many of these corporations responded with large-scale public relations offensives aiming to reassure consumers that they could purchase the company's goods and services with good conscience (Richey & Ponte, 2011). For example, Nike launched a major public relations initiative to instill consumer confidence after a series of reports published in the mid-1990s showed severe labor and human rights violations in Nike factories. These public relations efforts, coupled with multinational advertising campaigns featuring exceptional male athletes, has helped Nike maintain its market dominance despite making very few changes to their exploitive business model (Bigge, 2004).

Proponents of this type of engaged corporate social responsibility argue that eradicating exploitative labor and environmental practices is good for business because consumers are more likely to purchase products from companies that have responsible business practices and that publishing such changes in marketing materials will lead to increased purchases and brand loyalty (Vogel, 2006). However, this philosophy mistakenly assumes that consumers know how goods are produced and that there is not substantial room in the market for companies with less responsible practices. For example, within two months of Swiss gold refineries banning gold mined using inhumane conditions, the international hub of refining gold moved to Dubai, where no such ban exists. U.S. news media often choose not to cover stories such as these, threatening as they are to corporations, so one likely contributor is a lack of consumer awareness. However, many people are willing to ignore such information if it means lower prices (Vogel, 2006, p. xvii). These stories reflect the complexity of allowing corporations to

self-regulate their behavior through CSR marketing campaigns instead of through legally enforceable international standards. Because such changes are “voluntary and market-driven, companies will engage in CSR only to the extent that it makes business sense for them to do so” (Vogel, 2006, p. 4). Responsible business practices become yet another commodity in the marketplace, and consumers can get involved by “‘voting’ their social preferences” through “what they purchase, whom they are willing to work for, and where they invest” (Vogel, 2006, p. 4). In this way, engaged corporate social responsibility advances neoliberalism by relegating the very philanthropy designed to help privatize social services to the status of a commodity that itself can be subject to the forces of privatization and marketization.

Perhaps nowhere is the conflation of marketization and philanthropy more apparent than in the rise of cause marketing, which aims to combine purchasing power with philanthropic donation. In cause marketing, corporations align their brand or product with a prosocial cause and promise to donate a percentage of each unit purchased to a non-profit organization (Richey & Ponte, 2011). Recent industry studies suggest that this model is effective in encouraging point-of-sale purchases, especially for women consumers. One such study, NBC Universal’s *Activating Women Through Cause Marketing* study, used a variety of methods to show potential advertisers how to reach the coveted demographic of women consumers. Their goal was to show “how different market segments respond to cause marketing” and to provide recommendations for how corporations can “cut through the clutter” of companies who align their products with prosocial causes (Women at NBCU, 2010). The study concluded that because women are less skeptical than their male counterparts of corporations that claim to have an

involvement with a non-profit social cause, marketing these initiatives on female-skewed properties such as those under the Women at NBCU label make for a better return-on-investment (Schowalter, 2011).

The study also encourages companies to make the connection between purchasing a product and advancing the social good easy for consumers. The document states that, “86 percent of women say they ‘like when companies donate a portion of the purchase price to a non-profit dedicated to a social cause because it is an *easy* way to be involved” (Women at NBCU, 2010, emphasis in original). To drive the point home, the study quotes one female respondent as saying, “I hate when you buy the product but money doesn’t go to the cause unless you do something extra after the purchase. Buying it should be enough” (Women at NBCU, 2010). Cause marketing has been integrated into nearly every category of consumer products, with products such as cars, shoes, garbage cans, yogurt, and even stick-on moustaches lauded as potential ways for consumers to support their communities (Eikenberry, 2009). A 2008 Harvard study concluded that engaging in cause related marketing can lead to sharp increases in sales, sometimes by as much as 74 percent (Hein, 2008).

To follow up on their work, NBC Universal launched their Women at NBCU Brand Power Index, which combines online search data, social media buzz data, and person-to-person conversation data to quantifiably identify which brands women talk about most (Schowalter, 2012a). These data allow marketers to determine which types of brands companies can market to women most effectively and which types of marketing initiatives encourage women to talk about products most frequently. According to Women at NBCU board members, the brand index indicated that women paid the most

attention to brands that launched prosocial initiatives, including Starbucks' in-store promotion to help rebuild neighborhoods in New Orleans and the Olive Garden's promotion benefiting the Lymphoma and Leukemia Society (Schowalter, 2011). Potential advertisers used these tools to more effectively market their products through NBC, and to reach women as potential consumers. Many saw increases in sales surrounding these promotions (Schowalter, 2011).

In addition to serving as a way for corporations to differentiate their brands, cause marketing also provides solutions for consumer anxiety by suggesting that purchasing from responsible corporations can actually help to make the world a better place (King, 2006; Littler, 2009; Lellahom, 2013). Because neoliberalism asks us to address these problems on an individual basis through the market (such as by "voting" with our dollars), consumers conflate consumption with activism and suggest that the best means to solve systemic social problems is purchasing products from corporations who donate a portion of their profits to such causes (even when the acts of consumption exacerbate the very inequalities they proclaim to fight against). Thus, consumers can feel good about engaging in conspicuous consumption because their purchases are the most efficient way to address social, political, and economic inequality. However, the idea that consumers should seek out responsible or ethical purchases highlights the underpinnings of the neoliberal system, which advocates for corporate impunity through deregulation and then asks the market to address the very inequalities it has helped to create. In *Radical Consumption*, Jo Littler (2009) suggests that valorizing "ethical" purchases relegates activism to those high enough on the income bracket to afford such products. She writes that the "responsible" label

reveals both some of the key problems of our culture (global warming, global poverty, stark inequalities of wealth) and indicates the scale of our collective failure to deal with these problems on any significant or systemic level other than through small palliative measures orchestrated through the lifestyle choices of the sufficiently privileged. (p. 14)

Instead of pushing for collective action, cause marketing asks consumers to further privatize these solutions by making the individual solely responsible for policing corporations through their purchasing power.

What sets philanthropic models like the *Girl Effect* and *10,000 Women* campaigns apart from their predecessors is that these organizations fuse cause marketing with privatization in such a way that it also serves as a global development project aimed at creating long-term opportunity and wealth. Carol Cone, the managing director of brand and corporate citizenship for Edelman, argues that philanthropy is increasingly used as a tool for gaining lucrative business contracts in the Global South:

Companies need a license to operate. There are many, many competitors...In China, for example, the government wants to know, “What are you doing for my people? What are you doing for my communities?” even before they’re allowed to do business. When you give back through a cause, you earn the license to operate. (as cited in Pool, 2011)

Using corporate social responsibility in this way has enabled corporations to enter into new global markets, where they expand the reach of privatized social services.

By engaging in philanthropic initiatives that expand business pools and globalize their consumer base, corporations have found a way to engage in philanthropy that

appeals to consumers in the Global North while simultaneously maximizing profits for shareholders who adhere to Friedman's corporate mandate. In fact, the idea for the *10,000 Women* campaign model came after Goldman Sachs was criticized for philanthropic work that dipped into annual dividends, and the company brainstormed ways to engage in acts of philanthropy that would improve their public image while simultaneously expanding their profit potential (Anderson, 2007). Called "venture philanthropy" or "philanthrocapitalism," these new models of corporate social responsibility mandate that even acts of charity become profit-making ventures for the parent company (Vogel, 2006). This new model of philanthropy blurs the line between business and charity by making all acts of charity subject to the same profit motive of other standard business activities. Under this model, corporations profit from philanthropy by securing government contracts once their role as a responsible corporation is established, by profiting directly from activities such as making money off the interest from microlending, or by attracting and retaining top international business talent, to name just a few examples. Most importantly, however, these activities establish the neoliberal model in an ever-expanding number of global communities. The neoliberal model of philanthropy "aligns corporate support of social issues with building corporate brands and consolidating brand revenues while social justice transforms into yet another strategic venture to secure the corporate bottom line" (Mukherjee & Banet-Weiser, 2012, p. 10). The push to commodify social justice work is especially detrimental to women, as philanthrocapitalism continues to define women's global citizenship in terms of brand activism.

## **Women's Commodity Activism**

As stated above, one of the key developments of the philanthrocapitalist educational initiatives I examine is that these programs exclusively target women and girls, and they do so with the hope that such investments will result in increases in GDP and women's consumer spending capacity (Murphy, 2009; Marquis et al., 2010). This profit motive marks a stark contrast from humanistic research on GDP, which shows that the index is an inaccurate marker of quality of life in a particular country. GDP shows the total gain or loss of money in a nation, but it does not show the distribution of resources among citizens. If the increases come from foreign businesses that take the profit back to their corporate headquarters or if businesses profit from the exploitation of impoverished workers, the net increase is recorded as progress regardless of whether it leads to a net positive impact for citizens. Thus, increases in GDP do not necessarily mean positive outcomes for poor populations (Nussbaum, 2011).

The profit motive also marks a divergence from the previous five decades of educational interventions for women and girls, which mandated only that educational investments help women participate in society as full human beings. The UN defined this right as consisting of two primary benefits: the right to receive free primary education and the right to participate in local and national electoral politics (Jain, 2005). Though historical discussions of women's citizenship generally foreground women's suffrage and women's involvement in electoral politics, the history of voting and holding political office does not account for the innumerable ways women have been encouraged to engage in practices of "good citizenship."

Recent feminist scholarship offers a more diffuse way of looking at women's citizenship practices, arguing that citizenship occurs not only in organized, centralized acts such as voting for political candidates and running for office, but also through social and cultural community spaces and mediated events (Berlant, 1993; Graham, 1997; Cohen, 2004; Brown, 2005; King, 2006; Littler, 2009; Ouellette, 2012). Messages from these diffuse sources move beyond instructing people about how to engage in the public sphere via electoral politics, and instead constitute the idea that good citizens actively work upon themselves, making good choices for themselves and their families in a variety of individualized consumer contexts. Rose (1992) argues that the media are especially important in reinforcing that neoliberal principles of individualism and consumption are more efficient and powerful than institutional forces. While most U.S.-based media are unaffiliated with the state in a formal capacity, they have "nonetheless made it possible to govern in an 'advanced liberal' way, providing a plethora of indirect mechanisms that can translate the goals of political, social and economic authorities into the choices and commitments of individuals" (Rose, 1992, p. 159). The history of such practices dates to the last century, but more recent trends in consumer citizenship have exacerbated the way advanced neoliberal citizens engage in activism in a variety of contexts.

Within the United States, ties between consumerism and practices of citizenship became part of the social and media culture in the early 1900s when government sponsored public relations efforts supported consumption models that complemented national economic goals. For example, PR efforts tied consumer sacrifices with patriotism when factories focused on making supplies for the war efforts, but encouraged

citizens to purchase large quantities of consumer goods after the world wars to help stimulate the national economy. In addition to government encouraging particular forms of behavior using the logic of the market, historian Lizabeth Cohen (2004) argues that public relations efforts also encouraged the public to view government as a market system when judging local and national policies. Thus, good citizens were encouraged to think about the ways that local and national policies would financially impact them on a personal level, as opposed to how such policies would impact the populace or country as a whole. For example, since the predominant real-estate perspective held that increasing the racial diversity of suburban neighborhoods created in the wake of World War II would lead to significant decreases in property value, white residents of such homes were less likely to protest race-based discrimination in housing practices. Such practices persevered, including discriminatory federal legislation surrounding economic and zoning policies and discrimination in everyday lending and realty practices by agencies such as the Federal Housing Authority (Cohen, 2004). Cohen's (2004) research refutes the romanticized notion of citizen and consumer as once separate theoretical categories by pointing to how governmental policies encouraged acts of consumption that reinforced state interests.

This historical documentation of the fusion between markets and consumer practices has provided scholars with a structure for assessing visions of women's citizenship practices that look quite different from the UN's original definitions pertaining to literacy and voting. For example, women's citizenship was also historically tied to an ability to set up an efficient household. To do so, women were encouraged to purchase only quality products that would maximize efficiency in the home, and once

they had mastered the art of efficient household production, women were then to educate their neighbors to do the same (Graham, 1997). Additionally, women who were not duped by misleading advertising gimmicks were publicly praised for aiding community development by helping to weed out dubious companies, thus eliminating the need for centralized regulatory systems that might ensure these messages never reach consumers in the first place. The lasting significance of this incarnation of citizenship folds back into traditional political policies: because women who were good citizens took responsibility for maintaining an efficient household and educating themselves about their purchases, they could not be duped by the system. Thus, advertising regulation became unnecessary (Graham, 1997).

The rise of neoliberalism in the 1980s heightened the focus on consumer citizenship such that the market mentality has infiltrated individuals' conceptions of themselves and their communities. Within this political and economic paradigm, people are encouraged to think of themselves as rational market actors who are responsible for their own care. Painting responsibility as a rational action conversely means that those who mismanage their lives by not weighing the costs and benefits of their actions have acted irresponsibly, making it easier to cut social welfare programs for "unworthy" recipients (Martin, 2002; Brown, 2005). For example, commentary about whether particular welfare recipients are worthy of such aid is increasingly part of the media landscape, melding direct criticism of both individuals and institutional services into seemingly benign television programming (Ouellette, 2011). A plethora of 24-hour news networks and reality television shows compete for audiences who can participate in these public displays of judgment, often by agreeing with particular judgments made on-air or

by voting for “worthy” recipients of aid to remain on a reality show. This is especially problematic for women, who are often the subjects of such programming and who are encouraged to adopt the neoliberal mentality in their personal life choices if they would like to avoid public ridicule (Ouellette, 2011). For example, television programming such as *Judge Judy* is a seemingly innocuous form of entertainment; however, the show both privatizes the work of creating legally binding judgments in a court of law and offers direct commentary that shames women for choices that have resulted in a reliance on social welfare dollars. The “failed citizens” of such shows “are disproportionately poor, Latino, and African American” and are implicitly criminalized for making choices about who to date and where and when to work when such choices lead to “stressors” on taxpayers (Ouellette, 2011, p. 157).

As in such programming, neoliberalism requires individuals to take responsibility for themselves, and to do so as a condition of good citizenship. Good citizens, in this model, make choices that maximize their earning potential in the market through exercising their capacities for things like self-funded education and middle-class employment. When successful, they are taking care of the nation by positively contributing to the national economy and avoiding the public coffers. This marks a drastic difference from the early conceptions of consumer citizenship in that centralized messaging during and after World War II focused on how consumption practices can help the national community, whereas modern ideas of consumption practices come from diverse sources and suggest that what is good for the individual’s economic success is good for the nation’s. Thus, citizens have a moral imperative to adopt this individualized market mentality because personal responsibility is beneficial for their communities.

After adopting this perspective, citizens are expected to engage in acts of consumption that enable them to properly engage in a type of self-fashioning that will help to enable their successes. In other words, good citizens often use acts of consumption to fashion their identities so their “branded selves” have exchange value in the marketplace. This form of branding “produces sets of images and immaterial symbolic values” that individuals use to navigate the social world and directs citizens to engage in personal branding in “self-advantaging ways, shaping markets and controlling competition” (Hearn, 2008, p. 198). The ways we construct identities and become branded commodities in the marketplace relies on a constant articulation and re-articulation of culturally held meanings around such symbols. Within marketing materials that advance such visions of neoliberal self-branding, “citizenship is portrayed as an utterly privatized affair whose aim is to produce competitive self-interested individuals vying for their own material and ideological gain” (Giroux, as cited in Mohanty, 2003, p. 184). Corporations have quickly coopted this moral imperative of consumption habits, both by offering products that enable self-branding through consumer goods and by asking consumers to engage in activism that paints individual acts of consumption as the solution to inequities in the market system.

This model of social change provides individual solutions to collective issues of inequality and injustice, and makes shopping an appropriate substitute for legally enforceable corporate codes of conduct. Cause marketing and ethical consumption campaigns are largely geared toward women consumers, as marketers claim women are most likely to be influenced by prosocial advertising messages (Schowalter, 2011). Women are disproportionately the subject of and the marketing demographic for such

campaigns in ways that make women's lives, women's activism, and women's citizenship opportunities into palatable marketing strategies that allow corporations to compete for financial advantage in the marketplace of philanthropy. The commodification of women's empowerment activism has taken several forms as corporations find new ways to draw women consumers into their social responsibility campaigns.

One such model of women's citizenship enabled by commodity activism involves providing women and girls with a mutually constitutive relationship between conformity and resistance. In this model, media represent counter-hegemonic images of strong female characters, and simultaneously encourage girls to be active consumers of this image of empowerment via commodity flows that benefit the corporate bottom line (Banet-Weiser, 2004). For example, girls are encouraged to enact visions of female empowerment by purchasing shirts with girl power slogans, not by engaging in activism that challenges the male-centric media environment. This model grants citizenship to those who can afford the commodities that position them as pro-women activists, which limits possibilities for such expression to those who have the disposable income to increase corporate profits (Banet-Weiser, 2004).

Samantha King (2003) and Jo Littler (2008) further explore how this emphasis on commodity fueled activism ties good citizenship to publicly mediated philanthropic acts. King (2003; 2006) argues that the Race for the Cure and Pink Ribbons breast cancer initiatives encourage citizens to be responsible for themselves and their communities through highly visible volunteer activities. These activities often include raising money for nonprofit organizations that have stepped in to provide social welfare services that

were privatized through neoliberal policies. The problem with this model, according to King, is that it discourages women who attend these events from thinking about the U.S. as a site of struggle. Instead of fighting to fix the institutionalized forms of racist, sexist, and classist inequality that pervade neoliberal societies, women attendees are encouraged to believe that raising money, corporate philanthropy, and the power of collective positive thinking will solve health problems. Thus health problems become disarticulated from the contexts of inequality from which they emerge. This encourages a form of citizenship that simultaneously discourages legally binding reform efforts and limits government's responsibility for providing social services to citizens.

Littler (2008) expands this critique of corporate philanthropy to include charity work that occurs within celebrity culture. In describing common celebrity-driven charity tactics such as camera tours of poverty-stricken villages, Littler shows how celebrity involvement in various charity work benefits the celebrity brand more than it benefits recipients of such attention. In an era where celebrities' falls from grace make for common headline material, rising above the fray by positioning the celebrity brand as one that "gives back" often results in material benefits to the celebrity (Littler, 2008).

Additionally, this model of philanthropy constructs the ideal recipients of aid in ways that are in line with the neoliberal model. Good philanthropic citizens are those who want to use their charity-fueled empowerment to advocate for individualized solutions to systemic crises of capitalism. For example, both the *10,000 Women* and *Girl Effect* projects attempt to empower consumers in the U.S. to get involved with the campaigns because they view doing so as a way to build brand loyalty and long-term sales, and this type of advocacy work often substitutes purchasing products or attending charity events

for types of activism that might change the means of production (Murphy, 2009; Marquis et al., 2010). This logic suggests that if citizens throw enough private capital and media attention in the direction of causes like world hunger and women's education, then there is no need to address the ways that corporations and celebrity culture encourage cultures of consumption that increase the prevalence of world hunger and other inequalities in the first place (Littler, 2009). When powerful brands work to pull attention toward problems that can be solved through purchasing decisions and sensational media attention, governments can continue to ignore the ways that corporate deregulation (including deregulation of media corporations and of corporate-driven globalization) contributes to the problem.

An increasing number of corporations and transnational brands tie corporate social responsibility campaigns to profit-producing business plans, highlighting the neoliberal mandate that acts of virtue turn a profit. Cause market branding works similarly to neoliberal governance in that citizen consumers are not encouraged to adopt any one type of activism, but brand managers provide a framework that makes particular visions of involvement more likely to flourish (Ouellette, 2012). Often this path calls on ethical citizens to engage in acts of consumption or crowdsourcing that generates a tangible value for the brand. The brand then "becomes not only a governing device but also an instrument for channeling the work of consumers and brand communities...into a hyper-socialized, de-territorialized factory" that provides free labor to the branding campaign (Ouellette, 2012, p. 69). In this way, "social justice transforms into yet another strategic venture to secure the corporate bottom line" (Mukherjee & Banet-Weiser, 2012, p. 10).

Campaigns such as the *10,000 Women* and *Girl Effect* projects fuse this emphasis on self-branding and corporate branding in a variety of ways. In both projects, aid recipients are given resources such as trips to New York to meet with major retail stores or media coverage of their business plans if the corporation can use their personalized narrative in public relations materials. However, there is a large power differential between corporations who have abundant resources and women whose access to those resources is contingent on whether corporations can use their narrative to further their own business-related goals. Women in this situation can, of course, freely choose whether they want to brand themselves in this way, but the consequences of not doing so can be severe. Conversely, women in the Global North who represent the primary audience for such media campaigns are more likely to use branded materials to show their public support for particular incarnations of philanthropy. By showing public support via Facebook “likes” or wearing shirts emblazoned with charity logos, women in the Global North engage in self-branding that allows them to market themselves as socially responsible citizens while simultaneously offering positive publicity and consumer loyalty to the parent company.

However, this vision of citizenship largely focuses on corporate attempts to attract loyal consumers in highly developed economies such as the United States. The ideas of citizenship offered to women and girls in the Global South (who are often the subjects of such interventions) look quite different. Instead of offering women and girls in the Global South autonomy over their lives and a voice in what types of aid interventions are most necessary, campaigns often relegate them to roles as submissive recipients of aid from empowered western saviors. For example, the Product (RED) campaign to fight HIV and

AIDS in Africa incites corporations to ask consumers in the Global North to purchase products emblazoned with the umbrella philanthropy's logo, with a portion of the sales going to AIDS medications for poor women and children in Africa. In their analysis of the campaign, Lisa Richey and Stefano Ponte (2011) argue that

RED, with its glam and “hard commerce” approach to combating moral wrongs, promotes a consumer based salvation relation in which westerners are actors and Africans are acted upon... [This campaign] resembles most closely perhaps the contemporary “Save Darfur” campaign in its creation of the helpless African and the compassionate Western helper. (p. 83)

The *10,000 Women* and *Girl Effect* projects are similar in that they offer a similar “savior complex” to consumers in the Global North by suggesting that sharing online videos and attending fashion shows can result in major changes in world poverty. For example, a *Girl Effect* Facebook post suggested that changing the world can be as easy as making homemade stickers featuring the campaign logo and placing them on a water bottle.

As in the Product (RED) campaign, the case studies included in this research offer a global vision of consciousness-raising aimed at educating consumers in the Global North about the plight of women and girls in the Global South. However, unlike the (RED) campaign, they do so through offering such consumers a branded philanthropic experience, not by offering branded material goods. These experiences involve creating (not buying) branded products, coming together to discuss issues facing women in the Global South (often with little knowledge about the actual conditions of life in these spaces), and using social networking to spread corporate narratives about individual women and girls who have been recipients of such aid. These narratives include stories

painting particular women and girls as being deserving of international aid and success stories highlighting individual women and girls who have achieved the vision of success supported by the corporate intervention.

Because corporate marketing personnel write these narratives, it is perhaps not surprising that they lack critiques of capitalism or global imperialism—both key developments leading to the impoverishment of women and girls—and the resulting efforts by wealthy donors in the Global North to “save” such people. Instead, the consciousness raising encouraged in these spaces focuses on definitions of the problem that are easily solved with consumer-based solutions that empower individuals in the Global North with opportunities to feel that they are part of the solution to global poverty, regardless of whether their interventions make a difference. In order to achieve this desired simplified state of consciousness-raising, marketing documents for the case studies included in this research discuss problems of global poverty as stable and unified across geographical, national, cultural, and socio-economic boundaries, even though they discuss philanthropic programs in countries with vastly different compositions. For example, one marketing brochure for the *10,000 Women* campaign states that “female education can lead not only to increased revenues and job creation, but also to healthier, better educated families and, ultimately, more prosperous communities and nations” (Brochure, 2009, p. 3). It goes on to provide individualized narratives for success, including the story of Christine, a woman from Liberia who started a nail and hair salon in a refugee camp in Ghana and who used the information and financial assistance from her business schooling to renovate, expand, and decorate her shop (Brochure, 2010).

The consciousness raising that happens in this space eschews discussions of the complex and interlocking contributors to poverty or to the violence that would lead to the necessity of a refugee camp, for example, instead favoring descriptions of the issues that demand individual and/or consumer-based solutions. Corporate philanthropy that uses such marketing language to sell potential consumers on the social responsibility of business has not helped consumers understand how materialism and overconsumption contribute to global poverty, including how consumers in the Global North benefit “from the exploitation and oppression of women and men globally” (hooks, 2000, p. 161). This benefit comes largely from what Annie Leonard (2010) calls the externalized costs—the “unintended or uncompensated loss in the welfare of one party resulting from an activity by another party” (p. xxxii)—of the goods we purchase. For example, when we buy a shirt emblazoned with the pink ribbon logo, we are often unaware of indirect costs such as pollution from garment factories and health complications from a lack of affordable medical care associated with production and distribution of the product. The uncompensated costs benefit consumers and producers who pay lower prices for these goods, but come at severe costs for workers and residents in the Global South who must live with these negative consequences of consumption. Perhaps this type of robust information would be too much to ask from an entity that is legally obligated to privilege profit as its top priority. However, as I show in the extended case studies of these campaigns, corporations now actively direct citizens away from such information using a plethora of misleading tactics.

Additionally, the generalizations offered in these corporate materials paint women who lack access to education as a monolithic group who will experience similar benefits

despite major geographic, social, cultural and national differences in their lived experiences. One major problem with doing so

is that it assumes an ahistorical, universal unity between women based on a generalized notion of their subordination. Instead of analytically demonstrating the production of women as socioeconomic political groups within particular contexts, this analytical move limits the definition of the female subject to gender identity, completely bypassing social class and ethnic identities... Such simplistic formulations are historically deductive; they are also ineffectual in designing strategies to combat oppressions. (Mohanty, 2003, p. 31)

As I have suggested above, women experience their social worlds in vastly different ways, especially in regard to how corporate marketing institutions hail them to participate in global philanthropy. The documents paint a clear link between wealthy donors in the Global North, who are encouraged to participate using excess resources of time and money, and impoverished women in the Global South, who are encouraged to toe the line about the benefits of entrepreneurial business practices and show enthusiasm for capitalism as a condition of receiving aid. Corporate marketing materials rely on “an appropriation of [women’s] singular individuality to fit the generalizing categories of ‘our’ analysis,” and as such, these materials are “an assault on their integrity and on their identity” (Lazreg, 1988, p. 98).

One aspect of such analysis is that individual women are called to testify about their experiences of success, and in doing so, they are often painted as spokespersons for entire populations of women living in poverty. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1990) comments on her experience with this phenomenon, stating that such women are

perceived as tokens who are included in discussions as a way of dismissing larger concerns. She states:

I am constantly invited to things so that I will present the Third World point of view; when you are perceived as a token, you are also silenced in a certain way because, as you say, if you have been brought there it has been covered, they needn't worry about it anymore, you salve their conscience. (p. 61)

In much the same way, individual women who are asked to attend corporate press events or who are highlighted in corporate press materials because of their individual successes serve as conduits for those who benefit from global exploitation, helping corporations rid their conscience of guilt they might otherwise experience.

The push for education, entrepreneurship, and capitalist intervention highlights the “Americanization” of global governance, encouraging an “unstated assumption that U.S. corporate culture is the norm and ideal that feminists around the world strive for” (Mohanty, 2003, p. 6). Though philanthropic marketing materials often paint the problem of poverty as one that impacts “distant others” far outside generous coffers of the United States, poverty and other forms of inequality and oppression are as common within the U.S. borders as in many countries in the Global South. In an analysis of this phenomenon, Martha Nussbaum (2011) shows how Vasanti, a microcredit recipient in India who overcame immense challenges on the road to financial independence, might be just as likely to suffer similar circumstances if she lived in the U.S. She writes:

Inner-city schools in this country, however, often fail to deliver even functional literacy to their students, and at higher levels of education alarming inequalities in access remain. The experience of domestic violence is probably as common in the

United States as it is in India, studies show, and strategies to combat it are still insufficient, despite increased public awareness of the problem and efforts by legal activists. Inequalities in health care and nutrition are ubiquitous in the United States, and this failure is unconscionable, given our nation's great wealth.

(p. 16)

The U.S. suffers from many of the same problems media organizations project onto the global community, particularly regions that are comparatively less economically developed and industrialized. This is not to say we should ignore such issues in the international community, but instead that the vision of U.S. corporations as infallible saviors of the international community that create efficient and privatized social services is not yet realized within its own borders. Richey and Ponte (2011) suggest this trend will continue to grow for two main reasons: first, corporations that launch global philanthropic campaigns are given the opportunity to set the framework for such issues without worrying about criticism from beneficiaries, and second, there is less accountability in many recipient communities, meaning setbacks and failures are not likely to draw global media attention.

### **Global Development and Philanthrocapitalism**

As the research above suggests, the push for virtuous acts to turn a profit is an unprecedented development of neoliberalism, and one whose popularity is changing the way corporations implement branding strategies aimed at women. My dissertation expands this research to incorporate a transnational perspective, arguing that unpacking corporate-driven media narratives illuminates how these institutions determine who is worthy of aid and why within an international context. Both Nike and Goldman Sachs

created a number of resources (press materials, brochures, web pages, and social media sites) through which they relay information about program success stories, samples of exemplar third-party programs they selected to receive funding, and information for investors detailing why they should get involved. These materials exist alongside executive interviews, press conferences, social media campaigns and news articles that detail the types of activism corporations hope to spark through these campaigns.

Women of color living in the Global South—the subject of these international aid documents—have much at stake in how transnational corporations write these narratives. First, these documents help to define the problems associated with a lack of schooling and suggest that small amounts of money spent on keeping women and girls in school can have a major economic impact, even without any other changes. Because corporations do not use women’s voices when defining the global issues that impact their daily lives, women are profoundly impacted by the way the international community thinks about such issues and by the solutions that stem from such definitions. Second, these documents highlight the preferred paths women will take once they receive this corporate-driven education. The *10,000 Women* and *Girl Effect* philanthropic models offer funding to a limited number of organizations that apply for aid dollars, and they often highlight preferred interventions and preferred outcomes in marketing materials. By choosing to fund programs that offer women and girls U.S.-centric opportunities in business and political involvement, these programs help to shape the political possibilities available post-intervention. Lastly, these documents highlight the extent to which recipients’ voices are ignored within international philanthropy, even in cases where such accounts are plentiful. For example, as I show in Chapter 4, the Nike Foundation

conducted an ethnographic study in which they asked women and girls about solutions to their oppression that would make substantial changes in their lived experiences. Girls and researcher featured in the Nike Foundation reports called for systemic solutions to alleviate widespread poverty, but they were replaced with individualized accounts of poverty and success stories of women who persevered through difficult circumstances thanks to increased educational access.

Marketing materials in this project help to construct particular paths to women's involvement in the public sphere. Women are encouraged to participate through attending schools, opening and expanding businesses, and giving their earnings back to their communities. Additionally, these large global charity expenditures often include for-profit opportunities for corporations. For example, women and girls can purchase branded products such as cookies or toolkits and secure high-interest loans to start or expand a business. This type of philanthrocapitalist program serves as a means of governance that affects the ways global communities conceptualize and develop avenues for women's citizenship. While women are still technically able to engage in or fight for a wide range of activities, they are actively pushed to participate in activities that expand profit for corporations because such activities are often widely available, well funded, and have the resources needed to ensure success. Although corporate social responsibility has long been used as a rationale for expanding neoliberal policies that aim to privatize social and economic practices previously under the purview of the state, I argue that the Goldman Sachs and Nike campaigns are significant as public-private partnerships that enable corporations to define avenues available for women's citizenship and that privilege corporate expansion into developing regions as they subordinate the needs of

the women they profess to serve. To reach these conclusions, I engage in a multi-methodological approach that reveals multiple sites where power differentials exist between corporate-governance partnerships and the women and girls who interact with and through the resulting campaigns.

## **Methods**

The research chapters that compose this dissertation represent a fusion of three methodological frameworks: discourse analysis, feminist political economy analysis of media, and transnational feminism and development studies. Additionally, I situate my analysis within a personal and professional commitment to transnational feminist inquiry that aims to address the unequal relationships women in the global community have to social and political power.

Foucauldian discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis begin from the perspective that within a given society, some categories of thinking become normalized and unquestioned (i.e. they become an accepted discourse about a particular subject) while others are marginalized. Scholars engaging in this method must then ask what is normalized as “truth,” how truth acquires its status, and how this truth is constructed and mobilized within a particular cultural and historical moment—what Foucault calls a “regime of truth” (Foucault, 1972; Foucault, 1977; O’Farrel, 2005). What counts as “truth” or “knowledge” about a particular subject is intimately tied to notions of power, whereby those with greater access to resources such as money, knowledge, or communication media have a greater ability to shape the conversation (van Dijk, 2001). The systems of language and meanings used to describe a particular truth “do not neutrally reflect our world, identities, and social relations but, rather, play an active role

in creating and changing them” (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 2). Although Foucault was hesitant to delineate an exact research method, the tradition of discourse analysis now associated with him generally involves historical inquiry, analysis of power, and a commitment to resisting social inequality (Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine, 2008).

Foucault’s work highlights the importance of historical inquiry, arguing that “truth” is a historically and culturally situated category (O’Farrel, 2005). In this method, discourse is analyzed and contextualized historically in order to unmask how ever-changing relations of power create a “tangled knot of shifting meanings, definitions and interested parties over periods of time” (Powers, 2007, p. 26). Once unmasked, these shifts in meaning threaten to denaturalize the taken-for-granted discourses in a given society by showing what once was and possibilities for additional changes in the future. This historical inquiry is particularly useful in critical policy analyses that investigate the ever-changing relationship between cultural structures of governance and related discursive practices. For example, in Chapter 2 of this dissertation I use this guiding principle in my attempt to uncover the prominent political and economic systems of governance in existence before philanthrocapitalism in order to denaturalize this facet of the current neoliberal order. I contend that policies that both constitute philanthrocapitalism and are constituted by it aid in shaping a discursive formation that governs the appropriate actions for corporations, governance organizations, and global citizens.

What counts as knowledge “is always shaped by political, social and historical factors,” so discourse analysis must “examine the relationship between knowledge and the factors that produce and constrain it” (O’Farrell, 2005, p. 54). Such factors include

not only discursive practices that govern how cultures communicate about particular issues, but also institutional constraints that result from the structure of political and media systems (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002). For example, U.S. media are funded through advertising dollars, so they are more likely to publish and air stories that offer consumer-oriented messages that contribute to a buying mood (Herman and Chomsky, 2002). Additionally, political and media elites have greater access to communicative resources, which often translates into greater power to shape the discourse around a particular issue (van Dijk, 2001). Critical discourse analysis thus asks questions about whose access to power resources and how unequal access leads to broader forms of inequality.

Scholars engaging in this method study “the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (van Dijk, 2001, p. 352). Here critical discourse analysts echo Foucault, who views power and what counts as knowledge in a given society as necessarily connected. He argues that “no form of knowledge emerges independently of complex networks of power and that the exercise of power produces certain types of knowledge” (O’Farrell, 2005, p. 101). The goal of discourse analysis, then, is to expose the regimes of truth and power that circulate within a given society and around a particular discursive formation, and to attempt to map how these regimes of power are connected to the discourse circulating in a given historical moment.

Critical discourse analysis is an engaged form of scholarship that makes an intervention in discursive practices by unmasking the power relations that produce particular forms of knowledge. By denaturalizing the discursive formation and asking

what other practices might be possible or desirable, the work of discourse analysis potentially reshapes what counts as knowledge around a particular issue. Social justice is one goal of this method, as scholars engaging in this work attempt to challenge unequal power relations that construct and are constructed by asymmetrical relationships within and between cultures.

Using this methodological framework, I conduct a discourse analysis of campaign materials such as brochures, posters, press releases, and internal studies—including corporately funded research about the ease and profitability of educational investments in women and girls—to highlight how the philanthrocapitalist campaigns in question are discussed in legacy and social media. I pair this with analysis of national and international policy regarding educational access, women’s rights, and transnational corporate policy within governance organizations. My central questions in this analysis are (1) how corporations and international governance organizations justify their involvement in philanthrocapitalist educational interventions; (2) how these institutions define the ideal recipients of these interventions; and (3) how their altruistic goals translate into “awareness” about issues and solutions. These resources shed light on how corporations shape the discourse about issues of gendered intergenerational poverty and lack of educational access *on behalf of* women of color, and how they use access to communicative resources to shape the discourse around these issues in ways that may silence the voices of the women and girls these programs serve.

Control over communicative resources such as mass media and social media is a central concern of this project, as media coverage plays a key role in shaping public perceptions about social issues (Boycoff, 2007). Media coverage of events and issues

initiates and perpetuates what counts as knowledge about subjects and communicates values, biases, and appropriate codes of conduct for individuals in a society (Herman & Chomsky, 2002). Far from being an objective arbitrator of fact, news stories should be considered “partial, selective, and ideological narratives” that reinforces particular viewpoints, most often those of political and economic elites (Vavrus, 2002, p. 31). This framing stems in large part from the ownership structure of U.S.-based media corporations, which are characterized by increasing conglomeration and commercialization in a quest for increasing profits. Because the majority of U.S. media outlets are owned by corporations that benefit from the expansion of neoliberal policies, information perpetuated by mainstream media networks “cannot produce significant challenges to the economic and political system that have made them the extremely profitable organizations the media are today” (Vavrus, 2002, p. 31). In this way, media serve as technologies of power that reinforce the neoliberal paradigm by deflecting attention away from information that might shed light on the inequality exacerbated by the neoliberal social order. While media organizations provide a platform through which for-profit philanthropic organizations define their work, they are less apt to provide similar space for people in the Global South to discuss the interlocking contributors to their economic, social, and political marginalization.

Political economy analyses question the role media economics play in “enabling and constraining meanings that emerge” within stories created and disseminated by media outlets (Vavrus, 2012, p. 8). U.S. media corporations exist to earn profits and share their successes with shareholders, so it is little surprise that research consistently shows a tendency for mainstream outlets to privilege stories featuring perspectives popular among

the young, wealthy, white audiences most important to advertisers (Bagdikian, 2000; McChesney, 2008; Vavrus, 2012). Feminist political economy, then, aims to uncover the ways that media ownership contributes to the privileging of voices that advance neoliberal and consumer-oriented ideals and an active suppression of those that challenge these tenets.

My analysis focuses on how everyday discourse about the self-evident benefits of corporate philanthrocapitalism serves to reproduce the patriarchal domination of women and girls in the Global South. The media texts I analyze in subsequent chapters<sup>5</sup> reinforce “definitions of womanhood, feminist politics, race, and power” that are not especially threatening to the white, masculinist, wealthy hegemonic order (Vavrus, 2002, p. 15). Specifically, I analyze the ways in which media constructions of public-private partnerships serve to construct an ideal woman citizen of globalization as one who actively reinforces profitable corporate messages through her personal story of triumph. I am especially concerned with how the corporate media system aids and restricts the conversation about women’s access to education and to positions of power more generally.

The bulk of my analysis focuses on media narratives produced by corporate media outlets, both in mainstream news sources and in social media spaces created and operated by corporate brands. Much of this content is produced and disseminated by U.S.-based transnational corporations and is aimed at women like myself: white, middle-class, educated, professional women who often engage in philanthropic activities in their leisure time. This study explores how corporations construct media narratives that feature unprivileged women and girls in the Global South and package this content for privileged

women in the Global North. While I focus the analysis on U.S. media coverage, I include voices from women in the Global South and from transnational feminists to highlight how such perspectives are intentionally excluded from the conversations surrounding global philanthropy. I strive to highlight how perspectives from the Global North “are not always right or the best ways” to understand the world; instead, I hope to complicate the limited corporate media perspectives in order to “enter into the democratic, pluricentral global dialogues” that attempt to change the unidirectional focus of philanthrocapitalist development (Harding, 2008, p. 5).

The philanthropic media complex exacerbates what bell hooks calls the “white supremacist capitalist patriarchy,” or the interlocking string of privileges those in power use to remain atop the social hierarchy (hooks, 1994). I engage with transnational development scholars who challenge this hierarchy. For example, Chandra Mohanty’s (2003) research questions the logic of philanthrocapitalism by showing how privatized education constitutes citizenship through the lens of the market and falsely conflates access to markets with access to power and rights. Other transnational feminist scholars highlight the ways that philanthrocapitalist development programs encourage a vision of empowerment that actually limits access to communicative resources and makes collective action difficult (Parpart et al., 2002).

### **Chapter Outlines**

To support my argument that global philanthropic partnerships such as the *Girl Effect* and *10,000 Women* campaigns locate women’s value in relation to their profit potential and deflect women’s organizing efforts into those that aid brand awareness, I have organized my dissertation into three analysis chapters. The next chapter traces the

historical trajectory of public-private partnerships, paying particular attention to corporations that have repeatedly violated human rights standards in poor nations and that have teamed with the international governance organizations charged with policing unethical corporate conduct to focus on issues of inequality facing women in the Global South. I trace the trajectory of corporate involvement in international governance organizations and show how their global philanthropic marketing initiatives have constituted the ideal citizens of economic development during the last several decades. In these materials, corporations and citizens of the Global North are constructed as wealthy white saviors of women and girls in the Global South. Conversely, women and girls in the Global South are constituted in these initiatives as ideal recipients of aid dollars so long as they abide by particular pro-capitalist principles—often requiring that they remain silent about the very policies that impoverish their communities in the first place. In this chapter, I argue that international aid serves as a form of gendered global governance that directs how and why individuals, corporations, and governance organizations engage in practices of citizenship.

The third and fourth chapters of this project offer case studies of the Goldman Sachs *10,000 Women* project and the Nike Foundation *Girl Effect* campaign, the two most prominent philanthropic partnerships between U.S.-based transnational corporations and international governance organizations. As stated above, both campaigns are touted in business publications as exemplars of how for-profit capitalism can benefit businesses, and both have received substantial praise from the U.S. State Department. Together, these models of global philanthrocapitalism serve as templates for how corporations can receive tangible and intangible benefits from aiding educational privatization on a global

scale. The internal publications, marketing materials, social media campaigns, and uptake in mainstream media highlight both the ubiquity of the campaigns in global business literature, as well as how corporations can aid in constructing particular populations as being worthy of international aid dollars.

Chapter 3 highlights Goldman Sachs' efforts to use the *10,000 Women* campaign as a sophisticated public relations effort that simultaneously deflects negative attention from the company's questionable business practices and helps to spread pro-capitalist messages in the Global South. This program offers recipients the education and resources necessary to participate in a vision of global capitalism that disproportionately benefits Goldman Sachs and discourages conversations about the interlocking reasons for the gendered intergenerational poverty these corporate recipients face. This model of philanthrocapitalism highlights how seemingly altruistic ideas, such as educating women in the Global South, can be co-opted by transnational corporations as part of a global business expansion program that aims to generate profits and silence critics of economic-driven globalization while providing altruistic motivations for U.S. consumer behavior.

Whereas Goldman Sachs uses traditional media and public relations efforts such as press conferences, marketing brochures, and interviews in business journals to inform influential business leaders about their benevolent deeds, the *Girl Effect* campaign uses social media platforms to engage middle-class consumers in the Global North in their effort. Chapter 4 focuses on the *Girl Effect's* social media campaign, highlighting how social media activism encouraged by the campaign defines women in the Global North as saviors for black and brown women living in the Global South. This campaign aimed encourages consumers in the Global North to feel good about making a difference, a feat

they achieve by placing branded stickers on their water bottles and sharing online videos. I argue that this campaign encourages a form of branded citizenship in the Global North, whereby individuals participate using branded campaign resources and engage in individualized therapeutic acts of caregiving in their quest for self-empowerment. In contrast, women in the Global South are included as props in viral videos and images, earning money for charities only when they successfully appeal to for-profit philanthropic funding models.

I conclude with an analysis of how such programs redefine the ideal active citizens and the ideal citizens of globalization. This dissertation and these case studies suggest that access to funding, resources, education, and avenues to power are contingent upon whether women and girls adhere to guidelines set forth by the multinational corporate funding initiatives. This dissertation concludes that for-profit philanthropy focusing on women and girls leads to tangible and intangible benefits for powerful corporations; this is problematic because it denies women and girls in the Global South full personhood and suggests that women and girls are valuable solely for generating revenue. Lifting some women and girls out of the cycle of poverty they experience is a good thing, but doing so in the service of advancing the very policies that contribute to this poverty is not. As such, this project opposes philanthrocapitalist literature claiming that a profit motive and an altruistic motive can co-exist. Instead, I argue that this profit motive is detrimental to girls, women, and communities because it advances inequality and denies recipients avenues to challenge the problematic tenets of capitalism that impoverish their communities. To analyze this complex phenomenon, in the next chapter I begin a historical analysis that traces the trajectory of how transnational corporations

came to have a say in how international governance organizations engage in funding and policy decisions.

## Chapter 2

### **“A Deal With The Devil”: International Governance Organizations, Transnational Corporations, and Investments in Women**

*“Please rest assured that, when business looks to play its part in making this world a better place, the United Nations is open for business, and open to business.” –Louise Frechette, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, October 13, 2004*

Throughout the 1990s, Nike made headlines for signing several high profile athletes to multi-million dollar endorsement contracts, including stars such as Tiger Woods, Michael Jordan, and the entire Brazilian World Cup championship team (“History and Heritage,” 2013). However, the immense profit margins that enabled these large investments also became the subject of countless headlines when labor rights activists published reports stating that the people producing Nike products worked in extremely substandard conditions, were victims of abuse from superiors, and often incurred health complications resulting from environmental toxins inside the factories. In response to the controversy, Nike launched a multi-media campaign using press releases, newspaper editorials, and advertisements to disseminate false and misleading statements about their actual practices (Bigge, 2004). In short, executives attempted to deflect attention away from the issues by falsely claiming that their factories adhered to local and international labor standards. So when Nike’s CEO Phil Knight posed for photographs with United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan during a press conference in July 2000 to support a public-private partnership program for ethical global business practices, Nike was back in the news as reporters, researchers, and activists speculated about why an organization tasked with setting international human rights standards would want to

partner with a corporation known for some of the gravest human rights violations of the previous decade.

Nike was not the only multinational corporation to support Annan's mission, which is formally called the United Nations Global Compact. In fact, Annan posed for similar photos with executives from Royal Dutch Shell, BP Amoco, and "a host of other companies well known for their environmental, labor rights, and/or human rights transgressions" (Bruno & Karliner, 2002, p. 46). He told the executives that they should not wait for every government to introduce legislation outlawing unethical corporate practices, but instead corporations should "make sure that in your own corporate practices you uphold and respect human rights' and that you are not yourselves complicit in human rights abuses" (as cited in Oshionebo, 2007, p. 14). The Compact aimed to encourage corporations to comply with a list of ten<sup>6</sup> guiding principles relating to human rights, labor, environmental, and anti-corruption standards regardless of whether the countries in which they operate demand such conduct.

However, Annan's goal of including corporations that are regularly accused of violating human rights has been roundly criticized because UN policies are not legally enforceable and corporations do not have to comply in order reap the benefits of the partnership. Because there is no enforcement mechanism, companies can "sign onto the Global Compact and then violate every one of the nine principles with impunity" (Bigge, 2004, p. 12). Thus, transnational corporations have reason to want to sign on to the Compact: they can reap the rewards of marketing their social responsibility to potential consumers and clients regardless whether they actually abide by any such standards (Bradford, 2012). Both the United Nations and the World Bank partner with corporations

such as Nike, Goldman Sachs, Starbucks, and McDonalds, all of which continue to engage in business practices that cause and/or enable grave human rights violations (Nourafchan, 2011). In fact, corporations are often involved in writing the very policies meant to address their own violations (Lipschultz and Rowe, 2005), which means there is a likely conflict of interest between their policies and the goals of humanitarian organizations.

This chapter provides a historical overview of policies and procedures that have led to the seemingly incompatible relationships between transnational corporations and international governance organizations, paying particular attention to how these entities have come to collaborate on projects such as the *10,000 Women* and *Girl Effect* case studies included in this dissertation. I provide an overview of how the evolution of international governance policies led to the current era in which corporations that contribute to human rights violations are able to co-brand their corporate social responsibility campaigns with the very organizations that aim to discourage such conduct. Because there is a major push by both corporations and international governance organizations to fund programs that specifically target women and girls (both by funding programs aimed at women and girls in the Global South and by marketing corporate involvement to consumers in the Global North), I pay particular attention to spaces where these policies and programs support gender-based interventions.

The rise in funding for programs aimed at women and girls is not without merit. Girls account for 50 million of the 72 million children not enrolled in primary school, two-thirds of the 800 million people who lack basic literacy skills, and 70 percent of the world's poorest one billion people ("Global Poverty Info Bank," n.d.). Additionally, girls

under the age of 25 account for one-fourth of the world's population, yet they receive just two percent of development aid dollars (Oberdorf, 2012). Both the for-profit and non-profit sectors have created new policies aimed at reversing these statistics, including issuing renewed calls for investments in women and girls as a means to steer economic development towards the path of gender equity. Several scholars who have studied the resulting investment practices state that these policies have not been helpful in reducing gendered global poverty (Zammit, 2003; Jain, 2005; Nussbaum, 2011). Their work is beneficial in that they expose programs that exacerbate the very inequalities their philanthropic activities aim to solve, and public pressure resulting from awareness of these problems has led to shifts in how international aid is administered (Bexell, 2012; Bradford, 2012).

For example, in the 1970s Nestle engaged in a self-promotional philanthropic project in which they provided new mothers and doctors free samples of infant formula and hired women to pose as nurses to “educate” women and doctors about the health benefits of formula (Baer, 1982). A watchdog organization exposed their campaign, showing that it was not only inaccurate (breastfeeding is associated with higher survival rates in the Global South and formula did not cure illnesses as Nestle insinuated it would) but it also failed to account for issues such as poor water quality. Women mixed formula with contaminated water, exposing babies to harmful bacteria that increased mortality rates (Krasny, 2012). This manufactured crisis led to an influx of non-profit funding to combat Nestle's harmful message and a new set of international standards for how companies can discuss breastfeeding alternatives in interpersonal and public settings. A series of research programs exposed similar unethical campaigns to “help” women in the

Global South, leading to small changes in how organizations engage in helping campaigns outside the U.S (Krasny, 2012).

This analysis takes a different angle, arguing instead that international aid serves as a form of gendered global governance that directs how and why individuals, corporations, and governance organizations engage in practices of citizenship. I trace the trajectory of corporate involvement in international governance organizations and show how their global philanthropic marketing initiatives have constituted what is widely considered to be the ideal recipients of economic development during the last several decades. I illustrate that corporations and citizens of the Global North are constructed as wealthy white saviors of women and girls in the Global South. Conversely, women and girls in the Global South are constituted in these initiatives as ideal recipients of aid dollars so long as they abide by particular pro-capitalist principles—often requiring that they remain silent about the very policies that impoverish their communities in the first place.

As capitalism spreads throughout the globe, the problems of and potential solutions to global inequalities permeate a variety of media, including marketing materials from corporations, policies written by international governance organizations, and commentary from researchers from a variety of disciplines. To trace the trajectory of corporate involvement in international aid programs aimed at women, I analyzed several types of documents from both the World Bank and the United Nations, including historical documents and timelines created by their internal archive staff, published policies, historical accounts of women's involvement as members and as aid recipients, and critiques of development policies from transnational feminist scholars. I also looked

at research from academic economists, political scientists, international development experts, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). I highlight how power manifests in these materials by examining who defines the problems, identifies potential solutions, and implements new policies.

### **Gendered Global Governmentality**

Because the ability to define problems and solutions to global development crises transcends traditional avenues of governance such as national laws and international governance charters, paying attention solely to enacted policies portrays only a partial view of how women and girls are encouraged to participate in international governance structures. I add another dimension to this narrative by showcasing how corporations discuss these issues in texts such as marketing pamphlets, promotional literature, and news stories about new initiatives. In describing the ideal candidates and the noteworthy achievements, these sources serve as blueprints for who can be involved and in what ways. As such, a governmentality framework is useful in that it enables a move away from questions about how governments attempt to overtly control citizens through discipline and towards a more diffuse conceptualization of governance that constitutes and fosters the ways that ideal citizens conduct themselves (Foucault, 1991).

Mitchell Dean (1999) defines this field of study as one that “examines the conditions under which regimes of practices come into being, are maintained and are transformed” (p. 21). Put differently, “good” citizens are encouraged to abide by a set of principles that are often not legally binding but are nevertheless constraining, and studies of governmentality trace how these principles are constructed, maintained, and transformed over time. Because governmentality entails a decreased emphasis on

repressive laws and overt forms of discipline, these studies examine alternative means by which citizens are encouraged to behave in preordained ways by those in power. This often takes the form of encouraging self-discipline and self-regulation, such as the impetus to regulate one's own finances so as to not be reliant on social welfare (Ouellette & Hay, 2008; Schowalter, 2012b). Citizens are also encouraged to conform to values that have become normalized, and those in power create "hegemonic discourses that naturalize normality" as a desired outcome (Lipshultz & Rowe, 2005, p. 15). For example, the hegemonic discourse surrounding social welfare in the United States encourages citizens to view welfare recipients as burdens to the free market system. Once established, pressure to avoid reliance on social programs comes from those inside the system as politicians espouse such views in political speeches, but it also comes from a diffuse range of spaces such as television shows (Ouellette & Hay, 2008), news articles (Schowalter, 2012b), and daily conversations. The ideal citizens of this model contribute to society "not primarily by being obedient, but by being free in specific ways" to make choices that are constructed and promoted by those who have greater access to regimes of power (Bexell, 2012, p. 391).

Foucault's work looks largely at the practices of governmentality within individual nations, but global political scholars Ronnie Lipschutz and James Rowe (2005) show that governmentality is an increasingly important means of global rule. The recent uprisings in Egypt, Syria, and Bahrain and the increase in drone attacks by the U.S. military suggest that coercion, physical repression and violence are still being used. However, major military powerhouses such as the U.S. have invested more in "soft power" tactics in recent years, including investments in pro-democracy news outlets and

funding for cinemas to ensure Hollywood movies project Western values to new audiences; the goal of such investments is to encourage behavior that makes nations more amenable to democratic forces (Gardels & Medavoy, 2009; Mirrlees, 2013).

Neoliberal governmentality serves as the primary means of global social regulation in that international political goals are justified and implemented via the logic of the market (Lipschutz & Rowe, 2005). The expansion of market power within the neoliberal paradigm generally coincides with a weakening of the state, which often results in deregulation, decreased access to social welfare, and a prevailing ideology that suggests private entities can deliver social services at a lower cost (Barnett & Weiss, 2008). In such systems, changes to social policy are justified because they will lead to a more efficient use of monetary investments, such as increased profit potentials for corporations or reduced costs for governments (Martin, 2002). Economic globalization expands the reach of this paradigm to all corners of the globe, which serves to normalize the presence of market logic, even in places where this logic has been detrimental to the health and well-being of local communities (Lipschutz & Rowe, 2005; Mosco, 2009).

The idealized and normalized paths of economic advancement available to women through corporate-governance partnerships highlight the ways women's global citizenship has been constituted throughout the evolution of these alliances. The governmentality framework shifts research away from how specific policies or programs have been implemented and instead highlights how women are encouraged to enact global citizenship and for whom this vision of citizenship is beneficial. Women are not disciplined into these paths solely using disciplinary measures such as physical violence or incarceration. Instead, women are given the freedom to contribute to governmental or

corporate projects so long as they do so through orchestrated visions of activism that tend to favor those in positions of power. This does not mean that policies aimed at women are free from disciplinary forms of repression, but rather that women can also experience increased access to particular freedoms such as education if they self-regulate their behavior in order to comply with that favored by corporate donors. For example, Malala Yousafzai received an extreme form of disciplinary repression when Taliban forces shot her at close range to silence her campaign to make schooling available to girls in Pakistan (Vaidyanathan, 2013). Since the shooting, the United Nations and other governance organizations have also used her story to publicize corporate-driven educational initiatives like the *Girl Effect*, which funds schools for girls who successfully complete the Nike Foundation's funding process. Because Malala's story is now used as a model for how to create corporate social responsibility campaigns, it serves to direct the behavior of both donors and recipients.

Additionally, this interplay between disciplinary mechanisms and governmentality surfaces when disputes about whether the United Nations and the World Bank should create legally binding principles or rely on voluntary compliance when instituting policies aimed at advancing global human rights standards. United Nations and World Bank policies are not currently legally enforceable, meaning that UN mandates are merely requests that participating countries comply. According to the UN website for the Global Compact:

The Global Compact is not a regulatory instrument—it does not “police,” enforce or measure the behavior or actions of companies. Rather, the Global Compact relies on public accountability, transparency and the enlightened self-interest of

companies, labour, and civil society to initiate and share substantive action in pursuing the principles upon which the Global Compact is based. (as cited in Lipschultz & Rowe, 2005, p. 157)

Legal scholar Kevin Jackson (2010) argues that compliance with these “soft law” policies shows the extent to which the international community agrees on minimum standards for responsible and ethical global behavior. Governments and corporations comply voluntarily in countries with active consumer markets in order to accumulate the reputational capital they need to compete in the global marketplace. This selective voluntary compliance “presupposes that international businesses are able to distinguish moral choices and then make them” (p. 46), but also suggests that corporations choose to ignore the moral dimension of their choices when cost-benefit analyses show little risk in violating rights.

UN officials have previously stated that the market incentives for companies to comply with these soft law policies will be sufficient to ensure cooperation (Bradford, 2012), when, as I will show, corporations have been adept at silencing criticism of their inconsistencies on issues such as human rights. Because the UN and the World Bank sell social welfare policies based on the idea that voluntary compliance will lead to reputational advantages, they “create the erroneous impression that human rights are not peremptory norms...that must be observed by everyone in society; rather, they become negotiable commodities between society and business” (Oshionebo, 2007, p. 19). Thus, these policies often highlight the overlapping considerations between disciplinary power and more diffuse systems of power in which corporations and governments are free to self-regulate.

The UN and the World Bank, in particular, have a long history of encouraging public support for their initiatives in hopes that awareness would lead to increased pressure on governments and corporations to comply with these initiatives. For example, in the 1940s, the Hollywood Democratic Committee worked with the UN by “lobbying the U.S. government and mobilizing public opinion to support ratification of the United Nations,” and similar public relations initiatives attempted to garner support for international financial organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Wilson, 2011, p. 67). As I will show, the public relations work surrounding these programs has evolved over the last several decades, moving from mobilizing voters to encouraging consumer citizens to feel good about the products they purchase on behalf of people in need in the developing world. The remaining sections of this chapter trace the trajectory of corporate partnerships within governance organizations, highlighting the major developments that have led to the current era in which the World Bank and the United Nations have partnered with corporations like Goldman Sachs and Nike to administer hundreds of millions of dollars of aid to women and girls in the Global South.

### **Structuring (and) Inequality**

The impetus to form United Nations and the World Bank stemmed from the international fear of war and recession that followed World War II. Members of the United Nations signed their official charter in 1945, setting in place the benevolent missions of facilitating peace and cooperation among nations and preserving human rights and dignity in the international community. However, the founding nations had already been working in a more informal capacity by that time, and one year earlier held

the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference (more commonly known as the Bretton Woods Conference) to formally create the World Bank and the IMF (Stiglitz, 2003). The World Bank works as the financial arm of the three international governance organizations, and their mission includes monitoring international financial relationships to prevent economic depression and poverty. The Bank creates international development policy, is the largest source of development finance in the world, and delivers more outside funding for education than any other global financial institution (Kane, 2008). The IMF sets exchange rate policies, monetary policies, and codes of conduct for financial transactions between member nations (Driscoll, 1996).

Despite their benevolent goals, the United Nations, the World Bank, and the IMF are regularly criticized for promoting neoliberal policies that have exacerbated global poverty and decreased living standards in the world's poorest countries (Stiglitz, 2003; Zammit, 2003; Kane, 2008, Nussbaum, 2011). This criticism (which infiltrates even works published by the United Nations and World Bank presses) shows that women are disproportionately impacted when nations are pushed deeper into poverty by such "aid" (Vavrus, 2003; Zammit, 2003). For example, the World Bank and the IMF enforced their long-running structural adjustment programs (SAPs)—a series of economic restructuring programs that aim to privatize industries, provide an influx of foreign capital and control, and remove social welfare programs such as health care and food subsidies that cut into profits—upon Jamaica in exchange for monetary aid. Foreign investments led to a sharp increase in poverty-wage factory jobs in the 1970s and 1980s, and a subsequent spike in unemployment when corporations moved factories to even less expensive countries in Southeast Asia in the early 1990s. The neoliberal policies inherent in the SAPs also

influenced the tourism industry, and the small family-owned resorts on Negril's white sand beaches were quickly replaced with large, all-inclusive resorts. Both the factories and the corporately owned resorts relied on women to consent to low-skill and low-wage labor, and 42 percent of women who worked in these jobs were heads of households who had no other means to support their families. The agreements between the World Bank, IMF, and heads of state in Jamaica disproportionately impacted women because "SAPs ignore the sexual division of labor (both at home and on the job) that is the cornerstone of a gendered labor force," and because SAP policies removed social welfare programs such as healthcare from women's jobs (Bolles, 2007, p. 222).

As stated, transnational corporations and international governance organizations have attempted to address these criticisms by launching co-branded corporate social responsibility projects in the Global South. The relationship between these entities has resulted in corporate social responsibility serving as a means of gendered global governance that disciplines women into particular expressions of citizenship if they want to be "saved" from poverty. Though a myriad of factors contribute to the evolution of these partnerships, the organizational structure of these institutions begins the inseparable ties between global efforts to expand women's access to rights and the globalization of market-driven politics.<sup>7</sup>

The United Nations, World Bank, and IMF are premised on powerful nations such as the United States making decisions with minimal input from the rest of the world. In fact, because the United States wields the most power among these organizations, the trio of governance organizations is often called the Washington Consensus, and this power manifests both in formal rules and unwritten practices. For starters, the U.S.

representative's vote in the World Bank counts for 16 percent of the total voting power, while many nations where aid is directed have 0.07 percent of a vote or less (Kane, 2008). The World Bank power further extends this voting power by customarily voting the United States nominee for organizational president into office without opposition. In fact, the U.S. has successfully nominated all 12 World Bank presidents, many of whom held powerful but controversial posts in business and government before taking office. Former Goldman Sachs executive Robert Zoellick served as the World Bank President from 2007 to 2012, beginning his tenure at the dawn of the global recession his corporation helped to create.<sup>8</sup> His predecessor, Paul Wolfowitz, served as the United States Deputy Secretary of Defense and presided over the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Then-president George W. Bush nominated him for the post in 2005, and his two-year stint from 2005 to 2007 was the shortest term of any World Bank president (Stiglitz, 2003; Kane, 2008). President Obama's 2012 nominee, Jim Yong Kim, was the first to experience strong challengers, but his nomination was confirmed "despite his lack of experience in finance and in managing an organisation as large as the World Bank" (Lobe, 2012, para. 7). This custom carries over to the IMF, where "under a 'gentlemen's agreement' between the US and Europe, a US national has held the top bank position and a European the managing directorship of its sister institution, the International Monetary Fund, ever since the two agencies were created" (para. 8).

Additionally, the U.S. remains the only country to have veto power over proposed resolutions (Kane, 2008). The U.S. uses this power to determine which projects receive funding. For example, in the early days of the World Bank, the U.S. State Department demanded that France remove communist representatives as a condition of receiving

reconstruction loans and vetoed a loan to Soviet-controlled Poland in 1947. In later years, the U.S. pressured Bank members to reject proposals from states that nationalized industries that could have stayed in the hands of private investors. This included rejecting an Egyptian proposal for the Aswan Dam after “Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal” and a series of loans to Chile “after the Allende government nationalized copper (the aid was reinstated quickly after General Pinochet seized power in a U.S.-backed coup in which Chile’s democratically elected president and thousands of other Chileans were killed” (Tabb, 2004, p. 194). Although the U.S. is able to use the World Bank as an extension of its own foreign policy agenda, it regularly asks the Bank to justify why the money it receives from the U.S. Congress is worthwhile. “The Bank reported in response that between 1993 and 1995 it had channeled nearly five billion dollars to U.S. companies. It continues to adjust its future lending in this direction out of fear of possible funding cuts” (Tabb, 2004, p. 194). In this way, the U.S. representatives use their position at the top of the organizational hierarchy to exert influence beyond its legal authority. By rewarding particular behaviors with increased access to money and resources, the U.S. is able to engage in practices of global governance that impact the ways in which the World Bank addresses global crises.

On paper, the United Nations is structured in a more egalitarian way. For instance, the United Nations uses a “one nation, one vote” policy to prevent any one nation from controlling the voting power. However, the United Nations has managed to maintain a well-documented history of silencing voices of vulnerable populations (Jain, 2005; Bexell, 2012). This is especially evident in the fact that nations receiving aid are not invited to participate in informational sessions about how corporate aid and general

business should be administered within their own borders. For example, “The Global Compact has not engaged host communities in Africa—who bear the brunt of anti-social behavior of [transnational corporations]—in its learning forums and dialogues even when issues directly affecting these communities are being discussed” (Oshionebo, 2007, p. 27). Instead, the power to implement these changes is in the hands of wealthy nations and corporations in the Global North that fund the projects.

### **Gendered Dimensions of Global Aid Policy**

The Eurocentric structure of the Washington consensus has also impacted how the organizations construct and implement programs intended to foster gender equality. In contrast to the League of Nations,<sup>9</sup> which did not allow gender-specific language in its founding documents, the United Nations included women in drafting the official charter, allowed gender-specific language and interventions, and created the Commission on the Status of Women within its first year. The founding members of this commission advocated for international policies that would expand women’s rights, including a 1946 mandate that all countries afford women the right to vote and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which mandates free primary education for boys as well as girls (Jain, 2005). In 1952, the UN went even further by adopting the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, which included three international principles for governing formal electoral politics:

- Article I: Women shall be entitled to vote in all elections on equal terms with men, without any discrimination.
- Article II: Women shall be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies, established by national law, on equal terms with men, without any discrimination.

- Article III: Women shall be entitled to hold public office and to exercise all public functions, established by national law, on equal terms with men, without any discrimination. (“Convention,” 1952)

The Commission believed that passing the Convention would pressure nations to establish legal equality for women, including nations in the Global North who had not yet implemented this goal. However, this pressure was not sufficient to change legal policies in most nations (Jain, 2005).

In the 1960s, the UN Commission on the Status of Women responded to this stagnation. They believed “the codification of legal rights of women needed to be supported by data and analysis of the extent to which discrimination against women existed, not only in law but in practice,” so they began collecting data on the status of women worldwide (“Short History,” n.d.). The Commission found that legal rights were not necessarily translating to improvements in women’s lived experiences, so they used their country-by-country data to advocate for significant expansions of women’s rights in voting,<sup>10</sup> marriage laws,<sup>11</sup> and economic rights.<sup>12</sup> As a result of this research, UN officials advocated for policies that coupled campaigns for legal changes with campaigns that address the social and cultural inequalities that prevent women from realizing their legal rights (Jain, 2005).

However, shortly thereafter, the United Nations shifted interventions toward funding private programs that addressed the social ills they hoped to remedy. For example, the “primary means of addressing the gendered dimensions of poverty” shifted away from constructing policies that mandated equality and toward funding non-profit programs that address “problems associated with underdevelopment, such as poverty,

illiteracy, and lack of access to vocational training and employment” (Jain, 2005, p. 50).

NGOs are increasingly responsible for implementing many World Bank programs as well:

From 1973 to 1988, NGOs were involved in about 15 (World) Bank projects a year. By 1990 that number had jumped to 89, or 40% of all new projects approved. There is no particular logic behind this transition; it seems to serve an ideological purpose rather than an economic one. There is no evidence to show that NGO service provision is cheaper than public provision. (Hall-Jones, 2006, para. 11)

While NGOs are responsible to their investors and to the people they claim to help, there are no legally binding international resolutions that regulate the conduct of NGOs or that provide consequences for NGOs that do not provide tangible benefits to these communities. In a sense, the UN outsourced their fight for women’s rights to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that “can bypass formal state mechanisms of accountability, and at the same time, substitute for state functions” (Kaldor, 2003, p. 21). Because the primary means of addressing the deeply entrenched gender inequality highlighted in studies conducted by the UN Commission on the Status of Women is to give money to NGOs, efforts to increase women’s access to basic rights received went largely unregulated.

Still, women’s organizations such as the Commission continued working within the UN to include women in international policies, including funding policies sponsored by the World Bank. In the 1970s, the UN Commission on the Status of Women formed the Women in Development (WID) program aimed at integrating women’s concerns into

national development agendas instead of handling them as separate issues or hoping that economic improvements would “trickle down” to women. Specifically, WID advocates argued for programs that provided training and education for women as part of basic economic development plans in hopes that this would prevent women from being excluded when countries modernized their technological and economic infrastructures (Vavrus, 2003). Under this rationale, education was deemed important because it would lead to increases in economic capacity, not because it was important for other forms of citizenship.

The WID program made some inroads but did not lead to noticeable increases in women’s access to economic resources, nor did it increase women’s access to other rights. As Frances Vavrus (2003) states, “The WID view did not challenge the basic tenets of modernization theory, such as its embrace of capitalism, its evolutionary view of social change, and its economic rationale for women’s schooling,” each of which has been shown to exacerbate the very inequalities the program aimed to correct (p. 27). Despite research showing that economic incentives for expanding formal schooling in the Global South made a negligible impact on overall rates of poverty and inequality, World Bank president Robert McNamara doubled its lending rate in 1969 under the pretense that they would fund educational advances and basic literacy in impoverished nations (“Historical Chronology,” 2006).

The UN and the World Bank policies and educational funding efforts of the 1960s ultimately failed to provide meaningful changes to the lives of women and girls living in poverty. The UN Commission on the Status of Women encouraged the General Assembly to name 1975 as International Women’s Year to “remind the international

community that discrimination against women, entrenched in law and deeply rooted in cultural beliefs, was a persistent problem in much of the world” and to “encourage Governments, NGOs and individuals to increase their efforts to promote equality between men and women” (“Short History,” n.d., p. 8). The Commission used the occasion to plan the World Conference of the International Women’s Year held in Mexico City in 1975, during which the 133 participating nations created the World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women’s Year. The UN responded by naming 1975-1985 the UN Decade for Women, setting in place a 10-year plan of action that legitimized institutionalized the international women’s movement (“Short History,” n.d.). The Commission organized additional conferences on the status of women in 1980 (Copenhagen), 1985 (Nairobi), and 1995 (Beijing).

Additionally, the UN expanded the WID agenda to include mandates for including women in education and training programs, credit opportunities, local loans for women’s health programs, and gender-based data gathering (Jain, 2005). In 1974, the World Bank published a book by researcher Hollis B. Chenery detailing why these mandates have been unsuccessful in decreasing gendered global poverty. Chenery (1974) writes that these types of programs aim to increase per capita income, but these small increases do very little to solve systemic issues that affect global poverty, including what was then a growing tendency for corporations to profit by exploiting workers in developing countries. Instead of continuing programs such as WID, Chenery advocated for income redistribution policies that direct some of the wealth created through economic growth to people living in poverty, especially in cases where wealth is redistributed away from global corporations and towards local farmers and laborers. After

publishing the book, the World Bank ignored its suggestions and continued funding programs that claimed to increase GDP and per-capita income regardless of how these programs impacted other factors that contribute to quality of life (Nussbaum, 2011). In 1978, World Bank President McNamara called for increased funding for agricultural development in rural areas, but dismissed redistribution policies by stating that, “the only feasible hope for reducing poverty is to assist the poor to become more productive” (“Historical Chronology,” 2006).

Several UN member nations opposed these economic development principles on the grounds that they amounted to economic imperialism and that they had devastating effects for women living in poverty (Zammit, 2003; Jain, 2005). The Nonaligned Movement (NAM) worked to bring these issues to light. NAM formed in 1961 as a group of 25 nations concerned about the Cold War arms race, and member nations (many of whom were also members of the United Nations) chose not to back either the United States or Russia (Jain, 2005). Membership increased in subsequent years, especially among nations in the Global South, and the organizational leadership used their strength in numbers to voice concerns about Western imperialism and colonialism. Unlike the Washington Consensus, NAM’s goal in fostering international development was “the welfare of the people and not growth of GDP” (Jain, 2005, p. 82). NAM was especially concerned with the inverse relationship between the amount of money spent to increase the prevalence and use of technology in developing nations and the status of women in these regions. At the time, international aid dollars funded technology and infrastructure such as new farm equipment and community processing facilities that impacted work traditionally performed by men. Work traditionally performed by women did not see

these improvements, forcing women to continue labor-intensive jobs such as subsistence farming with hand tools and fetching water from communal sources. This discriminatory funding pattern increased inequality in output, which further impoverished women in rural communities who were not able to sell their goods at the same rate and decreased women's status and value within the family ("Final Document," 1979; Jain, 2005).

To address these issues, NAM held a series of conferences focused on gendered inequality and economic oppression, culminating in a world conference on women and economic development in Baghdad in 1979. The conference, which several UN committees attended, focused on the ways that economic injustices stemming from colonialist and imperialist development policies impacted women's poverty. Participant nations attributed women's oppression to two main factors: "poverty, iniquitous unequal utilization and distribution of resources and power that characterize the world order" and "obsolete, irrational attitudes that thrive on inequalities of all types" ("Final Document," 1979, p. 7). Conference participants cited research showing that "for the majority, development has meant little more than stagnation, or increasing misery, greater vulnerability to exploitation and sometimes even a decline in opportunities and status in certain sectors" ("Final Document," 1979, p. 7). This stagnation or decline in women's status after development is intimately tied to "policymakers' poor understanding of women's roles in their societies and the low priority they gave to women" (Jain, 2005, p. 82).

At the conference, NAM adopted a series of recommendations for international development, including basic principles such as a push to include aid recipients in discussions of development within their own borders and communities. The United

Nations adopted NAM's recommendations the following year, but summarily dismissed most efforts to implement these policies.

A similar organization, the UN's G-77 nations, engaged in similar efforts to encourage legally binding regulations against corporations who exploited the human and environmental resources of the Global South. The UN Economic and Social Council responded by starting the UN Commission on Transnational Corporations, and in 1976 this commission drafted the first UN Code of Conduct on Transnational Corporations (UNCTC). For their part, corporations formed the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to lobby the UN against adopting any legally binding corporate codes of conduct on the grounds that they would inhibit businesses from expanding to global markets. Subsequent lobbying from the OECD, corporations, and governments in the Global North proved successful, and the UNCTC released non-binding guidelines that served as suggestions for corporation behavior. This marked the "entrance of the voluntary code of conduct into business's strategic repertoire" (Lipshutz & Rowe, 2005, p. 137), a tool that would prove useful in minimizing corporate regulations during the early 2000s. The fact that these guidelines are non-binding and voluntary ensures that corporations can engage in a plethora of unethical and immoral behaviors without fear of official retaliation. As the arms race drew to a close and Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher ushered in a new era of conservative and neoliberal policies, NAM and the G-77 held weaning roles in influencing UN policy.

### **Women's (Human) Capital**

The rise of neoliberalism that encompassed Reagan's presidency in the United States and Thatcher's rise to power in England also led to substantial changes in World

Bank, UN, and IMF policies relating to globalization (Griffin, 2010). Neoliberal globalism occurs when powerful nations mandate that poor nations open national economies to foreign investors and transnational corporations as a condition of receiving foreign aid. Because the US and the UK enjoyed a disproportionate share of the voting power within the Washington Consensus, they were able to enact such policies despite strong objections from nations in the Global South. To do so, the IMF required their stamp of approval for all World Bank loans, and the IMF would not approve any loans unless receiving nations abided by a strict structural adjustment program in which they reduced state spending on social services such as education and public utilities. This means that in order to continue providing these services, nations had to either charge citizens for services that were previously provided free of charge or open their economies to transnational corporations that profited from selling these services at increased costs (Stiglitz, 2003; Vavrus, 2003; Griffin, 2010).

To be successful, neoliberal globalization also mandates that individuals buy into the logic of the market as an organizing principle for their communities, even in places that did not previously use such organizational patterns. This economic rationale served to constitute and regulate the direction of international aid in that “certain outcomes (the granting or renewal of World Bank development loans, IMF technical expertise or UN project management) depend on poor people behaving and performing in certain ways (as productive, malleable and ‘rational’ market actors)” (Griffin, 2010, p. 91). Nations who were most successful at this task received praise in the form of increased resources, which further enabled them to engineer a market society that offered corporations more avenues for profits while offering people fewer social safety nets (Griffin, 2010). As

more and more corporations used partnerships with the Washington Consensus to expand their businesses in new markets, the funding model for international aid projects changed drastically. In the 1950s and 1960s, most aid dollars to the Global South came from the U.S. and European governments. By the end of the 1980s, 45 percent of the funding came from private sources. During the mid-1990s, that number reached 85 percent, which resulted in the Washington Consensus favoring policies that would increase profits of the transnational corporations that funded many of their initiatives (Tabb, 2004).

The World Bank and the IMF advocated for open markets despite the fact that opening markets to outside influence almost always resulted in higher prices and market destabilization (Tabb, 2004). When loan policies and forced structural adjustment program changes led to increased poverty among the working class, the World Bank argued that opening markets was “short-run and unfortunately necessary” and that these pains would diminish once the markets determined for themselves how these services should be priced (Tabb, 2004, p. 200). These policies proved especially detrimental for women, as they often resulted in eliminating public sector jobs held by women or giving those jobs to men. Additionally, reductions in healthcare, childcare, and family planning services disproportionately impacted women’s lives and women’s health (Jain, 2005). The open market policy had severe implications for gendered global poverty as families who could not afford to send all of their children to school almost unilaterally chose not to educate their daughters (Stiglitz, 2003). Without an education, girls are at heightened risks for life-long poverty and familial neglect (“Global Poverty Info Bank,” n.d.).

Researchers’ concerns about the increase in gender inequality that accompanied the rise in market economics led to the 1985 Women and Development (WAD) program,

which aimed to better prepare women for this new economic climate. WAD is “a detailed blueprint for women’s economic empowerment, calling for education for women to prepare them for employment in business, commerce, industry, and handicrafts and small-scale industries” (Jain, 2005, p. 100). The program also prepared women for administrative and policymaking positions and offered “seminars to train women in marketing and running cooperatives” (Jain, 2005, p. 100). WAD proponents advocated for women-only cooperatives to “protect women from the detrimental effects of patriarchy...and reduce patriarchal control over relations of production” (Vavrus, 2003, p. 28). Critics of this system, especially feminists from the Global South, objected to WAD because the program implies that women can sever their productive and reproductive relationships with men on their own terms. In many families, women are not permitted to make such choices, and even when they are, it is impossible to separate these actions from the patriarchal control that demands such choices in the first place (Vavrus, 2003). This bifurcation is especially problematic in nations with high disparities in educational attainment because the largest determinant of whether women and girls receive an education or work outside the home is whether her father or husband permits her to do so (Greene et al., 2009).

This program also coincided with a new push to assess the gendered dimensions of poverty, which had been largely absent from many previous reports on economic development. Researchers found that the 1980s economic crises and structural adjustment programs caused a “feminization of poverty” in the Global South. The feminization of poverty refers to three main findings: “that women have a higher incidence of poverty than men, that women’s poverty is more severe than that of men, [and] that a trend

toward greater poverty among women is associated with rising rates of female-headed households” (Jain, 2005, p. 107). Several feminist organizations in the Global South advocated that the Washington Consensus use this information to address the larger structural and social issues that made women more likely to live in poverty (including neoliberal globalization policies and unequal funding for development projects) but the subsequent UN World Surveys on the Role of Women in Development show a failure to take these factors into account (Jain, 2005). In fact, the 1986 edition of the report stated that “women have become the main beneficiaries of industrial employment creation” because they received “the concrete benefits of improved health and nutrition and lower rates of infant mortality” (Jain, 2005, p. 110). However, these statements directly contradicted testimony from women working in industrial employment in the Global South, who testified during the UN Commission on the Status of Women conference in Copenhagen in 1980 that they endured poor working conditions, low pay, and inadequate health services in these positions (Jain, 2005).

The Commission on the Status of Women continued to hold conferences and publish studies that clearly and systematically outlined the legal and social barriers impacting women’s advancement, including political and economic barriers within national governments. During the Fourth Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the UN released a report about gender and human development outlining the ways that poverty disproportionately impacted women. The conference also encouraged women within and outside the UN to seek high-ranking political positions, claiming that major changes occur once women represent 30 percent of the leadership (Jain, 2005). The conference aimed to bring women together to share ideas about overcoming systemic

barriers to addressing gendered poverty and women's rights, and it succeeded in (1) creating new ways to research problems and monitor solutions; (2) bringing together nations, NGOs, and women's organizations to address systemic inequalities, and (3) setting in motion a push to seriously address global women's issues, among others. However, not all participants felt equally proud of these results.

The Beijing Platform for Action created new research methodologies for compiling information about the status of women and to measure progress. These indices included the Gendered Empowerment Measure (GEM) to determine whether women and men participate equally in decision-making and leadership, and the Gender Development Index (GDI) to determine workforce participation rates. However, several conference participants criticized these indices, stating that they measured variables more appropriate to highly developed countries than countries in the Global South (Jain, 2005). Critics explained that although the GEM index measures women's formal parliamentary participation, women in the Global South are more likely to hold positions of power in highly respected informal organizations such as cooperatives and trade associations. The GDI focused on formal workplace participation, but the majority of workers in nations with high poverty were engaging in work that was not recognized by this measure (Jain, 2005).

The Beijing Conference was also significant in that NGOs were invited to formally participate in the programming. However, NGOs drafted their own version of the Beijing Declaration to highlight issues not fully addressed during the formal conference proceedings but that were important to the work some of these organizations were conducting on the ground. The document noted that "the globalization of the

world's so-called 'market economies' is a root cause of the increasing feminization of poverty everywhere" and called for changes to structural adjustment programs, the inclusion of women's unwaged work in GDP accounts, and a larger platform for voices of women in the Global South (Jain, 2005, p. 143). Thus, while the conference brought nations together to discuss the importance of systemic change, there was little consensus about whether the indices created by researchers within the Commission would lead to major changes in the lived experiences of the world's poorest women.

In lieu of addressing the structural issues discussed by conference participants, the UN and World Bank suggested that microcredit programs that give small loans to individual women living in poverty would succeed in "making markets work for women...and empower women to compete in markets" (Griffin, 2010, p. 97). This logic suggests that women's empowerment stems from access to markets and an ability to participate in economic life, and that freedom "degenerates into a mere advocacy of free enterprise" (Harvey, 2005, p. 37). Such conflation of personal freedom and access to markets is reminiscent of what Miller and Rose (2008) call the "subjects of consumption," or the individuals who are imagined as full persons when they experience power and meaning from their "imperative to consume" (p. 114). While Miller and Rose (2008) acknowledge that individuals can find meaning in acts of consumption, "the pleasures, powers and meanings produced are...enacted at the price of turning a blind eye to the regimes of exploitation, illusion and exclusion that foster consumption" (p. 115). Because freedoms and choices within the market are partly pre-determined by corporate influence and power, viewing market actors as empowered politically fails to account for

the ways corporations shape the debate to further their goals of profit and power. As I will show, this is especially true in global microlending.

Still, the UN hoped that these loans would help to alleviate poverty among poor women by providing the start-up costs for women to open small businesses. On the ground, the focus on individualized interventions often directed attention and resources away from “projects designed to create jobs or interventions that put social-welfare grants or social security provisions in place for women” (Jain, 2005, p. 140). In fact, several studies show that microcredit programs fail to address the capitalist structures that impoverished many loan recipients in the first place. Thus, while some loan recipients make enough money to lift themselves out of poverty, national governments remain poor and continuously fail to provide basic educational and infrastructure resources to the rest of its citizens (Roy, 2010). Additionally, many researchers and aid workers have criticized the rigid structures of such programs, stating that recipients are rarely empowered within the entrepreneurship process because they are unable to participate in decision-making at any level (Roy, 2010).

The Washington Consensus sought to institutionalize the microcredit revolution despite evidence that such programs do not necessarily lead to individual, social, political and national empowerment (Jain, 2005). Together the UN and the World Bank launched two microfinance consulting firms, MicroStart and the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor, and allocated a total of \$231 million for microcredit programs in the Global South (“Historical Chronology,” 2006). The U.S. government and several private banks pledged to contribute an additional \$1.5 billion. Bella Abzug, a former congressperson and president of the Women’s Environment and Development Organization, campaigned

against the structure of these programs, stating that lending institutions enter such programs with a “banker-knows-best” mentality and structure them so that the banks benefit more than the women who receive loans (Jain, 2005).

A 2005 investigation by Henry Hyde, the chairperson of the U.S. House Committee on International Relations, showed that Abzug’s predictions rang true. The report shows that nearly 20 percent of the \$165 million given to microcredit firms in 2002 went to for-profit consulting organizations that used their influence to establish exclusive contracts keeping non-profit NGOs out of the microfinance market (Roy, 2010). Even after these revelations, leaders within the Washington Consensus advocated for an open market system for administering this aid, arguing that caps on the amount of aid participating consulting firms can keep for their own profits or on the interests rates they can charge to loan recipients would decrease business incentives to stay involved in the programs. As a result, many loan providers charge interest rates of over 12 percent; BRAC, the world’s largest microlender, charges between 18 and 60 percent interest, making repayment difficult (Roy, 2010; “BRAC,” 2014). Approximately 80 percent of loan recipients are women, meaning that women are disproportionately impacted when these international policies are implemented in ways that privilege corporate interests.

Research has shown that the World Bank and IMF policies mandating privatization, deregulation, and reduced government spending has created “a human rights catastrophe” that benefits multinational corporations who profit from goods and services that were previously provided free of charge by the state (Kane, 2008, p. 196). The World Bank continues to push such programs, suggesting that negative consequences such as increasing global poverty are the result of outdated local customs and a lack of

proper education. In fact, the Bank argued that privatizing education and charging higher school fees would help to create a new generation of workers who would be ready for a global neoliberal society (Johnstone, et al., 1998).

In a status report on higher education in developing countries, the World Bank argued that education “meets many of the... characteristics of a private good, amenable to the forces of the market” and goes on to state that students can be more accurately referred to as “consumers” or “clients” of education (Johnstone, et al., 1998, p. 4). The report suggested that the difficulty in collecting taxes and the rise in neoliberal economics made these changes unavoidable, but failed “to mention that the Bank is a prime engineer of that same context” (Kane, 2008, p. 200). Further, in this educational model, all people are presumed to have the same access to schools, despite significant social and economic differences that keep certain groups (such as girls or the poor) from enrolling. An individual’s success or failure is then “interpreted in terms of entrepreneurial virtues or personal failings (such as not investing significantly enough in one’s own human capital through education) rather than being attributed to any systemic property (such as the class exclusions usually attributed to capitalism)” (Harvey, 2005, p. 65-66). The IMF and the World Bank continue to push women’s education as the most cost-effective means of solving the social problems that accompany neoliberal globalism despite research consistently showing that “in the absence of a concomitant restructuring of national and international development priorities, schooling can transform very few lives” (Vavrus, 2003, p. 5).

Because structural adjustment policies favored the interests of the financial industry—mainly financial centers headquartered in highly developed nations such as the

U.S.—over the long-term health and well being of individuals in the Global South, their policies resulted in increased profits for the former and increased economic inequality for the latter. If the Washington Consensus policies of the 1980s and 1990s can be characterized as privileging profits of private financial interests, the 2000s can be characterized by an emphasis on improving global markets and profits for transnational corporations.

### **“Equality Means Business”**

By the late 1990s, neoliberal globalization policies had exacerbated inequality in nearly every emerging economy other than China and India,<sup>13</sup> and several high profile investigations revealed that multinational corporations (including Nike, Shell, Enron, and WorldCom) engaged in business practices that exploited workers, environmental resources, and weak governments (Lipshutz & Rowe, 2005). By the end of the decade, corporations responded to criticism by reviving the OECD and hiring consultants to construct plans for new corporate social responsibility initiatives. In contrast to the tension between the OECD and the UN in the 1970s, these organizations worked together in the 1990s to push for voluntary codes of conduct to police corporate activities. During a 1998 speech at the World Economic Forum, Secretary-General Annan called for increased participation between private businesses and UN commissions, stating that globalization is the “result of deliberate policy choices” made in both boardrooms and within the halls of the UN offices. He went on to ask that corporate leaders “choose to unite the power of markets with the authority of universal ideals,” by selecting “an enlightened way forward towards our ultimate, shared goal: a global marketplace that is open to all and benefits all” (Annan, 1998). Their cooperation resulted in two documents:

the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the UN Global Compact, both of which were written largely by corporate lobbyists (Lipschutz & Rowe, 2005). The former is a low-profile set of guidelines aimed at appeasing unions and NGOs, while the latter “is targeted at the larger public and mobilizes the UN’s profile and legitimacy to quell widespread public concern with corporate power” (Lipschutz & Rowe, 2005, p. 157).

As stated above, the Global Compact asks corporations to voluntarily comply with a list of 10 principles relating to human rights, labor, environmental, and anti-corruption standards, but it does not offer any concrete recommendations for corporate conduct or minimum standards of conduct. Instead, the Compact offers several general guidelines and examples of exemplar business practices, and encourages corporations to internalize and internationalize these within their own business plans. In order to participate, corporations need only submit an initial letter of support for the Compact and subsequent annual reports of their successes in implementing such policies (Bruno, 2005). The UN does not enforce or monitor this commitment, provide standards or criteria for what counts as involvement, and does not establish thresholds for adhering to or violating the compact (Oshionebo, 2007). Because the annual reports ask for success stories only, they “do not represent the overall record of the company, and allow only good news” (Bruno, 2005, p. 26). Georg Kell, the executive head of the Global Compact, states that the market incentives for companies to accurately report their progress will be enough to ensure compliance because corporations who deliver false or misleading reports will be subject to public shaming that will hurt their profits. However, as I show in Chapter 3, corporations such as Goldman Sachs have grown adept at using public relations and news media to direct attention away from their role in the crises of global

inequalities, suggesting that publicly criticizing corporations is not necessarily a viable mechanism to ensure compliance.

Because no part of the membership process is legally binding, thousands of corporations have signed on as partners. The Compact is currently “the world’s largest corporate citizenship initiative, with more than 4,858 companies from over 100 countries, and 16 of the Financial Times Global 500, having declared their membership as of March 2011” (Bradford, 2012, p. 167). However, most major U.S. corporations have not yet joined, meaning that many of the partnering corporations are headquartered in the developing world. This “less than enthusiastic embrace by governments of developed countries reflects their continuing desire to shield their TNCs from international regulation, even though, ironically, the Global Compact does not regard itself as a regulatory mechanism” (Oshionebo, 2007, p. 26). To get U.S.-based transnational corporations more involved, Kell worked with the American Bar Association to further relax corporations’ already nonbinding agreements to the Compact. The resulting policy allows corporations to “commit to the principles using a letter, full of legal boilerplate, which shields them from lawsuits based on claims that they have failed to live up to the compact...American companies such as Gap, Starbucks, and Newmont Mining have rushed to sign up” (Bluewashed, 2004, para. 4). As more corporations sign onto the Compact and violate its principles with relative impunity, critics have questioned whether it is appropriate for “the United Nations to enter a pact with big business—some even equate it to a deal with the devil” (Roth, 2000, para. 13).

Despite this criticism, the World Bank continued the UN mission of involving transnational corporations in voluntary initiatives, making the project of “forging

partnerships in the public and private sectors” part of their official mission to “fight poverty with passion and professionalism” (“Historical Chronology,” 2006). This mission included working with the UN to implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a group of eight standards focused on “reducing poverty, improving the quality of peoples’ lives, ensuring environmental stability, and building partnerships to ensure that globalization becomes a more positive force for all the world’s people” (Nelson & Prescott, 2003, p. 2). Unlike the Global Compact, the MDGs are not specifically focused on corporate involvement, but the World Bank and the United Nations published a 28-page guide instructing corporations on how they might integrate the MDGs into their business plans. The guide offers three main reasons why businesses should get involved: such investments lead to a more stable and healthy workforce, reduce operating costs resulting from environmental and social degradation, and allow corporations to fuse their corporate social responsibility initiatives with long-term plans for corporate expansion (Nelson & Prescott, 2003).

The guide also highlights success stories from corporations that have invested in particular MDGs. For example, Goal 3 aims to “promote gender equality and empower women,” especially within schools and workplaces (Nelson & Prescott, 2003, p. 3). Businesses are encouraged to follow in the footsteps of corporations such as Avon, Eli Lilly, and L’Oreal in making “women’s issues a strategic focus of their global philanthropy efforts” (p. 12), but provides no further details on exactly how these corporations have implemented such efforts in their business models. In short, the UN and World Bank provide “a loose framework of aims (poverty elimination, human development) and guidelines (good governance) for development programs and practices,

while the majority of the work associated with achieving global development” goals is left to NGOs, philanthropic foundations, and corporate initiatives (Wilson, 2011, p. 208).

Corporate partners have been quick to sign onto philanthropic initiatives, and total giving for public charities rose from \$1 trillion in 2003 to \$1.6 trillion in 2011 (Beloe, 2003; Roeger, 2012). In exchange for their investments, corporations can market themselves as “pursuing a socially responsible agenda” which enables them to

reap intangible resources from their stakeholders such as reputational benefits, increased organizational legitimacy, and long-term relationships that translate into tangible benefits and confer long-term competitive advantage over corporations that are not committed to CSR. In effect, the socially responsible corporation sells its responsibility as a “product” in the marketplace for which there is positive demand. (Bradford, 2012, p. 204-205)

In other words, corporations have latched onto the idea that philanthropy is good for business, and they sell their goods in the marketplace with the understanding that individual consumers will be more likely to purchase “responsible” products. The positive demand for these products stems in part from the value these goods have in the social and political spheres. Consumers use ethical consumption to craft their identities as socially responsible consumers who care about particular social issues (Hearn, 2008). In turn, these acts of consumption stand in for civic participation so that citizenship is an individualized act that replaces more systemic solutions to the problems and inequities of the market system (Giroux, 2001, p. 30).

Many corporations have used their dollars to pursue corporate social responsibility initiatives that combine the Global Compact and MDG goals with projects

that expand their consumer base. Because women consumers in the Global North account for 83 percent of consumer purchases, corporations are more likely to fund causes that appeal to this valuable consumer demographic. Women are most likely to purchase products relating to “women’s issues” such as breast cancer, education, children’s welfare, the environment, and poverty, which means that causes such as eradicating diarrhea—“an easily and inexpensively treatable symptom that kills 1.5 million children annually in developing countries”—often goes underfunded (Einstein, 2012, p. 106). Because corporations are more likely to support causes that will bring them positive press and increasing profits, NGOs have been forced to change the way they market their brands of humanitarianism in order to survive. NGOs often do this by highlighting success stories that appeal to the (white, middle-class, heterosexual, female) consumers most appealing to corporations. This has also meant that corporations engaging in philanthropic work now engage in an extreme form of governance in which their financial resources help certain populations and causes while leaving those in need of less profitable services to suffer.

As part of their mission to appeal to corporations in this way, the UN and the World Bank worked with a U.S.-based private investment management firm to create a set of guidelines that would help corporations justify the expense of appealing to women through global charity and provide action steps that would simplify the process. The resulting “Women’s Empowerment Principles: Equality Means Business” guide shows that “there is a strong *business case* for promoting women’s economic development, entrepreneurship and enterprise” because “women remain—to some degree in all parts of the globe—an untapped economic resource and an under-utilized economic asset”

(“Calvert Women’s Principles,” 2004, p. 5, emphasis in original). The Women’s Empowerment Principles document shows that the financial crisis exacerbated gender disparities and suggests that, “the solution lies in connecting women’s need for empowerment and business’s need for profit and good reputation in a win-win relationship” (Bexell, 2012, p. 395).

A related report called “The Business of Empowering Women” concurs and offers three reasons why “economically empowered women” are good for the corporate bottom line:

- (1) such women are potential customers and expand the market for goods and services;
- (2) skilled women constitute a broad and motivated talent pool to hire from; and
- (3) investments in improving women’s lives in developing countries can enhance a company’s reputation and brand. (Bexell, 2012, p. 397)

In these reports, women can be “empowered” by aiding corporate expansion into new regions, without regard for whether a corporate presence will benefit their communities and without respect for women outside of their potential to produce profit for the corporation.

Additionally, these types of reports suggest that philanthropy is synonymous with business expansion, especially when they fund charities that expand their consumer base in the Global South in ways that allow them to market their socially responsible agenda to loyal consumers in the Global North. For their part, consumers in the Global North can align themselves with socially responsible corporations as a means of showing their peers they “care” about women in the Global South despite knowing little about the lived

experiences of such a diverse group. Being a good consumer in this model means knowing which corporations are engaging in philanthropies that matter to the individual purchaser, but does not also entail advocating for systemic changes that might make unethical practices that impoverish women in the Global South illegal.

This fusion of business and charity also has large-scale impacts on governance organizations. For example, the World Bank adopted a policy in 2004 that applies the standards of corporate social responsibility in for-profit companies to its efforts to reduce poverty in a non-profit context (“Historical Chronology,” 2006). In other words, the World Bank mandated that all future poverty initiatives be structured using a for-profit business model, meaning that such initiatives would need to generate some form of tangible or intangible benefit for the organization in order to gain approval. Additionally, the UN and the World Bank have altered other policies in recent years to appeal to their largest source of funding: corporations. In doing so, they have provided corporations with access to new markets, avenues to influence national and international policies, and the power to ensure that these institutions oppose global regulations that are not in the financial interests of corporations (Zammit, 2003).

Because national governments have slashed money for social services, NGOs now serve larger numbers of people and must also compete against each other for funding to meet their annual budget goals. As such, the marketplace of philanthropic organizations is flooded with calls for donations, making corporate ties an especially valuable commodity for nonprofits in need of funds and publicity (Vogel, 2006; Einstein, 2012). NGOs market their philanthropic work as a brand with moral associations in hopes that corporations latch onto this mission. Their humanitarian work is now “a lucrative

resource—a vital source of income—in a world where the boundaries that had once closed off extreme suffering from commercial interests were fast eroding. Indeed, better branding and commercial skill became essential for institutional survival and renewal” (Barnett & Weiss, 2008, p. 106). In a book-length study commissioned and published by the United Nations to analyze the impact of partnerships with transnational corporations, author Ann Zammit (2003) calls for critical work that assesses whether corporate funding and partnerships help philanthropic organization reach desired outcomes. However, she also suggests that partnerships be assessed “in terms of other, possibly unintended, outcomes that have development implications” such as “corporate image enhancement” and “preferential access to developing country markets” (p. xxi).

This remaining chapters of this dissertation explore the concept of “unintended consequences” by analyzing two corporate partnerships: the World Bank’s partnership with Goldman Sachs and the United Nation’s partnership with the Nike. These partnerships began as part of the effort to draw corporations into the Global Compact and the Millennium Development goals, and both are now considered models for how to structure corporate social responsibility campaigns (Murphy, 2009; Marquis et al., 2010). Both campaigns aim to educate women and girls in the Global South, and both market their work with this population to businesses and consumers in the Global North. I contend that the outcomes these organizations have achieved are far from “unintended consequences,” but instead serve as deliberate tools of corporate expansion and economic development. As I will show, corporate executives have structured these corporate social responsibility initiatives such that they relegate efforts to achieve gender justice to the private sector, where they serve corporate-profit-making agendas over those of social

justice. The expanding neoliberal paradigm that enables this move also enables these corporations to market their initiatives using avenues that are largely free from public criticism. Unpacking these corporate initiatives and the media narratives that accompany them reveals how corporations define who is worthy of aid and why.

### Chapter 3

#### **Low Hanging Fruit: Philanthrocapitalism and Global Governance in Goldman Sachs' 10,000 Women Project**

*“Giving a woman an opportunity can produce the smartest return on the dollar possible.” –Dina Powell, Managing Director, Goldman Sachs*

Goldman Sachs unveiled plans for their *10,000 Women* project during a press conference on March 5, 2008. After outlining the company's pledge to invest \$100 million in short-term business and management education for women in the Global South, Goldman Sachs' CEO Lloyd Blankfein congratulated scholarship recipients from Egypt and Nigeria who were flown to New York City to serve as visual representations of the types of women the company hoped to help. According to Blankfein, the project's benevolent goals were twofold: first, the initiative would help close the global economic gender gap by helping women entrepreneurs in poor nations learn to better manage and expand their businesses, and second, Goldman Sachs wanted to “create more opportunity to ensure economic growth is more broadly shared” (Walker, 2008, para. 16). However, published interviews with program leaders and Goldman Sachs' own investment reports suggest that the company had ulterior motives for engaging in this type of philanthropy. As Powell's quote above suggests, Goldman Sachs viewed this philanthropy as a long-term investment strategy that would lead to both positive publicity for the company and new global markets for their own business, and as such, they structured the project in ways that would bring political and economic benefits back to the corporation (Marquis, et al., 2010).

The *10,000 Women* project aims to empower women through business education, but it is worthy of interrogation for the constraints it places upon women who are

accepted into their schools. Because women in the program have to abide by a particular set of capitalist principles and must already own a business that they are willing to expand, they are constrained by the Western imperialist vision of development offered by Goldman Sachs. Though this program certainly helps some women achieve financial stability, it is important to also consider the ways this type of education can simultaneously expand the capitalist paradigm that created their inequalities in the first place. As I will show, the purported philanthropic goal was less about a desire to help women achieve financial success for the benefit of women's empowerment than it is a desire to help women in ways that would pad Goldman Sachs' image and bottom line. Companies that engage in cause marketing in developing countries are more likely to win licenses and businesses contracts in those areas (Pool, 2011), so Goldman Sachs had much to gain by fusing its business plan with philanthropic educational initiatives that encourage capitalist economic development.

Analyzing news coverage, internal economic reports, and business journals' accounts of the project, I argue that the *10,000 Women* campaign's sophisticated public relations effort not only deflects negative press attention away from the company's role in the economic crisis and toward their philanthropic arm, but also serves to spread pro-corporate and pro-capitalist messages to women in the Global South. In this chapter I scrutinize the program's educational mandates and media campaigns to theorize how the discourse about women's involvement in privatized educational initiatives found in news media, public relations documents, and global economic reports construct women as citizens on both a local and global level *and* how corporate social responsibility serves to discipline women using philanthropy. Additionally, promotional materials about the

program's educational philosophy state that the company offers a pro-capitalist curriculum to women while simultaneously encouraging women to give their earnings back to their families and communities. Thus, the program offers women the education and resources necessary to participate in global capitalism through owning thriving businesses in the public sphere, but only when they promise to eschew personal advancement and instead use their earnings to aid in their caregiving roles in the private sphere.

The *Harvard Business Review* has labeled the *10,000 Women* initiative as *the* model in for-profit philanthropy, suggesting that we will see similar programs in the years to come (Marquis et al., 2010). Accounts of the program published to date have failed to address the way this philanthropic business venture offers a two-sided approach to corporate social responsibility: public accounts suggest that corporate social responsibility can solve the problems of the capitalist neoliberal agenda while privately corporations continue to advance market solutions that disengage the populations they profess to serve from decision making processes and resources. To show the connections between this dichotomous relationship, I integrate the theoretical frameworks of neoliberalism, corporate transculturalism, and feminist criticisms of international development and aim to offer explanations for how and why the *10,000 Women* project constitutes particular groups of women as ideal recipients of philanthropy.

### **Neoliberalism and Feminist Development**

Goldman Sachs maintains that corporations should be given license to solve the social and economic injustices they created without policy interventions from the government (Alridge, 2009). It is no surprise, then, that the *10,000 Women* project

embraces neoliberalism<sup>14</sup> with its quest to solve gendered economic inequality through market-based initiatives. Goldman Sachs' philanthropic efforts also fit within the larger frameworks of venture philanthropy and corporate transculturalism. Marwan Kraidy (2005) defines corporate transculturalism as a strategy of rhetorical hybridity whereby corporations claim to spread the benefits of globalization to poor nations, but the policies they implement actually privilege corporate profits and corporate interpretations of the global order at the expense of the nations and populations they profess to serve. Venture philanthropy, also called philanthrocapitalism, privileges the idea that a business model can be used to solve social problems, and more specifically, encourages corporations to enter into philanthropic relationships that will result in "win-win" situations.

Philanthrocapitalism offers corporations a chance to invest in global philanthropic efforts that use business tactics such as the promise of increased political and economic capital for investors and measured results that quantify results on the ground for stockholders (Edwards, 2008). Popular scholarship on this type of corporate giving suggests that it creates a win-win situation: underserved communities gain access to education and capital while corporations gain access to new markets for their goods and services. However, recent critical scholarship examines some of the fundamental assumptions proposed by such a system, claiming the corporations that invest in venture philanthropic initiatives place their desire to turn profits ahead of their desire to create sustainable social programs that benefit the communities they aim to serve (Edwards, 2008). In fact, corporations are legally obligated to put this profit motive ahead of other interests. Though it remains to be seen whether the *10,000 Women* initiative will be sustainable for women in emerging nations when the corporate funding runs out in 2013,

Goldman Sachs has been vocal about the ways it sees the initiative creating long-term wealth opportunities for themselves.

Focusing on “distant” and “disengaged” populations in poor nations enables corporations like Goldman Sachs to focus their corporate social marketing on groups not regularly given a voice in Western media (Richey & Ponte, 2011). As such, these voices are silenced by the power of corporations to construct, disseminate, and control access to resources. For generations, feminist critics of international development have advocated for translocal approaches that privilege a more nuanced understanding of women’s voices and women’s empowerment, especially in relation to attempts to empower women within corporate-driven global development. Scholars Jane Parpart, Shirin Rai, and Kathleen Staudt (2002) assert that empowerment must take institutional barriers into consideration, especially when attempts to empower women are encouraged within a particular set of institutional constraints. They write:

Groups become empowered through collective action, but that action is enabled or constrained by the structures of power that they encounter. We believe much closer attention must be paid to the broad political and economic structures, cultural assumptions and discourses, notions of human rights, laws and practices in which women and men seek to survive and even flourish in marginalized communities around the world. (p. 4)

As I will show, the *10,000 Women* project’s aim is to empower women within the structures and discourses of global capitalism, a model that dictates strict conditions for women to enter into decision-making positions.

Additionally, the process of enforcing a Western vision of business education within universities in the Global South contributes to avenues of women's citizenship that are defined through a capitalist and market-driven lens. Women in the *10,000 Women* program are granted avenues to power that are carefully constructed and regulated by a U.S.-based multi-national corporation, and thus avenues for networking, decision-making, and learning are all filtered through the channels of Western business philosophies. Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003) criticizes this capitalist vision of education and citizenship because market-based citizenship conflates wealth and market dominance with power and rights. As she argues, "If the market provides the ethical and moral framework for university life, educators and students exercise choices as consumers in a marketplace, not as citizens in a democratic polity" (p. 183). In this market-based model of education, participation is limited to those who have the ability to generate economic value for the parent corporation. Thus, the "systemic social inequalities that make it difficult for disadvantaged groups to perform this selective interpretation of civic action make it virtually impossible for [citizens] lacking value-generating capacities to fully participate" (Ouellette, 2012, p. 72).

Within this theoretical framework, I conducted a discourse analysis of the *10,000 Women* project, focusing on Goldman Sachs' internally funded research, corporate press materials highlighting Goldman Sachs' vision for and of the program, and business news publications discussing the program. I highlight these sources in part because of their ubiquity in discussions of the campaign and also because authors from these sources often cross-reference each other. Goldman Sachs created the project in response to internally funded studies that detailed the financial benefits the corporation could receive

if they invested in women's education. During and after the launch, Goldman Sachs distributed a variety of press materials highlighting the positive outcomes of their initiative, often highlighting individual success stories or bringing individual students to the U.S. for press conferences. Business journals and newspapers published glowing reviews of the campaign, often lifting information directly from press materials for their "news." In all, I analyzed the two major studies Goldman Sachs published to justify their economic stake in the project as a profitable one, 11 campaign brochures and pamphlets that offer Goldman Sachs' ideas about the program's worth, and 45 news articles from English-language print news sources that mentioned the program.

I will begin with a discussion of Goldman Sachs' motivations for starting the program before offering an analysis of the political and economic motivations for the project and concluding with a discussion of how this project impacts avenues for women's citizenship.

### **"Great Vampire Squid"**

In a feature-length article about Goldman Sachs' role in the 2007 financial crisis, Matt Taibbi of *Rolling Stone* called the company "a great vampire squid wrapped around the face of humanity, relentlessly jamming its blood funnel into anything that smells like money" (Taibbi, 2010). William Cohan, author of *Money and Power: How Goldman Sachs Came to Rule the World*, argues that the unflattering caricature of Goldman Sachs as a vampire squid stems from a series of calculations and bets made by Goldman Sachs executives that had major implications for the global corporate financial structure. In financial language, the company is a "mark-to-market" firm, meaning that it meticulously tracks the value of each of its investments every day. This allows bankers to notice even

small trends in the market early and adjust their investments accordingly. When executives in the mortgage securities sector noticed that they would stand to lose billions if and when the housing market collapsed, the company decided to engage in a policy that internal emails refer to as “the big short.” This program included knowingly selling its mortgage securities to competitors at inflated prices by telling investors they were a good investment, and then betting that they would be worthless if and when the housing market collapsed. When the housing market did plummet, the competitor banks that purchased the mortgage securities from Goldman Sachs lost billions of dollars. Goldman Sachs was able to offset the cost of the mortgage securities it was unable to sell with the \$4 billion they made from the bets. At the end of 2007, Goldman Sachs recorded \$11.4 billion in profits and paid its top five employees alone over \$322 million in compensation, while the rest of the financial sector collapsed (Cohan, 2010).

Though they initially declined Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) funds because their mortgage security bets left them in a much better financial position than their competitors, the resulting economic recession decreased company profits more than expected. In 2008, Goldman Sachs borrowed and quickly repaid \$10 billion of taxpayer money, which they used to fund investments that would revive their stock prices. Though the company’s profits fell to \$2.3 billion in 2008 (a profit much higher than any other U.S.-based financial institution), the company was able to repay the TARP funds in 2009, a year in which they also posted profits of \$13.2 billion and paid \$16.2 billion in employee bonuses (Cohan, 2010).

As if its role in the financial crisis was not enough of a PR nightmare, the company was also heavily criticized in national news media for its perceived arrogance.

The company was pegged in mainstream press as self-aggrandizing for not being more grateful for the bailout money it received to stay afloat, and citizens were upset that the executives who were largely responsible for the economic downturn received millions in bonuses as they struggled to make ends meet (Cohan, 2010; Donaldson, 2009; Harper & Cole, 2009). Several business publications suggested that Goldman Sachs chose to repay TARP funds ahead of schedule because they were afraid that the 2009 employee bonus mandate would impact the tax rates of the top employees at the firm. The mandate, which capped employee pay at \$500,000 for employees of companies who received taxpayer funds, would have meant that Goldman Sachs executives receiving substantial bonuses would be taxed at a rate of 90 percent (Sorkin, 2009).

In 2007, the average Goldman Sachs managing partner earned a base salary of \$600,000 and earned an average of 8.9 million in bonuses, though that number is slightly skewed by the fact that the CEO alone made \$68.5 million in 2007 (Sorkin, 2008). At the end of that year, former co-Chairman of Goldman Sachs John Whitehead called the level of executive pay “shocking” and lobbied the firm to offset the negative publicity of its unprecedented bonus structure with a \$1 billion charitable gift. The firm declined, instead starting the Goldman Sachs Gives program, which combined a \$50 million contribution from the company with \$80 million in donations that partners in the firm were “strongly encouraged” to give to the program (Harper & Cole, 2009). The company used \$100 million of that money to start the *10,000 Women* campaign. Though the firm was encouraged to create the program to deflect press attention away from its executive pay structure and its role in the financial crisis, Goldman Sachs was also encouraged to “be careful to make sure that any philanthropy comes primarily from employees’

compensation rather than from profits that would otherwise go to shareholders” (Harper & Cole, 2009). Because previous efforts to offer donations to nonprofits did not sit well with Goldman Sachs stockholders who were worried about these types of corporate gifts cutting into the dividends they receive, executives assured investors that this venture philanthropic program would increase the long-term profitability of the financial institution. Goldman Sachs professed to use its meticulous accounting techniques to monitor the international progress of their investments in women, allowing stockholders to see the return-on-investment as it begins to trickle back to the corporate pocketbook. Additionally, the company was encouraged to make sure their philanthropic efforts were long-term, increasing the likelihood that their firm would be touted in a variety of media as being philanthropic (Anderson, 2007).

### **10,000 Women in the Right Places**

Goldman Sachs launched the *10,000 Women* project in March 2008, pledging to invest \$100 million in short-term business and management education for women in developing countries over the next five years. The project grew out of the company’s internal research, including the 2005 “Womenomics” report published by Goldman Sachs’ Tokyo office and the 2007 “Women Hold Up Half the Sky” report, both of which suggested that investments in women could increase GDP by as much as 0.2 percent per year in the 15 fastest emerging countries. The *10,000 Women* project was launched as a global effort, with Goldman Sachs choosing to invest in countries based on where their investment would have the most significant impact on GDP. As such, Goldman Sachs focused their efforts in Brazil, Russia, India, and China and other countries with substantial economic growth potential. More than half of Goldman Sachs’ revenue

currently comes from markets outside the U.S., so increasing the GDP of emerging nations serves to increase the corporation's potential business pool (Marquis et al., 2010). Additionally, the company hoped to spread what it sees as the benefits of globalization to countries and populations who have typically not been on the receiving end of financial benefits, enabling Goldman Sachs to simultaneously establish business education and business relationships in new areas (Gunther, 2008).

Goldman Sachs decided to focus the education campaign on women who already own small to medium-sized businesses, a decision that stems from the "Womenomics" and "Women Hold Up Half the Sky" reports. These documents state that although small businesses are often overlooked in GDP investment research, they have a higher return-on-investment than microfinance programs and MBA scholarship programs. Additionally, an article in the *Harvard Business Review* reported that Goldman Sachs wanted to invest in business education for women who could not afford to attend graduate school or who did not need the theoretical framework offered by such programs. Instead, the *10,000 Women* project aimed to provide women entrepreneurs with short-term, practically oriented courses with the goal of helping women in the Global South manage their businesses and create a more stable base for future growth and expansion (Marquis et al., 2010).

Goldman Sachs' press materials offer several additional details about the program. Local schools selected to participate in the program were paired with some of the top business schools in the world, giving them access to curriculum and training to both help women in the program and to increase the quality of instructors so the changes would last beyond the five years of the program. Educators worked to create local,

contextualized content to meet the needs of women entrepreneurs in that nation, so the courses varied slightly between countries and regions. However, the courses started with the basic premise that creating a stable base for expansion and incorporating elements of U.S. capitalism in international contexts was a desirable outcome (“Fact Sheet,” 2008).

For their part, Goldman Sachs employees volunteered their time to mentor students in the program and create networking opportunities for program graduates. These mentoring tasks included reviewing loan applications for women who wanted to take out a loan with one of Goldman Sachs’ affiliates<sup>15</sup> and organizing meetings between program participants and top retail outlets in the U.S. (Marquis et al., 2010). The additional partnerships between U.S.-based business school students and Goldman Sachs employees helped the corporation recruit the highest performing graduates from top business schools and increase retention rates for employees who desired more personally fulfilling work (Marquis et al., 2010). The *10,000 Women* Project relies heavily on partnerships with educational institutions for curriculum creation and dissemination and on nonprofits for the actual program administration, many of whose employees engage in this work as volunteers or as part of course projects. Goldman Sachs employees volunteer their personal time to contribute to the company’s mentoring and networking role. This unpaid labor means Goldman Sachs can start the program with fewer overhead costs, and can financially benefit from the unpaid labor of educational professionals and corporate employees.

This financial benefit comes from several sources. First, conservative estimates state that the average company saves between \$3,500 and \$40,000 for each employee successfully retained in the company (Bliss, 1999). Goldman Sachs’ costs are likely

higher, as many employees have reported being interviewed between 20 and 30 separate times before being offered a position with the firm (Arlidge, 2009). Goldman Sachs employees who volunteer with the *10,000 Women* project are less likely to leave the company (Marquis et al., 2010), meaning that the corporation potentially saves large sums of money that would otherwise be spent on recruitment and retention. Second, relying on unpaid labor reduces operating costs because they do not have to pay successful business people in the U.S. to serve as mentors. Because this work is done in-house, they have constant access to mentors who share success stories for public relations materials. Third, this relatively small investment<sup>16</sup> has earned Goldman Sachs over 40 positive feature articles in major U.S. news publications alone, providing a steady stream of free publicity that paints the corporation in a positive light.

Press materials and news articles both report that the program has been highly competitive from the start. A college in China received 1,000 applications for its school's 100 spots, and 600 women applied for 60 spots when the program was first launched in Rwanda (Marquis et al., 2010). Though the selection criteria range from country to country, selection committees are encouraged to admit underserved women who demonstrate that they are not good candidates for MBA programs because of a lack of money, time, and/or use for such theoretical knowledge and who can show business growth potential. Women in the program own businesses from a range of industries, but the majority of women profiled in press materials run small operations that focus on garments, jewelry, and beauty services. For example, the 2011 brochure profiles Christine's expanded hair and nail salon in Liberia and Liu's thriving leather shoe design shop in Beijing ("Brochure," 2009).

Thus far, the program has been successful in helping some women better manage and expand businesses. Initial reports suggest that graduates of the program increased their number of employees and their revenue up to sixfold. Dina Habib Powell, a former State Department employee who now serves as the global head of corporate engagement at Goldman Sachs, said that 70 percent of program graduates have increased their business revenues (Yang, 2011), and a pamphlet quantifying the program's results in India states that half of the graduates doubled their revenue (ICRW, 2012, p. 3). The 30 percent of women who have not increased revenues are not mentioned, so there is no data available on how their lives have been impacted by the program.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Spin is the Message**

Several themes emerge when examining the *10,000 Women* documents together. First, the documents offer evidence for the increasingly direct link between corporate communications efforts and the information audiences see when they pick up a newspaper or news magazine. The tendency for news outlets to include public relations content as news is on the rise across all media. A 2009 study by the Project for Excellence in Journalism found that 63 percent of news subjects came directly from the government, 14 percent started as ideas by local reporters, and the rest—almost 23 percent—came from public relations materials or interest groups. In many additional stories, researchers “found official press releases often appear word for word in first accounts of events, though often not noted as such” (“How News Happens,” 2010, p. 2).

The second theme relates to the absence of corporate criticism. None of the news articles question Goldman Sachs' goals in starting this campaign, nor do they inquire about how spreading a pro-capitalist education influences women who are not featured in

Goldman Sachs press materials or the surrounding communities. Instead, the articles discuss the benefits of increasing GDP for international communities and corporations alongside an emphasis on fierce individualism that pegs individuals, and not the state, as responsible for this work. In fact, most corporate communications brochures and news articles highlight individual women who have benefited from the Goldman Sachs education project. This focus on the micro-level often foregrounds the concerns of individual women who have overcome obstacles on their path to running a successful business and obscures the macro-level questions such as why women are disadvantaged in these communities and why these communities have not yet experienced “the benefits of globalization” in the first place.

Goldman Sachs relies primarily on its corporate communications center to distribute information about the program, and fittingly, the Goldman Sachs website for the project contains press releases that are tailored for cut and paste inclusion in news stories, PDF brochures that highlight some of the women who have been successful after graduating from the program, and links to several news articles that have been complimentary of the program. The program has received a plethora of media attention, landing puff pieces in the pages of *Fortune*, *Forbes*, *Business Week*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Financial Times*, to name a few. Complimentary news articles are not hard to find: the majority of news articles reprint material directly from the press materials on the website or quote participants flown to the U.S. to tell crowds of reporters about the ways the program has positively influenced their businesses abroad. To date, I have not found any news articles containing any commentary critical of how the corporation spreads its pro-capitalist message to the Global South; such an absence

suggests that the project has done well for Goldman Sachs as it attempts to repair its image in the wake of the 2007 financial scandals. In fact, in his exposé of Goldman Sachs' connection to a website known to traffic women, *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof took time to praise the company for its work in the *10,000 Women* project (Kristof, 2012).

However, the lack of public criticism in mainstream news does not mean that such criticism is unwarranted. Far from being the benevolent arbiters of international good will, Goldman Sachs corporate communication policies should be viewed within the long history of public relations practices that attempt to deflect attention away from corporate scandals. The practice dates at least as far back as 1914, when Ivy Lee created public relations pamphlets about the philanthropic efforts of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. to deflect attention from a mining accident that killed 70 workers and a subsequent strike calling for better working conditions. Lee's efforts were so successful that at the time of Rockefeller's death, he was remembered as one of the great philanthropists of his time and news of the ways his company exploited workers was all but forgotten (Potter, 2010). Goldman Sachs was late to the spin game, starting its internal corporate communications department in 1996 (Endlich, 1999). In his analysis of the company's current public relations tactics, former CIGNA CEO of corporate communications Wendell Potter unveils the ways that Goldman Sachs and other financial corporations attempted to water down financial legislation making its way through Congress by using seemingly independent front-groups (groups that were actually financed by the financial industry's public relations offices) to create "astroturf" campaigns. These campaigns paid PR personnel to pose as everyday citizens to infiltrate online communities and message

boards with anti-regulation messages, all under the guise of being “grassroots” (Potter, 2010).

It is significant, however, that Goldman Sachs did not need to rely on these underhanded tactics to receive a large amount of positive press coverage for the *10,000 Women* campaign. In fact, in an era of increasingly corporate control of U.S.-based news and decreasing funding for in-depth reporting (McChesney, 2008; Bagdikian, 2000), Goldman Sachs’ tactics to promote its *10,000 Women* campaign have been much more traditional. Goldman Sachs uses its corporate website to disseminate fact sheets, brochures, and press releases about the *10,000 Women* project, and company press releases invite reporters to self-congratulatory award ceremonies during which they bring some of the program’s most successful graduates to the U.S. to speak about how the program helped them expand their businesses (Goldman Sachs, 2011). The press dutifully covers these events positively.

McChesney (2008) suggests that corporate control of news organizations means smaller newsroom staffs and an increasing pressure to publish information that will not upset potential advertisers. These pressures have meant that reporters such as those who cover the *10,000 Women* campaign are forced to publish information from press releases and press conferences verbatim, often failing to interrogate any of their content. The majority of articles in financial news publications combine information from press releases and corporate-generated brochures about the benefits of the program with “human-interest” segments derived from the success stories of women Goldman Sachs flaunts in both its award ceremonies and its press kits. For example, a *Wall Street Journal* article announcing the project launch combined information taken directly from the fact

sheets about the program with the stories taken from the speeches of two of the award program participants who were flown in from Afghanistan to address reporters. One of the women was excited to report that she may be expanding her silk business to international markets after her meeting earlier that day with Saks, Inc., and another recalled using the public relations and marketing skills she learned in the program to mitigate threats from male shop owners in her town who were not welcoming of women in the business world (Kelly, 2008). The article concludes with a quote from Blankfein, who stated, “We chase GDP. And that’s good for Goldman Sachs, and it’s good for the world.”

Because the news coverage relies almost exclusively on the sources provided by Goldman Sachs and not on any voices critical of the program, the coverage falls victim to what Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky call “sourcing.” According to Herman and Chomsky (2002), sourcing serves as a filter to the reliable flow of news when news media “are drawn into a symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interest” (p. 18). Thus, sourcing drastically reduces strain on news budgets by reducing the number of reporters a company needs to fill its available news space and reducing the travel time and costs associated with more traditional “on the ground” reporting. It also allows news corporations and companies like Goldman Sachs to work together, ensuring that messages reinforce a pro-business agenda and allows these companies to maintain positive relationships should they need to rely on each other for information sharing and dissemination in the future.

Mary Vavrus (2012) states that this is especially damaging in an age when corporate media rely on neoliberal policies for their survival. She argues:

Because the corporate media themselves continue to grow in size, reach, and profitability as a result of neoliberal policies deregulating media markets (e.g. the 1996 Federal Telecommunications Act), their scrutinizing those same policies and the mindset behind them would be economically irrational. (p. 8)

Thus, instead of engaging in robust discussions about the ways such policies impact those most vulnerable to changes in social welfare programs and policies, the media focus on the consumer demographics most desired by advertisers and effectively deflect criticism of the neoliberal order.

Public relations workers are not blind to these practices, and they increasingly tailor their press materials to fit the needs of busy reporters who do not have time or resources to do independent research. Books such as Potter's also suggest that PR executives go out of their way to provide sources that are sympathetic to their corporate message, while failing to offer any that might be critical. Because most news organizations do not have the time or money to pay reporters to seek these alternative voices (and those that do often choose not to allocate resources in this direction), companies such as Goldman Sachs are increasingly successful at shaping the types of stories that news organizations can tell about initiatives such as the *10,000 Women* campaign. They know that reporters must rely on the corporately controlled message if they want to add a human-interest element to its stories. Viewed in this light, it is perhaps not surprising that puff pieces about the program disguised as news articles appeared in plethora of national business publications. However, these practices deserve interrogation for the ways that they reinforce pro-corporate messages at the expense of the voices of those who are most affected by Goldman Sachs' global efforts.

## **Advancing Capitalism**

In addition to sourcing, Herman and Chomsky (2002) discuss four other media filters that serve to silence criticism of the neoliberal agenda in mainstream press. First, large for-profit media corporations have closely interlocked interests with the corporations and institutions they are supposed to monitor (p. 14). Second, because the corporate media rely on and compete for advertising dollars for revenue, advertisers are able to control content by refusing to pay for ad spots on stations that regularly air information critical of corporate efforts (p. 16). Third, corporations can organize negative publicity campaigns for media programs that go against their corporate interests; such negative attention is often indirect, taking the form of discrediting the media (or hiring other groups to do so) or supporting political campaigns of pro-business conservatives (p. 26). Last, those groups who question capitalism (or often even those who merely espouse liberal values) are labeled as communists,<sup>18</sup> which has become a signifier for the ultimate evil. Although evidence supporting these accusations is frequently absent, the label itself can threaten the speaker's credibility (p. 30). These filters work together to turn news into a propaganda machine that disseminates pro-business information at the expense of the victims such outlets deem as unworthy. According to Herman and Chomsky (2002), "A propaganda approach to media coverage suggests a systematic and highly political dichotomization in news coverage based on serviceability to important domestic power interests" (p. 35). Fittingly, the most damning news accounts of Goldman Sachs' role in the financial crisis have appeared in news sources such as *The Daily Show* and in the pages of *Rolling Stone*—not in the financial press. And perhaps more importantly for this

project, neither of these sources stop to question the role the *10,000 Women* campaign plays in spreading global capitalism.

Materials from both Goldman Sachs and the financial press have been consistently positive in their support for venture philanthropy as a viable solution to social problems. When asked by reporters whether the market can get the national economy back on track and solve the social problems created in the economic downturn, Blankfein was quoted as saying, “The financial system led us into the crisis and it will lead us out” (Alridge, 2009). Blankfein seems especially optimistic that the corporation can create a mutually beneficial relationship with the international community, most specifically with poor women in emerging nations. In fact, he sees this type of investment as a no-brainer, telling the *Harvard Business Review*, “We are disciplined in our investments, and when you get to the topic of trying to invest and create GDP, there is no better or more efficient investment—no lower hanging fruit—than the investment you make in women” (Marquis et al., 2010).

News articles were quick to latch on to this message, often repeating Goldman Sachs’ claims as their own. For example, articles in the *New York Times*, *Financial Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *The Times*, and *Business Week* all mentioned that investing in this type of education creates a win-win situation by helping individual women in underserved communities and in increasing GDP, which aids Goldman Sachs by increasing their potential investment pool. *Business Week* states that, “The program is aimed at women because closing the gender gaps in education and employment yield greater returns in economic growth for developing countries” (Damast, 2008). *The Times* quotes Mary Ugbe, a program graduate, as saying, “I have doubled my revenue since

starting the programme. This course has taught me how to better manage money in a way that is more profitable. This allows us to grow our business, grow our countries and grow our nations” (Lewis, 2008). If her story sounds polished and familiar, it may be because it also appeared in articles in the *Wall Street Journal*, philanthropy publications aimed at business professionals, and perhaps most importantly, on the fact sheet brochure included in Goldman Sachs press materials.

Nowhere in news articles or internal research reports on the *10,000 Women* campaign does anyone within the academic, news, or business communities question the goal of bringing these types of programs into emerging nations. On some level, this is not surprising. As previously discussed, news organizations are reluctant to publish information that goes against their advertisers’ wishes, both because publishing negative information about corporate interests and investments makes those companies less likely to share information and resources with news organizations in the future and because news organizations themselves operate on a corporate model, making publishing anti-capitalist messages contrary to the bottom line (Bagdikian, 2000; McChesney, 2008). Additionally, news organizations have historically vilified informants who offered anti-capitalist messages by questioning their patriotism and their credibility (Herman & Chomsky, 2002). However, when news professes to serve the public interest, it is worth questioning whose voices are left out of that debate. Within the context of the *10,000 Women* campaign coverage, the voices most frequently excluded from the debate are those who have historically been excluded from the benefits of globalization and capitalism.

Though these voices are plural and nuanced, I will focus on two areas in particular. First, news articles and analyses have not acknowledged the ways that women in emerging nations have failed to experience the benefits of globalization in part because some have attempted to resist Western influence on their lands. Despite the U.S. media's insistence that other nations readily accept—and even demand—U.S. entertainment, products, and ideologies, recent scholarship suggests that this perception is not accurate. In actuality, many U.S. products are exported to these nations whether the consumers in those nations want them or not. In just two of the many examples of resistance that have been published, Kraidy (2005) suggests that Maronite youth in Lebanon who are followers of a conservative sect of Catholicism are forced to engage in complex negotiation strategies when U.S.-based television programs are introduced in their nation. When youth encounter programs that depict teenage sexual promiscuity, they must actively negotiate these texts by accepting some of the tenets of American ideology while eschewing others. In another example, a growing body of feminist research suggests that women who wear a burka may do so because they are attempting to resist Western influences and not because they are dupes of a misogynistic system, as is reported many Western news outlets (Scott, 2007). Despite a growing effort to give voices to those who are the “recipients” of Western influence, none of the news articles questions whether women in emerging nations actually want the “benefits” of globalization and capitalism, nor do they ask critical questions about who really stands to benefit from the outcomes made possible by these policies.

Second, and fitting with the final theme of news coverage of this campaign, news articles fail to address the issue of why women in emerging nations have been excluded

from the “benefits” of globalization in the first place. The excessive focus on individuals and their micro-level struggles comes at the expense of macro-level concerns that would allow readers to see trends in continuing forms of institutionalized racism and sexism, not to mention structural issues that point to the negative consequences of global capitalism. Such an analysis would point to the ways that pro-corporate policies such as those advocated by businesses like Goldman Sachs are among the very reasons for these types of inequalities. First, Goldman Sachs policies encourage a profit model at the expense of concerns over human consequences (Cohan, 2010). Goldman Sachs’ policies have repeatedly increased the bottom line at the expense of their investors, most notably when their role in the housing crisis led in part to the loss of over 7 million jobs in the U.S. and an unknown number in the international community. Since playing a role in the housing crisis, Goldman Sachs has relied on former partners and executives who are now in high-level government positions to ensure that pro-corporate policies continue to be a part of the U.S. national and international policy in the years to come. The Secretaries of the Treasury during the Bush and Obama administrations have been former Goldman Sachs employees, and both were accused of defying orders to break contacts with Goldman representatives once they took their public positions. Though Blankfein insists that his employees naturally gravitate towards those positions, an in-depth analysis of the company suggests that employees are strongly encouraged to take such positions, thus continuing the cycle of cronyism and corporate influence between the financial giant and public policy makers (Cohan, 2010).

While the news media fail to address these key issues regarding the spread of global capitalism, the content advanced in the *10,000 Women* curriculum also continues

to push these messages on women in the program without questioning the possible consequences of doing so. Though the production of curricula is outsourced to the leading national and international business schools and is adapted by local schools to meet particular local needs, curriculum content in the participating nations addresses five key areas of business and management education. These areas include “(1) access to information, including training, technical assistance and technology; (2) access to networks; (3) access to capital; (4) access to markets; and (5) public validation” (“Fact Sheet,” 2008). Women are encouraged to attend school so that their successes may have a multiplier effect, bringing the benefits of globalization to their families. Women are not encouraged to question the capitalist system or the ways their nations have been exploited by those with wealth and power. Additionally, helping a few women suggests that capitalism does solve problems, but it leaves the inequalities perpetuated by global capitalism unquestioned and in place.

For its role in this education process, Goldman Sachs allows employees to volunteer time outside of their normal business hours to mentor participants, which helps to fulfill the first two of these educational goals. One article quotes the chief operating officer for the securities division of Goldman Sachs’ European offices as saying her volunteer experiences with the *10,000 Women* campaign have been inspiring and energizing. She states, “After a long day, I hop online and discuss issues to do with Okpe’s fashion business. It is so refreshing” (Lewis, 2008). Among the services Goldman Sachs staff has offered is help with loan applications (Marquis et al., 2010), increasing the likelihood that a Goldman Sachs affiliate will loan money (and thus profit from the interest) to women who are now educated on the importance of expanding their

businesses. Though news articles have covered only success stories of women who have taken out loans and substantially increased the size of their businesses, it is difficult to believe that all women achieve the same levels of success. It remains to be seen how the company will handle situations in which women default on loans in their efforts to expand their businesses.

Kraidy (2005) suggests that in our transnational, post-Fordist corporate culture, outsourcing and subcontracting are increasingly common, as are joint ventures and co-productions because these types of business models give the “superficial appearance of pluralism and competition” while actually serving to increase “capitalism’s affinity to create monopolies” (p. 99). Transferred to the realm of Goldman Sachs’ philanthrocapitalism, Goldman Sachs can outsource the production of its localized curriculum, giving the appearance of a pluralistic education that considers the realities of local communities. However, because women in local communities are not given a say in creating this curriculum at any stage of the process, they are not actual co-creators engaging in an equitable relationship. In other words, women do not get to voice what they think would actually help their businesses succeed because Goldman Sachs determines this for them; this creates an inequitable relationship where women do not have the opportunity to define their own educational goals. Additionally, Goldman Sachs relies on volunteers to create and implement the curriculum, allowing them to deflect the costs of the labor associated with their pro-capitalist knowledge production. Even their own employees who form mentoring relationships with women in the program are allowed to contact their employees only when they are off the clock, despite the fact that they are “strongly encouraged” to volunteer if they want to climb the corporate ladder.

Partnering with women and organizations internationally also means that stories of resistance to Goldman Sachs' corporate transcultural model will likely not make it into U.S. mainstream media. In their book on how corporations branded themselves with and through the Product (RED) campaign, Lisa Ann Richey and Stefano Ponte (2011) state that relying on "distant" and "disengaged" forms of corporate social responsibility allows corporations to justify their exploitative practices by stating that they are also "doing good" (p. 129). According to Richey and Ponte's theory, engaged corporate social responsibility would entail Goldman Sachs altering its business practices so as not to create a corporate culture that allows the company to profit at the expense of people in the first place. By utilizing "disengaged" corporate social responsibility, the firm is able to "have a positive impact on some people and/or environments (and thus, provide an ethical aura), [but still] not challenge any of the tenets of normal business conduct—on the contrary, the more successful a company is, the more money it can donate—no matter how and where that profit was obtained" (p. 128). Additionally, engaging with "distant" instead of "proximate" others, the company is able to focus on the problems of communities in places where they can simultaneously increase their brand's reach and educate populations on issues such as the benefits of global capitalism, without the potential for excessive critique from those populations (p. 130). Thus, distant disengaged corporate social responsibility is most effective when the promotional awareness of the campaign serves to reinforce positive associations with the corporation while simultaneously silencing dissenting voices.

Goldman Sachs has thus far been successful in doing just this. Because it is successful at controlling the news discourse about the campaign through a far-reaching

corporate communications department and news-friendly formats, news from women who are not already enamored with the benefits of global capitalism does not make it into the public discourse. Instead, company brochures, press releases, and award ceremonies honor program participants for achieving financial success with their businesses, and Goldman Sachs employees are rewarded for caring about the “distant others” whom they mentor. The public relations documents and news articles print stories such as Anagha Atul Kiukarni’s:

Anagha has been in the manufacturing business since 2001, and has used her new skills to attract new investors to provide capital. This has allowed her to hire ten new employees. Her company currently turns out specialized packaging applications like tough plastic Apet Sheet, Blisters, and trays that can be used in the hospitality and other industries.

(Brochure, 2009)

The brochure then quotes Anagha stating, “I have increased my cash flow and have added 10 new jobs, increasing my workforce by 50 percent. Ten people, ten families have a brighter future. Eleven, counting my family.” Like the other stories touted by Goldman Sachs, Anagha’s involves stories of overcoming adversity, helping others in her community, and expanding her business so that she can employ more workers in a capitalist enterprise. The women in these stories are grateful for the opportunity to help others, and some express feeling empowered by their newfound financial freedom. However, Goldman Sachs stands to benefit disproportionately from the publication of these stories—especially when there are no dissenting voices—because the expansion of global capital and the creation of new international investment relationships will continue

to serve their bottom line long after the dissolution of these types of educational programs. And if there is any doubt that Goldman Sachs believes its goals to be benevolent in helping the “distant other,” those doubts were squandered when Blankfein proclaimed this his venture philanthropic organization was doing “God’s work” (Arlidge, 2009).

The Goldman Sachs campaign is characteristic of a growing trend in corporate social initiatives and cause marketing in which there is a lack of critical interrogations of who actually benefits from these corporate policies. In *Pink Ribbons, Inc.*, Samantha King (2006) argues that cause marketing campaigns such as these reinforce the neoliberal order, such that “public-private initiatives and individual and corporate giving are promoted as morally and economically viable means through which to response to societal needs, in lieu of the state’s role in mitigating the social effects of capitalism” (p. xxvii). Corporations come to govern from afar through venture capital and corporate transcultural practices, but also constantly reify the desires of the neoliberal state to solve social problems using the economic model of global capitalism. However, because capitalism necessarily allows the success of the few at the expense of the many, it seems contradictory that capitalism is an appropriate means through which to solve the social problems of the system.

Instead, individual actors are encouraged to enact their citizenship within a micro-level economic framework. According to King, neoliberal political citizenship is best enacted by, “individuals who are responsible to themselves and for others in their ‘community’” (p. xxvii). Thus, women participants in the *10,000 Women* campaign are encouraged to engage in this type of citizenship because it is believed that they can

advance the capitalist system within emerging nations by bringing the “multiplier effect” of expanding their businesses first to themselves, then to their families, and finally to other families within their communities. This vision of corporate social responsibility furthers the neoliberal model of citizenship, which “aligns corporate support of social issues with building corporate brands and consolidating brand revenues while social justice transforms yet another strategic venture to secure the corporate bottom line” (Mukherjee & Banet-Weiser, 2012, p. 10). In other words, as Goldman Sachs fills its role as a good corporate citizen by righting the wrongs of capitalism and professing to decrease the gendered inequality that is exacerbated by globalization, it does so in ways that are good for the system in which its business operates. By encouraging this type of individualized citizen of corporate aid, Goldman Sachs constitutes women as corporate citizens and offers avenues of involvement that include education and entrepreneurship. However, they ultimately fail to address the roots of poverty in their host countries. Because these educational efforts constitute citizenship as an individualized endeavor, the women who fail to properly integrate these capitalist solutions in their small businesses have only themselves to blame.

Within philanthrocapitalism, citizenship is available to women as long as women continue to expand global capitalism and take it upon themselves to better their communities. In this sense, Goldman Sachs can govern from afar by selecting business schools to develop a pro-capitalist curriculum, outsourcing the implementation of the curriculum to colleges in emerging nations, and encouraging women to continue spreading that education to others in the community. In turn, Goldman Sachs can appear to be “giving back” to the global community—in a sense, excusing themselves for their

role in creating the economic downturn in the first place—all while continuing to pad company profits, expand global business relationships and opportunities for capital, and use its corporate identity as a philanthropic organization to attract and retain employees in the U.S.

Furthermore, the company governs from afar by using press materials to highlight who is worthy of aid and who is not. For instance, the company encourages investments in projects for a particularly narrow category of woman. As mentioned, women need to own a business that shows potential for growth, must be willing to expand the business, and must be willing to give their earnings back to their families and communities (“Fact Sheet,” 2008). This automatically excludes a vast majority of women, many of whom are impoverished or who have been excluded from any type of formal education, vocational training, or business work due to deeply entrenched laws and social norms preventing them from doing so. By selecting women who are relatively advantaged and hoping the investment “trickles down” to women with less access to resources, the philanthropy serves to financialize the value of women’s citizenship. The women who are granted access to this form of citizenship are given resources because they are more economically valuable to the corporation than women from other demographics, not because access to resources is a valuable goal in and of itself. Indeed, the philanthrocapitalist model of corporate giving highlights the importance of philanthropy that turns a profit instead of that which addresses the root causes of these injustices in the first place.

Additionally Goldman Sachs corporate transcultural model disables it from being a truly hybrid system; instead, the company’s philanthrocapitalist system continues to create an imperialist system in which U.S.-centric business ideologies are imposed upon

women in the Global South. These women, in turn, have much less access to resources from which to talk about the benefits *and consequences* of these systems on their local communities. In a truly equitable hybrid system, U.S.-based corporations and nonprofit organizations in other places would work together to mutually define and redefine their identities (Kraidy, 2005). Goldman Sachs instead operates under a system in which the avenues for definition—of education, business expansion, and citizenship—exist in a top down model that starts with their own corporate communications department.

Additionally, engaging in a philanthrocapitalist system allows Goldman Sachs to use the money it attained through unethical corporate business practices to impose the logic of globalization and capitalism on communities throughout the global South.

Philanthrocapitalism relies on distant and disengaged forms of corporate giving, and thus fails to hold corporations accountable for the ways corporate policies and the production of goods and services influence the global community. In her latest book, Martha Nussbaum (2011) describes the “capabilities approach” to international investments, a move that reprivileges human lives in decision making involving global investments. According to her theory, GDP growth is an inaccurate means of assessing a nation’s growth if that increase in financial resources does not coincide with improvement of the human condition. Nussbaum quotes Mahbub ul Haq, a Pakistani economist who pressed the UN to centralize human concerns when making investment decisions, as saying, “The real wealth of a nation is its people. And the purpose of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy, and creative lives. This simple but powerful truth is too often forgotten in the pursuit of material and financial wealth” (p. 1). She goes on to suggest that expanding our vision to

relate individual human stories of suffering to the systemic inequalities that breed them is an effective starting point from which to consider how to engage in philanthropic acts moving forward. Using this new framework, the solution moves away from creating a system in which corporations are not expected to engage with nonprofit organizations at all and toward one in that allows for the full participation of both proximate and distant communities at all levels of philanthropic production.

The *10,000 Women* campaign offers a lofty goal: the education of 10,000 women is no small feat and should not be dismissed outright. The program has indeed brought empowerment to *some* women in the international community. However, pushing for a “translocal” approach, one that focuses on the connections between the communities impacted by Goldman Sachs policies instead of focusing on 15 separate interactions between local communities and the U.S. corporate system, allows for a greater possibility of links between communities and thus a greater opportunity that their voices can influence the type of business education offered by the campaign. At the very least, the translocal perspective “allows us to remove the West from the center of intercultural relations” (Kraidy, 2005, p. 155). Additionally, switching from a corporate centered idea of international relations to a critical model that attempts to trace the power differentials and inequities of participation will continue to shed light on the ways that Goldman Sachs venture philanthropy serves as means of cultural imperialism that enforces the logic of global capitalism on international communities. Ideally, this approach begins to unravel the neoliberal model that stresses a business model for all aspects of social life, and instead, focuses on the human-centered consequences of transnational corporate policies. At least in the case of Goldman Sachs *10,000 Women* campaign, these policies serve to

advance the corporate image and bottom line to a disproportionately greater degree than the women it supposedly educates.

In this chapter, I have highlighted how Goldman Sachs uses news media as a conduit for positive publicity about their philanthropy campaign. In the next chapter, I address how the Nike Foundation attempted to get social media users more involved in their philanthropy. Instead of encouraging a translocal approach connecting recipients in the Global South, the campaign focused on linking groups of citizens in the Global North to “learn” about the need for education for girls in the Global South. As I will show, providing a platform for users to connect can be detrimental if wealthy and powerful corporations are not removed from the center of this network, as this space can be used to deflect attention away from systemic causes of global inequality.

## Chapter 4

### The *Girl Effect*: The Branded Marketplace of Philanthropic Governance

*“Invest in a girl and she will do the rest.”* – The Girl Effect, 2008

In 2008, the Nike Foundation launched the *Girl Effect*—a global initiative aimed at eradicating intergenerational poverty among women and girls in the Global South—by unveiling a plethora of multimedia materials highlighting the simplicity of helping girls help themselves. As the quote above suggests, the campaign assumes that small investments in women and girls will have a ripple effect for families and communities, and this will solve issues of global poverty even without any other structural interventions. The web-based campaign uses online and social media to create a business-to-business brand that serves as a hub for businesses, non-profits, and individuals to give money, design programs, and develop international policies that increase educational opportunities for girls in the Global South (“Nike Foundation and Buffetts,” 2008). In contrast to the centralized messaging and control present in Goldman Sachs’ *10,000 Women* campaign<sup>19</sup>, the *Girl Effect* offers a more diffuse system of philanthropy that allows any organization to brand themselves with and through the *Girl Effect* and encourages a wide range of on-the-ground organizations to apply for funding for girl-centered initiatives. In short, the initiative serves as an umbrella brand that helps organizations market an array of girl-centered non-profit activities, not as a traditional corporate philanthropy that associates itself with a single intervention or location. As Nike Foundation founder Maria Eitel explains, “The world needed a rallying point, and the *Girl Effect* is a movement that belongs to everyone” (quoted in Kylander, 2011, p. 2).

The *Girl Effect* initiative is also intimately tied to Nike's corporate branding strategy. The Nike Foundation employs many former corporate brand managers<sup>20</sup> who aim to create demand for this brand of philanthropy in much the same way they create demand for Nike t-shirts and shoes. The *Girl Effect* brand managers hope that increasing awareness and excitement around the initiative will lead to an increase in the demand for philanthropic programs benefiting girls, just as increasing hype around new basketball shoes leads to increases in sales. Emily Brew, the brand creative director at the Nike Foundation and a key player in the emergence of the *Girl Effect* brand, stated, "The more people know about the *Girl Effect*, the easier it will be to increase the amount of attention and funding that reaches girls from governments and multilateral organizations" (as quoted in Kylander, 2011, p.3). Thus far, the program has partnered with major international governance, economic, and philanthropy organizations such as the Clinton Global Initiative, the G20 Summit, the World Bank, and the United Nations (ICAI Report 5). It has also achieved popularity using media: the two main campaign videos have over 2.5 million views on YouTube,<sup>21</sup> the *Girl Effect* informational session was the fourth most popular session at the 2009 World Economic Forum, and the campaign has been the subject of an episode of *Oprah* (Carella, 2011).

In March 2012, the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) conducted a study to assess the campaign's impact on the lived realities of women and girls in the Global South. The ICAI concluded that despite major gains in raising awareness about the need to include girls in development programs, this awareness has not yet led to major change on the ground (ICAI, 2012). Additionally, the report found that the Nike Foundation's communication efforts fail "to reflect the complex social context and puts

undue pressure on vulnerable girls...[The program] appears to have struggled, however, to reconcile the power of a simple message with its efforts to tackle a complex social problem” (ICAI, 2012, p. 5). Despite this major criticism, the campaign lives on and now includes 56 corporate and non-profit partners. There have not been any formal studies to date that assess how the Nike Foundation’s *Girl Effect* team uses marketing, research, and social media materials to constitute awareness of the crisis of gendered global poverty or on how they construct the ideal recipients of their philanthropic dollars. This chapter aims to fill this gap, paying particular attention to how the Nike Foundation creates “buzz” around this philanthropic brand, how these buzz marketing materials construct divergent avenues for activism in the Global North and the Global South, and what it means to allow a multinational corporation like Nike, Inc. define these issues for the global community.

Analyzing official online and social media pages, campaign videos, mobilization materials, and affiliated research studies, I argue that the *Girl Effect* campaign deflects attention from the complexities of gendered global poverty and instead directs attention toward individualized therapeutic acts of caregiving. As I will show, the Nike Foundation has funded five research studies with organizations such as the Population Council and the Center for Global Development to offer systemic and critical analyses of the problems and potential solutions to intergenerational poverty among women and girls. However, official campaign materials direct consumer attention away from these robust analyses and toward individualization and self-empowerment. In other words, consumers in the Global North are encouraged to feel good about using consumption-oriented activities to “save” girls in the Global South.

This imperialist notion of philanthropic economic development creates a marketplace of branded philanthropy where active citizenship is defined as sharing online content or purchasing pencils for school children. The ideal corporate citizen in this model participates in philanthropic activities that expand the *Girl Effect* brand in neoliberal terms, and the ideal woman citizen in both the Global North and the Global South gives back to the community using these branded resources. Though this program is certainly beneficial to some women and girls who are given access to money and resources they might not otherwise receive, it is important to also consider the ways this program deflects attention away from the interlocking web of reasons why this extreme poverty exists—including Nike’s advocacy for unequal global trade relationships and history of inhumane working conditions in global factories (Fisher, 2006). To assess the connection between the focus on hyperindividualism and the deflection away from complex understandings of gendered global poverty, in this chapter I integrate the theoretical frameworks of cause marketing, citizenship, and critiques of education as economic development, and aim to offer explanations for how and why the *Girl Effect* campaign constitutes a market for branded philanthropy.

### **Citizenship and Education in the Marketplace of Philanthropy**

Every decade since the 1940s, the United Nations and the World Bank have advocated for increased investments in educational opportunities for women and girls, claiming that education is necessary for the development of full personhood. Personhood, in this context, includes not only personal freedoms and capacities such as access to healthcare and basic literacy education, but also the freedom to participate in civic functions and responsibilities such as nation-building and expanding women’s rights

(Jain, 2005). During that time, the cultural, political, and economic impacts of neoliberalism<sup>22</sup> have also affected opportunities for women's participation in electoral politics and avenues of citizenship more generally. As such, discussions of women's citizenship that focus exclusively on women's involvement in electoral politics do not properly account for the innumerable ways women have been encouraged to engage in practices of "good citizenship." More recent feminist scholarship expands this definitional framework, arguing that citizenship occurs not only in organized, centralized acts such as voting for political candidates, but also through social and cultural community spaces and mediated events. In these accounts, good citizens are no longer just voters, but instead are required to actively work upon themselves, making good choices for themselves and their families in a variety of individualized consumer contexts. This further directs the path to "good" citizenship away from communal action to change the larger institutional structures that oppress people and toward individual acts that tie consumption to empowerment (King, 2006; Einstein, 2012).

Recent connotations surrounding these practices relink personal benefits with communal benefits by suggesting that what is good for the individual's economic success is also good for the nation's success (Brown, 2005). This shift is intimately tied to the rise of neoliberalism in the 1980s and 1990s and to the move to conflate governance and consumer markets. In the neoliberal paradigm, governments run on a business model by selecting policies based on profitability and efficiency, and this line of policy reasoning impacts the ways individuals conceptualize their own place within the national and international community. Wendy Brown (2005) argues that the rise of neoliberalism reduces every aspect of human life to a market rationality and encourages people to think

of themselves as rational actors who must make good personal decisions so they are not burdens on the rest of their community. In this way neoliberalism conflates the need for public assistance with mismanagement and places personal consumption, good citizenship, and efficient governance within a moral framework.

The mass privatization of goods and services that characterizes neoliberalism correlates with a marketplace flooded with issues and organizations competing for resources they once received from the state. In this system, charities have become commodities that corporations use to “sell their products, and charities are branding themselves as products to be marketed to corporations” (Einstein, 2012, p. xii). Because women account for over 80 percent of consumer purchases and because this valuable demographic is more likely to purchase products from corporations who support a social cause (Schowalter, 2012a), many corporations make charitable contributions part of their business model and expect their charitable contributions to be efficient paths to increased profits. As such, corporations are more likely to favor issues that have mass appeal (such as noncontroversial charities for breast cancer that appeal to large segments of valuable consumer demographics) or that will enhance their presence in international markets (such as support for education in the Global South) (King, 2006; Einstein, 2012). Both individuals and corporations are more likely to accept their moral imperative to help if the paths to activism require very little effort while they simultaneously make them look and feel good (Einstein, 2012; Schowalter, 2012a). This model reinforces the idea that individuals must consume corporate products ethically in order to solve social problems that have been exacerbated by privatization and deregulation, perpetuating a system in which many of these same corporations use profits to lobby for further decreases in taxes

and regulation. Because the partnerships between charitable causes and corporations are largely unregulated, contradictions abound between corporations' purported goals of altruism and the mandate that they produce profit (Littler, 2009).

Because corporations such as Nike have more access to mainstream and social media resources, they have more power in shaping the ways consumers interact with and through philanthropic initiatives such as the *Girl Effect*. These interactions take center stage in the *Girl Effect* campaign, as consumers are encouraged to invest in their own identities as consumers and as global citizens through a professed support for the campaign on social media sites and through financial support for products that raise money for girls' education. However, these interactions also discourage consumer citizens from engaging in activism that questions the basic tenets of globalization and neoliberalism, both of which have led to vast social and economic inequalities as they have taken root in countries across the globe. These inequalities include the hypocrisy of Nike engaging in corporate social responsibility to address global poverty while eschewing responsibility for their long history of egregious labor and environmental practices. As Mukherjee & Banet-Weiser (2012) state, the tendency for corporations to direct criticism away from global neoliberal policies is especially important to unpack as global businesses and campaigns "exact their heaviest price from marginalized constituencies—women, nonwhites, and the poor" (p. 9).

The last several decades of economic globalization have relied upon vastly unequal trade relationships that have in turn exacerbated global inequality and poverty (Zammit, 2003); economic mandates imposed from wealthy donors onto poor nations that have significantly decreased access to rights and resources for women in the Global

South (Zammit, 2003; Jain, 2005); and increasing pressure to ignore growing inequalities within nations by measuring development solely based on GDP (Nussbaum, 2011).<sup>23</sup> Ignoring researchers' calls for multidimensional solutions to increasing global inequality, international governance organizations and transnational corporations have repeatedly defined the crisis of inequality in terms of women's lack of access to education at the expense of these other systemic factors that impact women's lives. Frances Vavrus (2003) shows how this attention to schooling as the solution to global inequalities obscures problems with the political economy of international development, including the fact that education does little to foster meaningful change unless it is coupled with major systemic changes within and between nations. Given these factors, in this context the rise in attention to educating women and girls does more to deflect attention away from systemic problems of economic injustice than it does to promote avenues of change. This is especially true in an era when corporations such as Nike market their initiatives to individuals in the Global North in hopes of attracting a loyal consumer base, instead of using their resources to change the inequalities in their own business structure.

This chapter highlights how consumer citizenship is gendered in international contexts, where corporations increasingly make safe and marketable investments in education for women and girls in the Global South in order to secure praise among their largely female consumer base in the Global North. As I will show, these mediated campaigns are sites of contestation where individuals and corporations struggle through changing notions of activism and definitions of global citizenship. The *Girl Effect* campaign and its corresponding social media initiative shifts the focus of research about girls' education from global policies to individual consumers—"a shift from a collective

reimagining of the market to a retooling of capitalist practices and strategies to better accommodate the self-interests of citizen-consumers” (Mukherjee & Banet-Weiser, 2012, p. 11). In this model, citizens in the Global North can feel good about engaging with both the Nike brand and its *Girl Effect* philanthropic arm because they are “helping” women who live in poverty, despite their acts of consumption doing more to provide value for the corporation and for their sense of self than for the women and girls they profess to serve, as I will show in this chapter.

Using this theoretical framework, I conduct a discourse analysis of the *Girl Effect* initiative, focusing on the official online and social media sites, web-based mobilization materials, and research studies affiliated with the campaign. I highlight these sources because they are the predominant means through which the campaign communicates with individuals and corporations who wish to get involved with the project, and also because these sources tend to cross-reference each other. Additionally, I analyze a five-study research series called *Girls Count* that was funded by the Nike Foundation to assess the importance of global investments in educational infrastructure for girls, the two *Girl Effect* reports summarizing this research (“Your Move” and “Smarter Economics”), and the two toolkits informing people how to get involved (“Toolkit” and “Plan an Event Guide”). I also analyze the official campaign website ([girleffect.org](http://girleffect.org)), the two official campaign videos posted to the *Girl Effect* YouTube channel ([youtube.com/user/girleffect](https://youtube.com/user/girleffect)), and the *Girl Effect* Facebook page ([facebook.com/girleffect](https://facebook.com/girleffect)), all of which offer more direct and real time communication with individuals, nonprofits, and businesses interested in more information about the program. Together, I look at what the totality of these materials says about how the *Girl*

*Effect* constitutes the best avenues for involvement, activism, and citizenship for individuals and corporations.

I begin with a discussion of how research about these education programs frames educational initiatives before offering an analysis of the rise of this particular form of branded philanthropic education. I conclude with a discussion of how this project affects activism surrounding economic global development.

### **The Importance of Girl Centered Philanthropy**

The *Girl Effect* campaign materials draw from a series of five studies funded by the Nike Foundation, the World Bank, and the United Nations and conducted by the Population Council, the International Center for Research on Women, and the Center for Global Development. Titled *Girls Count*, these research reports repeatedly tout the importance of creating multi-faceted health and education programs for women and girls in the Global South in order to reverse the systemic gendered discrimination that consistently disadvantages women.<sup>24</sup> Central to *Girls Count* is the idea that helping women and girls is important solely or primarily because they are currently being denied their human rights. For example, in 2008 the Coalition for Adolescent Girls—a partnership between the UN Foundation, the Nike Foundation, and 30 international organizations focusing on issues facing women and girls in developing countries—issued its first report in the series called “Girls Count: A Global Investment & Action Agenda.” The study details the intersecting forms of discrimination facing women and girls living in extreme poverty in the Global South and makes specific suggestions for intervention. The authors iterate the importance of focusing on girls by stating, “This report takes as a starting point that the wellbeing of girls matters, above all, because they are individuals

with inalienable human rights;” they go on to showcase areas where violence, discrimination, and an unequal distribution of resources prevent women around the world from exercising their basic human rights (Levine, et al., 2008, p. 11). The researchers acknowledge that investments in girls may lead to positive economic changes within communities, but they clearly state that the most important reason to invest in girls’ education is because girls are human beings with inalienable rights.

The following year, the Nike Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation funded and published another report in the series that included a similar premise. The authors write, “The primary motivation to improve the health of and health care for adolescent girls must always be the wellbeing of girls themselves” (Temin & Levine, 2009, p. 2). The report states that ensuring and protecting the human rights of girls should be the basis for all sound development projects. Again and again, the studies foreground women’s human rights, not the economic benefits that may come from investments in girls’ health or education. Each report also begins with a forward from Nike Foundation president Maria Eitel and United Nations Foundation executive vice president and chief operating officer Kathy Bushkin Calvin stating:

Investing in girls is the right thing to do on moral, ethical, and human rights grounds. Perhaps no other segment of society globally faces as much exploitation and injustice, and we owe girls our support as integral, yet overlooked, members of the human family. (Lloyd, 2009, p. x; Levine, et al., 2009, p. x)

When *Girls Count* does address economics, researchers focus on how girls are motivated by economics, including the motivation to be economically independent in order to avoid forced child marriages and to have enough money for basic rights such as food,

healthcare, and education (Greene, et al., 2009). Most other references to economics in the reports address the ways that girls' human rights are impacted by the unequal distribution of power, jobs, and resources (Levine, et al., 2008, p. 11).

These reports do not discuss how corporations might benefit economically by investing in girls' education, nor do they quantify the benefits countries would receive if they increased educational opportunities for women and girls. This is an important exception in a neoliberal era that consistently demands that social services run on a for-profit business model and asks that governance organizations extend rights and privileges to people when it is cost effective or profitable. The authors' resistance to financializing the benefits of extending full human rights to girls in the Global South disrupts the neoliberal model of economic globalization, saying that even in areas where it is not economically beneficial to expand rights and privileges to girls, governance organizations must do this work anyway.<sup>25</sup>

Still, a major road block in expanding girls' rights is that many are not aware of what rights are afforded them, and even if they are, many know that deeply entrenched societal values and norms restrict their access to those rights. A study summarized in one of the Nike Foundation reports shows the extent to which a lack of knowledge is a problem:

According to a UNICEF survey of youth in 17 countries in East Asia and the Pacific, few girls realize they have rights. A total of 53% of girls ages 9-17 knew they had a right to education; only one-third believed they had a right to express their ideas or opinions. (Greene, et al., 2009, p. 38)

As one teen girl living in a slum in Brazil told researchers, “Rights exist on paper, but in reality they aren’t put into practice” (Greene, et al., 2009, p. 38).

To address the incongruity between girls’ formal rights, their knowledge of those rights, and the lived realities that may or may not include access to their rights, the Nike Foundation conducted interviews and focus groups with girls in the Global South and asked girls about the challenges they face surrounding these topics. One girl quoted in the resulting report discusses the significance of this type of research by stating, “We the children are experts on being 8, 12, or 17 years old in the societies of today. To consult us would make your work more effective and give better results for children” (Greene, et al., 2009, p.2). In line with its qualitative methodology, the report privileges girls accounts of their lived realities and highlights the complex issues girls wish aid programs would address as they create development plans. Girls in the study largely focused on education, health, marriage choice, bodily integrity, and economic empowerment, and how they saw these issues as interwoven with each other and with the larger social and cultural contexts of their communities. For example, one frequently raised issue involved familial support for education. A 20-year old woman in Bangladesh stated, “I stopped studying after class five because my father was religious and did not believe in girls’ education” (Greene, et al., 2009, p. xxi). The report shows the connection between support for education and other possible outcomes, including a family’s likelihood of forcing girls into marriage in adolescence, which stunts girls’ opportunities. As one girl explained, “I don’t want to get married and have children, at least not anytime soon...I want to work and study. I don’t want to be like another girl I know who is 13 years old and already pregnant” (Greene, et al., 2009, p. xxii). Even when girls can choose to freely enter and exit relationships, they

are often not free to negotiate issues such as access to sexual health information and resources. Girls are frequently denied access to information about contraceptives, are unable to ask their partners to use condoms, and are frequently the victims of sexual violence. A girl in the Democratic Republic of the Congo explains the no-win situation this creates for women and girls in her community:

We do not have access to contraception. We are stigmatized if we have a child before marriage. We do not have the right to abortion. What a dilemma! How can we not die if we are exposed to risky abortions? How can we not resort to abortion if a child before marriage is a sacrilege? How can we avoid having children when there are no contraceptive services? We wish to affirm that one of the best weapons in the fight against risky abortions among the young is to respect our rights, starting with the right to information. (Greene, et al., 2009, p. 20)

Girls call for multi-faceted solutions that fuse increasing their economic opportunities with expanding social acceptance so that their communities grant them access to these resources. Instead, programs like the *Girl Effect* offer monetary solutions without addressing the inequalities experienced by girls such as those quoted above. As these girls rightly state, the addition of funding for more schools, water sources, and health clinics will not ensure that women and girls actually experience more equal access to resources unless these services are coupled with major changes in the way families and communities view the role of women.

Girls and researchers alike would like to see current educational initiatives shift from the expansion of schools themselves to more robust forms of social change. Ruth Levine, the lead researcher on *Girls Count*, writes, “The international community has

focused heavily on primary education for girls, and though important, primary education is by no means enough” (Levine, et al., 2008, p. 4). Echoing the work of Vavrus (2003), Levine (2008) continues by highlighting the problems she sees in the ways that international educational initiatives are implemented:

In recent years donors have focused education spending in developing countries on expanding enrollment in primary education. This approach has proven insufficient both for the girls themselves and for attaining the social benefits of education. When girls are at or near puberty (which often coincides with the transition from primary to secondary school), parents may discourage them from continuing in school or may pressure them to drop out to preserve their reputation and marriage prospects. Donors must therefore focus on the quality of education and on the social barriers in the transition between primary and secondary levels, typically affecting girls ages 10-14. (p. 5)

Because the Nike Foundation was integral to researching and publishing these reports and because they launched the *Girl Effect* campaign specifically to address these issues, it is worth interrogating how the *Girl Effect's* public campaign differed from the messages of the study.

### **From Burdens to Breadwinners**

In contrast to the human rights premise of the Nike Foundation research series, the *Girl Effect* public profile showcases how economically beneficial these programs are for investors, corporations, local governments, families, and girls. For example, both *Girls Count* and the *Girl Effect* address why it is important to highlight interventions for girls instead of girls *and* boys. The *Girls Count* series states that this is important because

girls face much more severe discrimination than boys in terms of allocating family and community resources, gender violence, and access to basic rights, so girls' needs are more immediate than the needs of boys (Lloyd, 2009, p. 9). In contrast, many of the *Girl Effect* documents cite research stating that investments in girls are more likely to yield returns for local economies because girls are naturally more selfless. A *Girl Effect* press release states that investing in girls is a better "return on investment" than investing in boys because "girls and women will reinvest 90% of their income back into their families, as compared to 35-40% for males" ("Former President," 2008, para. 3).

When the *Girls Count* series addresses these ripple effects of investments in girls, the researchers state that investing in girls is important because educated girls experience "greater safety, enhanced social status, and better opportunities for self-actualization and empowerment" (Lloyd, 2009, p. 36). In addition to these immediate benefits to the girls themselves, educated girls are more likely to staff local health facilities and local schools, meaning that communities benefit from better and more frequent services. Local healthcare is especially important for girls because without local services, many girls must engage in unsafe travel to other communities to receive treatments (Lloyd, 2009, p. 47). In contrast, a *Girl Effect* pamphlet published in 2011 shows how investing in girls will help corporations and governments who are currently losing money because of teen pregnancy and job inequality. It reads:

Girls are the world's greatest untapped resource. Investments in girls have significant economic returns. These returns have the potential to uplift entire economies. Recent work shows just how powerful the girl effect dividend is.

- With nearly four million adolescent mothers annually, India loses US\$383 billion in potential lifetime income.
- Girls completing secondary school in Kenya would add US\$27 billion to the economy over their lifetimes.
- In Bangladesh, the total cost of adolescent pregnancy over a lifetime is US\$22 billion.
- If young Nigerian women had the same employment rates as young men, the country would add US\$13.9 billion annually.
- If Ethiopian girls completed secondary school, the total contribution over their lifetimes is US\$6.8 billion.” (“Smarter Economics,” 2012, p. 3).

What this document fails to mention is that girls often have no say over when or under what conditions they get pregnant and give birth, nor does it account for the complex socio-economic structures that prevent women from being able to participate in paid labor markets both before, during, and after a pregnancy. Yet, it goes on to give this call to action: “Invest early so girls save money, build economic assets and move from burden to breadwinners” (“Smarter Economics,” 2012, p. 7).

The idea that girls are burdens in their homes and communities appears in various forms throughout the *Girls Count* and *Girl Effect* materials. Whereas the *Girls Count* materials state that we must educate men and boys about girls’ rights and inherent value, the importance of girls’ health and education, and the importance of stopping sexual, emotional, and physical violence against women, the *Girl Effect* campaign states that men and boys will realize girls’ value when investments in girls can lead to future financial gain for families and communities. The “Your Move” report, an 85-page document

detailing why investments in girls are a good idea, states that families are unlikely to invest in girls who have little to no economic value for the family. It states:

Today a girl is valued in her family—in the household ‘micro-economy’—as the caretaker of the young, old and sick, as the carrier of wood and water, and in the most desperate situations, as collateral for the debt-stricken. Families see little return on investing in a girls’ education, without visible income for her in the future. There is little incentive for her, her family, her community and her nation to disrupt and transform her status quo, without the hope and prospect of something better. (“Your Move,” 2011, p. 15)

Without interrogating or condemning the conflation of girls’ human value and economic value, the document goes on to state that ensuring girls’ economic value in adolescence and adulthood will ensure that families and communities invest in girls during childhood.

Once a girl can prove that she can support herself with paid labor outside the home, “Your Move” states that families and communities are more likely to support her choice to use that money for education:

Suddenly she is viewed as a good investment. Someone who can generate prosperity for herself and her family. With that shift, other dominoes fall into place. Broader attitudes about girls change. Families become healthier and wealthier. The girl effect unfolds. (“Your Move,” 2011, p. 15)

The *Girl Effect* suggests that the solution is simple: if girls are economically valuable, they will be valued as people. There is no interrogation of the philosophy that equates humans to economic value, the social conditions that impact girls’ chances of success (including the severe gender-based discrimination that prevents many girls from starting

any type of business of their own), or the high rates of sexual, physical, and emotional violence that impacts women and girls who displease the males in their lives. In Uganda, for example, 70 percent of men and 90 percent of women surveyed said that men were justified committing acts of domestic violence against women when women were disobedient (Koenig, et al, 2003). Other countries have seen increases in domestic violence rates among women who received loans from microcredit agencies (Carella, 2011). Countries with similar social structures impede the chances for girls to engage in paid labor outside the home, making it nearly impossible to earn respect under the *Girl Effect* model. In communities where women are barred from leaving the home, from engaging in activities without the consent of their husbands or fathers, or from controlling their own finances, the idea that women prove their worth by starting businesses and putting themselves through school cannot be actualized.

Still, offering women and girls the chance to engage in paid employment in the global economy is important for Nike and other corporations that rely on their inexpensive labor for immense profits. Nike president and CEO Mark Parker recently wrote:

Every global company should invest in the girl effect. Economists have demonstrated that it is the best possible return on investment. With targeted investments linked to market demand, adolescent girls will reverse cycles of poverty with huge impact on our global economy. (Murphy, 2009, p. 3)

The *Girl Effect* documents echo this sentiment, claiming that investments in girls will lift families, communities, and nations out of poverty. Statements such as Parker's reflect an ideology in which it is women's responsibility to fix the ills of capitalism and women's

value is defined through their ability to carry out this task in ways that still benefit corporations.

This ideology also manifests itself in the subsidiary programs the *Girl Effect* funds and markets. For example, one model philanthropic program the “Your Move” toolkit advertises is the “Safe and Smart Savings in Kenya and Uganda” program, which expands savings and loan programs to include young girls. The program also funds financial literacy programs for girls where they learn to control their money themselves, instead of offering financial services through a male guardian. Two of the four outcomes investors anticipate from this project include “increased household and community prosperity” and “adolescent girls as a new and viable market for savings products in the eyes of financial institutions” (“Your Move,” 2011, p. 54). The benefits of this program include the mandate that girls use their resources to engage in financial decisions that benefit the community and that create new markets for the banking industry.

Despite the overwhelming amount of research stating that educational and economic investments will not lead to change unless they are coupled with changes to the social and political structures that enable unequal treatment of boys and girls<sup>26</sup> (Vavrus, 2003; Levine, et al., 2008; Lloyd, 2009; Temin & Levine, 2009; Nussbaum, 2011), the *Girl Effect* continues to assert that change is “not that hard” (“Your Move,” 2011, p. 7). Perhaps nowhere is this more apparent than in the online and social media content used to educate and mobilize individuals, non-profit organizations, corporations, and government entities to get involved.

## **Give a Girl a Cow**

In addition to the *Girl Effect* research reports detailed above, the campaign informed potential donors about their mission by encouraging Facebook and Twitter users to like and share their two YouTube campaign videos. As of June 2013, the two have amassed over 2.5 million views, and the *Girl Effect* Facebook page has over 300,000 followers. Although researchers call for systemic and multi-faceted changes to the ways that educational systems operate in the Global South, the *Girl Effect's* mobilization agenda encourages a simplistic form of online activism among users in the Global North that has little to do with on-the-ground changes in the Global South. These mobilization efforts include sharing and linking to the official YouTube videos ([youtube.com/users/girl effect](http://youtube.com/users/girl%20effect)), website ([girleffect.org](http://girleffect.org)), and the Facebook page ([facebook.com/girleffect](http://facebook.com/girleffect)).

Similar to the “Your Move” and “Smarter Economics” reports, the online videos suggest the solution to gendered intergenerational poverty is simple. The campaign’s namesake video (distributed via YouTube in May 2008) and the subsequent “The Clock is Ticking” video (first shown in September 2010) pair text-only messages written in the campaign’s white, black and orange color scheme with music that gives the textual message a lighthearted feel. Both videos are in English<sup>27</sup> and aimed to attract people in the Global North to the cause of helping women and girls in the Global South. The *Girl Effect* brand managers state that their initial intention is to create public support around the issue in hopes of impacting the “decision-makers of international aid” to include girls in the work they were already doing in communities struggling with poverty (Kylander,

2011). Thus, the videos were produced with the intention that they would go viral and attract attention to the *Girl Effect* website.

“The Girl Effect” video states that “the world is a mess,” but shuns the Internet, science, government, and money as potential solutions. Instead, the solution is ensuring that girls living in poverty stay in school. After asking viewers to “imagine a girl living in poverty,” the word GIRL appears on the screen along with several smaller texts of the word FLIES. The flies begin to buzz around the word girl, and the words husband, baby, hunger, and HIV begin to stack on top of the girl. This image constructs girls in the Global South “Other,” as dirty, helpless, and dependent on wealthy, powerful Westerners to help them. Patricia Hill Collins (2000) shows how constructing dichotomous relationships—such as the relationship between people of color who are constructed as less than human and their white saviors—contribute to “the political economy of domination that characterized slavery, colonialism, and neocolonialism” (p. 78). Indeed, this video contrasts the unequal access to resources between women in the Global North and Global South, and uses constructions of the former to justify corporate interventions aided by the social media crowdsourcing of the latter.

The video then encourages viewers to “pretend you can fix this picture” and claims that through this act of pretending, girls living in poverty now have a chance:

Let’s put her in a school uniform and see her get a loan to buy a cow and use the profits from the milk to help her family. Pretty soon, her cow becomes a herd.

And she becomes a business owner who brings clean water to the village, which makes the men respect her good sense and invite her to the village council where she convinces everyone that all girls are valuable. Soon more girls have a chance

and the village is thriving. Village. Food. Peace. Lower HIV. Healthier babies. Education. Commerce. Sanitation. Stability. Which means the economy of the entire country improves and the whole world is better off... Invest in a girl and she will do the rest. (man vs. magnet, 2008)

Thus, girls are required to lift themselves out of poverty while men, corporations, and governments stand idly by, waiting for the moment when girls prove themselves valuable using the model set out by the kind-hearted corporations. Ideal girl recipients, in this model, do not use their personal wealth to invest in themselves, to vie for power, or to challenge the system that oppresses them. Instead, they use it to invest resources into the community that those already in charge have failed to prioritize. The idea that investing in girls by giving them money and then standing back while they “do the rest” on their own is counter to what scholars inside and outside the Nike Foundation suggest. Despite our many efforts to solve systemic problems with individualized solutions or “pick yourself up by your bootstraps” campaigns, decades of research show that, at best, these strategies lead to temporary band-aids for small numbers of aid recipients, and at worst, they exacerbate inequalities by allowing corporations to continue operating in ways that exploit those at the bottom and then blame those at the bottom for not getting ahead (Edwards, 2008; Richey & Ponte, 2011).

The second video was released two years later at the Clinton Global Initiative meeting in September 2010, and was accompanied by a revamped girleffect.org website and a short-lived *Girl Effect* Twitter account. Called “The Clock is Ticking,” this video paints a more urgent picture, beginning with the line, “We have a situation on our hands and the clock is ticking.” The video informs viewers that after age 12, girls living in

poverty are viewed as women in their community, which puts them at increased risk for teen marriage, pregnancy, death during childbirth, forced prostitution, and “contracting and spreading HIV.” Again, “the good news is there’s a solution.” The video states that if a girl stays in school through her teen years, by age 18 she will be able to financially support herself with a job and make decisions for her own life. The video states that this simple intervention will allow her to make several key decisions:

She can avoid HIV. She can marry and have children when she’s ready, and her children are healthy like she is. Now imagine this continuing for generation after generation. You get the picture right? 50 Million 12-year-old girls in poverty equals 50 million solutions. This is the power of the girl effect. (“The Clock is Ticking,” 2010)

This assumes that women and girls have access to knowledge about sexual and reproductive health, knowledge many women lack because of community taboos around speaking openly about sex (Greene, et al., 2009). However, even when girls have knowledge about dangers such as HIV and increased mortality rates for adolescent childbirth, many lack the power to enact their knowledge. A 17-year-old married mother discusses how she negotiates these issues with her polygamist husband, stating:

He refused me to take any precautions against pregnancy...Every time I have sex with him I fear HIV/AIDS...He also moves around with other girls so my health is at stake but I have no option since I am solely dependent on him so I just brush my fears off. (Greene, et al., 2009, p. 26)

Thus, throwing money at girls’ education will likely not solve such issues—even solely economic issues—surrounding the costs of HIV and childbirth.

Despite its problematic messaging, “The Clock is Ticking” won the TED Ads Worth Spreading Award in March 2011, an award given by the TED Talks organization in order to highlight advertising that has the power to change someone’s worldview and start a social movement around an issue. This award resulted “in a jump in the number of views from about 30,000 views a month to over 400,000 views in the month directly following the award” (Kylander, 2011, p. 3). The increase in hits was not all positive, however, and several viewers used the video’s comment section to voice concerns that the Nike Foundation was oversimplifying the problems and solutions, deflecting attention from more systemic solutions and approaches, and using their involvement to mask their long history of exploitative labor practices (Kylander, 2011, p. 3). Aid Watch, an organization working to ensure that international aid benefits the poor, responded to the controversy by publishing a commentary from guest blogger Anna Carella, a PhD student in political science at Vanderbilt University. Carella’s (2011) post claimed the *Girl Effect* “may actually be damaging to women” (para. 1) because it fails to challenge essentialist gender roles for women, ignores structural issues such as unfair trade agreements between poor and rich countries, and perpetuates the imperialist idea that the Western world can “fix” women and girls in the Global South.

The *Girl Effect* relied on the power of their social media followers to move past these critiques. Campaign executives “responded by asking the Facebook community to lend its voice to supporting the issue of girls in what was becoming a lopsided debate on YouTube” (Brew, as quoted in Kylander, 2011, p. 4). Campaign supporters flooded the comment sections on Facebook and YouTube, ensuring that positive commentary greatly outnumbered negative reviews. Interestingly, Brew relied on a higher quantity of positive

reviews to drown out negative reviews, implying that quantity is more important to steering a conversation than the quality of the content such a debate might provide. This suggests that the quality of the negative reviews was sufficient to inform the public about the damaging aspects of this campaign, and thus the Nike Foundation found it necessary to make those voices less immediately accessible. To prevent the back-and-forth commentary that ensued between supporters and critics early in the campaign, the *Girl Effect* communication staff disabled the comments section on “The Clock is Ticking.” In the end, they chose to “manage key tensions around the brand” (p. 4) by crowdsourcing solutions to supporters, who volunteered their time and online labor in service of silencing a larger conversation about the merits of the campaign and who ultimately consented to the Nike Foundation silencing the conversation altogether.<sup>28</sup>

With the criticism minimized, the Nike Foundation turned its attention to harnessing the power of the millions of viewers who watched its YouTube videos and visited [girleffect.org](http://girleffect.org). As Brew characterizes this moment:

The challenge here was how to convert this interest in the Global North to REAL impact on girls lives in the Global South. It’s one thing to create actions that make individuals feel good, but in the complex world of international aid, it’s a much bigger challenge to create actions that make an individual girl’s life better, which is what the whole movement is about. (Kylander, 2011, p. 3)

The materials created under the guise of harnessing this power are worthy of interrogation for the ways they conceptualize activism and involvement. Because the Nike Foundation opens and promotes particular avenues for involvement and intentionally chooses not to highlight other materials (or, as in the example above,

actively silences alternative visions), I suggest that their mobilization campaign attempts to define and direct activism and online global citizenship.

### **Stickers as Activism**

As *Girl Effect* brand managers have suggested, the goal in creating informational and promotional materials is to harness the political power of citizens of the Global North in ways that would lead to change for women in the Global South. In the future, they hope to expand these materials to include information for “the emerging middle class in the developing world, where building awareness and support for the Girl Effect might mirror the success of the Girl Effect in the North” and girls living in extreme poverty who might “drive the movement for themselves” (Kylander, 2011, p. 4); however, thus far these constituencies are not targeted for involvement. To reach the target demographic of women in the Global North, then, the Nike Foundation relied on the same tools they used in disseminating the viral videos: they distributed content via Facebook, linked frequently to sources on girleffect.org, and provided toolkits that helped consumers in the Global North take the next step in their involvement. As I will show, the deep concern for the humanity of girls in the Global South found in the Nike Foundation research reports is replaced with simplistic messaging about girls’ economic value to parent corporations and with commentary that encourages consumers in the Global North to feel good about “helping.”

Throughout its updates and revamps, the *Girl Effect* Facebook page serves as a way to disseminate campaign videos as well as keep viewers informed and engaged in the project. In 2011, the “Learn” section of the Facebook page reflected on the success of the movement by stating that the *Girl Effect* “engaged people, inspired people, made them

cry, and made them mad. It made them want to do something like write books, give money, and sock ignorance in the mouth” (Girl Effect, 2011). The page went on to offer a three-step process for new users to get involved in the campaign:

Step 1: Shout it from the rooftops. You know that Girl Effect video you found so inspiring? Well, we want everyone in the entire world to see it too. That’s right. All 6.8 billion of your fellow earth-maters need to know how important girls are. It’s ambitious, but hey, that’s how world change happens. Show it to everyone you know and everyone you don’t know. That’s our call-to-action for you. How you do it...well, that’s up to you. Be as creative as you want. The options are endless.

Step 2: Give the world a good kick in the pants. Right here is where the magic starts. In the Learn tab, we have everything from two-minute videos to detailed reports to fact sheets that will help you spread the word. The Mobilize tab also has a ton of helpful tools, including web banners, sample tweets, and a PowerPoint presentation with talking points. We even have logos you can use to create your own Girl Effect gear. If you want to download the one-stop shop for giving the world a good kick in the pants, check out our toolkit. [links to “Toolkit” and “Plan an Event Guide”]

Step 3: Wash, Rinse, Repeat. (Girl Effect, 2011)

The *Girl Effect* “Toolkit” and “Plan an Event” available on this page offered all the materials one would need to raise awareness about the campaign. Despite the goal of educating people around the world about the importance of gendered intergenerational

poverty, these campaign materials suggested that creating shirts, stickers, and parties would be enough to start a revolution.

The Toolkit is an 18-page guide that provides three main paths for spreading the word about the *Girl Effect*: a “talk it up” section with videos and sample PowerPoint presentations; a “make stuff” section that provides do-it-yourself templates for making buttons, posters, stickers, and t-shirts; and a “put on an event” section that provides ordered checklists for people wanting to plan a *Girl Effect* fundraiser, party, or club (“Toolkit,” 2011). Alternatively, potential activists are encouraged to think of their own ways to spread the word. The Toolkit promotes four exemplars:

Redwood High Girl Effect Club: Two girls watched the girl effect video and wanted to do more, so they organized a school club that raises funds and awareness for girls in the developing world.

The Smiths: The four member family is traveling the world in their family plane in 2010 spreading the word about the girl effect.

Lombard-Freid Art Exhibit: The work of several young female artists was featured in a month-long exhibit; 10% of proceeds went to the girl effect.

Brandeis University: A 15-member campus group that calls themselves “The Girl Effect” hosts film screenings and events to raise funds and awareness for international girls’ organizations.

This list of ways to get involved highlights the open source nature of the campaign, as anyone can download and distribute campaign materials, including items they create without consent or approval. However, they are also relying on the free labor of crowdsourcing to spread their message about the charity brand with little attention to the

systemic issues that affect the women and girls they profess to serve. Activists, in this model, spread the word about the *Girl Effect* brand by distributing logos and hosting themed parties, and in the face of criticism about the vacuous nature of these actions, they are encouraged to talk over and thus silence critical voices. Whereas Nike Foundation employees strictly police uses of the Nike brand, they merely “guide” the *Girl Effect* brand so as to “edit what does not belong and amplify what does belong and what works” (Parsey, as quoted in Kylander, 2011, p. 6). In this way, the activities highlighted in *Girl Effect* promotional materials serve as examples of the type of involvement executives want to associate with their brand, and the silencing of criticism represents the “editing” of content that does not fit their desired brand image.

The three avenues of activism and the four exemplar alternatives showcase people with money, time, and access to resources being encouraged to use those resources to promote a philanthropic brand instead of a systemic issue. For example, the aforementioned Smith family flies around the world on a private plane emblazoned with the *Girl Effect* logo under the guise of working to spread awareness about the campaign. The expense of flying around the world on a private plane alone could pay for major educational and social programs in the Global South, and each in-flight hour of their charity tour burns as much fuel as an entire year of driving a car (Collins, et al., 2008, p. 14). Additionally, suggesting that high school clubs or co-branded art exhibits are the impetus of a global restructuring that eradicates gender discrimination and poverty both minimizes the roles of political institutions that create and perpetuate inequalities and glorifies the impact of consumer-based involvement. Instead of fighting against institutions that perpetuate trade and labor inequalities, including corporations such as

Nike, these examples show that activism is relegated to learning about the plight of the other and engaging in consumption-oriented activities—neither of which asks that “activists” interrogate their privilege or think critically about the social issues at hand.

The *Girl Effect* also amplifies certain related campaigns, success stories, and visions of campaign involvement using status updates. Some of the material for Facebook status updates includes stories and stats taken directly from other research and promotional materials. For example, a post from September 18, 2010 highlights the story of Juthika, a girl who moved “from BURDEN to BREADWINNER” by growing vegetables and raising ducks (GirlEffect, 2010a). Her story and photograph are also included in the “Your Move” report. Juthika’s father’s deteriorating health prevented him from working and her mother’s job outside the home did not pay enough for her entire family to survive. Instead of accepting her fate Juthika took out a microfinance loan with BRAC to finance the purchase of the ducks and seeds she needed to start her small farm. She uses the surplus from her \$37 daily income to take care of her family. The status reminds followers that girls like Juthika are worthy of international aid dollars because they are financially valuable to their families and because they use 90 percent of their profits on basic needs for the family.

Users are not encouraged to ask why the work Juthika’s mother performed outside the home did not bring in enough money to support the family or how Juthika’s father’s health deteriorated to the point that he could not work. These exclusions make girls like Juthika particularly valuable to corporations, which benefit when supporters are actively discouraged from thinking about why Juthika’s family might be impoverished in the first place. Additionally, Juthika’s success is uncommon in the region. Approximately 20

percent of all Bangladesh women use microlending, as BRAC disbursed \$1.1 billion in loans to women in the region in 2009 alone (“Bangladesh,” 2011). Though they claim that 99 percent of women repay the loans in full, recent investigations show the actual number is much smaller and that many repay their loans by taking out additional loans to make payments (“Bangladesh,” 2011). Repayment is difficult in part because of high interest rates. BRAC charges between 18 and 60 percent interest on each loan, which it claims is necessary to cover the administrative costs associated with distributing small sums (“BRAC,” 2014).

The campaign’s status updates also “amplify” several ways that citizens of the Global North have gotten involved in the campaign. Predating the Human Rights Campaign’s drive to encourage Facebook users to change their profile picture to the organization’s logo, the *Girl Effect* campaign encouraged supporters to rotate various iterations of the campaign logo as their profile photo on a weekly basis (GirlEffect, 2010b). In August 2011, the *Girl Effect* moderator ran a campaign encouraging users to upload images of homemade logos, and the subsequent photo album unveiled 36 unique logo designs from materials as diverse as body parts, lawn foliage, and paperclips (GirlEffect, 2011a). In addition to spreading the word through sharing photographs, the moderators encouraged activism through creating and sharing consumer-based products. A post dated December 7, 2010 stated, “Sometimes spreading the Girl Effect only takes a little flour and eggs,” and the accompanying photo depicted square sugar cookies decorated with the girl effect logo. The comment section included a link to the bakery where users could purchase the cookies (GirlEffect, 2010c). Similarly, the page featured a photo of a supporter’s water bottle covered with *Girl Effect* stickers. The accompanying

text read, “Sometimes all it takes to spread the word are a few stickers and a little H2O” (GirlEffect, 2011b). When a man asked where he could buy similar stickers for his daughter’s water bottle, the moderator offered a link to the D-I-Y sticker creation template available on the *Girl Effect’s* “Mobilize” page.

“Girl Champions,” the *Girl Effect’s* term for campaign supports, are also encouraged to cross-promote other forms of online activism, including spreading the word about other girl-centered initiatives on their news feeds. For example, moderators “amplified” a pay-per-share campaign that gives \$1 to health services for girls for every time someone shares a girl2woman.org video with their friends. One user commented, “I love this! Just shared Mala’s video with 10 of my friends! \$10 for girls’ health, and it only took 3 minutes! Go girl effect!” (GirlEffect, 2010d). In addition to this type of cross-promotion of social media pages, followers are encouraged to watch television broadcasts that feature the *Girl Effect* and its affiliates. One offered users a link to the *Oprah* episode featuring the campaign, and the link includes on-air celebrity endorsements from George Clooney, Ben Affleck, Demi Moore and Hillary Clinton (Girl Effect, 2009). A 2010 post asks viewers to join David Cook, a former cast member of *American Idol*, as he brings awareness to girls’ educational needs in Ethiopia (2010e).

Moderators are not just involved in social media campaigns; the *Girl Effect* Facebook page also highlights the offline work Girl Champions were doing to raise awareness, such as Michigan high school student Emily Fischer’s campaign to raise awareness and funds for girls’ education in Cambodia. Fischer and her friends “painted cardboard boxes and camped out in them on the school’s football field to increase visibility for their cause. They raised over \$8,000—and had some fun at the same time”

(GirlEffect, 2011c). An accompanying image shows the group smiling amidst a village of cardboard boxes painted with slogans such as “everything happens for a reason,” and another shows the girls watching a video on a large projection screen near the football stadium concession stands. Commenters offer glowing endorsements of this form of activism, and the *Girl Effect* lauds Fischer as a “hero...with a big heart” (GirlEffect, 2011c).

None of the commentary addresses the problematic aspects of having fun masquerading as residents of cardboard slums in Cambodia. Safely nestled inside a secure football stadium, the masquerade limits the girls’ exposure to the dangerous health conditions, threats of physical and sexual violence, and feelings of hunger commonly found in such slums and replaces it with a vision of poverty that allows them to raise money and “[have] some fun at the same time.” As bell hooks (1992) argues in *Black Looks*, this form of “imperialist nostalgia” (p. 25) allows white cultural consumers to temporarily inhabit the lives of Others in ways that are void of the historical, social, and political roots of inequality, and thus they need not confront their privilege or the ways they use marginalized groups in their quest for self-actualization. In this sense, Fischer and her friends do much more to make themselves feel empowered than they do to raise awareness for the actual conditions in which the poorest Cambodians live. While Fischer and her friends attempt to give voice to the plight of impoverished girls in Cambodia, they simultaneously reify their privilege in the cultural economy.

### **Branded Citizenship**

As discussed above, the *Girl Effect* aims to move beyond “actions that make individuals feel good” and toward “actions that make an individual girl’s life better”

(Kylander, 2011, p. 3). However, there is no activity too small to count as activism for the *Girl Effect*. After one woman comments that she only eats vegetables from her own garden or from local farms, the *Girl Effect* Facebook moderator replies, “Thanks for being such a girl champ. By eating local and organic, you’re reducing your carbon footprint, which indirectly benefits girls as they are disproportionately affected the most by climate change issues such as water access” (GirlEffect, 2010f). Despite the purported lofty goal of changing the world, these types of promoted activities do more to celebrate the “activists” in the Global North than they do to educate or mobilize people about the deeply entrenched inequalities facing women and girls in the Global South.

In this model, online citizenship is imagined as a consumer driven enterprise, where online attention to branded social media works to ensure that consumers have a positive image of the brand and of themselves. Instead of fostering meaningful change, users engage in activism by creating and disseminating branded resources such as homemade *Girl Effect* t-shirts and stickers, sharing branded online content such as the campaign’s Facebook posts and YouTube videos, and by engaging in activities that push this branded activism into other facets of life such as school and work. These citizens are branded insofar as they engage in activism that aligns their public profile with a particular brand, thereby engaging in acts that work to expand their public profile as a philanthropist and their devotion to the messaging of a global philanthropic brand.

Central to this framework is the idea that branded citizens feel good about the work they are doing with and through the branded philanthropy. In the past, consumers have been encouraged to identify with a charitable cause through purchasing products linked to a particular issue. For example, consumers interested in supporting breast

cancer research can purchase a pink KitchenAid mixer or a pink NFL jersey, and in doing so they aid the profits of corporations that tie their brands into values beyond the use value of the material goods they create; instead of buying “just a mixer,” these consumers buy into the idea that their purchases align them with values such as altruism, community, and responsibility (Einstein, 2012). Alison Hearn (2008) defines the resulting push to market ourselves through these spheres as the “branded self” and suggests that the labor that goes into constructing and disseminating these visions of ourselves simultaneously enhances both the individual’s image as one who is self-actualized and the corporation’s image as a good global citizen. One implication of branded corporate philanthropy is that more and more companies rely on visions of individualized citizenship that work with and through branded activism, and the resulting branded citizens use immaterial labor to raise the profile of the corporation and philanthropy. This is especially problematic when the vision of citizenship funnels a genuine desire to be involved with changing complex and pressing issues such as gendered global poverty into avenues of activism that are not especially challenging to the current neoliberal model.

Much of the literature surrounding branding and the enterprising of the self is premised on the idea that corporations tie products directly into marketing campaigns for specific products. For example, “hypercharities” (such as the (RED) campaign to fight HIV/AIDS in Africa or the pink ribbon campaign to fight breast cancer) define activism as purchasing consumer goods containing the charity logo. However, what is new in the *Girl Effect* is that this charity is not tied to any particular product, nor does Nike, Inc. co-brand any of their products through this philanthropic venture. Instead, the Nike

Foundation offers users the chance to brand themselves through their branded philanthropic experience, and in turn consumers go to great lengths to promote the philanthropy and its parent corporation.

The *Girl Effect* uses this brand of charity not only to channel consumers into particular visions of activism or charity recipients into feminine acts of community caregiving, but also to absorb competition in the marketplace of philanthropy. When the Nike Foundation perceived that philanthropic brands such as Girl Up (the UN's campaign to encourage philanthropies to include girls in their programs) and CARE (a group of 14 organizations working to fight global poverty) presented competition for attention in the marketplace of philanthropy, executives used a capitalist model of competition to ensure their brand superiority. Because the *Girl Effect* is fully funded by the Nike Foundation and its partners, and thus does not compete for resources in the same way as other organizations, executives convinced smaller brands to allow the Nike Foundation to control messaging so they could direct their limited resources elsewhere (Kylander, 2011). Dean Stoyer, the strategic communication director for the foundation, hoped that "what will emerge is a handful of NGOs, including CARE, with legitimacy in this space that have the programmatic capability" (as quoted in Kylander, 2011, p. 5). In short, the Nike Foundation used its economic might to control the messaging surrounding gendered global poverty and girls education, ensuring that its vision of the problem and potential solutions would become the dominant paradigm. Once branded citizens buy into this messaging, they demand that other philanthropies address the issue in similar ways, as evidenced by the way these branded activists silenced dissenters who advocated for other,

more systemic solutions. In this way, the *Girl Effect* limits its competition and continues its reign as a dominant philanthropic brand in the long-term.

Nike Foundation researchers Temin and Levine (2009) start their *Girls Count* report pointing to the problem with engaging in this type of vacuous charitable work.

They write:

The world is filled with paradoxes and ironies, gulfs between rhetoric and reality, and instances of just plain hypocrisy. So perhaps we should be unsurprised by the vast gap between how widely the international community recognizes the importance of adolescent girls' health and what is actually done to help girls in developing countries become fully prepared for health, empowered, and productive adult lives. (Temin & Levine, 2009, p. 1)

Despite the Nike Foundation's contention that the *Girl Effect* falls outside of their commercial interests, they certainly have much to gain by directing activism away from calls for systemic changes to the ways that neoliberalism and capitalism impact global policy and directing individuals and organizations to rep their brands in new emerging global markets. They have little to lose by directing this philanthropy towards populations who have very little opportunity to air their concerns about the way this philanthropy is constructed.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion: The Ideal Citizens of Imperialist Philanthropy

*“Nearly every time someone feels better by doing good, on the other side of the world (or street), someone else is further locked into a system that will not allow the true flourishing of his or her nature or the opportunity to live a joyful and fulfilled life.” – Peter Buffett, New York Times, July 26, 2013*

Peter Buffett, co-director of father Warren Buffett’s multi-billion dollar philanthropic organization, recently penned a *New York Times* editorial explaining some disturbing trends in global philanthropy. He describes meetings in which corporate leaders who have caused global humanitarian crises work with politicians to ensure they profit from the philanthropic projects used to address the problems, and goes on to discuss how wealthy donors “sprinkle” money around to make themselves “[feel] better about accumulating more than any one person could possibly need to live” (Buffett, 2013, para. 7). Buffett shows that such practices fail to challenge the power structures that lead to poverty, and sometimes even exacerbate the problem by cementing poverty into the lifecycle. He concludes, “As long as most folks are patting themselves on the back for charitable acts, we’ve got a perpetual poverty machine” (Buffett, 2013, para. 16).

Buffett received an onslaught of backlash from pro-market enthusiasts, including a response in *Forbes* claiming Buffett’s “rambling observations” highlight more about his discomfort with inheriting wealth than actual problems with for-profit philanthropy (Husock, 2013, para. 2). Flipping Buffett’s logic, the *Forbes* article claims that the *real*

problem with philanthropy is not “the fact that it provides little more than a band-aid for big and intractable problems, but that it has become unfriendly to the creation of wealth that provides the resources to solve such problems” (Husock, 2013, para. 3). The many articles in this vein ignore the inequality inherent in massive wealth accumulation among elites and instead suggest that market logic can solve global inequality as long as governments do not interfere with business. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, there is scant evidence to suggest that neoliberal policies help poor populations rise out of poverty. In fact, the overwhelming majority of scholarship suggests the opposite is true (Stiglitz, 2006).

The back-and-forth between proponents and opponents of philanthrocapitalism highlights some of the larger issues I set out to explore in this dissertation, including how corporations use the logic of philanthropy to expand the neoliberal paradigm and how women and girls in the Global South are implicated in this process. Because philanthrocapitalism utilizes an influx of private capital to control an increasingly large slice of public welfare programs and safety nets, it is increasingly important to challenge the industry-led public relations about the benefits of this incarnation of philanthropy.

Transnational corporations and international governance organizations regularly use media to define the significance of philanthrocapitalism and expand neoliberalism in two major ways. First, they suggest that business is integral to solve the crisis of global inequality and deflect attention away from business practices that have caused and/or exacerbated such issues in the first place. For example, the *10,000 Women* case study analyzed in Chapter 3 highlights the ways that executives at Goldman Sachs used philanthropy to deflect press attention away from their role in the financial crisis, their

subsequently excessive executive bonus pay, and their decision not to publicize information about the 40 percent of students who are not successful after their short-term business education. This example shows how the UN assertion that public scrutiny would be enough to deter unethical business involvement in the Global Compact does not account for the plethora of ways that corporate communications departments shape and manipulate coverage of such campaigns. Instead of holding Goldman Sachs accountable to the ways their role in the housing crisis exacerbated the global economic crisis or how their unprecedented executive pay contributes to severe income inequality within U.S. borders, the press published puff pieces about the importance of the company's role in helping a small number of women to be successful entrepreneurs. While this is certainly commendable, no articles published to date in mainstream news sources question the company's *10,000 Women* public relations offensive.

Second, transnational corporations and international governance organizations use media to define the solutions to global inequality in overly simplistic and individualized terms. As discussed in the *Girl Effect* analysis in Chapter 4, companies like Nike state that individualized solutions such as making stickers, baking cookies, or even flying around the world in a private jet can all be ways to save the world. Charitable individuals are those who share viral videos or post photos of their cardboard box community on Facebook. At no point are such individuals encouraged to think about how their therapeutic acts of caregiving might contribute to issues such as conspicuous consumption or imperialist nostalgia, nor are they encouraged to ask how such actions actually "help" women and girls in the Global South. Conversely, women and girls who are recipients of aid are encouraged to be selfless by sharing resources with their

communities. When successful, corporate communications materials highlight their individual success stories, often leaving out any structural barriers that contribute to the cause of or solution to life in poverty. By highlighting particular aspects of these narratives and ignoring others, these institutions are influential forces in shaping the conversation around important global issues, including gendered intergenerational poverty and educational access for women and girls.

As these case studies suggest, the business interest in “helping” women and girls stems not from a goal of humanitarianism, but from a profit motive. Providing aid to women and girls in the Global South ensures positive publicity, brand loyalty, and emotional involvement from consumers. It also ensures transnational corporations will be considered for lucrative international business contracts and given priority for entry into new global markets (Pool, 2011). While “stronger capacities and institutions, new power relations, and different values may be a by-product of market-based interventions,” the incentive to build profit in new markets is the primary reason major corporations invest millions in such programs (Kremer et al., 2010, p. 245). Those who believe in the power of philanthrocapitalism take this further by arguing there is no conflict of interest between making money and helping people. Blankfein originally touted the *10,000 Women* program as a means of “manufacturing global GNP,” stating that increasing the economic potential of women is good for the global communities as well as the company’s bottom line (Coleman, 2010, para. 12).

This mentality also increases competition in the marketplace of philanthropy, making it increasingly difficult for smaller charities to attract attention to their causes. For example, the Nike Foundation proudly proclaims that their goal is to control the

conversation about global education for girls, offering free publicity for any subsidiary of their umbrella philanthropy. Nike's deep coffers and large network of media contacts make it increasingly difficult for smaller corporations to break through the clutter, and thus several of them have teamed with the corporation in exchange for free publicity (Kylander, 2011). Philanthropy hubs like the *10,000 Women* and *Girl Effect* campaigns then use media coverage to tout their good deeds to potential consumers. Research suggests this tactic is especially important in reaching women consumers with disposable income, as women are more likely than men to purchase products associated with a prosocial cause (Schowalter, 2011).

Because many corporations use philanthropy to appeal to wealthy women consumers in the Global North, campaigns must highlight noncontroversial causes important to this demographic. The resulting programs are unlikely to target vitally important issues such as infant diarrhea or sexually transmitted diseases among sex workers, both issues that can be tempered with relatively minor interventions, because these issues are less likely to contribute to a buying mood. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of a marketing plan that might successfully use diarrhea to sell goods. Instead, corporations are more likely to focus on issues that generate buzz among consumers, such as health issues that can be paired with cause marketing programs or campaigns for educating women and girls in the Global South (Einstein, 2012).

This profit-oriented approach to global philanthropy contributes to the rise of "education as panacea" (Vavrus, 2003). In this model, educational intervention serves as a safe and popular public policy intervention because it fits neatly with both human rights rhetoric and economic promises about return-on-investments. Additionally, attempts to

remedy unequal access to education are likely to garner media coverage because they rarely question the ways that corporate-driven neoliberalism has increased social and economic disparities (Vavrus, 2003). However, as development researchers have consistently shown, investments in education will not solve inequalities unless they are accompanied by major shifts in national and global economic policies (Vavrus, 2003).

In Chapters 3 and 4, I showed how Nike and Goldman Sachs claim to help women through educational initiatives while simultaneously lobbying for policies that exacerbate inequalities. These policies include damaging neoliberal trade policies (Cohan, 2012), the continued acceptance of human rights and labor violations in their factories (Fisher, 2006), and poor environmental practices that disproportionately impact the countries where companies like Nike mine and refine their raw materials (Bruno, 2005). Because these educational investments are rarely accompanied by other types of interventions—including those that might make it safer for women to travel to and from school or to receive the health and reproductive care they need to stay in school—they do little to change structures that lead to gendered intergenerational poverty (Greene, et al., 2009). Instead, I contend that such interventions disproportionately benefit Nike and Goldman Sachs, because these corporations use the programs to both add positive associations to their status as lifestyle brands and provide the infrastructure for future business expansion. Goldman Sachs makes no secret about the fact that they see the *10,000 Women* program as an investment. In fact, they tout the program as such to investors who were previously upset that corporate donations cut into their annual dividends (Harper & Cole, 2009).

Media coverage of these models of philanthrocapitalism within the Global North focus on helping consumers feel good about helping women and girls in the Global South. Images of smiling girls who have overcome poverty abound, without discussion of structural issues that make their successes so remarkably rare. The relatively small number of women and girls who are lifted from poverty through these interventions suggests that programs such as the *10,000 Women* and *Girl Effect* campaigns do more to pad the egos of consumers and corporate executives than they do to ensure long-term changes in the lives of people in the Global South. This dissertation questions the logic of investment philanthropy, highlighting how it contributes to philanthropic imperialism and spreads postfeminist visions of citizenship.

Much of the coverage in mainstream news and social media organizing supports the imperialist notion of white women “saving” women of color, including articles discussing benevolent Goldman Sachs employees who organize fashion shows for entrepreneurs in Africa and Midwestern teenagers who watch videos about poverty in a football field as a show of solidarity to girls who live in slum communities in other parts of the world. In this model, wealthy white women in the Global North believe it is their responsibility to “save” the distant others they see in YouTube videos, a notion problematic for several reasons. First, this idea inaccurately places the burden of change on individuals, and not the corporations, institutions, and governments responsible for causing and perpetuating these problems in the first place. Second, it reinforces imperialism through philanthropy, in which wealthy white consumers in the Global North inaccurately believe they know what is best for populations whose lives in no way resemble their own. Interventions supported by those with little knowledge about the

complex factors impacting poverty and educational access often fail to account for differences in culture, societal structures and local economics, which means they also regularly fail to lead to sustainable changes (Buffett, 2013; Stiglitz, 2006). Third, “helpers” in the Global North are not encouraged to consider their own privilege during the helping process, which both contributes to the therapeutic feeling of this type of distant caregiving and enables corporations to capitalize on the positive associations consumers have with the project and the brand.

These individualized therapeutic acts of caregiving are significant in that they perpetuate a postfeminist vision of women’s citizenship in which a genuine desire to engage in activism that makes life easier for women and girls who lack access to basic human rights is individualized and commodified. In postfeminist citizenship, women are encouraged to view problems through the lens of individualism. Media construct systemic problems in individual terms and encourage women to get involved through acts they perform from the comfort of their home or shopping center. Such involvement deflects attention away from solutions that entail collective action or systemic changes, and instead offers individuals a way to feel that they are uniquely qualified to make a difference through the power they have as consumers. Women can vote with their dollars by using ethical consumption to support issues and causes important to them. Not only does this narrow the range of charities that receive money to those that are marketable to valuable consumer demographics, but also such interventions do little to curtail the continuation of unethical conditions of production and distribution that plague the world’s poorest populations. Postfeminist citizenship offers women a model of political involvement in which activism aids their personal quest to brand themselves as

individuals who care, without regard for how their caregiving might exacerbate the problems they attempt to eradicate.

This dissertation contends that instead of collective action to fight for social change, philanthrocapitalist institutions construct a particularly narrow vision of activism and encourage compliance by deflecting attention away from alternatives to social change. The active citizen in this model is one who actively participates in sharing branded content online or actively attends branded philanthropic functions in their communities. Additionally, active citizens challenge messages that question the tenets of this vision of involvement, such as Nike's use of crowdsourcing to silence critics of the *Girl Effect* video. This active citizenship is brand-specific, both for consumer citizens in the Global North and aid recipients in the Global South. As a condition of receiving funding, the ideal recipients engage in visions of citizenship that reinforce the ideology of the sponsoring brand and use branded resources to give back to the community. In doing so, they help to increase GDP—regardless of whether that increase will result in meaningful changes to their lived experiences—and expand business opportunities for microlenders and other global venture philanthropists. In the models of philanthrocapitalism Goldman Sachs and Nike construct, access to funding, resources, education, and avenues to power are entirely contingent upon whether women and girls adhere to the guidelines set forth by elites who fund the initiatives.

The plethora of women who have been and continue to be critical of similar interventions suggest that such voices exist, making their absence in this media coverage all the more remarkable. For example, Anna Carella, the PhD student who penned a substantive critique of the *Girl Effect* video for the Aid Watch blog, received 108 tweets

and 41 comments on her work (Carella, 2011). However, her critique did not receive mention in press coverage of the campaign. Additionally, the Nike Foundation interviewed women and girls in the Global South who expressed a critique of aid programs that focus exclusively on education *and* offered solutions for how this might be implemented more effectively. The resulting campaign did not utilize this advice or the advice of researchers; instead, it utilized the simple messaging campaign and program (falsely) premised on the notion that investments in education alone will result in a large-scale reduction in intergenerational poverty among women and girls in the Global South. These critiques clearly exist, but they have not found their way into mainstream media.

### **Powerlessness and Voice**

In 1999, the World Bank issued a three-part economic report called *Voices of the Poor*, which pieced together interviews with 60,000 men and women in the Global South to assess their perceptions about living in poverty (Stiglitz, 2006). Researchers found that in addition to concerns about their lack of income, poor individuals feel powerless to participate in meaningful change. As the report highlighted, “The poor have few opportunities to speak out. When they speak, no one listens; when someone does listen, the reply is that nothing can be done; when they are told something can be done, nothing is ever done” (Stiglitz, 2006, p. 12). Similarly, the *Girl Effect* and *10,000 Women* campaigns directly asked girls how they conceptualized the interlocking contributors to poverty and lack of education. Researchers listened, penning long reports that detailed the girls’ responses and offered a blueprint for how philanthropic programs might help these communities. As in the experiences of those interviewed by the World Bank, the Nike Foundation did not use these recommendations, instead opting for interventions that

provided investment opportunities for its subsidiaries. Four years after the *Girl Effect* launch, a regulatory report by the Independent Commission for Aid Impact concluded that the program created an oversimplified description of the problems facing young girls in the Global South and has not led to significant changes on the ground (ICAI, 2012).

This dissertation challenges the idea that Nike and Goldman Sachs can use philanthropy to create meaningful change in the lives of the women and girls they profess to serve. Because these corporations limit their interventions to those that have the potential to turn a profit for investors or add value to the philanthropic or corporate brand, they deflect attention away from solutions that would challenge the business-friendly laws and regulations that exacerbate inequality. In fact, research has shown that efforts to “empower” women by “giving them more choice through increased personal assets and incomes” have not been achieved, and “the predicted spillover effects on collective action, network-building and institutional development have not materialized” (Kremer et al., 2010, p. 247). Further, an assessment of several high profile campaigns shows that “philanthrocapitalism may divert energy and resources away from attempts to leverage structural change” to achieve these goals (Kremer et al., 2010, p. 247).

In addition to contributing to the growing body of research that questions the benefits of philanthrocapitalism, my dissertation is among the first to detail how transnational corporations manipulate media to support their claims about the benefits of philanthrocapitalism, applying traditional marketing principles to control the conversation about solutions to global social issues. Instead of fighting for meaningful change, corporations use these media campaigns to add value to their brands in two ways. First, they construct global networks of business and government officials when they

launch global philanthropies and later rely on these networks to obtain profitable business contracts in developing nations. Second, they rely on coverage in mainstream and social media to increase brand value among consumers in the Global North.

I also argue that public-private partnerships such the *10,000 Women and Girl Effect* campaigns use philanthropy as a means of constructing the ideal woman citizen of globalization. I show that women who are recipients of corporate aid are defined as valuable insofar as they are vehicles for corporate profit. Because these transnational corporations use their money and power to influence the discourse about what types of women will receive aid *and* how their philanthropic activities are discussed in the Global North, corporations are using global charitable work to discipline women into particular acts of citizenship and activism that relegate women's involvement to pursuits that are not especially threatening to the global order. Combined with a vacuous vision of citizenship that steers activism toward placing stickers on water bottles and encouraging consumers to buy handmade goods from women in Africa, this new media coverage is significant in that it ensures postfeminist citizenship will continue to negatively impact the lives of women and girls worldwide.

### **Implications**

Though my background in media studies and communication influenced my approach to this subject, I attempted to fuse several disciplines to create a more comprehensive overview of philanthrocapitalism. In my review of historical literature, I was privileged to discover rich descriptions of how international governance organizations like the UN and the World Bank incorporated women and women's issues into their decision-making bodies and global policies. However, I was disappointed at the

lack of analysis about how global women's involvement in policy and rights intersected with the rise of corporate influence in these bodies. Additionally, I quickly noticed a lack of historical information on when and why corporations partnered with these organizations to tackle gender-based inequality. The second chapter of this project is an attempt to put these bodies of literature in conversation with each other and to offer some reasons why corporations choose to use their partnerships with international governance organizations to appeal to women in the Global North. In fusing these historical trajectories, Chapter 2 lays the groundwork for how corporations may exploit the profit potential of women's lack of access to education.

This project explores history from a Foucauldian theoretical and methodological perspective, using popular discourse about philanthropy to frame the debates about current campaigns. This framework is not new, and in fact, a growing number of media studies scholars utilize this framework to analyze the ways popular media can serve as a means of governance that controls the conduct of citizens. This dissertation expands the governance paradigm to the global community, highlighting one way that media contribute to controlling the conduct of subjects across borders and political systems. As such, my research contributes to a growing body of research that assesses transnational governance.

More specifically, I focus on how philanthropy contributes to gendered global governance. Breaking from the majority of studies on philanthropy that assess whether global corporate charities are effective in achieving their goals, this study asks how the structure of the programs and corresponding media campaigns describe the ideal conduct of participants. The dominant cultural narrative about philanthropic projects focuses on

how an influx of resources opens doors previously closed to aid recipients. I assess how philanthropies and media coverage of philanthropic campaigns can be used as a tool of governance to discipline women into narrow paths of political and economic involvement. Additionally, my research shows that the paths made available to women in the Global North differ drastically from those available to women in the Global South. These binary constructions are important to media studies, global development studies, and transnational feminist studies because they provide a framework for assessing the social and economic externalities of philanthropy.

In my assessment of the *10,000 Women Campaign* in Chapter 3, I showed how corporations plant stories in media to reinforce the positive aspects of their philanthropic work and deflect negative press attention from their failings. This chapter contributes to feminist political economy by showing how women in the Global South serve as pawns in these increasingly sophisticated efforts to appear responsible, appearing only when they allow simplified versions of their life stories to be used in press events. Most notably, this chapter challenges the idea that negative press coverage attributed to corporations that are involved in the Millennium Development Goals and the Global Compact will deter these businesses from engaging in unethical corporate conduct. In fact, corporations have grown adept at ensuring these stories do not surface, and the corporate media are increasingly hesitant to publish information that advertisers do not want. Thus, this philanthropic example is important not only for political economy scholars, but also as an example for activists fighting to change the ways corporations are involved in partnerships with international governance organizations.

In Chapter 4, I focus on how the Nike Foundation both silences voices of women and girls in the Global South and how they encourage particularly narrow paths of involvement for women and girls in the Global North. As such, this chapter highlights the dichotomous visions of citizenship offered to women and girls in the Global North and Global South, showing how neither offers paths to empowerment that include having a voice in the conditions of such projects or a path to positions of power within their community governance structures.

This dissertation takes a critical look at philanthrocapitalism, using two case studies to show how this vision of philanthropy can be co-opted to serve corporate interests over those of the women and girls who receive resources. However, small changes in how these campaigns are structured may have drastic impacts on some of the issues discussed here. For example, if the Nike Foundation incorporates the findings from the *Girls Count* research series and creates multi-faceted avenues for change, their program may have a stronger impact on ensuring girls' safety and health in conjunction with increasing their educational aptitude. There is some evidence that the *Girl Effect* program has made efforts to foster more robust forms of activism in the Global North, as well. For example, they have replaced some of their more vacuous calls for involvement (such as making stickers or flying in the family plane) with calls for social functions to educate people about intergenerational poverty. Still, there is much work to be done to ensure these conversations address the multi-faceted roots of poverty.

Scholars like Marwan Kraidy (2005) have called for other changes that may have a large impact on these multinational aid programs. He suggests that building transnational communication networks among aid recipients may help diffuse the

centralized power corporations have in shaping narratives by providing an organizing mechanism for recipients in diffuse communities. Such networks might enable women and girls to share information about successful and unsuccessful programs they created with new resources, to form relationships with a broader group of people who are experiencing similar hardships, or even to create networks of women who can organize and have a more centralized voice to air their perspectives. Such a network may help to mitigate some of the larger issues with silencing voices of women of color, but would also require media outlets to pay attention to women and girls (something this project shows they have not been willing or able to do consistently).

### **Limitations and Future Research**

In this dissertation, I approach the two most prominent examples of global philanthrocapitalist campaigns from a media lens, asking how corporations and their public partners describe their charitable work to the public and how they construct their ideal aid projects and recipients. I contextualize this with a historical analysis of how such partnerships and media coverage built upon decades of media and international governance policy. Additionally, I show how corporations actively silence voices of women in their campaigns by creating philanthropic programs fundamentally different from programs advocated by feminist researchers and populations they profess to serve.

The examples Goldman Sachs and Nike used in their marketing materials represent true stories of women who have overcome nearly insurmountable odds to achieve success, and in no way do I intend to belittle their accomplishments or suggest that these narratives should not be told. However, I do question what exists outside these narratives, including stories of women who have not achieved these successes or stories

about institutional difficulties. While I am critical of transnational corporations for silencing voices of women, my focus on media coverage meant that I was not conducting research on the ground in communities impacted by such programs, and thus I was not engaging with voices outside of those published in research or media sources. In future research, I would like to look outside of the official narratives by looking at local news sources in communities impacted by such programs. I will also apply for funding to visit several sites in order to interview participants and program graduates about how they view this program.

This dissertation adopts the perspective that a lack of access to education for girls in the global community is a major problem, and strides by both local and global communities are necessary to overcome this imbalance. However, I also recognize that Western framing about the importance of education may in part be a projection onto communities in the Global South, who may have alternative ways of framing such issues. As a growing number of research projects compile this type of information, such as the *Girls Count* research series, it is increasingly important to privilege these voices in international development and research.

The philanthrocapitalist project to educate women and girls in the global community moved to film when the *Girl Rising* docudrama debuted in early 2013. The docudrama was shown via community screenings throughout the spring and summer months and on cable and public television in the fall of that year. The film not only visually represents the issues I discuss in my dissertation by showcasing nine individual girls whose lives have been altered by their belief in the power of education, but also

presses it further by suggesting that a belief in education is important regardless of whether an individual overcomes systemic barriers to this basic human right.

For example, one narrative includes the story of a young girl living in a cardboard slum community. During the story, the young girl is nearly sexually assaulted, her family loses their cardboard home when the government demolishes the community, and she is left to live under a viaduct. The scene ends with the girl and her family huddled together under the viaduct to escape rainfall, and the voiceover tells the audience the girl will be successful later in life because she still believes in education (Robbins, 2013).

To make this film, writers traveled the Global South gathering stories of girls who believe in the power of education. Once back in the Global North, the director selected the stories he found most captivating, asked writers to create entertainment-quality first-hand narratives on behalf of the girls, and then traveled to the girls' home communities with a group of film makers to recreate the scenes of their lives in a pseudo-documentary style. In the final product, the girls' narratives are included in a voice-over read by famous celebrities such as Salma Hayek, Kerry Washington, Selena Gomez, and Meryl Streep (Calayag, 2013). The girls themselves do not have a chance to voice their stories. As I continue beyond the dissertation project, I will to add an analysis of this film and its circulation to the work presented here.

## **Onward**

In 2013, the UN chose the theme of education for their International Day of the Girl ceremony. As the UN noted:

The fulfillment of girls' right to education is first and foremost an obligation and moral imperative. There is also overwhelming evidence that girls' education,

especially at the secondary level, is a powerful transformative force for societies and girls themselves: it is the one consistent positive determinant of practically every desired development outcome, from reductions in mortality and fertility, to poverty reduction and equitable growth, to social norm change and democratization. (Dusenbery, 2013)

However, women and girls around the globe continue to voice their knowledge that a focus on education cannot exist in a vacuum. Ensuring girls have access to quality education must also be coupled with meaningful changes to ensure the safety, health, and general well-being of the entire community.

Malala Yousafzai, the undisputed media hero of international girls education, has used her time in the spotlight to ensure this message reaches a larger audience. During a visit to the United States to address the World Bank, Malala met with President Obama and his family to discuss her crusade for international education. Though not widely reported, she also used her time in the White House to criticize U.S. drone policy. As she recalled later in a statement:

I thanked President Obama for the United States' work in supporting education in Pakistan and Afghanistan and for Syrian refugees...I also expressed my concerns that drone attacks are fueling terrorism. Innocent victims are killed in these acts, and they lead to resentment among the Pakistani people. If we refocus efforts on education it will make a big impact. (Clark, 2013, para. 5)

Though the media widely circulated comments from the official White House statement about Malala's visit and pro-U.S. sentiments from Malala's statements, they decided that

a prominent young activist criticizing how U.S. drone policy impacts women and girls in the international community was not newsworthy.

As this example suggests, even notable media stars have trouble ensuring complex messages about global issues are fairly covered in mainstream U.S. media. Because media framing plays a large role in how the general public understands such issues, overly simplistic narratives limit the types of interventions people think are possible. The media play a crucial role in educating the public about the need for and the inequality inherent in international girls education. By removing information important to understanding the degree of complexity, the media are failing in this role.

However, there is a small but growing number of alternative news sources and a few high profile investigating journalists who are continuing to ensure these complex issues stay in the limelight. For example, Matt Tiabbi's continued work to expose fraud at Goldman Sachs—including his books *Griftopia: A Story of Bankers, Politicians, and the Most Audacious Power Grab in American History* and *The Divide: American Injustices in the Age of the Wealth Gap*—and Jeremy Scahill's *Dirty Wars* documentary and book about how drone attacks impact communities (including how drones impact on basic safety and prevent children from attending schools) are important in ensuring that activists fight for complex solutions. It is my hope that this project offers a scholarly supplement to such works and contributes to the conversation about how philanthropy is being used to discipline women and girls.

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<sup>1</sup> I use Global North and Global South here to distinguish between “affluent, privileged nations and communities, and economically and politically marginalized nations and communities” in much the same way that Western/non-Western is used (Mohanty, 2003, p. 226). Mohanty (2003) goes on to describe this language, stating: “While these terms are meant to loosely distinguish the northern and southern hemispheres, affluent and marginal nations and communities obviously do not line up neatly within this geographical frame. And yes, as a political designation that attempts to distinguish between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots,’ it does have a certain political value. An example of this is Arif Dirlik’s formulation of North/South as a metaphorical rather than geographical distinction, where ‘North’ refers to the pathways of transnational capital and ‘South’ to the marginalized poor of the world regardless of geographical distinction” (p. 226-227)

<sup>2</sup> In addition to public mandates such as the one issued by the Taliban to keep girls like Malala out of school, scare tactics commonly prevent parents allowing their daughters to receive an education. For example, the recent Boko Haram kidnapping of hundreds of schoolgirls in Nigeria sends the message that girls are not safe in schools, and many parents cite such examples as reasons to keep their children at home.

<sup>3</sup> Goldman Sachs did not specify why they did not think women needed a theoretical component to their education. Their paternalistic decision to make this decision on behalf of women in the Global South contributes to the philanthropic imperialism that makes many development scholars and critics weary of such interventions.

<sup>4</sup> For a more detailed analysis this trend, see Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

<sup>5</sup> I gathered these sources using several methods. First, I gathered news articles mentioning “Goldman Sachs” and “10,000 Women” using a LexisNexis search for these terms appearing between January 1, 2007 (the year before the official launch) and July 31, 2012 (the date I conducted the search). LexisNexis yielded 43 total articles from major U.S. news publications such as *Forbes*, the *New York Times*, *CNN*, and the *Washington Post*. I then looked through the corporate press websites for both Goldman Sachs and the Nike Foundation, and I pulled all studies, articles, brochures, pamphlets, and links to outside publications that mention work their philanthropic campaigns. For the chapter on Goldman Sachs, I analyzed two major research studies, 11 campaign brochures and pamphlets, and 45 news articles. My analysis of the Nike campaign focuses on their social media platforms. At the time of my analysis, the campaign primarily disseminated information via Facebook. I analyzed all Facebook posts from the site launch in 2009 through June 2013 (the month in which I completed the analysis). I also analyzed studies mentioned in research materials about the campaign and linked through the philanthropy website. In total, I analyzed 7 major research reports and five brochures and pamphlets featuring the *Girl Effect* campaign.

<sup>6</sup> The UN Global Compact originally included nine principles, Secretary-General Kofi Annan added a tenth principle related to anti-corruption in 2004.

<sup>7</sup> I do not mean to suggest that these are the only contributing factors or that my treatment of these factors will include all relevant historical turning points. Instead, I attempt to provide a narrative that fuses these histories so as to better explain how corporate-governance partnerships affect how we define problems and solutions to gendered global poverty.

<sup>8</sup> For more on Goldman Sachs’ role in the financial crisis and the tendency for Goldman Sachs officials to take government posts after their private sector work, see Chapter 3.

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<sup>9</sup> The League of Nations, an intergovernmental organization charged with overseeing peace missions after World War I, took on the charge of rebuilding communities destroyed by the war, and in doing so, offered several treaties on social welfare issues such as labor standards and global health.

<sup>10</sup> The 1952 Convention on the Political Rights of Women “was the first international law instrument to recognize and protect the political rights of women everywhere by spelling out that women, on an equal basis with men, were entitled to vote in any election, run for election to any office, and hold any public office or exercise any public function under national law” (“Short History,” n.d., p. 5).

<sup>11</sup> After data showed that women experienced severe discrimination within marriage laws, the Commission drafted the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (1957), the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (1962), and the Recommendation on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (1965). “Together these measures represent the first international agreements on women’s rights in relation to marriage that were adopted by the UN” (“Short History,” n.d., p. 5).

<sup>12</sup> The UN Commission on the Status of Women conducted a study that showed the economic basis for the “principle of equal pay for work of equal value” (“Short History,” n.d., p. 6). In the 1970s, “the Commission brought greater attention to the question of women’s economic participation, and cultural and social factors affecting women’s participation in development” (“Short History,” n.d., p. 7).

<sup>13</sup> Proponents of the IMF’s loan policies suggest that global inequality has decreased in the last several decades. However, if economic statistics from China and India are removed from the equation, global economic inequality has risen drastically. In addition to skewing the statistics, economic growth statistics from these nations do not reflect trends in global economic growth because these nations frequently rejected the IMF policies and loans in favor of controlling their own economic policies (Stiglitz, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> For a more detailed description of neoliberalism, see pages 12-18 of this dissertation.

<sup>15</sup> Women in the program were not required to take out loans, but to be accepted to the program they needed to show an interest in expanding their businesses (Marguis, 2010).

<sup>16</sup> Goldman Sachs invested \$100 million over 5 years in the project. However, in 2007 alone, the company paid their top five employees \$322 million (Sorkin, 2008), and the total amount spend on bonuses alone that year totaled \$12.1 billion (Harper, 2007).

<sup>17</sup> A report by the International Center for Research on Women (2011) addresses this 30 percent by stating, “Not all graduates experienced business growth after the program, in part because of competing demands on their time. Some graduates cited opportunities for growth that they had not pursued so they could devote more time to other personal or family goals” (p. 4). There was no mention of institutional barriers that mandate these choices.

<sup>18</sup> Though communism is still vilified in popular culture today, references to the media’s liberal bias or to socialism are similarly paired with evil, anti-American sentiments that silence critics of capitalism.

<sup>19</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the Goldman Sachs *10,000 Women* campaign, see Chapter 3.

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<sup>20</sup> For example, Emily Brew, Andrea Perez, Maria Eitel, and Dean Stoyer are all current executives for the Nike Foundation who work closely with the *Girl Effect* campaign, and all had previous successful careers with Nike, Inc. (Kylander, 2011, p. 5).

<sup>21</sup> “The *Girl Effect*” video included in the launch has 1.1 million views and “The Clock is Ticking” video has 1.4 million views as of May 29, 2013.

<sup>22</sup> Neoliberalism is defined in Chapter 2 as the mass privatization of goods and services previously controlled by the state. See pages 12-18 for a more complete analysis of neoliberalism.

<sup>23</sup> For more information on this history of these developments, see Chapter 2.

<sup>24</sup> These reports focus entirely on the *systemic* discrimination facing women and girls in the Global South. It is important to note that systemic discrimination impacts women and girls throughout the globe, including wealthy nations such as the United States. Large poor populations exist within these wealthy countries, and men and women must make tragic choices between competing basic necessities such as food, healthcare, and education (Nussbaum, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> This shift replaces the liberal discourse of economics with the liberal discourse of rights. Though both have been used in imperialist models of development, the latter is a more inclusive vision that foregrounds humanity over economics. Thus, the shift is an important intervention in models of development that frequently ignore problems that will not create profit for investors.

<sup>26</sup> Here I distinguish between the economic work and the cultural changes girls hope to see, but I do not mean to state that economic and social changes are mutually exclusive. This distinction I make underscores the Nike Foundation’s exclusive emphasis on economics and its pivot away from addressing social issues such as access to reproductive health information and care, to name just one issue important to girls in these regions.

<sup>27</sup> Though the videos were originally available in English, [girleffect.org/about](http://girleffect.org/about) offers 10 subtitled translations of the videos. The other materials are not currently available in other languages. The *Girl Effect* encourages users to create their own translations of any materials.

<sup>28</sup> More information on who these supporters are and how they participate in the campaign can be found in the next section.

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