

---

# Where are the Wealthy Women in Development Discourse?

Deane Kevin\*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Queen Mary, University of London – Royaume-Uni

## Résumé

Recent discourses in relation to gender in international development have focused on ‘reversed realities’ and an approach to development that draws on the experiences and narratives of poor women. Whilst this approach is to some extent understandable in the context of a well-intentioned development community that aims to support those at the bottom of society, and those more in ‘need’ of ‘help’ or have the worst developmental outcomes, this focus raises questions regarding the (lack of) visibility and voices of women from other classes. This is all the more surprising in academic and policy discussions about issues such as HIV/AIDS in the sub-Saharan context which disproportionately impact wealthy women. The absence of wealthy women from the development discourse and the focus on poor women as the site of intervention has a number of important implications for how ‘development’ itself is characterised, including what is ‘known’ about countries considered as ‘developing’, as well as struggles over empowerment and improved gender relations. This reductionist view of gender issues and (as a consequence narrow focus on core policies such as microfinance and cash transfers) obscures a more systematic understanding of gender relations and how gender and class relations interact. Drawing on two key case studies (HIV and Domestic Care), we reflect on how a political economy approach can provide a more nuanced understanding of the process of development and the struggle for gender equality.

**Mots-Clés:** gender, wealth, international development, care, HIV

---

\*Intervenant