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Wells, Karen (2015) Violent lives and peaceful schools: NGO constructions of modern childhood and the role of the state. In: Parkes, J. (ed.) Gender Violence in Poverty Contexts: the Educational Challenge. Education, Poverty and International Development. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, pp. 168-182. ISBN 9780415712491.

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Chapter 11

Violent lives and peaceful schools: NGO constructions of modern childhood and the role of the state

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This chapter explores how children have become a central, if not the central, figure of (international) development, and girls the ideal subject of development. It analyses the role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) in discursively constructing girls this way. In this construction interventions on gender violence are largely reduced to interventions on access to schooling on the assumption that the integration of girls into a particular kind of modernity will reduce gender-based violence and gender inequality more generally. INGOs and NGOs thereby construe issues of political struggle as technical problems amenable to expert intervention and programming.

There is considerable academic disagreement, largely ideological, about the role of NGOs vis a vis civil society and the state (Kamat 2004). The position I adopt in this chapter is that INGOs, regardless of the discourses through which they legitimate themselves are part of the structure of international governance (Wells 2009: 20). Through a discourse analysis of two exemplary texts, Save the Children's *The Future is Now* (2010) and Plan International's *Because I am a Girl: Learning for Life* (2012), I show how NGO's legitimate or establish their right to govern in the Global South through claims about their ability to increase the health and welfare of the population, and I locate education as a technology through which this work gets done. The chapter begins with an account of Governmentality theory to establish the theoretical framework of the discourse analysis that follows. After a brief

description of the method the chapter turns to elaborating the key themes that emerged from this discourse analysis: development as a concept of the gradual unfolding of immanent potential of both girls and nations; school as a zone of peace in a wider cultural context of presumed violence; and gender equality as an effect of modernity rather than a site of political struggle.

Governmentality, the politics of life and the emergence of rights discourse

Government, as a Foucauldian concept means something far more than the institutions of political power. The shift from sovereignty to bio-politics, according to Foucault describes a shift from government as a limited relationship between the sovereign and the populace to government in the wider sense of all those mechanisms and institutions, including school, police, hospitals, and prisons that constitute a field of power (Dean 1999; Ina 2005; Gallagher 2008, 401 – 402; Foucault 2008). Sovereignty is the power to ‘take life or let live’. It is a power of ‘deduction’; of taking things away from the population – taxes, land, conscripts – or leaving them alone. Sovereign power waned as liberal government replaced it and, in this new political regime, the power to ‘take life or let live’ was steadily replaced by the power to ‘give life or let die’. No longer was power content to simply take from the populace, rather the population itself became the object of government. The rationale of government is no longer its own self-aggrandisement, materially and symbolically. Instead, the aim of government is to secure the health and welfare of its population or the exercise of power through the giving of life (Foucault 1978:142).

The objectives of a regulatory government focused on ‘the mechanics of life’ and on securing increases in the health and welfare of the population are clearly relevant to the modern governing of childhood and, relatedly, of motherhood, in the Global South. Foucault located

the emergence of a contemporary rights discourse, one centred on claims about the right to health, happiness and satisfaction of needs to the emergence of a politics of life as the central problem and justification of government (Foucault 1978). In a liberal polity the right of the state to intervene in the lives of citizens is constrained by the legitimating principle of limited government. This constraint however can be set aside if the objective is to secure the expansion of other 'rights' – the right to health and the improvement of welfare. The justification for the expansion of government powers rests on the maxim that *Society Must Be Defended* (Foucault 2003).

The classic focus of human rights claims was to protect subjects from encroachments by the sovereign. In contrast, contemporary human rights claims expand the state's prerogative to rule in the name of securing life. In the frame of liberal bio-politics rights are concerned with health and welfare and this is especially true of children's rights, particularly in the Global South. The expansion of education which has become a cornerstone of children's rights is primarily directed towards ensuring the expansion of the health and welfare of the population. The right to education is compulsory not only on governments to provide access to education but on children to be in school. This almost entirely reverses the meaning of rights in the classical sense in that, rather than protect citizens from the reach of the state, it obliges them to subject themselves to the state's authority. The different kinds of injunctions and exhortations in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), ranging from the right to clean drinking water and nutritious food to the abolition of harmful 'traditional practices' are not the kinds of claims that would be called 'rights' in the classic tradition. Their inclusion in the UNCRC supports Foucault's contention that a politics of life, which is the justification and object of modern liberal government, has become at the same time the site of political struggles.

Childhood is emblematic of the politics of life because of the centrality of development discourse to bio-politics; to deliver increases in health and welfare, to deliver progress is to develop and childhood is the quintessential site of development. The idea of the child as a gradually unfolding potential, notwithstanding the attempts of childhood studies scholars to disrupt this construction, is deeply embedded in modern European culture (James and James 2004:142). The project of modern government is one of securing knowledge about the child in order to ensure his or her transformation to a fully mature, healthy, civilised adult. Modern education and health care are shaped by psychologically informed ideas about the unfolding of the child's moral and intellectual potential and the kinds of practices that might block or divert the normal trajectory from immaturity to maturity. The school is perhaps the most important site for the governing of 'the conduct of conduct' of children . This not only involves learning subject knowledge but also includes the design of the school, the arrangement of children into age-cohorts and ability groups (Srivastava 1998; Kress and Jewitt 2005), and into school timetables that inculcate in the child the importance of punctuality and regularity (Thompson 1967). Childhood is a particularly powerful site for regulating the conduct of conduct because interventions made on the grounds of being 'in the best interests of the child' are difficult to contest whilst maintaining a claim to moral action. Furthermore compliance with these technologies promises for both children and parents the possibility of a good childhood that has itself become the leitmotif of modernity.

Child-saving or the intervention of the state and other governing agencies (including NGOs) in securing improvements in the health and welfare of the child-population has been a key motif of the governing of childhood from the onset of modern government. In the 19th century, when the idea of modern childhood as a period of life deserving of special

government protection was first established, there was a racial bifurcation of the governance of childhood. In this period, colonial children, African-Americans in the USA and indigenous children in the settler colonies were excluded from the modern idea of childhood and the special protections it intended to afford to children. NGOs and missionaries were significant actors in forcing colonial governments to extend the norms of the governance of modern childhood to the regulation of childhood in the colonial countries, e.g. Save the Children convened the first international conference on the 'African child' in 1931 (Marshall 2004). The focus of NGO and missionary activity was in the areas of health and education since it is in these spheres that the apparatus of government can be brought to bear on the reshaping of subjectivities and the reformation of cultures in the name of saving bodies and souls. This was then, and remains today, a complex project. As the expansion of primary enrolment shows, parents in developing countries and children themselves are increasingly convinced that children belong in school and that school will be the means through which their future lives will be made easier and more secure.

Analysing INGO texts on gender, violence and schooling.

The NGOs included here were selected because they are two of the largest INGOs focusing specifically on children and primarily in developing countries. Together with CARE International, MSF (Médecins Sans Frontières), Oxfam, World Vision, ACORD (Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development) and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response they account for 20 per cent of the entire international NGO sector (Salm 1999: 87). In their focus on childhood they are different from other INGOs who resolve the problem of legitimisation through various discourses, e.g. human rights (Oxfam), solidarity with the poor (Action Aid), Christian charity (Christian Aid). INGOs whose focus is children benefit from the exclusion of the figure of 'the child' from political and economic calculation.

Saving children by any means necessary is an irrefutable trope that overrides the usual prohibition on the constraints placed on governance by the rule of law and democratic politics. The figure of the child (as opposed to the real lives of real children) represents that permanent state of exception that Agamben (2005) argues state sovereignty is founded on. In order to analyse the work of these two NGOs I chose two reports that are emblematic of their approach. For Plan, their annual survey of girls and development: *State of the World's Girls 2012: Learning for Life* and for Save the Children *The Future is Now*, which is the final evaluation of their campaign linking conflict and violence eradication and prevention and education: *Rewrite the Future*.

The Future is Now is the most lengthy of a series of reports and other outputs from the campaign¹, and comprises a 70 page report, including 5 pages of endnotes. It is divided into chapters: overcoming the barriers to education; improving educational quality; schools as sites of conflict or agents of peace; education as an essential emergency response; financing education in conflict-affected fragile states; and conclusion and recommendations.

Learning for Life is the latest 200 page report² in a series that Plan publish each year on different aspects of girls' lives in developing countries, linked to Plan's *Because I am a Girl* campaign. It has a foreword by the UN Women Executive Director and consists of three sections. The first section is a report divided into 4 chapters and interspersed with case studies. The second section is an update of Plan's cohort study on girl's lives in eight developing countries plus Brazil. The third section consists of reference material including nearly 20 pages of endnotes.

The themes that are discussed in the rest of this chapter emerged out of my coding of the reports. This approach to discourse analysis starts with a deep familiarity with the documents based on repeated reading. I then identified a series of codes from recurring motifs, words, and phrases in the report. I had electronic copies of both reports and so was able to highlight words and phrases electronically and then explore the surrounding text in detail. I then organised these codes into groups under a meta-code ('development' 'violence/peace' and 'gender equality') which are the headings of the following sections. I also attended to the silences or absences in the text; the stories or information the reader might expect to find in these reports but which was absent. In thinking about how the school is represented, for example, one might expect some attention to the curriculum or teaching but in fact there is very little said about pedagogy or bodies of knowledge. My analysis of the work that these words and phrases do, as well as their positioning in relation to other parts of the text, figures and images was also informed by the theoretical framework outlined above.

Developing girls and developing countries

In Save the Children's *Rewrite the Future* campaign and Plan International's *Because I am a Girl* campaign, school is axiomatically the space in which children belong and flourish. It is in school that they will learn the habits and aspirations of capitalist modernity. Children quoted in these NGO materials reveal remarkably similar dreams of returning to school and then getting a better life: "Maybe one day when my siblings are a bit older I could go back to school. I would learn and pass all my subjects, and then I could have a better job and a better life. Sometimes, I dream about becoming a teacher or maybe a nurse." Talent, 14, Zimbabwe' (Plan p.12). In Plan's report a diagram in the scientific genre of an evolutionary chart is used to show how the school will change a girl's future from one in which 'the cycle of poverty continues' (p.13) to one in which Nargis (the 7th billion child to be born) 'finishes

school and gets a good job'. A fuller elaboration of the chart imagines the alternative outcomes for Nargis at each juncture when she either drops out of or continues in school from Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) through to secondary school. The Nargis who does not go to school simply 'doesn't learn' she is married off at age 12, and pregnant at age 14. Her life is coloured in grey. In the alternative route, a pink figure progresses along an orange route through primary school and secondary school until she simply 'gets a good job' (p.13). Leaving aside the simple-mindedness of the claim that school qualifications lead inexorably to a better life, materially or otherwise, Plan's use of the science communication genre of diagrammatic representation of evolutionary development is indicative of the prevalence of a discourse of development in NGO representations. This is a kind of double discourse, where development refers to both the developing child and the developing country.

Plan's 2012 report, *Learning for Life*, focuses on adolescents, recognising that whilst the MDG 2 (full universal primary school enrolment) has led to significant increases in expanding school enrolment, once children, and particularly girls, reach adolescence they and their families are less likely to see school as the best use of children's time and effort. Centres for ECCD extend the reach of governance into the lives of children and their families. The discourse supporting this has increasingly relied on scientific claims about how early children's brains are 'hard-wired' and how important early intervention is to ensure that neurological development happens before the child's brain loses its plasticity. Despite the complexity of neurological science, these claims about brain development have already become part of development (child development and economic development discourse) and it is asserted that the failure of early intervention will reduce children's capacity to learn and progress intellectually and in a range of psycho-social or 'non-cognitive' skills as they grow up (Dercon and Sanchez 2011).

Plan's Learning for Life report extends the scientific claims about development to teenagers. Through a scientific discourse of knowledge about adolescent development, unsupported by any references to research, Plan insists that school is where adolescents 'ought to be' (p.17). In a section of the report title 'from child to married woman overnight' Plan explain that:

Adolescence is a life-cycle period whereby children are learning to think abstractly and better able to connect values to actions and actions to consequences. It is a period of physical, emotional, psychological and cognitive development during which experimentation and risk-taking are both normal and a fundamental part of developing decision-making skills. (p.22).

It is unclear what the 'experimentation and 'risk-taking' are that are a 'fundamental part of developing decision-making skills' or how adolescent girls who are out of school are denied the scope for either. Nor is it clear why experimentation and risk-taking will be experienced by girls through staying in school. Is it that school is the experiment here and that risk-taking is the risk of staying in school and defying traditional expectations? The report continues,

However, these experiences are denied to girls in rural Pakistan who change, almost overnight, from being 'children' with extremely limited access to information relating to sexual reproductive health to being married women with all the responsibilities that entails' (p.22).

It seems then that the experimentation and risk-taking refer partly to sexuality and partly to a broader idea of an ideal human subjectivity that is flexible, adaptable and

innovative. This analysis is supported by the statement that education ‘helps promote the awareness, independence and understanding of participation necessary for a citizen’ (p.22).

In addition to scientific discourses about the normally developing brain and its needs, justification for the claim that school is axiomatic of a good childhood is made through the citing of statistics about the impact of education on girls’ future lives. However, as so often with NGO sources, the evidence for these claims is circular; the sources cited to verify them are themselves from Save or Plan’s own research, much of it unpublished internal documents, and that of other NGOs and UN agencies. Although on occasion these kinds of evidential support for NGOs educational policy have been adjusted for the effect of class on outcomes, given that entry into secondary school education remains a middle class attainment across the developing world it is not clear how reliable these adjustments can be. The statistics are used, along with vignettes or case studies of girls’ experiences, to establish the importance of education to securing the future health and welfare of girls. School is what will enable adolescent girls to:

obtain skills...earn more income in the future, marry later, and have fewer, and healthier, children. In the longer term, secondary education protects girls against HIV and AIDS, sexual harassment and human trafficking. In short, secondary education, in combination with financial assets and life skills, is essential for adolescent empowerment, development and protection (Plan p.22).

This is an extraordinary paragraph which in two sentences gathers together all the current tropes about developing countries (HIV/AIDs, sexual harassment, human trafficking) as sites of disease and violence and the tropes about the development project (empowerment,

development, protection) as the foundation of human liberation and distributes them according to whether girls stay in or leave school.

Plan recognises that as children transition to adulthood, their families and wider social recognition demand more of their time and that they learn new skills and bodies of knowledge commensurate with emerging adulthood. Clearly, for Plan this is a problem because school is the site which children need to grow up in to learn gender equality, non-violence and the management of reproductive and physical health. In Learning for Life, adolescence is the mechanism through which successful transitions to adulthood are accomplished.

In these reports and other materials produced in support of these campaigns, the site of the school itself is curiously empty. There is little or no sense of what goes on in the school in relation to curriculum, pedagogy, qualifications, and the acquisition of knowledge and skills. In place of any account of the space, time and pedagogy of the classroom, both Save and Plan use visual evidence of children's enjoyment and engagement with learning. There are key tropes deployed in these photographs and four themes pre-dominate: children concentrating, children writing, children laughing, and children raising their hands. In these last images the significance of this gesture is instantly recognisable to anyone who has been a teacher or a student. It is perhaps one of the most simple gestures that reveal the pedagogical space of the classroom as one in which knowledge is distributed, digested and returned as evidence of learning. There is no space here for anything resembling a critical, discursive pedagogy. These images are clearly intended to convey the pleasure that children take in learning within the school and the incontrovertible connection between being in school and having a good childhood or, indeed, a recognisable childhood. These images suggest the significance of the

school as a site in which childhood is regularised and globalised. But more than that the absence of any content to the learning that goes on in school also suggests that the NGO interest in schools is as a site of governance, a site for the regulation of childhood through the inculcation of particular norms and dispositions concurrent with the reformation of subjectivity, which returns to the problem of developing countries as spaces saturated with risk and violence.

Violent lives and peaceful schools

If development of the child and their potential and the linking of this to economic development is one key theme in NGO discourse on schools, a second key theme is that school is the space within which children will learn how to become peaceful, tolerant people. Numerous references are made in reports and campaign summaries to how children learn in school to resolve conflict through discussion and are tolerant of differences. School is offered as the site in which conflicts outside the classroom are left at the door and children enter a new space in which dialogue and goodwill flourish. The images of children sitting at their desks laughing similarly convey the same message of school as a site insulated from wider conflicts and violence.

Save the Children's *Rewrite the Future: Three years on* is a short evaluation of the campaign, which illustrates well this discourse of the wider space of society and culture as a space of unremitting violence which can only be interrupted by the school as an insulated space and education as a redemption from the violence of tradition. In the following quote, the authors' citation of a respondent illustrates very effectively the symbolic violence of the circulation of a discourse of inadequacy between INGOs and the children involved in their projects:

In the beginning, especially in the south, we weren't educated...people just went to the bush and fought. But now we are in school. Without education we would still be in the bush (p.7)

Similarly in *The Future is Now*, Save identifies education as necessary to return countries to peace, 'Without education...countries remain on the brink of returning to conflict' (p.30).

Rewrite the Future's campaign and its various reports are premised on the claim that education reduces violence and teaches people how to resolve conflict by non-violent means. The very title of the campaign suggests that without school education the future will be a simple projection forward, a repetition of the predictable and atavistic space of the present. Teacher training should focus on showing teachers how to 'help children solve problems through discussion and negotiation rather than through violence' (p.20). The school is represented as a kind of alchemical space in which adults and children's experience of violence in conflict and fragile states 'can be used – with mutual trust and respect – to transform lives and build peace' (p.20). In contrast to the space of violence outside of the school, school is 'protective – safeguarding children from exploitation, abuse, violence and conflict' (p.18).

In Plan's report the role of school in reducing violence is discussed in a case-study entitled 'The Protective Role of Education' and presented as 'primary research' by the Institute of Education. The academic credibility of the inset is established in the opening paragraphs by the reference to the Institute of Education and the citation of research, including research by Plan, showing that girls are exposed to violence on the way to school, at school and because of being educated. It also notes the limits to the protection against violence that school provides. Having established the credibility of its claims through this balanced approach, it

then says '[n]ot only are women who are educated to secondary level or higher less likely their non-educated or primary-educated counterparts to experience violence, but men who are educated to [these levels] are less likely than their non-educated or primary-educated counterparts to perpetuate violence' (p.100). These are not proxies for class or employment: 'the data suggests that secondary education has a bigger impact on gender-based violence than...[does] high family wealth or female employment' (p.100). Why? Because 'Education seems to shift attitudes, and cycles of violence can be broken as women become more likely to report it, or to join together to fight against gender-based violence and to campaign for progressive laws' (p.101).

Within this text are two tables correlating experience of violence to primary and secondary education in 14 selected countries for ever-married women aged 15 – 49. However, in 8 of these 14 countries women's experience of violence by *men's* education level is lower for no education than for primary education (Cambodia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe). This evident contradiction between levels of education and protection against violence is simply elided by the supporting text which says, 'For men in most countries, continuing schooling beyond the primary level decreases the risk of committing violence' (p.101). A more accurate recounting of the two tables would note that in many countries women experience less domestic violence if they and their husbands have no education. This is the case in Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, and Uganda where, according to the statistics cited in the report, women's experience of violence is also lower when their husbands have no education than when they have secondary education. When experience of violence is correlated to women's level of education, the percentage of women who have ever experienced violence is lower for no education than for primary educated in Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Philippines, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia; and lower than secondary

educated in Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, and Zambia. The table does not then, in fact, support a simple correlation between education and the diminishment of violence against women and girls. The case study also excludes Latin American countries which, as noted elsewhere in *Learning for Life*, gender parity in secondary education has been achieved and girls often do better at school than boys do, and yet violence against women has not reduced. Other research suggests that education, age and marital status do not account for the difference in levels of intimate partner violence that women are subjected to and that the key difference in prevalence and severity is between rural and industrialised areas (Garcia-Moreno et al 2006: 1267).

So, the report correlates school enrolment to reduction in violence, not entirely accurately but also without any explanatory elaboration of why school education might or should lead to reductions in violence; like the idea of a good childhood being a schooled childhood, it is taken as axiomatic that school education is where people learn to be tolerant and non-violent and are protected from the violence space outside of school. The idea that school education and, particularly the acquisition of literacy, makes people less violent and more co-operative and tolerant of difference can be traced to modernisation theory and, prior to that, to the denigration of oral cultures in the colonial period. It points to the role of schooling and the learning of literacy as a ‘moral technology’ in the Foucauldian sense. Literacy is not simply the learning of the technical skills of reading and writing but also, as the ‘new literacy studies’ argue, a practice through which (new) cultural models about the self are inscribed (Street 1995:141).

Notwithstanding this discursive construction of school as a site of non-violence, school has, as NGO’s paradoxically acknowledge, become another site in which children experience

violence from their peers and their teachers. Save the Children acknowledge that teachers often use violent methods of discipline in the classroom and Plan acknowledges that sexual harassment and sexual violence by teachers against girls is almost commonplace. Plan cite sexual harassment as one reason why girls leave school early (p.11, p.14) and they note that teachers are themselves the perpetrators of violence, including sexual harassment and sexual violence against students (boys and girls, although there is little discussion of teacher sexual violence against boys) (p.15). It recognises that ‘gender-based violence’ in school limits girls’ access to education (p41, and in more detail p.53 – 54). This disrupts the idea of the school as a zone of peace, the location of modernity and therefore of rationality and discourse. This disruption is managed by attributing the violence in schools to the breaching of the schools’ boundaries by the culture in which it squats. Violence is not an effect of school itself but is ‘driven by deeply entrenched cultural beliefs and attitudes towards children’ (p.53). This containment of the cause of violence being rooted in cultural attitudes protects the discourse of school itself as a site of peace and a refuge from violence.

Similarly, in Save’s report, the chapter on schools as ‘sites of conflict or agents of peace’ essentially attributes the former (school as a site of conflict) to the incorporation of local political discourses into the school and the latter with the insulation of schools from these discourses. It notes that ‘in countries affected by conflict, the national curriculum can become particularly politicised’ and yet on the same page that ‘the curriculum can be used to promote peace...curricula for primary schools [to achieve this]...would include human rights, humanitarian law, citizenship and life skills’ (p.26). This juxtaposition of local politics to global rights entirely erases both the political struggles that generated those rights and that modes of citizenship, and the promotion of peace are themselves political issues.

Gender equality

Central to the discourse on education as a moral technology is the assertion that it both instantiates gender equality in the classroom and erodes gendered inequalities in the wider society and culture. Although Plan acknowledges in some places that, for example, ‘education does not operate in a vacuum and, even if children’s education rights can be secured, it does not necessarily follow that wider social change will result’ (p.26), this caveat is effectively erased by repeated references to the school as a site in which gender equality can be learned and which will ‘empower’ girls. Early childhood education, for example will ensure that ‘boys and girls grew up with the same values and opportunities’ (Plan p.9).

Indeed, girls are identified as the ideal subject of development in the Plan Report. This is much less explicit in *The Future is Now* because of its focus on barriers to school attendance arising from conflict rather than underdevelopment. In *State of the World’s Girls*, girls are unencumbered by the benefits of gender inequality that accrue to boys and by the habituation to subjugation that is the lot of adult women who do not resist the transformative potential of education:

The impact of education can extend beyond the girls who actually get the education. What these girls go on to do, what they achieve, and the example they set, could change attitudes about the roles of women and girls in society over time. As girls become more educated and enter the workforce, families and social structures can become reconfigured and gender roles may shift. (p.118)

This assumption that through specific approaches to education NGOs can use the school to instantiate gender equality and eradicate gender-based violence has been found in other analyses of NGO work on gender and education (Stromquist 2002; Murphy-Graham 2008; Sharma 2008; Stromquist and Fischman 2009; Dejaeghere and Wiger 2013; Parkes et al

2013). In the name of gender equality girls are represented as blank slates who accept the new inscription of gender relations that NGOs instruct them in. Deeper cultural and indeed political questions about the logics of gender, about what it means to be in transition to a socially recognised gendered adulthood in any specific social and cultural context are bracketed out of the discourse of school as the site for the inculcation of gender equality.

Here again, local cultural practices are entirely set aside. Indeed no recognition is given to the fact that in all cultures there are practices, including the acquisition of knowledge and skills – technical and cultural – that mark and make possible the transition to a socially recognised and gendered adulthood. If individuals are to transgress the borders of local gendered practices/subjectivities this is likely to involve them in conflicts and contestations, sometimes violently so. Deep shifts in gendered identities that challenge hegemonic masculinities and femininities and the sexualities that mark them cannot be accomplished by fiat but require sustained cultural political struggle. None of this is addressed in NGO campaigns.

In development representations in general the absence of boys and men, particularly in representations of Africa, is very noticeable. In these education campaigns in conflict and post-conflict states this elision is even more striking because of the contradiction between insisting on the school as a place in which tolerance and non-violence is learned and the exclusion of boys from the discourse on these beneficial impacts of education. In the Plan report there are a few references to sexual violence/sexual harassment of boys in school by teachers and others. Given the general silence about boys' subjection to sexual violence, the figures cited in Plan's report are surprisingly high with 73 million boys under 18 experiencing forced sexual intercourse according to the World Health Organisation's *World Report on Violence and Health* (2002) this compares to 150 million girls (Plan, p.53).. What

is more puzzling is that there is no discussion in the document of how this is to be confronted. Indeed, throughout these documents there is a gap between the clear representation of school as a moral technology in which girls learn how to be better people and the almost total erasure of boys from the space of the classroom. The only discussion of boys in classrooms points to their disaffection from education and their disruption of girls' learning (p92). If girls are the ideal subject of development this is partly because they are represented as the mothers of the next generation who will raise their children in more egalitarian ways. The pathways of normative masculinity are not thought to be as damaging to boys as they are to girls. Girls become responsible for protecting themselves from sexual aggression rather than boys being held responsible for their own violence.

The lack of attention to boys in the 2012 report also glosses over boys lack of social power, despite the widespread recognition that civil wars in sub-Saharan African (e.g. in Sierra Leone and Liberia) were partly reactions of boys or 'junior' men to their exclusion from access to land and other economic resources. Plan's 2011 report, *What about the Boys?*, is one of the few reports that focused on the role of boys in the struggle for gender equality. In this report boys and men are often spoken about together, as if the benefits that accrue to men from normative gender regimes accrue equally to boys. There is very little discussion of the violence that boys face at the hands of men (and also often of women) as they are inducted into heteronormative gender regimes. Furthermore, one of the main discourses that 2011 report deploys is that gender equality and ending violence against girls and women by boys and men involves redefining what it means to be a 'real man', e.g. it reports on an Indian community campaign which uses the slogan 'Real Man Thinks Right' (p.17). Elsewhere it cites the comment of a participant that a man is not 'a real man – if he beats women up' (p.89, see also p.123 for the same view from young men in a Balkans study). In this

discourse, the underlying gender regime still persists however, it is simply that new tasks get inscribed into the discourse of the 'real man'.

The involvement of NGO's in transforming gender in schools aims to change the character of the school as a state apparatus endowing it with radical potential. From a Foucauldian perspective this view misunderstands the fundamental character of contemporary government that is, as I have argued above, about expanding the right to govern in the name of increasing the health and welfare of the population. It is to this end that schools may expand the scope for a specific type of gender equality, one that is co-present with the expansion of capitalism and a liberal sense of the (gendered self) as radically individual, independent, rational and autonomous; in short with a model of gender that meshes with, indeed forms part of, the reformation of human subjectivity towards the liberal self-governing subject. Whether such a reformation is understood as being liberatory in a broader sense obviously depends on the analysis of the project of expanding capitalist modernity that is at the heart of development.

Conclusion

Childhood is the site on and through which development interventions inscribe new practices, dispositions and attitudes, in short, new subjectivities, that are compatible with the exercise of liberal governmentality, and girls are often the exemplary figure of these interventions. They do this through rationalities and techniques of government that separate out the political from the economic and developmental. *Rewrite the Future* is a campaign to address the education of children in conflict and fragile states, it is inherently a political campaign; *Learning for Life* is a project to expand school education from early years through to young adulthood and to expand opportunities for girls. It is necessarily political. Both campaigns make demands of governments and other agencies. Their right to make these interventions, to press demands on

government, is not congruent with the architecture of liberal governance which insists that it rules by and for the people. NGOs do not rest their right to govern childhood on democratic politics but instead on their expertise, their scientific assessment of need and their evidence on the impacts of their interventions. That development means capitalist development and that capitalism is an inescapably unequal regime is never addressed; and in fact is misrepresented through the emphasis placed on the ability of modernity to deliver gender equality while ignoring the persistence of class inequality.

In the discourse analysis presented in this chapter I have shown how scientific discourses of development are used to map the idea of normal adolescent development onto normal economic development, naturalising the idea of capitalist modernity as it does so. In this discourse the school and its technologies are identified as a site of protection so long as it can be separated from the wider cultural context in which it squats. Furthermore, school is understood as a site that teaches tolerance and peaceful co-existence and enables gender equality in contrast to the atavistic and violent cultures that surround it. This discursive construction of the school as a zone of safety and a kind of incubator of modernity is problematic for many reasons, not least because it offers a technical fix to what is essentially a political problem. Political problems, such as violence against girls, require political solutions that involve an understanding of the local and national power dynamics within which violence occurs and is legitimated.

¹ <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/education/rewrite-the-future>

² <http://plan-international.org/about-plan/resources/publications/campaigns/because-i-am-a-girl-learning-for-life-2012/>

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