University of Mary Washington

Eagle Scholar

Student Research Submissions

4-30-2015

Finding Meaning in Difference: Girls' Education Initiatives in Kenya from the UN and NGOs

Paige Heather Reese McKinsey
University of Mary Washington

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholar.umw.edu/student_research

Part of the Political Science Commons

FINDING MEANING IN DIFFERENCE: GIRLS' EDUCATION INITIATIVES IN KENYA FROM THE UN AND NGOS

An honors paper submitted to the Department of Political Science and International Affairs
of the University of Mary Washington
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Departmental Honors

Paige Heather Reese McKinsey
April 2015

By signing your name below, you affirm that this work is the complete and final version of your paper submitted in partial fulfillment of a degree from the University of Mary Washington. You affirm the University of Mary Washington honor pledge: "I hereby declare upon my word of honor that I have neither given nor received unauthorized help on this work."

Paige McKinsey
(digital signature)

04/30/15

"Finding Meaning in Difference: Girls' Education Initiatives in Kenya from the UN and NGOS"

Paige McKinsey

Dr. Gupta

University of Mary Washington

Abstract

Within international affairs academia, an understanding exists; when girls are educated, their families, their communities, their nations, and the world at large benefits. However, the academic work analyzing girls' education initiatives in developing nations has a partial view of the situation, focusing solely on those initiatives which combat logistical barriers. In previous research, it was found that a divide exists between the initiatives taken by NGOs and the United Nations working in Africa in which the former focuses on normative barriers to education while the later focuses on logistical barriers. What has yet to be discussed is the reason for this divide. Therefore, this paper will explore the constraints or limitations which cause western academics and the United Nations to focus solely on logistical initiatives while NGOs combat normative barriers to education within Kenya.

Table of Contents

Introduction

In 2003, the Kenyan government made primary education free to all students. This initiative was the result of an acknowledgement of a problem affecting many within Kenya: girls did not have equal access to educational opportunities that boys had access to. While this initiative greatly increased enrollment rates among both boys and girls, girls in Kenya continue to face additional barriers to education such as gender roles, teacher biases, and a greater concern for safety in getting to school. The Kenyan government is not alone in their efforts to reach gender parity in education. For many years, the United Nations and various NGOs have worked in Kenya to combat barriers to education. Therefore, it is troubling that although the government, the UN, and NGOs are all working to increase educational opportunities for girls in Kenya, a significant number of girls within Kenya are not able to attend school.

This paper seeks to provide an explanation of the variations in effectiveness between the initiatives of the Kenyan government, the UN, and NGOs as well as identify the strengths of each institution with the hope of generating ideas for better policies. While each of these institutions addresses this issue, it is clear that more needs to happen. The research presented in this paper shows that although on the aggregate access to education has improved, the effects of these initiatives do not impact all girls equally. Girls living in rural areas of Kenya continue to face additional barriers to education and it appears that the efforts of the Kenyan government, the UN, and NGOs are not reaching them. Therefore, this paper hopes to identify the ways in which these institutions can use their strengths and reach girls living in rural areas of Kenya.

Based on a review of the literature related to girls' education in developing nations, a case study of the educational system in Kenya, and interviews with representatives from the UN and NGOs working on girls' education in Kenya, it is apparent that all parties agree that

girls' education is an important and necessary cause. Additionally, all parties appear to acknowledge the various types of barriers girls face when trying to go to school. However, it appears that one of the primary indicators of whether or not a girl will attend school is her location within Kenya. Various studies show that girls living in rural areas of Kenya face additional barriers to education and that both the government and the UN face barriers in reaching those girls. However, while there are variations in access to education between children living in rural areas of Kenya versus their urban counterparts, organizations cannot understand the full extent of this variation without acknowledging the impact of gender.

Argument

This paper intends to argue the following; the regional position of a girl within Kenya is a key indicator of whether or not she will have access to education, due to internal structural organization of the United Nations it is not able to adequately address normative barriers to education, and there is a need for greater partnerships between the UN and NGOs working on girls education initiatives in Kenya. In support of these claims, the paper begins with a review of the literature on girls' education on a macro level, as well as the literature with a focus on Kenya. The paper then discusses the methods used in this study. From a discussion of the methods, the paper continues into a case study of the educational situation in Kenya. This discussion begins with a historical review of the events which shaped the current situation and follows with a description of the current situation. Next, the paper will discuss the material gathered from interviews and provide a synopsis of findings which will lead into a discussion of policy prescriptions.

Importance of Research

While the topic of girls' education and, more specifically, girls' education initiatives is not new in academia, it is a topic of the utmost importance. The reason for the importance of this topic is simple; when girls are educated, their communities, their nations, and the

entire world benefits. Within academia, academics describe girls' education initiatives as a sort of fix-all solution. According to academics, if a nation or organization can help a girl in a developing country gain access to school and provide her with the support she needs to stay there, wages increase, national health improves, and women are empowered, along with solving a vast array of other problems (Sperling 2005, Herz and Sperling 2004, Schultz 1993). Of course, the first part of the problem, especially in developing nations, is getting girls into school and then trying to keep them there. As this is a problem governments, the UN, and NGOs face, it is of the upmost importance that the field of international relations has a clear grasp on how organizations function in their initiatives to provide girls in developing nations with an education.

Further, each of those institutions implements steps and initiatives to work to achieve gender parity within schools. Beginning in 2002, the UN launched an initiative to wipe out a variety of problems affecting developing nations from poverty and hunger to healthcare by 2015.[1] One key aspect to these goals was to achieve gender parity in education. From this initiative, member states were expected to take steps to achieve these goals by the end of 2015. In response to the MDGs in 2003 the Kenyan government made primary school free to all students. Additionally, for many year NGOs implemented initiatives to improve gender parity in schools. Therefore, within Kenya all sides acknowledge this problem and are actively working to bring about effective change.

This push for change could not come soon enough for Kenya. With an undereducated population, the people of Kenya often find themselves within a cycle of poverty and struggle. Within Kenya, one in ten young people did not complete their primary school education and therefore struggle to find paid work.[2] Poverty only serves to exacerbate this problem. Out of

---

[1] "Millennium Development Goals and Beyond 2015," The United Nations. Accessed March, 2015. http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml
[2] "Fact Sheet Education in Kenya," Education for All Global Monitoring Report (2012). Print.

all the people living in the slums in Kenya 50 percent of men and 80 percent of women ages 15 to 24 have no income-generating activities.[3] These realities are directly tied to a lack of education for many in Kenya. However, in every case women consistently suffer more so than men due to their lack of an education. With the Kenyan governments commitment to achieving gender parity and fulfilling the requirements of the MDGs girls growing up in today will have a better chance to escape the same fate.

Literature Review

Scholars writing on gender, education, and development at this macro-level analysis identify three major barriers girls in developing nations face when trying to go to school: institutionalized sexism in the education system, problems with infrastructure, and societal barriers. While these academics disagree on which of these barriers should take precedent, all agree that each barrier plays a role in keeping girls from an education. This literature review will seek to provide greater analysis of these scholars and their insights as well as drawing connections between their works. Additionally, this literature review will offer critiques of the literature in order to identify possible areas for future research.

Although it is a relatively new field in International Relations, discussions on gender and development center around three main theoretical perspectives; Women in Development, Women and Development, and Gender and Development. These perspectives not only inform scholarship, they inform policies of development. Of these three perspectives Women in Development is both the oldest and has informed that majority of policies which inform development strategies. Unfortunately, because of its focus on modernization the Women and Development perspective results in policies which are narrow in focus and limited in their ability to affect sustainable change. The perspectives which follow, Women and

---

[3] Ibid.

Development and Gender and Development, seek to improve on the shortcomings of the

Women in Development theory. Unfortunately, these perspectives are not as widely

represented in the literature or the polices related to development.

Theoretical Frameworks

The three most prominent theoretical perspectives related to a discussion of girls'

education in Kenya are the Women in Development, Women and Development, and Gender

and Development theories. Over the past few years, these theories informed numerous

institutions in their work to eradicate poverty, provide medical care to those in developing

nations, increase economic capabilities, and drive development. Therefore, these are the three

which I will look at for this literature review.

Women in Development

Born in the 1970's, the Women in Development theory largely arose from Ester

Boserup's report *Women's Role in Economic Development.* This report was the first to

analyze the role women played in the international economy. Looking at sexual divisions of

labor, Boserup was able to effectively show the importance of gender as a variable of

analysis. Institutions began taking note of the importance of gender analysis in discussions of

development. The term "Women in Development", first used by the Washington DC chapter

of the Society for International Development, in an attempt to deliberately include women in

discussions of development. At the same time institutions began using the Women in

Development model, the dominant thought was that countries could achieve development

through modernization. Organizations and academics soon linked these two ideas together.

The two great issue areas for the Women in Development theory were its acceptance

of modernization theory and its acceptance of existing social structures. Unfortunately, many

linked the Women in Development theory and the modernization theory in a way that left

women out of the primary analysis. Rather than focusing on the ways in which modernization

would affect women or how likely it was that modernization would even reach women in developing countries, academics and institutions simply assumed that with modernization would come liberation for women in developing nations.

The Women in Development theory's second shortcoming was its lack of reflection on the institutions or norms which created a system of oppression. Rather than challenge or even consider the structures that put women in a disadvantaged position, Women in Development theory accepted these structures as the norm. Without challenging these structures and then linking the theory to one of modernization, academics and institutions created an ineffective theory which upheld dangerous standards and instead pushed Eurocentric norms onto developing nations. Further, these policies were not only Eurocentric; they were not effective in their countries of origin. While these institutions promoted modernization as the "fix all" solution, women in "developed" states continued to suffer from sexism, patriarchy, and oppression. Therefore, this theoretical perspective was simply exporting an ineffective process to "developing states" which only furthered the oppression of women around the world.

Women and Development

Scholars began to see that the plight of women in developing nations was not due to a lack of modernization but in part, because of it. In response to the shortcomings of modernization theory and the Women in Development theory, the Women and Development theory of the mid-1970's sought to critique these theories and develop a theory with more explanatory power. This theory argued that women have always been actors in development and that governments and institutions simply never gave them credit for their contributions. Rather than attempting to find means to integrate women into the development process, the Women and Development theory sought to analyze the relationship between women and the

development process. Further, this theory argued that the integration movements of the past simply helped sustain global inequalities between developed and developing nations.

While the Women and Development theory effectively criticized and sought to rectify the problematic aspects of the Women in Development theory, it had its own shortcomings. Similar to the Women in Development theory, the Women and Development theory tends to lump women in developing nations together without much consideration for nuance or difference in situation. Further, the Women and Development theory focused heavily on the income-generating occupations without considering the work done by women that did not generate any income. It was this oversight in areas of women's lives such as childbearing, home care, and elder care, which created significant critique of the Women and Development theory.

Gender and Development

Just as the Women and Development theory sought to develop a better theory than Women in Development, the Gender and Development theory developed critiques of the Women and Development theory and sought to create an even better theory. Coming about in the 1980's, the Gender and Development theory took the best aspects of the theories proceeding it while improving on their shortcomings. The result was a theory that acknowledged women as integral parts of the development process while also acknowledging the importance of *all* work women do. For Gender and Development theorists, the greater question was what caused women to remain in positions of lesser status.

However, one important distinction between Gender and Development and the Women and Development theory is its focus on the social construction of gender and the societal roles that different societies associate with different genders. Therefore, unlike the Women in Development and Women and Development theories, the Gender and Development theory allows for more analysis of all genders and the effects development has

on them. In regards to discussions of girls' access to education, the Gender and Development

perspective critiques the dialogue seen in the World Bank and UNICEF as identifying girls'

education as a return on an investment rather than a humanitarian right.[4] This approach is far

more intersectional, as it allows a researcher to look at how development would affect, for

example, a wealthy woman in a developing nation versus a poor man living in a developing

nation. In each case, gender is crucial in understanding the lived experiences of each person,

but the other qualities of class, race, ethnicity, level of education, etc. cannot be ignored. The

Gender and Development theory allows for this type of deeper analysis.

Although the Gender and Development perspective offers significant improvements

to both the Women in Development and Women and Development perspective, there is

almost no translation into policy. For the majority of international organizations and states,

their policies reflect Women in Development. Therefore, although an alternative to this

approach exists few take notice. Due to a lack of carry over into policy, it is important that

any critiques of the policies currently in place identify the areas where Gender and

Development ideas may be useful. The literature review to follow will identify those areas in

the scholarship where Gender and Development could be implemented in order to improve

on and broaden the perspectives of these works.

Academic Insight: Focus on Africa

A significant volume of academic work focuses on tackling the issue of girls'

education and its impact on the development of states. Within academic literature, many

agree on the various forms of barriers to education. However, they have differing opinions on

which barriers should take priority. In the works examined for this paper, three main

categories of barriers emerge: institutionalized sexism within the education system,

infrastructural problems, and societal barriers. It is important to note that each of these

---

[4] Christine Heward and Sheila Bunwaree, "Gender, Education and Development: Beyond Access to Empowerment" Zed Books 1999 New York: New York.

subcategories fall under the overarching divide of normative versus logistical issues. Further, it is important to note that only a few pieces of the literature included in this review fell into the Gender and Development category.

Institutionalized Sexism

One line of scholarship which recognizes the larger institutions preventing girls from gaining access to school is that which argues that institutionalized sexism is the primary barrier girls face when trying to gain access to school. Because of the acknowledgement of larger societal structures preventing educational equity, it easily fits into the Gender in Development theory. For feminist scholars, one of the largest problems to tackle is the problem of institutionalized sexism within the education system. These problems include, but are not limited to, inadequate or ineffective teaching, teachers and administrators with preconceived ideas of girls' abilities, gendered curricula, limited female representation in the school system at all levels, the funneling of girls into certain areas of study, and sexist policies that influence education. Academics argue that these problems lead to lack of access to an education as well as high dropout and repetition rates for girls.[5]

Many academics discuss the ways in which institutionalized sexism can reinforce societal gender norms through messages within the curricula or course material.[6] The reinforcement of gender norms and ideals often funnels girls into certain areas of studies which are thought of as 'more feminine.' These 'feminine' fields include home economics, teaching, writing, or secretarial work. Many academics observe this focus on feminine fields is as becoming worse in all girls schools where curricula will focus on subjects such as home

---

[5] .Dorothy L. Njeuma,"An Overview of Women's Education in Africa." in *The Politics of Women's Education; Perspectives from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.* Ed. Jill Ker Conway and Susan C. Bourque. (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1996. Print.)

[6] Karin A. L. Hyde "Sub-Saharan Africa." in *Women's Education in Developing Countries; Barriers, Benefits, and Policies.* Ed. Elizabeth M. King and M. Anne Hill. (Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 1993. Print.)

economics and secretarial studies rather than mechanics or science.[7] In fact, many academics found that many all-girl schools do not offer science courses.[8] For many academics, this exclusion of girls from certain areas of study truly begins to affect them once they have left the school system. This exclusion from certain areas of study affects job opportunities later on in life by not providing girls with the training necessary to pursue a career in these fields.[9]

Aside from limiting access to certain fields, many school systems simply have blatantly sexist policies and teachers, which many academics argue lead to high dropout rates. These academics argue that when teachers have prejudices against what girls are capable of doing or whether or not they should even be in school, it can make for a toxic environment for girls' equitable education.[10] These prejudices along with sexist curricula not only cause higher dropout rates among girls, but they present formidable barriers for entry into school.[11] Several academics explain that a lack of representation at various levels of the education system—students, teachers, administration, etc, only make these barriers more formidable.[12] When factoring in all aspects of institutionalized sexism, it becomes clear that often for girls in Africa, the education system itself can become a hostile environment which can lead to not only poor enrollment rates and low retention rates, but high rates of gendered violence that affect a girl's ability to attend and move up in school.[13]

---

[7] Dorothy L. Njeuma, "An Overview of Women's Education in Africa." In *The Politics of Women's Education; Perspectives from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.* Ed. Jill Ker Conway and Susan C. Bourque. (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1996. Print.)

[8] Karin A. L. Hyde "Sub-Saharan Africa." in. *Women's Education in Developing Countries; Barriers, Benefits, and Policies.* Ed. Elizabeth M. King and M. Anne Hill. (Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 1993. Print.)

[9] Ibid.

[10] Dorothy L. Njeuma, "An Overview of Women's Education in Africa." In *The Politics of Women's Education; Perspectives from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.* Ed. Jill Ker Conway and Susan C. Bourque. (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1996. Print.)

[11] Josephine A. Beoku-Betts"Gender and Formal Education in Africa: An Exploration of the Opportunity Structure at the Secondary and Tertiary Levelsin. *Women and Education in Sub-Saharan Africa.* Ed. Marianne Bloch, Josephine A. Beoku-Betts, and B. Robert Tabachinick. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc, 1998. Print.)

[12] Dorothy L. Njeuma, "An Overview of Women's Education in Africa." In *The Politics of Women's Education; Perspectives from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.* Ed. Jill Ker Conway and Susan C. Bourque. (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1996. Print.)

[13] Josephine A. Beoku-Betts "Gender and Formal Education in Africa: An Exploration of the Opportunity Structure at the Secondary and Tertiary Levels." In *Women and Education in Sub-Saharan Africa.* Ed.

It is clear from these academic works that institutionalized sexism and the resulting policies and practices of a sexist education systems greatly affect female enrollment and retention rates. It must be understood that the specific barriers identified by academics i.e. sexist school policies, teachers with prejudices, and sexual assault and violence do not occur independently of one another. As discussed by academics, these barriers present significant challenges to girls attempting to receive an education, but the challenges become far more daunting when they are occurring simultaneously.

Infrastructure

In another line of thought more attuned to Women in Development and Gender in Development, academics argue the issue of access comes down to a conversation of logistics. Many academics argue that the largest barrier to girls' enrollment in school is a matter of infrastructure. In other words, a country must have schools for girls to attend if they are to raise enrollment rates. While this argument seems obvious, many academics point out that it is not always discussed. Numerous academics agree that the proximity of a school to a girl is the deciding factor for her parents of whether or not they send her to school. Whether for fear of violence, for economic reasons, or for logistical purposes, a girl's proximity to a school proves to be one of the biggest factors in low enrollment and attrition rates for girls in Africa. Academics also point out that it is not always a matter of building more schools, but also expanding and improving on the ones which already exist. Although many of the solutions recommended for logistical barriers involve simply increasing funding, logistical barriers present a diverse set of issues for girls in Africa.

First and foremost, there is the issue of a lack of schools available for girls to attend. Academics explain the issue of proximity to a school can often come down to an economic decision on the part of a girl's family when they choose whether or not she is able to attend

---

Marianne Bloch, Josephine A. Beoku-Betts, and B. Robert Tabachinick. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc, 1998. Print.)

school. If a girl's school attendance interferes with household chores or the household economy, the parents will decide that the opportunity cost of sending the girl is unacceptably high.[14] When a school is not close to a girl, her parents consider her travel time to and from school to cut into her household duties and will not permit her to attend school. Academics explain that this problem becomes increasingly worse in rural areas where resources for schools are harder to find and families are often more dependent on child labor.[15]

For many academics, the proximity to a school is the single largest factor in determining whether or not a girl is able to enroll in school. Many explain that the solution has two sides. First, existing schools must be maintained and kept up to working condition. However, many academics argue that simply keeping up existing schools is not enough. They argue that in order to truly improve female enrollment rates, new schools must be built closer to girls. For many, the best way to reach girls is to build new schools in order to have a closer proximity to more girls.[16] As pointed out earlier, this problem especially affects rural areas of Africa where demand for child labor is far greater.

Societal Norms

In one of the most progressive strains of thought falling into the Gender and Development theory, academics acknowledge the role of societal norms in predicting whether or not a girl will attend school. One of the reasons that the condition of labor within families affects girls disproportionately is due to societal norms and expectations. Nearly all academics agree that one of the largest, if not the largest, factor affecting girls' education is societal barriers. These ideals and ideas on the place of girls, the abilities of girls, and what

---

[14] Dorothy L. Njeuma, "An Overview of Women's Education in Africa." In *The Politics of Women's Education; Perspectives from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.* Ed. Jill Ker Conway and Susan C. Bourque. (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1996. Print.)

[15] Marlaine E. Lockheed, et al. *Improving Primary Education in Developing Countries. (*Washington D.C.: Oxford University Press, 1991. Print.)

[16] Karin A. L. Hyde "Sub-Saharan Africa." In *Women's Education in Developing Countries; Barriers, Benefits, and Policies.* Ed. Elizabeth M. King and M. Anne Hill. (Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 1993. Print.)

their role should be in society can come from parents, community leaders, politicians, religious leaders, and teachers, and they significantly impact a girl's ability to attend school. Even in cases where girls are able to attend primary school, they will drop out before reaching secondary school due to societal practices which limit their ability to continue their education such as childhood marriage and pregnancy.

More often than not, parents are the most influential factor in determining if a girl will be able to attend school and if so, for how long. As many argue, unless the parents can see that the benefits of sending their daughter to school outweigh the benefits of keeping her home to help out with household duties that will teach her to be a wife and mother, girls have very little chance of attending school.[17] Especially in Africa, this focus on marriage and motherhood dictate much of a girl's life and her daily activities. Academics explain that this often not only leads to low enrollment rates, but higher dropout rates because, at a certain point in a girl's life, she is expected to stop everything in pursuit of becoming a wife and mother.[18] However, as one academic found, this emphasis on the importance of marriage can often lead to her enrollment in school because in some parts of Africa a family can ask for more money when they marry off a girl if she attended school. Academics explain this phenomenon, stating that the reasons for sending girls to school in some parts of Africa are due to societal expectations of marriage rather than innate benefits from education.[19]

However, as many academics point out, the ideals of a girl's parents are the products of their culture and society. Therefore, in some cases the influences and pressures from outside the home play a greater role in determining whether or not a girl attends school.

---

[17] Paul T. Schultz "Returns to Women's Education." in. *Women's Education in Developing Countries; Barriers, Benefits, and Policies.* Ed. Elizabeth M. King and M. Anne Hill. (Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 1993. Print.)

[18] Karin A. L. Hyde "Sub-Saharan Africa." in. *Women's Education in Developing Countries; Barriers, Benefits, and Policies.* Ed. Elizabeth M. King and M. Anne Hill. (Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 1993. Print.)

[19] Fay Chung "Educational Expansion, Cost Considerations, and Curriculum Development in Zimbabwe." in. *The Politics of Women's Education; Perspectives from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.* Ed. Jill Ker Conway and Susan C. Bourque. (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1996. Print.)

Academics explain that societal ideas about the appropriate roles of girls, their biological limitations, and gendered division of labor are key factors in determining if a girl will attend school and for how long she will be able to attend.[20] In this case, entities such as religious leaders, cultural ideals, traditions, and other societal influences can not only prevent a girl from enrolling in school or dropping out once she is there, but they can also influence the decisions of a girl's parents.

While many academics understand and agree that societal factors play an important role in determining whether girls are able to attend school, many do not offer clear explanations on how to combat these societal factors. Although some academics claim that family planning programs help to alleviate some of the societal issues, none of the academic works looked at in this review laid out clear recommendations. Rather, the focus for many of the solutions presented in the literature dealt with logistical barriers such as how to build up more schools or improve the resources available to schools. Often these arguments called for increased funding for schools and education without any real consideration as to where the money would come from. Although it should be acknowledged that academics do identify multiple barriers, their lack of attention to normative solutions is puzzling.

Academic Insight: Focus on Kenya

Similar trends appear in the literature focusing specifically on Kenya in which academics identified the same barriers to education for girls in Kenya faced by girls in Africa at large. However, unlike the macro level works on girls' education, the pieces which focus on girls' education in Kenya are able to develop more nuances. With more nuances comes a greater influence of Gender and Development theory which attempts to acknowledge all barriers involved in keeping girls from an education. In searches for work focusing on girls' education within Kenya, it was difficult to find any that analyzed the problem as a whole

---

[20] Karin A. L. Hyde "Sub-Saharan Africa." in. *Women's Education in Developing Countries; Barriers, Benefits, and Policies.* Ed. Elizabeth M. King and M. Anne Hill. (Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 1993. Print.)

rather than focus on a specific topic within the issue such as focusing on the experiences of a specific tribe in Kenya or analyzing enrollment rates in a specific time period. While each source offers a unique perspective on the issue, there are similar assumptions and themes found in each. First, there is the assumption that girls' education is inherently good and benefits nations as a whole. Second, there is an acknowledgement of both normative and logistical barriers, although the authors do not use that terminology to describe the barriers girls face. Lastly, because of their focus on a specific country, the authors analyzed ways in which historical events affected the trajectory of girls' access to education.[21]

Similar to the work of academics focusing on Africa at large, academics focusing on Kenya argue that if a state or organization can get a girl educated, wages increase, national health improves, and women are empowered.[22] Coupled with the discussions of the benefits of girls' education in Kenya comes the discussion of the barriers to education. In similar ways to the work of academics analyzing Africa as a whole, the academics focusing on girls' education in Kenya acknowledge the importance of both normative and logistical barriers. However, there appears to remain a trend of favoring logistical barriers within this discussion. For example, in his article "Universalising primary education in Kenya: the elusive goal," Somerset outlines the effectiveness of three historical education initiatives where he argues that the most effective among them have been those which focus on logistical barriers rather than those which focus on societal norms or stigmas

---

[21] Anthony Somerset *"*Universalising primary education in Kenya: the elusive goal.*"* *Comparative Education*. Vol. 45, No. 2, (2009) 233-250.

[22] Gene B. Sperling and Barbara Herz "What Works In Girls' Education: Evidence and Policies from the Developing World.*"* (2004). *Council on Foreign Relations.*

surrounding girls' education.[23] Academics cite the results of these historical initiatives as the basis of their argument for logistical initiatives.[24]

Theorizing Girls' Education

However, each source finds its own way to argue this case. For Fatuma Chege and Daniel Sifuna it is necessary to move beyond the rhetoric of equal access when advocating for girls' education in Kenya.[25] They argue that this rhetoric ignores important societal barriers and is often an oversimplified idea of reality. Similar to the rhetoric of Gender and Development theorists, these authors seek to increase nuance and problematize concepts other take as given. Just as I attempt to avoid oversimplification of barriers through my organization of the types of barriers girls face, the authors argue academia must not forget the intricacies involved in getting a girl into a school. As their book was the only source focusing on Kenya to specifically look at theory, it is understandable they would approach the rhetoric debate differently from the other pieces.

This discussion continues in another piece by the same authors in which they take their theory a step further and argue that in order to achieve equal access to education, policymakers must combat normative barriers to education.[26] Unlike their previous piece, the authors offer policy implications and recommendations based off of both their research and theory. In a call for immediate action from the Kenyan government, the authors argue for

---

[23] Anthony Somerset "A preliminary note on Kenya primary enrolment trends over four decades." In *CREATE Pathways to Access Research Monograph*, No. 9 (2007). Brighton: University of Sussex.

[24] A.S. Bedi, P.K. Kimalu, D.K. Manda, and N. Nafula. "The decline in primary school enrolment in Kenya." In *Journal of African Economies,* 13, no. 1: (2004) 1-43.

[25] Daniel N. Sifuna"The Challenge of Increasing Access and Improving Quality: An Analysis of Universal Primary Education Interventions in Kenya and Tanzania Since the 1970s" in International Review of Education 53, no. 5. http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/27715423?uid=3739936&uid=2&uid=4&uid=3739256&sid=211046158 45351 (accessed October 25, 2014).

[26] Fatuma Chege and Daniel N. Sifuna, "Girl' and Women's Education in Kenya: Gender Perspectives and Trends" 2006 http://www.library.unesco-iicba.org/English/Girls%20Education/All%20Articles/General/Girls%20and%20womens%20education%20in%20Kenya.pdf (accessed, 2015).

greater prioritization of normative barriers to education.[27] It is important to note that of all sources analyzed thus far, Chege and Sifuna's was the only one to explicitly call for normative changes.

Acknowledgement of Intersectionality

In addition to a greater presence of Women and Development and Gender and Development perspectives in the literature on Kenya, there is also a greater acknowledgment of the importance of intersectionality when discussing a girl's ability to gain access to an education. While all authors agree that a student's gender clearly plays a crucial role in determining her ability to go to school, more authors with a focus on Kenya also acknowledge other aspects of identity which impact their ability to receive an education. The majority of scholars focus on a girl's geographic location within Kenya or her socio-economic status. As with other barriers to education, it is again important to remember that these two barriers are deeply connected and occur in conjunction with one another.

Daniel Sifuna argues that the benefits brought forth from girls' receiving an education in Kenya are most severely felt by the poor.[28] Although he does not theorize about the intersection of class and gender in the context of girls' education in Africa, Sifuna discusses that it is often the poor girls living in rural and remote areas that struggle gaining access to an education. Therefore, when access to education increased for girls in Kenya, the changes resulting from the access will be most severe for the poor in Kenya.

However, Sifuna is not alone in his analysis of the situation for poor girls in Kenya. Other studies look at the affects of both the socioeconomic status of a girl's family and their location finding that both factors are hugely influential in predicting whether or not a girl will enter school.[29] Other works take this analysis a step further to not only discuss the location

[27] Ibid, 137.
[28] Ibid.
[29] "Academic Achievement of girls in rural schools in Kenya," Mungai, A.M., Adelphi Univeristy New York.

and socioeconomic status of a girl, but her ethnicity. One study focused specifically on the

Maasai within Kenya to analyze the ways in which other barriers affect them differently.[30] As

this research identifies the unique struggles Maasai girls face when trying to go to school, it is

not surprising that organizations are taking note. Today, there are NGOs operating in Kenya

for girls' education which are solely dedicated to the Maasai. In fact, one of the NGOs

interviewed for this study, the Maasai Girls' Education Fund, focuses on girls' and women's

empowerment within the Maasai.

Final Thoughts

The literature discussing girls' education on both the macro and micro level offers

important insights for policymakers and organizations. While each academic provides a

unique discussion of this issue, it is important that the Kenyan Government, the UN, and

NGOs working on girls' education initiatives in Kenya take note of some of the key themes

found throughout the literature. In order to develop an informed policy, the Kenyan

Government, the UN, and NGOs must understand the theories related to their work. In

addition, the UN and NGOs must acknowledge the importance, complexity, and nuance of a

girl's relationship to the barriers to her education as well as the relationship between barriers.

Unfortunately, the World Bank, a key player in development politics, demonstrates

the limitations of policies which derive from Women in Development. As a highly respected

organization, the World Bank has significant influence over the policies of developing

nations. In their *2012 World Development Report* the World Bank argues that gender

inequality persists around the world as well as laying out potential solutions.[31] In a discussion

of improving equitable access to education for girls in developing nations, the report offers

three solutions; make education free, change the economic incentives for educating girls, and

---

[30] Nkoyiai Anastasia and Amanuel A. Teklemariam "Socio-Cultural and Economic Factors Affecting Primary Education of Maasai Girls in Loitokitok Disrict in Kenya," in *The Western Journal of Black Studies, Vol. 35 No. 4.* 2011

[31] "2012 World Development Report: Gender Equality and Development" *The World Bank,* 2011.

build more schools.[32] While it is clear that each of these solutions could help many girls in developing nations, it is also true that none of these solutions seek to challenge the societal constraints placing girls in a disadvantaged position. Rather, these solutions address the side effects of a patriarchal society instead of challenging the society itself. Drawing from the Women in Development perspective, these solutions come from a belief in modernization without interest in nuance.

While it is important that school is affordable and accessible, the danger of simplistic solutions is their inability to account for differing situations. Improving access to education for girls in developing nations is a complex issue and therefore organizations cannot hope to fix the problem with one-dimensional solutions. Because many states look to the World Bank for policy prescriptions, it is important that the prescriptions they present have the ability to create lasting and meaningful change. It is important that the Kenyan government, the UN, and NGOs working on girls' education in Kenya take note of the short comings of the solutions the World Bank presents if they hope to improve their lives of girls in Kenya. As it becomes clear that many academics, the Kenyan Government, the UN, and NGOs identify similar barriers, the differences in approaches to addressing this issue brings about questions of best practice and effective policy.

Research Question

"Given that all actors identify both logisitical and normative barriers to education, what causes the difference in approaches between the Kenyan Government, the UN and NGOs working on girls' education initiatives within Kenya?"

Hypothesis

1). While gender is a significant indicator in whether or not a girl will attend school, other factors of identity play a role.

---

[32] Ibid, 111.

2). Given the impact of the Women in Development theoretical perspective on the World Bank, I expect to see similar approaches from the UN in their work in Kenya.

Methods

<u>Research Background</u>

The foundation for this project comes from a previous research paper, "The True Girl Effect: Girls' Education Initiatives in Africa," which sought to identify barriers girls in Africa face when seeking an education, examine what barriers the UN and NGOs working within Kenya identify, and find if a difference exists between the work of the United Nations and NGOs working within Africa in their efforts on girls' education. It is important to note that this paper did not seek normative answers as to which organization or institution had the "best" or even a "better" method in combating barriers to education. The paper sought no policy implications or recommendations. It simply sought to describe the situation.

I began this process through an inductive method of observing these two types of institutions as the primary contributors to the fight to end barriers to education. However, with this observation came another observation that these two institutions implemented different means of combating barriers to education. I wanted to see if my observations had any backing or truth to them. What I found through an analysis of the literature, analysis of websites and documents of the UN and NGOs, and a few interviews with representatives from the UN and NGOs, was that these two institutions do focus on different barriers when trying to affect change. This finding then allowed me to ask another question; why?

<u>Current Research</u>

Unlike my previous study which looked at girls' education initiatives in Africa at large, for this project I am conducting research on a single country. In order to avoid sweeping generalizations about the situation of girls and women in Africa as well as in order

to appreciate the nuance of the situation, I felt it was important to focus down my study to one particular country. I chose to study Kenya because I had gained more contacts in that country than in any other during my previous research. While I still feel it is important to focus my research as much as I can, for my literature review, in order to understand the totality of the conversation surrounding girls' education, I am looking at work which focuses on girls' education in developing nations on a macro level as well as the work which looks specifically at Kenya. Additionally, I look at the theoretical framework shaping the academic discussions of girls' education, namely the following theories: Women in Development, Women and Development, and Gender and Development.

After obtaining IRB approval, I sent emails to UN agencies and NGOs working within Kenya. I found these organizations through searches on the internet and then looked for partners of the organizations I found. In order to be considered, an organization needed to have worked in Kenya specifically on girls' education. Additionally I asked each respondent if they could suggest organizations or individuals I should contact for my study. From these correspondences, I have collected four interviews from representatives of agencies working on girls' education within Kenya. The interviews have been both verbal and over email correspondence, with verbal interviews lasting between 20 and 30 minutes. I then transcribe the verbal interviews in order to ensure the complete accuracy of any and all quotes cited in the final piece.

I asked each respondent the same questions relatively speaking. Aside from some moderate word changes, each respondent was asked between eight to ten questions about the work of their organization, the limitations they face, and the difficulties they have when trying to affect change. Below is a list of the questions each respondent was asked:

1. How does the work of Dining for Women differ from that of the UN or other NGOs working on girls' empowerment and education within Kenya?

2. What would you identify as the largest problem your organization faces when trying to effect change?

3. When selecting programs to fund, what are the things you are looking for? What do you believe is most important in these programs? What benefits come from these partnerships? How do you decide which organizations to partner with?

4. Do you ever face criticism of interfering with culture or sovereignty? Is that a concern when trying to effect change?

5. What would you identify as the greatest restriction your organization faces?

6. In your experience are those organizations which were founded in the country in which they work more or less effective than those which are international?

7. What rules or regulations, if any, must you abide by when conducting your work?

8. What would you say is your organization's biggest advantage when trying to affect change?

9. Do you know of anyone else either from your organization or another working on girls' education in Kenya that might provide me with more insight?

Case Study

<u>The Situation</u>

Historical Review

As a former British colony, it is clear colonization and the influence of the British deeply affected the education system in Kenya. First colonized by the British in 1895, Kenya did not gain independence until in 1963.[33] In order to gain greater control over the colony, the British quickly set up missionary schools in order to influence younger generations.[34] These schools sought to assimilate children into a European lifestyle by breaking all of their ties with their tradition, history, and culture. While these schools sought to alienate the Kenyan population as well as assimilate them, various communities within Kenya resisted the schools

---

[33] "Kenya Profile- Timline" BBC http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13682176 (accessed April, 2015).

[34] Sékène Diouf, "The Cultural Resistance to Missionary Schools in Kenya: A Study of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's The River Between and A Grain Of Wheat." *Journal Of Pan African Studies* 7, no. 7 (December 2014): 26-35. *Social Sciences Full Text (H.W. Wilson)*, EBSCO*host* (accessed March 30, 2015).

and instead opened their own schools as an alternative with greater understanding and respect for the Kenyan culture.[35]

Although missions had significant influence in the country, it was not until 1911 that a department of education came about in Kenya to formally organize these institutions.[36] However, because of the lack of leadership from the British government in organizing the education system, many religious organizations gained significant power and influence even forming their own educational boards within Kenya.[37] It is clear, that these religious organizations generated resentment and distrust among the Kenyan people that continues on into today. The effects of colonial educational systems are felt in modern Kenya. Due to the lack of respect and open oppression of many rural communities in Kenya, many today still feel the pressure of colonial rule.[38] With lessons from these schools carried down through generations, many rural communities, years after Kenya's proclamation of independence, feel they are awaiting "true freedom" from the colonial influence.[39]

As academics, institutions, and states begin to acknowledge the importance of an educated population, states attempt new and innovative means to achieve universal education. According to the UN, from 2006 to 2012 the Kenyan government spent 6.7 percent of their GDP on education. As shown in the chart, "Net Enrollment Rates," this expenditure had an impact in improving enrollment rates across Kenya. However, it is also clear that this impact is not equally felt across Kenya with low income children facing lower enrollment rates. In 2003, in an effort to boost enrollment rates, Kenya abolished primary school fees. As expected, the lack of fees caused a huge increase in enrollment, with approximately 1.3

---

[35] Ibid.

[36] Evanson N. Wamagatta, "Changes of Government Policies Towards Mission Education in Colonial Kenya and Their Effects on the Missions: The Case of the Gospel Missionary Society." *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 2008., 3, *JSTOR Journals*, EBSCO*host* (accessed March 30, 2015).

[37] Ibid.

[38] Lang'at, Kiprono. "Deconstructing Neo-Colonialism and Liberalism: Kenya and the NGOs--A Discourse Analysis." *International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives* 9, no. 2 (January 1, 2008): 57-68. *ERIC*, EBSCO*host* (accessed March 30, 2015).

[39] Ibid.

million students entering primary schools. This also helped Kenya to reach gender parity in primary school with 82 percent of boys enrolled and 83 percent of girls enrolled. While this accomplishment is significant, there is a drastic drop in enrollment rates for secondary school with 51 percent of boys and 48 percent of girls enrolled. It is important to note that these numbers come from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics and do reflect attendance rates or dropout rates.[40]

Graph[41]
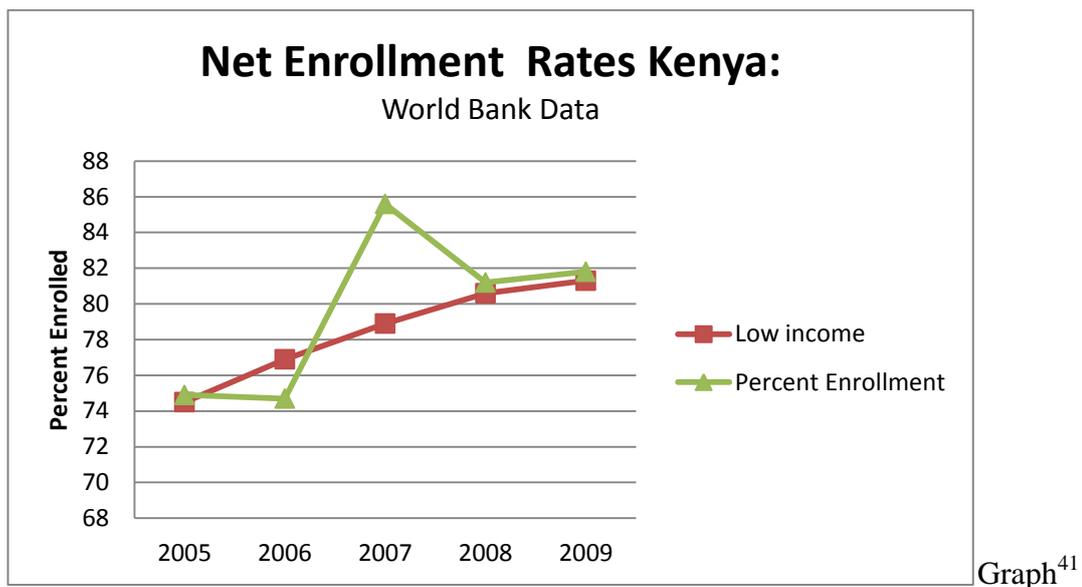
Although these numbers show near parity, it still means that over half of girls are not enrolled in secondary school. Further, 1.7 million children remain not enrolled in school within Kenya.[42] The disparities between those students enrolled in school versus those who are not highlight further divisions within the Kenyan society. Frequently, those children living in more rural areas are less likely to attend schools than those living in metropolitan areas. Unfortunately, of those 1.7 million children, the majority are girls, and fewer than one in five girls from rural areas enrolled in school.[43] Class and socioeconomic status are high

---

[40] "World Development Indicators: Metadata" The World DataBank (accessed April, 2015) http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/reports/metadataview.aspx

[41] "Data: School enrollment, primary (%net)" The World Bank (accessed April 2015) http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.NENR/countries/KE-XM?display=graph

[42] Michael Fleshman, "Giant Steps for Kenya's Schools," *Africa Renewal,* July 2005, accessed December 2014, http://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/july-2005/giant-step-kenya%E2%80%99s-schools

[43] Ibid.

indicators of whether a child will be enrolled in school and what type of school they will attend if they are enrolled. According to a study conducted by Brookings, children of more affluent families dropped out of Kenya's public school system to attend private schools due to an influx of poorer children into public primary schools.[44] This shift in enrollment created a class divide within Kenya between the poor attending overcrowded schools and the rich attending private school. Consequently, an initiative which sought to level the playing field for poor students created further divides in class.

Further, the Kenyan government's implementation furthers the problem of institutions addressing only one side of a problem. While poverty and the inability to afford schooling effects many children in Kenya, the idea that the solution is as simple as making schooling free falls in line with the Women in Development theory making it limited in its ability to succeed. Unfortunately, it is likely the Kenyan government developed this initiative based off the recommendations of the World Bank which argues that making school free does improve gender parity. While this initiative clearly impacted many children in Kenya, it does not address the structural and societal barriers which keep young girls oppressed and out of school. Rather than challenging patriarchy or classism, the Kenyan government simplified the issue down to a dialogue of affordability.

Demographics

As noted in the literature surrounding girls' education in Kenya, other factors outside of gender and socioeconomic status prove key in predicting whether or not a girl will receive an education. Therefore, it is not only important to understand the situation of girl's enrollment rates in schools, it is also important to understand the ethnic, religious, class, and geographical demographics of Kenya in order to understand the multiple hierarchies which

---

[44] Tessa Bold, Mwangi Kimenyi, Germano Mwabu, and Justin Sandefur, "Why Did Abolishing Fees not Increase Public School Enrollment in Kenya?" *Africa Growth Initiative at Brookings,* January 2013, accessed February, 2015 http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2013/1/education%20kenya%20kimenyi/01%20education%20kenya%20kimenyi.pdf

exists in the country. Through an understanding of the population demographics, the discussion of the works of the UN and NGOs working on girls' education initiatives will be set in a context of intersectionality.

Currently Kenya has a population of just over 45 million people. Of these 45 million, 82.5 percent practice Christianity making it the major religion of the country.[45] The second most prominent religious affiliation is Muslim with 11.1 percent of the population identified as practicing.[46] The clear minority are those who identify as "traditionalists" with only 1.6 percent of the population identified as fitting into that group. As a country, Kenya has a relatively young population with a median age of only 19.1 years old.[47] With an average life expectancy of only 63.52 years and an average of 3.54 children per woman, it is not surprising that the majority of the population falls into the 0-14 age range.

As academics agree that those girls living in rural areas of Kenya face additional barriers to education, it is interesting to note that only 24 percent of Kenya's total population lives in urban areas. Transportation limitations are particularly taxing for those girls living in rural areas as poor roads and infrastructure increase the difficulty for a girl to get to a school. Therefore, it is interesting to note that while Kenya has 11,189 km of paved roads it has 149,689 km of unpaved roads.[48] With such a stark contrast in the number of paved versus unpaved roads, it is clear that issues of transportation are likely to impact many girls living in rural areas.

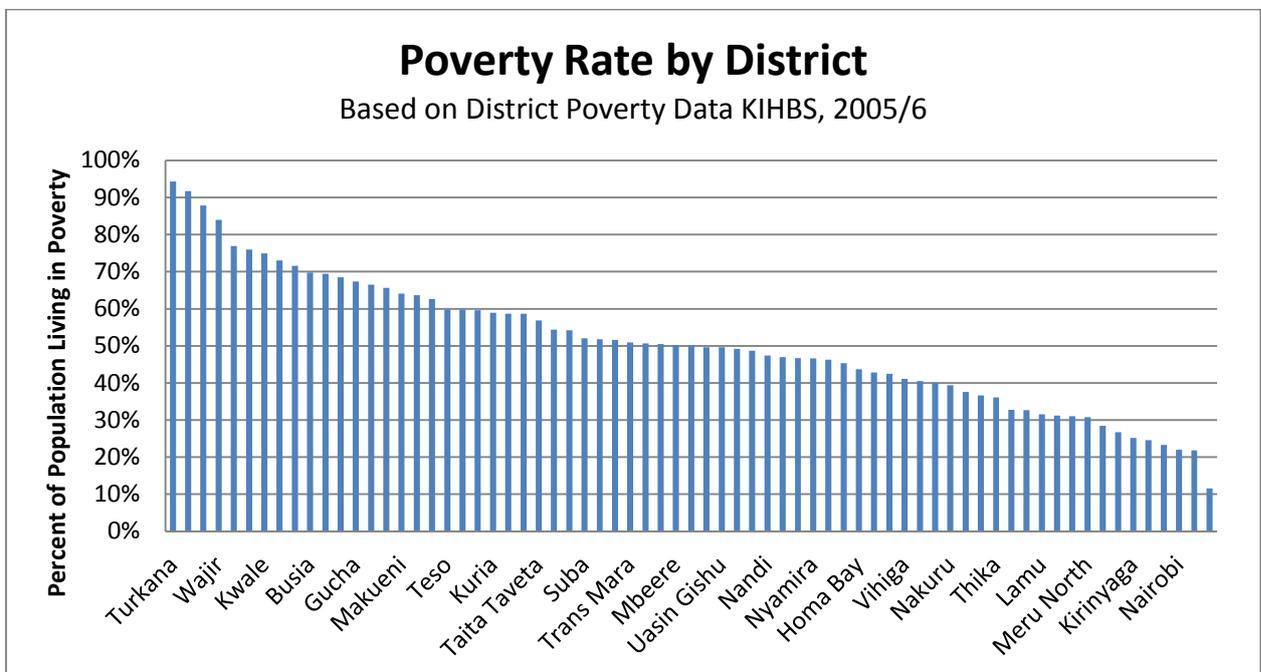[45] "Kenya: People and Society," *CIA World Fact Book.* June, 2014. (accessed March, 2015). https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ke.html
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.

Urban vs. Rural Divide

Image: Map of Kenya and its regions. [49]

Graph: Poverty Rate by District in Kenya[50]

---

[49] "Kenya: Geography," Google Sites https://sites.google.com/site/learnaboutkenya/geography
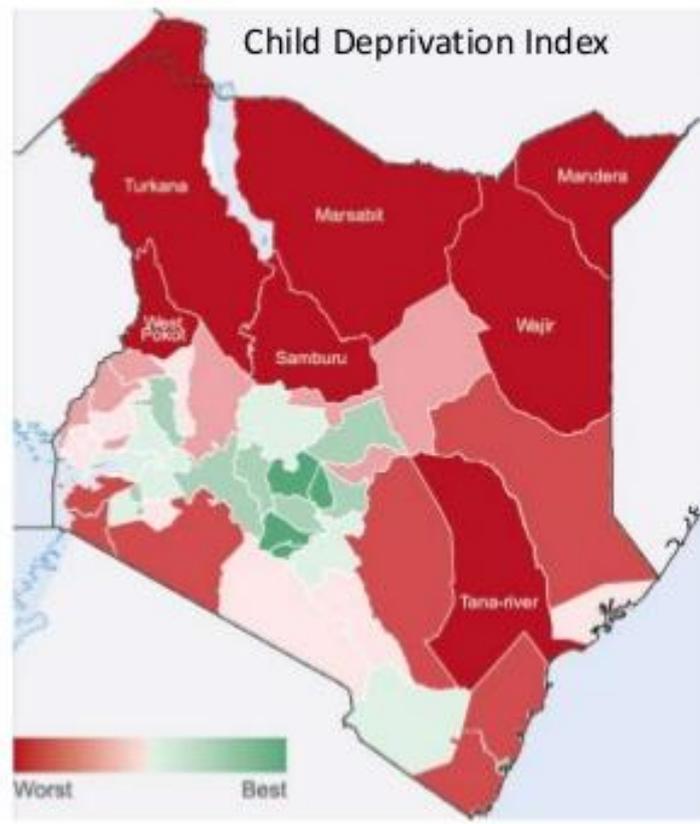
Image: Map of Kenya showing child deprivation in various regions.[51]

The map above shows the deprivation index for children living in Kenya. As is evident from this map, various regions and areas of Kenya face differing levels of depravity. It is understandable that in those areas which have the worst cases of deprivation that the barriers to education for girls are greater and more frequent.

---

[50] [50] "Growing Up in Kenya: Rural Schooling and Girls," Mungai, Anne M. Peter Lang Publisher Inc. New York. 2002. 34.

[51] "Kenya: Overview" *UNICEF.* (Accessed March, 2015) http://www.unicef.org/kenya/overview_4616.html

Urban and Rural School-Enrollment Rates for Kenyan Children Ages 6-13, Selected Years[52]

Percent
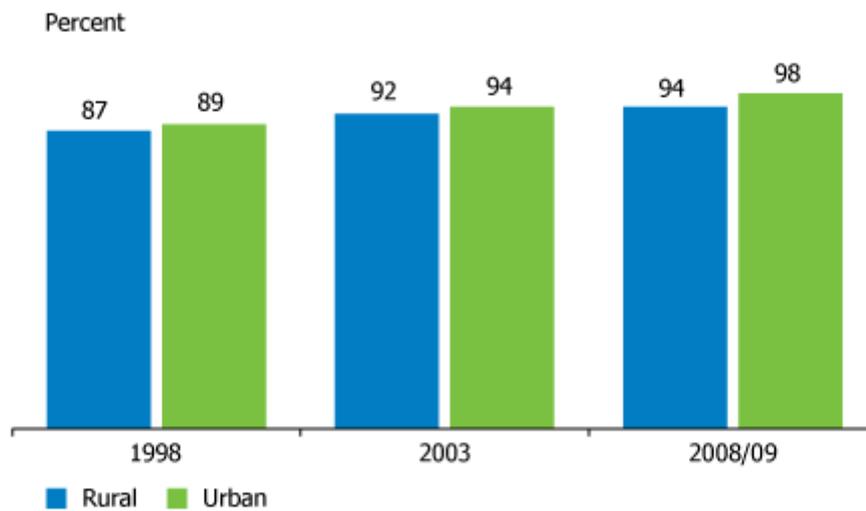
School Enrollment Rates for Kenyan Children Age 6, by Region[53]

Percent

---
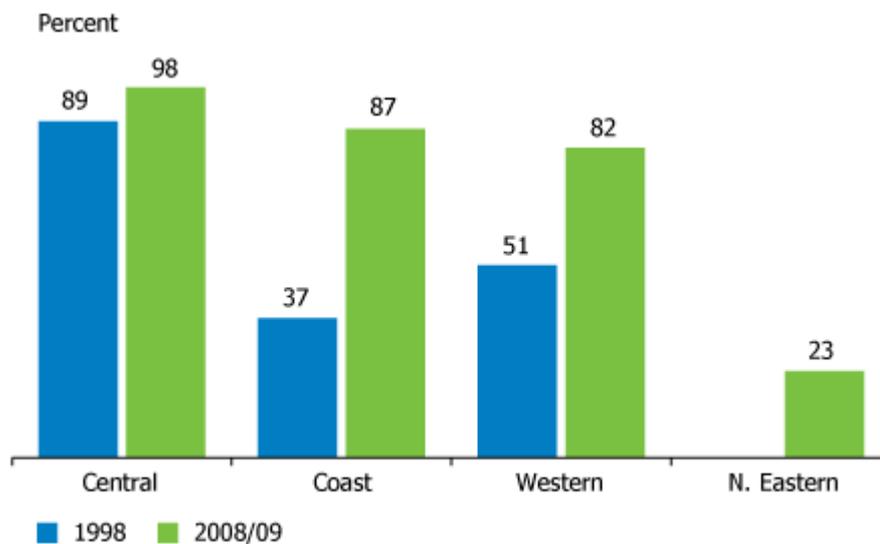
[52] Bernard Onyango, "Some Kenyan Children Are Not in School Despite Free Primary Education," *Population Reference Bureau,* April 2003, accessed February, 2015
http://www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2013/kenya-school-education.aspx .
[53] Ibid.

Work of International Organizations in Kenya

UNICEF is the lead agency for the United National Girl's Education Imitative (UNGEI), a partnership of organizations launched in 2000 to address girls' access to education.[54] Within Kenya, UNICEF works to identify multiple barriers to girls' education such as an inability to pay for school and a hostile learning environment within the classroom. Partnering with other international organizations such as the World Bank, UNICEF began the "child-friendly education" framework which seeks to remove stereotypes and sexist curricula.[55] While this acknowledgment of the negative effects of a sexist learning environment is important, a significant amount of their work focuses on logistical barriers to education. In a partnership with the African Girl's Education Initiative, UNICEF provided sanitary products, beds, mattresses, sheets, and mosquito nets to girls seeking an education.[56] While this initiative provides much needed supplies to many girls in Kenya, there is still a greater need for initiatives focused on normative barriers to education. Additionally, there is a need for initiatives focused on normative barriers before a girl enters school.

Final Thoughts

While these enrollment rates represent a multitude of problems, the gender divide in education is critically important to understanding this issue. Although it is true that poverty, lack of infrastructure, lack of basic health care, and violence affect a children's ability to attend school, these problems affect girls living in these situations differently than their male counterparts. While many children living in rural areas face some common struggles, girls face the additional challenge of societal pressures, norms, and expectations of girls to help with housework, marry, and have children. Therefore, while we cannot discount other factors

---

[54] "Girls education and gender equality," *UNICEF.* (accessed April, 2015) http://www.unicef.org/esaro/5481_girls_education.html

[55] Ibid.

[56] Daisy Serem "UNICEF-supported initiative aims to make girls' education a priority in Kenya," *UNICEF.* 11 November, 2011. (accessed April, 2015) http://www.unicef.org/education/kenya_60497.html

at play, it would be an egregious oversight to not take gender into account in a discussion of the historical context and current situation of Kenya's education system.

Description of Interviewees and Analysis of Responses
  UNHCR

   UNHCR or the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established in 1950 for the purpose of "lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide."[57] UNHCR within Kenya primarily serves refugees fleeing Sough Sudan after the Kenyan government decided to grant refugee status to all who fled the conflict.[58] With an annual budget of US$5.3 billion, primarily funded through voluntary contributions, UNHCR has the largest budget of all the organizations looked at for this study.[59]

   I was able to reconnect with the same UNHCR representative I spoke with for my previous study. This representative lived and worked in Nairobi, Kenya for many years. Within her interview, the representative identified two main obstacles to implementing change: the UN's budget cycle and entrenched cultural attitudes. She explained that each year the agency must re-apply for funding. Because UNHCR primarily deals with crisis situation, she explained that this process is often difficult. She said the offices try to gauge the figure through the number of refugees in the camp, what the refugee's expected departure date is, identify problems found in the camp in the previous year, and some programs they would like to add. This proposal then goes up through many levels of analysis before it is ultimately decided what the budget will be. With so many steps and complications it is not surprising that the representative identified this cycle as a barrier to affecting change.

---

[57] "What We Do", UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency. 2015. http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646cbf.html
[58] "2015 UNHCR country operations profile- Kenya", UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency. 2015. http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e483a16.html
[59] "Financial Figures," UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency. 2015. http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c1a.html

However, most interesting in this interview was the respondent's concern with cultural relativism within UNHCR. As the representative identified "entrenched cultural norms" as the second barrier to affecting change, I found it interesting that she then went on to say that the inability of fellow employees to combat these barriers was equally as frustrating. Although she believed a clear distinction exists between cultural norms and human rights violations, she said some other employees did not see situations in the same way. She said some people are hesitant to approach certain issues, instead excusing them. When I followed up with her to ask if the UN provides definitions to draw a distinction, she asked to not be directly quoted on the topic. From this, it is clear that there is not a clear line within the UN on the distinction between cultural norms and human rights violations, and there is a level of discomfort in discussing the topic.

Aside from these barriers to implementing change, the representative offered important insight into the need for partnerships with the UN and NGOs. She explained that working with NGOs has enormous benefits for UNHCR. First, she said that many NGOs are able to bring in a level of expertise that UNHCR is simply not qualified to offer. Whether is be medical services, counseling, or training, she said quite plainly, "It's not realistic to think that we could be experts at absolutely everything involved in serving refugees." Further, she explained that NGOs offer benefits to UNHCR in their language abilities, understanding of local governments, and ability to set up quickly and act immediately.

Dining for Women

Dining for Women is a grant-raising organization which supports programs in many countries working to support girls' education and empowerment. I became interested in this organization once I saw they previously supported numerous programs in Kenya. I was able to speak with a high level representative from the organization who is also a professor of gender studies. Dining for Women began after its founder came up with the idea for a

birthday party. She asked that instead of going out to eat that her friends join her at her house with a potluck dish and donate the money they would have spent on a meal out to a program supporting girls in developing nations. The idea caught on, and today Dining for Women has 435 chapters around the US. Each year, a selection committee decides which programs they will try to raise funds for. They only work with organizations which have a US non-profit designation to ensure the security of their grant. Further, they only give to organizations with an operating budget of $100,000 or more.

From this interview, the idea of the importance of lived experience came out with the respondent. She said she was reluctant to the idea of the UN, IMF, or World Bank as 'imperialistic' organizations and believed those who made those accusations did not have the backing to prove it. When I asked her why she felt this way, she said she felt this way because she grew up in a developing nation and was able to experience the work of these organizations on the other side. When I asked if her lived experience of growing up in a developing nation informed her work within Dining for Women, she said it did, especially in the selection process for programs. Since she did not see the UN or other similar institutions as imperialistic, I asked if she ever experienced criticism against Dining for Women for interfering with culture. She said they did not because they never acted without being asked for something very specific first from within the culture.

When asked if the organization had ever faced criticism for interfering in culture the representative responded by saying they had not because they only give to people who are asking for money. In this sense the organization does not act until explicitly asked to do so, and even then there is a specific purpose and designation for the money they provide. Because of the inherent set up of Dining for Women they do not face the same critiques as the UN and other organizations of interfering with culture. Additionally, the representative identified Dining for Women's largest advantage as where they chose to place their

resources. Throughout the interview she explained the level of care they take before deciding whether or not a program will receive a grant. She said because of this care they have seen the results which are not only positive but sustainable.

Circle of Sisterhood

Circle of Sisterhood is another grant-raising organization which supports programs that remove barriers to girls' education. What makes them unique is they raise most of their money from sororities within the US. The representative I spoke with said that the organization's ability to connect with US-based sororities proved a huge benefit as it means their base is largely educated and sympathetic to the cause. The representative I interviewed was an employee of the organization. As a relatively small organization with only two part-time staff, the organization primarily relies on volunteer work.

In a similar sentiment as the representative from Dining for Women, this representative said the organization had not experienced any criticism for interfering in culture because they only provide grants to those who ask for them. However, unlike the representative from Dining for Women this representative said she believed organizations working on the ground within their own country are hugely effective in implementing change. While she acknowledged her belief may just be because of a few outstanding NGOs she had experienced, she still said she thought they were effective.

Maasai Girls' Education Fund

Finally, I interviewed a representative from the Maasai Girls' Education Fund. This organization is unique in both the community it serves as well as its methods for implementing change. Serving the Maasai within Kenya, the organization provides scholarships for girls to attend schools, provides business training for women in the community, and conducts workshops for children and adults on topics such as safe sex, FGM,

and child marriage. With offices in both the US and Nairobi, the organization is able to walk a careful line of addressing normative barriers while respecting culture.

In the interview, the respondent explained that the organization's founder was concerned about interfering in culture and therefore spent significant time building a relationship and base in Kenya. Because of the thought that went into ensuring respect for the culture, the Maasai Girls' Education Fund was able to create an office in Nairobi fully staffed with Kenyans and build a relationship with the Maasai. This relationship is vitally important to the work of the Maasai Girls' Education Fund because every workshop is led by a Maasai community member. As the respondent pointed out, the US side is simply a support for the work done in Kenya. The work and success of this organization highlights the importance of working from within a community in order to generate change. The unique quality of the programs also shows the importance of respecting culture while still addressing normative barriers.

She also said that because of this respect for culture and need to include members of the community, the organization had not faced any criticisms for interfering in culture or being imperialistic. However, she said her organization is not unique in some of its practices. She explained that within the community of NGOs working on girls' education, there is a greater push for long-term sustainable solutions rather than for quick fixes to problems. She also mentioned a push to approach the problem in a more "holistic" way. This approach to the problem of girls' education in Kenya suggests and informed understanding of both the theory surrounding the topic and the academic insight.

Because of this new push within these communities, the representative echoed the belief of the representative from UNHCR that partnerships are not only beneficial but largely necessary. She explained that partnerships not only entail working on programs or initiatives together, but also include information sharing and resource support. This insight has

enormous policy implications as it shows both the need for partnerships and the ways in which those partnerships can be carried out.

Barriers to Education: Logistical vs. Normative: Blockades, Hurdles, and Headwinds

While many academics are able and willing to identify barriers to education for girls within Africa, none categorize these barriers. Due to this lack of organization in the discussion of barriers to education, the conversation has been unable to make many connections and provide further insight. Therefore, for "The True Girl Effect: Girls' Education Initiatives in Africa," I chose to group these barriers into two categories: logistical and normative. I will continue to use these categories in my current study as I found them valuable in my organization, analysis, and understanding.

It is important to note that the distinction made between normative and logistical barriers is not meant to suggest that the two types of barriers exist mutually exclusive of one another or that they occur within a vacuum void of other factors such as poverty or malnutrition. In reality, it is often a combination of both which present barriers to girls within Africa seeking an education. It is not simply that the nearest school is many miles away; it is that she faces high threat of sexual assault or rape on her route to that same school. It is not simply that families do not have resources to pay for a uniform for a daughter; it is that many families are hesitant to invest resources in their daughters that do not increase their chances of marriage. In short, the distinction is not meant to create or imply a simplified vision of the problem. Rather, the distinction is meant to facilitate discussion of the issue in an organized and understandable way.

Logistical Barriers:

Logistical barriers are those which are tangible, such as infrastructure, school supplies, capital, etc. Discussions of logistical barriers will often be in terms of a girl's

proximity to a school. For example, if the school does not exist in her town or village, a girl cannot attend. The solution to many logistical barriers is to increase funding from the state, the UN, or donor nations which help to build more schools, make improvements to ones which already exist, or help families pay school fees who could not afford them otherwise. Many academics as well as the UN are more willing to identify and prescribe solutions to logistical barriers to education. Although, it is not clear exactly why this is, I hypothesize that is the result of post-colonial thought which holds deeper respect for national and cultural sovereignty.

Normative Barriers:

Conversely, normative barriers are not tangible. Further, they are often more entrenched and accepted by societies and therefore, often difficult to combat. Examples of these barriers include societal norms, religious beliefs, gender roles and expectations, etc. Normative barriers, while not as concrete as logistical issues, present real obstacles for girls in developing nations as well as for the UN and NGOs in the implementation of solutions (Shanti Uganda). While people are more willing to accept the building of a school near their home, they may be less willing to accept a shift in gender roles or societal expectations of different genders. It was found that while both the UN and NGOs working within Africa identify normative barriers to education, the UN is less likely to prescribe solutions to such normative barriers while NGOs were more willing to try and combat normative barriers.

Blockades, Hurdles, and Headwinds

While the distinction between normative and logistical barriers is useful I find that even this distinction, does not go quite far enough in drawing distinctions between the barriers girls face when trying to receive an education. Although each girl's situation differs in the types of barriers she faces, on the aggregate there appear to be barriers which are more difficult to combat than others in both the normative and logistical categories. In order to

develop a more organized approach to identifying the various levels of barriers I will refer to them as blockades, hurdles, and headwinds in descending order of greatest level of difficulty to overcome to least level of difficulty. For the purposes of this study, "difficulty" will be defined as the amount of resources and level of change needed to implement a solution to a particular barrier.

Blockades

With this definition in mind, blockades will refer to those barriers to education which are the hardest for girls and organizations to overcome in terms of the resources necessary and the amount of change required to implement a solution. Based on my research, I find that there are three major blockades which prevent girls' from receiving an education in Kenya; beliefs of parents, poverty, and national crisis or disaster. While this list is certainly not all encompassing, it does provide examples of the greatest barriers girls' in Kenya face when trying to enter school. It is also important to keep in mind that just as with the divide between logistical and normative barriers, these barriers often are interconnected with one affecting the other and vice versa.

However, of each of these blockades, I find that the beliefs of a girl's parents are the most difficult barrier to overcome. In her book *Growing up in Kenya,* author Anne Mungai supports this claim stating "Stereotypes linked to the interpretation of cultural beliefs and practices regarding education and the place of women in society constitute the basis for discrimination against females in education."[60] As Mungai says, perceptions and beliefs about education girls is the basis of barriers preventing girls from entering school. Further, it is often left to the parents of a girl to decide whether or not she is educated and therefore, the beliefs and perceptions of the parents are arguably the most important indicator of whether or not a girl will be able to enter school. If a girl's parents believe that girls are not as capable as

---

[60] Anne M. Mungai "Growing Up in Kenya: Rural Schooling and Girls," Peter Lang Publisher Inc. New York. 2002.

boys academically or simply believe it is not right or proper for a girl to go to school, that girls will not go to school.

Unfortunately, within Kenya many parents believe that it makes more economic sense to educate their sons versus rather than their daughter. Within Kenya, marriage practices dictate that many parents must pay a bride price and that once a girl is married she becomes a member of her husband's family.[61] Because of this practice, parents are less likely to invest financially into their daughters as they are seen as only temporary members of a family. This problem is exacerbated by wide spread poverty within Kenya. According to UNICEF, 46 percent of Kenya's population lives below the poverty line.[62] Therefore, when parents have little resources to dedicate to their children, they are often forced to prioritize one child over another. As systemic poverty is a problem which has no clear solution, it is reasonable to argue the poverty plaguing Kenya is a blockade to girls' education.

Finally, I find that crisis situations create blockades for girls trying to go to school. For many people, particularly those living in a developing nation, their top priority must be their survival. In moments of crisis, the concern is not a child's ability to attend school five days a week but whether or not a family can feed itself or provide shelter for their children. In my interview with a representative from the Maasai Girls Education Fund, the respondent described a similar situation taking place within Kenya. She said it has been difficult for the organization to reach out to the Maasai for a few months due to an on-going draught in the area. She explained that because the Maasai rely on natural methods to sustain them, they must move to find water when it becomes scarce. Because of their recent mobility and concern about finding water, the organization has not been able to connect with them as frequently as they would like.

---

[61] Ibid, 32.
[62] "Kenya at a Glance" UNICEF, 2009 (accessed March, 2015)
http://www.unicef.org/kenya/overview_4616.html

Hurdles

While the beliefs or a girl's parents can determine whether or not she enters school, the culture of the school can also determine not only if a girl enrolls in the school, but whether or not she stays once she is in. Beliefs and attitudes of teachers on the ability of their female students can greatly influence a girl's desire to remain in school. However, it is not simply the internal culture of a school which affects a girl's ability to continue her education. Poor infrastructure proves a critical barrier for girls to overcome. Whether the roads leading to a school are in poor condition or the school itself is structurally unsound, poor infrastructure can determine whether or not a girl will receive an education. Because both of these barriers do not require as much effort as the blockades discussed earlier, but still present serious problems for those organizations trying to affect change, they will be defined as hurdles.

Unlike blockades, hurdles may not prevent girls from entering school, but they may create an environment within a school that forces the girl to drop out. For many girls this discouragement comes in the form of their teacher's bias. In Kenya, most schools do not create a supportive environment for girls.[63] Teachers do not encourage girls, prefer to call on boys, and believe boys are "naturally" better a certain subjects than girls. Because of this environment, many girls decide to drop out.

Headwinds

I often explain that when it comes to providing solutions for girls' education initiatives, sometimes it is as simple as writing a check. While I do not wish to minimize the importance of certain types of barriers, it is apparent that while some barriers come in the form of blockades proving hugely difficult to overcome, others often come down to whether or not someone is willing to write a check or provide the resources necessary to allow a girl

access to a school. It is because of the relative low amount of effort necessary to implement a solution to these types of problems that I will refer to them as headwinds. I think of these barriers as the result of a missing piece to a puzzle rather than a systematic or systemic problem to overcome. Although I acknowledge that it can often take a significant amount of work to convince someone to write that necessary check, once the money is in place change is soon to follow.

I primarily think of two examples of barriers when I think of headwinds; a lack of electricity and a lack of sanitary products. For many girls growing up in rural Kenya, electricity is not a luxury their families can afford. Further, their families cannot afford for any child to not contribute to the household. Therefore, many girls are given chores and tasks to do around the house. If a girl is able to go to school the necessity for her completion of her chores does not disappear. Therefore, she is often forced to do them when she returns home from school. Unfortunately, because of a lack of electricity once she finishes her chores there is not enough sunlight to allow her to finish her homework. The girl falls behind and eventually drops out of school. A donation of kerosene lamps solved a similar situation in another country. The lamps allowed the girls to work past sundown and complete their homework, which in turn allowed them to remain in school.

My second example of a headwind is a lack of access to sanitary products. Similar to the situation of a girl living without electricity, for many girls living in poverty sanitary products are another luxury their families simply cannot afford. Therefore, it is often the case that when a girl is menstruating she cannot attend school. When she cannot attend school for a week every month, she begins to fall behind and eventually drops out of school. Again, there is a missing piece to the puzzle that when introduced allows a girl to continue her schooling even during the weeks she is menstruating. Unfortunately, it is seldom that a girl faces a singular barrier to her education. However, when it is the case that all that is missing

is her ability to see her homework past sundown or go to school while she is menstruating, there are simple solutions which require little effort to implement. Therefore, for both of these cases, I am confident defining them as headwinds.

Synopsis of Findings

Due to perceptions of an "outsider" status, the UN is less likely than NGOs to confront normative barriers.

I find from both my previous and current research that Western academics and the UN do not pay enough attention to normative barriers. While academics and the UN will acknowledge the importance of normative barriers, they rarely suggest a means to combat these barriers. Based on my interviews, I find there is a discomfort among these actors of interfering in another culture which is not their own because of a perception of an 'outsider' status. In the case of the UN I find its structure as an inherently international, diverse body makes it careful about charges of cultural imperialism. As an organization comprised of many states representing a diversity of cultures and beliefs, the UN is less able to address the issue of changing domestic cultural norms in developing countries.

In comparison, the internal structures of NGOs, particularly national NGOs is often far more homogenous in its demographic makeup. This is not to suggest that NGOs do not face problems of cultural relativism. NGOs originating in a country other than the one in which they are implementing change constantly confront the issue of cultural relativism, especially if they try to implement normative change. These organizations work to ensure they are not seen as or act in a way that would make them appear imperialistic. For example, in an interview with a representative from the Maasai Girls' Education fund, the respondent said that the organization, which was started by an American woman, was always aware of their position as a western institution seeking to address cultural norms within the Maasai. In

order to lessen the impact of "western ideals" being imposed on the Maasai, the organization included the Maasai in their work.

However, within this discussion the distinction between cultural relativism and cultural imperialism must be clear. When the UN struggles with cultural relativism, they struggle to define something as a problem because they see it as a part of a culture outside of their own. From an outsider perspective certain traditions or practices may be misconstrued as wrong or immoral, when for people from within the culture, the practice is empowering or meaningful. Often organizations struggle with cultural relativism as they do not want to appear as culturally imperialistic or as an entity which would impose their culture and ideals onto another. Therefore, organizations often use arguments of cultural relativism to avoid the label of cultural imperialism.

While the UN and many Western academics face discomfort when confronted with normative barriers to education, NGOs are more able to confront these barriers in one of two ways; acknowledging problems with domestic cultural norms and listening to the needs of the people within the country or ignoring issues of cultural relativism and simply implementing the change they believe is necessary. Each method has its benefits and drawbacks for NGOs, the later leaves NGOs far more susceptible to criticism. However, even with this dilemma, NGOs face a far easier terrain in affecting normative change than the UN.

However, this dilemma is virtually nonexistent for national NGOs. NGOs affecting change in their state of origin are more comfortable confronting cultural problems because the culture they are trying to change is their own and they feel as if they have more authority to speak to the problems within the culture. Again, I do not want to imply that national NGOs do not face criticisms simply because they are affecting change within their own country.

Many NGOs are often criticized for promoting western ideals within their country when they advocate for girls' education.[64]

There is a need for greater partnerships between the UN and NGOs.

While the UN struggles with issues of cultural relativism, NGOs are more able and willing to combat normative barriers to education. In my each of my interviews, I asked the respondents if they work in partnerships. The representative from the UN answered that UNHCR often works in partnerships with NGOs which are instrumental to effecting change within a country. The representative specifically identified national NGOs' ability to speak the language of the community they are serving, their understanding of laws and the inner workings of the government, and their ability set up quickly. The representative from the Maasai Girls' Education Fund repeated this sentiment in her interview that partnerships are hugely helpful in their work. While the representative said that partnerships among NGOs working within Kenya on girls' education are strong, she believed her organization would have much to gain from a partnership with the UN.

In an interview with a UN representative working in Kenya I was told about an example of the sort of partnership the representative from the Maasai Girls' Education fund thought would be useful. In my interview I learned about UNHCR's partnership with Heshima Kenya a national NGO based in Nairobi. Heshima Kenya works to not only educate girls, but to provide them with the skills necessary to be economically independent. Because Heshima Kenya is a national NGO with numerous ties in Kenya, the representative from UNHCR said they proved an important partner for UNCHR. For Heshima Kenya, UNHCR was able to provide resources they would not typically have access to. While UNCHR was able to provide logistical solutions to many problems, Heshima Kenya was able to navigate the cultural landscape. Through this partnership each organization was able to utilize its best

---

[64] Greg Mills "The new imperialists" *The New York Times.* November 2, 2007. (accessed April, 2015) http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/02/opinion/02iht-edmills.1.8162200.html?_r=0

qualities while benefitting from the qualities of the other, creating a partnership which made sustainable change.

Concerns about interfering in culture decrease when organizations work from within a community.

One of the most important reasons for greater partnerships between the UN and NGOs working on girls' education in Kenya is because of the NGOs' comfort with combating normative barriers and their ability to navigate culture. While the UN and Western academics feel a discomfort in interfering in normative barriers, NGOs which work from within a community do not feel the same discomfort and are far more willing to address normative barriers. Further, because of the structure of NGOs which allows them to have a more direct focus, they are more able to work from within a community versus the UN which functions on a global level.

The UNHCR representative I spoke with echoed this sentiment in her interview explaining that while NGOs have a greater ability to spend the time and resources to connect with a community, many UN organizations must place their resources where they are most needed and often cannot stay in one area for extended periods of time. She used the example of the Syrian refugee crisis currently taking place. She explained that because the crisis is so enormous and so dire that UNHCR has allocated a significant portion of its resources to confront the conflict there while pulling funds away from other areas. She explained that because the UN is often forced to allocate its resources to the direst situation, they are not able to remain within a community or build a strong connection. Instead, she explained that the UN relies on NGOs which have worked in those areas for years to connect with people in the community.

Urban vs. Rural Divide Primary Predictor

Lastly, I find that one of the key indicators of whether or not a girl will attend school in Kenya is her location within the country. I have found that while Kenya has made great strides in working to achieve gender parity within its schools, significant disparities exist between rural and urban areas of Kenya. Those girls living in more rural areas of Kenya often face additional barriers to education not experienced by their counterparts in urban areas. These barriers are both logistical and normative and present real problems for both the government and organizations working to get girls in school.

Contributions of this Research

Given the importance of this topic, I find that in deciding to study girls' education initiatives in Kenya I not only hold a responsibility to my field, but also to the girls living this reality to contribute insight and knowledge to this conversation with hopes to affect better policies. I believe my primary contributions to the discussion of girls' education within Kenya comes from my analysis of the literature surrounding the topic, my case study and analysis, and finally and most importantly, my qualitative interviews with representatives from the UN and NGOs working on girls' education initiatives within Kenya. Through these three pieces, I hope not only to provide greater insight into the process of helping girls receive an education, I also hope that these insights will help to inform better and more effective policies.

While I find both my literature review and my case study to be useful pieces of my larger study and beneficial to my field, I believe my greatest contribution comes from my qualitative interviews with representatives from the UN and NGOs. From these interviews, I am able to highlight first-hand experience and insight into the workings of these institutions. Throughout my literature review and my case study, I have yet to find a piece which cites interviews with people working in the field. Through these interviews, I hope to add to the

dialogue around girls' education initiatives within Kenya while also gaining insight from these interviews that could inform better initiatives.

Policy Implications

While it is clear the Kenyan government and the UN implement initializes they believe will combat barriers to education for girls in Kenya, it is clear there is need for improvement. Therefore, while this paper primarily serves as a descriptive study, through certain observations, it is clear that there are policy implications which must be addressed. These policy implications primarily focus on the strengths of each institutions with the hope of capitalizing on those strengths to achieve gender equity in education in Kenya.

Need for Partnerships

Due to the limitations of the Kenyan government and the UN in providing for girls in rural areas of Kenya, it is clear there is a need for greater partnerships between these institutions and NGOs working on girls' education initiatives in Kenya. While the UN is not able to move as quickly as NGOs working within Kenya, it is clear that NGOs could benefit from the UN's resources and the UN could benefit from NGOs' ability to set up shop quickly. By utilizing the strengths of each institution, it is clear that partnerships could lead to meaningful and long lasting solutions. As respondents pointed out in their interviews, the problem of gaining access to education is multifaceted with combinations of blockades, hurdles, and headwinds. No organization is able to specialize in all areas necessary to create change. However, all respondents expressed a the need and importance in partnerships in order to address all sides of the problem.

Need for Integration of Gender and Development Theory into Policy

While partnerships are a potential solution for reaching girls living in rural parts of Kenya, the Kenyan government and the UN must take steps to address all barriers to education. As Gender and Development theory calls for a more inclusive view of

development, it is time that policies reflect the most progressive theories on development. It is apparent that by simply focusing on logistical barriers to education, their initiatives do not address the root causes of educational inequality. As stated earlier, this is not to suggest that organizations and institutions become experts in all areas of the problem. However, it is important that they recognize the various nuances involved and that their policies reflect an understanding of those nuances.

Two by Two

High Log. High Normative	Low Log. High Normative
Poor Girls in Rural Area	Poor Girls in Urban Area
Example: Maasai Girls	
High Log. Low Normative	Low Log. Low Normative
Girl in Rural Area	
	Wealthy girls in urban area

In order to gain increased understanding, it is important that organizations are able to organize and identify the barriers girls face and subsequently understand the most effective means to combat those barriers. I offer this two by two as a means of organization of these barriers and various situations. The chart identifies situations in which there would be high and low logistical and normative barriers and provides examples of those situations. As with the definitions of logistical and normative, this chart does not intend to simply nuance or situations. Rather, it is meant to provide a tool for the Kenyan government, the UN, and NGOs working in Kenya in order to assist them in making informed policy decisions.

The situations in which girls face high logistical and high normative barriers are primarily situations where a girl is living in a rural part of Kenya. In this situation, we would see significant blockades to education such as strict gender norms, increased rates of poverty,

and greater impact from natural crisis. Looking to the interview with the representative from Maasai Girls' Education fund, it is clear that the Maasai represent many of the barriers girls in rural Kenya face. With strict gender norms and rituals, the community does not place value on a girl's education and believe there are more important activities she could be involved in. Further, as the respondent pointed out, the Maasai are vulnerable to natural disasters such as the drought currently happening.

The situations in which girls face high logistical and low normative barriers are those girls living in rural areas of Kenya, but with parents who support her education. In this category rather than identifying significant blockades to education, girls primarily face hurdles and headwinds. Because she lives in a rural area of Kenya there is increased likelihood that she will face infrastructural barriers to education such as poor road conditions or a far walk to a school. However, because her parents are supportive of an education, normative barriers are fewer.

The situations in which girls face low logistical barriers but high normative barriers are poor girls living in urban areas of Kenya. Because of their location within an urban setting, it is less likely that schools are not close or not available. However, because of their socioeconomic status, a poor girl living in a rural area of Kenya may face additional normative barriers from her parents or other blockades such as poverty. In this situation, girls face a combination of blockades and hurdles as many of her barriers are the result of her class status versus the location of a school or the infrastructure of her environment.

Lastly, the situation in which girls face low logistical barriers and low normative barriers are those wealthy girls living in urban areas of Kenya. For these girls, their location offers them a variety of options for school and the socioeconomic status provides them opportunities not available to others. For example, in 2003 when the Kenyan government made primary school free to all students, class sizes grew enormously. Because of the influx

of students, many wealthy parents chose to transfer their children to private institutions with smaller classes and more private instruction. Because of the location of girls living in urban areas, they have greater access to these private schools, and because of their socioeconomic status they are able to afford that access.

Conclusions

Areas for Future Research

How Feminists write about "Others"

This continued pattern of academics' refusal to advocate for normative change appears to suggest a common discomfort or hesitation for combating normative barriers. While it is not entirely certain why this discomfort exists, I believe the lack of discussion from academics is important. It is a question I am not able to answer within my research. However, it is an important question to analyze. As of now, all I am able to do is speculate based on my own experience writing about women and girls in other countries.

As a white woman earning a degree at a US institution, I often feel I must traverse a careful course when writing about girls' education in developing nations. I acknowledge my immense privilege and complete lack of knowledge gained through lived experience in a developing nation. This feeling leads many to take heavy precautions when making recommendations for people in developing nations. With post-colonial thoughts of cultural relativism, many scholars feel it is not their place to make judgments or recommendations for others' cultural practices. I hypothesize this trepidation has caused academics to feel comfortable acknowledging normative barriers in a descriptive sense, but uncomfortable making recommendations for normative change.

How to Keep NGOs Accountable

Although NGOs are more willing to combat normative barriers to education, it is clear that this is often the result of the communities they serve seeking this change rather than the NGO prioritizing normative barriers. Therefore, if policies are to be implemented which boost the role of NGOs, there needs to be a system of accountability not found within some NGOs. In comparison the UN has built in policies designed to hold both individuals and organizations accountable to the people they serve. While I do not have a policy prescription for this dilemma, I believe it is an important area to consider. Therefore, I hope that another study will look at the ways in which NGOs neglected duties to their communities in the past and offer solutions on how to generate solutions.

Urban vs. Rural

From this research, it is clear that a key indicator in whether or not a girl will attend school is her location within Kenya. While girls living in rural areas face additional barriers to education, it is clear organizations and institutions do not know how to best address this issue. Therefore, I recommend that academics explore this area in more detail and find the best practices so that the Kenyan government, the UN, and NGOs can start to address the needs of girls living in remote areas.

Alternate Explanations

While it is clear that gender places a significant role in determining whether or not a girl will go to school, it is clear that other factors play a significant role. Right now I believe all alternative explanations go back to a discussion of demographics and intersectionality. While girls living in rural areas face blockades to their education, young boys will face similar barriers as their female counterparts. The idea of race and social class cannot be ignored either as they are known to deeply affect a child's experiences. Therefore, while it is important to view the issue of access to education through a gendered lens, it is equally as

important that this analysis is not blind to other pieces of a person's identity or other factors influencing their experiences.

<u>Closing Thoughts</u>

While academics, states, international organizations, and independent organizations realize the importance of achieving gender equity in education, each faces challenges when trying to implement change. Often due to internal organizational structures, these institutions navigate their initiatives in varying ways. While the UN largely focuses on logistical barriers to education, NGOs working on girls' education in Kenya are more able and willing to address normative barriers. With girls living in rural areas of Kenya facing additional barriers to education, it is clear there is a need for greater partnerships and greater understanding of the issue from all sides. Through a utilization of the strengths of the Kenyan government, the UN, and organizations like the Maasai Girls' Education Fund, as well as an increase in the influencing of Gender and Development theory, there is hope that in time girls in Kenya can pursue their passions and build their futures.

Bibliography

Anastasia, Nkoyiai and Teklemariam, Amanuel A. "Socio-Cultural and Economic Factors Affecting Primary Education of Maasai Girls in Loitokitok Disrict in Kenya," in *The Western Journal of Black Studies, Vol. 35 No. 4.* 2011.

Bedi, A.S., P.K. Kimalu, D.K. Manda, and N. Nafula "The decline in primary school enrolment in Kenya." In *Journal of African Economies,* 13, no. 1: (2004) 1-43.

Beoku-Betts, Josephine A. "Gender and Formal Education in Africa: An Exploration of the Opportunity Structure at the Secondary and Tertiary Levelsin. *Women and Education in Sub-Saharan Africa.* Ed. Marianne Bloch, Josephine A. Beoku-Betts, and B. Robert Tabachinick. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc, 1998. Print.

Bold, Tessa, Kimenyi,Mwangi, Mwabu,Germano, and Sandefur, Justin "Why Did Abolishing Fees not Increase Public School Enrollment in Kenya?" *Africa Growth Initiative at Brookings,* January 2013, accessed February, 2015 http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2013/1/education%20kenya%20kimenyi/01%20education%20kenya%20kimenyi.pdf

Chege, Fatuma and N. Sifuna, Daniel "Girl' and Women's Education in Kenya: Gender Perspectives and Trends", (2006) http://www.library.unesco-iicba.org/English/Girls%20Education/All%20Articles/General/Girls%20and%20womens%20education%20in%20Kenya.pdf (accessed, 2015).

"Data: School enrollment, primary (%net)" The World Bank (accessed April 2015) http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.NENR/countries/KE-XM?display=graph

Diouf, Sékène "The Cultural Resistance to Missionary Schools in Kenya: A Study of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's The River Between and A Grain Of Wheat." *Journal Of Pan African Studies* 7, no. 7 (December 2014): 26-35. *Social Sciences Full Text (H.W. Wilson)*, EBSCO*host* (accessed March 30, 2015).

Education for All Global Monitoring Report "Fact Sheet Education in Kenya," (2012). Print.

Fay, Chung. "Educational Expansion, Cost Considerations, and Curriculum Development in Zimbabwe." In *The Politics of Women's Education; Perspectives from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.* Ed. Jill Ker Conway and Susan C. Bourque. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1996. Print.

"Financial Figures," UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency. 2015. http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c1a.html

Fleshman, Michael "Giant Steps for Kenya's Schools," *Africa Renewal,* July 2005, (accessed December 2014), http://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/july-2005/giant-step-kenya%E2%80%99s-schools

"Girls education and gender equality," *UNICEF*. (accessed April, 2015)
    http://www.unicef.org/esaro/5481_girls_education.html

Heward, Christine and Bunwaree, Sheila "Gender, Education and Development: Beyond Access to
    Empowerment" Zed Books 1999 New York: New York.

Hyde, Karin A. L "Sub-Saharan Africa.". In *Women's Education in Developing Countries; Barriers,
    Benefits, and Policies.* Ed. Elizabeth M. King and M. Anne Hill. Washington D.C.: The
    World Bank, 1993. Print.

"Kenya at a Glance" UNICEF, 2009 (accessed March, 2015)
    http://www.unicef.org/kenya/overview_4616.html

"Kenya Profile- Timline" BBC http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13682176 (accessed April,
    2015).

"Kenya: People and Society," *CIA World Fact Book.* June, 2014. (accessed March, 2015).
    https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ke.html

Lockheed, Marlaine E.   et al. *Improving Primary Education in Developing Countries.* Washington
    D.C.: Oxford University Press, 1991. Print.

"Millennium Development Goals and Beyond 2015," The United Nations. Accessed March, 2015.
    http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml

Mills, Greg. "The new imperialists" *The New York Times.* November 2, 2007. (accessed April, 2015)
    http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/02/opinion/02iht-edmills.1.8162200.html?_r=0

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade,"Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse." In
    The Women, Gender and Development Reader, edited by. Visvanathan, Nalini et. Al.
    London, UK: Zed Books, 2011.

Mungai, A.M., "Academic Achievement of girls in rural schools in Kenya," Adelphi Univeristy New
    York.

Mungai, Anne M. "Growing Up in Kenya: Rural Schooling and Girls," Peter Lang Publisher Inc.
    New York. 2002.

Njeuma, Dorothy L. "An Overview of Women's Education in Africa." In *The Politics of Women's
    Education; Perspectives from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.* Ed. Jill Ker Conway and
    Susan C. Bourque. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1996. Print.

Onyango, Bernard "Some Kenyan Children Are Not in School Despite Free Primary Education," in
    Population Reference Bureau, April 2003, accessed February, 2015
    http://www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2013/kenya-school-education.aspx .

Schultz, Paul T. "Returns to Women's Education." In . *Women's Education in Developing Countries; Barriers, Benefits, and Policies.* Ed. Elizabeth M. King and M. Anne Hill. Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 1993. Print.

Daisy Serem "UNICEF-supported initiative aims to make girls' education a priority in Kenya," *UNICEF.* 11 November, 2011. (accessed April, 2015) http://www.unicef.org/education/kenya_60497.html

Sifuna, Daniel N. "The Challenge of Increasing Access and Improving Quality: An Analysis of Universal Primary Education Interventions in Kenya and Tanzania Since the 1970s" in International Review of Education 53, no. 5. http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/27715423?uid=3739936&uid=2&uid=4&uid=3739256&sid=21104615845351 (accessed October 25, 2014).

Somerset, Anthony "Universalising primary education in Kenya: the elusive goal.*" Comparative Education*. Vol. 45, No. 2, (2009), 233-250.

Somerset, A. "A preliminary note on Kenya primary enrolment trends over four decades" in *CREATE Pathways to Access Research Monograph*, No. 9 (2007). Brighton: University of Sussex.

Sperling, Gene B. and Herz, Barbara "What Works In Girls' Education: Evidence and Policies from the Developing World.*"* (2004). *Council on Foreign Relations.*

"The 2012 World Development Report: Gender Equality and Development" *The World Bank,* 2011.

Wamagatta, Evanson N. "Changes of Government Policies Towards Mission Education in Colonial Kenya and Their Effects on the Missions: The Case of the Gospel Missionary Society." *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 2008., 3, *JSTOR Journals*, EBSCO*host* (accessed March 30, 2015).

"What We Do", UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency. 2015. http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646cbf.html

"World Development Indicators: Metadata" The World DataBank (accessed April, 2015) http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/reports/metadataview.aspx

"Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse" Mohanty. Ed. Visvanathan, Nalini et. Al. *The Women, Gender and Development Reader,* 2011.

"2015 UNHCR country operations profile- Kenya", UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency. 2015. http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e483a16.html