JUST PHOTOGRAPHS?
THE DEPERSONALIZING PORTRAYAL
OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD
AND THE VISUAL DEPICTION OF THE UNICEF CHILD

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ABSTRACT

This paper demonstrates that UNICEF's form of governmentality is fundamentally determined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was ratified almost universally in 1990. As a transnational organization, UNICEF has been steadily accumulating symbolic capital in order to strengthen its credibility and reinforce its symbolic authority as a global advocate of children's rights. This study points out that the visual reflection of UNICEF's rationale of governmentality can be detected in the evolution of its photographic policy, in order to achieve its institutional goal in the portrayal of the child as a rightful subject. This visual policy aims to contest embedded Western practices of depersonalizing representation of the Developing World and transform needs-based approaches to rights-based ones. Through the analysis of twelve cover images of UNICEF publications produced between the mid-1990s and the present, I argue that this visual development unfolded in three stages, culminating in a distinct "UNICEF brand style", expected to be followed by all UNICEF photographers, editors and the organization's offices worldwide. The paper argues that due to the decentralized nature of UNICEF's structure of governmentality, a centrally achieved consensus cannot always be realized globally as National Committees for UNICEF carry out their work based on the conditions of their own cultural and social climate, thus challenging the capacity of UNICEF to influence the ways of world-making.

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INTRODUCTION

The dark, mudded faces of four happy German children in recent photographs of an educational advocacy campaign (see Figure 16 on page 69) wished to express solidarity with Africans who would stereotypically not have the chance to attend school (Black Women in Europe 2007). While the producers of the ad, the German National Committee for UNICEF were convinced that their message of genuine good-will was evident, the images building on the visual cliché of the 'African child', who is poor and dirty, uneducated and uncivilized, demonstrates that Western solidarity has not yet grasped how the naïve aesthetics constructed around deprivation in developing countries (Hutnyk 2004) is the elaboration and reproduction, as Derrida says, of "the violent hierarchy" of the Us and Them (Hall 1997:258).

Prevailing Western visual representation of the Developing World with the extensive use of images of "photogenic poverty" (Hutnyk 2004) – pictures of cute and suffering children – still carries embedded notions of domination, established by colonial photography. As humanitarian NGOs, governments and the news media continue to portray people living in Third World countries as objects embodying suffering, depersonalized, mute victims waiting for Western aid, the photos rather than providing constructive support, according to Hutnyk, undermine the whole purpose of advocacy (2004) and further widen the gap between the Developed and the Developing World.

The almost universal ratification of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990, transformed UNICEF into a transnational entity, with a new identity and the

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authority to advocate the human rights of children worldwide. As a result of this, from the mid-1990s, UNICEF has been making a conscious effort to contest dehistoricizing, needs-based representational practices of children and establish its own style of visual communication for the depiction of the child as a rightful subject. In the light of the Convention, attributes of this new identity of the child as a respectable individual provided the basis for UNICEF's internal photo guidelines, that have been developed from the mid-1990s, in order to guide the work of UNICEF photographers, editors of publications and the work of all UNICEF offices around the world. With the analysis of twelve cover images of UNICEF publications – produced between the mid-1990s and the present day – I argue that UNICEF has been systematically transforming its photographic representation of children in its three avenues of communication: general advocacy, fund-raising and programme communication.

The sampled images in this study illustrate that, following the ratification of the CRC, the institution's visual language has developed through three stages. The first period – from the mid-1990s until about 1998 – can still be characterized with images of dependent children, in need of Western aid. The second phase – between 1999 and about 2002-3 – puts more emphasis on the rights of the children, who are more commonly depicted as active agents of their lives. In this period children are seen in their life circumstances, with their family and peers, shown through documentary photographs. The final stage – from about 2003 until the present – establishes the distinct visual language of UNICEF as its "brand identity". This is a deliberate step to unite UNICEF's lead photographs under the attributes "simple, optimistic, bold and contemporary", and by doing so, distinguish UNICEF publications from the materials

of other organizations. Cover images in this period are most often close-ups with a positive message, while they also attempt to include the real life situations of the children.

By extending Foucault's theory of governmentality, I argue that UNICEF as a transnational organization applies the CRC to construct its own formula of governmentality for the establishment of the child as a rightful subject. Following the ratification of the Convention, the systematic evolution of UNICEF's visual policy becomes an important strategy, in order to control its own conduct and regulate general perceptions concerning the representation of the child.

In order to strengthen its rationale of governmentality and its identity as a global advocate of children's rights, UNICEF has been steadily accumulating symbolic capital, that is, different forms of capital socially accepted and recognized. Bourdieu's concept of capital illustrates how UNICEF as a transnational organization continually reproduces its identity and reinforces its credibility and symbolic authority, in order to regulate social consensus and influence the ways of world-making.

The first chapter of this study discusses how UNICEF has historically grown into a transnational entity for the advocacy of children's rights and how its formula of governmentality is constantly reinforced by the various forms of capital accumulated for the strengthening of its symbolic authority. The second chapter describes how colonial photography created its subjectivity of the inferior 'Other', that was understood as undeveloped and weak. It then goes on to point out, that Western charitable organizations, governments and news media frequently use clichéd imaged

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of depersonalized figures, in order to attract the attention of their donors, but by doing so, they counteract the purpose of advocacy. The final chapter discusses the conscious efforts of UNICEF to contest such dehistoricizing photographic practices. The analysis of twelve cover images of UNICEF publications illustrate how the institution has been constructing its distinct style of visual identity from the mid-1990s, in order to represent the child as a rightful subject.

CHAPTER 1: DOMINANCE IN THE FIELD OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS: UNICEF'S GOVERNMENTAL RATIONALITY AND SYMBOLIC CAPITAL

In the coming chapter I re-track UNICEF's development in the postwar period and establish how the initial emergency organization grew into a global advocate of children's rights, with special regard for the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC). Afterwards, I argue that in the field of advocacy for children's rights UNICEF is in a dominant position due to its form of transnational governmentality and its possession of symbolic capital. With Foucault's theory of governmental rationality I point out how UNICEF's Convention establishes the organization's international presence and creates knowledge practices that reproduces the institution's power mechanisms in the field as well as regulations that discipline the self and its subject. Through the framework of Bourdieu's theory of capital I illustrate that the sum of economic, cultural, social and juridical capitals, generated by the network family of the United Nations, is reinforcing UNICEF's position of authority as a global advocate of children's rights. The possession of symbolic capital liberates the global organization from having to take part in the symbolic struggle for the power of legitimization in the field and establishes UNICEF as a dominant actor for shaping social consensus, habitus and the ways of world-making.

1.1 The history and emergence of UNICEF as the advocate of children's rights

UNICEF, as an agency of the United Nations, rose out of the ashes and misery of World War II. At its inception in 1946, UNICEF's role was defined by providing assistance to the European children who were affected by famine, disease and poverty as a result of the war years (UNICEF N.d.b). The original definition as the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund shows that UNICEF was first perceived as a temporary establishment only (Veerman 1992:66). Sir Robert Jackson, a former Under Secretary General of the United Nations, points out that in 1950 UNICEF's existence was under threat when the United States campaigned for its termination (Black 1986:9). According to Veerman, the broadening of UNICEF's perspectives was due to a proposal supported by the Swedish National Committee in the 1950s. The committee initiated at the time that a study on the needs of children in Third World countries should be conducted by "a group of independent and impartial experts" (1992:66). Ulla Wickbom, who wrote a work titled *Sweden and UNICEF 1955-1985*, explains that this research on the needs of children served as "a starting point for the re-orientation of UNICEF's policy" (1992:66). A number of programmes initiated in the postwar era in Europe and then continued in Asia, Latin America and Africa, aimed to battle diseases like malaria, tuberculosis, yaws and leprosy (Black 1986:9). Permanent mandate was consequently given to UNICEF by the General Assembly, with provisions to assist children especially in developing countries (Williams 1990:45).

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The recognition of the global perspective on children's rights, however, took still long to be acknowledged. Hyndman explains that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights already in 1948 proclaimed the birth of the "universal man", a significant and timely development in light of the Darwinistic and colonial visions of evolution, she says (2000:69). The Declaration recognized – though yet on paper, – the dignity, equality and full rights of all human beings, regardless of "race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status" (United Nations 1948). On the other hand, Hyndman argues that the discourse of the UN was highly gendered at the time. Although the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was already established in 1947, real activism of gender equality on the side of the UN only began from 1975 onward with the declaration of the International Women's Year and the Decade for Women between 1975 and 1985 (Hyndman 70) as well as the establishment of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in 1976 (2000:70).

While article 25 of the Declaration of Human Rights pointed out that children were entitled to "social protection" (United Nations 1948), it was not until 1959, that with the Declaration of the Rights of the Child children's rights to protection, education, health care, shelter and good nutrition were defined (UNHCR 1959). The document declared in ten points the need for the elimination of discrimination against children (UNHCR 1959).

The political revolution of the 1960s, Sir Robert highlights, when countries in Africa gained their independence one after the other and new voices were to be heard on the international stage, brought into existence the Third World and changed the whole

character of the UN system as well. Jackson says that new UNICEF policies were defined that now considered the child as a vital resource in national development, with a special concern for the needs of African countries. The UN's former Under Secretary explains that the 60s and the 70s brought new issues like nutrition and health, the global problem of population growth, the availability of clean drinking water on UNICEF's plate and the organization was involved with relief work in Bangladesh and Cambodia, while the 80s brought on issues of uncontrolled urban growth of Third World cities. In listing UNICEF's increasing agenda Jackson points out how the organization has steadily grown into a global one, by always having been flexible to the needs and changing conditions of the time (Jackson 1986:10-13).

A major turning-point in UNICEF's global advancement for children's rights came with the UN's adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1989. Ratified by all but two members of the UN's General Assembly, it became the universal set of standards on the rights of children as individual human beings (UNICEF, CRC FAQ). Dennis Dijkzeul points out that while the Declaration is only a statement of UNICEF's principles, the CRC is "legally binding on a signatory" (1997a:123), with the commitment of 192 countries. Hanna Bokor-Szegő, the then chief secretary of the Hungarian National Committee for UNICEF said that the Convention defined children's rights as civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, their protection in the family and society, and in special situations of relief (1990), establishing the rights-based, rather than the needs-based subjectivity of the child (UNICEF photo guidelines 2). Philip Veerman emphasizes that the CRC gathers together under one title all the specifications international law establishes about children. The Convention promotes the welfare of children, Veerman says, from the

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point of view of justice, rather than of charity (1992:184). The author further highlights that while the Declaration considers the needs and rights of children distinguished from those of adult, the Convention points out the general perspective of human rights, including those of children (1992:185). What is also unique about the Convention, is that it not only calls on the ratifying governments to recognize children's rights but also to implement policies that, in line with the CRC, engender progress for the development of children.

Dijkzeul points out that in contrast with other organizations of the UN family, UNICEF's strength lies in two things. Firstly, in the fact that its objective for the welfare of children is one that has been almost universally ratified in the CRC and it is a mandate that generally does not cause much moral opposition and dilemma for governments to support (1997a:125). This considerable global consensus, Dijkzeul asserts, reinforces UNICEF's actions as legitimate and strengthens its symbolic authority in its role of advocacy for political and general support. This legitimacy, however, depends on UNICEF's multi-lateral donors – governments, NGOs and local communities – and serves as a source of motivation for UNICEF to keep up its high profile and increasingly become, as Dijkzeul says, a "get-it-done agency" (1997a:126), in order to prove worthy of donations, to facilitate further fund-raising (1997a:126), and to continue to validate its symbolic capital as well as its symbolic authority for the advocacy of children's rights.

Secondly, the author indicates that UNICEF is increasingly becoming a decentralized organization, meaning that in the individual countries, it is reaching out to the local communities and NGOs, building a network of cooperation, involving both the public

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and the civil sectors for the implementation of its projects and campaigns. Edit Kecskeméti, the director of the Hungarian National Committee for UNICEF explained that there are two types of national offices associated with UNICEF. The first ones are UNICEF field offices in developing countries, equipped with UNICEF's own staff and running specific programmes. The other types are the National Committees, established in 36 developed countries of the world. The committees are independent, self-subsisting NGOs that are only linked to UNICEF by contract and are not part of the global organization. Kecskeméti said that they are involved in advocacy and fund-raising work in their individual countries but are not authorized for running development programmes. While the self-supporting National Committees naturally operate in the larger context established by the UN, and UNICEF guidelines and trainings are provided to local staff at the field offices for the elaboration of their programming, policy making, budgeting, evaluation and strategy building, Dijkzeul says that UNICEF's focus is concentrated on the strengthening of country capacities and the mobilization of grass root potentials as the fundamental conditions for successful development (1997b).

This framework, at the same time however, is also a challenge for UNICEF, Dijkzeul explains, because the more participants and their changing individual needs and potentialities need to be taken into consideration, the more difficult it is for UNICEF, as an intermediary, to establish a consensus among the different partners, which slows down the course of action. But this country-supported structure depends less on direct guidance and intervention from UNICEF's regional and global headquarters (1997b) and involves a steady process of capacity building.

1.2 UNICEF's rationale of governmentality

According to Foucault, govermentality establishes itself through discipline and security, regulating the life and conduct of the self and the community with the constant presence of reason (Burchell 1991). Coining the phrase "governmental rationality", he unfolds the development of the art of govermentality from the sixteenth century onward. Foucault defines the main purpose of government in the steady progress and prosperity of its population (1991:10). In his understanding, this is achieved by a set of institutions and practices (1991:75-77), which enables the state to guide, control and administer the whole of social life (Ghisalberti N.d.): the behaviour and health, the interest and welfare of the people (Burchell 1991:92, 99). For Foucault, governmentality lies in these finalities of progress, arranged towards an end of prosperity and perfection (1991:95). This goal is to be achieved with the state's tactics, laws and regulations (1991:95), while it is also aimed at keeping order, stability and security within the state (Ghisalberti N.d.). At the same time, the population of the disciplinary state is an object of study and a subject of statistics, which accumulates knowledge and reproduces the practices of power. The partnership of knowledge and power, for Foucault, reinforces the truth and validation of the state (Burchell 1991).

Foucault's concept of governmentality is extended by Ferguson and Gupta from the state to transnational organizations. The authors see the emergence of transnational governmentality not in rivalry, but in coexistence with the state. Ferguson and Gupta say that in this mode of governmentality, non-state entities can also produce "governmental results" (2005:115), that is, they can be productive in areas

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traditionally associated with functions of the state. They conceptualize international networks, like UNICEF, with transnational funding and staff working in cooperation with local, grassroot agencies (Ferguson and Gupta 2005:114-123). As Kecskeméti said, while National Committees for UNICEF base their work on the normative values of the CRC, being independent and self-supporting NGOs, they operate within their own, individual cultural contexts. Therefore, it is a constant but constructive challenge for UNICEF to continuously develop consensus and capacity (Dijkzeul 1997b). Roger Dale argues that in this purposeful narrative of control and self-improvement, transnational entities continually construct and reproduce their identities (2004:181), grounded by the steady accumulation of symbolic capital.

In the case of UNICEF, the formula of governmental rationality is embedded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and is strengthened by the various forms of capital the organization has been gathering with time. The CRC is the fundamental consensus document that – in the advancement of the human rights of children worldwide – creates a "common destiny" (Dale 2004:183) overarching the transnational space. With 192 countries to have ratified the document until November 2005 (UNICEF N.d.d) and with over 120 offices over the world (UNICEF N.d.a), UNICEF is a singular and universal organization to construct tactics of knowledge and power to observe, shape and affect (Burchell 1991:2-3) the progress of children.

With the CRC having come into force in 1990, UNICEF has been gradually strengthening its position in the field by steadily gathering different types of capital and translating them into knowledge practices, which continuously reproduce UNICEF's identity and support its form of governmentality. The Convention

established UNICEF's field of governmentality and within it, defined the rights-based child as its subject and goal. By focusing on the areas of education, gender equality, health and the upholding of the rights of children (UNICEF N.d.c), the CRC created the basic system for the strategic functioning of its enquiry. As we will see, with the Convention UNICEF's value transfer through its visual communication becomes vitally important, as the form of discourse that regulates both the conduct of the self and of the wider community. Within this framework, UNICEF reinforces its power by reproducing its identity, as well as its knowledge and expertise, thereby strengthening its credibility and symbolic capital in the field.

1.3 UNICEF's monopoly of symbolic capital

The ground of humanitarian action, like all other social fields, is a network of relations and power struggles between the agents and institutions present in the field. The participants are positioned in the field by the composition and sum of capitals they possess (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1996:97-99). Bourdieu explains that those in a favourable position work to preserve and strengthen their monopoly in the field[1], try to differentiate themselves from other participants (1996:100) and wish to acquire more capital for their operations, while new actors try to find their way into the field (1993:72), their admission, however, is conditioned on whether they possess the properties of capital that are specific to the field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1996:107).

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[1] In the case of UNICEF, by its monopoly I mean its institutional position as an actor in the field for the advocacy of children's rights. This position is continuously strengthened by the accumulation of different forms of capital.

According to Bourdieu, in this symbolic struggle (1996:76) between agents and institutions, capital becomes both a weapon and a stake, access to which allows its possessor a powerful position to influence the field as well as the other players (1996:98). By taking part in this process, actors attend to the continuous reproduction of the field and the struggle, accepting what is at stake (Bourdieu 1993:74). Participants in this struggle, or as Bourdieu calls it, in this "game" formulate new strategies in order to gain more symbolic capital, to manipulate their own image and position in the social space (1989:20-21), to transform the rules (1996:99) and by that change the whole politics of the game. Players in this ongoing competition try to establish common forms of classification and appreciation and create the right circumstances for "the orchestration of habitus" – that is, those systems of practices and perceptions which determine one's sense of place and the place of others in the world (Bourdieu 1989:20-21), – as well as to define a common sense about the world and thereby construct social consensus and change the worldviews of people (Bourdieu 1994:13).

Through Bourdieu's framework of symbolic capital I argue that in the field of advocacy for children's rights UNICEF has a dominant position due to its composition of different types of capital – namely economic, cultural, social, juridicial as well as symbolic capital – that provide the global organization with the capacity to shape its presence and influence social consensus and habitus. In the following, I demonstrate that in this ongoing symbolic struggle, UNICEF recognizes the need to and constantly strives to re-enforce and strengthen its position by increasing its various forms of capital, by distinguishing itself from other participants

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and by reshaping the relative value of the types of capital specific to the field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1996:99), in relation to other participants.

1.3.1 The different forms of Bourdieu's capital

Bourdieu argues that in order to understand the functionings of the social world fundamentally determined and structured by the distribution of capital, one has to consider the various forms of capital accumulated and reproduced over time (1986) and used as resources in the social field, be it political, religious, scientific or artistic (Svendsen 2003:609). In the web of social relationships within the social fields, it is the distribution of the different types of capital that define one's possibilities and positions (Siisiainen 2000). Bourdieu's analysis of capital looks beyond the Marxian macro-economic, historical perspective, and instead it is geared towards the micro-sociology of relations (Svendsen 2003:608). He aims to look at the field constructed by the balance of forces and the distribution of the different types of capital between the agents and institutions present in the field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1996:76). By investigating both material and non-material resources, his construction of a consistent and general framework of capital recognizes the interconnectedness of the economic and the social sciences, and as such, looks towards a more "anthropological economics" (Svendsen 2003:610).

Bourdieu distinguishes three main types of capital: economic capital, cultural capital and social capital (1986). In regard to the bureaucratic power of the state, Bourdieu also identifies juridical capital with the power of monopoly over nomination (1994:11). Further to these, he adds the overarching form of symbolic capital, that is,

the power to enforce new and legitimate visions of the social reality and to aim to change the fundamental categories of perception about the social world (Bourdieu 1989:20-21). Symbolic capital is that added plus of socially recognized and accepted prestige and legitimized authority (Bourdieu 1989) that makes "the utilization and efficacy" (Carrington 1997:103) of economic, cultural and social capital possible.

1.3.1.1 Economic capital

Bourdieu understands economic capital as the total of those resources that are "immediately and directly convertible into money" (Bourdieu 1986:243), including material goods, properties and financial assets (Carrington 1997:102). In the case of UNICEF as a transnational organization, financial resources – the basis of the organization's economic capital – are established by government donations and fundraising through the worldwide network of the global organization. In 2003, for instance, UNICEF's income totalled $3,127 million, approximately 65% of which originated from national governments, while one third of its funds were raised by the 37 National Committees worldwide (UNICEF 2003:1-2). Thus, we can assert that UNICEF's economic capital is constructed by a worldwide network of both governments and National Committees, allowing a dominant position in the humanitarian field that most likeminded organizations of a smaller scale would unlikely to be able to compete with.

1.3.1.2 Cultural capital

According to Bourdieu cultural capital is the sum of one's knowledge, experience and skills that provides one with a dominant status in society. Cultural capital is traceable back to one's parents and schooling, giving one the capital of good attitudes and education. Cultural capital for Bourdieu is of three kinds: in the embodied, the objectified and the institutionalized state (1986).

Those in the *embodied* state can be categorized in Bourdieu's words as the "long-lasting dispositions of the mind and the body" (1986:243). Embodied capital is understood as the knowledge, skills and dispositions that represent one's habitus (Bourdieu 1986). In the case of UNICEF this type of cultural capital is comprised of the human and intellectual capital and knowledge that maintains and strengthens the institution's fundamental symbolic values set forth by the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF N.d.c). It is that capital of expertise that, cultivated and accumulated with time and, as Bourdieu says, acquired with "muscular physique" (1986:244), makes the institutional framework more and more applicable.

Capital in the *objectified* state, Bourdieu explains, is the sum of cultural goods, objects, works of art, scientific and technological instruments and machines, presupposing access to both economic capital and embodied cultural capital. Since objectified capital can be understood as economic capital and embodied cultural capital materialized, acting both symbolically and materially (Bourdieu 1986:247), it may be inferred that the objectified cultural capital of UNICEF is at least of two

kinds. First, those objects, machines and instruments – for example medical tools, educational resources, books and equipment, computers, etc. – that allow the organization to carry forward its tasks and mission. Second, it includes those gifts and souvenirs that are produced by UNICEF for the purposes of fundraising, in other words, the very realizations of the institution's primary objectives. As such, this second kind of embodied cultural capital is not only a source of economic capital to create funds for UNICEF's mission but also a source of prestige and symbolic power in the form of high-quality artistic souvenirs, photographic cards and calendars.

Finally, the *institutionalized* form of cultural capital for Bourdieu is the type of capital that guarantees one's qualifications and competence in the field, conferring respect and a lasting difference of prestige and authority (1986:248). Bourdieu explains that those with symbolic capital formally legitimated, authorized and guaranteed (1989:21) possess the monopoly of being socially recognized. Thus, it follows that the official definition of UNICEF as an official identity declared by the UN liberates the international children's organization from having to take part in the symbolic struggle for power because "the legal consecration of symbolic capital confers an absolute, universal value" on the body, ensuring "a legitimate point of view that everyone has to recognize as a repository of common sense" (Bourdieu 1989: 22).

Compared to other, less weighty children's organizations, cultural capital in the institutionalized state provides UNICEF with a substantial amount of symbolic capital. Signed and ratified by all member states of the UN – except for the United States and Somalia, who only signed the document, indicating their support (UNICEF N.d.e) – the CRC binds its members to the betterment of the life of children. Issued in

1989, the Convention defines the character of UNICEF, establishing its codes of manner, goals and orientation in the symbolic values of education, gender equality, health and nutrition, development, protection from violence, exploitation and abuse, and the upholding of the human rights of children (UNICEF N.d.c). The authority of the CRC, established by formal nomination of the UN (Bourdieu 1989:21), provides UNICEF with the position to have the social capital to impose a vision and the symbolic power to change the ways of world-making, that is, to ultimately change the world itself.

1.3.1.3 Juridical capital

In reference to the authority of the state, Bourdieu introduces juridical capital, providing the state with the power of nomination that makes the state the central authority (1994:11). This type of symbolic capital is inherently related to the institutionalized form of cultural capital, as it is established and guaranteed, in our case, by the UN's delegation of power and custom, codification of symbolic values, laws and regulations.

UNICEF's mandate – ensured by the UN and by the almost global ratification of the CRC – allows the institution to delegate its power for the construction of a global network. Kecskeméti explained that UNICEF's Executive Board – with the delegation of 36 governments, on three-year terms – is responsible for setting up UNICEF's own field offices or authorizing self-supporting NGOs as National Committees to represent UNICEF's normative values in their individual countries. Among other things, she said, the Board also monitors UNICEF's country-specific programmes,

decides on budget related matters and recommends new initiatives to the Economic and Social Council of the UN.

1.3.1.4 Social capital

Bourdieu describes social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" or "membership in a group" (1986:249), in other words, it can be described as the access to social relations and practices. For UNICEF the support of its "collectivity-owned capital" (Bourdieu 1986:249) by the UN is an entitlement due to its membership in the UN's global family. This institutional credential of symbolic capital, as mentioned before, is of legitimized authority and lifts the organization above the symbolic struggles for power in the humanitarian field.

At the same time, Bourdieu says that the relationships of social network that maintain social capital may also be the result of symbolic exchanges (1986:249). James Coleman highlights socials capital as a source of collective good, benefiting all involved with it (Svendsen 2003:619). Robert Putnam also concentrates on the beneficial aspect of trust and collective good, which define social capital as the sum of "networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit" (1993:35-36). In this respect then we may draw a parallel with UNICEF's initiative of employing celebrities – well-known singers, actors, athletes – as goodwill ambassadors whose fame "attracts attention" because they have the position "to focus the world's eyes on the needs of children…They can use their

talents and fame to fundraise and advocate for children and support UNICEF's mission to ensure every child's right to health, education, equality and protection" (UNICEF N.d.g).

Another source of a significant amount of social capital for UNICEF is the institution's partnership with international organizations like *The Body Shop* – representing symbolic values of ethics and moral leadership, health care, charity, gender equality and the upholding of human and civil rights – *IKEA* – established around the symbolic values of equal opportunity, environmental consciousness, partnership, prevention of child labour, orientation towards the family – or the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)* – with areas of focus on sport and health, social responsibility for development with football (UNICEF 2007a)[2]. These partnerships help UNICEF maintain and reproduce its social as well as its economic capital. Such partnerships are supported by what Alejandro Portes calls the "rule of enforcement", "bounded solidarity" and "enforceable trust", and as Putnam explains, are of mutual benefit for both participants as "bridging social capital" (Svendsen 2003:622).

The cultivation of social capital by this type of networking is an example of Mark Granovetter's theory of "strong ties" and "weak ties". He explains that the nurturing of weak ties is more beneficial for one's future prospects in the social fields because weak ties carry with themselves different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives. Furthermore, weak ties have the potential to open up new possibilities of involvement

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[2] In 2007, UNICEF's list of corporate partners included over 150 national or international companies and associations (UNICEF N.d.f).

and help to cultivate new ties with agents of other fields, while they do not demand as much engagement as strong ties would do (Granovetter 1973).

1.4 Summary: UNICEF's form of governmentality and monopoly of symbolic capital for the advocacy of children's rights

UNICEF's form of governmental rationality is established by the CRC, providing the organization with a mandate for the safeguarding and the advancement of children's rights worldwide. Foucault's theory of governmentality extended to transnational organizations explains that the CRC defines the child as a rights-based subject of enquiry and establishes the main categories – health, education, equality and the protection of the rights of the individual child, – around which UNICEF organizes its strategies for action. The knowledge and expertise the organization continually produces in its major areas of operation as well as its international presence allow UNICEF to regulate itself, sustain and reproduce its power and reinforce its credibility and truth in the field for the advocacy of children's rights.

In order to accomplish this, we applied Bourdieu's theory of capital, which explains that the various forms of capital – economic, cultural, social, and juridical capital – when recognized, legitimized and endowed with authority by agents in the social field, receive the value of symbolic capital, the prestige that confers on its possessors the position of monopoly and the domination of worldviews and perception. Thus, the accumulation of the various forms of capital contributes to the authorizing and the embedding of UNICEF's own rationale of gorvernmentality to ensure its discourses of conduct regulation. Following in the above line of argumentation on UNICEF's

different types of capital, we can infer that the global children's institution, as a possessor of "the means of impositions and inculcation of the durable principles of vision and division…is the site of the concentration and exercise of symbolic power" (Bourdieu 1994:9), that is the influencing of social consensus, habitus and the ways of world-making.

CHAPTER 2: THE WEIGHTY HERITAGE OF

THE COLONIAL REPRESENTATION OF THE THIRD WORLD

In order to establish a context for UNICEF's visual representational practices of children, one needs to follow traces back to nineteenth-century colonial dominance and examine how contemporary scientific and power relations constructed the essentialized stereotypes of 'the Other'.

It was an age of great transition, when scientists and thinkers of the time thirsted for the understanding of the origins and the development of modern society. Timothy Mitchell explains that the modern world of nineteenth-century Europe was increasingly understood by the power dynamics of human reason, and social affairs were defined, measured, calculated, mapped and controlled by new scientific categories: the material, racial, biological and psychological nature of society (2002:1-2).

Evolutionist theorists of the time termed for the unilinear progress and the gradual, structural change of human culture, proposing that mankind had evolved from simple social organizations – primitive or primeval societies – to complex structural entities, with continuous aesthetic, intellectual, moral and technological progress (Jary 1991). In their search for the roots of Western social, cultural and ideological perfection, they identified primitive societies as the ancestors of Western civilization (Kuper 1997). At a time when British imperial economy was at its peak, in the eyes of scientists Britain had reached a stage of perfection and stood as the example for those on lower scales of the evolutionary ladder. In order to make an example out of the highly developed,

however, required an example of the undeveloped in contrast. In their efforts to draw the cultural map of creation, evolutionary theorists were blinded by the fact that the imperial glory could only shine if it identified for itself an opposite pole, namely, the primitive, the weak, the feminine, 'the Other', that would be ready to be dominated. The perfection of the Western civilization was defined in the reflection of the imperfect, underdeveloped body of the racial 'Other' (Barringer 1998:167), brought into its domain in abundance from the colonies.

The binary oppositions, as Derrida says, of "the violent hierarchy" of the Us and Them (Hall 1997:258) was born in such climate and provided a fertile ground for the interests of explorers, missionaries, scientists, artists, tradesmen, colonial adminstrators, politicians and the army officials. Colonialism drew its new and exciting subject into the terrain of fascination where racial and cultural stereotypes were stamped by the dominating discourse of power. According to Edward Said this discourse was continually fed and reproduced by different representational practices, establishing the subject of Orientalism. The cultural hegemony contrasting the identities of European superiority and Oriental backwardness, Said says, became the source for the strength and durability of Orientalism (1979) as a discourse and a field of study. The construction of the modern, rational European mind was defined in reflection of the traditional and static image of non-European nations, deprived of historical change and a dynamic and capacity for development (Ashcroft 1999:145).

From that time on, colonialism got hold of photography and succeeded in making the then revolutionary technological innovation into a tool to crystallize its own concept of power distinctions. The visual representation of Africa and Asia was constructed

and understood in a particular type of imagery. James Ryan explains that the subjectivity of the native was classified by racial stereotypes, measured by the Western eye. According to Ryan, images of scientific endeavours were often posed to capture the imperial "ways of seeing", in order to underscore Britain's legitimacy for civilizing and illuminating the dark parts of the planet (1997). The classifying representation of local people is typical in photos of ethnography of the time. Maurice Vidal Portman's photo (Figure 1) shows a child in the Andaman Islands. The child's bodily features are measured against a grid, so to be classified as the typical characteristics of natives. Portman, who was a colonial administration officer in India, conducted a two-decade ethnographic research for the extensive recording of the Andamanese people (Falconer 2006). Such photos were inspired by the scientific belief that the Andamanese were on the way to extinction and Portman wanted to preserve their race by producing an archives of knowledge about them: through images and by measuring people's bodily features (Ryan 1997:151-3). Through classifying his human subjects, Portman established Andamanese people as objects, whom could be equalled with stereotypical measurements. By objectifying indigenous people as museum artefacts, imperial ethnographers dehumanized their subjects and glorified their own scientific accomplishments.

Figure 1: Ilech, a young Andaman child, 1890s
Photo by Maurice Vidal Portman
(Original source: Falconer 2006)

The subject of the exotic 'Other' was mapped, calculated and made a source of Western fascination. The colonial discourse of primitive cultures was measured in the imagination of the West with essentialized and fixed meanings, reflecting social control and unequality. The era gave reign in European thinking to the clichéd depiction of the imaginary 'Other' of the barbaric, weak, infantilized and exotic stereotype: the one very different from the Victorian standards and the one which European spectatorship was eager to explore visually. In brief, Stuart Halls says that the rationalizing and classifying tradition of the colonial eye established, essentialized and naturalized in Western thinking a binary opposite to itself (1997:258-9), thus setting apart in its imagination the moral sublimation and superiority of the West and the primitive Rest (1997:186).

While in the first half of the twentieth century most colonies won their independence, this did not bring an end to the ideological perspectives of colonial and imperial

discourse. Said explains that the decolonization of the Third World was brought about by a number of armed and cultural resistances, nationalist movements and with the rise of political parties and associations that aimed to establish the independent national identity of the colonized nations (1994:xii). The struggle that rooted itself in the regulation of human identity, ordained as a European project by the autonomy of the civilized and rational mind (Ashcroft 1999:145-6), took a historical turn but it still continued to revolve around its theme of differentiation and superiority. The fatality of oriental discourse has not got loosen its strong hold of shared imperial history yet. Said argues that the actors of postcolonial establishments have been involved on one hand, in a regretful attitude towards the loss of the good old days or the condemnation and complete denunciation of the past, and on the other, the politics of blame (1994:xii) that, in a search of new identities, has given fertile ground for the nurturing of strife, of the nationalist and fundamentalist mind. According to Edmund Burke, orientalism and nationalism, thus, have been progressing hand in hand, producing new boundaries of their old and new identities to distinguish themselves from each other (1998:495). This means that, on the other hand, there has been little effort for the decolonization of cultural representations and attitudes.

2.1 Postcolonial representation: the depersonalized and childlike 'victimology' of the Developing World

The infantilized portrayal of developing countries gained manifold realization with the disasters and economic crises of the past decades of the twentieth century in Africa and Asia. With the media's increasing demand for striking news and photographs of these regions and the possibilities offered by the progress of

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information technology, the mass media and humanitarian organizations have been constructing an ever more standardized, universal image of suffering in the Developing World, thereby even more reinforcing the sense of division and the cultural stereotypes (Campbell 2003) established by colonialism.

The depiction of helpless and vulnerable children and women – photographed alone and in masses – became standard representational practice of the tragedy of the Developing World. Dehumanized creatures, as dictionary definitions of Third World mass suffering, stand as iconic clichés of weakness and dependency. The objectification and the abstraction of refugee experience (Malkki 1996:388) constructed a kind of 'speechlessness' about Third World suffering, a 'universal victimology', depriving individuals of their own personal, social and historical context, and placing them in the category of helpless and mute creatures (Rajaram 2002:248, 251).

The 'victimology' of Africa presented in the news media and the fundraising campaigns of a number of humanitarian agencies, David Campbell explains, has been shaped as an infantilized and feminized place, the passive and pathetic world that depends on Western pity (2003). According to Heather Johnson, the gendered representation of the depoliticized figure of women and children does not stand only for the poor and lonely mother raising her children alone but it creates a cycle for the portrayal of the Developing World as a whole. The prevalent imagery of humanitarian crises in news coverage, showing feeble and hopeless women and children, who are dependent and in need of protection (Johnson 2006), underline the postcolonial understanding of the West and that of the exotic but weak 'Other'.

Such clichéd imagery of weakness and speechlessness is well reflected in two photographs, produced almost a century apart from each other. The first one taken around 1876-78 in Madras, India (Figure 2), shows victims of the famine that killed some ten million people (Campbell, Clark and Manzo 2005). While stationed in India, Captain Hooper photographed extensively people of different ethnic origins, hunting and Anglo-Indian life, and took a lot of pictures of the victims of the Madras Famine (RCS Photographers Project 2004).

The most striking feature of this image is that it was posed in a studio, objectifying the depicted people as examples of the famine. The victimology of the photograph – highlighted by the Imaging Famine project – is emphasized by the way it was set up and composed by the photographer. Here the photographer constructs the image of the dying, using his human subjects to best frame and capture his theme: Famine Madras.

With bare background, seated on a simple bench are centred the figures of the universal victim of a mother and her craving child. The two are surrounded by six men and children, who are hardly covered with some rags for clothing. The malnourished, seated figures all seem to be in need of physical support. One of the men is unable to sit up, while another man is held by a rope, possibly for support. This composition – probably staged – results in an indifferent, disrespectful and patronizing manner of depiction, depriving the depersonalized subjects of their dignity. Suffering, the central theme of the image, portrays the people as undeveloped, helpless 'Others'. The depiction of the miserable subjects constructs the essentialized suffering of the Third World.

Figure 2: Famine victims, Madras, 1876-77
Photo by Captain Hooper
Photo courtesy of Imaging Famine: http://www.imaging-famine.org/
(Original source: Sean Sexton collection)

Another, probably also posed photograph, taken in 1961 in the Congo (Figure 3), was used for an *Oxfam* advertisement in the 60s. The picture shows five undernourished, vulnerable figures, all in a pitiful state, waiting for aid. Juxtaposed with the photo of the famine victims of Madras, we can see how colonial representation constructed a patterned subjectivity, reflected in the *Oxfam* ad. The individual figures are completely decontextualized, they are portrayed as objects to define the theme of starvation.

The victimized figures are exposed to the viewer's gaze. The woman and the children – the universal dependants of Western support – are shown half or completely naked. In contrast, the background shows two pairs of black figures, all dressed and seeming

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healthy. The editors of Imaging Famine point out that the woman on the right side of the image was cropped in the ad and the two naked boys were probably told to cover their genitalia. The editors also emphasize that while at the time this image was used widely, since the mid-1980s *Oxfam* has been making policy changes to represent people in developing countries in a more respectful manner (Campbell, Clark and Manzo 2005). This photograph, used as a marketing device of humanitarianism, aims to define the suffering of Third World countries in an essentialized, fixed depiction of the universal, mute victim. The iconic photograph depersonalizes the five people of their individual contexts and establishes them as a clichéd abstraction of dependency, of childlike helplessness.

Figure 3: Congo, 1961
Photographer unknown
Photo courtesy of Imaging Famine: http://www.imaging-famine.org/
(Original source: International Committee of Red Cross, via Oxfam)

2.1.1 "Photogenic poverty"

John Hutnyk suggests that the use of images of children in depiction of the Developing World is one of the basic strategies and motivational tools of

humanitarian agencies (2004). This is due to the tendency, Michaela Paech explains, that the faces of vulnerable children attract women and mothers with young children between the ages of 35 and 44. In the United Kingdom statistics run by *Charities Aid Foundation* (CAF) and *National Council for Voluntary Organisations* (NCVO) illustrate that in 2002 more women contributed to charity organizations than men and that the most appealing causes for them were the causes of children and young people (2004).

Hutnyk asserts that rather than facing the real challenge of accepting the direct link between the abundance of the West and the economic and political struggle of the East, "we satiate ourselves with the charitable gestures and fantasies of childhood" (2004). The image of the cute child, innocence portrayed as the face of the infantile 'Other', as Hutnyk calls this depiction, "photogenic poverty" (2004), becomes a veil concealing the contexts underlying suffering. This Western ideology of "care and cavalier incursion", Hutnyk asserts, is part of the practices of both governments and NGOs. Consequently, the practice undermines the purpose. It will be about giving only, not about helping. If charity is only about giving, then, in Hutnyk's opinion, it becomes an alibi for avoiding the constructive approach of "structural redistribution". The author argues that "photogenic poverty" – cute children's photographs – transforms poverty into a naïve form of aesthetics. The reproduction of such images shows not the will for the redistribution of wealth but the continuous elaboration of poverty (Hutnyk 2004), in an endless, vicious circle. The colonial construction of social and symbolic order of authority between the dominant and the dominated one, the strong and the weak, the powerful and the powerless represented in images of

fixed and essentialized boundaries reinforces in stereotyping the practices of closure and exclusion (Hall 1997:258-9).

2.1.2 The photograph as evidence

Prem Kumar Rajaram says (2002) that these universal victims are depersonalized, depoliticized and dehistoricized through their confinement to visuality as they find themselves being used for the purposes of fundraising and advocacy. Through their special kind of powerlessness, women and children are confined to visual representation, which deprives them of their own voices and limits them to a mechanized, predictable "automaton", ready to be utilized for commodification. Paech points out that the iconic photographs of hungry children, selected to portray certain emergency and humanitarian crises, are often obtained from the abundant catalogues of stock photo agencies. The author explains that these types of photographs are mass-produced by photojournalists for such purposes and are often – ethically incorrectly – staged, thus causing potential donors to fall victim to the marketing strategy of the emotional appeal of fundraising. It is, of course, quite easy to deceive the Western public eye, which, as Paech asserts, generally cannot make a distinction between different cultures in Africa and in Asia, due to its lack of education about and depth of interest in the two continents (2004).

In the constant competition for donations, Amos Safo says, by showing the anonymous victimized and the hungry as a voiceless mass, there is a tendency among humanitarian organizations to provide a falsified image of helplessness in order to appeal to a wider audience. This, however, can claim counterproductive and rather than attracting donors' attention, it often results in their reluctance to contributing to

humanitarian causes (Safo 2002). The sight of yet another starving person in agony makes potential donors consider it a lost cause and a hopeless battle (Campbell 2003). The image of "Africa dying again" (Figure 4) employs the stereotypical notions of "photogenic poverty" and suffering in order to call onto the viewer's compassion. The market-oriented, decontextualized figure of the innocent child is aimed as an image of sensation. In order to rapidly reach hearts and pockets, it carries the photojournalistic clichés of public compassion for African suffering. Published in countless repetition, it results in numbness, rather than in the raising of public awareness concerning the complexity of development issues in individual countries.
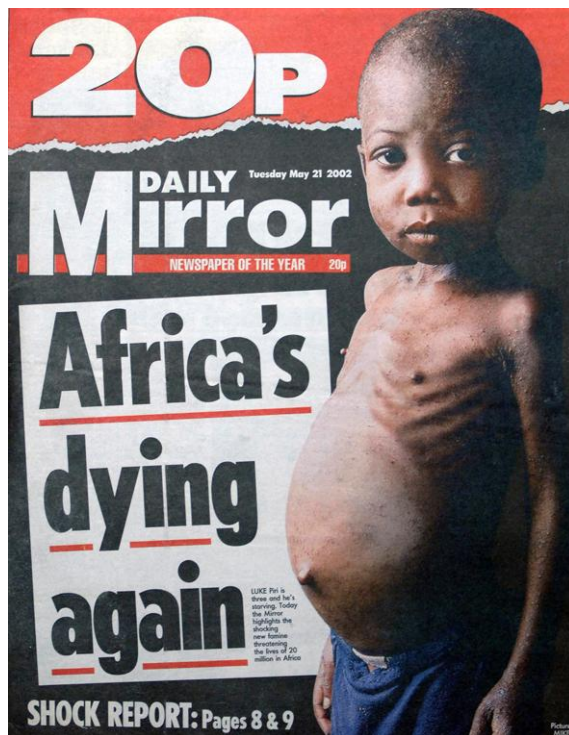
Figure 4: Daily Mirror, May 21 2002
Photo by Mike Moore, Mirror Group Newspapers
Photo courtesy of Imaging Famine: http://www.imaging-famine.org/

While one is being exposed to thousands of images daily, it is vital to consider the decision-making process how single photographs are selected for purposes of humanitarian agencies. A photo, Susan Sontag stresses, is always a construction, a decision what to include or exclude, which gives plenty of room for possible

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misinterpretation. An image can be successful in convincing the viewer of its authenticity because, as Sontag explains, the photo, as a single unit, corresponds with the nature of one's mind to freeze moments as images of memory frames. In the case of suffering, while depiction in a painting illustrates that things *like* the portrayed phenomenon have happened, the photograph, according to Sontag, claims to represent the *truth*, what was there in front of the camera, what can claim to be called an evidence (2003).

The problemacy of the photo as an evidence is further enhanced by its aesthetic quality. The more professional the image, the more effort is put into crafting a beautified depiction of the subject who is suffering, the better the viewer can relate to it, due to the carefully constructed aesthetics of the picture, satisfying the viewer's desire for the admiration of beauty.

The seemingly authentic photograph used for advocacy may also be deceptive, Paech says, because it is generally left without context or caption – merely portraying an objectified, hungry child – but it is reduced to the purposes of fundraising propaganda (2004). This decontextualized, global imagery illustrates a stereotypical experience of suffering, while obscuring many different experiences (Rajaram 2002). The depersonalized individual is lost in the mist of suffering and becomes a representative of a voiceless mass.

2.1.3 Need for a visual shift

Campbell calls onto photojournalists and humanitarian NGOs for a humanistic reform in visual representation, which should involve a regard for the dignity of the subject and the individuality of the human being. He says that putting emotional pressure on the viewer may solve problems only on the short-run. According to Campbell charitable organizations must reconsider their main purpose when making a conscious selection on photographs and should think about whether they only wish to raise public attention to get donations (2003) – while the images reconfirm colonial representational practices and power relations – or if they also aim to confront the traditionally embedded practices and change stereotypical Western thinking. Lars Staveland urges relevant NGOs to realize, it is not enough to show the image of suffering alone as an illustration of current humanitarian problems but they should take duty in giving a full context of the problems of developing countries, in order to educate the wider society (2003), to challenge current hegemonic standards and to establish a more humanistic approach that calls both for the attention of the eye and of the conscience, making the viewer seriously contemplate on the message of the photographs (Campbell 2003). In an effort to transform embedded colonial concepts and to revolutionize its visual expression, organizations like *Oxfam* and *Saving the Children Fund* have in recent years adopted new visual guidelines that abandon demeaning and victimizing ways of representation and try to show people within their own context and without pathos (Paech 2004).

2.2 Summary: Colonial and postcolonial representation of the Third World and the envisioning of alternatives

The iconography and the childlike representation of the Third World as 'the Other' of the West, have been determined by power relations since the nineteenth-century construction of the 'violent hierarchies' of colonialism. Social and symbolic order were given authority by the essentialized and fixed binaries and classifications of strong and weak, developed and backward, establishing stereotypes and creating practices of closure and exclusion. As the Western civilization of the nineteenth century defined itself in its reflection of the imperfect, underdeveloped body of the racially different counterpart, it also classisfied the subjectivity and the discourse of the barbaric, exotic, visually fascinating 'Other'. The power of photography as a mechanical tool to preserve those of the Rest, constructed a visual proof of imperial superiority. Colonial discourse and the practitioners of the subjectivity of the Orient gained full confidence with the means of photography that enabled them to map, capture and control their imaginary 'Other' and keep up and reproduce the boundaries of between the superior West and the primitive Rest.

Though with decolonization the physical borders of the empires disappeared, the reinforcing of boundaries has been continuing with the help of photography ever since. Through a continuous elaboration of reproducing images of "photogenic poverty", Western countries construct themselves an alibi for avoiding to face the real issues underlying suffering in the Developing World. By making poverty equal with the naïve aesthetics of cute children's photographs, Western governments and NGOs put on a superficial countenance of gallant and charitable attitude towards developing

countries. By doing so, they further widen the cultural and social gap caused by the colonization.

Charitable organizations and the news media have been using the word 'suffering' as a theme posted on their banner of advocacy in order to attract attention and receive donations. People living in developing countries have been stamped as depersonalized, mute objects, as 'universal victims' of mass suffering. The creation of the speechlessness and powerlessness of this victimology robbed individuals of their personal, historical and social context, and reduced them to images of helplessness. The power of photography as a tool to provide evidence and awaken strong emotions in viewers has created countless examples of infantilized and depoliticized subjects, while confined to visuality, these dehistoricized and silenced individuals have suddenly found themselves used for the purposes of fundraising and advocacy.

Today, the task of charitable organizations to envision alternative visual strategies for representing their 'clients', is a challenging one if we consider the contest they must take part in for the attention of potential donors. The challenge to abandon patronising methods of depiction of suffering and to keep the dignity and individuality of their subjects of the highest regard, to show people with context and without pathos (Paech 2004) calls for a concerted effort. Examples of *Oxfam* and *Saving the Children Fund* show that tendency is gradually changing as they realize that the helpless depiction has been proving counterproductive to their purposes and that people in need also deserve be portrayed with dignity as active agents. It is clear that the key to success can only be that relevant organizations, firstly, break consciously with their colonial heritage, secondly, understand their educational role towards the public, and thirdly,

consider those in need as equal partners and treat them accordingly, rather than making a compromise for the sake of money.

In the following, I consider how – in the light of prevalent representational problematics, – the symbolic capital of UNICEF for the advocacy of children's rights and its support by the almost universal acceptance of its Convention on the Rights of the Child is manifested in the international organization's visual policies. Afterwards, I analyze how, from the mid-1990s to the present day, UNICEF publication cover photographs used in a threefold communicational system – in general advocacy, fund-raising and programme communication – have been supporting the identity and credibility of UNICEF and thus its symbolic authority in the field.

CHAPTER 3: THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD AND ITS VISUAL REPRESENTATION AS A MEANS TO REINFORCE THE SYMBOLIC CAPITAL AND THE IDENTITY OF UNICEF

This chapter demonstrates that the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), as the major document determining the global mandate of UNICEF, is the framework that governs the organization's visual representational practices of children. Through the analysis of the Convention and UNICEF's photographic guidelines, I argue that UNICEF's concept of the rights-based child is envisioned in a threefold communication that combines a systematic approach in the visual representation of general advocacy, fund-raising and programme communication, in an effort to provide a truthful image of the child as a rightful subject. As UNICEF strives to depict the normative values of the CRC in the different avenues of communication, the photographs embody UNICEF's identity and demonstrate and reinforce UNICEF's symbolic authority as an advocate of children's rights.

3.1 Methodology

In my methodology, I concentrate on the analysis of UNICEF's internal photographic guidelines developed from the mid-1990s to the present day in order to understand how UNICEF constructs the image of the rights-based child. It is unfortunate that the exact years for the production of the photo guidelines were not available. Ellen Tolmie, UNICEF's senior photography editor said that the guidelines have been

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continuously developed from the mid-1990s but she was unable to be specific on the dates.

The study of the guidelines is followed by the analysis of twelve of UNICEF's lead images used in publications and campaigns in the same period. Unfortunately, I did not have access to UNICEF's photographic library, as it is only available for their staff. At the same time, I was told that in the coming year UNICEF would install a new software, allowing some of its collection to become available on a public site.

At first, I examined 90 UNICEF publication covers of brochures, pamphlets, reports, calendars and advertisements. These images were collected from three sources: firstly, calendar covers come from UNICEF's Regional Office in Geneva; secondly, images of other publications come from the archives of the Hungarian National Committee for UNICEF; and thirdly, the rest, mainly advertisements of National Committees and some publication covers from the internet: from UNICEF's main website, and other websites.

For the final analysis, I selected twelve lead pictures that best characterize UNICEF's visual development in conveying its mandate to advocate the human rights of children, as determined by the CRC. With regard to the sampling of the photographs, I was also interested to find out to what extent the photos carry characteristics of prevailing Western representational practices of the Developing World, and how they manage, over the years, to correspond with UNICEF's photographic guidelines. Since the guidelines had no specific publication dates, the photographs themselves served as

guides for establishing the linear progress of UNICEF's visual value transfer about the child as a rights-based subject.

With the help of Roland Barthes' constructionist approach, I explore the underlying message, the myth behind the surface level of the pictures, in order to understand how UNICEF's normative values of the rights-based child are depicted in the images, by which its symbolic authority is also strengthened in the field. Bearing in mind, as Douglas Harper argues, that the meaning of the visual image is constructed by the cultural and social biases of the producer and the audience (Prosser 1998:32), I also pay attention to how much the photographs reflect Western cultural preconceptions in order to attract potential donors and if the pictures manage to reach out for the worldviews of their subjects as well.

Information about the images and UNICEF's photographic practices were received from three key informants: Edit Kecskeméti, director of the Hungarian National Committee for UNICEF; Sylvie Pusztaszeri, product development assistant at the Private Sector Division of UNICEF's regional office in Geneva; Ellen Tolmie, deputy chief of the Internet, Broadcast & Image Section and UNICEF's senior photography editor at the Division of Communication (DOC), located at UNICEF's headquarters in New York. However, it has to be admitted that due to their workload, it was most difficult to extract information about the images from the New York office.

One of the main limitations of the paper is that while I was able to obtain UNICEF's internal photographic guidelines, which determine the organization's visual strategy on every level of communication, my efforts to contact some key UNICEF

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photographers who apply these guidelines in their daily work were unsuccessful. I enquired from DOC about the contact information of some of UNICEF's longstanding photographers and was told that they would seek the approval of these photographers for me to contact them. Unfortunately, however, I did not receive any further notice in this regard. The perspectives of professional photographers would have been beneficial for me in gaining a fuller picture of how UNICEF had been constructing its visual policies since the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990.

3.2 The visual aspect of the Convention

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by 192 nations of the 194 members of the UN's General Assembly, is the most commonly accepted international human rights treaty that recognizes the independence and the human rights of all children below the age of eighteen and sets forth their rights of universal values (UNICEF FAQ). Negotiated over a period of ten years by governments, NGOs, legal experts, social workers, educators and religious communities, the consensus document declares children independent subjects of their own rights, challenging prevailing tendencies that perceive them either as properties of their parents or helpless beings depending on charity (UNICEF FAQ). The overall aim of the Convention in pronouncing the rights of children, as obliging standards for guiding the policies and practices of governments, is to contest a needs-based approach towards children and transforming it into a rights-based understanding.

3.3 The depiction of the rights-based child in UNICEF's photo guidelines

In order to create a standard and exemplary representational practice of children, UNICEF has been developing visual guidelines for their photographers, editors and offices worldwide since the middle of the 1990s. Ellen Tolmie UNICEF's senior photography editor explained that the guidelines, covering a wide range of aspects of children's rights in line with the CRC, have been developed by UNICEF's Division of Communication (DOC), over the years as various representational issues arose. The guidelines find their basis in the almost universal ratification of the CRC, as a framework for the visual portrayal of children. The CRC, as a basic mandate document of UNICEF, offers among others the following points of reference for the photographic representation of children (UNICEF photo guidelines 8)[3]:

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[3] As pointed out by one of UNICEF's photo guidelines, CRC articles relevant to the visual depiction of children include (UNICEF photo guideline 8):

Article 1: "…a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years…".
Article 2: "…shall respect and ensure the rights…to each child…without discrimination of any kind…".
Article 3: "In all actions concerning children…the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration…".
Article 5: "…shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents or…legal guardians…in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child…".
Article 8: "…the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations…".

Article 12: "…shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child…in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child…".
Article 13: "The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds…either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice…"
Article 16: "No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation….The child has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks."
Article 17: "…shall…encourage the mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child…".
Article 19: "…shall…protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse….Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include…necessary support for the child…as well as other forms of prevention…of instances of child maltreatment…".

- The ensuring of rights to all children without discrimination (Article 2)

- Regard for the best interest of the child (Article 3)

- The assurance of the recovery and integration of child victims (Article 39)

- The treatment of the child with a sense of dignity and worth (Article 40)

3.4 Rights-based depiction in UNICEF's threefold communication

UNICEF's photographic guidelines determine the institution's goal for the visual portrayal of children in the contesting and the changing of the public perception of children from a needs-based to a rights-based understanding (UNICEF photo guidelines 2). The guides call onto photojournalists – both of UNICEF and of other agencies – to use images of children in a responsible manner, that is, rather than taking sensationalistic and cliché images of helpless creatures. They point out that especially in humanitarian crises and when representing victims of abuse and human rights violations, photographers should make sure that photos convey a positive and respectful message in which children are depicted as active agents of their fate (UNICEF photo guidelines 7).

Article 36: "…shall protect the child against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare…."
Article 39: "…shall take all appropriate measures to promote the physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child."
Article 40: "…the right of every child…accused of…having infringed the penal law to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child's sense of dignity and worth…"

While striving to document truthfully the lives of children, UNICEF highlights the importance of avoiding a polarized depiction of children. Highly conscious of the emotional impact of children's images, the global institution disapproves of an excessive use of photographs both of suffering and happy children. One of the guidelines asserts that the frequent use of such images builds on "the vulnerability of children and the desire of adults to protect and celebrate them" (UNICEF photo guidelines 4). The association in advertisements of children's images with products like cleaning detergents, awaken viewers' deepest feelings for the sacred notion of childhood (Wark 1995:36). Such pictures, according to UNICEF, violate the rights of children, who most often do not have a say in how they are portrayed. UNICEF points out that the excessive use of cute or pathetic photographs of young ones, rather than raising awareness, create numbness among viewers and potential donors. UNICEF's photo policies emphasize that the objectification of the idealized and sentimental aspect of childhood happiness make viewers feel good and reinforces the adults' own pleasant memories. However, it negates the notion of development and deprives viewers of the possibility to gain a truthful and realistic understanding of the complexity of the lives of children (UNICEF photo guidelines 6).

UNICEF's visual communication, Tolmie explained, is based on these photographic guidelines. Photographers and editors, she said, are expected to follow the guidelines when working on any projects for the Division of Communication that is in charge of the production and the maintenance of UNICEF's own photography collection. Tolmie also said that UNICEF prefers to work with photographers specialized in development-related photography and based in countries around the world. She noted that most photographers are employed by UNICEF on an assignment basis. From my

point of view, the local approach, Tolmie is referring to, helps two aspects of image production. On one hand, local photographers are often more realistic about local circumstances and less tempted to document humanitarian and development situations in a sensationalistic way. I agree with Paech who says that indigenous photographers, with their knowledge of local cultures and difficulties, with their inherent sensibility towards their subjects, may enhance a more balanced understanding of the Developing World and can be a good alternative for reforming current Western representational practices of developing countries (2004). This local perspective is also visualized in a number of photo stories by *Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF)*, presented on the organization's website at <http://www.msf.org>. What is also important, on the other hand, is that local photographers are also less likely to show their subjects in a fictional manner, rejecting the notion of 'the Other', and depicting children with dignity. UNICEF calls special attention to the contesting of 'othering' approaches, which are usually based on ethnic, national, gender and age differences (UNICEF photo guidelines 5).

Photographs for publications of general advocacy and programme coordination, Tolmie said, come from the Headquarters' main photo library, which mostly includes images produced in relation to UNICEF's photographic guidelines. On the other hand, images published in fund-raising – calendars, postcards – rarely come from the UNICEF collection. Sylvie Pusztaszeri, product development assistant at the Private Sector Division (PSD) of UNICEF's regional office in Geneva, said that photos for calendars are obtained from freelance photographers or image banks. She said this is because agencies have a wider variety of images, with "more effective and striking visual characteristics". According to Pusztaszeri, pictures of UNICEF's image

collection, on the other hand, are more specific on different advocacy and development themes. PSD strives to include images from a range of countries, always with a positive message. Pusztaszeri also noted that in the production process, they look at similar calendars made organizations such as *MSF*, *Oxfam* and *Amnesty International*. Since PSD products target the international market, they put a big emphasis on high quality images, not only for the cover, but for the whole calendar. Their aim is to produce an appealing product that the buyer can feel emotionally pleased about.

The general photo guidelines envision UNICEF's visual perception as systematically coordinated across the three avenues of the institution's communication (UNICEF photo guidelines 3): general advocacy (pamphlets, brochures, posters, advertisements, general annual report, articles, Web-sites), fund-raising (photo diaries, calendars, postcards and other gifts and souvenirs) and programme communication (programme and project specific reports and materials). Thus, by doing so, UNICEF is making a conscious effort, firstly, to raise questions on a global scale about the portrayal of children and the use of children's images and, secondly, to pave the way for other actors of the field of advocacy for children's rights and humanitarian development, as well as to agents of the news media, the entertaining and the advertising business for a more concerned and responsible way of visual representation.

A third important aspect that is at stake at UNICEF's visual portrayal practices of children is the organization's credibility and symbolic authority in the field. The photo guidelines also state that the possible misrepresentation of children's rights and that of the high standards of the CRC, can undermine the effectiveness of UNICEF's

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fundamental message and can lead to public accusations as well as to the diffusing

and the weakening of UNICEF's validity (UNICEF photo guidelines 3).

3.5 The different stages of depiction and the UNICEF "on-brand" image

The coming section analyzes some of UNICEF's lead and cover images published between the mid-1990s and 2008 in publications of general advocacy (brochures, advertisements), fund-raising (calendars) and programme communication (programme reports and materials). Based on these images and considering the fact that UNICEF's photo guidelines call for a systematic coordination between these three avenues of communication for the visual depiction of the rights-based child, I argue that this period can be generally divided into three distinct phases in the development of UNICEF's visual strategy. While there is also some overlap between the different periods among the three fields of communication, there is a visible line of development, systematization and a sense of direction of UNICEF's visual policy towards a single, well-definable identity.

The first period – following the Convention – from the mid-1990s until about 1998, can still be characterized by clichéd images of dependent, depersonalized children. The second phase, between about 1999 and 2002-3 strives to depict children contextualized in their wider life circumstances. This stage is mostly depicted with documentary images, showing children with their families and peers. Often important themes of UNICEF's mandate – like health and nourishment, education, equality, rights for development – are also prevalent topics in the photos. The last stage, from about 2003 until the present day, is what can be called as UNICEF's "on-brand" period. Lead photographs of UNICEF publications of this phase are most often close-ups of one child, looking into the camera. While bearing in mind UNICEF's mandate to be an advocate of the rights-based child, the photos also strive to portray a distinct

and refined style of UNICEF with the following "brand attributes": simple, optimistic, bold and contemporary (UNICEF photo guidelines 1).

It has to be also kept in mind that UNICEF's photo guidelines, as mentioned before, have been developed continuously since the mid-1990s. The guidelines have been used by all of the organization's offices, both at the Headquarters and at the regional offices, as well as the National committees worldwide, in order to demonstrate UNICEF's values and its symbolic authority in the field.

3.5.1 From the mid-1990s to 1998: The depersonalized child

As described above, the mandate of the CRC includes several articles that frame the visual characteristics of the rights-based child. However, the ratification of the Convention did not automatically mean that these criteria were immediately translated into visual representational practices. This period often portrays the child as a subject who has needs, rather than rights, consequently the images are more focused on raising funds than advocating the rights of the individual child. Several cover images of UNICEF publications show that in the late 1990s the depersonalized African or Asian child was the still characteristic portrayal of children in developing countries.

A 1996-brochure titled "Facts & Figures" (Figure 5), produced by UNICEF's Headquarters, shows the photo of a mother and a child, possibly in India or Pakistan, judging by the mother's dress. The mother and the child are photographed in the street, outside the protection of the home. It is uncertain where the photo was taken, the figures cannot be located to any specific environment, therefore seem groundless.

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The mother is sitting perhaps in a dusty street – there is some wild greenery behind them and possibly the wall of a house, – the child seems to be standing next to her, hanging onto her knee. Perhaps they live in the street. The mother is wearing two necklaces and the child has some bracelets; however, the mother's dress is torn at her arm. The child, probably a girl, is wearing a dress unfit for her young age. The family, or perhaps the single mother, seems to be poor. The child's hair is unkempt; something, perhaps grass or a long thread is tangled into her hair. The mother's hair is also untidy. It could also be that the photo was taken after a long day working in the fields. The Christian iconography of the image of the young mother and child as saintly and suffering is depicted in this photograph of hardship and trust, of poverty, courage and love. The image tells the viewer, especially potential Western donors, that UNICEF is looking after those in need, even in the far off corners of the world. People, even in scarcity can be hopeful of the future. In its stereotypical approach, the photo resembles Victorian paintings of the "fallen woman" who, cast out of her middle-class home with her illegitimate child, is huddling under one of the bridges of London.

Although UNICEF is trying to convey a positive message here – reflected in the loving smile of the mother, the trustful eyes and the grasping hands of the child – the photo is not dignified in the sense that it embodies Third World suffering and poverty in the decontextualized subjects of mother and child. The figures seem fragile and dependent, waiting for aid. This contrasts UNICEF's later strategy to only show positive images of people, where they are not objectified for their circumstances but are shown as active agents.
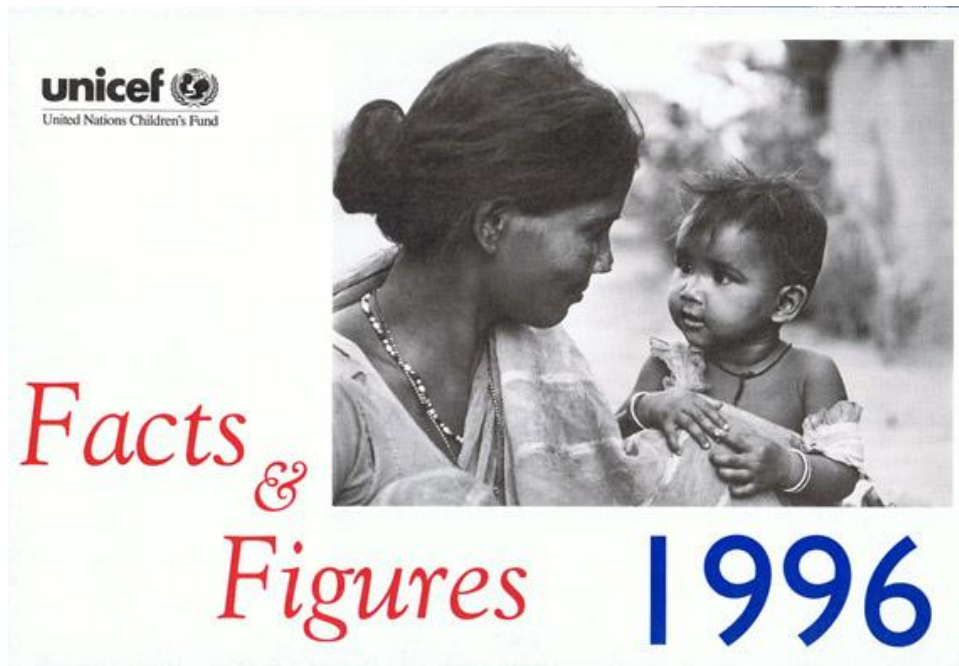
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Figure 5: UNICEF: Facts & Figures, 1996
Photo by Vilas

Another, in many ways similar, example is the cover photograph of the 1998-publication of "The State of the World's Children" (Figure 6). The photo shows two girls, who seem to be street-children, in India (UNICEF 1998). Their hair is untidy, their hands dirty. The dress of one of the girls is torn and dirty, while the smaller child is wearing a dress that resembles Western children's clothes. It was possibly received in an aid package. There is no clear background, we do not know where the photo was taken, which is disturbing, because it creates a feeling that these children have been lost, living in the streets and they are in need of help. They definitely do so because the smaller child is looking right into the eyes of the viewer, while the other one is looking up at someone trustfully. Both children are holding their hands as if distressed or asking for alms. The hands do also resemble the Christian iconography of the innocent one in prayer, begging for help.

A strange contradiction of the image is that while the publication's yearly issue focuses on child nourishment, the children do not look malnourished. I assume that

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the editors did not want to put the image of emaciated, starving children on the cover, on the other hand, they wanted to stress that poverty is a prevailing problem in the Developing World. I suspect that such a photograph would no longer be publishable as a lead image of a UNICEF report because it once again shows children in destitution. The two depersonalized figures embody poverty and call on Western consciousness to hearken onto the call of the prayers of the innocent.
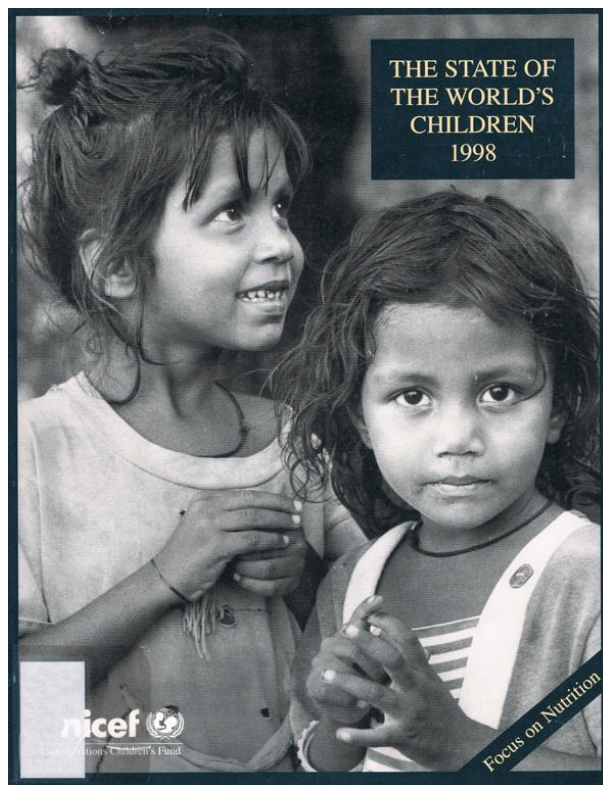

Figure 6: UNICEF: The State of the World's Children 1998
Photo by Dominica

The image that resembles most the postcolonial representation of Third World suffering in its dehistoricized depiction is a picture published in the mid-1990s on the cover of a pamphlet (Figure 7) made by the Hungarian National Committee for UNICEF. The photo shows a black child on his/her mother's bosom. The child, who is held tight and protected by the mother, is looking out of the picture and signalling with one hand. It could be a sign of being frightened but within the context of

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UNICEF, the image is saying that the baby is asking for help. Both mother and child are naked, obviously very poor. All they have is love, and once again this is an emotional appeal towards the Western public to demonstrate their love with donations. The positioning of UNICEF's logo implies that the organization looks after all African children in need.

A most unfortunate detail of the image is that it even shows the bare breast and the nipple of the mother. Although this is a detail that can only be noticed at closer examination, it is important because resembling colonial depiction, it essentializes African women as uncivilized, poor, naked and dependent on aid and Western education.
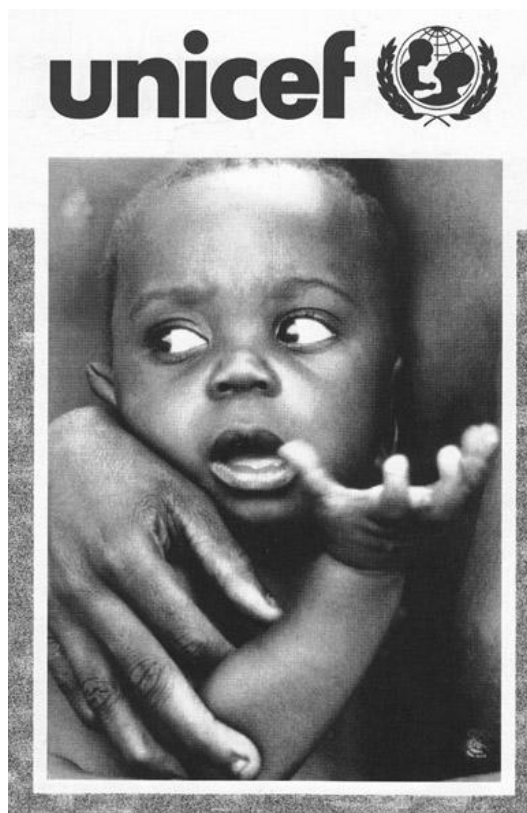

Figure 7: Hungarian National Committee for UNICEF, mid-1990s
Photographer unknown

Nevertheless, it would be unfair to state that all lead images in this period are overtly colonial. There are many covers that strive to give a more complex view of children's lives worldwide. The covers of UNICEF's Annual Reports between 1993 and 1996, for example, aim to provide a more global perspective. The photos do not limit UNICEF's perspective to Africa only. The cover images show a diversity of peoples from Asia – both South-East Asia and the Middle East – the Americas and Europe as well. By this, UNICEF is saying that their mandate is not limited to relief work only but it includes the rights of children in general. Accordingly, the 1996-cover (Figure 8) shows four images of children in different circumstances, emphasizing various themes of UNICEF: education, equality of the girl child, health, nourishment, family, the right of the child for development. This is also one of the few covers that show the importance of the relationship between father and child, rather than often showing a child and mother alone.
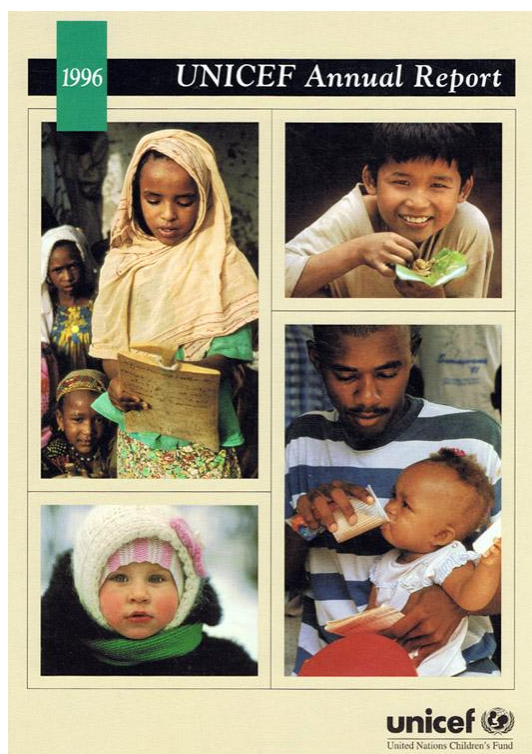

Figure 8: UNICEF: Annual Report 1996
Photos by Giacomo Pirozzi, Maines and Nicole Toutounji

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The children all look healthy, not malnourished, not dirty and not in messy clothes. Children looking into the camera do not cry for money, like in the previous photos building on the guilty conscience of the viewer. There is a sense of respect present for the individual figures represented. The images convey a positive message, saying, that these children – with the help of UNICEF – have the right, the potential and the chance to develop and lead a full life. The pictures also illustrate that UNICEF spends its donors' money on reaching these goals universally.

3.5.2 From about 1999 until 2002-2003: the life of the child

The last picture leads into the second phase of UNICEF's visual policy, depicting children in many different life circumstances. With this stage, the complexity of development is changing, the perspective shifts from relief to enabling development of different areas of life. Children are mostly portrayed through documentary images, living their lives with their families and peers. Often important themes of children's rights – like health and nourishment, education, equality and one's rights for development, – rather than only children's physical needs, are also prevalent topics in the photos. Childhood's important characteristic to have fun and to be happy also appears on various covers. This period can be characterized with a more conscious effort to portray children as rightful subjects.

A good example of this period is the 1999 cover of UNICEF's desk calendar (Figure 9). The photo shows father and daughter – possibly in South-East Asia – on a spring outing at the park. In contrast with the previous period, this image already at first

sight conveys a happy message with its vivid colours. The child is healthy and well-nourished, enjoying the full support of a family. She seems shy at the sight of the camera but the father does not mind the photo being taken. He is proud of his daughter and they seem to be having a good time together. The fact, that there are people walking in the background, puts the child also in the context of the society. Although this is a cover photograph of a fund-raising product, there is no hint about money based on the needs of the child. What is present though is the calling to mind of one's sweet memories of childhood. The marketing strategy of this photograph awakens not one's guilt but one's desire to spend on something beautiful, something that is precious for everyone: the carefree innocence of childhood.
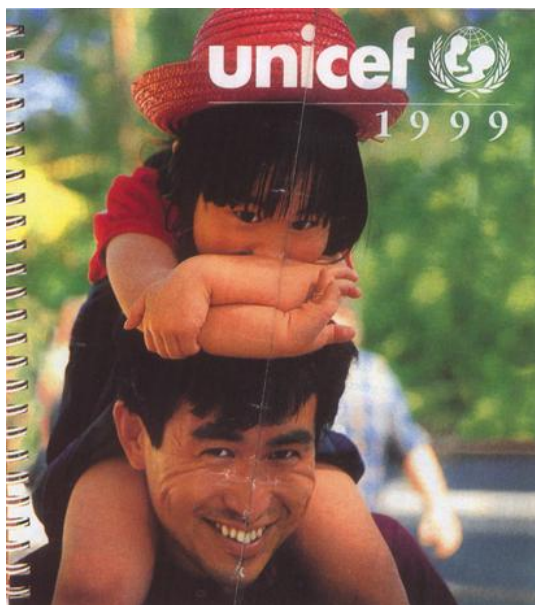

Figure 9: UNICEF desk calendar 1999
Photographer unknown

Regarding lead images of calendars, Pusztaszeri explained that photo selection for UNICEF's fund-raising or dated product is determined by the marketing strategies of the office. For example, surveys have shown that such products can be sold better if there is a single smiling girl on the cover (see Figure 12 on page 64). One reason might be, she said, that more women buy such calendars than men. Photos of a boy or

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two children, also documentary images that show children in complex situations can cause a sharp fall in sales.

Another fine example of this period is the cover of the 2002-report of The State of the World's Children, focusing on the theme of leadership (Figure 10). The cover unusually includes two images: one is the cropped version of the other. The full image – probably somewhere in South East Asia – shows a big group of people sitting on the ground. We can see women, men and children, possibly refugees, waiting in the midday sun, with what seem to be application forms in their hands. In the middle of the crowd though, we see a girl standing with full confidence. On her right side, possibly her mother and on her left perhaps her sister and father. The girl is well-dressed and healthy, once again there are no visible signs of hardship. She is holding a paper in her right hand, which conveys that she has been going to school, as she knows how to write and fill out the form. Also, she is holding some papers under her right arm. This entails that she is a responsible member of her family, as she may have collected all papers on behalf of her parents as well. She may be the only person in her family who knows how to read and write. Her face is lifted out of the crowd in the cropped and enlarged image, in order to portray the dignity of the individual. Although the size of the crowd reminds the viewer of the hard economic and social circumstances in some of the countries of South East Asia – which is part of the message UNICEF intends to bring across, – the photo aims to show that there is hope for the future as the next generations can become the potential leaders of society.
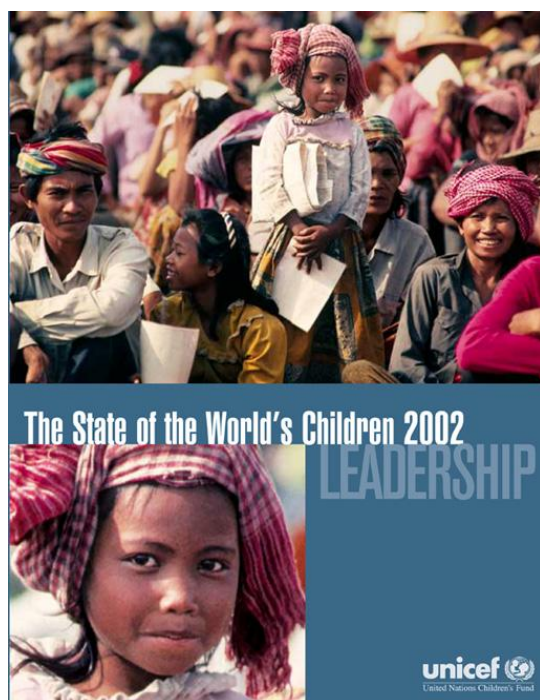
Figure 10: UNICEF: The State of the World's Children 2002
Photo by Roger LeMoyne

Finally, in this period is the 2000-cover photograph (Figure 11) of UNICEF's Annual

Report. It shows only one girl, older than the ones we have seen up to now. She is

probably about 10-12 years old, which is important if we consider that the CRC
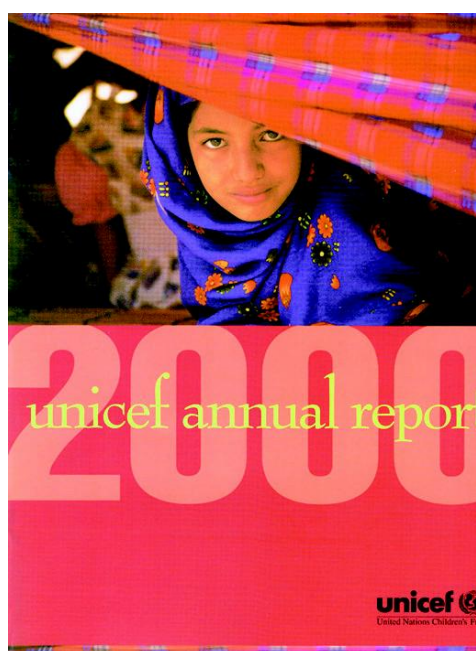
defines childhood up to the age of 18.

Figure 11: UNICEF: Annual Report 2000
Photo by Giacomo Pirozzi

The image shows a Muslim girl in a rural region of Asia. She is lifting up the front of a tent, stepping out of the private to the public sphere. The dress of another girl is visible behind her, in the darker part of the tent. The strong colours of the cover are also suggestive of the girl's transition from darkness to light, from poverty and deprivation to education, fulfilling her potentials. The chador she is wearing – in colours and pattern resembling her young age – does not cover her face. The image suggests that the double veil – both the tent and the girl's chador – has been lifted, the path is free for girls to receive education and have equal rights with boys, to become rightful members of society. The photograph is a credible reflection of UNICEF's mandate of the rights-based child, reinforcing the organization's symbolic authority. As opposed to postcolonial representation of dependency, this image resembles independence and equality, while also reminding of generations of deprivation.

3.5.3 From 2003 to the present day: "The UNICEF 'on-brand' image"

With the revolution of the digital age and the explosion of the possibilities of image-production as well as the constant competition it entails, UNICEF arrived at a point, when it needed an instantly recognizable, unmistakable identity for the visual representation of its mandate. The current style, which entered UNICEF's visual policy around 2003, is called the "UNICEF 'on-brand' image". This concept was created in an effort to establish a "brand identity" in UNICEF publications and to show a "coherent and consistent face to the world", whether portraying themes of health, education or equality (UNICEF photo guidelines 1). The photos of this period strive to portray a distinct and refined style of UNICEF with the following "brand

attributes": simple, optimistic, bold and contemporary. By this, UNICEF aims to represent a unified style that can be easily understood and distinguished from other children's organizations' publications. While still in light of the Convention's mandate, the attributes and the fresh colours – especially cyan, which has to be present on every publication cover (UNICEF 2008) – wish to define a confident and youthful style, reflecting a visionary organization (UNICEF photo guidelines 1).

Lead photographs of UNICEF publications of this phase are most often close-ups of one or maximum two children, looking into the camera. While portraits, the photos attempt to document the real life situations of the children and portray the content of the publications in a summary. Cover images of calendars continue to show happy, confident children, but lead photos of other publications also convey a positive message. The photos have less of the depths of traditional documentary photographs, which were more prevalent in the previous period. Documentary images are still important for UNICEF but from now on they mostly appear inside publications.

Three such examples that underline this new strategy are the cover photograph of UNICEF's desk calendar in 2006 (Figure 12) and the covers of the Annual Reports in 2006 (Figure 13) and 2004 (Figure 14).
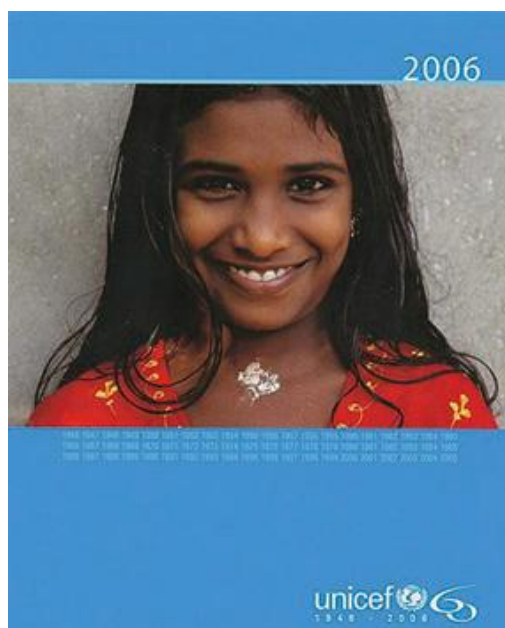
Figure 12: UNICEF desk calendar 2006
Photo by David Sanger

The 2006 calendar cover shows the close-up of an Indian girl, dressed in a traditional gown. It is clear that her dress does not come from an aid package; it matches well her age and cultural background, so in that sense, it is truthful of her reality. This also implies that she is confident in her own environment. While there is no obvious context present in the photograph, it is clear that she is not a street child, she is not lost and probably has a family. Her bright countenance is contrasted against the grey background, possibly meaning that even against the daily odds that her family has to face, she keeps happy, with confidence and a vision for the future. The portrait of the girl is refined, like most calendar covers, applying striking colours and simple structure.

Calendar covers of this period are generally portraits of smiling children, mostly girls. The complexity of children's lives receives less attention on the covers. This, however, can endanger UNICEF's policy decision against the use of too many cute

children's images, and further more, be counteractive to the organization's credibility to show a truthful image of children's lives.

A similar but stronger message is portrayed on the cover of UNICEF's 2006-annual report (Figure 13), showing a young girl, who was displaced by the conflict in the Central African Republic (UNICEF 2007b). Thus, the figure of this girl tells a story about her historical and political context, she is no longer a depersonalized creature. The image is a statement on UNICEF's role in the Central African Republic, in providing relief supplies to the displaced people of the conflict.
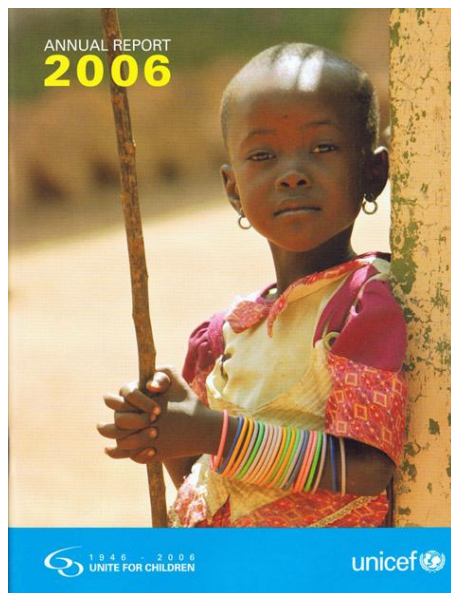

Figure 13: UNICEF: Annual Report 2006
Photo by Michael Kamber

The girl, who may be about 6 years old, is clean and dignified, upright and confident about herself. The stick in her hand suggests that despite her young age, she knows who she is and is aware of her rights. She is not only a playful child, but seems like a responsible individual with a bright future. She is not deprived or starving, but well-dressed, wearing jewellery as well. She is leaning against what might be a doorway of

her home, meaning that even though they have no permanent place to stay, she has protection and probably a family to support her.

It is important to include in this section a yet again different lead photograph in the family of "on-brand" images. The cover of the 2004-annual report (Figure 14) depicts a small child in his mother's arm, probably in Russia. This is the year of the Beslan school massacre, in which 186 school children were killed. The photo, therefore, aims to convey the message of an optimistic future. The baby looks frightened but the mother – also corresponding with the protection UNICEF can offer children – keeps him safe in her arms, so the child can look with confidence towards the future. Despite the horrors that happened at that school, children of the next generation have nothing to worry about. In this photo, while keeping the brand attributes in focus, UNICEF once more makes a statement about its global mandate in a historical context.
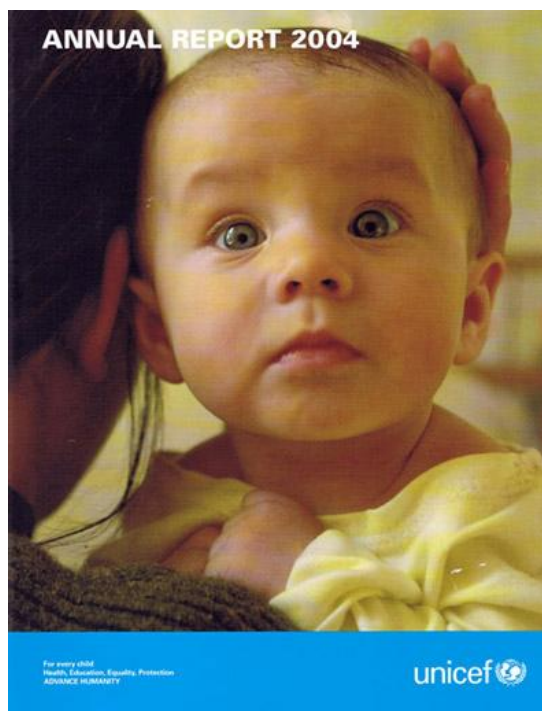
Figure 14: UNICEF: Annual Report 2004
Photo by Giacomo Pirozzi

Since this image shows a baby and considering that it is in the context of the Beslan massacre, this is the only photo in this section that talks about children's dependence, not only their rights. However, as opposed to the postcolonial depiction of 'othering' dependence, here we see a white child in need of protection, which suggests racial equality.

3.5.4 Bold and contemporary: but at what price?

While the "on-brand" image was conceptualized by UNICEF Headquarters, the definition of attributes like bold and contemporary may vary greatly in different parts of the world. Due to the decentralized nature of UNICEF, National Committees have a great amount of freedom to regulate their fund-raising and advocacy work in their individual countries. Edit Kecskeméti explained that while the National Committees have to keep their functioning in line with the values of UNICEF's mandate, based on the environment where they carry out their work, their cultural approaches may differ a lot. The independence of the National Committees thus creates a challenge for UNICEF to keep its symbolic authority and the representation of its normative values constantly in considerable consensus (Dijkzeul 1997b).

The following two education campaign ads – created by the National Committees of Turkey and Germany – are contradictory examples as to how much this consensus is achievable in different cultural climates and what problems they may entail.

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An outstanding example of an educational campaign is the photograph produced by UNICEF's National Committee in Turkey (Figure 15). The campaign was started in 2003 with the cooperation of the Ministry of Education, in order to advocate gender equality and equal rights for education. The committee's website explains that the campaign also addresses issues of domestic violence, early marriage and the recurring problem of the non-registration of the girl children after birth (UNICEF Turkey N.d.).

Figure 15: UNICEF Turkey, 2006
Photographer unknown
Photo courtesy of www.adverbox.com.

The black and white image, made in 2006, shows the half profile of a teenage girl, with a dark blue teardrop rolling down her cheek. The girl seems to be standing in the doorway, she is half-covered by the door-post. She cannot go outside, deprived of the chance to develop her potentials fully. She cannot go to school, she is forced behind the door, in the private sphere of the home. The colour of the image also speaks about her deprivation. The only thing that is live about her is her teardrop, otherwise she is denied of her freedom and the freedom of her mind. Her unkempt hair may mean that she was abused at home but the ad may also try to say that she is a peasant girl. She may also be a young wife, forced into early marriage. I think the advertisement is

successful by addressing an important social issue, in a simple, smart and fresh way. At the same time, it does establish a cliché of the non-educated rural girl, although it avoids postcolonial renditions of dependency.

The other ad campaign, which has been the cause of much turmoil among bloggers, was made by the German committee of UNICEF as part of an advocacy campaign for education in Africa (Figure 16). On behalf of the German committee, press officer Rudi Tarneden stated that these images were part of the campaign "Schools for Africa" with the aim to show German children's solidarity with children in Africa. Tarneden said that prior to the publishing of the ads they "had carefully discussed possible misinterpretations and the agency had also tested public reaction in a survey" but apparently, they received no negative comments from the German public. What is more, the ads were published free of charge by leading German newspapers and magazines, including the Frankurter Algemeine Zeitung, Spiegel, Die Zeit and Stern (Black Women in Europe 2007).

Figure 16: UNICEF Germany: "Schools for Africa", 2007
Advertisement by Jung von Matt.
Photos courtesy of Black Women in Europe.

So what do we see here? Four German children, whose faces have been mudded with dark paint, to make them look like Africans. The dark faces are juxtaposed against the light background and the children's light clothes. While Tarneden said that their intention was to demonstrate solidarity, the ad suggests that with a little bit of paint or mud, Western white kids can be transformed into uneducated and dirty African children, the essentialized definition of the postcolonial creature of humanitarian relief. The images convey that the masquerade of becoming African, 'the other', is easy. It does not imply any complexity: being African fundamentally and stereotypically equals with being dirty, uneducated and uncivilized. This fixed simplicity is also reinforced by the slogans written in the pictures:

 "In Africa many children would be glad to worry about going to school."

"In Africa children don't go to school late, but they don't go at all."

"I am waiting for my last day of school. Children in Africa are still waiting for their first day."

"Some teacher sucks. No teachers suck even more."

While advertising companies depend on fresh and striking ideas to be more appealing to wider audiences, I think this is not the approach that the policy of a UNICEF committee can afford, especially "after careful consideration of possible misinterpretations", and even more so with the social history of Germany. This was reflected in the fact that while the ad was developed for the time of the G8 summit held in Germany in June 2007, due to the negative response that UNICEF received from the internet community, the ad was removed from the official German website (Black Women in Europe 2007).

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3.6 Summary: Global vision vs. national rendition

The ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by nearly all members of the UN's General Assembly, determined a clear concept for UNICEF to create a visual strategy for the representation of the child as a rightful subject. From the mid-1990s UNICEF has been making a well-definable effort to embody this also in publications of its three avenues of communication: general advocacy, fund-raising and programme communication. As we have seen, from that point on three distinct styles of depiction can be distinguished, with a clear line of progress towards the creation of a "brand identity". The first phase – from the mid-1990s until about 1998 – still includes postcolonial images of displaced adults and children, portrayed as dependent on Western aid. The second period – between 1999 and 2002-3 – intends to render children as rightful subjects, shown in real circumstances in the tradition of documentary photography. The final stage – from about 2003 until the present – has been visually establishing UNICEF's "brand identity". This period has been producing cover photographs based on the attributes of being "simple, optimistic, bold and contemporary". The intention behind this strategy has been to create a refined, unique and immediately distinguishable style for UNICEF publications, with often one child appearing on the cover.

The above attributes are the global aims of all UNICEF offices. However, due to UNICEF's decentralized character, the translation of these attributes can result in culturally different and controversial renditions in various countries. The German committee's ad campaign "Schools for Africa" has shown that developed countries still see questions of Africa and Asia with the postcolonial eye of superiority, offering

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their solidarity to the depersonalized 'Other'. Thus, UNICEF's global symbolic authority, conscientiously built by a centralized system of intelligence throughout the years, can still be shaken when it comes to individual nations' relating to ethnic, national or gender differences.

CONCLUSION

With the almost universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, UNICEF was transformed into a transnational entity with a global agenda. The CRC established UNICEF as an international player with a new object of governmentality for the advocacy of the human rights of children worldwide. With a new identity and with a new purpose in mind, UNICEF set out to strengthen its presence by accumulating various forms of capital that would help reproduce its identity and credibility and create forms of discourse for the regulation of its conduct and that of the wider community. Through its possession of symbolic capital – socially accepted and legitimized authority – UNICEF aims to regulate and transform perceptions of children from a needs-based to a rights-based premise.

A big challenge in this mission of UNICEF has been the prevailing visual practices that NGOs, governments and the news media are using in their representation of the Third World. The 'victimology' and the childlike portrayal of 'the Other' are rooted in colonial hierarchies of power. The fixed boundaries of the West and the Rest, the strong and the weak, the developed and the uncivilized were constructed by the scientific knowledge that colonial photography produced. However, the images of "photogenic poverty" (Hutnyk 2004) continue to reflect Western superiority. Photographs of cute children, used in humanitarian representation, reflect a Western gallant attitude towards developing countries, by translating poverty and suffering into a naïve form of aesthetics, and thus, creating an alibi for avoiding to face real structural causes of the problems in Third World countries (Hutnyk 2004).

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In light of the Convention, UNICEF has been making a conscious effort from the mid-1990s to contest this dehistoricizing, needs-based visual perception. Through guidelines developed for the regulation of its own photographic production, UNICEF has been constructing three avenues of communication – general advocacy, fund-raising and programme communication – for a more systematic representation of the rights-based child. Based on the analysis of twelve cover images of UNICEF publications from the mid-1990s to the present day, I argue that UNICEF's visual strategy has developed in three stages. The first period – between the mid-1990s until about 1998, still includes overtly colonial images of dependent, depersonalized children. The second stage – between 1999 and 2002-3 – aims to render children as rightful subjects, as active agents of their own lives, shown through traditional documentary images. The final period – from about 2003 until the present, – has constructed UNICEF's "brand identity", which calls for a visually more refined, distinct style for UNICEF publications. In order to establish a visual brand for UNICEF, lead photographs of publications are expected to carry the following attributes: "simple, optimistic, bold and contemporary".

However, due to the decentralized nature of UNICEF, reaching of a consensus regarding the visual depiction of these attributes is not always easy. National Committees for UNICEF – as self-subsisting NGOs, – while carrying out the mandate of the CRC, also function according to their own cultural climate. The German office's campaign "Schools for Africa" has shown that developed countries still tend to express their solidarity through stereotypical clichés of depersonalized figures. The symbolic authority that UNICEF's rationale of governmentality has established is thus still vulnerable to Western 'gallant' attitudes towards global diversity.

I believe that further research on UNICEF's visual representation of children could also focus on how the development of the institution's photographic policy has been influencing the work of likeminded NGOs and the news media. In addition, it could be beneficial to re-track what historical conditions made colonial representational practices widespread. To further advance the present study, it would also be worth exploring the development process of UNIFEM's visual portrayal of women and juxtapose it with the present findings.

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