Seeking "empowerment" in the classroom: a look at two educational programs targeting the girl child in India and Turkey

by Cayley Elizabeth Pater

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Abstract

The "empowerment" of the global "girl child" through education has emerged as a popular focus of international development schemes since the turn of the century, rooting itself in liberal notions of individualism and capitalist economic perspectives. How do universalized conceptualizations of "empowerment" create constraints on girls' cultural, linguistic and occupational freedoms? This study examines two programs that aim to improve girls' situations across diverse regions: *Educate Girls* in India and the *Association for the Support of Contemporary Living (Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği - ÇYDD*) in Turkey. This paper addresses two ideological foundations of "empowerment" within mainstream development discourse as they are reflected in the programs' designs: (1) prioritizing the girls' economic advancement and (2) an assumption of their psychological "interiors." Both initiatives seek to increase girls' access to and retention in formal education systems as well as cultivate their personal and social development through training and counseling activities. The socioeconomic shifts in Turkey and India, both recently and historically, create important opportunities to understand the impact of globalization on what it means to be a girl and how girls' empowerment emerges in these contexts. The diversity of localized needs in terms of improving girls' lives resists generalization across regions or countries, especially when comparing urban and rural contexts. I argue that education as a means of girls' empowerment demands an interrogation not only of its curricular content, but also of the content's local applicability and tendency to discriminate against rural lifestyles. This work is intended to offer insight into programs that address girls' needs on large scales and therefore has implications for the way similar program models may be designed in the future.

Abstract (Español)

El "empoderamiento" de la "niña" a nivel global a través de la educación ha surgido desde un enfoque popular de los planes internacionales de desarrollo a partir del cambio de siglo, y se origina en las nociones liberales del individualismo y en las perspectivas económicas capitalistas. ¿Cómo refrenan conceptualizaciones universalizadas de "empoderamiento" las libertades culturales, lingüísticas y profesionales para las niñas? Este estudio examina dos programas que pretenden mejorar las situaciones de niñas a lo largo de regiones diversas: Educar a la Niñas en la India y La Asociación de Apoyo a la Vida Contemporánea (*Çağdaş Yasami Destekleme Derneği - ÇYDD*) en Turquía. El mismo se centra en dos fundamentos ideológicos del "empoderamiento" en el discurso del desarrollo desde la corriente principal, ya que se reflejan en los diseños de los programas: (1) el priorizar del progreso económico de las niñas y (2) la suposición de sus "interiores" psicológicos. Ambas iniciativas procuran aumentar el acceso y la permanencia de las niñas en los sistemas educativos formales, además de cultivar su desarrollo personal y social a través de actividades de formación y asesoramiento. Los cambios socioeconómicos en Turquía e India, tanto recientemente como históricamente, crean oportunidades importantes para comprender el impacto de la globalización en lo que significa ser una niña y cómo el empoderamiento de niñas surge en estos contextos. La diversidad de las necesidades localizadas en la mejora de vida de las niñas se resiste a la generalización a lo largo de las regiones o los países, particularmente cuando se comparan los contextos urbanos y rurales. Yo sostengo que que la educación como medio de empoderamiento de las niñas exige interrogarse por no sólo de su contenido curricular, sino también por la aplicabilidad local y la tendencia a discriminar a los estilos de vida rurales. Este trabajo tiene por objeto entonces ofrecer conocimiento sobre los programas que aborden las necesidades de niñas en gran escala y por lo tanto tiene implicaciones en la manera en que los modelos programáticos similares pueden diseñarse en el futuro.

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I would like to express my appreciation for those who have supported and advised me during this long and involved project. I especially want to thank my parents, particularly my Dad, for his willingness to read, give kind words of encouragement and thoughtful feedback on my work over the past two years.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Allaine Cerwonka, for her dedication to this study. Her invaluable insight showed me how issues related to development work "in the field" are intimately linked to theoretical phenomena, such as understandings of human agency. It was also her kind words of wisdom that helped me to open up my many questions about development work and women's and girls' empowerment projects, which I had coming into this MA program.

Many conversations inside and outside of the classroom, with friends and colleagues, have guided me to unpack difficult and sometimes contentious issues. During my field work, I had many friends and acquaintances along the way whose conversations and recommendations made this project possible. One person in particular is Demet Gülçicek, who I met through the Women's Studies department at Middle Eastern Technical University. I want to acknowledge her role as an interpreter during the interviews with ÇYDD and her generous support afterwards. I am grateful for her enthusiasm for this project and even more for the lifelong friendship that has blossomed as a result.

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Introduction

The ways that girls define themselves and relate to the societies in which they live is undoubtedly informed by the tools with which they are taught to do so. An important component of their subjectivity formation is how girls learn to value or devalue their mother languages, community traditions, and local occupational opportunities in educational programs, particularly those that aim for their "empowerment." While it is true that education can be a useful tool in fostering a transition from the "we as object" to the "we as subject" for females in male-dominated societies, as Celia Amorós Puente (as cited in Cobo, 1997, p. 55) defines as a transition in the process of a feminist emancipation, the notion of subjectivity within "patriarchal"[1] societies cannot be taken as self-evident. The push for girls' participation in public education systems has arisen as the mainstream tactic of many international campaigns to improve girls' situations globally. Girl-centered programs such as Educate Girls in India and ÇYDD (the Association for the Support of Contemporary Living -- Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği) in Turkey, the two I focus upon in this case study, seek to improve girls' lives on a holistic level through integration into formal education programs as well as their own trainings and workshops. Their program designs are based upon a particular conceptualization of "empowerment" that is historically and politically situated in a cultural context that can be located in colonial history, development discourse and recent American girl culture movements.

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[1] I am hesitant to use the term *patriarchy* without quotes because, like "empowerment," it calls for a localized situatedness in order to be effectively applied and representative of any community, as Rowbatham (1981) argues that gender inequality on a global scale cannot be traced to any one particular structure.

Driven by my longstanding interest in issues related to globalization, varied definitions of development, feminism, and cultural relativism, I decided to do an analysis of two specific program models focused on girls' education in order to map out how patterns of "empowerment" are constructed and related within a larger global project historically based upon neoliberal ideology and modern subjectivity. Discussions about "the girl child" over the past decade, which I will explain in more detail later, reflect a traveling concept of "empowerment" across international initiatives that seek to address the needs of girls in developing countries specifically. Interpal Grewal's (2005) discussion of knowledge production within the context of globalization points to a kind of imperialism that is enacted through neoliberal ideology with regard to human subjectivity. In her chapter, "'Women's Rights as Human Rights': The Transnational Production of Global Feminist Subjects," she explains how "transnational connectivities" have emerged within human rights discourse: "human rights regimes became powerful also because they envisioned political action in terms of the struggle for rights, and thus produced discourses that became normative in creating modern subjects" (p. 123). Her description of feminist causes that have been swept up in this ideology illustrate how the mainstream "empowered girl" has evolved accordingly and has spread to places like India and Turkey through modernization processes.

This study examines two educational programs primarily directed at girls: *Educate Girls* in India and the *Association for the Support of Contemporary Living (Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği -- ÇYDD)* in Turkey. In this project, I aim to address the following question and its related parts: How do mainstream conceptualizations of "empowerment" in development discourse create constraints on girls' cultural, linguistic and occupational freedoms? This paper seeks to address the ways in which these two organizations focus on two specific aspects that embody contemporary definitions of empowerment: (1) their individualized economic advancement and (2) uplifting the psychological "interior" of the

girls. Both initiatives seek to increase girls' access to and retention in mainstream governmental education programs designed to cultivate girls' educational and occupational opportunities by addressing their "interior" development as well as economic access. The social, economic and cultural changes in Turkey and India, both recently and historically, create important opportunities to understand the impact of globalization and colonization on what it means to be a girl and how girls' empowerment emerges in these contexts.

Using a feminist[2] perspective, this study explores the program literature as well as individual staff members' perceptions of the program models to investigate their goals of putting girls in mainstream modern formal educational systems with a particular idea of social and intellectual transformation in mind. The diversity of localized needs in terms of improving girls' lives resists generalization across regions or countries, especially when comparing urban and rural contexts. I argue that education as a means of girls' empowerment demands an interrogation not only of its curricular content, but also of the content's local applicability and tendency to discriminate against rural lifestyles. This work is intended to offer insight into programs that address girls' needs on large scales and therefore has implications for the way similar program models may be designed in the future.

Problematizing the imagined global sisterhood in development work

Ahistorical and acultural assumptions about non-western societies make it difficult for development organizations to define "girls' empowerment" in a manner that does justice to the immense diverse global contexts in which the concept is applied. An imagined "global

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[2] My definition of a feminist perspective necessarily involves a postcolonial critical outlook based upon intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), or possibly more appropriate, an awareness of assemblages (Puar, 2005) in order to understand constructions of 'girl' identities in cross-cultural contexts.

feminism," as described in Robin Morgan's (1984) influential work, *Sisterhood is Global: the international women's movement anthology*, allows for imperialist assumptions about forms of oppression that women/girls experience to emerge, which do not take local contexts into account. In the realm of international development work, such assumptions sometimes manifest in the form of maternalistic programs that ground their work on a need for saving the less fortunate "sisters" in so-called "underdeveloped" or "developing" countries (Enloe as cited in Davids and Van Driel, 2005). Many feminist scholars write to combat the notion of feminism and female liberation sprouting from a Western base, including Chandra Mohanty, Interpal Grewal, Sara Ahmed, Oyeronke Oyewumi, Uma Narayan and Lila Abu-Lughod. As Mohanty (1997) explains, the imagined female "we" creates "an already constituted, coherent group with identical interests and desires, regardless of class, ethnic or racial location, or contradictions" (p. 258). Despite these useful discussions in academic spaces, the world of development work targeting "the girl child" has yet to reflect such insights.

In order to understand the historical context in which imperialist feminist movements have articulated the needs of "sisters" in non-western societies, it is important to look at examples of language and discourse within transnational women's organizations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Leila Rupp (1996) stresses the consequences of creating a "universal sisterhood," which she argues is a concept entrenched in empire mentalities. Many organizations, namely the International Council of Women, Women's International League for Freedom and the International Congress of Women, emphasized the global aspect of women's movements during the 19th and 20th centuries. Rupp points out that these transnational organizations originated and developed in Europe and "neo-Europes," otherwise known as countries including the United States, Canada and Australia (p. 8). The membership base was also largely of European origin, although there was strong representation of African-American women by the 20th century.

Upper and middle class British women who supported the colonial regime in India employed a nationalist discourse in justifying their duty to "civilize" Indian women; presumably their duty as self-constituted superiors to their colonized counterparts (Burton, 1994). While concern for the wellbeing of others is indeed a productive human cause, it is the way in which people justify and describe human rights as universal that problematizes this concern. As Grewal (1998) describes in the case of analyzing Eurocentric definitions of human rights, scholars have questioned the extent to which individualistic models are justifiably imposed on societies that function in fundamentally differing ways. She discusses the topic of "women and the universalizing discourse of human rights," in which she refers to the work of Kothari and Sethi, from their book *Rethinking Human Rights,* in which they ask "whether women in many parts of the world can be seen as autonomous individuals outside the structure of the family or whether the problem of their oppression can be addressed by attacking the very families that support many women" (p. 505). The ways in which British women imagined Indian women's lack within a colonial project is fixed within a framework that fails to complicate their interpersonal relationships in their respective communities.

Rupp (1996) connects the history of the international women's organizations mentioned above to contextualize "tensions within contemporary international feminism" (p. 11). She refers specifically to conferences sponsored by the United Nations during the Decade for Women, between 1975 and 1985. Yuval-Davis (2006) also refers to this tension in the development of the "sisterhood is powerful" slogan from the 1970s during the Second Wave feminist movement (Morgan as cited in Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 276). She explains that the argument assumed that all sisters "share the same condition of oppression, and the same situated gaze of the world" (p. 276). The gaze that confines females, particularly girls in this analysis, to the same oppressions is placed specifically upon those in developing countries, who have been situated in a position to be lifted out of their homogenized misery.

In briefly looking at histories of colonization and global capitalist systems, sources of female oppression prove multifaceted; implicated within layered structures of dominance and can therefore not be simply taken at face value. Additionally, imperialist projects in the name of "modernity," such as those that take place within educational models, are enforced without overt critique. Possibly because their consequences, such as widespread assimilation and urbanization, occur quietly and without necessary inquiry as to what their cultural consequences might be. Mohanty (2003) opens the topic "Colonialism, Class, Gender" with an insightful quote from Helen Callaway:

> The case might be argued that imperial culture exercised its power not so much through physical coercion, which was relatively minimal though always a threat, but through its cognitive dimension: its comprehensive symbolic order which constituted permissible thinking and action and prevented worlds from emerging (p. 57).

As Callaway suggests, it is these imposed frameworks that have inhibited possible realities from coming into existence, including situations in which girls in developing countries could benefit from encouragement to appreciate their specific cultural lineages while exploring their own forms of empowerment. In order to change formal education systems so that they prioritize local specificity, there is clearly a need of "pivoting the center," as Bettina Aptheker calls it, which Mohanty (2003) discusses in her book *Feminism without Borders* (p. 44).

The global "girl child" and the United Nations

Following the global effects of the Washington Consensus in the 1980s and the fall of socialism in the early 1990s, a new development ideology emerged out of the implementation of neoliberal policies on a global scale, which have consequently shaped imaginings of

women and the "girl child," most notably in the Global South. The world experienced a huge shift in development perspectives based upon liberalization and a globalized economy that have persisted up until now (Heron, 2008). The shift in economic policies that prioritized open markets, free trade and privatization resulted in "a deterioration of the human condition" such that "the quality of life of the poor in particular as deteriorated" (Heron, 2008, p. 86). Heron explains how western ideologies that have essentialized individualistic tendencies have dramatically changed global understandings of human agency according to capitalist interests. The impact on women's and girls' issues resulted in a discourse based upon capitalist globalization.

Historical accounts of the women's activism within the United Nations, such as the first decades of the Commission on the Status of Women, have overrepresented feminist participation from countries such as the United States and the European Union, which Hilkka Pietilä (2007) illustrates in her work, *The Unfinished Story of Women and the United Nations.* While women from countries of the Global South have historically contributed a great deal to UN discussions on development and women, a silencing of Third World feminist voices seems to persist. One example is Peggy Antrobus' (2004) historical account of the first years of the United Nations, she describes Eleanor Roosevelt as a central actor in the global women's movement while barely giving credit to women of the Global South, she reproduces the idea that women from developed countries were at the forefront of UN development policy-making, insinuating that feminist movements were stronger there. Her references to more recent times, such as global women's movements during the UN Development Decades from the 1960s-1970s, delineate how the United States and the European Union have continued to dominate discussions of women's needs globally, undoubtedly a mere reflection of their financial positioning. Antrobus (2004) claims that the shape of the global women's movement emerged from discussions in international UN conferences of the from 1975

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onward, and changed in the 1990s along with the major economic shifts. She describes that there was strong representation from women of the Global South, yet she does not give many concrete examples of what they were saying. How can we expect to assess a "colonial agenda" without giving proper credit to women from underrepresented regions with alternative viewpoints and perspectives?

The evolving economic and political perspectives in the 1990s coincided with popular discussions of girls worldwide in the 1990s. With this power dynamics in mind, productions of women's and girls' modern subjectivities within UN discourse have undoubtedly been impacted by such high economic priorities on a global scale. Looking specifically at the case for the "girl child," the needs of girls as compared to the needs of women in development work have been rather "neglected and under-studied," according to Elisabeth Croll's (2006) research focused on East, South and Southeast Asia. She traces the use of the term "girl child" in mainstream development discourse since the 1990s, locating its origin in UNICEF's strategic plans published in subsequent pamphlets addressing her status and needs. This took place during the years leading up the UN Conference for Women in Beijing in 1995, in which the girl child had a space in the international agenda for the first time. Neera Kuckreja Sohoni (1994) calls the period between 1995 and 2005 "the Decade of the Girl" in her book *Status of Girls in Development Strategies*, in which she predicts, at that point in 1994, a shift in focus because of development policies that were passed leading up to the UN Conference in Beijing in 1995 (p. 240).

The "girl child" officially entered the international UN agenda in 1995, and references to addressing needs of girls in development literature date as far back as the 1960s, although they were usually categorized as children, along with boys (Sohoni, 1994). Countries throughout Asia took action to address the needs of the girl child specifically, especially through educational initiatives. Namely, the South Asian Association for Regional Co-

operation (SAARC) called the 1990s the Decade for the Girl Child. Sohoni (1994) notes that despite such initiatives, the projects were "limited in scope" and this lack in investigation is surprising considering extensive application of models for Women in Development (WID), Gender and Development (GAD) and Children and Development (CAD). She argues that the girl child has not been well integrated into such development models because there are not adequately prepared frameworks for addressing the concept, as it can become lost between categories such as "tomorrow's women," "women and girls," and "children," for example.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, however, the discourse has transformed rather quickly; "the girl child" as a target area has boomed and interest in girls' education has especially heightened. The year 2000, which kicked off the Millennium Development Goals, marked the year that the first international girl-focused education partnership-based campaign was launched: the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, which aims to tackle gender inequality and global poverty through girls' educational enrollment (UNGEI, 2000). UNICEF's 25 by 2005 Girls' Education Campaign is another example of one of the first widespread exclusively girl-focused educational initiatives. It was initiated in December of 2002 to increase girls' enrollment in schools in 25 countries by 2005, focused mainly on Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia ("UNICEF launches new push," 2002). Many other international girls' education initiatives that seek to address poverty through education programs in developing countries have sprouted up since 2005 including: The Coalition for Adolescent Girls[3], United Nation Foundation's Girl Up[4], 10x10[5], and Plan International's Because I am a

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[3] Founded in 2005 by the United Nations Foundation and the Nike Foundation. See www.Coalitionforadolescentgirls.org

[4] Working for this campaign inspired my interest in girls' empowerment issues, which I will explain in the 'Personal Contributions' section. The campaign was founded in 2010 by the United Nations Foundation. It currently has over 300,000 registered supporters in the United States. See www.GirlUp.org.

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Girl[6]. Plan International, a global development organization that focuses on children, initiated the International Day of the Girl Child movement, which the United Nations accepted and officially declared in 2011 as October 11th (Plan International, 2011). One international girls' educational awareness campaign and film produced by 10x10 and CNN Films, *Girl Rising*, was released in the spring of 2013, while I was carrying out this study. As of May, 2013, the film has been screened in at least 252 various locations across the United States with over 110,000 tickets officially reserved (*Girl Rising*, 2013). As indicated by these numbers, campaigns like *Girl Rising* and Girl Up have proven to gain significant support in relatively short periods of time, which reflects how concern for "the girl child" in developing countries has gained exceptional momentum in the United States over the past decade.

Croll (2006) discusses the focus of girls' education specifically, stating that it has received a significant amount of support since the 1990s from major development institutions such as the UN Secretariat, the World Bank and governmental bodies as well. With the mainstream development perspective, girls' education has been described as a strategic catalyst in expanding human capital; therefore situating it as a highly prioritized investment globally, as it became the primary aim of UNICEF campaigns for the girl child (UNICEF, 1998). Within this development discourse, education has not been described so much as a tool for sustaining cultural or linguistic identities nor fostering opportunities outside of the rather limited capitalist framework. Shaping good "productive" workers is one of several goals that UNICEF has described, which rather obviously puts formal education systems in a specific economic mentality (UNICEF, 1995). I argue that this economic prioritization is also

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[5] Founded in 2010 by the Documentary Group and Vulcan Productions. Their slogan is "Educate Girls. Change the World." See www.10x10act.org.

[6] Founded in 2007, after publishing their first report "The State of the World's Girls." See www.Plan-International.org/girls/.

made clear in the cases I analyze in this work, which I address in chapter one. I agree with Croll's idea that development programs ought to draw attention to the practical and strategic needs of the girls, particularly their rights. I would also add that the cultural and linguistic locality of these girls is the aspect that must also play a central role.

As many girls' empowerment projects have been based in the US, looking to the rise of the "girl culture" phenomenon may serve to clarify some motivations for the "salvation" movement within projects based upon the idea of a global sisterhood. Girl culture arose in the 1990s during the ambiguous "Third Wave Feminism." Gillis and Munford (2004) describe the phenomenon as "extremely eclectic" and explain it in a positive light, as indicated in their description of the "girl culture" movement:

> a vigorous reclamation and recuperation of the word "girl" as no longer a simply derogatory and disrespectful term but one that captures the contradictions shaping female identity for young women whose world has been informed by the struggles and gains of second wave feminism (p. 169).

I would argue that when such descriptions are overtly imposed in non-American contexts vis-a-vis traveling conceptualizations of "empowerment." The links between "girl culture" and predominant imaginings of girls' subjectivities in development work reflect the power relations within institutions like the United Nations. Evidence of "feminist orientalism"[7] becomes apparent when such subjectivities are grafted upon girls universally. As Mohanty discusses, "imperialist feminism" and "feminist orientalism" deem "Western" societies as ideals of progress for women in contrast to the "developing" and "backward"/"Eastern" societies" (Mohanty, 2003, p. 10). The *Girl Up* campaign of the United Nations Foundation embodies this particular approach precisely by putting American girls in positions of

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[7] "Feminist orientalism" is a term coined by Zonana in reference to Said's historic text *Orientalism* (Mohanty, 2003).

spreading awareness and raising funds for programs that help girls "in need" in developing countries exclusively. I find that this kind of imperialism mimics a global phenomenon that has a clear history in feminist movements in institutions like the UN and also through colonialist projects. It also depends upon urban-rural and modern-traditional divides that are maintained today in countries all over the world, including India and Turkey

The case study: Educate Girls and ÇYDD

This case study involves focusing on two specific organizations, both of which seek to address girls' needs on large regional scales, yet each within very distinct historical and socio-political contexts. The economic and colonial legacies in India and Turkey offer an axis of comparison, as both societies encourage a modern-traditional dichotomy, also referred to in terms of categorizing "backwardness." This concept is relevant in both cases, as in India it has been overtly institutionalized through the government's social and economic policies (Gupta, 2005) and in Turkey its influence has manifested through capitalistic and cultural transformations, which Kandiyoti (2002) states clearly: "European hegemony and the perceived backwardness if their respective societies created a terrain for ideological contest in which notions of 'catching up,' imitation of the West, cultural corruption and authenticity continued to have a purchase on political discourse..." (p. 2).

This study aims to describe country- and region-specific attributes of girls' access to education as well as broad perceptions of valued knowledge systems within a shared modern-traditional ideological split in Turkey and India. More specifically, the study examines two programs, Educate Girls in India and the Association for the Support of Contemporary Living (*Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği - ÇYDD*) in Turkey, through the use of interviews and qualitative analysis approaches to the program literature; looking at the ways in which these

two initiatives target girls in rural areas with overt modernist agendas to economically develop and homogeneously empower them psychologically, without putting their specific cultural, linguistic and regional needs at the center. Their primary aims are to increase girls' access to and retention in education programs designed to integrate girls into the larger (urban) mainstream societies as educated individuals, which fits into a modernist framework (Davis, 2005, p. 80) for female advancement that problematically prioritizes access to economic resources, vocational training and scientific knowledge .

The study targets these two NGOs because each organization: (a) focuses almost exclusively on girls and (b) aims to implement programs to improve situations for girls through increasing access to government schooling. While Educate Girls has only been working in two districts in rural Rajasthan, Pali and Jalore, since 2005, they plan to expand their programming to districts across India and eventually to other countries in Asia. ÇYDD, however, has been working across Turkey since 1989 and currently has over 100 branches nationwide. Both programs aim to describe empowerment of these girls in overarching ways rather than focusing on each branch or area on its own terms. As noted by Abu-Lughod (2002), "we need to be suspicious when neat cultural icons are plastered over messier historical and political narratives" (p. 785), which is why the homogenization of these girls' paths to "empowerment," particularly that of rural girls, requires deep inquiry. I will use a postcolonial feminist conceptual framework to guide the research on the uncertain consequences of educational strategies designed to uplift the girl child.

By tracing patterns of enforcing modernity, particularly within international development literature about girls' empowerment in the work of large institutions such as the United Nations and the World Bank, for example, I want to map the ways in which these two specific initiatives with nationwide outlooks rely on specific ideologies rooted in Western definitions of modernity and human subjectivity. These perspectives results in a tendency to

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discriminate against rural communities by emphasizing priorities of modern lifestyles and career choices. The two data chapters of this thesis address the following concepts and questions:

1. Prioritization of economic productivity: How do the programs inadvertently discriminate against rural lifestyles by encouraging capistalist-driven educational/career paths that emphasize economic productivity, regardless of traditional occupations? How might it be related to encouraged urbanization?

2. Uplifting of their "interiors" through personality and social development: How do the organizations address the "interior" aspect of empowerment, a concept historically situated in Western psychology, through their behavioral training programs? How do they relate to a historical salvation discourse that has defined empowerment on specific westernized terms?

Cultural, linguistic and political diversity in both Turkey and India are central to understanding relative possibilities for girls to give back to their communities in constructive ways that do not result in loss of language, cultural traditions and environmentally sustainable production practices.

Methods

I intend for this research to serve as an "instrumental case study" (Merriam, 1997) by contributing to broadening understandings of cross-cultural definitions of girls' empowerment by looking at educational program designs geared towards addressing girls' needs on large scales. On two separate trips to Turkey and one trip to India, I conducted semi-structured taped interviews with five staff members of ÇYDD and with seven staff members of Educate Girls. With ÇYDD, I conducted short interviews with staff at the

headquarters in Istanbul as well as in a local branch in Ankara. With Educate Girls, I also conducted interviews at the headquarters in Jaipur as well as in Pali, Rajasthan, the district where the majority of the staff and participants are located. I chose a semi-structured interview framework in order to allow for maximal flexibility in how the NGO staff decide to describe their programs in defining the programs' overall goals and how they address the needs of the girls they are working with; allowing for exploration of the concept of empowerment within these project designs.

In an effort to let the staff illustrate the meanings of improving the lives of girls in the target regions, I intentionally avoided using mainstream terminology (words such as empowerment, emancipation, educated, etc.) as much as possible in the questions so that the staff had as much freedom in constructing their own formulations of the program goals. Paying attention to my bodily gestures was also crucial to my interview style. I wanted to create an encouraging environment in which the interviewee felt free to say what he/she felt about their work. While expressing my opinions if prompted, I did not want to make the interviewee feel particularly constrained by my bias about international empowerment projects. I intentionally structured the questions to invite some degree of narration and open-endedness. Before conducting the interviews, I introduced myself and my project in simple terms and also communicated my curiosity and desire to explore the topic rather than come to any generalizing conclusion about the NGO's work. Within these semi-structured interviews, I based my questions on the following set of themes, each tailored to the specificity of the ÇYDD's and Educate Girls' programs. I asked each of the staff members about their personal motivation to do work for girls' education, their career background before coming to the organization, and about their own understandings of the organization's mission and its effects on Indian and Turkish societies. When possible, I asked the staff members to give concrete examples of issues they raised during the interviews, such as social and conceptual

difficulties they encountered in their work with the girls, the families as well as the community leaders.

I spent time in both countries aside from the designated research periods in 2012 and 2013, which contributed considerably to my understanding of the socio-political contexts in which these organizations work. Informal conversations about the political atmosphere and perspectives on educational reforms in Turkey had a significant impact on my research questions with ÇYDD, most notably. I had much more experience in India prior to carrying out research with Educate Girls, having studied Hindi and Urdu and volunteered for sustainable development initiatives in 2007 and 2009 in the region in which Educate Girls works. My language expertise in Hindi as compared to my limited knowledge of Turkish in addition to the comparatively less time spent in Turkey undoubtedly influenced my understandings of the contexts in which Educated Girls and ÇYDD work. In Turkey, for example, I used an interpreter for two of my six interviews, which made the interview experience very distinct as compared to interviewing directly in English and Hindi, which is what I was able to do in India. Taking this into consideration, I have incorporated relevant literature in both cases to address the frameworks in which each of these organizations function as well as the social, linguistic and cultural diversity that undeniably shapes the ethnographic landscape in both cases. I acknowledge that more investigative and participatory research time is necessary to create a more in-depth analysis of the work of these organizations. Therefore, I offer this thesis as an introduction to questions of empowerment within feminist and development discourses that ought to be pushed even further and with more detailed specificity, such as addressing the girls' own responses to the programs as well.

Personal contributions

I was inspired to focus on the topic of the girl child in educational work abroad because of my experience working with the US-based United Nations Foundation on a girls' empowerment initiative, Girl Up, that works through UN agencies (UNFPA, UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO, WHO and UNIFEM) to raise funds for education, health and development projects in Guatemala, Liberia, Ethiopia and Malawi as well as to educate American girls about the needs of girls in developing countries more broadly. Considering how totalizing these descriptions of girls "in need" appeared to the American public, I found the Girl Up campaign progressively more and more problematic over the course of eight months that I worked there. I hope that my research will raise discussions about how empowerment, and possibly more problematically, education programs, are not self-evident and must be imagined in culturally specific terms. With regard to my own positioning, I thoroughly acknowledge my situatedness as a white, American feminist graduate student conducting interviews with NGO staff in these situations abroad. My experience with the UN Foundation and the Girl Up campaign has undoubtedly impacted my viewpoints on dominant human rights discourse regarding the girl child. While I disagree on many issues regarding feminist imperialist notions of global female empowerment and imaginings of a global sisterhood, I am aware that my heritage and educational background has had an impact on the NGO staff's impression of my positioning on the topic, yet this is something that seems quite inevitable. In "moving from the field to the text," my intention has been to maintain reflexivity in my analysis, particularly on my situatedness (Denzin, 2001, p. 501).

In order to locate the historical application of the concept of empowerment in development work targeting women and girls, I will describe in chapter two some of the varied academic and applied definitions since the 1970s. The way in which I have addressed

tensions between differing conceptions of what it means to be empowered through these programs was through interviews with the staff responsible for organizing and designing these programs in Turkey and India. I intentionally chose programs that are implemented on regionally large scales, in order to address the organizations' approaches to the needs of girls in these localized areas, and consequently their understandings of appropriate educational programming. While both organizations feed into governmental education systems, the structure of the public school systems and their curricula are significant components of the understanding how these initiatives feed into effectively incorporating/disregarding diverse perspectives, languages, and systems of knowledge. The global aspect of these programs' overall impact in the world economic system can be easily traced through literature that talks about girls in developing countries. This literature includes work of the United Nations, the World Bank and major NGOs based in the Global North. Special days designated by the UN such as the International Day of the Girl Child (October 11) and International Women's Day (March 11) provide rich sources of literature about a global dialogue on these topics precisely. I have used such literature to set the stage of this international discourse on the girl child, which largely focuses on girls in the Global South, regardless of culturally specific or urban/rural settings. Female empowerment programming of UN agencies such as UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIFEM (currently UN Women) and UNESCO often includes working with local NGOs in target countries homogeneously referred to as "developing."

To investigate the impact of industrial development and western ideals on such essentialist and homogenizing descriptions, this study will explore the overwhelming emphasis on academic educational tracks and how girls in rural communities are so easily considered disadvantaged. Not only because this project is cross-cultural in addressing a global problem through the lens of Turkish and Indian initiatives, but also because any discussion about girls in large-scale regions requires cultural, linguistic and religious

specificity, I have incorporated an intersectional approach throughout my research; constantly considering the contexts that inform the subjectivity of those I interviewed as well as the girls that these programs are targeting. Taking into account the differing regional and historical contexts is a particular challenge considering that I did not grow up in these societies, which naturally affects my understanding of the standpoint of the staff members without making assumptions about their backgrounds, particularly their work experience and career goals. Depending on the location of the NGO as well as its programming in urban versus rural areas, the positioning of the programs and the staff reflects varying degrees of influence from dominant discourse on the girl child; from UN agencies or other international NGOs. Postcolonial feminist perspectives heavily shape my understanding of how male dominance can function and also vary, in that I made a concerted effort to avoid assumptions about "patriarchal" norms in Turkey and India as a whole.

Incorporating a feminist approach in my research requires not only intersectionality but also a self-reflexive and appropriately critical perspective. The narratives will necessarily reflect dynamics of cultural power and influence as well as national and international politics, most directly because of their ties to organizations/funding resources abroad. My suspicion was that the impact of mainstream notions of empowerment that rely on the concept of the human "interior," would be a key factor in the definitions that the staff of both organizations provide. While this may be the case, I also wanted to look out for signs of conflicting definitions and perspectives in my analysis.

One effect of poststructuralist approaches and tension between positivist and postpositivist perspectives on qualitative analysis in the social sciences is most notably a dismantling of central criteria for interpretation. Any set of strict standards that aim for any kind of objectivity would be inherently antifeminist, particularly because of the impossibility of utilizing a neutral frame, because there is no such thing (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). As

Hollway and Jefferson (2000) point out in their support of free association methods, "if we wish to do justice to the complexity of our subjects an interpretative approach is unavoidable," although it can still be "fair, democratic and not patronising" (p. 3). Recognizing the influence that I had a researcher in formulating an analysis of responses of the interviewees according to my own expectations of what the organizations should or should not do, I have strived to create a useful response to patterns that I recognize in these two organizations and their relation to a broader discourse regarding development work that targets girls through education programming. My main goal is to draw attention to a larger project that relies on the idea of a global sisterhood as well as a polarization of knowledge systems based in the urban and rural communities, two concepts that I am personally committed to investigating and problematizing through this comparative analysis.

In the following two data chapters, I analyze the definition and application of empowerment in the programming of Educate Girls and ÇYDD by focusing on the two themes I find most relevant: (1) the individualized economic priorities that are based on neoliberal, capitalist notions of female liberation and (2) the construction of a mainstream notion of girl's subjectivity rooted into uplifting her psychological "interior". In the conclusion, I will make recommendations for the programs based upon my research findings that I hope will speak to improving the effectiveness of larger international development trends in educational empowerment programs directed at girls.

Chapter 1: Analyzing neoliberal economic priorities within educational empowerment models

A common thread I have recognized through analyzing both programs of Educate Girls and ÇYDD is the overwhelming emphasis on economic development and girls' contributions to the overall economies in India and Turkey as a quintessential part of their individualized "empowerment." The organizations' explanation of stressing the financial aspect is largely based on locating the girls' oppression and lack of opportunity in situations of rural poverty. The focus on the economic return of girls' education places it rather obviously as a priority for alleviating (rural) poverty in the name of "development" and advancing the global market economy on national scales. These priorities rely on definitions of rural poverty within constrained ideas of development and progress, which consequently justify environmental degradation as well as discrimination against minority knowledge systems, cultures, languages and lifestyles that are deemed resistant of the advancement of mainstream global market systems.

When looking at contemporary conceptualizations of "development," the term proves to have been highly contentious and widely debated across academic fields. The anthropologist Arturo Escobar (1995) is one well known scholar who has challenged the concept, naming development essentially a vehicle for postwar Western economic and geopolitical imperialism (p. 184). Similarly, Martin Carnoy (1974) has written extensively on the topic and its relation to formal education systems globally. He explains in his work, *Education as Cultural Imperialism,* that predominant notions of development assume that any kind of pre-capitalist economic system or "traditional" forms of organization, those that do not value individual competition and free trade, would inhibit supposed development in a given society (p. 31). He also argues that this philosophy purports the false belief in "capitalism as the

antithesis to imperialism" because of the idea of supposed free movement of ideas, capital and labor that are necessary for building a "modern" society. However, as Hester Eisenstein (2009) explains in detail in her book *Feminism Seduced*, it is through global liberal, and eventually neoliberal, capitalist interventions, building upon former colonial economic structures, that the US has wielded its domineering political and economic power. The economic transformations that destroyed indigenous economies eventually created the "new international division of labor" from the 1960s and thereafter. Eisenstein describes this shift rather succinctly: "they began to move some elements of production overseas, taking advantage of cheaper labor, anti-union policies, and the establishment of free-trade export-processing zones," while also disregarding environmental and health concerns (p. 25). Emphasis on the autonomous individual grew as a central part of this liberal ideology, which has also provided the basis for hegemonic feminism that is "congruent with the dominant U.S. ideology of economics and politics" (p. 58). Mainstream US feminism has conveniently defended that the autonomous woman was therefore imagined to obtain her liberation through paid labor -- a particularly useful argument for corporations and governments to further spread global capitalism and "'open door' development" into the Global South (Eisenstein, 2009, p. 133). Given the complexity of how the global economic systems have involved imperialist impositions throughout the past two centuries, it becomes clear how empowerment in contemporary development discourse has been tied to such specific cultural notions of opportunity.

This is where education comes in as a key role in advancing individuals within such capitalist definitions of development: "Education is a force of rationalism and progress in this interpretation of societal change and international relations. Incorporating individuals and various groups into capitalist structures is in and of itself a *positive* function of the educational system" (Carnoy, 1974, p. 32). Given his own analytical views, Carnoy then

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proceeds to describe how critics determine such understandings of international development as naive, given the power dynamics of international capitalist relations. The dominant institutional programmatic literature, however, seems to have ignored the kinds of longstanding critical perspectives that scholars such as Eisenstein (2009), Escobar (1995) and Carnoy (1974) have provided over the past several decades. By looking at definitions and descriptions of development written by major institutions such as the World Bank and the United Nations, they consistently emphasize economic priorities first and foremost. The link between education and development in international discourse, which these major institutions reiterate in their campaigns and reports, undoubtedly plays a role in shaping the ways in which girls' empowerment is described, addressed and imagined through means of educational programming on a global scale.

One recent report that the World Bank published in 2011 on the girl child clearly exemplifies the prioritization of economic development in education and empowerment models. The forward of "Girls' Education in the 21st Century: Gender Equality, Empowerment, and Economic Growth" illustrates the relevance of girls' education in international development. The report explains that girls' education is not only a "women's issue;" it has other socio-economic ramifications, with especially high relevance in the global economy. The description explicitly refers to women and girls as "untapped sources of human capital" in developing countries. The report outlines the ways in which education enables girls to take part in breaking cycles of poverty by contributing to development, which is described here in terms of "economic productivity, more robust labor markets, higher earnings and improved societal health and well-being" (p. XVII). The way in which the report identifies gender gaps, which are used as central indicators for Educate Girls in Rajasthan, India, and also for ÇYDD's regional targeting models, involve economic,

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political, educational- and health-based criteria to create the index benchmarks in order to rank the countries.

Educate Girls identifies their target communities by gender gap measurements, a characteristic of "backwardness," in the words of several staff members as well as governmental classifications. Using the justification of developmental backwardness, the organization applies their empowerment model to reduce the gender gap in schools within these specific areas of Rajasthan, and with plans to do so throughout India in the future. It is important to address what is included and excluded in such descriptions when imagining a gender gap area and how the organizations design the programs to address this gap through socio-cultural transformations -- how do they describe the causes of the gender gaps? In the case of Educate Girls, the use of terms such as "backward," "rural" and "tribal" is consistent throughout the literature and was also pervasive in my interviews with the staff members in Pali, the area where the programs have been carried out for the past five years. In the case of ÇYDD in Turkey, this distinction is expressed in different terms. Their most prominent goal, to "create a contemporary society" and cultivate "contemporary people" creates the divide, as well as the projects targeted at eastern and southeastern Turkey, where more rural and ethnic minority communities are located, as compared to the western and more urbanized parts.

Focusing on girls' education for their participation in the global economy as the main avenue by which the girls are to be empowered presents many potential problems not only on a local level, but on a global scale as well. Without problematizing the reasons that girls ought to become formally educated in ethnonationalist systems for their own "well-being," programs may overtly or inadvertently support their participation in industrial practices in developing countries that are oppressive for workers, the environment, and the globe as whole. The emphasis on the economic return of girls' education places it rather obviously as a priority for alleviating poverty and advancing the global market economy. The terms upon

which girls' success is measured is also problematic; whether she is encouraged to pursue agricultural work or a career in the field of engineering or medicine, for example, has high political significance. The slanted economic-driven priorities of girls' education on an international scale are visible within both Educate Girls and ÇYDD program designs.

Looking at the history of formal education systems on a global scale puts such emphasis within current development programs in perspective -- imagining the ways in which economies and societies have transformed as a result of this spreading phenomenon. In the year 1850, the majority of the world other than northwestern Europe and North America had little to no formal education. By 1940, it was still generally the situation for people in Africa, most of Asia and a large part of Latin America; also constituting what we today call the "Global South" (Easterlin, 1981). When imagining education programs and their affects on society, we cannot take for granted the implications that it has in terms of cultural, linguistic and economic imperialisms. The surge in industrial economic growth since World War II has coincided with the spread of formal schooling throughout the "Global South" (Morawetz, 1977). When imagining the ways in which governmental education and economic planning go hand-in-hand, it is important to consider what exactly this education system is intended to do, what kinds of people is it meant to form and how these systems might discriminate against those cultures, languages, economic systems and ways of living that fall outside of the dominant capitalist-driven ideal? Easterlin (1981) addresses this issue in his article "Why Isn't the Whole World Developed?," in which he asks:

> If mass education is important, does it have its effect via training in functional skills... through "screening," or via political socialization, either of a broad sort, or more narrowly, in instilling a discipline appropriate for factory work? Or is the function of education, as some sociological studies suggest, one chiefly of creating a basic change in

human   personality -- a "modern man" who acquires aspirations and attitudes especially favorable to the adoption of new technology? (p. 8).

Both of these possibilities present problems of their own, and I think they offer insight into reconsidering the meaning of education systems in today's globalized world driven by capitalist interests, comprised of cultural diversities, and complicated by postcolonial power dynamics.

1.1 Educate Girls and the Indian context

Neoliberal economic policies were heavily enacted in the 1990s in India, which have necessarily impacted the discourse of empowerment within governmental approaches. Batliwala (2010) explains that rural development policies in particular have focused on poverty alleviation and empowerment by means of strengthened self-help groups and local governments infused with female empowerment. This is where the prioritization of economic development within current dominant models is made clear on a national level, similarly with the case of Educate Girls. The term has largely been overtaken by newer and hard results-based initiatives such as microcredit; one of the "magic bullet" models for both empowerment overall economic development instead of applying "a more multi-faceted process of social transformation" (Batliwala, 2010, p. 116). Kabeer (1994) also mentions the "magic bullet" approach that involves the implementation of "a single strategic intervention," which lacks dynamism to address the specific social and economic needs of women or girls in a given region, depending on their situation (p. 234).

Aradhana Sharma's (2006) work on women's empowerment initiatives in India also discusses some of the critical actors involved in NGO and government-led development projects, similar to what happens with initiatives directed at uplifting the girl child. She

touches upon the complexities of state-sponsored women's empowerment by highlighting the overshadowing of neoliberal ideologies vis-a-vis the "developmentalist state," also referring to Richa Nagar and Saraswati Raju's (2003) interpretation of the NGO-government relationship: "NGOs have become an arm of the government [but also] the government has become the biggest NGO" (p. 78). Sharma suggests that the co-opting of feminist goals within overarching neoliberal agendas complicates the possibility for alternative social change within feminist initiatives that work with state agencies.

Educate Girls identifies Rajasthan, the state in which their current programs are carried out, as the site of nine of the 26 most "backward" districts of India; a classification determined by the government of India in their Human Development Index, reported at the State level, where the government decides on appropriate and necessary "development intervention" (Nayyar, 2004, p. 2). Nayyar explains the government's emphasis on industrial investments, locating the target areas since the late 1960s according to the following terms: geographically disadvantaged areas, such as places with high drought, areas with high "tribal" populations, and those with low levels of income and formal employment. In the "Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana" (also called the Backward Districts Initiative), the government defines the purpose as such: "...removal of the barriers to growth and improvement in the standard of life of the people are being achieved by addressing the problems of low agricultural productivity, unemployment and critical gaps in physical and social infrastructure in the selected districts..." (Programme Evaluation Organization, 2010, p. 2).

Similar to the development perspectives reflected in the governmental schemes, one staff member explained to me in an interview how the rural setting presents unique difficulties in reducing the gender gap when I asked about specific obstacles the organization is facing in the region,. His description highlighted broader infrastructural issues and

ultimately tied the organization's difficulties with these communities to "social and cultural problems":

> We are finding it really hard to work in Jalore. It's tough because of the scattered settlement patterns of the clusters. We will try to find a better way to work like this... There are two or three types of settlement patterns in the villages. One is compact-- if there are 100 families living in the village, they will live in a particular area. In the scattered settlement pattern, they will spread out, usually on their farms. They are agriculturalists, so they usually prefer to live on their farms. That's why the families are spread all over, 10 to 15 kilometers... Another thing is infrastructure. In any development activity, the first requirement is infrastructure, like roads and communication. That's why there is a big gender gap there... The biggest effect would be change in mindset of the rural population. They are living in patriarchal society, they are really conservative, there are a lot of social, economic and cultural problems (personal communication, August, 2012).

The way that the Jalore district presents specific obstacles because of the families' farming lifestyles, their cultural perspectives are described as culprits to their "backwardness" in terms of education as well as infrastructure. Such perspectives are consistent in the Educate Girls' literature as well, and they also demonstrate how pervasive institutionalized approaches to development have completely shaped the way that Educate Girls understands the people of Jalore largely based upon their rural geographic location.

The Scheduled Caste[8] and Scheduled Tribe[9] populations have been explicit target groups for socio-economic development in government "Tribal Sub-Plans" since the 1970s

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[8] Scheduled Caste is reservation category defined by the Indian Constitution that refers to a heterogeneous group of people known as Dalits, or former "untouchables" (see Gupta, 2005, p. 417).

(Programme Evaluation Organization, 2010, p. 7). The more current programs have involved focusing on wage employment for agricultural workers in these target regions, where problems of "poverty and underdevelopment" are cited, although clearly in terms of participating in the global market economy. In describing the case of the Mandla district in Madhya Pradesh, Nayyar (2004) uses the case of women in this predominantly "tribal" area to be "even more impoverished with little education," thereby justifying the intervention with a clear motive to uplift the so-called socially and economically disadvantaged female population (p. 10). The link between the social and economic impoverishment in defining "backwardness" is key in government policies of India and pervasive in both the cases of Educate Girls and ÇYDD, which I will discuss further.

[Figure one: [Educate Girls school girls]. (2013). Retrieved from http://blog.icatsprogram.com/educating-girls-in-india-why-its-so-difficult-and-what-one-ngo-is-doing-about-it/.]

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[9] A distinct reservation category compared to Schedule Castes, Scheduled Tribes refers to an even more complex community comprised of various so-called "tribes" across India. Gupta (2005) problematizes the category, explaining how differing "tribal" communities are socially, geographically and economically integrated into mainstream Indian society to varying degrees, and therefore relate to the notion of supposed "backwardness" in differing ways, given their cultural and historical contexts.

The CEO and Founder of Educate Girls, Safeena Husain, gave a TED talk[10] in Mumbai in February of 2012, during which she gave a general description of what "a rural or tribal school looks like." With this general description, she opens the presentations by locating the need for intervention in a homogenized "rural" and "tribal" category. She explained that only 15% of the students in the region can read a simple story in Hindi, which she confidently called their mother language. In an interview with a staff member in Pali, they also made this statement about Hindi being the children's mother language, giving the same example about reading a simple story as a measurement of their knowledge (personal communication, August, 2012). However, the people of the Pali and Jalore districts in the Marwar region of Rajasthan speak dialects of Marwari and Godwari, completely different languages, although systematically named "dialects" of Hindi, despite the fact that they are not mutually intelligible with Hindi. In fact, the long history and abundance of Marwari literature has had a large impact on Rajasthani cultures since the ninth century (Kelsall et al, 2012, p. 18). With literacy as a main category of measuring knowledge, the robust literature in the Marwari language allows for little excuse of its lack of recognition. The public schools' failure to teach the local language as a source of knowledge in the region, or to even define literacy in this language at all, indicates the linguistic and cultural politics that the formal education system and Educate Girls support. The neglect of written Marwari, which the public school system enacts and Educate Girls reinforces, reflects a clear discrimination against regional languages in rural parts of India and acts a symbol of how these rural communities are effectively homogenized and considered "backward" through politics of language. After reporting the low literacy rate in Hindi as a shocking sign that the children cannot read in their supposed "mother language," Ms. Husain relativizes the fact in economic terms: "that's

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[10] Safeena Husain's TEDxASB talk can be accessed online (as of May, 15 2013):

http://www.ted.com/tedx/events/3959

absolutely the poorest sort of return that you can get on your investment," turning the conversation back to the interest of capital gain/loss.

Both Educate Girls and ÇYDD use the farm as a site of lack of opportunity, the latter case which will be discussed in the next section. Educate Girls discusses the agricultural situation more directly. In one of their case examples of successful participants, the organization describes a girl named Bhanwari who comes from a farming family in an unspecified rural village. The story is that through participation in the Bal Sabha program, a component of Educate Girls that aims for girls' collective organizing in schools, "her parents weren't really interested in educating her, but Bhanwari's potential convinced her parents that she could be more than just be a farmer's daughter" (Educate Girls, 2011, p. 28). While I agree that exploitation of child labor is unarguably is a practice of exploitation, I find this example rather telling of the economic perspectives of the kind of girl that Bhanwari ought to become; making her empowerment impossible in this farm context. Looking at the regional profile of Pali, where Educate Girls has been working for the past five years during their pilot project, agricultural labor, both rain-fed agriculture and raising cattle and sheep, is not particularly shocking; rather it describes what the majority of people in the area have done for work for generations (Robbins, 2001). So what does this say about the type of viable occupations that Educate Girls participants should hope for? If they wish to pursue farming, following in the footsteps of their parents and generations before them, will the Educate Girls program support that or steer them in another direction that is supposedly more economically prosperous according to global economic demands?

There has been a recent resurgence of interest in informal economics in development discourse, pointing to important complexities of economic measurements across multi-faceted systems. Discussions about what informal economies include on a broad scale has necessarily extended the meaning of modern capitalist development; informal economies are

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not simply a part of traditional economies, which is why they must also be imagined as growing and permanent aspects of a continuum of the total economy (Chen in Guha-Khasnobis, Kanbur & Ostrom, 2006). In her analysis of formal and informal sectors and enterprises in India, including organized and unorganized employment, M. R. Narayana (Guha-Khasnobis, Basuneb & Ostrom, 2006) comes to an important conclusion about the concepts and definitions of these aspects of the Indian economy: that they vary much more distinct than they are similar. I find that this information reflects how measurements of economic contributions are so dynamic that the supposed benefits, specifically for families and their daughters, are not easily measurable across sectors. If the links between formal and informal economies remain convoluted, the meaning behind productive labor, financial capital and its links to empowerment should also be interrogated because of their relative significance in a given community. The labor practices and value of money are specific to the communities in which they are applied, which is why it is crucial to keep in mind how economic systems and labor practices define families' relationships to resources and therefore definitions of empowerment in distinct ways.

The homogenization of "rural," "tribal," and "village" communities supports the modern-traditional dichotomy by allowing these adjectives to describe sites of economic and empowerment lack. The focus on poverty, without defining it or explaining how it works, as a cause of preventing girls' access to formal schooling creates more space for such generalizations. In a promotional video produced by the LGT Venture Philanthrophy iCats Program, Educate Girls is showcased as a social venture in which business professionals use their marketing and finance skills in a designated fellowship program to "empower village communities to improve the quality of girls' education, bringing about social transformation in rural and tribal societies..." (LGT Venture Philanthropy, 2012). In this short video, the fellows mention their educational and professional backgrounds, all of which are located in

Europe or the US. While this program is not carried out by Educate Girls directly, their support for intervention and guidance from people with such backgrounds further supports the economic priorities and capitalist perspectives in terms of how the organization ought to address girls' needs in these "rural and tribal societies." Also in the "Project Completion Report" from 2011, Educate Girls uses World Bank and United Nations statistics to give reasons for why girls should be formally educated (birth rates fall, literacy increases, family health improves, family and national income grows, etc) and then says that "this is especially true in tribal areas" (Educate Girls, 2011, p. 6). In various parts of the program literature, Educate Girls identifies the major problems that inhibit girls from attending school, thereby denying them access to "development opportunities." In line with this ideology, one staff member explained in an interview with me that girls become educated as means of enjoying "all the fruits of development" (personal communication, August, 2012).

The case of dowry and its relationship with the economic history of India proves a crucial case for understanding the key issues and limitations of girls' economic liberation as empowerment. Present day discourse about the dowry as an "ancient traditional practice" in India has rather inaccurately been discussed in terms of its inflation and expansion over the past few centuries. In literature across development organizations that do work in India, the dowry is described as a long standing reason for violence against women and girls, female feticide, female infanticide and bride burning. The dowry in modern day India is a gift often required with the bride in a marriage that has a history in Hindu patrilineal and patrilocal cultures in a variety of forms, yet its roots are rather complex and most definitely have a link to colonialism, developing "hand in hand with the increase of capital" (Den Uyl, 2005, p. 144). In terms of the "ancient tradition" aspect, many scholars refer to the tradition of a gift exchange for the bride and groom, *stridhan* and *dakshina*, during the marriage process (Srinivas as cited in Den Uyl, 2005, p. 145). Srinivas makes a distinction between modern

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dowry and traditional gift practices because the modern dowry is given on demand as opposed to being embedded as a voluntary act within the Hindu tradition, which he describes: "...only an attempt to legitimate a modern monstrosity by linking it with an ancient and respected custom" (p. 146). *Stridhan* was discordantly intended to be under the bride's control, contrary to the contemporary gift giving practice. While the custom, as it of course varies depending on the region in India, undoubtedly has had very concrete structural, physical and emotional consequences for women and girls across India, its "old/traditional" heritage prior to the 19th century is actually not the major root of the more recent oppressive and costly marriage requirement.

Marion den Uyl (2005) traces the connections between dowry practices in India and the economic shifts from the 19th century changes in the labor market and educational system. She refers to the historian Altekar's (1962) account of economic liberalization of the country in the 1990s, pointing out that despite expectations for its gradual disappearance as a result of globalization, the modern dowry practice has actually spread and increased in severity since these notable economic changes. She quotes Rajni Palriwala's researching findings with the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) that suggest a more complicated view of the custom and its relationship to economic shifts in India: "In a concentrated form dowry encapsulates contemporary and intensified inequalities and oppressions - caste, class and gender. It encapsulates the materialist and consumerist desires of today, the new religion of liberalisation" (Palriwala as cited in den Uyl, 2005, pp. 143-144).

Maristella Botticini and Aloysius Siow (2001) also point out the dramatic increase and spread of the dowry system across social and economic groups in both North and South India since the 1950s. They mention the contrast of the contemporary system, in which the bride has no control over the dowry goods/value, with the Hindu *stridhana*, in which the bride maintains ownership. Various scholars suggest that a family's desire to marry their rural

daughters to well educated men involved paying a higher dowry (Caldwell and Reddy as cited in Bottincini and Siow, 2001). This included men across classes, such as certain elite Indian men that had a European education and salaried employment since the colonial period, and also men earning cash wages in factories or government jobs; a clear marker of growing capitalist interests in Indian society since at least the beginning of the 20th century. While Bottincini and Siow predict that the inflation of dowries in India will eventually fall as a result of widespread and urbanization and modernization, they also state that this "transitory phase" may involve further rise and expansion until that point. I find this explanation rather inadequate, considering that capitalism and "modern feelings of greed and individualism," as den Uyl (2005) describes, seem to be the causes of the inflation in the first place, so why should they be the ultimate solution? So how can we talk about the modern dowry without talking about modern capitalist demands in India?

Neoliberal and capitalist economic shifts in India have therefore played a huge role in the form of demand and high price that dowry enforces in many females' lives today. Dowry is often one among several targeted customs, such as child marriage, to justify development projects to dismantle patriarchal norms in "developing" countries, as evidenced by descriptions in UN literature (UNIFEM, 2007). The movement towards individual interests and greed in Indian society has developed along with the growing of the dowry practice and has indeed shaped it. Educate Girls discusses marriage practices as a target cause for their programming, and also reduce the practice to "village customs" without mention of the modern materialist aspect that informs this process:

Pulled out of school and married off for dowry, to pass off the 'burden' or just because of village customs, child marriages start from the age of 12-13. It is common knowledge that in these marriages there is a high chance that the girl is subjected to abuse or worse... Educate Girls, with your help, is trying to change that. By keeping girls in school, we

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convince the parents to push back the date of marriage. More than that, the girls get empowered. She can make better life decisions, choose her own career and even take care of her family better. When a girl is educated, she consciously and unconsciously educates those around her. Empower young girls and start a ripple effect. (Educate Girls, 2012c).

By defining empowerment as a move away from "traditional customs," frequently cited in the rural space in villages, the emphasis on economic independence serves as a incomplete solution and supports a biased historical account of how neoliberal economic shifts in India have largely disadvantaged women and girls within their familial relations. Afra Rahman Chowdury's (2010) findings from 1975 to 1999 prove interesting conclusions about the dowry system in rural India, most notably that while caste is positively related with a family's socio-economic position, caste does not have a notable effect on the size of dowry. The "village customs" are not only historically inaccurate, as shown by the relation between capitalism and the practice, they are also inconsistent with stereotypes about caste/class distinctions.

Similarly the case of female feticide and infanticide in India, cited as a "social problem" in some UN literature (Gupta, 2007), also presents a potentially misleading situation when the practice is associated with poverty. Alaka Basu, an Indian demographer, explains that with the raising rates of female feticide in 27 of India's 35 states, economic advancement on the familial or individual level does not seem to solve the problem; in fact the opposite occurs, as economic success "seems to spread son preference to places that were once more neutral about the sex composition of their children" ("India's skewed sex ratio," 2011). Additionally, the 20% of the population in which the most dramatic drops of gender ratios have occurred are located in the wealthiest and most formally educated areas of India

(Kasturi, 2011). Therefore, the locations of these social problems are widespread and cannot be homogeneously described as more frequent in rural and so-called "backward" places.

The complexities of such violent discrimination against women and girls are very much tied to economic development in ways that problematize popular development solutions. When talking about rural areas of India with large "tribal" communities, the widespread discriminatory practices that such as demanding high dowries that women do not control, and preferring sons over daughters must be considered in a more encompassing lens across geographical locations and classes/castes. Empowerment models must therefore address capitalism as a central component and contributing factor to oppressive structures in India, rather than associating them with "village customs" and/or rural poverty.

1.2 ÇYDD and the Turkish context

While India's colonial history can be easily traced through governmental rule and economic control on numerous levels, Turkey's case is distinct because it was never officially colonized by another country. Juan Cole and Deniz Kandiyoti (2002) describe the Turkish case as suffering from a form of "capitalist colonialism," along with many other states in the Middle East and Central Asia (p. 190). Their definition of the modern state shapes the construction of uniform educational frameworks in both India and Turkey that are based on nationalist ideologies:

The modern nation is made up of citizens with an affective and imaginative commitment to identity with co-citizens...that governs a particular territory and strives to impose a common identity on all citizens through state education, usually focusing on linguistic unity, and that represents a political, diplomatic, and economic unity with its own sovereignty in all these realms (p. 190).

The relationship between prioritization of capitalist interests across Turkey and its nationalist history is central to understanding the ways in which development programs are designed and justified for the sake of modernity and progress.

The modernization of the Turkish state since the founding of the Republic has placed the implementation of a particular type of educational system at its core, that which is secular, Western-oriented, and widespread (Rankin & Aytaç, 2006, p. 26). Rankin and Aytaç give a general analysis of gender gaps in the education system in Turkey, locating possible limitations in "cultural perspectives" of Muslim communities. Their conclusions fall in line with mainstream notions of development, connecting formal education to increased occupational opportunities in urban centers: "better labor market opportunities for educated women in urban areas, the greater availability of schools in urban areas, and urban social norms that encourage the education of daughters" (p. 37). Clearly, the urbanization as a solution to gender gap issues in schooling demands specific cultural, economic and social transformations that are inevitably not sustainable in any country.

The movement towards nonmanual, so-called "skilled" labor, creates an illusion of convenience in resources that even the more industrialized societies requires, such as food and textiles. The structural shift from a largely agrarian society to an industrial nation-state was the conceptual aim of the new policies of the Turkish Republic (p. 29). The types of labor that the educated masses take up is certainly a consequence of the rapid economic development that has taken place in both Turkey and India, although many manual labor industries prevail, as they are necessary parts of any society to function. When a country "develops" and such industries become outsourced, why is it that their new "skilled" jobs offer them more credibility in this global labor hierarchy? The implications of such modernization trends on conceptualizations of empowerment are crucial for situating the formal education systems in both Turkey and India, particularly when imagining the

supposedly better opportunities that are offered to girls. The cost of acquiring such new modern knowledge in another language, such as English, or in a classroom where the girls' cultural heritage is absent or even outright suppressed, the possibility of empowerment becomes rather hazy. Considering the history of the education system in Turkey since the founding of the Republic, the westernization process signals a significant cultural shift in the name of "development."

The urban-rural divide that pervades development discourse and is located throughout program literature of both Educate Girls and ÇYDD represents a broader ideological framework. Kandiyoti (2002) calls it the "conceptual straightjacket of 'tradition' and 'modernity'" that "attempts to fit myriad complex and contradictory cultural phenomena" (p. 2). Globalization has undoubtedly set the backdrop for modernization theory, which Kandiyoti argues has created a new spatial dichotomy; the global-local, which replaces the temporal modern-traditional one. She explains how the centers of globalization, and sites of international interactions, are the cities. Placing urban spaces at the core of modernity has consequently marginalized non-urbanized areas everywhere else. Kandiyoti (2002) goes on to cite Öncü and Weyland's effective description of the ideological underpinnings of such transformations: "an image of the world that is empty beyond global cities, a borderless space which can be reordered, integrated, neglected or put to use according to the demands of global capital flows" (p. 4). Such conceptual shifts explain how an imagined empowered girl is more easily imagined in a city versus a village, when looking at the descriptions of Educate Girls and ÇYDD. Moreover, ÇYDD makes their values of modernity explicit throughout their literature in their illustrations of what a "contemporary individual" should embody.

The history of modernization is Turkey is of course rather distinct compared to that of India, considering how the Ottoman Empire was so quickly transformed into the Republic of Turkey. Along with the formation of the new Republic came westernizing ideologies and

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dramatic social as well as economic shifts. Even before 1923, through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Ottoman Empire experienced a range of fluctuations in terms of negotiating modernization through its economy and market becoming dominated by European markets. Kandiyoti criticizes how social scientists' historical accounts, largely "state and institution-centric," which have largely dismissed local resistances to such dramatic economic shifts (p. 2). Especially because of these notable resistances historically, she notes many social scientists' overall lack of cultural analysis in their descriptions of societal transformations in Turkey "from traditional, rural and less developed to modern, urban, industrialised and more developed, or alternatively, from feudal to capitalist," which engage a variety of complexities that ought to be more adequately addressed in historical texts (Kandiyoti, 2002, p. 2).

Kasaba and Bozdoğan (1997) similarly argue that social scientists have failed to sufficiently describe the intricacies of this history by offering overly simplified versions. He uses Bernard Lewis's classic text, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, as well as Daniel Lerner's The Passing of Traditional Society to shed light on failures to problematize the notion of modernity in Turkey's history. He explains how these texts present Turkey's movements in this direction, citing different points in history since the Middle Ages, such as movements in a positive and rather simple and supposedly inevitable direction (p. 20). The legacy of oversimplified dichotomies to promote the modernization project in Turkey can also be cited in the words of Ottoman-Turkish political leaders from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, using terms such as "old," "new," "traditional" and "Western" (p. 24). Taking note of historical descriptions of Turkey's economy is key to contextualizing modernization perspectives within development work, given the focus on economic development, particularly with the case of ÇYDD and their aim to form the "contemporary individual" through "contemporary education."

Up until the 1980s, the levels of formal education in Turkey were particularly low in Turkey, despite economic and political pressures from abroad (Easterlin, 1981). Therefore, the discourse about modernizing Turkey was situated at an interesting moment in terms of the large number of people who had not attended formal schooling and the political debates about cultural and linguistic diversity in the country. At that time, many people became openly cynical about the Republic's promises of "enlightened and prosperous tomorrows" (Kasaba & Bozdogan, 1997, p. 16). Kasaba and Bozdoğan (1997) describe the Kemalist outlook for modernization as a linear process which would result in the formation of "a militantly secular, ethnically homogenous republic well on its way to catching up with the civilized nations of the West" (p. 17). Pro- and anti-capitalist sentiments have been more or less historically located within political entities, generally speaking between Islamist and Kemalists, the latter of which have gained strength over the past few decades: "Islamists find the goals of Kemalist modernization intrinsically antithetical to the essential qualities of Muslim culture, of which they see the people of Turkey as an integral part" (Kasaba & Bozdoğan, 1997, p. 17).

Tensions between the secular Kemalist movement and opposition movements since the 1980s have undoubtedly shaped the discourse around modernization and women's rights throughout the country, which point to the political environment in which ÇYDD has grown and expanded its programs. More specifically, relationships between Islamist feminist movements Kemalist ones, as Arat describes in her article, "Feminists, Islamists, and Political Change in Turkey," mark the ways in which women's "interiors" have been defined. Arat (1998) gives a general description of how Islamists view Kemalists in a broader political sense: "Islamists argue that Kemalists have alienated the authentic roots and adopted Western culture as a global framework, thereby allowing cultural colonization of the country" (p. 126). Focusing on feminist activist groups, she touches upon diverging arguments between

the opposing movements in Turkish political debates and reflects upon some secular feminists' tendency to define the ways in which other women can be helped through specific modes of self-realization; some secular feminists have described the plight of the Islamist women in a way that reflects their need to "make women 'recognize their power,'" which reflects a mainstream empowerment ideology (p. 125). Therefore, the internal struggles between feminist groups reflect a broader debate about sources of women's oppression in Turkey and how they ought to be addressed, based upon a notion of "self." The way in which some Kemalist feminists have described the plight of women, such as Muslim women, in Turkey suggests a transcendence of broader global constructions of the female "interior" that have been fortified by these localized political debates since since the 1980s.

The 1980s was also a period during which Kurdish communities were reasserting their distinct cultural and ethnic identity by organizing an armed struggle against the Turkish army -- most notably the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which was founded in 1984. In order to create distance between the two seemingly incompatible ideologies, Kasaba and Bozdoğan (1997), although in an overtly general sense, describe how Kemalists have othered Kurdish political mobilization with ethnonationalist perspectives, as they deny "the existence of a 'Kurdish problem' and speak mostly in euphemisms such as 'terrorism' and 'underdevelopment' (p. 17). Here, the link between the politically antagonism is directly made with 'development,' and ethnonationalist sentiments are therefore more easily justified by targeting extreme cases of 'terrorism' within the Kurdish movement. Kurdish communities, comprising the largest ethnic minority in Turkey, have until recently continued to present suspicion about the Turkish educational system because of the how the Turkish government has suppressed Kurdish cultural identity (Rankin, 2006). In 2011, Sebahat Tuncel, Istanbul deputy of the Pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), was elected to Turkish Parliament. In her article "Arab Spring, Kurdish Summer, published in the New

York Times on June 17, 2011, she condemned the Turkish Prime Minister's, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, failure to address the crimes the Turkish army and government has committed against the Kurdish people:

> Turkey often presents itself to the world as a model Muslim democracy, but it is in fact denying basic democratic rights to almost 20 percent of its population... We will no longer accept the status quo. We are demanding democratic freedoms, the right to speak our own language in schools and mosques and greater political autonomy in Kurdish-majority regions (Tuncel as cited in Ozkirimli, 2013, p. 2).

Approximately one year following her election, Tuncel was accused of being a member of the banned Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), and was sentenced to eight years in prison. Luckily, the Supreme Court did not approve her sentence because of her MP status.

Since its founding, the PKK's principal demands have included "constitutional recognition for the Kurds, regional self-governance and Kurdish-language education in schools" ("Kurdish MP Sebahat Tuncel," 2012). Considering the severe cultural and linguistic bans placed upon Kurdish communities in Turkey as well as the violence that has ensued largely as a result of the struggles between the Turkish army and the PKK, addressing the so-called "Kurdish question" is crucial to imagining any kind of peaceful multiculturalism in Turkey (Ozkirimli, 2013). In addressing the empowerment of girls through ÇYDD's programming, the suppression of the Kurdish identity plays crucial role in delimiting its narrow definitions.

While ÇYDD claims that they are a non-partisan organization, their Kemalist views are rather overtly displayed in their literature and also in the interviews I carried out with the staff members. The organization is fundamentally "based on Atatürk's principles" and consistently uses nationalist language about the Turkish population in homogenous cultural and linguistic terms. The ways in which they target eastern and southeastern Turkey as compared to the rest

of the country reflects the Kemalist political views, due to the fact that these regions are predominantly comprised of rural communities as well as ethnic minorities, namely Kurdish communities. Prejudices against Kurdish communities falls heavily in line with the ways in which these regions are described within the ÇYDD literature and in the interviews, namely the south and southeastern 'less developed' regions, linked to the earlier descriptions of locating 'terrorism' in these areas. While none of the staff identified the Kurdish communities directly as problematic, they made overt distinctions in addressing the problems and needs of the region as compared to the western parts.

In eastern and southeastern Turkey, the government has many boarding schools for rural communities. These are places where ÇYDD offers a great deal of support not only through scholarships, but also for construction and maintenance of these schools. In one interview, the staff member explained to me that the lack of adequate funding from the government is the reason that NGOs must intervene in these more impoverished regions (personal communication, January, 2013). In the "I have a daughter in Anatolia, she will be a teacher" scholarship and training program, eastern and southeastern regions are high priorities because of the larger gender gaps in those regions. When I asked this staff member about the opportunities that girls are afforded as a result of these training programs as compared to doing agricultural work in rural areas, they explained to me that when these girls "We are starting to give a scholarship from elementary school to the end of university. So after university, she already has an occupation; so, she has a chance. But before, no chance, if her father and her family push her to do this kind of work..." This staff member then explained how the elementary school is age is a critical period for their involvement, because ÇYDD can more easily have an impact on the direction that the daughters will take. Similar to the case of a farmer's daughter described in the story of Bhanwari from Educate Girls, empowerment is not described as not probable in rural areas without direct intervention.

Dr. Aysel Çelikel, the President of *ÇYDD* as of 2011, gave a speech for the "You can light a candle too" campaign in February, 2011, in which she addresses the principal reasons that Turkey's ranking in development indexes is so low: education. She emphasized the role of poverty in limiting girls' access to education but did not mention any aspects of cultural or linguistic diversity (Celikel, 2011). She gave statistics on low university education rates and high drop-out rates in which she compared Turkey to the EU. She explained that only 14.7% of Turkey's population graduates from university, compared to the European Union's 40%. This juxtaposition puts Turkey and the EU educational standards on a level playing field and also suggests that the EU percentage could be a kind of ideal. The main reason for such high drop out rates in Turkey, she argues, is poverty: "The young people to whom we will one day entrust the management of the country live in unacceptable conditions and with educational gaps that deeply injure society" (Celikel, 2011, para. 9).

In order to identify diversified opportunities for girls to become educated, it is important to consider the role of academic tracks as compared to vocational training. In many of my interviews with ÇYDD staff members, they explained that attaining university education was the biggest goal of their scholarships, as indicated in this one staff member's statements: "...the point is, they have to complete their education. It means, they have to finish the end of the university" (personal communication, November, 2012). In the program literature as well, references to university education most definitely override references to vocational training courses. In their description of a special project jointly carried out with Istanbul Technical University and the European Union in 2008, they make this prioritization clear: "These courses were designed for girls who had graduated from high school but were unable to continue their education further, either because of their families' financial difficulties or because they had not passed university entrance exams." They also emphasize the formal employment that the girls attained at the end of the training, either as secretaries or within the

tourism industry. Formal education designs that place university education above all others necessarily encourages urbanization because of where the universities are located, thereby making the city the location of empowerment for these girls. If there were options to engage in traditional, non-industrial modes of production that are more environmentally sustainable, although technically less productive in terms of contributions to the economy, how might this allow for more flexibility within the imagined empowerment model? If engaging in precarious work is a future to be avoided, for example, encouraging girls to become educated within a homogenous framework of capitalist production that is based upon competition rather than cooperation will undoubtedly not result in overall empowerment with such limited terms of defining academic/occupational success.

Identifying the programs' international ties and explicit capitalist interests by looking at funding resources is key to understanding some of the motives for the types of education that girls' are encourage to pursue. In one interview, a staff member from ÇYDD explained the

[Figure two: [ÇYDD school girls]. (n.d.) Retrieved from www.icef.com/education-fund/turkey/turkey.html]

ways in which the organization is funded through some private companies, both within Turkey and from abroad, and how these funds are dispersed (personal communication, November, 2012). These funding resources include large companies such as Turkcell, a major cell phone company in Turkey, HSBC bank and Mercedes Benz. Mercedes Benz has been working with ÇYDD since 2004 with the "Every Girl is a Star" program, giving scholarships that have been designated specifically for girls pursuing technical fields, such as medicine and engineering. Additionally, the company has held career days for ÇYDD participants to visit the offices in Turkey (ÇYDD, 2011b). When imagining the needs of girls across Turkey, it seems that pushing many of them towards similar fields that fit into modern technological careers would be rather limiting and rely on competitive systems that ultimately narrow girls' options for utilizing their education in alternative ways and wanting to return to their home communities.

1.3 Reflections

In this chapter, I discussed the emphasis on economic productivity that plays a central role in the program designs of both Educate Girls and ÇYDD. They both cite poverty and rural settings, also labeling them "traditional," as frequent locations of oppression and lack for the girls in particular. This liberal frame that focuses on the girls' individual economic advancement as well as their contributions to their national economies, which is based upon a modernized notion of poverty, is also used in a well-known American-based girls' education campaign called the Girl Effect. The international campaign focuses on the international girl child cause and is managed by the Nike Foundation and supported by other organizations such as the United Nations Foundation (Girl Effect, 2010). In an effort to explain how "girls are the most powerful force for change on the planet," one of the slogans of the campaign,

they explain through cartoons and text a generalized notion of what girls in poverty everywhere in the world (presumably in developing countries, given that they explain that girls can solve development problems specifically): "when a girl turns 12 and lives in poverty, her future is out of her control," and proceed to list her predicted life experiences involving child marriage, prostitution and contracting HIV. The counter example they offer is the girl who is educated, visits the doctor, stays in school, is safe, and uses her education to earn a living; "now she's calling the shots" (Girl Effect, 2010). The image they present is that these 12-year-old girls can be lifted out of poverty and change the world generation after generation by passing on more highly prized values attained through formal education. So how might one achieve this goal through the design of an empowerment program? I believe that questioning the priorities of the formal education model as well as the economic systems in which these programs are implicated would be a start.

The ways in which educational programs have the capacity to "empower" and improve the lives of girls anywhere in the world require multiple possibilities and local contextualizations outside of capitalist ideologies. Curry (2003) discusses the consequences of denying "economic imaginings" (p. 405), which could be applied to a potential denial of "educational imaginings" that do/could exist in rural settings, where lifestyles as well as cultural perspectives differ greatly from urban centers in Turkey and India. One approach that I find particularly appropriate in the case of girls' education with goals of improving their overall wellbeing is that which David Simon (1997) proposes: that definitions of development are "contextual and contingent upon the ideological, epistemological or methodological orientation of their purveyors" (p. 184). Instead of rejecting mainstreaming development models altogether, which would be incredibly difficult if not impossible, the integration of localized knowledge systems and allowance for traditional practices/ways of thinking should be adequately applied. Additionally, Curry's (2003) point of applying place-

based processes as an alternative to mainstream development models is useful in imagining other development possibilities. While Curry's research centers around its applicability in market economy, I would argue that such theories are also appropriate when addressing educational models. He suggests that one way to challenge conventional notions of development is to focus on indigenous practices, thereby disrupting all too pervasive practices of "reductionism, universalism, and emphasis on western conceptions of rationality contained in both modernization theory and structuralist perspectives of capitalism" (p. 406).

A dialogical approach would effectively shift power relations within these programs; that which involves listening to community members' perspectives, considering their labor practices and integrating their community relations when designing educational programs. Additionally, the economic empowerment of individual girls must be contextualized within a broader structure; what are the expected consequences of her participation within a larger neoliberal market system and are they ecologically and socially sustainable? Both Educate Girls and ÇYDD are working within governmental educational frameworks, which would mean that their definitions of empowerment would need to disrupt the homogenizing influence that the curricula in these public schools can have. As is the case with rural communities around the globe, India and Turkey are large countries whose village lifestyles, cultures, and languages vary immensely. In order to respect localized perspectives in the case of girls' "development," there ought to be a thinking outside of repeated capitalist productions.

Chapter 2: The interior "self": an analysis of the psychological aspect of empowerment

Both Educate Girls and ÇYDD have components of their programs that target psychological transformations outright through training, information sharing workshops, as well as counseling activities. These parts of the programs are designed to address the interior aspect of the girls' "empowerment." They are aimed at changing their social behavior and values as well as convincing their families and communities to reframe the futures they see for these girls. The aspect of analysis here is the "self" that has been historically constructed in Western psychology and has traveled through popular development discourse as a supposedly universal human condition. The ways that these organization describe the girls' shared needs across vast cultural spaces rely on this specific notion of human subjectivity. The concept of "self," historically evolving through feminist salvation discourse, acts as a foundation for justifying how and why these educational empowerment models work to emancipate girls and improve their situations across India and Turkey, with an emphasis on rural areas. In order to address how Educate Girls and ÇYDD implement this dominant ideology that has been reinforced by the American Girl Power movement, this chapter puts emphasis on parts of the programs that address self-awareness, leadership, and self-confidence as popularized foci of individualized empowerment discourse.

2.1 Historical account of the interior "self," feminist salvation discourse and the Girl Power movement

Within popular development discourse that describes girls' empowerment, definitions of their imagined freedoms and fundamental rights rely on a specific kind of liberal ideology that is culturally, economically and historically specific. The foundations of constructing a

universal notion of an "empowered" girl can be historically located when looking at western psychological sciences, European colonial projects, as well American pop culture notions of girlhood. First, I will address the ways the private "self" has been traced in western psychology, referring primarily to Nikolas Rose's (1999) book, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*. Later I will explain how this notion of the human condition lies at the core of salvation tactics carried out in missionary projects as well as western-based feminist ideologies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and also provides a basis of understanding the meaning of a girl's essentialized interior in the more recent Girl Power movement that originated in the United States (Gonick, 2006).

The ways in which "uplifting" of women and girls has been described and justified throughout mainstream western feminist as well as development discourse reveals a consistent definition of human subjectivity, particularly when looking at the psychological aspect. The construction of the "self," the human "interior," in the history of Western sciences, is key to understanding how programs like Educate Girls and ÇYDD define the terms of self-awareness and self-expression in their programs. Nikolas Rose (1999) turns to psychology to delve into the historical development of the concept that has been constructed since the mid-nineteenth century. He exposes a particular notion of modern human subjectivity that has emerged as a result of dominant scientific discourse about the universal human interior. This type of subjectivity is not only misleading, but it has also allowed for a type of "governable subjects" to materialize, as Rose points out (p. VII). His studies and analysis illustrate the imagined modern individual as a specific type of being that navigates such systems in ways controlled by public powers; "Thoughts, feelings and actions may appear as the very fabric and constitution of the intimate self, but they are socially organized and managed in minute particulars" (p. 1). The viability of this specific interior subjectivity is justified as a kind of undeniable truth in Western psychological sciences. These subjects are

implicated in political systems based on liberalism and democracy, which is what is of particular importance when imagining how imperialist feminist projects have so successfully been masked by humanitarian justifications to "liberate" oppressed individuals by targeting their psychological "selves." In looking at the ways that girls' individual subjectivities are described in programs such as Educate Girls and ÇYDD, I find that such an understanding of the human condition provides a foundation upon which projects of individualized empowerment are designed and carried out on large scales, regardless of cultural or historical specificity of the target communities.

Informed by widespread missionary work steeped in contemporary Protestant evangelical discourse, feminists not only in England, but throughout Western Europe and North America exercised a kind of "caring power," otherwise known as "secular form of the pastoral power;" the secular work of emancipation (Van Drenth and de Haan, 1999, p. 23), which reflects a targeting of the internal "self" that must be "saved." They highlight the humanitarian work of Elizabeth Fry, a Quaker reformist in nineteenth century England who worked on improving situations for female prisoners, saving their "souls," as an example of "caring power" that originated in a Christian religious discourse. In her further research on Elizabeth Fry, De Haan (2012) discusses Gayatri Spivak's explanation of the "soul making" process that was central to the colonialist civilizing mission. Annemieke van Drenth and Francisca de Haan define two sides of "caring power" as it traces back to the late eighteenth century:

...on the one hand, its agents, deeply concerned with the well-being of others, struggled to free them from cruelty and violence, in a physical as well as spiritual sense. On the other hand, this was never a 'powerfree' or free-floating humanitarian concern; rather, care for the other was the technique or medium through which power was exercised, a power aimed at shaping new identities - thus new configurations of gender, class, and ethnicity (p. 24).

The salvation projects that were based upon religious ethics in the 18th and 19th centuries have since moved to a secular domain. Rose (1999) also refers to the religious construction in his research when he calls those who have had a large say in how one's interior ought to be governed the "engineers of the human soul," which he calls the psychologists, social workers, counsellors and therapists (p. 233). These "engineers," I argue, are also the ones who have historically implemented imperialist projects in the name of a westernized notion of female emancipation because of a Western ideological understanding of the human condition. De Haan and Van Drenth (1999) explain how the construction of the "soul" in the Christian tradition provided for a specific kind of "uplifting" work that focused on a specific cultural notion of the interior "self" and "psyche." This project took on broader secular meanings, which has entered development discourse and shaped mainstream empowerment definitions such that projects that target the girl child are founded upon it.

Returning back to colonial history, the roots of British feminism demarcate a heavy influence of such policing roles, having grown in a particular political context during the periods of Victorian and Edwardian imperialism, which Antoinette Burton (1994) explains throughout her book, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture (1865-1915).* Empire in western cultures more broadly gave rise to international feminist institutions that spoke on behalf of women in other countries, primarily the "Oriental" or Eastern women who were imagined as "prisoners of law or religious custom" (p. 66). This was largely made possible by women like the British feminists who put themselves in positions as "saviors," or as Burton describes, believed in the "world-civilizing significance they attached to their role in national political culture" (p. 1). She quotes Brian Harrison's description of British feminism to highlight how these women took on particular roles in their liberal projects to "uplift" women of the colonies during a specific socio-political moment: "[British feminism] was launched as a political movement in the optimistic

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mid-Victorian liberal mood of emancipation and free trade" (Harrison in Burton, 1994: p. 210). The notion of a cultural superiority and female agency against the nonwestern "traditions" within the empire mentalities of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century therefore justified a kind of "imperial feminism" (Burton, 1994, p. 2 & Vron Ware, 1992).

The salvation discourse of the British Raj is one clear example of how Indian women's subjectivity was focused upon as a legitimization for the colonial project; their "sisters" needed to be saved from "tradition." British women's acknowledgement of indigenous women's movements in India did grow after World War I, as accounted for in the Englishwoman's Review, yet the Victorian feminist debate remained largely entrenched in sentiments of pity with regard to "Oriental womanhood" (Burton, 1994, p. 107). In the case of India, the issue of sati[11] has symbolically represented a need to "save" Indian women from harmful cultural practices, defining tradition against modernity within the context of colonial power dynamics. In her analyses of the discourses surrounding the practice during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries specifically, Lata Mani (1987) points out how the dominant descriptions have illustrated Indian females in positions of denied agency. In her extensive research on the historical discussions of sati in colonial India, she addresses a heroine-victim dichotomy in western portrayals of Indian women that denies them a complex subjectivity as females, which has consequently made them susceptible to the salvation discourse (p. 152). While the case of sati is an extreme one, the disproportionately high number of western

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[11] Here, *sati* refers to the practice of immolation that a Hindu widow carries out on her husband's funeral pyre. A small minority of Hindu women have both voluntarily performed and have been forced enact *sati* in various regions in South Asia. Despite its relatively low frequency, it has been highly sensationalized in western discourse regarding Indian history and cultures since the fifteenth century (see Andrea Major's *Sati: A Historical Anthology. (*2007). UK: Oxford University Press.)

accounts of overt concern for the wellbeing of Indian women as compared to its relatively low level of occurrence, despite other oppressive aspects of the British colonial regime, is of interest here. I argue that policies which strived to save Indian women from "tradition" represent a broader pattern of overly simplifying its meaning, thereby giving it an automatic pejorative connotation. It is useful to pose the question of the psychological aspect; were the British concerned with the self-esteem or confidence of Indian women at the time? If not, how has this psychoanalytical shift been grafted onto girls' subjectivity in more recent empowerment concepts that seek to save girls in new ways? The emergence of the Girl Power movement of the Third Wave feminism might explain how the imagined modern subject within western psychological discourse has been directly applied to more recent national and international initiatives to uplift the girl child specifically.

Considering predominant linkages between development and economic growth within a capitalist framework, as I outlined in the first chapter, the role that the United States took up following World War II as the new "leader of the capitalist world" (Carnoy, 1974, p. 47) points to how American cultural constructions have been left relatively uncontested in development discourse. This is why I find American cultural phenomena regarding the construction of the girl and girlhood particularly key in understanding contemporary girl child discourse. Marnina Gonick (2006) addresses two cultural formulations from the US that I argue have shaped the global discourse on the girl child which define empowerment in individualistic terms and focus on the notion of the interior "self": "Girl Power" and "Reviving Ophelia." She contextualizes the two definitions of the (American) girl in a current global context: the first illustrating assertiveness and dynamism, and the latter presenting vulnerability and passivity. The construction of girlhood within popular American discourse describes a specific relationship to modernity, coming forth in the early 1990s, also the moment just before the girl child entered popular development discourse globally. The

potential link between the emergence of a "new girl," as Gonick (2006) calls her, alongside a widespread recognition of a girl's fragility, to discussion of girls' needs worldwide during the same decade provide insight into how definitions of girlhood have traveled transnationally through development work. The distinct cultural, social and political landscape that the feminist Third Wave encompasses, in the "late-capitalist and postmodern world" following the Second Wave (Garrison, 2000), provides a unique context in which the Girl Power movement has emerged in the US. While the "Third Wave" responds to critiques of mainstream feminism with a more intersectional approach, the overarching construction of a girl's interior maintains possibility for uplifting because of her essentialized private self. I argue that the empowerment initiatives that have been developed since the 1990s, particularly since the emergence of the Girl Power movement in the United States, rely on this specific cultural notion of the private self that Rose traces through western psychological sciences.

The commonalities found in current empowerment discourse across initiatives internationally suggest that institutions such as the United Nations, the World Bank and other large development NGOs have pervasively influenced the concept. The consistencies also rely on an essentialist view of girlhood as well as individualized empowerment (see Charania, 2001)[12]. The interior aspect of a popularized version of empowerment has involved to target psychological transformation and issues such as leadership, self-esteem and independence. These foci have been located in specific social movements in the United States that have aimed to uplift women and girls during the 1990s, also when empowerment became a buzzword in development discourse, which I discuss in more detail in the next section (see

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[12] Moon Charania (2001) complicates such essentialism in her research on the Atlanta Girls' School in the United States and effectively ties in a broader discussion of all-girls' educational philosophies in the US that problematically emphasize girl-specific pedagogical tactics as well as narrow definitions of educational "excellence."

Batliwala, 2010). Although the discourse on a global scale is of course not homogenous, and its implementation on the ground varies, there are many common threads within this popularized conceptualization that ought to be noted, such as the ways that interior development and economic development have been linked. As a result, discourse about Girl Power in the United States seems to have heavily influenced development perspectives on the girl child, thereby marking a shift of development to the interior and psychological part of girls' empowerment.

Universalizing constructions of a girl's interior exemplify the ways in which girlhood is imagined and can easily spread through economic policy when economic empowerment is the principal aim of betting their situations. Neoliberal development perspectives thereby define empowerment in such limited economic terms. Mainstream US feminist ideology as well as notions of a global sisterhood have undoubtedly impacted the global discourse on women's and girls' needs in disproportionate ways compared to movements such as those originating in the Global South. US mainstream feminism has rooted its arguments in the assumption that "paid work represents liberation of women," and American feminists have largely maintained their innocence in carrying out such projects in the name of spreading democracy (Eisenstein, 2009, p. 133, 182). Moreover, "an ethic of autonomy," as Rose describes it (p. 258), outlines the individual subjectivity of the targeted girl in the programming of Educate Girls and ÇYDD, naming her freedoms and rights according to liberal notions of how her interior ought to be uplifted. The girls are therefore granted their freedoms according to specific notions of how they as individuals should see themselves, interact with their communities, as well as the broader market economy that is entrenched in a global neoliberal value system. The dominant discourse argues that "uplifted" girls, as individuals who succeed in mainstream educational terms, compare against those who otherwise cannot in such competitive circumstances, thereby maintaining class hierarchies

inherent to capitalist systems: "the self-determining individual and the latter personifying an anxiety about those who are unsuccessful in producing themselves in this way" (Gonick, 2006, p. 2). Looking at the conceptualizations of the individualized girl subject and psychological approaches to addressing empowerment within programs such as Educate Girls and ÇYDD, the dominant discourse suggests a spreading of concepts legitimized by neoliberal policies and popularized notions of what an empowered girl does, how she should act, as well as how she should imagine herself as empowered.

2.2 A brief history of the term empowerment in development work

The term "empowerment" originally has European roots dating back to the Protestant Reformation and has been applied to various movements in the US including Quakerism, early capitalism, the black power movement and second wave feminist activism. The concept has changed since its emergence in development discourse in the 1970s, becoming a so-called buzzword in the late 1990s, as Batliwala (2010) describes in her book chapter, "Taking the power out of empowerment -- an experiential account." She calls it probably the "most widely used and abused" word that has become part of the development lexicon over the past 30 years because of the widespread depoliticized mainstreaming process it has undergone. During the 1980s, the term was revitalized particularly among Third World feminists who were critical of economic-driven development models that diluted empowerment objectives. Their empowerment movements, in contrast to mainstream global initiatives, challenged patriarchy in addition to broader oppressive social structures. While its meaning and application has varied in differing cultural and socio-political contexts, mostly in (neo)European movements, Batliwala (2010) claims it was "hijacked" in the 1990s when it was "converted from a collective to an individualistic process, and skilfully [sic] co-opted by

conservative and even reactionary political ideologies in pursuit of their agenda of divesting 'big government'" (p. 112). This switch from the collective to the individual marks a notable shift in priorities as well as understanding of modern subjectivity; how a person's needs are understood compared to their those of their community.

This transition is highly relevant in the context of Educate Girls and ÇYDD because of their emphasis on the individual empowerment of the girl, regardless of her local community ties. In the following sections that address the program specifics and interview responses of staff members from each organization, I illustrate some examples of how the organizations maintain the modernized individual as the center of the empowerment program designs in order to show how these models of empowerment fail to incorporate diversified opportunities for these girls. In the case of Educate Girls, one staff member highlighted the significance of a strong relationship between the organization and the government in ensuring the impact of their programming:

> After five, six years that I'm working here, I've seen a lot of changes...It has beeobserved by me that we should make our linkages with the government strong. Then you can solve lots of heavy problems easily, because we are working with the government... If a school teacher is not supporting you, then you can suggest to the district collecter... schoolteachers, headmasters, even block elementary education officers, then they automatically give support to us... (personal communication,
>
> August, 2012)

Here, the staff member directly addresses the link between the perspectives of the staff of Educate Girls and the formal education system; the stronger the relationship between the organization and the government becomes, their interdependencies will likely grow in two ways: 1) the government will trust Educate Girls' notion of an Indian girl's subjectivity and 2) the organization will rely on the formal schooling system in how they define educational

priorities. It is not only the education system itself that shapes the ways the girls understand their opportunities in their community and broader Indian society, but the programs of Educate Girls are given a great deal of space to influence such understandings through their direct impact on the public schooling system. Therefore, the political significance of "empowerment" according to their definitions depends upon this relationship and the opportunity for changing understandings of how the girls' lives are to be improved also depends upon how they approach this relationship.

Looking at examples from South Asian organizations that focus on women's empowerment such as the Grameen Bank, focus on the collective vs. individual consciousness sharply distinguishes the discourse about empowerment within each initiative and how the awareness of empowerment and disempowerment is operationalized. This distinction radically changes the way in which an empowered individual can therefore be imagined; for example: are her interpersonal relationships, distinct cultural heritage or accountability to her local community important according to the organization's strategy to improve her situation? And how is her particular background integrated as a part of her new empowered identity as a contributing member to Indian or Turkish society once she has gone through these programs? Kabeer (1994) touches upon an "empowerment from within" that involves transforming the target community's consciousness, which offers an alternative to be contrasted against the more individualized conception constructed in both Educate Girls and ÇYDD (p. 247).

Batliwala (2010) covers the use and application of empowerment both in scholarly work and development programs on the ground. She explains that the concept was also taken up within corporate agendas as a tool for expanding the market. Batliwala was herself involved with many development initiatives that targeted women's issues and gender equality in India during the 1990s. Based on her experiences, she notes that many NGOs and donor agencies

have written annual reports of their empowerment programs, although she, as well as Kabeer, claim that it has been impossible to find a consistent definition. Batliwala (1994) therefore took part in a collective re-imagining of the concept with grassroots organizations in the 1990s, which resulted in the publication of a document, "Women's Empowerment in South Asia: Concepts and Practices," which addresses its application in South Asia specifically. The document highlights that instead of targeting one specific issue or focusing on individual access to economic capital, land titles, etc., empowerment entails structural change in both dominant ideologies and institutions in order to ensure deep social transformation:

> ...as a process that shifts social power in three critical ways: by challenging the ideologies that justify social inequality (such as gender or caste), by changing prevailing patterns of access to and control over economic, natural, and intellectual resources, and by transforming the institutions and structures that reinforce and sustain existing power structures (such as the family, state, market, education, and media) (Batliwala, 2010, p. 115).

In addition to the meanings of empowerment that Batliwala traces, particularly with a gendered perspective, various definitions in the context of education in the US have been offered by scholars such as Ashcroft, McLaren and Banks (as cited in Sleeter, 1991):

> (1) "...bringing into a state of belief in one's ability/capability to act with effect" (Ashcroft as cited in Sleeter, 1991, p. 3)

> (2) "...the process through which students learn to critically appropriate knowledge existing outside their immediate experience in order to broaden their understanding of themselves, the world and the possibilities for transforming the taken-for-granted assumptions about the way we live" (McLaren as cited in Sleeter, 1991, p. 3)

> (3) "...knowledge that is institutionalized within the schools and the larger society neither enables students to become reflexive and critical citizens nor helps them to participate

effectively in their society in ways that will make it more democratic and just... to empower students to participate effectively in their civic community, we must change the ways in which they acquire, view and evaluate knowledge" (Banks as cited in Sleeter, 1991, p. 125-126).

Of the three descriptions of empowerment, I find the third to be the most insightful when imagining how the programs of Educate Girls and ÇYDD can be effectively improved. After giving examples of the aspects of each program that seem limited in respect to integrating local knowledge systems and cultural/linguistic identities, I address Banks' quote again in the conclusion of this chapter.

With a critical approach to understanding knowledge systems, believing in one's capacity to take action, and thinking reflexively in local cultural and linguistic contexts can open up the meaning of empowerment in new ways, particularly when considering its application within multicultural education. Sleeter (1991) states that empowerment and multicultural education are necessarily interwoven and have a joint capacity to create effective reform within schools on multiple levels. Her definition involves addressing social change directly by looking at racial, gender and social-class groups. Therefore, her idea of an "empowering" education model entails working with students, their communities and knowledge systems, rather than erasing the knowledge and abilities students offer by implementing that which the dominant society values. A unified "pragmatic" agenda within Women in Development (WID)[13] approaches goes unquestioned because of its

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[13] As compared to Women and Development (WAD) and Gender and Development (GAD) practices that emerged later, WID was first widely used in the 1970s following Ester Boserupe's groundbreaking publication, *Women's Role in Economic Development.* WID refers to a modernization strategy focused on developing countries to better integrate women into economic systems through gendered legal and administrative tactics (see Rathgeber, 1990).

institutionalized place within development work. Kabeer (1994) explains that this systematically occurs when the agendas are assumed to be void of any ideology (supposedly "neutral"), and consequently allow for homogenous empowerment models to be applied across complex and diverse situations (p. 12).

In her book, *Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*, Kabeer (1994) explores the meaning of power within the application of the concept, explaining that it is "clearly rooted in the notion of power and in its reverse, powerlessness or the absence of power" (p. 224). The inability of a so-called disempowered group to subvert oppressive hierarchies describes social relations in rather reduced dichotomized terms by identifying those who have power and those who do not. In her analysis of grassroots empowerment movements that address the needs of a target group, Kabeer concludes that the definition of power is not rigid; rather, it is multidimensional and "more fluid, more pervasive and more socially embedded than the conventional focus on individual decision-making would suggest" (p. 229). Therefore, the ways in which lack and oppression are defined and addressed within girls' educational programming that seeks to improve their overall situations demands a relativized approach to power dynamics within their respective communities.

An organization's conceptualization of empowerment depends on their prioritization of economic, social and behavioral aspects, as well as the identified sources of the girls' oppression within social structures. While Sara Hlupekile Longwe's (1998) article, "Education for women's empowerment or schooling for women's subordination" does not discuss the girl child specifically, her inquiries regarding women's advancement and empowerment within the context of education are relevant because of the way she interrogates strategies of overcoming structural oppression. She, like Batliwala (2010) and Kabeer (1994), contrasts definitions of empowerment that focus on (1) individual self-

reliance that emphasizes economic independence and increased access to resources vs. (2) collective action that prioritizes broader structural change in society as a means of tackling gender inequality. I agree with Longwe's opinion that the first option is "fatally limited" (p. 22). Therefore, my critique addresses this perspective precisely; the dominant image fails to address interdependencies and community relations, which both Educate Girls and ÇYDD portray in their programming. By encouraging competition and defining empowerment in terms of success in the classroom or in the job market, the 'empowered' girl might achieve her higher social positioning "at the expense of her sisters, for example by exploiting cheap labour..." (p. 22). This narrow possibility for success likely demands girls to compete within broader Indian and Turkish societies, thereby competing against each other as well. Additionally, the necessary consequence of such competition is academic elitism and exclusion, which plays a central role in maintaining an ideology of educational "excellence" (Fritzberg and Minnich in Charania, 2001, p. 88).

The ways in which Educate Girls and ÇYDD discuss the needs of girls in India and Turkey fits quite neatly into the homogenizing approaches that Kabeer critiques, despite the diversity of perspectives and lifestyles that exist in both countries. As is commonly found across the globe, cultural, linguistic and labor diversity are more pronounced in rural areas, making it an even more important location to inquire about the narrowness of such programs. Kabeer (1994) contends that the status quo is part of a liberal world view that maintains "possessive individualism, the pursuit of a greater share of material goods," which of course feeds into neoliberal economic theories and assumptions about individual satisfaction and motivations (p. 13). Modernization theory that defines development as a unidirectional evolutionary process creates an "institutionalized individualism" that situates a discourse about empowerment in a backward-modern dichotomy (Kabeer, 1994, p. 16), as I discussed in the first chapter. The rural space is further justified as the location of lacking the values of

rational individualism. It is here that I look further into the meaning of such individualism in educational initiatives that seek to socialize, thereby coaching the "modern" girl, by analyzing how these two organizations address the interior aspect of empowerment.

2.3 Educate Girls and the Indian context

The economic priorities of Educate Girls' programs are reiterated throughout their program literature and were also pointed out consistently in my interviews with the staff. Additionally, the social aspect of the girls' personality, in terms of how she should express herself and interact with broader society, can be easily identified as a high priority, as it was mentioned in five out of the seven of my interviews with the staff members. The history of the formal education system in India, based upon principles set forth by British colonial powers, sets the backdrop of the how the construction of "development" and formal schooling forced assimilation of Indians for capitalist purposes (Carnoy, 1974, p. 83). In the case of Educate Girls, the programs are designed not only to better integrate girls into the formal schooling system for the community and overall Indian economic development, it is, as one staff member reaffirmed, for their "overall development" as well. The slogan of a CLT training workshop that they advertised to the Team Balika volunteers read "Tum chalo to desh chalega": "you go, then the country will go." Within a broader nationalist and economically-driven framework, the individualized focus is a high priority for these programs, and the organization designs the trainings according to what a girl's "development" requires in order to make specific contributions to Indian society.

The three-language formula in India is a government mandate that defines the standardized languages through which knowledge is to be disseminated in the pre-university formal schooling system. Although the three languages technically include the local

language, the other two being English and another national language such as Hindi, determinants of literacy are the at the crux of where knowledge is measured. Within this schooling model, literacy is taught and defined strictly in the "medium" of specific standardized languages that are determined by the state, regardless of the literature that already exists in other languages that are widely spoken in a given region, such is the case for Bhojpuri and Marwari, for example. These government-determined official languages, the so-called 'rational' and 'modern' national languages such as Hindi, do not include regional languages which are not standardized (Keane as cited in LaDousa, 2005, p. 461). Naming such languages as "dialects" of Hindi, which the government of India does officially, deprives them of their distinct cultural and linguistic identities as separate languages tied to localized histories and knowledge systems. LaDousa (2005) refers to Bourdieu in his assessment of language in the formal education system in North India, explaining "education's ability to organize symbolic capital by training students in a particular type of language" (p. 468). Here, he makes the point that national education monopolizes the market through its mass uniform production of its producers and consumers. Moreover, English, the language associated with urban elites across India, plays a unique role because of its global as well as national significance across diverse regions. While the Hindi medium education encourages a national unification among citizens across diverse regions, English plays a more international role as the international language that continues to tie Indians to the global market system through its educational priorities.

One way that they address this part of the empowerment model is through children's councils (Bal Sabha) within the schools that are designed to stimulate "girls' participation in matters related to their growth and development so as to build confidence, leadership and self-esteem" (Educate Girls, 2011, p. 14). In these "self-development" activities, the girls in the 7th and 8th standards take part in life-skills trainings through game activities that focus on

ten specific skills. Educate Girls designs these life-skills kits and by 2010 had distributed them to 905 upper primary schools and ten KGBV (Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhalaya) in the Pali district of Rajasthan. In their research and monitoring reports, Educate Girls stated that "changes in their behavior, appearance, sharing confidence, leadership and communication" were some of the effective results that were gathered in observations, case studies, focus group discussion and feedback from teachers and parents (Educate Girls, 2012b, p. 5). They also mention in this document that "personality development" is one of the training priorities (p. 4). In the description of the Bal Sabha program that is written in Hindi, Educate Girls describes the aim of these councils:

बालसभा का उददेष्य बच्चों को उनकी वृद्धि एवं विकास को समझने सहित अच्छे

सामाजिकीकरण (sic) विकास व्यवहार के सिखने को प्रेरित करना है। बाल सभा गतिविधियों से

ग्रामीण एवं पिछड़े बच्चे अपनी प्रतिभाओं की पहचान, आत्मविष्वास, नेतृत्व कौषल एवं सहयोग

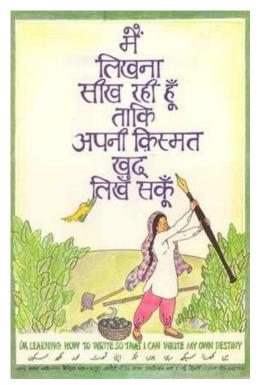को बढ़ा सकेंगे तथा अपनी व्यवहारिक कठिनाइयों एवं चुनौतियों से उभरना सीख सकेंगे।

(Bal Sabha document, 2012: p. 1)

In English, this translates to:

The aim of the Bal Sabha (children's councils program) is to understand the growth and progress of children including motivating them to learn good socialization development behavior. Through the activities of Bal Sabha, rural and backward children can better identify their talents, increase their self-confidence as well as leadership and cooperation abilities, and overcome their behavioral pitfalls and challenges.

The overall social transformation that Educate Girls seeks to achieve through this program, targeted a the "rural and backward children," is multipurpose. It addresses not only personal expression, and self-awareness, but undoubtedly cultural practices that seek to, in the end, make the girls specific kinds of people: "Finally EG generates the formation of improved human" (Educate Girls, 2011, p. 35).

As mentioned in the first chapter, the language that Educate Girls measures literacy is Hindi, not the mother language of the children in the Pali district. Considering what literacy in a foreign language symbolizes, the organization explained in a Facebook post from March 15, 2013, "By teaching them to write, *Educate Girls* inspires girls to write their own destiny," also indicated in Figure one, which reads "I am learning to write so that I can write my own future" (Educate Girls' Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/educategirls). Moreover, the idea of "writing their own destiny" relies on the concept of the interior and the priority of individualism, thereby defining empowerment in particular subjective terms. While I agree with training programs that encourage children to use their talents for their community, identifying them as in need of such assistance because of their "backward" cultural status and rural location signifies a larger power dynamic at play. The motivations behind such programs--to change the ways girls behave and interact with their communities, learn skills that Educate Girls deems as most important, namely Hindi, English and math first and foremost--suggest that people in these locations are automatically

[Figure three: [Facebook image post] (2013). Retrieved from www.facebook.com/educategirls.]

assumed to not know what their own needs are or how they can better themselves or their communities.

During the initial pilot project that was started in 2005 and continued until the establishment of the organization in 2007, Educate Girls recuperated data from government-run child tracking surveys (CTS) to identify gender gaps and because of inaccuracies found in their data, namely their methodological failure to account for low records of girls out of school, then the organization presented their new findings to the state government. The organization moved forward with their programs based on their own survey data that found more girls were actually out of school. In order to improve the quality of education, Educate Girls implemented Creative Learning Techniques (CLT). The government has agreed to support the organization in eventually implementing these programs in every state in India. The CLT approach involves activity-based curricula designed to create more interaction among the students in order to foster a more learner-friendly and also girl-friendly environment. While this methodology has the capacity to open new doors for building knowledge in the communities that it involves, the amount of control that the communities have on a local level to choose what the children learn (vocational training skills that have been used in the area over generations as opposed to computer training courses) and how they learn it (in Marwari vs. Hindi or English) seems limited (Educate Girls, 2012b).

In terms of community mobilization, the nonformal scheme is an alternative to the formal scheme, if the family thinks the schools are too far away, for example. This is part of the government educational framework and is also supported by Educate Girls, such as in cases when the families resist sending their girls to school because they need them to assist in childcare or at-home chores. Educate Girls then offers optional courses for nonformal education in which the girls are relocated. Many rural communities are unaware of the government education schemes, which is one of the reasons that the organization focuses so

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heavily on the door-to-door tactic of spreading awareness of their programs. Because of the slow process in changing the mindset of the community members, as was described to me in two of the interviews with the staff members, the non-formal educational scheme often acts as an intermediate stage towards the formal scheme, in which the academic track is more common. As explicitly addressed a few of the interviews, some staff members explained some of the concrete tactics they used in convincing families when they encountered resistance: "first, we enroll them in the nonformal school... then we slowly, slowly try to talk to the parents... you see that their minds slowly, slowly change and then after one year, they are ready to send their girls to the mainstreaming school... first we create interest about education..." (personal communication, August, 2012). The staff member then explained the majority of the girls move in the academic direction in the schools, as compared to the non-academic (nonformal) track. In five years, they expect to impact all 26 gender gap districts[14] of India. Once this work is done, a few of the staff members told me that their next step would be to work at secondary level of education.

In one of the interviews, the staff member discussed the skills development training aspect of the program:

I feel that the total scenario will change as soon as the movement goes ahead. It's just step-by-step that education will be given to them. Up to now I find that starting with education, health, talking about their empowerment, skills development, they should learn some technical education so that they can work on computers, so that they can also come ahead into the market. They can go on the shoulders of the other girls, having good backgrounds, having good education... (personal communication, August, 2012).

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[14] I explain the process by which *Educate Girls* locates and identifies the gender gap districts in the introduction of chapter one.

The act of the organization "giving" the girls these particular skills for their independence and survival, as was explained to me, limits definitions of skills that are considered useful to that which Educate Girls determines in their training programs. Another staff member explained that each village should feel as though they own the school. While this idea could increase the local school's capacity to define the skills and knowledge that is useful in that particular area, this possibility seems limited considering the effect that Educate Girls has on the gram sabha/panchayat (local governing bodies), the teachers, the students and the classroom structure through their trainings and testing measures. Part of this supposed ownership is enacted through a semi-grassroots strategy of spreading awareness of the program, which many staff members discussed as a key tactic. They explained that the girls have a particularly effective power to spread information about the programs to other girls in their community to increase enrollment.

As of April of 2013, Educate Girls described their principal vision on their Facebook page, and on fundraising websites such as Globalgiving.org, in terms of social and behavioral transformation, along with the financial aspect: "We aim to achieve behavioural, social and economic transformation towards an India, where all children have equal opportunities to access quality education" (Educate Girls' Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/educategirls). Through these clear statements, the purpose of "quality education" is portrayed as a personal development endeavor with specific interior transformations in mind. In a separate post on April 2nd, they stated that through their programs a girl is able to "express her thoughts & ideas more appropriately (Educate Girls' Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/educategirls). The term "appropriate" here flags a heavy assumption that, prior to these programs, the girls from rural and "backward" areas do not know how to express themselves in socially acceptable ways. Similarly, the kinds of work that the girls are imagined to do in the future is also a part of the constructed

empowered ideal, as one staff member illustrated: "I do not want to see girls doing any labor work. I want all our girls to sit in a chair, command something, and go forward." The idea of moving "forward" is part of the specific imagining of the girls' subjectivities and how they should navigate as educated individuals moving away from manual labor, which would absolutely include the agrarian occupations that so many people do in the Pali district, to name just one example.

As compared to the 1990s discourse on girls in the US and shifts in empowerment conceptualizations from a community focus to that of the individual, there is arguably a similar progression happening in the descriptions of Educate Girls; uplifting girls from a "Reviving Ophelia" state of fragility and vulnerability to the self-assured and independent "Girl Power" state (Gonick, 2006). The ways in which Educate Girls enacts the social, behavioral and psychological transformations of not only the girls, but their families and communities through the local legislative bodies, is most overtly described in their Bal Sabha programs. Their aim to assist girls in departing from a rural/traditional subjectivity to embrace an "improved human" positioning, which fits within a modern subjectivity in a capitalist sense, as they are expected to enter the market economy as independent individuals. The degree to which the local knowledge systems, languages, and cultural perspectives are integrated seems rather limited within the confines of these program designs. Educate Girls does explain that giving each community ownership over their own schools is a key strategy in ensuring that the girls' enrollment and retention increases, although the transformation that the organization demands does not seem to support the lifestyles that exist in these more remote settings.

2.4 ÇYDD and the Turkish context

While the design and content of ÇYDD's programs are distinct and geographically more widespread compared to those of Educate Girls, the aim of addressing the personal development of the girls is similarly a core part of its mission. Their training programs, counseling sessions with families and students, as well as target activity programs like theater workshops are some key examples of strategies to address the interior aspect of empowerment. The concept of empowerment in international development initiatives has largely shifted towards focus on the individual as opposed to a larger collective especially in economic terms. Descriptions of the individual girl's personality and behavioral training seems to be representative of a broader movement towards a possibly linked Americanized type of Girl Power, as I discuss in the introduction of this chapter. The principal goals of ÇYDD outline these psychological and behavioral priorities, as do Educate Girls, in the ways that they implement programs to "advance" girls' behavior in specific directions, which also fall in line with a "Turkification" ideology that enforces ethnonationalist identity politics on a culturally and linguistically diverse reality (Inal and Akkaymak, 2012, p. X).

The case of ÇYDD places modernity and the idea of a "modern subject" at the forefront. Historically, the concept of modern identity has been a central ideal in Kemalist politics, which ÇYDD supports, which was one of the first things I noticed in visits to a branch in Ankara, with their libraries filled with books on Atatürk. The major structural shift in the education system that took place during the Kemalist reformation in the formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 affected a dual system that was in place: a traditional (religious) and modern (western) educational track. In forming the nation-state, Atatürk considered education a key part of the modernization process, and therefore the latter became the only viable path, thereby making religious education marginalized.

As Inal and Akkaymak (2012) explain throughout their compilation work on the education system in Turkey, *Neoliberal Transformation of Education in Turkey*, the modernizing shifts have occurred within a consumption-based system. The economic transformations that took place in the late 1970s with the liberalization of the national market to join with global capitalism also marked a shift in the education system. In the 1990s, they became more pronounced, which Inal and Akkaymak (2012) explain that the educational reform in 2004 reflected an adoption of "a neoliberal discourse and changed the national stance of education into a global stance" (Inal and Akkaymak, 2012, p. XV). The more recent changes enacted through AKP (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi,* the Justice and Development Party) through the "4+4+4" program have been the inclusion of Islamic courses into curricula

[Figure four: (n.d.). This ÇYDD holiday card reads: "I thank you" (Left). "The real holiday of happiness will be when we educate all girls of our country. Happy holidays, we thank for your support" (Right). Retrieved from www.cydd.org.tr.]

and classification of imam-hatip, Islamic schools, as vocational training, and also allowing for homeschooling. The opposition party, CHP (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi,* Republican People's Party) has criticized the reform as "depriving children of a basic scientific and humanities education." Girls will also be allowed to wear the headscarf during these classes on the Koran ("School Reopens in Turkey," 2012). These modifications have all taken place while still maintaining a system that serves the needs of the market economy.

In reviewing the recent history of the education system in Turkey since the creation of the Republic, it becomes clear how economic priorities have dominated perspectives on what education should do to create the "modern Turkish subject." In imagining what this means for girls, ÇYDD's program exemplify just how this female subject can be formed by addressing not only her career development, but her social and behavioral development as well. The Vice President as of 2013, Nihal Kızıl, stated that the purpose of the organization is "to reach the modern community through the modern individual" and explained that to be modern requires education, and therefore the Association is carrying out very intensive training projects (ÇYDD Haberler website (b), 2012). These training projects involve a range of activities and strategies, including clubs at the local level and special summer training programs focusing on entrepreneurship, drama and overall nationalist ideologies.

One personal development training program that has been implemented in various ÇYDD branches across Turkey is the ANGIKAD Entrepreneurship and Development Youth Camp. ANGIKAD, the Association to Support Entrepreneur Business Women, held the second camp in November of 2011 in Ankara, which was sponsored by the World Bank, Microsoft and Ankara Governorship; a clear institutional collaboration of one of the largest global international development powers, the corporate sector and the government of Turkey. The girls who took part were scholarship students in their senior year of university. The topics covered by the "experts" during the camp included "entrepreneurship, personal

development, social participation, the social rights of young people, and best practices" (ÇYDD, 2011d). On their website, ÇYDD explains some of the speaker's talking points, such as Bekir Coşkun's point that women are important for Turkey's development, clearly bringing back the personal development strategy to economic priorities for the nation as a whole.

Like Educate Girls' Bal Sabha children's councils, ÇYDD has Children's Clubs that are organized at the local branch level. Their overall goal is to "improve children's cultural and social abilities, creating an environment where they can develop their individual talents, and improve their skills, while helping them grow up to be the sensitive and aware people of the future" (ÇYDD, 2011a). The activities that overtly target social transformation are the workshops, which coincide with field trip-type visits to historical sites, concerts and theaters. As a requirement of receiving a scholarship from ÇYDD, all girls must take part in training programs at their local branch. In an interview at the headquarters, one of the staff members described one example training program that teaches the girls in various locations across Turkey "correct communication," "correct body language" and "self-awareness" through creative drama techniques (personal communication, January, 2013). I learned about this drama programs through an interview at the headquarters when one staff member explained the importance of personal development: "...social development is so huge actually. It's like a training program for correct communication, body language, presentation skills...for their self-confidence and for their awareness" (personal communication, January, 2013). These programs are not directed solely at rural communities; rather, they are implemented nationally at varying degrees. I inquired about how these programs vary and learned during my interviews with the staff members at the headquarters that each local branch has some autonomy in carrying out these activities, yet the general goal remains consistent: the forms of social expression and self-reflection are taken as integral parts of advancing the girls'

situations. As ÇYDD does not address cultural and linguistic diversity nor do they leave much room for allowing girls to pursue education outside of the university track, how will this change the ways that girls see themselves and their communities? If they do come from a marginalized community in Turkey where most people are not university educated, how might this change their value judgment on "correct" versus "incorrect" forms of interacting with Turkish society? It seems that such programs would encourage movement away from marginalized labor practices, such as farming, or marginalized cultural practices and/or languages that do not fall into the "correct" categories as defined by ÇYDD.

Historically, the suppression of Kurdish identity has been legally instated through prohibition of the language in educational institutions, of Kurdish music and holidays in public, and Kurdish place names. Efforts to assimilate Kurds into a singular Turkish ethnonationalist identity have been carried out since the 1930s after the establishment of the Republic in 1923 (Olson, 2011). Movements to reclaim Kurdish rights to expressing their identity in such forms have formed, been suppressed, and reshaped particularly since the 1980s. The first decade of the 21st century marked a resurgence of Kurds fighting for their right to be educated in their mother language, as well as for a Kurdish university. Various economic development projects have been designed by the AKP party to target the regions in which Kurdish communities are heavily concentrated to resolve the so-called "Kurdish Question," which is also referred to as the "Eastern Question" (Olson, 2011, p. XV, 20)

In the Kurdish case, representation of Kurdish language and culture have been overtly denied in public and educational spaces, also in the name of overcoming certain customs that the government does not approve of, yet at a high price of social exclusion and discrimination. Aside from banning of the Kurdish language ban that lasted until 1991, other cultural bans have included broadcasting in Kurdish the banning of the newruz festivities around the new year. In contrasting the Kurdish girls' situation in rural areas to that of boys,

Erden (2009) explains that their higher drop-out rates are largely due to economic reasons: "In traditional extended families," the boys have strong familial ties that often require them to financially support their parents, but sometimes this means that they must do agricultural work with the family instead of attending formal schooling. Erden goes on to explain that these seemingly oppressive traditional perspectives are slowly but surely changing as families recognize the value of education that results in "increasing their children's status in society" (p. 129). Within a capitalist framework and considering the economic policies enacted in Turkey since the founding of the Republic in 1923, it seems that the class hierarchies are only maintained with such educational practices that place higher education at the top, and vocational non-formal education on the lower ranks.

While the programs fail to integrate the cultural perspectives of the rural communities that they target in their programming, neither Educate Girls nor ÇYDD avoid the issue of multiculturalism altogether; in fact, ÇYDD has even designed programs based on encouraging it, although with specific cultures in mind. A staff member at the headquarters of ÇYDD described to me a more recent program that was implemented in January of 2013. In this project, selected girls took part in the EU Youth on the Move Program, in which the girls participated in Youth Democracy Action 1.3. This program partners with youth organizations in Stuttgart and Tartu to address youth action in representative democracy, and most notably, "cultural exchange to breed respect and tolerance for different cultures." In the case of this program specifically, cultural exchange is central, yet the cultures they consider worth are exchanging are intentionally selected; the way in which ÇYDD envisions "correct communication," "correct body language" and "self-awareness" as a Turkish girl and selection of participating youth from the EU. Considering the history of Turkey's broader westernization processes since the founding of the Republic, the education system has been a core part of such transitions. The history of educational policies in Turkey suggest that this

movement towards replicating western systems, part of the Kemalist perspective, has only increased with neoliberal economic policies enacted since the 1980s. Organizations with such views, like ÇYDD, maintain the ideal of the modern subject that define success in such terms, which fail to serve the diversity that has and continues to exist among communities throughout rural areas of Turkey. As Kazamias (1966) candidly describes, the westernization of Turkey's educational institutions have been a "fundamental goal of Turkey's development" and consequently have been criticized as "alien to Turkish values, and as being functionally unrelated to the needs and aspirations of the Turkish people" (p. 261).

While ÇYDD describes their mission for personal development in some specific ways, such as political participation or developing business skills, other aspects are rather vague when they use terms such as "best practices," "correct communication," "correct body language" and "self-awareness." What are the actual deliverables that ÇYDD expects of these girls? How might the girls express these supposedly superior behavioral characteristics? In an interview with a staff member in Istanbul, I learned that presentation and performance skills are highly valued aspects, which they address in the drama programs specifically (personal communication, January, 2013). Additionally, one of the final performances of a summer camp at the Çağdaş Yaşam Dila Kurt Training House (ÇYDKEE) they described from 2011 exemplifies some of the possible deliverables of such training objectives: "Students showcased their knowledge and enhanced skills to their parents, teachers, and guests... They danced, sang Turkish and English songs, and performed drama and plays" (ÇYDD Haberler website (a), 2011). The languages in which the girls perform is highly symbolic of the representation of knowledge that is valued in the ÇYDD programming; singing songs in Turkish and English, as compared to singing in Kurdish or Armenian, two minority languages spoken in Turkey, would politically alter the desired subjectivity of the

presentation. The aim of developing the "modern individual" would obviously be linked to the use of English here as opposed to such minority languages.

Aside from the required training programs that ÇYDD offers to their scholarship students, the counseling process through which the girls are selected reveals other elements of the interior aspect of their construction of 'empowerment.' In an interview in Istanbul, I learned about the ways that ÇYDD talks to the families in cases in which there is resistance against sending their girls to school. The organization sometimes uses psychologists to work with the communities directly in order to convince them that education is important for their girls (personal communication, November, 2012). The organization tends to target low-income families and works with the schools to identify these families as well. In order to shed light on distinctions between urban and rural approaches, I asked specifically about how ÇYDD works with farming communities as compared to communities in Istanbul, for example. The staff member explained that "it's a different story over there" but assured me that despite the distinction, "it's not a big problem, because we used to live like that," referring to living in rural, agrarian settings. The "I have a daughter in Anatolia, she will be a teacher" program, which I mention in chapter one, targets eastern and southeastern Turkey because of the larger gender gaps in these areas, also where the majority of Turkey's farming communities live and where the largest Kurdish communities are located.

Similar to ÇYDD's explanations of educational gender gaps in rural areas, such as focusing on the eastern and southeastern regions of Turkey, Erden (2009) explains in her article about children's rights and equal opportunities to education in Turkey, "changing the beliefs of their families is very difficult," referring specifically to "traditional and conservative families." She explains that the blaming Islam and cultural values of rural people for the slow pace of spreading formal education and literacy in Turkey can be traced at least back to the founding the Republic in 1923 (p. 119). Issues such as "bride prize [sic],"

earlier marriages, and demanding girls' help at home are some reasons that she names that lead to higher drop-out rates in rural areas. Undoubtedly, exploitation of girls' labor and vulnerability when it comes to marriage are serious social problems to be addressed, and can definitely be addressed through education, but I find there is an oversimplification made about the practices of "traditional and conservative" families that reinforces a "backward-modern" dichotomy that marginalizes girls in rural areas instead of allowing for possibilities for community and culturally respectful individual empowerment.

2.5 Reflections

Contemporary constructions of the "empowered" girl in development initiatives such as Educate Girls and ÇYDD reflect a traveling conceptualization that has roots in specific westernized cultural contexts steeped within neoliberal perspectives. The tactics that girl-centered empowerment projects have employed to address the behavioral and psychological aspects of uplifting girls of their target populations can be traced throughout history of the West from the nineteenth century onward. By looking at the historical construction of the private "self" in western psychology, as well as feminist projects that have sought to "save" the "other" women within colonial contexts, and the more recent emergence of the Girl Power movement in the US, consistent descriptions of so-called deprived females who lack proper self awareness reflect a larger imperialist humanitarian ideology at play. Emphasis on helping girls to become more self-confident, on very specific cultural and economic terms, has many more limits that these organizations seem to address. Rose (1999) explains how the construction of the individualized identity is perpetuated by the idea of an essential "interior," "The self that is liberated is obliged to live its life tied to the project of its own identity" (p. 258). I argue that both Educate Girls and ÇYDD utilize this type of subjectivity as a means of

justifying such individualistic empowerment pathways that actually marginalize rural cultures, languages and lifestyles.

Varied definitions of empowerment offer distinct insights into its possible applications within development work. Kabeer (1994) and Batliwala (2010) address the coopting and depoliticization of the concept of 'empowerment,' particularly in the 1990s. The shift from being community- to individually-focused concurrently evolving during a pop culture Girl Power movement in the US suggests a link. This proves especially evident when considering the ways in which both organizations' descriptions of successful girls embody similar characteristics. Instead of a unidirectional approach, Kabeer (1994) suggests that maintaining fluidity when defining empowerment as an alternative. The rigid conceptual dichotomy of an empowered vs. disempowered individual also mimics the American Girl Power-Reviving Ophelia opposition that arose in the 1990s (Gonick, 2006). This hierarchical comparison is also made in development work and might therefore represent the more recent image that both Educate Girls and ÇYDD illustrate of the traditional girl in rural areas who must be rescued through effective social and behavioral training programs.

In addition to Batliwala and Kabeer's perspectives, I find one example that Sleeter (1991) cites to be constructive in imagining how programs like Educate Girls and ÇYDD can reframe their programs in more dynamic ways: the ability to criticize institutionalized forms of knowledge and address interpretations of meanings of knowledge in order to broaden world views and more effectively participate in one's civic community (Banks in Sleeter, 1991, p. 125-126). Given Sleeter's emphasis on multicultural education as well, I understand her selection of the quote in a broader intersectional context that demands local relativism and questioning of hierarchies that allow institutionalized forms of knowledge in curricula to dominate.

A classroom in a formal education system that enrolls and retains girls for their own benefit and growth ought to address their particular needs according to their unique subjectivities. When a girl's behavioral, social and psychological wellbeing is deemed inadequate simply because of her "traditional" or so-called "backward" background, her ability to define her own priorities and "self-awareness" has been severely hijacked by a larger modernity project. While Kabeer's (1994) work discusses women's empowerment mostly, her demands of organizations that carry out endeavors to advance individuals' situations are directly applicable to the work of Educate Girls and ÇYDD; a bottom-up approach must necessarily position its target group "as competent, but socially constrained actors who are capable of making choices, articulating priorities and taking responsibility" as opposed to acting as "passive clients in need of enlightenment and uplifting" (p. 235). Girls whose communities' lifestyles and values do not fall in line with the aims of these organizations are easy targets for transformation in the name of empowerment for the further modernization of Indian and Turkish societies and economies. When their own languages, community identities, labor practices and values do not enter the dialogue about what their educational advancement means, possibilities for actual multicultural understandings disappear and the proper modern subject ideal is given space to subsume all notions of "empoweredness."

Conclusion

Envisioning girls' "empowerment" on global scales often relies on several problematic assumptions: the notion of a global sisterhood, empowerment entails uplifting a girl's "interior," and paid labor is the primary means of liberation. International girls' empowerment campaigns have made these priorities evident, such as Girl Up, 10x10, and Because I am a Girl, which I referred to in the introduction. They purport solutions to global problems like rural poverty based upon liberal notions of individuality within a broader neoliberal economic system. For this case study, I chose Educate Girls and ÇYDD because their focus is national, and thereby more localized compared to larger transnational examples, and they were both founded and are run by natives of their respective regions. I initially hypothesized that these factors might lead to an alternative vision of "empowerment" in their program designs. However, interviews with the staff as well as an analysis of the program literature illustrated how these organizations also fall in line with the mainstream girls' empowerment ideologies.

In order to understand how the predominant conceptualization of girls' "empowerment" has traveled through "transnational connectivities," as Grewal (2005) calls them, it is necessary to look at the emergence of an international set of ethics and ideals within human rights discourse, specifically on that of the girl child (p. 123). The result is that even small-scale organizations in countries such as India and Turkey have shaped their descriptions of a modern "empowered" girl that is grounded on liberal ideology that idealizes a particular individualistic and neoliberal subjectivity. India and Turkey's respective historical ties to (neo)liberal economic policies and western empire represent locations of strong modern-traditional dichotomies and urban-rural divides. Through my interviews with staff members of each of the organizations and through studying the program documents, I concentrated on

the two foci within girls' "empowerment" models that I found to be most pervasive: 1) the prioritization of economic advancement and 2) addressing the psychological "interior" of the girls. These two issues are not only consistent in each of these programs that are so-called "native" to the regions, they are also tied to a broader global movement that addresses the girl child in specific cultural terms. These terms have a history that can be traced through colonialism, economic policies, international development discourse, feminist imperialist projects, and recent American pop culture movements.

The varied political, economic and linguistic power dynamics in regions such as India and Turkey have shaped predominant discourse on understandings of girls' empowerment without incorporating the relative subjectivities according to the girls' diverse backgrounds across these vast regions. A program that seeks to address the needs of girls on national scales through formal education and training programs, as Educate Girls and ÇYDD both seek to do in overt ways, must incorporate culturally relative definitions of "empowerment" in order to adequately address the various needs of girls in their respective communities. Examples from the program literature in both cases illustrates that the organizations' priorities reflect a historically and culturally situated westernized construction of the girl child that is also found in dominant development discourse; the assumption of shared oppression in "traditional" or "rural" settings that is enacted through neoliberal economic viewpoints and addressed through social and behavioral reformative programming. The specific behavioral, social and psychological ideals of the imagined empowered girl ask her to embody modernity, contribute to the national/global market, escape a traditional lifestyle, and geographically relocate to a city, should she pursue higher education.

Programs that use formal education as a means of empowerment are inherently political endeavors because of what these systems demand of their students. Education teaches the tools with which the students learn to become contributing members of society. The added

component of programs like Educate Girls and ÇYDD addresses their subjectivity in a way that the girls' "interiors" are imagined and "saved" through self-confidence building and personality shaping. Both India and Turkey represent cases of education systems that have been formulated under strong nationalist discourses and aspirations for modern development. Richard Easterlin (1981) describes the mistaken assumption that development and formal schooling can resolve economic and political discrepancies. While this reference dates back more than thirty years, I find Easterlin's insight to still hold true:

At some point, we may look back and ask what produced this world - how we got where we are. Such inquiry will show, I believe, that the proximate roots of the epoch of modern economic growth lie in the growth of science and diffusion of modern education. In a more fundamental sense, however, it will show that the source of this epoch is the secular, rationalistic, and materialistic trend of intellectual thought that evolved from the Renaissance and Reformation that in rejecting the authority of the medieval Church, humanity ultimately took up a new 'religion of knowledge,' whose churches are the schools and universities of the world, whose priests are its teachers, and whose creed is belief in science and the power of rational inquiry, and in the ultimate capacity of humanity to shape its own destiny. The irony is that in this last respect the lesson of history is otherwise: that there is no choice. The epoch of modern economic growth - a world of nations blindly developing - is itself the proof of this (Richard Easterlin, 1981, p. 17).

I find Easterlin's warnings to be particularly useful for programs like Educate Girls and ÇYDD. The public school is the primary space that these organizations look to as an opportunity for social and economic mobility for the girls they are targeting. However, it is a place where not only certain skills within selected knowledge systems are taught, but values are also instilled and hierarchies are maintained. Carnoy (1974), whose work I refer to in both

chapters one and two, effectively points to how this happens: "...it is naive to assume that schools are merely places to develop vocational skills... Schools transfer culture and values and they channel children into various social roles" and "they help maintain social order..." (p. 8). He explains how such social hierarchies, specifically capitalist ones, can create dependency and alienation (p. 14). I argue, in the case of development work, such detrimental consequences of formal schooling ought to be considered relevant aspects of "empowerment" initiatives.

While the girls that Educate Girls and ÇYDD target might be removed from so called "traditional hierarchies," their insertion into new hierarchies and dominant cultures within a global market system that structurally reinforces social and economic inequality is highly counterintuitive and actually harmful, especially when the psychological interior aspect becomes incorporated to create a holistic transformational program. It is important then to ask: how does the schooling system reproduce inequality and depencies on capitalist systems as well as silence indigenous cultural perspectives? These effects are reinforced through the organizations' programmatic trainings, workshops, counseling sessions, and children's organizations, such as the Children's Clubs of ÇYDD and Bal Sabha program of Educate Girls. How much "empowerment" is actually possible when the results limit these girls' abilities to become self-aware and contribute to society on their own localized terms?

The curricular content in government-run formal education systems often reflects the state's nationalist and economic agendas, as demonstrated in India and Turkey. Within these systems, a rural girl's personal background and values are likely to not be well-represented, or represented at all. This situation alone cries for an interrogation of the direct correlation between education and empowerment that mainstream girls' empowerment initiatives maintain. Nelly Stromquist (2002) explains this inaccurate assumption when she addresses the notion of girls' empowerment through formal education in developing countries; their

"mere participation in the formal system" assumes "that the experience and knowledge attained in schooling automatically prepare girls to assess their worth and envisage new possibilities" and "ignores the reproductive function of formal schooling, particular in more traditional societies..." (p. 24). Both Educate Girls and ÇYDD's emphasis on enrollment and retention reflect this ideology; if the girls are in school, they are automatically much better off than they were in their villages. Without questioning what is going on in the schools in terms of how the girls see themselves and each other, as well as judge their participation in broader Indian and Turkish society, empowerment through education proves to be rather stunted. One example, particularly indicative in ÇYDD's mission, is the emphasis on university education as the ideal means of social and economic advancement. While the academic path towards university is one option, it is surely not the only way that girls in India and Turkey can or should feel empowered as individuals.

The definition of empowerment in development work has shifted as a transnational concept from focus on the collective to that of the individual. Its significance as a social process that involves societal and systemic transformation was co-opted by neoliberal economic and political agendas in the 1990s to focus on the individual's status as its pertains to a capitalist framework based upon competition (Batliwala, 2010). The educational empowerment model is closely tied to traditional modes of formal education that emphasize competition and individual success. Martin Carnoy (1974) explains this tendency when he describes a general history of formal schooling worldwide and its links to colonial regimes. He explains how individuals are schooled to conform to confined possibilities of success and contribution to society in both social and economic terms. He supports Ivan Illich's argument that schooling has a negative affect on society: "Children are demeaned by schooling, adults are cast into roles by the amount of schooling they have rather than their willingness or potential capability to perform tasks (since this capability is not allowed to develop), and the

society becomes oriented toward formalized experience; the more schooling one has, the more his or her opinion is worth, often regardless of the person's good sense, humaneness, or other factors which may be considerably more important than the skills learned in school" (Carnoy, 1974, p. 11). Therefore, the assumption that simply increasing formal education as a primary means of empowerment, like the "magic bullet approach" that Batliwala (2010, p. 116), fails to incorporate localized perspectives. Insights coming from the local communities could not only benefit the girls and their families in more structurally beneficial ways, but they could also open possibilities of "pivoting the center" of knowledge production (Aptheker in Mohanty, 2003, p. 44).

Narrow definitions of valued labor, such as those that only pertain to formal public employment that is part of the global market economy, create space for discrimination and inadequate definitions of poverty. Understanding markets in their specific political and cultural contexts is crucial to defining poverty and its relation to empowerment, especially when looking at formal education systems as the primary means of valued social and economic mobility. In her discussion of feminist approaches to globalization, Bisnath (2001) addresses a more comprehensive understanding of poverty and economics. She looks at formal vs. informal labor, demanding that understandings of poverty and broader economic systems must "bring into historical visibility women's and men's participation in economic activities - this entails empirical studies, as well as discussions of their role(s) in, and the links between, reproductive and productive work, and the gendered effects of the public/private divide" (p. 6). She is critical of the strict division between public and private as well as economic and non-economic spheres that discredit reproductive and caring labor, that which is not monetarily compensated, as falling outside the realm of "productive" work. Bisnath refers to financial cases all over the world, stating that "there is no necessary relationship between economic liberalization and increased economic growth, development

and reduced poverty levels" (p. 5). Therefore, the link between such incomplete images of poverty and empowerment becomes illuminated. The ways that organizations like Educate Girls and ÇYDD define poverty and subsequently locate lack or oppression there is central to their presentation of girls' empowerment; by not explaining their oversimplified definitions of poverty, they fail to do justice in assessing the labor practices and needs of the girls they are targeting.

The recommendations I have to offer organizations like Educate Girls and ÇYDD relate to addressing the subjectivity of the girls by incorporating localized educational methods, languages, cultural perspectives as well as indigenous knowledge systems. This study offers a beginning to a longer project in investigating how the girls and their families understand "empowerment" on their owns terms. Jude Fernando (2003) addresses the political implications of indigenous knowledge when considering the historical and present day impacts of colonization, neoliberal economic policies and globalization. His broad definition of IK, Indigenous Knowledge, is useful for imagining its relevance in global empowerment initiatives.:

> Generally, IK is considered a body of knowledge associated with a fixed territorial space for a considerably long period of time. Such systems of knowledge are informal, experiential, and uncodified compared to the knowledge systems associated with the Western sciences. IK is unique to a community, culture or society; is the basis for local-level decision making in agriculture, health, natural resource management, and other activities; is embedded in community practices, institutions, relationships, and rituals; and as such is a powerful tool to create sustainable change, particularly in resource-poor rural communities. (p. 56)

These programs lack acknowledgement of indigenous knowledges, which are central to the unique subjectivities of these girls in rural areas in particular.

While predominant perspectives on the needs of "the girl child" in developing countries, as reflected in many UN campaigns, have suggested that indigenous cultural insights remain rather limited, there are groundbreaking discussions taking place in large UN forums that could change the face of issues like education. The most recent example highlights possibilities for potentially deep structural transformations: the 12th session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Discussions at this forum held in 2013 focus upon integrating indigenous knowledges into youth-related program approaches. Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon's opening statement sent a rather bold message: "We must have a better understanding of the views and values of indigenous peoples by engaging them in decision-making and providing a platform for issues affecting their lives and livelihoods" ("Indigenous culture," 2013, para. 2). If effectively integrated throughout layered approaches to development affecting girl-centered initiatives, particularly with respect to the programs' cultural and economic ties, formal education systems that UN agencies work with would need to be considerably restructured. Girls' empowerment, as a result, would have to take on new meanings in terms of relativized political, economic and cultural priorities of these communities.

The most accessible way of reforming measures of "empowerment" and allowing for alternative possibilities of "development" would be through effective dialogue with the girls and their families as a core part of the program design processes. Aside from focusing on the specifics of Educate Girls and ÇYDD, I also aimed to highlight the ways that mainstream girls' educational initiatives that seek to empower their target populations in development countries focus on poverty as their central area of interest. One way to fix this problem on multiple levels would be incorporate of indigenous knowledges. This shifting of power dynamics within the education system as well as the organization's own training and counseling programs also has the capacity redefine sustainable development because it

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"offers a framework of ideas, guidelines, and institutional foundations" (p. 55). I think it is also crucial to point out the indigenous-scientific/western knowledge binary that has been "institutionally produced," as Fernando indicates as well. It is highly problematic because of its oppositional positioning; the coexistence or processes of mutual influence are always possible depending on political circumstances (Agrawal in Fernando, 1993, p. 57). Therefore, the alternative perspectives that these rural communities would offer ought to not stand in opposition to notions of "modern" insights. Rather, a constructive dialogue between the organizations and the communities would result in a new definition of "empowerment," and possibly "development," which could serve the respective needs of the girls in a given location. While my interviews with some of the staff members in India and Turkey as well as my analysis of the program literature provide a small amount of data compared to the broad scope of international girls' empowerment initiatives globally, I hope that these findings provide an initial step in thinking critically about how such programs can be transformative according to locally defined needs and priorities.

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Appendices

Interview questions

A. The Association for the Support of Contemporary Living (ÇYDD)

1. What brought you to *ÇYDD* and your interest in programs for girls?

2. Tell me about your involvement in the organization's programs for girls.

3. What is unique about the *ÇYDD*'s approach to the needs of girls?

4. What are the societal problems that *ÇYDD* wants to address in Turkey?

5. What do you think is the most important aspect of the programs to ensure their success?

6. What do you expect from the girls who participate in the programs?

7. Are there any differences in your programs for girls in urban or rural areas?

8. What kind of resistance or conflicts does the organization encounter in these programs?

9. Can you give some examples of obstacles *ÇYDD* encounters in some rural areas?

10. Which organizations and institutions support *ÇYDD*'s mission?

B. Educate Girls

1. What brought you to *Educate Girls* and your interest in programs for girls?

2. Tell me about your involvement in the organization's programs for girls.

3. What is unique about the *Educate Girls*' approach to the needs of girls?

4. What are the societal issues that *Educate Girls* wants to address in India?

5. What do you think is the most important aspect of the programs to ensure their success?

6. What do you expect from the girls who participate in the programs?

7. Can you give concrete examples of how *Educate Girls* has made an impact on the Gram Sabhas in Pali?

8. Can you describe the way that *Educate Girls* interacts with formal and non-formal education schemes? And academic versus vocational streams?

9. What kind of challenges does the organization encounter in these programs?

10. Can you give some examples of obstacles *Educate Girls* encounters in some rural areas? (from the community? from Panchayat members? from Gram Sabhas?

11. How does educate girls attempt to make structural/societal changes outside of the initiative to educate girls and maintain a retention rates?

12. How will the girls ultimately benefit from this program?