

GLOBAL INEQUALITIES, MULTIPOLARITY, AND SUPRANATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ENGAGEMENTS WITH GENDER AND EDUCATION¹

DESIGUALDADES GLOBALES, MULTIPOLARIDAD Y COMPROMISOS DE LOS ORGANISMOS SUPRANACIONALES CON EL ASUNTO DE GÉNERO Y EDUCACIÓN²

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to identify the emergence of a multi-polar space regarding international development in the last ten years that stands between agendas associated with human rights and basic needs, security, the environmental agenda, and responses to the 2008 financial crisis. In this environment, gender and education, notably issues associated with girls' access to school, have come to occupy a particular resonant space, signalling both an end to all development ills, and the dissolution of differences between, for example, the state and the private sector, equality oriented NGOs and those linked with profit. The paper discusses how in this process supra-national organisations concerned with education deploy a number of key terms –empowerment, effectiveness and evidence – and how the ambiguities associated with these allow policies concerned with gender and education to signal both a social justice project and processes which sanction or sanitise relations of commodification, exploitation or continued inequalities.

The analysis comprises three threads of discussion. In setting the scene I first present a montage of some features of global inequalities associated with gender and education and some of the slippery dimensions of multi-polarity. I then consider some of the ways in which multi-polarity has been deployed in discussions of international relations and radical democracy, and use some of the metaphoric aspects of this notion to characterise the present moment in international development policy. Through this I attempt to theorise approaches to gender, education and international development that I term dispersal. In the third section I outline some of the relationships of supra-national organisations with national and local institutions working on gender and education, and show, using the example of the Department for International Development (DFID) Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) programme how features of dispersal are evident in policy declarations, programme descriptions and framing discourses. The conclusion draws out the implications of this analysis for some of the key global policy declarations being negated in 2015, such as the Sustainable development Goals (SDGs).

Key words: *Education, gender, multipolarity, supranationality, inequality, mainstreaming.*

¹ Earlier versions of sections of this paper was presented in May 2014 as a keynote address at a colloquium at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein on Universities, gender and development, and as a presentation 'Gender mainstreaming in education and the post 2015 agenda' to the Belgian Platform for Education and Development annual conference on gender mainstreaming and development, held in Brussels, November 2014. My thanks to the conference organisers for both events and to participants for helpful comments on some of those ideas, which have been further developed in this article. I also gratefully acknowledge perceptive responses from students on the module 'Gender, education and development' at the UCL Institute of Education, to some of these ideas, as I have tried to distil them, and from colleagues, Jenny Parkes and Rosie Peppin-Vaughan.

² En mayo de 2014 fueron presentadas versiones anteriores de partes de este artículo en el discurso de apertura de un coloquio en the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, sobre Universidades, género y desarrollo y en el formato de una presentación: "Transversalidad de la cuestión de género en educación y la agenda post 2015" y en la Conferencia anual de la Plataforma Belga para la Educación y el Desarrollo sobre la transversalidad de la cuestión del género y desarrollo, que tuvo lugar en Bruselas, en noviembre de 2014. Mis gracias a los organizadores de la conferencia por los dos eventos y a los participantes por sus útiles comentarios sobre algunas de esas ideas, que han sido desarrollados de forma más extensa en este artículo. También agradezco las respuestas a algunas de estas ideas por parte de los estudiantes del módulo "Género, educación y desarrollo" en el UCL Institute of Education; ideas que he intentado adaptar. Así como agradezco también las ideas de mis colegas Jenny Parkes y Rosie Peppin-Vaughan.

RESUMEN

Este artículo busca identificar la emergencia de un espacio multipolar sobre desarrollo internacional en los últimos diez años que se enmarca entre agendas asociadas con los derechos humanos y las necesidades básicas, seguridad, la agenda medioambiental y respuestas a la crisis financiera de 2008. En este contexto, género y educación, temas notablemente asociados con el acceso de las niñas a la educación, han venido a ocupar un espacio notablemente resonante, señalando ambas un final a todas las enfermedades del desarrollo y la disolución de las diferencias entre, por ejemplo, el estado y el sector privado, ONGs orientadas a la igualdad y aquellas relacionadas con el lucro. El artículo aborda el tema de cómo en este proceso las organizaciones supranacionales involucradas con la educación despliegan un número de términos clave – empoderamiento, efectividad y evidencia- y cómo las ambigüedades asociadas con éstas permiten que se lleven a cabo medidas sobre género y educación para indicar ambos un proyecto de justicia social y procesos que sancionen o saneen las relaciones de comercialización, explotación y continuas desigualdades.

El análisis engloba tres hilos de discusión. En la presentación del tema abordo una serie de características de desigualdades globales asociadas con el género y la educación y algunas de las dimensiones resbaladizas de la multipolaridad. A continuación, trato algunas de las formas en que la multipolaridad ha sido debatida en discusiones sobre relaciones internacionales y democracia radical; y uso algunos de los aspectos metafóricos de esta noción para caracterizar el momento presente en política internacional de desarrollo. A través de esto, intento teorizar enfoques de género, educación y desarrollo internacional que yo denomino como disperso. En la tercera sección trazo algunas de las relaciones entre los organismos supranacionales y las instituciones locales que trabajan en el tema de género y educación; y muestro, usando el ejemplo del Programa *Girls' Education Challenge* (GEC) del Departamento para el Desarrollo Internacional (DFID en sus siglas en inglés) cómo las características de dispersión son evidentes en las declaraciones sobre políticas, descripciones de programas y discursos de encuadre. La conclusión dibuja las implicaciones del análisis para algunas de las declaraciones de política global habiendo sido negadas en 2015, como son los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS).

Palabras clave: *Educación, género, multipolaridad, supranacionalidad, desigualdad, integración.*

Fecha de recepción: 3 de abril de 2015.

Fecha de aceptación: 12 de julio de 2015.

1. MULTI-POLARITY AND GLOBAL INEQUALITIES

I want to start with a personal montage made up of reflection on some global inequalities unfolding since approximately 2010. This is not an orthodox portrayal of global inequalities, which often comprises maps regarding the concentration of wealth, the networks of political power, the distribution of poverty, schooling or which universities from which continents are in the top 100 according to particular league tables (eg. UNDP, 2014; Dicken, 2015; UNESCO, 2015; Jons and Holyer, 2013). These are important dimensions of global inequality, but they delineate patterns of distribution of wealth and the locus of power, often commented on (eg. Bauman, 2011; Piketty, 2014; Sandbrook, 2014). I want to highlight some additional dimensions associated with gender and education which encapsulate aspects of what I am going to try to theorise as multi-polarity and dispersal. They are associated with embodiment, poverty, marginality, education and participation, but the inequalities entailed are multi-faceted and slide between different agendas concerned with rights, needs, security, formations of capital, information technologies, and networked forms of action. The moral compass, which in the period after the end of the Cold War appeared set in a direction towards rights, and integrated projects around social justice, in this contemporary period appears to swing somewhat disorientingly between points.

2. CHIBOK

The first image in my personal montage is of girls walking home from school in Maiduguri, Borno state, Nigeria. A photo taken in 2012 (<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2012/apr/24>) shows pupils at Junior Secondary school, around year 8. They have to pass this phase to access senior secondary school and higher education. It is this apparently simple journey of walking to school that Boko Haram in Nigeria, and extremist organisations in a number of other countries, claims makes girls a target for kidnap, attack and assault. The heartbreaking kidnap of 267 girls from Chibok in Borno state in 2014, who were writing their science exams, induced a wave of anger around the world that built to a *crescendo*, but to date has not resulted in the girls being found, or the murderous attacks on schools or universities in Nigeria and some other countries coming to an end. Much that has been written on this theme, but the gender dimensions are often unexamined. The Nigerian novelist, Lola Shoneyin, when reflecting in 2014 on the complicity of many in power in Nigeria with the violence of Boko Haram, commented:

“Nigeria is wounded and the scars will take years to heal. But the most effective way to defeat him [the leader of Boko Haram] and everything he believes in is to ensure children, especially girls in northern Nigeria, receive a good education. This is what the country owes them” (Shoneyin, 2014).

I completely agree with these views. But thinking about development and gender is not as simple as invoking the hope of education. We may anticipate good will flow from a national centre to local schools, or from transnational organisations, either to state governments or to local sites for delivery. But much can go wrong along these paths, often linked with gender and other inequalities, and imperfect institutional arrangements for securing human flourishing. A feature of multi-polarity is that the rationality associated with much systemic, sequential planning of this kind has to confront the complexities of locales, the politics and culture of organisations, and the textures of embodied historical relationships in which gender inequalities in many shifting guises is a major thread. That the process of policy enactment is nuanced and gendered, is not a new observation, but that it can slide between multiple agendas, some tending towards a concern with rights and needs, and some more ambiguously, linked with geo-politics or military strategy or the profit margins of large multi-nationals, makes understanding contemporary global inequalities a particularly complex undertaking.

The nature of the state in Nigeria in 2014 meant that the girls at Chibok could not be protected, and at time of writing were still not found, although in late April 2015 the Nigerian army attacked a stronghold of Boko Haram and rescued approximately 300 kidnapped young women, but not those abducted from Chibok. Military teams from Nigeria, together with those from the US, UK, possibly Israel, and certainly a number of West African countries have participated in the search. Thus a relationship of the development agenda and the security agenda is evident. In attempting to ‘bring back our girls’ (the slogan used by social media to highlight these events) and link together very disparate political constituencies in addressing an aspect of

global inequality – girls being violently attacked while at school – there were instances both of stalwart support for gender equality, girls’ rights to education, and examples, where contributions were more cynical, and difficult to interpret. The kidnaps in Chibok are not unique in exemplifying this slippery quality in which girls’ education has multiple registers. I have written about this in some other work (Unterhalter, 2014; Unterhalter, 2015a) and a number of other commentators draw out the range of ways in which girls’ education is linked with development policies that can either advance human rights agendas or support the work of global corporations (eg. Stromquist and Monkman, 2014; Moeller, 2013). Indeed a number of features of women’s rights come to be invoked in this dispersed way. For example, in the UK, the coalition government of 2010-2015 led vigorously in many international fora on opposition to violence against women, and support for girls’ education (UK, 2011; UK, 2014). However, this international support for women’s rights was accompanied by domestic policies associated with increased austerity, more insecure work and housing for the poorest, pressures on migrant communities, and limited action to address domestic violence (Ishkanian, 2014; Lonergan, 2015). A multi-polar sliding between registers on gender equality and women’s rights constitutes a feature of what I characterise as a framework of dispersal in global and national actions around equalities.

This military involvement to find the Chibok students came partly as the result of mobilisation of public opinion worldwide through social media, a key technological and discursive site of multi-polarity. Network society provides us with hitherto unthinkable amounts of information about features of global inequality, but it is often quite superficial, linked to a particular moment, event or short statement. While it has the potential to generate and circulate in depth assessments of people close to events, such as took place in Chibok, and connect them with those in power, it has not hitherto always worked in that way (Kleine, 2013; Castells and Himanen, 2014). The uneven access to social media in Nigeria, and the particular configuration of power, meant that neither the kidnapped girls nor those close to what was happening could be heard. This potential of social media to talk, but only be selectively heard, is another aspect of multipolarity and has been a feature of many of the most tragic events of the last years. For example, despite the flowering of many popular accounts of opposition and repression during the Arab spring, there was no move forward to deeper engagements with gender and other equalities either within or between countries, and the terrible wars that have followed may be read as yet another feature of dispersal around gender agendas. Thus conditions that promise one hopeful route forward are often confounded, by deeper social forces, sometimes associated with the distribution of technologies and voice, but sometimes long pre-dating these.

Global inequalities, like those highlighted by the kidnappings in Chibok, are not simply about poverty, isolation, and political powerlessness. They are also about, for example, who controls technologies, what girls’ education signals as a site of policy engagement, questions of embodiment, and how security is organised. Thus gender and women’s rights are both present in the contemporary moment and at the same time often presented as very one dimensional. The notion of ‘our girls’ in the social media campaign linked to the Chibok kidnappings is meant as a statement of solidarity, but it also essentialises identities and relationships. For example, it is contentious whether the students at Chibok were girls, young women, or what means of identification they would select for themselves. Does ‘our’ signal something about a universal humanity, which is positive, but also something that denies the very specific pains of loss of mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, teachers, and friends. Thus an additional feature of global inequality and multipolarity concerns silencing, definitional elisions and assumptions of similarity which may block deeper questioning and attempts to understand issues about the relationship of the particular and the general.

A further feature of global inequality and multipolarity the kidnap of the Chibok pupils highlights is how we think about poverty. Nigeria is not a poor country. With South Africa it has the largest economy in Africa, and growth rates over the last decade, averaging 6.13% are impressive. But wealth in Nigeria does not translate into human development, and a feature of the lack of human development is extreme inequality. Despite the size of the Nigerian economy, the GDP per capita in 2013 was calculated at US \$ 3005, while in South Africa in the same year stood at US \$6886 (World Bank, 2014a) and in 2010 62% of the population of Nigeria lived on less than \$1.25 a day, compared to 9.4% in South Africa, although other definitions of poverty show different distributions in each country (World Bank, 2014b). According to the UNDP IN 2014 Nigeria’s HDI rank was 152 in the low human development band, and a number of other countries in Africa, for example Kenya, Zambia and Namibia ranked much higher, while South Africa ranked 118 in the middle human development band (UNDP, 2014, 161-2) Nigeria has a large higher

education sector, a long history of schooling, which, in some states, has been gender equitable in terms of access and progression, but the inequalities in income are mirrored in education. UNESCO figures indicate out of school adolescents nationally comprised 32% of girls aged 12-18, and 25% boys. But in the North eastern region; where the Chibok girls were at school, 54% of adolescents were out of school (60% adolescent girls; 40% adolescent boys), compared to 4% girl & boy adolescents in the oil rich South eastern region. In the North eastern region: 79% girls from the poorest quintile & 68% boys were out of school, compared with; 14% girls from the richest quintile and 15% boys. In the South eastern region: 11% girls from and 7% boys from the poorest quintile were out of school (UNESCO-WIDE, 2014) That global inequalities are about more than wealth inequalities has long been known, but how the histories of gender inequalities are threaded through the limitations in delivering human development is again a much more complex story, as a number of commentators on women's rights. In Nigeria observe (eg. Pereira, 2002, 2014; Okome, 2013; Wallace, 2014; Aluko, 2015). Many women in Nigeria who have received education against the odds, still write about the gender inequalities associated with marriage, healthcare, public participation that persist, despite these insights (Omotola, 2012; Adamu and Para Mallam, 2012; Pereira, 2014). This too is something I want to associate. with multi-polarity and what I will call dispersal, that is that one social good, such as education, does not, under conditions of inequality, both within and between countries translate into another, say good health, or confidence to participate politically or economically. The wealth associated with the largest corporations in Nigeria is dwarfed by that of some household name multinationals. One question is why these regional inequalities in human development, in concentrations of capital, and in networks of gender inequalities exist. What drives multipolarity? Clearly we have to acknowledge with multi-polarity and what I will call dispersal, that is that one social good, such as education, does not, under conditions of inequality, both within and between countries translate into another, say good health, or confidence to participate politically or economically the long after burn of colonialism and the changing formations of capitalism. Thomas Piketty (2014) notes how much of the ownership of capital in Africa is based outside the capital, and the potential of forces associated with education and training to narrow some of the inequalities within countries. The global inequalities in the distribution of education are thus part of the story of economic and political inequalities. But, in addition, much more investigation is needed to appreciate some of the gender dimensions of these processes. Unfortunately, an important UN Women report released in 2015, looking at ways to address substantive gender equality, paid little attention to education (UN Women)

The response by different kinds of transnational organisations to the kidnap of the teenager girl students writing exams in Chibok highlights features of global inequality and multipolarity associated with multiple agendas of transnational organisations, which pull in different directions. A key feature, however, is constrained opportunities to address substantive injustices, despite the major focus on girls' education.

3. RANA PLAZA

The horrific accident on the outskirts of Dakar on 24 April 2013, in which an estimated 1,129 workers died and thousands were injured in the collapse of the Rana Plaza building, is considered the worst industrial accident in history. The building housed factories in which thousands of workers, many of them young women, who had completed school, were working for very low levels of pay, by global standards, but levels that were crucial to them to live above a bare minimum. Rana Plaza for me signals something about multipolarity and global inequality. While the existence of supply chains, entailing exploitative working conditions, are not new feature of capitalism, the ways in which increased levels of education, and enhanced conditions of economic growth do not end these, but indeed might intensify them, appears new.

Bangladesh is in many areas a success story with regard to the expansion of basic education and health provision (Adams et al, 2014; Asadullah, Savoia, & Mahmud, 2014) It has increased participation in primary and secondary education for girls and boys and has built integrated health provision. Its economic growth has been remarkable. But it has not expanded educational opportunities at an equivalent rate for all the population. Only 54% of the poorest children made a transition to senior secondary school, compared to 85% from the richest, and senior school completers comprised only 17% of the female age cohort (20-29), but young men comprised 23% (UNESCO-WIDE, 2015).

Rana Plaza was an unsafe building, and according to some accounts, the death toll was particularly high because workers, who felt the building shake, and wanted to leave, were ordered by supervisors to stay (Gomes, 2013). There was no trade union organisation permitted at Rana Plaza, and some global clothing companies who had contracts with the Rana Plaza factories have still not paid into the compensation fund, and the demands of bereaved families and injured workers, and the concern of governments appear to have no traction (Crawford, 2015; Butler and Burke, 2015). These features of multi-polarity are thus that education, in cases such as this does not succeed in opening doors. Large numbers of the workers in Rana Plaza were educated, but could not get supervisors to open the doors of a factory building about to collapse, could not get their government to support trade union rights, and could not get international brands to respect their humanity and pay compensation. We see a negation of human rights, despite education, and large companies not taking responsibility.

The Rana Plaza tragedy has many distinctive features, but the relatively high levels of education of the work force, which do not translate into better living conditions, is something the young workers in Bangladesh share with others in many countries. The recession from 2008 happened despite the highest participation in education worldwide. In many European countries, youth unemployment is particularly high, despite completion of secondary and tertiary levels of study. This is also the case in countries like South Africa, with relatively high levels of participation in education and youth unemployment.

This poses for me a question about the ethical compass associated with international development. If human capital theory cannot help explain these failures of societies to respond to needs or rights, if growth in education and training, does not halt or reverse growth in income inequality and concentrations of capital amongst the richest, what frameworks better capture the responsibilities for the global inequalities?

I now want to attempt to theorise some aspects of multi-polarity that I see manifesting itself in work on gender, education and international development. The notion seems to accord gender and education a slippery space, that is by turns concerned with social justice and the maintenance of inequalities

4. THEORISING MULTIPOLARITY AND DISPERSAL

Within international relations the notion of multipolarity is sometimes used as a shorthand to indicate the changes in power away from a unipolar world directed by US co-ordination, leadership, or dominance (depending on viewpoint) (Layne, 2011). Multipolarity as a term is used to characterise features of the present where it is not clear whether geopolitics is directed by processes of balance, tipping points, hard or soft power (Baylis, Smith and Owens, 2013; Haggard, 2014). It is also suggested by governments in emerging economically influential states, such as the BRICS to express a notion of equal sovereignty, an alternative to visions of global governance articulated by the US or the EU (Jaeger, 2014). From a different perspective, concerned with theorising radical democracy Chantal Mouffe (2008) has argued for a multipolar world order that recognises multiple understandings of democracy and human rights and recognises a number of regional poles. It is evident that the meaning of multipolarity is itself disputed, and invoking it to try to explore features of the different ways in which ideas about gender, global inequality, and education are deployed I am working only with the image of multipolarity, rather than rigorously engaging these substantive debates.

However, these two angles on multipolarity themselves suggest two ways in which gender may be addressed in this framing. A much cited feminist critique of the literature on international relations is how distant it is from concerns with women's rights, with an abstract stress on the politics of large formations like states and international organisations. By contrast, a key thread in the version of multipolarity advanced by Mouffe is the acknowledgement of agonistic relationships, in which gender, like race may play a central role, and that by acknowledgement their salience, and possible difference, attachment is built to the democratic project.

In thinking about multipolarity, in relation to work on gender, schooling and international development, I want to identify a way in which the signal about gender blinks on and off, oscillating between these positions of denying the salience of gender and acknowledging it. Thus the ontology I want to comment on

acknowledges large political formations of states, multi-national companies, and multilateral institutions, which generally marginalise or instrumentalise gender or equality issues, particularly their contextual complexity. However, it also identifies the existence of networks of radical organisations associated with educational practices that engage globally around claiming a space for gender and challenging existing thinking. Key features of the present, for example, the growth of what Michael Sadler as called being a market society, which commodifies crucial areas of value may sometimes deny the salience of gender and sometimes hyper promote this. For example, the production of cheap clothes at factories like those located at Rana Plaza, does not explicitly mention the employment of large numbers of young women workers (although their lower pay and relative powerlessness with unions severely circumscribed contributes to the cheap price at which the clothes can be produced). However, the marketing of youthfulness and leisure, which is a key part of the promotion of these clothes does entail particular hyper feminised versions of bodies and ideas of beauty. Part of understanding this is also understanding the ways in which value is being constituted and reconstituted with and without gender and the kinds of political, economic and social work that continuing global inequalities do in this process. While Thomas Piketty's work (2014) does not draw out gender as a feature the historically changing dynamic in the rate of growth of capital and income from employment, one aspect of this must certainly be the relatively lower wages paid to women, the squeeze on benefits in many high income countries, and the absence of women from many of the high paid managerial jobs he associates with the growing income differentials.

How can we theorise multi-polarity and global inequality as it manifests itself in education? Drawing on some earlier work I have done thinking about equalities in education (Unterhalter, 2015b). I have distinguished the need to think about inequality of what, inequality of whom, and inequality of how. Each can be linked with particular meanings of gender and global inequality and multi-polarity seems to suggest a kind of visual or verbal trick that allows us to see a number of dimensions in which these operate. Multipolarity helps signal the notion that education, which I continue to believe is a significant part of understanding how to redress facets of inequality, cannot be enough and may not always be the right kind or delivered in the right way. Multi-polarity may be associated with offering education, but maintaining unequal and exploitative global relationships, however it could also be associated with education building challenges to exploitation and exclusion in nascent, new ways not always visible to existing forms of analysis. In some ways this is quite familiar territory when thinking about women's rights. A long held approach by feminists throughout the 19th and 20th century was to advocate for women's education in order to make the case for emancipation, to show that women were worthy of participating politically, economically or culturally. But women's engagement with education has always far exceeded their levels of public participation in decent work, decision-making, and capacities to shape social and cultural action all around the world. Education is necessary, but not sufficient for addressing gender and other inequalities, both global, national and local.

Amartya Sen in his classic work of 1993 posed the question regarding the value of equality (Sen 1993). Thus if we are to distribute benefits and burdens between people equally, as we all share the planet, what dimensions of people's lives should be compared in order to establish whether one person is worse off than another? Should we conduct this in terms of income and wealth? The women workers in the garment sector in Bangladesh are generally paid less than men, who tend to be in more management positions. They are also paid less than workers in this sector in the UK and the USA. What is the significance of these inequalities in pay? If they were just about money to buy things, and the cost of living in Bangladesh was less than that in other countries, possibly this might not be such an issue, but there is so clearly an association between having money and having other social goods we value, such as health, education, the capacity to participate in discussion, and to have rights acknowledged. The gender discrimination in pay between women and men workers in Bangladesh does matter. I would argue that it is part of the relationships associated with work, where supervisors ordered workers back into an unsafe building, and where companies at the top of the global supply chain in cheap clothing continue to refuse to pay compensation. The inequalities in pay signal an inequality in worth, and it is problematic that education does not undo this symbolic relationship.

In addition Sen's question asked whether inequality was only to be assessed in relation to wealth and income, or whether we should compare if people were satisfied with their lives. If we look across the work at studies of income, education and happiness, it appears that people with more education and income do not always report themselves as happier, but that higher levels of education do appear to offer a wider range of ways to navigate the hardships and difficulties of life (UNICEF, 2011). The argument Sen has made is that a productive route to think about the ways in which we compare people is to review the opportunities they have to do and be what they have reason to value. In defining inequality of what in terms of Sen's notion of capabilities we are looking, not simply at resources, or amounts, that is number of years of education, but at the valued opportunities people do or do not have to fulfil what it is they have reason to value. This prompts us to think about gender not simply in terms of the descriptive categories of man – woman, which I have termed gender as a noun (Unterhalter, 2014), - but to look at the ways in which gendered social relationships and institutional arrangements shape the opportunities people have to act in ways they have reasons to value. I have used the metaphor that this entails thinking about gender as an adjective. An adjective colours social relationships, and is itself a relational term. If gender shapes particular attitudes to early marriage for the girls in Borno state, or subjects women who join unions in Bangladesh to sexual harassment, what it is they value – furthering their education or having the opportunity to articulate the problems about their work is being constrained. The relational dynamics of gender associated with power are at work in directing the relationships of women and men. The global inequalities I have distilled as features of multi-polarity, for example the linking of the development and security agenda, or the essentialised gender identities associated with social media, do not appear to undo these constraints. At best they reproduce older forms of subjugation, at worst they intensify these and introduce new layers. While the claim that capitalism supports feminism is contentious (ref), features of multipolarity suggest that global capitalism may support some forms of feminism for some women, but does not seek to change a larger picture of global and gender inequalities.

Inequality of what, and the gendered constraints on capabilities, are not only political, economic or social. A troubling question concerns not only gendered constraints on opportunities but the depth of the misogyny, the violence, the attitudes that are passed down over generations, often about women, so that vicious words exist in every language for women who do not conform sexually or intellectually. These hatreds also attach to men from subordinated groups, and are often phrased in terms of insults around sexuality. It is not clear that the notion of constrained opportunities adequately explains these levels of deeply held hatreds and intolerance, of which racism and xenophobia are examples. In the UK, recently social media and network society were used to spread vicious sexist messages about a woman who had campaigned to have an image of Jane Austen, a much loved and admired British woman author, on the bank notes. The tech companies were initially very slow to act to halt this abuse, and it indicates how much aspects of gender hatreds slither out from under well made social institutions and how much work is still to be done with emotions, with forms of consciousness that are political, but not always amenable to be shaped by institutions.

Drawing on Frances Stewart's work about inequality amongst whom, looking differently regarded groups constructed on the basis of race, ethnicity or gender. Metaphors I have used to think about gender as an adjective and as a verb can be seen to operate. Gendered social structures, such as the legal system that forms institutions, set the limits in which these ideas and practices associated with horizontal inequalities form and reproduce. But people also do gender and express and act in a range of ways, which either conform to or challenge these institutional frames. Young women going to school, despite the threats from Boko Haram, are doing gender, conforming in some ways to local ideas about dress and school, and challenging this in others. Their teachers and education planners in enacting curriculum, pedagogic relationships, formal and informal encouragement about who should progress to higher education are also doing gender.

With regard to horizontal inequalities what needs to be understood are both formal processes and informal, affective aspects of these interactions. I have supplemented the idea of inequality of what and inequality of whom with the notion of inequality of how (Unterhalter, 2015b). This form of procedural, or in education settings pedagogic, inequality sets in place particular kinds of hierarchies between, for example, teachers

and learners, that do not support the building of interactive discussions. These hierarchies are a feature of the global education landscape with knowledge concentration, defined in terms of highly rated universities, or research concentration and ownership of education technologies disproportionately gathered in particular blocs of countries or kinds of institutions, but with a range of flows through student exchanges or research collaborations which seek to change these. We need research to understand how gender features in these pedagogies, and the multiple forms it takes, as Henderson (2015) begins to map. Whether new technologies reproduce or transform gender associated with the inequalities of how is an open question in which context plays a key role.

In these conditions education is crucial to policies of social protection, enhancing social justice and processes of democratisation and enabling voice for the previously excluded. It is an important setting for critiques, and for investigating the taken for granted formulations of those in power. It is also a site associated with increasing monetization of information and of the relationships of learning and teaching. For many large and small companies education is a commodity bought, sold, speculated about, and planned with an eye to profit, rather than social justice. The relationship of these private associations with forms of state provision are complicated, as the literature on public-private partnerships attests (Macpherson, Robertson and Walford, 2014). Gender is a crucial component of both processes, but is not frequently remarked. Theorising gender is highly salient to enhancing justice at local, national and global levels that is attuned enough to the complexity of diversity. But the notion of gender is also implicated in the commodification of education and changes in social spending, development assistance, and forms of transnational organisation.

In the next section I look at these processes in more detail considering the work of some supranational organisations concerned with gender and education linked with the DFID funded Girls' education challenge programme.

5. SUPRANATIONAL ORGANISATIONS, GENDER AND EDUCATION

Gender and education, and the linked area of girls' schooling, hold a particular significance in global policy making. I have charted a long history of this process (Unterhalter, 2015a), marked by shifts associated with different forms of transnational organisation taking a lead, setting the discursive frame and funding forms of institutional change at particular conjunctures. In this section I want to look at the work of some selected transnational organisations concerned with gender and education as instances of multipolarity and dispersal.

To illustrate instances of dispersal and multipolarity in more detail have selected the Girls' Education Challenge (GEC), a project, funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), supported by a number of key other transnational organisations, I will detail the partnerships established, the areas of work given precedence and the ways in which they deploy a number of key terms – notably empowerment, effectiveness, innovation and evidence. The ambiguities associated with discourse and practice allow policies concerned with gender and education to signal both a social justice project and processes which sanction or sanitise relations of commodification, exploitation or continued inequalities.

6. GIRLS' EDUCATION CHALLENGE

DFID announced the GEC programme in September 2011, in an early phase of life of the Coalition government, which governed from 2010 -2015. £355 million were announced to assist 1 million 'of the poorest' girls to 'improve their lives through education' (DFID, 2014). The initiative exhibited many of the features of multipolarity and dispersal I have analysed. It was primarily focussed on the non-state sector, a shift from strategies under the previous labour governments, which had advocated Direct Budgetary Support to governments as a key feature of aid and transnational assistance (Hayman, 2011).

“The [GEC] initiative called on non-governmental organisations, charities and the private sector to find better ways of getting girls in school and ensuring they receive a quality of education to transform their future. The GEC is supporting projects that are able to demonstrate new and effective ways to expand education opportunities to marginalised girls” (DFID, 2014).

Funds were disbursed under three kinds of arrangement. What were called ‘strategic partnerships’ led to DFID providing matching funds to private sector partners for work with girls on improving learning opportunities. Step change projects, led by non state organisations, were intended to ‘quickly and effectively’ expand opportunities for girls at primary and secondary level in 9 focus countries. The Innovation projects aimed to fund technological innovations and new partnerships, ‘adapting proven solutions for new geographies, communities or age groups, and engaging females in decision-making processes’ (DFID, 2014). It can be seen that the three programmes associated with GEC exhibited a number of features I have identified with dispersal. These include an assumption that the state was by necessity a junior or minor player, and that step changes or innovations were to be achieved by the NGO sector and private companies. Another notion that echoes features of dispersal is that technologies and partnerships are magic bullets which could fix problems of girls out of school, and dissolve class, race or ethnic social divisions that had made implementation of public policy in education so difficult. Another feature of the dispersal discourse was that girls out of school could be brought in quickly, and that this problem of marginality could be detached from wider issues of poverty and inequality. The inclination of dispersal analysis was thus to stress agency over structure.

The three tables In the Appendix present a summary of the organisations funded under the GEC, their aims and the countries in which they are working. It can be seen that a range of different kinds of transnational organisation are engaged in the programme. DFID is present acting transnationally co-ordinating the partnerships, disbursing the funds, and publicising the approach. A number of multi-national corporations are recipients of funds, either under the strategic partnerships or the Innovations programme. This access to additional financing through aid is useful to these global for profit organisations. The funds help them in growing their enterprises, enhancing research and development, and provide numerous promotional opportunities. Different kind of global corporations are involved in the management and evaluation of the programme. Price Waterhouse Cooper holds the portfolio to manage the programme, while Coffey, holds a contract to evaluate it (UK, 2011b). A significant number of global NGOs are also big players in the GEC, largely as the recipients of substantial grants for work to be completed in a short amount of time either with in-country implementing partners or through branch offices working in low and middle income countries. These transnational NGOs gain income, access to national and international policy areas, and enhanced profile. While the large NGOs in receipt of GEC money are not for profit organisations, link the multi-nationals, their organisational forms are often rather similar, and it is not clear that many articulate the critical voice of the dispossessed they claimed some decades ago (Strolovitch and Townsend-Bell, 2013) Lastly, some UN organisations are cited in GEC project documentation as having helped broker some of the programmes (DFID, 2015). Thus the GEC can itself be seen as an instance of multipolarity and dispersal in practice, with a range of actors from different kinds of transnational organisation engaged in project implementation, management, promotion, and evaluation. However, groups that are strikingly absent from the GEC multipolar engagement are global feminist organisations, trade unions, and UN organisations acting through a negotiated process amongst states. We can thus describe GEC as multipolar, but not multilateral.

A number of issues associated with multi-polarity and dispersal are evident in relation to the ‘strategic’ partnerships summarised in table 1.

Table 1 GEC Strategic partnerships: matched funding with large corporations

The Discovery Channel (£12.3 million)	Establishing learning centres in schools, providing technology, video programming; training teachers on using media; collaborating with girls and experts to develop national television discussion shows; training and supporting communities to develop action plans to address gender marginalisation; supporting girls' clubs for in and out-of-school girls to encourage them to attend, stay and succeed in school.	Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria
Coca Cola (£7 million)	Learning spaces for academic support and training for adolescent girls and training to advance their leadership and entrepreneurship skills. vocational training programme focused on business and employment readiness for out of school. Girls	Nigeria
Avanti Communications, sQuid, Whizz Education and Camara Education	Project iMlang for high-speed satellite broadband connectivity to schools; personalised maths tuition with a virtual online tutor, alongside digital learning content for maths, literacy and life skills; tuition and support to teachers to use ICT in their teaching; electronic attendance monitoring with conditional payments - to incentivise families to send their daughters to school – for use with local merchants.	Kenya
Ericsson (£3.7million)	Connecting schools through mobile broadband, delivering educational content and teacher training. Scholarships for marginalised girls, enabling them to complete their secondary education.	Burma

Source: DFID, 2015

The first is the significant presence of the ICT sector, which appear a key component of what makes these companies 'strategic'. A second is the way in which GEC seems to lie somewhere between a security agenda and a development agenda. Nigeria, Kenya and Burma, where the strategic partnerships are located, are all countries which raise security and development issues. All four strategic partnerships purport to enhance young women's voice and participation, but the documentation on the projects indicate little integrated development planning to show how work in girls' clubs could link with changing national or local policy around gender inequalities in education, health or economic rights (DFID, 2015) Lastly, these strategic partnerships show aspects of the queasy relationship between public and private that forms part of the discourse of multipolarity. In each partnership substantial sums of public money, taken from taxes in the U K intended to further an agenda around international development and advancing rights, are being very openly used to develop the business plans and financial growth of companies in Africa and Burma. Public aid money is enhancing the market share for large corporations, be it demand for ICT to help learning and teaching in the selected countries, assist with the monitoring of education administration or train women entrepreneurs to participate in the Coca Cola' value chain' (DFID, 2015) .

These private goods for the companies appear quite minimally linked to support for education for marginalised girls. This it appears is the market opportunity, but the conditions with which some of these companies may be deeply implicated are not addressed in these projects.

Fifteen Step change projects were awarded funding in 2013 under the GEC. Recipients were largely international NGOs and the projects to be funded focussed on enhancing girls' access to school, learning and voice. These Step Change projects exhibit a number of features I have identified with multipolarity. Firstly, six out of fifteen are in areas of existing significant conflict, where the security agenda and the development agenda are very markedly intertwined. It is slightly chilling to realise that no names are provided to the recipients of grants in Afghanistan and Somalia, presumably because this would identify them as targets for attack. Many Step Change projects aim to develop learning materials and to support

girls' voices. But the project documentation is rather sparse regarding what the direction of travel might be of words spoken by these voices. None of the step change projects appear to focus on building institutions to support enhanced gender equality in the public sphere or to address changing the wider institutional context through laws or fiscal regimes or forms of public policy to address equalities. Many stress working with communities, building capacity and governance, but engagement with state institutions, still the largest provider of education in all the countries in which GEC works (with the possible exception of Somalia) is not mentioned in the project aims. Many comment on incentivising access to school, and establishing safe spaces for learning, but the links between these spaces and wider political economy or socio cultural engagements is not mentioned. Thus girls' access to school is very evidently here being detached from a wider women's rights or gender equality agenda. Although a number of GEC Step Change projects associate themselves with empowerment, and have aims associated with voice, the ways in which empowerment has been defined linked to an integrated social justice process and analysis of social relations does not appear evident.

Under the GEC Innovation Fund 20 programmes have been funded. In all these projects innovation is invoked in particular ways. It is linked with adopting new technologies, often linked with communication or green initiatives. And can address different ways of mobilising finance or forming partnerships. In only a handful of projects funded under the Innovation Fund is there any consideration of the changing social perceptions of gender and how to challenge this. Only two projects are concerned with addressing school related gender based violence, often a feature of gender inequalities under conditions of poverty (Pakes, 2015). Thus a minority of the innovations consider undoing deeply entrenched gender inequalities, and the majority work with notions of quick technical solutions presented as innovations.

An important feature of GEC that links it with aspects of multipolarity and dispersal is the significance of information. Sharing information about improving teaching or learning is an aim of many of the projects funded, and under the strategic partnerships and the innovation funds ICT companies have accessed significant resources. A significant part of the programme has been the requirement that recipients of funds undertake research on their practice. The findings from the baseline research confirmed much existing scholarship on girls out of school, and the low levels of learning for poor girls. Thus, from a scholarly perspective, it is unclear what new insight or information the huge level of investment in the baseline studies for GEC provided. However, this focus on assembling evidence, even if the purpose does not advance a particular scholarly programme, also talks to some key concerns of the framework associated with dispersal.

Networks seem apposite in describing the way GEC operates as a linked set of programmes, connecting multiple transnational organisations. It is evident that while many features of multipolarity and the instrumentalising of girls' education are evident, there are many agendas at play and detailed work is needed on how the programme has been implemented in different contexts.

CONCLUSION

This paper has considered features of contemporary global inequality associated with aspects of gender and education, often neglected in comments on distribution of income, wealth, power, and level of schooling. It has also looked at the ways in which different forms of supra-national organisations have become concerned with aspects of girls' education. Through presenting some theoretically located features of this process, I draw on some of the discussion of multipolarity, and market society to try to delineate ways to understand the workings of a number of transnational organisations engaged with gender and education. In a detailed consideration of the programmes being funded under the DFID Girls' Education Challenge I show how the framework I have formulated, and termed dispersal, is useful to characterise this kind of transnational engagement. GEC is associated with a number of relationships with non state actors, formations of public-private partnership, and presentation of girls' education in largely instrumentalist terms detached from wider engagements with gender equality. Further work is needed to consider whether on the ground these initiatives are concerned with gender and education as a social justice project or whether they work to sanitise relations of commodification, exploitation or continued inequalities. Under

conditions of extreme global inequality between countries, does work that addresses, one social good, such as education, translate into another, say good health, or confidence to participate politically or economically? The paper shows that GEC is associated with large political formations of states, multi-national companies, and multilateral institutions, which use a policy discourse which marginalises and instrumentalises gender equality issues. It is largely silent on their contextual complexity. However, networks of radical organisations associated with educational practices do exist, and they engage globally claiming a space for gender and challenging existing thinking. There are stringent disagreements amongst theorists of multipolarity regarding how we read the present, and which of these groups can set an agenda and mobilise support. The question of gender, education and transnational organisation provides an illuminating litmus paper of where this debate will travel.

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