The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

College of Education

INGOS, THE GLOBAL IDEOLOGY OF CHILDHOOD

AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN NEPAL

A Dissertation in

Educational Theory and Policy

by

Adrienne Henck

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2014

The dissertation of Adrienne Henck was reviewed and approved* by the following:

David P. Baker
Professor of Education and Sociology
Dissertation Advisor
Committee Chair

Maryellen Schaub
Assistant Professor of Education

Katerina Bodovski
Associate Professor of Education

Leif Jensen
Distinguished Professor of Rural Sociology and Demography

Gerald K. LeTendre
Professor of Education
Department Head of Education Policy Studies

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School

ABSTRACT

Over the last century, cultural ideas reflecting an ideal, normative childhood have become a major driving force shaping global policy related to children, particularly within the realm of education for development. A global consensus around these cultural ideas, referred to in this study as the global ideology of childhood, underscores the shared belief that all children are entitled to similar rights, protections, and childhood experiences. As societies around the world strive towards the realization of this ideal, a fundamental question remains: how is the global ideology of childhood reproduced in national contexts as transnational actors, and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in particular, develop and implement education practices and policies?

Within the context of a global movement that emphasizes the needs and rights of individual children through the provision of quality education for all, this study utilizes a qualitative case study of Nepal's National Framework of Child-friendly Schools for Quality Education to illustrate how INGOs and other policy actors reproduce and interpret global norms concerning children and childhood. The ultimate goal is to provide a richly descriptive account of how global culture is appropriated in one national context. Accordingly, three research questions ask: 1) how is the global ideology of childhood reflected in the policy?; 2) how do international, national, and local actors understand their roles in the development and implementation of the policy?; and 3) How do these actors envision the sustainability of the child-friendly school model in Nepal, and how might these global ideas be linked to broader social and cultural change?

Drawing on interviews with multilevel actors, policy documents, and school observations, the findings provide evidence of the convergence between global and national conceptions of childhood; demonstrate that models of cultural reproduction must allow for the possibility of multi-directional patterns; and reveal the complexity of sustaining global ideas in local contexts while pointing to the rise in importance of the child in modern society. Ultimately, the research highlights how the child-friendly schools policy has created a space for education reform—and the realization of the rights of Nepali children—using language legitimated by a global consensus on childhood.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ACRONYMS

BASE   Backward Society Education

CCWB   Central Children's Welfare Board

CERID   Centre for Educational Innovation and Development

CFS   Child-friendly school

CRC   Convention on the Rights of the Child

DEO   District Education Office

DoE   Department of Education

ECD   Early Childhood Development

EFA   Education for All

IFCD   Innovative Forum for Community Development

MDG   Millennium Development Goals

MoE   Ministry of Education

NEC   National Education Commission

NIDS   Nepal Institute of Development Studies

NNDSWO   Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization

PTA   Parent Teacher Association

SMC   School Management Committee

SSRP   School Sector Reform Plan

UMN   United Mission to Nepal

UNESCO   United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture

UNICEF   United Nations Children's Fund

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When I think about the journey of conceiving, researching, and writing this dissertation, the popularized proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child," comes to mind. Indeed, the growth of this work, which has become like my child, has been no different. I want to express my sincere gratitude to all of the village members around the world who have helped this child to survive and thrive.

Thank you to Stephanie Grepo, who I serendipitously met on a rainy New York City evening at an Irish pub on the Bowery. Your kind assistance and encouragement set off a chain of events that took me to Nepal and ultimately led to this dissertation.

Thank you to Iain Guest for providing me the opportunity to serve as a Peace Fellow with The Advocacy Project in Nepal and for supporting me even when my journey took an unexpected twist.

Thank you to Churna Chaudhary, Dilli Chaudhary, and all of the members of the BASE (Backward Society Education) family. You, who are true agents of social change, have taught me so much through your inspiring work.

Thank you especially to Pinky Dangi for your tireless support and friendship. I look forward to following the many great things you will no doubt achieve in the future.

Thank you to those who went above and beyond to facilitate this research and to make my time in Nepal as pleasant as possible. Thank you to LB Chaudhary for your research support and excellent motorbike driving skills. Thank you to the entire Dangi family (Mr. Dangi, Mrs. Dangi, and Rosy!) for your kindness and amazing hospitality. And thank you immensely to the anonymous taxi drivers of Kathmandu. Without your

endless persistence and superb navigations skills in a land of vague and often incorrect addresses, none of the data collection would have been possible.

Thank you to all of the nongovernmental and intergovernmental organization representatives, Department of Education officials, and researchers who generously participated in this study. This dissertation is a collection of your voices and a reflection of your indomitable commitment to improve the education system for the children of Nepal.

Thank you to Dana Burde, my advisor at New York University, who convinced me in the first place that I was capable of obtaining a doctoral degree. You are an inspiration for so many international education development hopefuls.

Thank you to David Baker, my doctoral advisor and committee chair, for always keeping me moving forward. You have helped me to grow tremendously as a researcher.

Thank you to my dissertation committee, Katerina Bodovski, Maryellen Schaub, and Leif Jensen, for generously providing your time, feedback and support.

Thank you to my amazing colleagues and friends at Penn State who have provided every kind of support possible. Lindsey Schrott, Nnenna Ogbu, Emily Hodge, Eryka Charley, Cat Biddle, Jen Lane Myler, Sakiko Ikoma, Kristina Brezicha, Will Smith, Emily Anderson, and Renata Horvatek, no one has believed in me as much as you all have.

And lastly, thank you to my family for generously providing me with a dissertation writing cave and for your unconditional love, support, and encouragement.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

Childhood is a social construction that, arguably more so than any other socially constructed phenomenon, resonates across cultures. Globally, a normative conception of childhood has come to reflect the belief that every child is entitled to similar things— similar rights, similar protections and similar childhood experiences. This shared belief does not negate the lived realities of children in diverse contexts but rather reflects a universal ideal that societies around the world strive towards. In this dissertation, I maintain that this ideal is embodied in a *global ideology of childhood* and that, although culturally defined conceptions of childhood are not new, in the last century they have become a major driving force in shaping global policy related to children, particularly within the realm of education for development. In this vein, the fundamental question that I address is: what happens when global ideas, packaged within educational policies and practices, permeate into national contexts?

Drawing on elements of the world society approach, I further contend that the global ideology of childhood, which is an integral component of an increasingly dominant world culture, influences how transnational and national actors (especially international, national and local non-governmental organizations, I/NGOs[1], as well as intergovernmental organizations, IGOs), develop and implement education initiatives intended to serve the best interests of children (Boli & Thomas, 1999; Boyle & Kim, 2009; Chabbott, 2003; Schofer, Hironaka, & Frank 2012). As such, this global ideology

---

[1] I follow standard usage throughout this dissertation, utilizing 'I/NGO' to refer to both INGOs and NGOs. When the acronyms 'INGO' or 'NGO' are used alone, 'INGO' refers to international non-governmental organizations and 'NGO' refers to national and local/community-based non-governmental organizations.

represents an especially promising angle from which to explore the role of I/NGOs as "carriers and enactors" of cultural ideas in the global system (Boli & Thomas, 1999). Primarily in the last 60 years, the world has witnessed a profound growth in the number of INGOs, including those focused on child well-being and children's rights, and a corresponding increase in national linkages with these child-focused organizations (Boli & Thomas, 1999; Boyle & Kim, 2009; Chabbott, 1999, 2003). This trend points to the hypothesized effect that as the global ideology of childhood spreads, nations will increasingly incorporate its elements into national laws and policies.

Yet, even within the robust and well-established literature on world society, several aspects of this process of transnational cultural flow remain unclear. What are the mechanisms behind this process at national and sub-national levels? What specific roles do international, national and local policy actors, such as I/NGO and IGO representatives, governments and even researchers, play in incorporating global ideas in national policies and practices? Do these actors faithfully reproduce the original ideas or do they adapt the ideas to fit local contexts in which they perceive children's needs to be different? And finally, how sustainable are global ideas in local contexts—in other words, once mediating actors depart, do global ideas become normalized in local belief systems? Indeed, an examination of these questions within a national context carries significant potential to contribute to understandings of the global-local interface in which processes of cultural reproduction take place. Contrary to the assumptions of some researchers and policy makers who assume that child-oriented policies arise from either a functional aim to meet the needs of children or from power conflicts among self-interested actors within social systems, this dissertation advances the claim that these policies are driven by the

increasing authority and legitimacy of socio-cultural ideas concerning children and childhood in the global-institutional system (Schofer et al., 2012).

To understand what all of this means in practice, consider the following global and national cases. To increase educational access and improve the quality of primary schools, the Department of Education of Nepal in 2010 adopted the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools for Quality Education—the education policy featured in this dissertation. Though UNICEF and I/NGOs were already active in implementing child-friendly schools throughout the country, the adoption of the Framework represented a new level of commitment and support from the government. About a decade earlier in Nepal and other countries, UNICEF, the leading provider of humanitarian and developmental assistance for children in developing countries, had begun to advocate the child-friendly school model as "a 'package solution' and holistic instrument for pulling together a comprehensive range of quality interventions in education" (UNICEF, 2010). Through partnerships with I/NGOs and Ministries of Education, the model has since been implemented in more than 95 countries, and there are plans to expand to all 154 of UNICEF's working countries (UNICEF, 2009e). And at the same time that governments have been incorporating the child-friendly school model into national education reform plans, the global community has been busily deliberating over the next global development framework to follow the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) when they expire in 2015. Unlike in other sectors, there has been an unprecedented level of consensus on the education goals: global leaders, national policy makers, civil society and even citizens of diverse countries have rallied for a shift from a focus on educational access to the provision of quality education and the improvement of learning outcomes

among all children. These snapshots of global and national developments should not be mistaken for unrelated, isolated events. Much to the contrary, they point to the evolution of a powerful global movement in education reform in which a very specific vision of a normative childhood is being produced and reproduced.

Statement of purpose

Within the context of an emerging global consensus that emphasizes the needs and rights of individual children through a focus on quality education for all, this dissertation utilizes a case study of Nepal's National Framework of Child-friendly Schools for Quality Education to illustrate how international and national non-governmental organizations, as well as other policy actors, reproduce and interpret global norms concerning children and childhood as embodied in a global ideology of childhood. As such, the ultimate goal is to provide a richly descriptive account of how global culture is appropriated in one national context.

Emergence of the global ideology of childhood

To understand the conceptual underpinnings of this dissertation, I begin by reviewing literature primarily from the intersecting disciplines of sociology and childhood studies to provide a basis for understanding the meaning of childhood as a social construction. I then draw on the very limited base of literature that conceptualizes childhood as a global construct in order to define the term, the "global ideology of childhood."

Childhood as a social construction

Moving beyond traditional conceptualizations of childhood as an absolute fact based on biology and as a simplistic, future-oriented period when children prepare to enter adult society, this dissertation advances the view that childhood is a social construction and an ever-present "structural form" in society (Corsaro, 2011; Hartas, 2008; James and Prout, 1997; Qvortrup, 1993, 1999). Many have asked, "What is a child?" According to the social constructionist view, the definition of children and childhood arises from meaning assigned by. Such a perspective suggests that, although specific conceptions of childhood—that is, the norms, values and beliefs that define childhood at any given time and place—vary culturally and historically, and although the experience of childhood for individual children is temporary, for society, childhood itself is a constant category (Corsaro, 2011; Qvortrup, 2009).

Of particular importance to the current study, Jens Qvortrup, a pioneer in the field of childhood studies and lead on the international "Childhood as a Social Phenomenon" project, has suggested that especially in modern society in which children spend long portions of their life engaged in schooling, children, along with adults such as teachers and parents, contribute to the production of knowledge. Contrary to other perspectives which marginalize children by viewing them as passive participants in the cultural world created by adults, Qvortrup maintains that children themselves actively participate in the production and reproduction of culture, and even contribute to social constructions of childhood (Qvortrup, 1993, 2009) (for an application of this idea, see Appendix G on child clubs). Viewing childhood from a social constructionist angle thereby allows for a wide range of sociological questions about the convergence and divergence of

conceptions of childhood over time and space. Though scholarly work in this vein is limited, and in fact almost nothing had been written about childhood at all prior to the 1970s, I review some important, mostly recent highlights below.

In his seminal work, *Centuries of Childhood*, Philippe Aries (1962) documents the "discovery of childhood" in the medieval period of Western Europe, the gradual transition in the 16th century in which adults began to view children as a "source of amusement and relaxation," and bourgeois society's subsequent removal of the child from the adult world to a life regulated by domesticity and schooling in the 18th and 19th centuries. Thus, over several centuries, societal conceptions of children shifted from the view of children as miniature adults to the view of children as completely distinct from adults. While Aries' argument about the initial unawareness of childhood in pre-17th century Europe has since received considerable criticism, he nevertheless made several important contributions to the study of childhood. First, he advanced the idea that childhood, as a life stage distinct from adulthood, is a social construction rather than an absolute biological fact. Second, he stressed the role of social institutions, such as the family and the school, in defining childhood. And finally, his work established a foundation for other scholars to investigate the cultural roots of childhood by positioning the social history of childhood as a legitimate field of study.

Although some scholars have suggested that there is more homogeneity in conceptions of childhood than we might expect (e.g. Vinovskis, 1996), others have followed in the tradition of Aries by exploring the transient nature of conceptions of childhood within specific historical or geographic contexts (e.g. Cunningham, 2006; Hendrick, 1990, 2009; Zelizer, 1985). In his book, *The Invention of Childhood*, Hugh

Cunningham (2006) draws on primary data, such as diaries, letters, and interviews, to examine the historical aspects of childhood in Britain from the Middle Ages to the post-war period of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. He shows that over time, children's roles have changed, from being on the periphery of society in the Middle Ages to becoming an integral part of the workforce during the Industrial Revolution. Importantly, Cunningham's analysis demonstrates how other social constructs such as gender, geography, and ethnicity, as well as macro forces at national and international levels, can impact both the experience of childhood for groups of children and the conceptions of childhood held by society. Also drawing on historical evidence in her study of the sacralization of the child, Viviana Zelizer (1985), describes the changing social value of children in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the United States. Analyzing evidence related to child labor, life insurance, and the adoption industry, Zelizer demonstrates that the perceived value of children shifted from characterizing them as economically useful to economically "worthless" but emotionally "priceless." The emergence of this new kind of child valuation created "an essential condition of contemporary childhood" (Zelizer, 1985, p. 3).

As these examples make clear, most scholarly work drawing on the social constructionist frame has focused on the American and European contexts. The few exceptions predominantly focus on marginalized children in poor countries (e.g., Balagopalan's (2002) article, "Constructing indigenous childhoods…," on child work and vocational education among street children in Calcutta, India; Glauser's (1997) piece on deconstructing constructions of street children in Paraguay; and Blanchet's (1996) much critiqued monograph, *Lost Innocents, Stolen Childhoods* on working Bangladeshi

children). Borrowing Zelizer's themes of the innocence and sacredness of childhood but advancing a very different argument, Blanchet draws on Neil Postman's (1982) view that childhood is disappearing.   She applies the popularized term "stolen childhood" to refer to the pollution and consequent negation of the childhoods of poor, Bangladeshi children who prematurely enter the adult world through work. As such, Blanchet suggests that an ideal normative childhood is characterized by purity and that any absence of that quality indicates the absence of childhood itself.

In documenting the historical and geographical variation in conceptions of childhood, these works collectively advance the idea that childhood is defined by a set of normative ideas held by society, i.e. it is a social construction. Further, they emphasize the importance of context in understanding how children are perceived by society. It is important to note that this social constructionist framework does not contradict the biological perspective that childhood is a developmental stage. Instead, it simply stresses the importance of socio-cultural ideas over physical immaturity as the primary aspect defining the discrete conceptualization of childhood (Qvortrup, Corsaro, & Honig, 2009). As such, the most salient points are that conceptions of childhood can, and do, change, and that this change is linked to historical, social and cultural contexts. The questions remain, though, of whether and how these conceptions transcend national borders.

The global ideology of childhood

In 1909, Swedish social theorist and early advocate of child-centered education, Ellen Key heralded in her book, *The Century of the Child*, that the 20th century would be an unprecedented period of "intensified focus and progressive thinking regarding the rights, development, and well-being of children as interests of utmost importance to all

society" (MoMA, 2012). Nearly 100 years later, the Museum of Modern Art in New York City revived Key's proclamation and celebrated modern thinking about childhood with their special exhibit called "Century of the Child: Growing by Design, 1900-2000" which showcased cultural artifacts representing childhood from around the world. The enduring legacy of *The Century of the Child* is no smaller matter, for there is little doubt that childhood has gained an unprecedented degree of societal importance over the last century, and not only in one or two countries, but globally. Indeed, Key was decades ahead of her time, for her prediction astutely captures the emergence of a new, child-centered world, the ever-increasing complexity of child development and the idea that children everywhere are entitled to the realization of a happy, healthy childhood—in short, it represents the essence of the global ideology of childhood.

There is not a fixed, absolute definition of the global ideology of childhood, but rather the term represents an amalgam of shared, cultural ideas concerning children and childhood. I contend that these ideas constitute a normative conception of childhood that has come to reflect the belief that every child is entitled to similar things— similar rights, similar protections and similar childhood experiences. To be clear, this of course does not mean that the lived realities of children everywhere are the same, but rather it means that there is a universal ideal that societies around the world strive towards. Importantly, the components of this cultural ideal vary in their legitimacy within the global realm over time and space. As such, global culture has come to define conceptions of childhood in such a way that the characteristics that we assign to children are not intrinsic, fixed and prescribed but extrinsic, historically-specific and negotiable (Woodhead, 1997).

Nevertheless, certain aspects of the global ideology of childhood have assumed a degree of durability and prominence in contemporary discourse. Most importantly, the global ideology of childhood reflects notions that childhood is a complex stage of human development associated with diverse needs, desires and rights, and that children possess social value in their own right, independent from other institutions such as the family and the school. I operationalize the global ideology in Chapter 3 according to six conceptually overlapping dimensions: (1) the increasingly unique and complex developmental aims of childhood; (2) the whole child perspective of child development and well-being; (3) children as bearers of human rights; (4) the individualization of children; (5) child protection; and (6) child development as national development. The remainder of this section provides an overview of the limited scholarly literature that has served as a foundation for the study of global conceptions of childhood.

The term "ideology of childhood" originated in Boli-Bennett and Meyer's (1978) work on cultural conceptions of childhood as reflected in national constitutions. They argue that ideas about childhood diffuse throughout the global nation-state system. All states, regardless of variations in organizational development, play a critical role in legitimizing this ideology. Boli-Bennett and Meyer emphasize that the differentiated social role of children, e.g. how they are thought to be different from adults and how social institutions adapt to this difference, is not simply an organizational distinction but an ideological one. This ideology reflects common ideas that are part of the world culture. Two such ideas concern the nature of the individual and the authority of the nation-state. In modern states, individuals become the dominant unit in society, and childhood is defined as the period of socialization in which productive members of

society are produced. As this process of individualization is taking place, the state also assumes jurisdiction over managing aspects of modern life, such as childhood. An important implication of this theoretical argument is that, because national constitutions are embedded with ideas about the people and societies they govern, they consequently represent a unique medium for investigating cultural concepts such as the ideology of childhood. In this manner, Boli-Bennett and Meyer continue in the methodological tradition of Aries, and lay a foundation for other scholars to use national and international textual documents to investigate ideas about childhood.

To date, very few studies have examined constructions of childhood on a global scale[2]. An important exception is Schaub, Henck and Baker's (in progress) historical analysis of how images of children and childhood are manifested in multilateral aid dialogue. They argue that the multilateral strategies behind the recent upsurge in global investments in children are enactments of the often unrecognized cultural images of childhood, and these strategies serve to legitimize the rights and resources that are thought to be necessary for the actualization of a normative childhood at any given time. Thus, in a symbiotic manner, global conceptions of childhood influence aid, and aid dialogue influences global conceptions of childhood. Analyzing historical data on UNICEF's activity from 1946-2010, Schaub and her colleagues demonstrate how the image of the child has shifted from a basic needs focus to a more complex child, embodied in a concept called the "whole child." They also show how children's rights, particularly education rights, have come to dominate global thinking on childhood. The contributions of this work are two-fold: first, Schaub et al. provide a clear representation

_____

[2] For critical perspectives on the concept of a global childhood, see, for example, Nieuwenhuys,1998, 2010, and Boyden, 1997.

of the ebb and flow of cultural conceptions of the child over time, thus reifying the idea that cultural images of the child did not suddenly appear on the global stage in the post-World War II period, but rather exist, by nature, in a constant state of change, and second, they provide evidence of the unique and unprecedented role that images of the child have assumed in shaping global policy in the modern era.

In a related way, Asher Ben-Arieh has explored the intersection of children and social policy on a global scale through an extensive analysis of nearly 200 "state of the child" reports published by child welfare organizations worldwide between 1950 and 2005 (Ben-Arieh, 2006, 2008; Ben-Arieh & Goerge, 2001). Through analyses of these reports, which use statistical data and indicators to study the well-being of children, Ben-Arieh has identified connections between discourses on child well-being and the child indicators movement and provided a redefined conceptualization of child well-being. He suggests that two approaches are particularly useful in thinking about child well-being: a rights-based perspective that envisions children's rights as human rights and a developmental perspective that characterizes childhood as a unique stage in itself. Through the analysis of the reports, Ben-Arieh has also analyzed trends in how the measurement and monitoring of children's well-being has changed. He identifies four shifts: (1) from a focus on children's survival to a focus on well-being; (2) from a focus on negative behaviors and risk factors to a focus on protective factors and positive behaviors; (3) from a focus on well-becoming (a future-oriented and outcome-based view) to a focus on well-being (a present-oriented and child-centered view); and (4) from a focus on traditional to new domains of children's well-being (Ben-Arieh, 2006). Notably, Ben-Arieh's work highlights the increased global attention to the study of

children's well-being and the role that indicators of children's well-being play in linking policy and theory (Frones, 2007). His work also establishes a foundation for using "state of the child" reports and other documents produced by child-focused organizations to examine cultural discourses on childhood. Though Ben-Arieh does not explicitly derive from social constructionist perspective, his work nevertheless supports a global conceptualization of childhood. In the next section, I explore a useful framework for understanding *how* the global ideology of childhood has emerged and proliferated around the world.

Connecting the rise of I/NGOs, world culture and the global ideology of childhood

Next, I lay out the theoretical foundation of this dissertation through an exploration of key elements of the world society approach. In doing so, I begin to show how this dissertation is a study of both the *content* of world culture and the *process* of global socio-cultural reproduction. I first discuss how I/NGOs have become such powerful actors as "carriers and enactors" of world culture and then develop a case for using this lens to understand the spread of the global ideology of childhood as a core component of world culture. I ultimately propose two heuristic frames for conceptualizing the behavior of I/NGOs as agents of social and cultural change.

The rise of I/NGOs as agents of socio-cultural change

The number of INGOs[3] worldwide has increased exponentially over the last century, and particularly within the last few decades. In 1900, there were only 200 active

---

[3] In this dissertation, I adhere to the definitions of INGO, NGO and IGO established by the Union on International Associations, the Brussels-based organization that has documented the growth of international civil society since 1907. According to UAI (2013), a non-governmental organization (NGO) is "a legally constituted organization created by private persons or organizations without participation or representation

organizations in existence globally; however, by 1980 the number had expanded to nearly

4,000 (Boli & Thomas, 1999). The most astonishing growth, though, has occurred

since1990, when there were about 6,000, as the number of organizations rose to 26,000

by 1999 and 40,000 by 2010 (Figure 1.1). To be clear, these figures reflect the growth of

only international, and not national or local/community-based, NGOs. In Nepal alone

there currently are between 40,000 and 60,000 self-described national and local NGOs

(NGO Federation of Nepal, 2014), and as a comparison, in the United States there are

approximately 1.5 million (U.S. Department of State, 2012). Not all types of INGOs

have experienced equal growth, though. Between 1990 and 2000, education-, health-,

and social services-focused INGOs grew by 23.8%, 50.0% and 78.5%, respectively.

INGOs focused on defense, politics and economic development/infrastructure, on the

other hand, experienced zero or negative growth during this period (UNDP, 2002). There

has also been profound growth in the number of INGOs focused on children's rights, and

a corresponding increase in national linkages with these child rights international NGOs[4]

(Boyle & Kim, 2009). Such trends clearly point to the growing importance of certain

sectors within the global system.

---

of any government." NGOs can be local, national or international. Intergovernmental organizations (IGO),
or "organization[s] composed primarily of sovereign states, or of other intergovernmental organizations
that [are] typically established by treaty or other agreement that acts as a charter creating the group," have
also experienced some growth over the last century (UAI 2013). Two examples of IGOs that feature in this
paper are UNICEF and, to a lesser degree, UNESCO.

[4] Boyle and Kim (2009) define national linkages as the number of child rights INGOs to which citizens or
organizations of a country belong. Additionally, they define child rights INGOs as organizations that
include either "promotion of child rights" in their official aim or core child rights terms such as
"eliminating child labor," "eliminating child trafficking," "eliminating corporal punishment," and "right to
education" in their official aim or activities.

Figure 1.1: Growth of NGOs and IGOs worldwide, 1909-2013
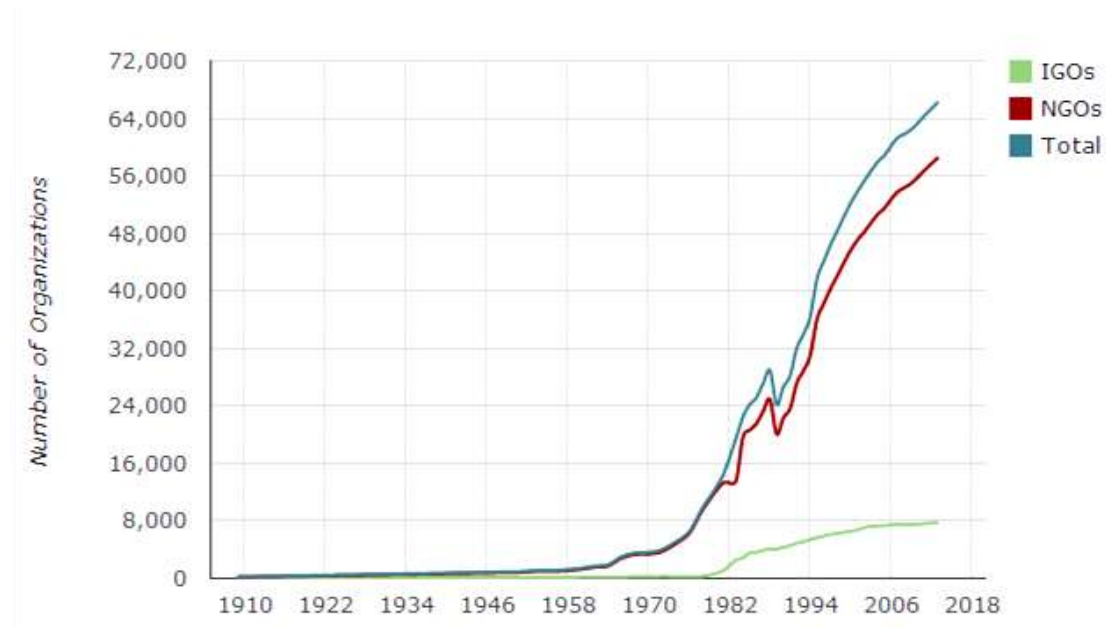
Notes. Reprinted from Union of International Associations, 2013 (http://www.uia.org/). Number of organizations reflects organizations included in the *Yearbook of International Organizations*. IGO indicates intergovernmental organization (e.g. UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank). NGO indicates non-governmental organization and in this graph includes local, national and international organizations.

Yet the significance of the growth of INGOs lies not only in their numbers but in the unique authority and legitimacy they hold within the global system. Despite having low levels of financial resources, they are nevertheless able to exert great influence on global and national actors and processes through the legitimacy of their structures and operational procedures, the legitimacy of the purposes they pursue (e.g. the protection of children's rights), and the high status of their professional members in terms of educational credentials and other forms of capital (Boli & Thomas, 1999). As Boli and Thomas (1999) assert in their seminal work, *Constructing World Culture: International Nongovernmental Organizations since 1875*, INGOs are "carriers and enactors" of world

culture—a characterization which supports the authors' proposal for studies that show how these powerful organizations reflect and help generate the cultural models employed by states and other actors. It is important to note, though, that INGOs are not simply empty vessels that facilitate the diffusion of cultural models, but rather at times they also actively adapt ideas within local contexts and contribute to the formation of new aspects of world culture. Before we can understand this nuanced behavior of INGOs and its application to the global ideology of childhood, it is important to first step back and establish the meaning of world culture.

Defining world culture

The concept of world culture stems from world society theory, and its parent, neo-institutionalism, which grew out of comparative research on education in the 1970s. During this period of rapid educational expansion, scholars began to take note of the similarities between emerging education systems in developing nations and those of Western societies. Despite differences in economic, political, and social contexts, schools and curricula seemed to resemble global models more than they seemed to be adapted to local conditions. With other sociological theories inadequately explaining this unexpected isomorphism of education systems around the world, world society theory accounted for global change in terms of a common world culture, which developed in the period following World War II and was linked to the diffusion of Western policies (Schofer et al., 2012).

In this vein, Boli and Thomas (1999) make the simple, yet undeniably important, statement that "culture is increasingly global" (p. 13). This implies that, "definitions, principles, and purposes"—and arguably also norms and values—are constructed

similarly around the world (Boli & Thomas, 1999, p. 18). A central feature of neo-institutionalism, generally, is an emphasis on socially constructed realities (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Goffman, 1974). Thus, it is not schooling as an objective reality, but schooling as a socially constructed phenomenon that has proliferated around the world. Further, as Boli and Thomas point out, this does not mean that there is an absolute consensus around a particular cultural model, such as mass schooling, or that the elements of world culture are never contested. The characterization of culture as global suggests instead that the contents of world culture are *known* by everyone and *applicable* everywhere, regardless of agreement or disagreement over the specific principles (Boli & Thomas, 1999).

According to John Meyer, John Boli, George Thomas, and Francisco Ramirez (1997), all pioneers of the world society approach, a central proposition is the following:

> *Many features of the contemporary nation-state derive from worldwide models constructed and propagated through global cultural and associational process.* These models and the purposes they reflect (e.g., equality, socioeconomic progress, human development) are highly rationalized, articulated, and often surprisingly consensual. Worldwide models define and legitimate agendas for local action, shaping the structures and policies of nation-states and other national and local actors in virtually all of the domains of rationalized social life—business, politics, education, medicine, science, even the family and religion (p. 144-145).

They go on to explain that in the world society, these global models spread throughout countries of the world despite vast differences in those countries. And while the exact content of world culture is dynamic and amorphous, certain characteristics, including high levels of individualism, universalism, belief in progress, and rationalization of thought, are more enduring (Boli & Thomas, 1999). Cultural models—ideas reflecting what is considered "normal" or "societal ideologies" that may not necessarily be

functionally optimal but nevertheless establish an ideal state to be achieved—are

normalized, or institutionalized, by global actors which may include states, INGOs,

IGOs, and, as I suggest, even national and local NGOs with strong ties to international

actors (Meyer et al., 1997). These institutions thereby serve a key role in creating,

reproducing and legitimizing world culture at global, national, and local levels (Schofer

et al., 2012). In this dissertation, I contend that the global ideology of childhood

represents such a cultural model and therefore is a central component of world culture.

The global ideology of childhood as a component of world culture

Childhood is undoubtedly known by everyone and applicable everywhere.

However, it is not simply the universal experience of childhood as developmental stage

that constitutes a component of world culture, but rather the specific cultural model

which I have defined as the global ideology of childhood. Because a similar nature and

purpose of childhood is universally known, we can say that childhood is a social fact that

is similarly constructed throughout the world. Further, the universal applicability of

childhood means that a normative childhood is necessary for human development and

societal functioning. For instance, in the United States, Nepal, and every other country

around the world, childhood is a necessary for the creation of productive citizens capable

of contributing to society and realizing their own self-actualization. These concepts will

become clearer in Chapter 3 when I operationalize the global ideology of childhood. The

global ideology of childhood as a cultural model is also in agreement with many of the

core characteristics of world culture, such as individualism and universalism, and in this

way reflects a modern conception of childhood. The ideology also represents an ideal

state of being and development for children that societies around the world strive

towards. As I have mentioned previously, this does not mean that childhood is the same everywhere. Indeed, there is no shortage of critics who will argue that the contextual specificity of childhood renders it impossible to be conceptualized in terms of global culture (e.g., Boyden, 1997; Nieuwenhyus, 1998, 2010). Yet, as with other cultural models, this very contestation reinforces the actualization of the global ideology of childhood (Boli & Thomas, 1999).

To extend an example used by Evan Schofer, a global conceptualization of childhood means that if a new island territory were suddenly discovered, we would expect that global actors and global culture would shape conceptions of childhood there much the same as elsewhere in the world. In short, conceptions of childhood in the new territory would come to be defined by the global ideology of childhood. It is important to note here that, according to world society theory, global actors do not simply reproduce any ideas, but only those ideas that are in accordance with the principles of world culture (Schofer et al., 2012). Since, as I have argued, the global ideology of childhood is a core component of world culture, a logical extension is that INGOs and other actors will also reproduce elements of the global ideology of childhood. The next question we much address is: exactly *how* do these actors reproduce global culture within national contexts?

The faithful reproduction and cultural interpretation of world culture

Characterizing INGOs as carriers and enactors of culture, Boli and Thomas (1999) go to great lengths to explain what it means to "enact" cultural models. They reject the assumption that enactment entails strict adherence to a predetermined script (Jepperson, 1991) or blueprint (Chabbott & Ramirez, 2000). Instead, they assert that actors are more commonly engaged in a form of "innovative enactment" in which they

"actively draw on, select from, and modify shared cultural models, principles, and identities" (Boli & Thomas, 1999, p. 18). As a consequence, while actors may similarly define themselves (e.g., in terms of the nature and purpose of their mission to serve children), there will nevertheless be limitless variation in their actions within specific contexts (Boli & Thomas, 1999). In the absence of an appropriate framework for characterizing this variation and also for the purpose of more generally explaining processes of cultural change at national and sub-national levels, I propose two heuristic frames to better understand the behavior of I/NGOs and other actors. I propose *faithful reproduction* and *cultural interpretation* as two contrasting behavioral categories which differ according to the degree to which actors alter and adapt global cultural models in specific contexts. Though these frames are constructed as polar behavioral categories, they are not absolute or mutually exclusive. A given actor may behave according to a particular frame in one situation and the other in another situation. As such, these behavioral frames may be expressed in varying intensities. Further, in addition to facilitating our understanding of how actors enact cultural models, the frames are also useful for showing how actors shape those models and alter the content of global culture itself. Boli and Thomas make clear that "by enacting general models [i.e., the global ideology of childhood] in specific contexts [i.e., primary schools in Nepal], actors elaborate, modify, and transform the cultural framework itself" (1999, p.18). Ultimately, I use the frames of cultural interpretation and faithful reproduction as standards of comparison for how actors might behave in order to construct a more systematic depiction of reality.

Before describing each heuristic frame, it is important to note here that although I refer to the behaviors of organizations, these organizations are comprised of individual actors (e.g., international development professionals) who act in very rationalized ways, motivated by notions of progress and justice and guided by the general principles of world culture (Boli & Thomas, 1999; Chabbott, 1998; Chabbott & Ramirez, 2000). Given that global institutions influence the perceptions and actions of individuals, I view these individuals as agents of those global institutions (Schofer et al., 2012). Thus, under the aegis of I/NGO initiatives, these individuals translate the broader cultural reality represented by the global ideology of childhood into specific actions. Accordingly, within this dissertation, I do not distinguish individuals from their associated organizations and speak of organizational and individual views and behaviors interchangeably.

I/NGOs operating under the frame of faithful reproduction exhibit a steadfast commitment to the universal notion of a modern childhood as embodied in the global ideology. Faithful reproducers are driven by a vision of a "unified modernity" (Merry, 2006). When implementing programs and policies they rarely deviate from prescribed norms and are often motivated by the claims of international law (e.g., the CRC), research (e.g., on child development and education), and other forms of authority. Accordingly, faithful reproducers strongly believe that there is a right and a wrong way to educate children that is applicable to all contexts. Thus, as the name implies, faithful reproducers enact global cultural models in a very uniform manner. This is not to say that these actors all implement the exact same carbon-copied programs, but rather that they draw on a common approach rooted in the image of an ideal, normative child in their

implementation behavior. Thus, in processes of transnational cultural flow, faithful reproducers may ignore the realities of the local context in order to uphold global principles.

Cultural interpreters, on the other hand, while also acting as intermediaries of global culture, differ in the degree to which they believe global norms can—and should—be altered. I/NGOs acting as cultural interpreters draw on more fluid notions of childhood. While they also reproduce the global ideology of childhood, their actions are informed by an understanding that variation in the histories and current realities of local contexts may require interventions to be tailored in specific ways. I adapt the term, cultural interpreter, from Sally Engle Merry (2006) who, in her monograph on the processes by which NGO activists translate rights-based international law concerning gender violence into local justice, argues that for human rights to be effective in local contexts, they must be "remade in a local vernacular." This frame has the potential to explain how the global ideology of childhood might create a space for contextually relevant education reform using norms and principles legitimated by a global consensus on childhood. Through the frame of cultural interpretation I/NGOs translate global ideas about children into initiatives based on values, social practices, and images of the child that are more appropriate in particular local contexts. These actors also take local stories and reframe them in the language of children's rights and the global image of a normative childhood. These appropriated stories become a part of global dialogue and are then used to redefine and alter global culture.

Connecting the global to the local: Nepal's National Framework of Child-friendly Schools

The purpose of this dissertation is to illustrate how global norms concerning children and childhood as embodied in a global ideology of childhood are appropriated, reproduced and interpreted by I/NGOs and other policy actors in one national context. To that end, I next describe the global and national policy contexts featured in this dissertation. I begin by detailing the emerging global consensus around improving the quality of schooling and ensuring positive learning outcomes for all children and then introduce UNICEF's child-friendly school model as one initiative that addresses these issues in countries around the world. Next, shifting from a global to a national perspective, I concentrate on the education policy context in Nepal, describing the current challenges in education and introducing the recently adopted National Framework of Child-friendly Schools for Quality Education.

Global education policy context: The right to learn

As the target date of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) approaches, an inclusive process has been underway, having been initiated by the UN Secretary-General, to generate discussion and dialogue about the post-2015 global development framework for ending poverty around the world. The process is being led by UN member states with broad participation from other stakeholders such as civil society organizations (including INGOs and community-based organizations), the private sector and academics. There is even a dedicated interactive web platform (www.myworld2015.org and www.worldwewant2015.org) that is being used for online consultations, information sharing and as a vehicle for citizens around the world to have a voice. Unsurprisingly,

from among 16 issues, "a good education" has been ranked as the highest priority for individuals representing both men and women and different age and income groups in nearly every country. The final result of the overall post-2015 global process will be a development framework extending to 2030 that guides the world in addressing poverty and other related issues.

The global education community in particular has been actively engaged in a dialogue about what kind of education goal is needed. Though many agree that the MDGs have been a powerful catalyst for progress in ensuring access to education, the goals have also been widely criticized on a number of fronts such as for failing to address inequality and over-focusing on access to services with little attention given to outcomes (Save the Children, 2013). There has been a broad consensus among UN-led thematic, country and global consultations that continuing to work on access while increasing the focus on improving the quality of education and the learning outcomes of all children is the way forward (Bergh & Couturier, 2013). Given that 250 million children, or 40 percent of the world's primary school age children are unable to read, write or demonstrate basic numeracy by the fourth grade—despite many being enrolled in school—global leaders are recognizing that much more remains to be done than simply placing children inside a classroom (UNESCO, 2012).

The failure to ensure that all children are in school and learning has even been described as a serious violation of children's basic right to learn by INGOs such as Save the Children and Plan International, as well as UNICEF. This shift in language from ensuring children's "right to education" to "right to learn" corresponds with an important transformation in the nature of the global dialogue concerning children and education, not

only because it emphasizes the need to improve processes for stimulating learning and measuring learning outcomes, but because it places the needs and rights of children at the center of education. Whether and how these ideas will become incorporated in the next development framework remains yet to be seen. Even so, the immense significance of the presence of these ideas in the global dialogue cannot be understated for, as I ultimately suggest, the Nepali child-friendly schools policy that is the focus of this dissertation is intricately intertwined with the post-2015 development agenda.

Global education reform: UNICEF's child-friendly school model

Nearly a decade before "educational quality" and "the right to learn" came to be buzzwords within the global education community, UNICEF was busy developing what would later become the organization's flagship education program for school reform. The child-friendly school model was first implemented in Thailand in 1999 as a means for schools to "serve the whole child" (UNICEF, 2009b) through a rights-based approach to improving the quality of education. Currently having been implemented in 95 countries with plans to expand to all 154 its working countries (see Appendix A for images of UNICEF child-friendly classrooms from around the world), UNICEF (2009c) identifies the purpose of the model as "to move schools and education systems progressively towards quality standards, addressing all elements that influence the well-being and rights of the child as a learner and the main beneficiary of teaching, while improving other school functions in the process" (p. 2). As such, the child-friendly school model is a cross-sectoral approach that addresses all of the needs and rights of children in terms of learning inside the classroom as well as the health, nutrition, safety and psychological well-being of the child.

Drawing on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), UNICEF further envisions that child-friendly schools will improve the quality of education through three over-arching principles: child-centeredness, democratic participation and inclusiveness (see Table 1.1). Child-centeredness is intended to ensure that all decision-making in education places the best interests of the child front and center. Further, as all children have the right to have their voice heard, democratic participation is a means for guaranteeing that children and those who represent their interests (i.e., parents and other caregivers) have a say in the provision of their education. Finally, the principle of inclusiveness protects the right of *all* children to education and advances the idea that "access to education is not a privilege that society grants to children" but rather "a duty that society fulfills to all children" (UNICEF, 2009b, p. 1). The model asserts that the application of these complementary and overlapping principles ultimately leads to quality education and improved learning outcomes (UNICEF, 2009b).

Table 1.1: Child-friendly school principles and features

Principle	Features of a child-friendly school derived from principle
Child-centeredness	• Child-centered pedagogy in which children are active participants, provided by reflective practitioners • Healthy, safe and protective learning environment provided through appropriate architecture, services, policies and action
Democratic participation	• Children, families and communities are active participants in school decision-making • Strong links among home, school and community • Policies and services support fairness, non-discrimination and participation
Inclusiveness	• Child-seeking • Inclusive and welcoming for all students • Gender-sensitive and girl-friendly • Policies and services encourage attendance and retention

Source. Adapted from *Child friendly schools evaluation: Country report for Thailand*, UNICEF, 2009b.

Acknowledging that contexts vary, UNICEF asserts in their widely disseminated *Child-friendly schools manual* (2009c) that it is the application of the three principles, and not any particular physical or pedagogical feature, that makes a child-friendly school "child friendly." The manual further emphasizes that the implementation of the child-friendly school model is an "eclectic process." Based on these characterizations, we might expect that all schools that faithfully adhere to the basic principles will be similar, even if they are situated in strikingly different contexts. However, Chabbott's (2004) review of global efforts to implement the child-friendly school model found that in practice there was much variation both between and within countries in how conceptual interpretations of the model had been applied. In fact, UNICEF emphasizes throughout the manual that an overemphasis on a specific set of characteristics or features of child-friendly schools typically leads to implementation failure. Nevertheless, the 244-page

manual is full of detailed instructions and diagrams on how to structure every aspect of

the school from classroom furniture arrangements to the design of teaching and learning

materials to the construction of school roofs (UNICEF, 2009c). The ultimate stated goal

of the manual is to assist countries in mainstreaming child-friendly concepts either

through a project-based approach of scaling up implementation throughout the country or

a systems-based approach of mainstreaming the child-friendly school model into national

education standards. As I show in the next section, the latter approach has evidently been

chosen within the Nepali education context.

National education policy context: Nepali schools as "places where children fear to go"

In April 2013, at a conference organized by the Rato Bangala Foundation[5], Kul

Chandra Gautam, former Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, Deputy

Executive Director of UNICEF, and a Nepali citizen, stood before a packed room of

I/NGO representatives, education leaders, policymakers, researchers and other

stakeholders, including parents and students, and delivered a keynote address on

"Enhancing Quality Education for All in Nepal." Held at the first ever international

education conference in Nepal, the address celebrated the progress made in the provision

of basic education[6] and summarized the challenges that continue to thwart the realization

of Nepali children's right to learn. Ultimately, Gautam made a bold call for

improvements in critical areas such as the expansion of early child development

programs, the creation of a more inclusive and multi-cultural education system, the

---

[5] The conference, "Quality in the Classroom: A Conference on School Education," held from April 4-7, 2013 in Kathmandu, was also organized with the cooperation of the Department of Education and in partnership with the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Asian Development Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO, Open Society Foundation and Rato Bangala School.

[6] Basic education in the Nepali education system refers to grades 1-8, while primary education refers to grades 1-5. Secondary education includes grades 9-12.

transformation of schools into zones of peace and an intensification of efforts to make schools truly child friendly.

Undoubtedly, there has been considerable progress in increasing education enrollments in Nepal. With the net enrollment ratio for primary education at 97% in 2012, most children are now in the school system compared to only 61% in 1981, according to data from the World Bank. Even more promising is the fact that the gender disparity in enrollments has been largely eliminated: in 1981 only 36% of girls of school age were enrolled in primary school whereas 86% of boys were enrolled. By 2012, there was no difference. Although girls still lag behind in literacy—78% versus 89% for girls and boys, respectively, in 2012—there has been a significant improvement in both the overall and disaggregated literacy rate compared to 1981 when only 15% of girls and 45% of boys were literate (World Bank).

Although this progress is promising in terms of equity and access in primary education, as Gautam solemnly acknowledged, tremendous barriers to the provision of quality education remain. In his address, he lamented that:

> Far from being safe, wholesome and joyful centers of learning, many schools in Nepal today are places where children fear to go. Teachers are often untrained, uncaring and quick to give corporal punishment. Schools are dirty and lack minimum sanitary facilities, especially for girls. There are no sports activities or recreational facilities. The method of instruction involves rote learning rather than encouraging children to explore, analyze and understand what they are learning… (see Figure 1.2 for a visual comparison of non-child-friendly and child-friendly schools)

The challenges to school quality that he describes are closely related with the poor internal efficiency of the school system (see Table 1.2). According to data from the Department of Education, there is an alarmingly high (21.3%) repetition rate in grade 1 (Flash Report I, 2011-2012). Similarly, dropping out of school without completing the

full primary cycle is a critical problem as evidenced by an overall survival rate to grade five of only 82.8%. That figure indicates that about 17% of those children who enroll in grade 1 drop out before completing primary school, a large majority of who come from disadvantaged and marginalized families. According to the Foundation for Human Development and Research Inputs and Development Action, student attendance is another issue, and in 2008, out of 100 school days, the average student attended for only 64 days (FHD & RIDA, 2009). Finally, although the Department of Education classifies 94% of primary school teachers as being trained (Flash Report I, 2011-2012), the persistent high repetition and dropout rates, combined with low learning achievement and promotion rates, raise questions about the impact of teacher training on children's learning outcomes (Lohani, Singh, & Lohani, 2010).

Figure 1.2: Visual comparison of non-child-friendly and child-friendly classrooms

Non-child-friendly classroom: Student (left, standing) leads the class in reciting
words from the textbook. Teacher (not in photo) observes from the side.

Child-friendly classroom: Teacher uses an object to
explain an activity to the students.

Sources. Rato Bangala Foundation (top), Adrienne Henck (bottom)

Table 1.2: Education for All achievements on key indicators in Nepal

Indicators (in percentages, except as noted)	2008 target	2008 actual	Target achieved
Gross intake at grade 1	110	148	Yes
Net intake at grade 1	95	83	No
Gross enrollment rate primary	104	147	Yes
Net enrollment rate primary	96	92	No
GNP channeled to primary ed. sub-sector	2.3	2.0	No
Total education budget channeled to primary education	60	70	Yes
Teachers with required qualification and training	99	67	No
Teachers with required certification/licensing	99	90	No
Pupil: teacher ratio	37	44	No
Repetition rate grade 1	10	28	No
Repetition rate grade 5	3	7	No
Survival rate to grade 5	85	73	No
Average composite score of students in grade 5[a]	60	40	No

Notes. Adapted from Lohani et al., 2010. Original data from NORAD (2009), p. 16-17.

(a) Based on average marks out of 100 in Nepali, Mathematics, English, Social Studies, and Science and Environment

In response to these challenges, the Department of Education adopted the comprehensive School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP, 2009-2015) in 2009. With its enactment following shortly after the return of democracy, many have viewed the SSRP as a beacon of hope for education reform in a country in which the education sector has been increasingly seen as a crucial vehicle for the creation of a "new Nepal." The plan builds upon previous reforms and introduces new ones which notably emphasize improvement in the quality of education. As such, the stated goal for basic education is "to ensure equitable access to quality education through a rights-based approach and promotion of a child friendly environment in schools" (p. 13). Moreover, the SSRP calls for the establishment of "minimum enabling conditions for learning" from which local education authorities can determine contextually relevant and appropriate norms and strategies for improving school quality. Although some broad guidelines are provided for these "enabling conditions," the content is limited and heavily relies on supplementary policies to fill in the gaps. The National Framework of Child-friendly Schools for Quality Education is one such policy.

National education reform: The National Framework of Child-friendly Schools

UNICEF, I/NGOs and other actors have been implementing the basic elements of child-friendly schools throughout Nepal as part of UNICEF's global initiative since 2003, and some NGOs have even been implementing their own versions of the model since as early as the 1990s. However, it was not until 2010 that the Department of Education adopted the child-friendly school model as an official education reform policy, and the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools for Quality Education (hereafter referred to variously as "the National Framework" and more simply, "the child-friendly schools

policy") was established. This endorsement by the national government has given the

widespread implementation of child-friendly schools a new level of legitimacy in Nepal

and strengthened the initiative's connections with the global post-2015 movement to

improve the quality of education in schools and promote the right to learn of all children.

I provide a brief introduction to the policy's background and contents here, though a

more detailed description and analysis is featured in Chapter 5.

The National Framework aims to transform primary schools by making them

more suitable and effective for children's learning through a focus on improving the

quality of education. The policy defines quality education as schooling that "ensur[es]

conditions for learning in a child-friendly environment without harm to [children's]

physical, mental, intellectual and emotional development…[and] consider[s] children as

the focal point of the whole education…" (p. 3). The policy sets forth nine aspects of

child-friendly schools which are then disaggregated into 149 indicators (see Appendix B

for a full list of the indicators). Those aspects, which represent the minimum standards

necessary for the establishment of a child-friendly school, are:

1. Effectiveness
2. Inclusion
3. Gender perspective in education
4. Participation of children, families and communities
5. Health, security and protection
6. Physical condition of school
7. Teaching and learning process
8. Teaching and learning in mother tongue
9. School management

The expectation is that schools will, either independently or with external assistance from

local education institutions, I/NGOs, the community and other stakeholders, identify the

aspects that need to be improved, incorporate appropriate measures for improvement in

the school improvement plan, and through "objective and effective" monitoring and

evaluation, incrementally improve their school quality and learning outcomes (p. 7).

Due to a number of reasons, there is no valid estimate of the scale of child-

friendly schools that have been established to date. In 2010, UNICEF reported that their

initiative had reached more than 1,200 schools[7] in nearly half (30 out of 75) of the

districts within Nepal. However, the actual total number is likely to be significantly

higher since the model has been and continues to be implemented through the efforts of

other countless other I/NGOs and local stakeholders. Additionally, because the concept

of child-friendly schools is more of an ideal for schools to strive towards, schools

typically achieve the minimum standards incrementally. Child-friendly schools,

therefore, cannot be thought of in all-or-nothing terms. The question of which schools

are considered "child friendly" is even more subjective since there is considerable

variation in how actors understand the meaning of child-friendliness. This latter issue is

explored at length in Chapter 5. Ultimately, it is problematic to even attempt to quantify

the scale of child-friendly schooling; however, widespread awareness of the term

suggests that the model has proliferated greatly throughout Nepal.

Conceptual framework

Based on the discussion of the global ideology of childhood, the role of I/NGOs

as reproducers of world culture, and the current education policy context in Nepal, I

propose the conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1.3 which is adapted from Chabbott

and Ramirez's (2000) model of mechanisms for carrying blueprints of development and

---

[7] According to the 2010-2011 Department of Education Flash Report, there were 26,773 government basic schools, which includes primary, grades 1-5, and lower secondary, grades 6-8.

education. The framework outlines the hypothetical pathways of transnational cultural

flow within a national education policy context, starting with the premise that a global

ideology of childhood reflects ideas about a normative childhood and other principles of

world culture. International actors, such as INGOs and IGOs, draw on and contribute to

this ideology which is also reflected in a discourse expressed through the global

education agenda (i.e., EFA and the post-2015 development agenda). Based on this

discourse as well as the global ideology of childhood, INGOs and IGOs develop global

education models, such as child-friendly schools, with the aim of reproducing those

models in countries throughout the world.

These education models, having been infused with select principles of global

culture, are disseminated in national and local contexts through various pathways.

Through one possible pathway, INGOs or IGOs partner directly with national or local

NGOs to implement the model in schools. Alternatively, INGOs and IGOs may attempt

to persuade the Department of Education to incorporate the global model into existing

national education policies or to develop stand-alone policies. In this scenario, the

Department of Education then becomes the primary implementing agent in schools, and

the global education model transforms into a national one. Regardless of the actors

involved and the specific pathway followed, the global ideology spreads and potentially

shapes local norms, values and beliefs about children and childhood.

It is important to note that all arrows in the framework are bi-directional, thereby

indicating that cultural flows may proceed both in a top-down and bottom-up manner.

For instance, national and local NGOs may develop innovative educational models in

response to the needs of children in their local context, and these models may spread to

other NGOs and schools. Those models may be embedded with ideas about children and childhood that may or may not be in harmony with the global ideology of childhood (though I will later argue that, despite insignificant nuances, local and global ideas concerning children are rarely in conflict). National and local actors may also indirectly influence national education policy and local cultural norms if the models become widespread or through social movements (Chabbott & Ramirez, 2000).

Figure 1.3: Conceptual framework for reproduction of global ideology of childhood within a national education policy context

Global ideology
of childhood

Global education models
(child-friendly schools)

INGOs and
IGOs

International
educational discourse
(EFA and post-2015)

National/local
NGOs

National
education
policies

Department of
Education

National/local
education
models

School-level implementation

Norms, values and beliefs about children and childhood
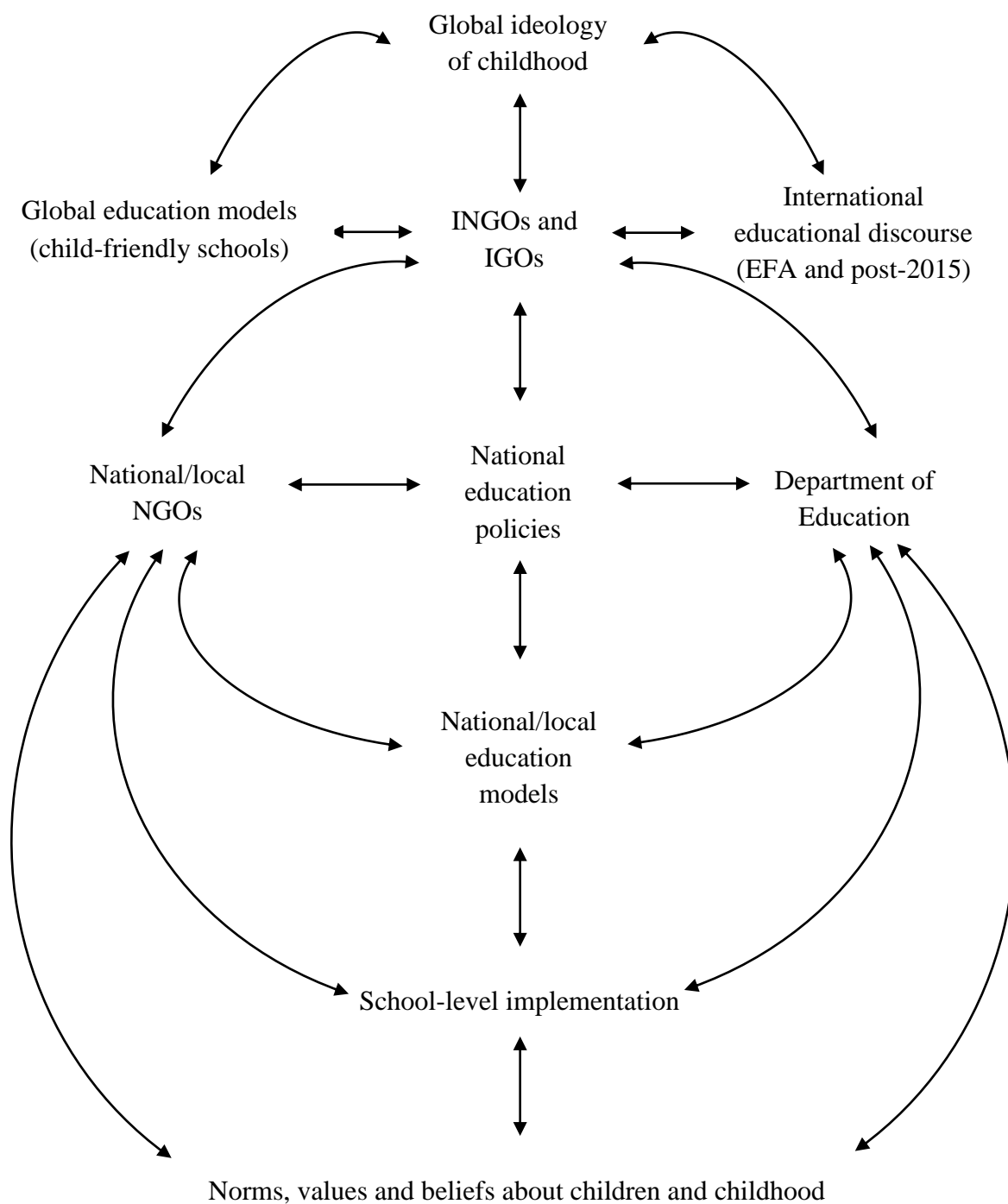
Note. Framework adapted from Chabbott and Ramirez, 2000.

Research questions

To examine how the global ideology of childhood is transmitted from global to local levels by I/NGOs and reproduced through national education policy, I ask the following research questions:

- *Research question 1:* How is the global ideology of childhood reflected in Nepal's National Framework of Child-friendly Schools? What similarities or differences exist between the global ideology and the national policy?

- *Research question 2:* How do I/NGOs and other actors, such as IGOs, the DoE, and research institutions, understand their roles in the development and implementation of the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools?

- *Research question 3:* How do I/NGOs and other actors envision the sustainability of the child-friendly school model in Nepal, and how do they perceive the dimensions of the global ideology of childhood, as embedded in the policy, to be linked to broader social and cultural change in Nepal?

Significance of study

There is no shortage of global-level empirical studies examining educational expansion and isomorphism through the lens of world society perspective (e.g., Baker & LeTendre, 2005; Chabbott, 1998; Chabbott & Ramirez, 2000; Fiala & Gordon-Lanford, 1987; Meyer, Ramirez, & Soysal, 1992; Schofer & Meyer, 2005). Collectively, these works advance valuable theoretical models and make strong cases for the transnational flow of a powerful global culture. Yet, as highlighted by the intense backlash of world society adversaries, scholars have largely ignored what happens to world culture when it

transcends into national contexts. Moving in a new direction, this work provides a richly descriptive analysis of the content and dissemination process of world culture in a single national context. In doing so, I contribute to understandings of how global ideas come to be incorporated in national policies and sub-national reform initiatives. To advance my argument, I draw on highly detailed qualitative evidence that reflects the roles, perspectives and behaviors of individual actors representing global, national and local institutions. I also suggest how global ideas might change in local contexts and which ideas are the most sustainable. Finally, unlike much of the world society literature which has examined transnational cultural flows as top-down processes, I allow for the possibility of bottom-up articulations of world culture as national and local NGOs increasingly become global actors.

Moreover, I propose the new concept of the global ideology of childhood which addresses a significantly underappreciated area of world culture. Though global conceptions of childhood have been in existence for at least a century, with the exception of Boli-Bennett and Meyer's (1978) now out-dated piece that introduces the idea of a modern ideology of childhood, world culture theorists have not yet empirically studied childhood as a global concept. Further, as conceptions of childhood have come to increasingly shape global and national policies in the last 60 years, there is further justification for examining these ideas within the context of international development. This work fills an important gap in the literature, thereby creating a likely bridge between the fields of comparative and international education and the childhood studies, all from a sociological perspective.

Lastly, this work is all the more important in the post-2015 era. As processes of developing a global consensus around education and other development priorities assume greater authority and legitimacy, it is even more essential to understand how global ideas translate into local realities via culturally embedded policies, especially for children. Clear global trends indicate that the global ideology of childhood will continue to become increasingly dominant in influencing state and I/NGO practices. A refocusing of education and development discussions around cultural conceptions of children and childhood thus has the potential to challenge our perceptions of what kind of education is best for children; our design, provision and implementation of that education; and our characterizations of children's vulnerability, resiliency and empowerment. I argue that such a discussion will ultimately foster a more effective development agenda. Only then can we be sure that we are developing policies that truly promote the rights and best interests of all children.

Dissertation contents

The following chapters provide a rich account of how global ideas concerning conceptions of children and childhood have permeated into a national context through an education policy and the roles that various actors, but particularly I/NGOs, have played in the process of cultural (re)production. Beginning with an overview of the qualitative research design and methodology in Chapter 2, I give a description of the case study approach that I use to analyze Nepal's National Framework of Child-friendly Schools policy and then outline the sampling, data collection and analysis procedures. In this

chapter, I also describe the rationale for the policy selection and my positionality as a researcher in the Nepali context.

In Chapter 3, I operationalize the global ideology of childhood in terms of six dimensions. This chapter ultimately aims to provide a detailed description of the contents of one area of world culture.

To establish a historical frame of reference for the main analysis, Chapter 4 traces the evolution of conceptions of children and childhood in Nepali education policies from 1951 to the present. Though this background is secondary to the primary purpose of the dissertation and does not explicitly address any of the three research questions, a historical analysis is nevertheless critical for understanding how the dimensions of the global ideology of childhood may have been expressed in education policies prior to the National Framework and what other conceptions of children and childhood, aside from those that comprise the global ideology of childhood, may have dominated the cultural landscape at other times.

The second half of the dissertation addresses each of the three research questions in turn, focusing either on the content of the global ideology of childhood or the process of its dissemination. With a content-oriented focus, Chapter 5 examines global ideas in a national context through a policy analysis of the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools. Before the main analysis, I first deconstruct the policy through a detailed analysis of its contents and provisions and provide an overview of how participants variously understood the meaning of "child-friendliness" and defined "children" and "childhood," all concepts fundamental to the purpose of the study. I then analyze the

policy document and interviews for evidence of the dimensions of the global ideology of childhood.

Chapter 6 turns to the issue of process addressed by Research Question 2 and explores the role of I/NGOs and other actors, including IGO representatives, Department of Education officials and researchers, in the policy's development and implementation. I provide a brief history of the rise of I/NGOs as important development actors in Nepal before turning to an exploration of participant narratives of the policy's development. I then turn to the question of how the policy has been implemented and apply the frames of faithful reproduction and cultural interpretation to understand the behavior of actors in this process.

Looking towards the future, Chapter 7 probes the intersection of process and content captured in Research Question 3. I explore participant perceptions of school-level change before addressing the sustainability of the child-friendly schools model and policy, as well as conceptions of children and childhood embedded in it. In particular, I focus on the perceived roles and responsibilities of different actors, barriers to shifts in reform ownership, and the future role of I/NGOs. The second half of the chapter looks at which aspects of the global ideology of childhood might be sustainable at the local level and the potential for lasting social and cultural change.

Finally, Chapter 8 presents the discussion and conclusion. In this chapter I synthesize the findings and draw conclusions about conceptions of childhood in Nepal, the transnational pathways by which cultural ideas flow between global and local levels, and the role of I/NGOs as intermediaries of social and cultural change. The chapter

concludes by offering ways in which this work can contribute to future policies and

research that truly serves the best interests of children around the world.

Chapter 2: Methods

Introduction

To chart the complexities of how global ideas concerning children and childhood are reproduced in a national context through an education policy, I employ qualitative research methods in this dissertation. Qualitative research methods are essential for addressing social constructions of childhood in global, national and local contexts since the underlying idea behind this type of research method is that "meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world" (Merriam, 2002, p. 3). An interpretive qualitative approach is further justified because of its richly descriptive nature. To that end, this chapter explains the design of the study, data collection process and data analysis approach. Because each of the three research questions draws on different combinations of data sources and uses data analysis procedures tailored to each question, I highlight these differences where applicable. I conclude the chapter by assessing threats to validity, reliability and the potential research biases present in the study.

Research design and methodology

Case study: A national education reform policy

While global culture on children and childhood constitutes a vital framework for this dissertation, as a case study, the focus is on providing an intensive description and analysis of the development and implementation of the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools (Merriam, 2002). As such, I employ a single-case, embedded case study

design with the policy as the main unit of analysis and I/NGOs and other actors

implementing the policy as the embedded units of analysis. According to Yin (1994),

case study methods are most appropriate for studies that meet three conditions: (a) the

research questions are framed as "how" and "why" questions, (b) the investigator has

little or no control over events and behaviors, and (c) the research focus is a

"contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" (p. 1). The current study

unequivocally meets each of these conditions. Even so, it is important to note one critical

distinction: although I employ historical evidence on the evolution of education policy

and I/NGOs in Nepal and retrospective accounts of policy development and

implementation, the research design remains a case study and not a history. There is a

subtle difference between these two types of research strategies which I carefully

navigate. For one, in contrast with the "dead" past that constitutes the heart of historical

studies, I mostly draw on the "alive" past—that is, past occurrences which current policy

actors are able to reflect on and which remain accessible through recent education

reforms. Further, as a case study, the current research utilizes two types of evidence not

typically used in historical studies: systematic interviews and direct observations[8].

Ultimately, the case study method best facilitates the dissertation's primary aim of

understanding the conception and implementation of a contemporary policy in the

context of global culture.

A critical feature of case studies is their ability to enable the in-depth

investigation of a particular context, which has immense value in empirical inquiries in

which "the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin,

---

[8] However, the direct observations are only of secondary importance to the study, as will be discussed in the section on data collection.

1994, p. 13). This "bounded, integrated system" (Merriam, 2002, see also Smith, 1978; Stake, 1995) reflects the case as a single entity within specific contextual conditions that are intricately related to the complex social phenomenon being studied (Yin, 2009). Indeed, with regard to the (re)production of global culture through a national education policy, the case study strategy has the potential to deconstruct the relationships between the global and national contexts, thereby disentangling the policy from its cultural attributes. Moreover, the bounded nature helps to define the case as a "specific, complex, functioning thing" within a given time and space (Merriam, 2002). In this study, the "thing" under investigation is the development and implementation of the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools, a phenomenon which we will see actually originated in the early 1990s and has extended to the present, and which takes place within one nation, Nepal, which exists in the global system. Whereas other methodologies completely divorce or limit the ability to investigate context, the case study is without a doubt uniquely suited for the task.

This "bounded system" is another way of conceptualizing the unit of analysis which defines a particular case study. The distinction between the primary and embedded units of analysis is critical for understanding the methodology of this dissertation. The primary entity under investigation is the child-friendly schools policy. But to understand the policy, we must analyze the perspectives and behaviors of individuals implementing the policy who exist not independently but in association with organizations and government bodies. Thus, although I define the embedded units of analysis as I/NGOs and other actors implementing the policy, the actual study participants are individuals and not organizations.

Rationale for policy selection

I purposively selected the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools as the primary unit of analysis for this research for a number of reasons. First, I wished to focus on a current policy that was comprehensive in its focus, yet manageable in the scope of its content. As childhood has come to be so intricately connected with schooling, it made sense to examine an education policy. While it could be argued that policies focused on other aspects of child development and well-being, such as health or protection, would be equally suitable, I expect that we would see similar patterns regardless of the content of policy. Moreover, because world culture theory grew out of an examination of education trends in developing nations, and a growing body of work has examined the expansion of schooling worldwide via the education revolution (e.g. Baker, forthcoming; Baker & LeTendre, 2005; Meyer, Ramirez, & Soysal 1992), the selection of an education policy is further justified given the similar theoretical foundation of this study. Finally, the child-friendly schools policy was an appropriate choice because the global origins in relation to UNICEF's model were known, yet the mechanisms of diffusion into national contexts of such a policy had yet to be critically examined.

Nepal is particularly salient context for the proposed analysis for several other reasons. First, a dynamic and strong NGO community has emerged in which organizations exercise a high level of power on key issues of national development including education and child welfare. Currently, 19,994 of 22,685 registered NGOs in Nepal are considered by the government to be active (Three Year Interim Plan 2008-2010). Of these, 5,370 belong to the NGO Federation of Nepal, a rights-based and social

justice-oriented umbrella organization that emerged in 1991 to facilitate coordination among the country's expanding civil society (NGO Federation of Nepal, 2014). Another 107 NGOs belong to the Child NGO Federation of Nepal. Additionally, the number of INGOs operating in Nepal has grown from a small handful in 1980 to about 150 in 2000. Of these, 19 promote children's rights (Boyle & Kim, 2009) and 15 focus on education (Chhetri, 2005). Though the government has made various attempts to regulate and coordinate the activities of I/NGOs since the early 1990s, these organizations maintain a high level of independence. Their contributions are regularly acknowledged by the government, and they remain key partners in development. As such, the DoE context flourishes with a strong NGO culture which makes it appropriate for investigating world culture theory and the role of I/NGOs as agents of social and cultural change.

Additionally, in recent years, the government has taken great interest in improving child welfare, protecting children's rights and promoting the best interests of children. Some important steps include the incorporation of child rights principles, including education rights, in the National Constitution; the adoption of cross-sectoral, child-focused national policies (e.g. National Plan of Action for Children 2004-2014); and the ratification international child rights agreements such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990. Moreover, the DoE government has taken great strides to address the legacy of disadvantage that the 10-year civil war left on a whole generation of children. Although, UNESCO's recently released Global Monitoring Report (2014) predicts that Nepal will achieve universal access to primary schooling by 2015, the provision of equitable, quality education remains elusive for the country. For these

reasons, Nepal is an appropriate context in which to analyze a policy whose primary aim is to improve the quality of education through a focus on children.

Finally, I first became familiar with the concept of child-friendly schooling while volunteering with a local NGO in Nepal, and it was that experience, combined with subsequent professional roles with UNICEF and Save the Children, which ultimately led to the conception of this research. In 2010, I spent ten weeks volunteering with BASE (one of the local NGOs featured in this research) in the south-western Terai region. The NGO's flagship program, Child-friendly Villages, aimed to promote children's rights at the grassroots level and to encourage parents and communities to ensure that all of their children were in school. While visiting these villages, and speaking with children, parents, teachers, and community leaders, I was struck by the similarities in how community members and NGO representatives spoke about children's welfare, the importance of education and children's rights. Their words mirrored the language used in the countless global documents that I had read. I began to think about the pathways through which these global ideas might flow from international organizations to national and grassroots NGOs, all the way down to the community level. In 2011, as a UNICEF researcher documenting a state-level school quality improvement policy in Orissa, India, I gained an even closer look at how international organizations influence education reform. Then, two years later in 2013, I witnessed what I believe to be the creation of global culture through the production of global policy briefs and implementation of advocacy initiatives while interning in Save the Children's Public Policy and Advocacy department in Washington, D.C. Through these experiences, I knew that in some small way, I was a part of that elusive process of global cultural change. Yet, at the time, I was

mostly unable to make sense of my observations. Through my subsequent academic studies, I was exposed to world culture theory, a framework which seemed to have the potential to explain what I had first observed in those Nepal Child-friendly Villages and later in the halls of Save the Children and UNICEF. With this experiential and theoretical arsenal, I have now returned full circle, to Nepal, to use the theory to understand the original context in which my ideas originated.

Sampling procedures

The target population of the case study, which included all individuals involved in the development and implementation of child-friendly school initiatives in Nepal, was limited, and therefore purposeful sampling was necessary to identify the individuals who possessed the knowledge and experiences most relevant to the study. It is important to note here that I deliberately use the term child-friendly "initiative" and not "policy" in the previous sentence so as to allow the population and respective sample to be broad enough to include all individuals involved in implementing any forms of child-friendly schooling, even those not directly linked to the national policy. However, since "child-friendly" has become a widely used term, the sample was restricted to include individuals involved only in child-friendly *school* initiatives and to exclude individuals solely involved in other child-friendly initiatives such as child-friendly governance. Focusing on this population, I drew on the relevant literature on key actors engaged in the spread of world culture, the foreword of the policy document which acknowledges key contributors to the policy, and my own experiential knowledge of influential actors in Nepali education policy to I construct five participant categories based on organization type: intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), international non-governmental organizations

(INGOs), national/local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the Department of Education (DoE)[9], and scholars/researchers. I aimed to over-represent NGOs and INGOs in the sample since they are the focus of this study and achieve a balanced distribution among the remaining participant categories. Based on these categories, some organizations were self-evident, such as UNICEF and Save the Children, because of their prominent role, both globally and within Nepal, protecting the well-being of children and advocating for children's rights. These two organizations, as well as World Education, were also explicitly identified in the policy document as supporting the development of the National Framework, further justifying their inclusion in the sample. Other organizations emerged throughout the sampling process and were ultimately selected because of their child-focused approaches and willingness to participate in the study. Finally, the use of the multi-category purposeful sampling procedure allowed me to choose participants who would potentially have different perspectives. Such a procedure ultimately tests the findings and "strengthen[s] the logic of the method" (Krathwohl, 2009, p. 172)

Most of the actual sampling took place concurrently with data collection, as is typical in field research, and thus, in addition to purposeful sampling, several other types of non-probability sampling procedures were also used to select participants. The flexibility of opportunistic/emergent sampling proved to be beneficial as I gradually gained more knowledge through interviews about the actors who were most influential in the policy process. For example, this technique lead me to assign increased emphasis on sampling within a particular participant category, as was the case with the

---

[9] The Department of Education (DoE) is a sub-division of the Ministry of Education, and so I frequently refer to this participant category as DoE.

scholars/researchers who I originally expected to have played a more secondary role, and

with particular participants, as was the case with a Department of Education Officer (2)

who I subsequently learned had been a leader in the policy's development. I also used

chain-referral sampling as participants often recommended actors with other

organizations or participant categories who were involved in child-friendly schooling.

Lastly, for identifying actors with local/national NGOs, I used convenience sampling to

select a local NGO (BASE) from among the countless NGOs in Nepal involved in child-

friendly schooling, because I had previously worked with that organization.   In total, 32

participants were selected for potential inclusion in the sample.

Data collection and research methods

The data derived from interviews, documents and school observations, in that

respective order of importance to the findings of the study. The interviews constituted

the bulk of the data since constructing an understanding of relevant actors' perspectives

was ultimately the most fruitful method for answering the research questions, particularly

Research Questions 2 and 3. Documents, which included the National Framework itself,

served three main purposes: (1) to facilitate a historical analysis of the evolution of

conceptions of children and childhood in Nepali education policy (Chapter 4), (2) to

answer Research Question 1 (Chapter 5), and (3) to serve as a point of triangulation with

the interview data (Chapters 5 and 6). The observations of child-friendly schools were

intended only to supplement my understanding of the policy implementation context,

both in terms of the general state of education in Nepal and what child-friendly schooling

looked like in practice, and consequently were not included in the data analysis. An

overview of the data collection and analysis procedures is provided below.

Interviews

I conducted all of the interviews in Nepal during a five-week period in the spring

of 2013. Prior to arrival, I developed a seven-question interview protocol which aimed to

assess participants' understanding of the origins of the child-friendly schools policy, their

role in implementing the policy or similar initiatives, and their perception of the impact

and future of the policy (see Appendix D for a copy of the interview protocol). The

protocol also included a question which asked participants to define childhood. Each of

the interview questions was directly linked to a specific research question. I also pre-

tested the interview protocol via telephone with Nepali colleague who had experience

with education development in Nepal but was not directly involved with any child-

friendly school initiative. The pre-test revealed that the question on defining childhood

would be extremely difficult for Nepali to understand; however, because this question

was essential to the study, I chose to leave the protocol unaltered.

Though I notified BASE, my gatekeeper NGO, in advance of my visit and

secured the organization's commitment to provide logistical support, all other data

collection preparation including participant recruitment took place exclusively during the

five week period in Nepal. I recruited most participants via email (see sample request for

participation email in Appendix F). In the email, the purpose of the study, the time

commitment required and the relevance of the findings to the potential participant were

explained. I also assured potential participants that I had my university's human subjects

clearance (IRB), and that they were free to refuse any questions they did not wish to

answer. Almost all participants responded to my email in a timely manner. Only a few required follow-up phone calls in order to confirm their participation and schedule the interview.

In total, 24 participants consented to be interviewed (see Table 2.1 for a list of participants by organization category and Table 2.2 for a breakdown of participant characteristics). Most participants were male (79%) and Nepali (92%). More than half of the participants represented NGOs or INGOs, and the other participants were about evenly distributed among each of the remaining participant categories: IGOs (13%), the DoE (17%), and research institutions (13%). The local/national NGOs included Backward Society Education (BASE), Innovative Forum for Community Development (IFCD), Samunnat Nepal, Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization (NNDSWO), and Rato Bangala Foundation, and the INGOs included Save the Children, World Education, World Vision, Plan International, and the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) (see Appendix C for descriptions of all INGOs, NGOs and IGOs). All participants consented to the use of their actual organization name in the research study. This was critical as the story of this dissertation does not exist in a vacuum and thus could not be told—and have relevant policy implications—without referencing these real-world actors. Further, as Yin (1994) states, disclosure of accurate identities within case studies helps the reader to more readily understand the true context, apply their own prior knowledge and raise appropriate criticisms about the published case. The names of individual participants were not given, though, in order to protect the confidentiality of all participants, even though many eagerly offered permission for their real name to be used. Instead, generic job-title pseudonyms (e.g. Education Officer #3, Official #1 and

Researcher #2) were used. When more than one participant came from the same organization, numerals (i.e. #1, #2, #3) were used to differentiate each participant. Although the Department of Education officials came from different departments, I have not specified these since officials seem to shift positions frequently and may or may not have been in their current departments while contributing to the development of the child-friendly schools policy.

Table 2.1: List of participants by organization category

Organization	Position	Nepali	Sex
International Non-governmental Organization (INGO)			
Plan International	Education Officer	Yes	Male
Save the Children	Education Officer	No	Female
Save the Children	District Education Officer (Kailali)	Yes	Male
Save the Children	Senior Education Officer	Yes	Male
United Mission to Nepal (UMN)	Education Officer #1	Yes	Male
United Mission to Nepal (UMN)	Education Officer #2	No	Female
World Education	Education Officer	Yes	Female
World Vision	Education Officer	Yes	Male
Non-governmental Organization (NGO)			
Backward Society Education (BASE)	Senior Official	Yes	Male
Backward Society Education (BASE)	District Official (Kailali)	Yes	Male
Innovative Forum for Community Development (IFCD)	Education Officer	Yes	Male
Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization (NNDSWO)	Education officer	Yes	Male
Rato Bangala Foundation	Education Officer	Yes	Male
Samunnat Nepal	Education Officer	Yes	Male
Intergovernmental Organization (IGO)			
UNESCO	Senior Official	Yes	Male
UNICEF	Education Officer #1	Yes	Female
UNICEF	Education Officer #2	Yes	Male
Department of Education (DoE)			
District Education Office (Kailali)	District Education Officer	Yes	Male
Department of Education	Official #1	Yes	Male
Department of Education	Official #2	Yes	Male
Department of Education	Official #3	Yes	Male
Research			
Nepal Institute of Development Studies (NIDS)	Sociologist	Yes	Male
Tribhuvan University, Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID)	Researcher #1	Yes	Male
Tribhuvan University, Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID)	Researcher #2	Yes	Female

Table 2.2: Participant characteristics

Characteristic	Participants
Organization type	
INGO	33%
NGO	25%
IGO	13%
DoE	17%
Research	13%
Nationality	
Nepali	92%
Non-Nepali	8%
Sex	
Male	79%
Female	21%

Most interviews took place in the participant's office, though two interviews were conducted at cafes, one took place in the participant's home and one was administered via email. Allowing the participants to choose locations they were comfortable with was important for encouraging them to speak freely and honestly. Further, because it is common for NGO and government officials to be fluent, or at least conversant, in English, almost all interviews were conducted in English. The one exception was the interview with the Kailali District Education Officer, whose interview was administered via a Nepali-English translator. It was particularly important that the interviews were conducted in person as this facilitated the development of rapport, which was critical since the most of the interviewees were meeting me for the first time and because my identity as a non-Nepali, female researcher positioned me as an outsider in relation to most participants. The interview length ranged from approximately 15 minutes to 75 minutes, with most averaging around 35 minutes. With the consent of each participant, a digital voice recorder was used to record each interview. The interview procedure adhered to a semi-structured format in which I changed the order and wording of the

interview protocol questions as needed. The semi-structured nature of interviews provided the freedom to probe interviewees' responses or to follow up on statements made by them. Though participants were generally eager to share their experiences, almost all struggled with the question which asked them to define childhood.

Documents

Policy documents were essential to the research study both as primary sources of data and as sources for triangulation. The most important document used was the National Framework itself. The 25-page text is rich with ideas about the policy developers' original vision and how that vision was intended to be implemented at the school level. The document begins with a foreword which lays out the policy vision, describes the multi-stakeholder process for developing the Framework, and acknowledges key contributors. Following an introduction chapter which defines child-friendly schooling and identifies the purpose of the Framework, the greater part of the remaining text is divided into nine chapters which individually address the core aspects of a child-friendly school. Each chapter features a table which prescribes very specific minimum and expected indicators for each aspect. The final chapter explains how stakeholders should use the Framework at the school level to evaluate the current state of the school, develop an appropriate strategy for improvement and implement that strategy in order to promote a child-friendly learning environment.

For the historical policy analysis (Chapter 4), I composed a list of all national development plans from 1956 to the present (n=12) and purposefully selected a sample of six plans to include in the analysis (see Table 2.3 for a full list of documents included in the analysis). The plans were selected on the basis of including one policy from each

decade and having the sample roughly evenly distributed over the period so as to allow

for maximum conceptual variation. Nepal's national development plans set forth the

developmental priorities and allocations of resources according to five or three year

periods. Though the plans typically focused on economic priorities, covering issues such

as increasing employment, developing infrastructure and encouraging the growth of

industry, international trade and overall economic stability, social goals such as

improving health, education, and encouraging a more equitable income distribution,

gradually began to be incorporated in the plans over time (Savada 1991). In addition to

the national plans, the historical policy analysis included two other documents: a multi-

sectoral, child-centered law, the Children's Act (1992), and policy, the National Plan of

Action for Children (2004-20014). Following ratification of the CRC in 1990, the

Children's Act was Nepal's first piece of legislation aiming to protect the rights and

interests of children and to ensure their physical, mental, and intellectual development.

Enacted by the Nepali Parliament, the law defines "child," delineates the rights and

interests of the child, and states provisions for the protection and welfare of the child by

guardians and the state. The National Plan of Action for Children is an action-oriented

policy document that builds upon the Children's Act by providing strategies for realizing

the rights of children enshrined in the CRC. Both of these documents were selected

because of their ability to provide a more in-depth perspective on the historical evolution

of the child in Nepali education policy.

Table 2.3: Documents included in policy analysis

Policy/Law	Institution	Dates
National Plans		
First Five Year Plan	National Education Committee	1956-1961
Third Five Year Plan	All Round National Education Committee	1965-1970
Fourth Five Year Plan	National Education Advisory Board	1970-1975
Sixth Five Year Plan	"	1980-1985
Eighth Five Year Plan	"	1992-1997
Eleventh Three Year Interim Plan	"	2008-2010
Others		
Children's Act	Parliament, Government of Nepal	1992-present
National Plan of Action for Children	Central Child Welfare Board, Department of Women, Children and Social Welfare	2004-2014
National Framework of Child-friendly Schools for Quality Education	Department of Education	2010-present

Observations

Though I had spent some time in schools during my previous visit to Nepal in 2010, I wanted to develop a more complete understanding of the current policy implementation context and what the child-friendly school initiative looked like in practice. This improved understanding through observation also served as an additional point for triangulating the findings, as will be discussed in the section on validity below. As such, I visited five government primary schools. Two of the schools were located in Kailali district, a rural, high-poverty area in the far-western Terai region of the country, and three of the schools were set in peri-urban to semi-rural areas of Bhaktapur district in the more affluent Kathmandu Valley (see Appendix E for map of Nepal). At each school I observed school grounds and classroom environments as well as teacher-student interactions and the teaching-learning process. I additionally held informal discussions with the head teacher and other teachers and took photographs, some of which can be seen in Figure 2.1. Each school visit was relatively short, lasting no more than one hour.

Figure 2.1: Sample photographs from child-friendly school observations

Primary school, Kailali

Primary school in Bhaktapur

Traditional classroom, Kailali

Child-friendly classroom, Kailali

School mural with NGO branding (BASE), Kailali

School mural with INGO branding (Save the Children), Kailali

Data analysis

In this section I describe the data analysis strategies used in the study. I begin by describing the general process for transcribing the interview data. Next, I discuss the suitability of content analysis for this study and outline the steps I took to assign codes to the data both overall and for each individual research question as well as for the historical policy analysis. Where applicable, I additionally discuss the process for coding and analyzing the document data.

Transcription

The data analysis process began by transcribing each of the 24 interviews. With the exception of pauses, fillers such as "um," "well," "like," "you know," and other repetitious or extraneous verbiage, the interviews were transcribed verbatim. Where portions of the interview were unintelligible, I have inserted place holder text indicated by "xxx." Transcription was a lengthy but fulfilling process. It allowed me to become more immersed in the data and begin to reflect on prominent themes and visualize patterns in the data. As I coded, I documented these emerging ideas in my notes. Indeed, listening to and transcribing interviews is as much of an opportunity for analysis as the formal data analysis process itself (Maxwell, 2005).

Content analysis and coding

As a qualitative analysis technique which by definition allows for the systematic identification of inferences from textual data, content analysis was identified as the most appropriate data analysis method for this study. Contrary to common perceptions, the method's general aim is less about the frequency with which information is presented and more about how data can be deconstructed into meaningful themes and categories. To

that end, I began the coding process through *a priori* identification of organizational and theoretical code categories. The organizational code categories, which functioned "primarily as 'bins' for sorting the data for further analysis" (Maxwell, 2005), were informed by the research questions. These included narratives of children and childhood, the meaning of child-friendly education, policy development and implementation, and sustainability and social change. Theoretical code categories, on the other hand, derived from the global ideology of childhood concept and included codes such as child rights, child protection, holistic development of children, and relationship of the child to social institutions (i.e. the family, school, community, nation and world). All code categories were hierarchical and thus had multiple levels of sub-codes. Using NVivo, I then assigned codes to the interview data, allowing new codes to emerge and rearranging existing codes as needed.

Research question 1. To answer Research Question 1, I was interested in the extent and nature by which each of the dimensions of the global ideology of childhood was reflected in child-friendly schools, both as embodied in the policy document and in participants' understanding of the policy. For the document analysis, I did not use NVivo as I did not yet have access to the program at this stage in the research process. Instead, I used Excel to construct a matrix that allowed me to record and tally phrases and sections from the policy which supported each of the global ideology's dimensions. I then conducted a thorough content analysis of the full text of the policy and recorded the findings in the matrix. During the analysis process, I added new categories to the matrix as they emerged.

The interview data, which was analyzed using NVivo, primarily derived from the

question: "What is your definition of childhood?" and was coded within the "narratives

of children and childhood code."   Though I originally labeled this code as "definitions of

children and childhood," I later re-labeled it as "narratives" in order to more broadly

capture the diverse ways in which participants conceptualized children. Many of the sub-

codes under this code derived from participant responses that invariably focused on legal,

age-based definitions of childhood and needs-oriented characterizations. Other sub-

codes, such as "childhood as a distinct stage and developmental goal" stemmed from the

theory. While participant responses—for all of the interview questions, but especially for

this one—arguably reflect some combination of personal and organizational views, I

contend that they are ultimately reflections of social constructions which shape the

broader interpretation and actualization of the ideas of childhood embedded in the policy.

It is important to emphasize that of all the interview questions, participants commonly

found this question to be the most difficult to answer. One senior official with the

Department of Education even flatly replied that he "had no idea" in response to a probe

to describe the characteristics of children.

Research question 2. The purpose of Research Question 2 was to investigate how

different actors have understood their roles in the development and implementation of the

National Framework in order to ultimately draw inferences about how cultural ideas

about children and childhood embedded in the policy are reproduced. It is important to

stress that the analysis, which drew exclusively on interview data, did not attempt to

establish any one policy development or implementation narrative as absolute fact. To

the contrary, the analysis aimed to draw out patterns regarding the origins of the child-

friendly concept and the types of roles different categories of actors played through

policy implementation. All narratives, regardless of frequency and truthfulness, were

considered to be salient. In other words, how actors made sense of events was considered

more important in the analysis than whether those events actually occurred. In order to

organize and better make sense of actors' implementation behaviors, I employed codes

such as "context," "policy and model origins" (sub-codes: "global" and "local"),

"implementation" (sub-codes: "faithful reproducer" and "cultural interpreter").

Research question 3. In addressing Research Question 3, the analysis aimed to uncover

whether policy actors perceived the child-friendly school model to be sustainable in

Nepal and the extent to which their responses suggested that cultural conceptions of

children and childhood may be changing. As the primary and embedded units of analysis

remained the policy and I/NGOs implementing the policy, respectively, the analysis was

not a school-level impact evaluation of the policy or even a true measurement of the scale

of the policy's implementation. Rather, the content analysis identified school-level

examples from the perspective of the interview participants and used these to suggest

how and the extent to which change may be taking place. Example codes included

"changing attitudes," "changing behaviors," "child and school outcomes," and "policy

growth and sustainability."

Historical policy analysis. The primary aim of the historical policy analysis was to

provide a frame of reference for gauging how conceptions of children and childhood in

Nepali education policy had changed over time. Focusing on the period from 1951 to the

present, I conducted a content analysis of a small sample of policies (n=8) for evidence of

the dimensions of the global ideology of childhood and any other ideas related to children

and childhood. For the all-encompassing national plans, only the education chapters were analyzed, with a special focus on the content related to primary education. The two child-focused policies, on the other hand, were analyzed in their entirety.

Assessing validity, reliability and research biases

Validity

Because this study rests on the basic tenet of qualitative research that "there are multiple, changing realities and that individuals have their own unique constructions of reality," assessing internal validity is essential for understanding whether the findings reflect the reality that the study set out to capture (Merriam, 2002, p. 25). Thus, to ensure internal validity, I have analyzed data from multiple types of sources (i.e. interviews, documents and observations) and multiple categories of actors and then triangulated information between these varied sources in order to develop "converging lines of inquiry" (Yin, 2003). For example, the use of different types of sources allowed me to validate information in participant interviews with facts from documents or observations, and the division of participants into different organizational categories allowed me to compare and contrast perspectives on a particular issue to arrive at some version of the reality. A third point of triangulation was my own experiential knowledge which I used to corroborate statements made by interviewees. Ultimately, the triangulation strategy was crucial for constructing a holistic description of the case under investigation and improving the internal validity of the study.

The study revolves around several critical, yet highly abstract, constructs, foremost of which is the global ideology of childhood. As a result, I was greatly

concerned with protecting against threats to construct validity. The use of multiple

sources of evidence, as described above, increases this type of validity, however, my

primary strategy to address these threats was through the inclusion of richly descriptive

data in the form of lengthy direct quotes from participants throughout the text. This rich

data, free from the bias of researcher interpretation and manipulation, served to retain as

much of the original context and meaning of the original statement as possible. The

reader is thus free to come to their own decision about whether the conclusions are

justified based on the data.

   To further strengthen the overall validity of my findings, I performed a limited

number of peer and member checks. Throughout the writing process, I periodically

reached out to the same Nepali NGO colleague who had assisted with the interview

protocol pre-test to ask questions and clarify unfamiliar ideas, especially those specific to

the Nepali political and cultural context. This sort of peer check was helpful for

minimizing the gap between the "knower" and the "known"—in other words, the

distance between the researcher and the thing being studied (Lincoln, 1995). Several

participants also provided member checks. Following the interviews, I informed all

participants that they had the right to request copies of the findings and provide additional

information or opinions via email. Only three participants took advantage of this

opportunity. The Save the Children Education Officer requested to edit her transcript

following the interview so as to clarify unclear statements and add in additional content.

Her contributions were very welcome because of her role as an education specialist with

a prominent INGO and since her ideas on the politics of I/NGOs in Nepal were

particularly insightful and critical. The two officers from UNICEF also reviewed the

overall findings and provided feedback particularly on the role of UNICEF. These member checks served to corroborate information and strengthen the validity of the study.

A common criticism of the case study method is that it possesses low levels of external validity, i.e. the findings cannot be generalized beyond the immediate case (e.g. the child-friendly schools policy). However, according to Yin (2003), this criticism has no basis because, although qualitative studies do not possess the statistical generalization of survey research, case studies rely on other types of generalizability. To achieve analytical generalizability, I generalized the case of the policy in Nepal and its reflection of the global ideology of childhood to broader theory, specifically world culture theory. By showing how the specific case supports or contradicts the theory, the study shows how its findings might be applied to cases in other national contexts or other policies. Merriam (2002) also offers support for the generalizability of qualitative studies by suggesting that it must be reframed as using an in depth understanding of one situation to transfer knowledge to a another situation. Through reader generalizability, an individual reader decides for themselves as they are reading a research study how the findings could be applied to their own context (Merriam, 2002). Thus, the reader is the one who makes choices about which findings can be generalized. To facilitate both of these kinds of generalizability, the study must provide "rich, thick description" (Merriam 2002, p. 29), so that readers have enough information on which to base their judgments. As I have explained above, this study features extensive, rich descriptive data.

Reliability

To strengthen reliability, I have provided detailed descriptions of the sampling

and data collection and analysis procedures used in this study. The purpose of these

descriptions is not so much to ensure that the study is replicable, but rather to improve the

reader's understanding of how the study was conducted such that the data and its

interpretation "makes sense" to the reader (Merriam, 2002). Indeed, the very subjectivity

of how cultural constructions of children and childhood are understood renders any

discussion of replicability futile since any number of interpretations are inevitably

possible from the data. Other strategies already described, such as triangulation and the

provision of rich description, also served the purpose of improving the reliability of the

findings.

Research biases

The I/NGO and IGO representatives, the government officials, the researchers and

myself all exist in the same kaleidoscope of culture that influences how we make sense of

the world. As such, biases, whether belonging to the researcher or to the participants,

invariably shaped the contents of the data, how it was analyzed, and the ultimate

conclusions of this dissertation. As the primary instrument for data collection and data

analysis (Merriam, 2002), my biases no doubt had a greatest impact on the results of the

study. My prior professional experiences with UNICEF, Save the Children and BASE

have provided me with an insider's view of these organizations. I have freely navigated

across the boundaries that separate these categories of actors, gathering experiential

knowledge about how they think and behave all along the way. Yet at the same time, my

introduction to Nepal through the grassroots activism of BASE brought me intimately in

touch with the daily joys and struggles of DoE children. That life-changing experience has admittedly colored my perspectives more so than any other experience.

When I first began this line of research, I reviewed evidence from easily accessible IGO and INGO documents to formulate a preliminary framework of how the child-friendly school model originated in Nepal. I was very convinced that there was one—and only one—way that things happened: UNICEF had persuaded INGOs, such as Save the Children, to adopt the model which then "trickled down" to local NGOs and later was adopted by the Department of Education as a national policy. I assumed a very dominant role for global actors and a very passive role for national and local actors. However, to rigorously test my biases, I had to ask myself: how might I be wrong? As I progressed through the research process, I challenged myself to be open to the possibility of other explanations on the origins and spread of child-friendly schools. Indeed, according to Yin (1994), a key test of bias is whether the researcher is open to contrary findings. I gradually learned that sometimes taking a step back and evaluating the evidence through a new and unfamiliar perspective provides the most clarity.

Moreover, my positionality as a highly educated, female researcher from a country perceived as rich as powerful may also have elicited biased responses from the participants. Though they were generally happy to meet with me and forthcoming in answering any question I asked, the unequal relationship between the participants and me could not be overlooked. During interviews, I often felt that the participants had a tendency to give answers that reflected what they thought I wanted to hear. For example, they often spoke "global speak" without seeming to have a solid grasp on the true meaning of concepts. One way I sought to overcome this limitation was by avoiding

leading questions that might influence participant responses in favor of my own biases. Adopting a position of neutrality in my language was no easy task, though. For example, I often wanted to know about participants' views on children's rights, and ideally hoped that they would approach the topic by their own volition. However, in most cases I had to directly ask participants' for their views on that topic, thereby implicitly communicating that children's rights were a topic of importance to me. It is challenges such as these that I have faced and attempted to overcome in this research. I have laid them out here so that they are can be known and acknowledged as the reader progresses through the remaining pages.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented the research methods and design, providing rationale for the use of an interpretive qualitative case study design. I have additionally described in detail the sampling, data collection and analysis procedures and assessed the various threats to validity, reliability and research biases present in the study. Chapter 3 turns to the conceptual heart of this dissertation by operationalizing the global ideology of childhood.

Chapter 3: Dimensions of the global ideology of childhood

Introduction

The global ideology of childhood is an embodiment of shared cultural ideas concerning children and childhood. A dominant aspect of this ideology is the universalist notion that, in developmental terms, children everywhere possess the same essential characteristics, and that every child is entitled to similar things—similar rights, similar protections and similar childhood experiences. However, it is important to recognize that, as societies around the world increasingly share beliefs about the nature and needs of children, this convergence does not negate the existence of contestation nor does it make the lived realities of children any less diverse. Instead, these beliefs about children, and their symbiotic relationship with education practices and policies, reflect cultural ideals that societies strive towards. There is not one absolute definition of the global ideology of childhood, but rather an amalgam of ideas that have emerged gradually and that vary in their legitimacy within the global realm over time. Thus, the actualization of some cultural ideas may be more dominant in one context than another, and some ideas may be so deeply embedded in culture that we hardly even notice their presence.

The main analysis in this dissertation is oriented around what I identify as six fundamental dimensions of the contemporary global ideology of childhood. The dimensions represent ideas that often go unnoticed in our daily interactions with children, yet collectively they exert great influence over how we think about and care for the youngest members of our society. They derive from prominent ideas within both scholarly (e.g., academic literature on child development) and international development

(child-focused reports, policies, and documents) discourses. In this chapter, I deconstruct the characteristics of the six dimensions which include: (1) the increasingly unique and complex developmental aims of childhood; (2) the whole child perspective of child development and well-being; (3) children as bearers of human rights; (4) the individualization of children; (5) child protection; and (6) child development as national development. Though I discuss each dimension separately, the conceptual boundaries between many of them overlap and blur together. I conclude the chapter by discussing how the dimensions reinforce each other to form a holistic global ideology of childhood.

Dimensions of the global ideology of childhood

Childhood as a unique stage with increasingly complex developmental aims

As an independent stage of human development, childhood is defined by a set of unique qualities which distinguish it from adulthood. This fundamental idea dominates not only everyday thinking but is also a core assumption of contemporary child studies literature (Aries 1962; James and Prout 1997; Qvortrup, Corsaro and Honig 2009) and international child rights discourse, as embodied by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The roots of this idea can be traced to traditional perspectives which portray childhood as a special period of physical growth and socialization in which children learn how to be citizens in a given society. Rousseau captured such an image in his famous statement that:

> Nature would have children be children before they are men. If we try to invert this order we shall produce a forced fruit, immature and flavorless, fruit that rots before it can ripen… Childhood has its own ways of thinking, seeing, and feeling… (*Émile, or On Education*, 1762)

This idea has resurfaced among contemporary child development theorists and child rights and welfare activists as a present-oriented focus which captures the idea that children must experience childhood as children, and not as "future adults" (Ben-Arieh 2006, 2008; Ben-Arieh and Goerge, 2001). Today, the CRC defines a child as anyone below 18 years of age and specifies that children are in need of special care and protection to ensure their full development. Children who lack protection or education and experience characteristics of adulthood too early are thought by some to be deprived of their childhood (e.g., in the case of working children or child soldiers). In this way, notions of childhood as a discrete yet special period of human existence are a key dimension of a normative childhood.

An extension of this dimension within the global ideology of childhood characterizes the aims of child development as assuming an increasingly complex nature. While a present-oriented focus is no less important for ensuring that childhood is a carefree, safe, and happy period of life, children do "grow up," and the desired outcomes of this growth additionally contribute to a conceptions of a normative childhood. Though traditional perspectives have defined a more limited vision of child development (e.g., a singular focus on physical or mental development), modern aims reflect an expanded vision which emphasizes the preparation of children to be functioning members of adult society and includes development for both individual and societal advancement. Two common aims that may at first seem to be in opposition are child development for the common good of society and child development for individual self-actualization. Children are expected to learn new knowledge and skills so that in the future they will make positive contributions to their society. However, this development also serves the

individual-oriented aim of moving towards a state of self-actualization. Another way in which child development is becoming increasingly complex is through the addition of new aspects such as psychological and emotional development. The state of individual growth for self-actualization thereby occurs through an integrated process of physical, cognitive, psychological, and emotional development and is often promoted as only possible through education. As such, the "increasingly unique and complex developmental aims of childhood" dimension is very much connected to the whole child perspective which I discuss next.

The whole child perspective of child development and well-being

The concept of the whole child is way of thinking about child development and well-being that moves away from a compartmentalized view of their needs and recognizes child development as a holistic process that includes physical, psychological, emotional, social, and cognitive components. The perspective has been equated with the interlocking pieces of a jigsaw puzzle whereby the whole picture is only discernible when all of the pieces are arranged together (Black, 1986). Such a conceptualization lies in opposition to more traditional approaches that compartmentalize children's needs, viewing them in isolation, and that typically fail to account for children's intellectual and psychological development (Schaub et al., in progress). In contrast, the lens of holistic development allows the child to be viewed as a highly complex entity, in much the same way as articulated by the "increasingly unique and complex developmental aims of childhood" dimension.

The origins of the whole child perspective are integrally connected with the child rights movement. The first Declaration of the Rights of the Child, drafted in 1923 by

Eglantyne Jebb, the founder of the Save the Children International Union, and a year later

adopted by the League of Nations and codified as the World Child Welfare Charter, did

not explicitly reference the whole child but nevertheless evoked a holistic vision of child

development by calling for the material and spiritual development of the child; food for

the hungry, care for the sick, and shelter for the orphaned; relief in times of distress;

training to earn a living and protection against exploitation; and instilment in the child of

a duty to serve society (Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1924). However, despite

serving as a seedbed for notions of children's rights, the Declaration gained little traction

within the international community.

The second Declaration of the Rights of the Child, unanimously adopted by the

United Nations in 1959, though still lacking the political momentum to impact national

policies, did effectively introduce several important principles related to conceptions of

children, one of which was the concept of holistic child development.   According to the

Declaration, "the child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and

facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally,

morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of

freedom and dignity" (Principle 2). On its own, the second Declaration was barely any

more influential than the first. However, in a critical turn of events, both for notions of

child well-being and for the organizational expansion of UNICEF, two pioneering

individuals, Dick Heyward and Georges Sicault, took up the cause and advanced a vision

for holistic child development (Black, 1986).   Their idea of child development as a

jigsaw puzzle would gradually begin to influence how children's needs were approached

in international development initiatives over the course of the next several decades.

Though sector-specific approaches continued to be implemented for some time, programming and policy frameworks began to gradually shift towards the whole child approach which called for cooperation between all sectors relevant to a child's life in order to prevent fragmented interventions (Black, 1986; Pais, 1999). This shift was not only a matter of programming efficiency but also a new philosophical vision for child development.

The indivisibility of children's needs—and rights—would later be established in the CRC (1989), the international agreement which codifies the rights necessary for the achievement of children's full development. Similar to the 1959 Declaration, the CRC specifically references children's "physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development" but unlike the Declaration, the CRC gained an unprecedented level of widespread global recognition from almost every country. The CRC therefore played an important role in foregrounding the whole child perspective within international development discourse from the 1990s to the present. One critical implication of the whole child perspective is that it has accentuated the importance of children's cognitive development and thus shaped thinking on schooling as the necessary activity for a full child development. In this way, the whole child perspective of child well-being has also provided increased legitimacy to the global movement for universal education.

Children as bearers of human rights

Children's rights are human rights afforded specifically to children that are fundamental to the dignity of every person (Pais, 1999). According to the CRC, the child is a special category of individual that "…by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection,

before as well as after birth" (1989). The Convention includes a wide spectrum of rights

including economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights, though in its 41 articles it

does not identify them as such. Widespread global recognition of children's rights, as

evidenced by the 191 countries that have ratified the Convention, is important because it

reflects a unique understanding of childhood. When children are considered in terms of

their human rights, child well-being is defined not in terms of needs but in terms of the

rights of individuals. As such, children are not just recipients of services but active

participants in all actions that affect them (Pais, 1999).

Two related tenets of child rights are first, that the social institutions that children

interact with, such as families and schools, should be more egalitarian, and second, that

parents and children by nature have independent interests. Further, children's rights, as

encapsulated in the Convention, address the whole child by including the a wide range of

indivisible and interdependent rights, including but not limited to: freedoms of

expression, religion, and peaceful assembly and association; the right to a name and

nationality; the right to health and social security; the right to education and participation

in cultural life; and others. The only way to promote the healthy development of the

whole child is to promote the realization of all of her rights.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child, the multilateral body responsible for

the implementation and monitoring of the CRC, has identified four general principles

representing the fundamental values necessary for the realization of all children's rights.

These are the principles of non-discrimination, best interests of the child, survival and

development, and respect for the views of the child (right to participate). These

principles are commonly used as criteria to assess national progress in protecting

children's rights. Non-discrimination (Article 2) refers to promoting the realization of rights without restriction or preference based on gender, race, color, language, religion, national or ethnic origin, disability, or birth. The best interests of the child require that the child's interests be considered first in all decisions regarding the child. This principle shapes the way social institutions interact with the child and often guides policy decisions. With the principle of survival and development (Article 6), child development is seen as holistic and includes health, education, protection, and other rights. The final principle of respect for the views of the child reflects the perspective of the child as a fully-fledged person who has the right to take part in all decision-making processes affecting her life (Pais, 1999). The general principle of children's rights and these four sub-themes are perhaps the most defining characteristics of the global ideology of childhood as they overlap with and reinforce all of the other five dimensions.

Child protection

The dimension of child protection is very closely linked to conceptions of children's rights as codified in the CRC. However, because the idea that children have the right to protection is so strong in the global ideology of childhood, I contend that it should be conceptualized as a separate dimension. It is important to note that the global idea of child protection rests on the view that children are "subjects with rights" and not "objects to be protected." This distinction means that society has an obligation to protect children not because they are weak and vulnerable, but because it is their right as individuals to be safe from harm and abuse. Article 3 of the CRC affirms that "States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being," and Article 2 notably provides for "all appropriate measures to ensure

that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment…" Other articles in the Convention pertain to the protection of children within the contexts of kidnapping, all forms of violence, child labor, drug abuse, sexual exploitation, trafficking, war and armed conflicts, and juvenile justice.

Though the modern notion of child protection is encapsulated in the principles of children's rights, the traditional image of children as vulnerable and innocent objects to be protected has strong cultural roots. This image should not be seen as in opposition to the global ideology of childhood, but rather as a precursor to the modern approach to child protection. Over the last century, society has assigned increased value to children which has been expressed through a heightened interest in protecting them from harm. Improvements in health care, and corresponding decreased rates of child mortality, along with the anti-child labor movement and enforcement of compulsory education laws are historical changes that have both been cause and consequence of a shift in societal attitudes towards the increased valuation of individual children. However, as the perceived value of children has increased, so too has thinking that they are objects that must be protected. Only as the child rights movement has gained momentum have views on child protection morphed into their modern form. Conceptions of children still retain an element of vulnerability; however, this is counterbalanced with a sense of empowerment afforded by the inalienable rights of all children and human beings. These ideas ultimately inform the cultural norms that shape how families and society treat children.

Notions of whose obligation it is to protect children have also evolved over time. The CRC expressly recognizes that parents have the most important role in the bringing

up the child. However, as children have come to be viewed as key contributors to their schools, communities, and nations, the network of individuals with interests in the child's well-being has broadened. Thus, the child is often seen as the responsibility of everyone, and actors including politicians, academics, business people, civil society, and parents have all recognized their roles in protecting the well-being of children. Child protection has ultimately become a collaborative endeavor within individual communities and the larger society. A residual effect of these heightened efforts to protect children as subjects with rights is that children are simultaneously empowered and thereby assume a more egalitarian position in relation to adults.

Individualization of children

The expanded status of children that is associated with the possession of rights is also linked to the rise of individualism in modern society (Aries 1962; Zelizer 1986; Ramirez 1989). Over the last century, and particularly since the advent of the post-World War II period, the individual, rather than the community or nation, has come to be seen, generally, as a key actor in human societies and, specifically, as the primary agent of social and economic growth (Bromley, Meyer, & Ramirez, 2011). Through this social transformation, children too have come to be constructed as individuals with their own identities and status as autonomous members of society. According to this logic, legitimate choices and actions are viewed as being taken individually by children and not collectively by their families. Further, the aim of socialization becomes one of agentic social participation, thereby preparing children to participate as fully functioning, rational actors in their social, political, and cultural worlds (Jepperson & Meyer, 2000). As children become empowered by their status and rights, their interests, desires, and

perspectives become increasingly legitimated in society. Ultimately, to the extent that their capabilities and potential allow, each individual child is entitled to pursue their own interests towards a state of self-actualization.

Such a focus on the individual child implies that individuals take on greater cultural meaning than relationships, e.g., with families, or collective actors, e.g., communities or nations (Boyle, Smith, & Guenther, 2007). Contrasted against the traditional view that the child is an extension of the family, this dimension of the global ideology constructs the child as an individual first and a member of the family second. The primary task of the family is to facilitate the development of the child for his own benefit, rather than for the common good of the family. The personal fulfillment of the child takes immediate precedence over any duty for the child to respect and obey his or her parents. In this way, children are protected from unequal balances of power that may not be in their best interests (Boyle et al., 2007). Nevertheless, the social role played by children in which they possess cultural relevance independent of family does not supersede the family's responsibility to protect and nurture the child. The Convention offers a balance between these two ideas by stating both that the family is "the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children" and that "the child should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society."

In modern education, the growth of individualism has meant that the student becomes the central project of the school (Bromley et al., 2011). This notion, which is very much in line with the progressive pedagogy of John Dewey and other well-known education reformers, is captured in the concept of child-centeredness which emphasizes

the centrality of the child in his own development, education, and society. In a child-centered classroom, the interests and capacities of individual students take precedence. As a group, all students and the teacher work collectively to advance the learning of each individual student. In this way, the teacher is a mere facilitator of the learning process, and Meyer and Jepperson's (2000) concept of agentic participation expands to include a student-centered active learning process (e.g., students ask questions, interact with each other, and contribute their own perspectives). In this process, the knowledge and perspectives of individual students is at times even privileged above the teacher. In the context of education, placing the child at the center means that the school should be molded to fit the child, rather than the other way around. In the contexts of the community, the society, and the nation, the application of the same logic underscores the meaning of "the rise of the child" which is the very essence of the global ideology of childhood.

Child development as national development

In the post-World War II period, national development has come to be seen as an aggregate of individual development. Guided by the logic of human capital theory, this neo-liberal principle has placed a special emphasis on education as the primary means by which individuals develop their skills and knowledge in preparation for becoming productive citizens. The implication of this logic is that nations and international organizations increasingly focus on individual welfare, the participation of individuals, and the inclusion of disadvantaged groups (Chabbott, 1996). In this way, children have also been constructed as modern individuals. Modern assumptions hold that the education of children, as individual citizens, is linked both to their own development and

the development of their nation. This notion of child development as national development builds upon the traditional human capital argument by synthesizing multiple dimensions of the global ideology of childhood to form a more nuanced conceptualization whereby an increasingly complex child has an increasingly complex impact on national development. The dimensions of the increasingly complex developmental aims of childhood and the whole child perspective are important here because it is not simply a strong and healthy child, or a child who has acquired particular skills and knowledge, who is positioned to be a productive member of society and further the growth of their nation. Rather, the normative, ideal child is one who is highly developed and has realized, or is in the process of realizing, their own potentiality on as many levels as possible. Additionally, the cultivation of the child represented by this expanded vision contributes not only to national economic development, but also to the promotion of progress, social justice, and democratic values within society. Indeed, everyone, including children, has an obligation to participate in the development process through civic participation, the promotion of values such as equality and respect, and other contributions for the betterment of society.

Within the international development community, this dimension forms the basis for a common discourse that views children as a means to address poverty and other social problems. The Education for All (EFA) movement in particular embodies societal confidence in the relationship between development and education at global, national and individual levels (Chabbott & Ramirez, 2000). The model of universal education rests on both normative, rights-based arguments and instrumental arguments that construct education as an investment in children for economic growth (Chabbott & Ramirez, 2000).

Both arguments tie into the normative conceptions of the child discussed in this chapter.

It is important to note that the justification for this dimension lies more with widespread

societal acceptance than actual empirical evidence supporting the link between education

and national development; however, this imbalance does not undermine its legitimacy

and its construction of children as integral members of society (Chabbott & Ramirez,

2000). In short, the idea that a focus on child development is essential for national

development has been a long-standing dimension of the global ideology of childhood and

captures the increasingly child-centered way of structuring society.

Conclusion

In describing six dimensions of the global ideology of childhood, this chapter has

aimed to demonstrate the most prominent aspects of the contemporary conceptions of

children and childhood that exist in the global sphere. No one dimension can stand alone

for they share indistinct boundaries and mutually reinforcing characteristics. The unique

and complex developmental aims of child development, for instance, are grounded in

physical, cognitive, psychological, and emotional development which collectively

constitutes the whole child and leads to the self-actualization of the individual. The

modern notion of individualism emphasizes the interests and perspectives of every child.

When understood alongside children's right to participate conceptions of individualism

expand such that children are empowered to demand all of their basic rights, protection

from abuse and harm, and the realization of their best interests. Taken together, these

dimensions represent a holistic, modern vision for childhood.

Yet culture does not exist in a vacuum nor is it static. It influences the actions of individuals and organizations, it shapes common institutions, and it plays out in the policies and laws that reflect the aspirations of societies. In the next chapter, I shift to the Nepali context and conduct a historical policy analysis, tracing the cultural influence of the global ideology of childhood over the last 60 years. Only by understanding how children have been constructed in the past can we begin to understand the current content of global culture and the processes by which it is reproduced in national contexts.

Chapter 4: The historical evolution of conceptions of children and childhood in Nepali education policy

Introduction

Before exploring the ideas about children and childhood embedded in the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools, I first aim to establish a historical frame of reference by tracing the evolution of conceptions of children and childhood in Nepali education policies from 1951 to the present. Guiding the analysis are questions such as:

- How have the dimensions of the global ideology of childhood been expressed in education policy over time?

- What other conceptions of children and childhood may have prevailed at different times?

I divide the analysis according to the three historical education policy periods established by Gurung (2012): the basic universal education system (1951-1970), New Education System (1971-1990), and education in the transition to a democratic system (1990 to present). In each of the sections that follow, I first briefly review the historical development of educational policy in that period and then conduct a content analysis of a small sample of national policies for conceptions of children and childhood as embodied by the dimensions of the global ideology of childhood. Altogether, 12 educational plans, including nine five-year plans and three three-year interim plans, have been devised from 1951 to the present. I include six of these as well as two multi-sectoral, child-centered policies in the analysis (see Table 4.1 for a list of national plans and education, child-centered, and other laws and policies with child-focused provisions in Nepal; see Chapter 2 for a detailed description of the sampling and analysis procedures). It should be noted

that throughout the chapter, I mostly focus on the aspects of policies affecting primary

education as that is the focus of this dissertation. A summary of the findings on the

emergence of the dimensions of the global ideology of childhood in select Nepali policies

is presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.1: Children and policy in Nepal: National plans and education, child-centered, and other laws and policies with child-focused provisions

Policy	Dates	In sample?
National Plans		
First Five Year Plan	1956-1961	Y
Second Three Year Plan	1962-1965	N
Third Five Year Plan	1965-1970	Y
Fourth Five Year Plan	1970-1975	Y
Fifth Five Year Plan	1975-1980	N
Sixth Five Year Plan	1980-1985	Y
Seventh Five Year Plan	1985-1990	N
Eighth Five Year Plan	1992-1997	Y
Ninth Five Year Plan	1997-2002	N
Tenth Five Year Plan	2002-2007	N
Eleventh Three Year Interim Plan	2008-2010	Y
Twelfth Three Year Development Plan	2011-2013	N
Thirteenth Three Year Interim Plan	2013-2016	N[10]

Sources. National Planning Commission of Nepal; Child Rights International Network (CRIN), 2012; National Plan of Action for Children, 2004.

---

[10] At the time of writing (spring 2014), the Thirteenth Three Year Plan (2013-2016) was still being drafted.

Table 4.1: Children and policy in Nepal: National plans and education, child-centered, and other laws and policies with child-focused provisions (continued)

Policy	Dates	In sample?
Education laws and policies		
New Education System Plan	1970	N
Education Act	1971	N
National Plan of Action on Education for All	2001-2015	N
School Sector Reform Plan	2009-2015	N
Child-centered laws and policies		
Children's Act	1992	Y
National Program of Action for Children and Development for 1990s	1992	N
Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act	1999	N
Child Labour Act	2000	N
Youth Recruitment Act	1971	N
National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Children and Women for Sexual and Labor Exploitation	2002	N
National Child Policy	2012	N
National Plan of Action for Children	2004-2014	Y
Other laws and policies with child-focused provisions		
Prisons Act	1962	N
Civil Code (Maluki Ain)	1963	N
Citizenship Act	1964	N
Birth, Death and Other Personal Incidences (Vital Registration) Act	1976	N
Disabled Protection and Welfare Act	1982	N
The Act Relating to Human Trafficking	1986	N
Labour Act	1992	N
Social Welfare Act	1992	N
Immigration Act	1993	N
Kamaiya Prohibition Act	2002	N

Notes. (a) In 2012, The National Plan of Action for Children was placed under the jurisdiction of the Central Child Welfare Board (CWB). Data sourced from National Planning Commission of Nepal; Child Rights International Network (CRIN), 2012; National Plan of Action for Children, 2004.

Basic universal education system: 1951-1970

Historical development of education policy

Throughout much of Nepal's history, major changes in education policy have tended to coincide with political change. Prior to the 1950s, education in Nepal was restricted to the elite as the ruling Rana family was opposed to any kind of public schooling. However, the introduction of democracy and the establishment of a cabinet government system in 1951 ushered in a new era of educational expansion (Gurung, 2012). At this time there were only 310 primary and secondary schools in the country, exclusively based in urban centers, and the national literacy rate was 5 percent (10 percent for males and less than 1 percent for females) (Nepal Central Bureau of Statistics, see Figure 4.2; Savada, 1991).

Following the 1950-51 revolution, the number of public schools began to expand rapidly and private education was introduced. Nepal founded successive governmental bodies which were responsible for reviewing the state of education in the country and developing national policies for educational development: the National Education Planning Commission (NEPC) in 1954, the All Round National Education Committee (ARNEC) in 1961, and the National Education Advisory Board (NEAB) in 1968. Beginning in 1956, these bodies made education policy recommendations to a central planning body[11] which then integrated the recommendations into national plans for economic and social development. The basic universal education period included the First Five Year Plan (1956-1961), the Second Three Year Plan (1962-1965), and the Third Five Year Plan (1965-1970).

---

[11] This body has been known by various names over the years and is currently called the National Planning Commission.

It was in this period that the models of a centralized curriculum for all government-supported schools and free primary education, which would later become compulsory, were introduced. While the policy priority in the 1950s was on expanding the number of schools and students (First Five Year Plan, 1956-1961), the focus in the 1960s shifted to improving school facilities, training new and existing teachers, and developing new textbooks (Second Three Year Plan, 1962-1965; Third Five Year Plan, 1965-1970). Further, though universal education was the stated aim, the policies emphasized the expansion of the upper levels of education, particularly the university level, at the expense of primary education. Although democracy was short-lived—a second major political upheaval in 1960 would return the nation to an absolute monarchy, also called the Partyless Panchayat Democracy (1960-1990)—the expansion of schooling would continue, albeit not without significant challenges. During the Second Three Year Plan, the proportion of children receiving primary education rose from 15.3 percent to 27 percent (Third Five Year Plan, 1965-1970), though by 1970, only 15 percent of enrolled children were female (see Table 4.2 on the expansion of schooling in Nepal).

Conceptions of children and childhood

In the early period of educational expansion, direct references to children and childhood were almost completely absent in educational policy. However, more so than any other dimension, the "child development as national development" dimension of the global ideology was, to a certain extent, stressed throughout the text of both the First (1956-1961) and Third (1965-1970) Five Year Plans. In particular, the very brief education chapter of the First Five Year Plan heavily emphasized the role of education in promoting national economic growth and the imperative for Nepal to "become a part of

the world" (p. 39). The focus on universal education further underscored the desire to produce "an enlightened citizenry" who could promote a democratic way of life. This dimension would be a constant strand through all of Nepal's National Plans, though the degree to which the actual child was emphasized would vary considerably. In fact, in the First Plan, the connection to child development was only implicit, and the terms "child" or "children" appeared only five times in the entire 44 page policy document, and most of those were in the two-page education chapter. Although the dominant, underlying message seemed to be that education is a commodity which benefits others, i.e., the nation and society, and not the child directly, the First Plan nevertheless affirmed that education "must serve individual needs, and it must serve the people" (p. 39).

Human capital discourse continued to dominate the Third Year Plan as the expansion of primary education was seen as necessary to meet the "growing need for educated manpower" (p. 73). However, the vision was slightly expanded to include some element of individual development, as the policy stated:

> …education is vital for the promotion of the intellectual and physical personality of the people. An educated peasant, aware of the needs of reform in agriculture, will be enthusiastic to adopt modern methods [of] cultivation. (p. 73)

However, the provision of education was not yet conceptualized as something that should be centered around the child and was still largely considered to be for the common good. In the Third Plan, the words "child" and "children" were no more prevalent than in the First Plan, appearing a mere six times in over 100 pages of text.

Because both the First and Third Plans did not include any references to child development and contained so few mentions of children at all, it is very difficult to analyze the remaining dimensions of the global ideology of childhood, other than to say

that they simply were not reflected. Although the U.N. adopted the Declaration on the

Rights of the Child in 1959, globally, the incorporation of child rights principles into

national policies did not take place until many years later, after the widespread

ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in the 1990s. Thus,

conceptions of children's rights and child protection are notably absent in all of the plans

from this period. Taken together, these omissions suggest that education was not viewed

in terms of the child, but rather in terms of the nation. Putting the child at the center of

education was a critical movement that would not begin until the return of democracy in

the 1990s.

New Education System: 1971-1990

Historical development of education policy

By 1971, the overall literacy rate in Nepal had improved to 14 percent, though 96

percent of females remained illiterate (Nepal Central Bureau of Statistics, see Figure 4.2).

The New Education System Plan (NESP), commonly considered the first formal

education policy in Nepal, included a series of four five-year plans, all of which

continued to prioritize the improvement of the education system for the purpose of

promoting national development. Education governance became even more centralized

under the monarchy, and while the policy of promoting universal education remained

dominant, the focus of the 1960s on improving existing school facilities and maintaining

educational standards continued. In the 1970s, primary education (grades 1 to 3)

emphasized reading, writing and math; lower secondary education (grades 4 to 7)

included the same and also introduced pre-vocational education in the curriculum; and

upper secondary education (grades 8-10) focused on vocational education and general skills (Gurung, 2012). In 1975 primary education became free and compulsory up to the third grade. In the late 1970s (Fifth Five Year Plan, 1975-1980), the government marginally relaxed the policy of centralization and made efforts to involve communities and encourage regional planning in the local provision of education. Initiatives were also developed to improve access to education among girls, children in remote areas, and other marginalized groups.

In the 1980s, education reform continued despite significant change in the national policy context. Given that approximately 60 percent of primary school teachers remained untrained, the government initiated a new emphasis on improving instructional quality. Additionally, primary education was extended through grade five, and in the late 1980s (Seventh Five Year Plan, 1985-1990) a policy of local voluntary enforcement of compulsory primary education was endorsed by the national government. Pre-primary education (later known as early childhood education) was also introduced. For the first time, the independence of policy makers began to deteriorate as Nepal became increasingly dependent on external assistance. The government continued to work to improve the curriculum; however, they were now receiving financial and technical assistance from and being greatly influenced by the United States and UNESCO. The neo-liberal influence of the World Bank also led to overall decreased government investment in social services including education (Pant, 1991; World Bank, 2003).

Conceptions of children and childhood

Conceptions of children and childhood reflected in the Fourth Five Year Plan (1970-1975) were in many ways similar to those of the 1960s. The aim of education

continued to be exclusively based on human capital theory ("the preparation of the educated manpower required for the all round development of the country and the provision of basic minimum education to the masses," p. 232). Moreover, the section on primary education focused mostly on the improvement of educational inputs such as expanding the number of classrooms and hiring additional teachers. Notions of child development or child well-being did not appear in the policy at all. Notably, though, "child" terminology did become more frequently used in the policy document with 15 instances, though these terms remained a small proportion of the overall text.

The Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-1985) made a monumental step by expanding the aims of primary and secondary education beyond the mastery of basic academic subjects. According to the policy document, the aim of primary education was to be "not only to teach the three R's to children but [to] inculcate in them habits of disciplined and hygienic living also" (p. 61). Similarly, the aim of lower secondary education would be to "lay stress on character formation and develop in them dignity of labour and habits of perseverance" (p. 61). Such aims embodied a shift towards the recognition of children as in a state of immaturity—both physical and psychological—and engaged in a developmental process en route to adulthood. That process was not only transitional but also complex as indicated by emerging evidence of the whole child perspective. Further, the policy included the objective of expanding educational access to "as many women as possible" (p. 61) and to those "lagging behind from the educational point of view," i.e. disadvantaged children, thus foreshadowing the idea that education is a basic right of all children.

Education in the transition to a democratic system: 1990-present

Historical development of education policy

Major political change combined with two groundbreaking international agreements in the 1990s ushered in a new era in the history of educational policy in Nepal. After the dissolution of the 30-year absolute monarchy (1960 to 1990), the government restored the multiparty democracy within the framework of a constitutional monarchy. In 1991, a new national constitution was drafted which for the first time in Nepali history declared education to be the right of children and included various other clauses which aimed to protect the interests of the child. According to the Constitution, "the State shall make necessary arrangements to safeguard the rights and interests of children, ensure that they are not exploited, and make gradual arrangements for free education" (Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990). To lead the country in a new policy direction, the National Education Commission (NEC) was also formed in1991.

Importantly, Nepal endorsed the "Education for All" (EFA) declaration at this time which had been adopted by global leaders at the World Conference on EFA in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. Led by UNESCO, the EFA movement aimed to universalize primary education and massively reduce illiteracy by the end of the decade. Nepal adopted the Education for All National Plan of Action (2001-2015) in 2003 in order to codify actionable strategies for achieving EFA goals by 2015. Accordingly, the EFA vision of Nepal was established to:

> To ensure that all children in Nepal have quality basic and primary education, in caring and joyful environment and to receive primary education especially in their mother tongue without having to feel prejudices in the form of cultural, ethnic or caste discrimination…

It was also in this period that the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted globally (1989) and ratified by Nepal (September 14, 1990). EFA and the CRC greatly influenced Nepal's education priorities, and in 1992 the NEC put forth their first policy recommendations (Eighth Five Year Plan, 1992-1997) which emphasized universal education based on democratic values and human rights principles. This was the first time that Nepal had formally recognized education as the right of all children through national education policy.

By1991, primary education had expanded significantly: total primary school enrollment had increased to include more than 2.8 million students who were enrolled in 18,694 schools across the country (see Table 4.3). With the momentum of EFA, enrollments increased even more rapidly over the next two decades, with nearly 5 million students in primary schools by 2010 (UNESCO) and a net enrollment rate of 97% in 2011 (World Bank). Literacy rates also began to increase more rapidly, though still remained low, highlighting the critical need to improve the quality of education and include marginalized groups (e.g., girls, ethnic minorities, rural children, etc.) in the education system. However, despite the near achievement of universal primary education, the provision of high quality education and the improvement of the learning outcomes of children remain tremendous challenges for the nation. Other challenges were presented by the protracted civil war (1996-2006) including violence against children, attacks against schools, the proscription of child soldiers, and diverted government attention from education priorities.

In this context, the Eighth (1992-1997), Ninth (1997-2002), Tenth (2002-2007), Eleventh Three Year Interim (2008-2010)[12], and the Twelfth Three Year Interim (2011-2013) Plans[13] have generally attempted to promote democratic norms and values while striving towards the universalization of primary education (Gurung, 2012). All of the plans reflect a growing recognition of the need to shift the focus from increasing access to schooling to improving the quality of education. The objective of the Eleventh Three Year Interim was "to make all the citizens of the country gradually literate and to extend access of primary and higher education [and] to provide quality as well as employment oriented education." Notably, the education chapter called for the development of a program to specify specific strategies for school reform, thus leading to the adoption of the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP, 2009-2015) which continues to be the main policy shaping education reform today. The SSRP is the parent policy of the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools that is the focus of this dissertation.

Beginning with the Eighth Five Year Plan, the plans also include separate sections devoted to child development. For instance, the vision of the Three Year Interim Plan (2008-2010) is "to create an environment where the children of all the regions of the country and of all communities are able to make an overall personality development by enjoying their rights fully." With the fall of the monarchy in 2008, a new interim constitution was also written; however, it retained the same core values with regard to children and their right to education (see Figure 4.1 for a summary of education and child rights clauses from the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007). Although a permanent constitution still has yet to be agreed upon due to political deadlock, it is likely that the

---

[12] Since the conclusion of the 10-year civil war in 2006, the subsequent national plans have been released in three-year increments to accommodate the nation's transition.

[13] At the time of writing (spring 2014), the Thirteenth Three Year Plan (2013-2016) was still being drafted.

government and people of Nepal will retain its constitutional commitment to fulfilling

children's right to education.

Figure 4.1: Education and child rights provisions in the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007)

Article 17: Education rights

(1) Each community shall have the right to receive basic education in their mother tongue as provided for in the law.
(2) Every citizen shall have the right to receive free education from the State up to secondary level as provided for in the law
(3) Each community residing in Nepal has the right to preserve and promote its language, script, culture, cultural civilisation and heritage.

Article 2: Rights of children

(1) Every child shall have the right to his or her own identity and name.
(2) Every child shall have the right to be nurtured, to basic health and social security.
(3) Every child shall have the right not to be subjected to physical, mental or any other form of exploitation. Any such act of exploitation shall be punishable by law and any child so treated shall be compensated as determined by law.
(4) Helpless, orphaned or mentally retarded children, children who are victims of conflict or displaced and street children at risk shall have the right to receive special privileges from the State to ensure their secure future.
(5) No minor shall be employed in factories, mines or in any other hazardous work nor shall be used in army, police or in conflicts.

Source. Interim Constitution of Nepal 2063 (2007).

Emergence of child-centered policies

Of immense significance was the emergence of child-centered policies during the period of transition. As a response to ratifying states' obligation to "undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention" (CRC, Article 4), these policies served to establish formal mechanisms for the realization of children's rights. In 1992, the Nepali Parliament passed Children's Act which codified some sections of the CRC, ultimately aiming to protect the rights and interests of Nepali children and to ensure their physical, mental, and intellectual development. Along with the Constitution, the Children's Act was "the first time in the history of Nepal that the country [had] shown a deep interest in protecting the rights of the child" (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 1995). However, the Act was not adequately comprehensive, and political unrest prevented the government from making further efforts to implement the CRC during the nineties (Representing Children Worldwide, 2005). In the period both before and after the ratification of the CRC, legislation to protect children and meet their diverse needs has additionally been codified in other child-centered and child-focused policies—some solely targeted at children and others only containing limited provisions pertaining to children—such as the Child Labour Act (1999), the Act Relating to Human Trafficking (1986), and the Social Welfare Act (1993) (see Table 4.1 for a complete list).

In 2003, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the multilateral body responsible for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the CRC, required ratifying states to adopt a comprehensive strategy to ensure the implementation of child

rights, also known as a National Plan of Action[14]. The Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare subsequently devised the National Plan of Action for Children (2004-2014), a multi-sectoral strategy with time-bound targets and that is linked to the National Five Year Plans. Though it is a government policy, it covers the actions of NGOs and the private sector as well as the government. The Plan was revised in September 2012 and placed under the jurisdiction of the Central Child Welfare Board (CWB), the country's key coordination body for children's rights which had originally been formed under the Children's Act in 1992. Also at this time (April 2012), the National Child Policy, was adopted to further align child-related laws with the CRC. It includes sections for each of the fundamental principles of child rights, i.e., survival and development, participation, discrimination, protection, as well as one new principle, juvenile justice.

Conceptions of children and childhood

Given the surge of child-centered policies, it is not surprising that in the period following EFA and the ratification of the CRC, ideas about children and childhood assumed an unprecedented dominance in Nepali national policy. Above all, the most significant evidence of the transformation of thinking about children and childhood was the emergence laws and policies entirely focused on children. These laws and policies began to signal new priorities for education and child welfare, the escalating importance of the child in society, and a more intimate relationship between the state and the child. The concept of "child-friendliness" was used for the first time in the National Plan of Action for Children (2004-2014) and subsequently in the Three Year Interim Plan (2008-2010) with a call for the development of child-friendly environments in all schools. The

---

[14] This requirement was mandated in Committee on the Rights of the Child - General Comment No. 5 on General Measures of Implementation for the CRC, available at http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/comments.htm

meaning and mode of implementation of this new concept was defined with a limited

scope in the National Plan of Action, but was later explicated in the School Sector

Reform Plan (2009-2015), and the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools that is

the focus of this dissertation.

In many important ways the child-centered policies of the transition period began

to incorporate dimensions of the global ideology of childhood. However, in other ways,

the policies—the Children's Act of 1992, in particular—retained strong culturally

specific elements. In fact, the Children's Act represented a sort of turning point in the

way children and childhood were conceptualized in Nepali policy by combining global

and national ideas together, much like in the metaphorical tossed salad of cultures.

Notions of child rights, including the principles of survival and development, non-

discrimination, and the best interests of the child[15], were introduced into national law for

the first time in the Children's Act. A limited recognition of the complexity of child

development was also evident through provisions to protect the physical, mental, and

intellectual development of children. Further, the Act emphasized child protection

through prohibitions against torture and cruel treatment (Section 7), child labor and other

hazardous work (Sections 17 and 18), and the involvement of children in "immoral

professions" (Section 16). Yet, alongside these globally influenced ideas were reflections

of Hindu socio-cultural traditions such as prohibitions on the shaving of children's hair

for religious purposes (Section 13.2) and on the sacrifice of children to Gods or

Goddesses (Section 14).

---

[15] The Children's Act of 1992 did not cover child participation, despite the inclusion of this principle in the CRC. After the turn of the millennium, child participation would later become integrated into the National Child Policy and the National Plan of Action for Children (2004-2014).

While new ideas about children and childhood were taking root in the child-centered laws and policies, dimensions of the global ideology also became more evident than ever in the National Plans. At first in the 1990s, many ideas were slow to be integrated, however, by the turn of the millennium, a momentous transformation was underway. Later in the period, the Three Year Plans (2008-2010 and 2011-2013) would be especially influenced by the highly comprehensive child-centered strategies set forth in the National Plan of Action for Children (2004-2014). The increasing individualization of children was particularly apparent in the Eighth Five Year Plan. A comparison of the objectives of education between the Third (1965-1970) and Eighth (1992-1997) Five Year Plans in Table 4.4 demonstrates this point. Though both plans include national and individual development aims, the Eighth Plan is significantly stronger in its promotion of individualism. On a basic level, the term "individual" does not actually appear in the excerpt from the Third Plan—instead, the collective term, "the people," is used. Further, the Eighth Plan references individual rights and suggests a broader vision for individual development, beyond the solely serving the end goal of national socio-economic development, in which each individual has the right to develop according to her own aspirations and inherent potential. The language in the Eighth Plan clearly resonates with the global ideology of childhood, demonstrating firstly, how the child became seen as an individual entity with her own interests, needs, and aspirations, and secondly, how the aim of education became centered around the realization of the full potential of the individual child.

The inclusion of child rights provisions in the Constitution and the Eighth (1992-1997), Ninth (1997-2002), and Tenth (2002-2007) Year National Plans indicated the

newly recognized importance of child rights, but it wasn't until the Three Year Interim

Plan (2008-2010) that policy language extended beyond the basic right to education and

began to incorporate the fundamental principles of child rights. Two of the four general

principles of child rights were especially well-represented in that policy, those of non-

discrimination and respect for the views of the child (right to participate). The inclusion

of disadvantaged groups, such as Dalits, Adibasi Janajatis, Madhesis, girls, children with

disabilities, conflict-affected children, and poor and rural children, was stressed

throughout the policy as being essential both to increase access and to uphold the right of

all children to education. The policy also featured provisions to revise the curriculum in

order to "create awareness against [the] discriminatory social structure, to create gender

and caste based awareness, [and] to form [an] equity oriented society" (p. 274). The

policy further promotes the concept of education in all mother tongues so that no child

will be excluded from learning on the basis of their native language. In addition, child

participation in both school- and national-level processes was promoted in the Three Year

Interim Plan through the organization of child clubs to encourage the participation of

children in academic processes and through the establishment of a national mechanism

for fostering meaningful engagement of children and youth in national policy

development processes. The policy also included a provision for establishing a youth

parliament though its exact nature was not specified.

Despite the earlier inclusion of ideas about child protection in the Children's Act

of 1992, the Three Year Interim Plan (2008-2010) was the first national plan to advocate

the need to protect children by integrating the "schools as zones of peace" strategy

originally featured in the National Plan of Action for Children (2004-2014). As schools

were often the center of political struggle during the 10-year civil war, the concept of "schools as zones of peace" was first introduced in Nepal in 2001 by Save the Children as a way to promote the idea that schools should protect children's right to education by being places that are free from fear, violence, and political interference (Save the Children, 2011). The initiative embodies the idea that schools should be safe places where children can feel protected. Because the Three Year Interim Plan was largely developed to respond to the needs of a people struggling to rebuild their country after a long conflict, strategies such as "schools as zones of peace" were developed to extend support to the child population. The Three Year Interim Plan further states that "special attention will be given to solving the problems created for children due to the conflict, like mental stress…" (p. 267). This provision is particularly important because it exemplifies not only the basic idea that children are in need of protection, but also that in order to promote child well-being, society must protect all aspects of the child—physical, mental, emotional, and psychological.

Several aspects of the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-1997) and the Three Year Interim Plan (2008-2010) hinted at a growing awareness of the increasingly unique and complex developmental aims of child development as well as the whole child perspective of child development, though the term "whole child" and related terms were never used in the policy documents. First, evidence that schools needed to promote both the physical and mental development of children appeared in the Eighth Plan in the form of provisions for physical education and extracurricular activities. The policy stated that schools should conduct physical education classes, organize competitive sports and extra-curricular activities, and integrate textbooks updated with physical education content into

the curriculum. This new type of provision indicated an emerging awareness of the complexity of child development and the role of schools as facilitators of children's overall development. It also was an early precursor to the whole child perspective of child well-being which would begin to emerge more fully in the Three Year Interim Plan (2008-2010) with a provision for psychosocial counseling services at the local level. Finally, the Three Year Interim Plan included terms to continue and grow community-based early childhood development (ECD) centers and pre-primary education in order to prepare young children for school education and increase access to primary education. The establishment of the ECD centers signified an expansion of the period of childhood under the jurisdiction of societal institutions beyond the family, e.g., communities and the state. It further demonstrated an appreciation that child development is so complex and the needs of children so vast, that children need to be cared for before even beginning formal schooling.

Conclusion

Sixty years ago, the concept of the child was only a faint after-thought in Nepal's national education policies. Since then, the government of Nepal has adopted policies and plans that have gradually reflected the growing importance of the child in society. Conceptions of children and childhood in education policy have shifted from being defined as a singular end to national development to becoming more complex and individualized and endowed with specific rights. As such, these policies have incrementally incorporated the dimensions of the global ideology of childhood. Within this context, the introduction of the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools in

2010 seems just a small step from other child-focused policies. Yet, when thought about

in terms of the rapid historical transformation of cultural conceptions of children and

childhood demonstrated in this chapter, the idea of child-friendly schools is, in fact, quite

radical. In the next Chapter, I explore in detail how the global ideology of childhood is

reflected in the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools.

Figure 4.2: Literacy rates by gender in Nepal, 1951-2011
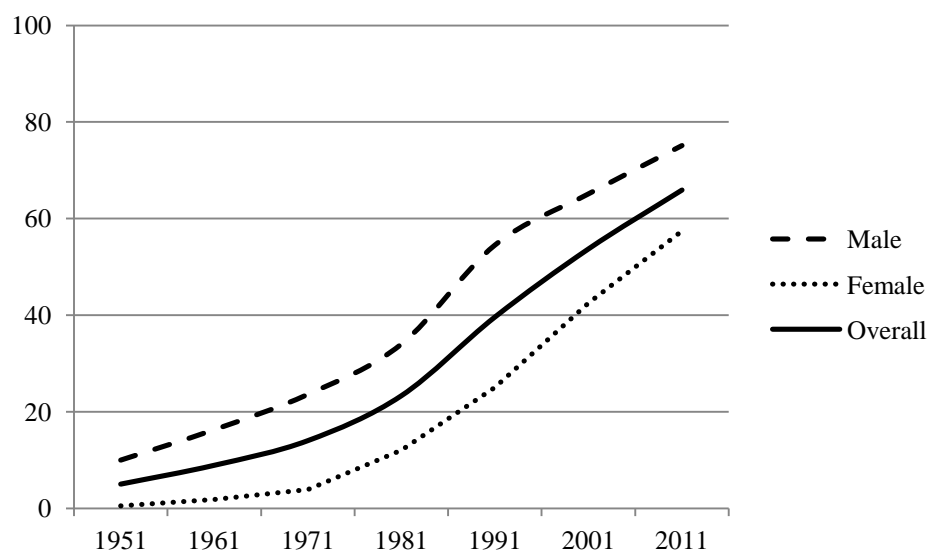
Source. Nepal Central Bureau of Statistics, various years.

Table 4.2: The emergence of the dimensions of the global ideology of childhood in select Nepali policies

	Dimensions of the global ideology of childhood					
Select policies	**Increasingly unique and complex developmental aims of childhood**	**Whole-child perspective of child development and well being**	**Children as bearers of human rights**	**Individualization of children**	**Child protection**	**Child development as national development**
First Five Year Plan, 1956-1961	N	N	N	P	N	Y
Third Five Year Plan, 1965-1970	N	N	N	P	N	Y
Fourth Five Year Plan, 1970-1975	N	N	N	P	N	Y
Sixth Five Year Plan, 1980-1985	P	P	N	P	N	Y
Eighth Five Year Plan, 1992-1997	P	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Eleventh Three Year Interim Plan, 2008-2010	Y	P	Y	Y	Y	Y
Children's Act, 1992	P	P	Y	N	Y	N
National Plan of Action for Children, 2004-2014	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Note. Y=Yes, dimension is represented; N=No, dimension is not represented; P=Partial, dimension is partially represented

Table 4.3: Expansion of schooling in Nepal, 1970-2010

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Enrollment									
Primary – Total	389,825	542,524	1,067,912	1,812,098	2,788,644	3,263,050	3,780,314	4,030,045	4,900,665
Female	58,093	84,008	299,512	541,649	1,003,810	1,301,640	1,611,333	1,865,012	2,453,935
Secondary – Total	...	281,816	512,434	496,921	708,663	1,016,443	1,348,212	2,054,165	2,675,217
Female	...	40,459	102,502	113,162	205,288	365,157	540,126	918,425	1,309,978
Gross enrollment ratio									
Primary – Total	26.81	53.53	93.72	86.77	116.93	120.58	126.36	119.74	141.05
Female	8.21	16.99	53.95	53.31	85.94	98.90	110.15	114.35	146.20
Secondary – Total	...	13.78	22.18	27.46	34.61	42.93	36.98	50.50	60.44
Female	...	4.07	9.12	12.86	20.49	31.97	29.64	45.37	59.57
Teachers									
Primary	17,988	18,874	27,805	51,266	71,213	82,645	99,382	101,483	153,536
Secondary	...	9,947	16,376	18,362	22,820	31,406	44,620	...	83,630
Public expenditure on education as a % of GDP	...	...	...	...	...	...	2.98	3.36	4.72

Notes. Data for primary and secondary levels includes both public and private schools. Data from UNESCO Institute of Statistics.

Table 4.4: Comparison of objectives of education in National Plans as evidence of the emerging individualization of children

Third Five Year Plan 1965-1970	Eighth Five Year Plan 1992-1997
Overall objective: Education plays an important role in the field of social economic development. Technical and [a]dministrative knowledge required for the creation of a modern society is obtained from an education that is in keeping with the need of the times. In addition, education is vital for the promotion of the intellectual and physical personality of the people…	1. To contribute towards the development of the inherent talents and personality of every individual.
1. To provide education to 40 percent of the boys and girls from six to eleven years of age and to expand the teachers' training programme in the same proportion.	2. To prepare citizens who are loyal to the nation and nationality, dedicated to the preservation of country's sovereignty and independence, conscious of their rights and duties, and have high moral character.
2. To develop secondary and vocational education in accordance with the need for skilled and semi-skilled personnel.	3. To help each individual in preparing himself/herself for life in the modern world, and to promote socialization of the individuals.
3. To raise the standard of teaching in secondary and higher educational institutions.	4. To develop science and technology, knowledge, technical skills and competence needed for economic development of the country, and thereby prepare capable manpower needed for various national development areas.
4. To supply books and other education materials as required by the educational institutions.	5. To enhance the spirit of nationality and strengthen social unity by preserving and promoting the glorious national culture, arts, music, national languages and by promoting creativity and research.
5. To make necessary improvements in the work the Education Ministry concerning statistics and programming in order to create a sound base for the formulation of education development programmes in the future.	6. To contribute to the conservation and proper utilization of the natural environment and national resources.
	7. To help in the integration of communities and groups that have lagged behind in society in the national main stream.

Notes. The objectives of the Third Plan are specific to that plan while the objectives of the Eighth Plan are proposed as overall objectives of education. Overall objectives of education were not explicitly enumerated in the Third Plan. Data from All Round National Education Committee, Third Five Year Plan, p. 73; National Education Commission, Eighth Five Year Plan, p. 327.

Chapter 5: Global ideas in national policy:
Analysis of the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools

Introduction

As a case study of a policy within the context of one country, I aim to provide a detailed analysis of whether and how that country has incorporated elements of global culture concerning children and childhood into national thinking through policy adoption and implementation. Towards that end, this chapter addresses the first research question:

> *Research question 1:* How is the global ideology of childhood reflected in Nepal's National Framework of Child-friendly Schools for Quality Education policy? What similarities or differences exist between the global ideology and the national policy?

Specifically, to determine the extent to which the global ideology of childhood has permeated the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools, this chapter has two primary aims: (1) to describe the contents of the National Framework as codified in the policy document and as embedded in participants' understanding of the concept of "child-friendliness" that defines the policy; and (2) to analyze the extent to which the dimensions of the global ideology of childhood are reflected in the policy document and in participants' understandings of the meaning of children, childhood, and the policy itself. In doing so, I search for similarities and differences between the global ideology and the national policy.

I first deconstruct the child-friendly schools policy through a detailed description of its content and provisions and provide an overview of how participants understand the meaning of "child-friendliness." This latter piece of the analysis is critical since individual interpretations of "child-friendliness" are integrally related to how actors may

variously interpret and reproduce the policy through implementation. Then, before

moving into the main analysis of the chapter, I examine how the participants define

children and childhood through age-based legal definitions and through characteristics

that distinguish childhood from adulthood. Next, I analyze the policy document and

interview transcripts for evidence of the global ideology of childhood, discussing the

extent to which the six dimensions are reflected and what, if any, additional ideas are

represented. The chapter concludes by discussing from a historical perspective how

notions of childhood have evolved over time.

Deconstructing the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools

Description of content and provisions

At its core, the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools aims to transform

primary schools by making them more suitable and effective for children's learning. It

seeks to bring about this transformation through a focus on improving the quality of

education in every school. Yet, as the policy admits, "quality" is a "relative and abstract

subject" (p. 3). Figure 5.1 provides some initial insight into how the policy defines

quality by answering the question, "What is a child-friendly school?" The answer

captures the policy's focus on learning as well as the basic principles of a child-friendly

school, from the provision of a safe environment to the prohibition against

discrimination.

Figure 5.1: Excerpt from the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools document: "What is [a] child-friendly school?"

A school that provides a learning environment suitable to the children is a child-friendly school. In such schools, environment for children is conducive to learning and their inherent potentials are developed. Furthermore, in these schools:

- Children receive a safe and healthy environment, physically, mentally and emotionally.
- Children's aptitude, capacity and level are respected and provision is made for necessary environment and curriculum for their learning accordingly.
- Teachers bear the full responsibility for assessing the learner's achievement in terms of learning.
- Children are encouraged to enroll in school without any discrimination on grounds of their caste/ethnicity, sex, financial status, physical and mental frailty, and are treated without discrimination both within and outside school.
- In addition to children's education, special attention is paid to their health and security needs.
- Children, parents and communities take part actively in policy making, planning, implementation and evaluation of activities in the schools.
- All times of physical, corporal and mental punishment are prohibited, and constant efforts are made to protect children from abuse and harm.

Additionally, by synthesizing learnings from international assumptions, national policy, and the Nepali context, the policy sets forth nine aspects of child-friendly schools which are then broken down into 149 indicators (see Appendix B for a full list of the indicators). As stated in Chapter 1, those aspects, which represent the minimum standards necessary for the establishment of a child-friendly school, are:

1. Effectiveness
2. Inclusion
3. Gender perspective in education
4. Participation of children, families and communities
5. Health, security and protection
6. Physical condition of school
7. Teaching and learning process
8. Teaching and learning in mother tongue
9. School management

The stated expectation is that schools will, either independently or with external

assistance from local education institutions, I/NGOs, the community, and other

stakeholders, identify the aspects that need to be improved, incorporate appropriate

measures for improvement in the school improvement plan, and through "objective and

effective" monitoring and evaluation, incrementally improve their school quality and the

learning outcomes of all students (p. 7).

How participants understand the meaning of child-friendliness

The description above derives exclusively from official documentation of the

policy. In the interviews, although I found consensus with regard to participants'

understanding of some aspects of the policy, on other aspects, their views were divergent.

I discuss three common themes that illuminate the shared and diverse interpretations of

child-friendliness among the participants. Because the themes are so interconnected, I

list them all here and discuss them together below:

1. Relationship of child-friendliness to school quality
2. Focus on physical environment versus pedagogy
3. Shift from traditional to progressive methods

Many participants agreed that child-friendliness was very closely tied with school

quality—not quite synonymous but related. Though their exact characterizations of the

relationship varied, most agreed that they were mutually reinforcing states. As the Senior

Officer from BASE explained:

> These are parallel. These both things should go together—quality education and
> child-friendly education. Without child-friendly approach, without child-friendly
> teaching practice you can't get quality education. So that is the difference.

On the surface, his statement clearly indicates that child-friendliness is a means towards

the end of quality education, a relationship that was reflected in the responses of several

other participants and mirrored in the policy document. Yet there are revealing nuances

evident in his use of "child-friendly" as a descriptor of "education," "approach," and

"teaching practice." "Child-friendly" can be both a generic term for a type of education,

and it can be a term that more specifically describes a pedagogical approach. The

dichotomy between these usages seemed to shape the perspectives of participants who

thought of child-friendliness solely in terms of the teacher-student interaction and the

contrasting perspectives of those who thought of it in broader, environmental terms. The

Education Officer with Save the Children offered this explanation:

> …[I]n my understanding child-friendly has more to do with environment, like
> safety or clean water, and gender-friendly. But of course, this [paper][16] says
> effectiveness for learning as well. But when you say quality, again, I think it's
> very highly arguable and debatable. But at least for me quality is more to do with
> teaching and learning, and how much students are learning, basic reading, writing
> skills and math skills, for instance.

In her personal view, child-friendliness is an environmental aspect. In other words, it is

something that characterizes the suitableness of the school building and available

resources for use by children. However, in referencing the material from UNICEF, she

acknowledges that this perspective is contested. Her response also points to the common,

yet widely debated, assumption that physical improvements have a limited impact on

children's learning outcomes and therefore should not be considered as contributors to

educational quality. Instead, according to this assumption, aspects of the teaching and

learning process which can be empirically linked to children's outcomes are more valid

measures of educational quality.

     Official #1 from the Department of Education, who supported the writing of the

policy, held a contrasting view on the role of the physical environment in defining the

---

[16] She is referring to a description of child-friendly schools that she had printed from the UNICEF website.

concept of child-friendliness. While he agreed with the Save the Children Education

Officer that quality education derived from a focus on pedagogy and learning, he differed

in his understanding of the focus of the child-friendly schools policy:

> Now what we are trying to do and the thrust of the Child-friendly Framework is that we need to focus on the learning psychology. That means pedagogical psychology. There is one slogan, I don't know how to say it in English. We may not need school room, the school. If the teacher and the student are in the position and situation of learning, we can learn even under a tree.

Thus, while the policy implementer (Save the Children Education Officer) and the policy

creator (Official #1 from the Department of Education) agreed on what contributes to the

achievement of strong learning outcomes among children, they disagreed on their

interpretations of the intention of the policy.

Education Officer #2 from the United Mission to Nepal, who was non-Nepali,

also felt that there were different conceptual interpretations of child-friendliness between

the policy creators and teachers. She expressed that there was a distinction between the

views of "Westerners" and Nepalis with regard to the difference between quality and

child-friendly education. She attributes this distinction to an apparent contradiction

between child-friendly theory and practice, as indicated below.

> I think in the mind of the Westerners, who developed this whole concept, they [child-friendly and quality education] should be the same. But in the minds of many of the teachers here in Nepal, they are not necessarily connected. Well, three years ago I walked in a classroom in Sunsari, in the Southeast of Nepal, and the headmaster proudly said, "We now have a child-friendly classroom!" And it looked nice, the walls were painted, they had carpet on the floor, and it was all fine. So then I asked the students, does the teacher ever hit you? And they said, "Oh yes, the stick." And the stick was about more than a meter long. So child-friendly classroom, yes, child-friendly, no. Was the teacher saying on purpose saying, "I hate kids, I want to hit them"?—no. He had 60-70 kids in his classroom and he just had no idea how to keep them in line otherwise. So he was fine with the concept of changing the classroom, not having them sit in benches.

> That's easy to do. But how do you manage a classroom, the soft part of it? That's a different story. And because most of those teachers have never seen any other example—their teachers were hitting them, their teachers were teaching them through rote learning. How can you do it different? Especially when you have such large classrooms?

Through the example of the teacher in Sunsari, she explained that some teachers may believe they have created child-friendly education just because they have improved the physical learning environment. However, subjecting children to abuse and harm through the use of corporal punishment, in fact, violates the core principles of child-friendly education. The Education Officer from World Education similarly stated that the ideal child-friendly teaching-learning environment is one in which, not only does the teacher not have "a stick in their hand," but one in which the children "practice learning with dignity and joyful learning." These examples clearly capture the ways that different actors variously understood child-friendliness to apply to either improvements in the school physical environment or improvements in pedagogy and interactions between the students and teachers.

The above quote from the Education Officer at the United Mission to Nepal also points to the significant shift from traditional, teacher-centered methods to progressive, child-centered learning. While many teachers in Nepal continue to use traditional pedagogical methods such as rote memorization, lecture-style lessons with limited student participation, and corporal punishment, the child-friendly schools policy advocates for child-focused, interactive, activity-based learning. In explaining the need for the child-friendly schools policy, the policy document states:

> Most of the schools in Nepal are still being run in a conventional way in terms of management and teaching-learning. The whole school environment is focused on encouraging children to get the text by heart. The text books and teaching aids made available by the central level only are being used. Seldom are the teaching

and learning materials that can be made available at the local level utilized. For all these reasons, teaching and learning that are suitable to children has not been addressed properly.

Additionally, many participants understood the shift away from traditionalism in the policy to involve the promotion of process-oriented over content-oriented teaching. In other words, the focus of child-friendly education should be on how children learn and not so much what they learn (i.e., strict adherence to the textbook). As the Education Officer from Rato Bangala Foundation explained:

> …[I]t's very traditional: blackboard is there, textbook is there, and the teacher comes to the front and gives central instructions. The children become a passive recipient. They get to listen to the teacher and follow what he or she is teaching. This is very traditional and very outdated. That makes the classroom boring for children…

Many schools have also implemented the progressive, child-friendly ideas through changes in the classroom set-up: benches and desks arranged in front-facing rows have been replaced with seating arrangements that better facilitate group work and increased interactions between both teachers and students and students with each other. Contrary to the Department of Education Official's idea of learning under a tree referenced above, these environmental changes reflect the view of some participants that the pedagogical aspect of child-friendliness can be enhanced through physical improvements. Thus, despite some limited variation, almost all unequivocally agreed that the aim of child-friendly schooling was to move away from traditional approaches which were not in the best interests of children.

The above discussion shows that there is no absolute consensus on the meaning of child-friendly, but these various perspectives nevertheless help to provide a richer understanding of the policy's content and provisions and how it is understood by key

stakeholders. These diverse understandings of the meaning of child-friendliness collectively suggest that there may be as much variation in participants' understandings of children and childhood. I turn to this topic in the next section.

Reflections of the global ideology of childhood in the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools

Before comparing and contrasting the child-friendly schools policy with the global ideology of childhood, it is first important to understand how participants understand children and childhood. Despite the ubiquity of childhood as a social construct, participant responses reflected a high level of complexity surrounding notions of childhood. These responses can be broken down according to two primary themes: age-based legal definitions and characteristics that distinguish childhood from adulthood.

Definitions and descriptions of children and childhood

When asked to define childhood, many participants began by stating age-based legal definitions drawing on both national and international provisions. For example, several participants stated that according to the CRC, which Nepal signed, childhood was from 0-18 years old, while according to Nepali policies, the upper age limit was either 14 or 16 years old. A few participants defined childhood as only extending to 10 or 12 years of age. Still others used legal definitions based on civil rights. The UNESCO Senior Official explained that:

> Legally, any person under 18 years, they are a child. In some cases, in the context of labor, we have defined the child below 14 years, and for getting citizenship, they have to pass 16 years. And if voting rights are ensured, then 18 years. So there are different types of definition[s] of child in Nepal.

Additionally, the official from World Education distinguished between her personal and

organizational views:

> I: What is your definition of childhood?
>
> P: OK, in my opinion, childhood is that, children are under the age of 10. I don't
> if it's wrong or right.
>
> I: Whatever you think.
>
> P: Yeah, it's very much the sensitive age…
>
> I: OK. And in this program, does it also use that same definition, that children are
> under 10?
>
> P: No actually, we haven't defined child and infant and other thing[s] because we
> are not working that much in the child development perspective.
>
> I: You are not?
>
> P: No, because in our project, children means [those] who are under 18. Those
> are the children. And in Nepali law, children [are those] who are under 14.
> Those children should be in school. [According to] labor laws, they are not
> allowed to work at all. Children who are over 14 years of age, our labor law
> allows them to work. They can work in close observation of adults…

There are several important takeaways from these definitions. First, they show that

participants initially thought of childhood in very objective ways, as something that could

be easily defined with numbers. However, even on the basis of a measurement as

seemingly objective as age, the explanations underpin the complexity of defining

childhood. Not only did the ages of childhood vary between individuals, but even

between individuals and organizations.

Other participants, when asked to define childhood, provided more descriptive

explanations. Some even used unique metaphors which revealed how they

conceptualized children. For example, the Education Officer from NNDSWO suggested

that children are like mud because mud is "very easy to shape." He went on to explain

that childhood is "not a perfect concept" so we can shape the mud "to make a good person from children." This characterization of children supports the need for child-focused activities that cultivate the "interest, emotion, ideas, and creativity" of children and allow them to use their "full potential," he argued. The Senior Official from BASE similarly described children as people who are "not perfect in every way," especially in terms of levels of maturity and responsibility.

Many participants described childhood in terms of how it was different from adulthood. They cited children's behavior, psychology, and needs as elements which differentiated children from adults. Participants also emphasized children's "sensitivity" and the idea that childhood is a time that should be joyful and carefree. The official from IFCD described the difference between children and adults in this way:

> If you are going to teach the children, you have to be a child at heart. Being an adult is not flexible. If you want to teach organized activities for children you have to be like a child—relaxed, free, very mobile, these sort of things. But being an adult, you are hard, and tight, and very rigid.

Similarly, the following exchange with the UNESCO Senior Official further illustrates the demarcation between childhood and adulthood as well as an understanding of childhood as an increasingly complex stage of life that can be defined differently depending on the perspective:

> I: In addition to age, what makes children different from adults?
>
> P: What types of characteristics are you asking? Biological, or mental or psychological?
>
> I: Well, that is what I want you to decide. What do you think is important?
>
> P: Yeah, yeah, psychological thing is the most important, because biological can automatically be seen in the manhood. So children, psychologically they are innocent, they have extreme/strange (?) thinking, psychologically they are always

changing their interest. And also they want to play and other such types of joyful situations. So that is the difference from adulthood.

These definitions collectively show how participants variously defined childhood. Though some participants adhered to objective age-based definitions, even these were not so simple. The definitions of other participants which drew out the specific qualities unique to children pointed to the increasingly complex ways of constructing childhood and understanding child development. As we turn next to the analysis of the child-friendly schools policy, it is important to keep these complex definitions in mind.

Evidence of the global ideology of childhood in the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools

In this section, I present the primary findings of this chapter in response to Research Question 1, which probes the extent to which the global ideology of childhood is reflected in the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools policy. I analyze evidence according to the six dimensions in both the child-friendly schools policy document and in participant interviews. A summary of the evidence for each dimension and examples from each data source are presented in Table 5.1.

Childhood as a unique stage with increasingly unique and complex developmental aims. Although participants frequently defined childhood in terms of how it was different from adulthood, most seemed to largely take for granted the idea of childhood as a distinct developmental stage. As an exception, Education Officer #2 from the United Mission to Nepal alluded to the Aries thesis while reporting her observation of an emerging awareness in Nepali society of the unique developmental needs of children. She explained:

>P: I think there is a developing sense that children are not small adults, and children are not empty slates that you have to fill—

>I: Do you feel that was the view before?

>P: Yeah, I mean, people were not so bothered by caring and nurturing kids. Kids came along and when they were big enough to help out in the field, they would do so. Many kids would die. That's just how it goes. *Ke garne*[17], you probably heard that, it's quite fatalistic in how you do things.

Her statement illustrates the view that children have come to be seen as possessing special qualities that distinguish them from adults. Notably, she also recognizes that this view is part of a larger shift in how children are cared for in Nepali society. By describing how children in the past were treated as miniature adults, especially once they reached a certain level of physical maturity (i.e., "when they were big enough to help out in the field"), and were in a sense neglected by the family, she implicitly shows how there has been a gradual shift in the value of children, ideas about child development, and the importance of children in society—all notions that echo with the "increasingly unique and complex developmental aims of children" dimension of the global ideology of childhood.

Further, the UMN Education Officer references the current recognition that children require intensive nurturing. In this way, child development is no longer thought to be a change that automatically happens, but a concerted process by which children become the focus of the family, and, as we will see below, the school. Yet this concerted process does not only pertain to physical growth, but also psychological, social, and emotional well-being as well. The idea that child development comprises these complex aspects was featured in the statements of numerous participants including the BASE

---

[17] Common Nepali saying that loosely translates to "What can you do?" or "What will be, will be." The spirit of *ke garne* shapes a very fatalistic national ideology.

Senior Official, both Researchers from CERID, the IFCD Education Officer, the Kailali

District Education Officer, the NNDSWO Education Officer, the Education Officer (#1)

from the United Mission to Nepal, and the UNESCO Senior Official. In short,

individuals from every participant category, except the Department of Education,

referenced either the psychology or emotions of children as being integral to child

development.

The policy document also mentioned children's emotional well-being, though it

did not include any references to child psychology. However, despite the absence of

wording pertaining to child psychology, the document nevertheless captures the

complexity of child development by stating that quality education should ensure

"conditions for learning in a child-friendly environment without any harm to [children's]

physical, mental, intellectual and emotional development from any quarters." That these

very modern aspects of child development have to varying degrees permeated the policy

document and the thinking of policy implementers, signals a strong correspondence

between the child-friendly schools policy and the "increasingly unique and complex

developmental aims of childhood" dimension of the global ideology of childhood.

A focus on the unique developmental needs of children is also reflected in the

content of the child-friendly school policy document in which there is a strong emphasis

on ensuring that education "puts the needs and interest of the child at the top" (p. 23). In

fact, the indicators of a child-friendly school are even stated as having been designed to

be aligned with "children's interest, aptitude, [and] capacity" (p. 7, 9). Additionally, the

policy states that, ."..teaching [should be] according to pupils' aspirations (their standard,

pace and absorptive capacity), [and] localization of curricula and development of need-

based curricula are necessary." These excerpts underscore the importance of designing schooling in such a way that the specific developmental needs of children are met and the child is considered as "the focal point of the whole education" (p. 3).

Another prevalent theme related to the uniqueness and complexity of child development that frequently surfaced in the interviews was the idea of the inner potentiality in children. As children develop en route to adulthood, they possess an inner potential that, when fully realized, allows them to not only thrive, but also fulfill their own wishes and contribute to the common good of society. This idea is especially important for two reasons. First, it shaped the views of stakeholders that all children have the potential to learn regardless of ethnicity, caste, gender, or other forms of potential disadvantage. And secondly, despite contextual variations, it captures the universal nature of children. As the Education Officer #1 at the United Mission to Nepal articulated:

> And the early grade children, whether they are from Nepal or Africa or USA, they are the same!...And children from Korea are performing better in Asia, children are performing better in Japan because that infrastructure is designed in such a way over there that they get more opportunity to learn. And here, children [have] equally capable potentials, but there is no such environment existing here.

Official #2 from the Department of Education, who was highly involved in the development of the child-friendly schools policy, expanded this idea by explaining that it is the role of the school and parents to act as facilitators—not directors—of children's development. Children are then free to develop according to their own wishes and to their full potential:

> For children there may be different kind of possibilities. Maybe some children want to be a doctor and some want to be a social activist and some want to be an artist or dancer or other things. All are free. If they have some kind of potentiality then they have to write, grow their possibility and potentiality, and the

school and the teachers should facilitate this. This is our model. Then definitely children have the right and are free to explore their ideas and for this the school and teachers are a facilitator group, I mean from the parents and teachers and educational personnel, they have to facilitate for them. And for this the child-friendly framework contributes.

This faith in children's inner potential hints at the aim of self-actualization embedded in the global ideology of childhood. Indeed, as the comments indicate, participants felt that children are in charge of their own development and their own actualization, in which they are free to pursue their dreams and desires. By facilitating children on this self-directed pathway, the child-friendly school becomes a place in which all children can succeed.

Whole child perspective of child development and well being. Although the term "whole child" was not explicitly referenced in any of the interviews or the policy document, the essence of the whole child perspective was represented in other more subtle ways in the data. Even so, given that this term is so prevalent in other contemporary IGO and INGO expressions of the global ideology of childhood, this lack of direct referencing was surprising. The term, "holistic development," was also completely absent from all of the data with the exception of one statement made by the CERID Researcher #1:

> But again, in looking at our context…so we do value the development of the child in a holistic way and we are concerned about the survival of the child, but we are not looking at the holistic development. Because if you look at the INGOs and UN agencies, like UNICEF's involvement in the school education, they were more focusing early in the 70s and 80s on immunizations…because they were concerned more about survival at that time. And now they are focusing more on the development and it's not only physical development but it's totally holistic development of the child, so the psycho-social part comes together among it. That's why it is being changed that way. And the CRC, you know, advocates for that, so that's why I said that the whole [child-friendly] framework is based on the concept of the CRC.

His claim suggests that in the Nepali context there is an apparent discrepancy between attitudes and behaviors with regard to child development. He states that we—it is not clear if he is referring to all Nepalis, the international development community, researchers, or another group—value the whole child perspective in theory but do not actually promote the holistic well-being of children in practice. As he puts forward, this may in part be due to the nature of the historical evolution of the whole child perspective. In the 1970s and 1980s, INGOs and IGOs such as UNICEF concentrated their efforts on only one aspect of child development, that of survival and physical growth through various health strategies, one of which was immunizations. However, over time other aspects of child development, such as psychological, social, emotional, and cognitive, were added to the thinking on how to care for children, and this coalescing of aspects reinforced the whole child perspective (Schaub et al., in progress). This incremental process of attitudinal and behavioral change might explain why some parts of society currently "value the development of the child in a holistic way" but are not yet "looking at [or practicing] the holistic development."

A defining feature of traditional approaches which lie in opposition to the whole child perspective is that aspects of child development are viewed in isolation, or compartmentalized. Though all of the I/NGOs included in this study reported to be implementing multi-sectoral programs, several participants claimed that some NGOs only focused on one aspect of child development and therefore were not truly implementing child-friendly approaches. For example, the BASE District Official indicated that one INGO didn't "focus on all indicators of the child-friendly approach" and that they only support[ed] one indicator like health activities at each school." Whether this claim is true

or false is largely irrelevant for it still reveals the critique of the BASE official to be strongly informed by the whole child perspective. Other participants, such as Department of Education Official #1, similarly emphasized the need to integrate development projects so as to promote holistic child development.

A second important feature of the whole child perspective is the inclusion of new categories of child well-being, such as psychological, social, emotional, and cognitive along with the traditional category of physical development. Although, evidence of these categories was already presented in the section on the increasingly unique and complex aims of child development, it is also important to highlight their connection to the whole child perspective. CERID Researcher #2, for instance, emphasized that children's emotional well-being was a keystone for a child's overall development, stating that "if the children are not emotionally healthy, we cannot do anything with them." Notably, she mentioned that these ideas about emotional health were seriously underappreciated by government actors. Other ways of describing children's social and psychological development within the context of child-friendly schooling included references to creativity, building confidence, speaking up, asking questions, and displays of maturity. Further, as discussed above, while these new categories of child development and well-being were well-represented in the interview data, they were less evident in the policy document, aside from the general reference that quality education should ensure "conditions for learning in a child-friendly environment without any harm to [children's] physical, mental, intellectual, and emotional development from any quarters."

There was a particularly strong emphasis on the importance of cognitive development. One consequence of the emergence of the whole child perspective is an

increased appreciation for children's cognitive development and widespread acceptance

of the idea that schooling is a necessary activity for child development. For example, the

Education Officer from Plan Nepal talked about how learning is crucial for defining

childhood:

> P:…childhood means the children should have a[n] enjoyable environment so that the child can develop their inner potentiality and also can participate better in the learning process. Not only the formal academic learning process, but also the informal and non-formal way of learning. If the child will have the opportunity to spend [time] in this environment then the child will have a kind of childhood. Otherwise, that will not be.
>
> I: Otherwise it is not?
>
> P: It is not childhood…

Thus, physical growth must be combined with mental growth for healthy and normative

child development. The importance of cognitive development for children's overall

development is also reflected to a limited degree in the policy document. In the section

on "Health, security, and protection," it states, "Children's health has a direct bearing on

their learning and on their participation in activities conducted in the school. Without

being physically and mentally healthy, no child can develop properly" (p. 15). Though

an emphasis on cognitive development might at first seem unsurprising for an education

policy, it is a huge departure from previous Nepali education policies which put forth

more limited views of child development. Overall, while a variety of participants

referenced aspects of holistic child development, this perspective was not mentioned by

all participants. Most surprisingly, none used the term, "the whole child," nor was it

present in the policy document. These findings indicate that the whole child perspective

of the global ideology does not represent a major component of the child-friendly schools

policy.

Children as bearers of human rights. As stated in the policy document and in the interviews of almost all participants, child rights are integral to the concept of child-friendly schools. Though I often did not directly ask about children's rights in the interview questions, most participants nevertheless spoke extensively about the topic. In fact, participants mentioned children as bearers of human rights, particularly the right to education, so often that this dimension was unanimously the most prominent of all dimensions of the global ideology of childhood. At issue, though, is whether participants truly understood the meaning of child rights, or if they were simply regurgitating popular rhetoric, and whether the promotion of child rights was linked to the actual implementation and true realization of those rights in child-friendly schools. Because of the prominence of this dimension, I devote considerable space in this sub-section to presenting extensive evidence first from the policy document and then from the interviews.

According to the policy, child-friendly schools are one effort of several national initiatives that are being implemented to "increase access and ensure quality education" in accordance with the right of all children to education established in the CRC, the Interim Constitution of Nepal (which includes a provision on the right to education), and national documents on education. Moreover, the first stated objective of the policy is "to address the international commitments endorsed by Nepal such as the CRC, Education for All and MDGs" (p. 7). The final objective is "to promote right-based quality education" through child-friendly schools. The critical importance of these objectives cannot be understated for they reflect a strong national commitment to comply with international norms and standards, and in particular, the recent global shift in priorities

from ensuring the right of children to access to schooling to the right to learn through

quality education. By conceptualizing learning as a right of all children, schools have an

obligation to ensure that no child is left behind and that all children master, at a

minimum, basic literacy and numeracy skills, and additionally enhance their aptitude for

critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and other soft skills. By conceptualizing

quality education as a right, the policy codifies the obligation of different actors to ensure

the realization of that right. The question remains, though, whose obligation is it? While

the Department of Education has provided the policy as a "guideline," it seems that the

responsibility of implementing the policy and thus fulfilling children's rights lies mainly

with schools, communities and families.   I investigate this question more thoroughly in

Chapter 7.

Through the focus on the right to learn, the policy document addresses each of the

four general principles identified by the Committee on the Rights of the Child that are

necessary for the realization of all children's rights—the principles of non-discrimination,

best interests of the child, survival and development, and respect for the views of the

child (right to participate). Because these principles are commonly used as criteria to

assess national progress in protecting children's rights, their inclusion in the policy

document is a crucial reflection of the permeation of the global ideology of childhood

into national-level discourse. One of the defining aspects of a child-friendly school is the

principle of non-discrimination. According to the policy:

> Children are encouraged to enrol in school without any discrimination on [the]
> grounds of their caste/ethnicity, sex, financial status, physical and mental frailty,
> and are treated without discrimination both within and outside school. (p. 6)

The minimum standards on inclusiveness, gender, and teaching and learning in the mother tongue all ensure adherence to the non-discrimination principle. Secondly, though the phrase, "best interests of the child," does not appear in the policy, the essence of this idea is nevertheless found throughout. For example, children are considered as "the focal point of the whole education" (p. 3) and of "their own future" (p. 7). These phrases suggest that the child's interests are being prioritized in all decisions concerning the child. Provisions are also included in the policy for the survival and development rights of children through references to the right of children "to live free of diseases and, if ill, receive prompt treatment" (p. 15), the requirement for schools to conduct regular health checkups and nutrition programs, and connections between children's health and their learning and overall development. For instance:

> Children's health has a direct bearing on their learning and on their participation in activities conducted in the school. Without being physically and mentally healthy, no child can develop properly (p. 15).

Finally, the principle of respect for the views of the child and the right of children to participate was especially prominent in both the policy document through the establishment of child clubs and the inclusion of children in School Management Committees (SMCs). I elaborate on the right to participate below as this principle was particularly prominent in the interview data.

In the interviews, participants used rights-based terminology extensively when speaking about child-friendly schools. Phrases such as "the right to education" and "rights-based approaches to education" were very common. However, the extent to which participants understood the meaning of child rights varied greatly. Some participants, such as CERID Researcher #1 and UMN Education Officer #1, were able to

clearly articulate the conceptual foundations of children's rights, even reciting the four basic principles. In contrast, Official #2 from the Department of Education who was closely involved in the development and implementation of the policy used the least rights-based language of all the participants. Other participants, such as Department of Education Official #1, conveyed an out-dated, access-focused definition of the right to education. He remarked, "Child rights means for me the right of the child to go to the school. That is the fundamental thing." In contrast, other participants understood that the right to education to mean the right to "a good learning environment" (World Education Officer), the right to "joyful learning" (UNICEF Education Officer #1) and the right to "learn, share, and get education in a friendly manner" (World Vision Education Officer).

There were other nuances in how participants understood child rights. Many participants, including those from CERID, the Department of Education, NNDSWO, UMN, and UNICEF, understood child rights as an international concept which derived from the CRC. The UNESCO Senior Official, while acknowledging the global origins of children's rights concepts, attested that these ideas had now become ingrained in Nepali thinking as evidenced by their inclusion in the National Constitution which then informs all education policies. The CERID Researcher was able to assess that while the Framework is based on the four principles of child rights, in practice those principles are often not implemented fully. The Sociologist with the Nepal Institute of Development Studies (NIDS) and the Education Officer #2 from UMN were similarly critical of the increased awareness of rights in Nepali society without the fulfillment of those rights. As the Sociologist stated, "We are enjoying human rights in the absence of food, safe water, transportation. So we are enjoying our freedom of speech, and many other human rights,

but not basic needs." Several participants, including the Education Officers from Samunnat Nepal and the United Mission to Nepal (#2), spoke of child rights as a modern system, compared with the old traditional system in which teachers and other members of society were not protecting child rights. Both the Education Officers from Plan Nepal and Samunnat Nepal spoke of child rights in terms of respecting "children's dignity."

Understandings of child rights were so broad and varied that other participants at times spoke of them in terms of the right to health, play, eat, participation, personality development, freedom from corporal punishment, make decisions, leadership, protection, nutrition, livelihood, entertainment, talk, stand, speak , use the toilet, and, finally, the right to enjoy chocolate. On the one hand, the extensiveness of this list hints at an over-usage of rights terminology among some participants and, despite an abundance of rhetoric, suggests that they may not have a good understanding of the true meaning of child rights. On the other hand, perhaps it is not that participants do not understand the meaning of rights, but rather that they are articulating the broadness of childhood experiences that they feel all children are entitled too. The latter interpretation makes sense in the context of the global ideology of childhood which holds that, despite different contexts, societies all over the world share a belief that children are entitled to certain universal childhood experiences. The following exchange with the Education Officer from World Vision demonstrates this point:

> P: …And those four aspirations [18][of World Vision] can help to achieve the child well-being… And within the four aspirations we have a number of outcomes. This way we strive to achieve those goals.

---

[18] The four aspirations, or guiding principles, of World Vision are that every child should have good health, all children should be educated for life, every child should be protected, and every child should have some kind of inner feeling of love and affection.

I: So I think what you are saying is that the needs of children all over the world are defined by the same rights? Is that what you mean?

P: Same rights? Yes, they should have. If a U.S. child can eat a chocolate, love to eat a chocolate, that right should be for our children also. However, the needs might be different.

I: More specific needs might be different in different contexts?

P: Or Thai parents can afford their children a chocolate, maybe a Nepali parent who lives in a mountainous area could afford the money for the chocolate but the chocolate might not be available in that community. Or if there is a chocolate, the parents might not have the money to buy it for the children. So the context is different.

The Officer's affirmation that the rights necessary for the fulfillment of children's well-being are universally the same—even though specific needs and contexts may be different—is a clear reflection of the global ideology of childhood.

When asked about the role of child rights in the child-friendly school initiative, participants often focused on the principle of respect for the views of the child (right to participate). The following excerpt from the interview with the Education Officer from Plan Nepal is a good example:

I: Do ideas about children's rights play any role in the programs?

P: Yeah, actually Plan is always promoting the children's participation in all the development initiatives. And me personally, I think we should consider child participation because children will have a good knowledge rather than adults.

I: What do you mean?

P: Sometimes they can suggest a better way, rather than the adults. Because what I experienced in the field, when I talked with the students, [I asked them] 'what should we do to improve the schools?' The adults always suggest making a big building and hiring teachers and other things. But the students are always saying, 'we need a library', and they say, 'our teachers have not xxx' and sometimes they suggest that 'we need playing materials'. That's why when we design any sort of

education program, if we talk to the students and teachers and parents, then the idea is more innovative from the students rather than the parents. That's why personally I respect children's participation in child-friendly initiatives.

Though I asked about child rights, the Education Officer did not mention child rights at all in his answer. Instead, he seemed to understand child rights solely in terms of child participation and thus focused on that one principle which was most important to him. Further, his comments provide evidence of the principle of acting in the best interests of children. He suggests that children will have the most insightful ideas about what is in their best interest and the best interest of the school so school leaders should ensure their voices are included in reform initiatives (see Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2: Image of children participating in a school management committee (SMC) meeting

Source. National Framework of Child-friendly Schools poster from the office of Department of Education Official #2.

Researcher #1 from CERID similarly drew a singular focus to the principle of child participation. He stated:

You know the CRC and the four major aspects of child rights, and we advocate for the child's participation. Let the child speak, let's value his or her opinions and views and anything he decides in the school system and also at home.

Accordingly, a crucial aspect of realizing children's rights is valuing their opinions. Many participants agreed that children's rights must be protected in all contexts, whether in school, in the communit, or at home.

As a minimum indicator of child participation, the Framework calls for the formation of child clubs at all child-friendly schools. Also called child rights clubs or child rights protection groups, child clubs are a form of student government that allow children to have a greater voice in the development of their schools and hold teachers, communities, and governments accountable for improving the quality of education (see Appendix G for an overview of the background on child clubs in Nepal). Many participants referenced child clubs as the hallmark of child participation within child-friendly schools. The Education Officer from BASE discussed the role of the child clubs in promoting children's voices:

If we form a child right committee or child protection group, then they will help the school be aware of children's problems. Children can't always tell their parents or teachers about their issues, so the child club can discuss about and represent children's issues. Sometimes teachers beat the children or the children feel uneasy at school. More than 25 children participate in the club. There is an executive committee with 9-11 members. They conduct regular meetings and they talk about child club activities and how can they represent their issues at the SMC and parent-teacher meeting. They put their demands out at the meetings.

Thus, through the structure of the child club, children are able to exercise their right to participation and ensure the school is promoting their best interests. Education Officer #2 from the United Mission to Nepal expanded on this description by explaining how students trained in the principles of child rights use the child club as a platform to

improve accountability among the teachers and ultimately improve the quality of

education at their school. She stated:

> Like we work with child clubs and a few of those child clubs have had training on
> child rights and how to be responsible students in the school as well. So they
> decided, "OK, we want to monitor our teachers. We want to set up a code of
> conduct for our school, for our students, for our teachers, for everyone who comes
> into the school, this is how we should behave. Stuff like, you don't come to
> school drunk, you don't gamble in school, you are respectful to people, you come
> on time. That sort of stuff. And we want to monitor the teachers as well." How
> to do this? Because if I was a student and you were a teacher and I come and tell
> you, "You are late, sir or ma'am," my grade would go down. So they developed
> this system in the school where the school is divided into four or five groups, and
> each group has a leader from an older grade that is overseeing younger kids. So
> anyone could bring complaints to the leader of that group, and the leader will
> bring the complaints to the teacher meeting every week. And they have seen real
> big changes in those schools. Teachers don't come to school drunk anymore, they
> come to school, they don't gamble in school anymore and the atmosphere has
> changed. So I asked the teachers, "So how did you feel about this? Child rights
> being demanded by the students themselves is quite a big thing." And they said,
> "Well at first we didn't like it." And I could totally see their point. "But now
> we've seen that it has brought positive [change] to our school, actually we are
> very happy about it." So it does show that different change can be made, and it
> requires being bold enough to step out and do it.

Thus, the statements above from the Plan Nepal Education Officer and Researcher #1

from CERID, which emphasize the singular importance of child participation as an

expression of child rights, along with the examples of child clubs as structures designed

to amplify children's voices, are collectively strong reflections of the global ideology of

childhood.

Child protection. Ideas of child protection were generally very prevalent in the data.

While participants often spoke of child protection exclusively in terms of anti-corporal

punishment views, the Framework encompassed a more comprehensive range of

meanings. In its definition of child-friendly schools, the Framework states that "all types

of physical, corporal and mental punishment are prohibited, and constant efforts are made to protect children from abuse and harm." (p. 7). Additionally, the definition states that children should "receive a safe and healthy environment, physically, mentally and emotionally" (p. 6) and that "special attention should be paid to their health and security needs" (p. 7). Thus, the prohibition against corporal punishment is present, but other types of protection are addressed as well. The dimension of child protection is the focus of the Framework's "health, security and protection" aspect of child-friendly schools. The protection part is addressed in the text as follows:

> Similarly, it is extremely necessary to adopt appropriate protective measures for children. For instance, the environment in school and classrooms must be healthy and safe; there must be necessary provision of safe drinking water, clean toilet and drainage; complementary nutrition and midday meals; and for personal hygiene. In addition, it is imperative to guarantee absence of physical confrontations and problems, misbehaviour, hatred and so on. The child-friendly school must take special precautions to protect children from potential accidents…and [adopt] measures for safety from earthquakes and other natural disasters… (p. 16)

The passage focuses heavily on protective, physical aspects of the school environment and only briefly mentions aspects that might protect the psychological well-being of children (e.g., "misbehavior and hatred"). Indicators and minimum and expected standards are then broken down into the health, security, and protection categories. In the security category, the policy stipulates that corporal punishment is "prohibited at school" and that rules and programs should be established "to bring an end [to] corporal punishment, humiliation, sexual exploitation and abuse of children within schools and in [the] community" (p. 17). The indicators for the protection aspect are similar to the passage above in that they touch on improving the school environment in terms of accident prevention and emergency preparedness.

Given that corporal punishment is just one of several aspects in the policy that addresses child protection, a more equally distributed emphasis on all forms of child protection might be expected in the interview data. However, participants expressed anti-corporal punishment views more frequently than any other form of child protection, and in some cases defined child-friendly schools exclusively as environments which prohibited physical violence against children. Further, some participants described childhood as a time that should be free from fear and violence. The focus on corporal punishment and violence against children makes sense when in the context of Article 19 of the CRC, which in addressing protection from all forms of violence, states:

> Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally. Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them. In terms of discipline, the Convention does not specify what forms of punishment parents should use. However *any form of discipline involving violence is unacceptable*. There are ways to discipline children that are effective in helping children learn about family and social expectations for their behaviour – ones that are non-violent, are appropriate to the child's level of development and take the best interests of the child into consideration. In most countries, laws already define what sorts of punishments are considered excessive or abusive. It is up to each government to review these laws in light of the Convention. [italics added]

The Convention clearly implies that corporal punishment is a violation of children's right to protection. Thus the strong anti-corporal punishment views among the participants must be seen in part as a reaction to the Convention, but also as a response to the Nepali context which has traditionally favored the use of physical forms of discipline against children. Even as Nepalis begin to acknowledge that corporal punishment is in conflict with the best interests of children and a violation of their rights, many participants

reported that the practice is still commonplace both within schools and the home. As

Researcher #1 from CERID explained:

> Well, just for an example, people have the feeling that corporal punishment is as
> normal as anything else. But if you look at the child-friendly [ideas], then you are
> not supposed to use any corporal punishment whether to xxx or beating or pulling
> ear or anything. But in many cultures in Nepal, it's very common, and these are
> things that are a violation of a child's right. But that is the perception that people
> have. And even the teachers they feel that—even now you find people who go to
> their classroom with a stick and chalk and duster…So the child-friendly [ideas]
> really prohibits the teachers to use those things.

Thus there was some tension between corporal punishment as an established societal

norm and the newly introduced child-friendly ideas which aim to change the norm.

The Researcher from CERID went on to connect the use of corporal punishment

with implications for child and societal development. He said:

> Basically, it depends on what kind of citizen you would like to have in the future.
> So if you are using corporal punishment, you are using some kind of orthodox
> methods, then you cannot [produce] a democratic mind in the children.

Though there were incentives to abandon the practice of corporal punishment—the

promotion of healthy child development and growth of democracy—participants

maintained that social change would be difficult because the norm was so deeply

entrenched in Nepali culture. Official #3 from the Department of Education recounted a

story that illustrated the complexity of the issue.

> P: In schools where we are providing more specific training to teachers…you can
> see some of the changes in their behavior.
>
> I: What kind of changes?
>
> P: Changes means that previously each and every teacher brought a stick into the
> classroom. When they enter into the classroom they have a stick with them.
> Right now they don't use the stick. They started to stop the corporal punishment
> to some extent.

> I: Why do you think they stopped? Is it just that the policy says it wrong? Or do they understand it in terms of children's rights?
>
> P: …They are realizing on their own… [The school principal said] "It would be good to implement the rights-based approach, it would be good to implement the right-friendly, the human rights-based approach to education, it would be better to provide activities in the real classroom situation." However, finally [he] said that…, "to some extent teachers need to exercise some power."

Although the teachers had received training from the Department of Education on how to implement a rights-based approach to education in the classroom, and although those teachers stated that they felt children's rights were important, they nevertheless clung to the traditional idea that teachers should exercise power over students through the use of corporal punishment. I explore the relationship between teacher attitudes and behaviors and the sustainability of child-friendly schools more deeply in Chapter 7.

The contention over corporal punishment evidently reflects a changing power structure between children and adults. A key assertion of the global ideology of childhood is that children and adults are equal. The elimination of corporal punishment is one way in which child-friendly schools aim to empower children, as this example from Department of Education Official #3 depicts:

> At the same time in school there are so many punishments, corporal punishment, that children are facing. At the same time so much abuse, even sexual abuse, bullying and other harassment. So we decided that our children have to say "No!" to the teachers. They have to say "No, this is not the right way! These are the things that you cannot do with us!"

When children are able to express what is in their best interests, the school environment becomes more egalitarian, more conducive to learning, and more child-friendly. An important part of improving equality in the classroom is altering the teacher-student

relationship. Many participants also agreed that the teacher should show love, care, and affection towards students (see Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4: Image of an expression of "love" from a teacher to her students

Source. Adrienne Henck, primary school in Bhaktapur district

According to the Education Officer at Plan Nepal:

> And if we talk about the childhood, first the child should have received affection and love from their parents and teachers and other society members as well. And if we talk about the learning process, the teaching process should be more child-friendly rather than imposing different types of punishment to discipline them. Of course, the children should be disciplined, but that discipline should be clarified and accepted by the children, rather than imposed by the adults. If we really created such an environment related to the behavior, attitude, and practice, if we improve these things in a child-friendly manner, then the children in fact will get a child-friendly environment.

The Education Officer also shows how the solution to the corporal punishment debate is not eliminate all forms of discipline, but rather to use non-violent, more democratic form. In this way, the Framework's prohibition against corporal punishment is very much a reflection of the changing relationship between children and adults in society. On the one

hand, children are being seen as individuals in their own right, capable of expressing their

views, and on the other hand, their increased sentimental value has lead to them being

seen as the objects of love and affection. Notably, as the Plan Nepal Education Officer

points out, that love and affection should come from not only from the family and

teachers but from society also, reflecting an important change in the nature of the child's

relationship with broader social institutions.

Ultimately, the emphasis on corporal punishment in the participant responses and

its inclusion in the National Framework should be understood in the context of the CRC

and shifting conceptions of children and childhood. Because the CRC discourages the

use of excessive punishment, corporal punishment has come to be associated with more

traditional ideas about children whereas rights-based anti-corporal punishment ideas are

viewed as modern, progressive, and in the best interests of children.

Individualization of children. At its core, the child-friendly schools policy is an

expression of the expansion of individualism and progressive ideals of education. It

seeks to empower children as individuals, promote their interests, and help them to reach

their full potential. In both the policy document and the participant interviews, the

individualization of children was articulated in the language of child-centeredness. In

child-friendly schools, the student becomes the main project of education and the teacher

takes on a secondary role as a facilitator. Although in the policy document's section on

inclusion, children continue to be constructed, to a certain degree, as members of

marginalized groups (e.g., girls, conflict-affected children, children from Dalit and

indigenous groups, children with disabilities, street children, child victims of sexual

exploitation and trafficking, children engaged in child labor, children suffering from

poverty, children in prison, orphans, and sick children) a new kind of language, not found in previous policies, emerges that constructs children as unique entities with individual needs, interests, and potentialities. The dimension of individualism in the policy document is expressed primarily in two forms: as support for the inclusion of all individuals in the education process and as promotion of child-centered, differentiated teaching practices based on individual children's abilities. The policy states that:

> Inclusive education refers to inclusion of understanding for each other, respect for each other, responding to academic needs, including the experiences, aspirations, and norms and values of all learners. In the formal school education system, inclusiveness is expected to address the conditions of children deprived of various opportunities. It accepts the differences between children. In addition, inclusiveness ensures the right to receive education of all children in a nondiscriminatory environment. (p. 11)

The normalization of individual difference, reinforced by conceptions of children as rights bearing individuals, advances the idea that all children have the innate ability to learn and that it is the responsibility of the school to cultivate each child's inner potential. This idea is explicitly stated later on in the text: "…if provided with an appropriate environment and support consistent with their individual needs, all children can learn…" (p. 11). This idea is especially relevant within the context of the global agenda on learning for all.

The interview participants also spoke extensively about how the burgeoning sense of individualism was reflected in the teaching-learning process. They emphasized the themes of allowing the learning process to be guided by children's interests, the importance of including the child's perspective, and nurturing the inner potentiality of all children. Many agreed that a key aim of child-friendly education is for the teacher to

respond to the uniqueness of each child to help her to learn and grow. As the Senior Official from BASE stated:

> And the teacher must focus not only on the curriculum but focus on the children individually. Not one approach to all children, but different children with different approach[es]. Let's say [one] student is very eager to learn about growing something. But other students are very interested to learn about culture. So in one class, different children are eager to learn different things, so the teacher must know who is interested in what. So based on the children's interests, the teacher must make a lesson plan. Individual treatment means the teaching practice should be different.

In this way, the teacher's role is as a facilitator and the flow of a given lesson should be guided by children's interests and abilities. Other participants articulated similar views: the Department of Education Official #1felt that the teacher's responsibility was to be observant of the different speeds of learning among the students and to adapt his or her teaching practice accordingly. Some mentioned an increased emphasis on group activities in which every child was expected to participate and master the target concepts. When I inquired about what happens if some children are not able to grasp the concepts, the Education Officer from Samunnat Nepal replied that both the teachers and the other students must support the weakest students and help them to learn. Both Officers from UNICEF agreed that the focus on the individual also served to deepen the interpersonal relationship between the teacher and the student.

The inclusion of the child's perspective was seen by some participants as a defining aspect of child-friendly schools. The Department of Education Official #2 discussed how the inclusion of the child's perspective helps to foster a sense of trust and confidence in the education system. Without this trust, there can be no progress, he explained:

P: …but something is lacking [in existing schools]. If you see the child perspective, then definitely some of gap is there.

I: From the child perspective?

P: From the child perspective. If you look just 10 years back, then at that time the teacher was there and the child was there and the parents were there, but what was lacking was the child perspective. The friendliness was not there. At that time, the system realized, OK this perspective should be included in the education system because without the confidence of the child, we cannot make more progress. Without friendliness, they cannot explore their ideas. Without a supportive environment, teachers cannot understand the child. There are many reasons. Then this idea, the child-friendly concept, was introduced in the education system.

The Official gave several reasons why the inclusion of the child's perspective is so important. Not only does it allow children to explore their own ideas, as also explained above by the BASE Official, but it allows the teacher to understand each child. The UNICEF Education Officer #1 extended this idea by describing it as a personal "touch." Whereas previously the teacher might not have even been able to identify individual students by name without looking at the class roster, the child-friendly school model encourages teachers to get to know each child individually. Placing a special focus on the needs and perspectives of each student also means helping to develop their individual inner potentiality. According to the policy document, because each child is a unique individual, the school must "… [teach] according to pupils' aspirations…" (p. 12). "Maybe some children want to be a doctor and some want to be a social activist and some want to be an artist or dancer or other things," the Department of Education Official #2 stated, "they have to…grow their possibility and potentiality, and the school and the teachers should facilitate this." Thus participants understood the policy as being closely

aligned with the aspects of the global ideology of childhood which emphasize the right of children to pursue their own interests toward self-actualization.

This increased valuation of the child's perspective meant that some participants felt that children were able to determine what was in their own best interest better than their parents. Such responses advanced a view of children in which they were constructed as individuals first and family members second. The DoE Official #3 pointed to how the personal fulfillment of the child has come to take priority over any duty to obey his or her parents. He explained that in some exceptional child-friendly schools, children had begun to express their own ideas and demand their rights with statements like: "This is our right, we have to do this and that, and we have send this message to our family and to our parents not to do this and that." He went on to explain that some parents had decided to withdraw their children from school so that they could join the labor market or perform agricultural work. In these cases, he reported that the children exclaimed, "It is my right to go to school, all people are going! Why am I not going? I have to go to school!" In this way, the rise of the individualization of children has also served to protect them from unequal balances of power that may not be in their best interests.

Child development as national development. Though not entirely absent, the dimension of child development as national development was not as strong as anticipated in the document or interview data. When this dimension did surface, the benefits of child development, and cognitive development in particular, were spoken of more in terms of collective social benefits (e.g., promoting democracy) than in economic terms (e.g., contributing to family income or national economic growth). Accordingly, the primary

function of education and learning was either for realizing one's full potential or for becoming a democratic citizen in society. The policy document put forth a balanced reflection of these aspects of the dimension with the following introductory statement:

> Education helps human beings develop their personality and prepares them for their future life. In addition, it is considered as the cornerstone of social and economic development. Hence, in all countries across the globe special efforts are being made to address the issues of access to and quality of education.

This forward-looking view, which is heavily infused with undertones of human capital theory, emphasizes that education produces both individual and collective benefits. Thus, by promoting the development of child-friendly schooling, the Department of Education aims to enable children to develop themselves for their own benefit and so that they may contribute to the development of Nepal. Beyond these sentences, though, there were no other examples of links between child development and national social or economic development in the policy document.

Several key examples of this dimension were featured in the interviews. In the following exchange, the Education Officer from Samunnat Nepal, a national NGO, expressed the view that child development, conceptualized in terms of development rights, had important consequences at individual, national, and global levels:

> I: And what kind of child rights do you think are most important?

> P: Development rights and education rights are very necessary. The development rights are very necessary because if the child develops very well then he or she can share his or her expertise outside the country, in the global village. If we give the proper education to the children, if we support them to develop them to their capacity, like you are coming to Nepal and doing like this, you got the proper education and you are doing like this. So if we provide children the proper education through the school system then it is better for their lives.

> I: I see. When children get this education, is it for their own personal benefit, or…?

P: No, no, it is for the nation.

The Education Officer clearly viewed the process of child development as serving various positive functions, yet he vacillated in his response between whether that development serves the individual, the nation, or the global community. Though he alluded to children benefitting "the global village" and "their lives," he ultimately decided that children's educational development is most important for the nation. UNICEF Education Officer #2 shared a similar sentiment when he characterized children, especially those enrolling in the early grades, as "the future of the nation." He went on to explain that:

> …the whole education system…somehow resembles, somehow forecasts our future in terms of the country itself. And since the child-friendly school is mainly supporting learning achievement…these children will be potential citizens of the country.

In contrast, some participants, such as Education Officer #1 from the United Mission to Nepal, held a much more critical stance. He considered children's educational development in terms of the "brain drain" phenomenon which, in his opinion, is detrimental to national development.

> But there are some schools in Nepal as well, Rato Bangala[19] is one of the nice primary schools, but it is out of the reach of the poor people. It is very expensive. Their methodology is all based, replicated like U.S. methodology, how it is taught in the U.S., they also copy the same. That's why children are performing better, and they do better on…those exams, and they just migrate and go to US and European countries. They are not serving in our country.

From his perspective, improving the quality of education has limitations because highly educated individuals will leave the country, taking their knowledge and skills with them.

---

[19] As the Education Officer in part explains, Rato Bangala is an elite private school in Kathmandu. It is widely considered to be the most prestigious school at the primary and secondary levels in Nepal. The school is affiliated with the Rato Bangala Foundation which is included in this study's participant sample.

In this way, investments in child development do not necessarily foster positive national development.

However, participants did not only view children as economic investments. The UNICEF Officer's reference to the "potential citizens of the country" introduces the perspective that children are not only important in terms of their future economic contributions, but they have intrinsic value as citizens. As children develop, they not only acquire knowledge and skills, but they learn how to be functioning members of their society. Department of Education Official #2 echoed this view when he argued against the traditional cultural perception that children should not be free to decide their own futures:

> And for that, the decision of parents was taken as everything. "You are my child, you have to follow me." "You are my student and you have to follow me." This was the perception from the teacher also and from the parents. This was not good. And from that we needed to prepare a democratic environment in school so that then children can also make their society democratic. This is how the child-friendly environment is a democratic environment.

In this way, child development within the context of the school is intended to lead to the creation of democracy in society. The Official's statement hints at the idea that allowing children to have the freedom of choice within their family and school lives will extend to the creation of a democratic society. Later in his interview, the Education Officer (#1) from UMN expanded this view by detailing other non-economic aspects of child development.

> No, we need to create such an environment for children such that children can grow and develop as a full citizen. So from the early times, they learn ethics, they learn culture, the fundamental things, knowledge, skills, and some element which makes them a good citizen in the future. So the early childhood development, the early period of children is very key to learn the good elements so that they can be a well-balanced person in the future, good citizen in the future, who can perform

> better in fulfilling his xxx life, and contributing to society xxx. Because these are the people who make a difference in the status of the country. So everywhere if you look at the scenario then it's people, population that makes their country advance. It's the citizen, it's the children, it's the people. So everywhere around the globe, even in Nepal, women and children and disabled were not really considered as a contributing citizen in the past. Women were not sent to the school, girls were not sent. It was the practice in the past.

The emphasis above is on children becoming "good," "well-balanced," and "full" citizens in the future. Importantly, he raises the universalist idea that all children are capable of making these contributions to the common good regardless of their status in society. This idea, that all children have the right to a normative childhood that serves individual and collective interests, is a fundamental element of the global ideology of childhood.

Diversity: An additional theme reflected in the policy document and interviews

Both the document and interview data also strongly reflected the additional theme of diversity, particularly in terms of ethnic and language diversity. Though it does not directly correspond with any one of the dimensions of the global ideology of childhood which I have identified, it is nevertheless highly relevant here because of this dissertation's emphasis on the universality of conceptions of children and childhood. Given that Nepal is home to more than 100 castes and ethnic groups who speak 92 different languages (Nepal Census, 2001), diversity is an issue that strongly defines the national culture and affects all policy making decisions. Education policy makers, in particular, have dealt with ethnic diversity by adopting policies of non-discrimination in schools and with language diversity by codifying the right of all children to learn in their mother tongue. Both the right to protection against discrimination and the right to education that respects the child's language are included in the National Constitution and in the CRC. It is, therefore, not surprising that issues surrounding diversity featured so

prominently in the data. The Framework draws on these precedents in the following excerpts:

> …[T]he Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has ensured the right to education of all children. The CRC has also recognised that all children have the right to receive quality education without any discrimination for their overall development. The Interim Constitution of Nepal and the national documents on education lay down guidelines for ensuring this right. (p. 6)

> The Interim Constitution of Nepal guarantees every community the right to receive basic education in mother tongue as per the provisions of law...Since, in Nepal, children from many different languages study in the same school, based on the national language policy, measures in accordance with the school and local contexts need to be adopted to address the issues concerning mother tongue. (p. 21-22)

Diversity is thus conceptualized as an issue of child rights, closely connected to the right to education. All children, regardless of caste, ethnicity, gender, class, and physical ability are entitled to a quality education and that education must be provided in a language understood by the child.

However, even more than simply being a reflection of children's rights, participants' emphasis on diversity in the interviews highlighted the importance they assigned to context in determining children's needs. CERID Researchers #1 and #2, the Senior Official from UNESCO, and the Education Officers from UNICEF (#2), Rato Bangala Foundation, Save the Children, World Education, and World Vision all referenced issues of diversity and the impact on children's education. They spoke of both ethnic and geographic diversity—terms which can sometimes be interchangeable in Nepal—and made remarks such as "If you go to many places in Nepal, you will see very diverse characteristics in the child…" (CERID Researcher #2); "[children's] needs may be different from different locations and contexts" (UNICEF Education Officer #2); and

"Children are the same! But the context becomes different" (Rato Bangala Foundation Education Officer). Thus, some participants felt that different contexts produced different child needs, while others felt that regardless of the context, children's needs were universal. The Researcher from CERID felt that children's needs were not universal, but rather context-dependent. She went on to explain that in her definition, child-friendly meant providing children with what they needed within their context. In contrast, other participants agreed with the position set forth in the policy document, that all members of diverse groups were entitled to the same thing: a quality education. Interestingly, none of the Department of Education officials or the participants from the national/local NGOs (Samunnat Nepal, IFCD, NNDSWO, and BASE), with the exception of Rato Bangala Foundation, mentioned diversity.

Conclusion

From a legacy of an elite and authoritarian education system and education policies that largely overlooked any references to children, to an entire policy focused on reinventing schools to be perfectly suited to meet the needs, desires, and interests—and protect the rights—of all children, Nepali education policies have undergone a dramatic transformation over the last half century. It is this exclusive positioning of children at the heart of an education policy that is perhaps the most notable element of the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools. While the education policies of the past aimed to improve schools, often solely for the purpose of economic growth and national development, their infrastructure and content-oriented focuses neglected the importance of the child within the school. Reflecting key dimensions of the global ideology of

childhood, including child rights, individualism and child protection, the child-friendly schools initiative has advanced a campaign to make the child the central project of education.

Through analysis of the policy document and participant interviews, this chapter has demonstrated how each of the dimensions of the global ideology of childhood are, or are not, reflected in the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools. Though the evidence of some dimensions is noticeably weaker than others, overall, the policy text and how key actors understand the policy reflect the rise of a new image of children and childhood in Nepal. That child requires care, protection, and facilitation towards the developmental goal of self-actualization. As such, new aspects of child development, such as psychological and emotional growth, have begun to influence how the school, as well as the family, the community, and the nation, promote the well-being of children. Most importantly though, that child exists as an autonomous individual who is entitled to certain basic human rights. Though participants recognized the broad spectrum of rights that contribute to an ideal childhood, they emphasized the right to protection (e.g., from corporal punishment) and the right to participate (e.g., in school improvement and governance) more than any other type of rights. Participants afforded great respect for the views of the child, at times implying that children had a better understanding than adults in terms of their own best interests and the interests of the school.

This descriptive account of how global ideas are reflected in a national policy raises critical questions related to the process of cultural reproduction. How was the concept of child-friendly schools first developed, both globally and in Nepal? What roles have global, national, and local actors played in the process of reproducing cultural

norms concerning children and childhood? How might these actors have adapted global

ideas to the realities of local contexts? In the next chapter, I turn to Research Question 2

which examines the role of global and national actors in the development and

implementation of the child-friendly schools policy.

Table 5.1: Summary of global ideology of childhood dimensions reflected in the policy document and interviews

Global Ideology of Childhood Dimensions	National Framework of Child-friendly Schools document	Participant interviews
Increasingly unique and complex developmental aims of childhood	**Evidence:** Focus on the unique and complex needs, capacity and inner potential of children. **Example:** ."..teaching according to pupils' aspirations (their standard, pace and absorptive capacity), localization of curricula and development of need-based curricula are necessary." (p. 12)	**Evidence:** Dual focus on children's individual development en route to self-actualization and on the formation of future productive citizens. **Examples:** "Maybe some children want to be a doctor and some want to be a social activist and some want to be an artist… the school…should facilitate this [inner potentiality]." (DoE Official #2); "If you want to really produce a really democratic citizen who values the rights of people then you…have to have these … child-friendly aspects in the school curriculum." (CERID Researcher #1)
The whole child perspective of child development and well-being	**Evidence:** Inclusion of diverse aspects of child development and emerging emphasis on cognitive, psychological and emotional well-being. **Example:** ."..according to the modern assumptions of school education…learning in a child-friendly environment without any harm to their physical, mental, intellectual and emotional development…is a basic requisite of quality education." (p. 3)	**Evidence:** Inclusion of diverse aspects of child development and emerging emphasis on cognitive, psychological and emotional well-being. **Example:** "…it's not only physical development but it's totally holistic development of the child, so the psycho-social part comes together among it." (CERID Researcher #1)
Children as bearers of human rights	**Evidence:** Commitment to CRC and provisions of framework stated in rights-based language. **Examples:** "right of every child to receive education" (p. 11-12); "…every child has the right to live free of diseases and, if ill, receive prompt treatment" (p. 15); "right to receive basic education in mother tongue." (p. 21-22)	**Evidence:** Participants spoke of child rights almost inseparably from the concept of child-friendliness. **Example:** "[A non-child-friendly school is] where the children do not actively participate…where they don't promote the rights of the child, like the right to education, right to health, right to play." (District Education Official)

Table 5.1: Summary of global ideology of childhood dimensions reflected in the policy document and interviews (continued)

Global Ideology of Childhood Dimensions	Child-friendly schools policy document	Interviews
Child protection	**Evidence:** Protectionist language included in core definition of child-friendly school. **Example:** "All types of physical, corporal and mental punishment are prohibited, and constant efforts are made to protect children from abuse and harm." (p. 7)	**Evidence:** Strong anti-corporal punishment views voiced by most participants. **Example:** "But if you look at the child-friendly [ideas], then you are not supposed to use any corporal punishment… But in many cultures in Nepal, it's very common, and these are things that are a violation of a child's right." (CERID Researcher #1)
Individualization of children	**Evidence:** Emphasis on inclusion shifts from constructing children as members of marginalized groups to the children as unique entities with individual needs and potentialities. **Examples:** "Children's aptitude, capacity and level are respected..." (p. 6); "…it holds the assumption that, if provided with an appropriate environment and support consistent with their individual needs, all children can learn." (p. 11)	**Evidence:** Emphasis on adapting teaching practices to align with the needs, interests and capabilities of individual students and to incorporate child perspectives. **Example:** "So in one class, different children are eager to learn different things, so the teacher must know who is interested in what. So based on the children's interests, the teacher must make a lesson plan. Individual treatment means the teaching practice should be different." (Senior Official, BASE)
Child development as national development	**Evidence:** Child development linked to national development vis-à-vis education. **Example:** "Education helps human beings develop their personality and prepares them for their future life. In addition, it is considered as the cornerstone of social and economic development." (p. 6)	**Evidence:** Child development linked to national development vis-à-vis education, especially growth of democracy. **Example:** "…And from that we needed to prepare a democratic environment in school so that then children can also make their society democratic." (Department of Education Official #2)

**Chapter 6: The role of I/NGOs and other actors in the development and
implementation of the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools**

Introduction

In 2003, UNICEF introduced its child-friendly school model to Nepal as the
organization's global flagship education program. Typically through partnerships
between UNICEF, I/NGOs, and local education authorities, this new model of school
reform began to be implemented in primary schools in an attempt to improve the quality
of their education by operating in the best interests of children, i.e., becoming more
"child-friendly." In 2009, Kul Chandra Gautam, the former Assistant Secretary-General
of the United Nations and Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF whose speech at the
Rato Bangala conference was quoted in Chapter 1, announced that, "The time for piloting
is over. Child-friendly schools must become the norm, not the exception" (UNICEF
2009d). Driven by his call to action, education experts from across South Asia convened
in Kathmandu in April 2009 at the Global Capacity Development Programme on Child-
friendly Schools, a four-day workshop organized by the UNICEF education section in
New York. At the workshop, the experts deliberated on the importance of child-centered
classroom practices and school environments that are safe and protective of children and
that promote learning. Shortly thereafter, in 2010, the Department of Education of Nepal
endorsed the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools for Quality Education,
legitimizing the child-friendly schools initiative and establishing it as a key national
education reform policy.

Today, countless child-friendly schools have been established in Nepal[20], and the initiative continues to grow and evolve. As awareness of the model spreads within the education development community, an increasing number of I/NGOs and other education practitioners are becoming involved in its implementation, either independently or in partnership with UNICEF. Yet, despite widespread awareness of the singular narrative of UNICEF's ownership over the child-friendly school model, little is known about how other actors, particularly I/NGOs, have understood their role in the development and implementation process, and if competing narratives, which could potentially suggest local origins of a similar model, even exist.

In this chapter, I investigate the policy's development and implementation through an analysis of how different actors have made sense of their own and other actors' roles in the process. This second research question is stated as:

> *Research question 2:* How do I/NGOs and other actors, such as IGOs, the DoE, and research institutions, understand their roles in the development and implementation of the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools for Quality Education?

This research question raises a series of important sub-questions. First, how did the National Framework come to be adopted by the DoE as a national education policy? One possibility is that UNICEF persuaded the national government to adopt the policy. However, given this scenario, what supporting roles might I/NGOs have played? Alternatively, the momentum for the policy may have come from the grassroots level in response to local needs, with implementing NGOs garnering support for a national child-friendly schools initiative from schools, local education authorities, and partner I/NGOs.

---

[20] See Chapter 1 for a discussion of the difficulties of quantifying the true scope of the child-friendly school initiative.

Further, once the policy was endorsed by the national government, or perhaps even before then, how have different actors, and I/NGOs in particular, behaved as implementers? Have they faithfully reproduced the child-friendly schools concept as codified in the policy, or have they independently interpreted and adapted the concept within the confines of local contexts? Since different actors are variously rooted in global culture, we might expect variation in their responses to a policy which at its core is informed by the global ideology of childhood. As a means of understanding how various actors enact cultural models through policy implementation, I analyze the latter question through two heuristic frames, "faithful reproduction" and "cultural interpretation," which I described in Chapter 1.

Because the focus of this dissertation is on I/NGOs, I first present a brief history of the rise of I/NGOs in Nepal in order to better understand how these organizations have assumed their current status as key players in national education reform. This account is based on historical literature as well as rich data obtained through an interview with a Sociologist from the Nepal Institute of Development Studies (NIDS) who previously held a prominent position in the national government coordinating the activities of NGOs. I additionally provide a short description of the role of UNICEF and other intergovernmental organizations in Nepal's development before turning to the main findings. The findings are then divided into two sections which address the role of actors in policy development and policy implementation. In the development section, I consider three primary narratives that aim to explain the origins of the child-friendly schools model in Nepal, and then in the implementation section, I apply the two frames to understand the actors' implementation behavior. It should be noted that because the

enactment of policy is a continuous process, and policy development cannot truly be separated from implementation, there is consequently considerable overlap in my presentation of the findings on development and implementation of child friendly schools (Datnow and Park 2009).

A brief history of the rise of I/NGOs in Nepal

Before 1991, the NGO landscape in Nepal was a faint reflection of the landscape that exists today. Especially until the end of the Rana regime in 1951, NGOs in Nepal were traditionally perceived as organizations which conducted "anti-social" activities because they operated outside the sphere of governmental authority. Some organizations, such as *Nepal Nagarik Adhikar Samit* (The Committee for Citizens' Rights in Nepal) which formed in 1937 with the aim to generate public awareness of civil rights, even rebelled against the authoritarian government (Tanaka, 2011). With the advent of democracy in 1951, the number of NGOs grew, however, all most all were unregistered, volunteer-based organizations that continued to lack national legitimacy and authority. In addition, there were approximately six government-sponsored NGOs (e.g., King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, Family Planning Association of Nepal, and Nepal Red Cross Society), that functioned as intermediaries in bringing international resources into Nepal (Bhattachan, 2001; NIDS Sociologist interview) as well as a limited number of foreign agencies including INGOs (the United Mission to Nepal began working in Nepal in 1954) and IGOs (USAID, 1951; World Bank, 1962; UNDP, 1963; UNICEF, 1968; UNESCO, 1954).

With the return to a multi-party democracy under a constitutional monarchy and the adoption of a new national constitution in 1991, the NGO landscape changed dramatically. The National Constitution of Nepal established new freedoms including the "freedom of opinion and expression," the "freedom to assemble peaceably and without arms," and the "freedom to form unions and associations" (1991), all of which incited Nepalis for the first time to organize around popular causes for the development of the nation. In 1992, the government passed the Social Welfare Act which further legitimized the position of NGOs in society. According to the Act, NGOs should be non-profit, non-political, and established to undertake social services to improve the economic and social welfare of disadvantaged groups (Social Welfare Act, 1992). The Act was followed in 1997 with a formal recognition in the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) of NGOs as "partners in development" and in 1999 with an extension of the same status to local NGOs through the Local Self-Governance Act. NGOs had made a monumental transition from operating on the fringes of society to serving as key players in the development of the nation. Ultimately, through this "NGO movement," as some have termed it, Nepal witnessed a mushrooming of NGOs and the growth of an NGO culture: between 1990 and 2000 alone, the number increased from a mere 249 organizations to more than 11,000[21] (Bhattachan, 2001; see Figure 6.1).

---

[21] It should be noted that despite the large numbers of NGOs in Nepal, there is also a very high organization mortality rate and many registered organizations quickly become inactive. Among unregistered groups, there is also a prevalent practice of labeling any collection of individuals working together for a shared purpose as an "NGO," even when they may not actually fit the criteria (e.g., they may actually be for-profit enterprises).

Figure 6.1: Growth of NGOs in Nepal, 1978-2010
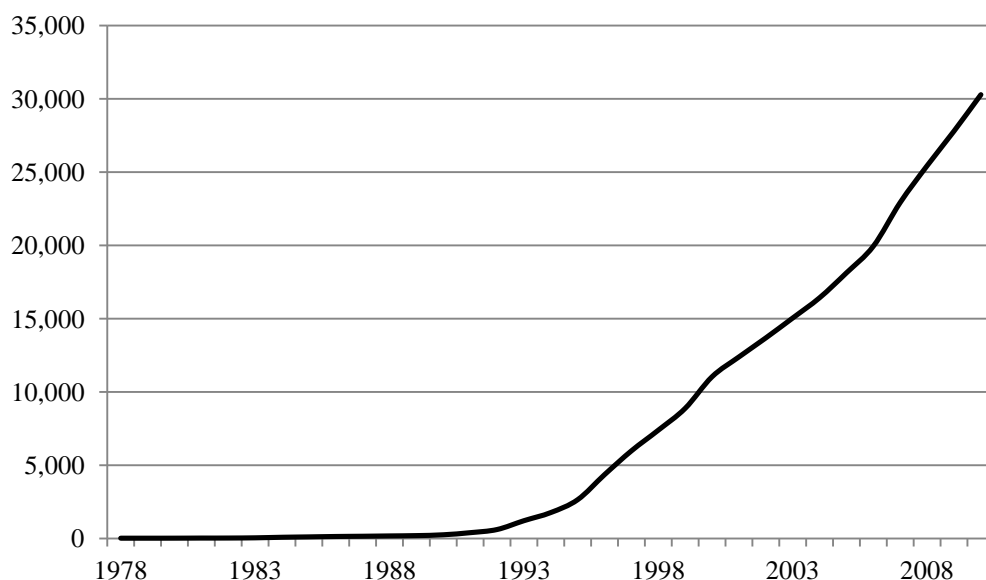
Notes. Data reflects local and national NGOs registered with the Social Welfare Council of Nepal, available at http://www.swc.org.np/

During this period of NGO expansion, INGOs also began to strengthen their presence and authority in Nepal. Save the Children had started its operations in 1975; World Education and Plan Nepal had both followed in 1978; and World Vision had finally entered the country in 2001. However, the power of INGOs in Nepal did not begin to really grow until the 1990s, a transformation which can be attributed to two main factors. First, bilateral and multilateral agencies that were becoming increasingly frustrated with the government's ineffective use of aid began to encourage INGOs to carry out programs originally intended to be implemented by the government (Chhetri, 2005). However, through the Social Welfare Act (1992), the government had prohibited INGOs from directly implementing programs and legally mandated that they only work in partnership with local and national NGOs. As a consequence, foreign funding

increasingly flowed into the country through INGOs, bolstering them as powerful

intermediaries. Currently, with 182 INGOs recognized by the Social Welfare Council

(2013), these international actors maintain a high level of influence and legitimacy in

Nepal's development initiatives.

Despite this expansion, the rise of I/NGOs in Nepal has not been without

challenges. Three issues in particular are important for understanding the development

and implementation of the child-friendly schools policy. First, the mandate for INGOs to

partner with Nepali NGOs encouraged the unrestricted growth of local NGOs, thus

permitting even inexperienced NGOs with limited capacity to access international funds

(Tanaka, 2011). The growth of local and national NGOs continued to increase

exponentially—by 2010 the number had surpassed 30,000 (see Figure 6.1). However,

during the ten-year period of the People's War (1996-2006), the Communist Party of

Nepal (Maoists) opposed the activity of any NGOs determined to not be genuinely

working for the poor and labeled INGOs as "parasites of foreign aid" (NIDS Sociologist

interview; Tanaka, 2011). While the Maoists later relaxed their opposition, the sentiment

that I/NGOs may not be completely aligned with the priorities and realities of the Nepali

people lingered among some groups (Dahal, 2001). Finally, INGOs in particular have

experienced a "tenuous relationship with the government" (Chhetri, 2005, p. 155).

Because INGOs have often had direct access to foreign aid, there has been resentment on

the part of the government and a common perception that they are "appendages" of bi-

and multi-lateral agencies (Chhetri, 2005, p. 154). Further, there has also been a lack of

clarity historically about the role of INGOs in the development of Nepal, and the

development and implementation of education programs in particular. In short, as

I/NGOs in Nepal have experienced profound growth in numbers over the last two decades, the complexity of their role has also expanded.

UNICEF and IGOs in Nepal

In the post-World War II period, intergovernmental organizations such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), and United Nations agencies (e.g., UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, and WFP) also became increasingly powerful actors in Nepal's development. UNICEF in particular has a long history of working with the government of Nepal, having operated in the country since 1968, and, because of the organization's connection to the child-friendly schools policy, is the focus of this section. Over the past 40 years the organization has participated in many of Nepal's landmark development strides from improving basic services in the 1960s, providing immunizations in the 1970s, promoting early childhood rights and education in the 1980s, empowering communities to monitor and advocate for their own health and education needs in the 1990s, and an emphasizing protection for children during the conflicts of the 2000s. Within the education sector, UNICEF's initiatives encompass four primary areas: early childhood development, formal primary education, non-formal primary education, and peace and emergency education.

At the policy level, UNICEF works with a variety of government agencies to develop appropriate policies and legislation for children (UNICEF, 2008). In fact, along with Save the Children, it was UNICEF that first introduced the Early Childhood Education within the Department of Education of Nepal. Additionally, more so than other IGOs, UNICEF is known for its strong partnerships with I/NGOs, as it was one of

the first multilateral organizations to identify NGOs as legitimate partners (Jones, 2006).

From 1960 to 2010 the proportion of UNICEF's income contributed by NGOs and the

private sector grew from 7% to 32% while contributions by governments decreased from

84% to 57% (UNICEF annual reports, various years). UNICEF has historically

maintained a high in country profile, both within recipient and donor countries, and

country offices have enjoyed high levels of autonomy and flexibility to appropriately

respond to local needs (Jones, 2006). These characteristics uniquely position UNICEF as

a conduit for the movement of ideas between global and local levels (Schaub et al., in

progress) and raises the question of what role have IGOs, such as UNICEF, along with

I/NGOs, played in the development and implementation of the child-friendly schools

policy? The remainder of this chapter presents evidence that addresses this key question.

Narratives of policy development

Instead of one unified narrative of policy development, participants made sense of

their roles in the origins of child-friendly schools and the development of the National

Framework of Child-Friendly Schools through a collection of seemingly contrasting

narratives. Some actors, mostly from INGOs and IGOs, discussed the global origins of

child-friendly schools and the role of international actors in introducing the policy

concept in Nepal. In contrast, other actors reported that the concept of child-friendly

schools had been conceived locally in response to the needs of children in specific

contexts. These participants, exclusively from local and national NGOs, perceived the

policy to have developed through a bottom-up process. And still other participants

described the policy development process as one characterized by mutual collaboration

among international and national actors. In the following sections, I review these narratives and present supporting evidence for each.

From Kosovo to Thailand to Nepal: Narratives of global conception

In 1999, UNICEF began implementing both child-friendly schools in Thailand and child-friendly spaces within Kosovar refugee camps in Albania. Many development practitioners attribute the initial use of the term "child-friendly" in modern development discourse to latter because of the high global profile of the Balkan conflict. These safe spaces were designed to provide basic social services and more appropriately meet the complex needs of women and children in areas such as pre- and primary school education, preventative maternal-child health and psycho-social services, and recreation. The model proved to be useful in other humanitarian crisis situations and programs that aimed to meet the needs and rights of children in need of protection (UNICEF, 2004). Since then, other international organizations, I/NGOs, and national ministries of education have liberally applied the "child-friendly" moniker outside of humanitarian contexts to describe governmental, community, school, and pedagogical approaches for serving the best interests of children. Today, this trend, which no doubt reflects the ascendancy of the child in society, has been manifested in initiatives as varied as child-friendly cities, child-friendly governance, and child-friendly technology.

The analysis of the policy document and interview data suggests that the Framework of Child-friendly Schools is also intricately linked to this global trend. After identifying its conception as a response to global imperatives such as the CRC, EFA, and the MDGs and referencing the right of all children to receive a quality education that has

been codified in the Interim Constitution of Nepal and other national documents on

education, the National Framework document states that:

> In order to increase access to education and ensure quality education, several
> efforts are being made. The concept of child-friendly school[s] is one of them.
> This concept takes into consideration the aspects such as the minimum and
> expected indicators for schools and the roles that can be played by different
> stakeholders in the development of schools. It is expected that such activities will
> result in parents taking interest in their children's education, communities playing
> important roles in school development and schools upgrading the level of their
> quality day by day. (p. 6)

Importantly, this explanation delineates the intended pathway for the dissemination of the

child-friendly schools concept which begins with global mechanisms and ends with

schools, parents, and communities. One of the stated objectives of the policy document

is even to address the international commitments endorsed by Nepal. Further, in defining

the minimum standards of a child-friendly learning environment, the policy draws on the

"international assumptions of child-friendly school[s]," as well as "the Nepali context"

(p. 3). Given this combined evidence, the policy's writers leave little room for doubt

about the role of global influences in Nepal's adoption of the child-friendly school model.

Moreover, as acknowledged in the foreword, the government of Nepal heavily

relied on input from a range of actors from international as well as national and local

levels in the development of the Framework. The policy states:

> In the course of preparing this Framework, which is specially targeted at the basic
> level of school education, a workshop was organized on the National Education
> Policy, programmes and the concept paper prepared by experts based on
> international practices and learning, with the participation of principal school-
> level stakeholders (teachers, pupils, parents, office-bearers of management
> committees), representatives of professional teachers' organizations and
> associations, governmental agencies, and international and national NGOs
> working in the education sector, among others, where extensive discussions were
> held, whereas observations were held in the real implementation areas for testing

its practical application. The final draft of this Framework was thus prepared by the experts of the sectors concerned in accordance with the directives from all three aspects—theoretical, policy and practical. (p. 3)

Thus, the document reflects the thoughtful inclusion of various perspectives and levels of expertise from international and national NGOs, school-level stakeholders, government, and other experts. The statement above contradicts assumptions that the policy may have been blindly conceived by a solitary actor (e.g., the Department of Education or UNICEF) by further referencing the joint mechanisms through which the policy concept was developed. These mechanisms included a workshop featuring "extensive discussions" among stakeholders, observations of target schools in "real implementation areas," and input from experts reflecting the relevant "theoretical, policy and practical" perspectives. The foreword then goes on to express special gratitude to UNICEF, World Education, Save the Children, the Association of International NGOs in Nepal (AIN)[22], and a number of specific individuals who were included in the sample but are not named here for the purpose of maintaining confidentiality. According to the document, these organizations and individuals provided consultative advice and contributed to the policy writing and revision process.

The collaborative process outlined in the policy document at first appeared to be supported by the interviews in which participants from UNICEF, I/NGOs, the Department of Education, and CERID described their roles in contributing to the development of the policy. However, underneath the outward claims of collaboration, a

---

[22] The Association of International NGOs in Nepal (AIN), formed in 1996, is an important network of INGOs working in Nepal. Currently comprised of 111 INGOs, AIN serves as a platform for collaboration and mobilization, facilitates relationships with the Nepali government and promotes a shared vision of improving the lives of disadvantaged people throughout Nepal. I also held an impromptu interview with two AIN representatives; however, that interview was not included in the data set. It is worth noting that the organization has no doubt been important in supporting the rise of INGOs in Nepal, and it is likely not a coincidence that the association shares office space with Save the Children in Kathmandu.

more nuanced narrative reflecting unequal roles played by global and national actors began to surface. According to UNICEF Education Officer #2, UNICEF had been implementing child-friendly school initiatives in Nepal since 2003. This claim was supported when I asked the Senior Education Officer from Save the Children about the origins of the child-friendly approach. The Officer replied that he believed that, "it was borrowed from UNICEF… they implemented it in Thailand sometime in the late 1990s, something like that. I'm not exactly sure about the timing." He then proceeded to explain that Save the Children had also been implementing child-friendly school programs for many years, though despite my inquiries he neglected to specify the exact year of the program's commencement. The Officer subsequently clarified that Save the Children's application of the "child-friendly schools" term was retroactive: "I mean, later on, we coined the phrase 'child-friendly' but then those elements that come under 'child-friendly' are the same ones that we were implementing already." Additionally, both Education Officers from the United Mission to Nepal corroborated the account of UNICEF's leadership role in introducing the child-friendly schools initiative in Nepal. When I asked if UMN developed the initiative on their own, Education Officer #1 replied:

> No, actually organizations like UNICEF, big organizations, bigger actors who are working in the child-friendly kind of thing at the global level, so they just said here, ideas, and they started giving us the information. And we also started browsing the internet and got something there.

These accounts ultimately support claims that UNICEF played a leading role in introducing the child-friendly schools initiative in Nepal and point to global origins of the policy concept.

UNICEF's role as a policy leader was further reinforced by Researcher #1 from

CERID who shared the most comprehensive account of the policy development process

and who was identified in the policy document foreword as contributing to the

development of the Framework. In the following account, he outwardly emphasizes

collaboration among actors but at the same time subtly suggests a more dominant role for

UNICEF and a more subordinate role for the DoE:

> P:…So UNICEF wanted to develop a kind of national framework so that every school will be using that framework in order to transform their school. If you look at even here at this research center and university, we have done a lot of work related to child-friendly initiatives in Nepal. So all that experience has helped us to transform the schools. One study we conducted some five years back—it's not child-friendly directly, but the title of that project was "community-based approaches in basic and primary education." We closely worked with UNICEF and [the] World Bank and that was a kind of piloting project of the whole child-friendly school initiative in Nepal. So then you know after that, it's not only the Nepal country office, but internationally—[mobile phone interruption]…So we transformed the classrooms from a kind of rudimentary, teacher-centered, content-oriented to process-oriented, child-friendly atmosphere. It's not only the transformation of the classroom but also the training and teachers' behavior and all of that xxx. And then…UNICEF wanted to develop that National Framework, so I was in a way asked by UNICEF if I could lead the team—*you know it was not done by one person, other people were also involved* [emphasis added], some from xxx and DoE and other areas, World Education, and other areas, NGO people were also involved in developing the national framework. And the process was xxx that first we reviewed the child-friendly initiatives in the country and abroad and based on that we developed a kind of outline to organizing a workshop. It was not done by only the experts but also the people working at the grass level [*sic*], mostly from NGOs and also the private sector, they were involved to give their opinion, even on the outline.

> I: How long was this process?

> P: It took about a year. At first we thought we would finish in five or six months but it took a whole year because of the series of consultation meetings with different sectors…And the process was so lengthy that we tried out each of the indicators that we developed in different pockets of the country—you know that Nepal is such a diverse country. So we went to the mountains, hills, Terai, east

and west, and we covered these different types of areas, and different types of schools, you know that we have different types of schools, some private and some community owned, some the normal schools. So we went to all of these schools and we tried out the indicators, and that's why the whole process took a long time. After that the government has endorsed it—that means the government has published it and made it available to the schools.

Based on his account which validates elements of the policy document (e.g., he references the mechanisms by with the Framework was developed, including a pilot project, a background review of similar national and international initiatives, a multi-stakeholder workshop, and extensive in country testing of each of the proposed child-friendly indicators), the Researcher led the policy development team, and as a result, how he understands the development process carries significant weight. Most importantly, his narrative begins at the global level with UNICEF making the pivotal decision to create a general framework for school reform and then ends at the national level with the Department of Education supporting the framework and disseminating its provisions to all schools. In short, this evidence of UNICEF's leading role and the DoE's subordinate role lends support to conceptions of the global origins of the child-friendly schools model. Although the Researcher also emphasized that many actors were involved ("you know it was not done by one person, other people were also involved…"), it is important to note that all of these other actors seem to have played more of a supporting role in the policy development process.

Collectively, the document and interview evidence suggest an overall narrative in which the development of the National Framework was clearly globally driven by UNICEF, albeit supported through the collaborative efforts of I/NGOs, the DoE, and researchers. In addition to the various consultative mechanisms described above, UNICEF additionally employed another strategy, not featured in the policy document, to

generate support among NGOs and the government for the eventual adoption of the child-friendly schools initiative as a national policy. This strategy was a series of "observe and learn" visits to child-friendly schools in Thailand. Beginning in the early 2000s, UNICEF, in partnership with the governments of Nepal and Thailand, invited representatives from local and national NGOs in Nepal that were already implementing programs to improve school quality, as well as select officials from the Department of Education, to travel to Thailand to witness first-hand the model child-friendly schools that UNICEF had been implementing there since 1999. The organization's apparent aim was to motivate the Nepali government to transfer the child-friendly school model to their system in order to improve school quality and address the numerous other challenges faced by the education system. However, a more latent aim was to generate support for the initiative among I/NGOs so that they would later join UNICEF's advocacy efforts directed towards persuading the Nepali government to incorporate the child-friendly schools initiative into national educational reform policy.

The NGO and government officials who participated in the visit had varying levels of previous knowledge and experience with the child-friendly model, and consequently, the visit served different functions depending on the participants' prior experience. The Education Officer from Samunnat Nepal, for instance, explained that, in collaboration with UNICEF and the Nepali government, his organization had for several years already been implementing a form of child-friendly education that focused on training teachers in child-centered pedagogy, when UNICEF observed that they were doing a "good job" and selected three organization leaders, including himself, for participation in the visit. Thus, for this officer and his colleagues, the visit reinforced

their existing knowledge while providing a new, comparative perspective and increasing

their understanding of how to expand and improve the approach in Nepal. For other

participants with more limited exposure to the child-friendly school model, the visit

served an introductory, educational, and motivational function. These participants

generally held the perception that Thailand at one point was like Nepal but had since

been able to make great progress in the development of their education system. As

Department of Education Official #1 explained, he too had visited "a very remote village

there" that was a "little bit far better than [the Nepali] situation," though he still claimed

to be very unsure about the origins of the child-friendly schools concept despite self-

reportedly serving as a member of the National Framework task group. Similarly, the

Education Officer from IFCD[23] observed that the Nepali education system was like a

"peanut" compared to the Thai system. He went on to lament that, "…in regard to them,

we haven't done anything. It's a long way to go. A long way to go." The visit,

therefore, provided these participants with a vision of how the Nepali education system

could be transformed if the Thai model was successfully implemented in Nepal. Still

other participants took issue with this idea of cross-national educational transfer,

cautioning about the underlying assumption of universality with regard to children's

needs. This is a topic which I return to in the final chapter of this dissertation.

Although the narrative of the Thailand school visit explains the global-national

transfer of the child-friendly concept to Nepal's education system, the question remains

---

[23] It should be noted that IFCD and Samunnat Nepal are both national NGOs which I was not familiar with before this research, but that were included in the sample because they were recommended to me by the Education Officer at UNICEF. This suggests a very close relationship between these NGOs and UNICEF which may at least partially explain their selection for the Thailand school visit. As I later learned, both participants had also been active in education reform in Nepal for many years and were consequently well-known and respected.

of exactly how the concept was introduced at the local level. Combined evidence from the BASE District Official and the Save the Children District Education Officer, both of whom have been involved in implementing child-friendly schools in Kailali district, provides a case study of the grassroots development of the initiative. According to their accounts, after jointly modifying the model of child-friendly schools that had been piloted in Thailand, UNICEF and Save the Children collaborated to introduce the model at the grassroots level throughout Nepal. As a first step, in 2002 Save the Children organized a regional training workshop in a neighboring district (Kanchanpur) in partnership with the Department of Education. Following the training, Save the Children subsequently provided funding directly to BASE to implement the child-friendly schools program in their working districts. Following the initial implementation, the District Education Office and the Department of Education also provided ongoing monitoring and evaluation support. Ultimately, the BASE official credited the local development of the initiative to the combined efforts of Save the Children, UNICEF, and the Department of Education. Though BASE is also a long-time partner of World Education, the official did not mention World Education in his account. In fact, the only sources which attributed a strong role to World Education in the development of the initiative were the policy document and the Education Officer from World Education itself.

However, evidence supporting the global conception of the child-friendly schools model was not all offered through impartial fact-based and process-oriented narratives. It was also voiced through contentious—and at times fiery—critiques of global actors by national actors. For instance, the Education Officer from Rato Bangala Foundation

asserted that, "these [policies] are nicely drafted by *outsiders* [emphasis added]." When I

asked him to elaborate on who these "outsiders" were, he explained:

> You heard about the consultants, the experts…Maybe outside consultants xxx and
> there are a lot of development partners who [the] government [asks] to draft a nice
> paper but the government is supposed to implement those ideas. Maybe those
> development partners may not even have a sense of what is written in the policy.
> They may need to train the government teachers, maybe their part is lacking so
> you can't see the results at the ground level…

Here, the officer reveals a subtle disapproval of global actors—consultants, experts, and

development partners—who may not fully understand the contextual realities of Nepal

and may not adequately fulfill their duties in ensuring that policies are implementable.

Although the responsibility of implementing policies lies with the government, the officer

clearly absolves it of all blame in policy failure. Interestingly, claims of external

intervention did not come from only Nepali participants. The United Mission to Nepal

Education Officer #2, a non-Nepali woman, also credited the importation of the child-

friendly schools model to "outsiders" and specifically to "UNICEF and those kind of

organizations." Later on she further attributed the development of the concept directly to

Westerners. While the policy document also acknowledges the role of "experts" in

preparing a concept paper based on "international practices and learning" and in

contributing sectoral knowledge in support of theoretical, policy, and practical aspects (p.

3), overall it asserts that a diverse group of actors contributed to the development of the

policy and certainly does not create any insider/outsider divisions. Nevertheless, the

participant narratives of outsider intervention provide additional evidence of the global

origins of the child-friendly schools policy.

More so than any other participant, the Education Officer from Save the Children,

also a non-Nepali woman, stood out for being exceptionally critical of the unchecked

power of global actors as well as the dialectical relationship between global forces and local culture. Although she also understood UNICEF to have driven the introduction and dissemination of the child-friendly schools initiative within Nepal, she did not necessarily attribute the creation of this concept to UNICEF. Rather, she believed that child-friendly schools may represent something more universal. She defended these nuanced ideas through a series of statements. First, she commented on the origins of the child-friendly schools initiative in Nepal by stating:

> …in my understanding, the concept of "child friendly" has been *promoted quite vigorously by UNICEF*. And I don't know what is happening in the other countries. And I don't know if this *level of intrusion in Nepal* is higher than average or not, like how much the concept is disseminated.

and

> …a powerful organization like UNICEF has xxx lots of strategies and people want to push particular agendas. So there might happen to be *someone who has this very strong agenda about this inside UNICEF*, that's my guess.

Then, in response to my question about where the idea for child-friendly schools had come from, her tone shifted, and she unexpectedly expressed her own uncertainty:

> Yeah, I would like to know…Because *education is something very universal, but again it reflects history and culture. And which is a Western or modern idea, and which is more traditional or culture-specific is very hard to tell, isn't it?* But before a long time ago, there was, of course, in any cultural context, there was a kind of traditional education…But the government's modern school, this subject-wise curriculum, Nepali language, English, mathematics, that is perhaps a more universal thing…As far as I read, the basic idea of child-friendliness is not necessarily 100% Western, [it is] something more acceptable, more broad, human-rights based…So, I don't feel this is too Western-oriented. But what I feel that is a little bit problematic is that it's something too ideal, and not reflecting the real context. *But real context doesn't mean Nepal's traditional culture, but it's more to do with the difficulty in achieving this. It's not because this idea is really marginalizing traditional culture or something…* [emphasis added]

Through these statements, and foremost through this last extremely powerful statement, which I return to repeatedly throughout this dissertation, the Education Office contends that the global origins of child-friendly schools initiative do not inevitably imply an imposition of Western ideas. Instead, child-friendliness may embody something more universal, based on the needs and rights of children around the world –in short, it may embody the global ideology of childhood.

Ultimately, the evidence from the National Framework document, the narratives of numerous participants, the account of the Thailand "observe and learn" school visit, and the critiques of global actors, including the particularly insightful words of the Save the Children Education Officer, all point to the global origins of the child-friendly schools policy. It is important to recognize that even though the policy document and several of the interviews additionally suggest that collaboration and contributions from diverse actors played an important role in the development of the policy, the data presented in this section support a process that is essentially top-down, with UNICEF at the helm, INGOs (and Save the Children in particular) at its side, and the DoE and national NGOs tagging along behind.

"Our learning experience made this": Narratives of local conception

Given the extensive evidence pointing to the global origins of child-friendly schools, and the intense spotlight on UNICEF, it seems difficult to not accept the narratives of global origins as truth. Yet some participants nonetheless unabashedly maintained an alternative narrative. The Senior Official from BASE and the Education Officer from NNDSWO, notably both local/national NGOs, asserted that their organization had conceived of the concept of child-friendly schools with varying levels of

independence in response to the needs and priorities of their local context. The narrative

from the Senior Official from BASE was particularly interesting because it diverged from

the account of BASE's District Official in Kailali. He shared the following story to

describe the genesis of child-friendly schools in BASE's working districts:

> In Tharu communities [ethnic group in the Western Terai region of Nepal], many adults, both male and female, were illiterate. So we [BASE] implemented non-formal education centers in the Tharu communities. The Tharu communit[y members], both male and female, asked for their children's education. So we organized with the community for education facilities for children. A lot of children were taking care of buffalos, cows, sheeps [*sic*], bulls, and we came to know that education for children is very important. We started implementing the out of school program for the out of school children. And we ran nine month schools—that course was developed by UNICEF. It was in 1992. And while implementing that out of school children's program, we learned that in each school, in the government schools, there is no child-friendly schools, child-friendly approach, child-friendly teaching. And teachers were not conducting the class in a child-friendly way. So then, from 1992 we just raised the issues, raised the voice on behalf of communities and children with the DEO and SMC…regarding child-friendly school and child-friendly teaching practice.

As he explains, BASE identified the critical problems of illiteracy and out of school

children in the local communities. Then, at a time when education enrollments were low

across the country and the EFA movement was just taking off, the organization

responded to these issues by developing a strategy for the improvement of school quality

with a focus on making the teaching practice more child-friendly. When I asked the

Senior Official if BASE used the term "child-friendly" at the time, he replied:

> P: No, we just used "quality education"…but *later on we came to know* that this is the child-friendly system. [italics added]
>
> I: When did you come to know about the child-friendly system under that title?
>
> P: It was around 1998.

His response was particularly interesting since UNICEF did not introduce the child-friendly concept into Nepal until 2003. According to this narrative, BASE developed a locally conceived solution in response to a local problem and then afterward reframed that solution in terms of a borrowed concept, that of child-friendly schools. Though the official's attribution of the child-friendly concept is vague ("later on we came to know that this is the child-friendly system"), his mention of support from UNICEF in combination with BASE's strong partnership with Save the Children points to two potential—and likely—sources of information and resources. Finally, it is important to note that the discrepancy between the accounts from the two BASE participants does not render either account untrue. Rather, the inconsistency more likely derives from different ways of understanding child-friendly education. The Senior Official clearly applies a more broad definition to the concept, one that equates it with quality education, while the District Official defines child-friendly schooling in more narrow, programmatic terms. Ultimately, both narratives are important for understanding the role of NGOs in appropriating the child-friendly schools concept.

Because of the strong document- and interview-based evidence on the global origins of the concept of child-friendliness combined with the different account from the District Official, the Senior Official's narrative of local conception was extremely unexpected and might have been considered as an outlier if another national NGO had not reported a similar account. The Education Officer from NNDSWO explained that his organization developed the child-friendly initiative based on their own learning from field-level experience and not in response to any government mandate. Similar to BASE, the organization first identified the critical issues faced by schools (in their case, low

enrollment, retention, and pass rates) and determined that "the root cause [was] the not

friendly environment in schools." This inadequate environment was preventing the

children from receiving a quality education, he claimed. In response, NNDWSO

developed a plan for establishing child-friendly schools in their working districts[24] which

included the District Education Office (DEO) and proposed this plan to Save the

Children, their funding partner. Later, NGOs collectively (he frequently referred to "we

NGOs" in the interview) made the government aware of the child-friendly model and

advocated to policymakers in the education sector for the model's adoption at the

national level.

However, despite the high degree of NGO agency featured in his initial narrative,

when I probed about partnerships with other actors, the Education Officer contradicted

his original story by stating that the child-friendly model had, in fact, been conceived by

Save the Children. First, he informed me that funding and technical support, including

training on the child-friendly model, came from Save the Children. Then, upon asking if

the idea of child-friendly schools had come from Save the Children, he gave this account:

> Yeah, yeah, yeah, they [helped] us. First, we analyzed the situation at the district
> level: what are the issues? Then they made the model on how to address those
> type[s] of issues. And we especially address[ed] the problem of Dalit children in
> Nepal. The enrollment rate in Nepal is 92% but the Dalit children's enrollment
> rate is not over 50%. So it is a big challenge in Nepal. So especially at the local
> level the Dalit and marginalized community children cannot go to school. Why?
> What is the major problem? One factor is the schools. There is discrimination.
> Class discrimination. Caste discrimination… That type of discrimination affects
> the education in schools. So this is not a friendly environment in schools, so that
> type of issue we raised at the local level.

---

[24] Similar to BASE, NNDSWO has also established child-friendly schools in Kailali district.

The Education Officer understood that while Save the Children developed the general

concept of child-friendly schools, NNDSWO adapted the model to target their specific

population of children, Dalits. The officer went on to explain that they also received

support and training from UNICEF since Save the Children and UNICEF are "joint

partners on these issues" and that, along with local partners like NNDSWO, BASE, and

other NGOs, they all work together. This model of partnership underscores the fact that,

while the local and national NGOs ascribed a high degree of local ownership to the

policy development, the process involved input from actors at different levels. Yet,

regardless of this reality, in the cases of both BASE and NNDSWO, the most salient

finding is that the NGO officers held the perception that the child-friendly initiative

originated locally instead of having been borrowed globally.

"I don't like to say this word ['borrow']": Narratives of mutual collaboration

Intermingled in the above accounts were also narratives that emphasized mutual

collaboration among actors. Participants who shared these narratives asserted that the

concept of child-friendly schooling emerged not from any single source but from the

collective contributions of diverse actors. Although the narratives of global conception

also included the theme of collaboration, those narratives reflected unequal relationships

between actors and a top-down policy process. The narratives of mutual collaboration,

on the other hand, emphasized an equal distribution of power and contributions from

actors. Three examples in particular, from interviews with the Department of Education

Official #2, the IFCD Education Officer, and CERID Researcher #1, exemplify these

ideas.

Mostly, the Department of Education Official, who, according to numerous other participants, has played a leading role in the development and implementation of the policy, concurred with the narratives that designated UNICEF as spearheading the child-friendly schools initiative. However, his narrative diverged slightly by characterizing the development of the policy as being more a process of multilevel collaboration than top-down dissemination of global ideas. In fact, a dominant theme of his interview was that the fundamental role of the Department of Education is to develop and implement education policies by "collecting the voices" from local stakeholders, including parents, students and teachers. When I pointedly asked if the Department of Education had borrowed the child-friendly schools concept from UNICEF, the Official firmly replied:

> Exactly, *I don't like to say this word ["borrow"]. We are not borrowing this idea*. [emphasis added]. But at that time, UNICEF was also not doing it separately…at that time this practice was a joint effort from the government side and the UNICEF side. Definitely UNICEF generated this idea and we stuck together, and prepared the plan together and launched in government schools. Definitely at that time UNICEF contributed huge resources…and that was also the partnership approach. So anyway, we got the feedback, and we got the findings, OK this is the thing that can contribute to quality education. And…then [the] government declared the child-friendly framework.

The Official's aversion to the word "borrow" reflects how he makes sense of the UNICEF-DoE relationship and each actor's role in the policy development process. Though he clearly understands UNICEF to have played a leading role by creating the concept and contributing "huge resources," he maintains that the DoE played an equally important role as part of a "joint effort." The official indicates that the role of the government was to collect stakeholder feedback, test the appropriateness of the initiative for widespread implementation in Nepal, and finally to legitimize the initiative through national policy. Thus, according to his account, although the child-friendly concept may

have originated globally, child-friendly schooling in Nepal was actualized through an egalitarian process of mutual collaboration.

The Education Officer from IFCD exhibited a similar dislike of the suggestion that his organization had borrowed the child-friendly schools concept from UNICEF. He explained that IFCD began implementing "child-centered activities"[25] in 2000 following a visit to Bangladesh organized by UNICEF to observe the child-centered activities for out of school children being implemented by Gonoshahajjo Sangstha (GSS), a Bangladeshi NGO working in non-formal primary education. Many other Nepali NGO officials were also in attendance on the visit to learn how make "all programs in Nepal like GSS was implementing—more participatory [and with] more joyful learning." The Education Officer explained the process of educational transfer in this way:

> So [after returning to Nepal] we organized a workshop and developed different participatory methodology and implemented that for out of schools [*sic*] children. So we practiced for some years and later in 2005 we thought that why should we not implement the same methodology for the same age group but in formal education. This is how we entered into formal education, school education. From there we were implementing the child-centered process.

However, in a similar exchange to the one I had with the Department of Education official, when I asked if the idea for "child-centered" education had come from UNICEF, the Officer quickly replied:

> P: Yeah, not directly from UNICEF. In a way you can say that we developed this methodology. It has different elements from different practices—from GSS, from Rato Bangala. We developed our own as well. You know, and our [staff] got trained in Thailand as well. So it's blended with many practices.
>
> I: So you adopted the practices and ideas from many places and developed your own program?

---

[25] According to the Education Officer, the term "child-centered" is more appropriate than "child-friendly" for describing IFCD's approach because "child-friendly" is a broad, multi-sectoral concept, whereas "child-centered" specifically refers to the type of teaching-learning process advocated by his organization.

P: Yes.

His response embodies the same narrative of mutual collaboration expressed by the

Department of Education Official #2. Though global actors, i.e., UNICEF, exerted great

influence, the national NGO ultimately took ownership over the child-friendly initiative,

claiming it as their own ("In a way you can say that we developed this methodology"),

albeit with acknowledged support from other actors.

Researcher #1 from CERID shared a story that also highlighted collaboration

among international and Nepali actors. Long before UNICEF had appointed him to lead

the development of the Framework, CERID had conducted several research studies

during the 1980s and 1990s in partnership with the International Development Research

Center (IDRC) in Ottawa, Canada. These studies, which investigated instructional

improvement in primary schools, were focused on child-friendly education; however,

according to the Researcher, the research team did not use that term at that time. The

Researcher suggested that though the term "child-friendly" has only very recently come

into popular usage, the basic concept of child-friendliness is more enduring and universal.

This point is captured in the following exchange:

> P:…Even at that time [in the 1980s and 1990s] we were talking about how to
> make the school and classroom more child-friendly. We didn't use the word
> child-friendly, but we were providing training to the teachers, involving the
> parents and community people in the education of the children, we were
> transforming the classroom system, we were discouraging teachers to use corporal
> punishment. So all of these kind of things were included even at that time. So we
> were very concerned about this process of child-friendly education in Nepal.
>
> I: Do you think that it is just a change in the word used?
>
> P: No, actually, the thing is that child-friendly is a very appealing term that we
> use now, but what I mean is that even though we didn't use the word child-

friendly, in the 1980's we were still working in that line. But we still have to go a long way.

I: So the ideas were the same, then and now.

P: Yeah.

I: But the state of education was obviously very different.

P: Very different. And also then we were focusing on the access part. Because most of the children were out of the school, and we wanted the kids to come into the school. So maybe 50% [of our work was] devoted to bringing [children] into the school system. But now as there are more than 96-97% of the children in the school, we don't have to worry about that part. We can focus our attention on the quality of the school system. So that's why "child-friendly" has become so popular and appealing and very useful and relevant in the present context.

Similar to the Senior Official from BASE, the Researcher claimed to have been using child-friendly methods prior to the introduction and popularization of that term in Nepal. Whether or not his previous work would be categorized as child-friendly based on contemporary definitions is irrelevant. The important point is that he makes sense of his former actions through the new concept of child-friendly schooling. As he explains, the "child-friendly" concept has increased in prominence in the present context because of its ability to appropriately frame policy solutions in response to the pressing issue of school quality in the Nepali context. Thus, such a narrative demonstrates how the process of multilevel collaboration has served to legitimize the concept of child-friendly schools at the national level and lead to the development of the National Framework. Collectively, the accounts from the Department of Education Official, the IFCD Education Officer, and the CERID Researcher provide an alternative to assumptions of the global origins of the child-friendly schools policy while still hinting at the powerful influence of global concepts on national actors.

In this section, I have presented evidence supporting three seemingly contrasting narratives of the development of the National Framework which emphasize global conception, local conception, and mutual collaboration among actors. As is evident, different actors variously made sense of how the child-friendly schools concept was developed and came to be a national education policy in Nepal. Yet, the diversity of narratives does not render any individual account to be untrue. Rather the ways in which participants made sense of their role and the roles of other actors provides great insight into how participants understand the origins of the child-friendly schools concept and the embedded ideas about children and childhood. I pick up this idea in the discussion chapter. In the next section, I turn to narratives of policy implementation.

Narratives of policy implementation

Participants drew on a range of narratives of policy implementation that were as diverse as those of policy development. As described in the previous section, many I/NGOs were already implementing child-friendly school initiatives before the national adoption of the Framework, either independently or through the dedicated support of Save the Children or UNICEF. Thus, the narratives presented in this section variously depict how participants, particularly those from I/NGOs, understood their roles in implementation at different points in the policy process. These roles are described in terms of two, non-mutually exclusive frames, faithful reproduction and cultural interpretation, which were described in detail in Chapter 1. In the following sections, I analyze how the evidence corresponds to these frames.

Adhering to a "common approach": I/NGOs as faithful reproducers

When explaining the child-friendly schools implementation process, many participants attested to the importance of adhering to a "common approach," a term specifically used by the Save the Children Senior Education Officer. Some defined this common approach as one which aligned with the international norms of child-friendly schools, while others described it as following the guidelines established in the National Framework. Despite a clear understanding of the global origins of the child-friendly schools concept, these actors perceived the established model to have been widely tested in different contexts and inclusive of diverse perspectives. Therefore, these faithful reproducers reasoned that this established model was appropriate for the Nepali context and consequently saw no justification for making any changes through implementation. When asked about the similarities and differences between the child-friendly approaches used by various INGOs, the Education Officer #1 from the United Mission to Nepal aptly represented the mindset of the faithful reproducers in this way:

> I think it's almost similar because we do follow the government's Child-friendly Framework, the government's guidelines, because the government has given certain guidelines. So we do follow the same guidelines, because it's perfect.

In response to a similar question, the Save the Children Senior Education Officer emphasized the same sense of conformity, but attributed the common approach to guidelines for child-friendly schools shared within the INGO community.

> It's the same thing. Child-friendly schools have developed certain guidelines and principles of what goes into a child-friendly school and we adopt the same thing whether it is UNESCO, UNICEF, Save the Children, World Education. Because we have a consortium, AIN, Association of International NGOs in Nepal. And then through that also we receive a kind of common approach to child-friendly schools.

Though the UMN officer references nationally established guidelines and the Save the Children officer draws on those legitimized by INGOs, both participants emphasize that there is a singular way to implement a child-friendly school. Yet later on in the interview, when I pointedly asked the Save the Children officer if there had been any resistance to the child-friendly school concept at any level, he firmly declared that there had been no resistance because it was part of a government regulation. Then, completely contradicting his own statement, he launched into a critique of the policy's comprehensiveness, arguing that it tried to be like "one medicine to all." In this way, the officer exemplified the faithful reproduction behavior because, although he harbored concerns about the uniform model, he nevertheless made a concerted effort to vocalize his fidelity to the policy and the government. He concluded his critique by stating, "That's my personal view. But I don't mean that I resist to the guidelines."

This allegiance to a uniform model had also diffused to the grassroots level. When asked whether BASE had been able to make any changes to the model through implementation, the Kailali District Officer affirmed that:

> …especially now the Department of Education and District Education Office are trying to implement the Child-friendly National Framework, so our activities are also based on the Framework, especially the 149 indicators…

His statement embodies the faithful reproducer view that there is a right and a wrong way to educate children, and that the 149 indicators as established in the National Framework clearly represent the right way. Notably, although the District Officer had previously discussed the strong involvement of Save the Children in helping BASE to develop and implement the model at the local level, here he fails to mention INGO support and fully attributes the model to the national government. He goes on to describe the challenges of

faithfully reproducing the model particularly in terms of poor school infrastructure, lack

of learning materials, untrained teachers, and absence of school plans for responding to

natural disasters.[26] Yet despite these challenges, the officer's commitment to

implementing the established child-friendly school model remains unscathed. In this

way, the District Officer captures the essence of true faithful reproducer behavior. He

laments the hardship of local realities but stays faithful to the authority of global

principles.

However, NGOs and INGOs were not the only actors who acted as faithful

reproducers. The Education Officer at Save the Children, who, as previously

demonstrated, was highly critical of global actors, recognized elements of faithful

reproduction within the Department of Education's adoption of the child-friendly schools

model from UNICEF. She offers an intense critique of the tendency of faithful

reproducers to blindly accept global policies without questioning their suitability for the

Nepali context:

> …but what I feel is that the people in the Department of Education have not really
> *internalized what a child-friendly school is* because one day they were told they
> are supposed to be doing this. [emphasis added]

An important point here is that faithful reproducers are not always passive participants in

the policy process, despite the officer's characterization to the contrary. However, she

clearly views the DoE as having had no voice in the matter of adopting the national child-

friendly schools policy and interprets this lack of agency to indicate that the DoE does

not truly understand the meaning of child-friendly schools. This is a very subjective

assessment for it is not clear whose understanding of child-friendly schools the officer is

---

[26] Kailali district is prone to flooding during the monsoon season forcing schools to close for weeks and sometimes months at a time.

using as a benchmark. Nevertheless, the Education Officer's statement alleges that

faithful reproducers may have only surface level or incorrect understandings of policy

concepts.

The lack of internalization of the concept also has major implications for the

DoE's ability to implement the initiative, as the Education Officer further suggests

through a story of a recent exchange she had with a UNICEF official:

> And very recently I had talked with a staff member in UNICEF, and I asked about this child-friendly school self-assessment, because in my project I have been disseminating this, and this was developed not by us but by UNICEF. So I said to this woman with UNICEF, 'In my project I am using a child-friendly school assessment' and she said 'Well, we developed that sort of assessment [and] indicators but the Department of Education is not really willing to make sure that will go to the schools, so we cannot do anything more.' That is not what she said word for word, but that's more or less what she said, so I was a bit disappointed that UNICEF made it, handed it over to the Department of Education and [was] not really committed to improvement or didn't give further budget to make sure that that will happen…I thought it's rather irresponsible that we made this [program] and give it to you and you do it and that's the end. And, of course, it won't happen [won't be implemented properly].

According to this account, the Save the Children Education Officer shifts some of the

blame for implementation failure to UNICEF, who she feels "was not really committed"

to the initiative beyond introducing the policy concept in Nepal, and the UNICEF official

places blame on the DoE who is "not willing" to make a concerted effort towards

successful implementation. She goes on to rationalize the low capacity of the DoE by

presenting a potentially explanatory view:

> I read recently… [that] because of these international education goals, MDGs and EFA…it's actually deprived…government [people of their] critical thinking power because it's so pushed on by people from outside.

In short, she reasons that when policy solutions are in a sense handed to national

governments, just like "instant noodles" according to the NIDS Sociologist, officials lose

their ability to critically evaluate the appropriateness of policies within specific national

contexts. For example, the over-focus on improving educational access driven by the

MDGs and EFA in the 1990s and 2000s has permitted other issues, such as "curriculum

issues and teacher development," to be under-prioritized. The lure of foreign aid and

global legitimacy has created a double bind for the government, though, essentially

leaving faithful acceptance and implementation of the policy as the best available option.

The Education Officer expressed the dilemma in this way:

> But maybe before these international goals existed, maybe the government had
> more time or power or capacity to think about their own priorities specifically in
> the Nepali context. But maybe these international goals are attached with money.
> So then donors' pressure is getting stronger. So perhaps those agendas sit outside
> the country and come over here, and we need to accept more or less as it is.
> Maybe nobody on the government side, the DoE side, can say, "Oh, that policy,
> we do not need that." I don't think they can say so to the donor.

Taken together, this series of comments by the Save the Children Education Officer

reveals an implicit unequal balance of power in the donor-recipient relationship that

ultimately affects perceptions of their roles in the implementation process.

Along with the power imbalance and other factors discussed by the Education

Officer from Save the Children, the Education Officer #2 from the United Mission Nepal

suggested an additional reason for why the faithful reproducer mindset may be

particularly ingrained in Nepali culture and thus so often expressed through both

governmental and non-governmental actions. From her outsider, non-Nepali perspective,

she explains that in Nepal there is a clear cut right and wrong way to do everything. For

example, she stated that:

> There is a right way for how you put your books in your bag. How big [the book
> bag] can be. There's a right color of paper for kids to use that's child-friendly.
> There's a right game to play and in case of doubt, you [teachers] better not do it,

than do it wrong. So that's very strong. And that's very challenging, because there's no easy way out. Because if you have been taught since very early, I mean this is before school, that there is only one right way and better not try if you're not sure, then the drive to try [new things] is very little. Because when I was two I got hit over the head for doing something wrong, so why try it? We do see quite big changes because teachers are slowly getting the idea of, "Hey! We can do it differently." And they're doing it. And students are slowly getting the sense, "Hey! We can try something new, we can respond in a way that's out of the ordinary, that is creative and we don't get hit over the head anymore."

Although her examples focus on actors within the school level, e.g., teachers and students, the widespread Nepali mindset that they represent is still very applicable to NGO officers and government officials who have been educated in such a culture of conformity. The rich description of her statement provides a view of how the faithful reproducer philosophy facilitates adherence to established norms and guidelines. In this sense, the unquestioning acceptance of national and global directives among some participants can be seen as an expression of Nepali culture. Although the focus here is on policy implementation, it is possible that this mindset may have also influenced how participants approached new cultural ideas, such as those about children and childhood.

"Nepalizing the outside influences": I/NGOs as cultural interpreters

In contrast, another category of I/NGO participants was ever mindful of the need to adapt implementation strategies according to the needs of diverse local contexts. Guided by a fervent belief in the uniqueness of Nepali culture, these actors were deeply attuned to the contextual appropriateness of child-friendly schooling within a given region, district, or even school. However, in a deviation from the cultural interpreter frame, this steadfast commitment to context did not translate into a belief in the fluidity of cultural conceptions of children and childhood. These participants were just as likely as the faithful reproducers to profess an unwavering conviction in the universality of

children's needs and rights. Though several participants strongly contended that global

cultural norms were not always suitable for the Nepali context, when pressed, none were

able to give valid examples of cultural incongruity. Different ways in which participants

understood the meaning of context were found to explain some of the findings. In the

end, what differentiated these participants from the faithful reproducers was their

devotion to context and a critical view of global initiatives.

Many participants possessed a strong collective vision of Nepal's cultural

uniqueness. According to this view, Nepali culture was, to varying degrees, incompatible

with or different from other forms of culture, including that originating in Western or

global spheres. This vision further shaped the idea held by some—but not all—

participants that global development initiatives were inappropriate in the Nepali context.

The Sociologist from NIDS exhibited such a perspective in the following exchange:

> P: Nepali society is very different, the fabrics of Nepali society is very different. That is why this INGO and donors or UNICEF, when they bring such kind of idea in the name of global process, in implementation many problems arise in the local situation.
>
> I: So you think if the local and national NGOs were able to better adapt the global ideas to the local situation, do you think it would be better?
>
> P: No better would have been BASE innovating something—
>
> I: On their own—
>
> P: On their own way, capturing to the local, Nepali ground reality. But that does not happen. Dilli [the President of BASE] doesn't have time to think that way, or his staff. So we copy and paste very easily from UNICEF or some other INGOs. Of course…we are bound to receive international culture in such programs.

The Sociologist, who later in the interview referred to global programs as "instant

noodles," objected to my suggestion of local NGOs acting as cultural interpreters ("if

local and national NGOs were able to better adapt the global ideas to the local

situation…"), and instead asserts that Nepali culture is so different that only Nepali NGOs are capable of effectively developing and implementing programs in the Nepali context. He also makes the important observation that the faithful reproduction of programs from global actors ("UNICEF and some other INGOs") leads to the diffusion of global culture.

The Education Officer #2 from the United Mission to Nepal, a non-Nepali woman, described a similarly oppositional perspective, in which Nepalis sought to counteract the diffusion of global culture by "Nepalizing" everything. She explained:

P: Well, there's quite some talk about Nepalizing the outside influences.

I: What does that mean?

P: Well, that's to change them [global ideas] into something that's acceptable for here. But, in what sense that is happening, it's quite hard to tell. In my opinion, it's more you do either the Nepali way or you do the Western way.

"Nepalizing the outside influences," thus, refers to a defining characteristic of cultural interpretation, that of translating global culture into a local vernacular. In a solitary example of this idea, the Education Officer from World Vision, an INGO, used a self-initiated textbook creation project to translate the child-friendliness within local contexts. By providing children with the opportunity and resources to create their own textbooks, he used the policy's emphasis on child participation to facilitate the production of books that would be contextually relevant to all of the children involved. In telling me about this initiative and proudly pulling a sample child-created textbook from his desk drawer, the Education Officer took a locally based story and reframed it in the language of children's rights and the global image of a highly capable and empowered child. No doubt such a story had been shared many times with officials from the government, UNICEF and other NGOs. In this way, such stories become a part of global dialogue

which reinforces global culture. However, this one example aside, my findings concur

with UMN Education Officer's conjecture regarding the difficulty in assessing whether

any NGOs have been able to successfully Nepalize global culture. Ultimately, the

findings did not reveal any evidence of strong cultural interpretation behavior by any

other participants.

Even so, many other participants maintained a firm commitment to paying

attention to context in policy implementation. The Education Officers from both World

Vision and Rato Bangala Foundation were both wary of the uncritical acceptance of

global programs and policies that was characteristic of the faithful reproducers. The

World Vision Education Officer, for instance, stated that his organization's field staff was

trained in the procedures for implementing child-friendly schools by visiting "a model

school which is contextual to them." He went on to explain:

> We do not send our staff or stakeholders on exposure visits in Thailand or African
> countries because the context is completely different. Even in our own country,
> the context is different. If I take some Jumla colleagues to Indonesia, then [the]
> Indonesia context and Jumla context [are] completely different.

Clearly an attack on the UNICEF and Government of Nepal sponsored "observe and

learn" visits to child-friendly schools in Thailand, the officer reasoned that educational

programs can only be effectively implemented through a deep understanding of the local

context. The Rato Bangala Foundation Education Officer also called for the

contextualization of policy solutions. When I asked him if he had adapted the child-

friendly schools model at all, he responded, "Yeah, we try to contextualize. You can't

just copy and bring everything here and paste. So we have to improve and consider the

local needs here." Because of the unique relationship with the Rato Bangala School[27], the Foundation is able to test imported educational programs in a Nepali school ("the school is a lab for us") and according to the officer, "see what works, what doesn't work."

However, the crux of the issue is whether the child-friendly school model is culturally inappropriate in diverse contexts with equally diverse populations of children. The World Vision officer and I subsequently engaged in a lengthy exchange in which I urged him to consider what the contextually relevant design and implementation of education programs truly meant to him and whether he believed this was in fact desirable and necessary. When I asked him if children had different needs in different contexts, both within and outside of Nepal, he asserted that "from birth, [all children's] needs are the same" yet "contextually it might be a little bit different." He supported the former idea by invoking children's universal right to education, and then elaborated on the latter point with two examples. The first drew on the different geographies of Nepal, as a landlocked country, and Thailand, as a coastal country, to demonstrate differences in context, and the second used content-based knowledge (i.e., the tomato, present in both Nepal and Thailand, and a ship, present only in Thailand), to make the point that similarities and differences in context shape learning environments. I then pressed him further with the following questions:

> I see what you mean, though in that example, it is a difference of the relevance of content, but what about the goals of education? Do you think the goals should be different or similar for children in different places?

---

[27] Rato Bangala School is a private, co-educational day school in Kathmandu that also houses a teacher training institute. It strives to replicate its innovative teaching methods and quality instruction (called the Rato Bangala Method) in schools across Nepal. Located on the campus of Rato Bangala School, the Rato Bangala Foundation has a close relationship with the school.

The Education Officer responded by arguing that, unlike other countries, Nepal had responded to the global EFA norms by adding an additional national provision that responded to the needs of Nepal's diverse ethnic minority communities. Through this provision the government recognized the right of all children to learn in their mother tongue and subsequently incorporated multi-lingual and multi-cultural components in national education policies, including the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools. Finally, he returned full circle to his previously stated conviction in the universality of children's needs. "So that's why World Vision has four aspirations globally," he stated, "we talk about every child should have good health, all children should be educated for life, every child should be protected, and every child should have some kind of inner feeling of love and affection." Throughout the exchange, the officer seemed to constantly vacillate between advocating for the universal and the contextual needs of children. Ultimately, he seemed to be saying that although children have universal needs, differences in contextual realities require that policy makers and program implementers concertedly translate global ideas into contextually relevant strategies.

The Education Officer from the Rato Bangala Foundation, though apparently not opposed to educational borrowing, which happened to be a core practice of his NGO, arrived at a similar conclusion while exhibiting the same kind of contradictions. Through a long-term partnership with Bank Street College in New York, Rato Bangala has been implementing been implementing its own observe and learn model of cross-national educational transfer. Each year Foundation staff are sent to the U.S. to learn from education professors at the college. I asked the officer how they adapted and contextualized their learnings from the U.S. in Nepali schools. He replied:

P: You can't implement all of the things that you learn in Bank Street to here in the Rato Bangala School.

I: Can you think of one example that didn't transfer well, that you had to change in some way?

P: Mostly the cultural context.

I: What do you mean?

P: The idea is the same but I'll give you one example, it becomes decontextual because in New York, obviously math teaching approach and other approaches are [similar], but some lessons like social studies have to be developed according to local Nepali culture…So we have adapted some lessons here.

I: Aside from content, are there any of the progressive teaching ideas that have to be changed, that don't work very well here?

P: Our class size is high. Thirty children are there [in each class]. Basically you can't find the teachers as highly trained as you may find in New York. You have to do a lot of in-house training and orientations. Sometimes we invite experts from Bank Street also. In a year, two or three trainers come and train our teachers, and this teaching training is also a part of their academic course…And even what we implement here in Rato Bangala [School], it is not possible to take that to the village.

I: Even that has to change?

P: That has to change. Because you don't have the infrastructure there, the trained teachers that are available here. So you really need to deal with schools according to needs.

I: But do you think that the basic needs of children in these different contexts, in America, here in Kathmandu—

P: Children are the same! But the context becomes different. Children all over the world, they are the same.

Both the Rato Bangala and the World Vision Education Officer emphasized the

importance of cultural context in cross-national educational transfer, yet were unable to

provide valid examples that truly exemplified threats to cultural norms, values and beliefs

surrounding children and education. Instead, they resorted to either content-based

learning examples or logistical challenges to program implementation. At issue is what is truly meant by the term "context." The Save the Children Education Officer proposed an alternative view to explain the diverse meanings of context:

> But what I feel that is a little bit problematic is that it's [the National Framework] something too ideal, and not reflecting the real context. But real context doesn't mean Nepal's traditional culture, but it's more to do with the difficulty in achieving this. It's not because this idea is really marginalizing traditional culture or something.

In doing so she argues that there is a distinction between logistical and cultural barriers within a given context. Her statement implies that any incongruity between the National Framework and the Nepali context does not mean that its provisions, and embedded global norms, are in conflict with the culture of Nepal. To the contrary, it may simply reflect the inability of a policy to be implemented given more concrete limitations or challenges to implementation. The Rato Bangala example illustrates this point. The officer cited large class size and untrained teachers as examples of cultural contextual factors that are barriers to educational transfer from Bank Street College in New York to the elite, private Rato Bangala School in Kathmandu as well as poor infrastructure as a barrier to transfer from the Kathmandu school to schools in rural villages. To the Save the Children officer's point, any threats to implementation derive from physical and logistical challenges and not from any differences between global and traditional culture.

Ultimately, with one small exception, almost no participants could be characterized as true cultural interpreters. Though many emphasized the importance of paying attention to needs of children in diverse local contexts, participants nevertheless upheld a belief in the universal needs and rights of children around the world. A true cultural interpreter would have taken a more fluid approach to implementing global and

local ideas related to children. Yet none of the interviewees could give any example of ways in which global cultural ideas were incompatible in the Nepali context. It therefore makes sense that there were no true examples of two-way cultural interpretation between global language and local vernacular. These findings provide further support for embeddedness of the global ideology of childhood in the child-friendly schools policy and are a testament to the universality of childhood.

Conclusion

In this chapter I presented three narratives describing the origins and development of the child-friendly schools policy, and I also applied two heuristic frames—faithful reproduction and cultural interpretation—to better understand the policy implementation behavior of actors. At first glance, it may seem that the policy development narratives of various actors are in conflict. With some NGOs claiming to have developed the child-friendly concept on their own, other actors referencing global origins, and still others asserting a model of collaboration among actors, it is difficult to untangle the truth. However, these should not be viewed as conflicting accounts but rather as expressions of how different actors have made sense of their roles in the development and implementation of child-friendly schools and the embedded global ideology of childhood. Generally, there was a heightened awareness among all actors of the duty of both international and national/local NGOs to act as intermediaries between global norms and local realities. In the end, while some participants reported implementation challenges and spoke out against global influence, not one participant criticized the concept of child-friendly schools. To the contrary, there was an overwhelming sense that child-friendly

schooling represented a promising movement away from the traditional model of schooling. At issue, though, is the long-term sustainability of such a model and the potential for lasting social and cultural change around conceptions of children and childhood in Nepali society. I turn to these questions in Chapter 7.

**Chapter 7: Sustainability and social change: Perspectives on the future
of child-friendly schools and the global ideology of childhood in Nepal**

Introduction

There is strong reason to believe that many positive changes in Nepali primary schools have resulted from the implementation of the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools. According to the participants of this study, teachers have variously incorporated child-centered methods into their teaching practice, reduced the use of corporal punishment, and adopted more inclusive approaches towards diverse populations of children. Reportedly, classroom environments have also become more child-friendly through the addition of wall decorations and group-oriented arrangements of desks. Children too have assumed more participatory roles in school governance through the creation of child clubs. But the crucial question remains of how deeply rooted and lasting are these changes? And how might they be linked to the spread of the global ideology of childhood? Hypothetically, if every NGO, INGO, and IGO were to vanish from Nepal tomorrow, what would happen? Would child-friendly schools resort to their former state, becoming nothing more than the product of a short-lived policy fad? Or, would they persist, continue to expand and evolve? And if they did in fact persist, what would be the implications for shifting conceptions of children and childhood in Nepali culture? In this chapter, I explore how participants perceived the sustainability of the child-friendly schools model and the implications for long-term social and cultural change in Nepal.

The bipartite research question is stated as:

> *Research question 3:* How do I/NGOs and other actors envision the sustainability of the child-friendly school model in Nepal, and how do they perceive the dimensions of the global ideology of childhood, as embedded in the policy, to be linked to broader social and cultural change?

I additionally probe these issues of sustainability and social change through a series of related sub-questions. First, what do participants perceive as having truly changed in schools? How sustainable are both these school-level changes and the policy itself? Given the critical role of I/NGOs as reproducers and interpreters of the child-friendly schools model, what kind of role have they played in the sustainability of the initiative and how might their role evolve in the future? Further, following the permeation of the global ideology of childhood into national policy, what aspects of the ideology might be sustainable at the local level? And finally, from a socio-cultural perspective, what is the future of conceptions and children childhood in Nepal? I analyze the interview data to address each of these questions in turn.

To be clear, because the embedded unit of analysis of this study is I/NGOs implementing the policy, and not school-level actors, this chapter is not an impact evaluation of the child-friendly schools policy[28] or even a true measurement of the scale of the policy's implementation. Rather, the chapter's primary aim is to understand whether policy actors perceive the child-friendly school model to be sustainable in Nepal and the extent to which their responses suggest that cultural conceptions of children and childhood may be changing. This is not to say that I do not provide school-level examples, and in fact I draw on numerous examples of teacher attitudes and behaviors as

---

[28] Indeed, such an evaluation has not even been conducted by the Department of Education, and to date all monitoring has been coordinated by District Education Offices, I/NGOs and schools themselves.

witnessed by I/NGO participants who have been actively involved in implementing child-friendly initiatives directly in schools. However, these accounts are always from the perspective of the interview participants.

Sustainability of child-friendly schooling in Nepal

The general concept of child-friendliness has unquestionably spread globally and nationally. The Education Officer #1 from UNICEF reported that even media coverage of the child-friendly school initiative was increasing in Nepal, and in interviews education authorities frequently drew upon child-friendly (*bal mitri*) terminology. But despite this apparent surface-level spread of the concept, the question of sustainability remains unanswered. This section is divided into two sub-sections. I begin by exploring participants' perceptions of what has actually changed in schools. Then, I turn to a discussion on the future of child-friendly schools, highlighting the perceived roles and responsibilities of different actors, barriers to shifts in reform ownership, and the future role of I/NGOs, all from the perspectives of the study participants. Throughout this section, and the chapter overall, I distinguish between the sustainability of the child-friendly school model and of the National Framework policy. Especially in considering the issue of sustainability, this is a critical point of differentiation since the model and the policy emerged through different processes.

Participant perspectives on school-level change

When discussing school-level changes, participants generally focused on four different types of changes: 1) physical changes in the classroom and school environment; 2) changes in the pedagogical process; 3) new dynamics in teacher-student interactions

and relationships; and 4) normative changes within schools particularly around teachers'

acceptance of children's rights. Although many participants enthusiastically reported

improvements in school and classroom environments, they equally celebrated

developments in the teaching and learning process and connected both types of

improvements to student learning[29]. Thus, even the environmental changes were not

perceived to be superficial by some participants. Participants associated some changes,

such as improved school construction (e.g., a solid, sturdy roof to protect against rain;

functioning windows and a door for providing security and ventilation; and separate toilet

facilities for boys and girls), classroom furniture (e.g., carpeting and low tables in

classrooms for the early grades, and black boards and desks and chairs suitable for

collaborative learning for the upper grades); and learning-oriented wall decorations (e.g.,

pictorial representations of the alphabet, numbers, and other basic concepts), with

fostering a more enjoyable and comfortable atmosphere for children that was better suited

for learning. Even the UNICEF Education Officer #1 cited giving classrooms a "facelift"

as one improvement that was necessary for the successful achievement of child-friendly

classrooms.

Other participants emphasized pedagogical improvements as most directly

contributing to significant school change. The Department of Education Official #1, for

instance, recognized that while improving school infrastructure and operations played an

important, albeit secondary, role in improving school quality, these elements belonged to

a more traditional method of education reform. Guided by the new, child-friendly

---

[29] One crucial question in assessing the depth of change is whether learning outcomes have truly improved. This question, however, is far beyond the scope of the current study, and is nevertheless impossible to answer at present since Nepal has no national learning assessment and does not participate in any international assessments such as PISA.

approach, he espoused the belief that "if the teacher and the student are in the position of learning, we can learn even under a tree." Many participants observed that teachers had variously adapted their teaching practice to promote a more child-friendly teaching and learning process. For example, teachers encouraged two-way interactions with students; creatively utilized learning materials other than the government-supplied textbooks; incorporated enjoyable activities into lessons such as songs, dance, and participatory games; and refrained from using corporal punishment. Teachers typically learned how to implement these practices in their classrooms through NGO- or government-led trainings. During the interviews, several NGO participants even readily shared with me "before and after" videos as evidence of the drastic change from traditional to child-friendly classroom practice. The differences were obvious: the child-friendly classrooms were noticeably improved, the teachers interacted with students and students with each other, and the students were clearly more joyful and engaged in the learning process. These participants seemed eager to convince me that deep change was really happening in the child-friendly schools. Yet other participants, including the Plan Nepal Education Officer, CERID Researcher #1, and the Save the Children Education Officer, were more skeptical. They were acutely aware of the difficulties associated with achieving meaningful change at the school level, contending that neither environmental nor pedagogical improvements alone were sufficient.

Another important aspect of change is how the interaction between teachers and students are changing. Multiple participants reported that the teacher-student relationship was becoming more intimate, caring, and equal. In a traditional classroom, the teacher might simply stand at the front, write on the blackboard with chalk, and lecture to the

students without questioning them and not really caring if they have understood anything after 45 minutes, according to the Save the Children Education Officer. Further, the teacher might not even know the students' names or how many students are in the class without looking at his register, the Education Officer #1 from UNICEF explained. After the introduction of the child-friendly model, though, the teacher "can even mention that Sita did not come today, and Ram was out" (UNICEF Education Officer #1). In short, the teacher begins to have what the UNICEF officer described as a "personal touch."

Several participants gave other revealing examples of how social interactions between teachers and students were becoming more intimate and caring. Participants reported that some teachers had begun to express concern and interest in students' well-being in ways that they had not done before. Some participants even used the word *love* to describe how teachers felt towards students. The Senior Official from BASE, for example, explained that during his experience of implementing the child-friendly initiative in schools, he had often observed some children assign their teacher the nickname *Amrish Puri*, the name of a leading Hindi film actor known for his "bad guy" roles. This nickname conveyed the sense of fear that students typically felt towards their teacher. However, with the implementation of the child-friendly school model, the official affirmed that

> … if you [give] love to the children, if you teach in a friendly way…then the children will come closely, [and say] "Yes, sir. Yes, Madam. What is this? This is this." [said in a gentle, child-like voice]

As the official suggests, if teachers show care and respect towards children, then those feelings will be reciprocated by the children towards the teacher, and the entire relationship will have been transformed. This belief that child-friendliness represents a

more loving teacher-student relationship was also shared by both the Save the Children District Education Officer and the Plan Nepal Education Officer.

Other participants attested that the dynamic between teachers and students was becoming more equal. Participants highlighted the child-friendly school model's emphasis on participation and inclusiveness. The movement towards a child-centered classroom meant that knowledge resided within students as much as within teachers, thus empowering students. Students were increasingly encouraged to guide class discussions according to their own interests, in the process interacting with both the teacher and other students. The Education Officer from World Education described a classroom interaction that she had witnessed during a recent school visit:

> Once children enter to the class, teachers don't start with teaching [and] learning, [they] don't start with check[ing] homework. They start first with interaction: "how are you?", "how do you do?", "how is your family?" If some children are sick, they discuss a little more about them. And there is a job chart. Every child is special, so there are job charts according to their job and turn. Students share news. For example, one day I visited grade 1 in a school. Even I never imagined that grade 1 students can speak like that in that particular Tharu area. One student came and his turn was to share some news. And he shared that, "today I had a vegetable, with a round thing." That's what he said. And another asked, "was it green?" And "where did it grow?", another asked…"in a tree, or in the ground?" And that kind of question and answers are happening in the classroom. And then the teacher started what they learned yesterday, they started reviewing…

The above example shows how the teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction has evolved to be both more egalitarian and caring. That the teacher had creatively and effectively shifted the norms of social interaction within her classroom to be more in line with the principles of child-friendly schooling suggests a deep-level of change. Yet, not all participants felt that child-friendly classrooms were achieving the intended goal of inclusiveness and equality. The World Education officer's surprise that

children "in that particular Tharu[30] area" could speak critically and articulately is quite telling. An important notion embedded in the child-friendly school model, and particularly relevant here, is that all children *can* learn and have *the right* to do so. While some participants alluded to this idea, it was largely absent from the interviews. Because of the long history of ethnic and caste diversity in Nepal, genuinely encouraging learning for all children in the classroom is no small matter for it is wrapped up in much more deep-rooted social issues. As the Education Officer from Save the Children explained:

> …if you have maybe a Brahmin teacher and Dalit student, can you imagine what it's like? It's very difficult for foreigners like me to get down to the bottom [of it]. And maybe Nepali people are aware of it, but they don't want to talk about it. Because I visit many schools where the teachers are usually Brahmins and Dalit students, and apparently teachers are very much committed, but sometimes I feel like they are doing a kind of charity, not education. "Look at these impoverished students, I need to look after them." [the teachers think.] But [they are] not really teaching. Sometimes I feel that way. But anyway…

Though teachers may adapt their pedagogy to incorporate new teaching practices and interactive learning exercises, as the Save the Children officer hinted, these changes are merely superficial if teachers do not also adapt the underlying beliefs and prejudices which frame how they engage with students.

The final type of school-level change which participants reported involved shifts in norms related to children. These normative changes raise the important question of whether simple changes in practice constitute "deep change." According to Coburn (2003), "deep change" refers to "change that goes beyond surface structures or procedures (such as changes in materials, classroom organization, or the addition of specific activities) to alter teachers' beliefs, norms of social interaction, and pedagogical principles as enacted in the curriculum" (p. 4). Though the child-friendly school

---

[30] The Tharu are a historically marginalized indigenous ethnic group in the Terai region of Nepal.

initiatives of many NGOs exclusively focused on reforming the classroom behavior of

teachers, changing teachers' beliefs, which Coburn (2003) defines as "teachers'

underlying assumptions about how students learn, the nature of subject matter,

expectations for students, or what constitutes effective instruction" (p. 4), proved to be

much more difficult.

One of the biggest challenges was teachers' ability to internalize the core

principles of child rights, an integral component of both the National Framework and the

global ideology of childhood. The complexity of this issue is illustrated in the following

statement from the Education Officer from Plan Nepal:

> Some of the teachers know more about the child rights, but they don't accept the
> value of child rights when they are practicing their behavior in the classroom. I
> think more than 50 percent of the teachers know about child rights, but I think less
> than 1 percent of teachers use that knowledge while behaving with their students.

According to his account, although approximately half of all teachers' had a surface-level

understanding of child rights, almost none of them had effectively incorporated the

fundamental principles into their personal belief system. Thus, any knowledge of child

rights would be expected to have a very limited impact on teachers' classroom behaviors

and interactions with students. I continued by exploring if there were any differences in

the internalization of child rights principles between different teachers, particularly

between the younger and older generations, to which the officer replied:

> Based on my experience, some of the new teachers are knowledgeable about the
> child rights issues but they are not practicing [them]. They do not respect the
> children's dignity when they are teaching to the students. And some of the young
> teachers, they don't have any idea about child rights, but they respect the students
> and the children's dignity and teach them in a more joyful environment…And
> with the older teachers, I found a similar situation. It depends on the person's
> behavior, how the person was brought up, their past environment. Because still at

home and in schools, this idea of imposing some kind of violence to motivate people, between older teachers and younger teachers, I don't see any difference…

Though there was a wide consensus among other participants that younger teachers were more open to new ideas, whereas older teachers were very resistant to any kind of change, the Plan Nepal Education Officer observed that both groups were equally unlikely to have truly altered their belief systems to encompass child rights. Instead, the Education Officer felt that an individual's background and past experiences were the most important determinants of belief internalization and true behavior change. Surprisingly, because of the importance of individual differences, the officer also believed that a deep understanding of children's rights was not correlated with the ability to teach in a child-friendly way. He explains this incongruity below:

> …As I already told, *the teachers do not know anything about child rights, but they still teach in a child friendly wa*y. And the teacher that knows better about ideas of child rights but they are still imposing punishment. That's why it's difficult. When I was observing a classroom in Banke three years back, he [the teacher] had a big stick in his own hands, and he hid his stick behind like that [behind his back]. And I talked with him about child rights, and he explained about child rights better than me. But when I went out from that classroom, just two meters ahead, then I heard him impose punishment with that stick. That's why it does not work.

Despite the unique view on the independent relationship between child rights understanding and child-friendly teaching, this account provides some evidence, supported by similar accounts from other participants, that the penetration of child rights into the norms and values of Nepali culture has been limited. I return to this issue in the final section of this chapter on social and cultural change.

Participant perspectives on the future of child-friendly schooling

In light of participants' views on the progress and challenges of school-level implementation, I next look to the future in order to assess the potential for consequential change to be sustained over time. Perspectives on the sustainability of child-friendly schools in Nepal ultimately hinged on the roles and level of responsibility interviewees attributed to different types of actors, particularly with respect to the process of shifting ownership over the reform. Some participants viewed the DoE's perceived lack of commitment to the initiative unfavorably. Other participants assigned the responsibility for long-term sustainability to school-level actors. And still others, given the complexity of actors' roles, conveyed uncertainty over who was ultimately responsible for the sustainability of child-friendly schools. None of the participants openly expressed that I/NGOs held any obligation to ensure the sustainability of the initiative, though one participant was highly critical of UNICEF, as we will see below. To the DoE's credit, the UNESCO Senior Official noted that the adoption of the National Framework in itself was a remarkable attempt to sustain the child-friendly school model in Nepal because of the legitimacy government support has afforded the child-friendly school model. It should be noted, though, that because NGOs, INGOs and UNICEF were actively implementing the child-friendly school model long before the DoE recognized the national (and global) importance of such an approach, the sustainability of the national-level policy and the school-level reform, though related, may be different. Generally, despite the broad-based support for the initiative at sub-national levels prior to policy adoption that could be attributed to the dual origins of the model (i.e., UNICEF's global initiative and the programs of local NGOs such as BASE and NNDSWO), participant

views reflected great uncertainty for the long-term sustainability of child-friendly

schools.

Given the weak state of the government and the strong leadership role played by

I/NGOs in implementing the model, an obvious assumption is that the sustainability of

child-friendly schools is most linked to the nature and duration of support provided by

I/NGOs. Accordingly, I asked participants to discuss first, what happens when NGOs

leave individual schools and move onto the next site or project, and second, what do they

perceive to be the future of child-friendly schools in Nepal? These questions aimed to

determine whether the reform had become deep-rooted enough to withstand a shift in

ownership, or if schools tended to quickly resort back to their traditional methods in the

absence of NGO support. Surprisingly, numerous participants from different sectors,

including the BASE District Official, CERID Researcher #1, and even the Department of

Education Official #1, answered the question by shifting the onus of sustaining the

initiative onto the government. The Senior Official from BASE responded in this way:

> This is a very important and very tough question…First, we need to address the
> policy of Nepal, policy on education of [the Nepali] government. Although, there
> are many policies and provisions, the policies are not implemented in the ground-
> level. We have a very nice policy, we have a very nice plan. We have a School
> Sector Reform Plan. We have a School Improvement Plan. We have a strategic
> plan. We have a goal for education. And there are many, many investments
> going on in the education sector. But…the achievement is not at a very
> satisfactory level…So the government is very careless…that is why the NGOs
> and the local institutions are necessary to do this. Right?

In short, the official indicates that the government's capacity to implement its own

policies is limited and therefore NGOs are needed to fulfill the basic functions of the

education system. Yet, there is a paradox, for in spite of the carelessness that the official

attributes to the government, NGOs also need the government. The official goes on to

explain that because of the financial uncertainty of NGO-led projects due to donor

funding structures, NGOs must collaborate with the government at both national and

district levels in order to be able to successfully implement child-friendly school

programs. Multi-level collaboration is essential for sustainability, he argues. He then

concludes his response with a highly ambivalent assessment which reframes

sustainability as a school-level issue:

> So I can't say [if] 100% [of] teacher[s] or 100% [of the] SMC will continue to implement… the quality education project, but most of the teachers will continue to [do so]. So there will be some sustainability of the project.

Though he ends by suggesting that child-friendly schools may be sustainable to a certain

extent based on the actions of teachers and school management, he is far from overtly

optimistic.

Researcher #1 from CERID took a similarly critical stance on the duty of the

government to scale up the initiative and the role of schools in implementation:

> …The first thing is that it's [the Framework] not being implemented by all of the schools. The government has not gone to each and every school, because they have a very difficult system of trickling down the framework itself. They might not have even produced 32,000 copies of the manual, [so] then how can it go to every school? You understand what I mean? And just having a manual is not enough. It's very important to have training on how to use that manual. And again, the manual is just a source of information, but it has to go to the classroom. The school has to buy [into it]. And when you say "school" you mean school authority, SMC, community, the teachers, the head teachers, so they have to buy the indicators that we have mentioned…

The Researcher astutely recognizes that "just having a manual is not enough"—even

32,000 copies (one for every public primary school)—to ensure widespread

implementation and sustainability and attributes this to the difficulties of the "trickle

down" mode of policy diffusion apparently adopted by the DoE. Like the BASE Senior

Official, the Researcher subtlety assigns the blame for perceived policy implementation

failure to the government, in this case for not doing enough to train school-level actors.

However, unlike the BASE official, he does not mention any role for NGOs and instead

emphasizes the need to secure buy-in from diverse school actors. His critique indicates

that what is needed is for consequential change in schools is a deep understanding of the

child-friendly model beyond the inadequate materials produced by the government.

Thus, under the current system, the prospects for the continued expansion of child-

friendly schools and the sustainability of the policy do not seem promising from the

CERID Researcher's perspective.

Yet not all participants faulted the government for the perceived poor prospects of

child-friendly schools. In fact, one participant from an INGO (whose organization and

job pseudonym I omit here because of the highly critical nature of the comment)

characterized the government more as a victim of careless process of shift in reform

ownership. For a reform to be sustainable, international actors must create conditions

that enable schools and national/local NGOs to assume the necessary knowledge and

authority before control is fully relinquished (McLaughlin and Mitra, 2001). Too often,

though, there are breakdowns in this process, as described by the INGO participant:

> But anyway, what I feel is that, at least because I happen to work with the
> government Department of Education very closely, because of the nature of the
> project I'm doing—but what I feel is that the people in the Department of
> Education have not really *internalized* what a child-friendly schools is because
> one day they were told they are supposed to be doing this. And very recently, I
> had talked with a staff member in UNICEF and I asked about this child-friendly
> school self-assessment, because in my project I have been disseminating this, and
> this was developed not by us but by UNICEF. So I said to this woman with
> UNICEF, "In my project I am using a child-friendly school assessment" and she
> said "Well, we developed that sort of assessment, indicators but the Department
> of Education is not really willing to make sure that will go to the schools, so we

cannot do anything more." That is not what she said word for word, but that's more or less what she said, so I was a bit disappointed that UNICEF made it, handed it over to the Department of Education and not really committed to improvement or didn't give further budget to make sure that that will happen. I'm not saying that it should happen at all the schools, but I thought it's rather *irresponsible* that we made this one and give it to you and you do it and that's the end. And, of course, it won't happen. [emphasis added]

According to the participant's analysis, UNICEF irresponsibly transferred ownership over the child-friendly schools initiative only in a symbolic sense, without ensuring that the DoE was prepared to commit to—or buy into—such a reform. The fault lies with UNICEF, the participant suggests. However, from the perspective of the anonymous UNICEF officer, the breakdown lies with the lack of willingness on the part of the DoE to implement child-friendly schools. To further complicate the finger pointing, the INGO participant, despite self-admittedly maintaining a close working relationship with the DoE and sharing a role in the implementation of child-friendly schools, overlooks any responsibility that her INGO might have in managing the shift in ownership process. In the end the participant assigns the blame with the initial owner of the reform, UNICEF, who, according to the account, essentially developed the policy, mandated that the government implement it, and then washed their hands clean of the entire affair. For this reason, the participant definitively claims that "it won't happen," meaning, child-friendly schools will not be sustainable.

Government and IGO actors aside, many participants focused on the responsibility of schools to ensure the sustainability of the initiative. When I asked the Education Officer #2 from the United Mission to Nepal how she felt about the future of child-friendly schools, both in terms of the national policy and school-level reform, she referenced the idea of school-level buy-in also raised by CERID Researcher #1. In the

following account, she draws on her former professional experience in Indonesia to

predict an unpromising fate for sustainable change in Nepal:

> Before I came and worked in Nepal, I worked in Indonesia for 11 years. And
> there they have been doing child-friendly education a bit longer, and what I saw
> there was a bit worrying, and I hope it's not going to be how it's going to end up
> in Nepal. The attitude there of the teachers was, "OK we've been told we can't
> hit them [the students] with a stick. We've been told we have to be facilitators
> instead of teachers in the sense that you have to do it like this and this and this,
> and that's it. We have to facilitate the learning process"—which is true. But
> those teachers then felt very ill-equipped for how do we do it differently then. So
> they decided, quite a bit like here, in case of doubt, do not think. So they would
> opt for sitting in the teachers' lounge and letting the kids work on their own in the
> classroom and not interfere. So there was no facilitating the students, and there
> was no child-friendly teaching because there was hardly any teaching going on.
> So if that's going to be how it's going to be here, then we need to come up with
> something else quickly. And that's the same with the idea that corporal
> punishment is bad, but you still have 60 to 90 kids in your classroom. How can
> you handle them in a way that is honoring to children, to children's rights, and yet
> effective? Same with teaching. You can't do rote learning. How can you do
> teaching in a way that is pleasant and effective for all involved? So that is a big
> challenge, and I think if we can tackle that challenge well, then it will be fine. If
> we just stop at, thou shall not duh duh duh, hit and whatever, then I think we are
> going to be having big problems.

According to the officer, the issue of sustainability comes down to teachers who must

have a deep understanding of child-friendly pedagogy beyond surface-level changes in

classroom practice, which they are able to maintain even after NGO support comes to an

end. Additionally, teachers must be able to creatively adapt the underlying principles of

child-friendly education in response to new challenges and in new contexts. Though

many NGO officials eagerly described the intensive training and support they provided to

teachers, few described measures to ensure sustainability within individual schools once

the training ended, though there were a few exceptions (e.g., the Education Officer from

IFCD). In the end, the UMN officer did not directly attribute blame for the challenges in

achieving sustainability to any one actor, but she nevertheless seemed to feel that if lasting change is to take place, concerted action will be required to better support teachers.

However, the sustainability of child-friendly schools requires spreading new practices, ideas and norms both *between* schools as well as *within* schools and classrooms. In this way the reproduction process is characterized not only by NGOs training school-level actors, but also by school-level actors sharing ideas amongst each other. The IFCD Education Officer suggested that scaled up monitoring efforts were essential to spread program knowledge between teachers and other school actors such as head teachers, SMC members, and PTA representatives. He explained that teachers were frustrated because they felt that, "Nobody is coming to see what we do and how the children are enjoying the learning." He elaborated:

> Monitoring is the weakest part of our education system. Just think of the teacher, he learns a lot of things, and he organizes many very interesting activities, participatory activities, with children. But nobody is there to see. Only the head teacher sometimes comes and says "You are doing good." Or the peer teachers come and say "Oh, I want to learn." But from the monitoring part, nobody is there to say to them whether they have conducted the activities properly or if there is some improvement needed. So they look for some kind of motivation from monitoring or supervision.

His example points to two severe limitations in the system: first, that effective monitoring to evaluate progress is not taking place, and second, that the lack of monitoring means that teachers are working in isolation. In short, no one knows what anyone else is doing. Increased monitoring and supervision would allow increased exposure to the teaching practices of different teachers which would ultimately enable the child-friendly model to spread more widely and deeply.

The Education Officers from Save the Children and Plan Nepal offered solutions to this problem. The former commented that district-level resource officers, whose responsibility is to be a contact person for all schools within a given geographic area, is supposed to fill this monitoring role by regularly visiting schools and providing needed support. However, according to the officer, unless the school is sponsored by an NGO, these visits often do not take place. She makes the interesting point that local-level government officers are motivated by the increased cachet of NGO-sponsored schools. The Education Officer from Plan Nepal shared a different kind of proposal for bypassing NGOs and ineffective local education authorities in order to foster the spread of ideas between and within schools. He explained:

> Now there still are challenges, but there are some innovative ideas already being practiced in the different schools. And if we organize an exchange visit between them, the schools that already established a non-violent teaching environment and the schools that are using corporal punishment, there are these two types of schools still in Nepal, and we can organize an exchange visit. And the first one can motivate to the second one…

The Plan Nepal officer recommends utilizing a cascade mechanism for transferring knowledge between schools to ensure sustainability. His recommendation, though, is underpinned by the assumption that NGOs would need to act as intermediaries in organizing the exchange visits. These potential solutions indicate that some participants looked within schools and local education institutions for ways to help teachers develop a deeper and more complete understanding of child-friendly practices. The reality is, though, is that these solutions are not being widely implemented, and so, in spite of these options, the vignette of the teachers in Indonesia foreshadows a grim fate for child-friendly schools in Nepal.

Yet some hope was found at the grassroots level in the case of Kailali district. Particularly when the nature of a reform is in opposition to traditional ways, as is the case with child-friendly schooling, it is ever more important to ensure that the priorities of school-level and district/national-level actors are aligned (Coburn, 2003). When such normative coherence exists, schools will be able to more successfully sustain deep change over time. Normative coherence also fosters a policy environment which is more favorable for NGOs to implement initiatives at the school-level and for teachers to adopt those practices in the classroom. In Kailali district, where BASE, NNDSWO, Save the Children, World Vision, and Plan Nepal have all been working, the District Education Officer expressed enthusiastic support for the child-friendly school model. He stated:

> The child-friendly approach should be compulsory for all schools because according to the changeable situation and the modern age, now if schools don't accept the child-friendly approach, they will not really change the children. Because of the child psychology, children need to be in a friendly environment. So the DEO recommends that it be continued at all schools and compulsory for every school in the coming days.

That the priorities of the I/NGOs and the Kailali District Education Officer seem to be aligned and has great consequences for the ability of the child-friendly schools model to spread within the district. Several participants, including the District Officer from BASE, even mentioned holding planning meetings with the DEO so as to promote a shift in ownership over the initiative. Others mentioned providing training to diverse actors within the school system aside from just teachers (e.g., parents and community members). Ultimately, these kinds of efforts not only foster normative coherence at the grassroots level but enable the spread of norms to higher levels.

Collectively, the critiques and recommendations referenced in this section indicate that participants largely attribute the uncertain prospects for the sustainability of

the child-friendly school initiative to the government or to schools themselves.

Participants were quick to blame the government for its lack of commitment or inability

to implement its own policies. Schools, on the other hand, were characterized more as

dependents who simply needed more time and support to internalize the new model. The

participants notably never attached any responsibility for sustaining the initiative to the

I/NGOs who had helped to implement the initiative in the first place. The claim that

local government officers are motivated by the cachet of NGO-sponsored schools offers

important insight into the evolving I/NGO-government relationship. As the number of

NGOs and INGOs has steadily increased both globally and within Nepal over the last

decade, these organizations have also increased their power over national affairs that

have traditionally been the domain of governments. Thus, their relationship with national

governments is especially important in understanding the sustainability of education

policy.

　　According to the Sociologist from the Nepal Institute of Development Studies,

who had previously held a position with the national government coordinating the

activities of NGOs and INGOs in Nepal, the future role for NGOs is very much

dependent on the type of government in power. Given Nepal's ongoing state of political

conflict, this could involve a very powerful, independent role or a weak, restricted role.

The Sociologist predicted that if democracy continues to flourish, then NGOs will retain

their current level of influence. However, if the Maoists return to power or the

government returns to a heightened state of centralization, then NGOs may lose control.

For now, NGOs are "part of the life for Nepali society" and will thus continue to "play an

important role in Nepali society," the Sociologist stated. This influential, secure position

of NGOs juxtaposed against the tenuous position of the government may explain why participants enthusiastically celebrated the initial positive changes in child-friendly schools despite ambivalence regarding the future of the initiative under the current system. As long as NGOs exist, the National Framework may change, but new ideas will always emerge. For, according to the World Vision Education Officer, NGOs bring innovation, and perhaps this is the key to their power. The question remains, though, of whether the positive changes they bring about are deep-rooted enough to impact broader social and cultural change.

Social and cultural change: The global ideology of childhood and the rise of the child in Nepali society

In 2002, when the Rato Bangala Foundation began offering a teacher training course in child-friendly pedagogy, people reportedly laughed at them. According to the Education Officer, teachers and policymakers alike displayed great surprise, exclaiming:

> Oh my god! Why do you have such an *intensive* training for primary teachers? *Teaching children is a piece of cake.* [If] you have finished your School Leaving Certificate [high school diploma], [then you] can teach anything. Is there anything [else] to learn…? Can you see anything new in the textbooks? Is there any problem to understand what is written?

Nearly 11 years later at the Foundation-organized and INGO-, IGO- and government-supported conference entitled "Quality in the classroom,"[31] the critics had clearly changed their perspective regarding children and education. I/NGO representatives, education leaders, policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders, including parents and students, packed into a Kathmandu meeting hall to exchange ideas, innovations, and

---

[31] See the more detailed discussion of the conference in Chapter 1 for additional information.

best practices about how to improve children's learning outcomes and make schools in Nepal more child-friendly. The conference was a sign of a momentous shift in thinking about how to educate children. It represented the triumph of the idea that teaching requires more than simply knowing subject matter content—it requires knowing *the child*. No longer was learning thought to be something that inexplicably happens when a student, teacher, and textbook are placed together in a classroom. Instead, education had come to be regarded as a complex process which aims to address the even more complex needs, and rights, of children. Most importantly, the conference symbolized the ascendancy of the child both within the school and the broader society.

The story of the Rato Bangala Education Officer raises important questions concerning how constructions of childhood may be changing in Nepali society. In the context of the implementation of child-friendly schools, how do participants of this study perceive conceptions of children and childhood to have changed? What aspects of the global ideology of childhood as embedded in the policy might be sustainable at the local level? And what might these transformations suggest about the position of the child in Nepali society? The previous section took a process-oriented angle and examined participant perspectives on the sustainability of the policy's implementation. This section explores how the contents of the child-friendly schools policy may be linked to broader social and cultural change in Nepal. It should be noted, of course, that in no way am I suggesting that the policy has caused such widespread change, or any change at all, for that matter. True to the qualitative nature of this research, I simply draw connections between the policy and participant perspectives on social and cultural change.

The global ideology of childhood in local contexts

Evidence that the individual dimensions of the global ideology of childhood had become fully integrated into belief systems within local level institutions (e.g., the family, the school, and the community) was limited. While the topic of shifting attitudes and behaviors related to the dimensions of children's rights and child protection were frequently discussed, participants mostly pointed to the difficulty of achieving such widespread normative change. While newly recruited, younger teachers were perceived as open to modern ideas concerning children (i.e., the global ideology of childhood), tenured, older teachers were seen as staunchly opposed to change and deep-rooted in their traditional practices. Nevertheless, participants recognized some evidence of social and cultural change at the local level. I explore this evidence through the examples below.

As the Rato Bangala example demonstrates, there is reason to believe that assumptions about child development and education are changing. As other participants also communicated, teaching is becoming understood as a professional area which requires specialized skills and knowledge related to children—a shift which is as telling about teachers as it is about children. Indeed, the extensive focus among I/NGOs and the DoE on implementing child-friendly teaching training programs clearly points to a departure from former practices in which it was thought that a general understanding of the textbook contents was sufficient teacher training. Researcher #1 from CERID added that even teachers themselves are now demanding the new forms of training as they become more aware of the complex needs of children. She notes that in the past 12 years of her career, she has also witnessed teachers become increasingly aware of the special needs associated with new demarcations within childhood, such as early childhood,

which further points to the growing understanding of the complex developmental aims of childhood.

The increased awareness of the complexity of child development is inseparable from the growing recognition of children as bearers of human rights. More so than any other dimension of the global ideology, participants discussed social change at the local level in terms of teachers', parents', and community members' understanding of children's rights. The interview with the Department of Education Official #3 offered a particularly enlightening glimpse into how social change may be taking place and the roles that different social institutions may play in enacting that change. Contrasting a traditional school and a model child-friendly school and suggesting how changes in the school, home and society are related, the official began by stating that in many cases:

> …children are not getting value in the family, children are not getting value in the society, and this replicates in the school situation. For instance, if you went to any house and see the scenario of any family…children are not getting so many opportunities to practice their writing in their family as well. So this type of replication [is] exactly transferred into the classroom situation to some extent.

On the other hand, in a model child-friendly school:

> P:…you can see the changes in the teachers' behavior, you can see the changes in the behavior of the children. They are more participatory than now. They can express their feelings without any hesitation. If you enter into the school and ask any question to the children, they are ready to answer any questions.

> I: So when [children] are valued more in school, this happens?

> P: Yeah, in model schools there are these type of changes in children, more talking, more expressing their own ideas, more arguing, and demanding their rights, "This is our right, we have to do this and that, and we have send this message to our family and to our parents not to do this and that."…But it is not in general in all of the schools.

Thus, the value of children as expressed in the home, school and society are all

interconnected, according to the official's statement. When children are valued more,

they have more opportunities to learn in all contexts, and they even become empowered

to demand their rights. That the official identifies children as demanding their own rights

is of utmost importance for understanding how he distinguishes between the two types of

schools and the type of children they produce. In the modern child-friendly school, the

child is vocal, inquisitive, and empowered. However, in the traditional school, the child

is submissive, vulnerable, and marginalized. The DoE Official attributes this perceived

normative transformation directly to the child-friendly school model.

Yet despite the official's inference that social institutions such as the school and

the family may be associated with changes in the norms and values surrounding children,

it is not immediately clear *how* he perceives these changes to occur. To clarify, I

subsequently asked him if changes in a model child-friendly school transferred to a

child's home. He responded by first affirming that, "Yes, to some extent the children are

bringing their knowledge to their home," and then by sharing his experience of evaluating

several Save the Children child-friendly schools in Kanchanpur district. From a

discussion with children and parents, he learned that:

> The children's' point of view is that they are arguing for their educational rights.
> They are arguing that their parents want to stop, not to send them to school. The
> parents decided that it would be better for them to go to work than school. In this
> way parents make decisions to not send their children to schools. With this
> particular event, they are arguing that, "It is my right to go to school, all people
> are going. Why am I not going? I have to go to school." On the other hand, they
> are also delivering messages and knowledge to their parents as well…some
> learning is also replicated at the family level also. I have seen some good
> symptoms that the children are educating their parents with regards to rights as
> well.

As such, he provides evidence that children spread knowledge of children's rights from the school to the home. I then asked about the scale of the change:

> I: Interesting. Do you think this is only a small number of cases that this is happening?
>
> P: It is not common. Where we have been focusing more and implementing model schools [where] you can see this type of behavior. If you go into any other school, to some extent children are bringing their knowledge to their homes, not only from the schooling, not only from the rights-based approach, but in general. For instance, the personal health and hygiene messages related to balanced diet, nutritious foods, these types of messages children are bringing from schools to society as well.

His answer indicates that while instances of children educating their parents about children's rights may be the exception, and only linked to exemplary child-friendly schools, children at other child-friendly schools may also facilitate the spread of new ideas, e.g., about health and hygiene, from the school to the home and society. In these excerpts from DoE Official #3's interview, one theme concerning the nature of social change stands out the most: at the heart of the spread of social and cultural ideas about children and childhood, we find children themselves. Participants perceived children, more so than any other stakeholder, to have internalized the principles of children's rights. And it is also children who are constructed as advocates for the protection of their own rights. Though they may be exceptions, these empowered and child-rights savvy children in model schools are nevertheless an important bellwether for future social and cultural change around conceptions of children and childhood.

In contrast, the findings indicated that other stakeholders played more nuanced roles in shifting conceptions of children and childhood. Teacher attitudes particularly regarding children's rights did not always match the corresponding behaviors, and these

discrepancies hint at the limitations of change. The following exchange with the

Department of Education Official #3 conveys this point:

> P:...previously each and every teacher brought a stick into the classroom…Right now they don't use the stick. They started to stop the corporal punishment to some extent.

> I: Why do you think they stopped? Is it just that the policy says it wrong? Or do they understand it in terms of children's rights?

> P: No, no they understand that it would be better…to practice their [children's] rights in the real classroom situation because we have also started and initiated so many training program[s] for teachers…They are realizing on their own. On the other hand, still you can find that there are so many teachers working in the classroom, even the school principals [who said things like]: "It would be good to implement the rights-based approach, it would be good to implement the child-friendly, the human rights-based approach to education…in the real classroom situation." However, finally they said that they, to some extent, teachers need to exercise some power…You know power is associated with the teaching process, you know. Still there are so many teachers, they want to exercise their power, they are the dominating field and the children are the follower[s]. They have better knowledge than the children.

> I: That is the traditional thinking?

> P: Traditional. Still some teachers have this kind of traditional thinking. So it would take a lot of time to change this type of thinking.

The example subtly illustrates the DoE official's belief that acceptance of children's

rights at the school-level may be at a tipping point. In the case presented, teachers

outwardly agree with the principles of children's rights and view them as an ideal state to

strive towards. Yet in practice, tremendous barriers prevent their realization as teachers

continue to revert back to more traditional approaches that do not always protect the

rights of children. Teachers have reportedly stopped administering corporal punishment

"to some extent" but not entirely. Other deep-rooted norms, which the official describes

in terms of the power distribution in teacher-student relations, continue to hinder the full

protection of children's rights. The egalitarianism of the social institutions with which children interact, including the school and the family, is a central tenet of children's rights and the global ideology of childhood. Thus, the lingering belief among teachers that they should be able to exercise power over children (i.e., through corporal punishment) is a sign of the kind of challenges that prevent the achievement of lasting social change. As the official rightly concludes, a lot of time is needed for true change.

Aside from notions of children's rights and child protection, the other dimensions of the global ideology of childhood were not expressed by the participants in ways that pointed to changes in socio-cultural conceptions of children and childhood. Given the dominance of the child rights and child protection dimensions in the policy and participants' perceptions of the policy (see Chapter 5), it makes sense that these dimensions would be the first to be linked to more entrenched cultural change. This is not to say that the other dimensions are not sustainable at the local level. However, they simply did not surface in my findings. As I discuss in the next section, it may be too early to assess more deep-rooted cultural change.

The rise of the child in Nepali society

Socio-cultural change is a slow process and one that is difficult to observe. Indeed, for conceptions of children and childhood within Nepali society to noticeably change over the course of 10 or even 20 years would be atypical and highly exceptional. Yet, as the evidence presented in this chapter, including the Rato Bangala Foundation officer's story about the former views on the simplicity of teaching children, has implied, the seeds of change have been sown. Among the participants, there existed a strong faith in the potential for even a small amount of change to blossom. That the officer would

choose to share such a story, which may be based on an actual conversation or may even

represent an imagined narrative only loosely tied to reality, reveals the strength of his

belief in the potential for socio-cultural change. Similarly, though many participants

spoke of the barriers to changing deep-rooted traditional norms and were able to provide

only limited evidence of shifting conceptions of children and childhood, they

nevertheless believed that positive change was slowly beginning to happen.

Regardless of the complexities of social and cultural change, one cultural idea

resonated clearly in the participants' perspectives on child-friendly schooling: the child as

an independent member of society has become more important than ever. In Chapter 5, I

presented findings on how the dimension of individualism and the related philosophy of

child-centeredness have positioned the student as the main project of education. The

teacher takes on a secondary role as a facilitator whose responsibility is respond to the

uniqueness of each child to help him or her to learn and grow. Moreover, the child's

perspective becomes valued such that the status of the child increases and authority over

the child diminishes. Through these aspects of the global ideology of childhood, the

cultural value of children has begun to expand beyond the school and into society. The

UNESCO Officer termed this a "paradigm shift":

> I: And what caused this paradigm shift, do you think?

> P: In my opinion, it is the new innovation. The real thing is that we have to focus
> on the child. Child-centeredness is the major philosophy that is driving towards
> this paradigm.

> I: I'm still wondering, was there something happening in Nepal that caused this
> new focus on the child. Because it seems—

> P: Basically it is driven by the Child Rights Convention. Nepal is one of the
> countries that is following that Convention and committed to Education for All
> and adopting child rights. So some policy documents beyond education policy,

we have in the Constitution it is mentioned child rights and child-centeredness, at the same time, our education law and act also fosters child rights and child-friendliness. Similarly, new knowledge that is emerging in the education field, through teacher training and curriculum development, in our school governance. Everything is driven by that type of philosophy, so we have also been applying the child rights and child-centeredness in the education sector.

As the officer explains, global policies entrenched with child-rights and child-centeredness have driven national laws and policies leading to the promotion of a specific vision of childhood. By furthering the education, development, and growth of this new kind of child—a child situated at the center of the family, the community and the nation; a child who understands human rights; and a child who is capable of enacting democracy—the development and implementation of the child-friendly schools policy reflects the ascendancy of the child in modern society.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored participant perspectives on the sustainability of the child-friendly schools policy in Nepal and how the global ideology of childhood as embedded in the policy may be linked to lasting social and cultural change. Participants perceived child-friendly schools to have impacted some progress in both environmental and pedagogical aspects of schooling. However, many challenges to effective implementation remained, thus producing great uncertainty among participants for the long-term sustainability of the policy. Even so, in the context of child-friendly schools, participants discussed cultural shifts in notions of children's rights, child protection, and the general rise in importance of the child in Nepali society. In the next chapter, I synthesize the findings of this dissertation and draw out conclusions about how global conceptions of children and childhood are reproduced within a national context.

Chapter 8: Discussion and conclusion

Introduction

Once a cultural element on the periphery of policy landscapes, conceptions of children and childhood have assumed an unprecedented level of influence over global and national agendas in the modern era. The primary argument driving this study, and a key research finding, is that a global consensus around an ideal, normative childhood has come to define and be defined by how societies strive to protect, nurture and educate their youngest members. In these pages, I have explored how this consensus, as embodied in a global ideology of childhood, is reproduced and interpreted by international, national and local NGOs and other actors through educational policy in Nepal.

In much the same way as all culturally embedded policies, the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools for Quality Education—the policy that has been the focus of this dissertation—is a statement of aspirations for children. Within the post-2015 global movement that emphasizes the needs and rights of individual children through the provision of quality education for all, the National Framework represents a vision of schooling—and a corresponding vision of childhood—to which all children are entitled. Ultimately, this research has shown how the National Framework, and the child-friendly school model in general, has created a space for education reform using language legitimated by a global consensus on childhood.

The empirical study of children and childhood from a global perspective has only recently emerged within the social sciences, with the present research being the first to identify childhood as an element of world culture and provide a rich, descriptive analysis

of its appropriation in a national context. The key findings have 1) provided evidence of the convergence between global conceptions of childhood and national education policy; 2) demonstrated that, despite the predominance of global-to-local patterns of cultural diffusion, models of transnational convergence must also allow for the possibility of multi-directional (i.e., bottom-up) patterns; and 3) revealed the complexity of sustaining global ideas in local contexts while pointing to the overall expansion of the role of the child in modern society.

With a conceptual framework rooted in world society theory, a further contribution has been the inclusion of the perspectives of multi-level policy actors. Despite the sometimes conflicting narratives of the policy process presented by these diverse actors, the fundamental norms defining children and childhood and the generally positive support for the child-friendly schools model has remained constant as demonstrated in the preceding chapters. These findings thereby undermine the critiques of scholars such as Boyden (1997) and Niewenhyus (1998, 2010) who claim that a universal, global ideal of childhood, enshrined in international child rights law, fails to capture the cultural realities of children in developing nation contexts, thereby further disadvantaging these children. In demonstrating that the conflict between global culture and local realities—if such a phenomenon even exists at all—is not as pronounced as these critics would have us believe, this research leads the study of childhood and world culture in a new direction which has the potential to challenge our perceptions of what kind of education is best for children; inform our design, provision and implementation of that education; and enhance our characterizations of children's vulnerability and empowerment.

In Chapter 1, I put forth three research questions related to the transnational flow of cultural ideas concerning children and childhood. Those questions are as follows:

- *Research question 1:* How is the global ideology of childhood reflected in Nepal's National Framework of Child-friendly Schools? What similarities or differences exist between the global ideology and the national policy?

- *Research question 2:* How do I/NGOs and other actors, such as IGOs, the DoE, and research institutions, understand their roles in the development and implementation of the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools?

- *Research question 3:* How do I/NGOs and other actors envision the sustainability of the child-friendly school model in Nepal, and how do they perceive the dimensions of the global ideology of childhood, as embedded in the policy, to be linked to broader social and cultural change in Nepal?

In the chapters that followed, I presented qualitative evidence, primarily from interviews with key policy actors, but also from documents including the text of the child-friendly schools policy document itself, with the aim of answering these research questions. In this chapter, I summarize the most important findings for each research question. Next, I revisit the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 1 before examining the ongoing evolution of the global ideology of childhood. I then discuss the theoretical and policy implications for this research before concluding by addressing some limitations of the study as well as potential avenues for future research.

Summary of findings

Research question 1: Global ideas in national policy

Compared to previous education policies extending back to the first in 1956, the

degree to which the global ideology of childhood is reflected in and shapes educational

policy in Nepal has evolved significantly. Initially expressed as a singular emphasis on

the importance of children's education for national development with limited recognition

of the potential for individual fulfillment, Nepali educational policy has shifted towards

promoting a more complex child with multi-dimensional needs and rights. Against this

historical backdrop, I examined the content of the National Framework of Child-friendly

Schools and participants' understandings of the policy to determine how the global

ideology of childhood is reflected in the policy and its implementation. I found that the

National Framework reflects many of the dimensions of the global ideology of childhood

albeit some more strongly than others. The individualization of children, children as

bearers of human rights, and child protection were the most strongly expressed

dimensions, while the whole child perspective of child development and well-being, the

increasingly unique and complex developmental aims of childhood, and child

development as national development were expressed less strongly.

At its core, the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools is an expression of

individualism, child-centeredness and democratic ideals. It represents the massive

transformation within the Nepali education system from a traditional, patriarchal system

governed by Hinduism to one guided by progressive ideology and human rights. The

interrelated dimensions of children as bearers of human rights and the individualization

of children constitute the keystones of the policy. Referencing the Convention on the

Rights of the Child and the rights-based Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007), the policy

document was clearly developed on a foundation of child rights. While phrases such as

"the right to education" and "rights-based approaches to education" were consistently

used in the interviews, there were many nuances in how participants used the rights-based

terminology and consequently understood the meaning of child rights. Although some

participants seemed to have only a superficial understanding, others seemed to have vast

knowledge of the basic principles of child rights, the connections to the CRC, and the

idea that the right to education should extend beyond access to schooling and include the

right to quality education and learning for all children. Notably, many participants

applied rights language so broadly (e.g. to everything from the right to participate to the

right to eat chocolate) that it seemed they might not have a solid grasp on the true

meaning of human rights. Alternatively, it may be that participants were simply

articulating the broadness of experiences they felt children were entitled. In doing so,

they communicated their vision for an ideal normative childhood that was in accordance

with the global ideology of childhood.

Though not all participants referenced the emerging global idea that the right to

education is more than simply the provision of access to schooling, there was,

nevertheless, a deeply-held belief that the individual child should be the focus of

education and that such child-centeredness was the essential for improving the learning

outcomes of all children. Both the policy document and the interview data revealed a

strong emphasis on empowering children as individuals, promoting their interests, and

helping them to reach their full potential. These critical aims of child-friendly schooling

must be viewed within the context of the global agenda on learning for all which some

groups, including UNICEF and Save the Children, have even characterized as the "right to learn." Child-friendly perspectives on the rights of the individual child have advanced the idea that all children, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status or other individual or social characteristics, possess both the right and the ability to learn given the right educational context. In a nation plagued by systemic gender, caste, and ethnic group-based inequality, that such an idea should be both embedded in a policy document and reflected in the views of global, national, and local actors represents a monumental transformation. Through this strong expression of individualism, perceptions of child development for the sake of the child overshadowed less prominent perceptions of child development for the greater common good, such that connections between the child and national economic growth were rarely mentioned by participants.

The few instances in which participants did make connections between the child and the nation were mostly expressed as an appreciation of the intrinsic value of children as future democratic citizens. Given the other omnipresent themes of egalitarianism and inclusion in the context of great national diversity, this was not unexpected. In describing key aspects of child-friendly schools, participants overwhelming emphasized that the ideal of "child-friendliness" could only be achieved through the inclusion of children's perspectives and by granting them to right to participate in all matters pertaining to their development. Indeed, the right to participate was by and far the most frequently mentioned principle of children's rights. Participants primarily viewed child participation in terms of contributing to school improvement through membership in child clubs or school management committees. A very similar theme also surfaced whereby the child's perspective was at times elevated above the authority of parents in

situations in which parent and child views about the best interest of the child were in conflict. In viewing an ideal childhood through the lens of child empowerment, participants advanced a construction of childhood based on equality between children and adults. I discuss the general concept of privileging children's voices in relation to the expanded role of the child in society in more depth later in this chapter.

Ideas of empowering children existed alongside a strong belief in the need to protect children from all forms of harm, abuse, and danger. While the National Framework document encompassed a comprehensive interpretation of child protection, participants often spoke of this dimension exclusively in terms of anti-corporal punishment views. This emphasis should be understood in the context of the CRC and shifting conceptions of children and childhood. Because the CRC discourages the use of excessive punishment, corporal punishment has come to be associated with more traditional ideas about children and adult-child power structures whereas rights-based, anti-corporal punishment ideas are increasingly viewed as progressive, egalitarian, and in the best interests of children. Notions of child empowerment and protection were in fact mutually reinforcing and furthered the notion of the democratic child.   The CERID Researcher #2 very aptly represented the ideal child that the child protection dimension represented when he stated, "Basically, it depends on what kind of citizen you would like to have in the future. So if you are using corporal punishment, you are using some kind of orthodox methods, then you cannot [produce] a democratic mind in the children."

 The dimensions of "the increasingly unique and complex developmental aims of child development" and "the whole child perspective of child development and well being" were less prevalent in the data compared to ideas about children's rights,

individualism, and protection. That childhood is a distinct stage is an idea that participants seemed to largely take for granted. Given the ubiquity of childhood in all societies, this is not surprising. That said, there seemed to be an emerging awareness of the complex aims of child development particularly as evidenced by the new categories of such as emotional and psychological development. Further, the multi-faceted aims of childhood were also suggested through the importance of each child achieving his or her inner potential and becoming a future democratic citizen. Though the whole child perspective of child development was noticeably less prominent than some of the other dimensions, the policy document and participants did reference various aspects of child development including physical, cognitive, psychological, and emotional. The term "whole child" was never used, though. This was surprising since the original definition of child-friendly spaces was used in humanitarian contexts to refer to an integrated, holistic approach, and the term is widely within contemporary international development literature on child well-being.

Taken together, the evidence supports the hypothesized effect that as the global ideology of childhood spreads, nations will increasingly incorporate its elements into national laws and policies. Compared with the historical policy evidence, the ideas embedded in the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools represent a striking shift in cultural conceptions of children and childhood in Nepal. The evidence also validates a critical premise of this research, the assumption that a global ideology of childhood does, in fact, exist and that it reflects shared ideas about a normative childhood. By highlighting the parallels between ideas prominent within academic, policy, and practice-oriented discourses on children and childhood around the world and an educational

reform policy in one country, the findings suggest that these ideas are not necessarily

Western or Nepali, but representative of a more universal conceptualization of childhood.

These findings lead to the next research question, which examines the processes by which

these global—or universal—ideas penetrate and diffuse within a national context.

Research question 2: The roles of I/NGOs and other actors in policy development and

implementation

In Chapter 6, I examined the roles that I/NGOs and other actors have played in the

development of the child-friendly school initiative (both in terms of initiating programs in

schools and contributing to the adoption of the national policy) and in the ongoing

implementation of the model. The aim was to use actors' reflections on the policy

process in order to construct a more complete conceptualization of the pathways by

which embedded ideas about children and childhood have flowed. Underpinning the

analysis were questions such as: 1) what is the direction of transnational cultural flows:

from global to local, from local to global, or in both directions? and 2) what kind of

variation, if any, exists in how actors with different levels of connectedness to global

culture have approached the child-friendly schools policy process? Contrary to the

singular assumption of a top-down process of policy adoption and dissemination, I found

that individual actors have made sense of their roles in the policy's development through

a collection of narratives that include elements of both global and local conception, and

mutual collaboration between various actors. I also used the heuristic frames of faithful

reproduction and cultural interpretation to examine the implementation of child-friendly

schools. The data revealed that while some actors behaved as faithful reproducers, the

cultural interpreter frame was not reflected in the data as strongly. Nevertheless, the

fundamental ideas embedded in the child-friendly schools model were uniformly

accepted by all actors and reflected in policy implementation.

Policy development. Participants made sense of their roles in the origins of child-friendly

schools and the development of the National Framework through three main narratives.

The most widely accepted and dominant narrative emphasized the global conception of

the child-friendly school model and a subsequent top-down process of idea

dissemination. In this narrative, UNICEF played the leading—and most powerful—role,

INGOs (and Save the Children, in particular) supported UNICEF, and the DoE and

national and local NGOs played supporting—and significantly weaker—roles. Evidence

from both the policy document and the interviews indicated that UNICEF used various

mechanisms (e.g., "observe and learn" school visits in Thailand and national and local

workshops) to garner support for the child-friendly schools initiative from I/NGOs and

the DoE, and then used this support to persuade the DoE to endorse the model as a

national education reform policy. Some of the strongest evidence came from the

opinions of participants who vehemently criticized the policy's external origins and

interference by "global consultants, experts, and development partners" who may not

fully understand the contextual realities of Nepal.

All of this is not to say that the contributions of other actors were insignificant or

that there was no collaboration. Indeed, as the policy document states, the policy

development process also included various consultative mechanisms in which "experts"

contributed to the writing of preliminary concept papers and school-level stakeholders

(teachers, students, parents, and SMC members), government officials, and I/NGOs

participated in discussions. However, the global conception narrative ultimately supports

claims that UNICEF played the most powerful role in introducing the child-friendly

schools initiative in Nepal and points to global origins of the policy concept.

Yet not all participants shared the widespread belief in UNICEF's exclusive

ownership of the child-friendly school model. The most unexpected finding was the

narrative of local conception in which two national/local NGOs (BASE and NNDSWO)

each professed to have developed the child-friendly school model, with varying degrees

of independence, in response to the needs of children in their local context. Both

accounts emphasized that the NGOs had developed the model based on their own

learnings and field experiences working with local communities. Notably, the BASE

Senior Official acknowledged that when they initially began implementing the model in

the early 1990s, they used the label "quality education" and that the term "child-friendly"

was applied retroactively, many years later, likely after UNICEF had introduced the

model into Nepal. The NNDSWO officer explained how NGOs had made the

government aware of the child-friendly school model and advocated to policymakers in

the education sector for the model's adoption at the national level.

Despite seemingly contradicting the dominant narrative of the global origins of

the child-friendly school model, these accounts nevertheless suggest two critical findings.

First, though the participants claimed to have developed a bottom-up model, the resulting

initiative embodied a vision of child-friendliness that is desirable for all children, whether

they be Tharu, Dalit, or from any other social group, and that mirrors the global model.

And secondly, whether these narratives are actually true is irrelevant. The point is that

the officers held the perception that the child-friendly initiative originated locally instead

of having been borrowed globally.

The final narrative similarly drew on the theme of local ownership, but included more of a spirit of mutual collaboration among actors in the policy development process. Proponents of this narrative asserted that the concept of child-friendly schooling did not emerge from any one source, but rather was conceived through the collective contributions of diverse actors. Some participants took issue with the insinuation that the child-friendly concept had been borrowed from a global source (i.e., UNICEF). These participants acknowledged that although global actors exerted great influence in advancing the policy, especially by contributing valuable resources, national actors were ultimately responsible for its development and therefore took ownership over the initiative, claiming it as their own. In this way, the narratives of mutual collaboration are different from the narratives of global conception. Though both include elements of collaboration, the key difference is that the relationships in the mutual collaboration narratives were characterized as being more equal. In the end, strong multi-actor collaboration legitimized the concept of child-friendly schools at the national level and lead to the development and eventual adoption of the National Framework. Collectively, narratives of mutual collaboration provide an alternative to widespread assumptions of the global origins of the child-friendly schools policy while leaving open the possibility that there could be some influence of global concepts on national actors.

That these diverse narratives seemingly contradict each other does not render any of them to be untrue. For whether they are true or false is irrelevant. Instead, their value is in what they reveal about participants' perceptions of origins of the child-friendly schools concept and the embedded ideas about children and childhood. The narratives hint at a broad, universal understanding of the child-friendly concept that remains

constant in different versions of policy development and implementation. To illustrate,

the CERID Researcher (#1) explained that many years ago he had been a part of a

UNICEF-World Bank primary education project. Though this initiative was "not directly

child-friendly," it nevertheless led into a pilot program for the child-friendly initiative.

Through this account, the Researcher retroactively categorized a certain type of

schooling—that which is not "teacher-centered, content-oriented," but instead that which

is "process-oriented" and has a "child-friendly atmosphere"—as "child-friendly." A

similar pattern is found in the narratives of the Senior Education Officer from Save the

Children and the Senior Official from BASE. The Save the Children officer claimed that

his organization had implemented a child-friendly schools-like initiative first and then

coined the term later. As previously described, the Senior Official from BASE firmly

attested that although the NGO had been implementing the child-friendly school model

since the early 1990s, it was not until "*later on [that] we came to know* [italics added]

that this is the child-friendly system…"

Collectively, these narratives suggest that, after learning about the UNICEF's

child-friendly schools model, these actors re-imagined their previous work in terms of a

new, or at least newly named, education reform alternative. The "child-friendly" concept

has undoubtedly increased in prominence and gained such widespread acceptance in the

present context because of its suitableness to frame a culturally appealing policy solution

in response to the pressing issue of school quality. Though the term "child-friendly" has

come into popular usage relatively recently, the basic concept of child-friendliness, and

the vision of childhood that it represents, seems to be more enduring and universal.

Policy implementation. Using the heuristic frames of faithful reproduction and cultural interpretation, I presented findings on the implementation behaviors of actors. The behaviors of faithful reproducers were generally characterized by a commitment to a "common approach." This approach was either defined by the standards established through the 149 indicators of the National Framework or the shared norms of the child-friendly school model within the international community. Despite variously acknowledging the global origins of the model, these participants perceived child-friendly schools to be appropriate for the Nepali context and consequently saw no justification for making any changes through implementation. Faithful reproducers included actors from diverse categories, including both local and international NGOs, and even the DoE. These actors were all motivated by two primary forces: the authority of those actors possessing greater power than themselves and the deep-rooted belief that there is a singular, best way to implement a child-friendly school. As a result, a common theme was a seemingly deliberate avoidance of outward expressions of resistance against the global model.

The strong comments of one participant in particular, the Education Officer from Save the Children, offered some important insights into the behaviors and motivations of faithful reproducers, particularly the DoE. She constructed a very passive role for the DoE, in which they allegedly had no choice other than to accept the child-friendly model that had been pressed on them by UNICEF. According to the officer's perspective, the DoE had consequently failed to internalize the meaning of child-friendly schools and the entire initiative was at risk of implementation failure. She further contended that faithful reproducers lacked the ability to critically assess the appropriateness of policies for a

given context. In the end, she attributed the faithful reproducer behavior not so much to a commitment to a belief in certain kind of schooling or childhood but to an implicit imbalance of power in the donor-recipient relationship. This perspective has important implications for it points to alternative motivations for actors' implementation behaviors that may not be culturally driven.

Unlike the frame of faithful reproduction, which was clearly represented in the data, the frame of cultural interpretation did not match the data as precisely. In fact, aside from one partial exception, none of the participants displayed evidence of true cultural interpreter behavior. However, there were certain characteristics which set some participants apart from the faithful reproducers. These included a passionate commitment to the assessing the contextual appropriateness of policy solutions and a critical view of global actors and initiatives. Concerns that difficulties may arise from the implementation of global initiatives in the Nepali context stemmed from a collective belief in the cultural uniqueness of Nepal. As a means of counteracting the diffusion of global culture, the idea of "Nepalizing the outside influences" was regarded as way in which actors might adapt global ideas to better match local realities, or in the language of cultural interpretation, translate global culture into a local vernacular. However, although many participants viewed themselves as intermediaries between global norms and local realities, there was no evidence of such cultural interpreter behavior actually occurring through the implementation of child-friendly schools.

The findings reveal a sort of paradox: on the one hand, these participants believed that child-friendly schooling may not be appropriate in diverse contexts, but on the other, they were just as likely as the faithful reproducers to profess an unwavering conviction in

the universality of children's needs and rights. The Education Officer from the Rato Bangala Foundation expressed this contradiction by exclaiming, "Children are the same! But the context becomes different. Children all over the world, they are the same." A possible explanation for the contradiction may derive from different understandings of the meaning of context. Although many participants stated that cultural context was important, as the Save the Children Education Officer suggested, context does not mean traditional culture. It simply refers to the physical or logistical challenges of implementing programs in low-resource settings. Indeed, the participant responses reflected this point. Unable to provide valid examples of threats to cultural norms, values and beliefs surrounding children and education, they instead spoke of context in terms of content-oriented curriculum issues or physical or logistical constraints. Thus, in spite of any perceived incongruity between the National Framework and the Nepali context, the faith in the global ideology of childhood and shared commitment to the implementation of the child-friendly schools model remained strong.

Research question 3: Sustainability and social change

In Chapter 7, I explored how participants perceived the sustainability of child-friendly schools, both in terms of the school-level model and the national-level policy, and the implications for lasting social and cultural change in Nepal. The aim was to understand the long-term viability of global ideas concerning children and childhood in national and sub-national contexts. Especially once global actors depart and reform ownership is transferred to schools and local education authorities, what is the fate of these newly introduced practices, norms, and values? Are schools likely to resort to their former state or will they continue to use the child-friendly model to improve the quality

of education? The primary finding was that, participants expressed tempered optimism around the impact and future of child-friendly schools in Nepal and also perceived child-friendly schooling to have sown the seeds of social and cultural change around conceptions of children in Nepali society. The optimism stemmed from the various school improvements which participants attributed to the child-friendly schools initiative. These included: 1) improvements in school infrastructure and classroom environments that fostered a more enjoyable and comfortable atmosphere for children; 2) adapted pedagogical processes in which teachers incorporated two-way interactions with students, utilized creative learning materials and activities, and refrained from using corporal punishment; 3) more intimate, caring, and equal teacher-student interactions and relationships; and 4) normative changes related to children. However, when it came to deep change, particularly around this last aspect, reactions were more tempered. Many participants recognized that the paradigm shift previously noted by the UNESCO Education Officer, whereby child rights and child-centeredness had come to dominate the education sector in Nepal, had yet to completely penetrate the school level. While there was widespread awareness of children's rights, most teachers had yet to truly internalize the full meaning and change their behaviors towards children.

Moreover, views on the future of child-friendly schools in Nepal reflected even greater uncertainty. Predictions on whether the initiative would continue to be implemented hinged on the roles and level of responsibility interviewees attributed to different categories of actors, particularly with respect to the process of shifting ownership over the reform. Despite beliefs in the global origins of the model, many participants viewed the sustainability of child-friendly schooling as being in the hands of

the government. Such a view was problematic though because participants also perceived the government to have a weak capacity and lack of commitment to fully implement its own policies. Other participants assigned the responsibility for long-term sustainability to school-level actors, especially teachers. The traditional values and steadfast resistance to change of older, typically tenured teachers was frequently cited as one of the biggest barriers to achieving lasting change in schools. The story of the teacher who hid the stick (for beating children) behind his back while giving a flawless explanation of children's rights to the NGO official is emblematic of this challenge. And still others, given the complexity of actors' roles, conveyed uncertainty over who was ultimately responsible for the sustainability of child-friendly schools. Perhaps the most significant finding of all, though, was that none of the participants openly expressed that I/NGOs held any obligation to ensure the future success of the initiative. Taken together, these diverse perspectives reflect the persistent belief that the child-friendly school model may be unviable in the absence of sustained I/NGO involvement.

More broadly, perhaps the tempered optimism on the sustainability of the model can best be understood in terms of how participants perceived shifting conceptions of children and childhood to be linked to broader social and cultural change. There was an overall sense that, although there was still much progress to be made, the policy represented the beginning stages of change, particularly with regard to notions of children's rights and child protection (e.g. corporal punishment), and the expanded role and rise in importance of the child in Nepali society. One standout narrative constructed empowered and child-rights savvy children as advocates for the protection of their own rights. These exemplary children, typically found in very atypical, model schools, were

perceived, more than any other stakeholder, to have internalized the fundamental principles of children's rights. In a context in which many stakeholders have been slow to absorb aspects of the global ideology of childhood, these children serve as an important bellwether for predicting future the social and cultural change that is yet to come.

Revisiting the conceptual framework

In Chapter 1, I proposed a conceptual framework for depicting the hypothetical pathways of transnational cultural flow between global and national contexts. The framework specifically centered on how the global ideology of childhood might be reproduced by various actors through educational models, discourse, and policies. At the opposite end of the framework, local-level norms, values, and beliefs concerning children and childhood represented cultural ideas within a national context. Through an investigation of the pathways connecting the global to the local, this research sought to use the hypothetical framework as a guide to construct a more accurate depiction of reality. To fully capture what cultural ideas might look like in a national context, it was important to allow for scenarios, through the use of bi-directional flows, in which sub-national actors might not just passively copy and paste ideas in a top-down manner, but also might more actively exert influence and adapt ideas from the bottom-up.

Comparing the evidence against the conceptual framework

When compared against the empirical evidence, the framework can be refined to better reflect what kinds of roles actors may play, which pathways may be the most active, and which direction cultural ideas ultimately may flow. Although I do not

completely reconstruct the framework here, as this is pursuit better left to future research, I do generally discuss some highlights of such a comparison. Given the prevalence of global-local diffusion narratives supported by studies of world culture (e.g., Frank, Longhofer, & Schofer, 2007; Ramirez & Chabbot, 2000; Schofer et al., 2012), a critical finding of this research is the existence of multiple narratives explaining the origins of the child-friendly schools concept and the development of the National Framework policy. The narrative of local conception provided evidence of local actors exerting influence from the bottom-up either through the creation of their own education models or through advocacy efforts directed towards the government. However, local- and national-level mechanisms for policy change are noticeably absent from the original framework, and thus a revised framework should include these. Pathways and mechanisms that emphasize mutual collaboration are also not clearly reflected in the framework and should be added.

Despite the presence of the narratives of local conception and mutual collaboration, they remained weak in comparison with the more dominant narratives of global conception. A revised framework would reflect these differential strengths of influence and activity as revealed by the evidence. It is important to note, though, that multiple pathways may be simultaneously active. Thus, during the late 1990s and early 2000s, local and national NGOs may have been advocating for the widespread adoption of their models of child-friendly schooling at the same time that UNICEF was also introducing the model and advocating to INGOs and the government. Growing momentum around the model from multiple sources ultimately may be what persuaded the DoE to adopt the National Framework. In terms of policy implementation, the

stronger evidence pointing to the faithful reproduction frame further suggests that certain top-down pathways may have been stronger than the bottom-up ones.

Although most participants perceived the global origins of the model to be the most compelling and truthful narrative, the counter-narratives affirm the pervasiveness of the dimensions of the global ideology of childhood. That local NGOs claimed to have developed a model of child-friendly schools on their own which resembled UNICEFs global child-friendly school model provides evidence that child-friendly schools—and the cultural ideas about children embedded in the model—are not necessarily Western, as claimed by some scholars, but much more universal. Even those participants advocating narratives of mutual collaboration among diverse actors still joined the consensus on a similar vision of schooling considered in the best interests of all children. The convergence of these narratives illuminates how individuals and organizations all over the world—from the mountains of rural Nepal and to the halls of the United Nations— have come to embrace a common belief in an ideal, normative childhood and how these beliefs are reproduced through multidirectional pathways.

Such isomorphism naturally raises a fundamental question not addressed by the conceptual framework: what are the origins of the global ideology of childhood?   Indeed, this ambiguity forms the basis for much criticism leveled at scholars of the world society perspective. The origins of contemporary global culture are typically traced to the ideas of the Enlightenment which favored progress driven by rational action and scientific evidence (Chabbott, 2003). However, as all global cultural models, including the global ideology of childhood, are often taken-for-granted concepts, it is impossible to isolate a solitary inventor of the ideology. Instead, we can only speak of the myriad of actors that

interpret and reproduce those models. These are the same actors who have comprised the narrative of this research: INGOs and NGOs, United Nations bodies, governments, and research institutions and universities. All of these actors contribute new knowledge, ideas, and opinions that shape the ever-evolving global ideology of childhood.

The roles of different actors in the transnational reproduction of culture

This research originated with the aim of exploring the singular role of one actor, INGOs, in the development and implementation of the child-friendly schools policy and how such a role may be related to their realization as agents of social and cultural change within the global realm. However, as the study progressed, it became evident that a multitude of diverse state and non-state actors played integral roles in the policy process surrounding child-friendly schooling—in both anticipated and unanticipated ways. Indeed, such a plurality of actors involved in the reproduction and legitimization of global culture is true to the core principles of world society perspective. Below I discuss the specific roles that NGOs, INGOs, IGOs, the Department of Education, and research institutions have played in the transnational reproduction of culture through educational policy in Nepal.

When we talk of local NGOs independently developing a model of child-friendly schools based on their own learning experiences, it is important to note that this does not mean that they operate without any external influence or in a vacuum void of global culture. Indeed, this research has shown how local and national NGOs have become increasingly embedded in the global system, particularly through their partnerships with INGOs. These organizations simultaneously maintain close ties both to the communities they operate in and to the INGOs that they partner with. Given this dual role, it is not

surprising that the local NGOs in this study thought of themselves as uniquely positioned

to transfer local-level learning to higher levels and advocate for education models they

perceived to best serve the needs of children in their working communities. Further, the

absence of true cultural interpreter behavior in the findings can be understood in part as a

consequence of the increased globalization of NGOs, which has ultimately enabled them

to act as conduits for both the bottom-up and top-down movement of ideas on children

and childhood.

Despite their local origins, NGOs also possessed high levels of legitimacy and

authority which derived in part from their ties to INGOs but also from the child-focused

nature of their work. Boli and Thomas (1999) suggest that organizations that involve all

of humanity have the greatest legitimacy. As such, the global nature of childhood may

reinforce the legitimacy of child-focused national/local and international NGOs. Because

of the universality of the ideal of a normative childhood, citizens of countries around the

world are likely assign higher degrees of respect towards organizations that represent

children. In a reciprocal manner, these organizations also further normalize the global

ideology of childhood through the coordination of their activities (Chabbott & Ramirez,

2000) and implementation of initiatives that promote children's rights, child-

centeredness, individualism, and child protection. Such INGO-NGO coordination plays

out through implementation partnerships, planning and training workshops, joint

advocacy efforts, and other mechanisms.

INGOs, together with NGOs, were also often perceived as innovative, progressive

and highly effective. Because of these characteristics, they commonly viewed

themselves as possessing an organizational culture distinct from the government (IFCD

Education Officer: "Yeah, but they [the government] will never be like an NGO"). The INGO officers with diverse professional experiences outside of Nepal (e.g., Save the Children Education Officer, United Mission to Nepal Education Officer #2, and World Vision Education Officer) were able to offer unique and dynamic perspectives. These attributes contributed to INGO's ability to implement new education reform models.

Beyond making the significant contribution of introducing their child-friendly school model in Nepal, UNICEF additionally played an important role as a partner with INGOs and the Department of Education. Indeed, the Department of Education was rarely portrayed as an independent actor, and pathways within the conceptual model which bypassed the DoE were typically the most active and robust. Although the DoE had legitimized the child-friendly school model through policy adoption, there was a general sense that the DoE did not have the ability to fully implement the policy. As a result, I/NGOs were perceived to be the primary implementing agents in schools. To be clear, this does not mean that the DoE was not involved in implementing the child-friendly school initiative, but simply that compared to I/NGOs, it played a weaker role. Ultimately, the relationships between INGOs, the government, and UNICEF have contributed to the authority of INGOs within the education sector in Nepal and their ability to serve as agents of cultural change.

Notably, researchers surfaced as unexpected contributors to development of the policy. Despite the connections between CERID and the government as part of a national university, they introduced innovative ideas and pro-active strategies for school reform. Through their collaboration with foreign universities, they were well-positioned to reproduce global conceptions of children and childhood and produce new ideas through

research. Indeed, it is through the contributions of the research community that new scientific ideas about child development often emerge and shape global culture.

The evolution of the global ideology of childhood

Boyle at al. (2007) claim that children are "quintessentially local" because "they represent every community's most important source of cultural reproduction" (p. 255). Yet, as I have argued in this dissertation, children have also become quintessentially global. The concept of the child resonates across societies and is defined by similar characteristics and entitlements—similar rights, similar protections, and similar childhood experiences. This shared vision of an ideal, normative childhood is embodied in a cultural force I have referred to as the global ideology of childhood which is reproduced through global and national education policy. Though I have analyzed the dimensions of this force as embedded in just one policy and at one point in time, conceptions of children and childhood are not static. The nature, intensity, and legitimacy of the dimensions of the global ideology of childhood are constantly evolving within the global realm. Indeed, similar to Meyer and Jepperson's characterization of the modern "actor," children and childhood, too, are "historical and ongoing social constructions" that are ever evolving alongside global culture (2000, p. 101).

Although historically, child development as national development has been the singular, dominant expression of childhood in Nepali education policy, as I have demonstrated, the dimension of the individualization of children has greatly intensified over time. The notions that children have as much of a right to develop for their own personal benefit and self-actualization as they do for the common good and that they

define their own path through individual choices and interests are deeply integrated in the

National Framework of Child-friendly Schools and other contemporary education

policies in Nepal. However, because children require experience and practice to assume

such an empowered role, schools—and child-friendly schools, in particular—are intended

to serve as training grounds for children to become "autonomous choosing adults" in

society (Bromley et al., 2011, p. 8). In this way, the idea that schools should be a

microcosm of society built around individualism has proliferated (Bromley et al., 2011).

Moreover, such a function of schooling, and the status that it affords children, has

become so taken for granted that its presence within education policies often goes

unnoticed. This transformation of education policy in Nepal is all part of the ongoing

evolution of the global ideology of childhood alongside broader world culture.

As an example, children's empowered role in school governance reflects the

expanding status of the child in society. Participation in child clubs and school

management committees—essential features of child-friendly schools—provides a space

for children to practice and develop skills essential for becoming future democratic

citizens. With children sharing their views and exercising their authority alongside

adults, the demarcation between childhood and adulthood becomes even more

indistinguishable (recall the image of children participating in the school management

committee meeting in Figure 5.2). This intensified participation is of such great

consequence because it represents a broader movement of societal child-centeredness

which is shaped by key elements of the global ideology of childhood, namely

individualism, the right of children to participate, and the evolving relationship between

the child, parents and the state.

Participation in child clubs and school management committees can be thought of as a microcosm of child voting at the national level. According to international law, children's right to participation does not extend to the right to participate in political elections through voting (Van Bueren, 1998). Nevertheless, there is an emerging discourse around youth suffrage within the children's rights movement (Boyle et al., 2007). A cursory internet search reveals numerous news media editorials and organizational websites that advocate for the right of children to vote. Contrary to the common argument that children do not have the mental capacity or knowledge to vote, a recurrent theme in this research has been that children are often thought to know their own best interests better than their parents and are able to contribute more effectively to school improvement than adult stakeholders. Though youth suffrage may be a long way off, the fact that such a movement to enfranchise children is even possible shows how the global ideology of childhood is evolving through the intensification of the related dimensions of individualism and children's right to participate. As the social status of children expands within the school and society, and their right to independently make choices becomes further legitimized, conceptions of childhood will continue to evolve.

It should be acknowledged here that, in the same way that the global human rights system has become profoundly transnational (Merry, 2006), the evolution of the global ideology of childhood is similarly rooted not in one country or region but in the expansive world society. Thus, any associated hegemony derives from ties to the global system rather than the forces of economic development or aid structures. Low income countries such as Nepal undeniably find it essential to acquiesce to global initiatives (i.e., UNICEF's child-friendly schools model) in order to fund basic services. Some may

argue that state acceptance of global initiatives stems more from the rigidity of donor incentive structures than from a shared culture. However, in arguing to the contrary, I have demonstrated that while incentives may exist, state compliance is evidence of the authority and legitimacy of global culture. Indeed, the Save the Children Education Officer was onto something very important when she stated that, "the basic idea of child-friendliness is not necessarily 100% Western. [It is] something more acceptable, more broad, human-rights based…"

Finally, the evolving, global nature of childhood does not mean that traditional culture no longer exists in Nepal or elsewhere. Nor does it downplay the impact of diverse contexts on children's lives. This research shows that the child-friendly school model has gained a degree of authority over traditional educational practices because of its embeddedness in the global system. Advocates for the "multiple childhoods" perspective (e.g., Boyden, 1999; Burman, 1996; Nieuwenhyus, 1998) undeniably make a great contribution by exploring the impact of globalization on children. Some participants in this research also contended that "child-friendliness" is a relative concept. However, ultimately, as I have shown, there was great consensus with respect to the needs and rights necessary for the realization of an ideal, normative childhood.

Implications

This research initiates a deeper conversation about the processes of global cultural reproduction at sub-national levels. More than just showing that there is a positive relationship between national INGO memberships and policy diffusion, also known as the "INGO effect," (Boyle & Kim, 2009; Schofer et al., 2012), this study used multiple

narratives of development and the application of heuristic implementation frames to descriptively demonstrate how I/NGOs and other actors reproduce and interpret global culture. In short, the study has attempted to demystify the often over-simplified diffusion process. Additionally, the detailed construction of a new concept, the global ideology of childhood, has the important implication of illustrating an underappreciated aspect of world culture and drawing attention to how cultural ideas about children shape policies. Although this study is an in-depth examination of educational policy in a single country, its findings no doubt have critical comparative implications. Finally, there are important practical implications for promoting children's right to education and serving the best interests of children. Understanding how conceptions of children and childhood function at global, national, and local levels can ultimately help to foster more effective national education policies and a global development agenda.

Limitations

Several methodological limitations shaped the findings of this research. The first relates to the depth and validity of the interview data. Although the specific individuals and organizations included in the sample were widely regarded as key actors with respect to the child-friendly schools policy and education reform in Nepal, the single interviews with each participant may not have fully captured reality. Having just met me for the first time, some participants may not have felt comfortable sharing their true opinions with me, especially if those opinions were critical of other actors. Further, given the diversity of narratives particularly regarding policy development, the research would have benefitted from follow-up interviews with select participants to clarify key points.

These follow-up interviews would have facilitated the development of rapport between the interviewees and me and allowed me to gain more in-depth and accurate information.

Secondly, an important question that childhood studies scholars and child welfare practitioners may justly raise is: why were the voices of children not included in the research? Given the emphasis within the global ideology of childhood on the inclusion of the child's perspective, why not let children speak for themselves? In terms of the composition of the sample, it is important to remember that the conceptual focus of this research was on I/NGOs and other policy actors. While the inclusion individual perspectives from children as well as teachers and parents would have undoubtedly provided interesting findings, such a focus would have led this research in a completely different direction. The examination of how conceptions of children and childhood are constructed at the grassroots level and the role that global ideas may play in shaping those conceptions is a promising avenue for future research, as I discuss below.

At issue in any qualitative study, and especially case studies, is the generalizability of the findings. As an embedded case study of a single policy, the findings cannot be directly applied to similar child-friendly schools policies in other countries or even to other education policies in Nepal. However, according to Yin (2009), unlike survey research which relies on statistical generalization, case studies rely on analytic generalization and thus are "…are generalizable to theoretical propositions" (p. 15). In this way, the case study method allows the current research to expand understandings of world culture theory. This study's theoretical contributions can help to identify other cases (i.e., countries and policies) to which the expanded theory can be applied, an idea for future research which I discuss below. Numerous replications of

similar case studies are required, though, in order to achieve any sense of generalizability (Yin, 1994).

Future research

The limitations discussed above combined with the findings of this dissertation suggest several potential avenues for future research. The most logical extension of the current study would be to add a comparative component or replicate a similar study in different national contexts. Currently, child-friendly schools have been implemented in 95 of UNICEF's 154 working countries, with large-scale initiatives under way in countries as diverse as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Egypt, Ghana, Nicaragua, and the Sudan (UNICEF, 2009e). Case studies of those countries that have incorporated the child-friendly school model into national education reform agendas, as part of existing or stand-alone policies, should be conducted to identify points of convergence and divergence from the findings of the current study. In particular, it would be important to show if the global ideology of childhood is reflected to the same extent; if similar multiple narratives emerge around the origins and development of the policy; and how the behavior of actors fits with the heuristic frames of faithful reproduction and cultural interpretation throughout the implementation process.

Though a focus on local-level stakeholder perspectives would lead the research in a new conceptual direction away from a focus on I/NGOs as agents of cultural change, a study of child, parent, and teacher perspectives on childhood would potentially broaden knowledge of the pathways by which global culture is reproduced. As mentioned above, the inclusion of child perspectives is important for giving children a voice and upholding

the principle of children's right to participation. In recent years, child studies research which actively includes children in the research process (i.e., as data collectors) has become increasingly recognized as a legitimate and important form of research. Further, since there was such a strong emphasis in the findings on the role of teachers, a follow-up study focusing on teacher perspectives of children and childhood and how teachers make sense of the child-friendly schools policy may provide important, new insights. Such a study would also be extremely useful in identifying cultural barriers to policy implementation.

A final avenue for future research would aim to explore the consequences and outcomes of global culture on the lived realities of children. Schofer et al. (2012) have noted that scholars of the world society approach have increasingly sought to theorize how global institutional processes impact substantive improvements in outcomes. For instance, future research could bridge the aims of the current research with Boyle and Kim's (2009) work which showed how INGO activity was indirectly associated with improved child rights outcomes such as decreased national-level rates of child labor and increased rates of primary and secondary education enrollment. They suggest that detailed national case studies are necessary to deconstruct the interaction between global ideas, NGOs, and national policies in improving child rights outcomes. Building on the findings of this dissertation and by exploring the relationship between discourses about childhood and the academic outcomes of children enrolled in child-friendly schools, new research might address how global cultural conceptions of children and childhood via policy implementation by I/NGOs impact the actualization of children's right to quality education. Alternatively, research that focused more on global institutional processes

(i.e., the empowerment of the child), rather than formal policies, would also make an important contribution to theoretical work on world culture.

Conclusion

Childhood is a ubiquitous and taken-for-granted cultural construction in societies around the world. Yet at no other time in modern history has such a powerful global consensus emerged with respect to the rights, protections, and childhood experiences that all children are thought to be entitled. In this dissertation, I have shown how this global ideology of childhood is reproduced in national educational policy through the activities of international, national, and local NGOs, as well as other policy actors. By describing the roles of transnational actors in the development and implementation of the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools for Quality Education, I have sought to demystify the abstract process of cultural diffusion. As I have argued, conceptions of children and childhood must be understood within the global, and not simply national, context.

As global education priorities continue to shift from enrollments and access to educational quality and learning outcomes to whatever will come next, the global ideology of childhood will continue to evolve along with the principles of world culture. However, the degree to which the global ideology shapes and is shaped by national policies is a facet of the modern era that will remain more constant. To be sure, the child-friendly schools policy may be replaced by a new wave of education reform, only for a similar concept under a different name to resurface several years later. Throughout the ebb and flow of education reform, policy as an instrument of cultural reproduction between global, national, and local levels will endure. In this way, the National

Framework of Child-friendly Schools and successor policies will continue to serve as

proclamations for a new kind of childhood in a new, global society.

References

Aries, P. (1962). *Centuries of childhood: A social history of family life*. New York: Vintage Books.

Balagopalan, S. (2002). Constructing indigenous childhoods: Colonialism, vocational education and the working child. *Childhood, 9*(1), 19-34.

Baker, D. P. (forthcoming). *The schooled society: The educational transformation of global culture*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Baker, D. , & LeTendre, G. (2005). *National differences, global similarities: World culture and the future of schooling*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Basnet, A. S. (2009). Learning the child-friendly way at UNICEF-supported schools in Nepal.   Retrieved December 4, 2012, from http://www.unicef.org/nepal/5474_Stories-Learning_childfriendly_way.htm

Ben-Arieh, A. (2006). Measuring and monitoring the well-being of young children around the world. Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report, 2007. New York: UNESCO.

-----. (2008). The child indicators movement: Past, present, and future. *Child Indicators Research, 1*, 3-16.

Ben-Arieh, A., & Goerge, R. (2001). Beyond the numbers: How do we monitor the state of our children? *Children and Youth Services Review, 23*(8), 603-631.

Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge.* Garden City, NY: Anchor.

Bergh, G., & Couturier, J. (2013). *A rough guide to emerging consensus and divergence in post-2015goal areas*. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Bhattachan, K. B. (2001). (I)NGOs and disadvantaged groups in Nepal. In K. B Bhattachan, D. R. Dahal, S. Rana, J. Gyawali, M. B. Basnet, K. R. Bhusal, & R. R. Pokharel (Eds.), *NGO, civil society and government in Nepal: Critical examination of their roles and responsibilities* (pp.67-99). Kathmandu, Nepal: Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Tribhuvan University.

Black, M. (1986). *The children and the nations: The story of UNICEF*. Potts Point, Sydney, Australia: P.I.C. Pty Ltd.

Blanchet, T. (1996). *Lost innocents, stolen childhoods*. Dhaka: The University Press Limited.

Boli, J., & Thomas, G. M. (Eds.). (1999). *Constructing world culture: International nongovernmental organizations since 1875*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University

Press.

Boli-Bennett, J., & Meyer, J. W. (1978). The ideology of childhood and the state: Rules distinguishing children in national constitutions, 1870-1970. *American Sociological Review, 43*(6), 797-812.

Boyden, J. (1997). Childhood and the policy makers: A comparative perspective on the globalization of childhood. In A. James, & A. Prout (Eds.), *Constructing and reconstructing childhood: Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood* (pp. 190-229). London, UK: Falmer Press.

Boyle, E. H., Smith, T., & Guenther. (2007). The rise of the child as an individual in global society. In S. A. Venkatesh, & R. Kassimir (Eds.), *Youth, globalization and the law* (pp. 255-283). Stanford University Press: Stanford, CA.

Boyle, E. H., & Kim, M. (2009). International human rights law, global economic reforms, and child survival and development rights outcomes. *Law & Society Review, 43*(3), 455-490.

Bromley, P., Meyer, J. W., & Ramirez, F. O. (2011). Student-centeredness in social science textbooks, 1970-2008: A cross-national study. *Social Forces*, 90(2), 547-570.

Burman, E. (1996). Local, global or globalized? Child development and international child rights legislation. *Childhood, 3*: 45-66.

Chabbott, C. (1996). *Constructing educational development: International development organizations and the World Conference on Education for All*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, School of Education, Stanford, CA.

-----. (1998). Constructing educational consensus: International development professionals and the world conference on education for all. *International Journal of Educational Development, 18*(3), 207-218.

-----. (1999). Development INGOs. In J. Boli & G. Thomas (Eds.), *Constructing world culture: International nongovernmental organizations since 1875* (pp. 222-248). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

-----. *Constructing education for development: International organizations and education for all.* New York: Routledge Falmer.

-----. (2004). *UNICEF's Child-friendly schools framework: A* desk review. *New York: UNICEF.*

Chabbott, C., & Ramirez, F. O. (2000). Development and education. In M. T. Hallinan (Ed.), *Handbook of the sociology of education* (pp. 163-188). New York: Kiuwet Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Chhetri, N. (2005). *Global discourse and INGOs – Implications for Nepal's educational*

development: A qualitative study. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, The Graduate School, Department of Education Policy Studies, University Park, PA.

Coburn, C. (2003). Rethinking scale: Moving beyond numbers to deep and lasting change. *Educational Researcher,32*(6), 3-12.

Committee on the Rights of the Child, Office of the UN Commissioner for Human Rights. (1995). *Nepal state party report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Retrieved November 17, 2013, from http://www.law.yale.edu/rcw/rcw/jurisdictions/assc/nepal/nepal_CRC_report_199 5.pdf

Corsaro, W. (2011). *The sociology of childhood*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Cunningham, H. (2006). *The invention of childhood*. London, UK: BBC Books.

Dahal, D. R. (2001). Problems and prospects of relationship between government organizations and NGOs/INGOs in Nepal. In K. B Bhattachan, D. R. Dahal, S. Rana, J. Gyawali, M. B. Basnet, K. R. Bhusal, & R. R. Pokharel (Eds.), *NGO, civil society and government in Nepal: Critical examination of their roles and responsibilities* (pp.105-128). Kathmandu, Nepal: Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Tribhuvan University.

Datnow, A., & Park, V. (2009). Conceptualizing policy implementation: Large-scale reform in an era of complexity. In G. Sykes, et al. (Eds.), *Handbook of Education Policy Research* (pp. 348-361). New York: Routledge.

Department of Education (DoE) Nepal. (2009). Flash report of school-level educational statistics of Nepal. Kathmandu, Nepal: Department of Education.

FHD & RIDA (Foundation for Human Development and Research Inputs and Development Action). (2009). *Improving local service delivery for MDGs in Asia: Education sector in Nepal (country case study).* Sponsored by UNDP, UNICEF, UNCDF and UNESCO.

Fiala, R., & Gordon-Lanford, A. (1987). Educational ideology and the world education revolution, 1950-1970. *Comparative Education Review, 31*, 315-333.

Frank, D. J., Longhofer, W., & Schofer, E. (2007). World society, NGOs and environmental policy reform in Asia. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology, 48*, 275-295.

Frones, I. (2007). Theorizing indicators. *Social Indicators Research, 83*(1), 5-23.

Glauser, B. (1997). Street children: Deconstructing a construct. In A. James, & A. Prout (Eds.), *Constructing and reconstructing childhood: Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood* (pp. 145-164). London, UK: Falmer Press.

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. London: Harper and Row.

Government of Nepal. (1990). *Constitution of the kingdom of Nepal.* Kathmandu, Nepal: Government of Nepal.

-----. (2007). *Interim constitution of Nepal*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Government of Nepal.

Hartas, D. (2008). *The right to childhoods: Critical perspectives on rights, difference and knowledge in a transient world*. New York: Continuum Studies in Education.

Hendrick, H. (1990). Constructions and reconstructions of British childhood: An interpretative survey, 1800 to the present. In A. James and A. Prout (Eds.), *Constructing and reconstructing childhood. Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood*.

Hendrick, H. (2009). The evolution of childhood in Western Europe c.1400-c.1750. In J. Qvortrup, W. Corsaro, & M. Honig (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of childhood studies* (pp.99-113). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

James, A., & Prout, A. (Eds.). (1997). *Constructing and reconstructing childhood: Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood.* London, UK: Falmer Press.

Jepperson, R. L. (1991). Institutions, institutional effects, and institutionalism. In W. Powell & P. DiMaggio (Eds.), *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis* (pp. 143–163). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Jones, P. W. (2006). Elusive mandate: UNICEF and educational development. *International Journal of Educational Development, 26*, 591-604.

Keys, E. (1909). *The century of the child*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Krathwohl, D. R. (2009). *Methods of educational and social science research: The logic of methods, 3rd ed.* Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.

Lincoln, Y. S. (1995). Emerging criteria for quality in qualitative and interpretive research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 1*(1), 275-289.

Lohani, S., Singh, R. B., & Lohani, J. (2010). Universal primary education in Nepal: Fulfilling the right to education. *Prospects, 40*(3), 355-374.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005). Qualitative *research design: An interactive approach, 2nd ed*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

McLaughlin, M. W., & Mitra, D. (2001). Theory-based change and change-based theory: Going deeper and going broader. *Journal of Educational Change, 2*(4), 301-323.

Merriam, S. B. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Merry, S. E. (2006). *Human rights and gender violence: Translating international law into local justice*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Meyer, J., Boli, J., Thomas, G., & Ramirez, F. O. (1997). World society and the nation-state. The *American Journal of Sociology, 103*(1), 144-181.

Meyer, J. W., & Jepperson, R. L. (2000). "The 'actors' of modern society: The cultural construction of social agency." *Sociological Theory 18*,100-120.

Meyer, J. W., Ramirez, F. O., & Soysal, Y. (1992). World expansion and mass education, 1870-1980. *Sociology of Education, 65*, 128-149.

Ministry of Education, (MoE), Nepal. (2010). *National framework for of child-friendly school for quality education*. Kathmandu: Ministry of Education, Nepal.

Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). (2012). Century of the Child: Growing by Design, 1900–2000. Retrieved December 3, 2012, from http://www.moma.org/visit/calendar/exhibitions/1239

NGO Federation of Nepal. (2014). NGO Federation of Nepal website. Retrieved February 1, 2014, from http://www.ngofederation.org/

Nieuwenhuys, O. (1998). Global childhood and the politics of contempt. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political, 23*(3), 267-290.

-----. (2010). Keep asking: Why childhood? Why children? Why global?. *Childhood, 17*(3), 291-296.

NORAD (Norwegian Development Agency). (2009). *Joint evaluation of Education for All 2004-2009 sector programme.* Kathmandu, Nepal.

Pais, M. S. (1999). *A human rights conceptual framework for UNICEF. Florence, Italy: UNICEF.*

Pant, G. P. (1991). *Foreign aid, economic growth and social cost-benefit analysis: Some experiences from Nepal*. England: Avebury.

Postman, N. (1982). *The disappearance of childhood*. New York: Vintage Books.

Prout, A., & James, A. (1997). A new paradigm for the sociology of childhood? Provenance, promise and problems. In A. James, & A. Prout (Eds.), *Constructing*

and reconstructing childhood: Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood (pp. 7-33). London, UK: Falmer Press.

Qvortrup, J. (1993). Societal position of childhood: The international project on childhood as a social phenomenon. *Childhood (1)*, 119-124.

-----. (2009). Childhood as a structural form. In J. Qvortrup, W. Corsaro, and M. Honig (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of child studies* (pp. 21-33). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Qvortrup, J., Corsaro, W., & Honig, M. (Eds.). (2009). *The Palgrave handbook of childhood studies*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ramirez, F. (1989). Reconstituting Children: Extension of Personhood and Citizenship. In D. Kertzer and K. Warner Schaie (Eds.), *Age Structuring in Comparative Perspective* (pp. 143-165). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Representing Children Worldwide, Yale University. (2005). Country brief: Nepal. Retrieved November 17, 2013, from http://www.law.yale.edu/rcw/rcw/jurisdictions/assc/nepal/frontpage.htm

Rousseau, J. (1974/1763). *Emile*. Translated by Barbara Foxley. London: Dent.

Save the Children. (2011). Case study: Promoting schools as zones of peace (SZOP campaign) in Nepal. Retrieved from Save the Children Resource Centre website: http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/

Save the Children. (2013). *The right to learn: Community participation in improving learning*. Washington, DC: Save the Children.

Schaub, M., Henck, A., & Baker, D. (in progress). The triumph of the 'whole child': Rights and images of childhood in multilateral aid development policy, 1946 – 2010.

Schofer, E., & Hironaka, A. (2005). The effects of world society on environmental protection outcomes. *Social Forces, 84*(1), 25-47.

Schofer, E., Hironaka, A., & Frank, D. J. (2012). Sociological institutionalism and world society. In E. Amenta, K. Nash & A. Scott (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell companion to political sociology* (pp. 57-68). West Sussex, UK: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd.

Schofer, E., & Meyer, J. W. (2005). The worldwide expansion of higher education in the twentieth century. *American Sociological Review, 70*, 898-920.

Smith, L. M. (1978). An evolving logic of participant observation, educational ethnography and other case studies. In L. Shulman (Ed.), *Review of research in*

education (pp. 316-377). Itasca, IL: Peacock.

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Social Welfare Council Nepal. (1992). *The social welfare act, 2049 (1992).* Kathmandu, Nepal: Government of Nepal.

-----. (2013*). Detail information of INGOs working under agreement with Social Welfare Council (Fiscal year 2069/70).* Kathmandu, Nepal: Government of Nepal.

Tanaka, M. (2011). The changing roles of NGOs in Nepal: Promoting emerging rights-holder organizations for inclusive aid. *Voluntas, 22*, 494-517.

UNDP. (2002). *Human development report 2002: Deepening democracy in a developing world.* New York: Oxford University Press.

UNESCO. (2012). *EFA global monitoring report: Youth and skills: Putting education to work*. Paris: UNESCO.

-----. (2014). *Education for all global monitoring report: Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all*. Paris: UNESCO.

UNICEF. (2004). *UNICEF child-friendly spaces/environments (CFS/E): An integrated services response for emergencies and their aftermath*. University of Pittsburgh.

-----. (2008). UNICEF in Nepal 2008-2010. Kathmandu: UNICEF.

-----. (2009a). *UNICEF's child-friendly schools in Thailand: A case study*. New York: UNICEF.

-----. (2009b). *Child-friendly schools evaluation: Country report for Thailand*. New York: UNICEF.

-----. (2009c). *Child-friendly schools manua*l. New York: UNICEF.

-----. (2009d). Education experts meet to discuss child-friendly schools in South Asia. Retrieved February 3, 2014, from http://www.unicef.org/media/media_48810.html

-----. (2009e). *Child-friendly schools programming: Global evaluation report.* New York: UNICEF.

-----. (2010). *Global capacity development programme on child-friendly schools*. Retrieved February 3, 2014, from http://www.unicef.org/education/index_49445.html

-----. (2013). *Country programme action plan (2013-2017) between the Government of Nepal and United Nation's Children's Fund*. Kathmandu, Nepal: UNICEF.

U.S. Department of State. (2012). *Fact sheet: Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the United States*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.

Van Bueren, G. (1998). *The international law on the rights of the child.* The Hague, The Netherlands: Kluwer Law International.

Vinovskis, M. A. (1996). An analysis of the concept and uses of systemic educational reform. *American Educational Research Journal, 33*(1), 53-85.

Woodhead, M. (1997). Psychology and the cultural construction of children's needs. In A. James and A. Prout (Eds.), *Constructing and reconstructing childhood. Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood*.

World Bank. (2003*). Financial accountability in Nepal: A country assessment*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Yin, R. K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods (2nd ed*.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

-----. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods (3rd ed*.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

-----. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods (4th ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Zelizer, V. (1985). *Pricing the priceless child: The changing social value of children*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Appendix A: Images of UNICEF child-friendly classrooms from around the world

Thailand

South Africa

Nigeria

Philippines

Nicaragua

Sources. UNICEF, 2009, *Child-friend schools evaluation: Country report for Thailand/South Africa/ Nigeria/Philippines/Nicaragua* (multiple reports).

Appendix B: List of sample indicators from the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools for Quality Education[32]

Area	Indicator	Minimum	Maximum
Effectiveness			
On Average	Class-wise average Subject-wise average Dropout rate Completion rate of grades	50% 50% 10% 90%	100% 100% 0% 100%
On teaching methods	Use of innovative teaching methods	Use of multiple teaching methods	Teachers trained in teaching methodology, participatory teaching methods used, and monitoring of used methodology practised
On time utilization	Attendance of teachers Teachers in classrooms Attendance of pupils	92% of school days 100% of total time prescribed A total of 210 days a year	100% Use of 100% of total time and extra time, as required A total of 220 days a year
On teachers' responsibility and support	Responsibility of teachers	Teachers responsible for the achievement of pupil learning	Planning in collaboration with parents based on pupils' individual achievements and implementation of plans
	Professional support for teachers	Every teacher has received demand-based training at least once a year	There is a practice of reviewing whether or not every teacher uses his/her knowledge and skills after receiving training, of informing stakeholders about achievements, and of sharing feedback for improvement
Inclusion			
On access	Distance between children's home and school	Walking distance of maximum half an hour or 2 km	Walking distance of a maximum of 15 minutes or 1 km
	Based on caste and ethnicity	100%	100%
On teacher training	Teachers training related with inclusiveness	All teachers have received training in inclusiveness	Refresher training conducted for all teachers on inclusiveness and training monitored regularly

---

[32] In total the policy includes 149 indicators divided among the nine aspects of a child-friendly school. See the policy document (Ministry of Education of Nepal, 2010) for a full list.

On teaching and learning	Environment	Learning environment for all children without discrimination, teaching and learning environment based on capacity, learning environment according to pace and pace of learning and teaching and learning taking pupils' individual difficulty into account	Learning environment for all children without discrimination, teaching and learning environment based on capacity and teaching and learning is ensured with remedial means based on individual differences by identifying difficulties of individual pupils

Gender Perspective in Education

On scholarship	50% scholarship	Scholarship has been provided for 50% of girls	Scholarship for 50% of girls increased to 100%
	Scholarships for Dalits	Provided as per the provisions made in laws	Distributed as per the provisions made in existing laws
On gender participation	To increase gender participation	97% girl students in comparison to boys	Equal participation of girls and boys
	Female teacher management	Full implementation of policy related to the appointment of female teachers	Provision of at least 50% female teachers in school
	To lay special emphasis on gender aspects	Special emphasis has been laid on gender aspects in all kinds of educational activities	Gender aspects have been established and managed as an integral part of every educational activity

Participation of Children, Families and Communities

On participation	Children's participation	Child club formed	Child club formed and activities carried out by the club monitored and reviewed
		Children's participation in formulation of school reform plan	Full implementation of suggestions forwarded by children in formulation of school reform plan
	Families' participation	PTA formed	PTA conducts programmes related to quality improvements of school
		Some parents come to school to know about their children's progress	Active and responsible parents awarded and all parents coming to know about their children's progress ever
	Community participation	SMC meetings held every two months	SMC meetings held every month
		Community meeting held at school at least once a year	Community meeting held more than twice a year…

Health, Security and Protection			
On health	Health check-up	Trained health workers check children's health at school once a year	All school children get their health checked at six month intervals and health profile of every child maintained
		Check if children bring nutritious snacks with them	Nutritious snacks arranged by the school and children's nutrition checked every three months
On security	Feeling of security	Physical and corporal punishment prohibited at school	Policies and rules formulated and in force along with monitoring and evaluation to prohibit physical and corporal punishment, misbehave and hate children on the foundation of their background and capacity and such policies and rules monitored and assessed
			Clear plans and programmes in place to bring to an end corporal punishment, humiliation, sexual exploitation and abuse of children within schools and in community
On protection	Feeling of protection	Classrooms of school have doors and windows in order to protect from wind and rain	Classroom windows, verandas and staircases have railings
Physical Condition of the School			
Physical infrastructures	Building and classrooms	Roof that prevents rain water and heat from entering the building	Roof with cold, heat, water and sound proof ceilings
		Rooms with enough light to read and write	Windows that allow light to enter; windows have grills or rods for security
		One classroom for every 50 pupils	One classroom for every 40 pupils
		An area of 0.75 sq m available to every pupil	An area of 1.00 sq m for every pupil
	Play ground	At least one game can be played by all pupils at a time	Playground of a size of football ground

		Neat and clean with greenery	Neat and clean playground with greenery, children-, gender- and disabled friendly
	Furniture	Arrangements of mats and cushions for children of initial-level grades to teach them on the ground	Arrangements of carpets, cushions, etc for pupils of initial-level grades
		One set of desk/bench for every four pupils	Arrangements of one set of appropriate chair and table for every pupil
		Desks for pupils - 15 inch wide	Desks for pupils - 18 inch wide
	Library	Library with curricula, textbooks, and reference materials in a room of school	Library with documentation of subject-wise reference books and distribution system
	Toilet	Separate toilets for girls and boys	Separate toilets for girls and boys
	Drinking water	Availability of a tap with potable water within school premises	Provision of drinking water with a filter in every classroom of school

Teaching and Learning Process

On annual plan of action	Formulation of plan	Annual action plan formulated and school activities conducted accordingly	Effective implementation of all activities in the plan, periodic reviews, continuous monitoring and evaluation and teaching and learning activities at the central point of the plan
	Teachers' lesson teaching plan	Annual lesson plan prepared by all subject teachers	Plan of action implemented, assessed and monitored regularly
Educational materials	Text book	Text books made available to all students in the beginning of academic year	Locally prepared reading materials including textbooks made available
Participation	Community participation	Community takes care of and supports in teaching and learning	Regular support provided by people in the community according to their knowledge, skills and capacity and it is assessed
Relationship	School and parents	Parents take an interest in their children's learning in school	Meeting of teachers and parents taking place in a planned way as an integral part of school teaching and learning

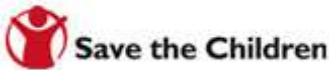| **Teaching and Learning in the Mother Tongue**			
Materials	Textbooks, teachers' guidelines and other reference materials	Availability of textbooks and teachers' guidelines in mother	Textbooks and guidelines in mother tongues used
Teacher/teaching	Multilingual teaching	All teachers have received multilingual training	All teachers have received multilingual refresher training and applied it as required
School Management			
Management	Meeting	SMC meets every two months and 80% of the members present at meeting	SMC Meets at least once a month and 100% of the members present at meeting
Accountability	Accountability	SMC officials are conscious of their duty and accountable to parents in relation to efficiency in school performance	In terms of designing, monitoring and evaluating school reform plan, SMC officials have directly translated their participation and accountability into practice
Dynamics	Dynamics of teachers' group	Participation in and commitments to designing shared programmes of educational uplift of school	The implementation of different approaches relating to educational uplift led by different teachers
		Responsibilities of class and subject teaching taken and accountable to parents and pupils	Milestone of learning of one's subject determined and improvement measures adopted regularly
	Community mobilisation	Programmes that aim at raising awareness in community and capacity building are planned and implemented	Various activities carried out for school development with community participation and involvement regularly
	School governance	Stakeholders concerned informed of efficiency, efficacy and quality of academic and management activities conducted by the school, social audit conducted annually to elicit feedback for the future	Participatory plan formulated based on the results of social audit and special efforts made to ensure child-friendly learning environment and quality education

Source. Adapted from the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools for Quality Education, Department of Education, 2010.

Appendix C: Descriptions of NGOs, INGOs, and IGOs included in sample

Organization Name	Type	In Nepal Since	Working Sectors	Description
BASE (Backward Society Education)	NGO	1990	Education, rights of freed-kamaiyas, livelihood support, child labor elimination, support for sustainable democracy, human rights, conflict mitigation, water and sanitation, environmental sustainability, disaster preparedness and response, infrastructure support, the protection and promotion of traditional and indigenous cultures, and support for children associated with armed groups	Vision: BASE dreams of creating a society free from exploitation. Goal: To promote accessibility for socially disadvantaged communities to create opportunities and improve their living standards for the creation of an equitable and progressive society.
Innovative Forum for Community Development (IFCD)	NGO	1984[33]	Non-formal and formal education, peace education, parenting education, peer based life skills HIV & AIDS, education in emergency, and climate change adult education	Vision: IFCD shares the concern of all individuals and institutions holding the principle that the promotion of literacy helps promote the well-being of human-beings and that it also serves as one of the basic conditions for attaining development with a human face. Mission: IFCD envisions to fulfill the above mentioned aim by developing itself as a support organization to support other organizations whose goal is the promotion of non-formal education in Nepal, especially among the most disadvantaged…

[33] IFCD was formed under the name Innovative Forum in 1984 but it was not recognized by the Social Welfare Council of Nepal until 1991.

Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization (NNDSWO)	NGO	1982	Advocacy, Capacity Development, Education, Sustainable Livelihoods, Health, Water and Sanitation	Vision: NNDSWO envisions an equitable and prosperous Nepal free from all forms of discrimination, exploitation and poverty where human rights, social justice and dignity of all are respected. Mission: NNDSWO, committed to eliminate caste-based discrimination and untouchability, advocates for the rights and in the interest of Dalits, builds their capacity and confidence to claim and exercise the rights, promotes their better access to quality education and sustainable livelihoods and raises awareness on healthy living.
Plan Nepal	INGO	1978	Health, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Basic Education, Household Economic Security, Child Protection and Participation and Child Centered Disaster Risk Management	Vision: Plan's vision is a world in which all children realize their full potential in societies that respect people's rights and dignity. Mission: Plan strives to bring about lasting improvements in the quality of life of deprived children in developing countries through a process that unites people across cultures and adds meaning and value to their lives.
Rato Bangala Foundation	NGO	2002	Education	Rato Bangala Foundation believes in empowering every member of the school community so as to ensure that the classrooms provide a safe and creative haven where students get a meaningful, age-appropriate and skill- based education, so that they grow to become responsible and pro-active citizens and life-long learners.

Samunnat Nepal	NGO	2012	Education, Gender and Social Inclusion, Community Development, Disaster Management, Global Warming and Climate Change, Socio-economic Development, Environment Impact Assessment	Vision: To build an environment where all children have the opportunity to exercise their rights and realize their full potential to create sustainable changes in society. Mission: To serve the children and educational systems through innovative solutions for facilitating lasting change.
Save the Children	INGO	1975	Child Rights Governance, Child Protection, Education, Health & Nutrition, Youth & Livelihood, HIV/AIDS & Emergency & Disaster Management	Vision: A world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation. Mission: Is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting changes in their lives
United Mission to Nepal	INGO	1954	Education, Health, Peace building and Sustainable Livelihoods, achieved through Capacity Building, Advocacy and Integral Mission	Vision: Fullness of life for all, in a transformed Nepali society. Mission: Inspired by the love and teachings of Jesus Christ, in partnership with the Christian community and others in Nepal and worldwide, we will serve the people of Nepal, particularly those who live in poverty.
UNICEF	IGO	1968	Child protection, Education, Health and Nutrition, HIV/AIDS, WASH and Social Policy	UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential…

UNESCO	IGO	1954	Education, Natural Sciences, Social and Human Sciences, Culture, and Communication and Information	To promote the economic social and intellectual development of the Nepalese people through educational, scientific and cultural activities.
World Education	INGO	1976	Child Labor & Trafficking, Heath Education, Non-formal Education, Vocational Education & Quality education	Dedicated to improving the lives of the poor through economic and social development programs.
World Vision International	INGO	2001	Maternal Child Health & Nutrition, Education, Livelihood, Water Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH),HIV/AIDS	Vision: Our vision for every child, life in all its fullness; Our prayer for every heart, the will make it so. Goal: To empower vulnerable children, their families and communities in Nepal to improve their quality of life with dignity and peace.

Sources. AIN Membership report 2012; various NGO websites.

Appendix D: Interview protocol

PENNSTATE
1855

Interview Questions

Title of study: NGOs and the global ideology of childhood:
Interpreting and reproducing world culture through an education policy in Nepal

Principal Investigator: Adrienne Henck
The Pennsylvania State University

Date: _____ **Location:** _____

Participant Name: _____**Title:** _____

Organization Name:
_____

Other Information:
_____

1. Tell me about the origins of the child-friendly schools policy.

2. What was your role in implementing the policy?

3. How would you describe a child-friendly school to someone from another country who had never heard of child-friendly schools?

4. How is the child-friendly schools program/policy similar to or different from previous/other education reform programs/policies?

5. What is your definition of childhood?

6. What has changed since the implementation of the child-friendly schools program/policy?

7. What do you think is the future of the child-friendly schools?

Appendix E: Map of Nepal including observation sites

Appendix F: Sample request for participation email

Subject: Request for Participation in Research Interview on Child-friendly Schools

Dear Ms./Mr._____,

My name is Adrienne Henck, and I am working towards completing my Ph.D. at Pennsylvania State University, with a major in Educational Theory and Policy, and Comparative and International Education. I previously served as a Peace Fellow with BASE (Backwards Society Education) in Tulsipur, Dang, and you were recommended to me by _____ as someone with experience in my area of research. My research investigates how the child-friendly schools initiative is being implemented by NGOs in Nepal. I am also interested in how cultural ideas about children and childhood are reflected in the initiative. Given the strong presence of NGOs in Nepal and the growing importance of child-friendly education, I believe this area of study is vital to your work and interest too.

This is an initial memo requesting your permission for your time to answer some of the questions that I need for my research. After you agree to be interviewed, I will send you some questions in advance that I will request you to answer to the best of your knowledge. I will be visiting Nepal during the month of April, so we can then schedule a brief interview meeting at a time and location of your choosing. I know you are pressed for time so my queries will be short but also open-ended to allow for your insights.

I have my university's human subject clearance, a mandatory requirement for researchers interviewing human subjects and this can be available for your perusal anytime you wish. As part of this requirement, you are free to refuse any questions you do not wish to answer.

If you are interested in the findings of my research, I will be most willing to provide you with this information once my studies are concluded. If you need further verification, please contact my advisor, Dr. David Baker, Professor of Education and Sociology, Penn State University at dpb4@psu.edu.

Thank you in advance, and I am looking forward to your confirmation to be interviewed.

Kind regards,

Adrienne Henck

Doctoral Candidate
Educational Theory and Policy, and Comparative and International Education
The Pennsylvania State University
1-646-673-1575 (U.S.) | 977-98-4959-2290 (Nepal)
adrienne.henck@gmail.com | adrienne.henck@psu.edu

**Appendix G: Background on child clubs in Nepal as spaces
to promote children's right to participate**

As a minimum indicator of community participation, the National Framework of Child-friendly Schools calls for the formation of child clubs at all child-friendly schools. Also called child rights clubs or child rights protection groups, child clubs allow children to have a greater voice in the development of their schools and hold teachers, communities, and governments accountable for improving the quality of education. In Nepal, the National Framework on Child-friendly Local Governance includes minimum standards for child participation such as the formation of child clubs within local school governance structures. Child clubs supported by Save the Children US and Save the Children Norway began to emerge in the mid-1980s and there are now currently an estimated 13,000 clubs in Nepal that have been initiated by both local and international NGOs as well as students themselves. The clubs hold regular meetings at which elected student leaders and members discuss how they can represent the issues most affecting students at their school to the school-management committee and parent-teacher association. This method of elevating pressing issues is particularly effective because students often feel more comfortable raising their concerns with fellow students than with adults. Students have used the child club as a platform to combat issues such as teacher absenteeism, inadequate supply of textbooks, resource misuse and corporal punishment.

Vita
Adrienne Henck

EDUCATION

2014   Ph.D., Penn State University
        Dual-title degree: Educational Theory and Policy, and Comparative and International Education
        Dissertation: INGOs, the global ideology of childhood and educational policy in Nepal
        Advisor: David Baker

2010   M.A., New York University, International Education
        Concentration: International Development Education
        Advisor: Dana Burde

2002   B.S., Mary Washington College
        Major: Psychology

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

- International Education Policy Intern, Save the Children, Washington, DC, Jun. 2013 - Dec. 2013
- Researcher, UNICEF, Knowledge Community on Children in India, Orissa, India, May 2011 - Aug. 2011
- Peace Fellow, The Advocacy Project/Backward Society Education, Nepal, Jun. 2010 - Aug. 2010
- Research Assistant, David Baker (2010 - 2011), Katerina Bodovski (2011 - 2012), Soo-yong Byun (2012 - 2013), Penn State University

SELECT PAPERS AND PUBLICATIONS

Kenny, K., Lei, P., Paxton, W., Talbot-Zorn, M., & Henck, A. (2013). *The right to learn: Community participation in improving learning*. Washington, DC: Save the Children.

Bodovski, K., Kotok, S., & Henck, A. (2013). Universal patterns or the tale of two systems? Mathematics achievement and educational expectations in post-socialist Europe. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*.

Byun, S. Y., Henck, A., & Post, D. (forthcoming, *Comparative Education Review*). Cross-national variations in student employment and academic performance: The roles of national contexts and international law.

Schaub, M., Henck, A., & Baker, D. (in progress). The globalized "whole child": Cultural understandings of children and childhood in multilateral aid development policy, 1946-2010.

Henck, A. (2012). Review of the book: The rights and wrongs of children's work, by M. Bourdillon, D. Levinson, W. Myers, & B. White. *Comparative Education Review, 56*(1), 177-179.

PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC SERVICE

Comparative and International Education Society, 2010 - present
- Member, South Asia SIG (2010 - present)
- Program Coordinator, 56th Annual CIES Meeting, San Juan, Puerto Rico (2011 - 2012)

International Education Student Association, Penn State University, 2010 - present
- Vice President (2011 - 2012)

AWARDS AND GRANTS

- Doctors William D. and Patricia A. Horton Scholarship in Education, 2012, 2013
- Comparative and International Education Program Summer Research Grant, 2011
- University Graduate Fellowship, Penn State University, 2010 - 2014