

On Alternative Development and  
the Modern Colonial Global Imaginary

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **On Alternative Development and the Modern Colonial Global Imaginary**

Ryan Moyer

In the lattermost third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, alternative development (AD) began to employ participatory and human-centered modes of research and operations as a response to the negative effects of colonization and mainstream development. While AD has always had a reciprocally supportive relationship with academic research, more recently, AD programs have become an integral component of Western higher education operations, syllabi and apparatuses. Although this new partnership presents opportunity for many, fresh scholarship is unravelling and critically examining the complexities and logical inconsistencies this relationship presents. This research employs sociological lenses that account for this new partnership's corresponding neo-imperial networks of power to challenge its radical claims to fostering decolonization, emancipation and the reversal of western hegemonic domination. Indeed, AD's authentic potential to assist in anti-colonial or -imperial struggles may now be nullified, as its new relationship with higher education ensures these struggles remain operationalized from within the very geo- and body-political epistemic location that they seek to counter and transcend. It may be the case that this new partnership is the latest strategy of the modern/colonial global imaginary, as it incorporates both strategies aimed at its resistance and alternative Indigenous imaginaries into discursive schemas to ensure its own perpetuity and expansion. In turn, AD's knowledge production has become instrumentalized by actively foreclosing upon systematic critiques pointing to this possibility.

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## **Acronyms**

AD: Alternative Development

AFN: Assembly of the First Nations

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis

MCGI: Modern/Colonial Global Imaginary

MDA: Mediated Discourse Analysis

PAR: Participatory Action Research

PDA: Post-foundational Discourse Analysis

STM: Social Transformation Model of Development

TPM: Transformative Praxis: Malawi

TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UNDRIP: United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Persons

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## **Introduction: An Overview of Contemporary Trends in Global Development and the New Quagmire of Becoming Critical**

“If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?”

—Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

### **A Brief Summary and Contextualization of TPM**

As evidenced in Canada by the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (TRC, 2015) and globally by the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (Assembly, 2007), landmark calls for greater attention to addressing and altering the acute and continual effects of colonialism, mainstream development and associated research schemas have become endorsed in public, academic and global development spheres, to varying degrees. Questions into the ethical quandaries and usefulness of Western global development research in post-colonial contexts have informed their reformatory direction (Smith, 2013).<sup>1</sup> Seeking to answer these questions assuredly, alternative development (AD) modalities have quickly become popularized as the new best-practice in global development and related research projects.

This new paradigm of research and development aspires to better outcomes by operating in accordance with fresh ethical commitments to participatory and people-centered practices (Pieterse, 1998) that focus on ensuring local populations genuinely benefit from, and participate in, research and development, in efforts to mitigate and reverse the harms associated with colonial and imperial habits and processes of domination (Escobar, 2011; Sachs, 1997; Stonebanks, 2016; Stonebanks et al., 2016; Smith, 2013). AD is narrated as being in opposition to the racialized colonial/imperial project and the economic determinism of traditional development modalities. It is viewed as a beacon of hope in reversing the continual harmful residual effects of colonization (Dussault & Erasmus, 1996; Pieterse, 1998) or the “old habits” of

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<sup>1</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2013) asks of Western researchers: “Are they useful to us? Can they fix our generator? Can they actually do anything?” (p.10).

Western domination that often continue to emerge in global development projects (Stonebanks, 2016). Accordingly, AD practitioners often maintain the routine goals of ‘empowering’ poor and marginalized communities to participate and guide development research and work (Friere, 1970; Sheerin, Stonebanks, Jeffery & Schouten, 2016) towards emancipation from domination and alleviating human suffering (Freire, 1970; Stonebanks, 2016). The popular understanding of AD’s abilities to achieve or contribute to these utopic ends while not furthering existent harm has gone relatively unchallenged (Cooke & Kothari, 2001), with the paucity of disputes stemming in large part from AD’s original success occurring via visionary anti-capital and -colonial subaltern leaders in Latin America (Campodónico, Carbonnier & Tezanos Vázquez, 2017).

More recently, the AD paradigm, including its bold claims to being decolonial and emancipatory, has been incorporated within the curricula and networks of Western higher education (HE) with limited critical response (Stein & Andreotti, 2016, 2017). This scarcity of critical accounts remains due to AD’s ambiguous conceptual outlines, a resultant inability to systematize critique (Cornwall, 2007) and immense critical complexities that arise with this new AD/HE partnership. Indeed, scholars have only very recently developed appropriate language and conceptual tools for capable and valuable critical analyses (Andreotti, 2015), and while the new partnership presents exciting opportunities for some (Hanson, 2010), to others, it is illustrative of a liquidation of AD’s potential and authenticity (Andreotti, 2015).

The new partnership is labelled by Lori Hanson (2010) as the “social transformation model” of development (STM) (p.72). According to Hanson (2010) the STM is used by Western universities in order to expand their curriculum for social justice in international moribund economic zones via academic programs that operate as both formal research endeavors and academic trainings. According to Hanson, STM is poised to foster “awareness of and commitment to societal justice for marginalized groups, grassroots empowerment, nonviolent and authentic democracy, environmental care, and North–South relations based on principles of equity, respect and sharing” (Toh, 1996, as cited in Hanson, 2010, p. 75-76). The aforementioned goals and principles have become a “duty” and “personal responsibility”, thus STM is widely adopted and is increasingly providing value for Western HE institutions, students and the wider networks within which they are situated (Hanson, 2010).

An example of this paradigm in practice can be found in the small-scale development initiative and non-governmental organization (NGO) *Transformative Praxis: Malawi* (TPM), from Bishop's University (often referred to here as "Bishop's"), with whom I collaborated for two separate five-week fieldwork trips in Malawi during the summers of 2014 and 2015. Publications regarding this initiative have proliferated and begun to coalesce over the last few years, which is advantageous in fleshing out the defining logics and philosophical foundations of TPM, as well as its methodological imperatives and general aims. According to co-directors Fintan Sheerin and Christopher Stonebanks (2016), TPM "seeks to build agency through social engagement and knowledge transfer, bringing academics, professionals, students and local Malawians together through dialogue and participatory action" (p. 34). Furthermore, TPM employs a wide edificial spectrum of descriptive terms to contextualize its mission, stating that TPM seeks "emancipation, liberation, social justice, solidarity and decolonization" (TPM, n.d., our story, para. 2) which is to be achieved within a one square kilometer piece of land that TPM calls an "Education, Health and Development emancipatory-based knowledge transfer campus" (Stonebanks, 2018, para. 1). Following the precedent set by TPM, from here on in this piece of land will be known as the "Campus".

TPM is a global research, development and education program whose operations are centered in this Campus, which has been constructed in the Kasungu region of Malawi over the past few years. In a publication called *Reading Shiva Naipual: A reflection on Brownness and leading an experiential learning project in Malawi* (2018), TPM's director explains that "For over 8 years, the author has led a university project in sub-Saharan Africa" wherein he has sought to "facilitate local creation of a...knowledge transfer campus and has incorporated university undergraduates and graduates as part of the process", including the observation that students "primarily come from White backgrounds" (para. 1). TPM's Campus in Malawi manifested from the creation of an international experiential knowledge exchange program that is founded at Bishop's University in Quebec, Canada and routinely includes students from St. Francis Xavier University, McGill University and Trinity College, Dublin. TPM grants both undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to travel to Kasungu to exercise what they have learned in the classroom within what is standardly called 'the field' in development studies and TPM.

To distill, the TPM Campus is used for *praxis*: as a hub for conversations to happen between Western and Kasungu TPM members that would lead to strategies for development that are then tested in the Campus and once again reflected on through conversation. TPM's philosophical undercurrent dovetails with that of STM as both stem from the mind of Paulo Freire<sup>2</sup>—required reading for Western TPM participants (Stonebanks et al., 2016, p. 262)—and his ideals of “participatory and liberatory education and transformative learning theory” (Hanson, 2010, p. 71). The Freirean modality of development is linked to the emergence of participatory action research (PAR) methods (Baum, MacDougall & Smith, 2006), which TPM strongly encourages (Stonebanks, 2016; Stonebanks et al., 2016). Through this method, TPM explains that it pursues “a cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting” towards its goals (TPM, Research, para. 1). The word ‘*praxis*’ situated within the TPM name stems from Freire’s (1970) work, wherein he maintains that “Authentic liberation...is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it” (p. 79). Thus, TPM does not seek or note any modest goals of increasing literacy rates, offering ‘x’ number of vaccinations or gaining seats in the political arena. Instead, the project “addresses a variety of local hopes” and works towards “alleviating human suffering” (St. Francis Xavier, 2014, para. 3) through new partnerships between Western HE institutions and Indigenous communities deemed to be suffering.

Sharon Stein and Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti (2016, 2017) have recognized STM's growing popularity in the Western HE sphere and maintain that a defining feature of these models is that they seek to address, reverse and/or transcend what the authors call the “modern/colonial global imaginary” (MCGI). They define the MCGI succinctly as the global dissemination of a “single story of progress, development and human evolution that ascribes differentiated value to cultures/countries” between, loosely speaking, levels of superiority/advancement and inferiority/recession (p.2). Like AD and STM modalities of global development, TPM narrates itself as a hedge and solution to the MCGI in explaining that it is working to counter the “essentially romanticized euroWestern view(s)” that stem from colonial education systems and contemporary Western ideals of “civilization” (Stonebanks, 2010, pp.

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<sup>2</sup> Freire's work will be covered in more detail sporadically throughout this work; however a critical appraisal of the entirety of Paulo Friere's philosophical foundations is outside current scope. Stanley's (1972) *Literacy: The crisis of a conventional wisdom* is a suitable critical appraisal and point of departure for a comprehensive overview.

366-70). Additionally, it narrates itself in juxtaposition to the harms associated with the MCGI's: globalizing AID system (Sheerin, Stonebanks, Jeffery & Schouten, 2016); "eurowestern powerbloc"; "global education system of hegemonic reproduction" (Stonebanks, 2010, p.370), and; old colonial habits of dominating Indigenous persons through research (Stonebanks, 2016). According to TPM's director, this "powerbloc" and its associated features can be characterized as a maintenance of existent colonial power through actors "holding access to valued resources (information, truth, cultural capital, wealth, media, etc.)" and by "children...schooled to accept existing societal structures, including the continue subjugation of indigenous people (both mind and body), locally and abroad" (Stonebanks, 2010, p.360). Indeed, TPM's desire as a program is to oppose and reverse the MCGI and its associated strategies and structures of dominance.

Persuaded by the value of these ideals, I first travelled to the village of Makupo, in the Kasungu district of Malawi, in 2014 to begin the process of informally conversing with local community members about high-speed cooking stoves. In a blog-post, dated July 1 2014, I state "The question has arisen in my research of cooking stoves; If the cooks are aware of all the benefits of the cooking stove vs. their usual three rock fire system, why don't they use the cook stove?" (Moyer, 2014a, para. 4). The trip was exploratory in nature, obviously quite utilitarian focused, limited in scope, and nothing really came of it.

Perhaps 'nothing' is an overstatement, as it did foster a deeper understanding of my own ineptitude as a fledgling development professional/activist researcher to enact the visions of a 'better Kasungu' that I had upon arrival. Accordingly, I returned to Canada defeated and rather confused. The year following my initial foray into development was one of deep reflection, and in 2015 I decided to capitalize on the lessons I had learned and travel back to Malawi to conduct another five-week fieldwork trip to bring into being a PAR project entitled "*Community Input Towards Envisioning and Enacting an Adult Education Program*". This project was both an independent PAR research study and a graduate level course in the *School of Education* at Bishop's University (see Appendix B for course outline). The trip resulted in the formulation of a community-based research group that enacted experiential adult education through investigating, discussing and acting out processes involved in land claims, organic composting and building and maintaining a village library. The group consisted of myself and seven local community members who became known as the *The Chilowa Research Group* (see Figure 1.1).

After my project in 2015 concluded, I returned home and was congratulated with high grades, but once again returned confused and contemplative. The confusion did not stem merely from jet lag and re-introducing a Canadian carb-loaded diet, it arose due to a hum of self-critique that suggested to me the ‘decolonial’ or ‘emancipatory’ work I undertook in Malawi was instead contributing to the capillarization and calcification of the MCGI’s systems of domination in which I believed it was participating. While supporters of STM, like Hanson (2010), maintain that STM’s globalizing practices will “facilitate a transformed social order both outside and within their boundaries” (p.72), Stein and Andreotti (2016) posit that the Western HE system’s cooptation of AD’s principles, methods and associated discourses into STM is a means through which the MCGI has strategically appointed, ‘folded in’ and instrumentalised models of resistance in order to ensure its own success and domination.

The paradoxical potential of the MCGI ensuring its own continuity by strategically using AD/STM’s programs aimed at subverting the MCGI—benefactors of MCGI’s operations ‘helping’ those on the “dark side of modernity” (Beck, 2018, p.56)—is acknowledged by numerous Indigenous and Western post-colonial scholars (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Barker, 2006; Emmanuel, 1972; Grosfoguel, 2002, 2011; Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Veracini, 2010a, 2010b, 2014, 2015; Wolfe, 1999). Indeed, STM and related HE/AD partnership projects have been identified as a potential contradictory ordering of power: power masquerading as its own resistance. This is thus perhaps the most minacious threat to both alternative world-imaginaries and critical post-colonial scholarship to-date (Stein & Andreotti, 2016, 2017; Stein, Andreotti & Suša, 2016)<sup>3</sup>, especially because it is difficult to become critical of that which is taken-for-granted as ‘good’.

Amidst the potent ethical anxieties tethered to practices of contemporary globalization, Western HE institutions have cunningly adopted an avatar as a “benevolent agent of justice” (Andreotti, 2015, p.3) via a self-authorized espousal of anti-colonial and -capitalism discourses to authorize their incubation of STM research programs (Andreotti, 2015; Stein & Andreotti 2017). Now, the competitive advantage provided to Western HE institutions who adopt and

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<sup>3</sup> This point is underlined in Slavoj Žižek’s (2008) recent work that dares us to consider the violence of smooth functioning MCGI systems as a greater threat than the overt violence we witness in imperialism and/or colonialism due to the former’s coercive and covert nature and thus its avoidance of critical reflection as scholars fixate on explicit militant force, blood and human suffering.

operationalize STM is vital to the economic wellbeing and relevancy of the Western HE sphere and its institutions (Stein & Andreotti, 2017). This is problematic because Western HE institutions remain a central pillar in the racial/colonial ordering of the world (Stein & Andreotti, 2017; Stonebanks, 2008; Vickers, 2002), enculturate the values of neoliberalism (Stein & Andreotti, 2017), aid processes of neo-imperialism (Harvey, 2003) and currently facilitate the success of settler-colonization (Alfred, 1999; Gahman & Legault, 2017; Seawright, 2014). Indeed, Western HE's recent co-optation of AD discourses and modalities into STM troubles understandings of AD's authentic potential to assist in anti-colonial or -imperial struggles because it now operates from *within* the very geo-and body-political epistemic location that it seeks to counter and transcend. This presents predicaments for the self-evident acceptance of radical claims to 'decolonization' made from STM and AD projects, like TPM, because abilities to delineate between earnest appropriation of these concepts, as opposed to their appropriation for "strategic purposes", becomes exceedingly complex (Stein & Andreotti, 2017, p. 4). In contrast, what remains simple is that we cannot default to an unsighted acceptance of claims to the former because colonization was/is premised upon the impotent acceptance of empire's benevolent claims to "helping" those they were/are actually dominating (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Storey, 2016; Vickers, 2002).

Recognizing this quagmire, Stein and Andreotti (2017) maintain that the current STM moment may be "the most recent reconfiguration of the modern/colonial logics of race and capital that characterize an established matrix of social meaning and modalities of power" (p. 1). Now that Western universities drive research and knowledge production among STM projects, the discourses produced from these projects' operation *must* produce their own positive appraisal and justify their continuity by silencing and foreclosing upon any indicators of their potential support of and/or collusion with, the MDGI (Stein & Andreotti, 2017; Stein, Andreotti & Suša, 2016). This glaring predicament has produced a dilemma for TPM, which, as I will argue, has been addressed by producing and maintaining a discursive cleavage between itself and the logics, methods and discourses that prop-up colonization, imperialism and mainstream development, or the MCGI, in order to maintain its own relevancy, legitimacy and value in the Western HE sphere and abroad in Malawi. Through a discursive disavowal of indicators of complicity with the ordering logics of the MCGI, STM projects like TPM can continue to confidently appropriate and authentic discourses of "emancipation, liberation, social justice, solidarity and

decolonization” (TPM, n.d., our story, para. 2). If this appropriation or authentication is challenged, the reciprocal relationship of value making between HE and AD is nullified within the growing business of producing “global citizens” and thus these silences are powerful and incredibly difficult to identify (Andreotti, 2016; 2017). Bourdieu’s (1978) moment of clarity serves well in adjunct: “no domination can maintain itself without making itself recognized by making the arbitrary which is at its basis be misrecognized” (p.76). Upon further review, TPM’s oppositional stance to the MCGI may indeed foreclose upon and silence important contradictory insights in its potential synergy, complicity and support for MCGI. These concerns are grounds for recasting TPM as a point of departure to identify specific paradoxes and logical incoherencies that become salient by contextualizing it within its wider linkages to the Western HE sphere and neo-imperialism (Harvey, 2003).

Similarly to Williams (2003), I am concerned that the re-naming of development does nothing more than conceal a continuity of the past and of the power relations brought with it, and that the discourses and ideologies of the MCGI may be embedded and globalized with TPM’s operation.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, this study moves forward in recognition of concerns expressed by Buxton and Provenzo (2010) in their review of TPM’s beginnings, stating that it may be “functioning as a mode of educational missionary work that is cloaked in the rhetoric of providing liberation” and thus perhaps “simply swapping a newer colonialist model for an older one” (p. 382-3). As Stein and Andreotti (2017) explain, there is an urgent need to “step-back” and focus, first and foremost, on identifying the foreclosures and silences involved in STM projects, which can lead to valuable “unlearning, unmaking, and unowning these promises” (p.7). Stepping back accordingly, I adopt Andreotti’s (2015) configuration of Gayatri Spivak’s framework for the critical assessment of global relations, with an emphasis on the importance of “complexifying analyses, exposing paradoxes, problematizing benevolence, uncovering our investments and

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<sup>4</sup> Despite the critical lens I bring forward in analyzing TPM throughout the chapters to come, I cannot proceed without acknowledging the work of Mkandawire (2005) and Simon (2003), in articulating a moral anxiety that presents itself to scholars that reject “Global South” development outright, from the quiet of their comfortable Western life. This thesis is instead an attempt to identify the power of development in molding regimes of truth that systematically avoid inconvenient understandings that, despite our beliefs in new modern development ideals, it never exists in a vacuum and has historically “failed to resolve old problems” while bringing “new ones of incomparably greater magnitude” (Rahnema & Bawtree, 1997, p. 378).



addressing the constitutive denial of (our own) complicity in systemic harm” (p.5). I proceed in this task with, hopefully, some strategic grace and, definitely, respect for all those involved.

### **Thesis Statement and Research Aims**

This thesis will critically evaluate and examine TPM’s discursive elements and strategies as themselves elements of the MCGI. I will evaluate the logical coherence of TPM’s claim to be a viable response to the MCGI by probing silences and foreclosures indicating the potential symmetry of TPM and the MCGI. Firstly, I will chart TPM’s historical background and how it came to be situated as an STM program in Kasungu. Next, TPM’s instrumental position within the neo-imperial global order will be analyzed. Many of the discursive strategies associated with neo-imperial domination will be ‘cross-coded’ to TPM’s discursive strategy to assess instances of synergy. In sum, the principle question I am seeking to answer is: to what degree is TPM tethered to, instrumental in and/or emulative of the MCGI it seeks to oppose? Hoping to contribute to the improvement of TPM and a renewed investment in academic critical reflection, another question emerges: how can a greater awareness of the forms and operation of contemporary strategies and topographies of power associated with the MCGI foster better international collaboration, respect and knowledge creation?

## Chapter 1: Tracing the Trajectory of Modern Development

### A Brief Genealogy and Overview of Mainstream Development

In order to understand TPM, it is necessary to investigate how global development came to be analyzed as an arrangement of discourses that identify and determine the conceptual parameters of development *and* its critical appraisals. A suitable place to begin is in investigating the ethos of what has come to be called the “impasse of development” (Kiely, 1995), a time wherein the study of development began to reflect more deeply on the failures of what came to be called “mainstream development” and consequently turn towards alternative development methods.

Mainstream development arose as a response to the uneven development occurring throughout the world after colonization had begun to unravel and physical European influence left occupied countries. This process left populaces to erect their own political, economic and legal apparatuses after being stripped of resources and traumatized from colonial violence (Caplan, 2008). Mainstream development sought to rectify this uneven development through the imposition of market and state-based reforms, including the World Bank’s *Structural Adjustment Programs*, in efforts to limit government interference and promote market liberalization (Englebert, 2000). It was not long before mainstream development ensured “a model of adopting free market principles (was) posited for the rest of the world” (Kiely, 1995, p.118) and this form of development quickly became dogmatic in development theory and practice (Corbridge, 1986).

These reforms failed to invigorate many economies with lower rates of development and economic success, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa, which led many scholars and development theorists to explain that underdevelopment was occurring as a product of African countries’ subservience to, and dependence on, Western countries (Caplan, 2008; Englebert, 2000). According to Wallerstein (1974a), the status of global relations and affairs became a new form of theft on a grand scale, as geo-political areas with high-functioning economies (core economies) syphoned resources from impoverished states (periphery economies). This theory was widely employed and adopted in interpreting the new global formation. However, scholars became increasingly critical of these theories’ privileging of Western macro-level explanatory variables, like state and economic apparatuses, in understanding development (Kiely, 1995). This period of critical reflection became known as the “impasse of development”.

## Impasse of Development

Debates surrounding development reached a turning point during the “impasse of development”, wherein David Booth’s *Marxism and development sociology: Interpreting the impasse* (1985) sparked a large-scale re-consideration of normative development theories like that of Wallerstein. Booth (1985) makes the argument that these normative analyses focused mostly on economic and state government structures in their explanations of variances in levels of development<sup>5</sup>. As Wallerstein alludes to above, much of these types of analyses maintained a geo-political world gaze that constructed it as a competition between two geo-political arenas, the “periphery” and the “core”.

Ray Kiely (1995) underlined Booth’s (1985) critiques, illustrating that the defining and popular feature of the myriad theoretical frameworks employed in development studies<sup>6</sup> is the consistent reading of underdevelopment and changes in the periphery as being the product of development and changes to the core (Kiely, 1995, p. 94). For example, Susanne Bodenheimer (1971) explains that the roots and continuation of Latin American countries’ underdevelopment is a product of their relationship to ‘developed’ countries, stating that “Latin America is today... part of an international system dominated by the now-developed nations.... Latin underdevelopment is the outcome of a particular series of relationships to the international system” (p.330). Stuart Corbridge (1986) expressed parallel concerns, stating that the impasse is fostered by incessant modelling of the world as simply a “fixed core and fixed periphery” or seeing the “Third World in terms of the needs (‘fixes’) of the imperialist powers alone” (p. 246).

This preoccupation with core countries in galvanizing development and fixing underdevelopment led to a disregard for events, struggles and successes occurring within countries or communities in the Global South, leading to scholars taking issue with development analyses being made *apriori* to conducting or undertaking work in overseas development contexts (Frank, 1981; Kiely, 1995). To illustrate, up until recently, The World Bank designed and evaluated projects with minimal involvement from the non-governmental organizations that

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<sup>5</sup> For example, Stewart, Lall & Wangwe’s *AD Strategies in sub-Saharan Africa* (1992) makes the case for alleviating poverty via increasing the state’s role in protecting domestic production and limiting foreign imports.

<sup>6</sup> Kiely (1995) analyzes a wide gamut of theoretical positions as they apply to development, including neoclassical and modernization theory, orthodox Marxism, regulation theory, dependency theory and world systems theory.

would carry out the work, effectively confining them to a role akin to retail service delivery (Fox & Brown, 1998, p. 495-6).

The limited involvement of local actors in both development actions and theory ultimately arrests “curiosity about why the world is the way it is and how it may be changed”; resulting in a disregard for micro-level operations and important local struggles (Booth, 1985, p. 777) while maintaining similar relationships found in the colonization that mainstream development proceeded (Crush, 1995). Local populations in periphery countries were repeatedly left out of the process of creating or vetting knowledge and information that guided the development projects that effected them (Said, 1978; Tuhiwai Smith, 2013).

### **The Emergence of Alternative Development**

A growing understanding of how mainstream development limits and arrests the voice of the marginalized by representing them in ways that may or may not be accurate, and is often limiting and harmful<sup>7</sup>, led to the formulation of “subaltern studies”, wherein these questions of representation came to the fore (Kothari, 2005). Colonialism, and later, mainstream development, created cultural classifications and differences between “self” and “other”, wherein superiority and inferiority could be inscribed. As Kothari (2005) posits:

this process of “othering” legitimates forms of control and inequality and is therefore not surprisingly also invoked and reproduced in contemporary development discourse. Thus the racial and gendered boundaries and distinctions, marking the power relations between colonisers and colonised, continued to be reinscribed though often subsumed within notions of expertise and professionalism (p. 432).

Ultimately, the general failure of mainstream development, including growing crime, disillusionment and an intellectual impasse (Sachs, 1997), coupled with its reproduction of power relations found in the colonial project (Crush, 1995), led to new “alternative” forms of development (Chambers, 1995) that sought to rectify these failures and habits (Kothari, 2005). As critiques of mainstream development mounted, development studies began to adopt new and

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<sup>7</sup> See Spivak (1988), especially page 92, for an example of how the representation of oppressed groups can become dogmatically inscribed into development theory.

alternate models of theorizing and doing development, with an emphasis on “grass-roots approaches” that could “never be divorced from the concrete situation of real, living individuals” (Kiely, 1995, p.162). Accordingly, to transcend the impasse, it was posited that those who development was being conducted for must be actively involved in its conceptual and operational processes. Looking towards the ‘grassroots’ or the ‘concrete situation’, new development pursued the inclusion of local populations in the process of generating knowledge and guiding plans. Soon after, new alternative paradigms of development, including PAR methods, quickly became the “new norm” (Pieterse, 1998).

Beginning in the 1970s and popularized throughout the late 1980s, alternative paradigms of development began to emerge on the world stage and crystalized in a people-centered approach (Pieterse, 1998), wherein “novel forms of collective action and social mobilization...characterized the decade” (Escobar, 2011, p. 216). AD practices highlighted the need to have those who development is being conducted for participate in the planning and processes that inform its operation, including a focus on human development as opposed to strict economic growth. Pieterse (1998) remarks that AD “is development from below...in this context ‘below’ refers both to ‘community’ and NGOs” (p. 346). Seeking to transcend the previous mainstream paradigm of development, AD’s principle aim was “no longer simply viewed as GDP growth”, instead “human development (was) seen as a more appropriate goal and measure of development” (p. 344).

Within the decades following the emergence of AD modalities, models of PAR began to be widely included within development work, seeking to leverage “social and political action in order to induce needed transformations” within “underdeveloped regions” where there was “blatant economic exploitation and human/cultural destruction” (Borda, 2006, p. 27). Scholar and PAR practitioner Paulo Freire (1970) maintained that development could only occur if knowledge that informed development was co-constructed between parties from the core and periphery towards emancipation and liberation. If this co-construction was done authentically, according to Freire (1970), both “oppressors” (e.g. TPM members from the West) and “the oppressed” (e.g. local Kasungu residents) would find communal freedom and emancipation. Accordingly, Friere and PAR’s popularity skyrocketed while critical appraisals remained static (Cooke & Kothari, 2001).

Attempting to renegotiate authority, PAR at once guards against power being concentrated in the hands of those from the ‘core’, or the “cruel elites now ruling all societies”, by facilitating the transfer or incubation of power in the hands of those in the “periphery” (Shor, 2014). Indeed, for Paulo Freire and many other PAR practitioners, there is a polemic of "the power now in power" against "the power not yet in power” (Shor, Saul & Saul, 2016). However, more recently, PAR has been recognized as being a method in which this simplification may not apply, as power in global development remains “messy, entangled, highly variable and contingent” which has “thrown some doubt on the utility and legitimacy of participatory and action oriented approaches” (Shor, Saul & Saul, 2016, p. 19). Condignly, PAR and AD have begun to come under more rigorous critique.

Despite the noble goals and impressive successes of PAR (see, for example, Kindon, Pain & Kesby, 2007), it soon became apparent that it too had its own shortcomings, often found in its propensity to reproduce similar relationships found in mainstream development and colonization, wherein power was held by those from core countries in roles of PAR expert or practitioner. Critiques of PAR began to emerge over the last two decades and brought to light various shortcomings, including failures to: produce desired outcomes; transcend habits of representing the “Other”, and; simultaneously engaging in modern tactics of representing, or branding, itself as novel and different from past methods (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Janes, 2016; Healy, 2001; Stanley, 1972). University of Malawi professor Blessings Chinsinga (2003) illustrates the ways in which participatory methods and colonial relationships are intimately tied in Malawi, often used to legitimize appeals for elite power in rural development and encourage and invigorate local development action while offering limited results and being devoid of action against structural elements of domination. Cooke and Kothari (2001) note that participatory development projects have “exacerbated social and economic inequalities and eroded still further the position of poorer sections of the community” (p.61), while noting that frameworks have been employed as sophisticated mechanisms to manage human actors in development. Another example is found in Kamruzzaman’s (2009) analysis of the World Bank, stating that it promotes ideas of inclusion, ownership and participation, however these discourses serve merely as rhetorical devices to ensure limited opposition to the smooth functioning of these agencies.

Indeed, results have proved that top-down social engineering and power hierarchies often remain entrenched in PAR and AD work, albeit much more difficult to identify (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Healy, 2001; Janes, 2016). Despite PAR practitioners claim that PAR is novel and different from mainstream methods, hidden elitism and claims to superiority on the part of practitioners remain an issue (Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Healy, 2001; Stanley, 1972).

The growing popularity and excitement for the possibilities of liberation that AD methods and analyses brought to the fore began to be met with critical scholarship outlining the many ways in which they fell short of their ideals. In recognizing that AD NGOs and experts continue to execute projects that have failed to improve the human condition and often produce results antithetical to desired outcomes (Stonebanks, 2016), the task of many theorists began to be focused on critical analyses of the ways in which development continued to authorize itself and draw power through discourses.

### **The Post-Development Discursive Turn**

Writers such as Gustavo Esteva (2013), Jonathan Crush (1995), Uma Kothari (2005) and Wolfgang Sachs (1997), all largely categorized under the umbrella term ‘post-development’, moved towards what is now called the ‘discursive turn’ of development studies in efforts to identify novel and fluid modalities of power involved in development. Most prominently, these authors employ Foucauldian conceptualizations of power as not only stemming from post-colonial relationships between core and periphery countries, but also from discourses of development, including their dominion over the ways in which development is consciously and subconsciously conceived of, judged, envisioned and enacted.

Amongst these post-development authors, there is a consensus that in order for development projects to continue to be justified, development experts and practitioners must represent those in the geo-locals they seek to enter and conduct development work in by *what they are not*. Regularly, this is done by Western development practitioners signifying those they seek to ‘help’ as in-misery, poor, disempowered and marginalized, in tandem with highlighting the promise of the development expert’s visions of what they could be; emancipated, liberated and free (Cornwall, 2007; Escobar, 2011; Kothari, 2005; Sachs, 1997). Despite many development theorists positing development as a natural, neutral and self-evident phenomenon, it

is founded on a constellation of discursively constructed ‘Third World’ deficits and ‘First World’ strengths, which enables development professionals to claim onus for rectifying the former deficits—poverty, disease and unrest—in the continued project of “conquer(ing) new domains” (Escobar, 2011, p.23). Similarly, PAR began to be seen as a way for development to maintain its relevancy and evade critique, ensuring that development experts may once again claim to possess the “latest and more advanced expertise” as they continue to “confirm the legitimacy of their role and intervention” (Crewe and Harrison, 1998, p. 97). Because PAR remains viewed as inherently able to bring about the ideals it professes (e.g. emancipation, democracy, etc.), it fosters a naiveté among its practitioners (Clover, 2011). For example, while TPM’s director maintains that PAR is used in TPM because it will ensure that unequal power relationships never return (Stonebanks, 2016), Healy (2001) reminds us that the discourses of PAR inherently silences the power and privilege inherently resting with the academic researcher—a power that includes the ability to be legitimately believed as an academic when making such a lofty claim. Additionally, Roy (2012) mentions that the ideals of PAR embodies the “current political vision of rational, independent, autonomous and agentic citizens” or, “the neoliberal citizen” (p. 637). PAR has long been becoming the means through which the marginalized can be rehabilitated into more accurately resembling the PAR practitioner’s ideals, not necessarily vis-à-vis imaginaries of a ‘final outcome’, but through the very process of participating in PAR itself.

The emphasis here is on shift in viewpoint that occurs when critical accounts of PAR began to coalesce with the discursive turn in development studies. We can begin to see how the post-development discursive turn and its recent critical fixture on PAR is indicative of an analytical alteration among theorists, from a materialist lens to analyses looking at contemporary development’s potential interpellation of alternative subjectivities within the MCGI. For example, while mainstream development imposed Western superiority through material forces (i.e. military force or economic strategies), analysis have begun to take note of how alternative development may be imposing the same superiority, but through more cerebral means.

Market forces have ceded their place as the primary vehicle for the MCGI’s dissemination in favor of “ideological apparatuses”, like education, that folds those outside the MCGI into its discursive practices, and related ethical paradigms, values and norms, to ensure the MCGI’s acceptance, supremacy and ontological security (Althusser, 2006). This is evidenced



in AD's use of PAR and the primacy of PAR practitioners—intellectual elites—assuming a role as those who are able to facilitate “empowerment” and protect the “oppressed” from their “semi-intransitive consciousness” (Freire, 1970) through re-education programs that will allow them to function at a level deemed satisfactory by development experts while, in turn, the experts are provided security in the supremacy of their subjective and ontological position.

Areas and sites that still retain some semblance of a cultural polarity to the globalizing West then become “markets structured through education” in order to commodify and embrace “those who exercise their ‘otherness’ as hybrids” and ensure the continuity of MCGI's supremacy (Mocombe, 2005, p.12). Those who participate in the educational apparatuses brought overseas by the West take on a subjective uniformity as they compete for control over existent livelihoods and recognize the influence of the new Western agents. AD programs then adapt and learn through “the knowledge which dialogue between subjective positions fosters” exactly how to “maximize their profits by catering to the needs of these ‘new’ consumers” (Mocombe, 2005, p.17). Long ago Immanuel Wallerstein (1974b) maintained that the world-economy provides opportunities for the “Other” in moribund economies to access economic gain *only* if it also results in foreclosing upon imaginaries and ideologies that compete with the capitalist order. This observation holds true today.

### **AD's New Deal with Western Higher Education and Allied Critical Foreclosures**

Very recently, the new AD paradigm and its use of PAR have become a central feature of Western HE institutions' curricula, marketing schemas and public relations, which Hanson (2010) has labeled “STM”. According to Hanson, this partnership routinely rejects the market model of economic growth in favor of intercultural and international partnership towards mutual learning, knowledge creation and AD. Hanson notes that STM is “illustrative of those intercultural internationalization activities” established in “global cooperation and international and intercultural understanding” that rejects “the idea of market supremacy inherent in the market model” (p. 72-73). She goes on to explain that STM is a reciprocal process, “where communities and institutions locally and internationally seek to share insights and knowledge and to learn from the experience (and) cultures...” (p.73). Hanson (2010) notes that, because of this model and the university student's travelling to learn in moribund economies, the Western

university is in a position to “facilitate a transformed social order” if they adopt policies and programs that “reward creative innovations” internationally (p. 73). Hanson (2010) also acknowledges that universities are indeed “value-based organizations” (p.73) and STM provides immense value to universities as they compete for recruitment and public stature via the provision of fieldwork opportunities overseas (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2006; McGuinness & Simm, 2005).

As evidenced by TPM’s partnerships with St. Francis Xavier University, McGill University, Trinity College, Dublin and, more recently, Yorkville University (PraxisMalawi, 2019a), Hanson (2010) is correct in stating that STM is an attractive model of global development for Western HE institutions. Increasingly, universities are looking for ways to expand overseas to maintain competitive marketplace advantages by addressing the poverty of countries in the ‘periphery’ (Tikly, 2004). Many scholars have pointed out that universities are increasingly internationalizing, or ‘off-shoring’, their educational programs in order to garner competitive advantage and recruit students at a global level (Knight, 1999; Warner, 1992). As competition increases, Western HE institutions have embraced neoliberalist logics, including a new preoccupation with performativity, commodification of knowledge (Ball, 2012) and a hastening of production and recruitment akin to a Fordist assembly line (Halberstam, 2011).

The authority and legitimacy of AD in general, and STM projects more particularly, stem from their ability to be perceived as genuinely “decolonial”, “emancipatory”—facilitating a path for the “marginalized” to transcend their human suffering (TPM, n.d., our story, para. 2). An intimate relationship with Western HE institutions and its contemporary neo-imperial logics complicates the legitimacy of this claim. Complications arise for many reasons, including Western HE institutions’ centrality as a publically-funded apparatus engaged in ongoing colonial practices (Gahman & Legault, 2017; Seawright, 2014; Vickers, 2002). Thus, STM can only remain valid and authentic if it actively forecloses on indicators of a connection with the university, the state, or any displays of symmetries between the logic of STM projects and that of colonial/imperial paradigms. Indeed, as Andreotti (2015) maintains, “The potential equality of the Other as well as the awareness of our dependency and complicity in their material impoverishment significantly threatens our self-image and perceived (pleasurable) entitlements to intervene in the world as ‘change makers’” (p.5). The analytical paradoxes associated with this

new ‘partnership’ have only recently begun to be addressed, as scholars have created new concepts to better guide analyses, which are featured below.

The MCGI is a recently developed concept from University of British Columbia (UBC) Professors Sharon Stein and Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti (2016) for investigating the paradoxes involved in Western HE’s contradictory attempts to lead projects dedicated to subverting systems of Western dominance, expropriation and exploitation, while remaining, in part, an integral component in those systems. It is worthwhile to briefly identify the concepts used to create the comprehensive interpretive lens of the MCGI, in no particular order. “Imaginary”, the concept of a “social imaginary”, first introduced by Castoriadis (1987), is acknowledged as a “generative matrix” that confirms legitimacy regarding common practices and ideologies in societies by normalizing them beyond doubt (Gaonkar, 2002). “Modern” refers to the *modern* ‘social imaginary’ that coalesces with modern Western culture’s desire for “self-authorization” in that it “look(s) for the principles or self-evident truths that provide normative credentials for one’s present way of life” (Gordon, 2005, p.121). “Colonial” refers to the aforementioned modern motivations for legitimacy and self-authorization that are situated within a “colonial matrix” that materially and symbolically orders both social meanings and relations in accordance with a global imaginary “premised on a singular trajectory of space and time, with the West positioned as the geographic center and the apex of linear human progress” (Stein & Andreotti, 2016, p.3). “Global” refers to modes of globalization, state structures and the power to impose a “National Imaginary” that organizes a populace into coordinates of control<sup>8</sup>, however “national imaginaries were always dependent on the horizon presumed within a colonial global imaginary” (Stein & Andreotti, 2016, p.3). Later, the MCGI emerged and began to be disseminated globally via overt violence. More recently, HE has become a new vehicle for this dissemination and its authority (Andreotti, 2015).

The MCGI is premised upon discursively dividing global humanity between those who identify themselves (metaphorically or overtly) as “knowledge holders, hard workers, world-problem solvers, rights dispensers, global leaders”, and those who become objects of research and development and are “lacking knowledge, laid back, problem creators, aid dependent and

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<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Graham Robb’s (2016) *The Discovery of France* for an articulate genealogical account of France’s nationalization and the various mechanisms by which it was achieved.

global followers in their journey towards the undisputed goal of development” (Andreotti, 2015, p.2). The MCGI is synonymous with a universalized conception of what is, or who embodies, the ‘common good’ in contrast to objects of antithetical discourse. Moreover, the MCGI actively suppresses discourses that challenge this dichotomy. As Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) maintains, the Western narrative of power, which casts itself as protagonist and savior, suppresses alternative knowledge and cosmologies, which according to Davis (2009) (and evidenced by our contemporary colonial situation in Canada) includes enforcing preferred modes of health and wellness, cultural ritual, ways of being and seeing in the world, and language use. This is often achieved through wider power relations that enables Western agents to construct the fields and interpretive frameworks through which localized problems and future visions can be interpretable (Mohan & Stokke, 2000; Williams, 2004). As Stonebanks (2010) alludes to, the MCGI and resultant modalities of social organization and development practices situates itself as self-evidently useful and disseminates that narrative through acts of “epistemic suppression” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 541). Similarly, Stein & Andreotti (2016) state that the MCGI “circumscribe(s) both the questions that are deemed worth asking and the answers that are deemed legitimate, alternative imaginaries (global or otherwise) are often repressed, co-opted, or deemed unintelligible or illegitimate” (p.1)—often done without realizing we are doing so.

Where previously race was, according to Quijano (2007), “the most efficient instrument of social domination invented in the last 500 years” (p.46), underneath this construction of racial difference is an intimate relationship between power and knowledge that is governed by the West. Moving beyond race, according to Stonebanks (2010) the MCGI, or the euroWestern “powerbloc” solidifies Western persons—not necessarily due to race but more so due to culture and “development”—as the “universal purveyors of a true knowledge” (p. 361). MCGI is another lens for looking into the seemingly relentless Western drive to naturalize and universalize relations of superiority/inferiority, and its own ways of seeing and being in the world (Escobar, 2011; Mignolo, 2011).

While these critical appraisals are invaluable, Western HE’s cooptation of AD programs within its designs, knowledge production and wider operations eliminates similar appraisals due to the success of the university now hinging upon the legitimacy, achievements and successes of STM programs. Critical scholarship pertaining to AD becomes a threat not just to the programs

themselves but also to the universities that endorse their validity and, in turn, rely on this validity for their own wellbeing. Knowledge regarding their operation becomes instrumentalized to ensure their continued relevancy and the Western universities' market advantage.

Despite the usefulness and radically reflexive critiques of PAR and AD by the likes of Cooke and Kothari (2001), Kothari (2005) and Chinsinga (2003), and those of STM (or similar programs) from Stein and Andreotti (2016, 2017), there remains a “tacit anxiety about the consequences of having to challenge a set of practices to which the major development institutions, powerful individuals within them, and perhaps most importantly, people who are good friends of ours, are committed” (Cooke & Kothari, 2001, p.3). Because of this, critics are sometimes advised to “be careful...” due to resultant professional ramifications (Cooke and Kothari, 2001, p.3). AD and STM are now big business, both within academic circles, in universities and in the development community more widely.

The paucity of critical examinations of PAR, AD and especially STM point to the accuracy of Cooke and Kothari's aforementioned claim. Perhaps more alarming is the scarcity of critical analyses of new modes of development undertaken by practitioners and Western agents themselves while taking part in, or reflexively analyzing their part in, these projects. Intelligent and methodical critiques like those offered from David Mosse (1996) have been largely ignored in academic circles (Cooke & Kothari, 2001), though a reading of Mosse (2015) offers insight into why this scarcity continues.

In Mosse's (2015) *Misunderstood, misrepresented, contested?: Anthropological knowledge production in question*, he reflects upon the career threats and pressure that arose as he published a critical examination of a participatory project in western India funded by the British *Department for International Development* (BDID), wherein he worked as a consultant for 13 years. In response to his censorious account, he came under fire through BDID's “appeals to the authority of the publisher, the university, and the ASA, and an anticipation that pressure would be brought to bear on me as an academic researcher to rewrite my book” (p. 129). Although Mosse was protected under academic freedom rules, this case is a clear display of the risk associated with threatening the legitimacy of AD projects and how they are taken as a very serious threat by its practitioners and beneficiaries. This climate has led to a scarcity of scholarly

critiques from inside development apparatuses and a banalization of accounts through knowledge being confined to a strict institutionally supportive nature (Mosse, 2015).

To counter this trend, it is imperative that scholars situate their theoretical contributions within their own real-world practices of development, so as to not continue to “fetishize” development (Kiely, 1995). Fisher (1997) for example, reminds us that the dynamic relationships of social organization including those between persons from ‘core’ and ‘periphery’ geo-locals, inherent in ground-level social movements and development projects, have been wholly overlooked in academia. Analyses of these relationships would allow for greater illumination of the complexities of power involved in development while generating novel understandings of how they change over time (p. 450-451). Indeed, critical thought and theory must be situated in the local context (Haraway, 1988) and this is especially true for the post-impasse discursive turn in development studies and critical accounts of PAR.

In sum, an increase in the frequency and depth of discursive studies and critical reflections on AD projects emerging from professionals involved directly in their operation would be advantageous to the field of development studies. To ensure that the discursive turn in development studies doesn’t fall victim to the same aforementioned incongruences between theory and lived experience that have plagued mainstream development studies in the past, it is necessary that development professionals are increasingly aware of the importance of reflexivity in research (May and Perry, 2017). Beyond this reflexivity, it is time that critical analysis of one’s own conduct in development capacities becomes commonplace, including the disclosure of mundane moments, inherent routines and fleeting interactions that may seem inconsequential to the research at hand but may still be constitutive of discursive power (Pink et al, 2017). As those concerned with global livelihoods, we mustn’t allow ethnography and academic accounts of development to become systematically confined to instrumental contributions to the apparatus of development (Mosse, 2015).

In surveying the global development milieu we have come to see how growing critiques of mainstream development, as constituting a continuation of colonial relationships in the form of core countries imposing economic and political models for periphery countries, led to the genesis of AD. Mainstream development solutions were implemented without consultation from

local populations in the periphery, while members of core countries often represented them in ways that harmed and caricatured them. This led to a re-thinking of development as a process that must stem ‘from the ground up’ in order to counter the dominant power of core countries in their paternalistic relationship with periphery countries, with PAR methods of development arising as a popular and hopeful direction. However, through the discursive turn, AD modalities like PAR have become more widely critiqued for enacting discursive power that continually situates those who are being assisted by PAR as ‘in need’ of development through underlining poverty and evading critique by locating power within mechanisms of mainstream development that it seeks to counter. Recently, these discursive mechanisms have been adopted and hard-wired into the Western HE sphere, leading to a new horizon of complexity and necessary analysis. The discursive turn in development studies is indeed timely and needed, however critical discourse analyses must not fall victim to the same short-comings that facilitated the initial impasse in development studies, i.e. they must be grounded in real-world development conduct and not fetishize development by analyzing development via proxy.

### **Theoretical Landscape**

Recent critiques of AD methods have illustrated that colonial habits of hegemonic social classification, including discursive constructions of inferiority and superiority on the part of development professionals, may still be widely present in AD modalities. This discursive authority in AD is more difficult to identify and analyze, in part, due to analyses looking to power over the ‘Other’ as premised solely upon overt political and physical domination (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). Despite new development modalities, development projects may remain constructed within the foundational discursive strategies and logics of the MCGI, in that they continue to construct discourses that impose certain Western-oriented cultural and social values in the promise of better living conditions (Sachs, 1997).

The *longue durée* of development is the MCGI that operates through a discursive authority that maps individuals and whole cultures into coordinates of control, most prominently through constructing development as a “movement from badness to goodness and from mindlessness to knowledge” (Shanin, 1997, as cited in Kothari, 2005, p. 13). The MCGI is not a theory, nor an ideology, instead, it is identified as an imaginary because it is an “invisible frame and structuring grammar of meaning and understanding that determines which/whose

perspectives are intelligible” founded in discursive power (Stein & Andreiotti, 2015, pp.4-5). Through discursive authority and strategy, globalizing development creates the means of its own subsistence, and it is at the sites of development that analyses should turn to understand how discourses become created, mobilized, authorized and powerful.

Examination of the discourses of development is difficult because development is often constructed as necessary, axiomatic, and “usually seen as self-evident and unworthy of attention” (Crush, 1995, p. 3), ultimately limiting the way it is investigated. As Crush (1995) maintains, discourse analyses are essential in the field of development because development initiatives are “characterized by rhetoric and persuasion” and “critical awareness of the processes of ideological foundations are essential”, however this awareness requires a fluid theoretical perspective (Crush, 1995, p.63). To add to this complexity, the recent usurping of AD into Western HE (i.e. STM) has increased the value of ensuring the smooth-functioning of AD for Western knowledge makers and thus produced discursive foreclosures that seek to render critical analysis null.

Proceeding accordingly, theoretical frameworks for the analysis of development discourses must be multifaceted and fluid, and not revert to reductionist analyses that only look to interplays of economic and/or institutional variables (Booth, 1985; Kiely, 1995). While development discourses are textual, their operation cannot be reduced simply to text, for as Crush (1995) posits, these discourses are constructed “within social fields of force, power and privilege” (p.5) and thus there is a need to situate the discourses within their social and historical contexts, including the research fields wherein they operate. To investigate how power is constructed in alternative modes of development, while using TPM as an example, we must understand the multitude of ways in which the discourses of development are conceptualized, enunciated and crystallized in real-world development projects, while paying astute attention to the silences and foreclosures that maintain their authenticity even while operating outward from within the MCGI.

By conducting a reflexive analysis of a real-world experience of a small-scale development-oriented project that percolates from personal fieldwork, we can begin to illuminate the space “in-between” the matrices of “discourses, institutions and subjects in development” in order to “pose further questions about the possibilities of resistance” (Power, 2004, p. 170). But,



what exactly are we seeking to resist as ‘post-development’ and critical global development scholars? If the vulgate of global development is a MCGI that is premised upon discursive authority and power that is maintained by convenient silences, it is only through an almost cynical discourse analysis that we can contribute to their identification and resistance (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013).

Following the precedent set by Crush (1995), Escobar (2011) this thesis follows the recent discursive turn in development studies through employing Michael Foucault’s analytical lens, focusing on the dynamic of power and knowledge. Foucault’s project of discourse analysis introduced a shift in the way power was understood and analyzed. In his overview of discourse analysis and the work of Foucault more broadly, Stuart Hall (1997) describes three defining features of Foucault’s work that will be used as theoretical foundations and parameters, including the: 1) concept of “discourse”; 2) question of subject, and; 3) power and knowledge, all of which are defined below.

### **The Concept of Discourse, the Question of Subject and the Co-constitution of Power and Knowledge**

Discourse can be defined as knowledge that is systemic in its relations to “social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations” that “constitute the ‘nature’ of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects (that systemic knowledge) seek(s) to govern” (Weedon, 1987, p. 108). For Hall (1997), Foucault’s conception of discourse constitutes not just a textual language but a system of representation that regulates which truths and statements have meaning, and thus guide, govern and/or evoke us to act in certain ways.

First introduced as an analytical concept in Foucault’s early work *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), discourse analyses are usually done within a historicized context, meaning the subject at hand is most often looked at through a lens that takes into account when its governing discourses emerged and how the subject was conceptualized and evoked to act both before and after its emergence. For example, in Foucault’s *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973) he charts the trajectory of the modern medical discourse, which rapidly transformed medicine from seeing disease’s etiology as entering the body externally, to disease as having its roots inside the body. This shift was charted into existence through new knowledge that constructed modern

medicine as a universalized truth, and anything opposed or alternative as misplaced and defected. The consequences of this shift was a vast transfer of power, as medical experts and bio-medical knowledge gained tyrannical status while the body became a laboratory under complete control. In turn, those who sought to negotiate health and wellness in the quick-to-become anachronistic paradigm of health—priests, shamans, healers, ethnobotanists—quickly became the equivalent of medical quacks. To illustrate with a historic example of this discourse beginning to *weave* a whole cultural transformation *through* its power, Graham Robb's (2016) *The Discovery of France* charts the discursive transition from spiritual healing to positivistic and scientific medical practice, stating:

Common experience showed that prayer had no effect on the physical world. Sickness was real and demanded a real remedy. 'Miraculous' cures were based on notions that were a better mental preparation for the scientific age than the airy abstractions of theology, which many priests, let alone parishioners, found impossible to fathom. Everything was believed to have a particular cause, which was either known or knowable. The cure itself nearly always involved physical activity or a real substance. This is why quack doctors and their customers adapted so easily to the new world of scientific medicine and why education so quickly eradicated misconceptions without plunging the population into the abyss of religious doubt. The difference between the generations that swallowed saints' dust and the generations that visited a qualified doctor was not mental capacity but information (p.134-135).

Further with this example, because conceptualizations of health and wellness are not universal or trans-cultural, meaning other cultures may have different discourses that encapsulate and orient distinct views, beliefs and actions on health and wellbeing (see, for example, Fadiman, 2012), Western medicine's dominance became a primary point of departure for control and domination.<sup>9</sup> Similar logics and discursive mechanisms remain prominent in development.

Carrying forward, Foucault's (1973) focus on the interplay between knowledge and power looked to the apparatuses of discourse and their associated techniques, like the modern

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<sup>9</sup> We will see in the analysis to come how this discourse still maintains its strong grip on constructing regimes of truth and power in TPM.

medical discourse, that constructed, employed and leveraged knowledge as power to categorize, represent and produce bodies as certain functions of that discourse (Hall, 1997, pp. 75-78). In this, Foucault doesn't look to the subject as a point of analysis, instead Foucault understands that what the subject speaks or does is not necessarily of their own accord or informed consciously, but rather a production fueled through discourses of the current zeitgeist.<sup>10</sup>

Discourse analyses do not focus, necessarily, on words, actions or objects, but the in-between places wherein a concept, like development, begins to axiomatically constitute and denote a meaning that is widely accepted, known and implicit, and powerful, despite no agreed upon definition (Ziai, 2015). Accordingly, Foucault stresses the importance and intimate relationship between power and knowledge, stating “power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (p. 27). Thus, post-development scholars sharpen their analytical lens on investigating the discourses that sanction and legitimate continued development due to knowing, as Homi Bhabha (2012) acknowledges, that the “colonial imagination” is paired with a “low mimetic literacy”, or an inability to see how it is repeating the “past”, which translates into “the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge” (p.122). It is my argument that a colonial residue impels contemporary global development.

Foucault's insistence that the subject is determined within a network or ‘matrix’ of power relations, and thus devoid of the rational and liberated free will and choice that is characteristic of Western modernity and the *homo economicus* model, was a striking proposition within the social sciences. Indeed, cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1997) argues that “...this is one of Foucault's most radical propositions: the ‘subject’ is produced within discourse” and thus “this subject of discourse cannot be outside discourse, because it must be subjected to discourse.”

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<sup>10</sup> Additionally, although I recognize the contribution of works that have broached the difficult field of embodied discursive authority, such as Hajer and Uitermark's (2008) *Performing authority: Discursive politics after the assassination of Theo van Gogh*, I do not look to discourse as Goffman-type dramaturgical performance, in recognition that many discourses become mediated and enacted in covert ways, often unbeknownst to the subject. However, I do recognize throughout the analysis that discourses construct, permeate and found the very social fabric that we act in accordance with (Johnston, Gregory, Pratt & Watts, 2000).

(p.79). Not only does the subject come into being through speaking (enunciating) and acting out (enacting) various discourses that provide the subject power according to the ethos and context, the subject becomes the conduit “through which power is relayed” (p. 80) through a syntagmatic chain of power.

Foucault (1979) does not analyze the subject, instead he looks for the discursive “conditions under which it is possible for an individual to fulfill the function of a subject” (p. 32). Because of this, a Foucauldian approach would not involve charting the level of “empowerment” of community volunteers in Malawi (Sheerin, Stonebanks, Jeffery & Schouten, 2016) and would instead look beyond the subject to how discourse produces, caricatures and personifies the “Other” (analogous to “the sick” within Foucault’s discourse of modern medicine) as well as how others read, view and act through this particular production (for example, how the doctor views the sick in a particular way based on intersections of discourses that constitute the modern medical gaze which evokes certain types and qualities of care). Of course, the discursive construction of the “Other” also, conversely, constructs those deemed powerful through societies’ meaningful decoding of the relationship between the two related concepts and the site of utterance (i.e. a subject deemed ‘impoverished’ by a development ‘expert’ is an enunciation of a power relationship, not just in words but through the form that the message itself takes, where it stems from and who the audience is) (Hall, 1973). Thus, this theoretical lens is fixed on how certain subjects come into being and are inscribed with certain qualities, through the discourse of development, which then allows development projects to be sanctioned through their promises of reform and betterment (Sachs, 2008).

For example, in sub-Saharan Africa specifically, scholars have noted that local Africans are often silenced in the face of dominant Western-oriented agricultural expertise, including Western development ‘experts’ occupying African land and using it in a way that seems appropriate in accordance with their ‘expert’ level knowledge. This practice is simultaneously enunciated and enacted as life-saving, necessary and, therefore, beyond critical questioning (Crush, 1995). Following this line of thought, Jonathan Crush (1995) investigates the discourse of “sustainable development”, which is commonplace within both AD practices and in the discourse of TPM more specifically, and deems it a sophisticated form of control and monitoring of peasant farmers, stating:

All of this represents a view from above, epitomized by technocratic centralism, its obsession with ‘objectivity,’ statistics or information generally, with tools and models, a faith in the latest technologies and fashionable terms. *It is strategic vision and identifies technostructures for mastering ‘the opponent’ from a distance...*(p. 117, emphasis added)

As was the case with the rise of the modern doctor’s medical gaze, the mastery of the subject of development is not done by direct physical force, as it was during colonization. Instead, mastery occurs through discursive power that constructs and manages the “Other” scientifically, ideologically and even imaginatively based on a tacit assumption of superior practices and knowledge on the part of the development expert (Crush, 1995, p. 190).

Not only does discourse analysis avoid the subject as a point of analysis outside of discourse, it also seeks to avoid looking to central locations of power in institutions and government bureaucracies. For Foucault (2003), power is enunciated “at its extremities, *in its ultimate destinations*, with those points where it becomes capillary, that is, in its more regional and local forms and institutions” (p. 96, emphasis added). Expanding upon this notion, Foucault states that a power-oriented analysis “should not concern itself with the regulated and legitimate forms of power in their central locations, with the general mechanism through which they operate, and the continual effects of these” (p.96). In Foucault’s (1982) *The Subject and Power* he reflects and writes of the realization that an analytical tool needed to be refined that transcends both economic reductionism and semiotics, he says:

Now, it seemed to me that economic history and theory provided a good instrument for relations of production and that linguistics and semiotics offered instruments for studying relations of signification, but for power relations we had no tools of study. We had recourse only to ways of thinking about power based on legal models, that is: What legitimates power? Or, we had recourse to ways of thinking about power based on institutional models, that is: What is the state? It was therefore necessary to expand the dimensions of a definition of power if one wanted to use this definition in studying and objectivizing of the subject (p. 778).

We are called on by Foucault (1982) to: resist thinking power exists within its surface appearances; to transcend structuralism and; avoid investigating power in its appearance as an

institution, because it “lays oneself open to seeking the explanation and the origin of the former in the latter, that is to say finally, to explain power to power” (p. 222). Roberto Calasso’s (1994) final words on the secret to Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand’s crafty Machiavellian mind: Power always stands to the side.

As Crush (1995) states, “Foucault’s analysis of power requires us to shift our concentration from the center and national institutions such as the state” (p. 141) towards a microphysics of power within “localized episodes” (Foucault, 1977, p. 27). For Foucault (2003), it is not a matter of looking to dominant symbols of power and domination, it is instead a search to unearth and illuminate the discourses that operate in a “multiple and mobile field of force relations” (p.102). This theoretical framework is especially suitable for the analysis to follow because it moves focus beyond the immediate institutional manifestations of power, and allows the analysis to avoid the problem of structural reductionism that often characterizes development studies (Booth, 1985). Speaking to the Foucauldian shift in the analysis of power, Starkey and McKinlay (1998) state that Foucauldian analysis “shifted from (looking at) the normalisation of populations to the choices that are possible in small groups...who band together to their own models of thinking and behaviour within their own communities” (p. 236). Thus, a small community-oriented development project like TPM is a viable case study for a Foucauldian discourse analysis. Of significance in considering development are how these apparatuses of legibility speak to the ways that power operates as practice and effect in TPM, allowing us to move beyond blaming or critiquing characters or individuals involved in development, towards a more generalized overview of how problems and solutions come into being—or are silenced—through discourse.

Discourse analyses of development projects are thus perhaps most beneficial and impactful if they analyze, describe and decenter discourses that both: a) construct abnormalities and sites of inferiority in formerly colonized nation-states, and; b) construct the development project as a self-evidently desirable, effective and necessary reform for the aforementioned abnormalities. The discourses associated with the former, in the case of TPM, focus on Western constructions of deficiencies and deficits of the local population in Malawi in the form of highlighting low levels of income, human suffering and the need for Western education. The discourses associated with the latter, in the case of TPM, constructs Western institutions,

ontologies and epistemologies of PAR and education as revolutionary, reformatory and able to transcend the aforementioned deficit-based conditions.

In applying this understanding of discourse to alternative forms of development, we can understand that overt indicators of power, such as the direct exercising of political domination via state-sanctioned violence, may be accompanied or succeeded by discourses that announce authority in more subtle ways, such as enunciating and highlighting the deficiencies of local Indigenous populations, while positing development experts and their modalities of social organization as the antidote. As discourses always hide their own mechanisms (Porter, 1995), it is necessary to look beyond their institutional or structural manifestation and into what Homi Bhabha (2012) calls, the ‘points of enunciation’. These points can be found in speech, (inter)action, assembly of space or any other formation of the social wherein a discourse of development is capillary and active. Discourses, in this sense, are not representations of the world, but are rather constitutive of it (Norval, 2000, p. 314).

Foucault’s conceptualization of discourse and Bhabha’s formulation of the location of analysis in “points of enunciation” are synergistic and find affinity when used with a research method like “mediated discourse analysis” (MDA). MDA is a research method that has been noted to be useful when tracing discourse to its ‘points of enunciation’ specifically (Scollon, 2002) and is as much a theoretical tool as it is a method. MDA was introduced by Ron Scollon (2002), and most accurately concretized in his work *Mediated Discourse: the nexus of practice*. Shortly thereafter, MDA’s popularity grew as an exciting and novel approach to discourse analysis and was adopted by noted linguist Sigrid Norris and intercultural communication and discourse researcher Rodney H. Jones (for an overview of other major contributions and contributors to MDA, please see Jones & Norris, 2005).

The main theoretical perspective that characterizes MDA is that social action is carried out within a nexus of accompanying discourses, both immediate and historical, that are informing enunciation, manifestation, acceptance, rejection and/or reproduction. MDA dovetails with Foucault’s (1977) conception of power as manifesting *through* people rather than *on* them, pointing to a certain “microphysics” of modern power that is conducted or *mediated* by various elements of a social setting (1977, p. 26). Further, in light of the frustrations associated with the

field of critical development studies (Booth, 1985; Kiely, 1995), an MDA approach can begin to transcend the polarization of the world into analytical categories of core and periphery countries, in that it seeks to understand the action of participants as informed by a *shared* discursive history (Scollon, 2002). In sum, as we will see, Foucauldian discourse analysis paired with MDA will allow the present analysis to capture the role of development professionals in the micro-dynamics of power that animate a small-scale development.



## Chapter 2: Methods

This thesis operates as a bricolage (Strauss, 1966) wherein emphasis is placed on qualitative research and writing that is (much like development projects) eclectic, fluid, flexible and plural (Rogers, 2012). This study methodically weaves findings from a critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Wodak & Meyer, 2015) of primary sources and grey literature published by TPM with deeper understandings of those discourses derived from my time in the “field” in Kasungu via “accidental ethnography” (Poulos, 2016). These findings are situated within wider contextual findings provided by MDA’s focus on space, place, land and history.

### Bricolage Approach

The advent of the discursive turn in development studies was accompanied by the use of bricolage by social sciences as they increasingly used discourse analysis, semiotics and hermeneutical approaches for investigation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). First developed by Claude Levi-Strauss (1966) in his work *The Savage Mind*, bricolage research is characterized by Denzin and Lincoln (2011) as suitable for those wishing to occupy intellectual spaces that incorporate and criticize numerous perspectives, theories and methodologies. According to Rogers (2012), those who adopt a bricolage approach (bricoleur), weave their creative imagination with available tools (observation, experience, discourse analysis) and the “artifacts” at hand (institutions, discourses and dominant truth regimes) in instances where there are “diverse knowledge-production tasks” (p. 3). This approach is especially appropriate given bricolage inquiry’s propensity to inform unique political action, such as localized and pluralistic grassroots movements that resist epistemic and discursive authority (Kellner, 1999), while being highly critical of structuralist essentialism (Rogers, 2012, p. 3). As detailed in the literature review, the field of development’s theoretical and practical impasse emerged in response to structuralist, functional, utilitarian and positivist approaches to the discipline, whereas bricolage methodology fosters plurality, complex interpretation and fluid perspectives (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 15).

Serendipitously, Rogers (2012) describes the path of a “methodological bricoleur” using an example that is an accurate contextualization of my research’s circumstances and development. He states that a bricoleur is someone who “begins an inquiry process with an

action-research approach and then realizes that discourse analysis could help develop a more complex portrait of a phenomenon” (p. 5). My research follows an identical path. Going forward in bricoleur fashion, I analyze TPM in its relations to institutions, theories, and historical narratives from a multiplicity of angles and through a diverse array of lenses. These analyses become animated by drawing on my time in “the field” and reflecting critically upon my own motivations and anxieties as they emerged throughout my time with TPM. As per below, the choice to take TPM as an illustration is purposeful.

### **Representing TPM Instead of Representing the “Other”**

By way of turning the lens onto my research endeavors with TPM and the discourses that construct it, I hope to avoid objectifying and exoticizing the ‘Other’ (Said, 1978); an outcome that continues to be common in the field of development studies. Western academics’ propensity to dominate via discourses that objectify without consent and deny those spoken about their autonomy to their own representation has produced a difficult time for many researchers in the field of development, often referred to as the “crisis of representation” (for an overview of this crisis and the innumerable scholars that have contributed to this understanding, please see Hesse-Biber, Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Thus, my perceptions of local Kasungu culture, idiosyncrasies, values, morality etc. are not featured. Instead, I focus on Western development practitioners and the discourses used to justify development in Kasungu. The spirit of Indigenous-led ethical research imperatives put forth to better control Western discursive domination (Schnarch, 2004) informs this direction. Indeed, I recognize Kasungu resident’s right to own, control, govern and access the discourses that construct them in academia, and that recognition is woven through my analytical choice. In sum, I want to shift the analytical eye towards the discourses that empower and direct the conduct and pre-conceived values of development professionals in TPM to ensure we are remaining astutely self-critical.

### **Accidental Ethnography**

In many ways, my analysis also borrows and is inspired by elements of the “accidental ethnography” method, wherein researchers pay close attention to moments, feelings or thoughts that are related to their primary research but were not formally part of an original research plan (Poulos, 2016). Accidental ethnography suggests that academics examine the seemingly banal

moments of their work more critically while being cognizant of their research being a process of self-actualization and becoming that is worthy of critical appraisal (Greiffenhagen, Mair and Sharrock, 2015).

The ethnographic component of this thesis accommodates a reflexive-empiricist position like that proposed by Ellis (2004) in his idea of ‘reflexive ethnography’ and is operationalized through the inclusion of, and critical reflections on, personal blog posts written and posted throughout my time in the TPM field. Here, I have set out to incorporate a personal narrative of my participation in a development project as insight to wider discursive underpinnings that reproduce the power of the development apparatus. This direction stems from understanding the need for academics to have the seemingly banal moments and discourses associated with their work—their research as a process of self-actualization and becoming—observed and looked at more critically (Greiffenhagen, Mair and Sharrock, 2015). It is a method included under the aegis of reminders from Wolcott (1992) that “No one ‘owns’ ethnography, any more than anyone owns participant observation or case studies” (p. 43). Thus, my personal account will provide a counter story to overly optimistic and simplified accounts of development through a critique of TPM that is founded in my own ‘hum’ of self-critique. This reflexive analysis of my own embodiment of discourses of development and, perhaps, contemporary colonialism, is product of a wide-array—or maybe a maelstrom—of influential discourses that shape the spaces and people around me, as discourses are the site where language becomes meaning and where power is constituted (Reynolds, 1993).

### **Critical Discourse Analysis: MDA and PDA**

As CDA is an umbrella term that speaks to a wide array of approaches and procedures (Wooffitt, 2005) and in the spirit of bricolage research<sup>11</sup>, the points of entry and pragmatic operation of this research applies a Foucauldian lens to the discourses associated with TPM through an analysis founded in principles associated with two methods of CDA: MDA and post-foundational discourse analysis (PDA). While there are many ways to operationalize CDAs, regardless of

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<sup>11</sup> It should be made clear that this bricolage research does not focus solely on discourse as spoken power, but rather, in the spirit of MDA and Foucauldian analysis, reflects on how normative discourses of development are enacted and enunciated in the development project, including the use of silence, space and associated affects.

which approach one takes, it remains true that for all CRAs, procedurally, they involves exposing “truth claims...to careful and consistent scrutiny” (Brownlie, et al., 1999, p. 10).

MDA is an analytical tool used to understand how discourse operates at nexus points wherein identity, power and authority becomes active and is ascribed and assigned, or at the place wherein it is “enunciated” (Bhabha, 2012). MDA poses two questions, namely: what action is happening? And, how does discourse figure into these actions? According to Scollon (2002), “Mediated discourse analysis takes the position that it is the constellation of linked practices which makes for the uniqueness of the site of engagement and the identities thus produced, not necessarily the specific practices and actions themselves” (p.5). Scollon sets forth five useful conceptual guidelines for conducting MDA from which I have borrowed one main analytical category to apply to an analysis of TPM.

The category is known as the “Site of Engagement” (SOE). The SOE is “real-time window” and “social space” wherein discourses and cultural tools are used and make the action (e.g. development) the focal point of those involved (Scollon, 2014). Within an MDA, the SOE can be identified as meaningful and worthy of analysis because it solicits the most attention, in that SOE are what Berenst (2001) calls *crucial* spaces that are considered to be “distinctive, characteristic of their social practice”, including, for example, doctors and patients interacting in a clinic (p.188). The SOE is the least theorized component of the MDA method (Jones & Norris, 2005), however it is defined as being a “concrete, specific, irreversible and unfinalizable” (Scollon, 2001, p.4) moment in time, or a “window opened through the intersection of social practice in which participants may appropriate a text for mediated action” (Scollon, 2014, p. 5). This interaction, during which discourses are “appropriated” leads to the concretization and durability of social identities, actions and groups (Jones & Norris, 2005).

My analysis recognizes TPM’s “Campus” in Kasungu during two separate five-week fieldtrips in 2014 and 2015 as the SOE. The purpose of this analytical category is to investigate how and what discourses of development come to inform the spatial and temporal construction of places of social interaction in TPM, including what spatial and temporal interactions and relationships have been left unsaid in TPM’s discursive formation (e.g. its formulation *vis-à-vis* its connection to the Western campus of Bishop’s University and the wider context of this point

in assessing AD). The SOE to be studied is not just chosen at random, as it is the place where discourses converge and is constituted by “those aspects of space and time that *we are inclined to pay attention to*”, as “we construct sites of engagement *through our attention*” (Jones & Norris, 2005, p. 152, emphasis added). Adding an Indigenous lens to this analytical category, this thesis is mindful of Chicano feminist author and poet Cherrie Moraga’s (1993) dual definition of land in post-colonial contexts as not simply territory, but allegorically also the cerebral space that alterity or Otherness has been excluded from. I am also indebted to Navaro-Yashin (2009) who maintains that her study of Cyprus is “an anthropology of melancholia” brought into being by “studying the affects generated by space and the non-human environment” (p. 4). Indeed, spaces not only speak, they are spoken into existence through the preferences of the discourses they institute.

Principles associated with PDA are also adopted in that they are synergistic with MDA and CDA and strengthen my conceptual guidelines for how analysis will proceed. PDA is founded in the assumption that language systems are not representations of the world, but are rather constitutive of it (Norval, 2000, p. 314). Through abnegating claims to our ontology being founded in an objective reality that produces truths and social meanings *a priori* to being brought into being via discourses, PDA processes discourse as constituting the means through which the popular will, or regimes of truth, construct and ossify understandings of realities (Marttila, 2018). Koch (1993) speaks well to this, stating, “the validity of norms, values, and morals reside in popular will, as opposed to transcendental notions of truth and justice, then dominant norms become both ontologically and epistemologically indefensible” (p. 343). PDA then recognizes that the absence of a foundational ontological essence of our realities implies that discourses “posit their own necessities” in a perpetual system of “self-referential grounding” (Marttila, 2018, p. 570). This grounding occurs within “nodal points” wherein discourses converge and refract based on our collectivized understandings that stem from our place within the current milieu of the knowledge-economy and our larger societal understandings that stem from that place. Nodal points facilitate the synthesis of discourses and social objects into what Cederström and Spicer (2014) call “an integrated whole” (p. 189) that renders them legible and intelligible to their desired audience (as cited in Martilla, 2018). For example, Torfing (1999) points to the discourse of the ‘welfare state’ being symbolic of a whole syntagmatic chain of discourses—networks of power, political strategies and institutions, ideal types of recipients, associated logics

of meritocracy—which become commonly understood as self-evident in its signification. Like an autostereogram<sup>12</sup>, these discourses meet at a point where the concept becomes convex, and the decoding viewer indulges in the illusion of depth perception and a reality on the horizon. In totality, the discourses of TPM are not seen as mirroring a ‘reality’ on the ground, but rather are looked to as codifications that produce reality through their self-referential mooring.

## **Procedure**

The following discourse analysis will assess specific discourses, their ‘nodal points’ and ‘points of enunciation’, to assess how the MCGI may remain present in TPM’s operation through discursive strategies that maintain authority and power. My analysis will take a ‘forked’ (i.e. three-pronged) approach, as a general CDA that borrows from and includes elements of PDA and MDA under the umbrella of bricolage methodology. It will use TPM’s “Site of Engagement”, or the “Campus”, as an example to investigate the commensurability of MCGI’s discourses and those involved in TPM. I will look specifically to the logical inconsistencies, paradoxes and silences imbedded within the discourses of TPM that speak to its support for, or symmetry with, the MCGI.

Moving forward accordingly, I adopt Andreotti’s (2015) prerogative of “complexifying analyses, exposing paradoxes, problematizing benevolence, uncovering our investments and addressing the constitutive denial of (our own) complicity in systemic harm” (p.5). Because TPM’s authority is premised upon its disavowal and silencing of “connections between knowledge production, discursive enunciations, and denial of complicity in harm” (Andreotti, 2015, p.3), my analysis will challenge and assess the fragility of said silences. The unacknowledged synergy between the MCGI and TPM will be responded to using an analytical framework set forth by Andreotti (2015, p. 3-4) to aid in these complex investigations. It looks to illuminate the discursive features of colonial patterns within STM modalities by describing

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<sup>12</sup> According to Wikipedia, an autostereogram is a “single-image stereogram (SIS), designed to create the visual illusion of a three-dimensional (3D) scene from a two-dimensional image. In order to perceive 3D shapes in these autostereograms, one must overcome the normally automatic coordination between accommodation (focus) and horizontal vergence (angle of one's eyes). The illusion is one of depth perception and involves stereopsis: depth perception arising from the different perspective each eye has of a three-dimensional scene, called binocular parallax” (Autostereogram, n.d.).

arrangements and depictions that are: hegemonic; ethnocentric; ahistorical; depoliticized; self-congratulatory and self-serving; offering un-complicated solutions, and/or; paternalistic.

Using these guidelines, this research is a matter of illuminating the illusive discursive characteristics of development; how TPM's development is written, enunciated, stylized, narrated and constructed as necessary while silencing indicators of being characteristic of the aforementioned critical categories. The focus of inquiry is not on refining definitions of development, nor on theorizing *what it is* or *should be*. Additionally, I look to discourses concretizing TPM's authority through its use of: spatial imagery and symbolism; historical silences; the silencing of alternative narratives, as well as; constructing the Kasungu community as a project to be managed while reproducing colonial power relations in tandem with professing to subvert them.

Additionally, my research takes a deductive approach to analysis (Fairclough, 2013), which according to Wodak & Meyer (2009), proceeds in oscillation between theory and analysis, through a "closed theoretical framework" which is "more likely to illustrate...assumptions with a few examples which seem to fit (its) claims" (p. 19). The analysis is fleshed-out via critical readings of primary sources and grey literature pertaining to the TPM project and situating them within a multiplicity of accompanying theories and perspectives. There are five primary sources (Stonebanks, 2010; Stonebanks, 2016; Stonebanks et al., 2016; Sheerin, Stonebanks & Jeffery, 2018; Stonebanks, 2018) and four grey literature pieces (Bishop's University, 2016; Bishop's University, 2017a; Bishop's University, 2017b; Sherbrooke Record, 2015) used to make sense of TPM. Generally, the defining features of TPM's discourses and associated silences are cross-coded with the discourses of MCGI to assess their similarities.

Additionally, in following recommendations for research with MDA (Jones & Norris, 2005), the Campus is seen as physical site that is representative of a convergence of multiple built environments that are built through, and engaged in channeling, various discourses. These environments include the Campus (the physical space); its digital representation in the social-media-sphere (the virtual space), and; the development vision (shared imaginary space) towards which people's work is oriented. The built physical environment of TPM's Campus and its online representation inform each other and their associated actors, manifesting simultaneously

in something like a double-helix of meaning. Indeed, the recognition of Twitter as a distinct field for research, in and of itself, is an important aspect of contemporary research (Lindgren & Lundström, 2011). It is for this reason that critical examinations of discourses found in grey literature and social media, including TPM's Twitter feed (<https://twitter.com/PraxisMalawi>) and its website (<http://www.transformativepraxis.com/>) are also adopted. Discourses are examined via text and image in Twitter posts.

Drawing on Dadas' (2016) *Messy Methods: Queer Methodological Approaches to Researching Social Media*, I have chosen methodological approaches to Twitter analysis that "respond to various sites of research with flexibility and complicate traditional research methods" (Halberstam, 1998, p.10, as cited in Dadas, 2016, p.62). I undertake a content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018) of TPM's Twitter account that looks to multimodal, visual and textual, representations of Kasungu residents. Following the precedent set by Brownlie and Shaw (2019), I use a three-week period to gather appropriate data. The select sample (n=56) was imported into Microsoft Excel, including information regarding the author, the tweet's caption (or its main text), the date it was published and its URL. These Tweets were then coded according to two questions, both answered with Yes (1) or No (2): 1) Does the Tweet's photograph show physical labor completed, planned and/or being undertaken by a Kasungu community member? And; 2) Does the Tweet's text congratulate and/or speak praisefully to physical labor being undertaken by a Kasungu community member for the purpose of TPM's success?

Coding for visuals follow's Wang's (2014) guidelines for discursive visual narrative analysis that takes into account the action on the part of a participant (animate subjects like people), its goal (the purpose at which the action is directed) and the narrative of what the viewer 'sees' and highlights in this action.



## Chapter 3: Findings and Analysis

### Introduction

Other cultures are not failed attempts at being you;  
they are unique manifestations of the human spirit.

—*Wade Davis*

Following the calls of post-development (Crush, 1995; Escobar, 2011; Esteva, 2013; Kothari, 2005; Sachs, 1997) and Indigenous (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Barelli, 2016; Cusicanqui, 2012) scholars for critical evaluations of contemporary Western development projects and associated research involving Indigenous<sup>13</sup> participants, this discourse analysis will investigate, contrast and compare discourses involved in TPM to those associated with the MCGI. This study moves forward in recognition of concerns expressed by Buxton and Provenzo (2010) in their review of the work of TPM's director, stating that his work may be "functioning as a mode of educational missionary work that is cloaked in the rhetoric of providing liberation" and thus perhaps "simply swapping a newer colonialist model for an older one" (p. 382-3).

In our globalizing world, wherein Western colonial state-structures and related institutions of HE continue to expand their access to land overseas (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2006), they may also envelop and disrupt culture, autonomy and self-determination of localized populations through the imposition of development schemas steeped within colonial research habits, ontologies and epistemologies. Indigenous scholars acknowledge this process in its domestic context as one of a "deepening, hastening and stretching of an already-existing empire"

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<sup>13</sup> While a comprehensive overview is outside the scope of this study, it is important to recognize the political implications and potential injustices involved in deploying the term "Indigenous", especially as a Western settler. However the term will be defined according to Alfred & Corntassel's (2005) definition, as follows: "The communities, clans, nations and tribes we call Indigenous peoples are just that: Indigenous to the lands they inhabit, in contrast to and in contention with the colonial societies and states that have spread out from Europe and other centers of empire. It is this oppositional, place-based existence, along with the consciousness of being in struggle against the dispossessing and demeaning fact of colonization by foreign peoples, that fundamentally distinguishes Indigenous peoples from other peoples of the world" (p. 597). It is with deep acknowledgement of the harm caused by this term, for example, through Canada's Indian Act, and recognition of its foundational use as a tool of colonization that I proceed with its use, with hopes for blessings from those who have worked so diligently to make these points clear for young fledgling researchers like myself. Larger conversations regarding what parameters are needed to ensure proper constitution and self-identification of "Indigenous" groups in the context of post-colonial Africa can be reviewed in Crawhall (2011). Additionally, the term "Indigenous" is employed throughout this study to refer to local Kasungu residents not only due to their conceivable inclusion in the aforementioned categories (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005) but due to TPM employing the term in the same capacity (Stonebanks, 2016).

that expands through discourses wherein the “fundamental reference and assumption” is always the Western agent’s power (Alfred & Cornthassel, 2005, p. 601).

Despite new research methods and an accompanying lexicon of development rhetoric and discourses that are warmly persuasive and “admit no negatives” in evoking “Good Things that no-one could possibly disagree with” (Cornwall, 2007, p. 472), Indigenous and Western scholars alike are continuing to warn of the shape-shifting nature of global colonization. Calls have emerged for greater attention to contemporary forms of colonialism and development, including neo-imperial NGOs emerging from Canada. These NGO’s often latch to discourses of global justice without acknowledging the colonial and capitalist roots and on-going operations in the geo-locals from which they emerged, and thus run the risk of reproducing myths of benevolent nation-building (Choudry, 2010). Calls extend to welcoming increased frequency and depth of examinations pertaining to how Indigenous land, space and place comes to be permanently occupied, constructed and controlled by self-proclaimed benevolent development executors originating from, and remaining tethered to, colonial states (Alfred & Cornthassel, 2005; Barker, 2006; Choudry, 2010). Associatively, scholars underline the preeminence of the Western HE institution in discursively constructing and facilitating the MCGI while constructing itself as contributing to resistance against the same (Stein & de Oliveira Andreotti, 2016, 2017).

In response, a deep critical awareness of contemporary development projects is essential to foster awareness of how “old (colonial) habits” may still be informing TPM (Stonebanks, 2016)—a reality acknowledged by TPM. However, it is just as important for the depth of analyses to match our understandings of contemporary “deep colonialism”, or how colonizing practices remain entrenched in institutions and/or NGOs that operate overseas via the strategic employment of discourses of decolonization and benevolence (Rose, 1996). The difficulty of this type of analysis is recognized by Australian ethnographer Deborah Bird Rose, as there is a certain “embeddedness” in development projects that may “conceal, naturalize, or marginalize continuing colonial practices” (as cited in Veracini, 2011, p.179). As Rose (1996) warns, the possibility of colonizing practices being embedded in institutions claiming to foster decolonization, such as TPM, “must not be understood simply as a negligible side effect of essentially benign endeavors” (as cited in Veracini, 2011, p.179). In order to honor this caution, how *exactly* contemporary forms of colonization operate discursively must first be *understood*

and then *applied* in analyses of contemporary Western development. Additionally, responses to “lingering imperialism” that is frequently “embedded within self-proclaimed critical methodologies” like PAR requires innovative and radically honest critical moments (Coombes, Johnson & Howitt, 2014, p. 845).

New theoretical conceptions of how colonialism remains penetrative in Indigenous land have been instrumental in autonomous Indigenous rights movements (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005), however they are rarely applied in analyzing specific development projects or the study of contemporary imperialism (Barker, 2009) and/or NGOs (Choudry, 2010). The following discourse analysis will assess the distinct realities of how authority and power over Indigenous Kasungu residents may remain embedded in TPM’s operations and brought to life through the built environment—space, place and land—of TPM. To begin, a brief synopsis of the history of TPM’s incubation, as well as an overview of the land and space occupied by TPM will be provided.

### **TPM’s “Site of Engagement”: The Campus, its History, Vision and Economy**

TPM was started in 2008 by Dr. Christopher Stonebanks (Bishop’s University, Canada, School of Education) and a group of professors from Bishop’s University after travelling to the rural region of Kasungu, Malawi to stay at a guesthouse in a village named Makupo. The village began to host Western visitors as part of a development project founded in providing ethical tourism and called their organization the “Makupo Development Group” (MDG). Though this development project is seemingly successful and community-operated, its contextualization as an ethical tourist endeavor (MDG, n.d., *Home*) was recognized by TPM’s directors as inadequate, and led to TPM’s criticality of “Hugs across Africa schemes...(and) encouragement of narcissistic ‘selfies’ for one’s Facebook page” (Stonebanks, Sheerin, Bennett-Stonebanks & Nyirenda-Paradise, 2016, p. 262). TPM began to emerge as a response to these concerns regarding “exposure tourism” and an “almost voyeuristic characteristic that has usually developed through a ‘top-down’ design” as they “often leave only superficial or temporary positive impact for the Indigenous population” (Stonebanks, 2016, p.115). Expanding on this position on the TPM website, the organization states “...although we recognize the importance of volunteering and aspects of exposure to new ideas when people cross borders, we reject forms

of ‘exposure-tourism’ or ‘voluntourism’ that have become a part of top-down encounters in countries like Malawi” (TPM, n.d., *Our Story*).

In response, TPM stakeholders received a donation of land from a local Chief named Chief Chilowa (mariielouu, 2018) and began to build a physical site—one square kilometer in total—that would be used for “dialogical learning and knowledge exchange” (Stonebanks et al., 2016, p. 262) within a PAR framework towards the development of improved healthcare, education and community entrepreneurship (TPM, n.d., *Home*). Through immense monetary investments, the Campus has also become one of the major hubs of essential service provision (e.g. fresh water) and academic research in the Kasungu region.

In 2015, the year that I returned to Malawi to conduct formal fieldwork, the project officially moved from operating in Makupo village in partnership with MDG to operating at the “Campus”, where “construction began on a water well, community center, tuck shop (corner store), football pitch, and a residence for students...” (Stonebanks et al., 2016, p.263). As seen in *Figure 2.1*, the Campus currently includes: a) a fresh water well; b) a full-sized football pitch; c) a convenience store (or a “tuck shop” in Kasungu); d) a hostel that hosts Western researchers, e) classrooms for Malawian children and; f) an outdoor kitchen. The Campus resembles, to a certain degree, a low fidelity and rudimentary Western university campus fitted with solar panels for electricity (I can remember the chorus of frustrated sighs as 16 students and their power-hungry laptops juggled themselves between two electrical outlets and a finicky Facebook connection) and an endless supply of “Mzuzu Coffee”—some of the best bean in the world.

While there, Canadian and European students, activists and researchers conduct development and education based research, at both undergraduate and graduate levels. On the TPM website, it is stated:

Transformative Praxis: Malawi is committed to action research. The physical campus space in Chilanga, Malawi is representative of the combined efforts of TPM members to build sustainable projects to further the health, education and development of the community. The campus provides a space for projects to be developed without fear of failure. Ultimately, the goal is to engage collaboratively with local community, supported with resources and expertise as needed, to build a model that can support both the

running of the TPM Campus and Ahmad Jahan School. To achieve this the community engages in a cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. No project, no matter the outcome, is considered a failure, but is rather a stepping stone towards sustainability and an opportunity to learn and grow (TPM, n.d., *Research*).

Throughout the processes mentioned above, there is boundless opportunity to engage local community in TPM's research projects, all while living in a beautiful student hostel, which is the TPM Campus headquarters (*see Figure 2.2*).

Many local Kasungu residents are employed in wage-labour positions to maintain the Campus, help with research and collaborate with students. Those who help with research are actively jumping between roles of research assistant, security guard, guide and translator. Additionally, many local Kasungu residents find work as cleaners, cooks, store attendants, guides, translators, laborers and cab drivers. In total, while I was present at the Campus, TPM employed upwards of a dozen local residents for various duties. All other people involved in research projects volunteer their time. While conducting formal fieldwork at the Campus in 2015, there were research projects taking place on the grounds pertaining to the following endeavors:

1. Collectively building, maintaining and expanding a village chicken coop;
2. Designing primary educational curricula and increasing educational capacity;
3. Facilitating an experimental farming patch;
4. Beginning a community radio program, including purchasing and maintaining radio equipment, and;
5. Building a full-sized soccer pitch and creating a TPM soccer team.

These projects are all currently ongoing and are funded, in large part, by the Western students who have participated in TPM via the collection of a "development fund", totaling \$200 CDN, upon enrollment for TPM (see Appendix C) or through research grants from the Canadian university system. These projects should be applauded for their operational successes, as chickens have indeed been raised and a full-sized soccer pitch has been constructed, however their tight integration and subsumed position within the realm of the Western HE and global development systems probes us to look deeper into their operations and discursive formations.

As per below, HE institutions have become increasingly invested in providing fieldwork activities overseas and have looked to establish permanent presences in exotic places where universities can offer students access to participate in fieldwork. Understanding this trend and the wider context within which it has arisen and extends is imperative to understanding TPM.

### **TPM's Campus and the Global Economy**

TPM is actively situated within a global struggle amongst HE institutions to satisfy the need for “radical reform to curricula to foster engaged global citizenship” yet, “little is written depicting how individual courses and their instructors might support such reform” (Hanson, 2010, p.70). TPM supports students in their global citizenship reformation through providing them fieldwork opportunities in Kasungu while encouraging students to “blog about their experiences...in connection with their required readings such as Caplan (2008), Freire (1970) and Fanon (2004)” and though testing the theoretical knowledge acquired in Western universities at the Campus in Kasungu (Stonebanks et al., 2016, p. 262). There is an emphasis on TPM's provision of learning experiences to Western students, as the expansion of Western HE institutions into moribund economic zones overseas (i.e. rural villages, etc.) has stemmed in part from the realization that providing exciting global fieldwork opportunities is an important step in “securing a competitive global market advantage” for HE institutions (Hanson, 2010, p.72). Indeed, the Campus and TPM is tethered to larger shifts in how Western institutions of HE are adjusting to, and remaining competitive within, a globalizing world. In situating TPM within this global current, better understandings of the project are unearthed through newfound abilities to see past the discourses of benevolence and global justice, within which it is currently saturated, towards better understandings of how it may contribute to empire.

The manifestation, organization and continual operation of TPM's Campus and its research projects is foundationally bound to the academic worlds of Western researchers, including universities in Canada and the United Kingdom (TPM, n.d., Community). The purpose of the student travel and research associated with TPM is, according to Stonebanks (2016), to have Western researchers “develop creative and concrete applications for the theoretical learning they acquired in their area of studies that related to the core principle of alleviating human suffering” (p. 108). As is the case with the entirety of the global development field (Sachs, 1997), weaving

together the academic and development worlds provides a scientific “statement of credibility” that enables the smooth functioning of the development project (Crush, 1995, p. 174). Thus, the Campus did not just spring to life as a nonpartisan and benign space of essential service provision. Instead, the emergence of the Campus constitutes an outcome of Western academia’s desire to facilitate development impositions through transforming space, including existent village life, into a field of research and SEO that is meant, at least in part, to serve the interests of Western academic institutions, researchers and students. Upon closer review of TPM, it becomes clear that the interests of local Kasungu residents are not the only interests served by TPM. Instead, its work is indebted to the HE institutions and associated research paradigms within which it is founded. One of these interests is the promotion of the *School of Education* at Bishop’s University from which TPM emerged and remains tethered.

### **TPM as Marketing Vehicle for Western HE’s Competitive Edge**

The STM model of global development, and related “offshoring” of university research and learning opportunities in general, has become instrumental in ensuring the competitive advantage of Western HE institutions (Andreotti, 2017; Stein, Andreotti & Suša, 2016; Hanson, 2010; Hanson, 2010; Naidoo, 2011; Tikly, 2004). This is evidenced in the relationship between TPM and its home institution of Bishop’s University and the ways in which TPM is instrumentalised for student recruitment and HE competitive advantage.

In two similar promotional publications from Bishop’s University, a lengthy promotional book for prospective students entitled *Bleed Purple #Ubishops* (2017a) and a web article titled *Research at its Most Powerful* (2016), the university repeatedly references TPM as a means to contrast and compare itself with other competing programs to gain competitive advantage in student recruitment. It is announced that Bishop’s (2017a) offers a means through which teachers can “become better teachers” (p.20) because of their involvement in TPM. Similarly, Bishop’s is said to offer “deeper” education than its competition due to the opportunity of fieldwork in Malawi. It maintains that new student-teachers will be able to “offer something much deeper to their own students than if they hadn’t gone to Malawi” (Bishop’s University, 2016, para. 8) while also offering self-transformation, as students can “get involved” and “come back completely changed” (para. 7). Bishop’s promotional material explains that TPM is “research at

its most powerful” (2016) and is an opportunity to “*gain valuable experience on the ground*” (i.e. in the field) (2017, p.20, emphasis added). The discourse of TPM is intimately intertwined with, and co-constitutive of, Bishop’s promotional discourse, as both support each other’s claims to authority.

Recent scholarship has predicted and charted a rise in using transnational education and development (mostly through creating campus proxy-sites) to boost prestige generation and revenue at domestic campuses (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2006). In TPM, scientific knowledge is not only used to help the ‘disadvantaged’, nor to justify the need for Western based interventions in post-colonial countries (Said, 1978), it is also, in turn, an intervention used to promote a university program through announcing the competitive advantage that TPM offers students in the marketplace.

Students in TPM, like myself, are well aware of the globalizing and increasingly competitive marketplace that awaits when exiting the university, and thus we engage in TPM in a highly competitive manner. We bring with us to TPM our associated neoliberal ideologies and modes of academic competition to the TPM Campus. We transplant performativity measures and our awareness of the need to create some type of tangible useful change in Kasungu in order for our project to be recognized as successful—not necessarily among local residents, as there has been no community-evaluation to date—in the eyes of our academic peers and superiors. It is worth noting here, as Osei-Kofi (2012) has, that the increasingly competitive nature of Western HE, including competitions for funding and associated performance measures, effectively suppresses student’s abilities to speak out against Western academies and their operation. In a blog post entitled *In Regards* published June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015, I spoke to the context of operating within the confines of Western HE and seem to be pondering whether my activity in TPM is mostly for my own academic merit, stating:

Up until now (maybe still but to a lesser degree) I’ve mostly been asking; *Is this the best I can do? Am I asking the right questions? Will this get me good grades?* The egoism is deafening. I’ve been raised and have been complacent in a system that promotes competition, hedonistic activity and romanticism at all costs, like they’re going out of style (Moyer, 2015b, para. 3).



Despite limited Kasungu-resident awareness or input, if any, on how TPM is narrated and used for commercial purposes in the West (e.g. publications and media coverage), TPM, the land it uses in Kasungu and its Indigenous research participants were all used to gain competitive advantages for both individual researchers and their academic institutions in the global marketplace. Increasingly, exotic locations for fieldwork are often chosen for their “appeal in a recruitment marketplace” (Mcguinness & Simm, 2005, p.243). Mcguinness & Simm (2005) rightfully point to the unethical economy of what they call “long-haul fieldwork” and problematize the integrity of the institutionalization of the “privileged” looking at the “underprivileged” for career development, academic promotion and institutional stimulus. Perhaps this critical appraisal is amplified if the fieldwork *isn't* long-haul.

The *five-week* fieldwork opportunity TPM provides students is insufficient when considering a PAR timeline, as it is perhaps the most time and resource intensive method used in the social sciences (Mackenzie, Tan, Hoverman & Baldwin, 2012). Reflecting now on my ethics protocol for the ‘PAR’ work I undertook in Kasungu in 2015 (see Appendix A), this timeline was not identified as problematic. After TPM, I moved to working for the *Institute of Health and Social Policy* at McGill University and at the start of my fellowship proposed a year-long PAR project. It was quickly shot-down by mentors, citing insufficient time, resources and training to be successful.

If PAR does have the potential to achieve TPM’s goals of emancipation, liberation, and decolonization, allowing PAR to be appropriated symbolically runs the risk of flattening and liquidating its potential. What’s more, a five-week PAR project runs the risk of becoming a simulation of sorts. Perhaps, due to the social and professional capital tied to using PAR as a researcher, especially for those involved in departments of education like TPM’s members (Jordan, 2009), PAR is allowed—encouraged—to be appropriated by students for their research grants and ethics protocols to ensure the project’s well-being. PAR becomes commodified, it becomes symbolic capital, like a Che Guevara t-shirt at a Cuban resort.

My own critique of PAR began to emerge in my second year with TPM. A blog post I published on the TPM website seems to express mounting anxiety towards the PAR narratives and Freirean philosophy. I wrote:

My hope dwindles daily in this search. I wonder if Paulo Freire’s theory of dialogical education has ever really worked...how can someone so confidently categorize humans into two neat categories of oppressor and oppressed? It’s like Freire is trying to pitch the world as a sequel to “A Christmas Story”, in which the ‘oppressed’ rise up and strike back at the bully! Then the bully realizes the immorality of his action and is all the better for it...Freire at times commits the murder of anomie, like a game of chess being played through kaleidoscopes, explained using a simple game of 20/20 checkers as an example (Moyer, 2015b, para. 1-2).

I was beginning to recognize, as Foucault had, the discursive power of *silencing* and *foreclosing* upon critical awareness of an academic “woke culture” (Jacobs, 2019) that offers ready-made illusions of radicalism, and resultant campus-attention and academic acclaim, without the demands of actually enacting any of the “lost causes” of revolution (Žižek, 2009) or making any sacrifices what-so-ever. In a personal journal entry scribbled in my TPM notebook sometime in 2015, it is clear I had begun to take note of the paradoxes involved in my ‘activist’ research that would have otherwise remained silent. I’ve included footnotes and made small edits to increase clarity, as it is obviously a caffeine induced stream-of-consciousness manifesto, I wrote:

I’m a genuine activist researcher now. I globetrot in Doc Martens made by children in China, while writing PAR plans for global citizenship and sustainable eco-friendly villages—all from the seat of a carbon-flatulence-fed Boeing 757. I’m floating to Malawi to solicit support for a regime of environmental conservatism used to preserve what’s left of land destroyed by the monocrop used to fill the cigarettes I smoked the night before departing. Like smoke I lifted-off from stolen soil called Canada—still encrypted with ‘Reserves’ for the wardens of the Crown that bought this whole ‘we’re here to educate you’ bullshit the first time around<sup>14</sup>—and at the moment of takeoff, Crown is poured on

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<sup>14</sup> See TRC, 2015.

ice, ‘Dances with Wolves’ hits the screen, and my pen touches-down to scribble ramblings that say ‘my PAR=their Decolonization’<sup>15</sup>

These concepts and methods like PAR, for many in moribund economies or areas of subaltern activity where they were created, are *not symbolic* and are instead incredibly important socio-political, epistemological and ontological concepts. The obfuscation and flattening of these concepts by wealthy Western undergraduate students is only afforded to them by Western cultures’ affordance of discursive dominance and symbolic capital.<sup>16</sup> Enabling them to appropriate these terms symbolically or metaphorically, ignoring the incommensurability between TPM’s limited timeframe and PAR’s resource demands, underlines Smith’s (2013) position that only Western culture is allowed to be contradictory, while Indigenous persons are expected to be authentic, not in the least part because they are the ones being surveilled, judged and published about.

### **Implications of TPM’s Relationship with the Globalizing Political Economy**

In Philip Holden’s (2016) analysis of the Canadian writer and poet Patrick Anderson, he begins to untangle how Anderson’s writings speak to important thematic narratives found within colonial projects. Holden maintains that Anderson’s writing about Singapore is representative of how colonial operations frequently hitch themselves to discourses of utopic values, such as “ethical commitments” and “best intentions,” while failing to be forthright in acknowledging that all of these desires are superseded by a “position within inescapable colonial discourse and colonial structures of governance” (p.492). TPM can be characterized in similar fashion.

Despite its best intentions and its discourses of benevolence and solidarity with Indigenous populations, TPM cannot escape its intimate relationship with the ‘post’-colonial structures within which it operates and their central function within networks of neo-imperialism

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<sup>15</sup> See Baudrillard’s (1988) *The System of Objects* for a poignant analysis of emergent ideas regarding symbolic capital and the values—and ironic paradoxes—that arise in their appropriation and consumption which is always done in a web of relations to other consumerist goods. This can result in willful ignorance towards the absurdity that arises from the cleavage between the limited/irrelevant use-value of goods (or in the case of PAR, concept) and their connoted prestige and social capital.

<sup>16</sup> For example, I could, if I wanted to, remain silent about the ingenuousness of my PAR work and continue to reap the benefits of it. I am afforded that opportunity as a wielder of the Western pen.

as a powerful sub-sector of the global capitalistic economy (Coombes, Johnson & Howitt, 2014; Choudry, 2014; McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2001). Former Director of the *US National Science Foundation*, Erich Bloch (2002), elaborates on the value of the Western university's vigor in maintaining prosperity (for some) in our post-industrial society, stating:

The solution to virtually all the problems with which government is concerned: health, education, environment, energy, urban development, international relationships, economic competitiveness, and defence and national security, all depend on creating new knowledge and hence upon the health of our universities. (as cited in McBurnie & Ziguras, 2006, p.9)

Indeed, within our globalizing world of neo-imperialist competition, the HE sector has become a key area of investment for growth; growth now deeply predicated upon the sector's abilities to provide safe fieldwork opportunities in moribund economies overseas (Hughes, 2008). Imperialism can be summarized as a "dialectic of political actors that command a territory (logic of territory) and capital accumulation in space and time (logic of capital)" (Harvey, 2007, p. 26-36, as cited in Fuchs, 2010, p. 840). New tweaks in the modalities of globalizing capital have recently been referred to as "neo-imperialism" or "new imperialism" towards accumulation being founded in more insidious ways of dispossessing Others of their wealth, material goods, land and knowledge (Harvey, 2003). Harvey (2003) defines neo-imperialism as a co-constitutive dialect of forms of power in local spaces and territories and their (often silenced) connection with the "molecular processes of capital accumulation in space and time" wherein "diffuse political-economic process in space and time... command over and use of capital takes primacy" (p.26). Investigating the role played by Western HE institutions in neo-imperialism is of primary importance because, as, Kwame Nkrumah (1966) explains, today we find colonialism to be an almost anachronistic concept as it shape-shifts into "its most dangerous stage" of late-stage imperialism, and many see the colonial project as simply an "avatar of the imperialist process" (Emmanuel, 1972, para. 2). For Grosfoguel (2003), understanding this neo-imperial trajectory has led to a simple realization: there is no "post" in the colonial project. Colonization is a structure, not an event, and Western HE is a central pillar in the continuity and perpetuation of that structure.

The role of Western institutions of HE within the neo-imperial *structure*—colonization’s avatar—continues to grow as universities engage in the “off-shoring” of Campuses overseas via an “emotional richness of rhetoric”, including appealing to “developing countries”’ need to develop rapidly and the competitive advantage a partnership with a Western university can afford them while seeking to do so (Tikly, 2004). The expansion of Western HE institutions into low-income countries has become so popular and its impacts so profound that Naidoo (2011) remarks how low-income countries can no longer be researched in isolation from these trends. Instead, research pertaining to development and low-income countries *must* take into account the penetration and transformation that Western HE networks and their rapidly changing relationships with globalizing capital have facilitated in “periphery” countries (Naidoo, 2011, p.40). If capitalism’s health is premised upon *folding* autonomous spheres of social operation into exchange (Best, 2010), the permanent penetration of exotic moribund economies by Western HE institutions for research purposes is certainly a *significant crease*.

### **Bringing the Gifts of Research and Education: Rainchecks for Accumulation**

Movements of resistance and global justice have become, perhaps unknowingly, complicit in the global schema of neo-imperialism, which signals the “continued relevance of systematic analyses of ‘decolonization’ and resistance in transnational...praxis” (Mohanty, 2013, p .975). According to David Harvey (2003), “developed” countries like Canada, generating surplus labour and capital, often absorb this surplus “temporal displacement through investment in long-term capital projects or social expenditures that defer the re-entry of capital values into circulation into the future” (p.109). This process is precipitated, according to Harvey, by a certain “lack of profitable opportunity” (p. 88). Avenues for profit-enhancement are found through “geographical expansion” and investments in “long-lived physical and social infrastructures” including expanding networks of “education and research” (Harvey, 2003, p.88). In the case of TPM, observing, exploring and researching poverty and development, coupled with HE’s institutional alignment with “social justice” and “decolonization”, is the transformation of an experience, like deep poverty and a student-quest for its alleviation, into a phenomenon for consumption. Researchers in TPM are promised they will “come back completely changed” from their experience (Bishop’s University, 2016, para.7).

In Harvey's estimation, "gifts" of Western research and education evade critiques of their "disproportionate influence" due to "spatio-temporal fixes", which are, according to Harvey (2003), "solutions to capitalist crises through temporal deferment and geographical expansion" (p.65). Harvey's (2003) theoretical concept of "spatio-temporal fixes", informed by historical geographical materialism, is outlined as follows:

Overaccumulation within a given territorial system means a condition of surpluses of labour (rising unemployment) and surpluses of capital (registered as a glut of commodities on the market that cannot be disposed of without a loss, as idle productive capacity, and/or as surpluses of money capital lacking outlets for productive and profitable investment). Such surpluses may be absorbed by (a) temporal displacement through investment in long-term capital projects or social expenditures (such as education and research) that defer the re-entry of current excess capital values into circulation well into the future, (b) spatial displacements through opening up new markets, new production capacities and new resource, social and labour possibilities elsewhere, or (c) some combination of (a) and (b)" (p. 109).

Adapting this analytical framework, the value derived from TPM's commodification of the experience it creates is displaced temporally because the capital gains associated with its procession will only be realized in the future when the impact of student training and research leads to successful careers of those involved like. This displacement is also evident in TPM's use as a marketing tool many years after its establishment. In this sense, TPM's outcomes are proven for its Western beneficiaries. Conversely, regarding the long-term benefits Kasungu residents will reap from the increased educational opportunities planned to be provided by TPM, we are unsure, and literature on this subject widely debates the value of these types of STM endeavors (see, for example, Tembo, 2003, for an overview of similar debates).<sup>17</sup> This isn't to say that value isn't also created for local Kasungu residents, as we must recognize that there is certainly

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<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that Matthew Lange's (2010) cross-national time-series analysis of education provision within moribund economies shows that increases in levels of Western-related education often leads to significant increases in ethnic violence due, in part, to beneficiaries of the "gift" of education not having any opportunities to use their new aptitudes and knowledge in any value-making ways once they return to their economic circumstances outside of the classroom. With this said, it should also be noted that while TPM doesn't acknowledge the possibility of contributing to increases in ethnic violence, it does forthrightly acknowledge the need to create a curriculum that is truly useful to local circumstances and undertakings (Stonebanks et al., 2016).

unmeasurable effects of introducing “running water, health posts, and the like” (Escobar, 2011, p. 145).

One could contend, however, that TPM is a contemporary function of capital’s “massive long-term investment in the conquest of space” (Harvey, 1989, p. 264) wherein the internal contradictions of capitalism<sup>18</sup> are expressed through spatial fixes in the form of “restless formation and reformation of geographical landscapes” (Harvey, 1989, p.150) overseas in Kasungu. According to Peter Little (2014), contemporarily neo-imperialism emerges as a möbius cycle of deterritorialization and reterritorialization—useful concepts to understand successive waves of Western academically-affiliated development and research practitioners entering Indigenous land in Kasungu.

In the case of TPM, it discursively constructs its endeavor as a “politics of repair,” a project oriented by “emancipation, liberation, social justice, solidarity and decolonization” (TPM, n.d., our story, para. 2). Despite this diversity of definitions associated with these concepts, they are products of Western academia—they are, for Kasungu residents, imports. Examples of these ideological imports are vast within TPM and the entire AD apparatus, and are often stylized to accommodate current ‘fads’ in academia (i.e. entrepreneurship becoming social entrepreneurship to appease new ideological demands; please see Dey & Steyaert, 2010).

One of the more peculiar instances of the “stylization” of development buzzwords, and perhaps an example of how participation is being used to “modify, sanitize and depoliticize” (Cornwall, 2007, p. 95), is found within TPM’s (2016) publication entitled *Health and wellness in rural Malawi: a health development initiative* (Stonebanks, Sheerin & Jeffery et al., 2016). TPM claims that community members in Kasungu “*strongly* indicated the need to foster critical thinking, creativity and social entrepreneurship” (p.262, emphasis added). Is this claim a discursive strategy of stylistic buzzwords operationalized to grant authority to AD and TPM? Investigating this particular discourse is essential because TPM is founded upon its pursuit of

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<sup>18</sup> For an overview of contradictions embedded in the capitalist system, please see Marx (2010) *A contribution to the critique of political economy*, specifically how capitalism creates the situation of its own demise “from forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters” (p. 2).

these values, and they are values that are deeply engrained in Western academia and thus present opportunity for academic elites to proceed with development by providing ‘expertise’.

To proceed, perhaps it is important to pull apart this claim. Firstly, there are no clear indicators of: a) what exactly “community” means (20 people...40 people?); b) how this consensus was reached (democratic vote?); c) how everyone came to a mutually agreed upon definition of these terms (a project in and of itself, as “creativity” could mean anything), or; d) what spectrum the “strong indication” is calculated by and situated in (does ‘strongly’ mean a majority vote? Would ‘weak’ mean a minority?).

When I was present at the Campus, you could barely get five people together on time, even with the promise of food and water (I acknowledge the ethical quandaries associated with this tactic of soliciting participation, but full disclosure is important), let alone an entire community. Plus, the area of Kasungu that TPM serves has a population of almost 60,000 people—so who exactly strongly indicated their desire for these ideals and how did they gain representative status? Plus, if you *could* gather research participants, language barriers ensured that ill-defined concepts such as “critical thinking” or “social entrepreneurship” would not be the topic of the day. Indeed, the term “social entrepreneurship” is in itself confined to academic circles, where it is plagued by a multiplicity of meanings, is often misunderstood and also widely used to create utopic illusions to market and ‘sell’ its value in research (Dey & Steyaert, 2010). It seems peculiar that the concepts of “social entrepreneurship” or “critical thinking” were organically, and “strongly”, indicated by the local Kasungu population as their primary desires for TPM’s ends. During my time with TPM, the only local desires that could be characterized as being “strongly indicated” were needs for HIV/AIDs medication and fresh water, as evidenced by a blog I published to the TPM website on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015. In this writing, the frustration with being confined to a PAR framework as opposed to fighting for institutional/structural change becomes palpable as I reflect on “reminding groups of my own inability to help in any type of practical or immediate way i.e. reiterating “I am not a water specialist! I cannot build a well!”” (Moyer, 2015b, para. 5). Finally, the directors of TPM (Stonebanks, Sheerin and Jeffery et al., 2016) go on to mention that “critical thinking, creativity and social entrepreneurship” also happen to be noted in Petra Tschakert and company’s (2014) *Learning and envisioning under*



*climatic uncertainty: an African Experience*, to be the three *exact* skills needed in African approaches to education and community health and wellness during uncertain times.

These concepts were, most likely, introduced as ideological imports—proposed, at least in part, by TPM and later acknowledged as acceptable by Kasungu residents in their review of TPM’s wider “package of development” (Escobar, 2011). Arturo Escobar (2011) calls these discursive imports “packages” in his analysis of rural development programs in Malaysia, finding that Western development practitioners promote the “package” they can provide in order to fill their imaginative void regarding what exactly is missing from the Indigenous life they have recently encountered. Myriad tools are suggested: “capital, technology, training and infrastructure” (p. 137). While TPM attempts to rectify Kasungu’s “lack of infrastructure” (Sheerin, Stonebanks, Jeffery et al., 2016) by installing a Campus that will bring “emancipation, liberation, social justice, solidarity and decolonization” (TPM, n.d., our story, para. 2), it fails to speak to how this package is accompanied by:

an entire biopolitics: a set of policies regulating a plurality of problems such as health, nutrition, family planning, education, and the like which inevitably introduce not only given conceptions of food, the body, and so on, but a particular ordering of society itself. In the specified spheres of social welfare, sexuality, and education, to name only a few, the everyday lives of village Malays are being reconstituted according to new concepts, language, and procedures (Escobar, 2011, p. 143).

Firstly, by local Kasungu resident’s investment in TPM and its associated “packages of development” which are premised on, for example “critical thinking” instead of “radical action”, TPM also actively de-politicizes both poverty and the role of the state. The de-politicization of the roots of poverty and domination in favor of simplified solutions that favor one’s own expertise is a key component of the MCGI’s discourses (Andreotti, 2015).

After studying development projects in Lesotho, South Africa, James Furgeson (1990) wrote *The Anti-Politics Machine*, which takes analytical aim at development apparatuses and their authoritative agencies. These agencies and apparatuses import strategies and programs to help with health and life in sub-Saharan Africa but they are, according to Furgeson, ‘soft’ philosophical approaches to development that de-politicizes poverty’s connection with state

architectures and globalizing capital. This is done through discursively constructing what the NGO brings (e.g. PAR, critical thinking, etc.) as the sole “missing link” in development and human flourishing. Thus, these types of NGOs position themselves in a way wherein the fundamental reference and assumption is always its own power. Indeed, this type of discursive construction both limits our optics in understanding how poverty and suffering may be tethered to the “bureaucratic state power” from which the NGO emerges, instead of it being a void to be filled by the NGO (Furgeson, 1990). If poverty and associated suffering cannot truly be solved without massive structural adjustments, much of which need to first occur in the Western world (Piketty, 2015), the de-politicization of poverty by NGO’s like TPM will definitely ensure their longevity.

As evidenced by a blog I published to the TPM website on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015, I slowly began to understand issues with the de-politicization of issues facing residents in moribund economies, as well as the inabilities of PAR, or myself, to address what local community members repeatedly express they *really* need and want. Below, there is a palpable frustration in recognizing our collective inability to rectify the “lost causes” (Žižek, 2009) of radical transformation and having to remain operative within TPM’s ‘soft’ philosophy, I state:

Honest dialogue here can be difficult, as it many times has meant reminding groups of my own inability to help in any type of practical or immediate way i.e. reiterating that “I am not a water specialist! I cannot build a well!” This gets tiresome, and I sometimes find myself resenting those who look to me to solve these structural problems because of my skin color...The honest answers I give can lead to very somber and morbid moods amongst the group, as this answer smothers any hope of clean water arriving any time soon (Moyer, 2015b, para. 5).

Returning now to Escobar’s (2011) conception of development “packages”, we find a whole host of elements involved in TPM’s packages of transformation that have been introduced to the local Kasungu population, including new specializations in crop production. For example TPM has imported processes of farming “non GMO sweet corn from Canada” and new planting methods like the “Three sisters model developed by the Indigenous Peoples of North America” (TPM, 2019c). These realities are again disconcerting to Escobar (2011), as the introduction of new organic composting methods and reductions in the use of family labour continue to interrupt local modes of being. According to Escobar, the introduction of these schematic packages are not worrying in and of themselves, in the sense that they may provide immediate benefits, as TPM’s

surely do. Rather, these schemas come under scrutiny because they represent the introduction of new “mechanisms of social production and control” (p. 145). For Escobar (2011), above all else, TPM may represent an introduction of bureaucratic organization into Kasungu that “contributes to the disciplining of labor, the extraction of surplus value, and the reorientation of consciousness” under the guise of “help” (p. 145). Because the discipline of labor, especially physical labor, was the lynchpin of traditional colonization (Killingray, 1989) and still an axis of globalizing capital, it is wise to explore TPM’s commensurability in this process.

TPM actively acknowledges and congratulates local Kasungu persons who work long hours for the TPM project on its social media. A recent TPM Twitter post states that “It must be noted that as soon as the leadership committee finished their six hour meeting, Mrs. Dina Mataka went right back to her experimental farming!” (PraxisMalawi, 2019d). Another example of TPM’s discursive disciplining of labor comes from a TPM Twitter post from March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019, wherein a worker named ‘Thomas’ is congratulated by TPM because he “works 7 days a week!” (PraxisMalawi, 2019b). Here we find examples of the neoliberal market rationality emerging through the congratulatory discourses uttered by TPM towards those who work the hardest and/or longest in the Campus, effectively enveloping the project and “reconfiguring both cultures and subject as responsible self-managing individuals within an enterprise society based upon norms of competition” (Olseen, 2018, p. 384). Knowing the disciplining of labor is an axis in neoliberal and neo-imperial agendas, it is important to look deeper, and more methodically, into the dominant discourses of disciplining labour within TPM.

A rudimentary analysis of TPM’s Twitter posts from February 8, 2019 to April 14, 2019 (n=56), illustrates that 70% (n=39) of its posts directly celebrate labour by speaking praisefully to and/or acknowledging the labour and construction efforts of local community members. In the same sample, 62.5% (n=35) posts show visual images of local Kasungu residents engaged in labour.

The disciplining of labour is of the utmost importance in the smooth functioning of neoliberal discourses and stratagems (Patroni, 2004), which is often accompanied by an outlook on society that reduces the essence of individuals and their social make-up to the strength of their work ethic, craft or docility *vis-à-vis* labor. Individual subjectivities become distilled into the

“social wealth” that their labour presents, as it is thought by Westerners to be the “universal activity of man” and begins to “impose an arbitrary, rationalist intentionality on all human activity” (Baudrillard, 1988, p. 3). According to Baudrillard (1988), this “censors the much more radical hypothesis that (Kasungu residents) do not have to be the labor power, the 'unalienable' power of creating value by their labor” (p. 3). For example, the instrumentalisation of land use for TPM’s productivity and labour may reorient some local residents’ values and consciousness to praise labour and interrupt some Malawian’s traditional spiritual connection with the Spirit of the land among the Chewa and Tumbuka peoples of Malawi (Penniman, 2018, p.55). I don’t wish to disregard the autonomy of local Kasungu residents here in assuming that they don’t take on labor for TPM independently, but rather wish to point out how those who control the *gaze* of the cameras that feed TPM’s Twitter are inherently exerting power over the object of that gaze: the Other—the TPM participant (DePew & Lettner-Rust, 2009). Thus, the choice of what a disciplinary body captures on film is a symbolic signaling of what it wants to see more of. The signaling associated with the camera’s ‘cold gaze’ does indeed shift the actions of the people captured through its iris, as they become tuned to the camera’s presence and objects of interest and adjust accordingly (Grassiani & Verweij, 2014). TPM doesn’t feature photos congratulating existent livelihoods, resiliencies and/or successes that are separate from TPM’s operations, it solely fixes its gaze on actions local community members take to support TPM. What this gaze illustrates is a preference for one ideological comportment—neoliberal disciplining of labour—chosen in favor over understandings that the resurgence of traditional Indigenous culture is paramount in walking any path resembling decolonization (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005). The gravity of the word ‘paramount’ here cannot be understated, as the resurgence of Indigenous culture and autonomy has been shown to hedge against suicide and self-harm—it is literally the difference between life and death (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998). The ‘gaze’ of TPM’s camera and resultant public relations strategies exemplifies an ignorance towards these facts. This *may* be done on purpose, because Indigenous cultural resurgence is, simultaneously, palliative care for the MCGI and Western ‘expertise’ in decolonial activity.

The disciplining of labour in TPM may also point to the fact that TPM, regardless of ‘decolonial’ intent, has simply superseded the State in welfare functions and replaced multi-national institutions in government representation. This is important to investigate as, if this is the case, this responsibility comes with stringent accountability and fiduciary duties, as well as

state-relations that are necessary to probe in analysis because of their instrumental function in colonial exploitation (Tuck & Yang, 2012). As a project representative of multiple universities throughout Canada and the United Kingdom (TPM, n.d., *Community*), TPM may continue to represent the interests of these States despite the modern NGO constructing its identity *against* State-affiliation (Lehmann, 1997). TPM is a peculiar case in this instance, as the TPM Campus remains home to the erect flags of England and Canada, signifying State interests and relationships (Figure 2.3). Below, the wider implications of TPM's provision of essential services is offered as a point of inception for novel analyses of how the "post-modern" NGO remains amorphous.

### **The Post-Modern NGO: A new 'Warden of the Poor' and Expert in 'Care'**

Despite the modern-day NGO's ascension in popularity as a response to the failure of State-based development and its authority being premised on an air of anti-statism (see, for example, Stonebanks, 2010 and more specifically, critiques of the "eurowestern powerbloc" on p. 370) NGOs may simply be assuming the role of the state as the new warden of the poor. Why? Lehmann (1997) speaks to the role of the "post-modern" NGO and its abilities to harness supportive public and academic opinion through discursively constructing itself as a "social movement" authorized by representations of its own "social implantation" (p. 572). He goes on to say that NGOs:

begin to replace the multilateral organisations... (as) established structures of representation are said to lack the social implantation necessary to their long-run legitimacy, and are decried as corrupt, while social movements are invoked in their place; and most significantly we observe the rise of multi-ethnic, multi-national, global network of (NGO) networks devoted to the cause of the poor (p.572).

We must unsettle the popular NGO construction of itself as a strictly local actor that seeks only to benefit community. Tembo's (2003) analysis of NGOs in Malawi points to them being a neo-imperialist extension of colonial states and notes that there are distinct and growing challenges to investigating this reality, as the "use of 'emancipatory' concepts such as participation and empowerment, the image-conflicts that underlie practice are very well disguised" (p.53). TPM's repeated characterization of its own project as one where members

from the “Global North” must adopt an “ethics of *care*” for those in the “Global South” (Stonebanks et al., 2016) signals an air of paternalism. It suggests that TPM may have simply superseded state functions as a “warden of the poor” instead of a radical agent poised to counter “hegemonic reproduction” (Stonebanks, 2010, p. 370). Indeed, paternalistic discourses are one of the foundational features of the MCGI. The “ethics of care” used to inform TPM’s interactions with local residents is imported into Kasungu via TPM.

Nietzsche reminds us to be weary of those who express pity (1881) and/or altruism (1967) for Others, directly or indirectly, and especially in public, for it is often a means to dominate, nurture one’s own ego, and thus, due to resultant increases in felt power on the part of those *caring*, usually produces suffering.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Tronto (2010) suggests that any institution who employs the discourse and framework of Gilligan’s “ethics of care” must be “highly explicit about its pursuit of purposes, how it copes with particularity, and how power is used within the organization” (para. 4). These cautions are expressed due to the “ethics of care’s” instrumentalisation of a natural human condition (i.e. caring for others) for institutional success because it is taken axiomatically as ‘good’ (Tronto, 2010). In TPM, the ramifications of its self-appointed role as an entity that is now ‘*caring* for the Other’ via a Western ethics protocol born in academia are not explored and must be.

An ethics of care may be conceived of as the continuation of a legacy of silencing local Indigenous scholarly work, which is often done because some of the latter indigenous works have a deeply spiritual and holistic idea of ethics that mostly transcends Western understandings, especially if they haven’t invested enough time in living with local populations (Walker, 2003). For example, the South African concept of Ubuntu<sup>20</sup> has been shown to produce, in Malawian

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<sup>19</sup> It should be noted here that Nietzsche’s theory is supported by contemporary theories, like the Empathy-Specific Reward hypothesis, that posit manifestations of empathy are done so for personal progress and rewards. See, for example, Batson’s (2014) *The Altruism Question*.

<sup>20</sup> Ubuntu is defined by Eze (2016) as an ethical core related to seeing that: “A person is a person through other people’ strikes an affirmation of one’s humanity through recognition of an ‘other’ in his or her uniqueness and difference. It is a demand for a creative intersubjective formation in which the ‘other’ becomes a mirror (but only a mirror) for my subjectivity. This idealism suggests to us that humanity is not embedded in my person solely as an individual; my humanity is co-substantively bestowed upon the other and me. Humanity is a quality we owe to each other. We create each other and need to sustain this otherness creation. And if we belong to each other, we participate in our creations: we are because you are, and since you are, definitely I am. The ‘I am’ is not a rigid subject, but a dynamic self-constitution dependent on this otherness creation of relation and distance” (p. 190-191)

contexts specifically, fair and equitable governance (Tambulasi & Kayuni, 2005), corporate social responsibility (Mickson Kayuni & Tambulasi, 2012) and valuable social work (Mugumbate & Nyanguru, 2013). However, its adoption by TPM would shift power to local Kasungu residents in that they would quickly become the ‘experts’ in TPM’s governance and ethical frameworks. This cannot be the case, as being able to authorize one’s claim to expertise in development is a lynchpin of the Western MCGI (Kothari, 2005).

Aside from the African concept of Ubuntu, alternative ethical frameworks from Indigenous scholars that live a little closer to home (Canada) for TPM may also be beneficial due to their synergy with Ubuntu. Standing Rock Sioux scholar and activist Vine Deloria (1999), Sto:lo author and Indigenous woman’s rights advocate Lee Maracle (1996) or Taiaiake Alfred (1999), have contributed alternative ethics and modes of relationships in research, community and between the environment and people that would be beneficial in TPM. Better yet, there are Malawian scholars who may provide a more accurate schema of ethics and morals in relationships between the West and local Kasungu residents because they have focused on the specific topic of developing successful trans-national STM projects. For example, work from Chifundo Ziyaya, from Mtogolo Village in Zomba, has articulated stratagems for better PAR relationships in education efforts between parties from the West and Malawi (Bottomley et al., 2017). Or, perhaps ditch the ethical schemas from Harvard in-lieu of work from Malawian academics who specialize in evaluating ethical commitments involved in rural PAR projects, like Dalo Njera (2017), who published great work on PAR’s efficacy in Malawi and is now the recipient of the Queen Elizabeth Scholarship-Advanced Scholars Program at Carleton University.

It is understandable why competing imaginaries stemming from the ‘margins’ of academia are avoided, for scholars from countries like Malawi, for example Dr. Fletcher Tembo (2003), paint much different pictures of NGO’s ethical frameworks and their foreclosure on appropriate reflexive analyses. He speaks to an urgent need for NGOs to engage in critical reflexive analysis that address “various representations and meanings that the different actors employ during negotiations and participatory activities” (p. 532), which would surely lead to more rigorously analyzing *our own* conduct as westerners as opposed to fixing our analytical lens on the Malawian Other. Additionally, as Tembo (2003) acknowledges, it would necessitate

reflexive acknowledgment of NGOs' subservience to neo-imperialist state logics of domination, including its forceful use of wealth and resources to ensure poor populations accept its vision and imaginary and exclusion of alternatives. Assessing the level of subservience Tembo speaks of—the intimacy between TPM and its domestic state apparatuses—should help here. To investigate further, I offer a systematic approach to investigate the affinities and levels of intimacy between TPM, its state-funded home-institution of Bishop's University and, via proxy, the nation-state of Canada.

The *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development* (OECD) (2004) recently released a report that acknowledged how intimate relationships with the state leads to NGO's becoming "more subject to financial constraints (and options) and to market pressures and risks" (as cited in McBurnie & Ziguras, 2006, p.44). To aid this quagmire, it conducted an eight-country study to ensure that these bodies remain at arms-length from the States that fund them and, perhaps, inform their operations.<sup>21</sup>

For TPM, Bishop's University is at once: 1) an owner, because it employs staff that carry out the project and bears risks associated with this ownership; 2) a regulator, because it regulates the entirety of TPM's research ethics protocols through its Research Ethics Board, and finally; 3) Bishop's University is a customer, due its use of TPM's services for institutional marketing purposes. Bishop's University is not a core funder, planner or partner of TPM, according to the OECD's definitions. Deeper investigations of these relationships are necessary because "the means by which some national formations dominate others are changing" and analyses may assist in "bring(ing) to light the intense contradictions that are generated by attempts to integrate indigenous populations into the system of states" (Day, 2005, p. 86). Below, TPM's claims to "decolonization" overseas are explored further by contextualizing and 're-linking' TPM with its domestic environment and 'pulling apart' moments illustrative of discursive domination.

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<sup>21</sup> Although this schema of analysis is used primarily to analyze levels of operational intimacy between HE institutions and the State, it is useful in this case to employ the framework to assess levels of intimacy between TPM and Bishop's University.



## Re-Linking TPM to its Domestic Environment and Investigating Repressive Authenticity

Analyses operationalized through neo-imperialist lenses do not pay enough attention to how modalities of capital accumulation “have been mapped onto previous racial and colonial discourses and practices” (Chakravartty & Silva, 2012, p.368). Despite the foundational utility of Harvey’s (1975, 1989, 1997, 2003, 2007, 2017) theories, neo-imperialism may now be “unsatisfactory” in analyses of “imperialist capitalism and the peoples of the exploited countries” because not enough attention is paid to a very important element: “the colonialists themselves” (Emmanuel, 1972, para. 5). It is for this reason that analyses of the MCGI must reflect on the domestic milieu that is its point of departure and the associated strategic logics of domination that may be employed in AD programs.

Stein and Andreotti (2017) remind us that the MCGI was formulated in nationally based imaginaries and mapped coordinates of control; however global expansion was always its horizon. Indeed, the modern/colonial *global* imaginary that Stein and Andreotti speak of, as Canadian scholars, was refined and perfected in Canada prior to its dissemination overseas. Dene First Nations scholar Glen Sean Coulthard (2014) argues in *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* that colonization is not finalized and confined to history books, instead, modern-day *colonialism is territorially acquisitive in perpetuity*” (p. 152, original emphasis). Thus, perhaps the discourses that inform TPM’s authority in making claims of facilitating decolonization and contributing to Indigenous emancipation overseas become empty when we take into consideration TPM’s domestic situation.

Westerner academic elites are often privileged in their abilities to side with those deemed marginalized and disenfranchised through “delinking” from their home state’s geo-political and body-political “epistemic location” and the privilege- and wealth-generating “structures of colonial power/knowledge from which the (colonizing) subject speaks” (Grosfoguel, 2011, para. 7). In recognition of this “delinking”, Andreotti’s (2015) mentions that MCGI discourses maintain dominance through “ahistorical” discourses and an active silencing and “forgetting” of “historical legacies and complicities” (p. 3). It is for this reason that scholars like Richard Day (2005) insist on locating oneself in the geo-political and body-political home from which one

travels, writes and conducts research. Much of this section is written in hopes of better locating TPM within its specific body-political and geo-political home.

TPM originates from Bishop's University (est. 1843), which is still grappling with its own colonial roots and expresses clear indecisiveness regarding how to proceed with "decolonization" as an institution, including expressions of uncertainty in envisioning what exactly this concept means or entails. In a recent press release called *Indigenous People – University Relations: Are Partnerships a Path to Decolonization*, Bishop's University (2017b) speaks openly about how the University has recently started to "consider how Bishop's might move forward" with decolonization, citing the continued "question of how we might sustain a partnership with a First Nations" (paras. 6-7). Bishop's cites its adoption of the "13 principles on Indigenous Education", signed by 96 universities across Canada. Within this mandate the third paragraph cites one of the main reasons for "decolonization" being "a clear benefit to Canada's economy" as "Canada needs more university graduates to meet labour market demands" and "Indigenous people can help meet this demand" (Universities Canada, 2015). There is no mention of consulting with Indigenous institutions, communities or persons for the drafting of these principles. We can begin to see why Richard Day (2005) maintains that colonial capitalist systems become stronger and more powerful as they are confronted with challenges to their power, in that decolonization has been turned into an economic opportunity for the university and the state. Similarly, according to Stein and Andeotti (2017), colonial regimes maintain relevancy and authority "in response to this resistance" as the MCGI "has been rearticulated numerous times in the past six centuries, selectively incorporating critique as a means to neutralize threats to its legitimacy and hegemony" (p.3). If TPM's colonial roots are not openly acknowledged in their connection to Canada and Bishop's University (and by extension the Anglican Church and the Indian Residential School system), how can we expect TPM to help bring about "decolonization" in Kasungu? The whole fragility of the thing breathes catastrophe. Perhaps this is evidence of the concept of "decolonization" being appropriated, flattened, and eradicated as a meaningful political-concept (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p.3). Perhaps, decolonization, in this case, may just be another "symbolic drip-feed" (Bourdieu, 1998, p.30) that acts like a carrot at the end of a stick to ensure the continuity of neo-imperial, capitalist and colonial development

Despite the often taken-for-granted progressiveness of “decolonization”, Veracini (2011) states that its use as narrative is a “time-honored protocol of western social thought” wherein “the prescriptive “good community” is located in some past time, is seen to have suffered irretrievable declension, and is imaginatively reconstructed in order to critique the dislocation and anomie of contemporary (Indigenous) life” (p.101). If TPM and myself moved into Indigenous territory overseas and expressed *our* need for decolonization via *our* new research methods, are we not, underneath that, expressing our contempt with current Kasungu Indigenous life, modes of being and ways of seeing?

An example of this contempt for alternative visions of the world can be identified in the ways in which TPM engages in what Veracini (2010) (drawing on Wolfe [1999]), calls “repressive authenticity”—‘development experts’ authenticating notions of the “authentic” Indigenous person as being “a frozen pre-contact essence” as a foundation for a “formula for disqualification” (p.40). In this, parameters through which the “authentic” Indigenous person can be recognized are constructed and controlled which, in turn, can actively disqualify those who do not fit that mold. This creates an identifiable pathway that Indigenous persons must walk if they are to become recognized by development agents as...emancipated, liberated, capable of critical thinking, etc. If that pathway is too short, or too easy, development is out of a job.

For example, Stonebanks (2010) mentions that he engages in a hike up a mountain in hopes of “reclaiming a knowledge for the villagers that had been almost wiped out by colonialism” (p.367). These types of narratives, expressed by outsider Western researchers, are characteristic of how Indigenous persons are commonly constructed as being shells of their former selves, with the better parts existing only in the past, or in museums (Deloria, 1994). The situation is reminiscent of Dhamoon and Crontassel’s (2014) critique of decolonial missionaries, stating that many think, “colonization is only a problem *because of others not quite getting it*” (p.15, emphasis added). Stonebanks (2010) effectively states that local Malawian residents are ‘not quite getting it’ and are in possession of knowledge rendered inauthentic in juxtaposition to Stonebank’s romantic visions of pre-colonial Indigenous knowledge, which was to be found atop a mountain. Stonebanks (2010) then inserts his idea of “critical pedagogy” toward the “ultimate desire to alleviate human suffering” as, not only, the new path that will guide local people towards decolonization, but also to justify permanent Western settlement in Malawi (p.370).

This “repressive authenticity” can also be observed in Stonebank’s et al.’s (2016) paper on TPM, entitled *Just Give the Money to the Women*, where the directors of TPM constructs “authenticity” as a concept by referring to William L. Gardner and Bruce J. Avolio, two professors of business and management in the US. This concept is deployed by TPM to determine which of the local Kasungu residents are worthy of access to resources. TPM’s declaration of “authentic leadership” resting with some Kasungu residents and not others is made based on the author’s observations of shifts in the behaviors and values that were observed after the Kasungu women’s engagement with TPM. They observe and document a movement towards authenticity that local Kasungu women experienced due to their interactions with TPM that effectively enabled them to see “the common good” (Stonebanks et al., 2016, p.275). TPM’s directors qualify these women as “emerging authentically” and, in turn, reward them financially (as evidenced by the publication’s name). Their account concludes with the sentiment that “faith, responsibility and ownership should be awarded to those who lead” and professes that it is now best practice to “just give the money to the women”, or, those they consider authentic (p.275). More troubling is the realization that, despite TPM being donated the land upon which they operate, the money they are providing to local women—after those women adopt certain subjectivities deemed authentic by TPM—is derived from selling Western researchers and academic elites access to the women’s land and to unfettered surveillance of their livelihoods. By controlling the parameters through which “authenticity” is acknowledged, TPM effectively formulates a conceptual apparatus that other Indigenous Malawians must operate within if they want to receive funding or gain access to TPM’s resources.

Another example of repressive authenticity is found in the publication by TPM (2016), *Health and wellness in rural Malawi: a health development initiative*. In this publication, TPM members recount their struggles with creating a community health team, positing that due to Indigenous Kasungu resident’s supposed lack of education “they were unable to consider causation and prevention of community health problems abstractly or to respond in innovative and creative ways” (Sheerin, Stonebanks, Jeffery & Schouten, 2016, p.37). In quickly flipping this rhetoric, perhaps it is TPM members that don’t understand Kasungu resident’s conception of causation and prevention, as understandings of medicine—and medical definitions, etiology, prevention and treatment more specifically—vary significantly between cultures and thus are not concretized and universalized. Nor does the universalization of Western medical lenses and

practices exist in a vacuum.<sup>22</sup> Conceptions of health and wellness in Malawi may differ drastically from those of TPM members. Indeed, many Chewa people in Kasungu envision health and wellness as a product of effective medical herbalism and ethnobotany (Msonthi, 1996) and as extending far outside of biomedical paradigms.<sup>23</sup> It may be the case that Kasungu community members are exercising a radical refusal to transfigure themselves into TPM's conception of what a 'modern' subject should be.

TPM constructs authenticity through a disregard or silencing of local resident's opinions of what *they* deem to be 'authentic'. According to Žižek (2009), this involves epistemic movement from "I speak the truth" to "The truth itself speaks (in/through me)" by "holding onto the truth about the position from which one speaks" (p.3). Seemingly recognizing this game, Indigenous scholars have been humbly mentioning for years now that they do not need or desire Western academics to "validate (their) vision of a new future" (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005, p.614). However, it is important to consider also that if Indigenous imaginaries and visions were recognized by TPM as authentic, TPM would again be 'out of job' as their Western 'expertise' would be rendered null. As Indigenous scholar and professor Michael Market (2006) argues, the proliferation and freedom of Indigenous knowledge, opinion and speech remains a threat to Western claims to authenticity, as they usually constitute a "direct challenge to the core assumptions about life's goals and purpose" (p.486). The proliferation and freedom of that knowledge can, and is, circumscribed and foreclosed upon by controlling the spaces, both physical and conceptual, within which Western parties control dominant discourses and authority.

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<sup>22</sup> Anne Fadiman's (2012) *The spirit catches you and you fall down: A Hmong child, her American doctors, and the collision of two cultures* charts the trajectory of a Hmong child with epilepsy from Laos who is brought to America and later dies due to a whole host of misaligning conceptions, etiologies and treatments between the Western medical lens and the Hmong's.

<sup>23</sup> Malawian people's conceptions of health and wellness extends far beyond the Western medical paradigm's conceptual parameters, in that the scope of medicine (known in the local Kasungu language of Chewa as Mankhwala) and traditional healing/healers (sing'anga) isn't confined to illness or sickness, or even health, but rather a sense of holistic well-being (moyo) that speaks to a sense of cosmological harmony. Consider also that there is a long history of ritualized practices to produce moyo being hidden from Western colonial eyes. For example, after the arrival of David Livingstone—the first colonial missionary to set foot in Malawi in 1866—ritualized sexual dances began to be practiced in disguise due to fear of judgement and reactions (Kamlongera, 1992, p. 93).

The Campus constitutes what many scholars call the “field of research”, which is a place where the processes of development are studied and the results of development are realized. Amit (2003) notes, research experience ‘in the field’ is the single most important consideration for publication approval. Understandably, hungry young academics at TPM, like myself, continue to flock to Kasungu with TPM, keeping our heads on a swivel with eyes prepped and ears perked for when local Kasungu residents enter the Campus—looking and listening for any glimmer of an interaction or dialogue of interest for blogging or research publication. Tilley (2011) maintains that “the field” in Africa continues to be constructed as a “natural laboratory” to examine local communities and persons within their “natural habitats”.

As Veracini (2010) makes abundantly clear, both traditional and contemporary forms of colonialism are concerned with the making and unmaking of places and spaces to serve empire. In recognizing that TPM’s Campus was constructed by Westerners as much for helping the local community as it was to serve the purpose of being a field of research to extract “raw data”, it is necessary to acknowledge, as Jones & Norris (2005) have, that field sites aren’t just places of research. Instead, “it is ‘at’ (and through) these sites, that more durable social practices, social identities and social groups are constructed” (Jones & Norris, 2005, p.141).

As evidenced by the, roughly, 250 blog posts on the TPM website (PraxisMalawi, n.d., *Blog Archive*) and many academic publications mentioned earlier, the Campus has enabled unfettered surveillance and research on the local Kasungu population. As Stonebanks (2016) maintains, this was entirely purposeful, in that “the concerted effort is to use a variety of qualitative tools *to gain as much as information as possible from all participants...*” (p.113, emphasis added). Currently, the only literature speaking to research scope or scale states: “Through PAR, we documented and analyzed collaborative efforts with community members...” (Stonebanks, 2016, p.110), meaning everything and anything worthy of publication is open-season. What this meant at the Campus in practice, essentially, was a constant journaling of every interaction between oneself and local Kasungu residents while noting every observation or piece of dialogue deemed useful for one’s academic endeavors. Within TPM’s Campus the sound of pencils and pens carving paper is ever-present. Western students and researchers, like myself, continuously scan the surroundings for any sign of activity—oral or physical—that may be of interest to those reading, or grading, research papers, blogs and/or promotional material.

Knowledge creation, surveillance and ethnographic methods have and continue to be used by academic elites as ways to control Indigenous populations and represent them in ways that are dehumanizing (Smith, 2013; Said, 1976) which can lead to devastating harms.<sup>24</sup> The potential of the Campus to lead to representations of Indigenous Kasungu residents, or, said another way, them becoming “overdetermined from without” via dominant discourses (Fanon, 1970, p. 116) troubles truisms regarding the Campus’s benefits. For example, a current TPM board member constructs local Kasungu residents within the theoretical discourse of “learned helplessness” in order to explain their entrenchment in poverty (Sherbrooke Record, 2015). It is only through a site of engagement like the Campus, which grants Western epistemological supremacy through constituting space where professional “field work” can take place, that a theory like “learned helplessness” could ever be applied to a large group of people without their consent. In recognizing this, Indigenous data-governance must become a central pillar of TPM.

### **The Globalization of Indigenous Data Governance: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Imperative**

...while land-based analysis and resultant protection of Indigenous rights, data and governance have made large-scale impacts domestically in Canada, a paucity of similar work has undermined progress on the protection of the rights of Indigenous peoples in Africa

—Jérémie Gilbert (2017), Professor of Human Rights Law, University of Roehampton Law School

Canadian researchers involved in TPM generally use ethics protocols written and informed by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada’s (SSHRC) *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS2). The TCPS2 includes guidelines titled: *Research Involving First Nations, Inuit and Metis Peoples of Canada*, which are adhered to by TPM’s Canadian researchers. My research ethics protocol included references to: 1) Oral traditions for informed consent (Article 3.12); 2) Respect for Community Codes of Practice (Article 9.8), and 3)

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<sup>24</sup> For examples of harms outside of direct colonial force that have come through controlling data about ethnic/sovereign Indigenous groups, please see Assembly of First Nations (2007) *O.C.A.P.: Ownership, Control, Access and Possession, First Nations Inherent Right to Govern First Nations Data*, p. 8.

Collaborative Research (Article 9.12). Despite these references and associated awareness of ethical imperatives, ethical dilemmas are still rampant in TPM's operation.

Existent solutions to the ethical dilemmas of AD research posited by Indigenous scholars and leaders have sought to limit the ability of Western researchers to exploit, control and represent Indigenous groups by writing into formal research governance laws the need for greater Indigenous ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP) of data (AFN, 2007). Due to the absence of binding inter-continental or international treaties regarding human research in Africa (Dominquez-Urban, 1997), which is the main reason why Africa has become one of the most desired locations for clinical trial research (Glickman et al., 2009), there have been growing calls for globally-binding ethical frameworks to ensure Indigenous data governance (Kukutai & Taylor, 2016). Recently, the *Assembly of First Nations* (2018), a pan-Canadian Indigenous advocacy group, delivered a strong statement to the United Nations on the need for a global commitment to UNDRIP and the aforementioned principles of free, prior and informed consent.

This is an imperative because many communities engage in various forms of research as a strategy for correcting their own oppression in the form of seeking immediate access to resources tied to research programs without fully recognizing the nuances of their operation (Tuck, 2009). This engagement is often continued due to Indigenous communities (and the majority of the global population, for that matter) having little knowledge of the formal research ethics frameworks involved in development work and due to the resource access that research affords (AFN, 2007). As Escobar (2011) states, acknowledging the popularity of these circumstances, essential service provision frequently “serve(s) to govern” (p. 143). Those who subscribe to TPM's version of, arguably, the MCGI and its associated frameworks for research, despite limited ethical robustness, are rewarded with access to resources. The AFN condemns Western researchers for continuing to neglect contextualizing the concepts of “free” and “informed” consent within the socio-economic milieu in which they are being sought...as those in moribund economies may nod in approval in exchange for a glass of water. Indeed, Indigenous persons are frequently “led to believe that participation in research projects is necessary to maintain their right to services” (Kukutai & Taylor, 2016, p. 143).



The imperative of “free” and “informed” consent becomes difficult and muddled in moribund economies that have begun to rely on a research schema, like TPM, for access to essential services. If power can be summed as “the ability to define reality and effectively negotiate and enroll others into that vision” (Leitner et al.1996, as cited in Tembo, 2003, pp. 530-531), controlling the resources necessary for life is perhaps peak power. Malawian scholar Dr. Fletcher Tembo (2003) speaks with clarity to how NGOs in Malawi continue to operationalize the same offerings of education and healthcare through participatory work that is really used to impose and document agreement with Western agent’s own imaginaries and visions of the world. As Schuman (2012) explains in firm detail in regards to healthcare research in developing countries, “a rights-based notion of autonomous consent *ignores the actual context in which that consent takes place*—a terrain defined by the absence of essential medical treatment, desperation for healthcare, and important cultural differences” (p. 129, original emphasis). As a result of TPM’s provision of essential services and the hopeful imaginary that this evokes, the “most subjugated” will “take on some of (the researcher’s) shared aspirations and social meanings—whether as a strategic means of immediate survival, sincere investment, or some combination of these” (Stein & de Oliveira Andreotti, 2017, p. 4). By providing services essential for life, TPM’s research ethics are challenged in recognition that participants may feel consent is necessary for access to these services. It seems, for TPM, that the deep poverty of Malawi is only recognized when constructing discourses of development-research authority, and not in exploring ethical implications of research

Additionally, it is unclear if anyone in Kasungu is aware of how they are represented in the Western world, via scholarly articles, websites, blogs, Twitter, Facebook and marketing material for Bishop’s University. It is unclear if they are aware of discourses painting them as victims of their own “learned helplessness”. The lone reference to a mutual understanding of PAR or the basic premises of TPM’s vision is provided by Chief Makupo when answering the question posed by Stonebanks; “How are you educating us?” In response, he explains: “Well, this environment to you is pretty new. We educate you by giving you whatever you are looking for from us. Yes. You ask us questions, we answer you, and we educate *you*. You ask questions, you answer, *you educate*” (Chief Makupo, as cited in Stonebanks, 2016, p.119). Quite simply, it seems any depth of understanding for research methods, ethics or protocols involved in TPM remains, at best, inconclusive. Ethics protocols only go as far as their participants’

understanding, which presents a crucial ethical issue to consider in TPM, and unfortunately, “the critics of the traditional field research process have sought their solutions to ethical problems from everyone else but those under study” (Lupan, 2003, p.46). This is also the case for TPM, with no localized ethics and data governance protocols or plans to discuss this. While Kasungu residents have been *allowed* to participate in the *action* and *dialogue* that research papers are written about, they have not been able to participate in constructing community-based ethics protocols or data governance processes that ensure sovereignty and respect.

Do local Kasungu residents genuinely understand the research that is taking place in TPM? Do they understand the TCPS2 ethics framework from CIHR, SSHRC and NSERC? Do they possess enough agency and resources to refuse opportunities for employment and access to resources that stem from participating in the research? Questions similar to these have led researchers throughout the globe to become reflexively critical of their own ethical frameworks, call on others to do the same and question the notion of free and informed consent in these contexts (Lindegger & Richter, 2000).

## **Conclusion**

Processes of colonization, imperialism and exploitation used market forces and violence to impose the Western development imaginary and gaze throughout the globe with intention to extract wealth and destroy and disrupt all alternatives. As they began to be recognized for the malicious processes they are, new imaginaries and processes have been brought to the fore in hopes of better and more respectful outcomes. While alternative modalities for development masked their power through conceding to formally, or continually, colonized subjects the ability to participate, it wasn’t long before this veneer molted under critical analyses. Underneath it remains clear that, while a piece of the crown was given as a gift, development experts and Western state apparatuses retained the rights, advantages and position as the arbiters of truth—or the place from which truth speaks. The continuity of this positioning effectively sustains the power to draw the parameters of conduct, right the terms of inclusion and speak the words that represent reality. The *trompe l’oeil* of AD spoke loudly against colonization and mainstream development, while retaining abilities to (de)legitimize certain modalities or imaginaries regarding culture, economy, epistemology and healthcare.

Due to AD's discursive mechanisms, including the employment of goals and ideals that border on the impossible, coupled with limited benchmarks, evaluation frameworks or measurable results, pose a greater threat to global cultures than traditional development or imperialism did. It seems that AD projects have begun incorporating this reality into the discourses used to authorize their permanency. For example, given the fine line between death and survival among Kasungu residents due to lack of arable land, coupled with TPM's large-scale acquisition of land, one would think that TPM is convinced of the benefits its "development packages" will provide local residents. This is not the case, as TPM remains open about the possibility of only being able to provide Western researchers with "possible exposure to their (local Kasungu residents) living conditions" (Stonebanks, 2010, p. 110), local Kasungu residents with "short-term monetary compensation" (Stonebanks, 2016, p. 110), while also noting its own potential to revert back to colonial relationships (see, for example, Stonebanks, 2016 and Stonebanks et al., 2016). It begs the question: if TPM falls apart, who would be impacted most negatively? Perhaps a more important question: if AD projects begin to leverage all of the possible critiques that could be set against them by acknowledging them in discourses, as a sort of discursive force-field, while openly adopting concepts and ideals that are a moon's throw away from reality...how can development analyses proceed in any type of serious or methodical manner? Maybe the only way is for those working within NGOs to continue to write critically and honestly about the power inherent in development discourses.

Moving forward, three low-barrier and high-impact strategies are humbly suggested for improvement: 1) ensuring extensive availability of research and ethics training for local Kasungu residents that wish to participate in TPM, should they so desire such information; 2) beginning discussions on how Western research has impacted Indigenous populations both at home and abroad, including an adoption of a localized TPM ethics protocol that resembles the OCAP principles, and; 3) default research to a "two-eyed seeing" lens, wherein the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of Kasungu residents is always respected and given supremacy in conduct, as it is, after all, their land that TPM operates on. Additionally, if the above-mentioned strategies cannot be achieved, I would suggest pulling the research element associated with TPM, as "colonialism's and postcolonialism's fellow traveler" is the "collection, use and misuse of data on Indigenous people" (Kukutai & Taylor, 2016, p. 57).

To the local community members I worked with in Kasungu, I suggest an active move to research refusal, which is a tactic used to “redirect academic analysis away from...narratives that obscure slow violence, and towards the structures, institutions and practices that engender those narratives” (Zahara, 2016, para. 2). This refusal would: enable residents to avoid the possibility that they are represented in ways that disenfranchise them, or in any way they don’t agree with; provide TPM with adequate time to figure out an appropriate research protocol similar to OCAP, and; give TPM time to figure out what decolonization means, and maybe assist in clarifying and contributing to the decolonial struggles underway in its own backyard.

Additionally, as Sachs (1997) states, because research, imperialism and capitalism has led to immense issues in the Western world—ecological collapse, massive disparities between the wealthy and poor, etc.—global development and research may be just exporting these problems overseas. I tend to agree, and, in light of my findings, would hope for a ‘delinking’ of Kasungu and Bishop’s University. However, I understand that this cannot occur, as essential services are being provided by TPM, the continuity of which is premised upon income generated from bringing Western students to Kasungu, and thus this action now potentiates large-scale harms to Kasungu residents. Kasungu is a different place now that TPM has arrived, and only time will tell whether its ideals can be realized or if this is another example of the potency of the MCGI and Western discursive authority.

To conclude, I revert back to the ‘antidote’ to colonization posed by Vickers: respect. TPM is an endeavor that is founded by inspiring people and praise-worthy academics with noble intentions. It is, conceivably at first glance, a beacon of hope in a world of development that far too often does not care to listen to Indigenous voices (Gregoriou, 2001). I’m honored to have been a part of the project and I’m excited to analyze it acutely to contribute, hopefully, to the betterment of the project and the people it serves. I’m excited for the day wherein Kasungu residents can turn to their Western researcher counterparts and speak words similar to those from Grand Chief Arlen Dumas of the Assembly of the Manitoba Chiefs directed towards the Canadian state:

“I don’t have any questions but I’m going to tell you how to do your job...get out of our way. Give us our money, give us our land and we’ll take care of ourselves.”

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PraxisMalawi. (2019d, March 29<sup>th</sup>). It must be noted that as soon as the leadership committee finished their six hour meeting, Mrs. Dina Mataka went right back to her experimental farming! [Twitter Post]. Retrieved March 31, 2019 from <https://twitter.com/praxismalawi?lang=en>

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