

**ENCOUNTERS WITH NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT WORKERS:
REFLECTIONS FROM THE “FIELD”**

by

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**A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
University of Toronto**

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ABSTRACT

Encounters with Northern Development Workers: Reflections from the “Field”

Master of Arts, 2001

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This thesis is an exploration of how Northern development workers conceptualise relations between Northern and Southern countries, articulate the role of Northern development worker and understand identity issues. The focus of this research is participants’ reflections of their work as Northern development workers and the meaning they make of these experiences to illuminate professional roles and practices. Through the lens of an interlocking theory of oppression, this inquiry of Northern development worker identity, experiences and practices is situated within a systemic analysis of power and privilege. This theory of interlocking oppression illuminates the workings of class, race, gender and Northern status, facilitating an exploration of the complexity of Northern development worker identity. The detailed accounts of participants’ narrations of their experiences are significant as they reveal interpretive frameworks of identity, culture and power. This work considers the possibilities of consciousness-raising of Northern development workers through informal and self-reflective learning processes.

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PREFACE

And while the path has been neither linear nor easy, it has shaped our shared political and intellectual commitments; we have changed, grown, and learned how to sustain each other during the last seven years. We have challenged each other to be clear; we have become attuned to the pulse of each others thinking, and we have developed an analytic language which now truly belongs to both of us. This has required each of us to let go of our inherited beliefs about the ownership of knowledge. And, as a consequence, we now know that our best ideas are produced through working and thinking together (Alexander and Mohanty, 1997, p. xiii).

This thesis is part of a larger study entitled Shaping the North-South Encounter: The Training of Northern Development Workers. This study was collaboratively designed and researched by gulzar raisa charania and Tabish Surani with the permission and support of our thesis committee, Dr. Jim Cummins and Dr. Shahrzad Mojab as well as the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning. Out of this study emerged two Master of Arts theses that reflect different areas of focus within the research. This thesis, entitled Encounters with Northern Development Workers: Reflections from the “Field”, documents participants’ reflections of their experiences as Northern development workers. It illuminates informal educational processes and analyses of participants through their involvement in international development. This thesis also provides a context for understanding participants’ articulated priorities and visions for training, documented in the second thesis. The second thesis, entitled Shaping the North-South Encounter: The Training of Northern Development Workers, focuses on formal learning processes, investigating the organization of pre-departure training for future Northern development workers. In both theses, we employ the pronoun “we” to acknowledge the insights of both researchers.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Here comes one of the most important sentences in this chapter: *study the rich and powerful, not the poor and powerless...*not nearly enough work is being done on those who hold the power and pull the strings. As their tactics become more subtle and their public pronouncements more guarded, the need for better spade-work becomes crucial. If you live in an advanced country, you undoubtedly have the social and cultural equipment to meet these people on their own terms and to get information out of them. Let the poor study themselves. They already know what is wrong with their lives and if you truly want to help them, the best you can do is to give them a clearer idea of how their oppressors are working now and can be expected to work in the future (George, 1986, p. 289).

Dei's pressing question, "what political space do I choose to occupy at this moment and why" (1999, class notes) made necessary an examination of the seductive impulse to work in Southern communities. Initially we imagined traveling to South Asia and working with feminist organizations and educational institutions committed to social justice. Given our own origins in South Asia, we felt there was a legitimacy with which we could intervene to do this research. We were operating under the premise that contrary to mainstream understandings of South Asian women, there are many and varied feminist organizations and movements and our intent was to bring those stories to a Northern¹ context in order to disrupt "the production of the 'third world woman'" (Mohanty, 1991, p. 51). We felt more entitled than white Northern researchers engaged in projects claiming to empower Southern women without an analysis of larger systems of disempowerment from which they, as dominant researchers benefit. Initially, we invested much of our time trying to understand how we could do this same research differently rather than how we could do different research.

¹ In this study, we are using the terms North and South to refer not to "geographical categories but rather socio-economic ones, referring to the line which divides the strong world market sectors from the competitively weak, economically superfluous sectors in society" (Sachs, 1997, p. 291). We recognize the increasing discrepancy of wealth both within and across nations but the focus of our work rests with exploring the North-South divide and the location of Northern development workers within this economic context.

Many of the readings in our research methodology courses centred dominant bodies conducting research in/on marginalized communities. These works explored the efforts of dominant researchers attempting to circumvent or employ participatory methodologies to address power imbalances in the research relationship, historically and as they continue today. According to Sutherland, this work for dominant researchers involves attending to power imbalances and tracing “our different and diverse positions in a colonial continuum of power which I contend is resolutely, ongoingly colonial, particularly in terms of race and gender, and our consequently different investments in changing those oppressive structures, institutions and relationships” (1994/95, p. 42). Using the language of academic freedom and obfuscating real power imbalances in research and the material benefits attached to them, most Northern researchers deny the need to engage seriously with these issues. We understand this dismissal to be an exercise of privilege on the part of these researchers who continue to understand the world as theirs to see, to name and to claim (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 80). As Behar argues, “out of that legacy, born of European colonial impulse to know others in order to lambast them, better manage them, or exalt them, anthropologists have made a vast intellectual cornucopia” (1996, p. 4). It was in listening to dominant bodies engaged in elaborate and self-serving projects of rationalization in order to not take seriously the implications of who should be doing what research and where, bypassing an interrogation of this desire to study the other that we were able to trace our own complicity in not pursuing the relevance of these questions for our own research.

Thinking through our sense of entitlement to do this research involved a process of identifying places of privilege and penalty in our lives to understand how we are implicated in systems of domination. Through this process, the saliency of Northern status in the context of international development became particularly difficult to deny or ignore. Due to the nature of our collaborative research relationship, we challenged each other about often implicit assumptions that were driving our own research interests and investments. While our positions in systems of

power and privilege are not identical, we share in common historical ties to South Asia and our status as Northern women of colour of Muslim origin. Through a recognition of our own relative positions of privilege as women of colour in the elite world of the academy, living in the North with our origins in the South, we have chosen to interrogate our own complicity as future Northern development workers in order to resist performing ourselves as dominant through a “politics of saving” (Razack, 1998, p. 160) people from the South. We had to seriously interrogate our assumed affinity with South Asian feminists working in the subcontinent to “*recognize* our own habits of dominance and our complicity in systems of domination” (Razack, 1998, p. 160). This interrogation has meant a refocusing of our research to political projects in the North that have enormous impacts on the lives of people in the South. We write from the context of the North.

This study is part of a larger effort to explore and problematize our own desire to participate in international development as educators from the North. In positioning ourselves as future Northern development workers of South Asian origin, this work also involves an exploration of our practices of negotiating and understanding our identities and assumptions about development. While this study does not document this process, it is present in and parallel to our research.² We chose to conceptualize our research as an exploration of the ways in which Northern development workers as facilitators organize and implement training programs for Northern development

² Also present but unexplored are the complexities of negotiating our identities as researchers of colour in dominant sites. Most of the research literature we were exposed to through course work focused on the intellectual acrobatics of dominant researchers to rationalize their continued research of/in marginalized communities. We were also able to access literature exploring the complexities of non-dominant academics researching within their own communities. While we recognize the value and necessity of this work, it was more difficult to access literature examining the complexity and negotiations of non-dominant researchers researching in dominant sites. Stanfield speaks to this lack of attention, noting “scholars have yet to debate the outsider/insider knowledge controversy from the standpoint of traditional outsiders, such as people of colour, conducting research on traditionally dominant subjects, that is, whites” (Stanfield 1994, 176).

workers.³ Recognizing that priorities for training often emerge from participants'⁴ prior experiences, this study also explores participants' reflections of their work as Northern development workers and the meaning they make of these experiences to illuminate professional roles and practices. For the purpose of this study, we are interested in how facilitators challenge future Northern development workers to reflect on and negotiate their identity positions prior to participation in overseas development work. As training programs are a critical site for Northern development workers to understand this professional role, the focus of this study rests in working with facilitators who engage these individuals in an analysis of identity and its intersections with the historical, social and economic conditions in which development work is located.

The focus of this first thesis is participants' accounts of their work as Northern development workers and facilitators and the meaning they have made of these experiences to illuminate professional roles and practices of Northern development workers. The detailed account of participants' narrations of their experiences are significant as they reveal interpretive frameworks of identity, culture and power as well as conceptualizations of their role as Northern development workers. It is through their own experiences and identity negotiations that participants articulate an understanding of the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that Northern development workers require. In the second thesis of this study, we consider how facilitators enact these insights in the organization and delivery of training programs. Combining relevant literature with participant experience, the second thesis is an exploration of the complexities involved in training Northern development workers and how facilitators negotiate these complexities. This inquiry into training programs is an effort to understand how facilitators intervene to shape Northern development

³ We are using Northern development worker to "reference Canadians and other Northerners, who under the auspices of Canadian NGOs, do development work on long term contracts, in 'developing countries,' regardless of what titles, such as 'volunteer' or 'cooperant,' are attached to this work" (Heron, 1999, pp. 5-6).

⁴ We use the term participants to reference the individuals with whom we worked in this study in their capacity as Northern development workers and facilitators engaged in pre-departure training.

worker's understandings of what constitutes the North-South encounter in the context of international development work. We are particularly interested in pedagogical choices and strategies used to prioritize and render visible issues of identity during the training program. A synthesis of facilitator insights into the training process will provide the basis for an exploration of pedagogical strategies for future training programs, centring identity issues.

Although we chose not to situate our project in a Southern or indigenous context, we align our intervention in training Northern development workers to support the efforts of indigenous projects as articulated by Tuhiwai Smith. These projects are based in efforts to develop and support indigenous based research that seeks to reclaim indigenous cultures and languages (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 142). We are drawing primarily on her elaboration of this intervention with respect to a "critical rereading of Western history" (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 149) through which issues of Southern economic underdevelopment are reframed, historicized and contemporarized. Our effort to investigate training programs for future Northern development workers is an intervention to explore the possibility of a different North – South encounter. It is within this context that we will investigate the discourse of development worker and implications for training within the larger international political, social and economic context. Facilitators are in a unique position to influence and challenge Northern development workers' understandings of their participation in international development. It is the recognition of this potentially powerful location inhabited by facilitators that has led us to training programs for Northern development workers as a site of potentially tremendous change. However, we remain cognizant that training is situated within organizational constraints, mediating the orientation of training and possibilities of what understandings of development worker can emerge.

In choosing deliberately and strategically to work in a Northern context, our work speaks to Northern development organizations and individuals participating in, or contemplating participation, in international development. We orient our research with the intent that it will

ultimately lead to more reflective and critical⁵ development worker practices in the South. As we have used this research as an opportunity to continue thinking through our own participation in the South, our hope is that readers will also choose to work through or continue working through implications of Northern development worker participation in international development. For us, processes of working through demand we move beyond individual good intentions to consider the impact of the larger Northern presence in Southern communities.

We do not understand our work to be a how-to manual for facilitators, many of whom have decades of experience in international development and in training future development workers. Our goal is to document and theorize themes, ethical dilemmas and absences in training programs, specifically around issues of identity. This study does not account for the impact of training on the attitudes and behaviours of Northern development workers. Rather, it focuses the content and processes of training and in this thesis, traces them to participants' own experiences and reflections. As educators, we also see many resonances and points of connection to other training and education related sites where anti-oppression work is identified as a priority. We also see the relevance and applicability of this critical analysis for community development work within the North. In the final analysis, we hope our work will make a contribution to shaping a North-South encounter based in Northern practices of accountability, epistemic and methodological humility (Narayan, 1988a, p. 38).

⁵ We rely on Dei's explication of critical as "a critique aimed at understanding and transforming existing ways of thinking and knowing and doing things" (1996, p. 10).

CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY

The difficulty many of us face in drawing attention to the issue of material inequalities as a key factor in research...suggests, to my mind, that the desire to transform the world is often weaker than the wish to enjoy it as it is (Patai, 1992, p. 145).

Rationale

As training programs are a critical site for Northern development workers to explore their role in the South, we worked with participants who engage these individuals in examining their participation in international development. Our interest lies in exploring how participants understand and negotiate their professional roles as facilitators and Northern development workers in the South. This inquiry allows us to consider the implications of these understandings for the organization of pre-departure training for future Northern development workers, particularly around issues of identity. While the focus of our work is not institutionally based, a consideration of participants' experiences is clearly situated in an institutional structure that provides a context, mediating the possibilities of what understandings of development worker can emerge and how these understandings inform the training process. The methodology we elaborate below is for both theses that comprise this study.

While we appreciate that curriculum and organizational documents "act as some form of expression or representation of relevant elements of the social world or that we can trace or 'read' aspects of the social world through them" (Mason, 1997, p. 72), we prioritize a methodology that centres people. Our methodology incorporates interviews with fifteen Northern development workers/facilitators and observations of sessions of training programs in four Canadian non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This methodological choice reflects an understanding that curriculum is not a written document alone, detached from its interactional process. This approach recognizes the complexity of curriculum and infusion of personal meaning as it moves from text to articulation and enactment. We use interviews to explore the meaning participants

articulate of their own experiences and teaching practices as they reveal processes of identity negotiation as well as their understandings of appropriate roles for Northern development workers in the South. Observations further allow us to explore how participants enact these understandings in the context of training Northern development workers. Our work with participants also presents us with the opportunity to understand competing priorities and visions of development worker that emerge through observations and interviews. The focus of our research is consistent with an ontological perspective that recognizes individual negotiations within competing frameworks of development work as “meaningful components of the social world” (Mason, 1997, p. 14). The impetus to develop these research relationships is based in an ontological position that suggests “people’s knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences and interactions are meaningful properties” (Mason, 1997, p. 39) of social reality and the epistemological position that an acceptable method of generating this data is through interaction with people to make meaning of their accounts.

While we had to define the parameters of this study, we did consider the ways in which Northern development workers, enrolled in pre-departure training, experience training and negotiate their understanding of what it means to be a Northern development worker and competing visions of development work. Acknowledging they have the potential to be powerful agenda setters, guiding the curriculum and shaping the direction of training, in this study we focus on the role of Northern development workers/facilitators in influencing understandings of what it means to become a development worker.

Meet the Participants

This study is not conceptualized as a comparative analysis of the four participating NGO training programs. In order to protect the anonymity of the non-governmental organizations and participating individuals, we do not disclose specific details of each of the NGOs or training

programs except to note they all have programs for sending volunteers⁶ to participate in international development in the South. We protect the confidentiality and identity of research participants by not including distinguishable characteristics, such as their real names, work places or organizational affiliations. For the same reason, we identify all participants as facilitators and use this term to include individuals involved in organizing, overseeing and facilitating training sessions.

All participants in our study have overseas development work experience, the majority in paid as well as voluntary capacities. Most have at least five years of experience in international development. Nine participants are women, six are men and participants range in age from mid-twenties to mid-fifties. Six of the fifteen participants have their origins in the South and variously identify as people of colour, immigrants, non-whites, visible minorities, blacks, South Asians, Canadians, Northerners, Westerners, and in the case of one participant of colour, there was no self-identification. The nine remaining participants variously identify as whites, Canadians, Westerners, Northerners, members of a tribe and in the case of one white participant, there was no self-identification. All participants have university undergraduate degrees.

Data Analysis: “In the Field”

We gained access to pre-departure training programs and participants by contacting non-governmental organizations that have overseas volunteer sending programs. Initially, we mailed out twenty-five requests for participation to NGOs that fit our criteria and chose to work with four such organizations. Administrative consent was obtained from each NGO, as well as individual consent of participants to be observed and/or interviewed (see Appendix A). Some agreed to be observed, but declined to be interviewed while others were willing to participate in both

⁶ For the purpose of this study, we have purposefully used the language of Northern development worker rather than that of volunteer in order to account for the material and personal gains incurred through participation in international development work, often obscured through the language of volunteerism.

observations and an interview. In some cases, we were only able to interview participants and did not have the benefit of observing them in training.

Our methodology allows us to explore themes that emerge in interviewing fifteen facilitators to consider how they understand their own experiences as Northern development workers and articulate training priorities around issues of identity. We use observations to understand how facilitators introduce, respond to and synthesize issues of identity during training. As our work is not organizationally based, articulations and observations are not connected to specific institutions or internal politics of organizations. In orienting our work in this way, we are better able to protect the anonymity of participating individuals and organizations. In addition to allowing us to see ideas as they move from articulation to interaction and enactment, observations and interviews illuminate the continuity between participants' understandings of the role of development worker, training goals and organization and implementation of training. This methodology also allows us to gain more depth to participants' articulation of development worker and clarifies the challenges of moving from experience to articulated training goals to pedagogical practice. Because we observed participants prior to interviews, observations provided a point of departure to explore the breadth of experiences of participants as Northern development workers and facilitators.

Observations

We observed sections of training programs and in many cases, training was heavily outsourced to facilitators external to the NGO. We interviewed at least three and no more than four participants from each of the participating NGOs. Through observations of training programs, we were able to glimpse the complexity of participants' understandings of development worker that inform their pedagogical choices and practices. We were able to explore participants' understandings of development worker through interactions as they emerged in the training context. Observations further allowed us to explore what is implied through these practices about the role of facilitator

in training Northern development workers. We were also able to glimpse behaviour (facilitation style, group interactions and dynamics) that often escapes articulation due to its familiarity or assumed insignificance. The organization of training and pedagogical strategies are not arbitrary but reflect assumptions, often not rendered explicit, about what is required to prepare individuals to participate in international development.

Depending on the NGO, either administrative personnel or participants arranged to secure consent of Northern development workers enrolled in pre-departure training programs (see Appendix A). The size of groups in training ranged from five to sixteen Northern development workers. While they all consented, during the training we observed varying degrees of comfort with our presence. Some development workers commented that while they were initially hesitant, they became more comfortable with our presence through the course of the observation period. Some development workers also approached us during breaks and lunch to ask specific questions about the study, our interest and motivations. However, it also appeared that some remained uneasy with our presence. In these cases, there was minimal interaction with or acknowledgement of our presence. We observed that in the two training programs where we were present for introductory activities, we felt better able to establish a more comfortable rapport with the group rather than disrupting an already established group dynamic. We recognize that whatever the response to our presence was or appeared to be, “where the researcher is not a party to the interaction but is simply within earshot, knowledge of his/her presence may still have an effect” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.130).

In each of the four participating NGOs, observations lasted between two to three full days. We observed sessions in the four training programs for a total of seventy-seven hours. We observed eleven of the fifteen participants that we later interviewed. Of the eleven, three participants delivered sessions that lasted two to three hours, six participants delivered sessions that lasted one and a half to two days and two participants organized training programs that were heavily

outsourced to external consultants. We observed these two participants over a two to three day period. The remaining four participants, whom we did not observe, were involved primarily in organizing training.

Our observations in each of the training programs began with a brief introduction outlining our research and addressing issues and questions from participants and Northern development workers. In most training programs, we sat on the periphery of the group, usually not together and did not participate in group discussions and activities. During observations, we took descriptive notes, documenting the interaction between participants and development workers, copied charts and notes that were posted on the walls, sketched the room layout and seating arrangements. Our purpose in documenting interactions between Northern development workers and participants was to understand how participants introduced, responded to and synthesized issues during training, particularly as they relate to identity. Where we have documented interactions from training in the thesis, we use italics. However in subsequent sites, we alternated taking notes, as we felt quite conspicuous when we were both writing, particularly when there was disclosure of a personal nature. Alternating note taking enabled the other researcher to observe the learning environment through participant responses to development workers' non-verbal dynamics such as body language, eye contact, note passing and side conversations. In one training site, facilitators asked us to play a more active role in discussions given the small group size and limited space that prevented us from separating ourselves physically from the group. In this case, one researcher continued to document interactions while the other participated more actively in larger group discussions and activities. Through the course of observing this training program, we rotated these roles. We were aware of the need to balance our participation in group activities while not dominating or heavily directing these conversations. In all but one training program, we were invited to join the group for meals and breaks. While we intended our observations to be unobtrusive, we learned that not all participants share a common understanding

of what constitutes unobtrusive observations. Some participants indicated that not engaging in discussions or joining the group for meals was more intrusive while other participants preferred us to play a more discreet role. In order to minimize disruption to training, we relied on participants to direct our role and participation.

Interviews

Interviews allowed us to understand the ways in which participants' experiences as Northern development workers inform training practices. The methodological choice to include interviews reflects our understanding that interviews are an "extremely important source of data: it may allow one to generate information that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to obtain otherwise – both about events described and about perspectives and discursive strategies" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p. 131). Interviews explored the following three interrelated areas: first, we asked participants to provide us with background into their interest and involvement in international development. We then asked participants to articulate their priorities for training, as they are informed by their own experiences as Northern development workers. Finally, we explored how participants organize training, their pedagogical strategies and development worker responses to training (see Appendix B). While we used an interview guide to cover these specific themes, many of our questions were in response to ideas and experiences raised by participants during the course of the interview or as a result of our observations. These questions were deliberately open-ended to elicit their understandings of identity in the context of development work.

All observations took place prior to interviews. In observing participants first, we were able to more fully appreciate their theories of teaching and learning as well as understandings of identity. These observations were used as a point of departure in subsequent interviews to understand more broadly participants' understandings of the role of Northern development workers as well as the

theoretical underpinnings of their training practices and approaches. We often drew on specific examples and interactions from training to explore further our own observations and insights while also encouraging participants to speak to their wider experiences as Northern development workers and facilitators. We were both present and participated actively in semi-structured interviews with fifteen participants that lasted on average for one and half hours. Conducting interviews jointly was something we routinely negotiated. Our involvement in interviews often times depended on a combination of factors including the rapport we had established with the participant, our ability to predict the other's responses and our own priorities within the larger research study. Through the course of the interviews there was a process of negotiating when individually we would intervene or follow-up on issues. There were times when we would both ask questions simultaneously or wait for the other to take up certain points while in other interviews we found we were able to anticipate with greater ease the other's participation. In order to ensure accuracy, we audiotaped and transcribed all interviews. We conducted one joint interview with two participants at their request. In this particular interview, our role was minimized as key issues were taken up in conversation primarily between the two participants. Our task was more to intervene and pose key questions to direct the conversation when appropriate.

During interviews, we observed some similar tendencies among participants. Most expressed some hesitation about providing responses that were 'correct' or 'appropriate.' Quite often, participants asked if the information they were providing was useful and relevant to our research, looking to us for affirmation to continue. As well, there was some resistance to having their responses recorded as definitive and some participants qualified that their comments were not exhaustive. In most interviews, participants noted they found the interview process to be quite exhausting and in some cases evocative of deeply personal experiences.

In order to share the preliminary insights generated through our research study, an interim update was sent via email to all participating NGOs and participants, outlining our process for data analysis and organizing themes that emerged during interviews and observations. As well, a final report summarizing the research findings will be sent to all participating organizations and individuals.

CHAPTER 3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND APPLICATION

Introduction

This chapter provides a theoretical grounding for our exploration of Northern development worker identity and practices. Our goal is to synthesize diverse theoretical resources to consider what this framework makes relevant to ask and investigate in this study. We have not provided comprehensive theoretical elaborations of each of the theorists we draw on and recognize that theoretically there are contradictions and divergences between them that are not fully explored. We begin with an explication of an interlocking theory of oppression that sets the context for our inquiry.⁷ Recognizing that “research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions” (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 5), we locate our work in an explicitly anti-oppression framework that we elaborate in this chapter. We also accept Lather’s characterization of openly ideological research as “neither more nor less ideological than is mainstream positivist research” (1986, p. 64). Our work considers the possibilities of consciousness-raising of Northern development workers through informal and self-reflective learning processes as well as in formal learning contexts, in this case pre-departure training. We bring together these theoretical insights to further investigate the complexities of Northern development worker identity and orientation of pre-departure training. In investigating our statement of problem through the lens of this theoretical framework, we situate our inquiry of development worker identity, experiences and practices within a systemic analysis of power and privilege. While an interlocking analysis of oppression makes relevant investigating social relations of domination and oppression, it also renders visible the limitations of liberal ideologies and approaches to social change. Central to the liberal approach is a celebration of diversity and respect for difference in ways that

⁷ This chapter was collaboratively developed by gulzar raisa charania and Tabish Surani and provides the theoretical framework for this study.

peripheralize urgent questions about social organization and relations of power. Given the centrality of power and privilege in our work and understanding of social relations, we have chosen deliberately to explore the transformative potential offered by the critical theorists, whose insights we synthesize as they relate to our study.

Theoretical Framework

Account of Interlocking Oppression

Because we understand everyday encounters to be structured through the lens of multiple oppressions, we have chosen to engage extensively with the theoretical framework developed by Razack and articulated in Looking White People in the Eye: Gender, Race, and Culture in Courtrooms, and Classrooms. In identifying interlocking systems of oppression, it is a theory committed to social change and anti-oppression with respect to all systems of domination. This affinity to Razack's work has emerged from a powerful recognition of self and naming of experience that cannot be isolated into racialized, classed or gendered selves. As Bannerji argues "it is always like that, this being in society, it lacks neatness, a proper compartmentalization" (1995, p. 11). In developing this analysis of interlocking systems of oppression, Razack identifies the foundational influence of Trinh T. Min-Ha, Patricia Hill Collins and a gendered reading of Frantz Fanon. Fellows and Razack explicate the operation of interlocking as follows, "this 'interlocking' effect means that the systems of oppression come into existence in and through one another so that class exploitation could not be accomplished without gender and racial hierarchies" (1998, p. 335). This theory of interlocking oppression illuminates the workings of race, gender and Northern status, facilitating an exploration of the complexity of Northern development worker identity. Razack recognizes the complexity of social relations and unfixedness of identity, while maintaining an unwavering interrogation of structures of

domination that she clearly names as capitalism, white supremacy⁸ and patriarchy, while acknowledging heterosexism and ableism.

Razack's work contributes to the production of a language to "complicate the meaning of gender" and describes "hierarchical relations among women" (Razack, 1998, p. 11) through which she theorizes the simultaneity of systems of oppression and the ways in which these systems sustain one another. In our site, this complication becomes particularly relevant given the prevalence of white, middle class people participating in international development, most of whom are women (Heron, 1999, p. 6). This negotiation of gender and the contestation of its primacy in defining experiences in the world illuminates that while women may be oppressed, this does not preclude them from simultaneously occupying spaces of oppression and domination (Razack, 1998, p. 158). Mohanty, like Razack challenges this universalization of the category woman as it "assumes an ahistorical, universal unity between women based on a generalized notion of their subordination" (1991, p. 64). As Dei warns, "when a particular experience is universalized it is usually accomplished at the expense of making another experience invisible" (1996a, p. 38). This assumed commonness of oppression denies relations of power between women, precluding a more systematic analysis of the ways in which women are positioned differently and unequally with respect to race, class and geography. For example, it is necessary as Russo argues for white women to "understand how the conditions of our lives are connected to and made possible by the conditions of other women's lives" (1991, p. 299). These theorists disrupt the pretence and claims of innocence in which women can retreat to a position of subordination as it obscures

⁸ Following Razack, we employ the term white supremacy in our theoretical framework. Russo provides an elaboration of the significance of using the language of white supremacy. Following hooks, she argues that the term white supremacy rather than racism "correctly places the responsibility on white women and men, rather than focusing on people of colour simply as victims of an amorphous racism. 'White supremacy' as a concept forces us to look power directly in the face, and when we do that there is less room for denial, guilt, and paternalism in trying to change it...part of the problem is that many of us white feminists still do not see racism as our issue" (Russo, 1991, p. 299). To frame racism as an issue and responsibility for white people, we also use the term white supremacy in our theoretical framework.

privileges incurred through other social locations such as class, race, geography, sexuality and physical ability.

Razack's analysis is rooted in historically specific sites that have produced subjects in "different and shifting positions of power and privilege" (Razack, 1998, p. 12). While she insists there are no positions of innocence, Razack does not allow this argument to collapse into an undifferentiated oppression equally experienced by all. In this way, there remains a constant interrogation of individuals who exercise dominance as well as structures of domination that include capitalism, white supremacy and patriarchy. This is in opposition to a liberal framework that emphasizes an analysis of individual attitudes and behaviours rather than locating these in structures of domination and oppression. Structures of oppression and racist domination can only be understood within a historical context that demands we trace and understand how legacies of colonial relations intrude into the present. Razack also argues that the recognition of ourselves "as simultaneously dominant and subordinate" in shifting relations of oppression and domination is not the "the most relevant when we are seeking to end specific hierarchies at specific sites" (1998, p. 161). Consequently, accountability for historical legacies and contemporary relations of oppression demand the tracing of identity and analysis of the reproduction of systems of domination (Razack, 1998, p. 14). This analytical investigation is particularly relevant for Northern development workers as many live and work in Southern countries with recent colonial histories and continued Northern presence.

Razack engages with the tension of recognizing complexities of identity without surrendering to an "ever-changing subject, who is not placed in social relations and history" (Bannerji, 1995, p. 36). In drawing attention to the relationship between self and structure, Dei warns against an "over-simplification of the notion of identity that narrowly dwells on the 'individual self,' and ignores the significant issues of how the inner self is connected to the outer self and to the larger structures of society. Identity can not be defined in isolation" (1996b, pp. 257-258). Articulating

the importance of postmodernist insights with respect to identity while maintaining a focus on questions of accountability and possibilities for change, Razack notes, “while I have relied on post-modern theories for understanding the construction of subjectivity, I tried to keep a modernist eye on domination” (1998, p. 161). Writing from an indigenous perspective, Tuhiwai Smith writes back to the widely accepted use of postmodern and postcolonial theories as a “convenient invention of Western intellectuals which reinscribes their power to define the world” (1999, p. 14). Challenging the notion that “the colonizers have left” (Sykes in Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 98), Tuhiwai Smith argues that the legacy of colonialism endures and with respect to indigenous peoples she writes:

Our colonial experience traps us in the project of modernity. There can be no ‘postmodern’ for us until we have settled some business of the modern. This does not mean that we do not understand or employ multiple discourses, or act in incredibly contradictory ways, or exercise power ourselves in multiple ways. It means that there is unfinished business, that we are still being colonized (and know it), and that we are still searching for justice (1999, p. 34).

The consciousness of the “‘post colonial’ as merely a theoretical space, one not grounded in contemporary realities of people” (Dei, 1996b, p. 251) anchors our research in a material context. For example, Roman locates her explorations of identity in a material context and her work provides an example of bringing together explorations of white identity in a material context. Confronting white racial privilege and the access it affords, Roman argues “while all whites do not benefit equally...it is wrong to suggest that possessive investment in whiteness does not positively advantage the economic and political power of whites across social classes and genders” (1997, p. 276).

In our work, we felt a similar need to negotiate and theorize identity in non-essentialized ways while not allowing the seductiveness of these ideas to provide a basis on which to deny the persistence of material and experienced domination or preclude the possibility of effective resistance and organization. For the purpose of organizing for social change, Razack recognizes

the importance of using “strategic essentialism” (Razack, 1998, p. 168). For example, in her foundational work, Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment, Collins argues that her deliberate decision to articulate an “overly coherent” black feminist thought, rather than to emphasize its very real “contradictions, frictions and inconsistencies” (2000, p. viii) is necessary in this historical moment in order to preserve the presence of black women subjects.

Politicizing Experience: Consciousness-raising for the Dominant⁹

My emphasis is on the concept ‘social,’ which allows many or all to speak about the same problem or reality without saying the same thing...friends and enemies are constructed by the same ground rules. The social signifiers of an oppressive experience can be ‘shared’ by others who inhabit the same social relations of ruling but benefit from them...it [racism] is as familiar a set of practices and ideas to white people as to non-whites – to the doer and done unto. As such there is no reason as to why ‘racism’ is solely a ‘black’ experience, though there are different moments and entry points into it, since different aspects of the same social locations are visible at different intersections, from different social locations (Bannerji, 1995, pp. 84-85).

We are relying on Bannerji’s theorizing of the relationality between oppressor and oppressed to illuminate that while we all exist within the same “social topography” (Bannerji, 1995, p. 74), our different locations within it produce radically different experiences of the world, traceable, as Razack also argues, back to systems of capitalism, white supremacy and patriarchy. We apply these insights as they illuminate the identity of Northern development workers in relation to each other and Southern people. How the social comes to have meaning is mediated by how identities are located within and negotiated in response to relations of power. Resisting the liberal impulse

⁹ We understand all Northern development workers to be dominant given the power they exercise and privileges they incur through Northern status. However, Razack’s theory also allows us to consider how race differently informs the experiences and identity formation of white Northern development workers and Northern development workers of colour. In this work, we use the term Northern development worker of colour as a generalized category that does not systematically address how communities of colour are organized in relation to each other.

to isolate the individual from communities as well as social relations, Dei is adamant in situating self in social relations and elaborates the material basis of social oppression:

We must understand the material conditions for the persistence and reproduction of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, ableism and other forms of social oppression...the roots of social oppression lie in material conditions in the access to property, privilege and power...all social relations are firmly embedded in material relations. All social relations have material consequences (1996a, pp. 57-58).

This ordering of identities, to produce hierarchical understandings of difference within the social topography, allows some to more easily access, enact and benefit from dominance. Bannerji implicates and makes visible the role of dominant people in sustaining social relations from which they unduly benefit, noting “what constitutes someone’s power is precisely another’s powerlessness” (Bannerji, 1995, p. 74). Bannerji’s demand is that people who oppress move from expressions of guilt, empathy and victimization to become accountable for that oppression. We identify as a practice of accountability, a sustained engagement of how one enables this social topography to exist as it does. Typically, moves to pre-empt accountability result in a collapsing of self and other, based in false identification with the oppressed without locating self as oppressor in constituting systems of domination. As Bannerji challenges, “why don’t they move from the experience of sharing our pain, to narrating the experience of inflicting it on us” (1995, p. 117)? Describing the victim posture to which women retreat in their unwillingness to interrogate their own complicity in subordinating other women, Fellows and Razack coin the term “race to innocence” (1998, p. 335).

Intervening in these often unreflective practices of narrating experiences, Razack like Bannerji draws attention to the “dominant group’s refusal to examine its own complicity in oppressing others” (Razack, 1998, p. 40), demanding an interrogation of self as dominant through a process of examining the story we tell of ourselves and how we construct stories to understand others. They argue that an investigation into this manufactured self reveals the “interest we protect through our knowing” (Razack, 1998, p. 10). Bannerji argues that we can all speak legitimately,

though differently, to experiences of domination and oppression, “indeed, there are many stories to tell” (1995, p. 85). Recognizing the many entry points into uncovering experiences of domination and oppression, the starting point of our work is the attention Razack and Bannerji draw to the role and practices of the dominant in these social relationships. This analysis of oppression and domination demonstrates the “struggle for justice is larger than any one group, individual or social movement...social justice is a collective problem that requires a collective solution” (Collins, 2000, p. xiii).

An analysis of interlocking oppression provides a basis for imagining and engaging in broad based social action that is not limited to one system. As Fellows and Razack argue, efforts to change only one system through which one is subordinated does nothing to alter the foundations which give rise to and sustain oppression. They provide the following example and theorization:

when a woman fails to pursue how she is implicated in other women’s lives and retreats to the position that the system that oppresses her the most is the only one worth fighting and that the other systems (systems in which she is positioned as dominant) are not of her concern, she will fail to undo her own subordination. Attempts to change one system while leaving the others intact leaves in place the structure of domination that is made up of interlocking hierarchies (Fellows and Razack, 1998, p. 336).

As Bannerji and Razack theorize, the collective solution Collins describes requires the participation of both oppressed and dominant people, differently engaged in struggles for social justice. For example in anti-racist efforts, liberal white people overwhelmingly locate their interventions in communities of colour rather than using their own experiences to challenge white privilege and dominance in white communities. Referencing this trend in research, Troyna and Carrington comment, “in both the U.K. and U.S.A. a common criticism of such research has been that white researchers have tended to direct their energies towards the study of black people rather than white racism” (1989, p. 208).

In addition to Bannerji and Razack, we are drawing on the insights of Dorothy Smith and Paulo Freire to illuminate processes of politicization through reflection on everyday experiences. They

argue that reflection is a mechanism to understand how systems of power are organized and converge to create a certain experience of the world. It is by connecting these everyday experiences to larger systems of social organization, that individuals are able to intervene in efforts to reconstitute their own reality. These theorists assert the importance of individual experiences as entry points to understand the organization of social relations of power. As Bannerji theorizes “a whole social organization is needed to create each unique experience” (1995, p. 74) and in this way, “what had seemed a private experience of oppression”(Smith, 1998, p. 154) or domination is in fact constituted by and rooted in a “larger generalized complex of social relations” (Smith, 1998, p. 156). The specific¹⁰ experience and local setting act as a starting point for understanding normalized properties of capitalism, white supremacy, patriarchy and heterosexism and the ways in which these institutional relations interrupt and organize daily life in ways that are generalizable. Therefore, an engagement with personal experiences does not preclude us from seeing beyond the local and specific but does allow us “to produce social explanations...which have a wider resonance” (Mason, 1997, p. 6). Bannerji synthesizes the potential of experience as a catalyst for a more transformative political project:

I can directly express what happens to me. But my experience would only be the starting point of my politics. For a further politicization my experience must be recounted within a broader socio-historical and cultural framework that signals the larger social organization and forms which contain and shape our lives (1995, p. 83).

We are using Smith and Freire’s processes of consciousness-raising for individuals from the North whose intention it is to participate in international development work. While they both develop their analysis for marginalized peoples, we apply their insights to demonstrate the urgency for dominant people to read their own realities and understand how they benefit from and reproduce relations of oppression. This is a necessary condition to expand our understanding of

¹⁰ We are using Bannerji’s explication of the specific as “our selves and worlds express, embody, encompass and yet extend beyond individual experience, intention and location. Everything that is local, immediate and concrete is thus to be considered as ‘specific’ rather than ‘particular’” (1995, p. 83).

what constitutes development work and effective international organization, recognizing that “regardless of how ‘nice’ or ‘good’ we may be, we are discursively produced to see and understand relations of power, both globally and at the micro-level, in ways that mask our own complicity and thus enable their operation” (Heron, 1999, p. 222). The expectation is that as Northern development workers, we will commit ourselves to investigate our own participation in domination with as much interest and curiosity as we demonstrate in exploring the realities and marginalization of the oppressed.

In her seminal work The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology, Smith explores the question “how is this world in which we act and suffer put together” (1998, p. 154)? She develops a sociology for the framework of women’s experiences that have not been addressed by traditional sociology, which in its claims to universality has excluded women from participating in knowledge production “as a conscious and often a cruel practice” (Smith, 1998, p. 18). Smith’s analysis renders visible relations of power that are obscured and only “partially discoverable” (Smith, 1998, p. 154) through an examination of women’s everyday lives. Invoking and naming personal experiences of oppression, Smith recognizes the significance of individual women’s experiences as entry points to understanding the organization of social relations of power. She articulates that women’s everyday activities and social relations are structured and organized in an “immensely complex division of labour knitting local lives and local settings to national and international social, economic, and political processes” (Smith, 1998, p. 154) not immediately apparent within the scope of their everyday lives. In developing a sociological analysis that makes the work of women visible, Smith argues that the “varying material conditions under which their work is done do not appear. Their presence as actual subjects is suspended” (Smith, 1998, p. 164). Smith argues that this invisibility is carefully constructed and maintained by prevailing ideologies that govern social, political and economic relations.

While Smith's sociology recognizes the "oppression they [women] share with others and of different oppressions rooted in the same matrix of relations" (Smith, 1987, p. 154), she acknowledges that she has "not yet understood fully the intersection of racial oppression with the gender organization of the relations of ruling" (Smith, 1998, p. 8). Though Smith centers women in ways that are enormously important and challenges the inclusion of women and women's experiences on "terms decided by men" (Smith, 1998, p. 19), her inability to fully integrate an analysis of race into her feminist sociology reflects her white standpoint with respect to knowledge production. While Smith provides a methodology for a gendered and classed reading of the world, consistent with Razack's theory of interlocking oppression, we extend Smith's analysis to include race. This ensures white women cannot retreat to positions of innocence that Bannerji names the "problem of the concealed standpoint" (1995, p. 114). This complication of class and gender illuminates the "invisible center," otherwise concealed in Smith's work (Bannerji, 1995, p. 114). We are applying Smith's insights to make visible relations of power from the standpoint of the dominant. In as much as relations of power are obscured and labour practices rendered invisible, so too are the benefits dominant bodies incur through this erasure. For example, exploring the impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on deteriorating standards of living and labour conditions in Mexico, Bishop Jean Gagnon connects Northerners' demand for and consumption of cheaper goods to exploitation of Southern labour, "the problem with free trade...is that it doesn't share the wealth. So my car costs less because it is assembled in Mexico but people have to live the way they do here. I can't accept that" ("Mexicans Pay Price," 2001). It is through reflection and critical narration of experiences from privileged social locations, that relations of ruling¹¹ are also uncovered and illuminated.

¹¹ The concept of relations of ruling articulated by Smith "grasps power, organization, direction, and regulation as more pervasively structured than can be expressed in traditional concepts provided by discourses of power" (1998, p. 3). In this way, relations of ruling encompass structures of capitalism, white supremacy and patriarchy.

Much in the same way that we have applied Smith's theorizations to illuminate the oppressive practices of dominant people, we are extending Freire's analysis of consciousness-raising to the dominant. As Freire argues in The Pedagogy of the Oppressed, it is through reflection of one's constructed existence and experience of the world that people through their own efforts, become conscientized. Freire, like Smith, understands this process of conscientization to be necessary for the oppressed through a dialogic encounter between the oppressed and those attempting to forge a "pedagogy with, not for, the oppressed" (Freire, 1997, p. 30). Freire has been taken to task for his lack of attention to the impact of oppression through gender and race, particularly in his earlier work. The oppositional logic Freire employs relies on the dualistic and binary creation of oppressor and oppressed as undifferentiated categories (Goetz, 1991, p. 143). Given complex experiences of the world, Freire's pedagogy assumes the result of reading the world from individual experiences will lead to action to transform it in a particular way. Again, Freire demonstrates the implicit assumption of a common oppression leading to collective action. More than a theoretical consideration, these differences may result in very different readings of the world as there is not a singular experience of oppression (Weiler, 1991, p. 453).

Formal Pedagogy

Do you not think it time
To re-read your Voltaire?
For you to mind your own
Gardens for a change?
Not everything there is blooming
Or smells good.
Do you not think it time
To start writing other stories
And to leave us in peace
To write our own (Narayan, 1988b, p. 106)?

While the previous section focused the possibilities of consciousness-raising through informal and introspective learning processes, the following is an exploration of this pedagogical project as it is planned and enacted in a formal learning context. We connect these pedagogical processes

theoretically, revisiting politicization of experience and an analysis of interlocking oppression introduced earlier. The theoretical insights of an interlocking analysis lead to a pedagogical approach that seeks to render visible and systematically investigate oppression and domination. While liberal approaches to education acknowledge power and the need for social change, with its focus on diversity and celebration of difference, transformative efforts to redress power imbalances in society are precluded. The focus of our investigation is to explore pedagogical possibilities in pre-departure training and we map implications for curriculum, role of educator, pedagogical strategies and learning environment for more transformative teaching and learning practices.

Curriculum as Ideological

What comes, we now have to ask, of having one's comprehension of the world so directly tied to one's conquest of it...we can not readily sort through and discard the colonially tainted understandings we carry, without devoting attention to how our view of the world has been shaped by imperialism's educational projects (Willinsky, 1998, pp. 3-4).

As every curriculum represents an attempt to centre a certain understanding and vision of the world, our starting premise for understanding curriculum is that there are no ideologically neutral positions. In its broadest form, we are building on Freire's positioning of education as inherently political. For Freire, education is political because of "both its content and form and its relationship to the larger economic and social structure" (Tadeu da Silva and McLaren, 1993, p. 39). He argues that the neutrality of education is a myth and all education, through curriculum, structured student - teacher relationships, methodology and the very silence around and exclusion of certain issues are all deliberate, reflecting powerful interests and the attempt of a dominant culture to reproduce itself. As Britzman argues, the "capacity to privilege particular accounts over others is based upon relations of power...every curriculum authorizes relations of power" (1991, p. 18). What comes to be represented and legitimized in any particular curriculum is the outcome of contestation over stories of the past, contemporary realities and visions of possible

and desirable futures (Giroux and Simon in Britzman, 1991, p. 40). Relations of power naturalize dominant ideologies in curriculum to the extent that ideological foundations are rendered invisible. This curriculum contributes to the production of knowledge that normalizes an “unequal distribution of material and social wealth, social inequalities, and institutionalized forms of oppression” (Britzman, 1991, p. 44) and presents social relationships as unalterable. It is against these naturalized understandings, deemed to be objective and universal, that other bodies of knowledge are designated political and particular. What is one particular reading of the world falsely masquerades as universal. For example, as educators we have observed that the designation of February as Black History month is often met with objections by dominant people who see it as biased in privileging the history of black people. They counter with the claim that there is no corresponding month to centre white history. These objections mask the normalization of the school curriculum that overwhelmingly represents and elevates the history, contributions and achievements of white Western civilization. Willinsky argues that this normalization occurred systematically through the colonial project and this imperial gaze continues to inform and organize understandings of self and other, here and there. He situates his project as an exploration of how “five centuries of studying, classifying, and ordering humanity within an imperial context gave rise to peculiar and powerful ideas of race, culture, and nation that were, in effect, conceptual instruments that the West used both to divide up and to educate the world” (Willinsky, 1998, pp. 2-3). Willinsky traces contemporary manifestations of imperialism as they are institutionalized in subject-matter curriculum within the formal school system in Canada, elaborating, “we are taught to discriminate in both the most innocent and fateful ways so that we can appreciate the differences between civilized and primitive, West and East, first and third worlds” (1998, p. 1). He draws attention to how dominant understandings capture and are embedded in the Western imagination. Investigating the question who has been “denied” (Willinsky, 1998, p. 16), Willinsky engages in a process of accounting for systemic exclusions within school based disciplines. We read Willinsky with the qualification Bannerji

provides that no history is totalizing and “fortunately history is longer than colonization, than Anno Domino, and textured with a host of contradictory social formations and forms of consciousness...history...is as much about ruptures as continuities” (Bannerji, 1995, pp. 28-29).

Following Willinsky, we understand the pedagogical value of investigating the relationship between conquest of the world and knowledge of the world. Our reading of Willinsky illuminates as problematic Northern constructions of the South and Southern people. While we recognize the existence of oppositional and indigenous knowledges that do not exist only or primarily in relation to this conquest, for Northern development workers the educational project is to illuminate how our understandings of the world are problematically classed, racialized and gendered. Dei charts the work that needs to be done to reassert marginalized histories as well as rethink dominant tales. As he argues, “we must not only reclaim marginalized histories, but also do new readings of dominant histories to restore and rewrite what was once excluded. This process will be arduous and painful, but politically and intellectually insurgent” (Dei, 1996a, p. 15).

Willinsky’s work demonstrates a commitment to engage in a reframing of this dominant history to understand how the imperial legacy has resulted in deeply lodged understandings of the world, codified through the educational project and normalized in Western knowledge systems as common sense. Suppressing a systematic tracing of historical and contemporary relations of power, common sense derives its resiliency from “authoritatively sanctioned and conventionally taken-for-granted ways of understanding, speaking, and acting” (Britzman, 1991, p. 17). If the process of assimilating knowledge as common sense is to be rendered visible, the often unasked but necessary pedagogical question becomes how dominant people come to know and invoke certain truths. The pedagogical imperative is one of locating the imperial residue in common sense. We argue that a critical investigation into taken-for-granted ways of knowing reveals the relationship between institutional and personal knowledge of dominant people. Recalling the

insights of Razack, Bannerji, Smith and Freire, dominant people engaged in sustained self-reflective practices are better able to connect their ways of thinking and being to systems of capitalism, white supremacy and patriarchy. As Bannerji argues, these self-reflective practices are “not the end point, but the beginning of an exploration of the relationship between the personal and the social and therefore the political. And this connecting process, which is also a discovery, is the real pedagogic process” (1995, p. 55). As Willinsky demands, “we need to grow curious about what we have made of the world, beginning with a critical geography of our own map-colouring and -labeling days in school that did so much to define our place in the world” (1998, p. 20). This project of growing curious must be guided by a critical reading of the world with the intent to imagine and disrupt the world outside the legacy of common sense. McLaren and Tadeu da Silva argue that efforts to reclaim, record and recount stories that challenge the meta-story of history provide the basis to construct alternative visions and narratives not rooted in the politics of domination and oppression (1993, pp. 68-69). Education, despite the fact that it has been implicated in the imperial project, also contains the possibility to “transform consciousness” (hooks, 1994, p. 44). This is, as Morrison argues, “intellectual adventure, and close exploration...without the mandate for conquest” (1993, p. 3).

Common sense knowledge is organized in ways that also construct and permit dominant raced, classed, gendered and Northern identities from being visible. It is in relation to this invisible centre that others are easily identified and their differences named. Southern people, for example, are described as requiring the aid and assistance of the North, people of colour are clearly raced while gays, lesbians and bisexuals have sexual orientations or lifestyles. In these pronouncements, Northerners, white people and heterosexuals constitute the invisible norm against which other is judged and systematically denied access to social and economic resources. The legacy of what is understood to be common sense is so pervasively structured in ways that

obscure not only dominant readings of the world but also processes of identity formation that rely on these very understandings.

Role of Educator

My teachers have always pushed me over the cliff (Chodron cited in hooks, 1994, p. 207).

Our starting premise for understanding the role of educator is that all educators enact a politics of race, class and gender through the knowledge they choose to privilege. The selection and delivery of every curriculum represents an attempt to centre a certain understanding and vision of the world. As Britzman argues, educators “possess the power to authorize discourse” (1991, p. 225). In the same way that curriculum challenging dominant ideologies is understood to be political, educators who attempt to put forward critical perspectives are labelled overly ideological or seen to be pushing their own agendas. The extent to which dominant bodies of knowledge are considered common sensical and apolitical is also reflected in educators’ “acceptance of ways of teaching and learning that reflect biases, particularly a white supremacist standpoint” (hooks, 1994, p. 37). While the risks of engaging in transformative educative practices are significant, we understand the choice not to teach in more critical ways or challenge dominant knowledge to be an exercise of privilege and “an act of complicity” (hooks, 1994, p. 66). hooks articulates the need to align an anti-oppression analysis with classroom practice, critiquing white male academics “who push critical pedagogy yet who do not alter their classroom practices, who assert race, class, and gender privilege without interrogating their conduct” (1994, p. 147). Educators, who are also positioned in different social locations in relation to each other and learners, do not uniformly experience these risks and responses.

We identify the challenge for educators as one of facilitating learning, in this case with Northern development workers, to explore “how history renders the world sensible, a history that seems above all to dictate the meaning of difference” (Willinsky, 1998, p. 247). As learners are

powerful agenda setters, bringing with them insights into the workings of this history from different social locations, it becomes the task of educators to synthesize learners' knowledge, engaging them in sustained efforts to illuminate these sensibilities and their workings through identity. We draw again on the works of Smith and Freire to articulate what we understand to be the role of educators within our pedagogical project. While Smith and Freire theorize the role of expert/pedagogue with people they identify as oppressed, we extend their insights, as they are pedagogically relevant for the purpose of illuminating relations of power among dominant people in dominant sites. The challenge becomes one of naming the act and actors of domination rather than only its impact.

In applying both Smith and Freire to dominant people, the role of the educator is to rigorously engage dominant learners in educative processes of consciousness-raising. For these learners, this means uncovering and owning their own domination rather than entering this process to learn about and empower the oppressed. Freire in Pedagogy of the Oppressed argues it is through reflection of one's existence in and experience of the world that people, through their own efforts, become conscientized. We apply Freire's work on consciousness-raising to the dominant as it reveals their role in relations of oppression. He warns against the tendency to "name on behalf of others" (Freire, 1997, p. 70) that would only mean recreating forms of domination and oppressive, paternalistic relationships. The educator can initiate the process of unveiling the world (Freire, 1997, p. 150) but people must enter this process as subjects. In the same way, Smith cautions the sociologist to refrain from "substituting the analysis, the perspectives and views of subjects, for the investigation by the sociologist" (Smith, 1998, p. 161). While recognizing women as "expert practitioners of their everyday worlds" (Smith, 1998, p. 161), Smith, like Freire, privileges a space for the expert sociologist. In doing so, she argues that "we can only see so much without specialized investigation, and the latter should be the sociologist's special business" (Smith, 1998, p. 161). In this way, Smith understands the process of making

fully visible relations of ruling as necessarily dialogical and based in a critical reading of experiences of oppression, and as we focus, experiences of domination. According to Smith, the sociologist engages women in processes of illuminating common bases of oppression and connects these experiences to hierarchies of power. She describes this process as “comparable to consciousness-raising” (Smith, 1998, p. 154). Freire similarly theorizes the dialogical encounter between subjects that seeks to facilitate people’s efforts to read social relationships with the intent to transform them.

A commitment to the pedagogical project we articulate also demands that educators engage in sustained efforts to examine how they are located in relation to systems of capitalism, white supremacy, patriarchy and North-South relations. It becomes the task of educators to engage in sustained efforts to illuminate for themselves, these systems and their workings through identity. Educators willing to work through the complexities of this project are better able to understand and anticipate complexities in the learning site while also facilitating this process for learners. In her article “Why Doesn’t this Feel Empowering? Working Through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy,” Ellsworth seeks to dislodge the unreflective acceptance of the expert educator in consciousness-raising. Demonstrating her own process of self-reflexivity as a white, middle-class professor, Ellsworth argues that “I cannot unproblematically bring subjugated knowledges to light when I am not free of my own learned racism, fat oppression, classism, ableism or sexism” (1992, p. 99). In Smith and Freire’s theorizing, there is a reliance on the expert sociologist or critical pedagogue whose identity is seldom interrogated. Smith, for example, argues it is the work of the expert sociologist to facilitate the process through which individual women make meaning of their own experiences in order to connect them to relations of ruling. However, this connection between the everyday and beyond assumes that this generic expert sociologist has full insight into how the everyday world is organized in ways that are problematic for all women. For example, we argue that within the totalizing category of woman, women of

colour's experiences and everyday encounters with racism are not immediately or fully apparent to a white sociologist. If, however, this expert sociologist is critically politicized around her own position of domination and subordination, she is better able to facilitate critical learning for women that illuminates not only the operation of systems of power but also the resulting hierarchies between women. So while women are oppressed in relation to patriarchy, they may incur benefits from capitalism and white supremacy that also require excavating in Smith's consciousness-raising. While Freire acknowledges the importance of subjectivity in the process of liberation, like Smith he leaves uninterrogated the identity of those facilitating this dialogic process of reading and naming the world. As Razack argues, "there have been few critical analyses of, for example, white middle-class educators (primarily men) leading subordinate groups to which they do not belong into critical pedagogy" (1998, p. 44). Leaving the identity of the critical pedagogue uninterrogated produces an absence of located self that "does affect the quality of possible interventions: if race, class, and gender do not matter, then racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, and so on, are not recognized as fashioning oppressive spaces that require intervention" (Britzman, 1991, p. 35).

In working through these tensions, Ellsworth provides an example of how to engage in this ongoing process of interrogating identity, particularly from a position of dominance, while not retreating to guilt, inaction, or innocence. She writes, "I brought a social subjectivity that has been constructed in such a way that I have not and can never participate unproblematically in the collective process of self-definition, naming of oppression, and struggles for visibility in the face of marginalization engaged in by students whose class, race, gender, and other positions I do not share" nor can "I...interpret their experience to them" (Ellsworth, 1992, p. 101). Interactions in the context of the university classroom have challenged Ellsworth's role as expert professor in creating a space for dialogue and safety across different social locations. The identities of her marginalized and variously politicized students in their everyday worlds demonstrate an access to

and understanding of relations of power and privilege differently apparent in her own life as a white, middle class professor. Because Ellsworth identifies herself as dominant, she acknowledges that social relations are organized in ways that protect her dominance, bringing with it the choice to see or acknowledge herself as dominant (McIntosh, 1995, pp. 266-267). While Ellsworth names purposeful investments people have in not seeing themselves or their practices as dominant, she demands accountability, recognizing “we choose our ignorances, just as we choose our challenges” (Boler, 1997, p. 269). Ellsworth concedes that she can not know the experiences of racism and other forms of oppression better than the students who live them and as a result, she must decenter and continually challenge her own professorial authority and practice. Recalling Bannerji’s insights, white people and people of colour are both intimately acquainted with white supremacy and its operation, though from different social locations. Ellsworth suggests a more productive way to think about encounters between the dominant, who wish to work in solidarity with the oppressed and those marginalized. She argues that in order to build and sustain relations of solidarity across different social locations, dominant individuals must acknowledge and challenge their own implications and investments in prevailing relations of power and privilege (Ellsworth, 1992, p. 100). It is from this position of dominance that Ellsworth locates her points of intervention.

Rethinking Empathy and Storytelling

Passive empathy satisfies only the most benign multicultural agenda
(Boler, 1997, p. 255).

Educators committed to engaging learners in an analysis of systems of power and privilege often elicit and rely on emotional responses, primarily empathy, as a way to imagine experiences of oppression that one does not share. Implicit in this liberal practice is an understanding that through empathy, dominant people come to learn others across difference, creating an imagined identification with marginalized peoples. The educative intent is that in coming to identify with others, learners will be moved to act for social change on behalf of those less fortunate. Typically,

empathy produces voyeuristic responses such as, “isn’t that terrible,” “what can we do,” “we have to do something,” “I feel so sorry for them,” “those poor children,” “I’m so lucky.” While these types of responses may be informed by good intentions, we agree with Narayan when she argues “my starting premise about what it takes to work across differences...is that presence of good will on the part of the members of advantaged groups is not enough to overcome assumptions and attitudes born out of centuries of power and privilege” (1988a, pp. 34-35). Because our pedagogical project is framed as an illumination of social systems as well as tracing one’s self through them, empathy alone does not lead to “any shift in existing power relations” (Boler, 1997, p. 255). An exclusive reliance on empathetic responses sustains the delinking of stories of oppression from those systems authorizing these stories and in this way “suffering...is not referred beyond the individual to the social” (Boler, 1997, p. 261). Emotionally charged responses do not produce sustained and transformative political interventions but rather haphazard forays. Sutherland observes this tendency, particularly of white Northerners to engage in what they understand to be solidarity efforts without a meaningful political analysis:

In my experience, solidarity group members have usually been middle class white people...participation may be more rooted in the desire to help, in a ‘political tourist’ mentality, or in unpoliticized emotional connections than in experience informed by a coherent political or social analysis. For these reasons, solidarity groups may lack a collective consciousness (1994/95, p. 49).

While empathy can nurture a desire to alter oppressive experiences, it lacks a location of self, not as lucky and fortunate but dominant and privileged. Boler problematizes what she calls passive empathy as it “produces no action toward justice but situates the powerful Western eye/I as the judging subject never called upon to cast her gaze at her own reflection” (1997, p. 259). In the development enterprise, this absence of self, not situated in systems of power and privilege, results in an abdication of accountability for complicity in social and historical relations. Denial of implication in any of these systems permits learners, in this case Northern development workers, to construct themselves in “fantasy spaces” (Boler, 1997, p. 255) as liberators rather

than oppressors. In this way, even when systems of capitalism, white supremacy and patriarchy are acknowledged, they are emptied of people who benefit from and perpetrate classist, racist, and sexist practices. Typically, these moves to pre-empt accountability result in a collapsing of self and other, based in false identification with the oppressed without locating self as oppressor in constituting and benefiting from systems of domination. In confronting the privileges whiteness confers, Roman provides an alternative to liberal responses to oppression, characterized by empathy and emotion, arguing that disinvestments in white privilege entail a “redistribution of material and social resources, power, and so forth” (1997, p. 275). In making explicit unreflective exercises of domination and unearned privilege, the educative intent is to engage Northern development workers in such sustained practices of self-reflexivity and accountability. As Boler contends, “these ‘others’ whose lives we imagine don’t want empathy, they want justice” (1997, p. 255).

Like Boler, Razack attempts to reconceptualize the often-used pedagogical strategy of sharing experiences through storytelling. She also demands an interrogation of the interpretive structures and spaces between the narration of experience and its reception and investments in hearing stories in ways that demonstrate the “dominant group’s refusal to examine its own complicity in oppressing others” (Razack, 1998, p. 40). In this denial of accountability and history, the role of the dominant listener is to offer an emotional response at best and a voyeuristic and consumptive act in its most repulsive form. Boler astutely describes this dominant habit, “let off the hook, we are free to move on to the next consumption” (1997, p. 261). In centering white supremacy Razack argues there is an expectation that people of colour will “tell our stories for your (white people’s) edification” (1998, p. 48). There is a perpetual postponement of one’s own responsibility in educating oneself as this demand is placed on those oppressed. Razack interrogates this call for stories of oppression in which the dominant listener remains intact, unshifted and in the imaginary space of innocence. Recognizing the pedagogical potential of

storytelling and listening, Razack preserves a place for storytelling that disrupts the fashioning of dominant selves as innocent.

Learning Environment

We recognize the pedagogical project we advocate requires a rethinking of taken-for-granted understandings of what constitutes a “good” learning environment. This environment presumed to be safe, student-centred, participatory, affirming and harmonious, is the accepted model most liberal educators strive to emulate. hooks, a black woman educator, challenges dominant educators’ uncomplicated understandings of safety. Not relying exclusively on familiar indicators of safety, she makes clear that “many students, especially students of colour, may not feel at all ‘safe’ in what appears to be a neutral setting. It is the absence of a feeling of safety that often promotes prolonged silence or lack of student engagement” (hooks, 1994, p. 39). Educators are able to maintain a learning environment with little apparent conflict or tension as learners, particularly dominant learners, are not required to situate themselves in systems of power or be accountable for complicity in social and historical relations. As our pedagogical project demands interrogation of self in systems of power and privilege, we understand conflict and discomfort to provide pedagogical possibilities as they indicate engagement in learning processes. Reflecting on her own transformative teaching practices, hooks observes, “confronting one another across difference means that we must change the ideas about how we learn; rather than fearing conflict we have to find ways to use it as a catalyst for new thinking, new growth” (hooks, 1994, p. 113). As Britzman also argues, the “uncertain can open pedagogic opportunities” (Britzman, 1991, p. 228). Recognizing that these educational processes will elicit intense and predictable emotional responses, manifest as hysteria, hostility, anger, denial, silence, and/or withdrawal, the learning environment and learner participation need to be framed within certain ground rules that facilitate a working through rather than denial or suppression of difference. Because challenges to knowledge systems and sense of self can be profoundly unsettling, educators need to be skilled in

negotiating emotional responses of learners while intervening in and complicating these responses. Recognizing the risks involved, this project requires an educator able to anticipate and negotiate learner responses that emerge from “shifting paradigms” (hooks, 1994, p. 43). Insisting learners trace the origins of and investments in their emotional responses, Boler demands, we “must learn to question the genealogy of any particular emotional response: my scorn, my evaluation of others’ behaviour as good or bad, my irritation – each provides a site for interrogation of...my investments in familiar cultural values” (1997, pp. 266-267). Creating an environment where learner’s understandings of the world and themselves are disrupted has implications for the relationship between educator and learner. Dominant learners often resist these interventions and educators need to be prepared for this lack of instantaneous affirmation. Tracing her own professorial journey, hooks confesses, “the presence of tension – and at times even conflict – often meant that students did not enjoy my classes or love me their, professor, as I secretly wanted them to do” (1994, p. 42). She elaborates “it took time and experience for me to understand that the rewards of engaged pedagogy might not emerge during a course” (hooks, 1994, p. 206).

Application of Theoretical Framework

An economic system can not be judged only by what it does *for* people, but also by what it does *to* people. An economic system can not have as a by-product the creation of a sub-race or the death of millions. And the worst of this situation is that anyone who calls attention to it is considered subversive. But subvert only means to turn a situation around and look at it from the other side. I respectfully submit to you that this situation *has* to be looked at from the other side (Cardinal Paulo Evaristo Arns cited in Rahnema, 1997c, p. 396)

The theorists we draw on provide an epistemological foundation for the relevance of personal experience as the basis for social transformation. In privileging personal experience and asserting its importance as a pedagogical tool for social change, these theorists move beyond cathartic and benign expressions of experience. According to Britzman, “the process whereby experience

becomes meaningful requires that we situate ourselves in history...we are all situated by race, class and gender” (1991, pp. 232-233). This shift to a more critical engagement with experience is marked by educators’ commitment to engage learners in a critical reading and reframing of reality from different social locations as a basis for intervening with and “acting upon that reality” (Freire, 1997, p. 34) for the purpose of social transformation. This relationship between reflection and action that Freire names praxis, provides a means to recognize the “politicization of memory...that remembering that serves to illuminate and transform the present” (hooks, 1990, p. 147). Articulating the relationship between personal experiences, political consciousness and synthesizing the insights of Smith, Mohanty argues that “if the everyday world is not transparent and its relation of rule, its organizations and institutional frameworks, work to obscure and make invisible inherent hierarchies of power (Smith 1987), it becomes imperative that we rethink, remember, and utilize our lived relations as a basis for knowledge” (1991, pp. 34-35). In our work, we are applying the process of conscientization to Northern development workers to challenge the ease with which Northerners presume a solidarity and affinity with oppressed peoples without interrogating how we are implicated in the disempowerment of others. We recognize it to be the responsibility of Northern development workers “not only to read, understand, and transform their own experiences but also to reconstitute their relationship with the wider society” (Giroux cited in Freire and Macedo, 1987, p. 7). This requires that we locate ourselves in social relations, to speak of how we perpetuate and benefit from systems of power and privilege in order to develop a politics, which takes seriously disinvestments of power.

In order to rethink Northern development worker experiences, practices and pre-departure training, we choose to privilege critical theorists attempting to illuminate the context in which international development is situated. Pedagogy infuses the application of our theoretical framework, both as it is relevant in the formal pre-departure training and as it applies to informal reflective processes. While the focus of our investigation is to explore pedagogical possibilities

in pre-departure training, we recognize learning to be a continuous process that occurs prior to and during pre-departure training as well as while Northern development workers are in the South and upon their return. Formal training is an opportunity to frame and guide learning processes. In positioning our work for a Northern audience, we recognize but do not focus on Southern resistance struggles and ongoing movements to challenge continued exploitation of the South. While our work is informed by a central premise that people are not “simply erased by the violence” (Razack, 1998, p. 16), as Northern researchers of colour our responsibility is to trace relations of power as they are implicated in Northern development worker practices. The theoretical resources we draw on allow us to see the construction of development workers as a political endeavour in which relations of power are necessarily involved. This framework illuminates and allows us to begin tracing North-South relations and development practices at both a structural and individual level to interlocking systems of capitalism, white supremacy, patriarchy and histories of colonialism.

Application of a Structural Analysis

When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist. – Dom Helder Camara

Recognizing the complexity of the development context, we are relying on an interlocking analysis to make visible the ways in which systems of power operate simultaneously between North and South. While there are many points of entry to examine these relations of power, as Northern researchers the focus of our investigation is to illuminate Northern policies and practices that perpetuate underdevelopment in the South. Through the lens of Northern policies, the inevitability and naturalization of economic poverty in the South is disrupted and historicized. In noting income ratios, Shuurman tracks the accelerated concentration of wealth and economic marginalization between rich and poor countries, not as a historical fact but a relatively recent development. Referencing Schuurman, Heron documents, “200 years ago income ratios between the richest and poorest countries were 1.5:1; in 1960, 20:1; in 1980, 46:1; and in 1989, 60:1”

(Schuurman in Heron, 1999, p. 33). A structural analysis of the context in which development work is situated illuminates the continuity of Northern interests in dictating terms of development in the South. In the context of African development, Dei synthesizes the relationality between North and South, writing back to “official discourses [that] explain African development problems as being self-imposed and due to internal political dynamics. A counter-challenge to this position draws attention to the continuing reproduction of African poverty in an intense era of Euro-American Hegemony” (Dei, 1996b, p. 251). Muchunguzi and Milne similarly contextualize and historicize North South relations, noting that the “division between rich and poor – North and South – has not developed in a vacuum. Historically, many of the processes which impede true development in the South are inexorably linked to processes occurring in the North” (1995, p. 5). These insights and analyses lead us to ask the initial questions: what is the origin of what we understand development work to be about, what interests do these understandings support and sustain and how can training be organized to support the emergence of a more critical North-South encounter?

Linking Northern Development Workers Experiences to Structures

The most frightening thing about imperialism, its long-term toxic effect, what secures it, what cements it, is the benevolent self-representation of the imperialist as saviour (Spivak cited in Razack, 2000, p. 39).

Linking a structural exploration to investigate experiences of Northern development workers in the South can reveal how micro-processes are shaped by larger “social matrices” (Smith, 1987, p. 154). As Smith argues in developing her sociology for women, these structures are not readily apparent within the scope of everyday life but only become visible through tracing “the organization of the immediate and local by social relations extending beyond it” (1987, p. 156). In the context of international development, the insights of the theorists we draw on make relevant locating and politicizing Northern development workers’ identities and experiences in relation to systems of capitalism, white supremacy, patriarchy and histories of colonialism. It is

Willinsky's "call to history" that we invoke in training to reveal the ways in which "the past remains present in the way we tend to see the world" (1998, p. 244). In connecting micro and macro processes, Northern development workers are more equipped with the analytical tools to systematically and critically read professional and personal encounters in the South. Consumed by the immediacy of experiences and appearances, Northern development workers often mistheorize understandings of themselves, their roles as Northern development workers and accounts of their time in the South in ways that are ahistorical and distorted. For example, as the Muchunguzi and Milne report illuminates, Northern development workers representing Northern NGOs mistakenly assume to be working in partnership with Southern NGOs and communities. In this report, Southern NGO personnel challenge this presumption and rhetoric of partnership as masking Northern interests and policies of increased interference (Muchunguzi and Milne, 1995, p. 4). We understand training as an opportunity to provide Northern development workers with a critical framework through which they can analyse their professional and personal experiences in the South as well as challenge and trace existing stereotypes and presuppositions. The possibility of oppositional practices can only be imagined when Northern development workers begin locating their experiences in larger systems of power, rather than emphasizing individual intentions and motivations, as is often the case in the liberal model. In describing the complexity of opposition, Sutherland notes the ineffectiveness of individualizing oppositional practices. She argues:

Opposition is never simple. It occurs not only in resistance to specific localized power relations, but also within larger systems of power, and failure to recognize how they support each other, their mechanisms and enforcement and how my oppositional practice is positioned within these larger systems is not only foolishly myopic but potentially fatal (Sutherland, 1994/95, p. 42).

The questions illuminated through a structural reading of Northern development worker experiences include: do Northern development workers have a facility in connecting Northern economic policies with their experiences in Southern communities, how are their processes of

integration related to colonial histories, how are their understandings of local capacity and resources racialized, how do women Northern development workers construct their relationships with Southern women? While explorations of these questions may have their origins in seemingly independent systems, they provide entry points to understand more holistically the simultaneous operation of systems of power in the development context. The challenge for Northern development workers becomes to investigate “how embedded are we in the arrangements we describe” (Razack, 2000, p. 52)?

Setting the Material Context

The myth of globalization contributes to a proliferation of images and impressions in the North, creating the illusion of universal participation in a globalized economy and shared economic prosperity. “The transnational reach of Dallas and the sexual escapades of the British royal family or the Bosnian bloodbath, like the international proliferation of McDonalds, Benetton or Sheraton establishments, confirm the modern prejudice that we all live in ‘one world’ (Sachs, 1992)” (Esteva and Prakesh, 1997, p. 279), making it exceedingly difficult to expose the myth of the global village. This “fantasy” (Kothari, 1997, p. 150) of the global village is juxtaposed against the reality of increasing disparities in wealth both between and within North and South. In material terms, the South continues to finance Northern economic development. In the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) figures from 1982-1990, total resource flows to developing countries totaled \$927 billion.¹² As George documents, “much of this inflow was not in the form of grants but was rather new debt, on which dividends or interest will naturally come due in the future” (1997, p. 209). In the same time period, developing countries remitted \$1345 billion in debt service alone, including both interest and principal to creditor countries. The difference of \$418 billion in favour of Northern states

¹² These resources include “all official bilateral and multilateral aid, grants by private charities, trade credits plus direct private investment and bank loans” (George, 1997, p. 209).

(George, 1997, pp. 209-210) leads to the question, whose economic interests are advanced through development aid? As Esteva and Prakash astutely observe, “far from being ‘globalized’, the real lives of most people on Earth are clearly *marginalized* from any ‘global’ way of life (1997, p. 285). To sustain these relations of exploitation, there is also a collusion of Southern elites, protecting and furthering Northern interests.¹³ The participation of Southern elites further legitimizes the illusion that all benefit from and are willing to participate in Northern dictated development models. These elites who Petras names the “imperial collobarators ...backed by the banks and multinationals, they wield immense power...opening their county and peoples to savage exploitation in the name of free trade”(1997, pp. 187-188). As Sachs concludes “the best one can say is that development has created a global middle class of those with cars, bank accounts and career aspirations. It is made up of the majority in the North and small elites in the South and its size equals roughly that 8 percent of the world population which owns an automobile” (1996, p. 241).

Historicizing development and underdevelopment within a colonial context, and contemporarizing them in imperial relations¹⁴ (Heron, 1999, p. 220), we rely on critical theorists to explore implications for the ways in which development workers are prepared for participation in development projects in the South. We identify our project as one based in the “causal relationship between First World economic policies and Third World underdevelopment” (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 165). As critical scholars argue, while there has been a “Northern conceptual delinking of development from colonialism” (Heron, 1999, p. 12), the development

¹³ While we are aware of complex relations between global elites in both North and South, our work focuses on the implication of the North and Northerners in these relations.

¹⁴ We are using Tuhiwai Smith’s understanding of colonialism and imperialism that recognizes the “two terms are interconnected and...that colonialism is but one expression of imperialism (1999, p. 22). We are using Linda Y. C. Lim’s understanding of imperialism as a “system of military, political, economic and cultural domination of the Third World by its former colonial masters...historically the outgrowth of capitalist development in the West. In the economic sphere, it is characterized by the exploitation of natural and human resources in the Third World by western capitalist enterprises” (1997, p. 217).

enterprise is predicated on intensifying relations of exploitation, institutionalized under colonialism. What remains uninterrupted are relations of economic exploitation in which Said argues, “old divisions between colonizer and colonized have re-emerged in what is often referred to as the North-South relationship” (1993, p. 17). This delinking of colonialism from development masks that post-independence, Northern countries sought mechanisms to continue their domination of Southern countries in order to maintain access to natural resources, markets for consumer goods, cheap and abundant labour (Rahnema, 1997a, p. ix). As Tuhiwai Smith insightfully observes, even when the colonizers “have left formally, the institutions and legacy of colonialism have remained” (1999, p. 98). While noting the continuity of these relations, Rahnema and others illuminate the ways in which development has packaged itself as an “even more pernicious form of colonialism...now coming as a friend and a saviour, as a grave-digger of colonialism, wearing the mask of liberation... to help them ‘catch-up’ with their previous masters” (Rahnema, 1997b, pp. 118-119). These critical theorists locate development to be part of the ongoing imperial project, disguised in the language of “‘progress’, ‘modernization’, ‘development’, ‘growth’” and rationalized as “‘civilizing mission’, ‘economic efficiency’, ‘friendly advice’” (Shanin, 1997, p. 66). Implicit in these understandings is the structural dependence of developing countries as requiring the assistance of the more developed North in order to replicate a Northern model of development assumed to be universal, possible and desirable. Willinsky maps the North’s entitlement to universally define. As he argues, “this idea of ourselves as knowing others better than they know themselves has long been a source of Western identity and license” (Willinsky, 1998, p. 262). Firmly lodged in this discourse is also an understanding of progress and modernization recognizable only as industrialization and urbanization (Lele, 1996, p. 28). What this understanding of development lacks is the material relationality between North and South and the economic prosperity of the North that is predicated on the economic underdevelopment of the South. Now coined in the language of aid and assistance, knowledge/technology transfers, capacity building and participatory approaches,

development paradigms and practices mystify material relations of exploitation in which the North and Northern development workers are implicated. Given this context, we understand the role of facilitators to work with Northern development workers in deconstructing development rhetoric and making clear economic connections between North and South and the ideology underlying this exploitation.

Given the continuity of power imbalances and inequitable access to resources between underdeveloped and developed countries, it is necessary for Northern development workers to situate themselves as dominant in North-South relations. Recognizing the increasing concentration of power and its exercise through abstract entities, Sutherland indicates the difficulty in isolating actors to account for the power they wield. She observes this operation of power, asking:

As power becomes ever more concentrated, yet at the same time exercised across great distances, and more invested in remote and abstract entities (the transnational corporations, the global economy, the World Bank) and less in identifiable individuals, the victims are usually clear enough, but who are the 'perpetrators' (Sutherland, 1994/95, p. 51)?

In responding to this question, Razack demonstrates that processes of accountability demand consideration of "how I am implicated in the flow of ideas, labour and capital that marks the financialization of the globe" (2000, p. 39). For Northern development workers, this requires tracing the specific material benefits they incur through the structured underdevelopment of the South, particularly as a result of processes of wealth extraction. These same processes also secure lucrative employment and travel opportunities in international development. In his reflections as a Northern development worker, Keough recognizes that international development has its origins in a colonial legacy and refers to this as the "undeniable culpability in the underdevelopment we work against" (1998, p. 194).

Making Race Salient

Common sense understandings of what constitutes good development practices circulate widely in the North and are embedded in understandings that Southerners can and need to become more like Northerners. This “anaesthetized consciousness, the one and only way of thinking” (Ramonet, 1997, p. 181), has produced a “space in which only certain things could be said and even imagined” (Escobar, 1997, p. 85) in development discourse. Training provides a space in which facilitators can challenge Northern development workers to complicate their implicit assumptions about development work and underdevelopment in the South. The critical theorists we draw on make explicit connections between colonialism, capitalism and development, challenging Northern imaginings of development. They identify as problematic the foundational ideology of Northern superiority that informs international development policies and interventions “of the most powerful in our communities ‘designing futures’ for others” (Dei, 1996a, p. 18). An application of an interlocking analysis of oppression further illuminates how Northern development worker interventions in the South are also constituted through white supremacy, ubiquitous but rarely named in Northern development discourse. Following Essed, Dei demonstrates the changing language but continuity of racist practices apparent in “conventional discourses about ‘international development.’ African peoples, for example, may no longer be seen as biologically inferior. They may be seen as techno-culturally inadequate” (Dei, 1996a, p. 47). Cultural difference is a mechanism to pathologize and render deficient the difference of the other now named cultural rather than racial. It is in relation to this less civilized other that understandings of the dominant as civilized and advanced are sustained (Razack, 1995, p. 71). The theorists we rely on constantly call attention to structural systems and historical relations of oppression and domination in which the story of individual deficiency and group pathology are contested and deconstructed. We recast articulations of the North as developed, modern, civilized, knowledgeable and technologically sophisticated in relation to the South described as undeveloped, traditional, primitive, backward and lacking capacity, typically

understood to be expressions of Northern superiority, as also racist. These racialized views of the South also regulate Northern perceptions of Southern women. Homogenous portrayals of Southern women as victims of patriarchal cultures, traditions and religious customs in relation to liberated, educated and professional Northern women obscure the marginalization of Southern women through Northern economic policies while also presuming the liberation of Northern women. Identifying the inadequacy of focusing exclusively on patriarchy, Tuhiwai Smith addresses the interlocking effects of oppression. She observes, “moves to discuss patriarchy without addressing imperialism and racism are always reframed by indigenous women, and of course other minority women, as inadequate analyses...in the end indigenous men and women have to live together in a world in which both genders are under attack” (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 154). The focus on patriarchy through which women are victims and oppressed primarily in relation to Southern men also distorts the interlocking impact of racism and patriarchy and their intensification through capitalism. As Razack argues, a focus on:

‘barbaric’ customs of non-Western cultures, for example, female genital mutilation...takes away attention from other forms of violence against women, and it masks how the North creates and sustains the conditions in the Third World that increase domestic violence against women, and inhibit women’s means of defending themselves. I am thinking here of the North’s role in devastating the economies of the South (2000, p. 47).

In much the same way that Northern development is predicated on Southern underdevelopment, racist conceptions of Northern superiority originate in and are sustained in relation to understandings of the South as inferior. Tuhiwai Smith elaborates these comparisons as ideological exercises of Northern power in classifying the world:

many of these ideas are predicated on a sense of Otherness. They are views which invite a comparison with ‘something/someone else’ which exists *on the outside*, such as the oriental, the ‘Negro’, the ‘Jew’, the ‘Indian’, the ‘Aborigine’. Views about the Other had already existed for centuries in Europe, but during the Enlightenment these views became more formalized through science, philosophy and imperialism, into explicit systems of classification and ‘regimes of truth’. The racialization of the human subject and the social order enabled comparisons to be made between the ‘us’ of the West and the ‘them’ of the Other. History was the story of the people who were regarded as *fully human* (1999, p. 32).

Facilitators' use of an interlocking analysis in training offers the potential to work through Northern development workers' problematic, partial and often racist descriptors and analyses of the South. Even within alternative development models that attempt to reframe Northern interventions as more participatory, sustainable, appropriate and human centred, what is rarely challenged is the racism and condescension of the Northern development community working to empower, educate and build capacity in Southern communities. While these development models appear to be responsive to and respectful of Southern knowledges, customs and visions, they continue to rely on Northern personnel, skills and technology to achieve Northern conceptions of development in and for the South. Sutherland isolates the self-interest of Northerners in continuing to secure for themselves, access to the "Third World:"

Today, there are still hordes of Northern 'experts,' 'advisors,' and 'researchers' in the South...I suspect there are still relatively few willing to engage in a rigorous examination of their own major stake in the perpetuation of the colonial relations of power underpinning their 'knowledge' production, in spite of a considerable body of critique from 'Third World' intellectuals (1994/95, p. 45).

Recognizing the defensiveness and denial of Northern development workers when asked to confront their own material gains and investments through participation in international development, facilitators require skills in managing and using conflict to further learning in pre-departure training.

Dei synthesizes Northern development practices, noting how development continues to be directed by Northern interests and understandings. He names the racism prevalent in these practices in Africa:

'development' is conceptualized on their [African countries] behalf. Development is defined in relation to what White middle-class Westerners perceive African peoples lack and/or what they are expected to become. Local views, conceptions and initiatives about development are discarded because, in the political language of some international development agencies, local peoples have nothing to offer. This approach to development on the continent may not merely be Eurocentric and male-biased, it is also racist (Dei 1994a)" (Dei, 1996a, pp. 47-48)

Understanding race to be a “fundamental principle of social organization and identity formation” (Omi and Winant cited in Dei, 1996a, p. 48), the theoretical resources we draw on allow us to explore race as it defines the experiences of Northern development workers in the South. Dei convincingly argues for the transformative potential of an integrated anti-racist analysis as it compels a linking of material conditions to white power. He states, “anti-racism acknowledges the reality of racism in society *and* the potential for change. It moves beyond acknowledgement of the material conditions that structure societal inequality to question white power and privilege and its accompanying rationale for dominance” (Dei, 1996b, p. 254). Given the prevalence of white Northern development workers and how white supremacy informs international development, an interlocking analysis of oppression in training allows us to consider and theorize how Northern development workers are located in relation to Southern communities, predominately of colour. It also enables us to investigate processes of negotiating racial identities for white Northern development workers and Northern development workers of colour. This investigation, however, remains grounded in an exploration of whiteness that recognizes “there are enormous social, political and economic benefits that historically have accrued, and continue to accrue, to certain individuals in society due to the dominance of White (male) power”(Dei, 1996a, p. 28).

In her 1999 dissertation, Heron employs an analysis of interlocking oppression to respond to the undertheorization of race as well as class in Northern development theories. She argues African theorists, producing bodies of knowledge that elucidate the relationship between racism and colonialism are marginalized as a result of the “Northern conceptual delinking of development from colonialism” (Heron, 1999, p. 12). This produces a peripheralization of race in Northern development theories and critiques. Heron’s work illuminates the pervasiveness of race in both macro conceptualizations of development as well as Northern development worker practices in

the South. We take up in more detail her discussion of identity constitution of white women Northern development workers and its relevance to our own investigation

Addressing the peripheralization of race and class in Northern development theories, Heron investigates the micro-processes through which white Canadian women development workers constitute their identities and negotiate relations of power in the South (1999, p. 7). She allows us to imagine how Northern development workers acting on behalf of the nation state, become accountable for historical and contemporary interventions in countries of the South. Problematizing her own position of dominance and privilege, Heron's work is an interrogation of her own involvement in development initiatives over a ten-year period and extends to an exploration of the identities of white women Canadian development workers in sub-Saharan Africa. Involving seventeen other white women research participants, Heron critically evaluates the position of these white women in relation to predominantly people of colour with a recent history of colonization in which these white Northern women are implicated. At the same time, she also acknowledges the possibility that the performance of dominance can be disrupted and resisted. Heron concludes that the desire for development on the part of white women development workers is also a desire to know and save the other while simultaneously claiming "non-implication in systems of oppression" (Razack, 1998, p. 170). She argues that this is achieved through an investment "in not seeing our participation in domination" (Heron, 1999, p. 218). In an effort to story themselves as innocent, Canadian development workers rely on and sustain distorted and selective historical accounts of nation. Razack elaborates the fashioning of this Canadian identity in the following way:

In the Canadian context, the imperialist as saviour of Third World peoples is an important construct in nation building. Canadians define themselves as unimplicated in the genocide of Native peoples or the enslavement of African peoples, a position of innocence that is especially appealing because it enables Canadians to imagine themselves as distinct from Americans. Canadians also mark themselves as the peacekeepers of the world, as living in a country that welcomes immigrants and as having few imperialist pretensions (1998, p. 89).

In the final analysis, Heron argues white women development workers construct and preserve themselves within a fictionalized narrative of innocence that also corresponds to a Canadian story of non-implication in imperial relations.

Conclusion

In order to rethink Northern development worker experiences, practices and pre-departure training, we rely on critical theorists to illuminate the context in which international development is situated. Pedagogy infuses the application of our theoretical framework, both as it is relevant in formal pre-departure training and as it applies to informal reflective processes. The theorists we draw on provide an epistemological foundation for the relevance of personal experience as the basis for social transformation. This requires that we locate ourselves in social relations to speak of how we perpetuate and benefit from systems of power and privilege in order to develop politics and practices, which take seriously disinvestments of power. Drawing on an interlocking analysis of capitalism, white supremacy, patriarchy and colonial histories, Northern development workers are equipped with the analytical resources to understand themselves and experiences in relation to these systems. The commitment to engage systematically and persistently in this work marks the distinction between liberal and critical approaches to social change.

The uniqueness of Heron's work is in exploring the micro-processes of identity negotiation and connecting them back to historical and contemporary systems of power and privilege, drawing particular attention to race and class in the Northern development context. Our research similarly investigates how Northern development workers/facilitators understand their professional roles and the meaning they have made of their time in the South. Heron's work also leads us to consider the implications of these reflections for the organization and facilitation of training programs for Northern development workers. As articulated in Chapter 1, this inquiry into training programs, the focus of the second thesis in this study, is an effort to understand how

facilitators intervene to influence Northern development workers' understandings of what constitutes the North-South encounter in the context of international development. What emerges from the critical perspectives of theorists is the demand for accountability, partly through a demystification of the development paradigm and self-reflexivity of interventions of Northern development workers in the South. Heron's demand to develop a "politics of accountability prior to any such engagement" (1999, p. 233) in the development enterprise, is a call to engage in rigorous efforts, both informally and formally through which good intentions, cultural mastery, racist assumptions and dehistoricized understandings of development are disrupted.

CHAPTER 4 CONSTRUCTION OF NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT WORKER

Chapter Introduction

The following two chapters provide a detailed account of participants' reflections as Northern development workers in the South, making visible their understandings of identity as well as systems of power and privilege. Interviews and our observations of training reveal participants' understandings of the role of Northern development worker and development practices. It is through their own experiences and identity negotiations that participants articulate the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that Northern development workers require. These explorations provide a context for the organization of pre-departure training that is documented in the thesis, Shaping the North-South Encounter: The Training of Northern Development Workers that also emerged from this study.

The theoretical resources we previously outline inform our process of analyzing, organizing and interpreting participants' accounts and observations of training. While their narratives demonstrate complexities and nuances, we were able to discern from them two broad categories, liberal and critical, representing different approaches to culture, power and identity in the context of international development. We employ these categories of liberal and critical to distinguish participants' reflections of their experiences and development practices. These categories are not meant to homogenize or represent as uncomplicated participants' reflections of their experiences. However, this division represents our reading and analysis of their understandings and negotiations of identity and professional roles. While we recognize and document points of convergence, we understand liberal and critical approaches to development worker practices to reflect two distinct conceptual categories when assessed as a whole. The rationale for this distinction between liberal and critical is also embedded in nuanced descriptions of how participants differently interpret their experiences as Northern development workers in the South. We understand all participants' articulations to be equally ideological and political. Six of the

fifteen participants reflect a liberal approach while the remaining nine reflect a more critical approach to these issues. We did not assume there to be, nor was there a correlation between participants' race or gender and their location in these categories. Participants in the liberal section employ the language of power and privilege but concentrate their efforts on negotiating cultural differences through integration and relationship building in Southern communities. In the critical section, participants make apparent and elaborate the operation and impact of systems of power and privilege in international development. For them, ongoing negotiations of power and privilege translate into a critical inquiry of appropriate roles and practices for Northerners in international development. This chapter is divided into two main sections, liberal and critical development worker. At the start of each section, we provide a brief map, as well as a synthesis of the main themes. We then elaborate participants' accounts of their role as Northern development workers and the meaning they have made of their experiences to illuminate identity issues.

Liberal Development Worker

Introduction

In this section, we draw on participants' narratives and our observations to explore their understandings of the role of Northern development worker and development practices in the South. These understandings are contextualized within an account of culture and power that makes relevant participants' approaches to and detailed explorations of relationship building and integration in Southern communities. As well, we document participants' strategies for negotiating cultural differences and their identities as Northern development workers. The theoretical resources we draw on allow us to read participants' narratives and identity negotiations through the lens of power and privilege. We attempt to convey the complexity of participants' experiences, while also identifying themes that emerge through interviews and observations. In their narratives, participants articulate the role of Northern development workers

as actors for social change in the international arena. Guided by a moral imperative and responsibility to act, they understand Northern development workers to be motivated by good intentions and a desire to do meaningful work that contributes to a better world. In addition to doing good work, participants present development work as an opportunity to travel, live abroad and experience different cultures. Their narratives are infused with an understanding of what constitutes a good development worker, describing qualities necessary for Northern development workers to establish meaningful personal and professional relationships in the South. Adjectives such as motivated, observant, self-aware, responsible, open-minded, adaptable and tolerant characterize these descriptions. Participants rely on these characteristics to respond to and negotiate difference. Their efforts are marked by a commitment to learn local languages, cultures and histories, as these are relevant and necessary to their preparation and ongoing work as Northern development workers in Southern countries. In attempting to establish more equitable relationships with Southern people, participants emphasize the need to engage in practices of self-reflexivity. They speak to the need for self-awareness in order to recognize and resist imposing Northern expectations of appropriate behaviour and work ethic.

Understanding the Role Of Northern Development Worker

Most participants understand their work as Northern development workers to be connected to a moral responsibility to act for social change while also providing opportunities for personal growth. As a result of this understanding, some participants delink their professional ambitions from participation in international development. While not all development workers pursue long term opportunities in international development, participants recognize the personal value in travel, cross-cultural skills and language acquisition with which Northern development workers return to Canada. Rather than emphasizing career aspirations when describing her own work in the South, Kate focuses on the opportunities for personal growth provided by living and working abroad. She understands this to be a primary incentive for pursuing opportunities in international

development and observes, “it’s kind of part of the cultural heritage of this white middle class group to go out and find yourself by traveling around the world...it’s like an emphasis on this personal growth and development rather than something else like – only education or career” (Kate 2 1 1, p. 16)¹⁵. Graham also describes his interest in international development as a desire for experience rather than professional advancement. He articulates, “I wasn’t - I didn’t have a profession I wanted to follow and I wasn’t striving for advancement...so I was on like a linear path. It was give me more experience, more experience, more experience” (Graham 2 2, p. 14). More experienced participants fondly recollect the many opportunities to work in international development through which they gained invaluable cross-cultural experience while making meaningful contributions in the South. Graham recalls his elation at being selected to participate in international development work, “I could travel, it was a huge change – it allowed all of my – curiosity about the world and what was beyond my own reality – to happen and so I jumped on it and I remember being really excited” (Graham 2 2, p. 13). Recognizing these benefits to Northern development workers and given the shrinking opportunities to participate in such work, Graham commends the Canadian government for supporting youth and “creating you know...youth employment strategy etc. - giving people six month experiences” (Graham 4 15, pp. 8-9). Without such opportunities, Graham expresses his fear that Canada and Canadians “would become a - big black hole of irrelevance...there would be a vacuum of information and knowledge and understanding. We would become backward” (Graham, p. 17T).

While Kate primarily identifies the benefits she incurs from her experiences in terms of self-development and personal growth, she understands her work in the South as contributing

¹⁵ In coding the data, we used NUDIST software. In this citation, 2 1 1 refers to the node or file number followed by the page number. In cases where we extracted quotes from the transcript, the page number of the transcript is followed by a T, for example Kate 2T. We have added commas, periods, dashes and question marks according to our interpretation of participants’ speech pattern. Dashes represent pauses in speech and bolded words reflect participants’ emphases while speaking. While we minimally edited participants’ articulations, we have made every effort to preserve and convey their intended meaning.

significantly to the professional development and opportunities of her colleague in the South.

Kate frames the mutuality of their experience in the following way:

I felt like we were both getting amazing experience doing this research that I knew - know will help her in her career. You know it did help her in her career and and I gladly, all the stuff that I had just done on my own which was all the kind of research, questionnaires, and how to lay out the research and stuff I gave it all to her when I left. I mean cause she wanted to continue to work in that area and so in that way we had a friendship and we had a relationship and she contributed so much to the whole thing and so I felt like it was more of a partnership with her (Kate 2 3 1, pp. 23-24).

Other participants see their involvement in international development as part of a long term career path. Alannah positions international development work as a career choice that involves the acquisition of specific professional skills and facility in relevant development issues. Monica locates her work in the South as an extension of the community development work she began in Canada, acknowledging that while her work in international development has an “activism kind of – edge to what we’re trying to do even though we don’t look very much like, I don’t feel like an activist because I’m a highly paid development consultant” (Monica 2 5, p. 18). Monica elaborates the distinctions between development workers and activists, noting that activists are committed to and organize their lives for social justice, often with little financial remuneration:

I don’t think I can call myself an activist because I work within the system ...there is a price for me to pay to maintain myself in that system...I don’t think - it’s a dichotomy. I see it on a continuum on a spectrum you know...for me those people are activists, they’re like the movers and shakers of society you know, the group that I belong to we’re a bit behind because of the choices we’ve made (Monica 2 5, pp. 18-19).

Saliency of Gender in Development

Some participants understand the saliency of gender in their work to be in response to Southern women’s economic and social disempowerment. They argue that gender needs to be considered an integral part of all development work. In order to be truly participatory, participants argue that development needs to be organized in ways that facilitate Southern women’s empowerment. Some participants complicate this analysis of gender and development to recognize the ways in

which Southern women are differently positioned through class, ethnicity, and age. Recognizing that not all women are oppressed in the same way, Monica advocates for a socially based gender analysis, stressing the significance of class in determining women's social locations:

in most societies I would say it depends on your social class. If you're a woman from the family who has money, you have more power over your life than a poor man. - You have more, maybe more mobility you have more access to basic services, access to education...the social, like the economic level, ethnic background, the religious background you know like all the other elements that - constitute one's situation basically in a society then you can be a man or woman but that's not your only determinant to what kind of life you're going to have in your society (Monica, pp. 15-16T).

In her interactions at the village level, Kate also observes these complex workings of gender that differently position Northern and Southern women in relation to each other. She recalls the resistance and fear of local women to her presence as well as that of her Southern research colleague, recollecting "people were afraid of her too because she wasn't from the community, she was from the town. I mean it's still happening to her but to a lesser extent" (Kate 2 3 1, p. 23). Kate observes the layers and complexities of identity not only for herself as a white, Northern development worker in East Africa but also for her Southern colleague, not from the village community. She complicates understandings of outsider to consider how the urban/rural dynamic results in what she observes to be local women fearing her urban Southern colleague.

Understandings of Culture and Power

Most participants acknowledge that power intervenes to shape personal and professional encounters that Northern development workers have in Southern communities. For all participants, what becomes relevant is the acquisition of cross-cultural skills as Northern development workers attempt to understand cultural practices of local communities, negotiate appropriate professional behaviour and build meaningful relationships with Southern people. Graham's interview and observations demonstrate that while he employs the language of power and privilege, his reading of power is framed primarily in cultural terms. Recognizing power to

be operating in processes of cultural adaptation, he articulates, “at the heart and soul of inter-cultural adaptation is power and privilege. Professional skills, your role, what people expect of you over there, what you expect of them, everything - is there” (Graham 19, p. 40). In training, he elaborates his understanding that Northern development workers lose power when they arrive in the South, particularly in their initial stages of adaptation, as they are dependent on people. For Graham, processes of effective adaptation involve regaining this lost power and he advises Northern development workers, “*when we leave Canada, we do as adults and arrive [in Southern countries] as adolescents. We lose power, we’re more dependent on people than ever, it’s about regaining power*”(Graham, p. 3).¹⁶ While other participants collectively name economic globalization, race, gender and Northern status, most speak generally in the language of culture, power and privilege both in Northern and Southern contexts.

Participants argue that all people employ a cultural lens or filter through which to understand and make sense of their lives. While in the culture of origin, it is not always explicit the extent to which our personal and professional lives are organized by this filter. Although Northern development workers share a similar cultural composition, participants also recognize the role of “*values in your life, family, individuality, politics*” (Kate, p. 2) in influencing specificities within the larger cultural lens. As Northern development workers move from North to South, participants argue that they unknowingly process their experiences in Southern communities through their own cultural lens. At the same time, they are subject to a similar cultural reading by Southerners. These simultaneous and conflicting readings often result in premature judgments and assumptions. Typically what follows are cross-cultural misunderstandings that participants trace back to “*assessments of country and culture that are quite different based on*

¹⁶ Dialogue extracted from our observations of training is cited in italics. We coded observations by participant and include page numbers from each participant file. We have added commas, periods, dashes and question marks according to our interpretation of participants’ speech pattern. Dashes represent pauses

filter”(Graham, p. 3). For Northern development workers in the South, the loss of a familiar moral compass and taken for granted ways of living and working can feel like an “*affront, offence*” (Kate, p. 1). Graham narrates his own process of coming to recognize how he employed his own filter in problematic ways. He describes himself as “being self-righteous and I didn’t have an awareness that it was me as a Canadian that was trying to shift or change or refocus their [Southerners’] value systems” (Graham, p. 3T). Participants recognize that these frustrations are often the result of cultural differences, intensified through miscommunication both in personal and professional interactions. Some participants also acknowledge the impact of colonial histories and Northern status as they intervene to shape Southerners’ perceptions of Northern development workers.

Relationship Building and Cross-Cultural Adaptation

Relationship building across different cultures emerges as a central project for this Northern development worker attempting to address power imbalances and live and work more equitably in Southern communities. Participants place great emphasis on building personal and professional relationships to compensate for cultural differences and power imbalances. Kate encapsulates it in this way when she says, “a large thing that I see in development is just being able to build relationships between people and so much can get accomplished when you have a good working relationship” (Kate 2 2, p. 23). Participants describe the skills and strategies that allow them to be effective in cross-cultural exchanges, isolating their ability to communicate, observe, be flexible and self-aware in Southern or unfamiliar environments. Kate demonstrates these practices in the following way:

I’ve found have been really helpful is just self-awareness and an ability to adapt and kind of go with the flow [laughter] and communicate and to observe...I really feel like those things kick in when I’m working in situations where I’m - you know foreign to a lot of what’s happening or of

in speech and bolded words reflect participants’ emphases while speaking. While we minimally edited participants’ articulations, we have made every effort to preserve and convey their meaning.

the culture that I'm in. Those things really kick in like I'm aware of myself. I'm very, I'm aware of a lot of the stuff that I'm bringing, a lot of the assumptions that I'm bringing, a lot of the ways I know I work and the ways that I communicate and how I prefer to do things...and recognize the feelings that I have, if they're feelings of frustration or if they're feelings of that's not the best way to do it, when I think its appropriate to say I think that there's a better idea or a better way (Kate 2 2, pp. 23-24).

Monica explains that relationship building is predicated on Northern development workers acknowledging the humanity of Southern people. It is in seeing Southerners as fully human that barriers cease to exist between Northern development workers and Southern people. Monica elaborates the potential of engaging in more productive relationships with Southerners when they are no longer seen as objects of development, but rather its recipients. She explicates the need to:

go beyond this sort of mass look that we have at the developing world, really see that it's composed, made of human beings really and try to sort of connect with them, - as I said that it's more sort of human level to understand and then you can no longer have this barrier between yourself and themselves cause they're just humans like you and then you can start working. It doesn't mean that everything about them is good, it means that they're not this object that we're talking about when we're talking about development projects. They're someone who's at the heart of what we're trying to do (Monica 2 2, p. 27).

Monica trusts that once Northern development workers are able to connect with Southerners, the ability to build relationships "has little to do with where you're from but more where you are sort of in a more human level" (Monica 2 6, p. 38). In reflecting on her own efforts to build relationships with Southern people, Monica notes her ability to "connect with the poor person at the human level. I can talk to a poor women just the way I'm talking to you right now" (Monica, p. 8T). Graham echoes this sentiment and his faith in people's abilities to overcome cultural differences and build relationships "heart to heart" (Graham 1 9, p. 43).

In order not to replicate Northern elitist ways of living and working in the South, participants attempt to integrate with local communities, building meaningful personal relationships. Their efforts to develop social and professional relationships with Southern people are reflected in decisions to live with host families or modestly rather than in exclusive neighbourhoods with other

Northern development workers. Kate narrates her efforts to negotiate her position as a Northern development worker and choice to live more like local people in Southern communities, commenting:

when I look back at it now I was so much trying to - not take advantage of that position at all...I didn't want to have you know, I was you know feeling awkward with a servant when we would go to the villages or feeling awkward getting driven everywhere in the white [name of African NGO] jeeps that are all over the developing world [laugh] you know those white NGO jeeps but yeah like I didn't want that. I would walk I would take my bike (Kate 2 2, p. 20).

It is through these sustained efforts, Kate reflects, that she was able to build relationships and feel “like I was kind of a part of the scene there” (Kate 2 2, p. 21).

In an effort to build these relationships and mediate power imbalances, participants also rely on and engage in dialogue with Southern counterparts. In dialoguing with Southerners, Kate acknowledges the power dynamics in operation but recalls feeling that she was able to comfortably engage in conversations around substantive issues, such as colonialism.

I was able to build relationships with people...I mean it's not just about but would also be about me and her or me and him and we were friends and we could discuss [colonial presence] and have conversations about it that weren't, I mean there's a power dynamic there just because of who we are in many ways but it's not like I'm not feeling anymore informed about this than they are or something. We're coming from two different experiences and we're sharing our knowledge and information and ideas and that's what it would feel like (Kate 2 3 1, p. 22).

Participants acknowledge that processes of cross-cultural adaptation are marked by high and low points that Northern development workers will have to contend with while overseas. They note that many Southern countries and cultures “are not easy to live in” (Alannah, p. 7T) and recognize that Northern development workers are likely to make mistakes by not “clueing into aspects of the culture... and as a result I was actually crossing some cultural boundaries like I was making faux pas you know” (Kate 3 1, pp. 13-14). In an effort to navigate foreign cultures, Alannah stresses the need for Northern development workers to be flexible and open-minded in order not to be “overwhelmed by a different culture” (Alannah, p. 3T). Participants stress the

importance of emotional engagement in order to fully experience life and work in the South. Monica warns against the tendency to over-intellectualize as it prohibits Northern development workers from engaging in and experiencing another culture. She observes of Northern development workers in the South:

instead of engaging you know the risks involved in engaging in another culture, you know you get somewhere, people invite you to a place, you have no idea what's going to happen over there...you just have to trust the people and I've seen some of these young people getting there and being so careful about everything they do that they analyze so much that they don't have an experience. ...analytical they are without – you know they don't want to put any of their emotions into into this work. And it's not possible. You can't do this just for intellectual reasons because - it has so many human implications (Monica 2 2, p. 26).

When confronted with new or unfamiliar circumstances, participants also speak of the need to suspend judgment, value different processes and cultural practices. In struggling to make sense of a difficult situation and resisting the impulse to judge Southern cultures through a Canadian lens, Graham recalls “the only way I could do that was to confront them [Southerners] with how I was feeling and what its impact was on me and for them to have to deal with that” (Graham, p. 7T). In addition to reserving judgment, participants also identify a tolerance for ambiguity as necessary for Northern development workers to achieve and maintain emotional equilibrium in Southern communities. Graham elaborates, “*your tolerance for ambiguity is a key factor in your satisfaction, ease with which you adjust, how comfortable you are with contradictions. Someone says this is black, but you say its white and both are true*” (Graham, p. 3). In recognizing the inevitable frustrations that Northern development workers will experience, Kate advises them to develop appropriate coping strategies that include being aware of “*self and limits. If you're getting feelings of frustration, take it somewhere else, go home and write a letter home or vent to someone*” (Kate, p. 2).

Participants who felt they had been able to build strong relationships in the South and move beyond power differences, employ the language of emotion to describe feeling connected with

Southern communities, feeling good about the contribution they were making through work efforts and the mutuality of professional and personal relationships. Kate narrates feeling an affinity with some local women in the Southern community in which she was living and working. She shares the experience of making signs with these women to celebrate international women's day and describes her feelings of solidarity, "I was definitely feeling in solidarity with them - we were very much, I felt like very much on the same wavelength with things and it was in their hands" (Kate 2 5, p. 14). In reflecting on her own time as a Northern development worker in the South, Monica recalls, "I felt, I felt really good when I was there. I felt that there was a role – for me" (Monica, p. 3T).

Negotiating Northern Development Worker Identity

Negotiating Professional Role in the South

Participants articulate their commitment to negotiate cultural differences and power imbalances by striving to build equitable professional relationships as Northern development workers. Aware of the legacy of a top down, hierarchical approach to development, participants attempt to construct alternative practices that challenge what they identify as development worker practices rooted in conceptions of Northern superiority. Graham describes his own journey of moving from the role of expert Northern development worker to a more reciprocal exchange of knowledge, skills and ideas. He also reflects on the extent to which Northern development worker practices and paradigms have favourably shifted:

I also had this little bit of a missionary ideal not about Christ or whatever but going to do good. You know like there was still the notion that - if you went overseas, you taught them how to do things and it's not even transfer, it was all giving people skills and knowledge or whatever to help them become more like us. In the thirty years since then, the notions of development and what it's all about it's - changed a lot (Graham 2 2, p. 13).

Some participants, mindful of the extent to which this expert model continues to inform contemporary Northern development practices, resist overstating how much these practices have changed. As described by them, this top down model of development endures and is

characterized by little meaningful consultation with Southern communities, replacement or dismissal of local capacity and notions of Southerners as helpless and needy. In drawing attention to this expert status that Northern development workers need to negotiate, Kate observes “as a development worker it can feel...you’re coming in as the expert with a set of tools that is needed in this place...and so I think that you can either stay in that role and still do your work or you can try to make different relationships with people” (Kate 2 2, p. 19). While participants resist enacting this Northern development worker as expert, they recognize the need to balance appropriate inter-personal skills with necessary technical skills that are site and project specific. In this way, Alannah identifies the good development worker as one who balances cultural awareness, knowledge of relevant issues in international development along with appropriate planning tools. Reflecting on their own involvement in international development, participants articulate a commitment to work in more equitable ways in Southern communities.

Participants construct alternative Northern development practices within participatory approaches to development that more meaningfully address power and privilege, emphasizing consultation, mutuality, locally defined needs, and capacities. These alternative practices involve working with, rather than directing Southerners in their efforts to improve their own lives. Kate describes her approach to work with people “to help people improve their, you know if they’ve identified they want something else, a better way of life or something else to be able to work with them to achieve that” (Kate 2 2, p. 22). Following Ron who recognizes Southern capacity and self-sufficiency, Monica problematizes Northern participation in international development, acknowledging that as Northern development workers “sometimes we substitute ourselves for what communities should be doing” (Monica 2 3 1, p. 26). Referring to the increasing capacity in Southern countries, participants prioritize working with locally qualified consultants. As Monica observes, “now you go everywhere, almost everywhere in the world and you can find someone to work with you who is educated, they can write and that you can work with. People are educated,

they've worked, they've had experience" (Monica, p. 20T). In promoting Southern capacity, Monica still values the role that Northern development workers play as intermediaries between Southern communities and donors but recommends gradually minimizing their control of development projects. She argues that Southern people are at the heart of development and encourages Northern development workers to "trust the process...you don't need to control everything but you need to progressively let go so that people can take over, to sort of look at their own life and manage some of these projects overall...have trust and faith in other people's abilities to deal with whatever happens" (Monica 2 2, p. 25). For these participants, the Northern development worker is no longer positioned as expert but more as a partner with Southern people, learning from and contributing to development of Southern communities.

In the same way that Monica has reservations about substituting local capacity, she also brings her skepticism to reflections on participation. While recognizing the potential of participatory development to be empowering, she is also aware that it is often employed in ways that are not meaningful to Southern communities. In training, for example, Monica juxtaposes World Bank rhetoric of participation against the reality of structural adjustment policies that intensify poverty in the South. She also warns against imposing Northern conceptions of participation on already burdened local communities. Monica asks how meaningfully local women in the South can participate in training initiatives and development projects when childcare responsibilities and lack of unstructured time are not taken into consideration.

Participants also recognize that not all power imbalances are surmountable given the constraints of development funding. Acknowledging the power Northern development workers continue to exercise in the South, Monica insists, "you have to be able to acknowledge [power] and find ways to go around that... this is what we can do, just be very open and very honest about - what's possible, what's not possible and be transparent about it" (Monica 2 2, p. 26). Monica further develops and locates this power analysis in the professional roles that Northern development

workers occupy, arguing that they access power through their employment in Northern NGOs that control funding to Southern organizations. As she keenly observes, “when you come from Canada...you work for an NGO that's funding projects, you have lots of power. It has a lot of impact on the relationships you have with people, you have to be able to acknowledge this” (Monica 2 2, p. 26).

Negotiating Race and Gender

In the same way that participants strive to be good development workers in Southern communities, they rely on characteristics and behaviours of open-mindedness, enthusiasm and awareness to respond to and negotiate differences of race and gender. Alannah argues that rather than explicitly addressing anti-racism, it is more important for NGOs to choose individuals that are “open-minded enough to be in a position like this” (Alannah 1 5 1, p. 41). As a Northern development worker attempting to integrate in a difficult situation, Graham relies on enthusiasm to negotiate his minority status as a white man recalling, “I had enthusiasm and I wanted to do everything so even though it was a difficult posting - there was a lot of racial issues in [the Caribbean]¹⁷ at that time – I thrived” (Graham 2 2, p. 14). Because Graham understands all people to be “inherently racist” (Graham 1 5 1, p. 42), everyone needs to be equally mindful of her/his potential to exercise racism. His remedy is for individuals, regardless of their culture, to behave in ways that are balanced and culturally sensitive, noting “we have equal opportunity to be either balanced in our view or quite racist” (Graham 1 5 1, p. 42). Graham understands negotiating racism as an individual responsibility but speaks primarily in the language of inequality. He elaborates that all women endure these same feelings of inequality, as do members of racial minorities. He goes on to provide a clarification of how he understands race in relation to

¹⁷ In order to protect the anonymity of participants, we do not identify the names of countries in which participants have worked but rather the region.

other systems of power, highlighting “this isn’t about racism but feeling in unequal in a certain way and dealing with that...we’re all part of it” (Graham, p. 9T).

Monica experiences the resistance of Southern communities to her presence and describes strategies for negotiating this reluctance to her presence as a Northern development worker. In an effort to develop connections with Southern women, she relies on compassion to humanize them, trusting that it is possible to develop these relationships even when people come from vastly different backgrounds:

I think it needs a level of compassion that allows you to interact with people at a human level so when you - because sometimes we deal with - India, Bangladesh, the women of Bangladesh, it's very abstract, it's dehumanizing. You know in many ways when you deal with people on this sort of more human level, trying to see them as humans...you don't need to come from a similar background to relate to people well and successfully but stop, stopping - you know what I mean like seeing people as mother, as wives, seeing Bangladeshi women as human beings who care for their kids, who have health problems you know (Monica, pp. 9-10T).

In her interactions at the village level, Kate is able to trace the resistance of local women to her presence as a white, Northern development worker back to an enduring legacy of colonization and development aid. It is within this historical context that Kate describes fear on the part of Southern women when she first arrives in East African rural communities. In communicating and developing friendships with these women, Kate is able to understand and gradually move beyond their initial responses of fear. She is worth quoting at length here:

In the communities...people were afraid of me. Women who I wanted to interview would turn and run and lock their doors when they saw me coming. I mean that's how drastic it was at the community level because so many negative things had happened in these places as a result of colonialism and development aid that I mean they, a lot of them are still existing in stories and that - happened. I mean they had this belief that if people came to immunize them then they would be making you sterile and as a result, many women would not get immunizations and they wouldn't immunize their children and when they saw me, especially as part of [name of African NGO] which is a health related organization - this is you're here to make me stop having babies cause you don't like Africans or I mean that was the feeling, that was sometimes what even was communicated when we would actually make - enough of a friendship to sit down and talk about it and that would come out at times but and you

think how ridiculous is that? But it's not - that happened (Kate 2 3 1, p. 22).

Kate employs strategies of remaining open-minded and encouraging dialogue with local women in an effort to mediate racial and colonial histories between herself as a Northern development worker and Southern people. Reflecting on the resistance and fear of local women to her presence, Kate minimizes her role, relying on her African colleague to play a more prominent research role with local women:

so I - played a low profile. I didn't want to [laugh] terrify people like I wasn't, I didn't want to - I wanted to play as low a profile as I could and as a result, my research partner who started as my kind of woman to translate...became a real like - really she was so interested in what I was doing and so she really took a large role of talking to people...but I mean a lot of times, I would just play a low profile. My friend, her name was [name of African researcher] and [name of African researcher] and I would discuss what kinds of things we thought were relevant in the interview we were going to do and then she would often handle it, a lot of it and I would play a low profile or whatever. It was - yeah -- try to be as low little impact as possible (Kate 2 3 1, p. 23).

Again, Kate observes the layers and complexities of identity not only for herself as a white, Northern development worker in East Africa but also for her Southern colleague, not from the village community. In comparing her community development work in a Northern context with her research in East Africa, Kate notes that she shares more in common with her Southern colleague despite their cultural differences rather than with marginalized youth from the North.

While Allison recognizes the problematic conflation of race and culture, she encapsulates her own process of trying to differentiate between them to understand their operation in international development. As she notes, it is “hard...to articulate how this [race] differs from culture but I think what we came up with is really letting people realize the power that is associated with race in these contexts” (Allison 1 5, p. 2). In theorizing how gender operates systemically in development, Allison attempts to bring these insights to consider the peripheralization of race, concluding that both systems need to be equally addressed in international development. Allison locates the starting point for negotiating white racial identities in the South as one of realizing and

exploring the connectedness of race and power in international development. She struggles to apply her analysis of gender and development to understand how whiteness operates, reflecting on how white people can become aware that they have power and exercise privilege. With this awareness, Allison hopes that she and other white Northern development workers can consider how not to abuse their power. She poses the following questions:

And how do you - how do you - not use it, how do you not abuse it or how do - how do you take that into consideration, how do you become conscious of it. If you're a white man and you're suddenly going to be working with a group of women who weave baskets there are things that come into play, even if it's not women. I'm setting up a gender issue again now, even if it's not gender what baggage are you carrying because of your race that we might not get (Allison 15, p. 2).

Ron encounters a Southern expectation that Northern development workers would be white and traces this to colonial histories in many Southern countries and the continued presence of white people. However, as a non-white male Northern development worker, Ron prioritizes his Northern status given that he was acting as a representative for a Northern NGO. While he does not elaborate, Ron acknowledges that Northern development workers of colour have to negotiate both their Northern status and racial identities in Southern countries with different racial histories.

Negotiating the Material Context

Monica extends her analysis of poverty in Canada to understand the impact of globalization both in the North and South. She strongly urges Northern development workers to investigate and humanize the impact of globalization. While Monica admits the difficulty most Northern development workers have in not judging Southern people for their poverty, she encourages them to trace the dissonance between their articulations of Southerners as resourceful and resilient with the reality of their judgments and emotional responses. Monica connects these responses, typical of Northern development workers, back to this gap in analysis:

deep down you feel people are poor because they haven't done enough to get out of their problems...you don't understand market forces and you don't understand capitalism and globalization and you have no underst-, no

clue of how much it impacts on poor people's lives so you go to India for instance and you go to a poor village and deep down your emotional feeling is uhg, why don't they do anything to get out of their shit, oh my god and then I talk to you in the car and I say oh my god they're so ingenious and you say ya ya I agree with you, you know what I mean? Like you have this - so emotionally you feel something but intellectually you think something else. So there is this, it's not aligned, you're not - totally aligned and people capture this (Monica 3 1, p. 18).

Monica urges Northern development workers to align their emotions and intellect in ways that allow them to consider the impact of structural adjustment policies on people in the South. She challenges Northern development workers to reflect on what structural adjustment policies look like in the lives of Southern people as it impacts their ability to access health care, education and other basic social services. For example, Monica asks, "what it means having to pay five dollars to go to a health centre in Thailand whereas five years ago it was free, but you have a hundred times less money to pay for it. So what does it mean for you? It means well my kid won't get immunized this year" (Monica 1 3, p. 10). It is with this analysis of global economic policy operating both in the South as well as in Northern countries that Monica situates her role as a development worker, asserting that "poor and voiceless people needed people like me to deal with the system for them, for instance needed people like me to help them develop their skills, to advocate for themselves" (Monica 2 2, p. 25). Other participants also trace their responsibility to act within this context of globalization to policies of Northern governments and multilateral institutions dominated by Northern presence. Kate, for example, is critical of the role of the Canadian government in selling weapons to Indonesia during the East Timor crisis. As a Canadian, she understands it as her responsibility to work "in solidarity with people there that are - you know being destroyed because of my government" (Kate 2 2, p. 21).

Understandings of Canada and Canadians as Development Workers

Most participants characterize Canada as a relatively just, peaceful, caring, and democratic nation. Monica argues that the Canadian context is favourable to developing attitudes of cultural sensitivity and knowledge of inter-cultural issues, resulting in more effective development worker

practices in the South. Graham describes these core Canadian values as “our sense of justice that every individual deserves individual treatment based on whatever their circumstances are. Our sense of democracy, everybody has a right to control their own - destiny...individual rights and sense of -- who the youth are and what rights youth have” (Graham 1 12, pp. 22-23). Some participants observe the influence of these values, noting that Canadian development workers in the South distinguish themselves with different perspectives and approaches to development. Participants perceive Canadian development workers to be culturally sensitive, kind, less arrogant and more familiar with Southern contexts. Participants attribute these traits and behaviors to a national history and current context, which lends itself to cultivating these attitudes. Monica traces Canada’s unique role in international development to its exemption from a colonizing past. For her, this history distinguishes Canada from other Northern countries participating in international development. Monica explicates the roles and perceptions of Canada and Canadians in international development in the following way:

Canadians are so nice because Canadians are very low profile internationally. We're not like getting in with our big boots...the fact that a lot of bilateral agencies have based their programs on past colonial ties, it creates already - there's a little something there that's not quite comfortable, the French in West Africa, the British in a number of East and Southern African countries. Canadians are exempt from that baggage, that heritage... overall people see them as like the nice guys... they're not like the Americans who tend to be a little more much more assertive you know rightly or wrongly... it's what others have told me about about Canadians and I have witnessed some of those behaviors (Monica 1 12, pp. 39-40).

While participants identify Canada as a terrific country, they also acknowledge and speak to internal social problems that Canadians are often reluctant to recognize. Monica observes this tendency among Canadians to overstate the greatness of this country and their complacency to revel in Canada’s first place United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) ranking. While she recognizes Canada to be an exceptional nation, she understands these attitudes to be slightly inflated given internal social problems:

I mean I think, what people fail to see is a lot of the problems that we have in our own country that - make it, yeah it's true it's a great country to live in but there are lots of things that could be better and the Canadians tend to be a little - I mean as anyone else, ethnocentric or a little biased about how good, like Canadian nature and all the right, the great things about Canada and I mean - it's true but it's a little inflated - I find (Monica 1 12, p. 40).

Participants collectively name poverty, violence against women, tax breaks for big business and social intolerance as pressing domestic issues. Developing the issue of social intolerance, Ron challenges the myth of Canadian multiculturalism. He observes and is critical of the tendency of Canadians to romanticize this country's racial harmony, particularly relative to the United States. He states, "there is kind of a -- that notion that we're better than the United States and that no racism exists in Canada or that we're a mosaic" (Ron 1 12, p. 42). Graham also notices some discrepancies in Canadian multiculturalism, commenting that not all Canadians experience this country as friendly and welcoming. He raises the question of how Canadians tend to understand themselves as friendly in relation to the experiences of immigrants struggling to learn English in Canada, who may not experience it in the same way. He understands this dissonance to be traceable to individual filters which produce different readings of Canada, all of which need to be recognized as true. While Graham situates these social problems as historically accurate, he characterizes a new and emerging Canada in which racism, sexism and environmental degradation are no longer tolerated. He elaborates on this shift in the following way:

I wouldn't - ascribe Canada one way or another at this stage cause it's rapidly changing, but if you look at - among educated people, like jokes have changed, we no longer have the racist, sexist, it's not - it's not acceptable anymore to have the same kind of humor as twenty years ago...so I think we're a society that's in rapid transition that has its roots in a white male oriented - background (Graham 1 12, pp. 24-25).

Some participants make connections between international development work and community work in Canada. In referencing her work with marginalized youth in a Northern context, Kate remarks on the continuity of power relations in Northern and Southern sites, stating "there were some similar issues in terms of my identity and the power dynamics that are at play or could be at play there and the differences of privilege"(Kate 2 2, pp. 22-23). Monica's participation in

international development followed her community development work in Canada. She identifies many of the issues of survival and participation in her work with women and poor people that were relevant to her work in international development. Monica describes the continuity of social issues in working in community development in Canada and in the South:

I've always had an interest in inter-cultural issues and traveling and working - with immigrants here and learning other languages...there are some very key principles or key issues that are the same in development that I was facing here working with poor people, working with women, working on issues of empowerment, issues of survival for poor people, also lack of participation in people's lives. So there were lots of things that I was facing here that I thought gee, I could really transfer some of this experience to working overseas (Monica, p. 3T).

Conclusion

Central to the liberal development worker is a moral duty to intervene in Southern communities to remedy poverty, inequality and the marginalization of women within a model of development that claims to be respectful of local cultures and traditions and prioritizes participatory development. Motivating this development worker is a genuine desire to do good work in the service of a more humane world. In addition to doing good work, development work is presented as an opportunity to travel, live abroad and experience different cultures. In sharing their experiences as Northern development workers and facilitators, participants reflect on their identities in the context of international development work. Within this section, participants differently reflect on appropriate roles for Northern development workers in Southern communities, how colonial legacies influence perceptions of Northerners and the operation of capitalism and structural adjustment policies. In exploring these issues, participants invoke a shared human identity, emphasizing good intentions and a desire to do meaningful work as sufficient to compensate for privileges incurred through whiteness and Northern status. We observed many similarities in these negotiations for both white participants and participants of colour and for this reason, we did not separately document their identity negotiations. In an effort to develop relationships with Southerners and overcome differences of power, participants

separate a systematic consideration of power and privilege from their interpretations of experiences in the South. Participants narrate their experiences and elaborate stories of relationships in the South using the language of emotion to describe their connections with Southerners. These emotional responses, without a corresponding analytical investigation, enable participants to presume a mutuality of feeling and experience on the part of Southern people.

Critical Development Worker

Introduction

As in the previous section, we draw on participants' narratives and our observations to explore their understandings of the role of Northern development worker and development practices in the South. Participants' efforts to problematize Northern development worker practices and formulate alternatives are contextualized within an account of power and privilege. As well, we document participants' efforts to negotiate their role as Northern development workers, making visible the operation of Northern status and race. Their explorations complicate understandings of partnership, participation and integration in Southern communities.

Echoing participants in the liberal development worker section, these participants also recognize the extent to which the expert model continues to inform contemporary Northern development practices. In exploring participants' narratives and observations, what emerges is an understanding of the role of Northern development worker and development worker practices informed by systems of power and privilege. Recognizing the complex workings of these systems, participants attempt to explore their multiple and simultaneous operation as well as their own location in systems of power and privilege as Northern development workers. Participants are cognizant that an exclusive focus on their own positions of marginality evades responsibility for their locations of dominance and exercises of power. Rather than relying exclusively on emotion to interpret experience, participants speak of ongoing processes of coming to read their personal and professional experiences as embedded in relations and exercises of power. They

draw attention to Northern implication in underdevelopment through an investigation of international financial institutions and Northern government policies, describing deteriorating material conditions in South and North, traceable to global economic policies. It is within this material context that participants resist the impulse to conceptualize development work as something that occurs primarily through Northern development worker presence in the South, reframing Northern development worker interventions. For some, ongoing negotiations of power and privilege translate into more deliberate choices to locate their international development work in the North through advocacy work and Northern consciousness-raising. However, participants are cognizant that development work from and in the North is also infused with relations of power, requiring analysis and negotiation. Others attempt to reframe their interventions, articulating strategic decisions to participate in international development work as Northern development workers in South communities. Participants discuss the ongoing and routine negotiation of power and privilege of themselves as Northern development workers in the South. We attempt to convey the complexity of participants' experiences and negotiations, while also identifying recurring themes that emerge through interviews and observations. In their narratives, most participants of colour and white participants speak to how race intervenes in shaping the experiences of white Northern development workers and Northern development workers of colour in the South. In these cases, participants explore how negotiations of power and privilege unfold quite differently depending on Northern development workers' racial identities.

Understandings of Power and Privilege

While participants in this section acknowledge that power intervenes to shape the encounters of Northern development workers in Southern communities, they speak in more depth, elaborating the operation and impact of these systems. These participants recognize modest distinctions that differentiate liberal from expert Northern development workers, but also challenge the inadequacy of the former in meaningfully addressing power and privilege. In moving beyond an

acknowledgement of power and privilege, these participants investigate the ways in which specific systems of power operate in international development. Recognizing the relationship between power and powerlessness, participants describe “*development as addressing power imbalances*” (Ann, p. 4) through which positions of power necessarily need to shift. Participants explicitly name and explore the impact of globalization, colonialism, race, gender and Northern status in Northern development worker practices in the South. They also speak to funding relations between Northern and Southern NGOs, elaborating the impact of funding in shaping relations between Northern development workers and Southern communities. Recognizing the complex workings of these systems, participants attempt to explore and articulate an integrated analysis that seeks to account for the way these systems operate together in the world. In explicating his understanding of how power operates, Peter describes that systems, routine behaviour and common sense converge to create and sustain oppression at both structural and individual levels. He illuminates that “oppressions work at all levels....beliefs or prevailing assumptions as well as systems, normal ways quote unquote, normal procedures and systems as well as individual acts or behaviours...it’s an issue of not only theory but also practice” (Peter, p. 4T).

Participants demonstrate varying efforts to locate themselves within systems of power and privilege, recognizing how their identities are constituted through race, gender and Northern status. They further consider implications for negotiating relations of power and their own identities as Northern development workers. In narrating processes of coming to read their experiences as embedded in relations of power, they identify an investment of time and need for self-reflexivity as foundational to these ongoing processes. Participants begin this process by thinking about what it means to access and exercise power. Ann describes her “reflection action reflection” (Ann, p. 8T) cycle as requiring a constant revisiting of actions in order to behave in ways that are relevant and appropriate. The questions that guide participants’ reflections are:

“who you are, where are you going, why are you doing this and what do you know and what you do not know” (Ann, p. 8T). In challenging themselves to move beyond pronouncements of good will and intentions, participants demonstrate degrees of accountability in their explorations of these questions. Their narratives and analyses emphasize the ways in which they, as Northern development workers routinely exercise power, most often grounded in whiteness and Northern status. In reflecting on and narrating their own experiences, participants often exhibit an ability to see as problematic and partial their interpretations of their time in the South. In doing so, they resist exclusively employing emotion as a basis for understanding their experiences as Northern development workers in the South. Participants argue that an over-reliance on good will and emotion without an accompanying analysis of power and privilege, allows Northern development workers to feel an affirmation that Angela describes in this way, “it’s just the whole issue about being overseas and being important and I think a lot of development workers, they just love that. They glory in that. They just glory in that” (Angela 2 6, p. 7).

White participants and participants of colour speak to the privileges they incur through Northern status and geography. However, this understanding of privilege is complicated when participants meaningfully integrate race to understand how it informs experiences of white Northern development workers and Northern development workers of colour. Many participants centre race and their racial identities, arguing that they are salient in shaping encounters that Northern development workers have in the South but are often overlooked. Sophia works through the complexities of Northern development worker identity without allowing them to be reduced to difference without power. She draws particular attention to how race and Northern status operate together to structure Northern development worker experiences in the South, compelling Northern development workers to consider positions of privilege prior to working in Southern communities:

even if you are a black person going from Canada, you’re still in a position of privilege based on geography because you’re from the West but at the

same time, racially it's different than from a white person, right so trying to look at the complexities of some of that power and privilege issues, structural differences, I think that's really really important...awareness around your position of privilege based on your gender, based on your race, based on your class background and power relations and dynamics when you're working locally (Sophia, pp. 13-14T).

In moving beyond a cursory naming of power, participants ground their analysis in multiple and simultaneously operating systems of power. In this way, they seek to elaborate its workings in Northern development worker interactions in the South. While participants in this group also acknowledge the limitations of top-down models of development, it is with their understanding of power and privilege that they further develop a rigorous critique of liberal development worker practices and articulate alternatives. Emily frames the position of all Northern development workers in this way: *"it's like you bought a membership in this club, how are you going to use the facilities? Everyone knows you have a membership in that club... reflect on this in terms of your own work in going overseas...what can you do as a result of what you understand, what it means (Emily, p. 13)?"*

Problematizing and Posing Northern Development Practices

Solidarity and Struggle

In elaborating on the role of Northern development workers, participants demand a rethinking of what it means to call oneself a development worker and the corresponding analysis and action required to engage in meaningful change. They compel Northern development workers to formulate a structural analysis of underdevelopment that connects national and international economic policies and processes. Participants understand it to be the task of Northern development workers to negotiate appropriate courses of action within this analytical framework. Emily argues that "the solution is not to leave the field to everyone who has no such analysis" (Emily, p. 37T) but she also adds, *"unless you're going to do something here, work to find a space here to do something" (Emily, p. 13)*. However, participants are also mindful of the extent

to which power and privilege operate and require negotiation in community development work in the North.

Participants articulate an understanding of the role of this critical Northern development worker as one who struggles against power imbalances and exploitation locally and globally. Within this context, participants argue that good will becomes an increasingly insufficient condition for participation in international development work. While Peter recognizes good will as a preliminary gesture, he observes that Northern development workers, though well intentioned, often reproduce oppressive relations of power. He frames the dilemma in this way, "I mean in a way, good will may be a good start but good will or the ideal to assist people in the South help themselves is a good ideal but that's not good enough because people end up falling in a lot of pitfalls or perpetuating – the injustice or the systemic power dynamics that you're working under" (Peter, p. 3T). This over-reliance on good will and helping without an accompanying analysis of power and privilege precludes a more critical questioning of the roles assumed by Northern development workers in the South. Sandra reframes the participation of Northern development workers, challenging them to consider what it is that they meaningfully contribute to struggles, given the demands they place on Southerners to facilitate their cross-cultural experiences in the South. She asks Northern development workers to account for:

what do you have to bring to that struggle, cause if you think of these things as struggles the people have a lot to fight for and a lot of other things to do other than babysitting you, translating for you, driving you around, feeding you, taking care of you when you're homesick and you realize pretty quickly that you're a burden...you're a burden, and if you're a burden that's not solidarity go home, you can go home (Sandra, p. 28T).

It is in describing this neediness of Northern development workers as they adjust to life in the South that participants challenge declarations of solidarity that Northern development workers assume and articulate.

Participants' understandings of solidarity are rooted in mutual investments in altering current conditions of exploitation that reinforce the North-South divide. Ann poses the question of relationality in this way, "*we are interdependent, what is my interdependence with you*" (Ann, p. 3)? In framing his own analysis of interdependence and solidarity, Peter recalls the words of an aboriginal woman in the South. He and she position solidarity as an interconnectedness of liberation and call for Northern development workers to interrogate and readjust attitudes of saving or empowering Southerners. In defining their role to empower Southerners, participants argue that Northern development workers problematically position themselves as saving Southern people. Angela also racializes these romanticized interventions that white Northern development workers construct of their contribution to Southern people. She observes their tendency to:

go down as these glorified white people going down - to help these poor black people. It's usually the black people, but in Asia it's not black, it's a brown people or whatever but in the Pacific, you know what I mean. But it's the whole mentality of how they view what they do is like I went down and oh, and it's just that storybook thing about this kid...and how I helped him. That's what I don't like about it (Angela 2 6, pp. 3-4).

Participants draw attention to the extent to which implicit in these development worker practices and attitudes are feelings of Northern superiority, identifying all the "baggage with regard to looking down on Southern partners and peoples" (Peter, p. 4T). Invoking the words of an aboriginal woman, Peter compels Northern development workers to develop a more informed analysis of interdependence prior to their participation in the South:

solidarity work has to be based on mutual need, on working on mutual goal and practice. The aboriginal woman in the South in the Pacific, who told development workers, look if you're coming here to help me don't come, but if your own liberation is intertwined with mine then let's discuss and do something about the situations both together. So it has to be - both working together to bring about - achieving your common goal (Peter, p. 4T).

Participants speak of a struggle that gains strength through an internationalization of actors for social change. They focus on social movements and away from project-based development exclusively, which they argue has not been successful in addressing causes of underdevelopment.

Ann problematizes the premise of project-based development and interventions of Northern development workers, highlighting their inadequacy given the structural underdevelopment of the South and intensifying disparities in wealth. She provides the following analysis:

the monies are getting out from the South to the North, so it's not a question of sending people to assist in changing the situation, these projects will not change the situation. They will perhaps give choices to a few people, but the structural difficulties that exist and the inequities in the North and in the South are accentuating, they are accentuating (Ann, pp. 6-7).

Participants identify the short sightedness of directing energy primarily to strengthen the NGO sector while neglecting movement building initiatives in the South. Sandra challenges that “if we really are committed to seeing social change, meaningful social change then it has to be, I think linked to movement building and movements... many times people work with local NGOs - I guess there's nothing necessarily wrong with that but that shouldn't be the be all and end all” (Sandra 2 5, p. 21). Bill also identifies the limitations of concentrating resources and energy in the NGO sector alone, particularly given the problematic structuring of funding relationships. Describing the conservative tendencies of the Northern development worker community, he notes their reluctance to challenge relations of power and address causes of exploitation. In naming what distinguishes Northern development workers from activists, he identifies, “struggle - struggle, confrontation - change. What we do is incremental - we don't confront vested interests or power - we don't - promote the idea of dissent - we don't promote confrontation, we don't promote challenge. We promote - convention --...this little comfortable club” (Bill 2 5, p. 4).

Understanding as struggles Southern movements for social and economic justice, participants are critical of Northern development workers' desire to experience and exoticize Southern cultures and people. Sandra characterizes as “despicable...reaching out for that little cultural experience, the more people are different the more brave this is...it's really about I think supporting, the search for authentic native other...I hate to say it but I don't want to – pretend that they do – such

great work” (Sandra 2 6, pp. 41-42). Sophia concurs, arguing that many international development programs are “very focused on giving white folks the opportunity to be in a so called exotic developing country” (Sophia, p. 1T). In critically reflecting on and problematizing her own experiences and stories of the South, Emily connects her accounts with those that circulate in travel literature. Acknowledging the extent to which knowledge of Southern people and ways of life are informed by Northern perspectives, Emily situates her own participation in documenting “the Southerner.” She comments that travel literature is often positioned “*as if they are the truth of what could be known about a place...I thought of myself writing postcards home about the people, food, climate are like this. We learn to think of the world and know what it is, how it is in relation to us. The world is served up as something to consume for our own enjoyment. It continues today*” (Emily, p. 14). In describing these unreflective and exploitive Northern development worker practices, both Bill and Peter use the term “development tourist” while Angela highlights the self-importance of Northern development workers and perceptions of themselves as “knight[s] in shining armor and coming down with all the goodness” (Angela, p. 15T). Participants compel a rethinking of dominant understandings of the role of Northern development workers, demanding that they name and account for the impact of their desire for travel and adventure interspersed with sporadic efforts to do good work.

Making Visible Relations of Exploitation

Setting the material context.

Participants challenge Northern conceptions of development that rely on the South replicating Northern models of economic, social and political organization. Most participants centre and speak critically of the global economic context in which they situate development work, arguing that economic growth has not resulted in the promised “*trickle down, as we have seen nothing trickles down*” (Ann, p. 1). They problematize Northern development paradigms that rely primarily on economic indicators of growth as the hallmark of Southern development. It is this

model that largely informs Northern development workers' practices and attitudes in the South. Arriving from what is assumed to be in the North a developed context, the civilizing mission becomes one of helping Southerners become more like Northerners. There is a normalization of this vision as the only path to development and Northern development workers come to believe that economic poverty in the South could be alleviated if Southerners follow Northern models of progress. Emily challenges Northern development workers to rethink their convictions that if:

they [Southerners] could become like us they wouldn't have these problems. The reasons they have problems is because of the impact of capitalism...it is almost impossible in this part of the world, to find our way out of the box and implicit comparisons, show them how to be like us. This is working for us because we know that deteriorating economic conditions are enriching other parts of the world (Emily, p. 7).

Other participants also observe the tendency of Northern development workers to disconnect the operation of capitalism from its impact in the South. Like Emily, they understand this to be problematic as it obscures causes of underdevelopment and sustains the North-South divide. Derek is critical of this delinking between development and capitalism, arguing "unless you're able to have those discussions, you can't ever talk about international development in a meaningful way...if you can't talk about capitalism when you talk about development [laugh] what are you talking about" (Derek 1 3, p. 4)?

Through their analysis, participants connect economic growth in the North with underdevelopment in the South, making explicit the "*hypocrisy of global politics*" (Ann, p. 1). They explicate the relationship between poverty and growth, pointing to the enormous extractions of wealth from South to North with the collusion of local elites. Ann articulates her understanding that globalization has resulted in increasing concentrations of wealth as well as growing inequalities between and within countries. She urges Northern development workers to connect economic growth, predominantly in the North with increasing poverty in the South.

Ann references the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) figures to demonstrate the outflow of money from South to North:

the figures will tell you all, OECD figures of how much resources are going from the North to the South in aid funds or you know, donor cooperation, or bilateral, multilateral, NGO you know is very little compared to the amounts that are being pulled out of the those countries to debt and other refinancing, you know, so the monies are getting out from the South to the North...the structural difficulties that exist and the inequities in the North and in the South are accentuating, they are accentuating (Ann, pp. 6-7T).

In describing deteriorating material conditions in the North and South, participants identify the impact of global economic policies in the form of debt repayment, structural adjustment and trade policies. Providing a historical lens, Emily observes and traces intensifying economic poverty in Central Africa to structural adjustment policies. Given her extended participation in international development work, Emily disputes, "*ahistorical explanations – they're [Southerners are] getting poorer, they've always been poor*" (Emily, p. 10). Participants challenge these discourses of inevitability and naturalization of poverty in the South. These explanations, manufactured in the North as ethnic clashes, tribal wars, corruption and inefficiency preclude a more systematic and historical analysis of underdevelopment in which the North is implicated.

Exploitation by Northern development workers.

In extending their analysis of the material context, participants problematize their own participation as Northern development workers in international development. They make explicit the benefits that Northern development workers incur through participation in international development work, arguing that recognition of these material and personal gains are often obscured through the language of volunteerism. While participants recognize that not all 'volunteers' will go on to work in international development, they recognize that working in the South provides all Northern development workers with critical opportunities for professional development and personal growth. Though rarely acknowledged, "how to succeed, how to get ahead...is what ninety-nine percent of people want when they go overseas" (Derek 1 5 3, pp. 5-

6). These experiences often translate into more lucrative employment opportunities in the North and South. In addition to these material gains, Derek elaborates the multiple ways in which Northern development workers participate in exploitation while in the South. He is worth quoting at length here given his facility in identifying the professional, economic, emotional and knowledge benefits acquired through participation in international development:

okay I think there's a lot of different kinds of exploitation. I think that there's - [sigh] - too many dimensions but let's think of some of the ones right off the top. There's the professional exploitation that going overseas is something I can put on my resume so when I come back I get a better job...exploitation number one. Exploitation number two, is any money that you might get paid now in these kinds of postings, that's not a big issue but for other people it is. For [Northern international development agency] people...your salary which is - being banked in Canada is ridiculous right so it's exploitation of professionally number two. Exploitation emotionally, you expect people to support you and be there for you and understand what you're going through and blah blah blah ... Exploitation number three wisdom and knowledge, tell me what the lay of the land is, tell me how things are done here, tell me how you do things here, tell me you know, settlers to Canada, tell me how to plant corn - so tell show give me the technical know how to survive and to flourish in either the workplace or socially...I'm just here to learn about you - that's another form of exploitation...do I also think that they can actually come back without to some extent having exploited the situation, no, I don't (Derek 2 6, pp. 18-19).

In critically reflecting on her international development experiences, Emily describes the status that she enjoys as a white Northern development worker in the South. In describing her profound sense of loss when leaving the South, Emily links her feelings to intense connections with people and places. However, it is only much later that she is able to also trace her nostalgia for the South to leaving a comfortable life and professional position. Reluctant to see how she enjoyed and benefited from her position of power and privilege as a Northern development worker, Emily narrates now feeling suspicious about herself and the investments she was protecting:

I would say that part of me was dying - you know that person I got to be there, I was not going to get to be that person anymore - but I didn't understand that ...part of it was that - that I couldn't - call up to mind or to - my emotions, the places that of deepest connection - but - the other side of that was also [laugh] that places where I was really enjoying being [laughter] who I got to be as the [title in NGO], - you know the perks that came with the job were things that I was missing. I started to think that

there's something about this nostalgia that's very very suspect. - I still think that. I guess in a - certain way that's - although I hadn't articulated it to myself in those terms...that I think leads us to something. **That's** something worth tracing. - I felt very suspicious about myself...I know that a lot of the nostalgia I have is for who I got to be there...I think that one has to - be watchful about what can that can indicate to me - what my investments were - [laugh] (Emily 4 15, pp. 3-4)

Given their analysis of the exploitive conditions in which development work occurs, participants deplore the ways in which the Northern development worker community continues to manufacture its access to the South. Bill identifies gender in development and all of its previous variations as an example of the construction of an industry dominated by Northern gender specialists. As he argues, the organization of development work is such that it encourages and brings “convention and security and stability and careerists into the business” (Bill 2 5, p. 5). Sandra problematizes this career advancement of Northern development workers as “climbing and I guess people climb all the time in their professions, they move up and there's nothing necessarily wrong with that but I guess there's a part of me that sometimes, I just really resent that kind of climbing [laughter] on struggles” (Sandra 4 15, p. 12). Participants further consider the conditions under which Northern development worker presence is warranted in the South. In recognizing the enormous local capabilities that exist in the South, participants resist contributing to diminishing employment opportunities in many Southern contexts. They are also harshly critical of Northern job creation strategies presented as development, resulting in displacement of Southern personnel that Sandra names “an employment or an HR agency or a temp agency really” (Sandra, p. 13T). In negotiating the relevance of her participation in Latin America, Sandra comments that her skills are abundantly available, and unwilling to participate in the displacement of local labour and capacity, she chooses not to work in these countries. Sophia similarly negotiates her own participation as a Northern development worker in South Asia, noting again the tremendous expertise that exists locally. As Sophia describes it, “in the [South Asian] context, there's just so many trained, capable, willing people in [South Asia] to do development work that I don't feel that I need to be going from Canada to do it” (Sophia, p. 11T).

Like other participants, Derek carefully negotiates what he understands to be appropriate roles for Northerners in international development. He prioritizes the work of Northern development workers in educating Northern communities rather than focusing their effort in the South:

My role is very clear to me, my role is not and I - to be honest with you I won't do international development in the sense I won't go and say I'm going to go and dig wells in northern Ghana. I'm opposed to it - I understand why you need technical experts and the rest of it to do it or to impart that information or that skill or whatever but there's no way we should be over there doing that stuff - my responsibility is to - hear what my [Southern] colleagues and my friends say in these different communities and then bring that information or that message back to my own community (Derek, p. 9T).

In shifting the focus from the personal growth and cross-cultural experiences of Northern development workers to their impact in Southern communities, participants challenge the contribution and competence of Northern development workers in the South, many of whom are less qualified and experienced than Southern candidates. Participants comment that rarely do Northern development workers have appropriate language skills or country knowledge, preconditions for making even modest contributions while in the South. As Sandra observes, "the types of work that most development workers do is not all that helpful [laugh]...I mean it's about educating these Canadians, it's not that helpful for the local partners...if anything it's often babysitting people" (Sandra 2 6, p. 46).

Negotiating Northern Development Worker Identity

Reframing Northern Development Worker Interventions

It is with this analysis of exploitive economic relations and their own efforts to negotiate power and privilege that some participants deliberately choose to work in the North for social justice and integrate these principles into daily living. In resisting the impulse to conceptualize development work as something that occurs primarily through Northern development worker presence in the South, participants reframe the participation of Northerners in international development. Recognizing Northern implication in underdevelopment, these participants locate their efforts in

the North to advocate against international financial institutions and Northern government policies, raising awareness of their detrimental impact in the South and North. These interventions, they argue, are more transformative and responsible as they address causes of underdevelopment and exploitation. As Ann argues, expertise exists both in the North and South, and Northern development workers can act more credibly, using their skills and resources to mobilize from the North rather than assuming that change happens primarily through Northern projects and presence in the South. Participants argue that it is through actors engaged in international development, from different geographical spaces that learning across North and South occurs in ways that more closely resemble partnership. Enhancing this partnership are reciprocal exchanges through which the flow of personnel does not occur primarily from the North to the South but as Ann argues, from South to North as well, providing Southerners with opportunities to study the North. She provides insights into differently imagined practices of development work, and is worth quoting at length given her facility in articulating the logic of international development:

I believe that the expertise exists everywhere in the North and in the South, and we have to first of all change the situations in which we live if we want to be considered real, credible development workers or actors of change, you know so if we are not involved in our local communities here we have not much to share to other people elsewhere...groups that you know that think that change comes by work in the South, it has to be work in North and in the South because that's the part of the problem, that is the problem, you know we think that the change is happening there and we have to support **that**, the point is that the groups in the South, any active group in the South who understands the logic of international development change will tell you go back home and do your homework and what are they saying, is they're saying that your government as well as ours is part of the [cough] is making policies that is **extremely** detrimental to us and is increasing our burden and our problem so if we do not do work for change and advocate for changes in Canadian laws, in Canada's role in the IMF in the World Bank, in international financial institutions, which **are** putting more and more pressure on the developing world, it will be of very little use, marginal use really (Ann, p. 6T).

In reframing their interventions as Northern development workers, other participants make deliberate and well-informed decisions to participate in international development through work

in the South. They discuss the conditions under which they choose to continue working in the South, given availability of local skills, capacity and lack of employment opportunities. Participants outline rigorous preparatory efforts for all Northern development workers prior to participation in international development. They insist that Northern development workers need to critically inform themselves of both Southern histories and Northern presence in the South, particularly from Southern perspectives. Angela's preparatory efforts have focused on learning from Southern resources in order to "know what the South is speaking...about development workers" (Angela, p. 2T). Participants are critical of the tendency of Northern development worker to postpone learning until they arrive in Southern communities as this means a continued demand on local people to inform and educate, that Derek names exploitation of local knowledge. Emily similarly warns against the "*danger in just seeing [Southerners] as available for me to study and ask personal questions. They asked me which sanctioned my asking back. That kind of curiosity is not the same...always a case study and never emerge just as people*" (Emily, p. 12). In understanding how power and history are embedded in interactions between Northern development workers and Southern people, Emily draws attention to the fact that seeking information from Southern people is not uncomplicated nor is it the same for Southern people asking similar questions of Northern people.

While participants do not deny the benefits and possibilities of learning across cultures, they are critical of cross-cultural learning alone as well as the conditions under which it occurs for Northern development workers. As cross-cultural learning typically produces emotional experiences, rarely do Northern development workers challenge themselves to develop corresponding analyses to trace their experiences and responses to systems of power and privilege. In not connecting experiences to structures, participants argue that Northern development workers are unlikely to engage in political learning and transformative projects that endure beyond their time in the South. As Ann observes of Northern development workers,

“some of them may become quite emotional about the experience and keep the contact yes with the communities they have had a very pleasant time with but it doesn’t go beyond” (Ann, p. 10T). Participants’ interactions with Northern development workers have confirmed that most have little interest in learning from Southern based social movements for the purpose of politicization and social change. Sandra, for example, notes the resistance of Northerners to learn from the South and Southerners. In reflecting on her own political learning through participation in international development, she recognizes the history of resistance and organizing in the South that provide tremendous lessons for Northerners attempting to mobilize against exploitive economic policies:

I really gained from working and living in other countries where I -- I'm just always amazed at how difficult that is for a lot of people here. What do you mean you have something to learn from [Central Asia], - you know, the reforms that were happening there, were happening before they were happening here. If you can look at restructuring in the 80's in Africa and Latin America, we should have been learning so much from how that was happening and thinking how we can mobilize here (Sandra 1 3, p. 12).

It is in this exchange of resistance strategies and mobilization that participants understand meaningful learning to occur across cultures. Within this context of knowledge sharing and Northern consciousness-raising, most participants negotiate and understand their own involvement in international development in the North and South.

Given their own tremendous learning through travel and work in the South, participants urge Northern development workers, on their return to engage other Northerners in a critical analysis of how systems of power and privilege operate in ways that benefit Northerners to the disadvantage of most in the South. Acknowledging the educative potential of travel, Derek is clear that his role as a Northern development worker is to bring this consciousness to his local community, rather than going overseas “to save anyone or to change anything” (Derek, p. 9T). While Derek positions Northern development workers as informed actors, he does not believe that individuals can divest themselves of power or privilege but argues it is possible for there to

be “effective use of power” (Derek 1 9, p. 20). As a self-identified white man, he describes his involvement in anti-oppression work in local Northern communities and efforts to educate friends, family and Northern development workers as responsible uses of power. His hope is that the time Northern development workers spend in the South will be marked by a politicization of experience and deepening analysis of economic structures and policies. Derek articulates his vision for the potential of Northern development workers to develop “a better understanding of economics you know that would be **amazing** if they if people started to come back and think that the systems – fucked” (Derek 1 3, p. 3) and actively engage in efforts to educate and challenge Northern people. Derek conceptualizes connectivity not as an esoteric longing but locates connectivity and consciousness-raising efforts in a material context. The process of educating Northerners then involves raising our collective consciousness around the relationality of our material lives with the conditions in which most Southerners live. Derek articulates his philosophy and politics of connectivity as bringing together:

people on different sides of the planet but in a meaningful way, not in this artsy fartsy kind of way that oh the air I breath has been breathed by -- you know that's to me that's crap. I'm sure it makes sense to some kind of meta-physical level but it's just not real enough for me. I mean the level of consumption that you have has an impact, the stuff you are buying is made by people under **these** conditions - that's the kind of consciousness that I'm talking about (Derek, p. 17T).

Problematizing Empowerment of Southern Women

Participants note the facility with which many Northern development workers are able to speak about gender and development, easily grasping its significance in development efforts. In comparing the extent to which gender has been integrated into the Northern model of development, participants comment that there is often a delinking of race from development that has not been the case with gender and development. Allison, from the previous section reflects, “recognized as a component - in development are things like gender but where does racism come in? I mean it's not one of the main objectives of [name of Northern international development

agency]. Gender is a cross-cutting theme, racism is a cross-cutting theme and it - crosses, it's never come up like that" (Allison 1 5 3, p. 3). Understanding race and gender to operate simultaneously and systematically in development, participants advocate that both should be addressed in meaningful ways.

These participants resist positioning themselves as advocates, working on behalf of Southern women to secure social, economic and political rights. They also resist positioning Southern women as requiring the intervention of Northern development workers on their behalf. They observe the many efforts of Southern women to mobilize for their own empowerment, not only against gender inequalities but also Northern imposed global economic policies. Sandra acknowledges that Northerners have much to learn from the activism of Southern women, highlighting, "could we ever learn a lot from most women's movements all over the world...who do we think we are to do capacity building in their countries" (Sandra, p. 11T)? Participants question the role of Northern development workers in working with Southern women, constructed as disempowered and needy. Like Sandra, Sophia points to the enormous capability that exists in the South, emphasizing the capacity of Southern women. She reflects:

in the [South Asian] context, there's just so many trained, capable, willing people in [South Asia] to do development work that I don't feel that I need to be going from Canada to do it...I just don't see the point, there's just so many [South Asians] in [South Asia] that can do it, do you know what I mean there's tons of women, tons of feminists interested in this kind of work (Sophia, p. 11T).

Not presupposing Northern women's liberation, participants broaden this gender analysis to consider how the same system operates in the lives of Northern women. As Bill elaborates, "*in my experience, gender hardest – Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Africa or here in Canada, hardest nut to crack...serious blocks continue to impede advancement of women. Tough one, at the core of self identity, esteem, how women, men see selves, who people are. People have good defenses, it doesn't matter where*"(Bill, p. 2). In drawing attention to the prevalence of oppression in Canada, Derek maintains an analysis of the ways in which gender oppression as

well as other forms of exploitation operate in the North and South. He elaborates the continuity of workings of these systems in Northern and Southern contexts in the following way, “sexual harassment isn’t going to just happen in Dar-es-Salaam or wherever right, Jakarta. Sexual harassment happens in Toronto every day right, homophobia happens in Toronto everyday - racism, all that kind of stuff and economic exploitation happens here everyday” (Derek I 12, p. 12). Derek also notes the facility with which people, in this case Northern development workers, are able to recognize and analyze the ways in which power oppresses them without developing a corresponding analysis of how they exercise power. For example, he observes this reluctance to engage in critical explorations of whiteness, particularly amongst white women development workers. Derek shares his insights:

I have to be careful because – you know the problem is – is that when you start talking, when I start talking about power, right as a white male, I’m on very, very, shaky, shaky turf...Don’t just tell me how power oppresses you if you’re not also willing to talk about how you exercise power. Like you can’t, you can’t have half the story - I don’t think and what I find with most, not all, I mean I read in my in anti-racism stuff, I read great white women writers all the time...who do this exploration of their own power and privilege – but I find its in short supply (Derek, p. 24T).

Emily narrates her long process of coming to problematize her own participation in women’s programs in the South. Realizing that “we can have the best will in the world but we really didn’t understand what we were doing. This did not deter me [laughter] from, **at all** from gender issues” (Emily, p. 9T), Emily reflects on her persistence in modifying the women’s program in an effort to get it right. Eventually, she concedes that even with local staff and participatory methodologies, the appropriateness of a foreign NGO directing a women’s program in Central Africa was still questionable. In reflecting on her desire to continue working in international development, Emily acknowledges her resistance to seeing her participation in the women’s program as problematic. She traces this resistance to her need to justify the contribution she was making in the South. She argues that Northern development workers need to be vigilant in investigating their stories of themselves and their work in the South:

I think that one has to – be watchful about what can indicate to me – what my investments were. - [laugh]...it was sometime last year that I actually was able to look at our women's program - critically. I couldn't, I could **not** see that program as I talked to you about it today. I couldn't I had to have like one thing [laugh] the one thing that was okay - that made it all okay somehow – I guess as well that's why I say I think it is you know – for white people its peeling away the layers of the onion (Emily, pp. 44-45T).

Her extended participation in international development work leads Emily to peripheralize the role that gender plays for white, women Northern development workers in the South. She identifies this as a field dominated by white Northern women and elaborates the elevated status that they are able to achieve in the South in a way that is not possible for them to do in the North. She describes this as *“very liberatory. They knew they could do anything, claim to subjectivity they could never have realized if they had stayed in Canada”* (Emily, p. 14).

Rethinking Romanticized Relationships: Participation and Partnership

It is within a context of struggle and exploitation that participants question the ease with which Northern development workers presume to be working in partnership with Southern communities. Using the language of mutuality, respect and good will, participants argue that most Northern development workers overstate their attempts and ability to re-shape their practices in Southern communities. For example, Emily criticizes Northern development workers' heightened sense of their own contribution to local NGOs, describing their over active imaginations when they assume that working across NGOs with other Northern development workers constitutes resource and knowledge sharing. She observes their tendency to misname communication between themselves as partnership, noting that Northern development workers **“imagine** that their organizations are now linking - but they're not of course linking. Its just that the development workers are linking and the development workers can find common ground in terms of what are we trying to do with **them** [Southern people/organizations]” (Emily 2 6, pp. 26-27). In extending the measure of competence, participants demand more of Northern development workers than cursory analyses and efforts to reconstitute relations between Northern development workers and

Southern people. They argue that this over-reliance on enthusiasm and good will without an accompanying analysis of power and privilege, leads to a profound distortion of how Northern development workers interpret their experiences, understand the role they play in Southern communities and by extension how they perceive the communities in which they are living and working.

Ann challenges the assumed benefits of volunteer sending and Northern presence in the South, arguing that such programs largely benefit the North and Northerners to the detriment of the South. In reframing this presumption of mutuality through volunteer sending, Ann argues that “a lot of this is benefiting the North, it’s not benefiting the South and the South is still giving and giving and giving and we have to ask ourselves how much can we suck out - of people even in their misery you know because it’s not reciprocity” (Ann, p. 18T). Participants apply a structural analysis to their critical assessment of participatory development and partnership, providing clarity on how power and privilege operate to mediate Northern development worker practices in the South. In reflecting on processes of becoming critical of her own practice, Emily recalls her initial enchantment with participatory methodologies and the belief that it could compensate for structural differences that intervene to organize development worker practices with Southern people:

this participatory stuff, this is the **wow**, this is the answer, this is it, this'll do it you know. Suddenly we can open up discussions and issues that we never discussed before - and it did make a difference you know, I'm not saying it didn't - it **did**, it did but I thought - it was enough to overcome everything - and of course it's not (Emily 2 2, p. 10).

While acknowledging that it did make a modest difference in interactions in the work environment, Emily recognizes that participatory methodologies are not sufficient to reshape the North-South encounter. Other participants also extend this analysis, warning Northern development workers not to romanticize participatory processes as a panacea to address power imbalances. Highlighting the power associated with Northern status, Bill identifies “a kind of

naivete...when you sit down with a villager you want to sit down as equals, you want to sit down as co-collaborators - if you come from the West, you have an education, you can leave at anytime ...and you want to negotiate on the basis of equality (Bill 2 6, p. 9)? Bill also elaborates on the extent to which funding structures and sustains hierarchical relationships between Northern development workers and their Southern colleagues. He describes the enormous imbalance in the demands for accountability placed on Southern NGO personnel, arguing that partnership requires a redistribution of control over and allocation of resources. Given this lack of shared decision making, Bill argues “you can see how it’s all inequitable cause the evaluations all go one way” (Bill, p. 10T). Participants frame their critique of participation and partnership in a larger structural context that secures for Northern development workers routine access to power and privilege in the South. They identify the larger Northern development community presence in the South that brings with it membership in an expatriate club, providing Northern development workers with access to influential networking and many other perks while in the South. Sophia describes this arrangement as a “whole infrastructure...from the Canadian embassy right down to [name of Northern international development agency] project offices...you know they’re all there and they all play into the same thing so it’s a bigger structural issue” (Sophia, p. 21T). In imagining partnership, often overlooked are these structural inequities that result in wage disparities between Northern and Southern development workers, even within the same NGO as well as access to employment opportunities within Southern NGOs.

In tracing their disenchantment with participatory methodologies, participants identify Northern development workers’ attitudes of superiority and arrogance that together with the structured inequalities make partnership illusory. In pointing to the gap between reality and rhetoric, Sophia observes, “people love to say oh yeah mutual respect and I don’t, I don’t find that that’s really what’s going on, it’s often patronizing and it’s not really mutual” (Sophia, p. 19T). Participants observe that the arrogance of Northern development workers, though not always expressed

explicitly, is rooted in Northern dictated visions of development in which the Northern development worker transfers appropriate and necessary knowledge and skills to the South. This attitude of “we know what’s best” (Angela 26, p. 6) denies that Northern development workers have much to learn in Southern communities. Participants comment at length on the inappropriate behaviours and attitudes of Northern development workers, as they are manifest in their places of work. They observe the extent to which Northern development workers reflect Eurocentric assumptions about the organization and flow of work and their unwillingness to concede alternatives. Sophia remarks on her professional interactions with other Northern development workers, observing their disrespect, arrogance and liberal exercises of power:

I saw expats really lose it, lose it in terms of just getting so frustrated and angry and just letting out all their frustrations and anger directly on somebody ...they **have to** make their point and they have to have the last word, or you know they’re frustrated, they just can’t let it go without that ...some of these expatriates often gave their opinions about a particular program or project or plan, and I don’t know whether it was necessarily appropriate all the time, like I think they might have been coming from a - sort of a more Eurocentric kind of view (Sophia, p. 19T).

These participants challenge Northern development workers to move beyond an emotional and unreflective reading of their experiences to critically interrogate the reasons for and impact of their presence in the South. Rejecting “a declaration of guilt” (Emily, p. 5), participants demand reflexivity, responsibility and a willingness to learn for consciousness-raising on the part of Northern development workers. While Northern development workers affirm that their time in the South contributes to their own growth and learning, participants understand this learning to be primarily for professional advancement, cultural and personal growth. They argue that rarely do Northern development workers learn in ways that challenge their own politicization and sustain a commitment to social change. Sandra observes exercises of Northern superiority on the part of white, Northern development workers, precluding them from learning in meaningful ways from Southern peoples. Recognizing local capacities and the mutual learning that can occur, Derek argues “you don’t always have to be teacher while you’re there,” (Derek 26, p. 18) challenging

Northern development workers' belief that they have little to learn from the skills, knowledge and mobilization of Southern people. He also adds that despite Northern technological sophistication, the North is in many ways, not advanced and has much to learn from the South.

Bill argues that Northern development workers do not willingly relinquish power and observes their widespread and destructive exercises of power in the South. In saying that "we don't give up power, we don't give up power - and we don't give up privilege either" (Bill 2 6, p. 9), Bill relies on explanations such as Northern development workers' naiveté, lack of exposure to ideas and accurate information to account for their exercises of power and reliance on privilege. In an effort to address power imbalances and improve Northern development worker practices, Bill resorts to remedies such as dialogue, honesty, trust, information sharing and experiences in the south while Sandra adds an openness to learn. Bill states it in the following way:

if you have a vulnerability or if you have a bias or if you are discriminated, if you have a prejudice, let's minimize it, let's talk about it because you'll become more than what you were if you're[laughter]...if you're cured of it, if you're divested, divested of it...somehow you are freed of what is a limitation and you think it's a strength but actually it's something that holds you back, bias, limitations, discrimination. If you're free of it you see things so completely different...so in the same way, I think that if you can see the limitations, if you can identify the limitations, if you can enter into a dialogue about limitations, then somehow you slay them, you slay these limitations and you become more and you become a better development worker if you're not carrying into every village all of this baggage (Bill, pp. 19-20T).

For example, in referencing his own efforts to negotiate gender, Bill again isolates the need for men to be honest in recognizing themselves as sexist. He identifies the origin of sexist ideas and practices in processes of socialization and while he is a gender specialist, Bill sees his own sexism, particularly as it emerges in interactions with other men. When asked what it would mean to address gender inequalities, he responds:

some honesty – you know the ability to sit down and for men - men are deadly fearful of this issue because these guys, I'm like that too, I want to be liberal, I want to be liberated, I want to be open I don't want to be a sexist but I know if I start really talking about this, I got a lot of socialization that I'm carrying along with me and I'm kind of embarrassed

about it, and we all are. You know when the guys are together, the way they talk is completely different from the way they talk when the women are in the room – and I know that - and I know what it's like cause I can do that too - but I'm a gender specialist [laughter] (Bill, p. 18T).

In presenting exercises of power as vulnerability, prejudice, bias, discrimination and limitations that can be overcome, Bill understates the material and personal investments of Northern development workers in not seeing how they enact and benefit from domination. In challenging Bill's assessment, Derek reframes this resistance to recognize systems of oppression in which one is implicated. He theorizes this unwillingness on the part of Northern development workers as one of refusing to acknowledge benefits they incur through oppressive relations. For example, Derek draws attention to the rarely acknowledged benefits that Canadians incur through their exploitive relations with First Nations people, noting this denial contributes to Northern development workers' posturing as being from the civilized North. He warns:

denial...is very dangerous but if that's your attitude and I've seen a lot of people go overseas with that attitude that they haven't benefited at all from from displacement of First Nations people. I didn't, I didn't do it, I didn't benefit from it well, if that's your attitude I think you go overseas with this arrogance you know it's – some people call it a blind spot – I call it denial. I don't think intuitively we're blind to anything (Derek 1 9, p. 20).

Other participants demonstrate a similar reflexivity in reflecting on their own experiences and appropriate roles for Northern development workers, denouncing behaviours and attitudes that perpetuate “neo-colonial shit” (Derek 2 2, p. 2). In having to constantly negotiate her privilege while in the South, Sophia asks of herself, “what does that mean and so what kind of a role do I play here and what can I contribute, what can't I do, where do I have to be quiet, where can I speak and you know I really sort of struggled with that” (Sophia, p. 24T).

Emily describes her own process of negotiating her participation in international development, reflecting of herself as well as other Northern development workers, a tendency to romanticize one's own participation as exceptional. Through her extended participation in international development, Emily observes that most Northern development workers are able to identify as

problematic aspects of development work, while positioning themselves and their own practices outside of this critique. Convinced that they are doing it right, these Northern development workers construct their participation in international development in problematic and distorted ways. Skeptical of what still requires excavating, Emily recalls telling herself this same story and the evolving analysis required to deconstruct this story:

Everyone...thought they did something different - they all had a critique of development and they all thought what they did was different and that was so familiar to me because I had seen this for years. I told myself the same story and I - and every foreign organization I ever saw work overseas had the same story. We do it right, everybody else is either wrong, questionable or not as good. [laughter joined by T] So - a lot of the roots of it of - the analysis I have now started back then and I think you know it's an evolving analysis. I don't think that you reach a point where now you know, I think now you might know some things that you didn't before but you have to assume that you've got some blind spots (Emily 2 6, p. 22).

Again, Emily narrates her long process of coming to see her own participation in the women's programs as problematic, challenging the story she constructed of the women's program and her own sense of getting it right: "I always seemed to be having just understood something that I'd hadn't understood before...and thinking that okay now I know, now we're getting somewhere" (Emily, p. 24T).

Complicating Integration

Like participants in the liberal development worker section, these participants also identify efforts to learn local languages, live more modestly and participate in local community life as ways to facilitate integration in the South. These participants also identify Northern attitudes of arrogance and opulent standards of living of Northern development workers in the South as problematic. Through their own observations, participants comment at length about the excessive lifestyle of many Northern development workers in the South, replicating "enclaves of white colonialism" (Emily 1 2, p. 11). Participants illuminate the expectation of comfort with which many development workers go overseas, anticipating lifestyles that include luxurious housing, domestic

help, swimming pools, fine restaurants, parties with local elites and the expatriate community. Sophia criticizes Northern development workers for their insistence on bringing expensive and unnecessary possessions, arguing that it poses obstacles to integration in Southern communities. Through her own observations, Ann is harshly critical of the tendency of Northern development workers to live lavishly in segregated compounds, that she names ghettos, often enjoying a lifestyle beyond what they could afford in the North. Replicating lifestyles of local elites, she notes that these Northern development workers rarely integrate in local communities, preferring to live and socialize with other expatriates. In a most quotable rant, Ann describes these habits of Northern development worker communities in the following way:

they cling to each other, they are a ghetto, they're a ghetto, they cling to each other, they try to get whatever assistance they can from the embassies and our missions abroad. They tend to click, clique together, and try to make themselves as comfortable as is possible and they hire little slaves in their homes in many countries to do work and they replicate modes of the elite in those developing countries and of course this is a generalization but I would say for example, in the countries I've seen, in many parts of Africa, and in Asia, especially in South East Asia, it's incredible, you know - they live off on on their own and they're involved in the development work, but very few are integrated into actually the life situations in those countries. They try to make themselves comfortable, in fact many times more comfortable than they would be in Canada (Ann, p. 15T).

While not denying that efforts to live modestly and learn local languages can facilitate integration, these participants are more cognizant of how systems of power and privilege intervene to complicate processes of integration and relationship building in the South. Their critical reflections illuminate the ongoing complexities of integration of Northern development workers living and working in the South. Most participants recognize that their power and privilege, as Northern development workers limits their ability to build equal relationships with Southern people. For Sophia, a woman returning to her country of origin as a Northern development worker, this was particularly difficult to negotiate as she imagined that with time and effort, her position of privilege would become less significant. Sophia reflects on her own

efforts to integrate in the South, recalling her realization that she would always be an outsider by virtue of her Northern status:

I was always in this position of privilege which I didn't quite understand before I got there...as much as you try and break down the barriers...you're always – in this outsider, privileged position...so that was something that I never imagined. I never imagined the extent to which that would happen. I thought oh no you know I'll just, it'll take a while to fit in but I'll fit in and everything will be equal and there's **no way** that I would be equal so that was kind of a hard – reality (Sophia, p. 2T).

Drawing attention to the material context, Emily focuses on how intensifying economic hardships for people in the South under structural adjustment policies impacted her ability as a Northern development worker to build relationships, particularly with Southern women. She notes that socializing and building friendships presupposes leisure time and disposable income, not a reality for most Southerners. She is worth quoting given her facility in connecting personal experience to the larger economic context:

In fact its very hard I think - given the economic circumstances in the country for people to have a lot of people in their lives in the way that we might here, right in terms of having friends – because - actually friends presupposes some money [laughter] and in a certain way it presupposes some leisure time...most people don't have that, most people don't have that kind of - level of financial security - anymore. Even middle class people don't and women, it's I think especially hard to really get to know other women because other women have family responsibilities - work ends and - they have kids at home and they have to get home and they have to cook and they - maybe doing something in the evening as well to raise money...so it is hard - to really get to be close to be people - and I think harder now with the way the economy is (Emily, pp. 18-19T).

Participants also observe and highlight the tendency of Northern development workers to invoke attitudes of superiority and arrogance when interacting with or discussing Southern people. For example, Northern development workers often comment on the lack of regard for time that Southern people exhibit in social and professional circumstances. Without an analysis of the impact of structural adjustment policies on Southern work cultures, Northern development workers easily come to evaluations of Southern people as inefficient, or romanticize a more relaxed pace of life that rarely corresponds to Southern realities. Participants challenge Northern

development workers to move beyond these readily accessible explanations to engage in a more critically informed analysis of their experiences in the South.

Negotiating Racial Identities of Northern Development Workers

White Northern development workers.

White participants and participants of colour locate the negotiation of white Northern development workers in a historical context of colonialism and contemporary context of imperialism in which international development is situated. Derek urges Northern development workers to be mindful in contextualizing their own experiences in a "*larger context. It's not just you in placement that day...there is a colonial context in each of these situations, imperial context continues today*" (Derek, p. 3). Most white participants make explicit the relationship between development and race and negotiate their whiteness as one of many points of power and privilege. While they demonstrate an analysis of racism as individual and structural, few articulate corresponding negotiations of white privilege as involving efforts to resist participating in both overt acts and articulations of racism as well as day-to-day enactments of racism in the South. In theorizing how race intervenes in the development process, they go on to trace the impact of race in their own practices as white Northern development workers. Recognizing the racism of white Northern development workers, Matt stresses the need for them to locate themselves in discussions of racism and resist talking about it exclusively at a structural level. He argues that white Northern development workers need to "really bring that issue home to themselves" as he observes their tendency to abstract racism as something "out there" (Matt, p. 11T).

While Bill also recognizes and is harshly critical of the enactment of power by white Northern development workers, he attributes this to their naiveté, lack of information and genuine belief in concepts of equality. He is optimistic that Northern development workers can overcome "privilege - power, racist - superiority" (Bill, p. 9T) through dialogue and accurate information. In expressing her skepticism about the ability of white, Northern, middle class people to learn,

Sandra asks the question, “what has to be, what has to be eroded inside of that type of white identity to allow them to be able to hear, to allow them to see” (Sandra 1 5, p. 6). Understanding this erosion as fundamental to Northern development workers’ negotiations of whiteness, she situates herself as having been able to learn as a white, Northern woman who has participated in international development work. While Emily concedes that this process is necessary, she resists finalizing explorations and negotiations of her white identity. In pre-empting this finality, Emily realizes the ongoing complexity for white people in coming to see themselves as racist and the experiences that require excavation. She observes that white people, in this case white Northern development workers rarely take the initiative in exploring their implication in racism and when called on to be accountable, they retreat quickly to positions of innocence. Unwilling to see how they perpetuate relations of exploitation, white Northern development workers attempt to differentiate themselves from white people whom they understand to be racist. Emily argues that for white Northern development workers who have engaged in tentative explorations of racism, there is a tendency to assume that having understood its operation, they are no longer racist:

It’s the white people who’ve done some - because they think they’ve got it worked out and they’re not like that - and they’re not prepared to think about ways in which they might still be like that...- for white people it’s a continual process of - peeling the layers of the onion, there’s always more layers and - we tend to need to kind of reach an accommodation with ourselves to be able to keep - on being - in this world. You know the real **horror** of what [laugh] of not only our history but of the way in which we perpetuate those historically based relations is - pretty much unbearable, I think - if we would confront it in its reality so I think we don’t tend to open things up. They get opened up for us. Sometimes we then come to terms like see something, come to terms and close things down again - and have to struggle against that - and I have to struggle against that too. I mean it’s always the kind of a desire to reach that position of innocence again - and I think that’s a luxury you have as a white person...we tend to reach to move pretty quickly towards those positions of innocence and sometimes we can get there by saying okay I now know this and I’m not like this [laugh] and you’re just repeating the sort of like I’m not that kind of a white person [laugh] (Emily 1 5 1, p. 34).

In making race salient in negotiating her power and privilege as a Northern, white development worker, Emily describes her efforts to distinguish herself from other white bodies in the South,

whether local elites or other Northern development workers. She traces understandings of whiteness and meanings attached to white bodies to a colonial history and continued presence of white people, articulating a desire to be seen as a different kind of white person in the South:

What kind of white person am I in [Central Africa]? I don't want people to look at me and think I'm a white [Central African] - cause there are white [Central Africans]... I'm not one of those [laughter], I'm not one of **those** people [laughter]. I'm **not** one of those and I'm also not **one of those development people**, you know. I'm not one of the ones that lives in the big posh houses and - drives the really expensive cars and -- has to have a guard at night and doesn't - associate with [Central Africans] except in the workplace, I 'm not one of those so I would also work hard at like what as time went on, figuring out what is it that I can - how can I show this, how can I convey this to people so that when they look at me, they read me a certain way. They're definitely going to read this body as foreign but I want them to read this body as a certain kind of foreign. [laugh] and not another kind, [laugh]... I was aware that I - as time went on that I was performing because I - I really did not want to be mistaken for one of those kinds of people - of which [Central Africa] has many, has had more [laughter] than its share, I think, [laughter] well I guess all colonized countries (Emily 2 3 1, pp. 5-6).

Emily describes her modest efforts to negotiate this reading of her white body through efforts to integrate in the community, interacting regularly and respectfully with Southern people, dressing appropriately and demonstrating comfort in her environment. While some of her negotiations are reminiscent of other participants, it is Emily's provocative analysis and ability to connect power and privilege with her everyday experiences that distinguishes her efforts. She describes her ongoing journey to account for her time overseas through a critical race analysis that has taken her many years to excavate. Emily qualifies that it was with commitment and support that she was able to connect race and development, to render visible her own investments as a white, Northern person in the development enterprise.

Northern development workers of colour.

Some participants of colour describe seeking opportunities in international development that would permit them to return to their places of origin. Angela recalls, "when I thought about going I figure I wanted to go to Africa, cause I just want to go to **Africa**, motherland, whatever

that is [laughter]" (Angela, p. 2T). Sophia elaborates her desire to return to her place of birth given her own experiences of racism as a person of colour in Canada. It is only as an adult that she traces this longing for home, romanticized as a place of acceptance and safety back to this alienation and racism in Canada. Sophia describes the origin of her longing:

I guess -- growing up...I was pretty isolated in terms of dealing with racism... as I was growing up I don't know what that longing was but I think maybe it had to do with all the discrimination and racism one felt I sort of idealized -- this notion of going to this romantic [South Asia] where everything was going to be so perfect and I was going to feel so comfortable and so safe and so of course that got thrown out the window right away...so I think it was a combination of those kinds of things that sort of longing that -- out of racism, out of racism and discrimination which at that time I could have certainly not have named but I think I certainly can now and that's definitely what it was. A sense of - a sense of alienation too, deep deep alienation (Sophia, p. 16T).

Participants acknowledge that a reading of Northern bodies of colour as not really Canadian mark the experiences of Northern development workers of colour in the South. Ron, like most participants, articulates that there is an expectation that Northern development workers will be white. Sophia describes the reaction of Southerners to Canadian development workers of colour as one of surprise. She connects this misreading of Northern bodies of colour as not Canadian to the projection of Canada as a white country and recognizes the educative role of Northern development workers in demystifying this construction of Canada. She notes Southerners' "assumptions and myths about Canada or they assume that Canada's all white Canadians and so they get surprised too when Canadians of colour end up in these projects ...so there's that role of education to play as well" (Sophia, p. 7T). Complicating this reading of Northern bodies of colour are racialized histories in different parts of the world. Emily urges Northern development workers of colour not to postpone processes of identity negotiation, particularly around race as these complexities quickly become apparent in Southern contexts. As she states, "the sooner you know the better - the sooner you start to try to sort out who you are here [laughter], the sooner - the better chance you have of figuring out what's going on there" (Emily 4 3, p. 30). Bill speaks to this unique position of Northern development workers of colour in the South, particularly those

returning to places of origin. Like Emily, he urges Northern development workers of colour to begin processes of identity negotiations given the confusion they may experience in the South. Bill notes their duality of culture and identity, remarking "I think people who go back sometimes have a big problem - in a sense of they're of a dual culture and it's the duality that confuses - them and that they have to work out... you have to figure out who you really are" (Bill 2 4, p. 1).

In referring to their own positions in the South, some participants of colour understand it to be a middle position, requiring negotiation. In the case of Angela and Sophia, this position refers to a shared racial identity with Southern communities but also acknowledges the Northern status they share with the white Northern development worker community. Sophia describes it as this "sort of middle position. I wasn't quite one of these - locals but I wasn't completely like I wasn't a white foreigner" (Sophia, p. 5T). While she did not return to her country of origin, Angela's development work was in a neighbouring country and yet she resists romanticizing her ability to have equal relationships with local people, recognizing how her Northern status separates her from people in the South while her race and race politics separate her from the expatriate community. Angela elaborates that as a person of colour, she was not readily accepted in the white expatriate community, particularly because she did not collude with them in their venting about Southern people. Reflecting on her relationships with her Northern colleagues and Southern community members, Angela recalls:

I felt that - the development workers didn't necessarily embrace me because of who I am, they needed somebody to who they could go to and - vent about - the Islanders and because I looked like Islanders they weren't able to do that with me... the locals, as soon as I speak they know I'm not from there, so they, I was not necessarily embraced. On the other hand - I don't think I was totally embraced in the expat community either cause it was predominantly white expat community (Angela 2 4 1, p. 1).

How this middle position is negotiated largely depends on the politicization of Northern development workers of colour. In negotiating their racial identities in relation to white Northern development workers, participants of colour develop similar strategies to deal with the racism

prevalent in the white Northern development worker community. Angela deliberates her responses to their racism given the possible alienation and loss of support resulting from her interventions. She recalls the process of becoming increasingly vocal in addressing the racism of white Northern development workers, choosing to withdraw from this community as necessary. Angela is aware that these negotiations became easier as she developed friendships with Southern people. She demonstrates a critical analysis from which to understand and negotiate her experiences in the South:

Although in the beginning, few people would say things and do things and really offend me. And - I had to take a stand, for the first time, second time, I didn't do anything about it. Maybe the third time, I just really spoke out, and I realized that caused a problem within for me and my expat community. But at the, in the first, I needed that community in the beginning I'd just went down, because they were my anchor, they were the people that I could talk to about Canada and stuff like that, but then after I was there for awhile, I was able to make some friends, reasonable friends, people - acquaintances, that sense of I had sort of a community that I could deal with so I was able to - move away from the expat, not totally but I mean sort of withdraw myself when I think it's appropriate or not (Angela 2 4 1, p. 1).

Sophia, in returning to her country of origin, demonstrates a similar reflexivity in negotiating her middle position as a Northern development worker of colour in relation to white Northern development workers and Southern communities of colour. She comments on the manifestations of racism at a personal level, observing the tendency of white Northern development workers to disrespect Canadian and Southern development workers of colour. She remarks on the need of white Northern development workers to feel supported by other white Northern development workers, particularly those who participate in their racism. She observes the tendency of white Northern development workers to demonstrate:

more respect to the Canadian staff overseas as compared to indigenous staff you know well what do you mean a black person from Nova Scotia is not a real Canadian you know, like these, all the - all of the racism, and not getting the kind of support that they want overseas because they think only a Canadian can give them that kind of support and that to a white Canadian so somebody who can collude with them in racist jokes or put downs or whatever, go out drinking and make fun of local communities whatever it

is, they need as many colluders in that as possible, in order to feel comfortable (Sophia, pp. 20-21T).

Like Angela, she adopts a similar strategy of withdrawing from the expatriate community “when they got tiring and they got racist or they got patronizing then you would move back into your other so you know and you’re always sort of moving back and forth between a couple of different worlds” (Sophia, p. 5T). These participants recognize that their negotiations of race have not always been well or easily received by white Northern development workers. Angela notes discomfort, self-censoring and withdrawal of support among the Northern development worker community while Sophia refers to more explicit responses such as dismissal or denial of racism as a legitimate issue. Describing how the language of political correctness is used to undermine her efforts to centre race, Sophia notes, “they go so far as to say politically correct, they’ll even use that language...to dismiss you right and they come with this liberal wishy washy kind of patch up oh come on its just a difference of opinions and – steer away from the real issues” (Sophia, p. 15T).

Participants observe that some Northern development workers of colour organize their time in Southern communities to pre-empt difficult and often painful negotiations around race. In their capacity as Northern development workers, participants also observe the proficiency with which some Northern development workers of colour internalize the script of Northern superiority and racism. As Emily, a self-identified white Northern development worker observes of Northern development workers of colour, their acceptance is tenuous and conditional on their ability to convince the primarily white Northern development worker community that they are just like them. She comments on the difficulty and complexity of these identity negotiations:

I think it’s a **really** difficult position to be in. I think that there are terms of fitting in with the – community of development workers...they need to whiten themselves to fit in. I think they need to constantly reassure that community that I really am like you...I think it would be very complicated (Emily 2 4 2, p. 4).

Participants describe these processes of convincing and fitting in to involve invoking a Canadian identity, silence around issues of race and racism, denial of race as a factor in shaping experiences in the South, performing oneself as white in ways that assure the expatriate community “you know in, written in big, bold letters, - just like you so that they would be no mistake about it that this is really one of ours” (Emily 2 4 2, p. 4) and in some cases collusion with the expatriate community in racism. In this way, not all Northern development workers of colour in the South employ a critical race analysis within which to understand and negotiate experiences.

While Angela elaborates her process of coming to negotiate her position in relation to the racism of expatriate communities in the South, she also struggles to negotiate the privileges incurred through Northern status. She recognizes the need to determine her involvement with the expatriate community, considering the emotional and social network it provides. She deliberates:

it's like you have to make that conscious decision, as to, do I want to alienate myself from this, I mean this gives me privilege, who does one privilege, who doesn't want to be a part of this elite group... whenever the embassy is having their big time parties, of course you're invited...it's like you poor development workers you don't eat much and they try to bring you in and bring you up so you're meeting with all these people (Angela, pp. 12-13T).

Sophia also qualifies her relationships with Southern people, recognizing that her Northern status provides her with an “outsider, privileged position” (Sophia, p. 2T) that precludes her from imagining equal relationships with Southern people. She comments that depending on the context either her gender or Northern status becomes more or less relevant. Ann, a non-white woman who identifies as Canadian, prioritizes the negotiation of her Northern status as a representative of a Northern NGO. As well, she locates much of the process of negotiating one's role as occurring prior to participation in the South. She expects that Northern development workers will develop a rigorous analysis of national and international processes impacting underdevelopment and demonstrate a long term commitment to issues of social justice, locating their interventions in Northern communities. It is in this capacity that Ann identifies a credible

role for Northern development workers to play in working for social justice in the North and South. Because Ann's analysis of power is not understood as operating through multiple systems of oppression that include race, she is able to speak extensively and critically about Northern exploitation of the South while delinking race from Northern development worker practices.

Rethinking Canada

All participants rigorously challenge the dominant national narrative of Canada as a just, tolerant, humanitarian, innocent, prosperous, civilized and developed society. Emily names the "*prevailing Canadian story. Canada is about meritocracy. Everyone has a fair chance*" (Emily, p. 13). In reframing this national story, participants attempt to document a history that accounts more accurately for Canada's past and contemporary realities of exploitation. Participants also see the role of a more critically informed Northern development worker in being able to connect development in the North with underdevelopment in the South, making explicit the "*hypocrisy of global politics*" (Ann, p. 1). Participants explicate the relationship between poverty and growth, pointing to the enormous extractions of wealth from South to North, highlighting Canadian policies of tying development to Canadian interests and business opportunities in the South. Sophia disrupts and reframes Canadian humanitarian interventions, noting, "how development work is very much tied up with Canadian business and Canadian opportunities in countries. It's not about doing good things in these countries and...I think peoples they operate under that assumption" (Sophia, p. 14T).

In making links between underdevelopment in Canada and the South, participants emphasize the need to understand local, national and international manifestations of globalization. Stressing the need to start from the local, Ann reminds Northern development workers "*development starts where we are, we have Third World right here, people who have no housing, no food. Development has failed for people not only in the Third World but here at home*" (Ann, p. 3). In drawing attention to the prevalence of oppression in Canada, Derek remains hopeful that

Northern development workers will develop a more comprehensive analysis of exploitation globally. He identifies the pervasiveness of economic exploitation, racism, sexual harassment and homophobia in Canada, hoping that an acknowledgement of these realities will result in less arrogant Northern development worker practices in the South. He elaborates:

sexual harassment isn't going to just happen in Dar-es-Salaam or wherever right, Jakarta. Sexual harassment happens in Toronto every day right, homophobia happens in Toronto everyday - racism, all that kind of stuff, and economic exploitation happens here everyday and I think that if people can start acknowledging the shit in their own backyard, or in their own house then I think the chances are less that they're going to go overseas with this big chip on their shoulders like I come from the civilized world - we've got it all figured out - (Derek 1 12, p. 12).

Participants explore oppressive relationships in Canada's past and also the way these relations continue to inform contemporary realities. Given the brutality of Canada's living history in relation to First Nations, Emily argues that Canadians "*need truth commission at least as much as South Africa*" (Emily, p. 1). Interrupting the storying of Canada as innocent, Derek further challenges Northern development workers to recognize and own Canada's colonial past as part of their history. He argues that Canadians who imagine that they do not live in a country with a history of colonization, imperialism and racism, choose deliberately not to see this Canadian reality. Participants argue that in relation to this mythical Canada, the South is often constructed as not "having anything of value to offer a place like Canada...so many Westerners are constructed as already knowing everything, as being the best place in the world" (Sandra 1 12, p. 44) in ways that reinforce Northern dominance and sustain the need for Northern exported models of development. Derek also connects this denial to the dominant myth of Canadian multiculturalism, circulating widely in Northern development worker communities. He challenges the assumptions of many Northern development workers that living in diverse cities predispose them to be open-minded. Given that Canada is internationally recognized and celebrated for its humanitarianism, diversity and standard of living, Derek argues the reality of Canadian society as profoundly racialized and segregated is masked:

the vast majority of people who go overseas from a place like Canada, number one - a lot of people in the countries that they go to think well Canada's a non-racialized country, you know there's no apartheid blah blah which we all know is garbage but Canadians going overseas I believe profoundly have this assumption, especially if you're from a place like Toronto which gets all this stuff written about it by the World Bank and the United Nations and whoever else. There's this assumption, well I live in Toronto, it's a diverse city - I can do, I can go anywhere, I don't have a problem with diversity (Derek 1 5 1, pp. 19-20).

Emily theorizes the investments in denying Canada's imperial history and its connections to Canadian development workers' participation and performance in international development. As Emily argues, Northern development workers enact racism and domination in the development context, worldviews firmly in place prior to their arrival in the South. She engages in a critical re-reading of Canadian history, considering its implications for Northern development workers in the South:

I see denial of Canada's imperial history as one of our fundamental national narratives, and I would argue that our need, as a nation, to be the saviours and good guys of the world is directly linked to our inability to acknowledge our own unfinished history of imperialism - both in terms of genocidal relations with indigenous peoples and in terms of Canada's efforts to maintain itself as a white nation, originally through official immigration policies and now through systemic racism. The legitimacy of development work, for Canadians, has a lot to do, therefore, with our stories of who we are and are not both at home and in the world. Our unacknowledged history of imperialism is tied up in unacknowledged racisms prevalent in Canadian society, and in the world views of Canadians who are drawn to overseas work. These racisms and other forms of domination become enacted by individuals from here participating in the development enterprise elsewhere. The development context calls forth these responses, but we arrive with them - like a fully loaded computer program (Emily 1 12, pp. 20-21).

Participants argue that Northern development workers need to recognize their own contexts in order to see themselves as beneficiaries of this imperial history. It is in identifying current issues of poverty, homelessness, environmental degradation, violence against women, racism and discrimination in Canada and locating them in systems of power and privilege that Northern development workers can begin to shift their understandings of Canada as a developed and civilized model for emulation. It is in this context that participants identify the responsibility of

Northern development workers to challenge myths of Canada circulating in the South that do not account for domestic social problems and oppression. As Sophia articulates, the role of Northern development workers includes “educating people around - local people around issues of development right here in Canada because that’s also not done in these kinds of situations either” (Sophia, p. 7T).

Conclusion

In narrating their experiences as Northern development workers and facilitators, these participants articulate that systems of power operate simultaneously and intersect in ways that make it difficult to extract or isolate their workings and impact individually. They demonstrate a range in their practices of accountability in terms of locating themselves within these systems and identifying the privileges they incur as Northern development workers. Recognizing the dominant social locations they occupy, participants identify different spaces from which to engage credibly in international development work. In speaking of internationalizing actors for social change, participants are clear that Northerners and Southerners both have important but distinct roles to play and emphasize their own responsibility to engage in political learning. In documenting the impact of Northern development worker presence in the South, participants decenter their intent to do good work as sufficient to justify their participation in international development. However, not all participants go on to develop negotiations that correspond to their analysis of power and privilege. There are inconsistencies in that some participants are able to passionately articulate critiques of international development without enacting practices that challenge their own power and privilege. In attempting to formulate alternative Northern development worker practices, some describe their commitment to enduring efforts for social and economic justice as a basis for their oppositional practices.

CHAPTER 5 EXPLORATIONS OF CULTURE AND RACE

The problem of racism is also a failure to acknowledge and deal with difference in a way that moves beyond a celebration of diversity to fundamental power-sharing in communities (Dei, 1996b, p. 252).

What makes the cultural differences approach so inadequate in various pedagogical moments is not so much that it is wrong, for people in reality are diverse and do have culturally specific practices that must be taken into account, but that its emphasis on cultural diversity too often descends, in a multicultural spiral, to a superficial reading of differences that makes power relations invisible and keeps dominant cultural norms in place (Razack, 1998, p. 9).

Chapter Introduction

While we understand systems of power and privilege to work in interlocking ways, in the site of international development, race pervades but is rarely acknowledged. We use this chapter to document participants' understandings and explorations of race and its relevance to their role and practices as Northern development workers. As race is central to social organization as well as educational processes, this chapter seeks to account for participants' conceptualizations of race that derive from their experiences as Northern development workers. As in the previous chapter, these understandings and analyses reflect two broad categories, liberal and critical, representing different approaches to race, power and identity. For participants in the liberal section, understandings of race are subsumed in a cultural model and race is one of many markers of difference. They often understand and describe racism as individual and easily identifiable acts. Participants operating primarily within this cultural framework, emphasize awareness and relationship building as mechanisms to overcome differences as Northern development workers living and working in the South. Participants working within a critical race analysis locate race as a system of power and understand it to be operating at individual, structural and ideological levels simultaneously. For them, the priority is to negotiate race through a sustained commitment to resist and unlearn racism in the North and as they enact it as Northern development workers in the South.

Understanding Culture

Cultural Lens

Some participants argue that culture provides a lens or filter that people employ to make sense of their lives. They posit that while in a culture of origin, it is not always explicit the extent to which our personal and professional lives are organized by this filter. As Northern development workers move from North to South, participants argue that they unknowingly process their experiences in the South through their own cultural lens. They are also subject to a similar cultural reading by Southerners. These simultaneous and conflicting readings of the other often result in premature judgments and assumptions. Participants stress that Northern development workers require an awareness of their own cultural lens in order to navigate foreign cultures and mediate cross-cultural misunderstandings. For these participants, cross-cultural understandings are necessary to appreciate cultural practices of Southern communities, negotiate appropriate professional behaviour and build meaningful relationships with Southern people.

Culture and Race

Within a cultural framework, experiences of living and working across cultures are intended to broaden awareness, tolerance and appreciation for diversity. Culture is employed to refer more broadly to differences of race, religion, ethnicity and country of origin. What becomes evident through participants' accounts is how race becomes one of many markers of difference during cross-cultural encounters. A race analysis is, therefore, not integral to processes of adaptation and relationship building. Rather, the focus is on negotiating and celebrating cultural differences, emphasizing similarities of individuals from different cultural backgrounds and acquiring proficiency in another culture.

For some participants, racism is seen primarily as easily identifiable, overt acts and articulations that all people are equally capable of committing. Graham situates his reading of racism within a

cultural lens that emphasizes individual power and understandings of right and wrong. "I operate by my own principle, any individual who diminishes the integrity of another individual intentionally or other unintentionally - it's a form of racism" (Graham 1 5 1, p. 43). It is in this way that Graham understands all people to be equally capable of enacting racism that Allison describes as "racism both ways" (Allison 1 5 1, p. 3). Allison's work with Northern development workers leads her to complicate exercises of racism noting that Northern development workers are often unaware that they are behaving in racist ways. She also remarks on their inability to cope with what she understands to be reverse racism in Southern communities, observing that Northern development workers were "perhaps who were behaving unbeknownst to them in a racist manner or who weren't coping with this concept of reverse racism perhaps" (Allison 1 5, p. 3). While not absolving individuals of responsibility, Allison elaborates that because Northern development workers story themselves as "hav[ing] the open mind and the desire to know other cultures" (Allison 1 5 1, p. 4), they resist seeing their attitudes and behaviours as racist. Also, because Northern development workers often focus on how they will be perceived and received in the South, they understand racism to be something that they will encounter against them in the attitudes and behaviours of Southern communities, predominately of colour. This is then reflected in training efforts where the focus is on preparing Northern development workers for the inevitability of these encounters, rather than making explicit and historicizing their own exercises of power through whiteness. Relying on his experience of being an outsider as a white Northern development worker in the Caribbean, Graham demonstrates his understanding that all Northern development workers will experience what it means to be an outsider when in the South:

S1: there are foreigners who come to Japan trying to be Japanese. You are Canadian, you're not going to be anything other than Canadian. Once you know and appreciate it, you can take on what you want of other cultures...it physically - it isn't possible. They are bigoted against anyone who doesn't have black eyes and black hair, that is a distinction they make

S2: Korean has a word it means outsider

G to S3: what is the word in Vietnamese?

S2: Koreans are belligerent about it...you don't exist

G: like in the Caribbean, white man

*SI: you are either Japanese, fit into the mold, or foreigner, never be
G: there is a word in Vietnamese and we will learn about it by the end of
the week (Graham, p. 2)*

Rethinking Cultural Understandings

Participants in the critical section develop a rigorous critique of culturally based understandings of difference that do not challenge Northern development workers to deepen their understandings of social relations of power. Participants argue that within a cultural framework, race is not meaningfully addressed because it is not understood to be operating as a system of power. Matt argues that with this exclusive focus on "culture...there's really no place for race - you know when issues of race come up it's all - it has tended to be in this form of cultural discussion" (Matt 3 1, p. 1). Emily finds these omissions of "power, race and privilege" to be extremely problematic given her analysis that the "development enterprise is riddled with these issues" (Emily 4 16, p. 5). In locating development workers in a Canadian context, Allison observes the general unwillingness of Canadians to engage in discussions that centre race as distinct from culture. She contrasts this with the facility Canadians demonstrate in addressing gender inequalities and struggles to make sense of this reluctance to name and discuss race. Allison reflects:

we as Canadians don't like to talk about race, we talk about culture. It's that difficult for us to deal with it. We can talk about - inequalities surrounding gender really easily, we can talk about inequalities surrounding whatever but when it comes to race, we just I don't know it just seemed to be a very sensitive topic and if it is then there's a reason for that and if people can't even deal with it (Allison, p. 6T).

Also identifying this larger cultural vacuum, Matt insists that Canadian development workers be engaged in explicit discussions about race and its operation in a Canadian context. He understands this to be the preparatory work for investigating the workings of race globally. As Matt frames it:

I really think you do have to start from yourself and your own culture before you start looking at issues of race elsewhere. I mean you really need to identify - recognize that they exist here in our own country and

maybe have some kind of discussion around what that looks like which is not a very common thing for people to do (Matt, p. 14T).

In participants' narratives and our observations, we also notice that some participants go to great lengths to avoid using the words race or racism, employing the following euphemisms instead: mistakes, overcoming limitations, social intolerance, baggage, tough stuff, other issues, racist or or prejudiced or eurocentric or ethnocentric or whatever, immigrant cultures, not weird in anyway, all kinds of things, sensitivity training, multicultural and New Canada. The following excerpt from Allison's interview also reflects the tendency to name racism as novel, strange and unusual feelings that Northern development workers experience in the South, "I think honestly part of them probably never expects they might, no matter what - they've never been in a circumstance where they can imagine feeling a strange way that they never felt before" (Allison 1 5 1, p. 4). Some participants situate this reluctance to address race in international development as a reflection of a wider social context in which race is primarily framed in cultural terms. Those who acknowledge the relationship between development and race, also comment on challenges of formulating and implementing an anti-racist analysis. They note the urgency to see the extent to which race operates in international development. In referencing the ways in which systems of power converge in the development context, Bill makes explicit the connection between race and development. He locates white Northern development workers exercises of racism within a structure that is organized to confer power on them. He observes their tendency to deny racial differences, relying on what is common or shared:

I think people are - they believe it that they do have a concept that we can be equals but when it comes to practice and when push comes to shove, you hide behind privilege - power, racist - superiority... the way that we transcend [difference] is that it doesn't exist because we're all Canadian. We're all equal. We all have the same lives it's not a question of skin colour. It's not true. Who has power? The North, essentially white. - Who doesn't have power? South and it's in government and it's in the multilateral institutions it's in the bilateral institutions and - it's in the NGOs as well (Bill 2 1 1, p. 3).

While this particular example primarily references the power dynamic between white Canadian development workers and Canadian development workers of colour, Bill is also aware of how race and Northern status operate together within the North and across North and South. Participants observe that Northern development workers similarly deny difference, invoking and focusing on points of connectivity in their relationships with Southern people.

In setting the context for how power operates in international development, participants challenge omissions in the cultural framework that allow Northern development workers to comfortably ask, *‘who am I as a cultured person’* (Kate, p. 2) rather than who am I and how do I exercise power as a Northern, raced person. In asking only the cultural question, what becomes obscured are the ways in which everyday life is organized through race. Liberal tendencies to celebrate culture pre-empt inquiries into how race organizes the material and ideological conditions of life. Cross-cultural understandings manufacture caricatures of cultures that rarely correspond to complex realities and internal contradictions. As Ann insightfully points out, both Northern and Southern cultures have within them *“liberatory and oppressive”* elements and it is the *“journey of an individual and community”* (Ann, p. 4) to negotiate and synthesize these understandings. Participants critical of this framework do not identify the potential for social change within this cultural paradigm but rather in explicitly anti-racism and anti-oppression work.

Understanding Race and Racism

Investigating the Operation of Race

In moving beyond a cultural framework, critical participants articulate an understanding that race operates within a system of power. They argue that race operates at structural, ideological and individual levels simultaneously and understand it to be a system that is organized to benefit dominant people. Participants identify the saliency of systemic racism in development and participate in efforts to integrate a race analysis to explore appropriate behaviours of Northern development workers in the South. Participants in this section reframe racism not as something

that Northern development workers will experience in the South, but something that Northern development workers “perpetrate” (Matt 1 5 1, p. 3). Through their explorations of race and racism, participants make explicit whiteness as a racial identity. Derek, a self-identified white man, asserts that he “started to use the term tribe to describe white folks - because of my history, I'm sick and tired of hearing tribe applied to the Middle East or to First Nations people or to Africa when Greeks, Portuguese, Italians, Scots, we're all tribes you know so why do we use the term here but not there” (Derek 1 5 1, p. 21)? He illuminates that while all people are raced, whiteness is often the invisible norm against which others are constructed, resulting in a denial of the benefits that white people extract from a system of race.

Participants make efforts to distinguish between prejudice, discrimination and racism. They define prejudice as involving assumed understandings of people, often a result of distorted or partial information. When enacted, prejudice becomes an act of discrimination. However, they distinguish that the enactment of racism necessarily involves individual actions that are situated in and supported by social power. Emily makes explicit the relationship between racism and power, demanding a consideration of how white people are able to access social power and enact dominance. She frames racism as an *“exercise of social power over person. Hard to think about individual acts without structures. Where individual gets power from, social power...don't lose sight of domination in racism, how power is related to racism”* (Emily, p. 11). While discriminatory acts can be emotionally painful, they are individual acts not backed by social power. Emily warns against conflating discrimination and racism as this critical distinction of social power and the differing impact is obscured. In training, Emily challenges Northern development workers who attempt to equate their experiences of frustration in the South with the experiences of recently arrived immigrants in Canada. She draws their attention to how these experiences are different at both structural and individual levels, encouraging them to consider the forces leading to flows of bodies:

E: This is just venting. Its normal to vent. Workshop around racism. When people get together and talk, the conversation changes. If we were all talking [Central African] walks in, conversation changes until leaves. So I ask you, is this something you have never encountered?

S1: isn't this the same as people who come here?

E: how are these positions different? Why would an Indian family be here versus a development worker there?

S1: I'm saying that because I've been told by immigrants in the winter ah this fucking country. If I could go back, I would. I've been told these things by people and I thought what do they say when they are alone. They say they fucking hate this country

E: but what about their day to day experiences, what are they like? Is it about their skills not being recognized, is it about their kids at school, on top of their accent, their skin is not white, what happens when they open their mouths for the first time, when their accent is heard? Predominately who goes overseas?

S2: all white (Emily, p. 9)

Because participants situate racism within a structural analysis that confers power to white bodies, concepts such as reverse racism or racism both ways do not exist. Rather, they employ the term discrimination to account for what is commonly referred to as reverse racism in the cross-cultural model. For example, when a person of colour invokes a racial slur against a white person, it can be understood as a discriminatory act. However, it is not equivalent to a white person invoking a racial slur against a person of colour, understood as racist. In society, the white individual is surrounded by affirming images and knowledge of her/his race and its dominance, that are activated in this racist exchange with a person of colour in ways the latter can not access. During training, Ron as a non-white participant recalls the frequency with which he is asked to account for his ability to speak English well. When a white Northern development worker attempts to position his experience in a similar way, Ron intervenes to have him consider how this question is differently asked of a white person and a person of colour:

R: I've had people come up to me and say wow, you speak really good English. Where did you learn?

S1: I guess I've had people say that to me.

R: But difference between you and me. When question asked to me and you, they ask differently and for different reasons (Ron, p. 1)

Participants' analysis of racism extends beyond overt and easily identifiable acts to include systemic and everyday practices of racism. Recognizing that "we're looking for those overt acts,

you paki types of racism...it's not about racial slurs, about power and privilege" (Sophia, p. 2), participants resist invoking the "dominant story of racism – overt acts" (Emily, p. 10). It is with this elaboration of race and racism that participants differentiate the impact of race as a system on white bodies and bodies of colour. Because Ron understands racism to be embedded in the "average person" (Ron, p. 1), he challenges claims of naiveté and unintentionality that white people often invoke to account for their own racism. For participants, intent is not the measure of responsibility. Rather, they clearly prioritize the impact of racist behaviours and attitudes. Discussions about intent evade responsibility and as Sophia argues, it is not "about intention, it does not matter in racism because it effectively...rubs off, responsibility rubs off, wash your hands of responsibility. What matters is the impact and focus on the impact" (Sophia, pp. 2-3).

Emily synthesizes the extent to which race organizes Northern development workers' everyday understandings of life both in North and South. She further illuminates that Northern development workers' assumptions about the South are deeply informed by a system of race. Investigating racism beyond overt acts, Emily challenges the tendency to see "*racism is a big capital R word, I am or I'm not – how pervasive ideas are, infiltrate day to day lives here and in the development context. How infiltrated our thinking is about these assumptions – pay attention to what racism has to do with it*" (Emily, p. 10). Participants trace this normalized every day racism to a history of colonization that continues to inform Northern practices of development work. Although ideas of racial difference did exist prior to colonialism, they were not codified to "*legitimate economic, social and political domination of individuals around the world*" (Emily, p. 14). Participants are conscious of the need to explicitly address race given the colonial context in which many Northern development workers live and work. Matt articulates this connection in the following way, "**there are definitely** issues of race that come up...particularly going into very – colonial histories and countries with a strong colonial past **there are issues there**" (Matt 1 5, p. 1). In reflecting on coming to her own understanding of development as profoundly racialized,

Emily observes the racialized explanations on which she and other Northern development workers rely to make sense of their experiences in the South. She describes the process through which she comes to question the origin and legitimacy of her explanations of the South and Southerners. For her, what is most alarming is the recognition that her explanations are traceable to hundreds of years of colonial accounts. It is not through her time and experience in the South that she formulates her analysis of Central African people, culture and infrastructure, but rather she arrives from the North with these readily available and racialized explanations. Emily argues that her time in the South confirms what she and other Northern development workers already know to be true about the South. She is worth quoting at length as she narrates her attempts to historicize and trace these understandings:

for me one of the turning points was reading this thing...the missionaries - with the the wagon stuck in the sand in Southern Africa. They're actually in Botswana, what is now Botswana. They were from London Missionary Society. The wagon gets stuck in the sand and they sit in the shade of the tree and one of them writes, they're writing it up in the journal and they're sketching it because they have to write these comprehensive reports that go back to the London Missionary Society and they are complaining about - the inefficiency of the African workers, the state of the roads and all these other things - and I looked at it and I recognized the scene. I knew this scene. I had been in the scene, I had fought against the same words coming to my mind, the exact same explanations were right there (snapping fingers), right there for me. You know that the driver didn't know what he was doing - the roads are so bad - I realized as I came across this that those are the kinds of explanations that would be ready to mind for me too. It's not that that they were not - but that they'd been circulating in western discourse for - this was a scene from the 1700's, for over two hundred years, two hundred and fifty years or something. The exact same words, the exact same explanations. It's not a question of one development worker like the colonialists handing it down to the - development workers to the next development workers. It's not that kind of a chain that you have to go there and somebody there tells you and you pass it on to somebody else new who's coming. No. I mean yeah, it is getting passed on but you're saying yes to it because you already **know this** - we arrive knowing it [laughter] now that's what stunned me. We arrived knowing this and we have always, we have known this in this society about **those** societies for over two hundred years and it hasn't changed. We still have the same explanations and I realized that I had those explanations in **my** head and - I was fighting with myself about explanations that would come readily to mind and I was constantly saying well no I shouldn't look at it like this. Now, maybe if I were in this context, I would do this too and I felt like a kind of a liberal apologist - a

lot of the time, sometimes cause I kept trying to find other explanations - but what - I eventually - began to feel...is that - it's not that I'm a liberal apologist for **those** people. It's not about those people. The problem is about what I already know to be true. The problem isn't - that it's hard to find legitimate other explanations that maybe the more racialized ones are really the legitimate ones and how can I find one that isn't so racialized. No, the problem is that - racialized explanations appear legitimate to me. - I have absorbed this from here [laugh] going there simply gives me the field where these explanations actually make more sense because that's where those explanations are attached to (Emily, pp. 31-32T).

Participants attempt to make visible these racialized explanations, resulting in prevalent racist attitudes and practices enacted by Northern development workers in the South. They point out that these explanations are rarely perceived to be racist but rather, processes of understanding through a Northern cultural lens. As a result, the enactment of these racialized explanations, when viewed through this cultural lens, are rationalized as part of the adaptation process, involving making mistakes, crossing cultural boundaries and feeling frustrated. Some participants further comment on this misnaming of racism, describing behaviours of Northern development workers that are commonly accepted as coping mechanisms such as venting or conversation switching when Southern people enter the room. They make explicit the racist nature of these Northern development worker practices in relation to Southern people. Some participants express that in order to be comfortable in their racism, white Northern development workers need the support and collusion of other white Northerners. Sophia describes this desire and need for "somebody who can collude with them in racist jokes or put downs or whatever, go out drinking and make fun of local communities whatever it is, they need as many colluders in that as possible, in order to feel comfortable" (Sophia, pp. 20-21T). Emily narrates an experience in which a Southern person overheard Northern development workers talking about the inefficiency of local workers. The Southern person named this conversation between Northern development workers as racist, provoking anger and denial within this Northern development worker community. Emily recalls, "*all development workers showed up angry because if he is racist, then we all are. This is just venting. It's normal to vent*" (Emily, p. 9). Bringing their

insights of how racism operates as a system to organize everyday life for Northern development workers, participants expand conceptions of racism beyond overt acts and recognize the multiple ways in which white Northern development workers access social power through whiteness. From not having to wait in line at the bank or for the bus to having access to influential NGO representatives and government officials, these are part of the benefits of who white Northern development workers get to be in the South.

Participants argue that because Northern development workers understand themselves to be open-minded and well-intentioned, they resist seeing their attitudes and behaviours as racist. Sophia challenges the arrogance of Northern development workers as worldly and already knowing, observing that most are reluctant to learn in ways that will disrupt or challenge their comfortable lives. She argues that the denial of race and reluctance to critically inform oneself are intentional and self-interested. Sophia passionately expresses:

People are too comfortable, people don't want to challenge themselves. They all think that they're so open-minded and that they're so worldly and so international because they've been in China for three years and they've adopted a child from China – you know and what else is there to learn? There's nothing else to learn - I know everything, I know everything about the world and now I'm doing my job and I'm doing the best I can so what are you talking to me about this shit for? Right. And so it's like this – this – outright denial, there's unwillingness to accept that you are still on a path of learning, that you haven't - learned everything there is to learn, that there's a lot more - work ahead you know it's just an unwillingness to go there because you're so comfortable...you don't need any more - challenges in your life (Sophia, p. 15T).

Given the complicated position of Northern development workers of colour in the South, participants elaborate the impact of racist behaviours and attitudes on Northern development workers of colour. Angela explicates this dynamic and its impact when she says, *“as a black, person of colour in a group of people that I'm supposed to be a part of with expats and having people talk about the culture as this and that...I have a different role and if I agree...why are they saying this? I'm Northern but I'm black and they're talking about me”* (Angela, p. 3). Racial identities of Northern development workers of colour are further complicated by racial histories

in different parts of the world and their own politicization around race. Participants observe that not all Northern development workers of colour are necessarily politicized or will have a critical race analysis of their experiences in the South. Quite often, this is an extension of an analysis that organizes their lives in the North as well. While most participants acknowledge and problematize displays of Northern superiority in the South, some go on to trace them in deeply rooted structures of racial superiority that also inform the attitudes and behaviours of Northern development workers of colour. As Emily observes of Northern development workers in the South, “the arrogance that development workers exhibit in their places of work – has a lot to do with – these kinds of racialized views of the world – and people of colour in this part of the world pick this up too” (Emily 1 5 1, p. 33). Emily observes that these systems are entrenched historically and continue to inform how all Northern development workers view themselves in relation to the South and Southerners. She notes that for Northern development workers of colour, there are ways of organizing life to mitigate or pre-empt racism in the North and South, “you know there's also a way of performing oneself so that these questions don't arise - but the sooner you know the better - the sooner you start to try to sort out who you are here [laughter] the sooner - the better chance you have of figuring out what's going on there” (Emily 1 5 1, p. 36). Emily elaborates this complexity, providing an example of a South Asian man acting as a representative of a Northern NGO in Central Africa. Given the presence of South Asians in East, Central and Southern Africa that can be traced to colonial times, South Asian development workers have to negotiate their identities in this history as well the power associated with their Northern status. Emily observes his efforts to perform himself as a different kind of South Asian in order not to be mistaken for those South Asians engaged in exploitive business practices in Central Africa:

he - was trying hard to present himself as not like - necessarily being like many of the - Asian people that they would have known, businessmen. He didn't want to look like that kind of businessman. He would dress a little differently and he would wear his hair a bit longer and he would - really have very - obvious, warm, friendly relationships with the [Central

African] staff. If he traveled, he wouldn't travel usually alone, he would travel with a [Central African] person and there would be always collegiality and so on, so he would constantly send out messages that I'm not - I'm not who you might first think I am (Emily 1 5 1, pp. 26-27).

While most participants articulate a structural understanding of race and locate themselves within it, few go on to develop an analysis of that location and its implications in their lives. These participants provide a guide to what this sustained inquiry might look like. Angela articulates the starting point of this to be a critical interrogation of how Northern development workers story themselves in relatively untroubling and moral ways to protect their deep investments. Participants have expressed that this inquiry can be potentially destabilizing and very painful. For Northern development workers of colour, the task is one of excavating how race operates in their own lives to develop an analysis of the complexities of their positions in the South. This requires that they also trace their attitudes and behaviours of racial superiority in Southern communities to deeply rooted structures of racism and its internalization. For white participants, this means seeing themselves as benefitting from and enacting dominance in everyday, seemingly benign ways of being in the world. Sandra asks the question, "what has to be, what has to be eroded inside of...white identity to allow them to be able to hear, to allow them to see" (Sandra 1 5, p. 6). Participants emphasize strongly the need to see processes of consciousness-raising for white people as ongoing and rigorous. They resist the desire to rush to more innocent and comfortable positions, often manifest in premature pronouncements of solidarity and affinity with people of colour. As a white woman, Emily observes of other white participants in anti-racist workshops, the common response of "oh isn't it [racism] terrible, oh I wouldn't want to be like that and to me that's not the point, right? I mean, yeah it is terrible but the point is that we are like that" (Emily 1 5 1, p. 38). Participants engaged in this process remain suspicious of themselves and the need to sustain an analysis of the ways in which they continue to collude in and benefit from racism. It is in this context of dominance that white participants struggle to imagine alternative ways of being in this world. This led has led some white participants to

understand and locate their efforts for social justice in dominant communities of which they are a part.

Conclusion

We use this chapter to document participants' understandings and explorations of race and its relevance to their role and practices as Northern development workers. Understanding race to be central to the development context, this chapter maps participants' conceptualizations of race that derive from their experiences as Northern development workers. For participants in the liberal section, understandings of race are subsumed in a cultural model and race is one of many markers of difference. They often understand and characterize racism as individual and easily identifiable behaviours in which they are not implicated. Within this cultural framework, participants emphasize awareness and relationship building as mechanisms to negotiate differences as Northern development workers living and working in the South. A race analysis is, therefore, not integral to their processes of adaptation and relationship building and thus more transformative efforts to address inequitable power relations and acknowledge their historical origins are displaced. These omissions allow participants to understate or obscure the ways in which everyday life is organized through race. Participants working within a critical race analysis locate race as a system of power and understand it to be operating at individual, structural and ideological levels simultaneously. For them, the priority is to negotiate race through a sustained commitment to resist and unlearn racism in the North and as they enact it as Northern development workers in the South. Most participants' narratives reflect an ability to connect their experiences as Northern development workers to a system of race that operates to organize their everyday lives in the North and South.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

A philosophy of praxis...must be a criticism of 'common sense,'...'everyone' is a philosopher and that it is not a question of introducing from scratch a scientific form of thought into everyone's individual life, but of renovating and making 'critical' an already existing activity (Gramsci in Britzman, 1991, p. 55).

Change means we must find new ways of imagining ourselves as moral (Dei, 1996, p. 16).

Introduction

The focus of this thesis is participants' accounts of their work in the South and the meaning they have made of these experiences to illuminate professional roles and practices of Northern development workers. We privilege participants' narrations of their experiences as they reveal interpretive frameworks of identity, culture and power as they inform their role as Northern development workers. An organizing premise in this research is that politics inhere in all conceptualizations of Northern development worker. Recognizing there are no apolitical spaces, we have tried to trace and name participants' articulations to categories, liberal and critical, reflecting distinct analyses of their experiences and explorations of identity. We recognize and document that within each category, participants' narratives demonstrate nuances and complexities. However, we also recognize the urgency to name, particularly those ideas and practices of development that are normalized to the extent that they often escape recognition and investigation. Naming also marks the potential for change and imagining alternative ways of being and behaving. Processes of reflection are ongoing and all participants, through their narratives, demonstrate their capacity to reflect on their experiences and roles with varying degrees of criticality. We are also cognizant that just as our understandings of the development context and our participation in it have been challenged through this work, participants' analyses of their experiences are not fixed. We offer a synthesis of our theoretical framework in order to relate the insights of participants to salient theoretical points. We then consider the relevance of these insights for development work and future areas of study.

Recalling the Theoretical Framework

Recognizing the complexity of the international development context, we rely on an interlocking analysis of oppression (Fellows and Razack, 1998) to make visible the ways in which systems of power operate simultaneously between and within North and South. While there are many points of entry to examine these relations of power, as Northern researchers the focus of our investigation is to illuminate Northern policies and practices that perpetuate economic underdevelopment in the South. This theory of interlocking oppression illuminates the workings of race, gender and geography, facilitating an exploration of the complexity of Northern development worker identity. An application of an interlocking analysis of oppression further illuminates how Northern development worker interventions in the South are constituted through white supremacy, ubiquitous but rarely named in Northern development discourse. In our site, this becomes particularly relevant given the prevalence of white, middle class people participating in international development, most of whom are women (Heron, 1999, p. 6). This theoretical framework allows us to consider and theorize how Northern development workers are located hierarchically in relation to each other and Southern communities, predominately of colour. The challenge for Northern development workers becomes to investigate “how embedded are we in the arrangements we describe” (Razack, 2000, p. 52)?

This work relies on Bannerji’s theorizing of the relationality between oppressor and oppressed to illuminate that while we all exist within the same “social topography” (Bannerji, 1995, p. 74), our different locations within it produce radically different experiences of the world, traceable, as Razack also argues, back to systems of capitalism, white supremacy and patriarchy. Bannerji implicates and makes visible the role of dominant people in sustaining social relations from which they unduly benefit, demanding that people who oppress move from expressions of guilt, empathy and victimization to become accountable for that oppression. We identify as a practice of accountability, a sustained engagement of how one enables this social topography to exist as it

does. Recognizing the many entry points into uncovering experiences of domination and oppression, the starting point of our work is the attention Razack and Bannerji draw to the role and practices of the dominant in these social relationships. They argue that reflecting on experience is a mechanism to understand how systems of power are organized and converge to create a certain experience of the world. Given their commitment to social justice, the theorists we rely on are critical of the tendency to use experience in ways that do not further an interrogation of and location in social relations of power. Behar names these non-transformative practices as leading individuals “into miniature bubbles of navel-gazing” rather than into “the enormous sea of serious social issues” (1996, p.14). These theorists assert the importance of individual experiences as entry points to understand the organization of social relations of power. As Bannerji theorizes “a whole social organization is needed to create each unique experience” (1995, p. 74) and in this way, “what had seemed a private experience of oppression”(Smith, 1998, p. 154) or domination is in fact constituted by and rooted in a “larger generalized complex of social relations” (Smith, 1998, p. 156). These theorists synthesize the potential of experience as a catalyst for a more transformative political project.

Making the Connections

Liberal Participants

While most liberal participants acknowledge power in their narratives, these reflections tend to be limited to one particular system, such as globalization, or they reference power more generally. For these participants, there is not a systematic analysis of power and privilege and the ways in which multiple systems operate simultaneously, structurally and through their own identities. In cases where liberal participants acknowledge the operation of power, these systems are emptied of people who benefit from and perpetrate classist, racist, and sexist practices. Participants' narratives are infused with an understanding of what constitutes a good development worker, describing qualities necessary for Northern development workers to establish meaningful

personal and professional relationships in the South. Adjectives such as motivated, observant, self-aware, responsible, open-minded, adaptable and tolerant characterize these descriptions. Central to the liberal development worker is a moral duty to intervene in Southern communities as an actor for social change, to remedy poverty, inequality and the marginalization of women. These participants articulate a commitment to models of development that claim to be respectful of local cultures and traditions, prioritizing participatory development. While these development models appear to be responsive to and respectful of Southern knowledges, customs and visions, they continue to rely on Northern personnel, skills and technology to achieve Northern conceptions of development in and for the South. Rarely do liberal participants name their self-interest in continuing to secure for themselves, access to the "Third World." They continue to position their participation in international development as doing good work while traveling, living abroad and experiencing different cultures. This understanding of their role often lacks the material relationality between North and South and the economic prosperity of the North that is predicated on the economic underdevelopment of the South. Now coined in the language of aid and assistance, knowledge/technology transfers, capacity building, partnership and participatory approaches, development paradigms and practices continue to mystify material relations of exploitation in which the North and Northern development workers are implicated. While most liberal participants articulate a critique of and problematize development, they tend to exempt themselves and their participation in international development from a corresponding analysis. Resonating with Heron's analysis, liberal participants story themselves within a fictionalized narrative of innocence that also corresponds to a Canadian story of non-implication in imperial relations.

In sharing their experiences as Northern development workers, participants reflect on their identities in the context of international development work but rarely connect these experiences and their identities to systems of power and privilege or locate them in a historical context.

Recognizing the many entry points into uncovering experiences of domination and oppression, Bannerji argues that we can all speak legitimately, though differently, to experiences of domination and oppression. Rarely do liberal participants locate their roles and development practices as dominant. Typically, these moves to pre-empt accountability result in a collapsing of self and other, based in false identification with the oppressed without locating self as oppressor in constituting systems of domination. Their explorations of identity reveal their emphasis on a shared human identity that assumes good intentions and a desire to do meaningful work as sufficient to compensate for privileges incurred through whiteness and Northern status. Relationship building across different cultures emerges as a central project for liberal participants attempting to address power imbalances and live and work more equitably in Southern communities. They speak to the need for self-awareness in order to recognize and resist imposing Northern expectations of appropriate behaviour and work ethic. Drawing on Razack (1995), we argue that this focus on cultural proficiency conceals relations of domination and oppression. Within this framework, the ideal development worker is able to master an understanding of cultural sensitivity and thus, more transformative efforts to address inequitable power relations and knowledge production or acknowledge their historical origins are pre-empted. Within this framework, culture is employed to refer more broadly to differences of race, religion, ethnicity and country of origin. What becomes evident through participants' accounts is how race becomes one of many markers of difference during cross-cultural encounters. A race analysis is, therefore, not integral to processes of adaptation and relationship building. Rather, the focus is on negotiating and celebrating cultural differences, emphasizing similarities of individuals from different cultural backgrounds and acquiring proficiency in another culture. In setting the context for how power operates in international development, participants' omissions in the cultural framework allow them to understate or obscure the ways in which everyday life is organized through race. Liberal tendencies to celebrate culture pre-empt inquiries into how race organizes the material and ideological conditions of life, both in the North and South. Also, because liberal

participants story themselves as being open minded and enthusiastic to learn across cultures, they resist seeing their attitudes and behaviours as racist.

In describing their efforts to develop relationships with Southerners and overcome differences of power, liberal participants separate a consideration of power and privilege from their interpretations of experiences in the South. They narrate their experiences and elaborate stories of relationships in the South using the language of emotion to describe their connections with Southerners. These emotional responses, without a corresponding analytical investigation, enable participants to presume a mutuality of feeling and experience on the part of Southern people. Consumed by the immediacy of experiences and appearances, liberal participants often mistheorize their role as Northern development workers and accounts of their time in the South in ways that are ahistorical and distorted. Intervening in these often unreflective practices of narrating experiences, Razack and Bannerji draw attention to the unwillingness of dominant groups to investigate their complicity in sustaining relations of oppression. We apply these insights to complicate liberal participants' interpretations of their experiences as well as the stories they construct to understand Southerners and their relationships with them. The dilemma of storytelling when used primarily in relation to personal experience without wider political connections is that it is often exceedingly difficult for narrators to consider alternative interpretations. Individuals often claim an authority based on experience in which it is difficult to intervene to challenge understandings as partial or problematic. When, for example, participants believe that they are integrating in Southern communities, they often deny or simplify histories and social relations. This erasure allows them to tell a story in which they do not consider the ways in which they are not and cannot be part of the communities in which they are living and working. We challenge the ease with which liberal participants presume a solidarity and affinity with oppressed peoples without interrogating how they are implicated in the disempowerment of Southerners. This requires a location of self in social relations, to speak of how they perpetuate

and benefit from systems of power and privilege in order to develop a politics, which takes seriously disinvestments of power. The themes that emerge from participants' reflections of their experiences recur in the priorities they identify for pre-departure training for Northern development workers.

Critical Participants

In narrating their experiences as Northern development workers, critical participants articulate that systems of power operate simultaneously in ways that make it difficult to extract or isolate their workings and impact individually. Recognizing the complex workings of these systems, participants attempt to explore their multiple operations as well as their own location in systems of power and privilege. Rather than relying exclusively on emotion to interpret experience, participants speak of ongoing processes of coming to read their personal and professional experiences in the South as embedded in a historical context and relations and exercises of power. Participants are cognizant that an exclusive focus on their own positions of marginality evades responsibility for their locations of dominance and exercises of power, particularly in the development context. In documenting the impact of Northern development worker presence in the South, participants decenter their intent to do good work as sufficient to justify their participation in international development. However, not all participants go on to develop negotiations that correspond to their analysis of power and privilege. There are inconsistencies in that some participants are able to passionately articulate critiques of international development without enacting practices that challenge their own power and privilege. Most are able to trace the specific material benefits they incur through the structured economic underdevelopment of the South, particularly as a result of processes of wealth extraction. They draw attention to Northern implication in underdevelopment through an investigation of international financial institutions and Northern government policies, describing deteriorating material conditions in South and North, traceable to global economic policies. They recognize that these same processes also

secure lucrative employment and travel opportunities for themselves as Northern development workers in international development. Recognizing the dominant social locations they occupy, critical participants identify different spaces from which to engage credibly in international development work. In speaking of internationalizing actors for social change, participants are clear that Northerners and Southerners both have important but distinct roles to play and emphasize their own responsibility to engage in political learning. It is within this material context that participants resist the impulse to conceptualize development work as something that occurs primarily through Northern development worker presence in the South, reframing Northern development worker interventions and understandings of solidarity. For some, ongoing negotiations of power and privilege translate into more deliberate choices to locate their international development work in the North through advocacy work against national and international economic policies and Northern consciousness-raising. However, participants are cognizant that development work from and in the North is also infused with relations of power, requiring analysis and negotiation. Others attempt to reframe their interventions, articulating strategic decisions to participate in international development work as Northern development workers in Southern communities. In attempting to formulate alternative Northern development worker practices, some describe their commitment to enduring efforts for social and economic justice as a basis for their oppositional practices.

Participants demonstrate a facility in connecting their experiences as Northern development workers to larger systems of social organization. In particular, most identify the saliency of systemic racism in international development and participate in efforts to integrate a race analysis to explore appropriate behaviours of Northern development workers in the South. However, for some there is a continued delinking or peripheralization of race from the impact of economic globalization. Most participants reframe racism not as something that Northern development workers experience in the South, but something they enact. Bringing their insights of how racism

operates as a system to organize everyday life for Northern development workers in the North and South, participants expand conceptions of racism beyond overt acts and recognize the multiple ways in which white Northern development workers access social power through whiteness. Participants are able to bring an analysis of multiple systems to understand their distinct impacts for white Northern development workers as well as Northern development workers of colour. Participants theorize that Northern development workers of colour are also implicated in relationships of oppression, though not identical to their white Northern development worker colleagues. As they point out, racial identities of Northern development workers of colour are complicated by racial histories in different parts of the world and their own politicization around race. In many cases, white participants and participants of colour speak to these complexities of identity negotiation as well as their distinct experiences as Northern development workers, depending on their racial locations. The themes that emerge from participants' reflections of their experiences recur in the priorities they identify for pre-departure training.

Final Thoughts

This thesis focuses participants' informal learning processes through reflection on their experiences as Northern development workers. This research illuminates participants' accounts of their work as Northern development workers and the meaning they have made of these experiences to illuminate professional roles and practices of Northern development workers. This provides the context for how participants' ongoing reflective processes and politics inform their role as facilitators in the organization of pre-departure training for Northern development workers. We direct the reader to the second thesis in this study, Shaping the North-South Encounter: The Training of Northern Development Workers, that explores the enactment of these insights in the organization of pre-departure training.

In choosing deliberately to work in a Northern context, this work speaks to Northern development organizations and individuals participating in, or contemplating participation in international development. As educators, we also see many resonances and points of connection to other training and education related sites where anti-oppression work is identified as a priority. We also see the relevance and applicability of this critical analysis for community development work within the North. We orient this work with the hope that it will ultimately lead to more reflective and critical Northern development worker practices. In positioning our work for a Northern audience, we recognize but do not focus on Southern agency and ongoing movements to challenge continued Northern development worker occupation in Southern countries. As Northern researchers of colour our responsibility is to trace relations of power as they are implicated in Northern development worker practices.

As we have used this research as an opportunity to continue thinking through our own desire to participate in international development in the South, our hope is that readers will also choose to work through or continue working through implications of Northern development worker participation in international development. For us, processes of working through demand that we recognize the inadequacy of our own good intentions despite our desire to work for social justice to consider the impact of the larger Northern presence in Southern communities. Through the process of co-researching, we have and continue to challenge each other to connect our own experiences and articulations of our imagined role as Northern development workers to systems of power and privilege. These processes, parallel to this study, have made more explicit our own investments in working in the South.

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All data will remain confidential and no individual person or institution will be identified. Only the researchers, Tabish Surani, gulzar raisa charania and our supervisor, Dr. J. Cummins, will have access to the data. This study will not involve invasion of personal privacy and the guarantee of anonymity will ensure the protection of participants from the effects of direct evaluative interpretations. If participants refer to other individuals in the research process, names and identifying characteristics of these other individuals will also be changed to protect their anonymity. The data will be securely stored in locked files for 5 years after which point, it will be shredded in a way that does not compromise anonymity.

The thesis will be housed in the OISE/UT thesis collection in the R.W.B. Jackson Library. If your organization would like a copy of the report, you can indicate this in the informed consent letter. After the completion of our study, we would also be happy to present our findings to interested members of your organization.

If your organization is willing to participate, please fill out the enclosed consent form and place it in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided. If possible, please share your decision with Tabish by email so we can begin making arrangements for interviews. Please do not hesitate to contact Tabish at any time should you have questions, concerns or would like clarifications.

We thank-you for taking the time to consider our request and hope your organization will agree to participate in this project.

Yours sincerely,

Tabish Surani and gulzar raisa charania

**APPENDIX A
INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDY**

Covering Letter and Request for Facilitator Consent

Student Researchers	Tabish Surani [Address and Contact Information]	gulzar raisa charania
Faculty Supervisor	Dr. J. Cummins [Contact Information]	

Dear Madam/Sir,

Our names are Tabish Surani and gulzar raisa charania and we are graduate students at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. We are interested in participating in overseas development initiatives and are presently conducting a research project entitled Activism and Accountability: The Everyday Challenge for Northern Development Workers which will provide the basis for our individual M.A. theses. Our work includes an exploration of the challenges involved in the organization and implementation of training programs for future development workers.

We are looking for 6 individuals who have participated in overseas development work for a minimum of 2 years and have been involved in training development workers with a Canadian non-governmental organization in the past 5 years. We are interested in working with trainers who identify an analysis of identity issues as a priority. If you meet these criteria, we invite you to contact Tabish by email or mail and provide us with a brief explanation of your interest in this research project and your training experiences. Should more than 6 participants express an interest, we will select those 6 who best meet the criteria for eligibility. We invite you to take part in an interview that will last 90-120 minutes and will be conducted at a time and place most convenient for you. With your permission, we will audio-tape the interview to ensure accuracy. We will ask you to talk with us about:

1. your understanding of development and the role of development workers in overseas placements
2. reflections on your training experiences with development workers
3. strategies for future training programs

Additionally, we ask that you share with us your teaching logs, reflections, lesson plans and if you are currently involved in conducting training programs, we would be interested in observing in a non-intrusive manner. Your participation will provide valuable insights, reflecting trainer experiences of training programs that will be of interest to organizations and individuals intending to participate in future development work.

We have no intention of evaluating organizations, training programs or development workers. Rather, we are interested in exploring the complexities involved in training development workers and how these complexities are negotiated by trainers. We recognise that in asking you to comment on training materials as they relate to issues of identity, some evaluative data may emerge implicitly. While this is not the focus or intent of our research, it is important for you to be aware of this potential in order to assess whether you wish to participate in this study. Should

you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw from the project at any time, in which case we will destroy all previously collected data.

All data will remain confidential and no individual person or institution will be identified. Only the researchers, Tabish Surani, gulzar raisa charania and our supervisor, Dr. J. Cummins, will have access to the data. This study will not involve invasion of personal privacy and the guarantee of anonymity will ensure the protection of participants from the effects of direct evaluative interpretations. If you refer to other individuals in the research process, names and identifying characteristics of these other individuals will also be changed to protect their anonymity. The data will be securely stored in locked files for 5 years after which point, it will be shredded in a way that does not compromise anonymity. The thesis will be housed in the OISE/UT thesis collection in the R.W.B. Jackson Library. If you would like a copy of the report, you can indicate this in the informed consent letter

We will contact all individuals who indicate an interest in participating in our study by phone or email. However, given the scope of our study, we will choose the 6 trainers who best meet our criteria for eligibility and will arrange to meet with each of you briefly. At this time, we will ask you to fill out the informed consent and we will schedule an interview. At this preliminary meeting, we will ask you to fill out the informed consent, bring any documents related to your training program (teaching logs, lesson plans etc.) and we will schedule an interview. We will reimburse you for the cost of parking, transportation (to a maximum of \$10) or childcare (to a maximum of \$24) that result from participation in our study. Please do not hesitate to contact either Tabish at any time should you have any questions or concerns.

We thank-you for taking the time to consider our request and hope you will agree to participate in this project.

Yours sincerely,

Tabish Surani and gulzar raisa charania

APPENDIX B INTERVIEW GUIDE

Development Work Experience

1. What prompted your initial involvement in development work?
2. What were you hoping to accomplish personally and professionally?
3. What did you feel that you had to offer communities in the South?
4. Can you briefly describe the kinds of development work in which you have participated?
5. How did you understand these experiences in the South?
6. How did you understand your relationship with the people in the country in which you were working?
7. Was it what you expected it to be? How/why or why not?
8. How did you understand the work that you were doing initially and how did that understanding change over time? Why?
9. How did you understand the presence of Northern development workers in the South?
10. Why did you stay?
11. As a result of your overseas development work and reflections about those experiences, how have you come to understand relations between Northern and Southern countries?

Training Context

1. How did your participation as a development worker inform or influence how you identified priorities as a trainer?
2. How would you describe the representation at the training program? Was this similar or different from your experience as an overseas development worker? How did you understand/make sense of who was present and who was not?
3. How do priorities in training shift depending on group composition?
4. Have you encountered contradictions between what you thought you should be doing as a trainer and the expectations your employer/colleagues had of you? If so, how did you negotiate this tension?
5. What is your understanding of the relationship between trainers and students?
6. What pedagogical strategies do you use during the training program?

7. Is this a type of training that is co-facilitated? Why/why not? How do you understand your role in that facilitation process?
8. How did your pedagogical strategies encourage Northern development workers to think about their identity?
9. What is your perception of how the training program is received by Northern development workers?
10. What were some of the tensions and complexities that you experienced or observed during the training program? How did you understand, think about and manage these tensions?
11. In the training context, what conditions need to be in place for participants to engage in a critical analysis of the role of development worker?
12. What were some of the limitations of the training program that you facilitated?
13. What do you identify as the possibilities of enhancing existing training programs?
14. Have you continued to participate directly in overseas development work? If so, in what capacities and why? If not, why?