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# **Scotland, Malawi and the Post- Development Critique: An Analysis of Power and Equality in International Development**

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## Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse contemporary efforts to make international development more equal, through the application of the post-development critique to the relationship between Scotland and Malawi. Post-development theorists posit that international development is a neo-colonial form of action that is premised on, and perpetuates, conceptual and material inequalities between 'developed' and 'developing' countries. The Scotland and Malawi relationship is presented by its proponents as an example of a contemporary development practice that challenges these embedded inequalities, based on its people-to-people approach which emphasises mutuality, reciprocity and friendship between the two countries. This thesis therefore brings the post-development critique to this relationship to understand the enduring power inequalities in the contemporary development discourse.

An interpretivist qualitative methodology was utilised to explore the perceptions and practices of a variety of organisations and individuals working within the Scotland-Malawi relationship. These methods included semi-structured interviews, participant observation, textual analysis and focus groups. This included a longitudinal focus group study with student groups travelling from Scotland to Malawi before, during and after their trips, to analyse how young people's perceptions were shaped by the contemporary development discourse.

This research uncovered the precise ways that contemporary development discourse perpetuates power inequalities in development interactions. These inequalities are shown to be embedded in the colonial cross-national relationships that development relations are often based on, and through the process of *othering* of people in countries that receive aid. By deploying Bayart's theory of extraversion, and applying this as an analytical tool, this thesis also offers a new way of understanding agency in post-development theory. Through this analysis, this thesis demonstrates the enduring value of the post-development critique as a means of understanding the dynamic and complex ways that power is negotiated in development. Ultimately, this thesis concludes that the development discourse requires unequal power relations in order to function, and efforts to challenge this from within the industry are unsuccessful.

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## Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

# Chapter 1 Introduction

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This research explores the development relationship which exists between Scotland and Malawi<sup>1</sup>. This relationship is characterised by widespread civil society connections between the two countries, supported and complemented by government-to-government cooperation. The civil society relationship is promoted and coordinated through a government-funded network organisation called the Scotland Malawi Partnership (SMP), which frames this bilateral relationship as one characterised by partnership and equality. The relationship between Scotland and Malawi is presented as a modern and innovative form of development practice, through the collaborative approach between civil society and government in both countries, and its emphasis on the principles of partnership and equality (Ross, 2015). This research explores this approach to development as a case study through which to analyse and assess the relative success and failures of contemporary development models which aim to create more equal relations between aid-giving and aid-receiving countries.

As this chapter will outline, this research analyses the SMP model from the perspective of post-development critique. This theory emphasises the extent to which the material and conceptual marginalisation of so-called developing countries are embedded in global structures. What appears to be the force for alleviation of this marginalisation, the development industry, is seen by post-development theorists as actually serving to perpetuate it (Ziai, 2015). Development is, according to this school of thought, implicated in the on-going

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<sup>1</sup> As I begin, I should clarify my use of the term 'Malawi'. The borders and structures which now constitute Malawi had no internationally respected form until 1891, hence no name. Between 1891 and 1907 what is now known as Malawi was then known as the British Central Africa Protectorate, after which it became Nyasaland. Between 1953 and 1963, Nyasaland was part of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. In 1964 Nyasaland gained its independence from British colonial rule, and renamed itself Malawi, a name derived from the *Maravi* kingdom, which was itself first noted on Portuguese Maps in 1546 (Pachai, 1972). Whilst efforts are made to clarify the time of discussion when referring to the country throughout this thesis (e.g. "the territory which became Malawi", or "pre-colonial Malawi"), usually I revert to the contemporary name Malawi for the sake of clarity.

marginalisation of the Global South. It embodies it, monetises it, and reifies it. Post-development theory is now more than 25 years old and first rose to prominence in the publication of *The Development Dictionary* in 1992. This text brought together academics and activists from across the globe to deconstruct the very concept of 'development', and called into question the presumed rationality which underpinned development institutions. Whilst this theory is subject to much debate and critique, post-development has had a profound impact on development studies and practice. In 2017, to celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, *Third World Quarterly* published a special edition analysing the contribution of post-development to the field of study, and reflected on its continued relevance for a changing development landscape. In this edition, the editor of *The Development Dictionary*, Wolfgang Sachs, suggests that recent major global agreements such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Climate Agreement, and the publication of the Papal Encyclical *Laudato Si* (all in 2015) signal the influence of post-development on international policy, and the end of the development era (Sachs, 2017).

Over the 25 years since the publication of *The Development Dictionary*, there have been fundamental shifts in the global order within which the development industry intervenes. The rise of the so-called BRICS economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), and now the MINT economies (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey) reflect the new wealth of some countries in the Global South, upsetting the binary which characterised prior development thinking, and with which the post-development writers first took issue (Ban & Blyth, 2013). In 2016, at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, UN member states agreed to the 'Grand Bargain', which will globalise the humanitarian aid industry by providing finance directly to agencies based in the Global South, rather than via Northern-based intermediaries (Agenda for Humanity, 2019). This signals a shift away from the traditional North to South model of humanitarian finance, and the increases in so called 'South-South' development assistance are also on the rise (Santander & Alonso, 2018). Since 1992, new questions have also arisen, and old questions have been rearticulated. Questions of perception and identity have gained in prominence, new ways of conceptualising the state and civil society have arisen, and post-colonial debates have entered the mainstream. In the context of these structural and intellectual shifts, confidence in the universal

truthfulness of the concept of ‘development’ has waned (Sachs, 2017). Indicatively, the SDGs are targets for all countries of the world, not just those categorised as ‘developing’. However, despite this changing context, the ‘development’ industry has continued to thrive. The industry has achieved this by constantly modifying its practice and language, though the extent to which these modifications represent meaningful change in the power dynamics that characterise development is contested (Matthews, 2010; Ospina & Masullo-Jimenez, 2017). This research deploys the post-development critique to explore one element of these shifts in practice: the efforts made to frame development in terms of equal partnerships between donor and recipient, using the SMP as a case study.

## **1.1 Purpose of Study**

The overall purpose of this study is to analyse what lessons might be learned from the post-development critique by contemporary approaches to development which aim to achieve greater equality in development relations. To achieve this, I use the SMP as a case study.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

Thus, my central research question is:

What can the Scotland Malawi Partnership learn from the post-development critique?

This research therefore applies the post-development critique to the case study of the SMP. It is concerned with exploring the SMP model’s emphasis on equality in development, which exists within the context of global trends in development. The post-development critique exposes the enduring inequalities that characterise development. This research therefore applies this critique to the case of the SMP to interpret the relative success and failure of its model which aims to foster greater equality in development. Through this, this research analyses the sustained value of post-development in the contemporary

development landscape, and what this new landscape means for efforts to reduce the marginalisation of countries that receive aid.

Epistemologically, I approach my research from an interpretivist position and adopt an inductive methodological approach. In that respect my research question is intended to be exploratory in nature rather than experimental. To address this central research question five secondary research questions were therefore developed and these were articulated as follows:

- 1) What are the origins of the SMP model?
- 2) To what extent does the SMP model challenge the dominant development discourse?
- 3) How do Scottish participants in Scotland - Malawi partnerships understand the Global South?
- 4) In what way does the experience of volunteering in Malawi affect Scottish volunteers' perceptions of that country?
- 5) What challenges are faced by member organisations trying to implement the SMP model?

The purpose of research question 1 is to situate the model and approach of the SMP in its historical context to assess the implications of its origins for its contemporary practice. Through this, I explore how the origins are contemporarily understood and used as an 'origins narrative' by the SMP, and analyse what this reveals about the organisation's practice. This question draws from the genealogical approach deployed by post-development writers, which traces the emergence of forms of knowledge through historical analysis. In such a way, this question constitutes this element of the post-development critique, and therefore contributes to answering the central research question.

Question 2 considers the extent to which the SMP model, which promotes greater equality in development relations, can therefore be said to challenge the dominant discourse of development. This question draws directly from the post-development critique, which interprets the discourse of development as perpetuating power imbalances (and therefore inequality) between donors and

recipients. Through this research question, this research brings the insights of the post-development critique to bear on an understanding of SMP practice.

Questions 3 and 4 are focussed on the perceptions of Scottish participants who work with SMP organised projects. I explore their experiences in order to better understand whether the SMP approach effectively challenges the conceptual marginalisation (or 'othering') of countries who receive aid. This conceptual marginalisation is seen by post-development theorists as a fundamental effect of the development discourse. This question therefore relates to the central research question as it questions how the SMP model addresses, or fails to address, this conceptual arrangement. Question 4 builds on question 3. In asking how the practice of volunteering-for-development shapes perceptions, this question considers how perceptions and practice interrelate.

Question 5 explores directly how the SMP model functions in practice, and is explored through consideration of the specific example of one SMP member organisation in Chapter 6. As a network organisation, the SMP does not have direct authority over its members in Scotland. This research question explores what implications this has for the SMP and its approach and therefore focuses on the potential gap between positions articulated centrally by the organisation, and what happens in practice. Through this, I consider the post-development critique that alternative practices are 'co-opted' into the dominant discourse. By analysing the challenges faced by SMP members in instituting their model, I consider what forces impact on their ability to successfully implement this model.

### **1.3 Scotland Malawi Partnership**

Since 2005 Scotland and Malawi have been linked in what is described as a 'special relationship', formally beginning with the signing of a cooperation agreement that year between the then Scottish First Minister Jack McConnell and President of Malawi, Bingu wa Mutharika (Ross, 2015, p. 6). The beginning of this partnership saw the Scottish Executive exploit a quirk within the Scotland



Act<sup>2</sup> allowing them to retain a modest budget for international development, an area of policy otherwise reserved for the UK Government. Around half of this annual budget has, since 2005, been spent on projects in Malawi: around about £4.5 million per year (Scottish Government, 2016b).

Despite this being a relatively small<sup>3</sup> amount of government funding, the relationship between these countries has thrived in the past 10 years. One study (Anders, 2014) calculates that 94,000 Scots and 198,000 Malawians are actively involved in partnership activities between the two countries, which is said to benefit 300,000 Scots and 2 million Malawians. More significantly, Scottish civil society generates almost ten times as much as the government's contribution to Malawi, providing an estimated £40 million per year (Anders, 2014). The SMP often uses this figure to credit itself as having a “multiplier effect” on Scottish Government spending by promoting Scotland-Malawi relations amongst a wider civil society in the country (SMP, 2015a). Whilst there have been questions around evidence base for such a claim in at least one report, the same report concludes that the SMP have clearly helped to create a “buzz” around the relationship (Gibson, 2016, p. 13).

The intergovernmental relations between the two countries were formalised in the Scotland & Malawi Cooperation Agreement, signed in November 2005 (Scottish Government, 2005). However, the year prior to that had seen the establishment of the SMP, which had the specific role of promoting the civil society relationship between the two countries. The SMP has, since 2004, grown into a large organisation representing over 1000 individual and organisational members, represented in every Scottish Constituency (SMP, 2016a). Coordinated by a small staff team based in Edinburgh, the SMP supports its members through

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<sup>2</sup> The Scotland Act lists international development as a reserved power, hence the SG are not required to have a development programme at all. However, it also details that the SG have “powers of assisting Ministers of the Crown with international relations... including in relation to international development assistance” and it's within this that Jack McConnell was able to negotiate for the programme (Gibson, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> ‘Small’ is used in comparison to other national aid budgets, such as the UK as a whole which gives annually 0.7% of its GDP to international development, which in 2015 amounted to £12.239 billion (DFID, 2015). In the lead up to the Scottish Referendum vote in September 2014, the Scottish Government committed to maintaining 0.7% of an independent Scotland's GDP for international development (Scottish Government, 2013), which was then estimated at around £1 billion (Gardham, 2013).

regular thematic network events which bring together members working between Scotland and Malawi in areas such as health, further education, school partnerships and business, trade and tourism (SMP, 2019: 'Forums'). Whilst politically neutral and independent of Government, the SMP receives core funding from the Scottish Government International Development Fund (IDF), provided on a triennial basis (SMP, 2015). One aspect of support provided by the SMP to its members is assistance for funding applications to the IDF. Alongside this, the SMP also engages in lobbying and advocacy work, which has recently included lobbying the UK Borders Agency on the issue of Malawian visas to the UK, promotion of the SMP model to the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and a campaign with Action Aid to write a new tax treaty between the UK and Malawi (SMP, 2016c). The SMP also continuously engage with the media to raise awareness of the relationship between Scotland and Malawi.

The SMP membership is made up of a wide variety of professional and non-professional organisations, church groups, community groups, schools and individuals. It includes large international NGOs with offices in Scotland such as Oxfam, Tearfund, Mary's Meals and Christian Aid and a number of small Scottish charities which have been established within the past ten years supporting causes in Malawi. Every Scottish University is a member, as are half of all Scottish Local Authorities, over 200 schools, over 300 youth members and a wide variety of individuals with interests in the Scotland-Malawi relationship (SMP, 2019 'Search for Members'). The membership is therefore highly diverse, and the SMP role is to bring together individuals and organisations in Scotland who have a shared involvement in the bilateral links. The task of bringing together members is managed by the SMP office in Edinburgh, whose work is informed by the members, and who therefore speaks on their behalf. It is therefore important to note that whilst the SMP receives core funding from the Scottish Government, it is primarily responsible for supporting and promoting civil society organisations that have links with Malawi; some of which also receiving Scottish Government funding, but most of which do not. The organisation promotes the bi-lateral relationship between Scotland and Malawi as constituting much more than only the IDF and the formal government-to-government links (Ross, 2015).

Furthermore, the SMP promotes Scottish civil society links with Malawi as characterised by particular values. The organisation presents its role as promoting “people-to-people” connections between the two countries which aren’t “just about ‘international development’, with donors on one side and recipients on the other” but about “partnership, about joint-working, and about friendship” (SMP, 2019: ‘About Us’). This is said to “pioneer a new approach” (Ross & West, 2008, p. 2) to international development, which is characterised by an emphasis on non-professional development relations and on the establishment of mutual relations based on equality between Scotland and Malawi. The SMP thus present its role as moving beyond conventional international development models. In the 2015 SMP publication *Malawi, Scotland and a Relational Approach to International Development*, Ken Ross writes that “Attempts to achieve international development have proved unsuccessful so far as the “bottom billion” are concerned. As a result, the received paradigm of international development is subject to question” (Ross, 2015, p. 1). Drawing from this central critique of the ‘received paradigm’ of international development, the SMP characterise the bi-lateral relationship as defined by reciprocity rather than a top-down, unequal, transfer of material resources. Underpinning the model is a stated commitment to “mutual understanding, mutual respect and mutual benefit” between Scotland and Malawi: “...a genuinely dignified two-way partnership, not a charity” whereby “both nations contribute and both nations benefit” (SMP, 2015a, p. 10). Whilst the organisation is to some extent a part of the traditional development industry in that it receives core funding from the Scottish Government IDF and includes numerous international NGOs amongst its membership, it positions itself as pioneering a new approach from within existing development structures.

The SMP’s emphasis on a mutual, equal, two-way approach is characterised by the establishment of an equivalent organisation based in Lilongwe: the Malawi Scotland Partnership (MaSP). MaSP first received funding from the Scottish Government in 2012, and again in 2015, as part of the SMP’s triennial IDF grant. This grant funding is managed by the SMP, however, MaSP is formally an independent “sister organisation” of the SMP, and “aims to establish an effective Malawi led and Malawi owned national umbrella organisation which is able to bring together, support and add value to the many civil society links

between Scotland and Malawi” (Scottish Government, 2012, p. 1). Whilst the SMP manages the grant funding of MaSP, it is important to note that the SMP does not regularly manage any other direct Scottish Government funding for projects in Malawi (SMP, 2016c). In short, the SMP support their Scottish members who have partnerships with Malawian organisations, and MaSP support their Malawian members who have partnerships with Scottish organisations.

Beyond these two organisations, and the civil society links they represent, the government-to-government links between the two countries continues to thrive since the signing of the 2005 ‘cooperation agreement’. In 2018, this cooperation agreement was updated, forming the ‘Global Goals Partnership Agreement’ (Scottish Government, 2018). This agreement commits both countries to working together to meet the SDGs, specifically on the themes of governance, sustainable economic development, health, education, renewable energy, water and climate. The opening of this agreement, like the 2005 cooperation agreement that preceded it, explicitly highlights the historical relationship between Scotland and Malawi as inspiring the contemporary governmental cooperation:

The Republic of Malawi and Scotland (hereinafter referred to as 'the Parties') desirous to sustain the remarkable network of connections between the two countries built upon by each successive generation for over a century and a half, beginning with the first encounters of the Livingstone Expeditions, strengthened through the seminal influence of the Scottish health and education missions, and confirmed in the signing of the historic Cooperation Agreement in 2005 between Malawi and Scotland thereinafter referred to singularly as "the Party" and collectively as "the Parties";

Scottish Government, 2018, p. 1

The celebration of the historical links between Scotland and Malawi is promoted across the bilateral relationship by both governments, such as in the above extract, and in civil society by the SMP and MaSP. In particular, David Livingstone is repeatedly invoked by both government and civil society (for

example, SMP, 2019: 'About Us' and Scottish Government, 2016a: 'Malawi Development Programme'). The importance of the historical relationship to the Scottish Government is reflected in Scottish Government IDF reports, which position Livingstone at the centre of a kind of origins narrative:

1.20 It was felt that Scotland's own devolution journey would not be complete without recognising its history as an outward facing nation and good global citizen; one whose people have had a strong spirit of global humanity that has continued to this day, working to enrich the lives of others, both at home and abroad.

1.21 Nowhere is this more apparent than in Scotland's enduring and special relationship with Malawi. Our connections started with Dr David Livingstone and the Scottish Missionaries in the mid-18th century, truly some of the first global Scots to Africa. Dr Livingstone in particular was an early champion of human rights.

Scottish Government, 2016b, pp. 14-15

The Scottish Government presents its approach in the same manner as the SMP and MaSP, reporting that: "it is these people-to-people links, between schools, churches and individual connections, which put reciprocity at the heart of our work" (Scottish Government, 2016b, p. 15). Therefore, in both the civil society networks and inter-governmental relationship there is a shared celebration of David Livingstone and Scotland's historic involvement in Malawi, alongside an emphasis on mutual and reciprocal relations between the two countries.

The SMP model, which places a claim about equality mutuality at the heart of its approach to development, and which emphasises a particular story about the significance of the historical relationship between the countries, is analysed in detail in Chapter 4. That chapter returns to the stated history of the relationship between Scotland and Malawi and draws on the post-development critique to analyse the origins narrative promoted by the organisation. With particular reference to some of the key theoretical debates in classical and contemporary development studies, the next section describes how the SMP is an appropriate

case through which to explore contemporary efforts to make development more equitable, using the post-development critique.

## 1.4 Contemporary Development Debates & Practices

The emphasis placed by the Scottish Government and SMP on mutuality, equality and reciprocity in the context development should be understood in the wider context of the contemporary development discourse. At the inception of the development industry in the 1950s, development was understood as involving, quite straightforwardly, the transfer of material resources from wealthy countries to poorer countries, with the aim for raising Gross National Product (GNP) of the latter (Webster, 1984), and promoting the 'development' of those countries along a supposedly pre-determined path. However, the multitude of relations which spawned from the development industry (and the decades of critiques, research and analysis) has given rise to new paradigms of development practice, such as the partnership approach taken by the SMP which emphasises equality. This approach is in many ways aligned with changes to international development policy described above, such as the SDGs, which emphasise the need for 'development' in all countries of the world. If implemented, this represents a significant shift away from the traditional development paradigm, as it requires a removal of the concept of 'developing' as a category through which to interpret certain countries of the world. Within development studies, however, responses such as these to the traditional development paradigm have been interpreted as broadly fitting into two distinct fields of thought: alternatives-in-development (or alternative development) and alternatives-to-development (such as post-development).

The SDGs can be regarded as being informed by the alternative development school of thought, in that they represent a shift away from the binary paradigm of classical development, yet are still aligned directly with the aims, objectives and structures of the development industry. The SDGs are the product of efforts made by the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to continue in their pursuit of 'global development' without the expectation of cultural 'Westernisation' that characterised prior eras. The SDGs comprise 17 universal targets, and were detailed in the document *Transforming*

*our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (hence also known as the '2030 Agenda') (United Nations, 2015). The UN adopted the SDGs in September 2015 to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which expired that year. As stated above, the SDGs are goals for all countries of the world, in contrast to the MDGs which provided targets for developing countries to achieve (UNDP, 2016). This reconceptualisation of goals has led The World Bank to begin 'phasing out' the term 'developing world' (Fantom, 2016). Attempts at redressing the conceptual marginalisation of developing countries include a focus on investing in business and entrepreneurship through development, which is presented as being a respectful means of establishing mutual relations for development when correctly implemented in line with SDGs (Torres-Rahman, et al., 2015).

Importantly, the SDGs also focus on 'partnerships' for development, an underpinning characteristic of the SMP model. This term reflects the emerging language of the UNDP and World Bank and their pursuit of a new paradigm for development. The 17<sup>th</sup> SDG is entitled "Partnerships for the Goals", and outlines "a revitalised and enhanced global partnership" that brings together different agencies, stakeholders and businesses to pursue the goals of sustainable development (UNDP, 2016, p. 1). This opportunity is attributed to globalisation which, as a process, is argued to be "tightening and reshaping the links between the global and the local" (Schech, et al., 2015, p. 2). Furthermore, globalisation is credited with revealing that problems such as inequality and pollution are "global challenges that can only be successfully tackled with a sense of shared international responsibility as espoused in the 'global partnership' MDG and SDG's" (Schech, et al., 2015, p. 2). Therefore, the SDGs can be interpreted as an attempt to move away from development policies which ignored the agency of countries that received aid.

The SMP model clearly shares a great deal with the perspective underpinning the SDGs, especially in its promotion of 'partnership' as a principle of development. This is exemplified not only through the promotion of 'people-to-people' interactions between Scottish and Malawian organisations, but also in the emphasis on the "mobilisation of civil society", "Government in synergy with people" and "a reciprocal partnership for development" (Ross, 2015, p.29). The

SMP model is thus emblematic of a wider and emerging partnership-approach to development. Therefore, through analysis of the SMP, this research engages with wider debates in development studies around the SDGs, the attempted paradigm shift by the UNDP, and the rise of a so-called 'partnership agenda', analysing what these changes to language and approach mean in practice. This research critically assesses these global trends through application of the post-development critique to the SMP, which is used as a case study through which to interpret efforts to make development more equitable.

## 1.5 Post-Development

Classical post-development theory has been interpreted as standing in direct contrast to the alternatives-in-development school in which the SDGs and the partnership agenda have their origins. Post-development calls into question the very premise of the development industry, calling for the 'knowledge' which underpins that industry to be deconstructed, and for the establishment of an alternative-to-development. The difference between these two broad camps can be indicated by how they interpret data about the world. For example, the development industry often justifies itself on the basis of evidence of the economic disparity between aid-giving and aid-receiving countries. Whilst much of this evidence demonstrates that these inequalities have slightly declined since the 1980s (Kiely, 2016, p. 85), around 800 million people still live in extreme poverty according to The World Bank (The World Bank, 2016). Moreover, half of this population (previously referred to as the 'bottom billion') live in Sub-Saharan Africa (Collier, 2008). The World Bank also reported in 2016 that global inequality is falling, partly because the rise of 'developing' states like India and China is bringing the 'developed' and 'developing' countries closer together. However, it also noted that the wealth of the top 1% within all countries is rising (The World Bank, 2016), and Oxfam calculate that the global richest 1% now control more wealth than the other 99% of the global population (Oxfam, 2016). The case of Scotland and Malawi reflects this global economic inequality. The Gross National Income (GNI) per capita in the UK is equivalent to \$40,000, compared to \$750 in Malawi (UNDP, 2015). The Human Development Index (HDI), which is calculated based on a range of social indicators such as years of schooling, places Malawi at 173<sup>rd</sup> in a list of 188 countries, with the UK in 14<sup>th</sup>



place. The life expectancy at birth in the UK is an average of 80.7 years, compared to 62.8 in Malawi (UNDP, 2016).

Social and economic statistical evidence therefore demonstrates clearly the material disparities between certain countries of the world. However, statistics such as these are critiqued by the post-development school as such data relies on a homogenising account of 'developing' in comparison with 'developed' countries: the premise of such data, and the paradigm it operates from, creates an artificial binary between these two diverse sets of contexts. Moreover, the evidence upon which assertions of global inequality are premised is itself a reflection of the dichotomous perception that the development industry reproduces. The development industry is thus seen to erase the reality of developing countries, homogenising them in all their variety into one whole, and defining them only through the structurally unequal parameters of so called 'development'. The post-development theorists discussed in detail in Chapter 2 attack the use of many indicators of global inequality, and in doing so target the 'knowledge' of developing countries created by the industry. They see global poverty indicators as a reflection of Western value systems, and therefore argue that these statistics embody an ethnocentrism inherent to development approaches.

For Sachs, it is critiques such as these from the post-development school which have ultimately given rise to the changes in international development policy, such as the SDGs. Whilst the SDGs are representative of a shift within the industry, Sachs suggests that the rejection of the categorisation of 'developing' countries embedded in these goals has come about through the post-development critique (Sachs, 2017). This follows the pattern of how the development industry has sustained itself since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by co-opting alternatives into its structures (Matthews, 2010), as seen in development trends such as the Basic Needs Approach (BNA), Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), and the contemporary partnership approach. The post-development critique suggests that all co-optations of alternatives into the industry are ultimately fruitless in challenging its inherent ethnocentrism (Ospina & Masullo-Jimenez, 2017). This thesis brings this argument to the SMP model, by critically assessing its efforts to foster greater equality in

development from within the industry, and questioning whether or not it is successful in creating real transformation of power relations.

## **1.6 Significance of this Research**

In order to analyse contemporary development practice using the post-development critique this research explores four key areas relevant to the SMP: the colonial origins of development practices (Chapter 4), popular perceptions of development and countries that receive aid (Chapter 5), co-optation and the impact of the discourse of attempts to change practice (Chapter 6), and the role of aid-recipients in programmes (Chapter 7). Through this, the research is important to contemporary debates around alternative development, the partnership agenda and the SDGs, studies around young people in development and recent debates about the potential for a post-development practice. Alongside this, Chapter 7 proposes the use of Bayart's theory of extraversion as a way of interpreting agency in ways that are consistent with the questions asked by post-development approaches, and highlights this as a potential area for future exploration.

This research is also of use to global anti-poverty campaigners, and people working within the development industry to affect a change in the relations between aid-giving and aid-receiving countries. It is furthermore of use to people working with young people within development, and Chapter 5 and 6 offer insights into how international youth partnerships have the potential to challenge ethnocentric perceptions if deployed carefully. Lastly, I am hopeful that the key findings from this research can be used by the SMP to inform and improve their practice, particularly with reference to their pursuit of greater equality in development.

## **1.7 Chapter Guide**

Chapter 2 puts the central research question into context by reviewing the literature around the sociology of development, tracing the origins of critical development theory, post-development, and the alternative development school of thought. The chapter establishes the central conceptual framework for that

question by exploring the history of theories of development and the post-development critique.

Chapter 3 describes in detail the methodology of this research. This includes an exploration of its philosophical underpinnings, an overview of the research undertaken, a description of the research design, a reflection on the methods of data collection deployed, and the tools of analysis used to interpret the data. It justifies this approach, considers alternatives and why they were rejected, and reflects upon the ethical questions raised by the study, and on its limitations.

Chapter 4 considers the organisational origins of the SMP and its model in detail. It uses the insights of post-development and post-colonial approaches to reflect upon what the narrative of the colonial relationship promoted by the SMP reveals about its approach to development. Furthermore, this chapter analyses the extent to which the SMP narrative of pursuing greater equality in development is reflected in its messaging and the forms of practice it promotes.

Chapter 5 focuses on questions of perception, and specifically how changes to development practice can influence how participants and the general public perceive countries that receive aid. This chapter draws upon data from Scottish international volunteers working in Malawi to explore these questions and to consider how unequal power relations are embedded in, as well as reflected in, the knowledge and perceptions that surround development interactions.

Chapter 6 explores the institutional working of the SMP model in more detail, by considering the case of one member organisation. Through the case of the Scottish Charity Malawi Tomorrow (MaTo)<sup>4</sup>, this chapter explores how development interactions are shaped by the structures of institutions and organisations. It does this to help map out the embedded power inequalities in these structures, and how the process of co-opting alternative approaches occurs in practice.

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<sup>4</sup> The name 'Malawi Tomorrow' is a pseudonym, as are the names of all individuals (unless stated otherwise) and organisations with the exception of the SMP and MaSP.

Chapter 7 deploys the concept of 'extraversion' as an analytical tool to interpret unexpected findings from the research relating to how participants were seen to 'perform' particular roles in development interactions. The concept of extraversion, first formulated by Bayart in *The State in Africa* (1993), addresses the way that elites in developing countries negotiate forms of marginalisation so as to manage external resources and, sometimes, to secure personal gain. Chapter 7 applies this concept to the tendency towards performance in the development interactions researched. In line with a post-development approach, therefore, this chapter explores agency within development interactions, and how otherwise marginalised parties take power back from within unequal relations of development.

# Chapter 2 Sociology of Development

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## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the classical and contemporary literature and research relevant to answering the central research question. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the theoretical context, to establish the conceptual framework for this research, and to demonstrate how this study contributes to the wider field of study.

This chapter begins by firstly exploring in great detail the foundational theories of development, specifically modernisation and underdevelopment theories, in order to develop an understanding of these foundational debates to facilitate analysis of the research material (section 2.2). Time is taken to explore these theories extensively, in order to establish a robust understanding of the origins of these key concepts, which are drawn upon throughout the findings chapters. Secondly, this chapter provides analysis of Bayart's theory of extraversion, which is deployed in this research as an analytical tool through which to interpret the agency of actors in development interactions (2.3). Thirdly, this chapter critically analyses 'alternative development' practices, which draw from critiques of modernisation-as-development models in an attempt to make development more effective and democratic (2.4). As the SMP can be regarded as an example of 'alternative development' practice, in that the organisation promotes its new approach from within the industry, this section is crucial to developing a contextual understanding of the organisation's approach. Fourthly, this chapter explores post-development theory, the theory which is deployed in this research to analyse contemporary efforts to make development more equitable, through the case of the SMP (2.5). This section concludes by demonstrating how each of the secondary research questions are deployed to address different aspects of post-development theory to answer the central research question. Throughout each section, I lay the conceptual framework for the study, clarifying interpretations of key concepts in light of my analysis of debates.

This chapter therefore provides context, clarification of concepts and justification of the value of this research. Through analysis of the foundational development theories, then alternative development practices, this chapter demonstrates how the development industry has been critiqued, and subsequently responded to these critiques through changes in practice. This chapter then explores in detail post-development theory, which in the 1990s deconstructed both classical development theories and many critiques of development practice, arguing that the very concept of 'development' itself was a product of unequal global structures of power and should be rejected. Since then, the development landscape has changed significantly, in terms of how it is publically perceived, and the types of practices it deploys: most significantly reflected in efforts to increase equality through the participation of aid-receipts in development programmes. The SMP can be regarded as emblematic of this participatory turn, and its emphasis on fostering greater equality between aid-giving and aid-receiving countries can be interpreted as a contemporary way of implementing the broad participatory approach. This thesis therefore uses the post-development critique to assess contemporary development efforts to make development more equitable through the case of the SMP, and in so doing assesses the continued value of post-development to development studies.

## **2.2 Modernisation and Underdevelopment Theories**

In the decades following the end of the Second World War debates within the sociology of development centred on two main theories, largely influenced by functionalism and Marxism respectively. The functionalist school of thought has its origins in the positivism of Comte and Spencer in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and is generally associated with the conventional modernist understandings of international development. However, there is not one distinct theory of modernisation. It is rather a compilation of non-Marxist perspectives on the 'Third World' from the post-WWII era, comprising evolutionism, diffusionism, structural functionalism, systems theory and interactionism (Harrison, 1988, p. 1). Differences in theoretical approach, for example, existed between the evolutionist theory of cultural development (influenced by the Durkheimian school) and the diffusionist (associated with the rise of the Boasian school of ethnography) which took a more dynamic approach to explaining how cultural

transition would occur (Leaf, 1979; Harrison, 1988). Modernisation-as-development can generally be understood as a perspective which understands development in terms of a trajectory towards some sort of end, and which often assumes that this trajectory of development has universal applicability. Such a view is expressed in much of the work of Talcott Parsons, in Lerner's *The Passing of Traditional Society* (1958), Rostow's *Stages of Economic Growth* (1960) and Moore's *Social Change* (1964). Each of these texts portrays, in varying ways, a development trajectory and assumes that so-called 'Third World' countries are ultimately moving towards a Western style, capitalist society.

The Marxist school of thought, on the other hand, critiqued the assumptions behind modernisation and provided an alternative account premised on the understanding that 'Third World' countries were being subsumed into the international system in a manner which guaranteed their exploitation. Originally, this side of the development debate was expressed most prominently in underdevelopment theories<sup>5</sup>. However, it is important to note that both dependency theory and modernisation theory shared a belief in an 'end goal' of development, though they differed in their theorisation of how this would be achieved (Kiely, 1999, p. 35). Writers such as Baran in the *Political Economy of Growth* (1957), Frank in *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (1967) and Amin in *Unequal Development* (1976) followed these perspectives in varying ways based on the Marxist school of thought. World systems theory evolved from dependency theory. This theory was developed in Wallerstein's *The Modern World-System* (1974) and *The Capitalist World-Economy* (1979), though Amin and Frank also contributed to this school of thought. The following sections explore each of these perspectives in turn, in order to establish a detailed account of how socioeconomic development has been theorised.

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<sup>5</sup> The sociologists who took a Marxist approach to development in this era are largely identified under the banner of 'underdevelopment theory'. World systems theory, which I explore in the next section, is also influenced by these Marxist approaches. For the sake of clarity, I refer to dependency theory and world systems theory collectively as being 'underdevelopment theories' (as does Harrison, 1988, p.62).

### 2.2.1 Modernisation Theory

As referenced above, modernisation theory has its origins in enlightenment thinking and the positivist school developed by Comte. As scientific understandings of the world developed and thinking moved away from the theological and metaphysical forms of knowledge, Comte theorised that a scientific model of inquiry could be applied to society. He believed that through understanding the science of politics and social administration, humanity could build a more harmonious society. Moreover, Comte believed that this state of scientific understanding came at the end of a universal trajectory which all societies followed (Barnett, 1988). This was seen as leading from a world of non-scientific, authoritarian and metaphysical beliefs to a state of rational knowledge, which is what he called positivism.

The assumption that a social system is formed by a goal-orientated dynamic process is fundamental to this theory and clearly informs later ideas about the course of development. Moreover, the functionalist division of society into elements and institutions (family, education, politics etc.) fits well with the interventionist nature of development programmes (which often directly tackle issues by targeting each of these institutions) (Escobar, 1995). Sometimes referred to as the 'diffusion model' of development, this theory was based on the belief that all countries had experienced in the past what the 'Third World' was currently experiencing, and that through diffusion of Western values and capital 'Third World' countries could develop more quickly (Namkoong, 1999).

Rostow's *The Stages of Economic Growth* represents one of the most explicit articulations of this modernist account of economic development. It outlines five stages of economic development which, he argues, hold true for all societies: the traditional society, the preconditions for take-off, the take-off, the drive to maturity, and the age of mass consumption (Rostow, 1960). One result of this perspective was the view that a lack of development could be understood as the 'fault' of those countries which failed to develop, in that they were seen as lacking characteristics necessary for development (Webster, 1984). At the same time, it licensed interventions attempting to 'raise the stage' of development for recipient countries (Goldthorpe, 1984). In this model of economic growth,



development followed one model for all states and crucially was a process that took place intrinsically within a society - thus discounting the impact of colonialism on the 'Third World' (Barnett, 1988).

Modernisation theory was popular in the post-WWII period and was frequently presented as a demonstration that post-colonial nations could prosper (emerging from so-called underdeveloped conditions) through the adoption of a Western capitalist (rather than Eastern socialist) economic system (Webster, 1984). The general view was that nations that are less developed must have some tangible social and cultural reasons which explained this condition, thus with a concerted effort to tackle these causes they could be 'raised up'. Attempting to understand what these causes could be was regarded as a useful contribution that could be made by social scientists (Goldthorpe, 1984). Perspectives on what these 'reasons' were varied across the modernisation school. Parsons theorised that the fundamental shift involved a move from relations of kinship to contract, to a society with an open stratification system and free exchange (1951). Others elaborated on this work, seeing the establishment of an achievement based economy of entrepreneurs as a keystone in development, arguing for the requirement of a social personality based on rationality and empathy (Hagen, 1962; McClelland, 1961). For Bauer, change would come in the form of a shift from traditional values and attitudes amongst 'Third World' populations (1984).

Empirical research informed by the modernisation perspective was plentiful. Some social scientists looked at how tradition was being challenged by new technologies (Foster, 1962) whilst others explored the ways in which new technologies were being adopted in 'traditional' societies (Randolph & Randolph, 1967). David Lerner's study in the Middle East found what he called 'traditional beliefs' to be waning in Muslim societies in favour of a rationalist and realist spirit (Lerner, 1958).

However, modernisation theory was widely critiqued by the anti-capitalist Marxist school. Many of its accounts were accused of oversimplifying the myriad challenges faced by so-called 'underdeveloped' countries (Coetzee, et al., 2007) and understating or ignoring the legacy of colonialism (Bernstein, 1971; Sylvester, 1999). Moreover, whilst there is a presumption in much modernisation

theory that there must be a change in values and social systems for development to occur, this does not appear to have empirical justification (Webster, 1984), and much of the relevant empirical work was accused of ethnocentrism (Goldthorpe, 1984). Modernisation theory was accused of lacking an adequate historical perspective and an awareness of enduring structures of inequality (Webster, 1984). Rostow's work, in particular, has been critiqued for failing to provide an accurate account of how states might develop but also for his misreading of British history (Wallerstein, 1979; Webster, 1984). Moreover, the presumption of a social shift (such as from kinship to contract relations) presumes a homogeneity of kinship relations across all societies (Eisenstadt, 1964). The claim that technological and economic advancements would necessarily dilute or disenchant established social values in the same way as happened in the West is unsubstantiated. Moreover, there is little recognition of the widely varying nature of secularisation processes across developed nations (Frank, 1969). By the end of the 1960s, much of the social science that had influenced the modernisation theories had been discredited. This was the case, not least, because the promise of orderly economic growth and the future political stability of 'Third World' countries went very much unfulfilled (Barnett, 1988; Edelman & Haugerud, 2005).

Despite these critiques of modernisation theory, its underpinning perspective is still in evidence in much development practice to this day (Cavalcanti, 2007). Modernisation and development were at their inception mutually interchangeable concepts, and continue to be implicated in each other. Moreover, the positivist epistemology that underpins modernisation theory has endured in development thinking. Though new models of development are challenging this orthodoxy, elements of classical modernisation theory are embedded in contemporary neo-liberalism, and therefore there remain significant obstacles for those promoting new models (Kiely, 2016). Brohman argues this point, suggesting that neo-liberalism shares the underlying Eurocentrism, assumption of universalistic models and ideological biases of modernisation theory (Brohman, 1995). This interpretation of modernisation theory and its legacy is drawn upon extensively in the chapters which follow.

### 2.2.2 Dependency Theory

Modernisation accounts presumed the inevitability of a trajectory towards economic development such as that taken by the dominant capitalist countries of the world, and put forward the idea that human development and achievement could drive an economy in this direction. 'Third World' countries were seen as lacking either a particular 'spirit' or the requisite talent to drive economic growth. Seeking to rectify this was presented as one way in which the West could have a role in encouraging global economic growth.

Dependency theorists were prominent critics of this theory. Influenced by Marxism, they viewed modernisation theory's lack of class analysis as rendering it inadequate (Webster, 1984). Rather than viewing countries as poor or wealthy because of their internal structures or because of the presence or absence of particular social characteristics, dependency theorists explored how the economy of a country was influenced by the wider structures of the global economy. As the Cold War developed and the growth promised by modernisation theorists was not realised, some sociologists had begun to turn towards Marx and his contemporaries to look for new approaches to understand development (Barnett, 1988). Moreover, sociologists in newly independent former colonies in the 1950s had found Marxist theories more relevant to an understanding of their nation's situation, as had many intellectuals during struggles for independence (Barnett, 1988).

Although this school of thought was influenced by Marx and Engels, they themselves wrote very little about the 'Third World', generally focussing on European societies (Harrison, 1988). Whilst Marx was hostile to the brutality of colonial conquest and rule, some scholars have argued that he saw colonial wealth extraction as a historical necessity (Foster-Carter, 1974), though this is much debated (for example, in Bartolovich & Lazarus, 2002). Nonetheless, classical Marxism was treated, predominantly, as an evolutionary theory akin, in many ways, to modernisation theory. Marx suggested societies all followed a linear trajectory of development (pastiched by Rostow in his *'Non-Communist Manifesto'*). Marx's teleological approach is reflected in his analysis that "the

country that is more developed industrially only shows to the less developed the image of its own future” (Marx, 1995 [1867], p. 4).

As original texts from Marx and Engels did not address global poverty and underdevelopment specifically (largely because their works pre-date these concepts), it was left to successive Marxists to provide a Marxist position on the question of development. Originally this came via foundational Marxist writers such as Lenin and Luxemburg (e.g. Lenin, 1965; Luxemburg, 1951) and their explorations of empire, and subsequently the dependency theorists who applied Marxist models of capital exploitation to global economic structures (Webster, 1984).

Lenin and Luxemburg portrayed the expansion of capitalist operations into the ‘Third World’ as the solution to capitalist overproduction: the system was producing more than the domestic market could purchase, thus the move to the ‘Third World’ was a necessary pursuit for the Western economies (Luxemburg, 1951). In Lenin’s account, the significant merging of bank and industrial capital led to business interests becoming intertwined with national political levels of power, enabling capitalists to extend monopolistic control through state military power in the form of imperialism (1965). Moreover, the expansion of imperial control in the ‘Third World’ was seen as an inevitable development of capitalism and one that was fuelled by competition amongst Western nations.

These accounts, however, have been critiqued as inadequate applications of Marxism to the issue of international inequality. Lenin’s account fails to use adequate empirical evidence and lumps together different parts of the colonial world too often, without due appreciation of the diverse relationships between the West and the nations that capitalist economies dominated (Sutcliffe, 1972). Furthermore, he did not account for the differential influx of capital to colonies where European settlers had established themselves (in New Zealand, Australia and South Africa) rather than to the new colonies of Africa and Asia (Roxborough, 1979). Indeed, contrary to his theory, these newer colonies experienced a lack of development (Webster, 1984). Lenin believed that though capitalism would bring plunder and greater exploitation to these areas of the world it would also, in the longer run, inevitably bring about an increase in

production and economic development, which we now know was not the case for much of Africa and Asia (Webster, 1984). Luxemburg has also faced critique as her account did not adequately explain how expansion to the 'Third World' could effectively provide markets for goods from the West (Harrison, 1988). Like Lenin, she failed to account for the fact that capitalism failed to develop the 'underdeveloped' economies prior to their independence in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (O'Brien, 1975).

Following on from these critiques several neo-Marxists began to develop differing accounts of international economic inequality. The central tenet of these accounts was that imperialism blocked the development of 'peripheral' countries, leading formerly colonised nations to become economically worse off, as value was systematically transferred from the poor to the rich areas of the world. In *The Political Economy of Growth* (1957) Baran argued that it was in the interests of capitalism to keep the "backwards world" as an "indispensable hinterland" which provided inputs of valuable raw materials to the Western markets (p. 20). For him, no amount of aid or development money could change this fundamental relationship between the two parts of the world, and the only solution available was to fully withdraw from the world system and establish socialist states (Harrison, 1988). Baran wrote that:

Far from serving as an engine of economic expansion... the capitalist order in these countries has represented a framework for economic stagnation, for archaic technology, and for social backwardness

Baran, 1957, p. 164

He argued that this 'backwardness' was the result of capitalist countries' exploitation of pre-capitalist structures. Although he theorised that contact with capitalist countries accelerated the breakdown of pre-capitalist structures, the extraction of wealth that accompanied this contact ultimately prevented local industrialisation (O'Brien, 1975).

It was Frank, however, a contemporary of Baran and convert to dependency theory, who wrote the key work on the sociology of development in this era. For

Frank, the Parsonian modernisation models were theoretically inadequate and politically ineffective (Harrison, 1988). Taking issue with the work of Rostow on *The Stages of Economic Growth* (1960) and Hoselitz's *The Progress of Underdeveloped Areas* (1952), Frank said that both failed to account for either the past or the present reality of underdeveloped countries (Frank, 1969). He argued that the persistent poverty of countries like Peru and Chile was caused by their position in the global economic system, as a consequence of exploitation by Western capitalist economies. His central argument was that "a handful of 'metropolitan' economies governs, hinders and distorts the development of a rather larger number of 'satellite' economies" (Booth, 1975, p. 52). This claim then became the basis for later accounts of the ways in which developed countries in the 'centre' relied on exploitation of developing countries on the 'periphery', as also described by writers such as Samir Amin in *Unequal Development* (1976). Taking his theories of development to the field in Chile and Brazil, Frank critiqued the modernisation view that there was one trajectory for development (requiring an entrepreneurial work ethic, parliamentary democracy etc.) that could be followed by developing nations to reach a pre-given end-point. Much like the post-development writers who would eventually follow him, his writings questioned the very word 'development' itself; "before there was development there was no underdevelopment" (Frank, 1975, p. 1). Frank saw capitalist countries as systematically appropriating capital from their relations with the 'Third World' countries, thus consigning them to perpetual poverty. Underdevelopment was not a stage before development but was rather an end stage of the processes of Western development and colonialism itself (Frank, 1975).

Dependency theorists therefore vehemently rejected modernisation theory. Writers such as Frank argued that 'Third World' economies were tailored to the needs of dominant countries. Moreover, they were held back by unequal relations of exchange and the flow of profits back to the advanced countries. In such a way, Frank argued that 'Third World' countries were actively underdeveloped (as a process), rather than undeveloped (as a state of being) (Frank, 1969). By 'dependency' the main theorists indicated a distinction between the ability of the dominant countries to expand and to sustain themselves, as opposed to the dependence of the rest on the growth of these

countries for their own survival (Dos Santos, 1970). Conversely, advanced economies were dependent on the 'Third World' to advance their own economies (Frank, 1969). Furthermore, this process benefitted elites within the dependent countries who thus reinforced their country's relationship with dominant countries (Sunkel, 1972). Dominant countries therefore thrived on, and sought to reinforce, the inequality and lack of genuine democracy in dependent countries (Caporaso, 1978).

Other writers explored the exploitation of the 'Third World' by the West chronologically, often basing their accounts around the three stages of merchant capitalism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. Writers such as Amin (1976) and Kay (1975) explored the role of the merchant class in trade and plunder of 'Third World' countries between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. This period saw the slave trade thrive and accumulation of European wealth increase exponentially through the exploitation of enslaved labour and raw materials. The colonialism which followed organised this accumulation through the introduction of more systematic modes of control, more refined methods of production and through the imposition of a system of law which would benefit the colonial administration. This specialisation of production was primarily export orientated, creating the conditions for future economic dependency on the purchasing 'metropolitan' countries (Frank, 1969). The political and cultural domination of the colonies required specific curtailed economic conditions for African producers, given that if 'Third World' workers could produce freely they would significantly undercut European producers (Weeks, 1975). The Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) thus heavily critiqued the relations of production between developed and underdeveloped countries (Cardoso & Faletto, 1979). Inspired by the thesis of Raul Prebisch, who provided the economic basis for dependency theory, the ECLA saw international trade as resulting in the opposite of the benefits that were predicted by modernisation theory (Love, 1980).

Essentially, dependency theorists used economic and historical analysis to argue that 'underdeveloped' countries had been systemically and continually exploited by 'developed' countries. Whereas the modernisation theorists presented a country's lack of 'development' as the result of internal deficiencies,

dependency theorists argued that this lack of 'development' was the result of global exploitation by powerful countries that had continued after colonialism. Moreover, alongside the economic exploitation, dependency theorists argued that ideological and political control by former colonies continued after countries gained formal political independence. Former colonies had politically and in law all the trappings of national sovereignty, yet remained subordinated through their relations with former colonial states. Particularly from the 1980s this was seen as happening through the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) promulgated by the World Bank and the IMF. These policies ostensibly sought to challenge the crisis of growing 'Third World' debt, inspired by the neo-liberal governments of Thatcher, Reagan and Kohl (Litonjua, 2013, p. 100). The view proposed was that too much government involvement in economic matters would hinder long-term economic growth. However, there were also fears that the expanding debt of the Global South would lead to world economic collapse. The solution to this proposed by the IMF and the World Bank were the SAPs, that enticed countries with generous offers of aid or the renegotiation of existing debts, on the expectation that they would de-regulate and liberalise local markets and privatise services. The programmes ultimately failed to reduce debt or to raise the prosperity of the underdeveloped recipient countries, and have since been regarded a "lost decade of development" (Litonjua, 2013, p. 101).

Retrospectively, the early SAPs are widely regarded as having failed, with even the IMF admitting that they were overly economic and hindered social development (Simon, 2008, p. 89). Babb (2005) portrays these programmes as having broken through the dependency versus modernisation theory dichotomy, as these opposing positions both supported the idea of strong states to promote economic development. According to Babb, when the neo-liberal SAPs began to dominate, the divisions between dependency and modernisation theorists began to blur (2005). However, neo-liberal development policies can still be seen to be underpinned by the same economic approach to development as modernisation theory (Kay, 1993). The move towards neo-liberal development policies in the 1980s was accompanied by a decrease in global support for arguments based on classical dependency theory, and rational-economic solutions to 'development' became increasingly popular for the governments of former colonies (Black, 1999).



Throughout this period, however, Frank's work on dependency theory was also subject to extensive academic critique. It was said that he provided a circular argument: dependent countries are those which lack the capacity for autonomous growth and they lack this because their structures are dependent ones (O'Brien, 1975, p. 24). Moreover, the only real measure of dependency was the economic inputs and outputs to and from 'Third World' countries; the net difference between these being the appropriated surplus. Yet this was seen as inadequate, as measures of investments and returns alone cannot paint a full picture of these relations (Kitching, 1982). Furthermore, investment even in the decades since dependency theory first arose was seen to have increased in Latin American countries. This demonstrates what some writers have called dependent development, but not necessarily a condition of perpetual underdevelopment (Cardoso & Faletto, 1979).

Perhaps most fundamentally, the proposition that the 'Third World' was economically dependent on other nations seemed to tell us very little other than that, simply, countries were dependent on one another. If the world economy is a system, as argued by Therborn, then of course all countries are dependent on each other in some way (Therborn, 1979). Another critique came from David Ray, who argued that dependency theory was underpinned by three logical fallacies. Most prominently, he noted that the model was premised on the assumption that it was the specific economic practices of capitalism that caused dependency, even though powerful nations imposing economic dependence on their smaller neighbours predated capitalism (Ray, 1973). Debate ensued, particularly with neo-Marxist Bill Warren, who was accused of downplaying the lack of development in the poorest nations and of equating growth with development (Smith, 1983). Other writers argued that there was a lack of analysis of the revolutionary capacity within 'Third World' countries, despite all these theorists identifying such a possibility as the solution, and that much of the underdevelopment theorising tended to be overly economic (Webster, 1984).

Despite these critiques, dependency theory was fundamental to the emergence of anti-modernistic development thinking. It ultimately inspired the contemporary critical development school of thought, and is representative of a

foundational theory which is reflected upon in the chapters which follow. Between classic dependency theory and contemporary thought lies world systems theory. Emerging out of dependency theory, world systems theory avoids generalisation of types of countries and pays more attention to the *specific* histories of different parts of the world (Barnett, 1988). It thus takes a more dynamic approach than dependency theory, and interprets how the core appropriates value from within the core, the semi-peripheral and the peripheral territories. It is towards an outline of this school of thought that I now turn.

### 2.2.3 World Systems Theory

World systems theory was developed by Wallerstein in *The Modern World System* (1974) and *The Capitalist World Economy* (1979). Whilst very much associated with dependency theory, this approach was novel in its appreciation of the diversity of the world economy and in rejecting, outright, the idea that history is characterised by a set of stages or types of economy. Moreover, Wallerstein sought to build upon the work of previous Marxist development thinkers by abandoning the idea of taking “either the sovereign state or that vaguer concept, the national society, as the unit of analysis” and instead analysing the world system as the “only system in this scheme” (Wallerstein 1974, p.7). His theory was still firmly rooted in Marxism, but in a non-teleological version of Marxism that paid attention to the constituent parts of the system in detail (Barnett, 1988).

World systems theory shares with dependency theory the core perspective that surplus value flows from periphery to core countries. However, world systems theory rejects the idea that this can be understood as a simply linear process, and takes the view that workers are exploited throughout the world system, not just in the periphery (Wallerstein, 1979). Furthermore, Wallerstein theorises the existence of semi-peripheral countries. These countries are understood as bridges between the two extremes, and are characterised as either declining cores or peripheries improving their world position (Wallerstein, 1974). Moreover, Wallerstein’s categorisation of countries was also less totalising than those in some dependency accounts. For example, during the industrial revolution, British capitalists exploited slaves in North America, who occupied a

peripheral area in a semi-peripheral country (Wallerstein, 1974). In short, world systems theory takes a less polarised approach to understanding capital flows and processes of economic exploitation.

Wallerstein was not alone in the development of this theory, with Samir Amin and the later writings of A. G. Frank also making significant contributions. Frank's work on the theory explored a complex chain of core and periphery relations that transcended national boundaries. He argued that rural areas supply (and are exploited by) the city in the peripheries, and these cities supply (and are exploited by) the core countries (Frank, 1969). For Frank, it was a country's ability to occupy a position as a regional core that enabled it to industrialise. He argues this regarding the countries of Latin America whose development stunted at the point when their links with the West strengthened. Conversely, Japan thrived precisely because it was not a periphery to any core (or, in his language, 'satellite' to any 'metropole') (Harrison, 1988). Samir Amin further contributed to world systems theory. He analysed how economies in the centre produced for mass consumption, and social contracts minimised conflict. This system functioned without external influence, whilst the periphery relied upon exports to the system (Amin, 1976).

World systems theory was important to the evolution of the sociology of development. Its malleability in contrast to the more totalising dependency theory led to its application to a variety of states and territories. For example, when writing about world systems in 1969, Frank stressed that some satellites would function to "suck capital or economic surplus" from other satellites (Frank, 1969, p. 6). Referring to Spain and Portugal as 'underdeveloped' countries, Frank explored how their relative subordination had subsequent repercussions for Latin America. This element of world systems theory is important in contemporary development studies, as the theories of modernisation and dependency come to seem increasingly outmoded in the context of the rise of the so-called BRICS economies, inter-African wealth disparities and the rise of South-to-South development cooperation (Santander & Alonso, 2018).

Bill Warren offered a relevant critique in 1980, when he criticised dependency thinkers for failing to analyse production relations properly (Warren, 1980). He argued that the notion of a dichotomy between rich and poor, core and periphery, satellite and metropole are obsolete, pointing towards the growing dispersion of economic and political power throughout the world. Warren's critique went further, claiming that the original dependency theorists had ignored the prospects for successful development in the Third World, and those advances that had already been made. He argued that there was already a strong capitalist class in many areas of the Third World, and that capitalist development, or its absence, could be explained by focusing on class factors within these societies rather than on global structural relations (Warren, 1980). World systems theory, in contrast with dependency theory, accounts for the development of peripheral countries. Taking the world system itself as the unit of analysis, Wallerstein makes clear that countries could change their position within this system. His historical analysis shows how this has occurred in recent centuries in relation to the Netherlands, Britain, and the USA (Wallerstein, 1974).

Other theories have been developed, such as that of Moore, who stands apart from both dependency and world systems theory. As a historian, his analysis of Britain, France, USA, Japan and China identified three different routes to growth, arguing that the differences in trajectories of development resulted from internal class processes rather than global interaction (Moore, 1967). Brenner too agreed with this:

...neither economic development nor underdevelopment are directly dependent upon, or caused by, one another. Each is the product of a specific evolution of class relations, in part determined historically outside capitalism, in relationship with non-capitalist modes

Brenner, 1977, p. 60

In the above extract, Brenner argues that both dependency and world systems theory overstate the complicity of a monolithic global economic system in the

creation of inequalities between states. Rather, he argues for a careful, specific, historicised account of local class relations within states.

In summary, dependency theory has been critiqued for focussing too much on the simplistic dichotomy of developed and developing countries (Warren, 1980; Friedmann & Wayne, 1977). World systems theory, by contrast, provides a more detailed account of global systems of capital exploitation, though it too has been critiqued for an under appreciation of internal class relations (Moore, 1967; Brenner, 1977; Webster 1984). Nevertheless, world systems theory provides a stronger theoretical framework through which to understand the contemporary global economy as it offers a more dynamic and nuanced account. Moreover, world systems theory has evolved since its first inception, with Ward seeking to integrate with contemporary gender theories (Ward, 1993) and Moore proposing it as a theory around which environmentalists can challenge global ecological degradation (Moore, 2003). In particular, for this research, world systems theory provides a framework for conceptualising unequal economic relations which facilitates an exploration of trends throughout history, both within and between economically marginalised states. This has relevance for this research, as it provides the basis for understanding the dynamic processes which lead to the material marginalisation of countries that receive aid, which is also reflective of the complex nature of their conceptual marginalisation. This is reflected upon most significantly in Chapter 7, which draws on the work of Bayart to explore how the way development is conceived marginalised people in countries that receive aid, and the complex structures which perpetuate this marginalisation. The political analysis of Bayart, described in the following section offers a particular way of interpreting how such global economic relations are managed, and this forms an essential analytical tool in this research.

### **2.3 Extraversion**

In the previous section, I explored world systems theory, and described how this theory will provide the structural economic framework for this research. This section analyses and presents the work of Bayart, which forms the part of the theoretical framework for understanding the political relationships which underpin the economic relationships described in the previous section. The work

of Bayart is therefore presented as a means through which to understand the contemporary dynamic relationship between aid-giving and aid-receiving countries, and how this theory is used alongside post-development theory to interpret agency (specifically in Chapter 7).

Jean-Francois Bayart's *The State in Africa* (1993) was a critical response to modernisation and dependency theory, which he regarded as failing to account for the agency of African actors in their countries' economic marginalisation. His account has been praised as transformative of the study of Africa through its attention to the historicity of the African state (Clapham, 1994, p. 433). Historicity is the "idea that politics must always be understood as a moment in a complex and very long-term story" (Leys, 1996, p. 122). For the study of the UK, the USA, Italy, Russia or even Japan, the idea that to understand their contemporary politics requires appreciation of their history is completely unremarkable. Yet for Africa it is "little short of revolutionary" (Clapham, 1994, p. 433). Bayart sees the image of Africa as just "as ambiguous as the fantasy of the Orient denounced by Maxime Rodinson or Edward Said" (1992, p. 55). He critiques the racist stereotypes of Western public opinion regarding Africa, which he sees as deriving from a "failure to grasp the history of 'exotic' societies" (1992, p. 55). Drawing from those who portray Africa's poverty as the "object rather than the subject of its future" the continent is seen as "doomed, crippled, disenchanting, adrift, coveted, betrayed or strangled, always with someone to blame" (Bayart, 1992, p. 55). This same attitude to Africa, he writes, tends to turn "political science into pathology when it speaks of sub-Saharan societies as dependent, immature or unhealthy" (Bayart, 1992, p. 55). Bayart's theory of Africa came as a direct response to accounts of its marginalisation in modernisation and dependency theory, and offers an alternative way of interpreting the global power relations between the continent and the rest of the world.

Bayart argues that the modernisation and dependency theorists misinterpreted and misrepresented Africa. He traces the origins of Africa's conceptual marginalisation to great Western philosophers like Aristotle and Hegel, the latter of whom called Africa the "land of childhood... wrapped in the dark mantle of the night" (Hegel, 1975 (1830), p. 174). Bayart describes how this led to the

creation of the European myth of Africa: a myth that saw colonial powers regard it as having no pre-colonial history at all, and positioned it perpetually as the object of foreign manipulation (Bayart, 1992, p. 3). Bayart does not deny the fact of Africa's marginalisation, nor that it has been a subordinate player in relation to the outside world: rather he argues that it has been "a player nonetheless" (Leys, 1996, p. 122). His account describes how Africa's relationship with the outside world has been characterised by a process of 'extraversion' through which African actors have drawn on "resources or alliances available in the external environment in furtherance of their continuing internal competitions and conflicts" (Leys, 1996, p. 122). Extraversion is the paradigm through which Bayart thus interpreted African elites' use of external resources to maintain their power over local dependents (Cooper, 1981; Bayart, 1992). What Bayart often refers to as the "strategies of extraversion" include the use of repertoires of "trickery": that is the ability of actors to deliberately deceive external forces to make economic or political gains (Bayart, 2000, p. 255). In this respect, then, Bayart's emphasis on African agency takes issue with the way that, for example, dependency theory portrayed African countries (in particular) as passively dependent on others. In contrast, Bayart argues that Africans have been "active agents" in their own dependence, deploying the strategies of extraversion to manage external resources in internal battles for power (Bayart, 1993, p. 24).

There is a 'conventional' view of African politics which sees African states as artificial, defined by arbitrary borders created by European colonialists. After independence, in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, African rulers were left with the task of maintaining the structures of government which colonial rule had left behind (Clapham, 1994). However, whilst these borders were frequently created by non-Africans and "lacked any internal logic" (Clapham, 1994, p. 55) they were not wholly arbitrary constructions. Bayart takes the view that these states must also be understood as the product of internal African manoeuvring (Bayart, 2000, p. 264). He explores the ways that the colonised themselves participated in the construction of African political realities, including responding to its global marginalisation, citing Cooper who wrote that "European policy is as much a response to African initiatives as African 'resistance' or 'adaption' is a

response to colonial interventions” (Cooper, 1996, p. xii in Bayart, 2000, pp. 222-223).

Bayart thus sees his project as trying to understand African states as a product of their own societies; interpreting how they respond to external influences on their own terms. He draws on extensive analysis of African history to show how African leaders struggled to draw value from their own people and land. In the face of this material scarcity, they used their subordinate relations with external actors to draw resources from outside to consolidate their wealth and power (Lindsay, 2014). Thus, he does not deny that African states are ‘dependent’ on former colonial states, but rather argues that “sovereignty in Africa is exercised through the creation and management” of that dependence (Bayart, 2000, p. 238). He argues that the networks between Africa and external resources are both “founded upon inequality” and “themselves producers of inequality” (Bayart, 1993, p. 228). Moreover, the sovereign authority of African leaders was initiated and recognized from outside, so that the greater challenge for the first leaders of post-colonial African states was to secure their power internally (Cooper, 2002). Cooper writes that these African leaders acted as gatekeepers, “collecting and distributing resources that derived from the gate itself: customs revenue and foreign aid; permits to do business in the territory; entry and exit visas; and permission to move currency in and out.” (2002, p. 157). Bayart thus uses the paradigm of extraversion to capture the “dynamics of dependence”, which he sees as a “historical process, a matrix of action, rather than a structure - as dependency theory, using a metaphor implying immobility, generally conceives it to be” (Bayart, 2000, p. 234).

Bayart’s model therefore rejected the historical grand narratives of global economic inequality embodied in dependency theory, which he regarded as part of Africa’s *othering* on a global stage. For example, those who treat the borders between Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi as artificial may regard these countries as mere products of empire, thus denying the multiplicity of differences (cultural, political and historical) which exist between them. As Cooper writes, the binaries of “coloniser / colonised, Western / non-Western, and domination / resistance” may be useful in first understanding the general power relations, but ultimately disable the search for the “precise way in which power is engaged,



contested, deflected and appropriated” (Cooper, 1994, p. 1517). This insight from Bayart is valuable for this research, in that it offers a way of interpreting the complex ways that power is shared, contested and occasionally concealed in interactions between aid-giving and aid-receiving countries. This is of particular value in analysing contemporary efforts to make development more equitable, and it provides a means of interpreting complex and dynamic power relations that simmer beneath the self-evident economic inequality of donors over recipients.

In summary, Bayart directly critiqued the way that dependency theory portrayed actors in aid-receiving countries as passively dominated by the interests of aid-giving, former colonial, countries. Rather, Bayart argues convincingly that actors in these countries actively use their marginalised position to make gains and to manage internal political conflicts. This theory therefore has significance to contemporary practices which try to make development more equitable, such as the SMP, in how these practices focus on equal partnership, mutual exchange, and the agency of aid recipients. Bayart’s theory demonstrates the opportunities that ostensibly unequal relationships present for the ‘dependent’ party to attempt to take power back from their marginalised position. This research therefore uses the paradigm of extraversion as an analytical tool through which to interpret the agency of actors in development relationships that attempt to foster greater equality, whilst maintaining the central position of world systems theory on global economic exploitation. Moreover, as described in section 2.5, this theory is used in a way that complements post-development theory in analysis of the research material.

## **2.4 Alternative Development Practices**

In the previous section, Bayart’s theory of extraversion was shown to provide an alternative means through which to interpret the political relationships that underpin the economic relationships described in world systems theory. Bayart’s theory was a response to the way that modernisation and dependency theories ignored the agency of Africa actors. Whilst Bayart made this critique from a political science perspective, these classical theories were also heavily critiqued from within the development industry. How modernisation-as-development was

applied to development practice was subject to numerous critiques for failing to acknowledge the agency of recipients of aid, and therefore not incorporating their perspectives in the design of development interventions. These critiques were often accompanied by suggestions of alternative forms of development practice, many of which have been incorporated into the mainstream development industry. However, such practices have also themselves been subject to criticism in design, in deployment, and on the grounds that they embody only superficial attempts to make development more equitable. These critiques came from development practitioners and academics, and this dialogue between theory and practice is crucial to understanding how debates over the years occurred in development studies. In light of this dialogue, this section focuses on two approaches to development which derive from the alternatives-in-development school of thought: participatory development, and the partnership approach. Through analysis of these practices, this section demonstrates the critical position taken in this research towards efforts to make development more equitable from inside the industry.

### 2.4.1 Participatory Development

Participatory development approaches draw from the theoretical position that recipients of aid have agency and important knowledge which can and should be used to influence development activities. However, participatory development is used by practitioners in two distinct ways. Some use it to refer to participation as a *means* (to achieve the aims of the project more effectively) whilst others use it to refer to the *ends* of a project (whereby recipients establish processes for their own development) (Nelson & Wright, 1995, p. 1). Robert Chambers, the most influential academic working on participatory development, has written extensively specifically about Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), a methodology which he defines as “a family of approaches and methods to enable rural people to share, enhance, and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act” (Chambers, 1994b, p. 953). Chambers highlights that PRA draws from Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), a technique that first emerged in the 1970s in response to critiques that development projects were suffering from spatial selection biases, weak data collection methods and that they were not making use of the valuable local knowledge which existed in communities who received

aid (Chambers, 1994b, p. 956). The methodology of RRA importantly highlighted the value of the knowledge held by communities and, according to Chambers, constituted a less one-sided, more cost-effective way for outsiders to learn about communities (Chambers, 1994b, p. 957). However, Chambers further argued that RRA was ultimately still an extractive form of knowledge creation, and as such was non-participatory: it was characterised by external actors collecting data which is then “taken away to be analysed elsewhere” (Chambers, 1994b, p. 957). For Chambers, PRA was “more participatory and empowering, meaning that outsiders are convenors, catalysts and facilitators” who support people to share their own investigations and analysis (Chambers, 1994b, p. 958).

Many of the critiques of participatory development suggest that (at least in practice) it doesn't differ fundamentally from approaches which preceded it. For example, Mohan argues that “although the ‘rapid’ in RRA has been replaced by ‘participatory’, there remains an emphasis on short-term involvement” in PRA, and proposes instead a radical redistribution of power in aid-relationships whereby “communities set the agenda and outside agencies become responsive” (Mohan, 2001, p. 167). Cleaver calls into question the claims of PRA proponents that it empowers communities and integrates them into development, arguing that these claims are based on the “rightness of the approach” rather than any evidence of success (Cleaver, 1999, p. 597). Francis (2001), similarly, argues that PRA can often manufacture the appearance of consensus from a community, masking power imbalances and biases. Mosse (1994) makes a similar point, calling into question the extent to which marginalised groups within communities are free and able to participate.

Chambers acknowledges that the label PRA has been used to “legitimise bad work” and used inaccurately to refer to extractive forms of knowledge creation (Chambers, 1994b, p. 958). Many of the critiques above can be regarded as reflective of bad practice, rather than as fundamental critiques of PRA as a method. However, Cleaver argues that such a defence misses the fundamental problem with the theoretical underpinnings of PRA and development (Cleaver, 1999, p. 598). Many other writers agree, and call into question the conceptual framework on which PRA is based. For example, Kothari describes it as based in a series of binaries and dichotomies, such as “uppers and

lowers, North and South, professional knowledge and local knowledge” alongside those of the margins and centre, local and elite, powerful and powerless (Kothari, 2001, p. 140). Kothari argues that this reproduces simplistic notions that sites of social power and control only exist in the powerful centre. In such a way, power is viewed as an entity which can be held centrally by institutions, and PRA is based on the view that through new techniques this power can be redistributed. Chambers himself directly takes this position, and argues that power redistribution can occur through “personal transformation” of the powerful (Chambers, 1997, p. 14). This conception of power is critiqued by Kothari from the Foucauldian perspective which understands power as diffuse and manifested through society in a capillary fashion. Such an understanding is fundamental to the post-development position, to be assessed in detail in section 2.5. Moreover, this analysis appears to suggest that the conceptual framework of PRA fails to adequately interpret the dynamic power relations which exist in development, in the way that Bayart captured, for example, through this theory of extraversion.

Nelson and Wright’s collection on participation takes a similar position, arguing that PRA fails to address the multifaceted power relations which exist in development, in particular within communities that receive aid (Nelson & Wright, 1995). Kapoor takes this point further, arguing that there is nothing in PRA which prevents its practice from being free of coercion or domination of one group over the other. Indeed, it is argued that PRA may reproduce inequalities through its practice: for example, its requirement of long hours may disproportionately affect female participants with caring responsibilities (Kapoor, 2002). This point is contentious amongst critics of PRA, as it relates to the ongoing debate over how prescriptive efforts to improve development can be. Hailey argues, for example, that participatory development needs to be less formulaic than PRA and RRA manuals suggest, and calls for an emphasis on informal, personal interactions to achieve more participatory decision making processes (Hailey, 2001). This approach, however, appears to share much with Chambers’ initial position, which was that PRA was developed (and should continue to derive) from the daily experience of development experts rather than from academic reflection on development theories in the abstract (Chambers, 1994a, p. 1262). Kapoor argues that this approach is overly

empiricist, depoliticised, and fails to account for the interpersonal power imbalances which surround development (Kapoor, 2002). In such a way, Kapoor's argument takes the position that trusting in the interpersonal relations of development workers and recipients of aid essentially denies the power inequalities which exist in such relationships.

In a study of participatory development techniques in Tanzania, Maia Green points out a similar contradiction in relation to agency. She argues that participatory development denies that communities already have agency in development relations, as it presumes communities require interventions in order to facilitate empowerment (Green, 2000). Ironically, this position suggests that the solution for development must come from the external actor (e.g. the PRA practitioner). This critique highlights again that participatory development is not underpinned by a theoretical position that aid receipts *have* and *exercise* agency, as is emphasised by the notion of extraversion, but implies rather that they can acquire this through outside intervention. Participatory development, therefore, can be interpreted as a theory and practice which values local knowledge but without due respect for the agency of participants.

In summary, participatory development has been interpreted by some as an evolution away from approaches informed by modernisation theory towards a more equitable development practice. It has been regarded as such due to its incorporation of local knowledge and the perspectives of aid-recipients in development activities. However, as this section has shown, the conceptual framework of PRA appears to deny the agency of recipient communities and continues to prioritise the role of external actors. Moreover, participatory techniques such as PRA appear to be premised on a depoliticised interpretation of society, which fails to acknowledge diffuse forms of structural and interpersonal power inequality. Chambers claims that PRA constitutes a "new paradigm" of development (Chambers, 1997, p. 11). This section has conversely demonstrated that participatory development is underpinned by some of the same assumptions as the modernisation-as-development school both in its application and conceptual framework. The analysis in this section has therefore raised two important insights which will be addressed in the findings chapters: firstly, that participatory approaches may fail to challenge the power relations

of domination of donor over recipient, and secondly, that these approaches may actually conceal enduring political and structural inequalities.

The following section explores this ‘partnership’ approach to development in greater detail, and demonstrates how, like participation, alternative development techniques often fail to go far enough in decolonising the industry.

### 2.4.2 Partnership

A more recent trend in development work, which shares aspects with participatory methods, is an emphasis on working in ‘partnership’. This approach has specific relevance for the focus of this study, the SMP, which regularly refers to its model as a “partnership approach” (Ross, 2015). This section considers the partnership approach as a development of the participatory approaches described above, and therefore aligned with the alternatives-in-development school. I explore how this approach has been deployed and critiqued to lay the foundations for the critical analysis of data in the findings chapters which follow.

The term ‘partnership’ has been used by alternative development practitioners and theorists since the 1980s to promote the ideal of mutual solidarity, trust and shared development goals between donor and recipient development organisations (Schech, et al., 2015, p. 359). In such a way, partnership discourses can be seen to draw directly from the emphasis placed on the importance of local knowledge and self-determination in the participatory approach of Chambers, and have been referred to as “in essence, the concrete manifestation of the participatory turn in development practice” (Impey & Overton, 2014, p. 115). The partnership model has also been interpreted as encouraging the emphasis on ‘capacity building’ by NGOs based in aid-giving and aid-receiving countries (Lister, 2000) as well as producing results that partners could not obtain without collaboration (Brown, 1990). Lister (2000) identifies a number of elements that some writers have suggested must be present for a successful partnership, including: mutual trust, reciprocal accountability, shared perceptions, transparency and a long-term commitment to working together (228). As will be evident, this list bears a striking similarity to the *partnership*

*principles* produced by the SMP and MaSP, the set of 11 principles said to underpin the SMP approach (SMP, 2016b). In such a way, the SMP can be regarded as representative of the global partnership approach and contemporary trends in development which aim to make it more equal.

Whilst the partnership discourse has its origins in the alternative development school of thought, it has in recent decades been incorporated into mainstream development practice. Such is the prevalence of the term, there is now a tendency to refer to all development interactions as ‘partnerships’, though they may in practice be no different from traditional donor-recipient development models (Schech, et al., 2015, p. 359). The formal use of the term within the industry can be traced back to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 1996 report *Shaping the 21<sup>st</sup> century: the contribution of development cooperation* (OECD, 1996). The term was then enshrined in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and much more recently as the 17<sup>th</sup> and final Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) (UNDP, 2016). The formal endorsement of a ‘partnership’ approach by the OECD was justified in terms of two aims: creating a more “people-centred, participatory, sustainable development process”, but also producing a “more effective and efficient aid delivery, and thus, restor[ing] the tarnished image of development assistance” (Schech, et al., 2015, p. 359). It is in relation to the latter of these two aims that there is much criticism of the partnership discourse, which some writers interpret to have been co-opted by the mainstream in a similar way to the idea of participation (Hickey & Kothari, 2009). As with participation, Schech et. al. argue that “institutions invoked partnership... not for reasons of social justice and empowerment but more because of their (neo-liberal) preoccupation with development effectiveness” (Schech, et al., 2015, p. 359). The partnership discourse achieves effectiveness by spreading risks and responsibilities (Impey & Overton, 2014) and has been used by donor NGOs to continue to justify their own existence by claiming to add value through capacity building (Lister, 2000).

The central critique of the partnership discourse is that it has resulted in a perpetuation of unequal relations of development, in contrast with how it was originally intended. Lister argues that there is a “frequent disparity between the rhetoric and reality of partnership between NGOs” (2000, p. 229) as the

relationships are still ultimately characterised by unequal financial positions. Elliott quite straightforwardly notes that the “donor can do to the recipient what the recipient cannot do to the donor” and thus that “there is an asymmetry of power that no amount of well-intentioned dialogue can remove” (1987, p. 65). Partnership is in such a way regarded as a largely rhetorical device, a legitimising buzzword, which masks the material inequalities between donors and recipients. In this respect it can also be seen as a depoliticising discourse which implies that the empowerment of recipients can be achieved without significant political change, and reduces development interventions to technocratic questions of ‘effectiveness’ (Elbers, 2012; Fisher, 1997).

However, alongside these critiques, some accounts have shown that beneath the rhetoric of ‘organisational partnerships’, strong interpersonal relationships between donors and recipients have increased throughout this time (Brown, 1996; Dichter, 1989). Recent studies, such as that of Schech et. al., have found the potential for successful partnership building in contemporary forms of development practice, specifically international volunteering (Schech, et al., 2015). Therefore, it has been argued, the aim of building ‘genuine’ partnerships in development is not in-and-of itself problematic, though the use, misuse and overuse of the term has been shown to be.

Moreover, in his analysis of NGOs, Fisher has noted that viewing aid agencies as apolitical institutions trying to accomplish development goals is uncontentious in many circles, and therefore the argument that the partnership agenda is a depoliticising force would be regarded by some practitioners as misconstruing the nature of development work in the first place (Fisher, 1997). This has important implications for the direction of this research. Fisher argues that there are broadly two camps of NGOs: the first sees development as “flawed but basically possible and inevitable”, and this camp generally sees NGOs as normatively apolitical. The second camp believes the underlying paradigm of development is fundamentally flawed, and sees NGOs as vehicles for “transformations of relationships of power” (Fisher, 1997, pp. 444,445). This demonstrates that there is a fundamental division regarding the intentions and approaches of development work, and this division is manifested in organisation’s interpretations of ‘partnership’: which can be either used to refer



to political equality, or an apolitical mechanism to increase aid effectiveness. The SMP presents itself as an ideal case-study in this regard, as it promotes its model and partnership approach explicitly as both a means of improving the effectiveness of development (SMP, 2016b) and as about more than “just international development”, but about simply building connections and friendships between the two countries (SMP Website, ‘About Us’, 2019). By bringing a post-development perspective to bear on an analysis of the SMP’s work in the chapters which follow, I aim to develop a better understanding what a partnership approach means in practice and the extent to which it challenges inequality in development relations.

In summary, the partnership agenda has been shown to be widespread in contemporary development. However, many writers have critiqued this agenda as often no more than superficial, with ‘partnership’ seen as a legitimising buzzword for development interventions which may, in fact, bear little difference from traditional forms of practice. Like the earlier emphasis on participatory methods the partnership approach can be interpreted as having been co-opted by the development industry, and ultimately sustaining a traditional modernisation-as-development paradigm rather than embodying the principles of the alternative development school in which it has its theoretical origins. However, this section has also demonstrated that there is value in strong interpersonal relations which can be established beneath the surface of unequal organisational partnership. Moreover, this section has explored the difference between apolitical and political approaches to development, and considered what implications this has for the promotion of a partnership approach to achieve greater equality in development. The SMP has been shown to be a strong case study through which to analyse these findings, as a civil society network organisation that promotes the partnership approach, prides itself on strong interpersonal relationships as a bedrock for development practice, and promotes its approach both as a means of increasing effectiveness and as an end in itself. The findings chapters which follow will analyse each of these aspects in greater detail.

### 2.4.3 Alternative Development Practices Conclusion

Through the examples of participatory practices and the partnership approach, this section has assessed the failings of alternative development practices in fostering greater equality in development. Through this assessment, this section has also demonstrated the appropriateness of the SMP as a case study through which to interpret contemporary efforts to make development more equitable, and analysed the alternative approaches to development that give rise to divergences in theory and practice. In such a way, this section has analysed how development practice is influenced by development theory, but also how practices emerge from critiques to development theories, and therefore explored the interplay between the two. The next section considers how post-development emerged as a critique of both development theory and practice, analyses the theoretical contribution it has made to wider literature on theory and practice, and demonstrates how it will be applied in this research.

## 2.5 Post-Development

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate the key insights from post-development theory that have informed the research and analysis in this thesis. This section achieves this by firstly exploring the theory of post-development, how it has been critiqued, and responses to those critiques. The section then ends with a summary of the key aspects of post-development that influenced the secondary research questions, and therefore how these questions contribute to answering the central research question.

The first post-development texts came to prominence in the 1990s. These included *The Development Dictionary* edited by Sachs (1992), *Encountering Development* by Escobar (1995) and *The Post-Development Reader* by Rahnema and Bawtree (1997). These texts, amongst others, were inspired by a Foucauldian perspective to analyse development from a very different epistemological position than that of the modernisation and underdevelopment thinkers. Rather than taking 'development' as an objective category that could be measured (e.g. the 'development' of a particular country) the post-development writers turned their focus on the establishment of the concept of

development itself, and the types of knowledge and practice which it legitimated.

Essentially, for the post-development writers, 'development' was a Western discourse, rooted in a colonial view of the world which presented Western countries as socially and economically superior to countries categorised as 'developing' (Sachs, 1992; Escobar, 1995; Rahnema & Bawtree, 1997). Drawing from the post-modern turn in the social sciences, in particular the work of Foucault, led these writers to undertake a critical history of how this concept had emerged, and consider how its establishment reflected the enduring power of former colonial powers over former colonies. For example, scholars such as James Ferguson applied Foucault's theory of governmentality to understand development practices. Just as Foucault historically traced how the prison, the hospital and the asylum were sites through which power came to be embodied in knowledge, Ferguson explored how development functioned in the same way (Ferguson, 1990).

Fundamental to this new approach was how it contrasted with the functionalist and Marxist perspectives on development. The post-development accounts "served to illuminate the political and power aspects of what was earlier seen as a neutral and practical problem: how to deliver development to poor people" (Nustad, 2001, p. 482). The functionalist perspective argued that knowledge could be neutral and objective, and the Marxist accounts maintained that knowledge could be emancipatory (Lie, 2008). In contrast, Foucault's work explored how knowledge was inseparable from power (Foucault, 1980). Moreover, this power was diffuse and "present in all social relationships, permeating society in a capillary way" (Gledhill, 2000, p. 150). This difference in philosophy led the post-development writers to produce an account of the industry markedly different from modernisation and underdevelopment theorists.

Post-development writers undertook a genealogy of the discourse of development. This is the process of critically tracing the origins of contemporary concepts (which, prior to this genealogical work, are often thought of as fixed or self-evident). This process, write Peet and Hartwick, finds "hidden meanings,

heights of truth, and depths of consciousness to be shams of the modern imagination; instead, genealogy's truth was that things had no essence" (Peet & Harwick, 1999, p. 129). Esteva, writing in Sachs' seminal *Development Dictionary* in 1992, deployed the genealogical approach to analyse development, and argued that the concept was first given meaning in US President Truman's 1949 inaugural address. In this address, Truman said:

We must embark on a bold new programme for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas

Esteva, 1992, p. 6

Esteva argues that by using the term 'underdeveloped' for the first time in such a context Truman created the specific meaning of the concept of development "...and created the emblem, a euphemism, used ever since to allude either discretely or inadvertently to the era of American Hegemony" (Esteva, 1992, p. 6). Esteva argued that at the end of WWII the US sought to make explicit their position as the world's global superpower. That status was to be justified in part by an effort to 'develop' those areas which were designated 'underdeveloped'. Thus the concept of 'development' was created as part of the process by which the US and its allies were positioned at the top of a constructed hierarchy of countries. Esteva argued that the 'knowledge' of development was an expression of the power of Western nations over the Global South, and that this knowledge homogenised this diverse body of other countries. These countries came to serve as merely an "inverted mirror of others' reality" (Esteva, 1992, p. 7).

In *Encountering Development* (1995) Arturo Escobar also traces the gradual evolution of the discourse of development in chronological fashion. He focussed on how the beginnings of the development discourse could be found in the modernisation beliefs of the 1940s and 50s. If industrialisation and urbanisation were the key factors in modernisation, and modernisation was intrinsic to development, then access to capital for these inputs was central (Escobar, 1995). The perspective was that modernisation would encompass these key factors and through material advances would come social, cultural and political

progress. As there was little access to capital within underdeveloped territories, the assumption was that it had to come from abroad. Yet no foreign investment would come without assurances of success, thus those with access to capital would engage in the process of modernisation of the underdeveloped territories (Escobar, 1995, pp. 85-87).

Through this genealogical approach, Escobar traced how specific concepts, forms of relationship and identities were created based on the discourse of development. Given the new relationship between the former colonial powers and colonies, new identities of 'donor' and 'recipient' were created. The process of development itself established presumptions about how development would occur through the introduction of technology, how resources should be distributed, what fiscal system would work for the recipient country, etc. (Senarclens, 1997). Through this process the discourse of development "framed everything in European categories, captured social imaginaries and constructed identities" (Peet & Harwick, 1999, p. 146). Culturally, development institutions promoted 'modern values' and education, operating on the premise that education was a functional tool to escape poverty (Ki-Zerbo, et al., 1997). Politically, the structures of development required international bodies to manage funding, thus the birth of the World Bank, IMF and UN technical agencies like UNICEF (Senarclens, 1997). Essentially, through the establishment of the discourse of development came a plethora of supporting concepts, which Escobar argued were taken as objectively true by traditional modernisation and dependency theorists (Escobar, 1995).

Moreover, crucially, the development discourse was imbued with relations of power. Escobar begins *Encountering Development* with a definition of discourse as a "process through which social reality comes into being;" it is a "space in which only certain things {could} be said and even imagined", a "space for the systematic creation of concepts, theories and practices" (Escobar, 1995, pp. 85-86). The application of Michel Foucault's work on discourse and the power / knowledge nexus to development thus follows the general definition of discourse provided by Grillo: "a discourse (for example, of development) identifies appropriate and legitimate ways of practising development as well as speaking and thinking about it" (Grillo, 1997, p. 12 in Rossi, 2004, p. 1). Not only is

development a powerful construction on a global scale, but it also affords power to individual development practitioners who are understood as both knowing and controlling what 'development' is, and acting legitimately and morally when pursuing it (Kippler, 2010). Development is therefore regarded as a "historically and culturally specific form of rationality which is inseparable from related regimes of practices and configurations of power" (Rossi, 2004, p. 1).

Furthermore, according to Escobar, the power of the discourse of development is not only expressed in these new organisations and technical programmes, rather it is found in the new relationships between the donor and the recipient:

In sum, the system of relations establishes a discursive practice that sets the rules of the game: who can speak, from what points of view, with what authority, and according to what criteria of expertise; it sets the rules that must be followed for this or that problem, theory or object to emerge and be named, analysed, and eventually transformed into a policy or plan.

Escobar, 1995, p. 87

As Foucauldian models of power are inherently connected to knowledge, in this interpretation power can *only* exist in relationships: it is not a quality or object that can reside in and of itself (Foucault, 1976). Escobar's account details how the idea of social 'reality', and the way in which people could speak about that 'reality' in underdeveloped territories, was being transformed (Escobar, 1995, p. 108). These processes coalesced in the new agencies of the development industry and were reflected in the way that aspects of social life in underdeveloped territories were regarded as requiring transformation. The external tools required for this transformation (development interventions) were therefore also part of this system of knowledge.

The objects for transformation were factors such as poverty, insufficient technology and capital, inadequate agricultural practices, alongside alleged causes of underdevelopment such as 'backwards' cultural attitudes and beliefs (Escobar, 1995, p. 87). Academic and development economic institutions

together exercised collective power in the process of consolidating these relations, not only through economic flows but also by producing and reproducing these “dominant ideas, representations and discourses” (Peet & Harwick, 1999, p. 146). The net effect of this new framework was to problematise those countries seen as developing: that is, to construct them as problematic (Escobar, 1995, p. 87). People began to see the world through the lens of development, thus the world was socially constructed and re-created through Western eyes (Peet & Harwick, 1999). Moreover, the development discourse had the effect of establishing specific identities of actors within these contexts, and defining the parameters of these categories based on Western standards, such as the “malnourished”, the “small farmers”, the “landless peasants” (Escobar, 1995, p. 41). These groups were produced through overlapping discourses, depending on whether they were at household or village level, an urban or a rural category, regional or national, pre-harvest or post-harvest (Escobar, 1995). Similarly, contemporary forms of practice such as participation and partnership have shaped new categories, with beneficiaries redefined as ‘project participants’ and development NGOs as ‘partners’. Crucially, the identification of these specific categories was not a democratic process. They were shaped by those with the power in these relationships, from the multinational agencies to local governments. Thus, in a Foucauldian sense, Escobar demonstrates how power is expressed in the knowledge of things: the identification of a malnourished urban household in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, was never an objective expression of reality. The fact that such a household could be ‘understood’ as evidence of underdevelopment, and therefore serve to justify external interventions to change it, demonstrates how development knowledge can be seen to justify the exercise of power. The development industry is a producer of knowledge about the world, and whilst this knowledge can shift gradually over time, it is fundamentally rooted in the concept of ‘development’, which is a Western creation, and a reflection of Western power.

Another important aspect of post-development theory regards development as an essentially anti-political entity, which turns elements of society into objects for technocratic interventions. For example, Escobar writes:

Development fostered a way of conceiving of social life as a technical problem, as a matter of rational decision and management to be entrusted to that group of people - the development professionals - whose specialised knowledge allegedly qualified them for the task.

Escobar, 1995, p. 91

Aspects of social life in developing countries were therefore converted to problems that required solving, and for the reasons explored above this 'solution' had to come from abroad. This element of post-development theory is best exemplified by Ferguson in *The Anti-Politics Machine* (1990). Researching a World Bank agricultural development programme in Lesotho, Ferguson explored how development agencies turned the economy of that country into discrete units of analysis subject to particular regimes of intervention. The World Bank viewed Lesotho's economy as less developed and primitive, and perceived this to be the result of its isolation from the global capitalist economy (Ferguson, 1990). Quite the contrary, however, Ferguson found that Lesotho, far from being a subsistence agrarian economy isolated from the regional economy, was providing a labour reserve for the South African mining industry. He argues that this fact was ignored by development agencies because it did not fit with their interventionist model: addressing this complex economic cause of poverty in Lesotho was not part of the agenda of development agencies. Essentially, social and economic realities in Lesotho were being distorted to meet the needs of development interventions. Moreover, this was 'de-politicising' in that the assessments of Lesotho by development agencies ignored the politics of its dependent relationship on South Africa (the country is wholly surrounded geographically by South Africa), and its internal democratic party politics, and instead turned its society and economic into discrete units for intervention. Development was, in such a way, an 'Anti-Politics Machine' in that it turned formerly political questions (e.g. about redistribution of resources) into technical questions (Ferguson, 1990).

This post-development perspective has also been put forward by Shiva. She argued that global economic agencies categorised subsistence economies as impoverished to facilitate their inclusion in the international market and to



inculcate the imposed 'needs' of the consumer economy (Shiva, 1988). As the development industry is intertwined with the global market, it was also ultimately regarded as perpetuating this process. Development thus turns societies into sites requiring external technical intervention rather than local political redistribution of resources. Escobar extends Shiva's perspective, asking: why does development promote cash crops rather than food crops, why is decision making centralised and not localised, why the introduction of mechanised instead of organic farming? (Escobar, 1995, p. 43). The fundamental point here is that the logic behind the technical solutions proposed for so-called underdevelopment can also be seen as increasing 'developed' countries' own prosperity and power.

This section has explored the core arguments of post-development. Specifically, these arguments have been shown to relate to the construction of 'development' as a discourse, that this discourse influenced the production of concepts through which to interpret the world, how the discourse was a reflection of maintained relations of domination of former colonial countries over former colonies, and that development was a de-politicising force.

### 2.5.1 Critiques of Post-Development

Post-development has attracted a great deal of criticism since its first elaboration; the first, polemic accounts invited equally robust responses. Writers such as Stuart Corbridge (1998), David Lehman (1997) and Jan Nederveen Pieterse (2000) suggest that post-development texts (in particular Sachs' *The Development Dictionary*) failed to make adequate use of the academic theories from which they claimed to draw (Brigg, 2002). Brigg, for example, notes that although *The Development Dictionary* unashamedly alludes to Foucault in its subtitle 'a guide to knowledge and power', it provides a long decrying of Eurocentrism rather than an application of Foucauldian theory (Brigg, 2002). Escobar, in particular, is accused of using a narrow version of Foucault's theories of discourse in his work (Lehman, 1997).

Moreover, aside from being a poor application of Foucault, other writers critique the very applicability of Foucault to the field of study. Rossi argues, for

example, that “post-development writers offer little ‘room for manoeuvre’ at any stage of the development process (whether at the donor or beneficiary level)” (Rossi, 2004, p. 4). This, it is claimed, is related precisely to theoretical adoption of a Foucauldian approach, which is said to imply a “destiny relationship” between agency and its products, leaving little room to imagine or develop a practical policy for change (Fardon, 1985, p. 130). This relates to a wider critique of Foucault’s work, which is the fact that it can be said to accommodate “no active subjects at all” (Giddens, 1984, p. 98). Rossi (2004) further argues that the Foucauldian conception of discourse has the effect of “limiting the extent to which actors can be seen actively to manipulate knowledge in power games which do not take place between equals” (Rossi, 2004, p. 6). This critique appears to be substantiated by the work of Ferguson cited above, in which he argues that “...the ‘development’ apparatus in Lesotho may do what it does... behind the backs or against the wills of even the most powerful actors” (Ferguson, 1990, p. 18). By contrast, several recent studies have argued that there is indeed ‘room for manoeuvre’ in development practice, at both the beneficiary level (Long, 1989; Grillo & Sirrat, 1997; Long & Arce, 1999) and at the donor level (Grindle & Thomas, 1991; Haas, 1992; Keeley & Scoones, 1999), whereby actors can manipulate aid programmes to meet their desired ends, even if they are out-with the official parameters of the funding.

Furthermore, through its failure to address agency, critics argue that post-development patronises voices within the Global South who call for development - treating their desires as only products of misguidance, or the effect of a kind of ‘duping’ overseen by Western dominated agencies (Kiely, 1999; Storey, 2000; Schuurman, 2000). Post-development accounts are also said to “construct communities as helpless victims” (McGregor, 2009, p. 1694) unable to negotiate with development initiatives in order to make them more applicable to their own lives. In portraying recipient communities in such a way, Schuurman writes that the post-development school essentially delegitimises grassroots movements in the South who call for development by suggesting that they are suffering from a kind of false consciousness (2000). He argues that in Sachs’ account of development all wants and needs are manufactured; and in Escobar’s account that poverty is a discursive construction. The post-development school is thus “naive” in its analysis of needs and wants, Schuurman continues,

suggesting that it encourages the poor in developing countries to “forget about needs which resemble our own needs” (Schuurman, 2000, p. 15). In short, post-development through its application of Foucault removes agency from people directly involved in development; both beneficiaries and agents of aid.

However, Brigg (2002) offers an alternative way of applying Foucault’s work to development, and in doing so proposes a new way of thinking about post-development theory. Brigg concedes that some post-development accounts attributed too much power to an apparently monolithic development industry, and that this resulted in some accounts failing to adequately address agency. This is exemplified by Esteva, for example, when he suggests that development was deliberately created to consolidate American hegemony, whilst painting the actors involved as unthinkingly replicating the discourse (Esteva, 1992). However, Brigg suggests that post-development can offer more to development studies through a more nuanced application of Foucault, which he suggests can be achieved with acknowledgement of the concepts of *sovereignty* and *biopower*. Biopower refers to power that operates not by direct command but by being internalised in our sense of self and behaviour. Biopower is understood as predominant in modern nation states, in contrast with sovereign power, which is the control of material forces traditionally associated with monarchs or empires. Brigg argues that the colonial era may be considered as being characterised by sovereign power, whereas the development era is marked by biopower (Brigg, 2002). Thus Brigg sees Esteva as making a mistake in that he interprets development as if it was something imposed using sovereign power. This, for him, is an example of Eurocentrism itself, as it presumes the passivity of the governments and people in developing countries (Brigg, 2002).

Therefore, Brigg’s reading of post-development offers us a different way of interpreting its classic texts. In the *Anti-Politics Machine* for example, Ferguson writes that regardless of their intentions, development workers are “sucked into the system, producing reports, analyses and solutions which conform to the expectations of development discourse” (Ferguson, 1990 summarised in Green, 2003, p. 125). Yet Ferguson’s contention need not be understood in a merely negative way. He highlights the unproductive effects of the development discourse, but could equally have explored productive and positive outcomes

from the ways in which people engage with, and make use of, development discourses and structures. Writing on her research on isolated communities in Thailand, McKinnon saw great potential in using discourse theory to interpret responses to development, but argued that previous post-development accounts had “allowed their attention to be pulled too much towards relations of domination and control rather than looking into productive power relations” (McKinnon, 2008, p. 291). Moreover, in Rahnema’s contribution to *The Development Dictionary* he describes how agents in development are actively distorting the world to “live off global poverty alleviation campaigns”: serving themselves in a process that also serves to Westernise non-Western territories (Rahnema, 1992, p. 169).

On balance, it can be concluded that post-development does not necessarily imply a view of the world that denies agency, even though some of its prominent accounts have unhelpfully had the effect of doing so. Recent work on post-development has, for example, considered how post-development could be applied in practice and in so doing have considered the theory in a way that respects the agency of aid recipients (Bebbington & Bebbington, 2001; Saunders, 2002; Cavalcanti, 2007; McGregor 2007 & 2009). Essentially, understanding the knowledge which is constructed through development institutions is central to post-development theory, but this need not be accompanied by a denial of the ways in which individuals hold or make use of that knowledge. Rather, understanding development as entailing discursive power acknowledges that actors are often aware of the structures which surround the industry, and can at times use these structures to pursue their own interests. In this thesis, I have adopted this reading of post-development through the deployment of extraversion as an analytical concept. By using the work of Bayart to interpret the behaviour of development practitioners, I demonstrate how actors can use the structures of development to their own ends. Through the deployment of extraversion, in line with contemporary approaches to post-development, this thesis develops a dynamic way of interpreting behaviour in development and demonstrates the continued value in the post-development critique when interpreted alongside Bayart’s work.

Another key critique of post-development surrounds the claim that it lacks evidence and homogenises both development practice and the Global South. This is a particularly pertinent critique, as many post-development theorists directly criticise the development industry for doing the same thing (for example, in Gardner & Lewis, 1996). Pieterse writes that post-development caricatures, homogenises and “conceals divergences within development” (Pieterse, 2000, p. 180), and Latouche argues that its key texts were based on theoretical speculation and “armchair reflection” (Latouche, 1993, p. 28). Pieterse further cites Escobar’s dismissal of World Bank projects as “all the same”, ignoring the “tremendous discontinuities in the Bank’s discourse over time” (such as their focus on redistribution in the 1970s, then structural adjustment in the 1980s, and poverty alleviation in the 1990s) (Pieterse, 2000, p. 180). These critiques are partially justified, especially in reference to some early post-development texts. The first popular post-development texts were focused on theoretical argument rather than empirical analysis, and writers such as Latouche (1993) and Pieterse (1998, 2000) are correct to highlight that this led to an account which appeared to contradict the aims of some movements in the Global South. However, these accounts were also the products of an outpouring of frustration from those who had been engaged with, and had to respond to, development programmes for many years, and who had witnessed the often problematic effects of those programmes. This research addresses this critique by specifically deploying post-development as a tool through which to assess development practice, and therefore draws on the insights of these key texts to influence analysis of practice.

Post-development has also been critiqued for failing to propose alternatives-to-development. Pieterse, indicatively, argues that *The Development Dictionary* is “all past and no future” (Pieterse, 2000, p. 184). He asks “what is the point of declaring development a hoax (Norberg-Hodge, 1995) without proposing an alternative?” (Pieterse, 2000, p. 188). He continues this point, arguing that post-development is not about changing the world at all, it offers no positive suggestions, comprising only a critique that leads nowhere (Pieterse, 2000, p. 188). Moreover, when post-development texts do make suggestions for alternatives, these often involve vague and imprecise calls which gesture towards finding solutions in local communities (Pieterse, 2000; Kiely, 1999).

Pieterse regards such calls for adopting local perspectives as both fruitless and as drawing from an anti-modern, romantic and paternalistic view of (usually rural) life in the Global South (Pieterse, 2000, p. 186). Pieterse further accuses such accounts of becoming “caught in rhetorical gridlock” and “based on a paradox” in that they deploy modernist discourses and conceptions (such as democratisation) whilst rejecting any progressive potential in the concept of modernisation as such (Pieterse, 2000, p. 187). In this respect, he argues that “it fails to translate this sensibility into a constructive position; what remains is whistling in the dark” (Pieterse, 2000, p. 188).

Furthermore, Schuurman argues that post-development’s failure to propose solutions stems from the rejection of positivist epistemologies typical of the post-modern turn, and argues that such a move functions to further isolate post-development from any meaningful politics (Schuurman, 2000). Specifically, he argues that the post-modern epistemology adopted creates a barrier between research and public policy (Schuurman, 2000, p. 9). Moreover, the theory is accused of generally being anti-intellectual. In calling for more voices from the South, and for a de-professionalisation of the industry (such as in Kothari, 2005), post-development writers risk arguing that there is no value in intellectual analysis or scientific investigation at all (Pieterse, 2000).

However, these critiques appear to fall into the trap of comparing post-development with conventional development theories that seek, straightforwardly, to ‘improve’ the industry. Post-development stands out from these theories precisely because it calls for radical alternatives. Whilst post-development accounts are sometimes relatively imprecise, some texts do make calls for alternatives, such as requiring a greater respect for traditional knowledge, direct democracy and communal economies (Ziai, 2004, p. 1053). These calls for change are under-theorised precisely because post-development is concerned to reject ethnocentrism and authoritarianism. Post-development writers do not present a comprehensive manifesto for change because that would contradict their theoretical (and political) position (Ziai, 2004). Moreover, this thesis deploys the post-development critique as a means through which to interpret development practice. For the purposes of this study, post-development theory does not need to offer alternatives in practice.

Furthermore, through this study, I will demonstrate the value in deploying the post-development critique as an analytical tool through which to interpret contemporary development practices.

Lastly, I take the position that post-development has been unfairly disregarded as a theory that romanticises 'traditional' livelihoods, denies the material and social benefits of economic growth, disregards progress made in international policy regarding human wellbeing, and seeks a return to some idealised 'state of nature'. In fact, many of the key post-development writers regard have themselves acknowledged and sought to address these critiques (e.g. Rahnema & Bawtree, 1997, p. 381). The post-development position adopted in this research is based on what Ziai refers to as 'sceptical post-development', and maintains the denial of the universal truthfulness of 'development', and challenges the industry's tendency towards the rejection of any alternative livelihoods (Ziai, 2015). However, it does not deny that poverty and inequality exist, and aligns the rejection of development with a challenge to how current economic forces maintain the material and conceptual marginalisation of countries that receive aid. Some forms of post-development are anti-modern, and often contradictory, in how it essentialises some concepts (such as that of 'traditional' 'local' societies) whilst rejecting the universality of other concepts (such as 'development' itself) (Ziai, 2015). Using this theory of development to assess the SMP, or indeed any other contemporary development organisation, would likely yield little but a narrow repetitive critique. Application of sceptical post-development, on the other hand, leads to consideration of how the processes to alleviate global poverty can continue without the associated allusion of a linear process of 'development', and the conceptual marginalisation that comes with it.

### **2.5.2 Post-Development as Research**

As explored above, post-development has been extensively critiqued. Many writers argued that it was a poor application of Foucault, that it failed to account for agency, and that it did not offer concrete solutions for the development industry. However, many of these critiques have been shown to fail to adequately assess the value of the theory, and none were successful in

challenging its central arguments. Moreover, for the purposes of this thesis, post-development will be deployed as the central theory through which to interpret the practice of the SMP. In such a way, the theory is deployed to assess contemporary practices that attempt to make development more equitable.

This thesis uses different aspects of post-development theory to influence research questions which assess the SMP model. Research question 1 is influenced by the genealogical approach. As described above, post-development texts traced the origins of the concept of development through critical historical analysis. For Esteva, the concept had its origins in US President Truman's inaugural address (Esteva, 1992); for Escobar, it owed its origins to the first debates at the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at the UN General Assembly (Escobar, 1995). As post-development texts critically analysed the historical origins of the concept of 'development', research question 1 critically analyses the historical origins of the SMP model to explore the power relations beneath the surface.

is influenced by the focus of post-development texts on discourse: specifically, how the discourse of development was found to be embedded in relations of inequality between donor and recipient. As explored extensively above, post-development theorists regard development as a "Eurocentric discourse" (Ziai 2004) that perpetuates global inequality (Esteva 1992) and which depoliticises 'underdeveloped' countries, turning the problem of global poverty into a technical issue requiring a technical solution (Escobar 1995). This research question considers the extent to which the SMP, in its efforts to make development more equitable, can be seen to challenge this dominant development discourse.

Research questions 3 and 4 have been influenced by the emphasis of post-development on the 'knowledge' that is created by the development discourse. Cammack (2001), for example, undertook a discourse analysis of World Bank documents and demonstrated how, in their accounts; 'development' was simply equated with capitalist modernisation. Cavalcanti (2007) explored the 'developmentalist worldview' which he saw exhibited amongst development staff on a goat-rearing project in Brazil. He saw unequal structures of



development being recreated and affirmed in the attitudes of development workers, and therefore demonstrated the connection between the conventional development discourse and ethnocentric behaviour of development workers (2007). McGregor (2009) writes that post-development aims to demystify and challenge the “taken-for-granted goodness and vagueness that has surrounded development since its inception” (p. 1699). This aspect of post-development is what informs research questions 3 and 4, which each consider how the perceptions and ideas about development are formed, influence practice and whether they perpetuate the conceptual marginalisation of countries that receive aid.

Research question 5 is influenced by the emphasis of post-development texts on how structures of development re-create the traditional development discourse. This component of post-development has two central aspects: how the way development is organised influences participants, and the process of co-optation. The first of these is the post-development argument (such as that offered by Escobar, 1995) that the way development is organised itself influences the perceptions of development workers and project participants. The division of development programmes into funding partners, implementing partners, technical support staff, field staff, lead participants and project participants recreates a modernisation-as-development paradigm (Cavalcanti 2007) that turns political questions of resource distribution into technical problems (Ferguson 1990) and perpetuates a hierarchy of people from aid-giving countries over people from aid-receiving countries (Esteva 1992). The second aspect of this component is what has been referred to as the ‘co-optation’ process, whereby critiques of development are incorporated into the mainstream industry. Particularly strong examples of this are the critiques of development’s impact on the environment (leading to the sustainable development discourse), critiques of it being donor-led (leading to participatory development practices), and critiques of its patriarchal approach (leading to gender mainstreaming in development) (Ospina & Masullo-Jimenez, 2017). Research question 5 specifically considers these two aspects of this component of post-development through the case study of an SMP member.

Chapter 7 analyses emergent data from the research to answer the central research question. In order to do so it specifically considers the response of Malawian actors to the SMP model. The analysis in Chapter 7 therefore specifically addresses the call from post-development theory for a focus on the local as a site of knowledge production and for the integration of ‘alternative imaginaries’ into alternatives-to-development (Escobar, 1992 & 1995; Esteva & Prakesh, 1997; Sheth, 1997; Rahnema, 1997). For example, Andrews and Bawa argue that alternatives-to-development must still be focussed on the same beneficiaries, but that norms and practices of current ‘development’ must be transformed so that they are context specific (Andrews & Bawa, 2014). Whilst it is said to be an exaggeration that development has destroyed indigenous accounts of the world (Ela, 1998), it is argued that currently the development industry does not provide space for these narratives or epistemologies to significantly impact upon project design (McGregor, 2009). Whilst a ‘local focus’ is now common parlance in conventional development institutions, such as explored in sections 2.4 and 2.5, post-development is critical of these often superficial attempts at such inclusivity (McGregor, 2009, p. 1697). Attempts to integrate this ‘local focus’ in conventional projects have often been shown to re-affirm local power inequalities (Green, 2003) and maintain the developmentalist worldview of practitioners (Cavalcanti, 2007). It is argued that an adequate ‘context specific’ approach would “make local populations an integral part of a dialogic process” and “extricate development as a discourse, practice and theory, from its colonial and modernist history” (Andrews & Bawa, 2014, p. 922). Moreover, this chapter deploys Bayart’s theory of extraversion as an analytical tool through which to interpret the agency of aid-recipients. As has been explored above, post-development has been heavily critiqued for failing to account for agency (e.g. Pieterse 1999; 2000; Schuurman, 2000). This chapter therefore deploys extraversion as a means through which to interpret the agency of participants in this research, and in so doing improves the post-development analysis of the SMP.

## 2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a comprehensive review of development theory from the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century to present day, including modernisation,

underdevelopment and post-development theories. Through this, I have explored Bayart's theory of extraversion, and described how this will be deployed as an analytical tool in the findings chapters which follow. Furthermore, I have explored practical responses from development actors to critical accounts of development theory, in light of the close relationship between development theory and practice. Through this analysis I have demonstrated that efforts to reform development practice have historically been regarded as not wholly successful in fostering greater equality between donors and recipients.

Throughout this chapter, I have established the conceptual framework for this research. This includes the deployment of a post-development perspective which holds that the concept 'development' is a construct and that 'developing country' is a category constructed by unequal global power relations. Building on this, I take the position that post-development theory needs to appreciate that these global power relations are nevertheless not totalising and linear, and that through deployment of extraversion a stronger understanding can be built of how relations of power operate through knowledge, and the opportunities this gives for occasional resistance. This chapter has therefore established a thorough understanding of post-development, the key theory which directs this research and the central research question. It has furthermore justified the research question in light of its relevance to contemporary debates within development studies. This research was therefore undertaken to explore the value of the post-development critique in the assessment of the success or failure of contemporary efforts to establish equality in international 'development' relations. The following chapter describes the methodology deployed to answer this question.

# Chapter 3 Methodology

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## 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated the central contribution made by this thesis to the wider field of study. That contribution is developing understanding of contemporary efforts to make development more equitable through the post-development critique. This research used the SMP as a case study through which to explore this. The central research question was devised to shape this research, and articulated as follows:

What can the Scotland Malawi Partnership learn from the post-development critique?

Other research questions were subsequently devised to build towards answering this question. These questions were articulated as follows:

1. What are the origins of the SMP model?
2. To what extent does the SMP model challenge the dominant development discourse?
3. How do Scottish participants in Scotland - Malawi partnerships understand the Global South?
4. In what way does the experience of volunteering in Malawi affect Scottish volunteers' perceptions of that country?
5. What challenges are faced by member organisations in trying to implement the SMP model?

These questions are explained in detail in section 3.5.

This chapter begins with an overview of the research design (section 3.2). This is followed by a critical assessment of the epistemological and ontological positions which inform the research and which are justified in relation to both their theoretical appropriateness and practical applicability to the field of inquiry (3.3). This builds upon the exploration of the epistemological positions of classical development theories provided in the previous chapter. This chapter

then describes how the literature review and my personal experience of the topic influenced the articulation of the central research question (3.4). This is followed by a description of the secondary research questions (3.5) and the subsequent process of developing the research design, identifying stakeholders, deploying multiple methods (3.6) and engaging in analysis (3.7). The chapter ends with a consideration of some of the challenges faced in the research process and what steps were taken to mitigate these (3.8), followed by a concluding summary of the research that was undertaken (3.9).

### **3.2 Research Design**

This research used a case study design. This was felt most appropriate for exploring the field of study due to its clear parameters (involvement in development activities between Scotland and Malawi), its suitability given the research strategy, and the fact that this design enables the use of multiple methods of data collection. Moreover, the case study design facilitates the development of insights from relatively small cases to larger, global trends. The research example in this case is very small by international standards, yet through the case study technique inferences into wider trends and discursive tensions can be made.

Furthermore, the research was designed to ensure that ongoing analysis of data could influence the overall structure, plan and direction of the project. To ensure this, the design was influenced by the work of Charmaz (2006) so as to incorporate feedback loops. Data was collected and analysed, and that analysis was used to inform the future methods of data collection. This approach was appropriate given the subject matter, as it reconciles “positivist assumptions and post-modernist critiques” (Charmaz, 1995, p. 62). Therefore, this design was appropriate for the middle ground epistemological position taken which pursues insights and evidence that will be of use to the wider population but does not claim to identify universally generalisable trends.

Secondary questions were developed in pursuit of answering the central research question. Data collection was then undertaken in both Scotland and Malawi. To ensure inductivity in the research process, the secondary research questions

were reflected on and refined at the beginning of the data collection process. Most significantly in this regard, prior to the completion of the literature review and formulation of the research strategy, two pilot interviews were undertaken with active SMP members. These interviews were used to explore early ideas for the research, and they subsequently fed into formulation of the secondary research questions. Furthermore, throughout the research I remained open to the emergence of new lines of inquiry within the set research questions, in keeping with an inductive approach. This led to the unanticipated findings which are analysed in Chapter 7.

### **3.3 Research Strategy**

This qualitative study takes a broadly constructivist approach, and adopts an interpretivist epistemology. In this regard, the research strategy is informed by the broad philosophical perspectives which have influenced post-development thinking. However, it should be noted that I align myself with the nuanced, later interpretation of post-development detailed in the previous chapter. I have described this using Ziai's term 'sceptical post-development' (Ziai, 2004). Moreover, I take the position that the theory can be seen to occupy the same political space as underdevelopment theorists, and that acknowledgement of real global material inequalities is essential.

Interpretivist qualitative methods entail a shift away from positivist thinking, as does the post-development school. Non-positivist approaches are furthermore associated with studies seeking to critique modernist understandings of development. The modernist perspective in the sociology of development sought to understand how the economic and social structures of developing societies could be 'raised-up' to Western standards. This field of thought explored how this might occur through reductionist, comparative methods. Modernisation theorists therefore drew from a positivist epistemology and utilised experimental research strategies that converted observations into numerical data that could then be analysed quantitatively. This theory has been widely rejected, as detailed in Chapter 2 (though, of course, quantitative methodologies are still much used). As post-development theory rejected modernist perspective (i.e. the idea that all societies must follow one trajectory

towards the same goal, a Western style capitalist economy) its methods of research changed correspondingly.

What followed from this was a methodological shift towards non-experimental, inductive, constructionist research. The contemporary position taken in post-development theory is that social reality is only knowable in terms of the beliefs and interpretations of social actors (David, 2010), and that these can be accessed only through a deeper qualitative investigation (Beck, 2016). Beyond post-development, this methodological position is often applied in contemporary development debates; for example, through the popular concept of *Buen Vivir*. This concept, in English translatable as ‘good living’, developed as a response to neo-liberal development projects in Ecuador, and is inspired by deep ecology to reject modernisation-as-development models. It calls specifically for a rejection of Western ontologies and epistemologies, with particular reference to Western ideas of a society-nature dualism (Gudynas, 2011; Villalba, 2013; Merino, 2016). This alternative methodological approach relates to the efforts of practitioners to be led by communities receiving aid, such as through participatory techniques discussed in Chapter 2, rather than by imposing objectives from donors; though as discussing in that chapter, the effectiveness of these efforts are significantly contested. Nevertheless, the philosophical position that power should be held by recipients of aid is shared with post-development, and therefore it was appropriate that efforts were made to ensure that this research was also, as much as possible, led by participants. This was most prominently incorporated into this research during focus groups and interviews, when conversations were allowed to flow to allow for the research to take new directions, and the findings of this research would not have arisen without this flexibility.

### 3.4 Central Research Question

What can the Scotland Malawi Partnership learn from the post-development critique?

The central research question for this study was refined as a result of my review of the debates around post-development theory and contemporary development practice. However, my general interest in the topic is longstanding. Since 2007, I

have been involved in Scottish links with Malawi. Firstly, I was involved as an international volunteer during the first year of my undergraduate degree in 2007, and I remained engaged through the charity I volunteered with, eventually becoming one of the office bearers for that organisation. Alongside this, since 2008 I have been chairperson of another small charity that supports community development projects in Malawi through small grant funding. I also undertook research for my undergraduate dissertation in Malawi in 2009, and again in researched my MSc thesis in the country in 2012. Since 2014, I have been a board member of the SMP. Moreover, my undergraduate research explored post-development theory extensively, and I adopted a Foucauldian approach, utilising discourse analysis when analysing my data. I have therefore been interested in both post-development and in work between Scotland and Malawi for several years.

The central research question builds upon and reflects my research proposal and wider personal interest. However, the articulation of the research question derives from the literature review, which made clear the value of using the post-development critique to analyse contemporary efforts to make development more equitable, like that of the SMP. In particular, the literature review revealed how previous efforts to reform development had concealed enduring structurally unequal relations of donor over recipient, and highlighted how the concept of 'development' was embedded with the discourse of modernisation. These findings led to the formulation of the central research question as a mechanism through which to critically analyse the SMP using post-development theory to consider what insights this theory can offer contemporary development approaches. In line with the interpretivist epistemological position and inductive methodological approach, this research question is explorative in nature rather than experimental. Answering the central research question therefore comes through application of the post-development critique to the study of the SMP. In order to structure this assessment, secondary research questions were developed.

### **3.5 Secondary Research Questions**

The secondary research questions are as follows:



- 1) What are the origins of the SMP model?
- 2) To what extent does the SMP model challenge the dominant development discourse?
- 3) How do Scottish participants in Scotland - Malawi partnerships understand the Global South?
- 4) In what way does the experience of volunteering in Malawi affect Scottish volunteers' perceptions of that country?
- 5) What challenges are faced by member organisations in trying to implement the SMP model?

These questions were developed to help address the central research question. Each question is now explained in turn, with an indication given as to the specific chapter in which they are explored.

- 1) What are the origins of the SMP model?

Question 1 is addressed in Chapter 4. This question draws from the Foucauldian approach deployed in post-development to undertake a genealogy of the SMP model. This question therefore draws directly from the post-development critique, and was developed in tandem with the research plan, which entailed seeking out stakeholders involved in the inception of the partnership to better understand its conceptual origins. This question leads the research to consider the various sources of knowledge which influenced the SMP model, and the social and historical context from which it emerged. My intention, in this regard, was to situate the origins of the SMP model within contemporary development thought, and to explore how these origins relate to the organisation's aim of creating a more equal development. Secondly, this question also lead to a critical analysis of the official narrative of the origins of the SMP model, and what this reveals about the organisation's approach. In such a way, this question both assesses the history and the historiography of the organisation: both its institutional emergence and the discourse it establishes about itself. In doing so, it deploys the post-development critique, and therefore contributes to answering the central research question by considering the institutional 'origins' of the SMP model, which is a fundamental aspect of the post-development critique.

- 2) To what extent does the SMP model challenge the dominant development discourse?

Question 2 was formulated based on the assessment of the development discourse provided by post-development theory. As described in Chapter 2, post-development writers saw the development discourse as perpetuating power imbalances between donors and recipients, and shaping the worldview of people on each side of development interactions. As has been established in Chapter 1, the SMP presents its model as challenging this embedded superiority of donors over recipients. This question therefore considers the extent to which the SMP model, with its associated way of practicing and attempts to make development more equal, is successful in challenging this dominant development discourse. Drawing on post-development theory, this question drives critical analysis of the practices and institutional perspective of the SMP, to consider the extent to which it can be said to challenge the taken-for-granted truths that post-development writers saw the development industry as establishing. This question contributes to answering the central research question through a focus on the analysis of 'discourse', which is a fundamental component of the post-development critique.

- 3) How do Scottish participants in Scotland - Malawi partnerships understand the Global South?

Question 3 specifically considers another of the central concerns of post-development: that 'development' perpetuates the conceptual marginalisation of people in countries that receive aid through forms of 'othering'. As has already been extensively explored in Chapter 2, the lens through which actors perceive developing countries is an essential component of the structure of development and its endurance despite extensive critique. The SMP has publically supported various efforts which might be seen as addressing this conceptual marginalisation through. This question therefore leads me to seek to evaluate the success of such attempts, and in a more general sense, explores origins of perceptions with a view to considering how they could be transformed. This question thus relates to the central research question by reflecting on potential

lessons for the organisation in this regard. This question directs the analysis in Chapter 5, but also relates to the analysis of findings in chapters 6 and 7.

- 4) In what way does the experience of volunteering in Malawi affect Scottish volunteers' perceptions of that country?

Engagement in the Scotland - Malawi relationship is promoted extensively amongst young people in Scotland, many of whom engage in volunteering work in Malawi through member organisations of the SMP. This question follows from question 3 in considering if this aspect of the SMP model contributes to, or successfully challenges, the conceptual marginalisation of people in countries which receive aid. Specifically, this question builds on question 3 to explore the relationship between practice and knowledge. In so doing, this question considers how the discourse of development is constructed, navigated and 'made real' through the experiences of Scottish young people volunteering in Malawi, and what influences particular forms of practice have on perceptions. The research drawn upon to answer this question explores how the development discourse can affirm and shape the experiences of volunteers in practice. Through this, the analysis applies post-development to the subject of international volunteering, and crucially relates the deprofessionalised approach of the SMP's civil society model to this central aspect of the theory. This question also directs research in Chapter 5, though has significance for findings in Chapter 6, and to a lesser degree Chapter 7.

- 5) What challenges are faced by member organisations in trying to implement the SMP model?

Question 5 considers how the SMP promotes its model amongst its members. As a network membership organisation, the role of the SMP officially is to serve and meet the needs of its members, though it also promotes its particular developmental perspective amongst the membership. This question is specifically explored in Chapter 6 through the case study of one SMP member, the educational charity Malawi Tomorrow (MaTo). Through the analysis in that chapter, I explore how efforts to make development more equitable are impacted upon by the wider structures of the industry, and use the post-

development critique to interpret what this means for the SMP and the pursuit of greater equality in development. In such a way, this question contributes to the central research question by considering specifically how notions of partnership, equity and dialogue in development are, or are not, realised in practice. This relates directly to the key aspect of the post-development critique which theorises a ‘co-optation’ process, whereby alternatives are appropriated into mainstream development practices.

### 3.6 Undertaking the Research

The research was conducted in two stages, in Scotland and then in Malawi, each split up into two further parts. Each stage deployed the same methods and researched similar stakeholders as identified in the stakeholder analysis (see appendix A), with Scottish and then with Malawian participants. The first part of each stage comprised interviews with key actors in the partnership. The second part of each stage engaged members of the SMP and MaSP respectively, and utilised focus groups, observation, casual interviews and textual analysis. Alongside this, six Scottish youth groups were engaged in longitudinal research exploring their trips to Malawi. These participants were engaged in focus group sessions before they travelled to Malawi, whilst they were there, and after they returned. This section explores each of these elements of the research design in detail, and demonstrates their appropriateness and effectiveness in answering the research questions. The research is represented in figure 1 below:

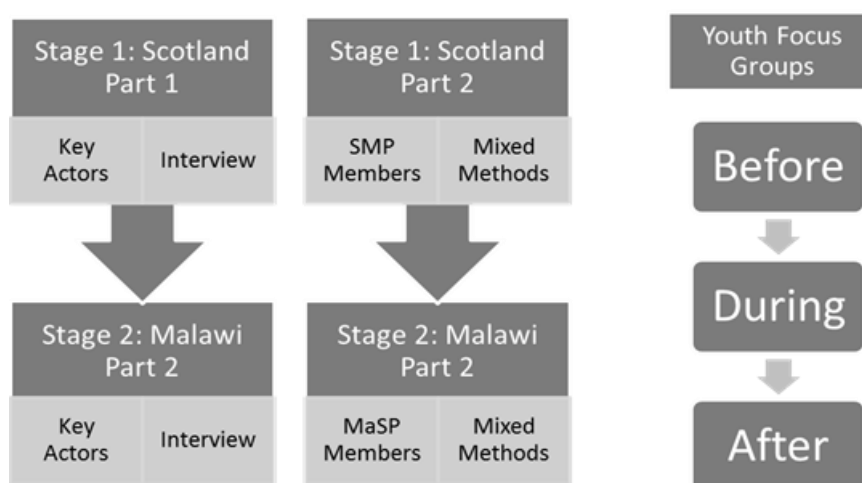


Figure 1: Research Plan

The names of all individuals and organisations have been protected by pseudonyms, as have specific locations where appropriate, to protect respondents' anonymity. This was agreed with participants in consent forms, in line with the ethical approval received and detailed in appendix C. This is with the exception of each Minister interviewed, Hon. George Chabonda from the Malawian Government, and Humza Yousaf of the Scottish Government, and former First Minister Jack McConnell. Due to their high-profile public positions, it was felt appropriate to name these respondents and therefore interpret their responses as representative of their official capacity, alongside their personal perspective. This was agreed to by each Minister and former Minister in an amended consent form prior to interview, which did not include the guarantee of anonymity.

### **3.6.1 Stakeholder Analysis**

Before recruitment of participants, I undertook a stakeholder analysis, detailed in appendix A. To undertake this process, I created a matrix of the different categories of SMP and MaSP members. At the top-level, this included the separation of professional and non-professional members. Both organisations promote 'people-to-people' links between Scotland and Malawi, and the term refers to the involvement of a wide range of civil society members. This approach means that non-professional actors are invited to become members. The membership of each organisation therefore includes schools, faith groups, universities, local authorities, as well as private individuals and professional development organisations. The second level of the stakeholder analysis matrix considered the size of these organisations, which I categorised as small, medium and large based on annual turnover. In some instances, this category crossed professional and non-professional organisations, though generally non-professional actors were in the small and medium categories, with professional organisations mostly occupying the large category. The third level of this analysis considered the type of membership, specifically separating the following: schools, NGOs, religious organisations, universities and community groups. Again, this category crossed the previous two categories in that members separated by this category varied in both size and whether they were professional or non-professional. The fourth level of the analysis was arranged

thematically, and followed from the SMP's own arrangement of membership categories according to areas of interest. This included: health, water, school education, community development, higher education, business and commerce, investment and tourism, governance and agriculture. Many members have interest in more than one of these categories, and each crosses the categories identified in the matrix.

The purpose of this analysis was to ensure a broad level of representativeness from the members engaged in research. Achieving some degree of representativeness was judged to be essential in order to enable recognition of the diversity of perspectives and to explore how different members perceived and understood the SMP model. Efforts were made throughout the recruitment period and as the research was being undertaken to achieve a relative balance across the four categories identified. However, the inductive approach to the research means that my findings have focussed especially on non-professional, young, educational based members, including a dedicated chapter exploring the experiences of Scottish volunteers. The focus on this category derives from two important considerations: firstly, the centrality of volunteers to the de-professionalised model promoted in Scotland-Malawi partnerships, and secondly due to the relevance of this category for understanding questions around the popular discourse of development and of relations between aid-giving and aid-receiving countries. However, professional NGOs were also researched and analysed significantly, as were a number of other groups and individuals from across the stakeholder analysis matrix. Throughout the findings chapters, the place of respondents in relation to the wider SMP and MaSP membership is made explicit.

### **3.6.2 Key Actor Interviews**

The key actor interviews preceded the rest of the research process so as to provide essential contextual information which helped me make sense of the field.<sup>6</sup> The target was to interview six key actors in Scotland, followed by six in

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<sup>6</sup> This is with the exception of two pilot interviews undertaken as part of a course in Advanced Qualitative Methods at the University of Glasgow in 2014.

Malawi. Due to the cancellation of one interview, I undertook seven interviews with Scottish and five with Malawian key actors. Each interview was conducted in English, face-to-face, and consent forms were signed by both parties. With consent from participants, interviews were audio recorded and full transcripts were produced.

The process of isolating the key actors from the wider group of potential participants was highly useful in refining the research design. Following the literature review and formulation of research questions, it was apparent that the beginning of the research ought to explore the history of the partnership from the perspective of those most prominently involved in its establishment. Given the inductive nature of this research, and the consistent effort made to ensure that the data was informing the research design, it was also a useful step to allow the data from the key actors to signal what would be important lines of questioning to use in interviews with the membership.

For practical reasons, this stage was undertaken firstly in Scotland. Ideally, this stage would have been conducted in Malawi and in Scotland concurrently, and I would have repeated this process with the second part of the research. However, for obvious logistical reasons this was unfeasible. To mitigate against my formative perceptions being shaped in a detrimental way by Scottish actors only, I constantly reflected upon this potential bias in my data collection and analysis. Moreover, I also arranged a focus group with a Diaspora organisation of Malawians in Scotland during the Scotland stage of research, which helped me incorporate the Malawian perspective into my research approach. Furthermore, I believe that a key strength of the research design was precisely that it facilitated detailed comparative analysis between the perceptions of Scottish and Malawian actors. This was essential in placing the relationship itself at the heart of the analysis. Despite considerable logistical challenges, I ultimately achieved relative parity between data collected in Scotland and in Malawi, which further underlines the success of the research design.

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Data from these interviews was considered in the development of the research design, but has not been included in the analysis. Both interviewees were interviewed again after ethical approval had been awarded.

### 3.6.3 Member Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used most frequently in this research. Including key actor and member interviews, a total of 36 interviews were conducted, evenly split between Scotland and Malawi. Average interview time was around 50 minutes, ranging from 30 to 90 minutes. The disparity in time was the result of their loose structure and my concern to allow the conversations to 'flow'. Whilst an indicative schedule of interview questions was set prior to each interview (a sample of which can be found in appendix B), they were not strictly followed and often interviews would take tangents. This approach therefore drew directly from the wider research strategy, and was also practically of great use given the research setting. Allowing interviews to flow organically was particularly appropriate when engaging with knowledgeable participants who had usually already reflected on the issues with which I was concerned. Some amendments were made to the interview plan in advance of specific interviews and dependent on the time of research. However, key themes and topics remained central to each interview, which ensured that comparison at the analysis stage was possible.

Whilst I used the term 'members' at the planning stage of the research, this was eventually interpreted more broadly to include individuals involved or affiliated with member organisations. A wide range of participants were engaged in interviews from member organisations of different sizes, structures and specialities. This included interviews with representatives of large international NGOs with Scottish Government funding for projects in Malawi, non-professional representatives of small charities, teachers involved in school partnerships linking the two countries and staff of small Malawi NGOs which host Scottish volunteers.

Interviews were deployed as they are a highly adaptable tool in researching previously unknown participants. Through interviews I developed an understanding of the ways in which participants interpreted the relationship between Scotland and Malawi, what improvements they felt were required with regard to the practical way the relationship is managed, and learned more about how these links operate. Some questions explored these issues directly, whilst



others focussed more on the perceptions of participants. For example, I asked many participants about their understanding of the history of the connection between Scotland and Malawi. This facilitated an exploration of how participants *felt* about that history, and therefore helped me to develop an understanding of the popular perceptions of this topic in each country. By taking a comparative approach, I was able to contrast these between the two countries and between actors with different professional or non-professional positions. The data from member interviews provides the main body of research analysed in Chapter 4, alongside focus group material considered in Chapter 6.

### **3.6.4 Focus Groups**

Focus groups were utilised in this research to complement and add depth to the material generated from interviews and observations. In total, eighteen focus groups were undertaken, thirteen with Scottish based groups involved in partnerships with Malawi (including the Malawian Diaspora in Scotland), alongside five groups undertaken with Malawian actors who had been involved in partnerships between Scotland and Malawi.

#### **Youth Focus Groups: Longitudinal Study**

The thirteen youth focus groups constituted a relatively self-contained longitudinal study. Three of these met three times: once before they travelled to Malawi, once whilst they were in Malawi, and once after they returned. These were groups from St. Peter's Secondary School, Glasgow Volunteers International (GVI) and Scottish Volunteers Worldwide (SVW). I encountered new groups whilst in Malawi and one after I returned, and due to the flexibility of my methodology I accommodated these groups into my research. This resulted in my engaging one other group whilst in Malawi and after their return (another student group from the organisations Big Volunteering Project (BVP)), another only whilst in Malawi, and another only after they had returned to Scotland, each of whom came from the charity Malawi Tomorrow (MaTo). The ability to act opportunistically and engage extra recipients proved highly fruitful in this area in particular.

I used focus groups for specific reasons related to both the wider research strategy, the epistemological position taken, the nature of the field being studied and the research questions. The longitudinal research with youth groups enabled me to explore firstly what the groups' formative perceptions of development and the Global South were, then how these were shaped by their experience in Malawi, and after their return. I then compared the data from each group against each other, and considered the particular activities each group was engaged in to explore how this may have impacted upon their perceptions.

Morley argues that whereas interviews “treat individuals as the autonomous repositories of a fixed set of individual ‘opinions’ isolated from the social context” focus groups enable the researcher to “discover how interpretations were collectively constructed through talk and the interchange between respondents in the group situation” (1980, p. 97). In such a way focus groups give the researcher a snapshot of the process through which discourse is constructed and navigated in society. Taking a longitudinal approach further enabled me to see how the process of constructing discourse changed over time and what impact the experience of volunteering had on understandings. I was therefore also able to explore how the dominant discourse shaped the perceptions of the group, and the extent to which groups were able to challenge or contest this dominant discourse. This is of vital importance to the overall thesis, as the exploration of perceptions of ‘development’ is a key component of the post-development critique.

### **Other Stakeholder Focus Groups**

The preparation, undertaking and analysis of the other focus groups also shared this epistemological position, though these were one-off groups. Each of these groups fed directly into the research design alongside the member interviews described in the previous section. The focus group with Malawians living in Scotland was undertaken prior to my research period in Malawi. This was a highly informative piece of research, which influenced the development of my research approach in Malawi, as well as providing a counterpoint to the account I was then collecting from Scottish key actors. I also engaged 3 groups of

Malawian volunteers in Malawi in three focus groups, which provided valuable insights into their experience of development. My initial research plan only included those directly involved in Scottish partnerships, however, after having spent some time researching in the country it became evident that understanding popular perceptions of the relationship with Scotland amongst Malawians more generally would be vitally important, and this was achieved in these 3 focus groups. Lastly, I undertook a focus group with Malawian teachers who manage their links with Scottish schools. This focus group was highly informative with regard to school linkages, and added depth to the interviews I undertook surrounding this particular area.

### **3.6.5 Observation and Casual Interviews**

Alongside interviews and focus groups I engaged in a series of observations from which field notes were produced and analysed. These included observations at formal events such as meetings of the Cross-Party Group on Malawi at the Scottish Parliament, the MaSP AGM in Lilongwe and the SMP AGM in Edinburgh. I also undertook observations at the training day sessions for two student organisations, GVI and SVW. During my fieldwork in Malawi, I further utilised the observation technique when visiting groups of volunteers undertaking their activities and visiting the 'project sites' of NGOs. It was in anticipation of these 'ad hoc' visits to NGOs that I ensured I had ethical approval to undertake such observation. During such visits, I also engaged participants in 'casual interviews' which involved taking quick field notes and seeking verbal consent to make use of the data in my work, in line with the ethical approval received (documented in Appendix C).

I deployed the observation technique to add depth and contextual understanding to the research. This was in keeping with the more general epistemological approach taken, and the use of observation as a method also reflected the fluid nature of research in Malawi. As the long-term planning of meetings is less common in Malawi than in Scotland I felt that incorporating this approach into my plan for research was important. I was also aware that receiving tours of project sites is common practice in development contexts. Therefore, observation was a useful method as it allowed me to incorporate an

understanding of the dynamics of these ad hoc events into my research via field notes and diaries. Alongside these practical reasons, observation was utilised due to its correspondence with the overarching research strategy and philosophical position that informed my work. The use of observation material was crucial in collecting data and in analysis of the presentational nature of development interactions. This is a significant finding of this thesis, and particularly explored in Chapter 7. This chapter draws on observational data in particular, and findings are therefore presented in an ethnographic style.

I was aware throughout the process of collecting observations and writing field diaries that I could have been influenced by prior conceptions of the field based on my previous knowledge of it. I therefore deliberately sought challenges to my preconceptions to ensure my thoughts and impressions from non-research based experiences were not influencing my findings. In particular, I would question and seek verification of events from different actors to help me better understand how to interpret verbal data, events and actions. Lastly, the process of writing up field notes from observations and casual interviews provided me with a regular source of reflection on the development discourse, and the field diaries provided a useful chronology of my developing understanding of key issues related to my research.

### **3.6.6 Textual Analysis**

In Chapter 6, I deploy textual analysis to compare the contributions of participants in an educational youth exchange programme with the written material about the project posted on their website. For the project managers, this involved comparing their contributions with the presentation of the project's ethos and activities as described on that website. As noted, I engaged two groups of young people from this organisation who travelled to Malawi from Scotland in 2015 in focus groups sessions. Some members of these groups also blogged about their experience, and I compared their discussion in the focus groups with the ways in which they presented the project when blogging.

This method was deployed to interpret the discourse drawn upon by participants and make inferences into their perceptive on development. In such a way, the

interpretation of the texts was similar to the interpretation of the transcripts I produced, as I consider the context in which the data was produced in my analysis. However, it was also essential to understanding the different contexts from which each utterance was produced for an accurate analysis. These postings on the website were written with a different audience in mind, it was a different performance, and as it was not speech it allowed the writer to spend more time considering their reflections (Gomm, 2008). Therefore, the texts online were isolated, as they were neither the product of individuals contributing to group discussion, nor an interview where the respondent is (potentially) influenced by their interpretation of the desires of the interviewer. Crucially, it was the ability to explore the differing ways volunteers expressed their experience in public compared to private spaces which was useful in showing how participants navigate the development discourse. This approach to analysis was in keeping with the constructivist approach taken in this research, and facilitated a deeper understanding of the dynamic, two-way and complex relationship between discourse and perceptions. Furthermore, by designing my research in this way I was responding to critiques of post-development explored in Chapter 2 that the theory treats the development discourse as monolithic.

### **3.7 Coding, Analysis and Interpretation**

Full transcripts of all interviews and focus groups were produced, which were thematically coded, alongside data from field notes and diaries. This involved reading each script and noting emerging themes. These themes were then colour coded, and the text was highlighted in accordance with this code. Transcripts were also grouped together depending on their field. For example, all of the focus groups undertaken with local Malawians in Malawi were grouped and analysed together, as were the longitudinal focus groups with youth international volunteering groups.

The process of analysis drew considerably from grounded theory, in that it involved an iterative approach allowing for the generation of codes from driven by both the research questions and the data itself. The coding was undertaken at two levels, as distinguished by Miles and Huberman (1984), firstly by identifying groups (first level themes) then by identifying patterns within and

between the transcripts. The first level of coding involved thematically separating sections of each transcript. In doing so, each transcript was split into a range of codes, which drew from the data and the research questions.

Analysis and interpretation of observation material was undertaken using field notes and memos, which were constantly compared and referred to during and after the fieldwork period. Field notes were produced whilst undertaking observations and 'casual interviews' (i.e. the conversations I had with people whilst undertaking observations). During the research period, I also kept a field diary which included notes taken immediately following observations. What Bryman et al (2008) refer to as memos were also taken. These were more targeted than field diaries, and constituted what Strauss (1987) refers to as 'in vivo codes' which are codes emerging from the social context, rather than codes produced in the formal process of analysis and interpretation. Memos were essentially the product of my ongoing analysis whilst I undertook the research, and were therefore used again in the process of analysis to reflect upon my impressions at the time.

### **3.8 Challenges and Reflections**

Whilst the research process was, overall, a success in terms of access, recruitment of participants and alignment to the research strategy, there were also several challenges that affected the results; three in particular which I have acknowledged and adapted to. Firstly, one personal challenge was my own tendency to accidentally slip into normative language and thinking throughout the process. This tendency came in the form of, for example, supposing the words of the development discourse were in some way truthful, factual, or universal - in contrast with theoretical position I adopted for the research. For example: in evening reflections, I would occasionally find myself thinking as an 'agent of aid', considering what development projects could be funded in Malawi that might help it to 'develop'. I found myself considering the place I was researching as an object which ought to be changed in line with what Cavalcanti (2007) refers to as the 'developmentalist worldview'. Through its technicalisation of otherwise political issues (as explored by Ferguson, 1990) the developmentalist perspective brings out in people this constant musing over

small changes which can have big impacts, and encourages this ongoing search for the imagined panacea of development, or for a key-stone intervention from which all good things will derive. Trying to avoid this tendency to conceptualise Malawi in such a way was a challenge. Yet this was also an opportunity, as it was only through a reflective awareness on this tendency, and a constant critique of the developmentalist perspective, that I was able to recognise the performative nature of development practice and how development money served functions within communities other than those that were anticipated by Western donors.

A second significant challenge that particularly affected the research was the multilingual environment and the challenges this brought in terms of communicating with Malawians. I could speak only greetings and a few basic verbs in the most commonly spoken language in Malawi, Chichewa, throughout the research period. This meant that all focus groups were undertaken in English, though one included a translator for some members of the group's contributions. Moreover, whilst each of the formal pieces of observation took place on occasions when English was being used as the language of instruction and conversation, casual observations occasionally were made of sites where local languages were being used (mostly Chichewa and on one site Chitumbuka), when I had to rely on interpreters. Extra care in interpretation of the data generated from these observations was taken to ensure the bias of the interpreter was not included in my findings. Indeed, in line with my epistemological position, I made sure on each occasion to doubt my first impressions and ask for clarification on each point. Nevertheless, it is a shortcoming of this research that it did not include more detailed analysis of the perspectives of Malawians, and this is reflected in some of the findings chapters. This was the result of language, but also because of the limited resources I had to undertake fieldwork in Malawi: the cost of which I had to mostly bear personally. Whilst I managed to achieve parity in terms of the formal interviews undertaken (18 with Malawians, and 18 with Scots), considerably more focus group material was collected from Scottish participants, and I have taken into account this relative lack of Malawian voices in analysis of these findings. However, throughout my fieldwork in Malawi, I lived either with Malawian host families, or in basic accommodation in a Malawian township. I spent most of my time eating, drinking and socialising with Malawian friends. Therefore, whilst it

is doubtless a shortcoming of this research that more Malawian voices were not incorporated into the formal data I collected, I did not enter into the research from the position of an isolated, external actor, and I regularly reflected upon my findings with Malawians.

The third, and most significant, challenge I faced in this research related to my position as an active member of the SMP and a member of its board since 2014. This position was both highly challenging and highly beneficial to the research. It was challenging in that I had to constantly switch perspective on the work of the organisation between that of a researcher and that of a board member. Regularly, I was aware that each of these roles was in conflict. For example, when interviewing key actors, I adopted the position of a researcher and attempted to assume no prior knowledge or perspective on the approach of the SMP. This was a challenging position to adopt. One respondent remarked when I asked about the history of the SMP; “you know all this as well as I do”. This was a particular challenge, as the purpose of this question was to interpret how the participant thought and felt about the history of the SMP, and to draw insights from the way that they depicted it. I do not deny, more generally, that my position on the board, and closeness to the field of study, has impacted to an extent upon my results. In light of this challenge, I took the following steps: firstly, I adopted a critical perspective on the SMP and its model throughout the research, analysis and writing up; secondly, I actively reflected upon my own positionality throughout the analysis, and used these reflections to inform my findings; thirdly, I make explicit that the purpose of this thesis is to draw insights into how to make development more equitable. I equally make clear that I am adopting a critical approach to this research. By being clear and explicit about my position, the goal of this research, and the approach I am taking to achieve this goal I am confident that I have done all I can to ensure that my involvement in the research context has been appropriately accounted for. I furthermore take the position that my insider status has had a net-positive effective on the quality of the research produced. My insider status facilitated access, improved understanding from the beginning of the research period, and aided the process of analysis.



### 3.9 Conclusion

In summary, this research was designed to explore the SMP and its associated 'model' in an iterative, inductive fashion. The central research question asks what the SMP can learn from the post-development critique. In answering this question, the research aims to use post-development insights to explore contemporary efforts to make development more equitable, as exemplified in the case of the SMP.

The methodological approach drew from interpretivism and constructivism, and this informed the methods deployed and the approach to analysis. Five secondary research questions were developed to work towards answering the central research question. These questions were addressed through a two stage research process involving data collection in both Scotland and Malawi. Data collection was undertaken using interviews, focus groups, observation and textual analysis. Thematic analysis of this data was then undertaken. Alongside the secondary research questions, the themes that emerged from this process have structured the presentation of findings in the following five chapters. As a result of the inductive approach taken, some of the findings in the following chapters emerged out of my ongoing process of reflection whilst undertaking research. This chapter has summarised how this research has been structured in a way to allow for such new data to emerge. The following four chapters now present the findings which emerged from the process outlined above. The concluding chapter that follows then summarises these findings, answers each research question and summarises the contributions made by this thesis.

# Chapter 4 Critical Account of Scotland - Malawi Relations

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## 4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to critically explore the historical development of the SMP model, and the extent to which the application of this model in practice can be said to challenge the dominant development discourse. To achieve this purpose, this chapter analyses data to answer research questions 1 and 2, articulated as follows:

- 1) What are the origins of the SMP model?
- 2) To what extent does the SMP model challenge the dominant development discourse?

In analysing data to answer research question 1, this chapter considers both the history and the historiography of the SMP model. That is to say, it analyses the stated origins of the SMP model to trace its political and theoretical origins, and critically reflects on what the expression of these origins by stakeholders reveals about the organisation's approach. This question draws from the Foucauldian approach deployed in post-development to undertake a genealogy of the SMP model, and therefore contributes to answering the central research question by applying this aspect of the post-development critique to the model.

Research question 2 is based on the central claim of the post-development critique that the dominant development discourse perpetuates unequal relations. Following on from the exploration of the origins of the SMP model, which demonstrates the emergence of the SMP emphasis on challenging the inequalities embedded in development, this chapter analyses data to consider the extent to which that model can therefore be said to challenge the development discourse.

In order to achieve this analysis, this chapter begins with a critical analysis of the historical narratives used by the SMP to promote its model (Section 4.2). Secondly, the chapter explores the origins and meaning of the civil society approach promoted by the SMP (4.3). Thirdly, the chapter considers the origins and meaning of the specific development perspective promoted by the SMP (4.4). Through each of these I consider the organisation's historical origins and stated approach to the practice of development. I use this to draw conclusions which relate to the central research question.

Data drawn upon in this chapter includes interviews with 'key actors', in this case members of the SMP and MaSP, some observational data from SMP events, and analysis of key published accounts of the SMP approach. Stakeholders identified as 'key actors' include prominent members of the SMP and MaSP, members of each organisation's board, and key figures in the contemporary partnership. Members from SMP and MaSP were identified following a stakeholder analysis described in section 3.6.1, and observational data was collected at a series of SMP public events including their AGM and at the Cross Party Group on Malawi at the Scottish Parliament.

## **4.2 A Critical History of Scotland - Malawi Relations**

This section draws on data from key actors and accounts of the SMP to analyse what their interpretation of the origins of the organisation reveals about its model. It does this by firstly providing an account of the origins narrative of the SMP, followed by a critical assessment of how actors use this origins narrative to promote the SMP model, then critically reflecting on what this reveals using the post-development critique.

In various public accounts provided by the organisation, the SMP traces the origins of the relationship between Scotland and Malawi to David Livingstone and his Zambezi expedition (Hope-Jones, 2015), and the Scottish missionaries who followed him (Ross, 2013). This history is rehearsed in a range of media publications (Hope-Jones, 2015), in research (Ross, 2013), on its website (SMP, 2019) and in educational resources it produces (for example for use in schools, see (SMP, 2016e)). The organisation's current chairperson, Ken Ross, has also

written extensively in a personal capacity on the relationship between the two countries, most recently in *Scotland and Malawi: Together in the Talking Place* (2013). He has furthermore written from his position as chair, such as the 2015 paper *Malawi, Scotland and a Relational Approach to International Development*, a publication by the SMP in which Ross drew from his personal professional historical research to promote the SMP and its model (Ross, 2015).

In these accounts, actors draw upon historical narratives to positively celebrate the history of interaction between Scotland and Malawi. For example, Ross (2015) draws upon the work of McCracken (2012) to argue that the Scottish missions continued Livingstone's goals of bringing the Christian faith to Africa and fighting for an end to the slave trade, which continued locally despite formal British abolition of the trade in 1807. This is based on the interpretation of Livingstone's aim as having been to replace the trade in slaves with that of "legitimate commerce", an aim which formed part of his attempts to bring the so-called 'three Cs' to Africa; Christianity, Civilization and Commerce (Ross, 2015, p. 5). In the pre-colonial context, Ross writes that the Scottish missions "built up relations with local communities" and that it was "only when faced by the twin threat of Portuguese annexation in the south and Arab slavers in the north" that they campaigned for British Protectorate in 1891 (Ross, 2015, p.5). Other writers such as Thompson share Ross' historical perspective, and note that the Scottish missions took the side of Malawians against the colonial authorities, evidenced by their opposition to forced labour and the punitive 'hut tax' introduced in the 1890s (Thompson, 2005, p. 576).

In these accounts, Scottish missionaries are said to have shown a greater respect for African culture than the colonial authorities, in fact celebrating it. These missions developed a network of schools that were said to cultivate "values which implicitly challenged racism and colonialism, and educated the Malawians who in due course would form the nationalist movement which led the country to independence" (Ross, 2015, p.6). Through their fluency in local languages, the Scottish missionaries are reported to have "formed friendships that proved to be deep and enduring" and families in both countries gradually "became aware of one another and of the particular history that united them" (Ross, 2015, p. 6).

Ross's account provides one particular interpretation of the history between the two countries. Whilst his account does provide details of the complicity of the missions in the colonial project, the tone of this account is celebratory, and emphasises the idea of strong personal relationships being forged between missionaries and the communities they worked with. He brings this positive analysis of the history between the two countries through to the era of Malawian independence, writing that as colonial rule over Nyasaland began to wane after the Second World War, Scottish actors were again at the forefront of the fight with colonial authorities (Ross, 2013, p. 140). In this respect he highlights the role that Scottish actors played in supporting the Malawian nationalist movement until it was successful in 1964, noting that a Scot, Colin Cameron, was the only European to be appointed to the Cabinet of this new state when it was established (Ross, 2015, p. 6).

The SMP publication by Ross, *Malawi, Scotland and a Relational Approach to International Development* (2015), uses this historical interpretation directly to present the SMP model. It critiques the failures of international development, noting that the "received paradigm of international development is subject to question", and in this context presents the SMP as a "new approach" based on the "longstanding shared history" between Scotland and Malawi (Ross, 2015, p. 1). Crucially, this paper uses this "longstanding shared history" to situate the origins of the SMP model, and makes claims about the value of this model as a new way of doing development. In short, Ross frontlines a positive historiography of the relationship between Scotland and Malawi to emphasise the origins of the contemporary values of the organisation. However, these historical interpretations are deeply contentious.

Such positive accounts which highlight the positive relationship between Scottish and Malawian actors in the colonial period is challenged by other, far less positive, historical accounts that highlight the struggles between colonised Malawian communities and the Scottish missions. For example, McCracken describes how the Blantyre Mission understood its role as exercising civil as well as spiritual authority, and as such represented agents of colonial rule (McCracken, 2012, p. 46). He describes their harsh penal authority (including the establishment of the first prison in Malawi at Cape Maclear and the regular use

of flogging) and the questionable land deals that missionaries entered into with local chiefs (McCracken, 2012, p.47). In his detailed account of the Livingstonia mission, McCracken also explores how the missions ultimately served to bring the local population under colonial rule, and therefore directly contributed to Malawi's subsequent domination (McCracken, 1977, p. 107). McCracken's account is in stark contrast to Ross's portrayal of the Scottish missions as continually advocating on behalf of the communities they served in Malawi. Ross suggests that the missions used their civil authority to take "the side of African communities" on issues such as land, labour and taxation (Ross, 2015, p. 5). This historical reading is backed up by some other writers such as Thompson, who argues that it was the churches in Malawi who "provided the most effective civil opposition to the extremes of government", and that this opposition "came most actively from the Scottish missionaries" (Thompson, 2005, p. 575). However, other accounts highlighted the problematic relationship between Malawians and the Scottish missionaries.

Mphande argues that through the Scottish missions' teaching of literature they served the function of ensuring that cultural dependence was maintained after political independence (Mphande, 1996, p. 90). In his detailed account of how colonial education resulted in cultural degradation, Mphande describes how missionary schools, which were first established under the auspices of the Livingstonia mission, encouraged the celebration of conversion to Christianity and the translation of English language texts into Malawian languages. He argues that the missions engaged in cultural colonisation, and notes the significance of the fact that after Malawian independence all locations that had been given European names were changed, apart from Livingstonia and Blantyre, a fact that is suggestive of the influence held by the Scottish missions (Mphande, 1996). This demonstrates the superficiality of the claims made by Ross above, when he suggests that the Scottish influence on Malawi was positive, because the Scottish missions "educated the Malawians who in due course would form the nationalist movement which led the country to independence" (Ross, 2015, p. 6). This praise for the provision of education by Scottish missions is also echoed by Malawian writers such as Mkandawire (1998). However, what these accounts fail to do is address the structural inequalities that shape this provision of education: failing to critique what type of 'education' this was, for whom it was

provided, and the colonial discourse that created the 'need' for Malawians to have Western education at all.

The critical account by Mphande is highlighted by other writers, who explore the ambiguous role of the Scottish missions in relation to local culture, such as traditional healing practices (Hokkanen, 2004). Enslin and Hedge comment that the missions' exercise of civil authority served to bring populations under colonial rule, though they also note that this generated a local leadership which would lead the eventual independence struggle (Enslin & Hedge, 2010, p. 97). Stuart shows how, in contrast to the positive narratives expressed in accounts above, there was no consensus among Scottish missionaries over the independence struggle, and that support for Malawian independence was "by no means unequivocal" (Stuart, 2003, p. 430).

John Lwanda, writing on the legacy of Scottish involvement in pre-independence Malawi, produces a particularly robust critique of the narrative that credits Scottish figures with a beneficial role in shaping the present-day country (Lwanda, 2007). He writes that the role of Scottish colonial officials "is often forgotten", and that the role of the Scottish church is inaccurately "taken to be mostly positive" (Lwanda, 2007, p. 36). Through extensive research, he demonstrates that whilst, for example, health services were built by colonial authorities in the country they were exclusively for the benefit of resident Europeans, and he further highlights the significant role that Scots played in the colonial government itself (Lwanda, 2007). He challenges those who call Malawi a "failed state" not to forget that this condition usually follows that of a "failed colony", and that the Scottish role in colonial Malawi must not be forgotten (Lwanda, 2007, p. 41). In sum, what is evident is that the narrative which celebrates Scotland's historical role in Malawi is deeply contested, and can be seen to ignore both the ambiguous use of authority of the missions, such as that identified by McCracken (2012), the active role that Scots played in the colonial regime, and the structural colonial discourse which shaped the interactions between Scots and Malawians.

These findings represent a deep inconsistency between the SMP model, which aims to promote greater equality between donors and recipients, and its

historical narrative which downplays and ignores the deep embedded inequality of the colonial relationship between the two countries. From a post-development perspective, the development industry is a continuation of the knowledge and logic of the colonial era, and exists to continue the privileged position of former colonies (Kothari, 2005). In the case of the SMP, this is particularly overt. The SMP presents itself as an organisation which challenges inequalities in development, which is reflected in its emphasis on reciprocity (SMP, 2016b), in its support for “a move away from the traditional donor-recipient aid relationship” (Ross, 2015, p. 16) and by members of the organisation’s board in interview, who characterised relationships between the countries as “being entered into as genuine equals” (Lee, Former SMP Board Member, May 2015). However, as the examples above have demonstrated, it does not do this through a rejection of the inequality embedded in the colonial era. Rather, it does this by downplaying the ills of the colonial era; in fact, it celebrates the relationships in that era, and uses them to justify its “new approach to North-South relations” which it claims are “built on friendship and respect between two nations built up over generations of close collaboration” (Ross, 2015, p. 8). In short, from a post-development perspective, the SMP is denying that the enduring inequality in development has its roots in the colonial era. It does this through a latent denial of these colonial inequalities by celebrating that era, and suggesting that it is the inspiration for the organisations contemporary model. This is demonstrated again in the origins narrative used by the SMP in relation to David Livingstone, which the next section will explore in detail.

#### **4.2.1 David Livingstone**

This section analyses how the SMP use the character of David Livingstone to justify its approach. After firstly exploring how the explorer is used in Scotland and in Malawi, I consider what this reveals about the SMP model using the post-development critique.

Throughout the interviews with key actors, the explorer David Livingstone was repeatedly referenced as the inspiration for the SMP’s approach. Former SMP Board Member, Phillip, for example, referred to Livingstone repeatedly without



ever directly reflecting on the explorer. He traced the origins of the SMP to his giving the ‘David Livingstone Lecture’ at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, which was attended by the Lord Provost of Glasgow who subsequently campaigned for the establishment of the SMP. He further described the formal opening of the David Livingstone Clinic in Malawi, which was attended by Princess Anne, now honorary patron of the SMP (Phillip, former SMP Chairperson, Interview, February 2015).

Another former board member, Joan, remarked in interview on the centrality of David Livingstone to the origins narrative of the SMP, particularly notable in the following remark when she summarises the origins of the Scottish Executive’s<sup>7</sup> decision to develop its Malawi Development Programme:

Right, the first SMP was in Glasgow at Strathclyde University. And the first provosts, the provosts were involved. It was an intellectual educational, based on the existing medical links, political, but it raised the profile: political, Jack McConnell, commonwealth, DFID... We wanted something smaller that makes a difference. Erm, not enough money to do something that Scotland could be seen to put its own personal thing on. Erm, David Livingstone, Blantyre, erm, educational, blah blah blah.

Joan, Former SMP Board Member and Civil Servant, Interview, February 2015

Joan’s reference to “David Livingstone, Blantyre, erm, educational... blah blah blah” shows how Livingstone is used as a kind of shorthand rhetorical device for describing the partnership between the two countries. This implies from the outset that the icon of Livingstone embodied what the Scottish Executive were planning to do in Malawi, and is suggestive of the political importance of this endeavour to Scottish identity. Moreover, from the outset, this programme was being developed to promote Scotland: “...something that Scotland could be seen to put its own personal thing on”.

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<sup>7</sup> Prior to 2007 when the Scottish National Party (SNP) won the Scottish Parliamentary elections, the Scottish Government was officially referred to as the ‘Scottish Executive’

The SMP itself regularly publically cites Livingstone as the inspiration for its work. The SMP website states, for example, that “The friendship between Scots and Malawians began in 1859, with the warm welcome extended to David Livingstone and his companions when he entered what is now Malawi for the first time” (SMP Website, ‘About Us’, 2019). It continues this historical narrative by describing how it emerged from “David Livingstone’s alma mater the University of Strathclyde”, where the SMP traces its origins (SMP Website, ‘About Us’, 2019). In the first citation above, the SMP interpretation of Livingstone is neatly summarised: by emphasising “friendship” and the “warm welcome” extended to Livingstone, the organisation can be seen to be denying the inequality which shaped Livingstone’s interactions with Malawians in its origins narrative.

In celebrating Livingstone, the SMP are in line with a wider nationalist celebration of the explorer. This was particularly notable in 2013, when the 200-year anniversary of Livingstone’s birth was marked across the UK. A series of mass media articles were penned at this time promoting Livingstone’s perceived positive attributes. For example, Michael Barrett wrote in the *New Statesman*:

David Livingstone’s life and death in Africa helped mould the Victorian missionary myth of exploration and sparked the Scramble for Africa. Yet he was never a typical imperialist and he left a powerfully charitable legacy.

Barrett, 2013, p.1

Throughout Scotland, Livingstone is recognisable, and the Scottish Government have engaged in his celebration. At the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary, they funded a number of events to celebrate his legacy, and the rhetoric from Barrett above that he was not a typical imperialist, and has a charitable legacy, was widely promoted.

Livingstone is equally widely recognised in Malawi. Former SMP Board Member and historian, Frank Macpherson, reflected on the celebration of Livingstone by the Scottish missionaries, and noted that this was “very well reflected in Malawian view” (Frank, SMP Board Member and Historian, Interview, February 2015), which was substantiated in my own research. In focus groups with

Malawian participants, I began at one point with the prompt of two bank notes: one depicted the Malawian pastor John Chilembwe, who led a revolt against colonial rule in 1915, and another note depicted Livingstone. In response to the subsequent conversation, one respondent remarked:

Elisiba: he is the one who fights for freedom, John Chilembwe, and David Livingstone is the one who brings peace.

Asante, Volunteer Focus Group, June 2015

This was characteristic. David Livingstone was credited with ending slavery in the country, and whilst the anti-colonial figure of Chilembwe was also revered by participants in the focus groups, participants did not relate Livingstone to the colonialism which followed him, and therefore saw no contradiction in celebrating both figures. Throughout my observations, casual interviews, focus groups and semi-structured interviews I noted no negative feeling towards the explorer. Whilst this may have been the result of participants knowing I was Scottish, my experience in Malawi leads me to believe that Livingstone remembered very positively throughout the country. On one level, this reveals how enduring the origins narrative promoted by the SMP is in Malawi, and specifically in Scotland and Malawi relations which are premised on celebration of this historical narrative. However, throughout my research I also found many Scottish and Malawian actors used Livingstone in an *instrumental* way with respect to the relationship between the two countries. Within the context of development interactions, actors often used the character of Livingstone purely for strategic reasons to promote the partnership. This was particularly notable in the extract below, when James is responding to hearing that Livingstone was a less well-known figure in Scottish classrooms than in Malawi:

James: If it is not well preserved one day we can erase David Livingstone from the history of Scotland! Which is very dangerous to us, because if you get out David Livingstone then it is more like getting Malawi out.

Malawian Teachers, Focus Group, June 2015

In the extract above, James interprets the character of Livingstone as important in an instrumental way, with regard to the relations between the two countries. Livingstone is the historical embodiment of the partnership, and therefore occupies an important symbolic space in the narrative surrounding it. It is evident that his centrality to the partnership is important in its promotion in Scotland and Malawi: the symbol of Livingstone is central to the narrative of the partnership in both countries.

However, alongside the symbolic importance of the character of Livingstone, key actors in the foundation of the SMP also suggested that Livingstone's *character* was a specific inspiration for the organisations' approach to development. Analysis of this is revelatory of the SMP position. For example, in an email interview with former First Minister of Scotland, Jack McConnell, he directly cited Livingstone as his personal inspiration, remarking on the explorer's belief that "the Africans he met in Malawi and elsewhere should be independent and self-sufficient" (Jack McConnell, Email Correspondence, February 2015). Thus, McConnell alludes to the character of Livingstone as having informed the particular style of relationship between Scotland and Malawi which he intended the SMP to express. This claim - not just about Livingstone's historical role, but about what he is taken to symbolise - was repeated throughout the interviews with key actors. In the following extract, Christopher from the SMP presents this perspective:

I think generally one can sort of surmise that the principles and ideology that Livingstone travelled with, particularly in contrast to some of his Victorian contemporaries at the time, have, to an extent, defined why we are where we are now, that spirit of partnership, the striving for equality, and most fundamentally the spirit of mutual respect. And striving for mutual understanding as well has been really a key part of the history of the relationship.

Christopher, SMP Staff Member, January 2015

What I particularly mean to draw attention to here is the fact that Christopher draws a direct link between Livingstone's character and the contemporary model

promoted by the SMP. He references the “spirit of partnership”, a reflection of the SMP’s ‘partnership principles’. He further references “equality” and “mutual respect”, two of these partnership principles, devised by the SMP and MaSP, and which Livingstone is taken to embody.

The uncritical promotion of Livingstone is repeated by other prominent actors in the SMP. In his historical accounts, SMP chairperson Ken Ross portrays Livingstone in a similar way, and in doing so also suggests that the contemporary SMP model can be understood as a part of the explorer’s legacy. Ross portrays Livingstone as a restless abolitionist, who “marched on foot for mile upon mile through the African bush with ulcerated feet, constant anal bleeding, dysentery and gastrointestinal problems... to heal the ‘open sore’ of the slave trade” (Ross, 2013, p.16). He praises the missionary’s “formidable range of skills” including his developing expertise in tropical medicine and his “appreciation of the richness, copiousness and subtlety of the Bantu languages” (Ross, 2013, p.17). Though noting that he was criticised for apparently abandoning his missionary vocation, Ross praises Livingstone for undertaking a living and working mission. Tellingly, the image we have of Livingstone here is one that corresponds to the mode of development activity which the SMP claims to represent. The development worker adopting a ‘partnership approach’ is encouraged to travel to Malawi and learn its languages, celebrate its culture and befriend its people, just as Livingstone is said to have done. This account thus sees ‘development’ as something which comes about through a deep affectionate connection between Scotland and Malawi, and is expressed in the form of interpersonal relations linking the two countries. In Ross’ analysis of Livingstone, the explorer appears therefore to be the perfect embodiment of such an ideal.

Christopher, from the SMP, shared this perspective. He remarked in interview that Livingstone was “able to engage a cultural landscape very different from his own and define the tone and terms of that relationship in a way that was in stark contrast to his Victorian peers of the day.” By way of contrast, this participant referred to the behaviour of Henry Morgan-Stanley, the journalist and explorer who famously travelled to find Livingstone, who “clearly didn’t treat his in-country helpers with the same respect that Livingstone did. And as a result, he was treated very differently” (Christopher, SMP Staff Member,

Interview January 2015). As with the account provided by Ross and cited above, Christopher appears to paint a picture of Livingstone not too dissimilar to the type of development worker that the SMP promotes. This is not to suggest that Christopher was only positive about Livingstone in interview: it is important to note that he later commented that “the man, like all of us, had weaknesses and shortcomings”. Alongside reflection on his personal shortcomings, he also reflected upon the structural challenges of the icon of Livingstone, noting that “The idea of going to Africa to instil civilisation is far off the mark from where we are now... and indeed aspects of his legacy are uncomfortable” (Christopher, SMP Staff Member, Interview, January 2015). However, this critical reflection is confined largely to private reflections rather than public critique. In public, Livingstone is celebrated, both by the SMP and the Scottish Government, and widely in Malawi. The point here is that praise for Livingstone in public spaces constitutes a failure to redress both his colonial legacy and therefore also the enduring inequality that characterises neo-colonial relationships. By failing to publically redress these relations and their historical basis, the SMP are failing to challenge the structures of inequality that surround relations between aid-giving and aid-receiving countries - especially when these relations are founded on colonial ties.

The positive interpretation of Livingstone is further demonstrated by how key actors in the SMP interpret the historical accounts of his death. According to many historical accounts (e.g. Bayly, 2017), when Livingstone died in Ilala, Zambia, in 1873, his African companions, Susi and Chuma, buried his heart in the Africa soil as he had requested. They then mummified his corpse and carried it for 8 months to the coast where it could be taken by ship to his final place of rest in Westminster Abbey. Ross writes that “there can be no question that Livingstone had qualities which earned him an extraordinary degree of loyalty and affection from the Africans among whom he lived and worked” (Ross, 2013, p. 17). Christopher told me how Livingstone embodied “partnership, friendship and dignity”, that this was clear from his writings and anecdotal evidence, pointing towards the “genuine sorrow felt by his Malawian friends, the fact that they committed to carry his body back”. (Christopher, SMP Staff Member, Interview, January 2015).

Interpreting Livingstone in such a way is revelatory of the perspective that underpins the SMP approach. It shows that the SMP promote the idea that development workers should be engaged, culturally aware, passionate, hardworking and respectful of their beneficiaries - as Livingstone is said to have been. However, this rests on a contentious interpretation of Livingstone, and in adherence to this the explorer's participation in structural colonial violence is not addressed. The lack of acknowledgement of the consequences of colonialism on the relations between Scottish and Malawian people is pronounced in its absence. Moreover, crucially, this *celebration* of African gratitude and loyalty, in the case of Livingstone's companions, can be seen to express a continued patriarchal view of what relations between Africa and Europe should be like. In using this example to present their model, SMP actors are re-inscribing a view of Africans as loyal, passive, beneficiaries.

The celebration of Livingstone by the SMP, and in the popular discourse in both Scotland and Malawi, rests upon positive interpretations of his work and his character: however, such interpretations are widely contested outside of formal Scotland - Malawi relations. In contrast to his portrayal by the SMP, Livingstone has contrarily been interpreted by some as a proto-imperialist who directly embodied the colonial perspective with regard to Africa and who ultimately helped to bring large parts of the continent into the British Empire (Thompson, 2012). Livingstone is credited with laying the groundwork for European colonisation of Africa, and the social Darwinist perspectives on race which soon after his travels became the dominant paradigm of social science with regard to the Global South (MacKenzie, 1996; J. Livingstone, 2015). For example, some writings of Livingstone demonstrate that he shared prevalent perceptions concerning a hierarchy of races, as can be seen in the extract below:

The Basinje... seem to possess more of the low Negro character than either the Balonda or Basongo; their colour is generally dirty black, foreheads low and compressed, noses flat and expanded laterally, though this is partly owing to the alae spreading the cheeks, by the custom of inserting... reeds in their septum; their teeth are deformed by being filed to points; their lips are large. They make a nearer approach to a general Negro appearance than any tribes I met.

Livingstone, 2005 [1857], p.442

In the extract above, Livingstone expresses a political perspective that was relatively uncontentious at the time of writing to British audiences. Positive accounts of Livingstone absolve or ignore the extent to which he was integral to the establishment of a racialised set of relations. In doing so, they form part of an evasion of colonial responsibility in popular Scottish discourse (Mullen, 2009). In celebrating Livingstone, the SMP is therefore falling into the same trap as when they celebrate the role of the Scottish missions in colonial Malawi: its symbolic emphasis on Livingstone ignores the colonial violence that Scots were part of in Malawi. In continuing to celebrate Livingstone uncritically, both Scots and Malawians are party to a denial of the colonial influence on their relations that continues to structure interactions between actors from each country.

Whilst this partially demonstrates the reasons why the SMP deliberately downplay negative historical interpretations of Livingstone, this is a highly problematic position. That Livingstone is celebrated now for his personal relationships with his Malawian co-travellers is perhaps a welcome reflection of the growing re-articulation of the idea that Scottish and Malawian people should relate to and appreciate each other. However, using Livingstone in such a way contributes to positive accounts of colonialism, and downplays the complicity of colonial characters in colonial violence. Furthermore, the reflection on Livingstone's relations with Malawians has an enduring undercurrent of colonial superiority, such as is evident in accounts where his amicability is expressed as a gift he chose to give to his Malawian co-travellers. These accounts ignore the material and social structures that shaped the events of his life and accounts that praise Livingstone's 'friendship' with his co-travellers ignore his undoubted great esteem and personal political authority. In a similar way, the positive accounts of contemporary relations between Scotland and Malawi [relations of "kinsfolk" (Ross, 2013, p.9)] can be seen to ignore the vast economic disparities that underlie most interactions between Scots and Malawians.

From the perspective of the post-development critique, the SMP origins narrative about Livingstone reflects again its denial of the embedded inequalities between aid-giving and aid-receiving countries. Crucially, however,



it does not do this through the development discourse and its continuation of the colonial logic of 'traditional' versus 'modern' (explored extensively in Chapter 2), but by failing to address the inequality of colonial interactions in the first place. In her study of the professionalisation of development from a post-development perspective, Kothari draws upon post-development accounts of writers such as Escobar (1995), Crush (1995) and Cooke (2004) to critique how the development industry reproduces this colonial logic through a process of technicalisation of development interventions. In her study, she argues that the industry creates development professionals with knowledge of the process of 'development' but without deep understanding of any specific country. This amounts to a homogenisation of 'developing' countries, and a de-politicisation of the issues that affect these countries, by turning questions of access to resources into technical problems (Kothari, 2005). Kothari draws upon interview data from former colonial administrators to make her argument, many of whom also lamented the professionalisation of development, which they saw as inadequate compared to their role as permanent political actors in colonies who were, in their opinion, better placed to understand the 'developmental needs' of particular areas. What this example shows is that the SMP historical narrative appears to draw from a similar idealised memory of the colonial era. The SMP historical narrative rejects professional development activity to an extent, via its claims of being a 'modern' and 'innovative' approach that emphasises mutuality, based on the extensive personal connections between Scotland and Malawi. However, in doing this, it also aligns with the logic of the colonial era, and the figure of the colonial officer with a remit for 'development' explored by Kothari above. This celebration of colonial relations, from a post-development perspective, is incompatible with the organisation's parallel claims of fostering greater equality in interactions between aid-giving and aid-receiving countries.

This section has presented a series of findings that show that the SMP use a particular positive historical narrative of the relationship between Scotland and Malawi to celebrate both the contemporary 'partnership' and the organisation's approach to development. This historical narrative used by the SMP has been shown to be deeply problematic (and highly contested amongst historians), both in relation to the history of the Scottish missions and in relation to the symbolic figure of David Livingstone. Celebration of the historical relationship is

accompanied by the failure to address the colonial violence which surrounded Scottish involvement in Malawi in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, and this aspect of the SMP's origins is incompatible with its efforts to foster equality in development. Furthermore, analysis has shown that this historical interpretation reveals a latent ethnocentrism amongst key actors in the SMP in that it promotes a specific type of development that still operates through a European donor - Southern recipient hierarchy. From a post-development perspective, these findings reveal that the SMP model essentially promotes a discourse of inequality related to the development discourse, which is based upon colonial discourses of 'traditional' vs. 'modern', concealed by contemporary narratives of 'equality'. The following two sections will explore these findings in relation to more empirical data from SMP members, to consider the extent to which this historiography is reflected in practice.

### 4.3 The People-to-People Model

The SMP use a series of terms to refer to its approach to development. Alongside its 'partnership approach', embodied in its partnership principles, the terms 'people-to-people' and 'relational' are repeated throughout its official documentation (e.g. SMP, 2014; SMP, 2016a). Thus, for example, the SMP Vision is expressed in the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan as follows:

The Scotland Malawi Partnership promotes a people-to-people model of development, rooted in the shared history between our two countries. It focuses on active relationships between people to foster a shared understanding of the development challenges facing Malawi and to support the development of practical, sustainable solutions. It is through this deeper understanding and shared human experience that the people of Scotland and Malawi will be able to effect real and lasting change, both through their own activity and by influencing the policies and actions of governments and institutions.

In its vision statement above, the SMP make clear its role in promoting a ‘people-to-people model’. This model is said to be “a new approach” by the SMP Chairperson Ken Ross, who justifies this on the basis that “attempts to achieve international development have proved unsuccessful so far as the ‘bottom billion’ are concerned”, and that the “received paradigm of international development is subject to question” (Ross, 2015, p.1). As detailed in Chapter 1, the core element of this people-to-people model is the promotion of civil society links between Scotland and Malawi. This section explores the origins of the people-to-people model in detail. In analysing the origins of this key element of the SMP’s approach (research question 1) this section demonstrates that this model derives as much from the political and economic context in Scotland, and global trends in development, as it does from the ‘shared history’ between Scotland and Malawi. In analysis of the development perspective of the SMP (research question 2) this section further shows that the people-to-people model does not necessitate greater equality in development relations, and can contrarily be interpreted as a co-optation of alternative development practices into the mainstream.

#### **4.3.1 Establishment of the Contemporary Relationship**

In 2005, Scotland and Malawi entered into formal partnership, through the signing of a ‘Cooperation Agreement’ that year. This agreement stipulates that the two countries “will develop and increase collaboration” across the themes of civic governance and society, sustainable economic development, health, and education (Scottish Government, 2005). In the preface to this agreement, the “long history of collaboration” between the two countries is highlighted, as is the idea of the resulting partnership being “reciprocal” (Scottish Government, 2005, p. 1). The establishment of the contemporary relationship embodied in this agreement is regularly credited to the then First Minister of Scotland, Jack McConnell (for example in Enslin & Hedge, 2010; Ross, 2015). In an email interview with McConnell, he recalled this part of the history:

I decided when I became First Minister that it would be appropriate for the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive to have an international development policy and we launched that policy in 2004. At the core of

the policy was the capacity of people in Scotland to help transfer skills for capacity building in Malawi, in addition to their voluntary contributions to charitable causes and the support of the UK government through DFID.

Jack McConnell, Email Correspondence, 2015

International aid and development was high on the political agenda around the time of the launch of the Scottish Executive (now Scottish Government) International Development Fund (IDF), which itself ultimately led to the signing of the Cooperation Agreement in 2005. In anticipation of the G8 summit in Gleneagles, the *Make Poverty History* campaign and *Live8* Concert helped create the widest popular engagement with international development since *Live Aid* in the 1980s (Harrison, 2010). Its establishment also suited the Scottish Executive at that time, as it tried to use its limited powers to enact popular, though relatively uncontroversial, policies. In this respect, the establishment of the policy can be seen to be shaped by the power relations that arose after devolution and which involved the First Ministers of Wales and Scotland, alongside the UK Government. The office of the First Minister had to assert its power in a context of relatively limited authority over economic planning, alongside the fact that those holding these posts were not leaders of their political parties (Scottish and Welsh Labour remained at that time part of the UK Labour Party). Thus, one way that First Minister Jack McConnell attempted to express political autonomy was through establishing a distinctive position in international affairs (Lynch, 2006).

A major test of the resilience of the partnership came in 2007 when the Labour Party were marginally defeated in Scottish Parliamentary elections; this was before civil society links with Malawi had become as important to the political landscape as they are now. When the minority SNP took power that year, however, they decided to keep the relationship and continue to ring-fence the most significant part of their international development budget for projects focussed on Malawi. Now the policy is something that the SNP Government has been proactive in supporting, as the Minister for Europe and International Development explained to me in an interview:

This is a huge priority. It's probably best demonstrated by putting our money where our mouth is... in the run up to the 2011 general election here in Scotland, there wasn't many budgets that were frozen. The health budget, which is the largest budget, and by probably most people's account the most important budget, for the NHS, was frozen. And so was the international development fund. Ok, a vastly smaller budget. But at the same time, it would have been easy, and it is easy for governments across the world, to take the axe first to the international development / aid budgets. But we chose not to. We chose to freeze it, to maintain it, to ensure that the poorest people in the world don't suffer at the economic incompetence's of those in the West, frankly. So that's how you can tell it's important.... Including this ministerial position, myself, this is a ministerial position that was created by Alex Salmond in 2012. So that alone shows its importance to the work that's being done.

Humza Yousaf, Interview, May 2015

It is therefore evident that both political parties which have led the Scottish Parliament since 1999 have found the Malawi connection valuable. It was an appropriate project for a Scottish Labour Party, concerned as it was to do 'good politics' at a time when it was struggling to demonstrate the distinctive function of the Scottish Parliament, given that their party also controlled the UK Government (Keating, 2005). For the SNP, it appears also to have been an opportunity for them to propagate their 'good politics' image - but also a way in which to promote the idea of Scotland as an independent country with an active global role. The Scottish IDF is an international development budget controlled by a devolved parliament. Existing at sub-state level means that the usual diplomatic tensions and internal dialogues which surround the use of national aid budgets do not apply. Thus, the Scottish Government can manage its budget without actual control of or authority over the official diplomatic relations between its country and the countries in which it funds projects. However, this anomaly has also given rise to tensions, as was the case in February 2016, when the UK Foreign Office criticised Humza Yousaf for writing to foreign governments raising human rights issues (Edwards, 2016).

The promotion of Scotland as politically distinct from the UK is undoubtedly a positive aspect of the relationship with Malawi from the perspective of the SNP. Mr Yousaf noted in interview:

When I travelled to Malawi myself, being Scottish, is very much seen as being separate to being from the United Kingdom or England, or even being European. There was a depth of friendship and warmth with Scotland that probably isn't replicated in any other country. That came to light at a number of different events, but when I heard the ambassador for the EU who is based in Malawi, Lilongwe, when he said it to me that "you Scots have something unique here, you have trust that no other country has in the world" then I thought that actually, if it's being noticed by people outside of Malawi, outside of Scotland, then it's got to be a good thing.

Humza Yousaf, Interview, May 2015

In the extract above, the SNP Minister clearly reflects his perception that the Scottish IDF was important in presenting Scotland as an autonomous political actor in international relations. In contrast, the former Labour First Minister Jack McConnell highlighted in his email correspondence that the Scottish IDF would support the work of the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID) (Jack McConnell Email Correspondence, February 2015). The implicit presentation of Scotland as an independent nation on the international stage has been seen to cause some political tension within international development. One anecdote which has been told to me on two separate occasions in casual interview involves a minister for the UK Department for International Development (DFID) arriving in Lilongwe and assuming a Malawian Government vehicle had been sent to collect him. Embarrassingly he was then ejected from the vehicle which had in fact been sent to collect a member of the Scottish Government international development team (Field Notes, March 2016). Therefore, in contrast to accounts from the SMP that its model has directly arisen from the "shared history" (Ross, 2015, p. 1) between Scotland and Malawi, it is evident, in fact, that its development owes much to political expediency and the interests of Scottish political actors.

### 4.3.2 The Origins of the People-to-People Approach

The perceived public support for the Scottish IDF, indicated by Humza Yousaf above, also undoubtedly stems from the fact that it involves a relatively small amount of money. This support is evidenced by a survey undertaken by the SMP, which found that 74% of people surveyed in Scotland supported the country's links with Malawi (SMP, 2016c). The Minister noted this in the interview, remarking that reassigning the £9 million a year international development budget to health would be a drop in the ocean of health funding, but would open doors to attacks on the government for having scrapped a popular policy. However, it is precisely this small amount which I am interested in when tracing through a genealogy of the partnership and its ideas. As the budget only arose "via a caveat that exists within the Scotland Act" (Yousaf Interview, May 2015) it was, and only could be, a limited amount of funding, as international development remained a reserved issue for the UK Government. To supplement this money, it was therefore a strategic choice for the Scottish Government to fund the network organisation SMP to promote civil society engagement; in other words, in order to top up the government funding which was, in effect, limited by the constitutional position, they were financially compelled to look to the establishment of a model based on encouraging involvement from wider society.

To this extent, the 'people-to-people model' has its origins in financial necessity, and in the Scottish Government's concern to ensure that their small budget had widespread symbolic impact and political value. The people-to-people model has since been found to contribute a return on investment of ten times the amount annually contributed to projects in Malawi by the Scottish IDF, with Anders calculating that civil society contributes around £40 million per year to causes in Malawi, compared to an average of £4 million per year contributed by the Scottish Government fund (Anders, 2014). Therefore, through the strategic fostering of a specifically Scottish international development sector, the Scottish Government has facilitated a civil society model to increase the significance of its very modest aid budget. As we have seen, the SMP's own account of its own practice suggests that the people-to-people model derives from the strength of Scottish and Malawian civil society links, and that it is reflective of a new, more relational form of development practice. For example,

in writing on the importance of this aspect of the model, Ken Ross writes that “The distinctive genius of this approach is its grounding in the friendship—both individual and institutional—which has built up between the two nations over the past 150 years” (Ross, 2015, p. 9). However, this section has shown that the model also has important origins in the political and economic context which surrounded its emergence. It is essential to interpret the SMP and the bi-lateral relationship as a whole as the product of these contexts, as the relationship exists within the wider context of development interactions globally, which as explored in Chapter 2 are intertwined with international economic structures and geopolitics. In short, the relationship between Scotland and Malawi does not exist in a vacuum, and it is only through understanding the social, economic and political contexts which surround it that it can be accurately analysed.

This is particularly pronounced in the SMP model’s focus on civil society, some aspects of which are now commonplace throughout the development industry globally. As described in Chapter 2, the ‘partnership’ model of development is widespread, and often facilitated by government funding of programmes through civil society organisations who have the strongest ‘partnerships’ with organisations in aid-receiving countries. Moreover, this way of organising professional aid agencies has been widely critiqued as unsuccessful in creating greater equality in development, on the grounds that these relations tend to be top-down rather than bottom-up (Elbers, 2012) and more of a response to donor and government concerns than local priorities (Mawdsley, et al., 2002). As argued in Chapter 2, the partnership approach to development finance does not inherently create greater equality, but is more straightforwardly a change to the way interventions are organised to spread risk and enhance effectiveness (Impey & Overton, 2014).

During the research period in Malawi I undertook eight interviews with Malawian recipients of Scottish Government grant funding, through which I explored the successes and challenges of support provided by the Scottish Government IDF. This enabled me to interpret the SMP model, and in particular its emphasis on the concept of ‘partnership’, through the eyes of recipient organisations, and compare this to the perspective of Scottish actors in the SMP. One of the key findings of these interviews was that organisations were working with something



called the 'partnership' approach with a number of different international NGOs throughout the world - certainly not just with Scottish NGOs - and that giving money through 'partners' was "the norm with everyone now" (David, Food for Thought, INGO, Interview July 2015). One programme officer for a large INGO described the various different partnerships his Malawi office had with offices of his NGO around the world, other NGOs, and community based organisations in Malawi (Enoch, Help International, INGO, Interview July 2015). Another representative of an INGO was wholly unaware of the 'partnership principles' of the SMP and MaSP when I enquired about this, but was keen to impress upon me the fact that their organisation too had a set of partnership principles which she found to be successful (Janice, SAVE, INGO, Interview June 2015). In terms of the actual process of grant applications, none of the 8 Scottish Government grant managers identified anything unique about Scottish funding compared to other donors. In short: the model of a Government providing funding to organisations in donor countries, who then implement projects through 'partner organisations' 'on the ground' is commonplace throughout development internationally. Calling this a 'partnership approach' is also widespread. This demonstrates that the SMP narrative of its model in Scotland is not reflected in the interpretations of Malawian actors receiving and implementing grant funding for projects. This is significant, as it emphasises that how SMP approach is aligned with contemporary development practice, and therefore in perpetuating the development discourse.

Furthermore, many of these respondents were critical of aspects of Scottish Government grant funding, in particular the rules against capital purchases with Scottish Government grants (David, Food for Thought and Marcel, InnoNATION). There was also a perception that the projects were too short to make a lasting difference (Blessings, One Voice), that the Government didn't have a clear strategy to influence policy change in Malawi (David, Food for Thought) and another complained about the Government re-calling under-spend on grants in 2015 at short notice, which it then used for humanitarian assistance in parts of Malawi which had been struck by floods that year (Janice, SAVE). However, in other ways respondents reported some successes of the Scottish Government programme, including that there was greater flexibility when implementing grants compared to other donors, and many respondents commented on the

value of network events hosted by MaSP in terms of sharing technical knowledge and experience. In short, those directly involved in work in had mixed feelings about the success of the Scottish Government IDF. Both its challenges and successes seemed to be related to its relatively small size compared to other donors. Moreover, within the NGO community, it was reported that the Scottish Government programme was well-recognised, and in a way that went beyond the amount of money it provided. Indeed, many respondents remarked upon the 'special relationship', the two Governments' cooperation agreement, and the long historical relationship between the two countries.

However, no recipients suggested that their relationships with Scottish organisations were any more equal than with organisations throughout the world, nor did they see evidence of such equality being embedded in the administration of these grants. Therefore, in terms of the Scottish Government IDF, based on my interviews it cannot be said that this aspect of the wider Scotland - Malawi relationship embodies qualities of equality and mutuality. Rather, it appears a similar arrangement to other international aid donors, with the only exception being its relatively small size. As a result, these international 'partnerships' of donor organisations in Scotland and recipient organisations in Malawi face the common challenges of this model of development finance faced throughout the world (as described in Chapter 2). Furthermore, respondents were ready to reflect on the fact that there could be no equality in these 'partnerships' as the finance for the programmes came from one side and involved giving to another. Some respondents talked about the need to make the idea of partnership more meaningful "we need to just make it more realistic on the ground, it shouldn't just be theoretical" (Chiko, Food for Thought, INGO, Interview July 2015). However, others were explicit in seeing such notions as a veneer covering what remained fundamentally unequal relations: "the one who holds the purse decides how it has to be spent" (Blessings, One Voice, INGO, Interview July 2015); "when we are dealing with donors, it's not actually partnership... it's on paper only" (Arthur, Roots, Malawian NGO, Interview July 2015).

These findings reveal that the SMP model is not particularly unique internationally, and that the values espoused by the SMP are not reflected in the

deployment of Scottish Governments IDF. Moreover, crucially for this study, this demonstrates that the function of these development interactions between Scotland and Malawi are relatively ubiquitous in development practice worldwide. In such a way, from a post-development perspective, the operation of this grant funding between Scotland and Malawi can be seen to embed inequality through the privileged position of Scottish organisations controlling the financial flows: alluded to by Blessings and Arthur above. This is what Escobar refers to as one of the ways that the development discourse is “produced, recorded, stabilised, modified, and put into circulation” via the “deployment of forms of power” (Escobar, 1995, p. 46). Essentially, the way of organising the financing of development projects in Malawi is not premised on any notion of equality, but is a means of effective administration of the IDF by the Scottish Government, which actually embeds a contingent set of unequal relations premised on one ‘partner’ controlling financial flows to the other.

In summary, this section has demonstrated that in contrast to the way in which it is often represented by the SMP, the people-to-people approach has derived from a contingent set of political circumstances and global trends in the management of development finance. This demonstrates that the SMP has its origins as much in the recent political and economic context as in the historical relationship claimed by key actors in the previous section. In fact, through its adherence to the global partnership agenda it could be seen to promote a model which has been shown to be wholly inadequate in subverting the traditional donor-recipient hierarchy. Moreover, in relation to research question 2, the case of the Scottish Government IDF shows that the model does not require participants to promote a new model of development interaction at all. In relation to development finance, the people-to-people approach therefore constitutes at best a superficial change to the organisation of development activities, but cannot be said to inherently embody values of mutuality nor to foster equal relations. The following section will consider the ‘relational perspective’ promoted by the SMP and take this analysis from professional to non-professional SMP members.

## 4.4 The Relational Perspective

Running parallel to its focus on the people-to-people model is the SMP's emphasis on mutuality and reciprocity in development, referred to as the 'relational perspective'. The SMP promote this approach through its 'partnership principles':

Planning and implementing together
Appropriateness
Respect, trust and mutual understanding
Transparency and Accountability
No one left behind
Effectiveness
Reciprocity
Sustainability
do no Harm
Interconnectivity
Parity (equality)

SMP, 2016b, p.1

Through adherence to the partnership principles, members of the SMP and MaSP are encouraged to adopt what I refer to as a 'relational perspective'. For the purposes of this research, I use this term roughly in line with how it is expressed by Ross (2015) to refer to the values of equality and mutuality promoted by the SMP. The partnership principles above were devised in consultation with Scottish and Malawian participants, through the SMP and MaSP, between 2010 and 2014 (SMP, 2016b). Whilst some of these principles can be seen as technical,

such as ‘transparency and accountability’ and ‘effectiveness’, others are presented as enabling a more relational perspective. Principles such as ‘planning and implementing together’, ‘respect, trust and mutual understanding’ and ‘reciprocity’ are not elements of traditional development interventions, such as those based on the modernisation-as-development theories explored in Chapter 2. Rather, these principles underpin the relational perspective, which refers to the discourse of the SMP which promotes greater equality in development. This section considers the origins of this perspective, what it means for the SMP and its members. Specifically, analysis is shaped around exploring the origins of this perspective (research question 1) and what it means for an assessment of SMP practice (research question 2).

#### 4.4.1 Origins of the Relational Perspective

The SMP has its origins amongst a community of ex-missionaries of the Church of Scotland who shared a common interest in Malawi. One founding member of the SMP, John MacArthur, explained how a group of “20, 30 or 40” people might meet on occasional weekday evenings, or might convene to welcome visiting Malawian delegates to Edinburgh in the late 90s and early 2000s. Though the organisation was not formal or public, these gatherings were the organic roots of the SMP (John, SMP Founding Member, Interview, February 2015). He explained how this small informal group saw their collective interest blossom into what it is today:

You know, not quite the Masonic lodge. But there was this constituency of people who had lived a big part of their life in Malawi... you could have easily said this was a dying breed. You know, missionaries are a thing of the past and, you know these people are getting grey-haired and dying off. So again if you looked at it critically you could have said you know, fair enough, it’s a nostalgic kind of thing. But, one thing I do remember from the very early period when I was in the Church of Scotland building here in Edinburgh here, the Chaplain from Strathclyde University came to see me one day. I think this would have been in 1999. That was the time when everybody was thinking about the millennium. You know, what we are going to do. All the computers were going to crash, everything was

going to be different when the millennium came. And the positive side to that was that people wanted to do something that, kind of inspirational, to mark it, and not just let it pass. You know, lots of energy was generated around that. But anyway, Strathclyde University was also asking that question. You know, what we do to have a full experience of the millennium. Somehow in asking this question they had, surprise surprise, come up with the Livingstone factor. You know Livingstone was a graduate of the Anderson institute, which was the predecessor body of Strathclyde University... to cut the story short it ended up with the Malawi Millennium project at Strathclyde University.

John, SMP Founding Member, Interview, February 2015

Many others that I spoke to offered a similar narrative as to how the SMP evolved. Ken Ross, current chairperson of the SMP, writes in his account of the SMP's development that the Malawi Millennium project at Strathclyde University was the spark needed "to ignite the new possibilities" (Ross, 2015, p. 6). After the millennium and this project, "old links took new forms" and schools, churches, health boards, local authorities and Universities began to build collaborative connections with Malawi (Ross 2015, p.6). Other Scottish respondents who were involved at the beginning of the SMP told a similar story of personal connections between Scotland and Malawi giving rise to a sort of 'natural' equality embedded in the relations which arose. Participants thus reported that a 'relational perspective' was not something that was articulated, but that there was a more general feeling that the first participants members of the SMP were engaged in "something special", "something different" something that was "not just about supporting Oxfam or being a person in Government development" (John, SMP Founding Member, Interview, February 2015).

In interviews with key actors and members, I asked participants to consider what they thought were the origins of this perspective. It was notable that many respondents ascribed this 'relational' perspective to the "Presbyterian egalitarianism" of its founding members, many of whom were former Church of Scotland and Free Church of Scotland missionaries (Lee, Former SMP Board Member, May 2015). This respondent, for example, who had carried out his own

research into the first texts written by Scottish missionaries in Malawi, claimed to find a “spirit of egalitarianism” evident in the missionaries’ writings, and thus traced the SMP’s relational approach to this longer history.

I addressed this specifically with other actors, including John MacArthur, himself a former missionary. John notes that during his time in Malawi there was an emphasis from the Church of Scotland on the concept of working in “partnership”:

There was a great kind of awakening when the whole world was changing that that kind of mission was not going to be appropriate any longer. And so aspirations towards partnership were born in that time, and the partnership vocabulary came into play. So you know that had 50 years in church life before we were using it for our Malawi enterprise... it was always a great struggle: what is partnership, are we having true partnership?

John, SMP Founding Member, Interview, February 2015

In such a way, this actor interpreted the relational approach of the SMP as something reflective of Presbyterian theology as well as of emerging trends in the organisation of the Church of Scotland. Importantly, however, it was noted repeatedly that the SMP was never explicitly aligned to any one school of development thinking: “none of us had been into classical theories of development... none of us were professional development studies people”. For this respondent, the partnership approach was ‘natural’ to this SMP founding members, and was based on their deep personal relations with Malawi and Malawians (Frank, SMP Board Member and Historian, Interview, February 2015).

It was, in other words, broadly reported by key actors that the relational perspective of the SMP derives from Presbyterian theology and the organisational structure of the Church of Scotland. Crucially, the directionality of this story is revealing. Throughout this aspect of the research, I found that narratives of the origins of the relationship were from a Scottish perspective. Essentially, participants reflected on the value of this form of relationship for

Scottish participants, based on a Scottish Christian values and practices. Moreover, this notion of wrestling with the concept of achieving “true partnership”, as remarked by John above, individualises notions of power imbalances. The idea that partnerships can be achieved through personal transformation, or by transformation of bi-lateral relationships between former missionaries and people living in former colonies, denies the reality that power relations are shaped by structural forces. From a post-development perspective, the inequality in development interactions is embedded in the discourse, which is itself a product of and reproducer of global inequality. In drawing from the Presbyterian theology of partnership, and applying this to the perspective of the SMP, these respondents are evidencing that the notion of equality in development in the SMP model is individualised, and therefore essentially apolitical.

Furthermore, from the perspective of post-development, this origins story is problematic for the SMP relational perspective. Firstly, this is problematic as the celebration of these historical and religious links rests upon the same broadly positive historical understanding of the role of the Scottish missions in Malawi, already critiqued in section 4.2. To present the SMP as embodying a relational practice derived from these historical antecedents relies upon the highly contestable view that the Scottish missions were premised on an ethos of mutuality and equality with Malawians. Moreover, it tells the story once again of the Scottish actors having agency and control over the origins of the ethos, whilst excluding consideration of the theological or historical perspective of Malawians on Scotland. In so doing, this historical position again reflects the lack of acknowledgement in the SMP model of complicity of the Scottish missions in colonial violence, and the extent to which colonial relations shaped the values of the organisation.

That this position is highly problematic was highlighted in interview with Lee, cited above, when he suggested that “if they {the missionaries} were taking in a colonial mentality then often it was probably quite unconscious” (Lee, Former SMP Board Member, May 2015). Such a perspective draws from the view that the racism of former generations was merely part of the zeitgeist of the day. When the SMP celebrate its historical origins it may be interpreted as subscribing to



this position which partially obviates responsibility of colonial actors. Furthermore, the interpretation of the relational approach presented above relies upon assumptions around the practice of SMP members and presumes an effective translation of the rhetoric of ‘mutuality’ and ‘equality’ into action. As I demonstrate in the following section, what is described as a ‘relational perspective’ is sometimes hard to distinguish from that of a ‘charity approach’. In the following and final section, then, I consider what this relational approach looks like in practice, by drawing on evidence of the operations of one particular SMP member organisation.

#### 4.4.2 Charity Approach and the Relational Perspective

The ‘relational perspective’ is presented as being in contrast with what can be called a ‘charity approach’ to development. This difference was expressed by Christopher, a member of SMP staff, in interview when describing his work with SMP members:

A lot of that is attitudinal, too, encouraging our members to view their links with Malawi as something not defined by, or rather not limited by, a charitable ethos, but a spirit of genuine partnership that affects the products they buy as well as what they do in committee meetings in a formal charitable set up. Moving beyond the charitable, further strengthening this spirit of dignified two way partnerships is really important

Christopher, SMP Staff Member, January 2015

In the extract above, Christopher highlights the perspective espoused by the SMP regularly at events and in official publications: that they are about “partnership, not charity” (Field Notes, May 2015). The organisation interprets charity relations as one-way, and therefore highlights its emphasis on two-way relations through the terminology of ‘partnership’ and emphasis on the relational.

The term ‘charity approach’ is used in this section, in reference to the wider literature in this field, to refer to a model that focuses on the material poverty of the Global South, and seeks financial support by reproducing images of that

poverty. Much has been written on how images of poverty in developing countries perpetuate negative stereotypes and can present a homogenized image of such countries (see the work of Philo et al, 1999; Stone, 2000). This is not a new concern either, though such images have recently gained the tag of 'poverty porn' (Selinger & Outterson, 2010). As far back as 1989 a code of conduct was written by the General Assembly of European NGOs on Images and Messages relating to the Third World (DEEEP, 2016). The code was updated in 2005, seen as "very timely given Live 8, Make Poverty History and the debate about major reforms within the EU" (McGee, 2005, p. 1). The code invites NGOs to take part in a self-audit scheme with regard to their own use of images and messages, to ensure that organisations are "respectful of the personal dignity of the people {they} feature", "avoid sensationalism" and "choose {their} images and messages based on promoting equality, partnership and dignity" (McGee 2005, p.18). The critique of 'charity approach' imagery is specifically included in post-development literature, notably by Escobar who writes that such images are "about pornography and scopophilia, where intellectuality and historical agency are placed only on the side of the Western viewer, and specularity on that of the passive other" (Escobar, 1995, p. 191). Essentially, this is viewed in the post-development critique as a fundamental component of the enduring colonial 'othering' of people in countries that receive aid.

The SMP promote its 'relational perspective' as directly contrasting with a 'charity' approach. In practice, however, some organisations who are members of the SMP appear to reproduce the imagery associated with a charity approach in their communications. This calls into question the ability of the SMP to foster a relational perspective amongst its members, and the notion that it can engage in challenging this aspect of the development discourse in public spaces.

One such SMP member is the organisation Zikomo Malawi. This is a membership-based small charity with a small team of staff and a large number of volunteers. It fundraises money in Scotland to support educational projects across Malawi each year. Zikomo Malawi is representative of the SMP membership in a number of ways. It has its roots in non-professional development, and relies upon non-professional development workers (i.e. volunteers) to implement its programmes in Malawi. It regularly attends and presents at SMP events. At these events, I

observed the organisation and its presentations. I then reviewed its social media and website content for the purposes of this research.

The organisation's deployment of the charity perspective is highlighted in particular in its promotional videos. One video opens with the line, for example, that "Malawi is a beautiful but very poor country" and employs familiar 'before' and 'after' images in its pursuit of funding: sad children in dilapidated rural schools, followed by images of happy children after Zikomo Malawi have completed its project. Its model supports the development of schools in Malawi through a typically modernist approach, and it emphasises a perspective that sees institutional forms of education as the means to achieve development. This is evident from the language in its promotional material: "what binds us together is that it's through education Malawi will develop"; "we tap into everyone that wants to make a difference"; "they want to help... people are good, they want to make a difference, we give them the opportunity" (Field Notes 2/9/15). This material is highly problematic from a post-development perspective; it privileges the viewer and patronises the subject; depoliticises, homogenises and simplifies the experience of extreme poverty; and ultimately reproduces the othering of countries that receive aid.

Zikomo Malawi is a high-profile member of the organisation, and its representatives are regularly invited to speak at SMP events. However, it should be noted that a number of SMP members that I spoke to also expressed unease with the way in which this particular organisation presented its work. In reference to this, three respondents mentioned the organisation Zikomo Malawi specifically. In the extract below, Lee highlights Zikomo Malawi's 'charity minded' approach:

The organisation that I am reminded of in these kind of conversations is Zikomo Malawi, who is... probably extremely charitably minded but is kind of hands on and accepts that you're in a negotiation with people to meet shared objectives.

Lee, SMP Board Member and NGO Worker, Interview, April 2015

In the extract above, Lee expresses his perspective on the difference in approach between the SMP and Zikomo Malawi, but chooses to highlight his belief there was still a spirit of mutuality in its work: “that you’re in a negotiation with people to meet shared objectives”. Another respondent, Caitlin, shared this perspective, and said about Zikomo Malawi:

Initially I had more reservations, but I think that’s the thing... if people completely mean well in what they’re doing, and I think a huge amount is, and it’s in local priorities and local government, then I think why not...

Caitlin, SMP Member, Non-Professional Charity Manager, 2015

In each of these examples, the respondents attempt to defend the images used by Zikomo Malawi, and suggest that the organisation is still (in spite of this) related to the SMP relational approach. Lee emphasises that how the organisation implements its work can justify the type of representation they deploy, and Caitlin suggests that it is okay as long as they “mean well”. These interpretations again re-assert the agency of donors over deciding on the values which underpin implementation and over the choice to misrepresent, simplify and patronise participants in their projects.

Another respondent was far more critical, however, and in her experience found Zikomo Malawi’s representations to be highly reflective of their practice. She joked that she wanted to “slap” charities that “just come in and out of Malawian lives”, before specifically referring to the organisation:

Zikomo Malawi... It is very much a white-down, paternalistic... and, they don’t do it through Malawian Government. So, there is at least one example of where they have built on somebody else’s land....It’s just wrong! And it is, it is paternalistic.

Ms Hill, MaTo Project Manager, Interview, August 2015

Ms Hill’s perspective is that Zikomo Malawi is both patronising and ineffective, in that it does not work with the Malawian Government. Moreover, she draws a direct link between the ways that the charity promotes their activities in Malawi

and its method of intervention. This perspective reflects the post-development critique, which suggests that the process of othering of people in countries that receive aid is perpetuated by the structures which surround it. Essentially, the idea that the practice of development, the representation of development and the interpretation of development interactions by participants are all mutually reinforcing aspects of the development discourse (as explored extensively in Crush, 1995). Moreover, the example of Zikomo Malawi demonstrates the embedded power imbalances that endure in the SMP model, in spite of its purported efforts to foster greater equality in development. The fact that the misrepresentations by Zikomo Malawi are championed by the SMP at events is suggestive that the organisation does not see how problematic such images are for the pursuit of fostering equality in development. Moreover, when SMP members such as Lee and Caitlin justify this representation, there is a lack of awareness for the structures of inequality which surround development interactions, and that it is the power given to donors such as Zikomo Malawi that allows them to misrepresent without consequence.

Moreover, from the perspective of Lee, an organisation can be seen to be in line with the SMP relational approach based on its interpersonal relations with its Malawian counterparts, regardless of its public communication or other practices. This again relates back to the historical interpretations by key actors in the SMP of Livingstone. These interpretations suggested that Livingstone was a progressive figure from the Victorian era because of his ability to strike up person-to-person friendships with local people. In such an interpretation, the entire purpose of Livingstone's travels, and structures which supported him, and the legacy of colonialism which followed him are irrelevant - he is praised as a great man because he was amicable with his guides. Furthermore, in both the case of Zikomo Malawi and in these interpretations of Livingstone, having camaraderie with Malawians is portrayed as gift which can be given by active European agents of aid to Southern beneficiaries. In these examples, as with the analysis presented throughout this chapter, the portrayal of equal relations in terms of practice, or in attitudes towards the historical origins of the organisation, fails to take into account the conceptual and material structural inequalities which surround much charity and development work.

In summary, this section has presented the SMP 'relational perspective' and considered its deployment by drawing upon the post-development critique. These findings have demonstrated that this approach has its origins in particular Scottish historical narratives and values. Moreover, the case of Zikomo Malawi reveals one of the ways that inequality in development endures through the deployment of the SMP model, and that the organisation fails to interpret and address the embedded inequalities in development relations. Moreover, the relational approach was shown to be superficial in that it promoted certain values but did not apply these to the conceptual and material structures which surround inequality in development practice. These findings added weight to those presented in the previous two sections, as they demonstrate that the SMP is still embedded in colonial forms of relationships which it has failed to adequately redress. Moreover, this section has shown that the dominant perception of the SMP is one which ultimately subscribes to the development discourse, and that this still fundamentally underpins much of its practice. clarify the connection between the SMP's colonial origins with the post-development critique

## 4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed data from key actors in the SMP, its members, and its publications to critically assess the organisation's origins and relationship with the dominant development discourse. In analysing data to answer research question 1, this chapter considered both the history and the historiography of the SMP model. This approach was inspired by the interpretation of Foucault deployed by the post-development writers, who used a genealogical approach to interpret the origins of the discourse of development.

This analysis found that the SMP model has its origins in the work of Scottish missions, and that its particular approach is credited as deriving from the egalitarian spirit of the Presbyterian theology that underpinned their work. However, this chapter also demonstrated that the organisation can equally be seen to have its origins in much more recent political events in Scotland, and that many aspects of it are aligned with contemporary development practice worldwide. Moreover, through analysis of how these origins narratives were

presented by the organisation, I found prevailing colonial attitudes were embedded in the institutional perspective of the organisation. This was firstly shown with reference to how the organisation expressed a positive narrative of the Scottish missionaries and David Livingstone, and in so doing failed to address the structural inequality which shaped these colonial relations. By failing to acknowledge this colonial inequality, the organisation also failed to acknowledge the inequality which the post-development writers show continues from the colonial era into the development era. The organisation does this through occasional reminiscence of an idealised image of the colonial era missionary as a development worker embedded in the culture of the country and in so doing fails to address the fact that these missionaries were part of the structure of colonial violence. Through such interpretations, the organisation was shown to engage in perpetuating a latent patriarchal view of relations between Scotland and Malawi, suggesting that the values it espouses of 'friendship' and 'partnership' are gifts that are given from Scots to Malawians. Beneath the contemporary language of 'equal partnership', these findings demonstrated that latent colonial values still underpin some organisational attitudes, and these attitudes are enabled to thrive within an individualised framework of 'people-to-people' interaction that disregards structures of inequality.

These conclusions must also be interpreted through the findings which relate to research question 2. This question drew upon analysis of the relationship between the SMP model and the practice of its members to critically assess the extent to which the SMP model might be said to challenge the dominant development discourse. This question was based on the central position of post-development, that the dominant development discourse affirms inequalities between donors and recipients. As the SMP was shown to actively challenge this inequality, this question was posed to assess the SMP model using the post-development critique. Through analysis in this chapter, I have found that the SMP model fails to challenge the dominant discourse, and that its 'partnership approach' is relatively common in contemporary development practice worldwide. Essentially, the organisation is part of development practice, and replicates some of the inequalities embedded in the dominant discourse, such as through promoting organisations that perpetuate the conceptual marginalisation of countries that receive aid. Furthermore, this analysis demonstrated that the

SMP model essentially individualised relations between Scottish and Malawian organisations, including the principles and values which underpin such relations. In so doing, the model is essentially promoting the depoliticising aspect of the development discourse, which privileges neo-liberal attitudes towards individualised responsibility over critical challenges to structural inequality. Essentially, the SMP model has been shown to prop up the dominant development discourse, through its inability to challenge organisations that perpetuate conceptual inequality and the organisational attitudes which deny the structural inequalities which surround relations of development.

In summary, the historical origins of the SMP, and its celebration of these, can be seen embed the organisation in a historically colonial bi-lateral relationship, holding it back from establishing a genuinely equal relationship between Scotland and Malawi. Furthermore, the central position of the SMP on development can be seen to have the same effect. The organisation has been shown to adopt an alternative development position of promoting greater equality between aid-giving and aid-receiving countries, but doing so *within* the current framework of the development industry. In such a way, the organisation attempts to promote equality through a framework which is specifically premised on inequality: be it colonial historical relationships, or the transfer of development aid.



# Chapter 5 International Volunteers

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## 5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate how ideas and concepts of development and the relationship between aid-giving and aid-receiving countries are produced and developed. This purpose relates to the central research question, as perceptions are a fundamental part of the post-development critique. As described in Chapter 2, the way that aid-giving countries perceive aid-receiving countries has been heavily critiqued by post-development writers, who have suggested that the development industry embeds an ‘othering’ of countries that receive aid through a well-established development discourse. This thesis uses the concept ‘conceptual marginalisation’ to refer to this process of othering, which is regarded as both additional and related to the ‘material marginalisation’ of countries that receive aid. This chapter therefore brings the post-development critique to the attitudes, conceptions and beliefs of Scottish practitioners engaged in partnerships with Malawi, and critically analyses what this means for the SMP attempts to create a more equal development practice.

To achieve its purpose, this chapter analyses the experiences and understandings of international volunteers. It does so for three reasons. Firstly, this chapter focuses on international volunteers as a window into how particular forms of action relate to the perceptions of participants. Secondly, volunteers can be interpreted as emblematic of the wider civil society approach taken by the SMP. Whilst the SMP includes a number of large NGOs in its membership, the civil society model it promotes directly celebrates the very small voluntary relationships that exist between Scotland and Malawi, such as the small charities and schools that provide data for this chapter. Kothari has argued from a post-development perspective that the ‘over-professionalisation’ of the industry is emblematic of its depoliticising nature, and suggests that this perpetuates inequality between development practitioners and project participants (Kothari, 2005). The SMP model can be argued, at least, to have taken a ‘deprofessionalised’ approach, and so it is relevant to ask what that approach looks like, and what its consequences are, from the perspective offered by the

post-development critique. Thirdly, this chapter focuses on international volunteers as this form of practice relates directly to wider societal understandings of aid and development relationships, as evidenced by recent popular debates around the concept of 'voluntourism' in contemporary media.

This chapter is thus directed towards research questions 3 and 4, detailed beneath:

3) How do Scottish participants in Scotland - Malawi partnerships understand the Global South?

4) In what way does the experience of volunteering in Malawi affect Scottish volunteers' perceptions of that country?

Question 3 requires analysis of the existing perceptions of Scottish participants in Scotland - Malawi partnerships in order to establish a clear and robust baseline understanding. Moreover, this chapter considers how these perceptions are formed in order to understand the potential role of the SMP model in influencing perceptions of development. Question 4 considers how the practice of volunteering specifically influences Scottish perceptions of Malawi. This question is used to analyse how perceptions of development are formed through development encounters, and considers whether changes to practice might help to reduce the conceptual marginalisation of countries that receive aid.

The data analysed in this chapter mostly derives from the series of focus groups that I conducted with different groups of young international volunteers. As described in Chapter 3, I engaged two student groups and one school group in focus group sessions before they travelled to Malawi, again whilst they were in Malawi 'on project', and once more after they returned. I further engaged another student group whilst they were in Malawi and on their return, one other whilst they were in Malawi only, and another only when they returned. This longitudinal focus group data is supplemented by observations of volunteers during preparation sessions for their trip, observations whilst they were in Malawi, casual interviews, and is further supplemented by three formal semi-

structured interviews with individuals involved in promoting student volunteering.

This chapter proceeds firstly by providing a summary of the organisations that provided data for this chapter, followed by a brief history of international volunteering. This is followed by section 5.4 that presents analysis of the perceptions of volunteers, with reference to popular contemporary debates around volunteering (research question 3). Section 5.5 then considers how these perceptions are formed specifically through the process of volunteering, and more broadly, how they are influenced by general relations of development (research question 4). The chapter concludes with a summary and an assessment.

## **5.2 Research Participant Information**

This chapter draws upon qualitative data derived from research of volunteers from four different volunteering organisations: Student Volunteers Worldwide (SVW), Glasgow Volunteers International (GVI), Big Volunteering Project (BVP) and Malawi Tomorrow Youth (MaTo Youth). SVW, BVP and GVI are all based at universities, and each organisation sends volunteers to Malawi annually. These organisations are wholly student run and manage relationships with hosting Malawian organisations directly. Students are recruited, trained and supported to fundraise by their sending organisation. Students fundraise contributions towards their travel expenses and charitable donations made to Malawian people, institutions and organisations. All three organisations have attended SMP events, made reference to the SMP partnership principles in preparing volunteers and used the term ‘partnership’ to describe their approach to working between Scotland and Malawi (Field Notes, May / June 2015). These organisations are therefore, to an extent, emblematic of the SMP approach, especially in their use of the narrative of ‘partnership’ to describe their work as being premised on principles of equality.

Volunteers undertake a range of work whilst overseas. In 2015, GVI volunteers facilitated extra-curricular activities at local primary schools, helped local orphan care centres to access external funding and participated in community

development activities, including engaging in awareness raising workshops with a female empowerment group. BVP held sessions on sexual health at a local primary school, offered learning support to inmates at a youth prison, and supported the development of a rural shop intended to generate income for a health clinic. SVW volunteers in 2015 worked on a community based agriculture project, which involved volunteers holding workshops on sustainable agriculture techniques, nutrition and business management. MaTo Youth is an educational charity that supports school aged young people to travel to Malawi. MaTo Youth volunteers fundraise for all of their expenses and charitable contributions. In 2015, MaTo Youth volunteers engaged in painting classrooms and sports activities with Malawian young people. MaTo is the focus of an in-depth case study in the following chapter, though research of this organisation also supports the analysis in this chapter.

Alongside the student groups, this chapter draws on research from two school groups: St Peter's and Bank Street Secondary Schools. These schools have annual trips to Malawi, whereby around 10 young people travel with Scottish teachers from Scotland to Malawi. St Peter's partnership is two-way, with Malawian pupils from their partner school visiting Scotland annually. Moreover, this partnership is focussed on educational exchange, whereby young people attend classes when visiting from Scotland to Malawi and vice-versa. The teacher who established and leads the St Peter's partnership is heavily involved in the SMP, and this school has been used as a case study for the organisation. Young people at St Peter's also received training from the SMP prior to departure in 2015. Bank Street Secondary is not a two-way partnership, and young volunteers from this school spend much of their time in Malawi painting classrooms, visiting other schools and orphan care centres, and playing sports. Bank Street has only had limited involvement with the SMP.

### **5.3 Brief History of International Volunteering**

International volunteering has a long history. In the aftermath of the First World War, European countries came together to arrange youth 'work-camps' to help in the reconstruction effort. After World War II, these activities were formalised under the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS)

with support from the United Nations (CCIVS, 2016). These camps brought together young people from a variety of European countries to one place on the continent, where they worked together on a specific project, with the theory that these interactions would bind the people of Europe together for peace (CCIVS, 2016). Such work camps continue to this day and remain popular in mainland Europe (Alliance, 2015). Indeed, it is this ‘volunteers for peace’ movement that has since been adopted by the EU in the form of well-financed youth programmes to break down cultural barriers between EU countries (Verschelden, et al., 2009). International volunteering for development in the Global South began to arise soon after, most prominently with the formation of President Kennedy’s Peace Corps in 1961, but also the Graduate Volunteer Scheme in Australia in 1951 (Devereux, 2008). Running parallel to this development was the pre- and post-colonial tradition of Christian missionary service (Lewis, 2006) and the movements of international solidarity which, for example, saw people travel to Spain to resist fascism from around Europe (Daftary & McBride, 2004).

In recent years, international volunteering has become more associated with international development work than with peace building and international solidarity, and the number of volunteers taking part in projects in Europe has waned (Alliance, 2015). However, there is little data compiled on the actual numbers of young people who volunteer internationally, and no data to compare those who volunteer in ‘developed’ as opposed to ‘developing’ countries. California based international volunteering organisation Go Overseas has reported, “There is no question that the volunteer abroad industry is constantly growing” (Go Overseas, 2012). In acknowledgement of the lack of data, Go Overseas analysed Google searches to interpret the particular destinations that international volunteers were interested in, as part of a report in 2012. Their list of the top 48 destinations potential volunteers explored on Google featured predominantly developing countries. They provided two reasons for this:

First, ‘Third World’ countries seem like the place where volunteers can have the most impact. Second, volunteers from industrialized, Western countries can get away from the hectic, technology-driven lifestyle back home.

Whilst the organisation acknowledged this, its report also found a significant number of searches exploring the possibility of volunteering in Australia and the US, and it notes that Europe was the only continent not to feature in the top 10. This is interpreted as not surprising “since more volunteer work is needed in developing nations in South America, Africa and Asia” (Go Overseas, 2012, p. 1). This report reflects the popular discourse around international volunteering: i.e., that it is an activity related in some way to helping achieve ‘development’.

In the following section, I analyse data from Scottish international volunteers working in Malawi to consider their perceptions. This exploration relates to contemporary debates around international volunteering, with specific reference to the debate around ‘voluntourism’, to contextualise the analysis of empirical data. Volunteering offers a significant context from which to explore how development discourses are formed, challenged and negotiated. At the same time, it is a relatively under-researched area. Though there is some work on international volunteers and development which explores this in part (Smith & Laurie, 2010; Jones, 2008; Lewis, 2006; Devereux, 2008; Simpson, 2004) these authors note the relatively small amount of academic research conducted in this area.

## **5.4 Development Perceptions**

This section explores the perceptions of volunteers with regard to Malawi, notions of ‘development’ and ‘developing countries’. In a particular way, it also explores the origins of these perceptions to assess the extent to which the emphasis on equality in development, as presented by the SMP, is an influence. Furthermore, this section uses volunteers as emblematic of the deprofessionalised approach promoted by the SMP, and therefore considers what types of perceptions and relationships emerge from this approach. This section firstly (5.4.1) analyses the competing forces which influence the perceptions of volunteers and the discursive dilemma that this gives rise to, followed by a detailed discussion of the concept of ‘voluntourism’ (5.4.2) and what this reveals about the perceptions of volunteers.

### 5.4.1 Discursive Dilemma

In pre-departure focus groups, I engaged volunteers directly in a word association exercise to help explore their perceptions of Africa. Instead of asking what participants associated with Africa, I asked what their family and friends might associate with it. I asked the question in this way, as I expected that had I asked volunteers directly about their own perceptions they would have felt under pressure to give what they felt was the 'right' answer. The responses from GVI, SVW and St Peter's Secondary School were very similar. For example, the GVI responses were as follows:

**So, let us move on, see if we can mind map. I want to use this to explore what people think of Africa. What sort of things does your family and friends think?**

Matthew: Poverty

Gina: Unstable government

Kat: Corrupt

Lizzy: Unsafe

Gina: Ebola

Kat: ...and other, like, tropical diseases as well

Sally: HIV

Janet: No one really thinks of it as a continent. They think of Africa as a country and they kind of generalise the whole place. It's like saying Europe is one place, but there's like so much different shit going on

Gina: People come 'round your door and tell you a child's gonna die every three seconds

John: It's also an assumption that Africa countries are poor, like. People say the life expectancy in Shettleston is less than Zambia. I don't know if that's true, but they use that as something to be ashamed of. Like, if we can be compared to Africa.

GVI 'Before' Focus Group, April 2015

Through this data, it is evident that stereotypes of Africa are very well understood. Each group swiftly recounted what they felt was the popular discourse about Africa: poor, corrupt governments and unsafe. Moreover, they associated this directly with charity (as in Gina's comment above), and their narrative of Africa was defined by its comparison to 'developed' countries (exemplified in John's contribution).

These perceptions reflect the process of 'othering' that post-development theorists argue is rooted in the development discourse. This concept was explored notably by Said in the seminal *Orientalism* (1979), who linked othering specifically to the colonial project. For Said, as the European nations travelled past old boundaries, they established a science of 'orientalism' and alongside it a conceptualisation of uncivilised people. In conceptualising the uncivilised 'other' Said wrote that Europeans function to define themselves in a manner which satisfied them (that which is other is not European, that which is European is not that of the other), and in doing so homogenised vast swathes of the world into one identity and way of life (Said, 1979, p. 3).

The process of othering has a long and rich history in European portrayals and perceptions of Africa. For example, Hegel wrote of Africa that it was "the country of infancy, beyond the daylight of conscious history, wrapped in the blackness of night" (Hegel, 1965, p. 247 in Bayart, 1992, p. 57). This process of othering is reflected in the engagement of religious missionaries, whose education programmes privileged ultimately 'western knowledge', and this was premised on, and associated with, an othering of the cultural artefacts (such as dress) of colonised populations (McCracken, 2012, p. 109). The process of othering also underpins racism in aid-giving countries. Specific to this case, a lack of redressing this othering has been shown to mask the racism that endures



in Scotland (Davidson, et al., 2018, p. 3), and has been related to the popular downplaying of Scotland's complicity in colonial violence (Liinpaa, 2018). Other writers have associated the othering of development specifically with colonial violence, with Pieterse suggesting that development was an extension of the logic of evolutionism that underpinned the colonial era, and was premised on a denigration of the other (Pieterse, 2009, p. 19).

The process of othering was explored specifically from a post-development perspective in Chapter 2. Escobar wrote, for example, of how "representations of Africa are... the heirs of an illustrious genealogy of Western conceptions of those parts of the world" and that representations of these countries as "backward, retarded, insufficiently developed, insufficiently advanced etc." continued from the colonial to the development era (Escobar, 1995, pp. 7, 192). The central contention of post-development theory is that the development discourse continues to affirm colonial othering of Africa through an enduring binary of 'modern' versus 'traditional' societies. Crucially, this binary is rationalised through apparently universal and objective indicators and statistics. For Kothari, by calling into question the objectivity of such indicators, post-development demonstrates that the quality of being or not being 'developed' is rooted firmly in the colonial imagination (Kothari, 2005).

This analysis of the literature helps to interpret the data expressed above. Whilst volunteers in the above extract quickly present knowledge of the stereotypes of Africa, they also express knowledge that these stereotypes are inaccurate. John casts some doubt over the comparison of Zambia to Shettleston, Janet critiques that other people think of Africa as a country, and Gina implies scepticism in her glibness when remarking about charity fundraisers claiming a child dies every three seconds. This sceptical reflection on the discourse of Africa was repeated in other focus groups. For example, Colin from SVW blamed the news media and charity advertising for promoting "myths" about Africa: "whenever you hear about Africa it's about poverty and violence and stuff like that, you never hear anything nice" (SVW 'Before' Focus Group, May 2015). Essentially, that volunteers understand that popular perceptions of Africa are inaccurate reflects their ability to challenge such myths.

However, later in this focus group, volunteers demonstrated that they did not doubt the concept of 'development', and expressed attitudes that reflected their perceptions had been precisely shaped by this concept. One volunteer, Matthew, expressed that the "perceived problems that Africa has, or African countries have, stem from different diseases" which cause "famine and stuff". His contributions were affirmed by another participant, Julie, who suggested that African countries' lack of "treatment and surveillance" leads diseases to have a bigger impact, and by Gina, who suggested that diseases are spread because of a lack of "educational awareness". John then concluded this discussion by stating, "It's also the natural geographical syndrome. Equatorial countries are always going to have problems with diseases because they're warm and there are mosquitoes and stuff" (Matthew, Julie, Gina, John GVI 'Before' Focus Group, May 2015).

What these exchanges demonstrate is that whilst these participants were aware that some perceptions of Africa are stereotypes, their working reflections on Africa were absolutely still shaped by the development discourse. In the discussion about tropical diseases, volunteers engage in a technocratic, non-political theorisation of the causes of poverty in Africa. In doing so, they exhibit many of the key critiques of the development discourse discussed by post-development writers: they generalise across countries, draw on a modernisation-as-development paradigm and ignore global political power inequalities. This demonstrates that challenging stereotypes of Africa is not necessarily accompanied by a challenge of the discourse of development. This amounts to a discursive dilemma as, from a post-development perspective, the process of 'othering' endures through the discourse and relations of development.

This distinction between the critique of stereotypes and the critique of development arose throughout the international volunteer focus groups. With St Peter's Secondary School, I undertook a focus group directly after they had taken part in a training session provided by an SMP member of staff to prepare them for their trip to Malawi. Part of this session included the displaying of images to the school group that represent what one might call romanticised understandings of Malawi. That is to say, mostly images from rural areas of the country, homes with thatched roofs and bicycle taxis. These were then

contrasted with images of wealth in Malawi's urban centres. The activity was intended to display to the school group that their perceptions of Malawi may be inaccurate, and that there was greater diversity in Malawi than they may have expected. I encouraged the group to reflect on this:

**Can I get some feedback from you: do these pictures surprise you, or were you aware that there were some nice buildings, towers and stuff in Malawi?**

Group: No

**And why do you think that is, where do you get these ideas from?**

Angela: Adverts and all that. They never show like that side. Obviously 'cos they want you to help them, but they never show...

Lorraine: Like Comic Relief and all that as well. They don't really show like richer sides of it

St Peter's Secondary School, 'Before' Focus Group, April 2015

Similar to participants in the GVI focus group, members of the St Peter's group demonstrated awareness that stereotypical images of African poverty have a degree of inaccuracy. Moreover, what is interesting about the above example is how Angela justifies the use of inaccurate stereotypes, by suggesting that she understands why they present Africa inaccurately. This argument was repeated throughout the focus groups, for example by Richard from SVW; in the below extract, he reflects on the use of stereotypes in charity fundraising:

Richard: It has two sides. It has the negatives in that it makes the countries look really bad and it sort of obscures any positives that might come from these countries because the media and that will never focus on them. But then it's also good because it does encourage people like us to help, and people to donate, so it hopefully would do good.

SVW 'Before' Focus Group, May 2015

The idea that negative portrayals might have positive outcomes, in that they elicit more donations for causes alleviating poverty, was repeated in each of the focus groups undertaken at this stage of research. This reveals a latent perception amongst volunteers that there was some accuracy in popular depictions of poverty and that it was appropriate, in some cases, to sensationalise poverty to encourage people to give charity. That it was appropriate and admissible to do this implies a neo-liberal understanding of the operation of charities; that they live in a naturally competitive world, and can misrepresent the truth to be successful in this world.

This reflects a discursive dilemma for volunteers, and more broadly for the SMP model. Volunteers engage in volunteering in Africa in response to impressions of poverty there, and in order to assist in efforts to alleviate that poverty. This was evidenced in my research, when volunteers reported that they were volunteering to “do some good”, “to do something positive rather than just working (in Scotland)” and “to help” (GVI, ‘Before’ Focus Group, April 2015). However, in preparation for their trip, volunteers are told that poverty is much more complex than this appears, and that ‘developing’ countries have been stereotyped (Field Notes GVI Training Day, March 2015, and St Peter’s ‘Before’ Focus Group, April 2015). This gives rise to discursive dilemma from a post-development perspective, as volunteers simultaneously rejected stereotypes of poverty yet maintain a developmentalist perspective, which post-development writers argue is intrinsically related to the ‘othering’ of countries that receive aid. This dilemma is furthermore reflected by the SMP in how it presents its model, as it both promotes Scottish involvement in Malawi on the grounds that it is a more ‘effective’ model for alleviating poverty (Ross, 2015), yet also actively critiques traditional models of charity and aid premised only on ‘international development’ (SMP, 2019, p. 1). In a similar way to the volunteers, the SMP seeks to challenge the conceptual marginalisation of Malawi whilst still using a ‘development’ paradigm (such as in arguing for the ‘effectiveness’ of its approach). According to the post-development critique, these two perspectives are incompatible.

Throughout the research, volunteers’ perceptions were found to be closely related to, and shaped by, their perceptions of their role within their projects in

Malawi. Volunteers expressed that they wished to ‘do good’ and work with charities that ‘did good work’ in the country. What ‘doing good’ as an international volunteer means, however, is publically contested, and over recent years the practice has received extensive public critique. Volunteers were aware of this critique, and how it shaped their perceptions is explored in the following section.

#### 5.4.2 Voluntourism

Much of the popular debate around the practice of international volunteering centres of the concept of ‘voluntourism’. Generally, the term refers to a combination of volunteering and tourism, most often associated with short-term engagement in charitable activities in developing countries, alongside touristic travel around the country or region (Clemmons, 2012). The term is usually used with critical intent. Critiques of such practices also target the popular ‘gap year’ programmes offered to young people, which similarly promote tourism in combination with charitable activities in developing countries (Simpson, 2004; Papi, 2013). Such practices have been argued to be harmful to recipient organisations and communities (Simpson, 2007), inherently paternalistic (McLennan, 2014), and their associated images are condemned as crass and distasteful (Dasgupta, 2014)<sup>8</sup>. In this section, I consider the debates surrounding voluntourism at a theoretical level, explore how respondents reflected on these debates and analyse what this reveals about their perceptions of ‘development’.

Critics of voluntourism see the practice as a vehicle for the perpetuation of negative views of developing countries. The programmes which offer opportunities make the practice of international development “doable, knowable and accessible to young travellers”, but in doing so “produce and reproduce particular notions of the ‘Third World’, of ‘other’ and of ‘development’” (Simpson, 2004, pp. 681-682). Moreover, there is the challenging question of who benefits from such activities. In 2006 the most prominent volunteering organisation in the UK, Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), made a

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<sup>8</sup> Dasgupta (2014) is just one of a great number of opinion pieces easily accessible through any search engine. Each critiques voluntourism on largely the same terms, and these critiques dominate the online perceptions of the practice.

statement warning that gap year programmes might become a new form of colonialism, and that their focus on short-term impacts over long term sustainable development can reinforce a perception that volunteering is for the benefit of the volunteer (Devereux 2008).

Moreover, these programmes are seen to embed conceptual marginalisation of countries that receive aid. For example, Simpson argues that:

the absence of ‘a clear pedagogy for social justice’ allows gap year organisations to construct and promote... an image of a ‘Third World other’ that is dominated by simplistic binaries of ‘us and them’, and is expressed through essentialist clichés, where the public face of development is one dominated by the value of Western ‘good intentions’.

Simpson, 2004, p.690

Palacios takes a similar position to Simpson, writing that international volunteering programmes need to “distance themselves from a development aid discourse” to avoid “falling under the umbrella of ‘neo-colonialism’” (Palacios, 2010, p. 861).

Interestingly, this critique of voluntourism was reflected in the focus groups and observations of volunteers. The volunteers I researched were aware of these critiques and keen to distance themselves from this form of practice: projecting the work *they* were doing as superior to that of voluntourism. This type of volunteering was, according to the young people I researched, something engaged in by people who were more interested in what they would gain from the process of volunteering, rather than what they could ‘give’ to the communities they were working with overseas:

Paul: Some people are like, ‘look at me, I’m in Africa helping orphans

Niamh: Yeah people go out for a new picture for facebook

Jenny: Some people are going purely for self-gain

## Outgoing Volunteers Group Discussion: GVI Training Weekend March 2015

In the GVI Training Weekend, quoted from above, volunteers actively critiqued voluntourism. They were led in debates around the concept by GVI coordinators, who are themselves former student volunteers with GVI<sup>9</sup>. At these training sessions, the organisation clearly positioned itself as being against the practice of ‘voluntourism’. In the pre-departure focus groups, then, I followed up on this discussion of voluntourism with the 2015 group of volunteers:

Sally: When I was applying, I looked into other volunteering trips before I went here. I looked into, like, ‘No Borders’ and things like that, which probably are more... they seemed to me a bit more... but I didn’t know anything about voluntourism, but then, when I went to like an GVI talk before it, before applying, I kind of saw the difference in how it would be more useful.

GVI ‘Before’ Focus Group, April 2015

In the extract above, Sally acknowledged that before she applied to volunteer with GVI she “didn’t know anything about voluntourism”, but that attending a talk by GVI helped her see the difference between what they do and what others do. This talk was a presentation by GVI encouraging volunteers to apply for their projects early in 2015. At this presentation, GVI project coordinators actively presented GVI projects as opposed to voluntourism, and used the occasion to critique this form of practice. This critique was prevalent throughout the GVI training weekend, and in the focus groups was found to have a significant impact on the perceptions of volunteers, and how they reflected upon their own practice.

In the pre-departure focus group with GVI volunteers, the critique of voluntourism centred on the idea that the touristic element was self-serving and hedonistic. The narrative emphasised by GVI was that volunteering-for-development should be a form of action that serves ‘charitable ends’ rather than

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<sup>9</sup> After participating in GVI volunteer projects, volunteers are encouraged to continue involvement with GVI as ‘project coordinators’

something which benefits the volunteer. In his exploration of international volunteering, Lewis comments on this, referencing the “anxieties about the disproportionately high levels of benefits which tend to accrue to the server... as against the less positive impacts that may be apparent in relation to the served” (2006, p. 7). These anxieties were reflected in my focus groups and observation of members of this organisation. In such a way, the concept of voluntourism was found to become part of a sort of moral economy, whereby it serves to differentiate the act or engagement of the respondents from the act of others involved in similar activities. Crucially, this individualised their critique and focussed on their perception of the motives of others rather than reflecting on the political or representational issues surrounding the practice. Moreover, it is within the perceived ‘difference’ between what the respondents do, and what they perceive others as doing, that their interpretation of this concept is revelatory of their development perceptions.

This was repeated in the post-project focus group with GVI, when I brought up the concept of ‘voluntourism’ again, reminding the volunteers that they had interpreted GVI’s projects as ‘superior’ to this type of activity before they left. The volunteers maintained their perception that GVI focussed on “sustainable development” in a way that voluntourism organisations did not (GVI ‘After’ Focus Group, October 2015). However, the focus group was poorly attended with only three members of the original group of 10 in attendance. This led those present to criticise some other members of the group for what they interpreted to be ‘voluntouristic’ behaviour on project.

Sian: I think GVI... I think it’s an amazing organisation, but I think the selection process is putting it at the risk of being voluntourism. I think....

Kat: Its desirable to get involved with it because you don’t have to pay that added extra, which could.... emm... encourage people who aren’t / who would like to do a voluntourism trip, who’d be better suited to do a voluntourism trip to apply for it because they don’t have to pay the extra thousand pounds.



In such a way, then, the concept was used in a way that again served to differentiate the speaker from ‘others’ who were seen as engaging in the same practices for the wrong motives. Their fellow volunteers whom they found to be embodying a perception associated with voluntourism were said to be “less polite, less respectful”, apparently laughed and mocked people in a local Malawian market, and were more interested in “having a good time” than having a “sustainable impact” on the community (GVI ‘After Focus Group, October 2015). These members of the group were therefore seen to be more interested in the benefits they could gain than what impact they could have in Malawi, as expressed by Sian below:

Sian: yeah, we had people that just... didn’t, like weren’t really interested in the international development aspect of it. They... I think it was more for a CV or just to get a holiday

GVI ‘After’ Focus Group, October 2015

Throughout the research, voluntourism was always interpreted as a negative thing that ‘other people’ do. Moreover, voluntourism was linked to individuals’ pursuit of self-improvement or enjoyment, rather than an endeavour inspired by selfless motives. This is interesting, as it is highly likely that external observers may interpret the activities that GVI volunteers were involved in as voluntourism. The project involved the selection of unqualified young people in Scotland to travel to Malawi and engage in ‘development work’, many of whom took the opportunity to travel around the countries after they had finished their project activities. On the surface, therefore, they were indistinguishable from projects popularly regarded as ‘voluntourism’. However, alongside the individualised evaluation of the ‘ethics’ of voluntourism, volunteers also asserted their perceived difference from voluntourists based on the work they engaged in whilst in Malawi.

Analysis of the volunteers’ interpretation of what is and is not ‘valuable’ work is revelatory of their development perceptions. How volunteers articulate the positive outputs of their volunteering has been explored in the literature. For example, Jones (2008) has written on international volunteering as a form of

'global work'. What counts as work is socially constructed and varies depending on context (Grint, 2003), yet Jones writes that work is seen as something that individuals and groups 'do' in a material place (Jones, 2008). The interpretation of what type of work is valued differs between the European volunteering initiatives discussed in section 5.3 (which focus on cultural exchange) and the 'north-south' programs that focus on development. Essentially, that volunteers criticised voluntourism for its lack of impact relies upon a having a particular developmentalist worldview. This discussion has further relevance for the SMP, as they often promote cultural exchange between Scotland and Malawi as just as important as traditional forms of development interaction. As stated on the SMP Website, "Our work isn't just about 'international development', with donors on one side and recipients on the other. It's about partnership, about joint working, and about friendship" (SMP, 2019: 'About Us'). The SMP's approach therefore directly relates to conceptions of what is and is not appropriate work for young Scottish people to do in Malawi. This is a central element of the debate around voluntourism.

In both 'before' and 'after' focus groups, GVI volunteers were very concerned with this dilemma over the appropriate activities in which they might engage. Volunteers perceived their main goal to be achieved through the material inputs they made, and regarded the value of cultural exchange as only a by-product of their volunteering. This was exemplified by Sian from GVI in one focus group, when she suggested one of their roles as volunteers was to "try and impart some cultural exchange and say 'this is how we contribute to our country, this is how you can contribute to your economy'" (GVI 'During' Focus Group, July 2015). In such a way, cultural exchange was regarded by the volunteers as a positive by-product of their volunteering, but not an end in itself.

This is further exemplified by how GVI organised their work in Malawi by breaking their activities down into 'funded' and 'non-funded' projects. Both of these parts of their programme were evaluated by volunteers in their relation to hard 'impacts': volunteers understood the non-funded projects as ones in which they used their so-called 'soft-skills' for hard benefits. Using their soft-skills for non-funded projects included activities that are often referred to as 'capacity building'. As explored in Chapter 2, capacity building as a concept has been

interpreted as a means for NGOs based in aid-giving countries to justify their continued purpose (Lister, 2000). In the case of international volunteers, capacity building involves the teaching of ‘soft skills’ and transfer of knowledge from volunteers to recipients of aid, and is sometimes regarded as one way that volunteers can have an impact in the long-term (Schech, et al., 2015). For example, in the case of GVI, volunteers worked with local orphan care centres to help them apply for external funding from local Malawian businesses. A focus on capacity building is, according to Devereux, one of the fundamental ways that international volunteers are a positive resource in international development (Devereux, 2008). This position appears to have been shared by many GVI volunteers, revealed in their critique of the practice of voluntourism for its lack of tangible outputs. This can be seen to reveal the ultimately developmentalist perspective embedded in the critique of voluntourism.

The emphasis on ‘capacity building’ in conventional development studies implicitly accepts the focus on material models of development. It does this through its justification of ‘soft’ exchanges in terms of their ‘hard’ outputs. It is therefore one of the ways that modernisation-as-development theory maintains its paradigmatic primacy in the industry. This is reflected in the following extract, when three GVI volunteers considered how they would have an ‘impact’ on Malawi despite them being unskilled volunteers:

**What will you do, as unskilled volunteers?**

John: Educate

Julie: Encourage them to do more themselves

Kat: I think... I’m not sure, but out there, I think even just having white people come and like, you know, show that they’re interested in being surrounded by them can motivate them to do more stuff themselves as well...

Kat: You could be like teaching them, like, different ways of... like new different ways of teaching Maths and English. Like, if they’re just using a worksheet then you bringing in interactive ways and like planting things,

and doing it in different ways can motivate one person who's just not motivated at all...and that would be like... a good thing

GVI, 'Before' Focus Group, April 2015

In a direct way, this extract is evidence of how the practice of voluntourism is interpreted as affirming colonial stereotypes; when Kat asserts that “just having white people come” can make an impact. However, the model that these volunteers contrast voluntourism with is also problematic. In their pursuit of having an ‘impact’ and trying to relate everything they do in Malawi to tangible outcomes, they are expressing a view shaped by the paradigm of modernisation-as-development. Moreover, this perception reproduces a colonial vision in which Europeans are active agents in having an impact, and Africans are passive recipients.

In short, the way that volunteers critiqued voluntourism was revelatory of their own deeply held developmentalist perspectives, and how this perspective is embedded in the popular critique of voluntourism. The impact that volunteers regarded as evidence of real ‘sustainable development’ was always associated with ‘hard’, ‘material’ inputs, and when only soft-skills were shared (for example, on volunteer teaching projects) these were justified on the grounds that they were ‘capacity building’. Capacity building is, of course, a way that non-material development exchanges can be quantified and regarded as having material outputs. The critical discourse regarding voluntourism therefore dismisses non-material exchanges as lacking value and as such perpetuates the perception that developing countries are objects for particular kinds of intervention. In this respect, the **critique** of voluntourism is born out of and perpetuates the modernisation-as-development discourse. The **practice** of voluntourism is also born out of and perpetuates this discourse and it is within that discursive trap that volunteers found themselves. Moreover, the popular rejection of non-material volunteer activities can discourage organisations from promoting ‘cultural exchange’ as an end in and of itself. This form of activity, in fact, can be effective in dismantling the conceptual marginalisation of developing countries, and is an achievable goal, whereas the material inputs of

volunteers will only ever be of marginal benefit to host countries (as also argued by Palacios, 2010).

In summary, the case of voluntourism demonstrates how the modernisation-as-development discourse shapes popular and individual perceptions of countries that receive aid. This was demonstrated through the critique by respondents of appropriate behaviour for volunteers to engage in when travelling to developing countries, and that they justified the value of volunteering on the grounds of tangible 'impact'. Essentially, the way that the volunteers, and popular debates, critique voluntourism derives from an explicitly modernisation-as-development paradigm. Moreover, from a post-development perspective, this paradigm contributes to the conceptual marginalisation of countries that receive aid, in that it defines all countries by relation to industrialised nations, and requires the relations between aid-giving and aid-receiving countries to be characterised along this donor-recipient hierarchy. Whilst voluntourism can be interpreted as the embodiment of a 'charity approach' to development, such as that discussed in the previous chapter, this analysis has used the post-development critique to explore in detail how the development discourse also perpetuates the dominance of aid-giving over aid-receiving countries.

Cavalcanti (2007) wrote about the 'developmentalist worldview', which is both more widespread and guilty of perpetuating the conceptual marginalisation of developing countries than voluntourism. In his study of a goat-rearing project in Brazil, Cavalcanti found development workers exhibiting this worldview and finding it inconceivable that the intended beneficiaries may not want to change their practices despite the financial incentives to do so, provided by development funding. The development workers therefore engaged in a manufacturing of needs that served their steadfast resolve to transform the community. Moreover, this worldview can be seen in the development workers' interpretations of community members as "stupid and lazy" because they did not want to "change their lives for the better" (Cavalcanti, 2007, p.87). The developmentalist worldview derives from the modernisation-as-development perspective, and this is also exhibited by those who critique voluntourism because of its lack of hard inputs. The following section explores the impact of the practice of volunteering on the development of these perceptions, and

specifically considers how the relations of development shape such as developmentalist worldview.

## **5.5 Impact of Volunteering on Perceptions**

Section 5.4.1 demonstrated that whilst volunteers are critical of traditional stereotypes of global poverty, and Africa specifically, they also justify the use of these stereotypes on the grounds that they serve the function of building support for 'development' and aid. Section 5.4.2 further demonstrated that volunteers maintain a developmentalist worldview, and that this underpins the way that they perceive countries that receive aid, and the recipients of that aid. This final section is split up into two sub-sections and draws on my longitudinal data in order to ask how the practice of volunteering shaped such perceptions.

### **5.5.1 Fundraising**

In international volunteering, it is common for volunteers to fundraise money to engage in their projects. This is a necessity of many non-professional development organisations, which are an important component of the SMP model. Volunteers with GVI and SVW fundraised for the activities in Malawi, as well as to pay for their food and accommodation, which were provided via the contribution they made to the NGOs that hosted them. Volunteers with these organisations paid for their own flights, inoculations and leisure activities in Malawi. Another student group (engaged only in 'during' and 'after' focus groups) only fundraised for their activities in Malawi (such as resources for school workshops and charitable donations), and volunteers with that organisation had to pay for their own accommodation and food. The school group I engaged in all three sessions, St Peter's, fundraised to pay for their entire trip, which meant that a majority of the money each young person raised paid for their flights, accommodation and leisure activities in Malawi. The two groups engaged from the Malawi Tomorrow (MaTo) project (both school-aged groups) followed the same model as St. Peter's.

How volunteers fundraised, and how they reflected on their fundraising in this research, reveals how this practice can be seen to influence their perceptions.

For example, in the extract below two students from St Peter's reflect on an experience when they were challenged on their fundraising:

Carly: Aye 'cos when we were doing the fundraising like to come here... someone came up to me and Sophie and said...

Lorraine: aww yeah, at Tesco

Carly: Uhuh, and put money in the bucket and said to me "well instead of going over to another country, why don't you think about your own first". But I was thinking... well, we have, like our country has the money to help people in poverty. And at least people in poverty here have things... like they have food banks, they have help. Whereas over here they don't really have any of that. So I was about to say to the guy... we actually do, we do go over there to do something to change people's lives, whereas you're sitting here complaining to me you're not doing anything about it

Teresa: A larger majority of here is in poverty... compared to somewhere in Britain

St Peter's Secondary School, 'During' Focus Group, June 2015

In the extract above, the young people are forced to justify their fundraising, and they do so by drawing on a narrative of Western intervention to alleviate global poverty. In a sense, the common critique of international aid forced the young people to reach for tropes of global poverty as a counter argument. This is revelatory of how the practice of fundraising, a necessity for this form of action in development, helped to reproduce particular expressions of global poverty and Africa. Moreover, how the volunteers used this expression of global poverty reflected how the discourse around development reproduces ideas of passive Africans requiring intervention from active Europeans, such as when Carly states, "we do go over there to do something to change people's lives". This evidences again the analysis in section 5.4.1 that demonstrated how the development discourse is embedded in perceptions of development even within arguments that critique popular stereotypes. Crucial to this example, however,

is that the stereotypical presentation of global poverty in a public space is maintained precisely through the practice of fundraising.

Having engaged in this fundraising, volunteers reflected in focus groups on the ways in which they had explained their contributions whilst in Malawi. In the following extract from the 'during' focus group with volunteers from Bank Street Secondary School (under the auspices of MaTo), volunteers and their teacher consider what impact their fundraised money had had on Malawi:

**So what was everyone's best bit?**

Ms Donnelly: I very much liked yesterday 'cos the head teacher said that... emm... she's expecting exam results to be better this year in standard 7 and 8 'cos they're in the classrooms we painted last year, and she thought it was a much better environment for their learning. And that's really good sort of impact

**Yeah that's good. What other benefits do you think there has been from you guys being here?**

Ryan: for the kids or?

**For anything**

Ryan: I suppose they've learned new dances!

Ms Donnelly: the young folk at Chichiri have learned how to paint. They can maybe take that forward then. They can maybe, some people; maybe does some sort of a vocation project, some people could actually go on to use that still.

Bank Street Secondary School, 'During' Focus Group, June 2015

In the extract above, the teacher who had led the school group was keen to express her perception of the impact that their project had had on the community. Relating to the emphasis on hard outcomes discussed above, Ms



Donnelly focussed on the ‘vocational skills’ volunteers might have imparted to the Malawian school students who helped paint the classroom. The students in this focus group appeared less confident in identifying what the ‘impact’ of their work was, though Ryan’s reference to “learning new dances” is significant. Of course, in justifying the fundraising efforts that volunteers engage in, facilitators of these school partnerships like Ms Donnelly may have in mind the expectations of those who helped fund the trip. Often these expectations are interpreted by actors as necessitating ‘tangible’ or ‘hard’ outcomes. The cultural exchange element of international volunteering (such as ‘learning new dances’) is less valued. This can again be related to the neo-liberal form of exchange created by the development discourse, described in section 5.4.1, whereby social life in developing countries is viewed as a technical problem requiring technical interventions. Through fundraising, this becomes an economic exchange whereby donors purchase impact through the medium of development interventions: in this case, via international volunteers. Moreover, this is one of the ways that the conceptual marginalisation of people in countries that receive aid is maintained. This logic of development is premised on a concept of active donors intervening upon passive recipients (Kothari, 2005), and devalues forms of practice such as two-way cultural exchange which actually could be more effective in challenging the “development gaze” and creating the conditions for new kinds of engagement (Escobar, 1995, p. 155).

Associated with the impact of fundraising is the management of social expectations and the self-presentation of volunteers when they return to Scotland. In several of the focus group sessions participants brought up the perceptions of their families in relation to Malawi. In the following extract, a member of the MaTo Youth Group reflects on returning from Malawi:

Amy: It was weird (coming back). People were coming up and asking us, like, “what did you do, what did you do?” and we were telling them, like; I think they were expecting us to be telling them like “oh my God, we saw kids, like, begging”. Just constantly, you know. I don’t know about you, but I think they were expecting us to like say like really bad stuff that happened in Malawi.

MaTo Youth Group, 'After' Focus Group, October 2015

This similar experience was repeated in the focus groups, such as by Kat from GVI

**Have you found that when talking to your family and friends, like, do they get it?**

Kat: Yeah, no, I think the... when you come back and tell stories people are like "what? So they had computers?" Cos we were doing computer lessons, and they're just like "oh okay".

GVI, 'After' Focus Group, October 2015

And by Molly from St Peter's Secondary School:

Molly: They have like a kinda sinister idea of what it's like, my Mum and Dad do, like quite old fashioned views... Like sort of like, it's dangerous and all that.

St Peter's Secondary School, 'After' Focus Group, October 2015

These well-established images of Africa were therefore seen as conflicting with the 'reality' that the volunteers had experienced in country. In the pre-departure focus group with GVI, Janet reflected on her family's perceptions of her volunteering:

Janet: My family were kind of like this is my place to save, if there's any way... like, "oh your going out there and you're gonna save the world" - I'm like, "yeah!" but yeah it's so naive. They thought that this was my place to like make my mark, but like, I'm so tiny compared to this country. Like, they have no idea.

GVI 'Before' Focus Group, April 2015

Janet considers her family to have a particularly idealised vision of what it means to be a volunteer in a ‘developing’ country. This reflects what Simpson refers to as the way that international volunteering creates a “publically accepted ‘mythology’ of development”, which reinforces the idea that “there is a ‘need’” and that “European young people have the ability, and right, to meet this need” (Simpson, 2004, p. 682). This narrative reinforces the conceptual marginalisation of developing countries, and reflects how the development discourse creates the spaces through which countries that receive aid are “known, specified and intervened upon” (Escobar, 1995, p. 45). However, what this example shows specifically is how the recreation of an ‘othering’ of countries through the practice of volunteering is perpetuated by the expectations of social structures that surround them. In short, it is not the practice alone which perpetuates this conceptual marginalisation, but rather, it only achieves this because of the public discourse which already exists around development. Several volunteers recounted experiences that were similar to this, and talked about the fact that they had to navigate these expectations when recounting their experiences in Malawi. This is intrinsically connected to the impact of fundraising on perceptions, as most often the same people who contributed to fundraising efforts are the people who have these expectations about what experience the volunteer would or did have. Therefore, the volunteers are constrained in how they can express and interpret their role in Malawi by the expectations that surround their role. Rather than engaging in of a form of practice which perpetuates ‘othering’, volunteers can be interpreted as engaging in a practice which is emblematic of the ‘othering’ that the wide development discourse itself perpetuates.

### **5.5.2 Development Encounters**

This chapter has so far established that volunteers exhibited a ‘developmentalist worldview’. This was shown, for example, through their critique of voluntourists, and the related criticism of volunteering actions that did not have hard or tangible ‘development’ outcomes attached. This was a widespread perspective found throughout the focus groups. For example, in the post-project focus group with SVW, John recalled a moment between project activities when he got chatting with some local woman in the rural village he was volunteering in,

which he highlighted as a good example of cultural exchange. He then followed up by adding that he tried to turn this conversation into one of “gender roles” by telling these women how it was to be a woman in Scotland. Essentially, he turned an everyday interaction into a ‘development relation’ with an active input and intended outcome (SVW ‘After’ Focus Group, August 2015). This section explores how the preparation of volunteers by their sending organisation, the activities volunteers engaged in, and the subsequent encounters with their Malawian counterparts shaped these perceptions.

In the pre-departure focus group with SVW, volunteers exhibited clearly how they had been prepared by the organisation to have a developmentalist approach to their activities. When asking volunteers what their fears and expectations for their trip were, one participant remarked that he was concerned the community in Malawi would not “realise the stuff SVW were trying to achieve”. Another commented that he was glad the work they were going to do was “teaching based” because “when you teach the adults, they pass it on, and on to their children, and then hopefully when their children have children it will just keep passing down”. Volunteers described how they would not see “impact” of their project on the community for a number of years, but that they hoped in the short term community members would start to hear their message: such as the message of the importance to eat 5 portions of fruit or vegetables everyday (SVW ‘Before’ Focus Group, May 2015).

These examples clearly show that the SVW volunteers had been prepared to play the role of a development worker by the sending organisation and the way that their activities in Malawi had been structured. This can be seen to have shaped the perceptions of SVW volunteers during and after returning from Malawi. In the post-project focus group, volunteers reflected on their “simple but very effective” interventions such as promoting the construction of “smokeless stoves” and holding nutritional classes to discourage Malawians “over-reliance on maize” (SVW ‘After’ Focus Group, August 2015). The promotion of so called ‘smokeless stoves’ is a popular development activity throughout Malawi, and involves the construction of firewood stoves in rural areas which are considerably more fuel-efficient and clean than traditional cooking methods (Concern Universal, 2012). It is therefore a common activity for professional

development organisations to engage in, and had become part of the SVW activities following the recommendation of Scottish volunteers. The nutritional workshops engaged in by volunteers were similarly the idea of Scottish volunteers from SVW, who proposed this activity to their Malawian host organisation, who accepted (Field Notes, Malawi, June 2015). What this example demonstrates is that SVW volunteers exhibited a developmentalist worldview partly because they were engaging in development activities whilst in Malawi, and because this is the way that their project had been premised. From a post-development perspective, this reflects the way that the development discourse turns all aspects of social life into objects for technical interventions, and through this process perpetuates the othering of countries that receive aid.

Furthermore, it is notable in this example that SVW was adopting the practices of professional aid agencies, but without the extensive knowledge or understanding of these practices. This led volunteers to engage in the construction of smokeless stoves without consulting or aligning with the appropriate civic authorities in Malawi, and to promoting public health nutritional guidance from the UK (eating five portions of fruit or vegetables daily) in Malawi. From a post-development perspective, this example demonstrates how the discourse of development was embedded in the practice of SVW. The logic of development led volunteers to assume that Western nutritional advice would have a positive public health impact in Malawi without consideration of other factors. Moreover, this pattern of student volunteers being placed in positions of considerable authority, in a country they did not know, was repeated throughout my research.

In each of the groups I engaged, volunteers were regularly placed in situations of significant authority and expected to make decisions based on their assessment of what would have the greatest impact. In the mid-project focus group, GVI volunteers debated which organisation in the area they should provide funding to for a computer, with some respondents judging that the intended recipient was not sufficiently trustworthy to receive one (GVI 'During' Focus Group, July 2015). During my time spent with the volunteers, they regularly made decisions over the allocation of their spending throughout the community, including the allocation of resources to orphan care centres, a local school for disabilities and

two youth groups. Another visiting volunteering organisation, BVP, had their project in another town, where they taught classes in a prison, wrote a business plan for a rural shop (with profits intended to go to a local hospital) and undertook regular sexual health workshops for children and young people in nearby schools (BVP 'During' Focus Group, July 2015). Alongside their nutritional work, SVW promoted sustainable agricultural techniques, and made decisions over which villages deserved enough to receive seeds and livestock (SVW 'After' Focus Group, August 2015). Each of these projects were led by unskilled, unqualified students who had no prior experience in international development, yet the young people were trusted to make important decisions on the functioning of their projects.

The volunteers on these projects were therefore thrown into a development context that they had little experience of, and expected to perform as development workers offering advice and insights into areas that they had very little understanding of. In these occasions, the structures of volunteering appear to have shaped the 'developmentalist worldview' held by volunteers. They viewed Malawi through this lens because that is the role that they were given on their projects, making decisions based on maximising impact for development. In such a way, this example shows how this form of practice privileges agents of aid, and how the developmentalist worldview perpetuates a conceptual marginalisation of countries that receive aid. Moreover, through these examples the practice of student volunteering can clearly be interpreted as another site in which the development discourse can be seen to reproduce a deeply unequal set of relations.

## 5.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to investigate how ideas and concepts of development and the relationship between aid-giving and aid-receiving countries are produced and developed. This relates to the central purpose of this thesis, as perceptions are fundamental to the post-development critique and generally to the marginalisation of developing countries; a marginalisation that the SMP are attempting to challenge. Volunteers were used as a focus for this topic because they embody certain aspects of the SMP model, in particular its

deprofessionalised approach to development. Therefore, this chapter sought to use volunteers as a case through which to study perceptions of development and how these are shaped by practice.

In section 5.4, I addressed research question 3, which sought to establish a detailed baseline understanding of the development perceptions of participants. The chapter demonstrated two key findings. Firstly, it demonstrated that participants were critical of popular media messaging in relation to Africa and global poverty, but maintained an uncritical view of the concept of 'development'. Moreover, it also found that participants felt misrepresentations of global poverty were justifiable on the grounds that it helped organisations to fundraise and promote their work. This finding was shown to constitute a discursive dilemma for efforts to foster greater equality in development from within relations of development. Secondly, this section demonstrated through the case of voluntourism that participants held on to a 'developmentalist worldview'. That is, in spite of their critique of some popular presentations of countries that receive aid, the discourse of development was still foundational to how they interpreted action in countries that receive aid.

In section 5.5, I addressed research question 4, which sought to understand how the practice of volunteering specifically might have influenced these perceptions. In relation to the perception on stereotypes of global poverty, I presented evidence that volunteers are compelled to engage in this process themselves through fundraising for their trips. Moreover, volunteers were shown to attempt to meet familial expectations in how they performed and reported on their experience as a volunteer. This led to their external presentation of their experience drawing from media tropes and stereotypes as much as from the reality of their experience. Rather than the process itself perpetuating an 'othering' of countries that receive aid, as some critics of voluntourism have argued (e.g. Simpson, 2004), I argued that the practice only contributes to perpetuating this conceptual marginalisation through the wider discourse of development. The associated 'mythology' of developing countries used in international volunteering programmes should be interpreted as emblematic of the way that countries are 'known' through the discourse of development, not as an isolated form of practice. Secondly, this section presented evidence that

demonstrated that the developmentalist worldview of volunteers could have drawn from the role volunteers were expected to play in Malawi. Volunteers were tasked with the role of trainee development workers, making decisions on funding and implementation of projects with little or no local knowledge or experience. This was shown to have led volunteers to maintain a strong developmentalist worldview after they returned from project, as this was precisely the lens through which they had been expected to view Malawi in performing their role. This was provided as an example of the precise way that the discourse of development is recreated through forms of development practice.

In conclusion, this chapter has explored perceptions of development in order to understand how the conceptual marginalisation of countries who receive aid could be reduced. This is a central concern of post-development. The findings presented in this chapter demonstrate how the discourse of development compels particular ways of seeing and knowing countries who receive aid, and that even when there are attempts at resisting some stereotypes, the unequal relations of donors over recipients are maintained.



# Chapter 6 Case Study: Malawi Tomorrow

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## 6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to draw on detailed empirical work to better understand what the SMP principles of partnership and reciprocity mean in practice when implemented by its member organisations, and to bring a post-development lens to critically assess that practice. This is related to the central purpose of this thesis, which is to assess what the SMP can learn from the post-development critique. The findings presented in this chapter contribute to answering the central research question through detailed analysis of one SMP member: the Scottish-based educational charity, Malawi Tomorrow (MaTo). As a membership based organisation, it is only through understanding how members apply the SMP model that the central research question can be answered, and this chapter analyses this aspect of the SMP using the post-development critique.

This case study approach was utilised to facilitate in-depth focussed analysis of mixed methods data. As such, this chapter draws upon interviews with MaTo project staff, focus groups with MaTo youth volunteers, and textual analysis of written material by volunteers, volunteer leaders and the organisation's promotional material. Analysis of this material provides rich insight into what application of the SMP principles means in practice, the external forces which impact upon this application, and how participants negotiate competing discourses of development in public and private spaces.

This chapter therefore directly addresses research question 5, partially contributes to answering research question 4, and provides analysis used to address the central research question.

- 4) In what way does the experience of volunteering in Malawi affect Scottish volunteers' perceptions of that country?
- 5) What challenges are faced by member organisations in trying to implement the SMP model?

Research question 4 is addressed, as in the previous chapter, through analysis of how MaTo volunteers interpret their experience, and specifically how this is shaped by the SMP principles applied by MaTo. Research question 5 is addressed through analysis of the internal and external forces that impact upon the success of MaTo's attempts to implement the SMP principles. Answering this question is vital to establishing a detailed understanding of how the SMP approach is being implemented by its members, and what challenges there are towards successfully embedding the principles of reciprocity and partnership in practice. Moreover, answering this question requires consideration of the post-development position on co-optation. As explored in Chapter 2, post-development accounts argue that the success of the discourse of development in maintaining paradigmatic authority comes through the internationalisation of the discourse amongst populations and the process of co-opting alternatives (Ospina & Masullo-Jimenez, 2017). In the case of participatory development, for example, the co-optation process brought these techniques into the formal industry, removing their potential to foster alternatives to "ethnocentric perceptions of reality specific to Northern industrialised countries" and turning them to mechanisms for the proliferation of the modernisation-as-development discourse (Rahnema, 1992, p. 121). In answering this research question, this chapter analyses in detail the extent to which a similar process of co-optation can be seen to have occurred with regards to the SMP model and its pursuit of a more equal development.

This chapter begins with a description of MaTo and places it in the context of the wider SMP membership (section 6.2). This is followed by analysis of the perspectives of leading figures in MaTo, and what this reveals about the organisation's approach (6.3). This is followed by comparative analysis of a series of findings which provide evidence of the organisation's practice in real terms, and consideration of the respective internal and external forces that shape its implementation (6.4, 6.5, 6.6). Thereafter, I present analysis of how participants manage the tension that arises between the rhetoric and practice of the organisation (6.7). The chapter concludes with an assessment of research question 5, and of MaTo and the SMP in reference to the central research question of this thesis.

## 6.2 Malawi Tomorrow

MaTo was established in 2011. The organisation supports a number of schools in Malawi, through which teachers from Malawi and Scotland engage in two-way exchanges. Since the first Scottish teachers travelled to Malawi in 2012, 35 staff members have travelled to Malawi to work in schools and early childhood development centres (MaTo Website, 2016). In this period, there have been three visits of Malawian teachers to Scottish schools, and in total 16 Malawians have come to Scotland as part of the programme (MaTo Website, 2016). The programme was initially developed with the sole aim of developing education in Malawi, but this aim has now been changed to a two-way exchange, with benefits for both Scottish and Malawian participants (Ms Sharon Hill, Project Manager, MaTo, Interview August 2015). The website notes that this change came about as the project evolved, and Ms Hill who established the project writes that she gradually came to appreciate the benefits that the project could also have on schools and young people in Scotland (MaTo Website, 2016). In this regard, the organisation is embedding the aspect of ‘reciprocity’ into its programme design, which is in line with the SMP’s stated approach. The principle of ‘reciprocity’ is one of the SMP partnership principles (SMP, 2016b, p.1), and can be seen to be emblematic of its relational approach, in that it emphasises a shift away from what the SMP refers to as the “traditional paradigm” of a one-way “endless transfer of aid” (Ross, 2015, p. 3).

MaTo developed organically via the chance meeting of a few individuals. A Scottish head teacher, whose school was already engaged with projects in Malawi since 2006, travelled to the country in 2008 with the Scottish NGO Food for Thought to find a specific school with which to partner. By chance, he shared accommodation with the education manager for a regional education division in Malawi. After three years building a partnership between his school and a community secondary school in Malawi, one of the teachers most involved with the partnership approached Ms Hill to suggest expanding their work to include schools across Scotland. This style of organic project development is specifically promoted by the SMP, who see the ‘people-to-people’ approach as embodied in such partnerships. As explored in previous chapters, these non-professional, people-to-people links are placed at the heart of the SMP model, and based on

“ordinary people and local communities [being] mobilised to offer their time, energy, resources, experience and expertise”, in a way that draws from the “democratic and communitarian traditions both in Scotland and Malawi to move away from hierarchical and top-down approaches in favour of working from below” (Ross, 2015, p. 11). This is another example of how MaTo can be seen to be representative of the SMP approach with its emphasis on the importance of personal connections for building ‘partnerships’ between the two countries, rather than only institutional or governmental bilateral links.

Moreover, the method of implementation taken by MaTo is fairly typical of the SMP membership more generally. The transfer of professional staff from Scotland and Malawi is common in education, but also in health (SMP, 2015b), policing (Scotsman, 2016) and governance (Scottish Parliament, 2010). Having said that, the two-way exchange of staff between Scotland and Malawi is more prevalent in the education sector than in any other and it is promoted and encouraged by the SMP (Christopher, SMP Staff, Interview, January 2015). MaTo is a member organisation of the SMP, and representatives of the organisation have been involved in the SMP member forums for many years. At these forums, the SMP promote their particular approach to development, and regularly use the SMP ‘partnership principles’ to direct discussions. These forums are therefore one of the key ways that the SMP promotes its perspective amongst the membership, and many other SMP members suggested that the partnership principles themselves had shaped their practice, determining how they undertake needs assessments (Tom, SMP Member, Healthcare NGO, Interview, May 2015) or shaping their wider strategies (Michael, SMP Member, Student Volunteering NGO, Interview, May 2015). However, it is important to note that whilst MaTo representatives attend SMP events and are generally supportive of the organisation’s perspective, they arrange their own activities and training sessions for volunteers.

In 2012 a specific ‘youth’ element of MaTo was developed, which involves the sending of Scottish young people to Malawi (though, notably, this is not a two-way exchange programme). MaTo Youth is a programme within MaTo, which is the registered charity through which both the teacher exchange and youth projects operate. Since 2012, four teams of young people have travelled to

Malawi directly through this programme. MaTo Youth volunteers have themselves been involved in SMP activities, including in sharing their work at the SMP annual forum for young people. In 2015, as explained already, I engaged two of these teams in focus groups, one in Malawi and another after their return to Scotland. The interviews undertaken for this case study include those with Ms Hill, the founder and Project Manager of MaTo. I further engaged Mr Paul Melville in interview, the coordinator of MaTo, and Mr Tim Graham, the coordinator of MaTo Youth. Whilst the youth element is a separate programme within MaTo, each participant had awareness of both the teacher exchange and the youth programmes.

In short, whilst MaTo is an independent charity and therefore not under the institutional control of the SMP, its approach and values are representative of the SMP approach. It is therefore a fruitful organisation through which to explore the SMP approach in practice, and as an SMP member, analysis of MaTo also provides insights into how the SMP promotes its approach through its membership.

### **6.3 MaTo Approach**

The MaTo approach therefore shares a great deal with the SMP approach. This is particularly evidenced in its aim to develop education in both Scotland and Malawi, which represents a shift in the presentation of international development activities, as previous development activities operating from a “charity paradigm” would not have openly advertised their emphasis on self-benefit from their engagement (Ooms, et al., 2010, p.17; Glennie & Sumner, 2015). Moreover, that MaTo engages in a two-way teacher exchange between Malawi and Scotland signifies again the organisation’s incorporation of the principle of ‘reciprocity’. This section draws upon the post-development critique to analyse this approach in greater detail.

In an interview, the MaTo Project Manager stated that she felt passionate that her organisation would have a ‘new’ perspective on international development that was not associated with the ‘charity paradigm’. When I asked about the

inception of MaTo, Ms Hill remarked on her personal principles which she presented as being reflected in the organisation:

I have... fundamental principles that it needs to be a two-way partnership... that we are not the great white hope; that there is a strong education system in Malawi, they just need help to help themselves. So we need to start with the premise that education is not broken; that they have integrity; that they have their own Malawian education.

Ms Hill, MaTo Project Manager, Interview, August 2015

In the extract above, Ms Hill makes her focus clear on MaTo being a two-way partnership, and that it must be premised on respect for the autonomy of Malawian actors and institutions. Again, straightforwardly, this aligns with the SMP approach. However, interestingly, Ms Hill relates this approach, which respects the agency of Malawian actors, with a neo-liberal economic attitude in suggesting that “they just need to help themselves”. As described in Chapter 2, post-development has been interpreted by some critics as offering a theoretical justification for neo-liberal development interventions. Schuurman (2000) argues, for example, that in imprecisely calling for ‘local perspectives’ and through its general critique of state controlled development programmes, post-development is anti-state and therefore can be used to justify neo-liberal development perspectives. This is problematic for post-development, as it misaligns post-development theory from the intended political allegiances of its key proponents (Ziai, 2004). This misalignment is evidenced in the contribution from Ms Hill above, as she relates her perspective that Malawians have agency with a depoliticised attitude that this means they can “help themselves”. This potential complicity between individualised notions of the causes of poverty and an alleged respect for the agency of aid-recipients has the potential to be problematic for the SMP more generally, as it suggests that respecting agency is accompanied by denial of the economic structures that cause global poverty. This finding is returned to throughout this chapter.

Furthermore, in interview, Ms Hill related her perspective on the agency of aid-recipients to her rejection of the racialised colonial relations which she saw as

characterising some forms of international charity. Essentially, Ms Hill promotes her organisation as a horizontal, two-way education development programme, as opposed to a traditional, binary, donor-recipient hierarchy model of 'development'. However, through so doing, she draws again upon individualistic economic politics, and an emancipatory perspective of institutional education:

Ms Hill: Therefore, we are not coming in to take 'Biff and Chip' into the schools. This is about; how do we build the capacity of Malawian teachers to better help themselves? There is a lovely synergy in that our children have lives affected by poverty, and in Malawi they have lives affected by poverty; therefore, in Malawi, wouldn't it make sense if we do the same thing? Which is 'education is key'.

By 'Biff and Chip' Ms Hill refers to the classic reading tools currently used in schools in Scotland from the Oxford Reading Tree. She stresses here and throughout the interview her perspective that the solutions to the challenges faced by the education system in Malawi are not unique to Malawi, nor to Africa or 'developing countries', but that they are perpetuated by poverty which exists internationally. Essentially, through her respect for the agency of Malawians and the importance of reciprocity, Ms Hill is rejecting of the term 'development' as a 'thing' that needs to happen only in countries that receive aid. Rather, she regards 'development' as something for all countries of the world, and not a useful category through which to interpret only countries that receive aid. As described in Chapter 2, this view is aligned with that of the UN Sustainable Development Goals which are a step towards ending the use of the term 'developing' to refer straightforwardly to all countries of the world that receive aid (Sachs, 2017). From a post-development perspective, this can be regarded as a signal that development's "regime of representation" (Escobar, 1995) might be diminishing. However, what this contribution shows is that this attitude is also aligned with neo-liberal attitude of individual responsibility for success ("how do we build the capacity of Malawian teachers to better help themselves"). Essentially, the rejection of 'developing country' as a category through which to interpret countries that receive aid (which is a wholly post-development argument, provided by (Esteva, 1992) most eloquently) is aligned in this example

with a disregarding of the economic structures that cause global poverty in favour of individualised notions of personal responsibility.

Tim Graham, the MaTo Youth Coordinator, expressed similar views on charity, 'development' and the work of MaTo. Like Ms Hill, he critiqued racialised colonial relations between Scotland and Malawi, like when he remarked that he "cringed" at the idea that people thought of MaTo as a project through which "all these white people are going to Africa". In the extract beneath, he presents this perspective with reference to the activities he was coordinating for the MaTo young volunteers:

I've got a programme that I should send you from last year, and basically they look at citizenship, you know, they look at each other. They look at the young person in Scotland - "who am I, what am I, what do I do?". They then look at Malawi - "who, what, what do I do?". They look at school lives, they look at home lives, they do comparatives. They do comparative works and they talk about interests, life as young people, and they talk about health. And they begin to explore things... but then there's the traditional "activity" and I think the traditional activity is taking a back seat. You know, "lets paint schools". Forget that. Not into that.

Mr Graham, MaTo Youth Coordinator, Interview July 2015

In the extract above, Mr Graham clearly demonstrates that he has a similar attitude towards 'development' as Ms Hill, inasmuch as he emphasises the universality of issues such as 'citizenship' and the school and home lives of young people internationally. He emphasises the sameness of the young people in Malawi and the young people in Scotland, and in doing so rejects the traditional 'development' paradigm that emphasises difference and 'otherness' of aid recipients. How development embeds this 'othering' of aid recipients is well documented already in this thesis, and is based on the view that the logic of modernisation-as-development, coupled with the economic power of some countries and the legacy of colonialism, perpetuated individual identities of 'developed' compared to 'undeveloped' peoples (Shrestha, 1995). By



emphasising the need for comparative learning between young people in Scotland and Malawi, Mr Graham is essentially acknowledging that development has fostered this process of 'othering', and is attempting to challenge it. Moreover, through his reference to certain types of "traditional activities", Mr Graham suggests that particular practices may perpetuate this othering, and that he therefore aims to remove such activities from the MaTo programme.

Elsewhere in interview, Ms Hill made the same point with regards to the practice of young Scottish volunteers travelling to Malawi to paint classrooms; an activity which she regarded as "white-down, paternalistic" (Ms Hill, MaTo Project Manager, Interview, August 2015). The third MaTo staff member shared this perspective, and emphasised that the project was about a "meeting of minds" and "sharing of good practice" between Scottish and Malawian teachers, and that it "wasn't about resourcing" (Mr Melville, MaTo Coordinator, Interview July 2015). This reflects the post-development critique that the means of organising development into areas of technical intervention, and the requirement for professional knowledge to manage these interventions, perpetuates the superiority of the agent of aid over the recipient (Porter, 1995; Cavalcanti, 2007). Essentially, MaTo staff took the view that activities which involved material transfer of time or resources from Scottish to Malawian young people (e.g. painting classrooms) would perpetuate an inequality between the two groups of young people: an inequality they wanted to challenge. The consequence of this was that MaTo staff took the attitude because the transfer of resources was not conducive to good 'partnership', Malawian schools did not require material donations, and that with education (and the improvement of their education) they could 'better themselves'.

In summary, MaTo staff reported that it was an organisation premised on building bi-lateral links that were premised on two-way knowledge exchanges and the emergence of comparative thinking rather than one-way charity. In such a way, the MaTo perspective can be seen to embody the approach taken by the SMP, which emphasises 'reciprocal', 'two-way' relationships based on 'partnership, not charity'. Importantly, this perspective aligns with the rejection of 'development' as a valuable category through which to interpret global poverty, espoused by post-development writers, and which has now been

rhetorically incorporated into the UN SDGs. Moreover, the MaTo staff suggested that particular kinds of activities between Scotland and Malawi could be racialised, paternalistic, and therefore perpetuate inequalities between agents of aid and aid-recipients. However, this section has demonstrated that there is an alignment between this attitude towards development and a neo-liberal attitude that depoliticises, localises and occasionally individualises the causes of poverty. Essentially, this section has demonstrated the critique that post-development can inadvertently offer a theoretical justification of neo-liberal development interventions: through respect for the agency of aid recipients, MaTo staff essentially denied the global structures which perpetuate poverty in countries like Malawi. In emphasising equality of relations, the institutional perspective of MaTo overlooked the economic inequality that underpins these relations. As explored in Chapter 2, I take the view that post-development is politically aligned with underdevelopment theories, and that it is entirely compatible with theories of how countries that receive aid are economically exploited by the world system. These findings therefore demonstrate how the emerging discourse of 'equality' in development, espoused by the SMP and MaTo, can be seen to be aligned with neo-liberal economic attitudes, which can partially explain how the equality agenda has been allowed to grow in contemporary development trends and policies.

The following section considers how these attitudes percolate through the practice and activities of MaTo. Throughout my research of MaTo I was struck by its emphasis on elements of international volunteering which *were* unique in many ways. The MaTo Youth group who travelled to Malawi in 2015 was comprised of two groups from two different schools, and they prepared for their trip to Malawi for 18 months prior to departure. This preparation included extensive reflection amongst the group about global issues, and included sessions led by qualified youth workers on global dialogues and intercultural communication. Their trip to Malawi was seen as only one aspect of the activities: "not the purpose of the journey, the purpose of the journey is to go through that personal development exercise" (Mr Graham, MaTo Youth Coordinator, Interview, July 2015). This was markedly different from the other volunteering organisations I engaged in research. MaTo was evidently making great efforts to try to establish a more sophisticated partnership between

Scotland and Malawi. MaTo seemed to at least attempt to incorporate the elements of “respect, trust and mutual understanding”, “parity” and “planning and implementing together” (SMP, 2016b), and were therefore evidently strong exemplars of the SMP model. However, throughout the collection of data for this case study, I gradually uncovered a series of divergences between the rhetoric of the organisation, as expressed in the perspectives of its leading figures and the actual activities it was engaging in. I now consider each of these in turn, and reflect on the source of these tensions and how they were negotiated by actors, with section 6.7 in particular considering how MaTo actors presented their work in Malawi in different ways in public and private contexts.

## 6.4 Teacher Exchange

In the previous section, I showed how leading figures in the MaTo organisation sought to suggest that their work operated on a bi-lateral model and was concerned with a process of mutually beneficial exchange. One way that this was promoted as happening was through exchange visits, whereby teachers from Scotland would go to Malawi and vice-versa. However, it became evident as I researched these in practice that these visits did not generate quite as equal a process as was claimed.

One way in which these exchanges were not equal was in relation to the activities that teachers were exchanged in. For example, when MaTo sends Scottish teachers to Malawi they go for 1 month, providing educational resources to the school, training the teachers, writing reports and taking classes themselves. When the visiting Malawian teachers come to Scotland, it was for “shorter” visits, “dinners” and “lots of being taken around... definitely not the same”, according to Mr Melville. I asked him to elaborate, specifically wondering if Malawian teachers took classes when they visited Scotland.

I'd say that some of them get to teach, but it's maybe a wee one-off lesson. A lesson on Malawi, or some lessons... the two visits are basically very different from each other. And that's an example of... we always kind of fall back to this we're leading the project

Mr Melville, MaTo Coordinator, Interview July 2015

In the extract above, Mr Melville suggests that the organisation's emphasis on mutuality was not necessarily reflected in practice, and that in spite of its stated intentions these visits were structured in very different ways for Scottish and Malawian teachers. This is an example of the external presentation of 'reciprocity' not being matched by substance. On the surface, MaTo promotes itself as embedding activities that will reject binary 'development' relations, such through this two-way exchange programme. Indeed, Mr Melville remarked that his work to establish these exchanges, and his concern for them to be reciprocal, came from sharing experiences with another SMP member, at an SMP network event, which is reflective of this aspect deriving from the SMP approach. However, what this example demonstrates in practice is that the notion of 'reciprocity' is only a formal presentational issue. The teacher exchange was two-way, as Malawian teachers did visit Scotland and vice-versa. However, the expectations that surrounded the visit of Malawian teachers to Scotland were markedly different to the expectations of Scottish teachers visiting Malawi. Whilst the organisation premised itself as aiming to benefit education in both Scotland and Malawi, Mr Melville reported that the teacher exchange was far from reciprocal: Scottish teachers would engage in a short-term project to support improvements of Malawian schools when they visited, but on the return visit, Malawian teachers were not expected to do the same (Mr Melville, MaTo Coordinator, Interview July 2015). Essentially, what this highlights is that the extent to which the programme is 'reciprocal' is only skin-deep, as this practice doesn't establish a meaningful reciprocity of learning from each other. For Mr Melville, it was just a perpetuation of the same unequal relations under the guise of an 'equal' practice.

Whilst I did not have the opportunity to engage with visiting Malawian teachers through the MaTo programme, I did interview a Malawian teacher, Mr Kalunda, whilst he visited another Scottish school which had a similar programme. Mr Melville's critique was reflected in my own research of this teacher visit, which was also largely tokenistic and insubstantial. Moreover, in interview with Mr Kalunda, I found that the visit had served to enforce the differences and inequality between Scotland and Malawi, rather than the similarities and the

equality of relations. Mr Kalunda took the opportunity in interview to emphasise the relative lack of resources in Malawian schools compared to Scottish schools, and highlighted the difference in living standards. This difference in living standards meant that he was hosted by another teacher when visiting Scotland, but Scottish teachers were accommodated in a hotel when visiting Malawi (Mr Kalunda, Interview, October 2015).

Writing in one of the key post-development texts, *Power of Development* by Crush (1995), Shrestha writes how development became a category in his home community in Nepal. For him, development programmes in his community brought the notion of underdevelopment. Aspects of life which were hitherto normal, became defined by comparison to Western livelihoods: “poverty had never been so degrading until development workers came” (Shrestha, 1995, p. 269). In the interview with Mr Kalunda, I was struck by how his visit to Scotland had led him to make comparisons with life in Scotland similar to that provided by Shrestha. This is expressed in the extract below when Mr Kalunda reflects upon the idea that Scottish young people could be hosted at Malawian homes, as he was in the home of a Scottish teacher when he visited Scotland:

The way you are living, the standard way of living... and you know the way we live in Malawi. Our living is just poor... The houses have no cement down, the floor is not cemented. You see? Some of the houses have no windows. So I don't think you can take a student and say just go and live in this home. So to stay at the hotel I think it's better. We don't want students to be affected by some diseases: mosquitoes, malaria and the like. So at the hotel is better, because that one (the hotel owner) he really built a hotel quite well, and it is suitable for well to do people. And we, the local people, we are used to the poor houses we have in our homes. Those houses uncemented, unplastered. But the moment [visitors from Scotland] are staying in that they can catch many diseases. So to protect them, it's better they can stay in that hotel.

Mr Kalunda, Interview, October 2015

The experience of Mr Kalunda had served to reinforce the difference between Scotland and Malawi rather than the similarities. Moreover, from a post-development perspective, this should not be interpreted as a natural response to a difference in living standards. Rather, post-development teaches that the interpretation of what are 'underdeveloped' living standards by comparison to the living standards of 'developed' countries is a product of the development discourse. In such a way, the experience of Mr Kalunda highlighted how the management of this two-way exchange between Scotland and Malawi reinforced ideas of the superiority of people from 'developed' countries, and embedded the development discourse via expressing the lack of 'development' reflected in the comparison of Malawian to Scottish homes.

This finding was reflected furthermore in the experience of the MaTo exchange. In the following extract, Mr Melville suggests that inequalities were embedded in the different practices which structured the two-way exchange:

Mr Melville: For example, I've written a guide for our teachers who go out. But there's no guide for the teachers in Malawi to receive us. And I don't think we should write that, I think they should write that. I also think that it would be good if their Malawian side wrote a guide for their teachers who come to visit here. Because, we can't write their view of Scotland of course! ... it was like a light bulb going off in my head, thinking "we don't strive to make this equal" we always default to "we're in charge, we know what's best for you, we've got the money, we'll tell you what's happening" and it's not as equal as it should be. And having heard other people give presentations at SMP, I think a lot of the projects.... it's so much easier to just be in charge. But you then don't really get proper, proper partnership. And it shouldn't matter that we provide the money. It should just be that we're both coming together...

In the extract above, Mr Melville highlights the lack of meaningful reciprocity, and relates this directly to the flow of money. This relates to the discussion in Chapter 4 around the Scottish Government IDF, when participants suggested that the 'partnership' was in name only: "the one who holds the purse decided how it has to be spent" (Blessings, One Voice, INGO, Interview July 2015). Ultimately,

he suggests that the underpinning relation between the Scottish and Malawian 'partners' was that the Scots were in charge, by virtue of their access to the money that controls the relationship.

Furthermore, he interestingly presents a perspective that he has no power to transform the practice to make it "proper partnership". He was in a position of authority within the organisation, and the coordinator of the teacher exchange, albeit under the direction of Ms Hill. Many organisational challenges could have contributed to his lack of ability to make the exchanges more equitable. However, Mr Melville expresses a more general concern that reflects back on the general attitudes towards development activity. He refers to other SMP members projects which "default to" certain ideas of power and control in international relationships, and suggests Scottish 'partners' ultimately default to the position of being in charge. His struggle therefore appears to be also against the discursive formations which shape the practice in which he is engaging, which becomes ever more complex when entwined with multiple perspectives within a large organisation. This reflects the post-development critique, which argues that the development discourse reproduces power imbalances through its structures, and is "constituted and reproduced within a set of material relationships, activities and powers - social, cultural and geo-political" (Crush, 1995, p. 6). Essentially, this example demonstrates how the way of organising these exchanges, including travel, finance, accommodation and activities are all reflective of the power of one party over the other.

Moreover, how Mr Melville's refers to the material difference between Scotland and Malawi is revelatory, commenting that it should not matter who provides the money, it should just be about people coming together. His challenge to the dominant development perceptions of other Scottish organisations goes together with his critique of the material influences on power in these relationships. Both the material and the conceptual essentially combine to build barriers against what he thought ought to be fundamental to the relationship. This is particularly evident in the case of mutual exchange visits, which are constricted by real material inequalities between those taking part. Those differences are significant in a whole range of contexts, including the finance and support

required to acquire visas, or the importance of disposable income to supplement the inevitable additional costs of international travel.

However, beyond these questions of material inequality, the organisation is also constricted by perceptions; supporters of the organisation do not see bringing Malawians to Scotland as an appropriate activity, noted by Ms Hill in interview. In an apparent contradiction with her prior contributions, Ms Hill noted in reference to mutual exchange visits that she had no intention of funding Malawian young people to travel Scotland as part of the MaTo Youth Programme, as was the case with the MaTo teacher exchange. She cited the “phenomenal cost” of such an activity, the cost of visas particularly noted, and questioned the “value” of such a project (Ms Hill, MaTo Project Manager, Interview, August 2015). This concept of “value” relates back to the content explored in the previous chapter, and suggests how deeply embedded the development discourse is. What is valuable in the development discourse relates to the traditional modernisation-as-development paradigm, which favours the transfer for hard, tangible resources from one country to another. In rejecting the idea of funding a two-way exchange of Scottish and Malawian young people on the grounds that this was not good value, Ms Hill is drawing from the traditional development discourse. Essentially, this suggests that as long as ‘partnership’ activities are viewed through the development paradigm, truly equal and two-way partnerships cannot exist, as funding will always be geared towards achieving impact for ‘development’, rather than valuing two-way exchange as an end in itself.

In summary, the example of the teacher exchange visits demonstrates how MaTo is attempting to implement a practice aligned with the SMP emphasis on reciprocity. However, what analysis has conversely shown is that these exchanges are far from reciprocal, and in fact can be seen to reflect and further embed notions of inequality in development relations. The post-development critique highlights how the discourse of development “establishes authority” through portraying its construction of the world “self-evident and unworthy of attention” (Crush, 1995, p. 3). In such a way, how deeply embedded development attitudes are has been reflected in this case, when Mr Kalunda argued straightforwardly that Malawian homes are unfit to host Scottish



volunteers, and Ms Hill argued that bringing Malawian young people to Scotland would not be good value for money. This section has clearly demonstrated that calling these relations reciprocal is deeply premature, and has indicated that there can be no genuine equality in bilateral relations through a development paradigm.

## 6.5 Material and Non-Material Activities

In section 6.3, I demonstrated that the MaTo staff promoted their organisation as different to others, particularly on the grounds that it was focussed on sharing knowledge and learning rather than a one-way transfer of material resources. For example, Ms Hill commented that she wanted to “slap” organisations that draw from the “white-down, paternalistic” perspective, and she associated this with the crude transfer of material resources to the country, such as the building of classrooms (Ms Hill, MaTo Project Manager, Interview, August 2015). Mr Graham noted that he “cringed” at school visits which only involved painting classrooms, and Mr Melville commented that their project was originally about “sharing good practice... it wasn’t about resourcing, it was about the meeting of minds” (MaTo Staff Interviews, July & August 2015). In such a way, material charitable relations were understood by the MaTo staff as embedding inequality in bilateral partnerships. The MaTo model was presented as being opposed to this form of practice.

In the interview with Mr Melville, he addressed this point directly:

Mr Melville: You know; if you are a charity that's providing something, then it's not going to be equal, providing material things. So if you're... the light up charity (for example), who are providing solar lights which light up at home. In what way is that going to be equal?

In this extract, Mr Melville presents his perspective that material charity relations are always going to be unequal if that is the main premise of the project. His general perspective is that premising a project on charitable donations automatically places power in the hands of the Scottish partner by virtue of their superior wealth. By contrast, Mr Melville expands upon his earlier

remarks that the economic difference between Scottish and Malawian partners should not matter in a successful partnership. From his perspective, funding should be treated as the product of the two organisations coming together, therefore a shared resource. Decisions about spending should be mutually agreed upon. This reveals a strange dynamic of the discourse of partnership espoused by the SMP and MaTo. Essentially, through each organisation's emphasis on the agency of recipients of aid, the need for the transfer of material resources from Scotland to Malawi, and the economic structures that cause poverty in Malawi, are downplayed and disregarded. As explored in section 6.3, this exemplifies the critique of post-development that through its emphasis on localism and agency it can inadvertently provide theoretical justification for neo-liberal and individualised attitudes towards poverty (Schuurman, 2000). However, as with the case of the mutual exchange visits addressed in section 6.4, through researching MaTo I found some of their project activities were based around the one-way transfer of material resources from Scotland to Malawi. The way that such activities are justified in light of the organisation's emphasis on non-material exchange is revelatory of how MaTo's model still relies upon the dominant development discourse, and therefore reveals, from a post-development perspective, that these relations will always be characterised by inequality.

During the research period in Malawi, I engaged a school group who had travelled to the country under the auspices of MaTo Youth, Bank Street Secondary, in a focus group. In contrast to how the MaTo managers presented their activities, this group had spent much of their time painting schools in Malawi, alongside the donation of other 'gifts' they had brought from Scotland. The members of the group itself presented a far more traditional perceptive of its activities in Malawi than was portrayed by the MaTo staff. For example, the contributions of young people focussed on the difference they were making when presenting donations from Scotland to Malawian children, they expressed admiration for how happy Malawian people were in spite of how poor they were, and the Scottish teacher who led the group suggested that the classroom they had painted the previous year had led to an improvement in exam results (Bank Street Secondary, MaTo Youth, Focus Group, Malawi, June 2015). Similar to the findings in Chapter 5, these young people related their interactions to what

‘impact’ they were having on Malawi, such as how they “improved their learning environment” by painting classrooms, and “improving their social skills” by teaching Malawian young people Scottish dances (Bank Street Secondary, MaTo Youth, Focus Group, Malawi, June 2015). In short, the group talked of their work in terms of a traditional charitable approach whereby participants from Scotland were seen as having direct and straightforward impact on a simplified version of Malawi.

When Mr Graham, the MaTo Youth Coordinator, expressed derision towards school painting projects; “you know, let’s paint schools. Forget that. Not into that”, I challenged him by telling him I had met with Bank Street and found that their project was based on traditional material donations. He responded:

Mr Graham: They did some of that... and I think the only basis for me in my world, in that, is as long as they’re doing it together... I hope and believe that they were doing it together. Because through that kind of social activity, you really get to know each other.

For Mr Graham, if the Scottish young people were engaging in this ‘style’ of activity alongside Malawian counterparts, then it was justified as it also included “getting to know each other” and therefore some form of cultural exchange. He followed the same pattern as the volunteers in the previous chapter by then equating this cultural exchange with ‘capacity building’.

Here we can further see evidence of the discursive dilemma that I explored in previous chapter. Mr Graham clearly believed that non-material exchanges were more aligned with the values of the organisation than material donations, which he saw as cemented in a charity approach. He justifies the material inputs by Bank Street Secondary on the grounds that they were not the core activity of the project, which he said was cultural exchange. However, he then justifies this cultural exchange on the grounds that it contributes to capacity building, which is a way of justifying non-material exchanges by projecting what ‘hard’ impacts such interactions may have. This is a fundamental way that the development discourse shapes interactions between Scotland and Malawi, as all engagements

are related by participants to what impact they are having on the ‘development’ of Malawi.

Mr Melville takes the same position in the following extract:

Mr Melville: The project also fits a library and gives a sewing machine... did Ms Hill explain? So that has become a wee bit about resources but they're not given without training on how to use them.

Mr Melville above refers to the charitable donations made by MaTo alongside their teacher exchange. Ms Hill also referred to the financing of libraries and investment in sewing machines as an income-generating project for Malawian schools. However, she also derided paternalistic projects that were charitable in nature. It therefore becomes apparent that what constitutes appropriate ‘partnership’ activity lies somewhat in the eye of the beholder, and that there is no consensus either within MaTo or between the SMP and its members about what ‘partnership’ might mean in practice.

This divergence between the rhetoric and practice appears to be a consequence of a number of competing forces. One force which impacts upon this is the requirement to evidence and report impact to people who helped fundraise for these trips, which is much more challenging with ‘non-material’ activities. The MaTo projects are premised and advertised as if based on the exchange of culture, ideas and ‘soft skills’:

Sharing good practice, resources and teaching expertise between the two countries and ultimately improve the quality of learning and teaching in a challenging environment.

MaTo Website: ‘About Us’

Mr Melville reflected on this, and how this has led to challenges in their reporting of results:

Mr Melville: I think in some ways it’s quite an unusual project because it’s not to do with resources. And it’s much easier to raise money for things,

and say you've paid for solar panels or you've paid for whatever. And that's why we've introduced this monitoring and evaluation part of it to say "can we actually prove that it's having some kind of impact?"

Essentially, the need to provide 'hard' evidence of results makes the emphasis on non-material development work difficult, and this appears to present a fundamental challenge to implementing the ethos of 'partnership, not charity'. The Scottish Government's IDF provides funding to some of the biggest members of the SMP, including MaTo (though the MaTo Youth project relies on fundraising for most of its work). However, this fund is fundamentally for the benefit and development of Malawi and its citizens. The requirement of reporting on activities supported through funding, which is considered at the stage of applying for funding, therefore requires applicants and grant recipients like MaTo to focus on the pursuit of outcomes which can be shown to have made a material difference.

However, this divergence may also be seen to derive from the relations of 'development' itself, and therefore indirectly from the expectations that surround and shape appropriate ways of working in bilateral 'partnerships'. This became especially clear in the discussions I held with MaTo Youth, whom I engaged in a focus group with after they returned from Malawi. The group was sent directly by MaTo Youth, and their project was premised on promoting cultural exchange between young people. I asked them why they thought this was valuable:

Laura: I liked the way we went out and actually worked with them. Instead of just going out and like building a school; "there's your school", and just leaving. We actually go to like work with the children, like build relationships and stuff

Kate: And we also got to do like bits of painting and that as well. At the school.

Kat: We did get to do like things for them

Here, Laura clearly expresses why she thought that forms of cultural engagement were superior to other types of engagement with Malawi. This demonstrates that young people had received the message from MaTo regarding the importance of exchange and mutual learning, which can be inferred from the value she placed on “building relationships and stuff”.

Mr Melville was keen to impress upon me that the material inputs were of secondary importance and inconsistent with the project’s wider agenda, and that when they did engage in such activities, it provided a context for other kinds of interaction. In the extract above, Laura demonstrates her perspective that it was important for them to engage in more than just the donation of material wealth. However, it was clear that there was a discursive tension here, and other members of the group were keen to impress on me that they were not just going to do an exchange, but they had made a material difference “as well”. This again relates back to the evidence presented in the previous chapter, in which volunteers were shown to justify their activities by relating them to material inputs. For example, Sian from GVI suggested that it was important to “try and impart some cultural exchange and say this is how we contribute to our country, this is how you can contribute to your economy”, (GVI, ‘During’ Focus Group, July 2015). Essentially, this evidence shows that cultural exchange, “building relationships and stuff”, is not seen as an end in itself in Scotland - Malawi ‘partnerships’. This provides further evidence of the enduring power of a conventional narrative of development, which is characterised by the top-down input of resources from Scotland to Malawi, which embeds the superiority of the giver over the receiver.

This chapter has so far demonstrated that MaTo expresses a view that the transfer of material donations is inappropriate for their programme, in that this will perpetuate inequality between the Scottish and Malawian participants. However, this section has demonstrated that beneath the rhetoric of two-way partnership, MaTo was engaging extensively in activities related to the one-way transfer of charity. This reveals two important findings. Firstly, the perspective of MaTo on the one-way transfer of resources reveals that assertions of Malawian agency are accompanied by a downplaying the global causes of poverty. This is reflected in the SMP model which emphasises equality and people-to-people

links in a way that downplays the political and economic structures which perpetuate unequal relations between Scots and Malawians. Secondly, the fact that in spite of this perception MaTo does engage in charitable donations reveals that the development discourse engulfs alternative conceptualisation of practice, and that even when organisations attempt to subvert traditional forms of practice they are compelled to comply with the rules of the relations of development. This was evidenced by how MaTo was encouraged to comply with traditional practice through the expectations of volunteers and the networks that support the charity. In short, this section has demonstrated that inequality will endure in relations when such interactions are premised on the discourse of development: there can be no equality when this discourse is the premise of interaction.

## 6.6 Gift Giving

In the previous section, the development discourse was shown to require particular forms of practice and to ultimately hold back alternative approaches. MaTo is representative of the SMP in many aspects of its approach, and this therefore reflects the challenge faced by the SMP in promoting a new approach to development, with an emphasis on equality, through the traditional development industry. This created a tension amongst the MaTo young people I engaged in research, as they had been prepared for their trip with a particular perspective on 'development' that emphasises equality, but were then expected to take part in activities which emphasised the inequality between them and their Malawian counterparts.

In the following extract, the volunteers discuss an instance when this dilemma came to a head. During the focus group after the volunteers had returned from Malawi, the group reflects on one afternoon towards the end of their trip. At their partner school in Malawi, the Scottish young people had spent around 10 days engaging in cultural exchange workshops and building friendships with their Malawian counterparts. The MaTo managers were proud that their project emphasised the importance of cultural exchange, and regarded this as emblematic of their contemporary approach towards interactions between the two countries. However, this afternoon the volunteers were, to their surprise,

asked to publically present donations from Scotland to their Malawian counterparts and other children at their partner school. The young people reflect on this beneath:

Laura: I didn't particularly like doing it, because I felt we had too much credit for it... I just felt like we got too much credit for it. It was in front of the full entire school, which I didn't like because you've got four thousand people around you, and they're getting nothing, but you're just handing it over to this one specific person...

Kate: Yeah like after it, we were like... that felt really forced.

Lauren: Yeah we were saying, like, it was very formal. Like we were superior to them

Natalie: The queen

Lauren: Yeah, but we're not! We're just the same

MaTo Youth, 'After' Focus Group, November 2015

These young people had received extensive preparation in the year prior to their travel to Malawi. This preparation impressed upon them the ideas of mutual respect, 'real partnership', and the notion that their links with Malawi should be premised on equality rather than inequality. They had been linked up with a group of Malawian young people of a similar age, with whom they had engaged in activities that promoted intercultural dialogue and exchange. However, in the instance referred to above, the Scottish young people were instructed to publicly donate gifts to their Malawian counterparts, in front of an audience comprising the whole school. In the extract above, the volunteers express how uncomfortable this experience made them. This example is problematic for the approach of MaTo, and therefore the SMP, as it demonstrates how the expectations of 'normal' interactions between Scotland and Malawi compel traditional forms of interaction which are not aligned with the values of 'partnership', 'equality' and 'reciprocity' promoted by the SMP. As explored above, MaTo staff members regretted that these forms of activities took place,



yet expressed that they were essentially powerless to remove these aspects of the interactions totally from their projects. Essentially, traditional activities such as the formal donation of goods from one party to another embed inequality in relations, yet these activities are so much part of the normal performance of development interactions that they are maintained, even in projects that seek to establish new forms of relationships between Scotland and Malawi.

Furthermore, this example demonstrates the particular way that activities embed inequality. In section 6.3, I argued that the emphasis on agency and equality in Scotland-Malawi interactions can be seen to align this perspective with neo-liberal attitudes towards poverty that downplay the impact of global structures and emphasise individual responsibility. This can be seen in particular in the way that the MaTo staff present the material donations made as part of its projects as misaligned with its core values. However, the example of the young people providing donations to the school should not be read as a complete rejection of any form of material redistribution. Rather, what this example demonstrates is how the way in which this material donation takes place embeds and perpetuates unequal relations. The public nature of the donation in this case contradicted the spirit of the relationships that had been established between the Scottish and Malawian young people, and therefore serves to produce forms of symbolic inequality between them. The donation itself does not perpetuate the inequality in this instance, but the way that the donation is given reflects how the expectations that surround relations of development perpetuate this inequality.

As with the examples in section 6.4 and 6.5, the event here can be seen to be shaped by the expectations of individuals and organisations of the normal way of interacting in development relations. The gifts had been donated to the group by local businesses in Scotland, leading the MaTo staff to accept these donations and honour them by gifting to their Malawian counterparts as promised. Moreover, it is also highly likely that the formal presentation of gifts was orchestrated by the Malawian host school. This was not confirmed in the focus group, but during the research period I was aware that this formal aspect of gift giving was commonplace in the other school partnerships I spent time with.

Essentially, this event was the product of expectations of ‘normal’ practice in relations such as these. This jarred with the young people who had been extensively prepared with a different perspective on their project, which emphasised equality. Therefore, this event signifies the challenge in attempting to change the way that people engage with countries through the development discourse, especially when structural inequalities between (in this case) Scotland and Malawi remain so great. In other words, MaTo and the SMP are attempting to change the discourse of relations between aid-giving and aid-receiving countries - and attempting to enact something called ‘partnership’ - without a transformation of the development discourse through which these interactions take place.

## 6.7 Public & Private Expressions of Perceptions

One further and significant finding of my research concerns the difference between the private and public expressions of experiences within development contexts. During the focus group with the MaTo youth group, the young people made contributions that demonstrated a critical response to conventional ‘charity’ images of Africa. However, the young people were also asked to produce blogs during their trip. This section compares the contributions of the young people in the private space of the focus group to the public space of the blog to interpret what this reflects about the MaTo model and efforts to make development more equal.

During the focus group, the MaTo young people presented perspectives significantly different to those presented in their blogs. For example, some young people criticised the stereotypical images they see on TV adverts of charities, and suggested that the “nice parts” of Malawi were never shown on TV “because they [the charities] don’t want us to see them” (Laura, MaTo ‘After’ Focus Group, October 2018). Later in this conversation, another young person reflected on this further, and rejected ‘othering’ of poverty in Africa:

Amy: Yeah, it’s always like “£2 a month for this kid who’s, like, dying of a disease” and you’re like... you feel bad, but, like, before I went, I was like “I’m no rich either”... they don’t show at all, like, the good side of

Malawi, and I think that's bad, because then people are gonna think they don't wanna go to Malawi as well, cos they think it's just poverty, poverty, poverty. But there is good parts of it.

MaTo 'After' Focus Group, October 2018

In the extract above, Amy critiques the stereotypical images of Malawi, acknowledges that the reality of the country is much more complex than its occasional popular depiction, and presents a perspective that poverty is a universal problem. Furthermore, in the focus group, the young people talked about cultural differences in a respectful rather than paternalistic way:

Kate: Yeah, me and Lauren were sitting in one of the classrooms and we were on our phones, like letting them listen to our music and they knew like Calvin Harris How Deep is Your Love and everything! I was like, "whit!?" Pure nedly songs. I didn't expect them to know that

They were also very open about how their expectations of Malawi had been challenged by the experience:

Kat: I was prepared to go and see like kids like begging for money, food and stuff. But you never really, we never really saw that. So I was surprised at how good it was instead of like the negatives of it.

It was evident from the focus group that this team had been reflecting upon their experiences in Malawi, but also that they had been well prepared to do so. Even when they were reflecting on experience of encountering real poverty they often framed these reflections in thoughtful ways, such as in the extract beneath:

**So what did you expect? That it would be poorer than it was?**

Kat: I think we expected to see what we would see on TV, adverts and stuff.

Natalie: I think there is parts of Malawi that's like that, but we just didn't see them. Like...

Kat: Yeah, like when we came out of KFC we saw all the people trying to beg for like money and food off us and stuff, which was, like... because they were so close and so... they were kinda intimidating in a way. That's kinda what you expect, because that's what you're told and what you're shown that people are that poor that they'll come up to you and beg and beg and beg, but it was only every so often that we saw that.

MaTo Youth Group, 'After' Focus Group, October 2015

Throughout the focus group, the young people presented deeply thoughtful and sophisticated reflection on their experience. They sought to find opportunities for cultural exchange with their Malawian counterparts, they rejected essentialised notions of what it was to be from Malawi, and instead sought nuances to interpret their experiences in complex ways. However, the blogs written by members of the group often took a very different approach to presenting their experiences and the work that they were involved in, such as in the following example:

Pre-MaTo I never imagined of starting my own charity, but now that I have been through the MaTo programme, I believe that's why I'm here. To make an impact on my life and many others by providing the resources and skills they need to live a normal life.

The emotion on the children's face as you gave them their share of the porridge was absolutely heart-warming, they looked so happy for the little they had been given.

This for me is absolutely heart breaking, seeing them so happy with so little is amazing. They truly are the happiest people on this planet and amazing to be around. So amazing, that many little faces can brighten up your day.

MaTo Youth Blog, October 2015

In the extract from the blog above, the tone is markedly different from the reflections in the focus group. Rather than highlighting sameness and critiquing the presentation of ‘otherness’, as they did in the focus groups, in the blog the young people drew from the charity paradigm to highlight the material poverty of their Malawian counterparts. This is evidenced in particular in the references to “the emotion on the children’s face as you gave them their share of porridge” and how this was “heart-breaking”. Furthermore, this expression highlighted the superiority of the giver over the receiver, and emphasised the activity of the young people over the passivity of their Malawian counterparts: such as when it is suggested that this young person would now start a charity to provide “the resources and skills they need to live a normal life”.

The leaders of the MaTo Youth group themselves also talked about their work in such a style when reflecting on it in a public context. In the following example one of the leaders, in their own blog, summarises why he feels the work of his project is so important, and how it has been successful:

I believe the work we are doing in all areas of our own charity are really making a difference. I see it everywhere. The library projects - children directly involved are being selected to go to secondary school. All of the girls in our sponsorship programme are achieving well beyond their previous forecast in extremely challenging circumstances. Previous MaTo counterparts in Malawi all selected to go to university. All of our partner schools have clear improvement plans that are creating clear visions and goals for learning and teaching.

MaTo Leaders Blog, October 2015

The blogs were, in this way, drawing from a different narrative from that which was promoted by the MaTo project managers, and one which was not reflected in the MaTo Youth focus group. In the extract above, which is representative of the whole blog, the teacher in question only focuses on the material inputs from donors to recipients. In so doing, they draw upon a charity paradigm, which is premised on the traditional notion of active Europeans *doing* development to passive Africans. This is in stark contrast to the emphasis of the MaTo project

managers, who instead chose to emphasise mutuality, shared learning and a rejection of Eurocentric traditional forms of development relations. These extracts, from the young people and the leaders, reproduce ideas of European benevolent agency as the central factor in development. From a post-development perspective, this amounts to the power of donors over recipients, as Europeans have the power to determine the category of 'Africa' or a 'developing country', and amounts to what Escobar refers to as the violence of representation (Escobar, 1995, p. 214). These examples demonstrate that actors are required to employ different discourses of development, and that they are able to navigate alternating renditions of development perspectives depending on their interpretation of the demands of the audience at a specific time and place. However, perhaps most importantly, these examples also demonstrate that actors have a degree of understanding of what the rules that govern development representations are. They knew how they had to present their experience in public to make it widely intelligible to European audiences, and that is why their public accounts differed from private expressions when they were encouraged to critically reflect, such as in the focus group.

As we have seen, then, volunteers are encouraged to propagate one particular narrative of Malawi in public spaces, even if they have a different interpretation in other environments, such as in the focus group. This is therefore another example of how the dominant development discourse is maintained by forces which are external to the control of any one organisation. However, we can also recognise the agency that volunteers have over these expressions, and that they are generally in control of choosing to write in a particular style in their blogs, compared to how they spoke in the focus groups. This reflects the same activity engaged in by the MaTo managers, who present their work as focused on non-material exchange and on encouraging new forms of relationship, though upon analysis conventional forms of charitable practice appears to be an important part of their activities. Lastly, through researching the different platforms that volunteers speak from, this section has demonstrated that the way people talk about development is the product of a relatively fluid processes of knowledge. Post-development texts have been criticised for denying actors agency and assuming that they unconsciously adopt the dominant discourse. For example, it has been accused of "providing a totalising view of history" by placing too much

emphasis on “external structures and discourses” and ignoring how much “room for manoeuvre” beneficiaries have to meet their own agendas within the confines of particular project (Rossi, 2004, pp. 3-4). In contrast, this account has shown that the post-development critique can be used to interpret the way that actors ‘perform’ development and express different perceptions of development when specific contexts require it. This finding is analysed in more detail in the following chapter.

## 6.8 Conclusion

The key purpose of this chapter was to analyse how successful organisations are in implementing the SMP model, in line with research question 5: *What challenges are faced by member organisations in trying to implement the SMP model?* I deployed a case study design to answer this question, which shaped analysis of interviews, focus groups and texts relating to the SMP member organisation, MaTo. Through analysis of MaTo, this chapter has presented a series of specific examples which demonstrate that the organisation is failing to challenge the development discourse, and therefore is perpetuating unequal relations between Scottish and Malawian participants. These examples demonstrated how organisations are constrained by internal and external forces from changing the ‘normal’ or ‘expected’ patterns of interaction between organisations from aid-giving and aid-receiving countries. For example, section 6.4 demonstrated that the ‘mutual’ exchange visits of Malawian teachers were far from equal, and in fact exposed and reinforced inequalities in the bi-lateral partnership. Sections 6.5 and 6.6 demonstrated that MaTo young people participated in one-way transfer of material donations from Scotland to Malawi, which MaTo staff had specifically identified as a barrier to building relationships of equality. This divergence was shown to have derived from the embedded development discourse surrounding relations between Scotland and Malawi, which sets the rules for what is and is not appropriate roles and activities in such bilateral links. Despite the efforts of the SMP, this discourse has not yet changed.

Furthermore, this chapter critically explored post-development theory. Section 6.3 considered how in the case of MaTo, and by extension the SMP, the

organisational perspective that promotes a respect for the agency of aid recipients led to an unwitting alliance with neo-liberal economic attitudes that denied the structures of injustice that cause poverty, in favour of an individualised perspective. By emphasising the equality of relations, these organisations evidenced having overlooked the enduring inequality of economics. This finding is important for an overall analysis of the process of applying the post-development critique to the SMP, and is returned to in Chapter 8. Lastly, this chapter also found instances whereby participants demonstrated agency in managing the development perceptions that they presented externally. This finding is developed further in the following chapter.

In summary, this chapter has demonstrated that whilst organisations can make efforts towards instituting greater equality in their programmes, ultimately they are constrained. These constraints come in the form of external influences, such as in the case of the expectations of donors or fundraisers, and from internal influences, when the development discourse is internalised and actors make evaluations based on their perceptions of what is appropriate within its parameters, such as in the case of the mutual exchange visits. Ultimately, this chapter has shown through application of the post-development critique how alternative forms of development practice are ultimately unsuccessful in fostering greater equality, as the discourse itself is premised on inequality, and requires this in order to function.



# Chapter 7 Performing Development

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## 7.1 Introduction

At the end of the previous chapter, I considered the way that actors in development can be seen to change how they present perceptions and actions depending on the different audiences with which they are engaged. In the case of the MaTo project, as might be expected, the project managers presented an account of their work which was quite different from the volunteers and leaders who engaged in project activities. What was more striking, however, was that the leaders and volunteers presented their work very differently in their blogging than they did when they were talking amongst themselves during the focus groups. They also presented their work very differently depending on what activity they were engaged in: when fundraising they would draw upon discourses of charity, for example, whereas when they presented their work in relation to educational contexts they described it as an involving the building of relations separate from questions of material inequalities. In some ways, this may be unsurprising: many accounts of performance have already explored the various ways that people and institutions manage interactions in pursuit of personal gains or in ways that are aimed at achieving collective understanding. The work on impression management formulated by Goffman (1959, 1967), and explored in an African context by writers such as Berreman (1962), Lyman and Douglass (1973) and Bonsu (2007) already offers a paradigm for understanding how people present themselves in these kinds of context.

However, during my research several reports from Scottish actors made clear to me just how far they saw development relations as scenes of performance: they often talked about their Malawian counterparts as presenting reality in ways they considered to be partially inaccurate. Throughout my research with MaTo, for example, Malawian partners were said to “put on a show” (Mr Graham, MaTo Youth Coordinator, Interview, July 2015). Ms Hill alluded to this presentational behaviour on several occasions, recalling one visit to a Malawian school when she felt that there “a smell in the air that perhaps all was not as it seemed” (Ms Hill, MaTo Project Manager, Interview, August 2015). Mr Melville also remarked on

this behaviour in reference to visiting a partner school in Malawi which he felt was a “bit contrived for us”, that the school tended to “put on a wee bit of a show” and that they had “seen the same show in the same school twice now in two years” (Mr Melville, MaTo Coordinator, Interview, August 2015). These comments are remarkable, as I had also gathered research whereby participants in school partnership could be said to “put on a show” in Scotland when fundraising, as explored in Chapter 5.

Furthermore, Malawian participants also reflected on this apparent ‘performative’ aspect to development interactions. For example, the CEO of a Malawian Youth NGO, Asante, told me that larger NGOs “block money” coming to smaller organisations by telling donors that they are corrupt: “they might say [to donors] ‘Asante took money this time: you cannot trust them’”. Mr Nyasulu suggested that Malawians working for larger NGOs were deceiving donors to divert money to places where they had their own interests, such as to their own traditional village home, by accusing organisations like his of corruption, or justifying action in a specific area based on its “greater need” (Mr Nyasulu, Asante CEO, Field Notes, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015).

Findings such as these highlighted a general sense that there was a performative aspect to international partnerships of this kind that I had not anticipated at the beginning of this research. Projects were being shaped by performances, and understanding these performance was therefore required to develop a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between donors and recipients. Due to the inductive methodological approach adopted I was able to reflect upon these findings during the research period, and this chapter analyses this data with reference to the central research question.

To analyse this data I draw upon the work of Bayart on extraversion, as explored in Chapter 2. Bayart’s concept of extraversion considers the way that African elites, in particular, have been able to mobilise their ostensibly marginalised global position and use relations of “dependency” to their advantage. Through this concept, Bayart insists on acknowledging African agency, and explores how such actors are able to take power back from the global system that had hitherto been interpreted only as disempowering. Using a more inductive

approach, then, I reflected upon this theory after having collected a number of findings relating to the performative aspect of partnerships between Scottish and Malawian organisations. Actors engaging in performance, such as those putting on the “contrived” “shows” referenced above, appeared to be engaging in a practice akin to the strategies of extraversion engaged in by political elites in Bayart’s theory. These actors were performing particular roles in global development ‘partnerships’ to control the situation and attempt to elicit particular ends: in the case from Chapter 6, for example, this meant continued financial support from MaTo.

This chapter, then, deploys Bayart’s concept of extraversion to explore the performative aspect of development interactions. Through this analysis, I try to assess what an awareness of these dynamics would mean for the central research question: *What can the Scotland Malawi Partnership learn from the post-development critique?* Specifically, this chapter considers what post-development theory reveals about the way that particular roles, categories and behaviours are constructed, and deploys Bayart’s extraversion as an analytical tool through which to interpret how actors perform in relation to these constructs. My use of Bayart’s concept of extraversion, therefore, introduces a way of combining the insights of post-development critique with a greater focus on questions agency, a focus which is often lacking in key post-development texts (Brigg, 2002; Pieterse, 2000; Rossi, 2004). Importantly, I argue that we have to understand these performative practices as always ‘two-sided’; as practices which both Scottish and Malawian actors take part in when engaging in activities in Scotland and in Malawi related to their bi-lateral partnerships. My findings are analysed in relation to the central research question and the research aim of developing an understanding of the embedded power relations in development interactions through exploration of the perspective of actors in both Scotland and Malawi. These findings draw from data collected throughout the research period, including interviews and focus groups. However, the bulk of the data draws from observations and casual interviews undertaken whilst in Malawi, and there the findings presented in this chapter are done so using an ethnographic approach.

This chapter begins with a brief exploration of the inequalities embedded in development interactions. This is followed by analysis of how these inequalities give rise to particular contexts for behaviour in development interactions, through the use of extraversion as a paradigm. The chapter then demonstrates how in many ways the concept of “partnership” itself has become a frame for performance. This exposes the fact that inequalities are still deeply embedded in relations that are presented as premised on ideas of equality. The conclusion brings each of these elements together in reference to the central research question.

## 7.2 Inequality in Development Relations

Throughout the research period, I collected a vast amount of data that evidenced how inequalities remain embedded in development relations. Many of these inequalities have been explored in the previous findings chapters. However, for the purposes of the particular analysis in this chapter, it is important to reflect upon how these inequalities shape development interactions. This inequality was particularly evident in the interactions between Scottish volunteers and the Malawians they worked with. In the following extract from a focus group with Malawian volunteers for an NGO that hosted Scottish volunteers, this inequality is made apparent:

Hastings: Of recent, in our communities, when our communities have come so close to see *Mzungu*. So it's something very, very precious. Firstly, to see a *Mzungu*, secondly to talk to the *Mzungu*. It means a lot to a child. It's rare for us to see you guys. Maybe there are very few communities who are exposed. So that indicates to say they can live together, stay together, and we have the passion to do things together with you. And it also tells that development... people are of the view that development comes with *Mzungu*. And it normally comes. That's how they feel or think. *Mzungu* brought the bible, *Mzungu* brought the currency, money, *Mzungu* brought school - he brought everything!

Asante Volunteer Focus Group, Malawi, June 2015

*Mzungu* is a term from the Bantu language used to refer to ‘European people’, though more commonly used to refer only to ‘white skinned people’. One account of albinism in Malawi notes that people with albinism were also referred to as *Mzungu*. However, some writers note that the term is used in slightly different ways in different circumstances (Braathen & Ingstad, 2006). In my experience, whilst the term can be used to refer to different groups of people, its connotations are relatively consistent. That is to say the term was used in relation to groups perceived as socially or economically more prosperous, coded through racial categories. In the extract above, Hastings refers specifically to Scottish volunteers as *Mzungu*. He directly relates these volunteers to the colonial legacy of Scotland when he references that “*Mzungu* brought the bible”: in the group we had already discussed David Livingstone, Scotland, and how the explorer is credited with bringing Christianity to Malawi. Hastings also critically reflects upon the interpersonal inequality between the *Mzungu* and the hosting communities, when he asserts that communities are excited by the idea that they can “live together” with *Mzungu*. However, Hastings crucially also directly links the *Mzungu* with ‘development’. This association was repeated throughout other focus groups in Malawi, with participants suggesting that NGOs are important to the development of Malawi because of their association with America and Europe (Selly, RAFIKI Youth Focus Group 3, July 2016) and that *Mzungu* show people “what they are missing” so that they can realise what they need to develop (David, Asante Volunteer Focus Group, Malawi, June 2015).

Crucially, Malawian participants critically reflected that these inequalities, and the association between *Mzungu* with wealth, colonialism and development, shape interpersonal relations between Scottish and Malawi participants. For example, in a focus group with young volunteers from another NGO that hosted international volunteers, members of the commented on the fact that from a “tender age” they had been taught to consider a white person to be “superior”, and that when they saw a white person the “mentality is automatically that there is money” (Patrick and Steven, RAFIKI Youth Focus Group 1, Malawi, July 2015). In the same focus group, Joyce even remarked that people would expect they had received payment for attending the focus group:

Joyce: They'll say "oh, Ben was here and we were having some drinks and some biscuit" they'll say "oh, they got money". We were colonised by British, so I think we can't change it.

RAFIKI Youth Focus Group 1, July 2015

In this example, Joyce explicitly connects my being a *Mzungu* with my wealth, and therefore the assumption that her taking part in my focus group would come with payment. Importantly, she then explicitly connects this to the history of colonisation and its longer term intellectual effects.

Such connections were drawn throughout the focus groups, and young Malawians often made a link between "colonialism" and "development". Strongly expressed anti-colonial views were rare amongst the research participants. Focus groups usually reached a consensus that colonialism had been ultimately positive for Malawi and its 'development'. The extract beneath from Henderson was relatively representative, and he expressed his views in response to a group discussion about David Livingstone and the Malawian anti-colonial icon, John Chilembwe:

**And yet, for so many of these years, Malawi was a colony of the United Kingdom... how do you feel about that? Do you ever feel angry, like you want to start an uprising like Chilembwe? Or do you always feel "peaceful", like David Livingstone?**

Henderson: As for me, I don't feel angry. Just because; in as far as lifestyle is concerned, life process is concerned, there is time when you have to rely upon your parents, then there is time when you have to rely upon yourself. The same applied that during that time, we were supposed to rely upon other countries who organised Malawi. That being the case, time came for Malawi to be self-reliant.

RAFIKI Youth Focus Group 1, July 2015

Henderson interpreted Malawi as on a developmental trajectory, something like that assumed in the modernisation-as-development school of thought. He is

suggesting above that Malawi required, and benefited from, colonisation, but that it eventually developed enough to manage its own affairs. After murmurs of agreement from the group, Henderson then took his argument further, and argued that he believed Malawi would be better off if it never became independent. This invited some critique, particularly from one other participant, who responded that whilst “colonialism wasn’t as bad as maybe we were thinking” the “whites were segregating the Africans, the indigenous people” and because of this, people “couldn’t feel the respect and the dignity that they deserved” (Suzgo, RAFIKI Youth Focus Group 1, July 2015). Despite some disagreement over Henderson’s key argument, there was consensus throughout this discussion that colonialism had had a materially beneficial impact on Malawi.

These examples demonstrate that Malawian actors understood development relations to be unequal, and that there were associations between *Mzungu*, such as the Scottish volunteers who engaged in my research, and wealth; between development and *Mzungu*; and between colonialism and development. Crucially, Malawian actors critically reflected upon these unequal relations, and how they shaped interactions between participants in development projects, even in partnerships that are intended to be premised on equality.

How these unequal relations shaped interpersonal inequality between donors and recipients has been explored in the literature. Pink (1998), for example, writes about her experience of a series of challenging interactions with communities who were hosting her. She remarks on how local people would ask to take the belongings of development staff after they completed their fieldwork. Somewhat cynically, perhaps, she asks, “Who would harvest the fruits of ‘friendship’ with the rich *brancu* development worker this time?” (Pink, 1998, p. 9). Her decision to use inverted commas for the word friendship implies that she interpreted these relations as focussed on questions of ultimate material benefit, and therefore in some sense spurious, which she goes on to explore. She argues that these relationships were, to some extent, ‘managed’, and therefore themselves emblematic of the inequality that structured her relations with local people. Essentially, the way that agents of aid perceive aid recipients, and the way that recipients perceive agents of aid, is shaped by the development

discourse, and this gives rise to particular sets of expectations of appropriate behaviour. These expectations shape the rules of interaction within relations of development, which can be interpreted as 'performances' that are revelatory of the embedded inequality between each side of these interactions.

Scottish participants in my research reflected on similar experiences. In the post-project focus group with GVI, volunteers reflected on the experience of being invited for dinner with a friend, Hopeson, they had made in the community. Six members of the group accepted the invitation for dinner. At the end of the meal Hopeson's mother asked the volunteers to fund his University tuition. The volunteers reflected on this experience:

Kat: Yeah I don't know: I think 'cos even... we thought we'd made like really good friends with Hopeson for example. And then at the end of it, 'cos that was the last 2 weeks, he asked for money from us. So we thought that we'd made like proper friendships with him and... it was sort of like... not thrown back in your face, but...

GVI, 'After' Focus Group, October 2015

One interpretation of events of this kind, informed by the concept of extraversion, may come to the conclusion that Hopeson was actively and deliberately feigning friendship to elicit personal gains. However, such a reading assumes an ability to determine 'real' motivations in a way that is problematic. Rather, I suggest that we can think about extraversion as a mode of behaviour that is normalised in development interactions, and shaped by these interactions: actors sometimes knowingly and sometimes unknowingly engage in these strategies. Importantly, the concept of 'friendship' and what that means is shaped by the wider context in which people interact. Moreover, in the account from Pink (1998) there appears to be a latent moral judgement made which assumes that 'true' friendships cannot come with the exchange of material wealth. This is contradicted by the work of Goffman, for example, who interprets all social relations as including an aspect of performance (Goffman, 1956). Rather than make judgements about what may or may not be appropriate behaviour in friendships, it is more important to understand the ways that



extraversion establishes diffuse forms of action embedded in the discourse of development. This interpretation sees Hopeson as having behaved in a way that the development discourse makes possible, a way that is in keeping with the development industry's own presentation of how Malawians are likely to interact with Scottish agents of aid. The GVI volunteers themselves reflected on this in their focus group:

Sian: You don't know as well, he [Hopeson] might have been brought up his whole life with his Mum saying "be nice to *Mzungu*, be nice to them they've got money" do you know what I mean? So it might not have been out of any like... maliciousness or anything. But I definitely think that he would've been, like, really eager to become friends with us because we were a group of white young people. That's probably quite a novelty for him as well, 'cos he's maybe not had white friends from the West before. That's probably quite a draw towards us. But I do also think he was always aware that we were wealthy compared to him

GVI, 'After' Focus Group, October 2015

Sian continued these considerations by reflecting that "it's probably been just his socialisation", in reference to the way that Hopeson behaved towards the volunteers. What this experience also shows, however, is the impact of the socialisation of the *volunteers* in the process. The volunteers had been socialised to interpret friendships in an alternative way, and to reject requests for personal donations. Nevertheless, what this experience crucially shows is the way that inequalities are embedded in the interpersonal relationships between actors from the aid-giving and aid-receiving sides of development interactions: this is a fundamental challenge for efforts of organisations to make development more equal. Moreover, this section has shown that the challenge of interpersonal inequalities is also related to deeply embedded associations between the *Mzungu* and the histories of colonialism and subsequent development practices. The SMP model attempts to transform development interactions to make them more equal by its changes to practice and rhetoric, yet this section has demonstrated how deep these inequalities go. The following section uses the paradigm of extraversion to explore how development creates performances to

manage these inequalities, and section 7.4 shows that even “equality” and “partnership” themselves are performed, though relations remain unequal.

### **7.3 Development Creates Performances**

Through the course of the research period, I came to better understand how the interactions between Scottish and Malawian participants often involved forms of performance. These performances involved specific presentations that drew from the tropes and stereotypes that surround poverty and the livelihoods of people in Malawi, and sometimes elicited exaggerated presentations of what impact the volunteers could have in alleviating this poverty. Essentially, the performances drew from, replicated, and therefore maintained, the traditional development discourse of passive African participants relying on help from active external agents of aid. These findings therefore build on those presented in chapters 5 and 6, as they show that the perpetuation of stereotypes of countries that receive aid comes from the very practice of volunteering in such countries. The analysis in this section interprets these performances through the paradigm of extraversion, and assesses the extent to which these performances perpetuate stereotypes and embed inequality between donors and recipients. This section illustrates these points through two specific examples: the contrasting visits of St Peter’s Secondary School and GVI volunteers to Mgoza Orphan Care Centre (OCC), and the competition between Malawian NGOs over volunteer resources.

#### **7.3.1 Mgoza Orphan Care Centre**

Throughout the research period, I visited Mgoza OCC on a number of occasions. This centre was about a 30-minute walk from my accommodation, in an urban township of Blantyre. I had known this centre from previous time spent in Malawi, and known that it had received international volunteers for a number of years. The student organisation GVI had been sending volunteers from Scotland to work at Mgoza OCC each summer for around 7 years, and St Peter’s had been visiting Mgoza as part of their annual trip to Malawi for 3 years. In focus groups with each Scottish organisation, I reflected on their contrasting experience of visiting Mgoza OCC, and I accompanied participants from St Peter’s on their visit

to the centre to undertake observations. The contrast in experience between St Peter's and GVI at Mgoza reveals some of the specific performances that are produced by development interactions.

### **St Peter's Secondary School**

In June 2015, I accompanied the group from St Peter's and their teacher Mr Scott on their visit to Mgoza OCC. In pre-departure focus groups with the St Peter's group, and in interview with Mr Scott, I had heard that the group would visit this centre and asked to join them as part of my research. This was the 3<sup>rd</sup> visit of the group from St Peter's to Mgoza, and according to Mr Scott, the 2015 visit was typical of previous years.

When I arrived with the group we were greeted by the manager of the OCC, Mr Kazembe. Mr Kazembe welcomed the visitors and explained the situation of some of the children. His first words to the group were "these are the orphans", and after thanking them for coming, he invited the Scottish young people to take part in some activities with the children (Field Notes, June 2015). After some trepidation, which lasted about 10 minutes, the Scottish young people took out the toys they had brought as donations to the centre and began to play with groups of children: blowing up balloons, reading books, and singing songs. One of the Scottish pupils, Drew, opted out of playing games, instead choosing to take one of the smallest children at the centre in his arms and sit in silence with the child in the corner. Whilst the pupils were engaging with the children, two of the teachers (not including Mr Scott) took pictures of their pupils with the children for St Peter's Twitter page, and discussed what caption they should use for each image. After about one hour, Mr Scott, the other teachers and I were shuffled into a small office at the back. Mr Kazembe, alongside the secretary and some members of their committee were all present at the meeting. A few remarks were made by the teachers, thanks were given for their visit, and Mr Scott announced that on behalf of their school they were donating £300 to the centre; he handed over the amount in Malawian Kwacha. After this meeting, the pupils were told it was time to leave the centre. They said goodbye to the children and gradually made their way to the bus which was collecting them.

Many the pupils were in tears as they left the children, and moved in their bus to their next appointment.

At a focus group after this visit, I prompted the group to reflect on their experience at the centre:

**How did it compare to your expectations?**

Carly: I thought it would've been maybe sadder

Lorraine: Naw, I was sad

Phil: You were crying!

Lorraine: I was crying! Naw, I was dead sad, but like it was a nice atmosphere.

Angela: It was nice in there, and then after it when we were saying like 'bye' it was upsetting 'cos we were all just...

Gill: But they were happy, we weren't, like, expecting that

Drew: One of them peed

Group Laughs

Lorraine: It was just sad; I know they don't have Mum or Dad

Angela: One of the wee ones called me Mum, and then I realised she was actually calling the woman 'mama'. I was a bit gutted, but awright!

Group Laughs

**What about the rest of you?**

Drew: I didn't cry

Angela: He's not cried once

Ms Jones: You were sitting with a face of glum

Drew: When?

Ms Jones: At the orphanage you spent about half an hour holding that wee one. So that wasn't crying, but it was internal.

Teresa: When the bubbles came out and the parachute, if that happened like where we come from, it like wouldn't be much of a big deal 'cos we've like seen them before. But these kids had never seen any of that.

**What do you think... Obviously, you gave a donation to the centre as well? What do you think can be done with that to change things?**

Angela: Well the guy said to me that he was gonnae make it bigger. So that he can like bring in more kids and stuff

Drew: More toys

Angela: Uhuh

Harry: I don't know who it was, but someone told me that they actual don't sleep there. Like at night they just walk about and they find somewhere to sleep

Carly: Naw people take them in, like

Lorraine: Into the community

Angela: People in the community look after them.

St Peter's Secondary, 'During' Focus Group, June 2015

This long extract provides an insight into how the young people understood the experience. They were happy that their group had made a financial contribution

to the centre, which Mr Kazembe had indicated would be used to increase its capacity. Many of the young people cried as they left the centre, and Mr Scott reported that this had been the case with previous groups. Based on the extract above, it is evident that this was not the first time that the young people had cried during their trip (note that Angela remarks that Drew had “not cried once”). Drew, who had opted out of taking part in the games, was bashful when reflecting on this in the focus group. At the end of the extract above, the young people considered what they had heard about how the non-residential orphanage functions<sup>10</sup>.

In one sense, the interaction between the young people and the children at the OCC reveals something about how Scottish actors perceive the Global South. The young people crying can be interpreted as them enacting the expected behaviour of the situation they were in. Whilst I do not wish to downplay the gravity of the situation for the young people (social performances are no less ‘real’ because they are performances) they were nevertheless partaking in the common response to visiting sites of African poverty. This was particularly evidenced by Drew and how he interacted: rather than taking part in the games, he took it upon himself to sit aside with one of the children, express a silent emotion, in the familiar pose of a white agent of aid. From the perspective of Goffman, these volunteers can be interpreted as actors performing a script; with each actors knowing their own role and conforming to the demands of the performance (Goffman, 1956). Using this approach, the ‘script’ is reflective of the rules which govern relations between donors and recipients, and is therefore reflective of the way that ‘developing countries’ are “known, specified and intervened upon” (Escobar, 1995, p. 45): in this case, as sites which demand pity, emotion, and intervention by external (often European) actors.

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<sup>10</sup> It is common in this part of Malawi for orphaned and vulnerable children to be primarily cared for by relatives and family friends. Community based orphan care centres (CBCCs) provide care food for such children, and operate on a non-residential basis, with children returning to their guardians in the late afternoon (Beard, 2005)

Furthermore, the teachers' efforts to document the events for social media reflect the expectation that they will report on these experiences to the school and Scottish actors who had helped the young people fundraise for their project. This demonstrates how the traditional discourse of development is perpetuated by the perceived demands of audiences: the group presented archetypal relations between participants from aid-giving countries and aid-receiving countries on social media to meet the perceived needs of their audience, who had supported them through fundraising. Moreover, the young people later posted a number of pictures of themselves at the centre on their own social media channels. This suggests that whilst performing, the young people were consciously aware of how their actions would be perceived externally and therefore that the potential online external audience may also have shaped their behaviour. Building on the example explored in section 5.5.1, this example demonstrates again how the 'othering' occurs through the expectations that surround the actions of volunteers, and therefore should be interpreted as part of a wider process, rather than solely related to the practice of youth volunteering itself.

This interaction can also be seen to have a performative aspect from the perspective of the Malawian participants, such as the centre manager Mr Kazembe. Throughout my research period in Malawi, I was mostly based in the township of Mgoza. I therefore engaged several members of this community in research and this led me to consider the OCC in particular. I had also met with Mr Kazembe himself during the research period and before I visited the centre with the young people. Through research surrounding St Peter's visit to the centre, it became evident that Mr Kazembe was also engaging in the presentation of a particular reality to the volunteers, via the performance of the visit. Under his management, two prominent members of Mgoza community mentioned in interview that the OCC was not doing the "good work it once did" (Mr Banda and Mr Phiri, Field Notes, June 2015). I was informed that the centre had begun to operate more as a nursery school than an orphan day care centre, by charging fees for local children to attend. I engaged Mr Kazembe in a casual interview when visiting his centre prior to the visit of St Peters, and he confirmed that out of the 85 children they cared for, only 14 were registered orphans, and that 71 were fee-paying students. To check whether this low ratio

was unusual, I asked Mr Phiri, a local NGO Director, who confirmed that it was. He then recalled a story of another OCC in Mgoza which was refused registration with the city authorities because, on a surprise inspection, they found that it didn't have enough 'orphans and vulnerable children' (Mr Phiri, Mgoza NGO Director, Interview, June 2015). When Mr Kazembe welcomed the young people from St Peters by saying "these are the orphans" he was knowingly presenting his centre, and the children it supported, in a particular way which spoke to the assumptions of his audience at that moment. Interpreting this through the concept of extraversion, he can be seen to have been managing the impressions of the visitors so as to attempt to access their potential material donations, and this worked effectively.

However, it's important to note the fundamentally two-way nature of this interaction. In the extract above, members of the group refer to the centre as the "orphanage". Lorraine remarks that "it was sad, I know they don't have a Mum or Dad" and Angela comments on her mishearing that a child had referred to her as "mama". They also reflect on how it was only a day centre, remarking "people from the community take them in". Whilst this is how the centre operates, most of the children were simply returning to their family homes. In chapters 5 and 6 I showed how groups like that from St Peters were compelled to report having had a particular experience in Malawi. These two elements converge in this example. When the young people from St Peter's came to visit, Mr Kazembe said, "these are the orphans", and the young people, expecting to see orphans, accepted that presentation of reality. They then performed in the appropriate way in respect of their own anticipated ends: they played games and carried children, cried at the end of the experience, or, in one case, opted out to take a child and "sit with a face of glum". The young people in many ways wanted to see what they had expected to see; that is, what they were primed to see by dominant images of Africa and Africans. It was, correspondingly, in the interests of Mr Kazembe to present the centre in such a way, as he was attempting to elicit funding for his organisation. Therefore, both parties to the interaction acted in ways that were in keeping with a dominant narrative of relations between Europeans and Africans within conventional development contexts. In such a way, they could be said to have 'staged' a development interaction through a managed presentation of reality.



## Glasgow Volunteers International

The student group GVI also worked with Mgoza OCC in the summer of 2015. As mentioned previously, GVI had a long-term partnership with the centre. The GVI volunteers were coordinated and hosted by a larger local NGO. This NGO facilitated placements for the group, and two volunteers were due to be placed at Mgoza to support the centre management in finding sources of local funding. However, the student group interpreted their experience of Mr Kazembe and the centre in a very different way to the students from St Peter's. After the group's first visit, the two volunteers who were meant to undertake a placement at the centre opted to work with a different local NGO. During a focus group with GVI, they reflected on their first visit to Mgoza OCC.

Louise: They kept just handing them [other members of their group] children and then if the child wasn't smiling they would take it away and get a new child and hand it to them. It was just really weird they said they got a horrible vibe from them

Michelle: But they're going to do what they can to get them donations for food and stuff, but they just said they weren't that impressed

### What was it Mr Kazembe said to you?

Kat: Oh, like, "now your dreams have come true to can play with the orphan, touch the orphan". It was just a bit strange

Debbie: And then he kept going on about the building and they need a new building... but their building seems really good compared to others

GVI, 'During' Focus Group, July 2015

The group reported that Mr Kazembe had behaved in a way that was similar to how he had when I observed the meeting with the young people from St Peters. He had suggested to the volunteers that he wanted to build a bigger building, as he also had asserted to St Peter's, and continued to refer to all the children as "orphans". Notably however, Kat reports that he had gone beyond this, and

sought to prompt particular reactions from the volunteers: “now your dreams have come true to play with the orphan...”

The reports from the GVI volunteers are second-hand, but they are consistent with my prior research into interactions at this centre. It appears that Mr Kazembe was attempting to present the GVI volunteers with the same archetypal image of the situation of the centre, and the children it supported, as he had to St Peter's, but that in this case he was too explicit in his attempt to orchestrate events, and ultimately failed. Understanding this through the paradigm of extraversion, we might suggest that Mr Kazembe was presenting the centre in a way that attempted to play upon the expectations of the international volunteers. Unlike the school group, however, the volunteers did not interpret the situation in the way that he had expected. Indeed, Michelle's reflection above indicates that the group immediately perceived Mr Kazembe as attempting to elicit funding. This demonstrates that performances are relational and fragile. When one party becomes suspicious of the motives of the other, that actor can be seen to be working “cynically” (in their own interests) rather than “sincerely” (genuinely expressing their identity), to use Goffman's terminology (Goffman, 1956, p. 10). Moreover, the difference in how GVI interpreted the performance may derive from their closer engagement with questions around development interactions, to some degree, and from the fact that they were intending to work with the OCC for 8 weeks rather than simply engaging in a brief morning visit.

What these two different examples demonstrate clearly is how development calls for particular presentations of reality. These presentations draw upon traditional discourses of development and upon stereotypes of Africa and Africans. In the case of St Peter's, the presentation actively perpetuates these stereotypes, via the social media content generated, and the perceptions of the participants. In the case of GVI, however, the same performance was not successful, demonstrating how presentations can fall into crisis if the audience start to question their authenticity. To use the language of Goffman, the volunteers perceived Mr Kazembe as a “cynical performer” attempting to delude his audience for the purposes of “self-interest or private gain” (Goffman, 1956, pp. 10, 11). What is important to remember, of course, as emphasised at the

start of this chapter, is that these interactions do not take place on an even playing field; the volunteers in this instance are, in many respects, able to exercise more power and authority over the intended recipients of aid than the school group. Had they interpreted Mr Kazembe's performance as sincere, it is highly likely that they would have partaken in the performance of mutually agreed roles in the relationship. However, when they were unsatisfied with his performance, they had the power to withdraw their proposed support to the centre.

These examples demonstrate the complexity of these presentations, and the dynamic power relations that shape who controls the appropriate ways of performing in development interactions. In the case of St Peter's, tropes and stereotypes of the role of Europeans in interactions with Africans were actively affirmed, and therefore the conceptual marginalisation of recipients of aid was perpetuated. In the case of GVI, volunteers exercised their considerable material power, and therefore through this interaction reaffirmed the material marginalisation of countries that receive aid. Moreover, what is common to both is that development can be seen to demand presentations that reflect the inequality embedded in the exercise of these forms of power, and how easily these unequal power relations are perpetuated by development interactions which present themselves as premised on "partnership".

### **7.3.2 Competition for Resources**

The example in 7.3.1 demonstrates two forms of power exercised by volunteers, which can be referred to as 'material authority', volunteers having the power to withdraw or bestow donations, and 'conceptual authority', volunteers having the power to decide what is an is not an appropriate performance. How these two forms of power intersect is demonstrated in the case of two other aspects of the research: the relationship between students from GVI and BVP with the Malawian NGOs that hosted them. In these cases, it was evident that Malawian NGO staff were in competition over the resources that these volunteers brought to their organisations, and that they used particular presentations to try to attract this financial support.

## GVI

GVI had first started its Malawi project in 2006 with a local youth NGO called RAFIKI. Through RAFIKI they were connected with Mgoza OCC and several other schools and community based organisations (CBOs) in the local area, one of which was Umodzi. After their project in 2012, GVI decided to end their relationship with RAFIKI, and established an alternative partnership with Umodzi. This change of relationship appeared to have caused significant tensions between the directors of RAFIKI and Umodzi respectively, both prominent members of Mgoza community.

I explored what had happened here through casual interviews with the Directors of both RAFIKI and Umodzi, who largely recalled the same events, though with opposing perspectives. The Director of RAFIKI, Mr Phiri, told me that he had been the chair of the board of Umodzi; a role from which he resigned after GVI changed their partnership. He told me that he had not been informed by GVI of their intention to end the partnership, and that he had been particularly offended that the director of Umodzi, Mr Banda, had not informed him of their intention to work with the latter's organisation as a result. Mr Phiri felt that Mr Banda had manipulated the GVI volunteers in 2012 to try to ensure that they would change their Malawian partners (Field Notes, July 2015).

Upon first reflection, it can appear that this is an example of an external development organisation, GVI, exercising significant 'authority' over local political dynamics in a community. Though a small charity run by students, GVI had brought significant resources to the community of Mgoza every year since 2006, funding construction projects throughout the area almost each year they came. However, analysis of this through the paradigm of extraversion suggests a more dynamic and nuanced way of understanding this situation. GVI did wield great material authority, of course, and it was their material resources that both Umodzi and RAFIKI were in competition for. GVI came into the community of Mgoza under the banner of RAFIKI: throughout the community, people knew that these volunteers were working from RAFIKI. Despite this, they did not construct buildings for RAFIKI, but for other organisations to which Mr Phiri had introduced them. Therefore, when GVI funded the construction of a victim support unit at

Mgoza police station, for example, RAFIKI were seen in some way as the benefactor of this new local development, adding to Mr Phiri's local political capital. The skill of Mr Phiri was to convince the GVI volunteers that their gift to the community provided a direct relationship between the community and the volunteers, whilst locally it could be seen in a different way: i.e. that the gift was *from RAFIKI* to the community, as RAFIKI had enabled the flow of resources. Indeed, Mr Phiri told me that he was particularly aggrieved by the change of affiliation of GVI to Umodzi because he had deployed the very same GVI volunteers to work with Umodzi in previous years, though they were technically working for Umodzi only on behalf of RAFIKI. In interview, Mr Banda confirmed this and suggested that without the support of Mr Phiri his organisation would not have grown to the size it has (Mr Banda, NGO Director, Malawi, July 2015). Despite this, the two were in competition in 2015 in pursuit of the political capital afforded to them by having GVI volunteers invest in their community.

Through analysis of the presentational elements of these relations, it is apparent that this shaped part of the reason for GVI changing their affiliation from RAFIKI to Umodzi. In 2015, GVI volunteers reported that they had shifted their partnership from RAFIKI because Mr Phiri had become - in their view - too money driven, whereas Mr Banda at Umodzi was seen as passionate, dedicated and had ideas to improve the effectiveness of the volunteers. Through my regular interactions with both Mr Phiri and Mr Banda, and observations of how each interacted with international volunteers, it is highly evident why the GVI volunteers shifted from one organisation to the other. Mr Phiri was relatively cynical, and appeared to have stopped valuing the role that international volunteers could play in growing his NGO. He bragged about the scale of projects he was now implementing on behalf of major international NGOs, and described how he was using his own growth within the sector to build a new life for him and his family. Alongside this, he mocked and derided his fellow Malawian citizens: "they are lazy", "they are crazy", "they don't do strategic thinking", "they don't future plan", "they don't care about anything" (Mr Phiri, Field Notes, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2015). It appears to me that Mr Phiri had lost any passion he once had for the potential of 'development' in Malawi, and now viewed it as an industry like any other, in which he wanted to become more successful.

Mr Phiri's cynicism was in stark contrast to how Mr Banda behaved. I observed Mr Banda constantly performing to volunteers: acclaiming the positive impact they were having on the community, exaggerating every activity they engaged in, and ultimately making them feel that they were valued. He would do this by alluding to the poverty of the people of Mgoza, presenting them with local people from the community to tell their stories of suffering, and suggesting how the volunteers could help to alleviate this poverty. Moreover, he did not only perform in such a way in front of the volunteers, but also in private to me, and to other Malawians when I was present. In one meeting I observed, he told some local school teachers that he "shed tears" at the generosity of the Scottish volunteers, and how they suffered to try and support Malawians (Mr Banda, Field Notes, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015).

This distinction in behaviour ultimately benefited Mr Banda, as it enabled him to entice the volunteers to change their partnership from RAFIKI to his organisation. Mr Phiri had become tired of performing to volunteers, and the gains he received from doing so were diminishing in importance as he became more successful at receiving larger grants of money for RAFIKI. Mr Banda, on the other hand, was ready to perform to the volunteers, reminding them of their importance to the community. Ultimately, he was successful in presenting a particular image of the community and the role that the volunteers could play in that community, which he did by drawing on the traditional discourse of development, and this enabled him to access the GVI resources for his organisation. This example has relevance for the study of 'partnership', explored with reference to literature in Chapter 2. The concept had initially been used to reflect greater equality in development practice, and it is consistently used by the SMP as a concept that reflects their emphasis on equality and mutuality. However, in this case, having a 'partnership' with external sources of development is shown to be more akin to a resource to be fought over rather than a long-term source of mutual exchange and friendship. This finding was further reflected in the following example.

**BVP**

The events that led GVI to switch their affiliation from RAFIKI to Umodzi were reflected in the 2015 experience of another group of student volunteers I engaged in research. Volunteers from the organisation BVP were living in Mgoza during my research period, though they were only being accommodated there (by RAFIKI) and working with another NGO in another township, which was a 30-minute drive away. I engaged these BVP Volunteers in a focus group whilst they were in Malawi and after they returned, and spent a large amount of time speaking with them casually about their work. In many ways, their experience was strikingly similar to that of the group from GVI. In the focus group, the volunteers told me how members of staff at the organisation they were working with were secretly establishing a new organisation. Without the knowledge of their organisation's management, these members of staff had asked the international volunteers to assist them in applying for status as a Community Based Organisation (CBO) with the city authorities. In approaching the international volunteers, these staff members were also trying to promote their work to potential sources of external resource. Jasmine recalled the events in the focus group:

Jasmine: there's like something... they're not happy. So certain workers are not happy with the management. And they're not happy with the way the funding has been used. There's like two factions basically. One of them has spoken to Kathy, the other one is speaking to me and Luna. And one of them was speaking to me today, and he reiterated to me 1000 times that this is very private. So I won't mention his name. But he is leaving because he says like... things that are supposed to get done because it's a youth charity are not getting done. He meant in specific the clinic side of it. He's just saying "it's just a building". I asked him, like, what is it going to be used for? And he was like "I honestly don't know". And this is someone who works there and like... is quite high up in the organisation and doesn't know what is going to happen with it. So he's set up another charity and he's actually going away with someone else from that organisation. So they've got it all set up, and they've been actually using us... as kind of resources, to edit documents, proof read

stuff that they're gonna send away for funding. Which puts us in a bit of a kinda awkward situation. Not only that, but they're actually asking us to kinda help them get funding back in the UK. Which is hilarious because I've got no idea how to do that.

BVP Volunteers, 'During' Focus Group, July 2015

The staff member in question was attempting to encourage the BVP volunteers to assist him in the creation of a more effective organisation. He did so by criticising the organisation they were working with in 2015. His specific critique relates to a clinic built by another group of volunteers in 2011. This clinic was central to the concerns of the BVP volunteers, who felt that it was rarely used by health professionals. The construction of this clinic had in 2011 been a tool through which the NGO hosting BVP volunteers had enticed international volunteers to work with them, and likely congratulated them on their effectiveness and significant impact. Now, the lack of effectiveness of the clinic was being used by staff in the same NGO to try to establish a separate relationship with another international volunteering organisation: essentially, competing over the resources offered by these international 'partnerships'.

This has parallels with research undertaken by Harri Englund, who explored the strategies of extraversion utilized by members of Pentecostal churches in Malawi in an article in 2003. He presents an account of members of churches gaining access to contact details for wealthy branches of Pentecostalism in the US which were "treasured" and a "matter of intense competition" (Englund, 2003, p. 89). Malawian church members were constructing their own new branches of Pentecostalism in what Englund argues to be a form of extraversion; a way of accessing or using external resources for their own personal economic and political gain. In the extract above, the group of student volunteers can be seen to have become a part of a similar process. In suggesting their alternative way of developing Malawi, the members of staff were attempting to divert the flow of external resources towards themselves and their would-be new organisations. As in the case of GVI, competing organisations are interested in attracting the support of international volunteers to their cause. In order to do this, they often draw upon traditional discourses of development, including tropes and



stereotypes of people in countries who receive aid, and suggestions of how to enhance aid-effectiveness. This example reveals again that international ‘partnerships’ are competed over as a resource, and this demonstrates clearly the enduring material authority held by volunteers over their hosting NGOs.

### **7.3.3 Summary**

In summary, the presentations demanded by development interactions are based on, and often function through the reproduction of, the traditional development discourse and stereotypes of people in aid-receiving countries. Parties to these interactions engage with these discourses when necessary to pursue particular ends. This section has shown how NGO staff use what might be called their conceptual marginalisation, embedded in the development discourse, to attempt to control the flow of material resources into their communities and to their organisations. This demonstrates how inequality is embedded in development interactions, but also that this conceptual inequality can be negotiated by aid recipients in ways that allow them to exercise some control over the material flows that accompany development interactions. These findings are important for a contemporary application of the post-development critique, as they demonstrate how the theory’s central position that development is an ethnocentric construct, paternalistic and that it establishes unequal relations of power, is compatible with an account that also respects the agency of aid recipients. Importantly, the examples in this section have also shown that successful performances fundamentally require a two-sided investment in its staging from actors on the aid-giving and aid-receiving side, but that whilst it is two-way, the power relations are absolutely not equal. As the next section will show, another depth of this performance is specifically how the concepts of “partnership” and “equality” themselves are performed in relations between Scotland and Malawi, and how through this embedded structural inequalities are concealed.

## **7.4 Partnership is Performed**

This section explores the ways in which the discourse of ‘partnership’ has become an element of performance in relations between Scottish and Malawian

organisations. This chapter therefore builds on the work of the three previous findings chapters. In particular, it demonstrates that the promotion by the SMP of relations characterised by ‘partnership, not charity’ has led to organisations promoting their activities as premised on equality and mutual exchange, when in fact they are still characterised in part by conventional development relations. Through demonstration of how partnership is performed, these findings show again the depth of the embedded inequalities in the relations of development, and that superficial changes to practice or rhetoric can sometimes serve to conceal these inequalities.

#### 7.4.1 School ‘Partnerships’

In this section I reflect on the research I conducted which explored the school partnership between St Peter’s Secondary and Sapitwa Community Day Secondary in Scotland and Malawi respectively. Alongside engaging the group from St Peter’s in longitudinal focus groups, I also spent a considerable amount of time with them whilst they were in Malawi, such as in the visit to Mgoza OCC, and when engaging with their partner school, when I observed their interactions and engaged the teachers in casual interviews. As mentioned above, this school partnership was regarded as emblematic of the SMP approach by a number of interviewees involved in the SMP. One remarked that Mr Scott, who established the St Peter’s partnership, “managed to make it 100% equal” and that other projects should aim to be as equal as the relationship between St Peter’s and Sapitwa (Mr Melville, MaTo Coordinator, Interview, August 2015). This school partnership had even been used as a case study of a strong ‘equal’ school partnership by the SMP<sup>11</sup>. This partnership was therefore presented as premised on equality, and as involving a two-way learning exchange between the two countries, rather than on one-way charity from Scotland to Malawi.

However, having spent time with the group whilst St Peter’s were visiting Malawi, it became apparent that this partnership was, in fact, involved the one-way transfer of charitable donations. In such a way, this school partnership had similarities to that of the MaTo project; it presented itself as premised on equitable, non-material exchanges, and was celebrated as such. However, many

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<sup>11</sup> No citation is provided to protect anonymity

of its practices bore more resemblance to those associated with the charity paradigm. Moreover, in one casual interview with Mr Scott, he revealed how particular performances reflected and shaped this misalignment between the rhetoric and practice of his school partnership.

Every year the Scottish young people would be taken on 'educational visits' to some of their Malawian fellow pupil's houses, on the premise that they should "see the Malawian way of life" (Mr Scott, St Peter's Secondary School, Casual Interview, June 2015). The head teacher of Sapitwa, Mr Dzimbiri, who arranged these visits, would every year take the Scottish group to a student's home and, at the end of the visit, would inform the group of hidden poverty in the house. The example given to me was that in 2015 the group were taken to the Sapitwa head boy's house, and at the end of the visit were told that "Dyson unfortunately will have to leave the school next week, because his parents don't have the money to pay his school fees". On another occasion, also in 2015, the group were taken to visit the home of a pupil which had recently been damaged by torrential rains. On both occasions, and on every other year of the partnership, the Scottish young people then took it upon themselves to either lobby their teachers or club together themselves to give a cash donation to the home in question (Field Notes, Malawi, June 2015).

Mr Scott expressed discomfort with this interaction, which he felt to be a means through which Mr Dzimbiri was able to encourage economic donations from St Peter's. The activity of visiting pupils' houses was justified on grounds of education and cultural exchange, and therefore in line with the aims of a partnership model, reflected in the fact that Malawian pupils would visit the homes of their Scottish counterparts on their visit to Scotland<sup>12</sup>. Therefore, when the young people took it upon themselves to suggest making a donation to the hosting family, this activity was beyond the formal project activities.

This example has two particular elements, which I will explore in turn. Firstly, again, the interactions here can be understood as expressing a form of

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<sup>12</sup> This was fundamentally unequal, however, as whilst Malawian visitors would be hosted by Scottish families in their homes, the Scottish visitors only had lunch with their counterparts at their homes, and slept at a nearby hotel.

extraversion. The partnership model, particularly the emphasis on non-material exchange, is both challenging to operate for Malawian schools, and often fails to meet their expectations of what it means to have a partnership with a school in Scotland. I reflected upon this in a focus group comprised of Malawian teachers with links to schools in Scotland. Whilst many of these teachers had links involved charitable donations to Malawian schools, many were also primarily justified by educational exchange and the promotion of Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence<sup>13</sup> (Malawian Teachers, Focus Group, June 2015). Respondents in this focus group were keen to highlight that they could not fulfil the educational aspects of their partnerships because of lack of resources:

Yohane: As a teacher, I went through a course on the teaching of English in our schools. This is all in our curriculum, and the British Council plan a list, and they tell us how we can use it. But we fail to give it to the learners because we don't have the resources. I have a laptop. I charge it at home, I bring it to the school and it will just run for one hour, then the battery is gone. I will charge it for the day, and it will just go. Had it been that we had this solar power, then we would know who the partnership are.

Malawian Teachers, Focus Group, June 2015

Yohane had a school link with Scotland that was supported by the British Council. However, he explains that he was unable to connect with his Scottish partner school due to lack of a reliable access to electricity. This contribution sparked a series of similar anecdotes from participants, who reported not being able to share educational resources between Scotland and Malawi because their Malawian schools lacked access to electricity. I highlighted in the focus group that had only highlighted what Scottish schools could offer Malawian school in terms of material resources, and asked if there were other things that they

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<sup>13</sup> The Curriculum for Excellence is the national curriculum for Scottish schools, first implemented in 2010. It is based on four key purposes of education, which will enable young people to become "successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors". It was intended to transform Scottish education, with a focus on flexibility and acknowledgement that all education does not take place within the classroom (Education Scotland, 2019, p. 1)

gained from their partnerships. The group mentioned briefly that Scottish young people were free to come and learn about Malawian culture “chop wood like we do in the village, and taste our food” and that they would link with students from each country as pen pals. However, the conversation quickly turned back towards material exchange, through the example of a Malawian school that makes products for the Scottish school to sell in Scotland in order to send the money back to Malawi. This was explained by Violet beneath:

Violet: They can be decorated with beads or dry leaves into story cards. We send them to Scotland. It's like entrepreneurship. But there is some culture in the programmes. The partners, they get them for entrepreneurship for them in Scotland. So that whatever they get, they try to assist our school as well. But through the making of the things we even instil some knowledge and skills in our learners. And those learners can support themselves in future with the same skills. So that makes the two schools learn.

Malawian Teachers, Focus Group, June 2015

In the extract above Violet explicitly highlights the non-material impacts of this initiative. Perhaps as a result of my questioning, she was keen to impress that “there is some culture in the programmes” and that the initiative also had elements of “capacity building”.

The consensus amongst this focus group was very clear: Malawian schools lacked resources, and required support to access improved facilities. Crucially, participants argued that having access to improved resources would enhance their partnerships with schools in Scotland: for example, improved technology would better allow them to share educational resources between the two countries. This demonstrates that Malawian actors are critically aware of the shortcomings of the notion that partnerships can be truly ‘equal’ in the absence of material equality. However, this also demonstrates how actors use the discourse of equal partnership to achieve what they want out of the bilateral relationships. In the case of the work between St Peter's and Sapitwa, Mr Dzimbiri was able to use the premise of educational exchange (visiting pupil's

homes) to elicit material donations from a partnership that was explicitly premised on non-material activities. Teachers like Violet and Yohane also demonstrated through their contributions to the focus group that they were adept at managing the emphasis on partnership and using this to gloss the transfer of material resources. The paradigm of extraversion is valuable in interpreting this as it gives agency to these actors, and demonstrates how actors can use aspects of the development discourse to achieve their particular goals.

In the examples above, extraversion helps interpret the agency in development relations, and demonstrates how actors can be seen to take power back from these relations that otherwise marginalise them. However, whilst this is a useful insight, this case also demonstrates the prevailing unequal structures that still very much surround these interactions. At the beginning of the research period, I engaged a former civil servant, Joan, in interview. Joan had promoted school partnerships between Scotland and Malawi on behalf of the Scottish Executive in the years following the first cooperation agreement between the two countries (signed in 2005). In interview, Joan remarked on how she would have to explain to Malawian schools when establishing partnerships:

You're not having a link with a school in Scotland to get a new roof, you are not having a link with Scotland to get new uniforms for your kids, and, but, the underlying thing is that you will get the new roof, you will get new books, you will get the new buildings, they all know that's going to happen. But you have to keep telling them that that's not what you're going into this to do.

Joan, Former Civil Servant and SMP Board Member, Interview, February 2015

In the case of St Peters and Sapitwa, and the various links represented at the focus group, this emphasis on the value of non-material exchange has been shown to endure. Joan had been resolute early in the interview that the school partnerships she was establishing “were not about money or charity”. Yet in the extract above, she concedes that ultimately these relations would involve the provision of resources for Malawian schools, though they had to effectively perform partnership to achieve this outcome. This demonstrates how these

partnerships can still be seen to be ultimately driven by Scottish partners, and Malawian partners schools have to comply to the needs of Scottish schools in order to achieve a successful school 'partnership'. Essentially, the notion that relations should be premised on non-material, two-way learning exchanges is a discourse that meets the needs and desires of the 'partnership discourse' promoted by Scottish partner schools and the SMP. Malawian schools have to then perform to this discourse, for example by denying that they are seeking material resources from Scottish schools or aligning their needs with the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence, even though this premise of partnership does not meet their needs and desires for resources. Ultimately, partnership is performed, and through this performance, in a very particular way, inequalities are concealed. Importantly, this reflects the perverse consequence of the partnership model explored particularly in section 6.5: by emphasising what can be termed 'conceptual' equality of Scots and Malawians, the material inequality is overlooked, and engagement in charitable donations from Scotland to Malawi becomes a practice which should be downplayed or done in private.

Furthermore, a significant consequence of this is that it leads to a lack of transparency in partnerships. As Malawian schools are forced to navigate complex performances, the communities surrounding the schools often become suspicious that teachers are engaging in corruption. When one of the class teachers from Sapitwa visited Scotland in October 2015, I engaged him in interview, and asked him specifically about how Malawian schools feel about the emphasis on non-material forms of exchange. Mr Kalunda responded that the local community did not understand that this was the premise of the relationship, and notes that members of that community attributed all developments at the school to donations from Scotland, rather than from the efforts of local education authorities. When the community felt that there was not enough being developed at their school, he believed that the community assumed the teachers at his school had misappropriated the donations.

The comments from people... you know people have been observing you, coming to Sapitwa, coming back. Their expectation was to see some of the developments taking place at this school. Maybe buildings being built by St Peter's Secondary School. Some of... a certain kind of development

taking place there, from you. This is what they were expecting, people. And now they say "ah". They are saying these people; they are just spoiling. They are saying the Europeans have been, they have brought a lot of money to this school, and the teachers have just squandered it all. See; what have they done? They have done nothing. But the Europeans are bringing money at this school. This is what the people, the community, they think so... This is what they told us. At one time Mr. Dzimbiri was painted black in the sense that they said he has bought a car. He has no car, but people were saying he has got a car; "the people from Scotland they have brought money, they have given him a lot of money, and he has bought a car and kept it somewhere else..."

Mr. Kalunda, Sapitwa Secondary Teacher, Interview, October 2015

This example demonstrates how the partnership discourse leads to a lack of transparency via performance, and the impact that this has on communities that host 'partner' schools from Scotland. Mr. Kalunda later expressed in the interview that his coming to Scotland would also arouse suspicion, and that community members would expect that he had received money whilst visiting the country. Furthermore, this example demonstrates again that the partnership approach promoted by the SMP is not necessarily reflective of the needs and expectations of Malawian actors. As described by Mr. Kalunda above, the community around Sapitwa expected material donations because that is the traditional mode of practice (and more aligned with their need). When they did not see tangible evidence of material donations, they became suspicious. This demonstrates how the need to 'perform partnership' is potentially problematic for Malawian actors, who can be accused of corruption. But more so, this again represents a misalignment of power between the two sides of the partnership, and suggests that the discourse of non-material exchange and 'partnership, not charity' is firmly a Scottish discourse, imposed upon Malawian schools who wish to engage in partnerships with Scotland. Moreover, this example also demonstrates that this emphasis can be seen to be responsible precisely for a decrease in transparency. This is because St Peter's *did* give material donations on their trip: they had made a donation to Mgoza OCC, to pupils directly during the home visits, and left money behind at the end of the trip with teachers to



pay for school fees for other struggling pupils. Each of these donations, however, were made in private and because they did not fit with the idea of partnership. In this instance, premising the relationship on non-material educational exchange forced material donations under the surface, and fed local suspicions that the partnership was a front for more covert forms of financial relationship: suspicions that were, therefore, partially accurate.

#### 7.4.2 Mutuality of Performance

As I have noted already, a key point is that both parties within these interactions were required, in different ways, to perform partnership. Whilst 7.4.1 has provided evidence that Malawian partners are compelled to perform in particular ways, throughout the research I also found a number of instances of Scottish partners presenting their work differently depending on context and audience.

In interview with one of the coordinators for the MaTo project, Mr Melville, I explored this presentational aspect of partnerships. Mr Melville noted that during fundraising for their trips to Malawi, MaTo volunteers would deliberately emphasise the charitable aspects of the organisation, and downplay the real way that the fundraised money would be spent:

...last night, one of this year's participants has put up an advert for a social event to raise money. And she's put on it "the money goes towards establishing libraries in Malawi". Which it does, but she's raising money... She's raising money for her trip... it's to pay for accommodation, a certain amount for food, and your flights...

Mr Melville, MaTo Coordinator, Interview, August 2015

In the example above, the MaTo volunteer is presenting a particular interpretation of their activities with the organisation. MaTo does indeed support the construction of libraries in some of its partner schools. However, such construction was a side project, and not the core focus of its work which is focussed on two-way, non-material educational exchange. As Mr Melville pointed out, the majority of the funds raised by MaTo volunteers would go towards the

cost of the flights, meals and accommodation required for them to travel to Malawi on a visit. Mr Scott, from St Peter's, gave a similar example:

Well, the kids at Celtic Park for example. We were fundraising with buckets and some of the young people were shouting "give money for the Malawian orphanages", because we are visiting and making a donation, the kids know that. In some case it's true, some will go to orphans, but that's not really what the majority will go to. But people see Malawi and they think "oh give money to Malawi", but the majority is on the flights.

Mr Scott, St Peter's Secondary School, Pilot Interview, April 2014

Both Mr Melville and Mr Scott's projects were on the surface emblematic of the 'relational approach' and were premised on the exchange of cultural rather than material donations. However, in their fundraising, the Scottish participants deliberately drew upon the narrative of African poverty and European led development so as to elicit greater donations. Just as Mr Kazembe of Mgoza OCC exaggerated the poverty of the children his organisation care for, and Mr Dzimbiri selected the poorest households for Scottish young people to visit, these Scottish young people were drawing upon a particular image of poverty in order to elicit the desired response. This demonstrates that allusions to stereotypes and tropes in a way that conceals realities are used by Scottish participants in relations with Malawi, and that these are effectively performances that mirror the performances of their Malawian counterparts, already explored extensively in this chapter.

In the same interview with Mr Melville, he offered an interesting reflection upon his own particular presentation of life in Malawi, which demonstrates another element of the performative aspect of these partnerships:

.... things like, you're taking a photograph of two wee cute kids, and there's maybe a red plastic bucket in the background. So you sort of almost subconsciously move the camera so the red buckets not there, 'cos that looks too modern. And if there's a nice wooden one you include that in the picture, you know. And we all do it! I've done it myself. If you look

through my first year of photographs, it's all the traditional housing and the nsima (popular Malawian food) and all the rest of it.

Mr Melville, MaTo Coordinator, Interview, August 2015

Mr Melville here catches himself, in a literal way, re-creating formative perceptions of a developing country through his photography. His reflection on this shows that he was aware that the image of Africa he wanted to find was inaccurate, or at least a 'managed' one. However, he nevertheless contributed to re-creating these perceptions. This example demonstrates how embedded the perceptions of Africa can be, and how they are actively shaped and recreated by agents of aid. Rahnema writes that "the power of development... lies in its internalisation by the host" (1997). This example shows how this internationalisation occurs. Though Mr Melville was able to critically reflect on this tendency, the examples he provided of young people presenting particular realities can be seen to represent the external presentation, when the audience demands it, of a particular internal perspective of 'reality'.

Each of these examples demonstrate, as do those in sections 7.2 and 7.3, that the performative aspect of development relations contributes directly to the replication and affirmation of stereotypes of global poverty, Africa and European led development. Moreover, this section has shown how participants on the donor side of these bilateral relationships are also actively involved in the performative presentation of development relations. In such a way, using extraversion as an analytical tool helps demonstrate how the discourse of development shapes interactions between donors and recipients, but also how donors and recipients help shape the development discourse. Essentially, this discourse is constantly being reaffirmed and recreated by both sides of development interactions, concealing inequalities, and maintaining faith in the concept of development as a foundation for interaction.

### **7.4.3 Summary**

In summary, this section has demonstrated how partnership itself has become an element of performance. Malawian actors have been shown to perform

partnership as a means of achieving their particular ends. Through the paradigm of extraversion, I interpreted this as partially empowering: Malawian actors negotiate within development structures and agendas in ways that aim to take back power. However, I also demonstrated that actors were only partially able to take control in this way, and that ultimately the emphasis on non-material partnerships represented the imposition of a particular development agenda by the agents of aid on recipients. This was summarised most effectively by the contributions of Joan, who asserted firmly that Malawian schools had to learn to speak the foreign language of ‘partnership’ if they were to have any hope of their needs and desires being met. Section 7.4.2 then crucially demonstrated that the performance of partnership is two-way, and that Scottish organisations engaged in performance of a different kind to elicit increased fundraising, frequently in ways that perpetuate traditional stereotypes of global poverty. This further demonstrated again the inequality at the heart of these development relations, as Malawian partners were being compelled to downplay their desire for material donations, whilst Scottish partners were emphasising the material poverty of Malawian partners to raise the funds they required to fly to visit their ‘partner’ schools.

## 7.5 Conclusion

As is discussed extensively in Chapter 2, post-development theorists have explored how the development discourse establishes specific identities, relationships and forms of knowledge. From the premise of the development discourse, these identities are used to facilitate intervention by agents of aid, such as the “small farmers”, the “landless peasants” and the “underdeveloped” (Escobar, 1995, p. 41). Corresponding models of development were also constructed, involving institutions such as NGOs, and through these relations and identities the discourse “determines what can be thought and said” (Escobar, 1995, p. 40). This chapter has analysed how these relations, identities and forms of knowledge are performed in contemporary efforts to make development more equitable, through the case of the SMP. This chapter has focussed on understanding how development relations are performed, drawing upon the work of Bayart on extraversion as a means through which to understand how different actors operate within the contexts created by development performances.

Through this analysis, this chapter has drawn on the post-development critique to analyse what these performances reveal about contemporary efforts to make development more equitable.

This chapter has presented three central findings. Firstly, section 7.2 demonstrated that there is an enduring relationship between colonialism, development, modernisation and the racial concept of the *Mzungu*. Malawian respondents critically reflected upon this enduring relationship, but it was also shown to shape how some Malawian actors interacted with volunteers. Analysis in this section found that concepts of development directly influenced unequal relations between people from aid-giving and aid-receiving countries.

Secondly, section 7.3 analysed data which found that the performances of development continue to draw upon, and therefore affirm and perpetuate, the conceptual marginalisation of countries that receive aid. Actors were shown to draw upon the development discourse and its associated colonial depictions of aid-receiving countries in order to engage in the relations of development. However, this section crucially demonstrated that actors in aid-receiving countries were also adept at navigating such relations. Through the use of extraversion as a paradigm, analysis demonstrated that actors used their conceptual marginalisation to encourage the desired response from agents of aid. This analysis in particular also demonstrated the compatibility of post-development with theories that give agency to actors in development, and this constitutes one of the key theoretical contributions of this thesis. Moreover, this analysis showed the value in the post-development critique in interpreting contemporary efforts to make development more equitable, as such efforts are partially premised on the post-development position that rejects the universality of 'development' as an objective truth.

Thirdly, section 7.4 demonstrated that partnership itself is performed in Scotland - Malawi relationships, with actors on both sides drawing upon the discourse of partnership to present particular renditions of their relationships and activities. In Chapter 2, I explored how post-development writers had found participatory techniques to have been radical concepts that had been co-opted by mainstream development (Hickey & Kothari, 2009). Building on Chapter 6,

this section demonstrated in a very detailed way how this process of ‘co-optation’ can be said to have occurred with the partnership agenda through performance. This analysis showed that the change in language and expectation around partnerships between Scottish and Malawian schools had not resulted in a significant shift in relations. Rather, organisations in both Scotland and Malawi were demanded by this shift in rhetoric to present their projects in a different way to align with the partnership discourse, but ultimately these relations were still characterised by inequality. Whilst this analysis demonstrated through the paradigm of extraversion that Malawian actors were able to take some power back from their embedded marginalisation, it ultimately found that the power to set the agenda still resides firmly in the aid-giving country.

This chapter has therefore shown that the relations of development are still highly unequal. Though actors can exercise some agency within these relations, the exercise of this agency was found to come at the cost of maintaining the conceptual marginalisation of people in countries that receive aid, via the perpetuation of stereotypes about global poverty and development. Through the post-development critique, this chapter has shown how these inequalities have their roots firmly in the discourse of development. Escobar writes that the development discourse “determines what can be thought and said” within “the rules of the game” based on constructed “forms of knowledge” (Escobar, 1995, pp. 40-41). This chapter has shown how Malawian actors can occasionally use these constructions through performances, in doing so take some power back from the system that otherwise marginalises them. However, ultimately, the rules which govern these performances are not mutually agreed upon: Malawian ‘partners’ were not able to set the rules of the game, only to play the game, with the hand that they had been dealt.

# Chapter 8 Conclusion

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## 8.1 Introduction

This thesis has considered contemporary efforts to increase equality in development interactions. Specifically, it has explored this issue through analysis of the SMP using the post-development critique. This research has been written in the context of efforts throughout the development industry to foster greater equality between aid-giving and aid-receiving countries. The formulation of the SDGs, published in 2015, can be seen to be a discursive turning point in these relations, as they set targets for all of the world, not just developing countries, like the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015) did (UNDP, 2016). This reflects a significant shift in focus and language, and indeed, global institutions like the World Bank have now begun phasing out the term 'developing world' (Fantom, 2016). This shift comes from a long history of theoretical and practical challenges to development from within and out-with the industry. In the 1970s and 1980s, participatory development first came into vogue, promoting a more integrated relationship between aid-recipients with the programmes that influence their lives. More recently, the term 'partnership' has been the dish of the day, which directly reflects the shift towards equality. Essentially, the top-down, bureaucratic, interventionist forms of development appear to have been rejected, in favour of an integrated, more democratic, partnership approach, premised on equality.

However, this narrative of a shift throughout contemporary development towards an agenda of equality does not tell the whole truth. In fact, changes in global development policy and practice can alternatively be interpreted as having co-opted critiques into the mainstream and utilised integrated methods to promote the same modernisation-as-development paradigm that underpinned the industry's first incarnations. This thesis has shown how within the contemporary equality agenda in development, and the practices that accompany it, deep inequalities between donors and recipients continue to shape interactions, which remain premised on structural and individual power imbalances.

These findings have come through the application of the post-development critique to the contemporary efforts to increase equality espoused in the SMP model. The post-development critique first rose to prominence 25 years prior to the writing of this thesis, when *The Development Dictionary* was published in 1992. In December 2017, *Third World Quarterly* released a special issue focussing on post-development 25 years on. This issue, introduced by Aram Ziai, brought together foundational post-development writers like Escobar and Esteva with a range of other academics and activists (Ziai, 2017a; Esteva & Escobar, 2017). Contributors noted that the world, and development, had changed in many ways since 1992, but that post-development absolutely still had relevance to interpreting it. Esteva writes that challenges to the westernisation and capitalisation of the world, like post-development, are needed now more than ever, given the limits to growth on a planet with finite resources, and the impending climate catastrophe (Esteva & Escobar, 2017). Other writers explore how post-development has been appropriated into mainstream development (Wilson, 2017), the incorporation of post-development into development studies curriculums (Harcourt, 2017; Ziai, 2017a) and how post-development must respect the agency of aid-recipients (Matthews, 2017). This thesis therefore also comes in the context of contemporary reflection on the value of post-development theory in the late 2010s. It enters into these debates by exploring the internalisation of development by practitioners and ‘recipients’, the appropriation of critical voices into the mainstream industry, and contemporary dialogues around the presentation of participants in development projects. For post-development, this thesis serves as a detailed exploration of the formation of the development discourse in light of contemporary challenges, and evidence of the continuing value of the theory.

This thesis has therefore applied post-development to the SMP, to explore contemporary efforts within the industry to create greater equality through this case study. It has done so in the context of movements within the development industry, in reference to particular contemporary debates around perceptions and identity, and has expanded upon debates within post-development theory itself.



The central research question for this research was: What can the Scotland Malawi Partnership learn from the post-development critique? As the approach taken in this thesis has been interpretivist, this research question was explorative rather than experimental. Therefore, five secondary research questions were developed to structure the analysis. These were devised to help address the central research question, and were based on different aspects of the post-development critique. Research question 1 considered the origins of the organisation, drawing from the post-development approach of undertaking a Foucauldian genealogy to situate institutions within historical structures of knowledge. Research question 2 considered how the SMP model fits within the contemporary discourse of development, and used the post-development critique to evaluate the extent to which its practice could be said to challenge this discourse. Research questions 3 and 4 considered popular perceptions of developing countries, which are a fundamental part of their marginalisation in post-development theory. The answers to these questions came through detailed analysis over how such perceptions are formed, occasionally challenged, and ultimately shaped by structures of inequality. Research question 5 drew from the post-development argument that critiques of development and alternative forms of practice are co-opted into the mainstream, by considering the challenges faced by organisations when trying to implement the SMP model. In addition to these research questions, Chapter 7 analysed findings which emerged from the data and considered these in line with the central research question. These findings, which demonstrated how performances are integral to relations of development, were analysed using the post-development critique, and an alternative application of post-development which aligns with accounts of agency was proposed.

This chapter now considers each of these research questions in turn. In the following four sections, I summarise the answer to each secondary research question in relation to literature, and assess the implications of each answer in light of the central research question, including the analysis from Chapter 7. Section 8.7 then summarises the implications of this study for post-development theory, section 8.8 makes some recommendations for practitioners based on these findings, 8.9 proposes possible areas for future research, and 8.10 reflects

on the implications of this research on attempts to make development more equitable.

## 8.2 Origins

### 1) What are the origins of the SMP model?

The question of the origins of the SMP model arose from research around the organisation in preparation for the collection of the empirical research, and drew from the approach of the post-development critique, which undertakes genealogies of development institutions to trace the emergence of the knowledge that underpins them. Chapter 4 therefore explored and analysed both the history and the historiography of the organisation. In this chapter, I demonstrated how the SMP use a particular historical narrative of Scottish engagement in Malawi to promote the organisation and its contemporary approach. This narrative celebrates the Scottish missions as having played an ultimately positive role in Malawi, in particular through the provision of education, and ultimately helping Malawians gain independence from colonial rule. Furthermore, this narrative suggests that the personal connections built up between Scots and Malawians during this time led to the creation of the SMP, and that these relations of 'friendship' led to the development of the particular approach of the SMP, which emphasises equality, reciprocity and mutuality. This historical narrative was shown in particular to be reflected in the case of the explorer David Livingstone, who was presented by the SMP as both sowing the seeds of the organisation via his expeditions to the land now known as Malawi, and sowing the seeds of the organisation's approach through the way in which he interacted with his Malawian counterparts. Through critical analysis, it has been demonstrated that these historical narratives are partially inaccurate, represent a denial of the complicity of Scottish actors in the violence of colonialism, and conceal embedded ethnocentrism in the institutional perspective of the SMP.

Firstly, the inaccuracy of the origins narrative was demonstrated through analysis of the contemporary forces that gave rise to the SMP as an organisation. Chapter 4 demonstrates how the organisation, far from arising organically from the legacy of interpersonal connections between Scotland and Malawi, actually

owes much debt to the political context in Scotland which surrounded its emergence. Moreover, that chapter demonstrates how the approach of the organisation is aligned with contemporary practice throughout the development industry internationally. Claims made by the SMP that the partnership approach derives from the unique history of Scottish interaction with Malawi are overstated, as these claims were shown to actually align with the partnership agenda internationally, as was notably evidenced by research of Malawian NGO staff with partnerships in Scotland.

Secondly, Chapter 4 established that the origins narrative of the SMP constitutes a denial of the complicity of Scottish actors in colonial violence. This was particularly evidenced in the language used by the SMP. For example, in interviews and official publications, the SMP suggests that the Scotland Malawi 'friendship' is 150 years old (Ross, 2015). When reflecting on Livingstone, the SMP further drew upon this perspective of equality, suggesting that Livingstone built relations of 'friendship' with his Malawian co-travellers, as did the Scottish missionaries who followed him. Furthermore, actors were shown to celebrate the role of Scotland in Malawi historically through praise for the education provided by the Scottish missions to Malawians. In each of these examples, the SMP narrative fails to address the vast structural inequalities that underpinned these relationships. In celebrating the education provided by Scottish missions, the SMP fails to ask the crucial questions of what type of education this was, for which Malawians it was provided, and fails to critique the notion altogether that Malawians would 'need' the provision of external education. In calling the relations between Scotland and Malawi relations of 'friendship', the organisation is denying the violence that characterised the colonial era, in favour of a narrative that suits its particular contemporary approach to development.

Thirdly, analysis in Chapter 4 demonstrated how the origins narrative of the SMP conceals embedded ethnocentrism in the institutional perspective of the organisation. This was reflected in the organisation's view of the origins of its relational approach, which suggested that the 'partnership' agenda has its roots in Presbyterian theology and the practice of the Church of Scotland. In this example, the directionality of the view of the SMP was palpable: the partnership agenda was viewed as a Scottish creation, and the gift of Scottish missionaries to

Malawians. In its accounts of Livingstone, the organisation also promoted a similar privileging of the Scottish over the Malawian, by portraying Livingstone always positively, ignoring the racist views he held and the racist structures that surrounded his mission, and portraying his African counterparts as passive, loyal beneficiaries. These latently ethnocentric views were furthermore reflected in how key actors in the SMP reflected on the role of SMP members in Malawi, when having a 'partnership' approach was suggested to be a gift which Scottish organisations could give to their Malawian 'partners'.

These findings demonstrate that from the perspective of the post-development critique, the origins narrative of the SMP reflects the embedded inequality in its institutional discourse. In its celebration of the Scottish missions and Livingstone, the organisation denies the structural inequality which shaped these relations. By relating these historical relations to its contemporary approach, the organisation fails to effectively challenge the legacy of colonialism on contemporary relations between the two countries. Post-development theory shows how the inequalities that shape contemporary development have their roots in the colonial era. The SMP fails to address these contemporary inequalities not by suggesting that it has removed this legacy, but by denying that this legacy of inequality exists altogether, and therefore maintaining the latent ethnocentric attitudes which were reflected in the organisation's origins narrative.

### **8.3 Challenging the Discourse**

- 2) To what extent does the SMP model challenge the dominant development discourse?

This research question was developed to address the central position of the post-development critique that the dominant development discourse perpetuates inequalities between aid-giving and aid-receiving countries. As the SMP positions itself as providing a model of interaction based on equality, this question was explored in Chapter 2 to analyse the extent to which its practice could be said to challenge the dominant discourse. Building on the findings relating to research question 1, analysis demonstrated that the organisation fails to

challenge the dominant discourse precisely because its institutional narrative fails to identify the inequality embedded in colonial relations. Through its celebration of the colonial era relations between the two countries, and the effectiveness of its approach for the 'development' of Malawi based on connections which have their roots in this era, the organisation essentially affirms, rather than challenges, this discourse and its associated unequal structures.

Furthermore, the 'relational approach' promoted by the organisation was shown to reflect contemporary forms of development practice which exist internationally. Whilst elements of this model were shown to be unique, it was broadly aligned with the principles of the partnership approach, explored in detail in Chapter 2. This approach was shown to be a technical shift in development practice rather than a fundamentally different way of doing development, and has its origins in the desire to reduce costs, share risks and make programmes more effective (Impey & Overton, 2014). In this way, the organisation was promoting the discourse of development, rather than challenging it.

Lastly, Chapter 4 drew on data to show that in terms of the conceptual marginalisation of countries that receive aid, the SMP is complicit in perpetuating unequal representations of poverty and 'underdevelopment'. From a post-development perspective, the dominant discourse of development is based on and recreates an 'othering' of countries that receive aid, which embeds inequality in relations characterised by aid and development. The SMP was shown to promote organisations that perpetuate this othering, and the institutional perspective of the organisation justified these misrepresentations on basis that they were accompanied by 'effective' development interventions. From a post-development perspective, the promotion of material which 'others' developing countries is deeply problematic. Such material privileges the viewer and patronises the subject; depoliticises, homogenises and simplifies the experience of extreme poverty; and ultimately reproduces colonial ideas of subaltern passivity, and the need for European intervention. In this way, the SMP model, and its accompanying institutional perspective, was shown to promote and create the dominant development discourse, rather than challenge it.

It should be noted that the critiques of the SMP provided above could likely be applied to numerous, if not all, development agencies throughout the world. In fact, the SMP may well be better at reflecting on questions of embedded inequality in development than others, by virtue of the emphasis it does place on trying to foster greater equality, mutuality and ‘partnership, not charity’. However, what these findings show, and this question shows in particular, is that even when organisations try to change practice and be more equal, there are unequal relations at every turn. The case of the SMP demonstrates that even when actively trying to challenge the inequality embedded in development structures, the discourse is so powerful that organisations are compelled to comply.

## 8.4 Perceptions

3) How do Scottish participants in Scotland - Malawi partnerships understand the Global South?

4) In what way does the experience of volunteering in Malawi affect volunteers’ perceptions of that country?

Research questions 3 and 4 were developed to consider the efforts of the SMP to alter the way that development, and ‘developing countries’, were perceived in Scotland. Specifically, the SMP was shown to promote this change in perceptions through its language, its emphasis on the importance of non-development relations between the two countries, and by directly challenging in its trainings and resources aspects of the traditional development lens. These questions were important to this study, as questions of perceptions and ‘othering’ are a fundamental part of the post-development critique, which is interested in representation as much as material economic marginalisation of countries that receive aid. These questions were specifically explored in Chapter 5 in relation to international volunteers. Using international volunteers as the research group through which to explore these questions was justified based on this group’s representativeness of the SMP’s deprofessionalised approach, and in light of contemporary debates around the practice of international volunteering.

In exploring research question 3, this research found that even within their relatively critical approach to public perceptions of countries that receive aid, volunteers still held onto key aspects of the modernisation-as-development paradigm, and its associated othering of 'developing' countries. For example, in focus groups, volunteers critiqued the popular stereotypes of global poverty, and 'Africa' specifically. However, they held onto the discourse of development, and did not critically reflect upon this as related to these stereotypes. Furthermore, volunteers were shown to justify the use of stereotypes and misrepresentations of countries that receive aid, on the grounds that they led to increased fundraising, and therefore to more 'development'. From a post-development perspective, this is contradictory, as it is precisely the discourse of development that perpetuates this 'othering', and the conceptual marginalisation of these countries. This was shown to be reflective of the SMP institutional position explored in relation to research question 2. Whilst it publically, to some extent, challenges the misrepresentation of countries that receive aid, it still supports the dominant discourse of development, which is the source of this misrepresentation.

The perspectives of the volunteers were furthermore reflective of the SMP position in how they critiqued practices which they saw as 'othering', whilst defended the development discourse. This was demonstrated in particular through the volunteers' critique of the practice of voluntourism. Essentially, the volunteers critiqued 'voluntourism' on the grounds that this practice was self-serving and hedonistic. However, through this critique, the volunteers critiqued any involvement in countries that receive aid that was not related to development interventions. Whilst the practice of voluntourism doubtlessly can perpetuate the conceptual marginalisation of countries that receive aid, what these findings demonstrated was that this was also embedded, via justification of the development discourse, in the critique of voluntourism. Furthermore, these findings show how the development discourse creates the appropriate ways of acting within the confines of the established order of things, and perversely led the volunteers to justify even the more everyday of interactions within Malawians by relating them to development outcomes. This was shown to reflect the SMP position, which justifies its relations of 'friendship' and

'partnership' on the grounds that they make development more effective (Ross, 2015).

In relation to research question 4, Chapter 5 further demonstrated how the precise forms of action around volunteering can be seen to perpetuate this developmentalist worldview. Prior to their trips to Malawi, volunteers engaged in fundraising to cover the costs of their trips and charitable actions they were engaging in. This process led volunteers to present and understand their activities through the lens of traditional development relations and the transfer of material resources. This was particularly notable in the presentation of their trips when fundraising, both before and after, which demonstrated how the practice became an exchange between the donor and the volunteers. Essentially, the donors at fundraising events purchased a particular impact based on their expectations, which were shaped by the development discourse, and the volunteer had to honour this purchase by presenting this impact back to the donors. In such a way, how the practice of international volunteering perpetuates the 'othering' of countries must be interpreted as reflective of the wider development discourse, and the practice should not be critiqued in isolation from this.

Furthermore, in exploring this question the research demonstrates how the discourse shaped the practice and perceptions of the volunteers through the work they were doing in Malawi. Volunteers were given extreme esteem and authority on their projects, with some expected to essentially undertake the task of development professionals, including teaching sexual health classes, holding workshops on sustainable agricultural techniques, and making decisions over which Malawian organisations deserve funding most. Chapter 5 demonstrated how this led volunteers to interpret their experience in a particular way, and how it shaped their view of what Malawi is and who Malawians are, via the developmentalist lens that they were compelled to look through given the tasks they were expected to undertake.

These findings demonstrate how the conceptual marginalisation of countries that receive aid is perpetuated. They demonstrate, in detail, how the process of 'othering', which has a long history in Eurocentric and racist views of Africa, is



embedded and navigated by participants in development activities. The othering of the colonial era is embedded and perpetuated through the discourse of development. Furthermore, these findings have specific implications for the deprofessionalised approach of the SMP. The SMP emphasis on civil society links, cultural celebration, and activities that can be described as 'beyond development' promotes individuals from outside the professional development sector to become involved in Scotland - Malawi links. This appears to have strong alignment with the organisations values of mutuality, two-way exchanges and an international 'friendship' between the two countries. It further can be seen to align with post-development theory. Kothari (2005) explored the over-professionalisation of development work, and how this was part of its depoliticising nature, and reflective of the embedded power imbalance between agents of aid and recipients. However, what the answer to these questions has shown is that a non-professional approach to development can also perpetuate the dominant discourse and its associated power imbalances. This is because the power of the discourse does not only reside in the formal development sector, but through the way that developing countries are perceived, known and interacted with. In short, these findings demonstrate how the efforts made to make development more equal, in this case of the SMP, fall short in terms of perceptions as the discourse of development is ultimately still the conceptual currency upon which exchanges are premised.

## **8.5 Member Organisations**

5) What challenges are faced by member organisations in trying to implement the SMP model?

This research question was developed to explore a core element of the SMP model. As a member-network organisation, the SMP does not have official institutional control over the approach taken by member organisations working between Scotland and Malawi. With the exception of funding for MaSP, the SMP does directly implement any projects in Malawi. Moreover, whilst finance for MaSP is ultimately the responsibility of the SMP, it is formally an independent 'sister-organisation'. This question therefore used the post-development critique to explore how the SMP attempts to implement its approach in practice,

specifically how its members attempt to create a more equal model of development interaction. This question was addressed in Chapter 6 through the case study of the SMP member Malawi Tomorrow (MaTo).

Through analysis of MaTo in consideration of this research question, Chapter 6 presented two central findings. Firstly, it demonstrated the inconsistencies within the SMP model and its efforts to create a more equal development practice, and secondly, it demonstrated how alternatives are co-opted by the dominant development discourse. In relation to the first finding, Chapter 6 demonstrated that one of the consequences of MaTo implementing the SMP approach was losing an appreciation of the structural causes of global poverty. MaTo demonstrated an institutional perspective that respected the agency of Malawian actors and, specifically, the Malawian education system. This was aligned with the SMP approach, and is consistent with an approach to development that aims to reduce the conceptual marginalisation of people in countries that receive aid. However, the consequence of this view was a neo-liberal and depoliticised attitude towards the solution to global poverty, which emphasised individual responsibility. As explored in Chapter 2, this mirrored the critique of post-development that it is unwittingly aligned with neo-liberalism, in its post-modern deconstruction of grand narratives and state-based solutions. However, in Chapter 2, I furthermore demonstrated that post-development does not necessarily support neo-liberal attitudes to poverty, that it is politically aligned with the underdevelopment theories of development, and presented the 'sceptical post-development' position of Ziai (2015) which reconciles Marxist interpretations of global economics with the post-modern critique of the politics of representation. Therefore, from the position of the post-development critique, these findings can be seen to show the compatibility of the contemporary equality agenda in development with neo-liberal economic attitudes. Essentially, the contemporary equality agenda is good on questions of representation in that it makes efforts to dispel the 'othering' associated with traditional development practice. However, it does this at the cost of denying the systemic economic exploitation of poor countries by rich countries, and achieves this under the guise of a progressive approach. This finding demonstrates how the contemporary equality agenda fits with neo-liberal

economic attitudes, and therefore partly explains how this agenda has grown within the development industry.

Secondly, in relation to research question 5, Chapter 6 demonstrated in detail how alternative ways of presenting and practicing development are co-opted into the mainstream. Like the participatory approaches explored in Chapter 2, the SMP approach was shown through the case of MaTo to be co-opted in a way that means they function to promote, rather than challenge, the dominant modernisation-as-development discourse. This chapter shows how this aspect of post-development theory happens in detail. It demonstrated how the programmes were designed, implemented and interpreted through the developmentalist lens of the funders and donors whom MaTo had to report to. Like with the international volunteers explored in Chapter 5, MaTo volunteers interpreted their actions through the discourse of development. Furthermore, this was shown to be shaped by the expectations of Malawian actors as well as Scottish actors, as the normal relations of development compelled compliance rather than allow for alternative conceptualisation.

Each of these key findings contributed to the growing body of evidence being established by this thesis: that alternatives-in-development are unsuccessful in challenging the dominant discourse and fostering greater equality between aid-giving and aid-receiving countries, precisely because they are still premised on the idea of 'development', which relies of inequality in order to function. This body of evidence shows the continued value of the post-development critique in understanding contemporary development interactions, and provides insights into the precise way in which this process is managed, navigated, and ultimately replicated in the actual experience of participants.

## **8.6 Performing Development**

Chapter 7 drew from findings that were unanticipated at the beginning of the research period. Throughout the research period, I gathered data relating to what can be regarded as the performative aspects of development relations. Scottish organisations reported repeatedly how their Malawian partners would put on performances and present things in certain ways to elicit a particular

response: usually, in pursuit of increased charitable donations. Moreover, throughout the research I observed how Scottish participants engaged in similar practices when presenting the activities they had engaged in in Malawi to audiences in Scotland. This led me to explore in the research period through interviews, observations and in focus groups, the meaning of these performances in relation to the research. As these findings were unanticipated at the beginning of the research they did not relate to a specific secondary research question. Rather, the analysis in Chapter 7 explored the meaning of these findings in relation to the central research question. Specifically, this chapter used the post-development critique to interpret what the presentational aspect of development relations revealed about attempts to foster greater equality.

This chapter related these findings to post-development by considering how this theory found development to create particular roles, identities and relations. Classical post-development accounts, such as *Encountering Development* by Escobar (1995) wrote extensively about how development created such categories. The findings in Chapter 7 demonstrated how these categories were known and understood by participants on both sides of development interactions, and then used directly by these participants to manage the relations of development. Essentially, actors were able to perform these constructed roles in order to elicit particular outcomes. This was shown to provide a valuable theoretical contribution to post-development, in particular by showing how the theory can be compatible with accounts that respect the agency of recipients of aid.

In light of the connections with post-development and the central research question, this chapter found three central conclusions. Firstly, this chapter showed that contemporary efforts to foster equality in development do not actively challenge the relations between development and colonialism or the racialised way that these relations are understood. Secondly, this chapter demonstrated that the way actors perform in development can be interpreted as perpetuating the conceptual marginalisation of developing countries. Both agents of aid and aid recipients were shown to draw upon tropes and stereotypes of development and people in aid-receiving countries, in a way that both reflected and perpetuated this othering. Thirdly, this chapter showed that

partnership (and 'equality') is itself performed in development relations. This finding is crucial to understanding what is holding back the SMP from achieving its aim of fostering greater equality. Essentially, new language and practices were shown to be subsumed into the development discourse. This chapter showed how precisely this process occurs, by actors drawing upon the nomenclature of the day to present their practice as contemporary, whilst in fact their practice was still embedded in the traditional way of doing things. Crucially, this finding also demonstrated how actors in aid-receiving countries were further marginalised, as whilst they partially exhibited the power to manipulate the nomenclature to pursue their own goals, they could not exercise power over changes to the language of development. The concept of partnership was, to an extent, found to be an imposed concept upon Malawian 'partners', who valued material inputs above the two-way exchange of ideas between Scotland and Malawi, yet had to speak the language of 'partnership' to achieve their own ends. Ultimately, whilst the application of extraversion to the post-development critique was empowering of Malawian actors in that it is a better way of respecting their agency, it also found that the rules of performances were prescribed by donors, who had power by virtue of their control over material resources.

## 8.7 Theoretical Conclusions

Chapter 2 explored the theoretical landscape in which this thesis makes its contribution to knowledge. It began with the foundational development theories of modernisation and underdevelopment. These were the two central theories that were debated throughout the first few decades of development. Whilst the emphasis in development studies no longer surrounds these two theories, each still has significance. Throughout this thesis I have shown the broad perspective of modernisation theory endures in contemporary practices and perceptions of development. In the case of the SMP, it was shown on the one hand to adopt alternative development practices and attitudes, by promoting equality in development, and critiquing the binary of developing and developed countries. However, on the other hand, the SMP was also shown to argue the benefits of this alternative development approach on the grounds that it was more effective. It is evident that the modernisation-as-development paradigm is still

foundational to the way these relations are interpreted, despite the critiques of ‘top-down’ development models expressed by organisations such as the SMP, the SDGs being for all countries of the world, and widespread public reflection on the misrepresentation of people in countries that receive aid. Some aspects of the industry are regularly critiqued and doubted; however, the foundational position of the modernisation-as-development school that ‘development’ is a universally agreed tangible state of being, and that it can be understood using linear economic indicators, is not widely critiqued. The post-development critique offers a perspective that demonstrates how this foundational position perpetuates the conceptual and material marginalisation of countries that receive aid, and therefore the need to uproot this discourse in order to appreciate that alternative, fluid and diffuse conceptualisations of ‘progress’ are required. One of the key contributions of this thesis has been to show that superficial changes to language or terminology do not reflect significant changes in the power relations of development, and it has demonstrated the precise ways that alternatives are co-opted and inequalities are concealed.

Alignment with underdevelopment theory, on the other hand, has been notably absent from organisations explored in this research. This theory, which is a collection of theories from Marxist perspective on the global economy, posited that ‘development’ would never occur, because the global capitalist economic system required the perpetual poverty of large areas of the world to provide the cheap inputs required for economic growth in wealthier countries. Whilst this theory ostensibly stands in contrast to post-development, especially in its economically determinist perspective, Chapter 2 argued that these two theories have political alignment. Having researched and analysed the data explored in this thesis, it is even more apparent how strong this political alignment can be. Post-development theory calls for new forms of action to alleviate poverty and suffering and for a rejection of the presumed universality of western-style economic development. However, post-development has been heavily critiqued for not proposing what these new forms of action might resemble. In the case of the SMP, as an example, it might be asked how the organisation could align more strongly with post-development theory to achieve its goal of fostering greater equality. It seems apparent that a stronger and more explicit connection between post-development and classical Marxist accounts of development could

fill this gap in proposed actions, and breathe new energy into cross-national partnerships campaigning for an end to the injustice of Western exploitation causing global poverty. Such partnerships and campaigns must be premised on genuine equality and solidarity, as relations premised on 'development' have been shown extensively in this thesis to continue to be characterised by relations of inequality.

In relation to post-development theory, this research offers a number of reflections and conclusions. Through its application of post-development, this research has considered how the theory relates to contemporary debates, specifically efforts to make development more equitable, and what relevance it has 25 years since it first rose to prominence. This application has demonstrated throughout that post-development has been broadly misinterpreted by a number of actors. Ziai (2017a) writes of the tendency towards the expression "I'm not a post-developmental, but..." arguing both of the profound impact that they theory has had on development studies, and its misinterpretation. He suggests that this sentence is often roughly completed "I'm not a post-developmental, but the discourse of development is a Eurocentric construction, paternalistic and imbued with relations of power" (Ziai, 2017a, p. 2720). He argues that people interpret post-development as only related to 'neo-populist' post-development, which can be seen to romanticise traditional livelihoods and present people from the south calling for aid as bewitched by capitalist 'false consciousness'. In contrast, Ziai promoted the perspective of sceptical post-development adopted in this thesis, which centres on the less contentious second clause to the suggested sentence above: that development is a Eurocentric construction, paternalistic and imbued with relations of power. This thesis has shown the strength in application of this interpretation of post-development theory. Essentially, through application of the post-development critique, these findings have exposed the inconsistencies and discursive dilemmas that arise when efforts are made to make development more equal from within the development industry.

This thesis has further contributed to post-development by producing a deep and detailed account of how processes such as the co-optation of alternative voices and the internalisation of the development discourse occur. This contribution

has evidenced the precise ways that actors negotiate different discourses, and how alternative perceptions can actually be seen to mask inequalities behind the language of alternative development. Moreover, it has shown how language such as 'partnership' becomes the tool of the dominant development discourse, and how actors perform new concepts as part of development relations, but ultimately perpetuate the same power imbalances of traditional approaches. Furthermore, this thesis has demonstrated how ideas about developing countries are produced, challenged, and ultimately affirmed by development interactions. Grand theoretical contributions in post-development had offered each of these processes as theories of action, and this thesis has provided analysis of the precise ways in what these processes occur.

Lastly, this thesis has demonstrated the importance of agency in post-development theory, and how post-development theory can be compatible with theories that respect that agency. As discussed extensively in Chapter 2, post-development has been critiqued as having no active subjects at all, and painting all people in aid-receiving countries who receive aid as passive products of the development discourse. Chapter 7 drew upon Bayart's work on extraversion as an analytical concept through which post-development can be compatible with theories of agency. Specifically, this chapter explored how actors use the categories created by the discourse of development to partially take power back from the system that marginalises them. Whilst this chapter also showed that there remains a deep power imbalance in the relations of development, as the agenda was set by actors in aid-giving countries, this contribution crucially demonstrates the compatibility between post-development and accounts of agency. This contribution would merit more theoretical exploration in future research.

## **8.8 Recommendations for Practice**

The SMP can reflect on the findings in this thesis to improve its consistency in approach. The organisational already supports a number of efforts to redress how Malawi is subordinated both in terms of ideas and in terms of economy. They do so by promoting tourism to Malawi, by bringing Malawian products to market in Scotland, and by campaigning to make economic and political



relations between the two countries more equal. For example, the SMP have recently offered support to Action Aid's campaign to change a colonial era tax treaty that privileges UK companies rather than the Malawian Government (SMP, 2016c). Efforts such as these should be welcomed. These forms of action are external to the development discourse, and can be worked on in relations of genuine partnership between actors in both countries. However, to ensure that these forms of action are not co-opted by developmentalist relations and othering, the SMP could also actively engage more in critical reflection on the conceptual inequalities that surround development. An active process of redressing this, which could involve the development of a resource for its members, could be highly beneficial to the organisations mission. Any form of reflection on this conceptual marginalisation must include active critique of the organisation's colonial origins, including its characterisation of the Scottish missions and David Livingstone.

Furthermore, this thesis can also be a source of critical reflection for the Scottish Government, which funds the SMP, and has a big role to play in shaping the development sector in Scotland. It too should actively engage stakeholders in a process of critical reflection on the development discourse. The Government could achieve this by pioneering a new communications strategy which challenges the conceptual marginalisation that underpins in depictions of development, and by championing new approaches to development projects, which are more successfully democratic and participatory. Through the critical approach taken in this thesis, both actors can find avenues to better align their practice with the principles of partnership and equality.

## **8.9 Recommendations for Future Research**

This thesis has focussed considerably on non-professional development interventions, such as international volunteers, due to the importance of these forms of engagement to the SMP model. However, future research could build upon these insights to explore from a post-development perspective how the process of 'othering' is perpetuated by the way that professional development interventions are organised. Specifically, this research could explore how the expectations that surround northern-based development workers, the way that

they are prepared for their field trips and the tasks they are expected to undertake can be interpreted as embedding the conceptual marginalisation of people in countries that receive aid.

Furthermore, future research could build upon the findings of this thesis by exploring extraversion in professional development programmes. Many respondents in my research alluded to ways that actors subvert reality and perform in order to manage development funding: for example, through creative accounting and using deliberately vague terminology in project proposals, to facilitate flexibility in grant implementation. The extent to which these behaviours could be interpreted through the paradigm of extraversion, and the implications this has for power in development relations, could be a highly insightful piece of research.

Lastly, future research could explore in greater detail the compatibility of extraversion with post-development theory. This thesis has demonstrated how these two theories can complement each other, and that extraversion can be used as a way of including agency in the post-development critique. More extensive research in this area could be highly informative, and provide insightful reflection on the way that power is contested in contemporary relations of development.

## **8.10 Final Remarks**

In the case of the Scotland - Malawi relationship, I have explored the efforts of the SMP to address both the material and conceptual inequality between the two countries. Whilst their efforts have ultimately been shown not to effect a transformation of these relations, it cannot be stressed enough that this is the result of diffuse global forms of power that are far beyond their control. The SMP must therefore nevertheless be commended for their efforts and laudable aspirations.

However, at the heart of this research has been an exploration of how global structures of inequality are embedded in the discourse of development. The discourse has been shown extensively to hold back efforts to make relations

between aid-giving and aid-receiving countries more equitable. It is imbued with colonial relations, and replicates these dynamics of power. It perpetuates the conceptual marginalisation of countries that receive aid, and requires this marginalisation to function, even through contemporary narratives that challenge these stereotypes. Development policy, and organisational attempts at shifting practice, has been shown to fail because the discourse is so embedded. Development performances provided further evidence of this, showing that even 'partnership' is performed on the front stage, while behind the scenes are the same power relations characterise interactions. Each of these examples paint the same picture: that the discourse of development is rooted in inequality; inequality is its lifeblood, its beginning and its end. Changing language will not suffice in transforming relations: for genuine transformation of the power dynamics that shape global interactions, real material economic changes are required.

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# Appendix A: Stakeholder Analysis

A stakeholder analysis helps the researcher identify the individuals or organisations to target within the limits of a piece of research. The following diagram illustrates the different types of organisations involved in Scotland Malawi Partnerships. Due to the variety, it was decided that a range of organisations should be targeted though not all possible configurations could feasibly be engaged in the research.

1	Professional				Non-Professional				
2	Small		Medium			Large			
3	School	Community		Religious	University / Student		NGO		
4	Health	Water	School Education	Community Development	Higher Education	Business & Commerce	Investment & Tourism	Governance	Agriculture

**Category 1:** This category identifies between ‘professional’ and ‘non-professional’ organisations. By professional, it is meant that the organisation has at least one full time member of staff. Non-professional organisations are characterised by voluntary or irregular employment of part-time staff. This category is not ‘paid’ against ‘unpaid’, but is rather characterised by the difference between organisations which regard their work as a sole job or as a side-line activity.

**Category 2:** This is a distinction based on size of the organisation. For the purposes of this research, this will be based on turnover of the organisation. Small is characterised by a turnover of < £10,000 per annum, medium £10,000 - £100,000, large by >£100,000

**Category 3:** This is a distinction in the type of organisation, and the distinctions are designed to target different approaches and relationships within the membership. For example, it is envisaged that NGOs will have a different approach from school groups, due to the nature of their involvement. Each of these groups may be registered charities, but it's likely that many of the school, community, religious and student groups will be non-professional. However, this will not be true in all cases.

**Category 4:** This has been designed in reference to the Scotland Malawi Partnerships key areas, which are developed from consultation with Malawi. As this is the largest category, it is not anticipated that it will be possible to find respondents from each - though every attempt will be made to achieve this target.

# Appendix B: Sample Interview Plan

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## Sample Interview Plan:

### Introductions

Name, current occupation, gender etc.

What is your current / what has your past involvement with Scotland Malawi Partnerships been?

### History of the Relationship

To your knowledge, how did this partnership come about?

{from beginning to present day}

### Scotland and Malawi

What was your first experience of Malawi / Scotland?

What is the most important aspect of the relationship to you?

Tell me about someone you met in Malawi / Scotland that inspired you?

What do you think Scotland / Malawi benefits from this partnership? And Malawi / Scotland?

How do you see this partnership developing in future?

### The Scotland and Malawi Approach

What do you think is unique about the approach taken in this partnership?

Could you tell me an example of this approach, and why it does / doesn't work?

How do you think this approach is different from others?

What do you think the long term goals should be for this partnership?

# Appendix C: Ethical Approval



CSS July 2014

## Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

Staff Research Ethics Application   
Application

Postgraduate Student Research Ethics

### Application Details

Application Number: 400140070

Applicant's Name Ben Wilson

Project Title Exploring the 'Relational Approach' and the History of the Scotland and Malawi Partnership

### Application Status

### Changes Required (see details below)

Start Date of Approval      (d.m.yr) 11/12/14

(blank if Changes Required/ Rejected)

End Date of Approval of Research Project      (d.m.yr) 30/8/15

**Only** if the applicant has been given **approval** can they proceed with their data collection with effect from the date of approval.

### Recommendations (where Changes are Required)

- **Where changes are required all applicants must respond** in the relevant boxes to the recommendations of the Committee and upload this as the **Resubmission Document** online to explain the changes you have made to the application. All resubmitted application documents should then be uploaded.
- **If application is Rejected** a full new application must be submitted via the online system. Where recommendations are provided, they should be responded to and this document uploaded as part of the new application. A new reference number will be generated.

(Shaded areas will expand as text is added)

**MAJOR RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

**APPLICANT RESPONSE TO MAJOR**

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**MINOR RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

**APPLICANT RESPONSE TO MINOR**

## Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

**Staff Research Ethics Application**       **Postgraduate**      **Student**      **Research**      **Ethics Application**

### Application Details

Application Number: 400140132

Applicant's Name      Ben Wilson

Project Title      Exploring the Scotland Malawi Partnership's 'Relational Approach' to International Development

**Application Status**      **Approved**

Start Date of Approval (d.m.yr)      19.03.15

*(blank if Changes Required/ Rejected)*

End Date of Approval of Research Project (d.m.yr)      06.03.16

Only if the applicant has been given **approval** can they proceed with their data collection with effect from the date of approval.

### **Recommendations** (where Changes are Required)

- **Where changes are required all applicants must respond** in the relevant boxes to the recommendations of the Committee and upload this as the **Resubmission Document** online to explain the changes you have made to the application. All resubmitted application documents should then be uploaded.
- **(If application is Rejected a full new application must be submitted via the online system. Where recommendations are provided, they should be responded to and this**

*document uploaded as part of the new application. A new reference number will be generated.*

*(Shaded areas will expand as text is added)*

**MAJOR RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

**APPLICANT RESPONSE TO MAJOR**

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**MINOR RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

**APPLICANT RESPONSE TO MINOR**

<p>The proxy consent form for guardians should be amended to indicate that the child will be participating in the research and not the guardian. At present it reads 'I understand that my participation is voluntary'. It should read, 'I understand that participation is voluntary' or something like this.</p>	
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**REVIEWER COMMENTS**

**APPLICANT RESPONSE TO REVIEWER COMMENTS**

*(OTHER THAN SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS)*

	<p>The recommended changes have been made to the consent form</p>
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Please retain this notification for future reference. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Terri Hume, Ethics Administrator. End of Notification.