Voices from the Darker Side of Development

Edited by
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Foreword

Lisa Hartley and Caroline Fleay

As Co-Directors of the Centre for Human Rights Education (CHRE) at Curtin University, we are incredibly proud to write the foreword for this important book, *Voices from the Darker Side of Development*. It includes a constellation of important essays written by students from CHRE's Masters and Graduate Certificate of Human Rights programs, as well as powerful chapters by Dr Yirga Gelaw Woldeyes, Senior Lecturer at CHRE, and his collaborator Dr Eyob Balcha Gebremariam, University of Bristol. In developing this book, Yirga has provided an incredibly important opportunity for students to share their insights and learnings from their studies at CHRE.

For context, CHRE is an interdisciplinary research centre that engages in research, teaching and advocacy drawing on expertise from a variety of disciplines and professions. The Centre aims to develop a sound theoretical and conceptual base for human rights practice and education, and its research, advocacy and teaching is grounded in the reality of people's day-to-day experience. This recognises that the lived experiences of others are vital sources of knowledge from which we can learn and consider how best we might all live together. Critically, this understanding underpins our teaching programs, including the Human Rights and Development unit that Yirga coordinates, which foregrounds this book.

Voices from the Darker Side of Development is timely. It contains essays that unsettle the mainstream understandings of development as inherently "good" and, in doing so, exposes the violence of development. It raises critical questions about privilege, and who has the right to define what is progress or what is good for society. It highlights how development practices can cause significant harm in communities all over the world, and yet how communities continue to resist.

This book is also about considering alternatives. It explores alternatives to dominant paradigms and discourses of human rights and development, and its structures, institutions and practices, that are underpinned by colonial understandings of the world and of what constitutes knowledge. In the context of the scientific and existential reality of the ecological breakdown of our planet, learning of insights into the relationship between nature and humanity, epistemologies of the South, and from indigenous people's ways of knowing and doing, are fundamental to our own survival. The collection of essays in *Voices from the Darker Side of Development* demonstrates precisely why uncovering the darker side of development matters and what a difference it makes.

Introduction

Reflections on the Darker Side of Development

Yirga Gelaw Woldeyes

"Under the cover of development a world war on people's peace has been waged."
Ivan Illich, The Delinking of Peace and Development (1982, p. 409).

The common understanding of development is an overwhelmingly positive vision of the future. Development is expressed in terms of good change, progress, advancement, growth, transformation and evolution. Development is presented as a mirror through which society perceives itself as prosperous, advanced and fair. It is a belief about what "we" will become in the future: a developed society.

The association of development with "good" presents it as innocent, unquestionable, something that occurs by nature, and something that should be pursued or defended like peace, love and happiness. There are signs and symbols that seem to confirm this belief. If we consider advances in technology, the world we live in can be regarded as more developed than any other age we are aware of. Innovation, scientific and medical advances, technology, the digital age and the exploration of space reflect a significant achievement. Yet, these achievements are often attributed to the special talent or innovation of individuals from the west. They are also used to define our time as an era of modern scientific achievement. Poor people whose minerals and cheap labour are exploited or indigenous people whose lands are stolen are not recognised as contributors to the modernisation or development of the world. It is from this standpoint that we ask the question, what is the darker side of development?

Development is a politically controlled and socially engineered practice. It does not allow diverse ideas and interests to be involved in its realisation. It has mechanisms that silence, eliminate and exclude these voices. In today's world, 1% of the world's population has more wealth than the other 99% (Shiva, 2021). Millions are displaced from their homes due to conflicts. The destruction of the environment poses a significant threat to the earth's hospitability for life. It is not clear how the world's poor can realise the right to development as stipulated in international human rights conventions. Yet, development persists as the only path towards a better future. Why do we value something that seems to be unattainable and destructive? How can we understand this contradiction within development? How can we bring forth the voices that are silenced by the darker side of development?

As a senior lecturer at the Centre for Human Rights Education (Curtin University, Australia), I invite students to ponder these questions at the beginning of our unit on Human Rights and Development, where we watch a film titled "In the name of development" (Activist Canvas, 2010). The film shows a controversy over the acquisition of fertile farmland by a corporation called Tata Motors in India. The corporation acquired 997 acres of farmland from the West Bengal state to build a manufacturing plant for Nano, "the world's cheapest car". It promised to bring "development" expressed in terms of employment for locals, economic growth to the whole region and affordable vehicles for low-income earners. Considering these set of objectives, the fertile farmland which had been used to produce food

was regarded as underdeveloped. The film shows how the language of development discards lives, beliefs and experiences that exist outside of its own logic. This is a common trend across the world. Indigenous people, rural farmers and several communities are frequently viewed as temporary settlers who must give their lands when development demands it. Along with this dispossession, communities and their diverse experiences, relationships, knowledges and stories that depended on their connection with land are destroyed. Yet, this destruction weighs lightly on our conscience mainly because of our belief in development: Development is good and any harm that follows development is a necessary cost for progress.

The film tries to disrupt the settled meaning of development as a benign and objective process. It tries to expose us to the violence of development, which is rarely narrated in mainstream academic or public discourses. It also shows us the interplay of multiple actors, the struggle for meaning and complex realities that are often left out of our focus when we speak about development. The local farmers fight against the handover of their land to the corporation. The film shows how the government sends the police to forcefully evict the farmers. There are beatings, demonstrations, hunger strikes and debates. Behind the camera, there are invisible persons who relate with the story in different ways: The Tata Motors company or the corporation, the West Bengal state, the film makers, the translators, and the audience (including us) who watch the film and others. None of us view what is happening in the exact same way. For example, while the government view the manufacturing of cars as an important means of achieving development through industrialisation, the farmers view this as the destruction of their livelihoods. A protester says, “Why car industry on agricultural land, which is the source of food for so many people?”. Another says, “This land is like our mother. I can’t imagine cars and trucks moving around over my father’s grave”. Another says, “We want development for mothers who do not have proper clothes to cover themselves in the winter nights”. The film shows not just local resistance against land acquisition but also struggle over meaning, on what development is or should be.

The meaning of development involves struggle over values. The farmers argue development cannot prioritise the production of cars over the production of food. It should facilitate conditions for people to get what they do not have (such as proper clothes), not to take away what they already have (such as their farmland). From this perspective, development should be compatible with people’s values and choices. Violating the community’s belief that the land is a living mother, and the graves of the dead are sacred, is to act against the spirit of development. The state and corporations on the other hand portray progress and technology as superior values to other values such as the sanctity of ancestors’ graves or the protection of communal life. Here, there is a radical difference over values and their location in the world. Can the natural world have any inherent value other than what experts ascribe to it? Development also involves a struggle over agency. Who has the privilege to define what is progress or what is good for society? Who can speak and act in the name of development and who cannot? Development can turn human agents into human resources that must fit into the narrative of progress as objects. Those of us watching the film also have a pre-made assumption about what development is. However, we rarely reflect on whose agency, values or meanings are served by our belief in development. Many people believe development is necessary, but it should be carried out with less violence. That means, our frame of mind is shaped by ideas that privilege the prevailing meaning of development. We are not required to experience development; we simply know it is good. This unexamined belief dismisses other alternative perspectives or opposing experiences as anti-development.

The Birth of "Developed" and "Underdeveloped"

If we are to consider all people as having equally valid values and do not discriminate among them based on our own perception of what is good, then development cannot have one meaning. A useful approach that could show us this is to examine how our perception of development was historically constructed. This genealogical examination is different from a theoretical perspective that views development based on a predetermined hypothesis. Theories often forget or minimise voices and narratives that disrupt their construction. Theories of development exclude the history of people in development or incorporate them in a way that justifies the hypothesis of the theory. A genealogical reflection helps us examine how contemporary theories and beliefs on development achieved their dominance, what voices and experiences were excluded or incorporated, and why. Despite the existence of multiple meanings and experiences of development, there is a dominant perspective or a hegemonic discourse of development that invalidates or dominates other meanings. Many agree that this concept of development has been extensively used in political, economic and social life since the middle of the 20th century, although its history is linked with earlier periods (Illich, 1982; Escobar, 1995; Esteva, 1992). It is associated with a constructed belief about the inevitable evolutionary process of human progress that encompasses all countries and people. The universalisation and naturalisation of development emerged with the change in world politics, especially with the rise of the USA as a global superpower and the end of European colonialism. It reflects the superficial change in the colonial/western view of the Other.

Before World War II, most parts of the world were under European colonial domination. European powers claimed that they had a civilisational mission, "the white man's burden," to Christianise and civilise the barbaric races of the world. Colonialism defined the Other, the colonised, as having no historical or civilisational worth. The non-white world was seen as a dark world of uncivilised races because they *did not have* what the white race had: the gospel and "reason". With the end of colonialism, previously colonised people came to be perceived through the lens of development. Their countries were collectively considered "underdeveloped areas", places that *lacked* what the west had: science and technology. In both cases, the west defined the Other using its own values. The non-western world was and continues to be silenced, left in the dark side.

The shift from "uncivilised races" to "underdeveloped areas" marks the birth of development, not as a God-given racial mission but as a natural process. According to the theory of development, all societies belong to the same origin and destiny, but some are at the highest stage while others are at the bottom. This difference or hierarchy between the developed and the underdeveloped reflects their economic stage which is the result of objective and linear advances along the path of political, social and economic progress. While colonialism emphasised differences among human races, development emphasises natural sameness. The birth of universal human rights contributed to the belief that development is a natural process that applies to all people across all places. In other words, development placed the colonisers and the colonised into a natural context where the impact of historical exploitation through racism, slavery and colonialism was forgotten. The first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states that, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act

towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood". While this may seem like a straightforward statement about the equality of each human life, it ignores the brutal inequity that many non-western people are born into, particularly how colonialism produced this very inequality. Development, therefore, did not start from the actual context in which people lived. It invented a fictitious "natural" context, a state of equality and dignity which did not exist. It created a biological or natural lens to explain the political, economic and social world.

This fictitious natural context presented inequality and poverty as abnormal human conditions that could be treated through the charity of the developed countries. The fact that "underdeveloped countries" experienced hardship due to the historical legacy of colonialism and slavery committed towards them *by* "developed countries" (who had even secured their "developed" prosperity through such violence) was suddenly erased, replaced by the idea that these places were just not on the same developmental level. As a result, the invention of underdevelopment to name the condition of life created by racial and class exploitation excluded the voices of those who have been exploited and colonised. People in previously colonised places were cast into a politically invented natural state of suffering and misery as first expressed through US President Harry Truman's speech:

> We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. More than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate. They are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas. For the first time in history, humanity possesses the knowledge and skill to relieve the suffering of these people (1949).

The "underdeveloped" came into existence as a single category when they were perceived by western standards (Esteva, 1992). They were defined by what they were not, without regard to their values, experiences and voices. They were invented with negative qualities that had natural causes to justify the intervention of the "developed". They were not fully human but "humanity possesses the knowledge and skill to relieve the suffering of these people". The life of people in the "underdeveloped areas", which was historically produced through colonialism but was now cast as a natural state of poverty, created the foundation for the view of development as helping. Engaging in development work with the underdeveloped was and still is seen as an altruistic gesture, a morally appropriate activity. This is clear from US President Kennedy's speech where he said:

> To those people in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required – not because the communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right. If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich (1961).

In the speeches of both Truman and Kennedy, developed and underdeveloped areas were cast in the following ways:

Developed Areas	Underdeveloped Areas
• Scientific advances	• Inadequate food
• Industrial progress	• Living in misery
• Knowledge	• Victims of disease
• Skill	• Primitive and stagnant
• Help without return	• Handicapped and threat to all
• Free society	• Half the globe
• Saving	• Live in huts and villages

Development defined the poor by what they were not. The invention of the non-western world with negative identities has a long history in western thought. Edward Said's influential work on Orientalism provides a detailed analysis of how the west invented the Other using negative perceptions that originate within its own culture.

> Orientalism can be discussed and analysed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient —dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it; in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (Said, 1977, p. 3).

Orientalism is not only imposing negative identities on the Other. It also involves the invention of the self, creating the identities and values through which western societies could accept capitalism as a natural and superior stage of human evolution. People living in developed areas are viewed as having individualist identity, scientific outlook, rational mind, secular values and objective laws. These characteristics are considered superior by contrasting them with the despised qualities of the Other such as communal identities, superstitious beliefs, and unscientific and primitive cultures. The binary between the developed and the underdeveloped segregated the people in the two areas into opposite contexts that serve the interest of capital by undermining non-capitalist relationships and promoting consumerist culture and patriarchal values. It made it impossible to imagine that the west could learn from the experiences of the non-western world. By despising the culture and identities of the Other and celebrating the individualist and consumerist culture as a mark of progress, development made people in the west regard the Other as a threat. The social and economic injustices perpetuated by the richest 1% could easily be disregarded.

Development, in this sense, maintains the Orientalist tradition of the west whereby the Other is nothing but the negation of the Self. This style of exercising power over people by turning them into opposite categories (developed vs underdeveloped, advanced vs primitive) portrays development as a historical mission and a natural process that should be supported by the people in both areas.

Development as the Mismeasuring of Life

Once the categories of the developed and underdeveloped were invented to allow a Doctor-Patient type relationship, there was confusion in how to apply development in practice. In what way could the underdeveloped become like the developed? Soon after Truman's speech,

the UN created a group of experts containing academics and economists to prepare "a program of action" for underdeveloped countries. These UN appointed experts noted how they defined underdeveloped areas:

> We have had some difficulty in interpreting the term 'underdeveloped countries'. We use it to mean countries in which per capita real income is low when compared with the per capita real incomes of the United States of America, Canada, Australasia and Western Europe. In this sense, an adequate synonym would be 'poor countries' (United Nations, 1951, p. 3).

The UN appointed experts considered what was convenient for doing their job, not what was true for the people living in the "underdeveloped areas". From their definition, poverty is not what the poor experience. It is not a simple lack of food and shelter that makes them "underdeveloped". It is the amount of GDP their states make compared to the states of "developed" countries such as the USA. Measuring development using GDP excludes important assets people kept over centuries. Their languages, cultures, spirituality, connection with nature, and community were not considered relevant to measure their progress. This devaluation has the consequence of maintaining the hierarchy between the colonial and colonised world in the age of development. In fact, these non-commercial assets and values were regarded as impediments to economic progress. As a result, development is nothing more than a country's ability to convert its resources into cash. The UN appointed experts suggested that poor countries should abolish their traditions if they wished to catch up with the west through rapid economic progress. They said:

> There is a sense in which rapid economic progress is impossible without painful readjustments. Ancient philosophies have to be scrapped; old social institutions have to disintegrate; bonds of caste, creed and race have to be burst; and large numbers of persons who cannot keep up with progress have to have their expectations of a comfortable life frustrated. Very few communities are willing to pay the full price of rapid economic progress (United Nations, 1951, p. 15).

This suggestion could be read as an expression of fundamentalism that calls for cultural genocide. However, the association of development with "the good" dampens the extreme language and extreme violence that may occur in the name of development. In other words, the belief in development devalues the lives of the underdeveloped areas. While the quote above may be from 1951, this philosophy of development still underpins dominant development ideas and practices today. Although the experts measure development using technical indicators such as GDP and cash, the process of achieving high GDP is linked to the conversion of the *worldview* of underdeveloped people. The poor are called ignorant and made responsible for their own poverty. Their conception of nature, unscientific outlook and communal traditions are considered the root causes of their impoverishment. In a clearly colonial approach, they are required to convert their structures and worldviews into western conceptions through education:

> Neither must education be conceived merely as a process of transmitting techniques. For what is required is a radical change in the outlook of the peoples of the under-developed countries. The progress in technology in Western Europe and the United States of America is based on a long scientific tradition, a conception of nature leading to a spirit of exploration, discovery and experimentation. A further obstacle to

> the absorption of new technology is the social structure of some under-developed countries (United Nation, 1951, p. 30).

The underdeveloped are portrayed as not only ignorant but also as incapable of learning unless they abandon their ways. This assertion resembles the colonial belief about the non-educability of primitive races that compared the maximum cognitive capacity of African adults to European children with four years of education (Lyons, 1970). This belief justifies the implementation of actions that lead to its own materialisation. Africans are denied of the knowledge and technology their exploited resources were used to produce. Development replaced the colonial belief in the biological superiority of the white race with a new belief in the scientific and technological superiority of the west. Education plays a role in this process of converting people into a western worldview. In most countries, studying western languages and ideas is the only means of achieving intellectual privilege. The consequences of believing in the hierarchy of cultures, peoples and languages is enormous. For example, many non-western states exclude local ideas, languages, histories and experiences from their education systems and other state institutions. They deprive their own indigenous and local knowledges economic and social status and replace them with western-oriented institutions and practices. This contributes to the destruction of cultures, the killing of knowledges (Epistemicide) and the killing of languages (Linguicide). Colonial languages are used in most schools and universities thereby denying the society who speaks non-colonial languages the much-needed knowledge to improve their lives (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Phillipson, 1992). The western view of nature promoted through states and institutions has led to the destruction of natural habitats in the name of development.

Development and western education engendered a process of alienation, a way of viewing nature and society as separate from the individual. Many people have lost their traditional institutions or the resources that supported their cultural and economic connections with each other. The devaluation of their culture and tradition has endangered the survival of their subsistence and local economies. Their lands have been taken away from them in the name of investment. Today, more than half of the world's population live in urban areas. They have become dependent on the financial economy run by political elites whose main focus seems to be the conversion of nature into cash. Western culture has reached to almost all corners of the globe through mass media, social media, education and other means. Yet, this westernisation of the world does not deliver the promises of development. Although development is viewed as a positive transformation of society, its implementation is primarily to facilitate economic growth by integrating all aspects of life into the capitalist market system which is controlled by a handful of powerful states and private corporations.

The Institutionalisation of Development

With the rise of development as a dominant belief of our time, new institutions became powerful and global. These include the nation state, international financial institutions, and private corporations. The nation state has been used as the most effective tool of development. The idea of the nation may have diverse origins and meanings before World War II. China, Iran, Ethiopia, Egypt, Rome and India were vast civilisations before they became nation states. Yet, the Westphalian model of the nation state which emerged from 17th century European thought became the only model of being a state (Rist, 2008). It is

invented through selected and authorised historical narratives, and the exercise of coercion and sovereign power over people and resources within a given territory. Nation states are imagined as objective and natural on the surface, but they instigate a sense of Othering by relegating some internal and external groups as outsiders. In many societies, nation building has been a painful and violent process that destroys communities by replacing traditional and cultural values with western political values. This process is often regarded as development.

Here we are not putting all states in one box or labelling them as inherently evil. Our approach is to critically study the changing role of the state in relation to the dominant ideas, institutions and practices of development. Development gave specific identities to nation states by designating them as developed, underdeveloped, and developing; by tasking them with the conversion of natural resources into financial resources; and by making them clear all local barriers to development processes. It is important to ask how many of the numerous development projects of the nation state have been inclusive of diversity or people oriented towards the regeneration of nature or for ending historical trauma. With the rise of globalisation since the 1970s, the role of the nation state is geared towards the market with dire consequences on people and the environment. In many countries, states safeguard the interest of global capital more than the interest of citizens. Public spaces are increasingly being privatised, and a new class of corporate elites exercise significant power and sovereignty, threatening the very meaning of democracy: the sovereignty of the people.

Nation states work with international institutions that use financial rules and incentives to govern the economy of less powerful countries. The World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) are global financial governance institutions. Most states are members of these institutions, but they do not have equal decision-making power. For example, since voting power is proportionate to economic power, economically weak states have almost no voice. Multi-National Corporations (MNC) have become key players in the global economy. These institutions create positive feelings about their role using the language of human rights, poverty reduction, green economy, development aid and the freedom of the individual. Their activities impact economic, social, political and cultural lives of billions of people and the environment. However, they are not accountable to the people of the world.

The implementation of development through aid and investment shows how development is practiced through the contradiction of promises and outcomes. For example, popular views towards aid imagines the provision of food, water and shelter to those who cannot afford it. However, only an insignificant amount of the foreign aid budget goes to humanitarian purposes. The largest proportion of aid is allocated to promote free trade and free market policies, and to advance the national interest of donor countries with geopolitical strategic considerations. Foreign direct investment and portfolio investments often target gaining profit through export markets rather than addressing local needs. These practices maintain the dependence of states over financial institutions, foreign markets and private corporations, which are prone to illicit financial transactions, corruption and mismanagement. In other words, aid flows in reverse, from poor to rich countries (Hickel, 2017).

Development as a practice dismisses the sacred dimension of humans and nature by turning them into commodities. Human beings are human resources, nature is a natural resource, and the market is constructed as a space for the realisation of the freedom to exploit both. This freedom is presented as individual liberty or entrepreneurial freedom. However, only those with capital, even if they are not human (in the case of corporations and entities)

are free to master and control. Once the market is constructed as a space for the realisation of individual liberty or freedom, the intervention of the state in the market is regarded as a threat to freedom. Yet, free market is not free for the poor. Market forces are not governed by equality, equity or love. The role of democracy in balancing the unfairness of the market is construed by portraying the latter as a natural state.

If we examine the language of development, we can see that it removes human narratives. Documents about the economy or development reports present statistics, indicators and fictious jargons that do not express human experiences. These reports talk about indicators and percentages that hide the injustices of the free market and the suffering of the marginalised. In this way, development becomes the elimination of storytelling. It allows harm to be done without creating a sense of guilt or the awareness of injustices by the doers.

In this book, our critical study of development aims at telling stories. The important questions are: whose stories do we want to tell, and what is the precondition for telling those stories? If the post-colonial world is the age of development, the story of the age should reflect the experiences of most of the world's population who are left in the darker side of development. In order to allow these stories to emerge, we need to undo and displace the dominant discourse of development institutions. The dominant view of development is not in fact universal and natural, but a western model with its roots in colonialism. We need to uncover the stories and voices from the darker side of development as these are truly important to transform human rights.

Seeking Alternative Models of Development

Development presents itself as having no alternative. Alternatives to the dominant model of development always exist and they can always be created by people. Although the capitalist system has silenced many voices and experiences, our world still has significant diversity that exists based on non-capitalist relations. Subsistent farmers, pastoralists, indigenous people and many others exist and survive. They may be excluded or disregarded in the language of development, but their lives and experiences create spaces of resistance and agency. In countries like Australia, citizens could utilise human rights to activate the role of the public in the economy and the political process. The meaning of development can be recreated, changed or transformed based on what is compelling and relevant for communities and people.

A search for an alternative is not a search for a single universal paradigm or an attempt to find different names for the same structures and processes. An important area of learning alternatives emerges from studying how nature, human life or reality is conceived from non-western perspectives. Returning to our unit on Human Rights and Development, our classes draw insights from epistemologies of the South, from suppressed perspectives in the North, and from indigenous peoples' conceptions of life and experiences. Epistemologies of the South give us insights into voices of indigenous populations and colonised countries (de Sousa Santos, 2014). For example, the view of the earth as a living being presents the possibility of safeguarding the rights of nature. Countries such as Bolivia and Ecuador provide examples on how to do this. The Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador (2008) under Article 71 states: "Nature, or Pacha Mama, where life is reproduced and occurs, has the

right to integral respect for its existence and for the maintenance and regeneration of its life cycles, structure, functions and evolutionary processes." Under Article 72, it says "Nature has the right to be restored. This restoration shall be apart from the obligation of the State and natural persons or legal entities to compensate individuals and communities that depend on affected natural systems". The African conception of nature provide important alternatives to reimagine the concept of the Anthropocene (Woldeyes & Belachew, 2021). Akeel Bilgrami draws from the critiques of the Enlightenment in Europe, the earlier works of Marx, and Mahatma Gandhi to provide alternative perspectives that can overcome the contradiction between liberty and equality by addressing the problem of alienation (2020). He suggests the concept of "the unalienated life" should become the centre of our thinking and organising society. If the purpose of development is not to be alienated, our approach to nature, the self and others will have a totally different orientation than it has now under the belief in the superiority of the individual and the market. Indigenous knowledges also provide important sources of becoming and knowing. These perspectives give us new ways of framing, imagining and acting towards an alternative for the dominant view of development in our time.

Chapter Summaries: Showcasing Voices from the Darker Side of Development

This book was conceived to showcase student endeavours to uncover the silenced voices from the darker side of development. The editing of the book was a collaborative project between myself, Gaylene Galardi, Dr Rebecca Higgie and Erin Thomas. Galardi and Thomas both have a Master of Human Rights from the Centre for Human Rights Education (CHRE), and their knowledge of the field, as well as their editing skills, contributed significantly to how the book was shaped. Thomas' paper from her time as a student also appears in the collection. Dr Higgie has a PhD in cultural studies, and is also an award-winning author who lent her expertise in editing to the project.

The book opens with a reflection on pedagogy, with Chapter 1 from myself and Chapter 2 from Dr Eyob Balcha Gebremariam (University of Bristol, UK) that reflect on how to teach and learn development with a decolonial approach that challenges dominant discourses and privileges silenced voices. The proceeding chapters are from students in the CHRE Master's degree program. These chapters track the darker side of development from all over the world. Yet, from all these diverse places, we see a marked similarity in how development practices cause harm and how local communities resist and survive.

In Chapter 3, Erin Thomas opens our collection of student papers in a detailed examination of how welfare policy in Australia has a long history of harm towards Aboriginal people. States are often seen as "developed" when they have comprehensive welfare programs that aim to integrate people into the economy through employment. This relies on measuring development according to the logic of late capitalism, a system that assesses a person's value depending on their contribution to the economy. One's human rights – one's right to life, culture, dignity and equality – is often contingent on how well one performs in this system, and those who do not are often subjected to coercive measures.

In Chapter 4, Naomi Arnold examines the practice of "clinical volunteerism/voluntourism" in Africa. Volunteering in "underdeveloped" areas is widely seen to be an altruistic and noble act. Directly drawing on the testimony of local doctors and

health care workers, Arnold shows how inadequately-trained volunteers often do more harm than good, and that their very placement is based on the idea that western health workers, however inexperienced, have something to teach African professionals.

Emma D'Antoine also examines a project in Africa: the World Bank funded Lesotho Highlands Water Project. In Chapter 5, D'Antoine shows how this multi-dam construction project is indicative of development discourse that prioritises a western, neoliberal idea of "progress" over local understandings. Similar consequences play out in Chapter 6, where Meg Gills examines the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy Dam Project in Laos. In the case of Lesotho and Laos, as in other countries around the world, defining a place as "underdeveloped" justifies outside intervention that exploits local people and their natural resources. In both projects, thousands of people lost their homes, lands, livelihoods and food security, resulting in environmental and social devastation.

As these chapters show, people all over the world suffer rights violations in the name of development, despite those rights supposedly being protected under various human rights conventions. Indigenous Australians are sadly no different. State and federal governments frequently break their promises to Australia's First People, despite being signatories of international conventions on Indigenous rights. In Australia, this happens at both a federal level and at a state level. While Thomas focuses on this at the federal level in Chapter 3, Grace E. Dowling focuses on the state level. In Chapter 7, she discusses the Djab Wurrung Embassy and their fight to protect sacred land and trees from a VicRoads highway development project. She demonstrates how development discourse often involves silencing Indigenous voices in a way that perpetuates long-held and violent colonial practices.

It is no coincidence that many chapters in this book examine the impact of major infrastructure projects, particularly in the profit-driven industry of mining. In Chapter 8, Selena Knowles tracks the long history of the Mirarr people's battle with uranium mining. Knowles shows how "administrative violence" was used to coerce agreements and deny the Mirarr the right to veto mining projects. Knowles' chapter shows how the dominant development ideal of "the national interest" is frequently used to rationalise the violation of Aboriginal peoples' human rights. In Chapter 9, Ana Blazey examines the potential impact of the proposed Adani mine for Queensland's Wangan and Jagalingou peoples. Blazey challenges Adani's claim that their mine will lift people out of poverty, showing how global neoliberal corporations use human rights and development discourse to justify projects that inevitably result in displacing and harming Indigenous people.

The push to "modernise" within development discourse is further explored in Chapters 10 and 11. In Chapter 10, Ben Claessens examines recent development projects in the Chinese province of Xinjiang, particularly their impact on the Uyghur population. Again, we see how development projects not only fail to deliver the promises of economic prosperity that underpin them, but they restrict the freedom of indigenous and minority groups to, as Claessens' notes, "speak their language, to express their religion and, more generally, to be whomsoever they choose". In Chapter 11, this process is seen again in Papua New Guinea. Emily Munroe looks at the various negative impacts of the PNG Liquified Natural Gas Project, concluding that for any future development project to succeed it must start from how locals envisage their own futures.

Finally, the student chapters close on a broad yet nuanced discussion on the gendered nature of development discourse. In Chapter 12, Adele Aria articulates how women's work is undervalued, and that dominant, neoliberal development models champion male-centric and

capital-driven ideals of work. Aria shows how women suffer in this model, where they are expected to do unpaid domestic labour as well as "developing" themselves in the neoliberal market.

Leading human rights scholar Emeritus Professor Baden Offord closes the book with an insightful Afterword that reflects on the importance of the discussions showcased in the student chapters. He adds a rallying call to those interested in development and human rights:

> As critical human rights educators and students, the demand before us, if we are to understand this concept of development with our eyes wide open – unblinking – is to work towards decolonising the world, to de-glamour our minds and foster and create alternative futures.

This book demonstrates a commitment to bring out the stories that are often missing from government reports and statistics. The current model of development silences the voices of people impacted by its practice. It values the achievement of high GDP or economic growth through institutions even if the process leads to the destruction of local economic, social, ecological and cultural lives. Our approach to the study of development in this book centres on life. We consider the urgent importance of safeguarding human and environmental life, and advocate for the rights of diverse languages, communities and relationships to exist and flourish.

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Chapter 1

Teaching from the Darker Side of Development: Practical Pedagogical Reflections

Yirga Gelaw Woldeyes

Learning How to Learn Development

Questions are effective methods of reflective learning. They activate our minds to draw from our knowledge and experiences. They give us the chance to speak. "What is the meaning of development?" Asking this question generates numerous answers. Behind the question, there is an implicit assumption about the existence of a settled meaning of development. It is assumed that the word "development" represents some concrete or objective reality located in the world. In the process of searching its meaning, we reproduce the meaning of development using the prevailing assumptions and beliefs that exist around us.

In the academic world, the search for meaning is often carried out by referring to published books, journal articles, lecture materials and other authoritative texts. Politicians, religious groups, economists, environmentalists and indigenous farmers may refer to their own texts and come up with their own meanings of development. Here, we can see that the search for the meaning of development is achieved through processes that create a cognitive frame, a way of looking into the world based on a given set of signs, symbols, attitudes, customs, opinions and beliefs. Yet, these varied perceptions of development do not have equivalent power in determining the meaning of development. The economist may see a large mining project as a source of economic growth, but an environmentalist may see that same project as a licence for the destruction of biodiversity. An indigenous person may see it as the destruction of lands that house ancestors' spirits. A smallholder farmer may see it as a theft of farmland.

The existence of different perspectives on development does not mean we value them equally. Many people often recognise the economist's view as development, the environmentalist's view as a criticism of development, the smallholder farmer's view as a resistance to development, and the indigenous person's view as a superstitious belief that has nothing to do with development. Many do not change this understanding even if the farmer's perspective is based on lived experience of losing ancestral land, livelihood and community in the name of development. The meaning of development thus relies heavily on our belief in the authority of the speaking agent, on whose voice counts as development and whose voice does not.

A slightly different question about development could be "how do we understand the meaning of development?" or, even better, "how do we understand the way people understand development?" This question generates a different set of ideas about development. Here we invite ourselves to learn how we learn. We inquire into the world of meaning making: how do people give meaning to reality? When we try to understand meaning, we do not simply describe "facts". We try to understand not just what experts think or write about development but why and how we and others understand development the way

we do. In other words, we become interested in human beings, in their ideas, beliefs, values and experiences. Learning human rights and development together with a critical lens entails the democratisation of ways of seeing by situating development in the narratives of lived experiences.

My teaching approach at the Centre for Human Rights Education has been to encourage students to sharpen their critical lens. I focus on a critical examination of the self, and the ways in which knowledges, institutions and practices of development reproduce themselves with the consequence of dominating diverse lives and nature. The aim is to answer three important questions. First, what types of ideas, institutions and practices reproduce development as a dominant idea of our time? Second, which lives, stories, communities, experiences and cultures are silenced by this domination? Third, how do we learn from lives that are silenced by development? These three objectives guide us to organise our study critically and creatively by examining our ways of knowing (the critical reflection on the self); by evaluating how dominant ideas, institutions and practices inflict violence on people, nature, communities and experiences; and by listening to the silenced experiences and voices of people at the margins of power. We approach human rights not as eternal rules fixed by states, but as insights that emphasise on the worth of being human across diverse lives and contexts. As Baden Offord notes:

> Human rights as concept and practice, therefore, are complex and rooted in survival, relationship and co-existence, the exploration of interconnectedness (between self and other) and its realisation. Ultimately, it is linking the idea of human rights to the question of what it means to be human (2006, p14).

Human rights as invitations to explore the interconnectedness between self and other, as Offord notes, involves examining how we perceive ourselves and others. It involves the critical understanding of the self, including how the other enters the self, and where it rests within it. Interrogating the lens with which we see the world is important in recognising the existence of other ways of seeing.

Critical Reflection: Understanding our Perception of the Self

Traditionally, people thought they saw the world as it was. They believed that there was a perfect correlation between language and reality, and the world had no other meaning except what we know through our senses and describe using our languages. This view has been shown to be dismissive of the complexity and diversity of the world and experiences within it. People hold different meanings and perceptions of the world depending on where they stand to look at it. Critical theorists from multiple fields have shown that the belief in the existence of one meaning or truth about the world is achieved only by disregarding alternative interpretations and perspectives. This has been the case especially when colonialism enabled Europe to spread its "Enlightenment" ideas to the world.

Most of the ideas we use to speak about development came from the western perspective, as was shown in the Introduction. That means, most of us see the world through the lens of Eurocentrism (Shohat and Stam, 1994; Grosfoguel, 2011). Understanding how this lens distorts reality and excludes the voices of people who exist outside the experience of Europe is very important. This exclusion works not just by outside institutions and people, but by our own position in the world. As people who apply the western lens, all of us could

exclude, silence and disregard voices that are absent in our epistemologies, languages and studies. Often, our understanding of other cultures and peoples is shaped by the perceptions created within our society, not by the voices and experiences of the people concerned. To challenge how we understand others, first we must understand how we understand ourselves. We try to do this by examining our own positionality, knowing where we stand in relation to the topic. To help us in this self-examination, we consider three conceptual locations that can help us understand our positionality. These are social location, epistemic location, and power location.

Our social location relates to our position in the society we came from. Considering social location reminds us to examine how our social and cultural background informs the way we think and act in the world. Meanings are not made in isolation. They are made in society, through culture and experience. Values too exist in our society influencing our attitudes and preferences (Bilgrami, 2016). We bring a cultural framework and notions of lived experiences from our social and cultural background.

Our epistemic location relates to our ways of knowing reality. Considering epistemic location helps us remember how the types of ideas we hold, books we read and knowledge we study influences the ways we perceive reality, or understand and act in the world. Western epistemology is dominant in education systems, even in non-western countries. People coming from the same social location may have different epistemic locations. For example, I grew up in Ethiopia speaking the local language, participating in cultural life. My social location was similar to the social location of many people who shared the world with me. However, when I studied in the western education system, I studied the world using a foreign language. I studied western ideas and philosophies that did not relate to my Ethiopian experiences. These ideas and philosophies oriented me to believe that the Ethiopian society I came from was inferior to the west and I should use my western education to help modernise my people. I started to interpret the world using the ideas I acquired from western education. Although my social location was Ethiopian, my epistemic location became western. It took me a long time to realise how my western epistemic location devalued the ideas, values and experiences of my own people.

Power location relates to the position and status we have in relation to how power is distributed across and within a given epistemic or social location. Power locations reminds us that we may inhabit asymmetric, hierarchical or unequal relations of power in relation to a given field. We may have similar beliefs and perspectives on many areas or come from the same social background but differ in our power locations due to our roles, status, gender, income and so on. People who have similar epistemic locations may have different power locations that influence how they think and act in the world. Company executives may interpret social reality differently from their employees, or political leaders from their followers.

The three locations are not static categories that permanently define a person's worldview. They are not neatly demarcated from one another. People can change their locations and adopt multiple locations. We cannot categorise people based on perceived locations. I can take positions on a subject from western or Ethiopian epistemic locations. A company executive may occasionally speak from the perspective of the employee. Locations are simply useful ways of understanding the many ways through which our subjectivity is formed. They help us to reflect on ourselves. A critical reflection on the self involves the analysis of how our social background, our intellectual knowledge and our power interests

influence the way we interpret reality and act in the world. My teaching approach first focuses on encouraging us to examine our positionality. Critical reflection helps us recognise and challenge our privilege, and be committed to the rights of others to speak their word.

Being Drawn into Other Selves: Understanding our Conception of the Other

The study of development involves thinking about places and people that are different from us. Critical understandings of the self, based on the three locations, helps us understand other selves in a better way. It helps us recognise and learn about people who occupy other social, epistemic and power locations in the world. Before we learn about people who are different from us, we ask "how do we understand difference?" This is a question about our way of thinking about difference, not about describing the actual things that are different. We are accustomed to think of difference without experiencing the things that are different. We are used to converting people – their cultures, beliefs, experiences and identities – into ideas and images that exist within our own cultures, theories and beliefs. Critical reflection on the self helps us review this framework.

Before we change real things into mental concepts, we try to pause and ask how we relate, listen to and understand voices and experiences that are different from ours. Whose ideas inform our cognition process? Whose questions do we ask and whose responses do we listen to? The aims of this knowing and questioning could include letting others speak, paying attention to those who are silenced, showing the many forms of violence that are carried out in the name of development, bearing witness to the suffering of others, and becoming members of new communities or learning new knowledges. These aims could be furthered by incorporating critical theory from various fields of interest such as social justice, critical human rights education, decolonisation, feminism, indigenous knowledges and others. This type of education opens a way of becoming "one" with others. To be drawn to the world of others means to open ourselves to the real condition of others, to unfold our relational and creative agency. It is a path to solidarity.

Critical reflection on the self allows us to explore other selves, to imagine what development could mean from disadvantaged, silenced or neglected positions. Our interest in human rights and social justice orients us towards a consciously selected position in development because there is no neutrality with solidarity. We deliberately search for and listen to voices from the darker side of development: experiences emerging from the social, epistemic and power locations of the people that are silenced and marginalised. We are committed to challenge the ways in which institutionalised power and professionalised language silences lived experiences. We are interested in the voices of nature, communities, indigenous people and groups and identities that are dominated, silenced or excluded. I call this appreciative learning, a wilful and humble encounter with the other's existence and wisdom.

To be drawn to other selves is a delicate and difficult process. There are many reasons for this. Knowledge corrupts agency when it silences people from narrating their reality. For example, the poor can teach about poverty better than experts. Africans or indigenous people can educate about their experiences better than outsiders (Smith, 2005; Clement, 2017). If what happened to the colonised, the exploited or the discriminated were told by the victims, the stories we would know about modernisation or development would be different (Dussel,

2009; Mignolo, 2011). Yet, institutions that are controlled or influenced by power interests give experts the power to speak on behalf of the poor, Africans or indigenous people. Academic discourses provide little chance for unprofessionalised, unpublished, unurbanised, uncommercialised or untrained experiences to narrate their reality. When agency is corrupted, it objectifies and commodifies life. It turns real people into mere data, giving power to the few by disempowering the many. When our knowledge of the poor is based on the disempowering and silencing discourses of modern institutions, we engage with a false sense of agency that perpetuates the condition of the poor.

We cannot perfectly express the reality of others' suffering or the voices of their experiences. Yet, these challenges should not stop us from our earnest endeavours at learning and engaging with others. They make us question what we mean by learning and engaging with others. Learning is not an act of becoming an expert over other people's reality. It is a process of becoming human by recognising the humanity of others. It involves liberating the self from a false or corrupted sense of agency, questioning that which stops us from relating with the other and being drawn into other selves in order to transform our humanity. It is a constant endeavour not just to think about the world but to know how to live in the world without alienation from nature and human beings. Paulo Freire regards this type of learning as humanisation. Humanisation is "the people's historical vocation. The pursuit of full humanity, however, cannot be carried out in isolation or individualism, but only in fellowship and solidarity" (1970, p. 85). This type of learning does not take place solely in classrooms. It takes place at all places all the time. Yet, the critical reflections and readings in the classroom prepares us to be conscious of it and to practice it in an environment that validates and encourages this type of learning.

The Importance of Dialogue

The three locations discussed above may help us improve our capacity to learn from others while being reminded of the challenges and promises of this learning. However, education as a process of becoming human requires more. We need ideals, principles or values that can help us relate and connect with other selves. Such ideals are important for building communities and relationships. Paulo Freire's teachings show that dialogue is a way of becoming one with others. He suggests that we cannot save or free the oppressed because humanisation is not a gift one gives to the other. We can only enter into dialogue with each other to humanise the world. Dialogue is not discussion. It is the act of naming the world and co-creating reality through action and reflection (1970). It is a process of moving away from using our institutions and knowledges as instruments of dehumanisation and silencing. This process requires a commitment to values outside institutional guidelines and procedures. Education as dialogue is an open invitation for the expression of the beauty that exists in every life and place.

Freire teaches that true dialogue exists only when there is love, humility, faith, hope and critical thinking. "If I do not love the world – if I do not love life – if I do not love people – I cannot enter into dialogue" (1970, p. 71). We need humility, for no amount of knowledge can make us superior to others. Faith in people and trust in their humanity is necessary despite the injustices that deny them these: "To glorify democracy and to silence the people is a farce; to discourse on humanism and to negate people is a lie" (1970, p. 72). Freire also

believes that hope is necessary because we cannot do anything if we believe nothing will change. Freire adds the necessity of critical thinking as a condition of dialogue. He defines critical thinking as:

> Thinking which discerns the indivisible solidarity between the world and the people and admits of no dichotomy between them – thinking that which perceive reality as a process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity – thinking which does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved (1970, p. 73).

Freire's conditions of dialogue open up the world for conversation. Since reality is never fully defined and exhausted, previously agreed meanings are not definite and eternal truths. Reopening the world for dialogue, for interpretation through our words and actions, enables us to speak from new and different locations and experiences. It rejects the view that reality is a closed system and all we can do is mimic what others have already said about development. Education or dialogue as a way of becoming human reveals to us how our humanity is bound up with the humanity of others.

Development in the Classroom

In teaching Human Rights and Development in the classroom and online, I approach important topics of development based on the above perspectives. We critically examine the diverse meanings of development and its alternative practices. Education is never neutral, nor is our approach to development studies (Giroux, 2020). We consciously and critically take the position of those without power and voice. We study perspectives on the environment, what engenders ecological destruction, and the ways in which processes of healing and the regeneration of life are possible. Students are invited to explore the practices and beliefs of development from indigenous perspectives and experiences, and examine the theoretical assumptions and dominant policy practices that affect the lives of people in the so called "underdeveloped" countries, focusing on Africa. We explore the philosophical underpinnings of neoliberal globalisation, the role of international financial organisations and corporations, and the ideologies and practices of foreign aid. Students are always encouraged to interrogate dominant modes of engagement with development, and to critically examine needs based, right bases, and human security based and sustainability approaches to development. We also investigate the ways in which patriarchal values inform development thinking and the multiple forms of gender oppression. Finally, we explore alternative, transformative and decolonial perspectives on development, mainly drawing from diverse lived experiences, knowledges and futures.

Critical education is not static. It continues to evolve, sharpening its critical grammar based on diverse sources of knowledge and by challenging the structures that oppress human and environmental life. However, since universities operate within a globalised colonial and capitalist climate, the educational space for the cultivation of radical imagination and the practice of critical learning has been diminished. Since elementary and high school, most of us have internalised the power of institutionalised knowledge that instils within us what Freire calls *the fear of freedom*, the constant doubt and uncertainty in critical and independent thinking (1970). Schools are often where the imagination of students is killed, where we are made to doubt our own ideas; not to have the right to give words to our experiences without

using the authority of others (Illich, 1973; Giroux, 2014; hooks, 1994). Therefore, my teaching practice aims at overcoming the fear of freedom. This is an important aspect of humanisation for participants and a key effort towards decolonising the university (Giroux, 2007; Woldeyes & Offord, 2018). It considers the complexity and contradiction of the social world in which our learning takes place, the intersectionality of identities and the need to cultivate critical agency among participants.

During the last eight years of teaching and research at the Centre for Human Rights Education, I have come to frame my teaching methodology under *Critical-Appreciative-Dialogue* (Woldeyes, 2017). These three conceptual themes are indirectly or directly discussed above. The critical aspect focuses on critical reflection on the self, understanding the various ways in which systems and structures of power dominate life and perpetuate oppression. The appreciative aspect seeks to draw insights from the darker side of colonial modernity, from lives that are dominated by structures of power and knowledge. Through dialogue we reflect on values and positions that could allow us to discover, create and transform relationships. We imagine alternative insights that centre on liberating and transforming both human and non-human lives.

Conclusion

The approach advanced in this brief reflection may not fit with dominant knowledges, institutions and practices in the field of development. The language of institutions displaces human voices and replaces it with professional language to present itself as objective and neutral. Yet, this language is never neutral. Theories of human rights and development often start from a dystopian view of nature that justifies the use of institutionalised control over the irrationality of nature and human beings. This view of nature is a value laden perspective that allows a few powerful individuals or groups who influence, manage or own institutions to exercise control over life and resources. Our critical study of development recognises the importance of understanding how the dominant ideas, institutions and practices of development reproduce their dominance while silencing other voices and experiences. The classroom provides a limited opportunity for all of this, but it offers an indispensable opportunity to direct students towards humanisation. The insights we share through critical reflections in class goes out with us not just to the workplace but to all life contexts. For more details on my pedagogical approach please see Woldeyes 2021, Woldeyes & Belachew 2021, Woldeyes & Offord 2018, and Woldeyes 2017.

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Chapter 2

Reflections from Teaching African Development using *Decolonial Perspectives* at LSE

Eyob Balcha Gebremariam

The use of decolonial perspectives in designing and teaching development studies is a marginal academic practice. Decolonial perspectives remain largely negligible, especially in courses that broadly cover development management, development policy, African Political Economy, African development or African Studies. Indeed, one of the starting points of decolonial perspectives is questioning the mainstream thinking, practice, knowledge framework and ideology of development. The idea, practice and theory of development is inherently a colonial project which was initially pursued and practised through individuals who were assigned as colonial administrators. Recognising this historical fact can be a good starting point.

I taught African Development at the International Development department in the Lent term of 2021 at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). I used *decolonial* perspectives to design and deliver the course, which helped my students and me approach African development from a radically different perspective from the way the course was taught before. Overall, the core lesson is that a decolonised perspective in development or African studies is a complex endeavour of identifying and examining the power of Eurocentric knowledge framework, "unthinking" (Wallerstein, 1991) the knowledge cannon that sustains colonialism, and centring views and perspectives that offer decolonial insights and reasoning.

The *"Imagined Africa"* vs the *"Real Africa"*

We started the course by making both analytical and empirical distinctions between the *"imagined Africa"* and the *"real Africa"*. The "imagined Africa" is a product of centuries-old construction of the continent as a "dark", "uncivilised" and "savage" place through the accounts of non-African philosophers, "explorers", and colonisers (Stanley, 1988; Wainaina, 2005). Later on, once the idea of "development" become one of the most dominant "post-second world war" engagements of the West, Africa remained at the centre primarily because of its imagined features (Larsen & Jensen, 2020).

Mainstream academia and, most importantly, development theory, thinking and practice imagine Africa predominantly by emphasising poverty, destitution and backwardness. For economists, Africa is linked with investment risk, corruption and "permanent crisis"; for geographers, Africa presents a pristine nature, virgin land, safaris and game resorts; for historians, Africa is divided into pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. For political scientists, Africa presents case studies of civil wars, failed states, post-election violence, neopatrimonialism and despotic dictators; for anthropologists, Africa has primordial tribes, traditional and simple societies, and for humanitarians, Africa is associated with aid, donation, vulnerability and a perpetual cycle of crisis.

The imagined Africa has a vital role beyond the academic world. The tarnished image of Africa serves the purpose of magnifying the glamorous image of the west. In his influential work, *On the Postcolony*, Achille Mbembe argues:

> Africa as an idea, a concept, has historically served and continues to serve as a polemical argument for the West's desperate desire to assert its difference from the rest of the world. …Africa still constitutes one of the metaphors through which the West represents the origin of its own norms, develops a self-image, and integrates this image into the set of signifiers asserting what is supposed to be its identity. And Africa … is not simply *part of* its imaginary signification; it is *one of* those significations (2001, p. 2).

Before I gave the first lecture, I asked my students to submit an optional assignment of a maximum of 500 words response to the following two questions: "How do you understand African Development?" and "Why are you interested in studying African Development?". It was not surprising that most of my students knew more about the poverty, destitution and troubles of African countries usually captured through very low GDP. Most of the responses also included personal ambitions to positively change the dire conditions in the continent.

Readings, lectures, seminar debates and discussions in the first two weeks helped us discern the prevalence of the imagined depiction of Africa in mainstream academia, media and public discourse. We emphasised that being aware of the distinction between the imagined and real Africa and the complexities therein does not mean being oblivious to actual problems on the ground. It is instead to be conscious of the power of institutionalised discourses and practices that have normalised Africa as a continent that needs to be fixed. For example, I asked my students, why does the Department of International Development at LSE have a course only on "African Development" but not on any other geographical region of the world? What does this tell us? Does this mean other regions of the world do not need development? Answering this question opens up several lines of debate and reflection.

Modernity and Coloniality: Two Sides of the Same Coin

After addressing the distinction between the "real" and the "imagined" Africa, our course emphasised that the notion of development is a continuation of the west's centuries-old civilising and modernising mission. The narratives and discourses of modernity and development are often painted as aspirations such as progress, civilisation, rationality, salvation and liberalism. However, if we examine experiences and narratives of societies that encountered the west through its modernising and civilising mission, the tone will change completely. We start to talk about the authoritarian role of the empire and colonialism, domination, exploitation and dehumanisation. Hence, we cannot study modernity and development without talking about coloniality. As Walter Mignolo argues, coloniality is the darker side of western modernity (2018). We can locate the experiences of societies across every part of the world, from North America, the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa, Asia and Australia, that can tell us their respective versions of coloniality of the same historical experience depicted in the west as civilisation, modernity and development.

The notions of development in general, and African development in particular, are also significantly shaped by a Eurocentric and hegemonic knowledge framework (Bhambra, 2007). Manifestations of the Eurocentric knowledge framework include the high regard for western norms, values, historical experiences, ontologies and epistemologies and efforts of universalising these western notions as global standards. These centuries-old practices have created hierarchies between the west and non-western regions and countries, used to justify the developed/developing countries, the global north/south divide and also to create and sustain the racial/ethnic hierarchy.

A decolonial perspective enabled us to make a distinction between colonialism, colonisation and coloniality. As argued by Ndlovu-Gatsheni, colonisation is space and time-bounded, and it refers to the conquest, subordination and administration of a place (2020). Colonialism is "a power structure that subverts, destroys, reinvents, appropriates, and replaces anything it deems an obstacle to the agenda of colonial domination and exploitation" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020, para. 20). Coloniality, in its turn, refers to "the most general form of domination in the world today, once colonialism as an explicit political order is destroyed" (Quijano, 2007, p. 170)

We approached modernity and coloniality as two sides of the same coin. There cannot be modernity and development without coloniality (Walsh & Mingolo 2018, p. 4). In other words, the mainstream knowledge, theory, idea and practice of development is inherently colonial because it thrives on revealing and consolidating one set of western knowledge, histories and ideas whilst concealing and trivialising non-western knowledges, histories, experiences and values.

Our decolonial approach to the study of African development heavily benefited from the works of Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018), Robtel Neajai Pailey (2020), Uma Kothari (2006) and Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2006). Analytical insights derived from these scholars were the main pillars of examining continental development frameworks, States in Africa, the debate on the democracy-development nexus, and specific sectors such as education, agriculture, social policy and digitalisation. Most importantly, we used two analytical frameworks that remained at the centre of our lectures, seminars, debates and discussions.

Our Two Decolonial Analytical Frameworks

The Three Forms of Empire

Throughout the course, two analytical frameworks stood out as the most useful decolonial perspectives of studying African Development. The first analytical framework is based on Ndlovu-Gatsheni's argument about the "three empires and three trajectories of decolonisation" (2018, p. 55). The forms of empire are physical empire, commercial-non-territorial-military empire, and metaphysical empire. The respective decolonisation for each type of empire is political, economic and epistemic decolonisation, respectively.

The first form of empire, the physical empire, was dismantled, at least in its most common form, during the liberation movements in Africa that culminated in the 1960s. However, building on the success of political decolonisation remained elusive because the "colonial matrix of power" (Walsh & Mignolo, 2018, p. 4) continued dominating Africa through the second and third forms of empire.

The second form of empire is a commercial-non-territorial-military empire. This type of empire is powerfully dominating African countries socio-economic spheres in multiple ways. Front bearers of this type of empire include the international financial and trade institutions (e.g., the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization), multinational corporations, the aid industry complex and philanthropies. These actors determine, shape and influence socio-economic policies and decision-making processes in almost every African country. The second form of empire enabled colonialism to remain dominant and adaptive after the end of the physical empire. Manifestations of the commercial-non-territorial-military empire are witnessed during the structural adjustment programs and conditionalities of the 1980s and 90s. Currently, the commercial-non-territorial-military empire operates through a network of powerful global actors that target Africa for their economic and political purposes in the name of development. These include France's Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), the USA's Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union, China, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and technology giants such as Google, Apple, Facebook and Tesla. These actors are actively shaping policies and decisions in several sectors across the continent, including mining, oil, agriculture, health, population, social policy (mainly social protection), education and digital technologies. One logical explanation why Africa lost $836 billion between 2000 and 2015 through illicit financial flows is the power and operations of the commercial-non-territorial-military empire (UNCTAD 2020). In the present context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the refusal of the EU, UK and USA to waive the intellectual property rights of the vaccines was one of the real-time examples that demonstrated the power of the commercial-non-territorial-military empire.

One of the vital contributions of applying the commercial-non-territorial-military empire is the room it creates to identify new actors operating within the "colonial matrix of power". Hence, our decolonial perspective is not fixated on old-school colonial powers such as Britain and France. It also recognises emerging actors that are dominating Africa's socio-economic and political landscape through their military bases in the continent (Russia, China, Saudi Arabia), through their large-scale land acquisitions (Song and Christian 2008) and also digital technology interventions.

The third form of empire, the metaphysical empire, is perhaps the most enduring and powerful form of empire but hardly captured by mainstream development thinking. South African scholar Lwazi Lushaba argues that colonialism could not sustain itself only by relying on violence (2009). Colonialism required inculcating specific ideas that serve its objectives in the colonised minds so that the system that sustains its dominance is reproduced continuously. The metaphysical empire thrives by "submission of the colonised world to European memory" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018, p. 54). In doing so, the cultures, languages, values, traditions, knowledges and histories of the non-western world are eradicated, trivialised or forced to become obsolete.

In our study of the education sector, we examined how the English and French languages became the medium of instruction, knowledge generation and research in many African countries. In many African countries, the majority of the population use different languages as their mother tongue language. Nevertheless, English and French language are regarded as manifestations of advancement, modernity and development. Hence, education institutions from the early childhood level to the universities prioritise these foreign languages at the expense of local languages. As a result, the "educated elites" of most African

societies are alienated from the majority of the society they aspire to or are supposed to serve (Nyamnjoh, 2004; Woldeyes, 2017).

The study of metaphysical empire also enabled us to examine how colonialism operates without colonisation that happens through physical subjugation. By studying the Ethiopian case, we examined how Ethiopia – the only African country that defeated a European colonial power and remained independent – fell to the powers and domination of the west through the metaphysical empire. The work of Yirga Gelaw Woldeyes (2017) and Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis (2021) helped us to dig deeper on the Ethiopian case.

Sociology of Absences

The other key analytical framework we used in our course was Santos's work on the sociology of absences. Santos's articulation about how the hegemonic knowledge framework operates helped us to debunk Eurocentric ideas and to examine the logics through which it maintains dominance. Santos's sociology of absences argues that "what does not exist is actively produced as a non-existent, that is, as a non-credible alternative to what exists" (2007, p. 15). Arguments in mainstream academia that portray themselves as the only way of knowing or theories that implicitly or explicitly argue that there is no alternative way of pursuing progress and change inadvertently create the possible alternative as non-existent or non-credible. Until recently, neoliberalism was imposed on African countries as the only way of achieving positive change and progress within societies.

Sociology of absences identified "five monocultures" (Santos, 2007, pp. 16-17) through which the hegemonic knowledge framework sustains its dominance and produces non-existence. As an alternative, it also provides "five ecologies" (2007, pp. 18-29) that would allow us to challenge hegemonic knowledge frameworks. For example, the fifth monoculture promotes capitalist productivity and efficiency. Any system of production that deviates from capitalist logic and principles of the market is considered invaluable and non-existence is produced as non-productiveness. The alternative ecologies of productivities, on the other hand, promote solidarity economies, co-operatives and self-managed businesses that may not prioritise the principles of market efficiency.

We specifically examined this logic in our study of the agriculture sector and land value in many African societies. The western logic and market-oriented principle considers land as a commodity and a property that can be owned, bought and sold by an individual. On the contrary, we examined how invaluable land is in many African societies whose value could not be measured in a monetary sense. Indeed, in many African societies, individuals cannot claim land ownership because it belongs to "the living, the dead and the unborn" (Tafira & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2017, p. 15). Failure to recognise these differences may cause more damage. This explains why the people of Madagascar went to the streets furiously in 2008 and toppled the government that leased half of the island to Daewoo, a South Korean firm, for 99 years (Song & Christian, 2008). Land connects the ancestors to the current and future generations, which is beyond any transactional value generated on the market. A logic of efficiency and productivity can hardly capture the value that land has among many African societies.

In Conclusion

The learning experience was for everyone in our virtual class, both for the Africans and the non-Africans. Being white, Asian or African was neither a privilege nor a disadvantage for acquiring decolonial perspectives and applying them in our academic inquiries. As argued by Ramon Grosfoguel, "epistemic location" does not necessarily reflect the "social location" (2007, p. 213). This is why I disagree with people who equate decolonising academia with the diversification of the reading list. Scholars from diverse socio-economic, cultural, geographic and gender background may speak from the perspectives of the hegemonic western knowledge framework. Whilst a diversified reading list for our courses is a virtuous goal in itself, it will not achieve the decolonial agenda unless we are actively promoting diversity at the epistemic level.

Finally, the course enabled us to learn from everyone's self-reflection about several topics such as our knowledge about Africa, development, history and knowledge. I was lucky to facilitate all five weekly seminars where students make presentations based on each week's seminar questions, debate on some of the concepts, exchange their personal stories, apply some complex ideas into the real-world context, and share the change trajectories in their thought processes. We also had a second optional essay of answering how the course helped them think about African development differently. Most of my students responded quite frankly how the course helped them see perspectives they were not aware of, rethinking and unthinking some of the theories and ideas they learnt before.

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Chapter 3

Bureaucrats and "Bludgers": A Critique of Australia's Welfare and Development Policies

Erin Thomas

Abstract

This chapter examines welfare theory, policy and praxis in the context of "work for the dole" programs implemented by the Australian Government, including the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) and Community Development Program (CDP). I argue that welfare policy and programs, designed on behalf of Indigenous Australians, are contemporary examples of ongoing colonisation, ethnocide and epistemicide. They are a means of assimilating Aboriginal people into the colonisers' economy which at the same time strips the Earth of its natural resources.

This chapter examines a range of coloniser artefacts: offering an analysis of the contemporary public discourse towards Aboriginal recipients of welfare and examining the liberal foundations of the welfare state (Leonard, 1994), while deconstructing neoliberal approaches to "value" and "capital". Through deconstructing and demystifying the economy (Graham, 2008), white allies may free ourselves to engage meaningfully with the natural world, its resources, and each other.

I argue that by becoming cognisant of the historical precedents of contemporary welfare policy, we may liberate ourselves from making the same ontologically violent mistakes of the past. Further, this paper joins calls for deference to Aboriginal leadership and camaraderie on all issues of self-determination.

Introduction

Indigenous Australians have managed the lands they call home for at least the past 65,000 years (Wright, 2017) and up to 80,000 years (Davidson & Wahlquist, 2017). Highly structured systems of kinship, ethics and lore, developed over the centuries, have consistently provided Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with meaningful social roles and the means of subsistence. These cultural systems have thrived, evolved and nurtured Indigenous peoples' physiological, psychological and spiritual needs, both prior to colonisation and in spite of it. However, as Aboriginal people were forcibly moved from traditional lands and as food became scarce, many families were forced to engage with the bureaucracies of their oppressors and to apply for government welfare in order to survive (Collis & Webb, 2014).

This paper examines the welfare and development policies enacted upon those who continue to practice their custodial ethic and cultivate their sense of belonging to the land, yet who are, in many ways, displaced on their own soil. I draw on Aboriginal Australians' experiences of home, belonging and displacement to engage a critique of federal welfare and community development policies. I discuss the collection of Commonwealth policies that have sought to address economic development and unemployment, particularly in remote Aboriginal communities, including the Community Development Program (CDP) and Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP). These programs and policies are employed as case studies to examine ongoing expressions of colonialism, the construction of power and knowledge, and the realities of epistemicide in Indigenous Australia.

International Human Rights Laws

Article 22 of the United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Rights emphasises that each person has the right to social security and is entitled to "the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality" in accordance with the resources of the state (United Nations, 1948, p. 6). However, despite Australia being a signatory to this declaration emphasising human dignity, the provision of welfare is delivered in a way which is often described as paternalistic and dehumanising (see Davidson & Knaus, 2018). Rather than upholding human rights and dignities, I argue that the current approach to welfare, as defined within the inflexible model of neoliberal capitalism, seeks to silence Indigenous epistemologies and alternative means of community organising.

The Australian Government initially resisted signing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), however, we have been party to this international agreement since 2009. Under UNDRIP, Indigenous peoples have the express right to have the right to self-government concerning local affairs and to receive assistance from the state in determining their own health, economic and social development (UN, 2007, Arts. 4, 20-21). Like all individuals, First Nations Peoples have an explicit right to an evolving worldview and way of life (UN, 2007, Arts. 11, 13, 31). Moreover, Indigenous people have the right to "financial and technical assistance" from the state to support them in attaining each of these rights (UN, 2007, Art. 39). I argue that when Aboriginal Australians are prevented from claiming these rights, it relegates them to the role of *non-citizen* or *outsider* on their own soil.

A History of Social Welfare Directed at Aboriginal Australians

In Australia, public attitudes towards recipients of welfare are far from favourable. This vitriol is heightened when it comes to Indigenous peoples. Social security benefits for Aboriginal people commenced in the 1940s and were paid directly to mission establishments at the time (Ngaanyatjarra Council, 2017). Sanders explains the precarious history of welfare and development programs in Aboriginal communities from the 1970s onwards, beginning with the initial pilot of the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) in 1977 (Sanders, 2007). The CDEP underwent a process of radical reform as part of the Northern Territory Emergency Response in 2007 (Ngaanyatjarra Council, 2017). This saw the introduction of income management, with the intention of moving people into mainstream employment despite there being few jobs available (Ngaanyatjarra Council, 2017). Autonomously controlled block-funding for individual communities was ceased and funds were moved into the hands of third-party job service providers (Altman and Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the Northern Territory, 2011). These development policies were met with strong criticism from Indigenous communities, academics and advocacy groups alike, who show that human rights have been violated in the face of increasingly punitive policies (Altman and Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the Northern Territory, 2011; Walters, 2018).

Between 1 July 2013 and 1 July 2015, the Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP) also operated in Aboriginal communities. After which time, the program and its earlier iterations were rebranded and transitioned into the Community Development Program (CDP; Australian National Audit Office [ANAO], 2017). The transition was intended to align with "broader welfare reforms and changes to the mainstream employment services" as well as facilitating an increased focus on training and providing "real jobs" (ANAO, 2017, p. 25).

The CDP currently supports approximately 32,000 Australians, with over 80% of these participants identifying as Indigenous (Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet, 2018). The CDP has been subject to ongoing criticism (Brennan, 2018). For example, Mr Corey Feehan, an Aboriginal man from Arrino, Western Australia, was forced to walk 35km each day to reach his place of CDP employment, or risk suspension of his payments (Feehan in Knaus, 2017).

Derek Harris, Chairman of the Ngaanyatjarra Council, clearly explains that his people "don't want CDP. We didn't want it when it started but we thought it would be like CDEP because it has the same letters" (Harris in Ngaanyatjarra Council, 2017, p. ii). In the 2018 federal budget, the government committed $1.1 billion to overhauling the CDP and conducted a consultation process to develop a new model of welfare and employment support for Indigenous communities (Davidson & Knaus, 2018). Fred Chaney AO, Former Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Bill Gray AM, Former Secretary of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, delivered a joint submission to the 2017 senate enquiry, firmly stating:

> It is impossible to explain Commonwealth policy across the Howard, Rudd, Gillard, Abbott and now Turnbull governments other than as assimilationist in intent designed to use compulsion to require remote Aboriginal people to fit into a metropolitan framework of work or welfare (Chaney and B. Gray, 2017, p. 8).

In 2019, The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) was established to take over certain functions of PM&C, including the CDP. Instead of focusing on "real jobs"

(ANAO, 2017), the focus has moved on to providing "real wages", subsidising certain jobs so that employers can pay CDP participants "minimum wage or above" (NIAA, 2020, para. 13).

While the Australian Government continues to legislate on behalf of Aboriginal people, this paper will question the foundations and intentions of the welfare state: examining the contemporary welfare discourse and deconstructing some of the neoliberal underpinnings of this agenda.

Skills Building, Participation, Job-Readiness: Discourse for the Dole

The CDP and CDEP programs are known informally as *work for the dole*, with politicians even adopting this colloquialism (See Abetz in Carabine, 2014). The ethos of *work for the dole* perpetuates the myth that Aboriginal people are lazy and disengaged from their own communities. According to the Discrimination against Indigenous Australians Report, 37% of Australians aged between 25–44 believed that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians were lazy and 42% believed that they were given unfair advantages and benefits by the government (Beyond Blue, 2014). The government has contributed to perpetuating this stereotype, allowing development programs to become "conflated with passive welfare in public discourse, [and] media representations" (Altman and Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the Northern Territory, 2011, p. 36). This complicity has helped to create a dominant culture in which First Nations Australians are subject to ridicule. Chief Economist of the Australia Institute, Richard Denniss, similarly observes that millions of Australians are living in fear, and that in addition to receiving some of the lowest welfare payments in the developed world, Australians are working longer hours and are subject to unpaid overtime. This stereotyped attitude against Indigenous recipients of welfare is symptomatic of a capitalist state whereby white workers have been rendered fearful of being left unable to provide for themselves.

Skills Building

The language of *skills building* advocated by PM&C both patronises the Indigenous communities that it purports to serve and placates an Australian public intent on seeing Aboriginal Australians assimilated into a dominant workforce and hegemonic class structure. "Skills building" denies the range of skills and intimate, encyclopaedic knowledge of the land which have become devalued in the modern labour economy. Furthermore, Indigenous community leaders have made it evident that the CDP was designed as "a regime of incentives and disincentives, [which] if sufficiently punitive and applied over an extended period of time, will eventually teach…people the value of regular work" (Ngaanyatjarra Council, 2017, p. 9). The hegemonic worldview often dictates that the worth of individual human can be reduced to how they earn a living. As a pathway to employment, the CDP both offers a means to achieve this "valued status", while at the same time devaluing the traditional labours of Indigenous people and ridiculing their engagement in the western labour system by offering them less than the minimum wage (Campbell, Browne & Grundoff, 2018). In face-to-face interviews of 45 Aboriginal Australians living in Larrakia Country (Darwin, Northern Territory), one participant commented that the community service industry, which is alleged to meet the needs of Aboriginal people, is actually, "a source of exploitation" (Habibis et al., 2016, p. 64). Habibis and her colleagues reflect that, "employment is not a matter of social recognition as an equal but a replication of old patterns

of subordination"; a commonly held perspective amongst many of the interviewees (2016, p. 64).

Job-Readiness

The Australian Government continues to insist upon a program of welfare reform to produce a generation of Indigenous people who are *job-ready* (PM&C, 2018). However, they fail to recall that prior to colonisation, highly structured systems of kinship and ethics provided Aboriginal people with meaningful social roles and the means of attaining physiological, psychological and spiritual sustenance. While the Australian Government advocates the importance of training for "real jobs" (ANAO, 2017, p. 25), I problematise this terminology, as it negates the importance and reality of culturally enshrined roles and vocations, replacing them with market-driven pastimes, which may be vague, unfulfilling and nebulous.

Traditionally, *job-readiness* is initiated through the traditional process of lore, and is maintained through specific expectations of *women's and men's business.*[1] Today, many Aboriginal people mourn that they are unable to partake in these traditional coming-of-age ceremonies. For example, a young female interviewee on the ABC television series *You Can't Ask That* explained that going through lore was no longer an option for Aboriginal people living in her community today (ABC, 2016). The interview shows that she is brought to tears when describing a photograph taken in the early 1900s of a group of women who have just been initiated in this last known occurrence of sacred women's business, now lost due to the fragmentation of language and cultural knowledge (ABC, 2016).

The images evoked by the language of *working for the dole*, alongside the value-laden language of *skills-building*, *innovation*, *participation* and *job-readiness* all amount to an offer of a one-dimensional worker-consumer existence in the context of Australia's current neoliberal reality. They neglect the finer nuance and the demands for an enriching social and spiritual life afforded by traditional ways of life, often displacing these values rather than engaging in creative solutions.

Participation

Indigenous Australians must navigate a complex bureaucracy in order to prove their worth in a society which has consistently attempted to displace and erase them. The CDP aims to increase the "participation" of jobseekers in the community, with PM&C claiming that they want for Aboriginal people to be self-sufficient and to break the cycle of dependency and welfare (Altman and Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the Northern Territory, 2011; PM&C, 2018). However, emancipatory models of participation are firmly grounded in dialogue and entail a people who are in control of their livelihoods, hopes, dreams and futures (Freire, 1970). One only needs to recall the rejection by the Turnbull government of the proposed Indigenous voice to parliament—The Uluru Statement from the Heart.

[1] Note: *Women's and Men's Business* is an English translation of an Aboriginal practice, describing the traditional ceremonies whose customs are known only to those initiated through coming-of-age ceremonies in Aboriginal lore. According to Yunkaporta (2019), there are clear and valued roles in traditional lore for homosexual people, non-binary and intersex people. Furthermore, "Men's Business and Women's Business in the contemporary Aboriginal world are contested issues, as we find ourselves increasingly domesticated" (Yunkaporta, 2019, p. 203).

This outright rejection attests to the fact that Indigenous participation in Australia remains an exercise in tokenism. (Davis, 2018; Maddison, 2019)

The Liberal Foundations of the Welfare State

Professor Peter Leonard describes how western states became the main provider of domestic welfare after the Second World War, intervening in the economic, social and personal lives of citizens. According to Leonard, these liberal foundations initially conceived of state intervention into welfare as a means to both strengthen the state and to "maintain strong capitalist economics and social structures" (Leonard, 1997, p. 3). While Foucault (1994) points out that welfare serves to maintain the existing internal order of states, Leonard describes a paradox of modern welfare, stating that "the provision of universal public services directed to the well-being of citizens [is] simply incompatible with the moral virtues embedded in the operation of market forces" (Leonard, 1997, p. 5). This critique highlights the tensions which arise when basic human needs are serviced in the context of a competitive market economy, which prioritises profit over equality.

Engaging in a post-modern, feminist critique of welfare, Leonard contends that the very construct of "needs" was defined by "an oppressing class of white males intent on serving their own interests and perspectives" (Leonard, 1997, p. 4). As an example of colonialism, welfare suppresses local ontologies and has negative implications for self-determination and the ability to problematise the social order. Furthermore, Leonard emphasises that the welfare state has turned our human needs into "an ideological means…to legislate for and control a population which includes women and cultural/ethnic minorities" (Leonard, 1997, p. 4). This can be clearly observed in the Australian context, which has been described as a racial state whereby "patriarchal white sovereignty" dominates (Moreton-Robinson, 2011, p. 645).

The need to control minority populations can be observed throughout Australia's history of policies towards Aboriginal people. In particular, protectionism, assimilation, the Stolen Generations, and other forms of genocide. In a poignant example, Collis and Webb (2014) recount the negative impacts of colonialism and welfare on the family of Barkindji man Arch Black. They describe the physical and epistemological shifts that occurred in the lives of Aboriginal people when land was stolen and traditional hunting grounds became subsumed by private estates. They explain that, as a direct result of welfare intervention:

> The traditional extended family networks began to dissolve. Parents began to show they cared more for their own children than for their brothers' and sisters' offspring, saving any surplus from their meagre wages and rations for possibly harder times in the future…when they should have shared, they kept things to themselves; when they could have embraced, they denied; where they had been a community, they were now nuclear families (Collis & Webb, 2014, p. 498).

While speaking of imperialism in Africa and of development more broadly, Dr Kimberly Pfeifer, Head of Research at Oxfam America, provides a clear reminder that, "when the protest of the colonised could no longer be ignored, the institution of development replaced colonialism" (Pfeifer, 1996, p. 42). This critique of the development discourse further illustrates the colonial roots of modern welfare. Both Leonard (1997) and Pfeifer's (1996) observations are pertinent to a colonised country such as Australia, where First

Nations People must fight to maintain their cultural autonomy against a state which has consistently implemented policy to erase, assimilate and silence them.

The welfare and development discourse establishes a theoretical foundation on which our basic human needs and freedoms can allegedly be met. However, it is a precarious business when well-intentioned humanitarian projects are conflated with myths of late-capitalism about what it means to be a self-realised human. The widespread acceptance of neoliberalism further complicates the social and political landscape, making it increasingly easy to silence those who have an alternative perspective, or who have diminished influence over the market.

Questions of community organising and the exchange of resources ought to ignite rich, nuanced and creative discussions (see Yunkaporta, 2019). Meanwhile, neoliberalism masquerades as the only sensible solution to community organising. Culture and community are dynamic and continually evolving. McConvell (2018) attests that Aboriginal Australians have, "been on the move, creating new solutions to problems of social organisation" (p. 2; see also Yunkaporta, 2019). Because of this active and ongoing engagement, the perspectives of Indigenous peoples present a greater threat to the dominant hegemonic paradigm. Indigenous people report that they more clearly perceive the metanarratives of capitalism and colonialism as ludicrous contortions transplanted from a strange and unfeeling west (Graham, 2008; Habibis et al., 2016; Kwaymullina, 2005).

Deconstructing Economics: Value and Capital

The ethic of imperial colonialism which has dominated Australia's recent history has in turn contributed to assimilationist policies, cultural ignorance and an inability to engage meaningfully with those whose lands we occupy. As Graeber points out, bureaucratic solutions alone are unlikely to resolve entrenched social welfare issues (Graeber, 2015). This is especially true when welfare issues are produced by intergenerational trauma and crimes committed by the very same protectionist bureaucracies (See Eckermann et al., 2010).

Dominator culture often acts as if economic transformation precedes happiness, self-actualisation and healing. Paradoxically, the economic model which seeks to subsume Indigenous Australians into its labour-market, threatens our natural heritage and Indigenous sense of identity, which is intimately connected with the living land (Kwaymullina, 2005). Gunditjmara woman and Victorian Treaty Advancement Commissioner, Jill Gallagher captures the paradox inherent in contemporary Indigenous welfare, contending that Aboriginal people are angry "because we see that our birthright has produced so much wealth for so many, but only a trickle has reached our communities" (Gallagher, 2018, p. 104). Furthermore, activists have drawn attention to the unpaid labour of Aboriginal people throughout the 19th and 20th centuries (Teo, 2005; Thornton & Luker, 2009). These stolen wages have magnified the economic disadvantage which is experienced by Indigenous Australians today.

Harvey (2017) describes capital as seeking to subsume all aspects of personal and domestic life. He explains the field of economics as having achieved "the status of an orthodoxy, a closed body of supposedly rational knowledge – a true science – to which no one else is admitted except on state and corporate business" (p. xiii). Despite the orthodoxy of economic solutions and their general acceptance amongst workers and the political elite,

recent interviews with Indigenous Australians revealed an overwhelming rejection of the "White Australian neo-liberal deal of individual advancement through economic pathways of employment and hyper-consumption" (Habibis, et al., 2016, p. 57). Rather, participants explicitly pointed out that "a lifetime of hard work" in exchange for material wealth and social status "is both a false promise and one which is fundamentally irrational and unbalanced" (Habibis et al., 2016, p. 63).

Kombumerri Elder and academic, Mary Graham, similarly notes that in Aboriginal culture, "one does not need work, money or possessions to justify one's existence; in fact there is no notion of having to justify one's existence at all" (Graham, 2008, p. 187). These perspectives provoke a stark reminder of fundamental differences between cultures on these same lands that Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians collectively call home. They invigorate an impetus to further examine hegemonic categorisations of individualism and success - and the assumptions that we make on behalf of others, regarding what constitutes a meaningful and connected human life.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike have been oppressed by hegemonic ideologies and institutions, the former through cultural, structural, epistemic and physical violence; the latter through a rejection of the felt and experiential world; desecration of the peasantry; imprisonment in industry; through a numbing of the senses; and the stripping of humanity that occurs when one is used as an instrument of oppression (See Freire, 1970). While many white Australians and allies to Aboriginal people want to be a part of transforming Australian society through reconciliation, Graham emphasises a need for white Australians to understand the metaphysical origins of money (Graham, 2008). She argues that deconstructing economics may demystify some of the reverence it holds over peoples' lives, resulting in a greater respect for what is naturally occurring and that which can be felt and experienced in the physical world. Ambelin Kwaymullina asks us:

> what is the basis
> for the Settler claim of belonging
> to Indigenous lands
> waters
> skies?
>
> Where are the Settler stories
> of relationships?
> The ones that tell of how Settlers
> have respected Indigenous sovereignties
> have walked humbly among Indigenous peoples
> have respected Indigenous knowledges
> and learned
> how to hold up the connections
> that are the world
>
> And if there are no such Settler stories
> or if there are not enough
> then what are the pathways
> By which such tales can be created?
> (Kwaymullina, 2020, p. 11)

Conclusion

Welfare has the potential to damage people's ways of life in multiple ways (Leonard, 1997). The humiliation ranges from working for less than minimum wage walking long distances to fulfil "appropriate employment" to being an *initiated lore man* who is told that he is "unskilled", or being denied initiation and cultural knowledge altogether, due to colonial violence and cultural genocide. While the individual consequences of contemporary welfare policy are many, it is necessary to recall that each of these struggles are due to common structural causes. By becoming cognisant of the historical precedents of contemporary welfare policy, we may liberate ourselves from making the same ontologically violent mistakes of the past. Through demystifying the economy (Graham, 2008), we may free ourselves to engage meaningfully with the natural world, its resources and each other.

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Chapter 4

Development and Clinical Volunteerism in Africa

Naomi Arnold

Abstract

"Voluntourist" organisations assist universities and groups with planning increasingly popular international clinical placements for students, doctors and health professionals. These organisers claim that clinical placements contribute to the development of hosting communities. Many researchers have examined the benefits and problems associated with clinical volunteerism from the perspective of the volunteer. However, less attention has been given to the experiences and views of those in hosting communities.

This essay will use clinical volunteerism in Africa as a case study for examining the theoretical and philosophical assumptions used to justify international volunteerism, as well as provide a critical analysis of its impact on hosting staff and communities. This essay argues that despite organisers promoting the importance of clinical volunteerism in international development, hosting staff in African health settings report numerous concerns and alarming consequences. A review of the literature unearths accounts from African healthcare staff who share serious, negative experiences in their accounts of foreign volunteers, particularly those who attend short-term placements.

Although volunteers may benefit from international placements and believe that their work aids international development, their impact on the host staff, patients and communities can be downright dangerous.

Introduction

Universities, training organisations and other groups often engage "voluntourist" organisations to assist with securing and planning international clinical placements for their students (McCall & Iltis, 2014). Organisers claim that such volunteer placements positively contribute to international development in hosting communities (Sullivan, 2017). Many researchers have examined the benefits and problems experienced by volunteers while undertaking international clinical placements, however, less research has explored the experiences and perspectives of the hosting staff and communities (Lough et al., 2018).

This essay will examine clinical volunteerism from the perspective of hosting staff and communities in Africa. I will begin by defining clinical volunteerism followed by a brief summary of its history. I will then identify some of the theoretical and philosophical assumptions used to justify the value of clinical volunteerism and its connection to international development discourse. Finally, I will provide a critical analysis of the reported impact of clinical volunteerism on hosting communities through a literature review of projects in Africa. In doing so, it will become clear that although volunteers might experience a number of benefits to undertaking international volunteer placements, hosting staff and communities often experience significant issues and harmful consequences.

Background

Defining Clinical Volunteerism

Medical and health professional schools and organisations often promote global volunteer opportunities (Martiniuk et al, 2012). Students, doctors and health professionals frequently express interest in international placements (Bezruchka, 2000; Crane, 2011). Due to popular demand, organisations specialising in "voluntourism" are engaged to organise volunteer placements (McCall & Iltis, 2014). Clinical (including medical and health professional) volunteerism is therefore sometimes called "clinical tourism" and discussed in the broader context of "voluntourism" (McCall & Iltis., 2014).

"Voluntourism" refers to individuals or "tourists" participating in organised global volunteer activities (Wearing, 2001). Clinical volunteerism involves students or practitioners (across varying fields) from "rich" countries undertaking generally short-term overseas work in the healthcare settings of "poor" countries (Bezruchka, 2000). Volunteers may not self-identify as "tourists", instead claiming they volunteer to alleviate poverty and/or assist with international development. However, organisers often partner with tourist companies to offer placements and expand the volunteer experience (Sullivan, 2017).

History of Clinical Volunteerism

It is challenging to precisely pinpoint when clinical volunteerism began. With the birth of non-government and government organisations in the 1960s, doctors and nurses were sent to "third world" countries to apply western medicine in areas that reportedly lacked "qualified" health staff (Bauer, 2017). Views on clinical volunteerism have shifted and evolved since then, with ethical concerns and criticisms emerging in the late 1990s (Bauer, 2017).

Such criticism reportedly surprised those who believed volunteerism was a noble and well-intentioned effort to assist sick and injured "poor" people (Bauer, 2017). Despite

growing concerns, international volunteerism increased in popularity (Sullivan, 2017). Many universities continued to develop and promote global volunteer placements, programs and excursions (Sullivan, 2018). Unable to meet the demand, universities partnered with (or outsourced to) tourist companies or Volunteer Placement Organisations (VPOs) (Sullivan, 2017).

Clinical Volunteerism and the African Context

Clinical volunteer locations are often popular tourist destinations and former colonies (Sullivan, 2018). In Africa, favoured locations include South Africa, Ghana and Tanzania. Tanzania, for example, received independence in 1961, previously having been under British colonial rule (Hervik, 2018). The first Tanzanian president post-independence, Julius Nyerere, initiated "Ujamaa" or "African Socialism" (Hervik, 2018). The liberalisation of the Tanzanian economy reportedly occurred at the end of "Ujamaa", opening the region up to become an international tourist market (Hervik, 2018). Tourism has since increasingly become one of the biggest foreign exchange earners in Tanzania (Hervik, 2018).

An example of a popular volunteer location in Tanzania is Arusha - a tourist hub where vacationers join safaris, depart for Mount Kilimanjaro and board planes to Zanzibar (Hervik, 2018). Tanzanian staff report volunteers first arrived in Arusha in 2007 (Sullivan, 2018). Sullivan (2018, p.313), who studies clinical volunteerism in Arusha, claims (in one season) one hospital facility hosted under 30 foreign volunteers in 2008, 100 by 2013, and over 200 by 2015. Sullivan (2018, p.313) reports this is typical as most health facilities host volunteers from multiple VPOs. At least 20 VPOs were operating in Arusha in 2017, and given the popularity of the destination, more companies are reportedly arriving to scout prospective placements each year (Sullivan, 2018).

Theoretical and Philosophical Assumptions

Many of the theoretical and philosophical assumptions used to justify international volunteerism echo and intertwine with international development rhetoric, assumptions and justifications. Some of the theoretical and philosophical assumptions used to justify the value of clinical volunteerism in Africa are summarised below.

Social Responsibility

Similar to international development rhetoric, the concept of "social responsibility" is often emphasised in promoting clinical volunteerism (McCall & Iltis, 2014). "Social responsibility" implies one has a moral responsibility to contribute to the broader community (Snyder et al., 2011). In health contexts, this involves practitioners not just assisting individual patients but also the global community (Snyder et al., 2011). Many students and practitioners therefore choose to participate in international volunteerism out of a sense of "social responsibility" - believing they will assist "vulnerable" communities in "developing" countries and contribute to reducing global health inequities (Snyder et al., 2011).

International Development and the "Other" Rhetoric

The stereotypes of Africa and its people that are commonly used in international development discourse are also employed to promote clinical volunteerism (McLennon, 2014). A "Third

World other" and an "us and them" rhetoric is prolific. Images and anecdotes narrate a vulnerable, suffering and sick Africa, incapable of escaping poverty and disease (Friedus, 2017; Sullivan, 2018). Potential volunteers are encouraged to view themselves as "lucky" and those in placement areas as "unlucky" and in need of outside intervention, aid and international development to "save" them (McLennon, 2014).

"Making a Difference" in International Development

Phrases like "make a difference" are used to promote volunteerism and international development initiatives in Africa (Sullivan, 2017). It is assumed that volunteers – regardless of their skills, experience, language competency and training – will positively impact patients and hosting communities (Sullivan, 2018). It is also assumed they will indirectly "make a difference" by influencing local staff and triggering a "domino effect" in the region beyond the duration of their placement (Hervik, 2018). The phrase "make a difference" is also used alongside international development buzzwords like "empowerment" and "community development" to promote an assumed significant and long-lasting benefit (Hervik, 2018).

By exaggerating impact potential, organisers arguably encourage volunteers to assume an overestimated sense of importance (Hervik, 2018). Volunteers arrive in Africa thinking hosts will welcome and praise them for their international development efforts and perhaps well-intentioned volunteerism (Hervik, 2018). They also assume their abilities surpass those of hosting staff, often positioning themselves as "experts" and "superior", even when they have limited training and experience (Garrison, 2015). Volunteers thereby adopt "paternalistic" behaviours rooted in international development rhetoric that romanticise poverty and their ability to "make a difference" to "helpless" and "poverty-stricken" Africans (Garrison, 2015).

Colonialist Ideologies

Researchers, including Tanzanian scholar Issa Shivji, note problematic postcolonial echoes within volunteerism (Hervik, 2018; McLennon, 2014; Shivji, 2007). They argue clinical volunteerism is built on the structures of colonialism and imperialism, benefiting western and neoliberal interests instead of addressing the root causes of inequity and poverty (McLennon, 2014). Medical volunteerism is particularly problematic, due to placements often occurring in the healthcare settings of former colonies and a historical relationship between imperialism and biomedicine (Sullivan, 2018). Sullivan argues:

> Biomedicine's close ties to imperialism enable it to remain conceptually, if unconsciously, tethered to notions of whiteness, where volunteers from the global North conceptualise whiteness as an 'unspoken norm', and Africanness as a deviation from this norm. (2018, p.312)

Sullivan's (2018) studies in Tanzania unearthed two prevalent postcolonial development tropes in the marketing, narratives and practices of clinical volunteerism. First, volunteers framed health professionals through "global racialized hierarchies" wherein local Black professionals must prove their expertise and professional status, but volunteers (regardless of experience level) had assumed expertise by virtue of being white (Sullivan, 2018). Second, hosting communities and patients were framed as impoverished "suffering strangers" thus justifying volunteers' low level of training as "good enough" despite it not being so in their home countries (Sullivan, 2018). Sullivan summarises: "volunteers,

regardless of skill level, train Tanzanian communities and health professionals about Tanzania's problems, despite lacking language and contextual skills" (2018, p. 315).

Such narratives arguably reinforce international development rhetoric that Cole (2012) labels the "White Savior Industrial Complex". The White Savior Industrial Complex is where privileged white people adopt the role of "savior", assume they "make a difference", and in the case of volunteerism arrive in Africa on a mission to "save" people and their communities (Sullivan, 2017). In doing so, volunteers arguably uphold an underlying philosophy that fixates the white volunteer as "the hero", reinforcing problematic stereotypes and behaviours that align with paternalism and neo-colonialism (Garrison, 2015).

A Critical Analysis of Clinical Volunteerism

Critical analyses on the impact of clinical volunteerism primarily focus on the experience of volunteers rather than the experience of hosting communities (Lasker, 2016). Reports from hosting staff in Africa are provided below.

Burdensome

Volunteerism can burden host communities and contribute to wasted resources (McCall & Iltis., 2014). Hosting staff reference problems such as the amount of time, attention and expenditure volunteers place on them and their communities (Hervik, 2018). Sullivan (2017) reports Tanzanian hosting staff were not compensated for having to translate for, assist, teach and supervise volunteers. Hosts felt they had an already heavy workload, resource shortages and overwhelming patient needs, so assisting inadequately skilled volunteers was an additional burden (Sullivan, 2017).

Lasker's (2016) research in Ghana and Rwanda also found hosting volunteers involved significant preparation and administration. A Ghanian worker told Lasker (2016), "I've not seen the contribution. They only waste our time, especially my time" (p. 147). In Rwanda, a hosting professional said:

> Not only does it require time and effort prior to the arrival of volunteers, but while they are in the Village, much of my time is spent tending to their needs and activities rather than devoting time to the Village itself and its people and activities (Lasker, 2016, p. 147).

Furthermore, Laleman et al.'s (2007) research in sub-Saharan Africa found a consensus among hosts that choosing foreign volunteers over local staff was financially burdensome. Hosts said it would be more cost-effective to recruit unemployed health workers in their own country. They estimated ten local junior health workers could be hired for the cost of one foreign expatriate (Laleman, 2007). They also argued it was paradoxical that many African doctors and nurses were recruited to work overseas and felt this was more important to address than recruiting international volunteers (Laleman, 2007).

Inexperienced

Volunteers generally have no experience working in international contexts and limited clinical experience, skills and training (McLennon, 2014). International placements are therefore highly regarded for professional development purposes, enabling volunteers to

build their resume, skills and experience. However, this inexperience can be a liability to hosting communities (McLennon, 2014).

Tanzanian hosts claim volunteers overestimate their skills and abilities (Sullivan, 2018). Volunteers find themselves performing procedures that due to their inexperience would be "illegal" at home (White & Cauley, 2006). Sullivan reported that Tanzanian health staff were concerned about the consequences of this lack of experience. For example, one doctor is quoted as saying:

> [Volunteers] who have studied biology come to practice in the hospital, and they don't know anything! I don't know what criteria they [foreign institutions] are using for practicing in a hospital just by knowing biology alone, which we here – we study biology in secondary school, and you still can't come and do anything in a hospital with just that! (2018, p. 317)

Sullivan concludes "hosting staff were right to be concerned" (2018, p. 317). When interviewing inexperienced volunteers, they would boast of delivering babies, reading x-rays, and encouraging each other to practice procedures for the first time without supervision. Despite being instructed to "observe only" (as per their liability insurance), volunteers would dismiss trained Tanzanian health professionals to practice on their own (Sullivan, 2018). Hosting staff therefore "viewed volunteers' enthusiasm with suspicion" and were "concerned about violations to patients' rights and safety" (Sullivan, 2018, p. 317).

Similar results were found in Laleman et al.'s (2007) research in sub-Saharan Africa. Local staff reported volunteers were generally junior, inexperienced, ill-prepared and had insufficient technical skills, knowledge and training. They also reportedly undervalued local staff knowledge and experience, held different values and norms, lacked cultural sensitivity and awareness, and experienced cultural and language barriers (Laleman et al., 2007).

Lack of Cultural Awareness

Volunteers generally speak English, rely on translators, and have limited cultural, political and social awareness (McCall & Iltis, 2014; McLennon, 2014). This can lead to miscommunication, misunderstandings, mistrust, misdiagnosis and mishaps that impact hosting staff and patients (McCall & Iltis, 2014; McLennon, 2014). Hosts claim volunteers sometimes appear unable or unwilling to understand their culture, politics and preferences, refusing to fit within existing systems and instead creating new systems (Laleman et al., 2007). For example, in Lasker's research, he quotes Ghanian staff as saying:

> They don't understand our system, especially the white ladies who come here. When they come here there are systems here, so you must understand each department and what he does and when he does and how he does it. So they come here, they didn't normally understand us…
> I would say the language, how they communicate, how they relate with us. They don't understand us. (2016, p. 122-123).

Lasker (2016) discovered similar themes while interviewing Namibian hosts. Concerns were raised regarding volunteers' sense of superiority, lack of cultural understanding, and attempts to enforce their opinions and methods (Lasker, 2016). Local practitioners reported volunteers would attempt to apply western concepts and standards of medicine and care in contexts where they were not relevant or possible (Lasker, 2016).

Disrespectful to Hosting Staff and Communities

Volunteers reportedly disrespect and disobey local staff, health setting rules and regulations, and VPO guidelines (Hervik, 2018; Lasker, 2016; Lough et al., 2018). Tanzanian staff claim volunteers directly lie, disobey rules, ignore advice and dismiss attempts to be supervised (Sullivan, 2018). Sullivan shares:

> Volunteers[’] self-perceptions as representatives of a ‘modern’ medicine back home, coupled with constructed postcolonial racialised imaginaries of Tanzanians as ‘waste men’ or ‘suffering strangers’ and therefore ‘other’ justified skirting local authority which volunteers felt should not apply to them (2018, p. 318).

Lasker’s (2016) research in Ghana revealed similar reports. Hosts claimed volunteers were often “know-it-alls”, disrespectful, autocratic, arrogant and bossy. For example, Ghanaian practitioners shared:

> When they come, they look down upon the black people, they think we are fools and monkeys so they do anything anyhow…
> They don’t take our advice, or if you tell them something, they think they know better than us and that is not good…
> What they say is final. You just have to take it. That’s what I don’t like about them. (Lasker, 2016, p. 122-123).

Harmful to Patients

Volunteers reportedly overestimate their positive impact and underestimate the harm they cause (Lasker, 2016; Wang, 2018). They believe they are more capable than local practitioners and feel “doing something” is better than “doing nothing” (McCall & Iltis, 2014). In Tanzania, for example, Sullivan (2018) found volunteers were dishonest about their qualifications, practiced procedures beyond their skill-level, violated best practice, endangered the lives and health of patients, and at times even initiated activities resulting in patient deaths. Even licensed doctors were known to cause irreparable harm performing procedures they were unfamiliar with, like fistula repairs (Sullivan, 2017).

Ineffective Over Short-Term

Hosting staff were generally more critical of short-term volunteers than long-term volunteers (Lasker, 2016). In Niger, where volunteers attend surgical “camps”, Lasker found hosts felt that volunteers needed to stay longer to be effective. When interviewing physicians from sub-Saharan Africa, Lasker also found they were critical of short-term volunteers but viewed those who stayed long-term in “a spirit of partnership and mutual respect” positively (2016, p. 128).

Short-term volunteers are reportedly more likely to:

- be culturally and professionally unprepared, inexperienced, unskilled and disrespectful to locals;
- be interested in placements as a means to travel, complete tourist activities, gain academic credit, bolster resumes and meet egocentric motivations;
- spend minimal time in clinics, leave for tourist activities, exploit community members, and not bring sustainable benefit to communities;

- believe VPO "developmentalising" marketing language concerning their role in "making a difference" and "community development", overestimating their significance and impact; and
- be "cheap", demand local fares, haggle for prices, and spend less than mainstream tourists (Hervik, 2018; McLennon, 2014; Snyder et al., 2011; Wang, 2018; White & Cauley, 2006).

Whereas, long-term volunteers are more likely to be:

- hard working and motivated;
- appropriately qualified, trained and experienced;
- willing to undergo language and local training;
- living and working in remote or difficult conditions for extended periods; and
- able to attain resources (e.g., funds, drugs, equipment), fit within existing structures, improve local working conditions and assist community capacity building (Laleman, 2007).

Conclusion

Despite placement organisers and sponsors promoting the importance of clinical volunteerism in international development, hosting staff in African health settings report numerous concerns and alarming consequences. Although volunteers reportedly experience significant benefits from placements, their impact on hosting staff, patients and communities is less beneficial. It would seem that many of the theoretical and philosophical assumptions used to justify and promote international development are also employed to encourage international volunteerism, often without critical examination or exploration of the damage and harm such efforts can cause in hosting communities.

It is interesting to note that there were some positive reports from hosting staff concerning the impact of experienced long-term volunteers in their region. Although they were very critical of those undertaking short-term placements, there was reported positive feedback regarding long-term volunteers who approached their placements with "a spirit of partnership and mutual respect" (Lasker, 2016). Further research examining the impact of long-term volunteers' placements filled by experienced and qualified clinical health professionals would be insightful and useful to determining any merit in continued international development efforts through clinical volunteerism.

In conclusion, if volunteers truly wish to "make a difference…they will have to do the necessary work, over the long term, to address global inequalities head-on, taking seriously the systematic, racialised postcolonial systems on which those inequalities rely" (Sullivan, 2018, p. 320). If they do not, the research suggests that they will not only replicate and uphold damaging international development theoretical and philosophical assumptions, but will also likely trigger serious negative consequences and cause significant harm to the very communities they claim they wish to serve and assist.

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Chapter 5

Critical Analysis of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project

Emma D'Antoine

Abstract

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) diverts rainfall from the Orange-Senque River via a sequence of five proposed dams and tunnels which stretch over 200km. Funded by external elite stakeholders such as The World Bank, there has been little in the way of purposeful development for poor rural communities around the dam and has resulted in the upheaval of local communities and seen them moved onto less fertile land and into unfamiliar communities, causing both economic and social challenges. Communities living in the vicinity of the development area have suffered innumerable losses due to the dam project. The compensation scheme offered by the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) has not been sufficient to restore lives to their previous state. In fact, the majority of displaced villagers are worse off. Environmental and ecological consequences have been nothing short of drastic and the losses experienced by the highland communities have been further facilitated by environmental degradation. Social impacts have also been devastating, with worsening poverty, a sharp decrease in food security, an increase in serious diseases and marginalisation of communities. This essay provides a brief background of the project and the population affected by it and then explains the theoretical and philosophical justifications underlying its implementation. Both sociocultural and environmental impacts are investigated, where the experiences of sources close to the project are considered. I conclude that the LHWP has had a devastating impact not only on the rural population of the Lesotho Highlands, but also on the environment.

Introduction

Lesotho, landlocked entirely by South Africa, has a current population of 2.29 million, 99.7 percent of whom identify as Basotho (World Population Review, 2019). Population in the highlands is sparse in comparison to the rest of the country. Hitchcock (2012) explains that the Basotho people typically live a self-sufficient agrarian lifestyle in this remote region. The communities that live here have always relied on the land to provide them with both food and medicine. Communities in rural areas also rely on the growing and selling of fruit and vegetables, herbs and medicinal plants to help support their livelihoods. The country has mountainous regions that see an average of 1000 millimetres of rainfall annually. The Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), a multi-dam construction with several phases and, as of 2011, one of the five most extensive construction projects in the world (Braun, 2011; International Rivers, 2005), was implemented in an attempt to utilise the abundance of the natural water resources, termed "white gold" (Braun, 2011, p. 284), ultimately transferring it to the industrial Gauteng Province in South Africa. The Katse Dam was completed in 2004 in Phase 1A of the LHWP, which Thamae and Pottinger (2006) and Keketso (2003) state negatively affected approximately 27,000 people. In phase 1B in 2004, the Mohale dam displaced 325 households. Phase II is set to commence in 2023, with the construction of the 163.5-metre-high Polihali dam (Barnes, 2019). While both the South African and Lesotho governments manage the project, its funding comes from the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the Development Bank of South Africa and the European Development Fund, as well as several European banks (Keketso, 2003). Although the project is often credited as a monumental success within economic, technological and scientific discourse, there has been scant consideration of the effects the project has had on the local community. While those with vested interests have benefitted, others have not been so fortunate. Displacement and poverty have been commonplace experiences for those living close to the development site. Furthermore, stress placed on the environment has resulted in a resource shortfall, leaving inhabitants battling for survival and fuelling armed conflict.

Theoretical and Philosophical Assumptions Justifying the Project

The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) states that the project, completed in phases, aims to deliver water to the South African province of Gauteng. In addition, Lesotho would be provided with hydroelectricity. The LHDA website presents the project as a mutually beneficial solution for both countries. The project is described as "one of the world's most successful regional water resources management schemes; a partnership between the governments of South Africa and Lesotho initiated in the 1980s for the mutual benefit of the two countries" (International Water Power and Damn Construction, 2018). The LDHA states that it put forward several plans of action, which purportedly aimed to combat social and environmental issues brought about by the LHWP. The compensation policy, which includes a resettlement plan, was developed in accordance with the research findings of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The action plan also considered the restoration of income, the environment and public health. The LDHA would compensate all villagers affected by the construction process and flooding, whereby living standards would not be of poorer quality than before the project began. A Treaty was signed by both Lesotho's

and South Africa's governments in 1986, which set out the LDHA's intentions to implement steps to make certain that those affected by consequences resulting from the project would not be subjected to a deterioration in quality of life. The agreement additionally declared that those who are displaced by the construction of the dam would not undergo a reduction in income or standard of living.

Braun (2011) rightly points out the irony of sizable development projects in the Global South as a means of reducing poverty. The investment required for such large-scale constructions relies on global institutions, particularly the World Bank. Large-scale development is commonly justified through what Rousselot calls the "win-win narrative" (2016, p. 2), which maintains the promise of lucrative economical remuneration. Furthermore, the neoliberal ideology of international institutions such as the World Bank promotes extensive construction projects as an opportunity to utilise the local workforce (Braun, 2011). Nandy (2004) finds fault with the definition of development, and what it means to be "developed" within the western context of the term. Hegemonic frameworks assume that "undeveloped" nations must show a lack of progression, thus implying a state of inferiority. Rousselot (2016) further criticises international development narratives for defining Lesotho, and in particular the highlands, as marginalised undeveloped communities restricted by traditions. Moreover, the only acknowledged wealth of Lesotho has been its vast natural resources, consequently forming the foundation for which the justification for their extraction and exploitation was built. The ideology of a partnership between two countries, both of which benefit as much as the other, was a persuasive concept proposed by the World Bank.

Impact of the Project on People's Lives, their Agency and Environment

Manwa (2014) points out that Lesotho has just over half (50.1%) of its population existing below the poverty line and is dependent entirely on South Africa. What is particularly noteworthy is that the poorest communities live in the highlands of Lesotho, where the LHWP has been implemented. Braun (2011) warns that it is not uncommon for dam construction projects to have a significant impact on the environmental, social and cultural lives of communities living close by. This is particularly evident in rural areas. Under the Treaty, all agents involved in the project pledged to take steps to secure the current environmental quality of the area. This was to be done at all levels, from implementation of the project to its upkeep. The International Rivers organisation (2005) tells a different story: social and environmental impacts are among the most serious issues caused by the construction of the dams.

Impacts on Farming Practices, Roads and Soil

As Mwangi (2008) explains, Lesotho already faces environmental challenges through its steep sloping landscape and fragile soil formation. Hitchcock (2012) starkly explains that only 11% of Lesotho has arable land. Moreover, Lesotho's soil is frequently of poor quality and easily eroded, most notably apparent in the lowland ravines and rocky mountain regions. To put the scale of land erosion into perspective, Mwangi (2008) explains that 3.6 million tonnes per year is lost through erosion alone due to poor soil quality and a shortage of fertile and cultivatable land. As Mwangi (2008) stresses, the LHWP further impacts on the already

high amount of soil erosion in the Lesotho highlands. Dam construction has also impacted the accessibility of local roads and has facilitated the decrease in arable land, forcing workers to farm in areas with even lower quality soil. As more and more people become displaced, the areas they are able to cultivate become less suitable for farming, such as steep hillsides and gullies. Soil erosion and overgrazing increase when farmers are forced onto lands which are already unsuited to growing crops. The roads around the project have inadequate drainage which results in the widening of gullies, further adding to deterioration of land (Mwangi, 2008). Other parts of the highlands have had land destroyed from materials left over from road construction, which are too large to be moved or farmed around (Hoover, 2001). Phase 1A of the project swallowed approximately 3925 hectares of both grazing and arable farmland and Phase 1B saw 2210 hectares of land disappear, despite the area providing more superior soil than the rest of the region (Mwangi, 2008).

Social and Economic Impacts

Environmental stressors are linked to violence, particularly armed conflict, where disputes from lack of natural resources have spilled over from a struggle for survival. Ryan (2015) explores the violence that stems from development, particularly large projects such as the LHWP, and concludes that there has been little regard for displaced populations of the Lesotho Highlands. The project has fostered conditions conducive in maintaining civil conflict. Furthermore, there are disparities in the distribution of water to areas which are rich and predominantly white, compared to areas which are poor and predominantly inhabited by black indigenous populations. The area of South Africa which the LHWP provides water to is home to half the white South African population. Black indigenous civilians living in rural communities are still reliant on river water and poorly-maintained communal taps (Ryan, 2015). The discrepancy in the distribution of Lesotho's water leads me to draw parallels with apartheid-era policies. These inconsistencies have furthered racial tensions and socioeconomic inequalities in both Lesotho and South Africa. Furthermore, Jammot (2016) states those who live in Katse stress that they have gained little from the sale of Lesotho's water. Farmer Mohlakoane Molise, who is angered by the daily sight of the Katse dam, expresses his frustration that the water in the dam could be used to water crops during times of drought. In past harvests, Mr. Molise's efforts yielded around twelve large sacks of maize crops, yet in 2016, he saw a yield of just two sacks. Farmers in Lesotho have had their land flooded in order to build the dam and now face the challenge of eking a living from water-soaked fields. The trees have disappeared, the farmland for livestock is of poor quality and crops are inadequate. Food insecurity has resulted from lack of rainfall, leaving over a quarter of Lesotho's population in crisis and in need of urgent assistance (England, 2016). The change in climate has resulted in severe drought, where decent rains were last seen in 2013, resulting in failed crops. Further decreases in rainfall are predicted by the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. When rain does fall, it is estimated to be in shorter, more extreme patterns, essentially causing even more erosion of topsoil (Kings, 2016). Tsenyeho Sehole, who trained as a teacher, says that while the construction of the dam initially brought jobs to the area, the employment is now gone and the community is forbidden from using the water supply, which is intended solely for South Africa. Prior to the dam being built, the river was a source of food, explains Tsenyeho's grandfather Ramatseliso. He discloses that any attempt to access the dam for water will result in arrest. The same punishment applies for accessing the river for fish, which are now exported to Japan (Thamae

& Pottinger, 2006). As Mowforth (2014) notes, the right to access water and sanitation is set out in the binding International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights under Article 11. However, the community around the Katse dam is seemingly not afforded this right.

Impacts on Biodiversity and the Ecosystem

Interestingly, Scudder (2006) claims that prior to the implementation of the LHWP, it had been surmised that no significant environmental complications existed. Furthermore, no research was conducted on possible soil erosion or excess sediment, which can be caused by improper land use and would be vital to consider for the project's long-term feasibility. Although there is an EIA for Phase 1B, it does not consider unresolved issues from Phase 1A. Yet, the environmental and ecological changes that have occurred downstream have been devastating for the communities that live there. Since the majority of the river's water beneath the dam is diverted, there has been a considerable impact on downstream habitats, resulting in a decreasing number of fish and animal species. A loss of wetlands habitat has also impacted ecosystems to the point where certain fish species have become endangered and rare plant and bird species have been displaced. During large surges into the dam, tunnels had been opened to decrease water levels, resulting in drowning deaths of both people and animals. Without adequate warning, the influx causes the collapse of bridges and downriver flooding which have both resulted in fatalities. Furthermore, communities have endured their homes crumbling and collapsing, as well as threats of earthquakes (Keketso, 2003). What is further noteworthy is that the nearest village to the Katse Dam was not protected from the water surges by fencing (Manwa, 2014).

It is evident then that the biodiversity of the area has been seriously affected by the implementation of the LHWP. The EIA had already warned that a particular species of frog would be lost from the area permanently (International Rivers, 2005). It also warned that water quality downstream of the dam would be poorer, with lower levels of oxygen and micronutrients, as well as a variation in the temperature of the water. The loss of wetlands downstream has resulted in a negative impact on the flora and fauna of the region, meaning that firewood and plants for medicinal purposes have become scarce. The loss of natural resources for basic living requirements severely affects poorer households due to their lack of access to basic health facilities. Moreover, native plants and grasses have been replaced by invasive species that are unable to be utilised as food or medicine. Mwangi (2008) notes that the loss of indigenous plants has a multidimension effect on the lives of the rural poor. Likewise, food for livestock becomes limited in not only quantity but also quality, affecting their production capability. Consequently, there is a further reduction in household income, compounding the effects of poverty that loss of land has brought about. A vicious cycle is thus created, where poverty is both the cause and the effect of environmental and ecological deterioration. Mwangi (2008) explains that although Lesotho's highland communities have been severely impacted by the LHWP, reparation has not been made a priority mainly due to the unwillingness of those with access to natural resources, namely elite politicians, to shape political discourse and policy to include environmental degradation as an urgent issue.

The LHWP has disrupted existing social and familial structures and in some cases physically split families apart due to relocation. Deep-rooted social ties have been cut when villagers are resettled within completely different communities, which itself brings further social issues. Communities who accommodate new members may not necessarily welcome

them. Thamae (2006) notes the difficulties of the Matala community, who were resettled into a new community that failed to understand their cultural practices. In addition, they were forbidden from carrying out vital burial customs, causing significant anguish. Even with prior advice from the Transformation Resource Centre (TRC), a non-government organisation working to empower marginalised communities in Lesotho, the LDHA ignored the advice and created friction between the two communities. The relocated Matala people encountered unfavourable repercussions for ignoring the customs of the host community. Reservoirs between dams have made previously accessible areas out of reach, in effect raising barriers between communities, resulting in violence in some instances (Mwangi, 2007; Ryan, 2015). The highland communities near to the dam construction have suffered immense adversity. Communities have suffered from a loss of livelihood, loss of housing and have seen an introduction of previously uncommon diseases. Health issues have risen dramatically, with the introduction of 20,000 workers to the area creating a rise in AIDS cases, which has been easily spread through prostitution at the dam site. Coinciding with Thamae and Pottinger's (2006) report, Horta and Pottinger (2006) stated that Lesotho unfortunately had one of the highest rates of the disease in Africa. Once a remote region with mountain-dwelling communities, the highlands of Lesotho have been significantly altered by the influx of project workers. Large-scale construction projects are notorious for facilitating the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV and AIDS (Hitchcock, 2012). The dire economic and social position of women and girls in rural Lesotho, worsened by their loss of small farming plots and gardens, often sees them turn to prostitution out of desperation (Hitchcock, 2012).

Manwa (2014) found that the LHWP has significantly impacted the security and stability of the lives of those who live in the mountain areas of Lesotho. As an already delicate and vulnerable environment, Lesotho has suffered through the effects of natural and human actions. The project has had a devastating impact on ecological and human security, which in turn increases food insecurity (Mwangi, 2008). Not only is land tied to food security, but it is also a transferable asset to future generations. Without this, there is no stability for future generations. In stark contrast, compensation provided by the LHWP project would last only 50 years. Not only have the traditional owners of the land been subject to land dispossession, but the structure of the compensation scheme ensures that there is no reparation after either the plaintiff has died, or 50 years have passed. The Treaty between the Lesotho and South African governments proposed mitigation for any community member who experienced loss of housing, land or income due to the project, yet compensation is not transferable to future generations (Rousselot, 2016). This is risky short-term thinking, implemented without consideration for long-term food security. There have also been cases where compensation has not been received or it has been paid to the wrong person. It is not rare for a male relative to benefit when the male head of a household has died, leaving the widow and children bereft. In fact, villagers have stated that at times the brother of the deceased male has received the compensation package. In cases where there is no male relative, it is the responsibility of the village chief to sign for the release of the funds to women, keeping the control of the family's future security firmly in male hands (Braun, 2005). More recently, Braun (2010) described the mitigation scheme as "gendered" (p. 454), and women, who have been shown to grow better quality and more nutritious crops, have little opportunity to secure even a small amount of land. More to the point, Hitchcock (2012) emphasises, money does not replace access to the land the community had before displacement.

Conclusion

The 27,000 people who were affected by the construction of the Katse dam have either lost their homes, farmland or their access to use of common pasture. Of the 7,400 people impacted by the construction of the Mohale dam, those who lost their homes have waited years to be rehoused. Furthermore, many of these people have not recovered from loss of livelihood, despite attempts at reintroducing revenue through the LHWP. Sadly, the changes to Lesotho's rural environment are primarily a consequence of human actions, as dams in general have a destructive impact on the wildlife and ecology of rivers and streams. Additionally, large hydropower projects can exacerbate erosion, sedimentation, flooding and pollution, resulting in alterations to a river's water flow patterns, extinction of habitat and loss of ecological biodiversity. Such drastic alterations of the natural environment impact on communities through loss of land, mass displacement and food insecurity. Forced resettlement is socially and culturally harmful to those who existed peacefully prior to large-scale development projects. Resource extraction is directly connected to political and economic security, determined by power and accessibility. Further, environmental degradation and ecological scarcity can be directly linked to the consequences of extracting natural resource supplies. It would appear that crucial research into social and environmental effects of the project have been an eleventh-hour consideration at best. It could also be said that studies commencing so late in the project were merely conducted to secure the backing of the World Bank. While it is generally assumed that a development project will enhance the lives of those living in close proximity, often the reverse is in fact true. The top-down approach to the LHWP utilised and prioritised external stakeholders such as the World Bank and other external financial institutions, advisors and agencies to design and implement the project. This model of development focuses on the provision of the professional management of a development project, thus not enabling local communities to take control of their social, economic, cultural and environmental circumstances. The correlation between the decline in natural resources, such as water, and violence in the Global South is well established by researchers (Mwangi, 2007; Ryan, 2015) and widely acknowledged across many domains (Gleick & Iceland, 2018; International Rivers, 2005; Pacific Institute, 2018; World Resources Institute, 2019). Environmental pressures further encourage conflict between communities, exacerbate poverty and facilitate racial tensions. It goes without saying that the western notions of development should not be assumed to be superior to the profundity of local knowledge, the importance of which is highlighted by the social, environmental and personal tragedies local communities continually endure in the name of progress.

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Chapter 6

The Role of Neoliberalism in the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy Dam Project: Economic Benefit vs. Social and Environmental Consequences

Meg Gill

Abstract

Today, states and organisations do very little to oppose the market; the political is increasingly becoming erased in favour of capital. The majority of states do less to protect citizens because the dominant view today is that capital is the end goal (Membe, 2016). This acquiring of capital is most often achieved through "development". In Laos and the Lower Mekong Basin, the most visible form of development in this sense, is the increasing number of hydropower dams. The Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam was built by the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy Power Co., Ltd. (PNPC) and is one of more than 140 dams planned on the Mekong and its tributaries in Laos and Cambodia. The way this project has been planned and implemented illustrates how the neoliberal approach to economic development is dominant in this region, at the expense of the social and environmental rights of local people (IUCN, 2018; Save the Mekong, 2019). Hydropower dam construction is central to the Laos's national economic development plan, which envisages Laos gaining revenue by exporting hydropower (IUCN, 2018). The Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam will be the focus of this chapter. I argue that the emphasis on neoliberalism surrounding the building of this dam and its subsequent collapse contributed to human rights violations and illustrates the darker side of development and its impact on local lives and cultures.

Introduction

Locke once argued that, "God gave the world to the industrious and the rational" (1976, p. 34), and it is through this type thinking that neoliberalism has bloomed. By Locke's logic, it becomes acceptable to disregard human rights and the second article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) because if you are not using your property or land in a way that those in power consider "industrious", they will simply take it from you (Franco, et.al., 2015). This is a distinction that those with power choose to make in favour of generating capital, at the expense of many local communities (Gasper, 2014). According to Marx (2001), the separation of producers (workers) from the means of production is a necessary condition for surplus extraction. Profit by the capitalist class, and this division, further reinforces the reproduction of capital for those in power. This capitalist model has been implemented by the Laos Government's national economic development plan which relies heavily upon the export of hydropower to neighbouring countries, while many of its own people still lack access to electricity in local communities (Save the Mekong, 2019).

If we apply these economic theories to large hydroelectric projects, Fox argues that in order for them to make economic sense, water resources such as rivers and lakes in their natural state have to be regarded as having no monetary value (2000, p. 178). Thus, whatever results from their "development" has value; it is like turning garbage into gold (Rosenberg et al., 1995, p. 147). One such project, undertaken as part of this development plan, is the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy hydroelectric power plant. This dam was built by the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy Power Co., Ltd. (PNPC) as part of a joint-venture with the Government of Laos (Verdict Media, 2019; Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy Power Co., Ltd., 2019). The Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy hydroelectric power plant, while constructed within a socialist state, has been influenced heavily by capitalist thinking, which is evident by the project's prioritising economic benefits while marginalising the concerns voiced by Save the Mekong Coalition, and International Rivers Organisation, on behalf of local communities. Einbinder (2017) argues that a large part of this issue stems from the lack of accountability of corporations who often present development projects in a purely economic light; this causes an imbalance between the economic benefits and the social, cultural and environmental costs of development (Intralawan, et. al., 2018; Williams, 2019).

Oxfam – who are a part of the Save the Mekong Coalition – have argued that the Mekong River, while vital to the economic development of the countries it flows through, is also vital to the social, cultural and environmental lives of people in the region. It is more than just a power source; Save the Mekong state it is "home to the world's largest freshwater fishery, and is the second most bio-diverse river on the planet" (Oxfam, 2019). The PNPC coalition responsible for building the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam have proven their irresponsibility by separating the capital gains from the social and environmental impacts of this project. This development project, like many before it, has had far reaching ecological effects that have impacted both the livelihood and cultural base of the people who rely upon the Mekong River and its linked resources (Hirsch, 2002; p. 147; Save the Mekong, 2019).

Project History

The Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam project was one of more than 140 dams planned under Laos' national economic development plan, which had a goal of generating revenue through the export of hydropower and developing a capacity of 28,000 megawatts of power (IUCN, 2018). The Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy Hydroelectric Power Project was designed to have a capacity of 410 megawatts and to trap the water flowing from the Houay Makchanh, the Xe-Pian and the Xe-Namnoy rivers on the Bolaven Plateau in the Champasack Province; from there the water flowed to a hydropower plant at the base of the Plateau along the Province of Attapeu in Southern Laos ("Project in Brief," 2019). 90 percent of the power generated was to be exported to Thailand, with only the remaining 10 percent being made accessible to rural Laos through the local power grid (Lindsay, 2018).

The areas identified by PNPC as being directly affected by the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam project are the Attapeu Province, Paksong District, Champasak Province and Samakkhixay Districts (Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy Power Co., Ltd., n.d.). In the final report by PNPC (n.d.), they identify 17 villages that were directly impacted by this project with impacts ranging from total relocation of their villages to requirements for infrastructural assistance such as installation of irrigation to offset the impact of dams to local water supplies.

During the consultation process with PNPC, one of the issues raised included the need for translators, as communication was quite difficult due to the fact that the majority of project-affected people were ethnic minorities. In addition, there were concerns around the provision of health services, education, and impacts to livelihood, which were raised numerous times by communities both before and after relocation (Oxfam Australia, 2019; Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy Power Co., Ltd., n.d.). The rivers feeding into this dam are crucial sources of food and are vital to producing income from fisheries. Further, the construction of this dam threatened local food security, livelihoods and, by extension, the way of life of all communities within the project footprint (Hirsch, 2002; Intralawan, et.al, 2018; Oxfam, 2019). Because of these threats to livelihood, it is easy to see how dams like the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy Project impact on local environments.

The PNPC group secured a 27-year lease of the land which would begin once the project was completed. In return, the Government of Laos would receive a "fixed percentage of its gross operating revenues as royalties and to transfer the plant to the Government of Laos at the end of the concession period" (Xe-Pian Asia-Pacific, 2014, p. 2). In theory, PNPC and this project were to be key sources of capital and would be vital to the economic development of Laos. The agreement would set the precedent for all future debt financing development opportunities for Laos, but did not look into the social, cultural or environmental impacts of such a development deal.

Population and Impacts of the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy Dam

According to the World Bank (2001), the people living in Lao PDR, including the provinces that were relocated for the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam project, are considered to be living in "rural poverty" because they "live at the subsistence level" – however, it is important to remember that prior to the first resettlements, Indigenous peoples lived far more sustainably

than they did after relocation (Sisoumang, Wangwacharakul, & Limsombunchai, 2013; Lee, 2013; World Bank 2001). Indigenous peoples in this region had experienced minimal interference in their daily life from government and corporations and were self-reliant because of their longstanding relationship with the lands they lived on (Lee, 2013).

More often than not, resettlement for dam production in Laos PDR has resulted in community displacement, lack of access to natural resources like clean water, and impacts to food production that actually worsen the wellbeing of local communities (Fox, 2000; IRN, 1999; Lipton 2019). A further consequence of this is the weakening of their self-reliance and self-determination – the Laos Government has been so focused on strengthening their relationship with corporations building the dams, that they have uprooted the lives of the population in surrounding areas.

The development of the PNPC dam project has impacted social and cultural life in the Attapeu region drastically, because of the numbers of people being uprooted from their homelands. Before the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam project, most of this region was remote and isolated, with minimal access by roads. The population was primarily made up of small villages ranging in size from 40 – 300 households (Delang & Toro, 2011). Because of the isolation and reliance on natural resources and ecosystems, the Attapeu province was home to an incredibly diverse range of minority ethnic groups (non-Lao), making up at least sixty percent of the population (Fox, 2000).

While it is obvious that biological diversity is threatened by development of the PNPC dams, a commonly overlooked fact is that the ethnic diversity in these areas is also linked to local environments. By making environmental changes like the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam, the cultural survival of the many ethnicities is also directly impacted (Fox, 2000). Fox quoted a Cambodian fisheries expert who sums this up by saying, "people concentrate around wetlands and rivers for the fish, then they grow rice and work the land. These systems are linked together... if that link is cut, the ecosystem will be destroyed" (Touch Seang Tan in Fox, 2000, p. 178). Before relocation began, people could catch fish in the rivers and streams. They had access to forests that provided a variety of wild food, and they had space for cultivating a mix of necessities such as coffee, rice, vegetables and fruits. These crops were both environmentally and socially sustainable, promoting self-determination through self-reliance (IRN, 1999; Lee, 2013; Oxfam Australia 2019).

Unfortunately, like many other large-scale development projects, there was very little positive engagement or support provided to local communities (Hirsch, 2002). Existing water users were given minimal consideration, due to a lack of formal acknowledgment of their land rights and a lack of access to legal support (Oxfam, 2019; Seo & Rodriguez, 2012;). From 1996 to 2001, between two to three thousand of the vulnerable Nya Heun people were amongst the first to be removed from their lands along the Xe-Pian and Xe-Namnoy rivers, in preparation for construction (Lee, 2013). Two villages who refused to accept the initial resettlement packages reported intimidation from authorities (Lee, 2013). In an effort to coerce their compliance, the villages were stripped of their access to official supports for any infrastructure services (Lee, 2013). Fox (2000) argues that dam development projects are commonly used to facilitate the resettling of ethnic minorities away from upland areas and natural resources. Another example of which was the relocation of the Oye ethnic group who relied on land that was confiscated to be used as the project's access road, powerhouse and construction camp (Fox, 2000; IRN, 1999).

The initial disruption to social, cultural and economic life was caused by the relocation of people when construction began, and this was compounded when heavy rains caused the collapse of part of the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam. The collapse of the dam caused flash flooding, which destroyed multiple villages and this was then further exacerbated by prolonged flooding in the Attapeu region (UNESCO, 2018). When UNESCO completed their "Post Disaster Needs Assessment" in late 2018, they found that there was both tangible and intangible damage to cultural heritage throughout the region.

UNESCO (2018) found that the Oye people suffered cultural trauma because of the damage to their forests. Every Oye village had a designated sacred forest for traditional ceremonies, reflecting their deep cultural link to the natural environment, a link which was effectively severed. The Post Disaster Needs Assessment also warned of the potential for an increase in gender-based violence such as domestic violence and human trafficking as a result of the breakdown of community protection systems. This is made even more likely due to "overcrowding, unsecured camps with limited privacy for women or men" (UNESCO, 2018, p. 3).

The continued marginalisation of local ethnic groups has been illustrated by the offers of compensation worth around 50 percent of actual losses (Whong, 2019). PNPC have failed to provide sufficient compensation for property damage by setting excessively low compensation amounts and for those lucky enough to receive promises of compensation, it has been slow to materialise (Lipton, 2019; Whong, 2019). In the first year following the disaster, land-grabbing by foreign corporations has resulted in a shift of local agriculture away from the diversity that was previously present (Fox 2000; IRN, 2019; Lipton, 2019; Pollard, 2019).

Sadly, these living conditions do not have a foreseeable end, as the allowances and support provided by the Laos Government are inadequate and inconsistent (Barker, 2018; IRN, 2019; Oxfam, 2019). According to a statement by the Save the Mekong Coalition, "in the dam resettlement area, researchers witnessed people struggling to cope with a lack of access to sufficient food, water and land" (in Barker, 2018). The Lao Government could have chosen to compensate the affected residents with land rights, supporting local cultivation of essential resources. Instead, the land was passed to foreign companies for development, limiting the potential for local economic growth and undermining the self-reliance of local ethnic groups (IRN, 2019; Whong, 2019).

Reconstruction of the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam is already well underway, further showing how the economic benefit has been given far too much weight in comparison to the social and cultural impacts on local communities. With the commencement of additional dam projects in the region, it is unclear when living conditions in Attepeu will improve (Lipton, 2019).

Development and Narrative Surrounding the Project

Pfeifer argues that the underlying assumption driving all approaches to development is the tendency to construct distinct identities along a "development/underdevelopment polarity" (1996, p. 41). As a result of this perceived polarity, states will often enter into development plans like the one that governs the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam, in the hopes that it can trigger more capital and economic growth (Betts et. al., 2017; Pogge, 2016). With the Government

of Laos and PNPC blinded by the goal of "development" and economic growth, they failed to promote protection of the rights of indigenous populations (Olawuyi, 2015; Pogge, 2016). Olawuyi (2015) has argued that even when governments undertake development projects – like hydro-powered dams – to combat climate change, there is simply not enough emphasis put into addressing human rights concerns and the accompanying legal and institutional frameworks. As a result of this, we are seeing increasingly frequent cases of forced displacement due to infrastructure projects like the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam, when in reality, displacement should have been a last resort (Tripathi, 2017).

The building and operation of dams, like the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy, frequently involves forced displacement of local communities (Munzer, 2019; Tripathi, 2017). The narrative that has surfaced surrounding the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam is not unique in the way that it challenges the approach taken by the Government of Laos and its Thai and South Korean business partners. Oliver-Smith (2006) argues that the displacement of indigenous people is central to the increased emergence of social movements and non-government organisations (NGOs), which are challenging the dominant neoliberal policies of development present in many southern regions like that of Laos and its neighbouring states. De Wet (2006) also argues that central to the difficulties faced by local communities challenging these kind of development projects is a lack of appropriate information, making it difficult for indigenous people to fully assess the situation and act accordingly.

When infrastructure development occurs in this way, it is often called "land-grabbing" by NGOs, such as the Save the Mekong Coalition. Land-grabbing is often the same throughout the Southern Hemisphere: significant land changes which affect ecological systems and local communities equally (Seo Rodriguez, 2012). The Government of Laos has illustrated its willingness to participate in land-grabbing, through displacement of local communities and trading-off the value of economics vs ecological and social outcomes. This was part of the original development plan for the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam, as well as in numerous other projects in the region (Hirsch, 2001; Wild et.al., 2018). Aiken and Leigh (2015) argue that this is not unusual – states will often play a key role in deciding matters of resource development and, more often than not, the trade-off between economic impacts and ecological and social impacts results in deep conflicts between indigenous populations and the state (Wild et.al., 2018). The land and resource grabbing often renders indigenous populations less able to deal, not only with environmental changes, but also with future socio-economic challenges (Betts, et. Al., 2017; De Wet, 2006). The displacement that often results from the social and environmental impacts of large dams can sever bonds, not only to indigenous homelands, but also damage what Aiken and Leigh call "place-based identities" (2015, p. 71).

Conclusion

Acker (2004) argued that development in countries like Laos often disrupts the reproduction of daily life and increases both poverty and inequality. Unfortunately, due to the neoliberal lens which dominates today's understanding of what development actually means, there is an increasing tendency to trade off human and environmental concerns against economic growth goals (Roht-Arriaza, 2001; Wild et.al., 2018). The Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam project is just one example of how local communities are affected by this increasing desire for capital at the

expense of local lives and environmental degradation. Oxfam's Save the Mekong Coalition have been arguing against the increasing reliance on hydropower projects in this region, including those that form part of Laos's national economic development plan.

It has been consistently argued that when dams are developed, they have major impacts on ecological systems and local communities; such as those in the Champasack province of Laos, who have been reliant upon the Xe-Pian and Xe-Namnoy rivers for their crops and fisheries (Barker, 2018; Hirsch 2002; Oxfam, 2019; Seo & Rodriguez, 2012). The Mekong River spans not just the length of Laos, but also extends into China, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam, so effects seen locally by damming the tributaries also undoubtedly impact communities downstream too – what happens to one region is felt the full length of the river. The role of neoliberalism in this project has been illustrated through the choice of the PNPC and the Government of Laos to prioritise market value of the hydropower generated by this dam over local environments and the social impacts on local lives. As a result, livelihoods were destroyed through forced displacement both in the process of building of the dam and later when the dam burst and caused thousands of lives to be uprooted once more. The desire for economic development at the expense of local communities can hardly be argued to have been worth it.

Gasper argues that there is increasingly a need to generate a "human rights culture" instead of relying solely on the declarations of rights (2014, p. 10). Roht-Arriaza (2001) argues for more mediation to resolve conflicts. Numerous NGOs, like Oxfam and the Save the Mekong Coalition, argue instead for a deeper understanding of communities' own rights when faced with major development decisions, like that of the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam. Ultimately, understanding these rights, and how to assess the impacts of new development projects like this dam, will increase the likelihood of positive community outcomes. Furthermore, understanding the drivers behind dominant views of development is key to ensuring that the darker side of development does not win out at the expense of social, cultural and environmental considerations.

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Chapter 7

The Djab Wurrung Embassy vs. The Colonial Machine: Centring Indigenous Voices in Development Discourse

Grace E. Dowling

Abstract

While development discourse continues to actively exclude Indigenous voices, it remains an egregious weapon of colonial violence and human rights violations alike. The Djab Wurrung Heritage Protection Embassy, founded in 2018, is an Aboriginal site of resistance and activism seeking recognition in the face of a Victorian state-lead highway upgrade project, projected to destroy sacred land and trees of immense cultural significance. This paper seeks to interrogate the mechanisms of colonialism that continue to facilitate the dismissal of Indigenous voices in development discourse, and the power dynamics in place. Regarding the state, particular vehicles of narrative manipulation are positioned as instrumental in securing the colonial objective of exclusion of Aboriginal input. A human-rights discussion seeks to pinpoint the violations being committed by the government, while providing insight into alternatives. Lastly, an example of Indigenous versus state collaboration seeks to position the Djab Wurrung Heritage Protection Embassy's objectives, in correlation with those stipulated in the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart, within the colonial framework. This paper ultimately explores the ways in which Indigenous voices are de-centred in development discourse, and the violent, damaging repercussions.

The Djab Wurrung Embassy vs. The Colonial Machine

Djab Wurrung, meaning "soft lip", is the name of an Aboriginal language group in Western Victoria, Australia (Chatfield, n.d.; Clarke, 1995). There are many alternate English spellings, including but not limited to Djap Wurrung, Djab Wurung, Chaapwuurong, Dyapwurong (Clarke 1990, in Chatfield, n.d.). Djab Wurrung language is spoken in and around Stawell, Ararat and a portion of Gariwerd (Chatfield, n.d.). Nearby language clans include the Djadja Wurrung, Jardwadjali, Watha Wurrung and north-eastern Dhauwurd Wurrung groups (Clarke, 1995, p. 57). Speaking to culture and belief systems, the Djab Wurrung Heritage Protection Embassy (DWHPE) website states that "the land is our means of survival", elaborating that the land is "our food, spirit, identity and culture". Land is further described as having "a spiritual value and not an economic one" and coalescing its people with "the beginning of time, back to our spirit ancestors, our creators" (n.d.). Djab Wurrung Country is located on a songline, meaning a place of great significance in spiritual and cultural spaces, with particular astronomical and geographical knowledge connotations (DWHPE, n.d.).

A cornerstone of Djab Wurrung Country is approximately 260 sacred trees, some of which are 800 years old (DWHPE, n.d.). One 800-year-old eucalypt birthing tree "has seen over 50 generations born inside of a hollow in her trunk" (DWHPE, n.d.). This tree, among others stretching across the hills of southwestern Victoria, are of immense cultural and historical significance, with one Djab Wurrung cultural lore man explaining, "this is it. This is our women's safe place. The creational place" (Djab Mara in Kwai, 2019). Djab Wurrung ceremony sees its children born in the hollows of the birthing trees, and "the placentas [are] planted nearby to imbue saplings with their spirit" (Kwai, 2019), suggesting a symbiotic relationship between Country and Custodian (Gorrie, 2019). Speaking to this relationship, Kurnia/Gunai, Gunditjmara, Wiradjuri and Yorta Yorta writer, Nayuka Gorrie, describes her connection to Djab Wurrung Country through her grandmother and the subsequent meaningfulness of the sacred trees to her understandings of identity. Specifying that this feeling cannot be articulated by "the Anglo settler", Gorrie explains, "they can't understand what it means to be able to connect the blood coursing through your body to ancestors' blood soaked in ancient soil and ancient trees" (2019). Gorrie elaborates that, "to sit in a tree that saw your people birthed, your people massacred, and now your people's resistance" is, by one token, emblematic of transgenerational relationship to Country and, by another, the exact reason that sites such as these may be targeted by the colonial oppressor as it strives to "further dispossess, wipe the slate clean, and allow the state to continue its operations unhindered by Aboriginal sovereignty" (2019).

Under the Victorian State Government, the "upgrade" of the Western Highway under Major Road Projects Victoria has been progressing since 2013, intending to "improve" the primary trucking route between Melbourne and Adelaide (Amerena, 2018). The primary motivators for the project allegedly consist of decongestion measures, safety concerns and speed and efficiency in transport (Amerena, 2018). The particular 12.5 kilometre stretch between Buangor and Ararat – home to the sacred trees of the Djab Wurrung people – has been contested by both Traditional Owners and allied activists alike (Amerena, 2018; Hall, 2019). Following the rejection of a heritage protection claim in 2017, the DWHPE formed in June of 2018, committing to on-site presence in an act of protest against VicRoads' intended removal of up to 3,000 trees, including those which are sacred to the Djab Wurrung people

(Amerena, 2018). The history of the Aboriginal Embassy in Australia begins in 1972, when Aboriginal activists descended on Canberra's Capital Hill, setting up a permanent occupation site (Muldoon & Schaap, 2012). Muldoon & Schaap (2012) describe the "Embassy" phenomenon as "not only displac[ing] the monumental order and its formal public sphere", but simultaneously creating an "alternative public space to that authorised by the state" (p. 540). In this case, the installation of three stationed camps, according to the DWHPE website creates an alternative public space "taking bold action thereby preventing work from starting and demanding the [road works] project is cancelled" (n.d.). The statement continues "it's no easy task but we know it must be done" (DWHPE, n.d.). Echoing the imperative of agitation of the status quo, Dispossessed vocalist Harry Bonifacio summarises that, "Australia at the end of the day is built on genocide" and that, "there is no greater, no more important struggle than the anticolonial struggle on this environment" (in Thorne & Mertha, 2019).

While an act of resistance, "the Embassy's organisers reject the notion that their presence is a protest camp" (Amerena, 2018) or that their message was staunchly anti-development. Instead, the site embodies a "grassroots protection action to preserve their heritage alongside the highway extension" (Amerena, 2018). This suggests that it is not state-lead development that demanded counteraction, but the ways in which the Major Roads Project sought to first dismiss and later demolish Indigenous claims to land and heritage as a continuation of the colonial project. When bulldozers accompanied by police officers arrived in mid-March 2019 for example, the Embassy called for the presence of bodies to protect and defend the trees in danger of removal (Gorrie, 2019). Gorrie recalls "the call out was met by up to 100 black land defenders" in addition to non-Aboriginal allies (2019). Wardandi/Badimaya art curator, Clothilde Bullen, describes holding spaces wherein there is "an understanding that the fundamental needs and goals of that group will be different to the dominant groups" (2020, p. 30). This concept of differing fundamental needs may partly describe the tone set by the Embassy's occupation; the Embassy is an activist space in which Aboriginal voices, needs and goals take precedent.

The call to stand in solidarity is echoed around the Embassy campsites, with one sign pictured on the Facebook group Carpools 2 Camp (2019) reading "HELP by connecting and listening", implying that allyship is best accessed through listening as opposed to paternal and removed advocacy (McGloin, 2015). McGloin (2015) speaks to this non-Aboriginal solidarity as "critical alliance" (p. 280). This notion is explained as "active listening that consciously decentres the listening self in order to hear what an "Other" is saying" (McGloin, 2015, p. 274) or, more specifically, "an active role where participation/activism takes the form of a genuine alliance alongside recognition of white privilege and the on-going effects of colonial power relations" (p. 280). Here, McGloin is positioning active listening as the fundamental mechanism of usefulness for a white/non-Aboriginal ally, acknowledging that while colonial power relationships are maintained, critical alliance is inaccessible. Rosalie Schultz (2020) prescribes that "leadership, monitoring and evaluation of progress and development" must be designated to the Indigenous peoples in question while "non-Indigenous Australians have said enough" (p. 13). In order to practice this pedagogy of alliance, "it is time to listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices" (Schultz, 2020, p. 13).

The amplification of Indigenous voices in activism is traditionally met with oppressive retribution (McGloin, 2015). Surprisingly, police presence at the Embassy has (so far) been minimal and thus has physical conflict between authority and activists, in part due

to the Embassy's promotion of harm minimisation (Amerena, 2018). Nevertheless, author Dr Tony Birch (2016) argues that violence does not necessitate physical conflict, and can take many insidious, alternative forms under colonialism. Birch illustrates that the destruction of land in the name of infrastructural development is also a violent crime, specifying that "there is a link between histories of brutality, the colonial psyche and violence enacted against ecology and country" (2016). Djab Wurrung woman, Sissy Austin, suggests that the silencing of Djab Wurrung voices is a targeted act, symptomatic of a colonial oppressive structure. She states that a "violent and controlling relationship" with "no consent" is the government's weapons of choice (Austin in Hayman-Reber, 2019, para. 4).

Regarding colonial discourse, Kothari (2004) writes that "there is an unstated belief that those who stand in the way of development" or choose to resist development trajectory "are actually obsolete, retrogressive and redundant and deserve to be thrown in the dustbin of history" (p. 9). Effectively, a narrative is written in which the Indigenous activist is fighting progress and is therefore demonised (Kothari, 2004). Embassy founder Aunty Sandra Onus commented on a 2018 postponement of the Western Highway project, stating "we don't want to hold up progress either, we can see the traffic that gets built up", but elucidates that "we have to protect our cultural heritage. We have to show them that Aboriginal people are connected and devoted to their culture" (Bate, 2018). Here, Onus makes a clear distinction regarding the Embassy sites, clarifying the difference between being anti-development and staunchly opposed to violations of cultural significance. Victorian Minister for Transport Infrastructure Jacinta Allan (2019) wrote in *The Age* that the state government "respect[s] the right of people to protest", but they "need to get on and deliver this project. People's lives are depending on it". Allan is referring here to road accidents that take place on the Western Highway each year, supposedly due to inadequate infrastructure. More significantly, what is elucidated in her statement is a subtle, yet direct, polarisation of Aboriginal activists and development. Kothari (2004) would argue that this is emblematic of a popular technique used to position the broader public against the enviro-activist. This re-working of public discourse is a fundamental vehicle for development crusades, in another example of Indigenous voices being "spoken-over" in order to – in the words of Jacinta Allan – "get on and deliver" the coloniser's objective (Allen, 2019).

This asymmetrical narrative has not been exempt from contestation by the Djab Wurrung people, who are determined to negotiate (Bate, 2018). Senator and Gunnai-Kurnai & Gunditjmara woman Lidia Thorpe (2019) explains that the Djab Wurrung representative's quashed attempts to communicate with the Victorian Government have "given insight into the failure of established practices, which require the government to seek the free, prior and informed consent of the Indigenous people whose land will be impacted upon", a group procedural right (Havemann, 2009). A reason for this failure is the lack of direct access between Djab Wurrung people and decision-makers, instead a space reserved for two Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs; Thorpe, 2019). Thorpe outlines the ways in which RAPs are determined by the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council, elected by the Victorian Minister for Aboriginal Affairs – a seat historically held by settler politicians – and how they are not an adequate solution to diversified representation of Aboriginal groups. Two RAPs, Martang and Eastern Maar, both in their own respective times representing the needs of Djab Wurrung Country, have been met with bureaucratic disputation from one another, Djab Wurrung elders/representatives and the state government alike (Thorpe, 2019). At one point, this entanglement saw VicRoads falsely claim they had sought approval from *both* groups to

progress with the Western Highway project (Thorpe, 2019). Funnell et al. (2020) discuss the "nothing about us, without us" tagline in relation to Indigenous representation and scholarship, concluding that without genuinely seeking to provide autonomous representation to Indigenous peoples regarding their own Country, they find themselves maintaining the oppressive structures they should be striving to circumvent. The Western Highway project and its operatives in the Victorian Government have seemingly approached enough consultatory measures via RAPs in order to claim a conversation took place, thereby preserving its "progressive" public facade, and yet not enough to create meaningful collaborative outcomes (Amerena 2019; Funnell et al., 2020; Liddle, 2019; Thorpe, 2019). Until the latter becomes the objective, attempts at consultation exist only within the pre-existing constraints of the colonial model (Funnell et al., 2020; Thorpe, 2019).

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) – of which Australia is a signatory – provides a list of minimum standards for survival, prosperity and health of Indigenous peoples. Article 3 describes the right to self-determination, stating Indigenous peoples may "freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development" (UN General Assembly, 2007, p. 4). Here is the necessity of autonomous representation pertaining to various aspects of life. Self-determination in development and rhetoric in Australia peaked in the 1980s-1990s under the Hawke and Keating governments, but slowly dissipated in the early 2000s, due to a rapidly intensifying neoliberal regime in which policy reverted back to economic and political assimilatory rhetoric (Birch, 2002; Jackson, Porter & Johnson, 2017). This was in part due to John Howard's Prime Ministership. The juxtaposition between deregulated, neoliberal economic climate and recognised/amplified self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people demonstrates a symbiosis between capitalist imperatives and the de-prioritisation of Indigenous self-determination. Similarly, Article 23 of UNDRIP states, "Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development" (UN General Assembly 2007, p. 7). While Djab Wurrung people seek to actively engage with the state in cultivating a project that meets popular development needs whilst respectfully preserving sacred cultural land and spaces, they are effectively lobbying in order to access what Australia supposedly recognises as their fundamental human rights as Indigenous people. Jackson et al. prescribe that "greater consideration and creative effort must go towards establishing collaborative, meaningful partnerships, in which authority and decision-making powers are shared" in order to truly realise either of the rights mentioned (2017, p. 243). "Deeper dialogue, sustained engagement, and grappling with questions of community and recognition are vital" as instruments in dismantling power dynamics that have historically sought to amplify the colonial trajectory, while simultaneously silencing the Indigenous counter (Jackson et al., 2017, p. 243).

As a means of accessing these designated human rights, the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart (The Uluru Statement, 2017) was written in the name of Indigenous Australian consensus regarding constitutional recognition, and the need for a Makarrata Commission. Makarrata is the Yolngu word for "treaty" or, more literally, "peace after a dispute" (Nithyani, 2020, p. 33), already inherently indicative of both its intentions and context. The Statement illuminates a distinct ancestral connection with land, stipulating "this link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty", with the next paragraph rhetorically inquiring "how could it be otherwise?". The document is a formal demand to the Australian Government to implement institutional reform facilitating access to

the rights of its Indigenous peoples. Nithyani (2020) writes that the project seeks to "amplify the First Nations voice" (p. 32) in land rights discourse, effectively manifesting a space in which ancestral ties to Country are considered in the same sentence as mainstream development motivators. Conversely, David Harvey (2007) speaks of the 1990s Zapatista rebellion fighting for the rights of indigenous peoples in Mexico, writing that the movement "did not seek to take over state power or accomplish a political revolution" but instead, its objective was "a more inclusive politics to work through the whole of civil society" (p. 40). The underpinning idea here being the formulation of a "political power bloc in which Indigenous cultures would be central rather than peripheral" (Harvey, 2007, p. 40), echoing again the imperative of the "central" placement of Indigenous voices on Indigenous matters. Summarised as a "passive revolution within the territorial logic of state power" (Harvey, 2007, p. 40), Harvey's discussion of Zapatista activism resonates with the objective of the Uluru Statement, seeking constitutional recognition under the settler state. Of course, it too resonates with the message of the DWHPE, wishing to work alongside infrastructural development *while* maintaining autonomous consultation power, in collaboration.

The DWHPE has claimed that they are not anti-development, but are instead demanding consultation and respect in the state-lead development project (Amerena, 2018; DWHPE, n.d.). The Djab Wurrung Embassy has performed this demand by calling to action Indigenous voices and non-Indigenous allies to stand together in solidarity to protect sacred land and trees of immense cultural and historical importance. The centring of Aboriginal voices is imperative in protecting and promoting agency and self-determination in the face of the ongoing colonial project that tends towards "an outward performance of listening" (Liddle, 2019). Meanwhile, the Victorian state's indignant upholding of a colonial dominant narrative works to control discourse, in direct opposition to its UNDRIP obligations. In regards to Djab Wurrung Country, "the inability to see these sites as worthy of being protected or that they are significant is fundamentally racist" (Gorrie, 2009), as the state violently reinforces the colonial agenda, effectively weaponising silence to succeed. In mid-2020, the Djab Wurrung Embassy was still occupied by activist bodies pursuing justice (DWHPE, n.d.). Future research mapping the trajectory of the project and its relationship to consultation discourse will be critical in the coming months and years, to holistically interrogate the polarised mainstream discourse of decolonisation and ongoing oppressive colonial forces, particularly in the development sphere. The Uluru Statement from the Heart (2017) states "we seek to be heard", a powerful reiteration of Aboriginal voices in Australian development discourse, imploring that until consent and consultation are properly adhered to, the violent mechanism of colonialism rages on.

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Chapter 8

In the National Interest: Undermining the Mirarr

Selena Knowles

Abstract

The Mirarr people have been custodians of their land for over 50,000 years. Colonialism impacted their way of life through disease, disruption and the dispossession of their land. Much of Mirarr country has since been designated as Kakadu National Park for its outstanding beauty and unique biodiversity. In the 1950s, large uranium deposits were discovered on Mirarr land and initiated 70 years of relentless pursuit of mining by both the government and mining companies, despite the opposition of the traditional owners. The Mirarr people's resistance to development and destruction, and their endeavour to have their rights recognised and respected has struggled against racist and paternalistic laws. This can be described as a form of administrative violence under active colonialism. Despite Government rhetoric of consultation and land rights, Mirarr opposition to uranium mining has been consistently overruled under the guise of the national interest. This paper will demonstrate that although legislation granted the Mirarr people rights of ownership to their land, the consequence of a dominant development discourse and mining companies allied with the state, have led to a culture of exploration and exploitation of mineral wealth, irrespective of the cultural wishes of the traditional owners.

Preface

In the dreamtime, the Rainbow Serpent Almudj created the land, the people and the way of life. Transformed into a knob-tailed gecko, Boyweg travelled across the valley and sank down into the Bagaloy soak. Boyweg-Almudj is a sacred site that never runs dry as Almudj remains below the surface. Djidbidjidbi is a sacred site where the King Brown dreaming lives in the land today. A sacred, dangerous power called the Djang is unleashed when sacred land is disturbed (Smith & Thompson, 2013). This land belongs to the Mirarr people. "It's very good country up here for our living. We don't go anywhere else. I live here" (Toby Gangale in Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2013, 9:41).

Introduction

This is the story of the Mirarr people and their struggle over the theft of their land. It is an account of their opposition to "development" and destruction and their endeavour to be recognised and respected. Their land is of exceptional beauty including the magnificent wetlands of the Jabiluka billabong country and the spectacular sandstone escarpment of Djidbidjidbi (Mulvaney, 2001). Much of Mirarr country has since been designated as Kakadu National Park for its outstanding splendour and unique biodiversity. The Mirarr had lived in harmony with the seasons, the climate and the land for over 50,000 years. The unrelenting pressure of uranium mining has been a persistent threat to the lives of the Mirarr over the past 70 years. "We are worried that we are losing a little bit, a little bit, all of the time. We keep our ceremony, our culture, but we are always worried" (Silas Roberts in Fox et al., 1977 p. 47).

This chapter exposes the post-colonialism hypocrisy of Australia in acknowledging the past injustices imposed on the Aboriginal people, while dismissing contemporary Aboriginal demands. Since the 1950s, there has been a tenacious interest in mining uranium in the Northern Territory, an example of the "ongoing colonial desire to exploit the land, its resources and peoples" (Perera & Pugliese, 1998, p. 72). Despite Government rhetoric of consultation and land rights, when Aboriginal opposition is onerous or inconvenient, it is systematically and consequently overruled in "the national interest". This claim of "the national interest" is, as will be shown, a justification from the dominant development discourse that is frequently used to rationalise violating Aboriginal peoples' human rights. In this chapter, I will detail the administrative violence used by the government to coerce agreements and deny the Mirarr the right to veto mining projects. I will centre Aboriginal voices, offering perspectives that are frequently left out of government reports that simply assess the financial risks or sustainability of development projects. This chapter will document the historical background of the Mirarr struggle with uranium mining, and provide a reflection on whether their interests were considered in "the national interest". It presents the injustices faced by the Mirarr people as a form of administrative violence, "a term which describes one of the key mechanisms through which structural inequality is reproduced entirely legally" (Lea, 2017). It also shows bearing witness to administrative violence is an important aspect of advancing social justice and Aboriginal peoples' rights.

1950s-60s: Miners Move In

Uranium deposits were identified in Mirarr country in the 1950s. Some small-scale mining occurred, however, details are limited as regulatory governance and record keeping were poor (Graetz, 2015). In 1953, the Atomic Energy Act was passed, placing uranium mining under Commonwealth defence powers (Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2010). By 1960, the Australian Atomic Energy Commission reported that 60 companies were exploring, or intended to explore, for uranium in the area (Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2010; O'Brien, 2003). Subsequently, four major uranium deposits were discovered: Ranger, Nabarlek and Koongarra in 1970 and Jabiluka in 1971 (Giblin, 2005). During the exploration phase, Mirarr people were subjected to intrusive invasion of their lands and the intruding and trespassing across culturally significant areas. Europeans (balanda) violated and damaged places of cultural significance, causing offence and spiritual trauma (O'Faircheallaigh, 1986). Mining tracks inadvertently provided access to important art sites which led to unauthorised balanda access (Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2010). "They're drinking and chasing women…and bring problems. Ruining our places, caves, paintings and all that. Climb rocks. Destroying our sacred places. Just walk anywhere. You know what European does. He doesn't care" (Rachel Maralngurra in Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2013, 20:19).

The Mirarr population had been decimated from disease, and displaced by the allocation of large areas of land for the pastoral industry (Fox et al., 1977). Further disruption occurred as Aboriginal people were encouraged to relocate to missions and towns which led to developing a sedentary lifestyle (Fox et al., 1977). "In some cases it wasn't even as direct as taking land away from people: it was occupying areas of land and reorganising the structures of Aboriginal society under the threat of violence" (Jacqui Katona in Katona et al., 1998, p.3).

With multiple rich uranium deposits in the area and a colonial paradigm of resource utilisation to advance both the economy and "civilisation" (Perera & Pugliese, 1998), there was increased activity, applications for leases and movement to exploit the economic benefit of mining. Colonialism and development are often justified with the same rhetoric: "advancing civilisation". In January 1971, the Commonwealth Government indicated uranium exploration would continue, despite the emerging interest in designating the area as a national park (Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2010; O'Brien, 2003). Even prior to government approval, preparations were well under way from a construction and destruction perspective. Without consultation with the Mirarr, an airstrip and a base camp were built at Jabiru to serve as a regional centre (Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2010). Mining companies moved swiftly, ready to commence mining the deposits known as Ranger and Jabiluka.

1970s: The Illusion of Land Rights

In 1976, the first regional land rights legislation was introduced with the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act, based on recommendations from the Woodward Royal Commission (Woodward, 1974). Under the legislation, former Aboriginal reserves were transferred to Aboriginal "ownership" and Aboriginal land councils were established (Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2010). However, with the prospect of uranium mining

in the area, the Mirarr's right of veto was specifically excised from the legislation. Recommendations stated that exploration and mining should only occur "by [Aboriginal] consent or where the national interest requires it" (Woodward, 1974, p. 109). This gave the government the power to legally authorise mining irrespective of the traditional owners' wishes if mining was considered of "national interest." (Banerjee, 2000).

> The parts of the Land Rights Act which would allow our community to ensure that there was no development, to ensure that they had the ability to control their lives, were just conveniently evaporated, either through political negotiation or through legislative amendment (Jacqui Katona in Katona et al., 1998, p.8).

A government inquiry to consider the grounds of objection to the mining and selling of uranium in Australia released its first report in late 1976 (Fox et al., 1976). The report recommended mining at Ranger proceed, subject to the findings of a second report to consider "the position of the aboriginal people who oppose mining in the area, and some of whom wish to be treated as owners of the land sought to be mined" (Fox et al., 1976, p. 5). Concurrently, the Jabiru town site was excised from the Aboriginal native title claim, in anticipation of mining proceeding. "Government can push, but we still say no" (Bill Neidje in Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2013, 18:58).

Although the Mirarr did not have the right to veto exploration or mining on their land, the Northern Lands Council (NLC) and the Commonwealth were required to make an agreement before uranium mining could occur (Howey, 2019). If an agreement could not be reached, the Minister could appoint an arbitrator; thus, traditional owners were stripped of any power in the negotiation process (Howey, 2019).

In May 1977, the Second Fox report recommended sequential development of uranium mines and the establishment of a National Park excluding the uranium deposits (Fox et al., 1977). The report expressed disregard to strong and consistent Aboriginal opposition to uranium mining, stating that "in the end, we form the conclusion that their opposition should not be allowed to prevail" (Fox et al., 1977, p. 9). The removal of the veto to mining put the NLC in the untenable position of negotiating on behalf of traditional owners without being able to oppose the mining (Howey, 2019; O'Brien, 2003). "They were just pushing people, pushing people to sign the agreement" (Rachel Maralngurra in Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2013, 20:10). During the numerous meetings between the Mirarr community, the NLC and government representatives, concern was raised about the damage to ancestral lands, the influx of people, roads and infrastructure even during the exploration stages (Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 1997; Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2013; Howey, 2019; Lea et al., 2018). "We think if they get in there and start digging we'll have towns all over the place and we'll be pushed into the sea" (Silas Roberts in Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 1997, p. 5). Transcripts from the meetings reveal intimidation, coercion and bullying (Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 1997).

Three weeks following the community's rejection of the mining agreement, on 3 November 1978, Aboriginal Affairs Minister Ian Viner arrived at the community asserting the NLC sign the agreement to proceed with the Ranger mine. The media was locked out and independent experts' permits were revoked. After months of controversy, legal battling and conflict, the Ranger Uranium Mine Agreement and the Kakadu National Park lease were signed (Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2010; Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2013). Traditional owners opposed the agreement and most refused to attend this meeting.

“The Land Council members accepted the agreement under the pressure, more like it, from the government. I didn’t vote for it” (Leo Finlay in Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2013, 30:02). The myth that the government legitimately sought community consultation and consideration of the Aboriginal viewpoint is part of a development discourse where buzz words are used to authenticate and justify development being beyond reproach. Development is unquestioned and inherently considered to be bringing something better, regardless of consequences or opposition (Cornwall, 2007).

Five months later, Prime Minister Gough Whitlam released a media statement with the declaration of Kakadu National Park. In referring to the forced agreement it claimed that, “the Aboriginal owners have in effect made a gift of their land to the Australian people to be managed by the Commonwealth as a national park” (Prime Minister of Australia, 1979).

1980s-90s: Breaches, Damage and Protest

The Ranger mine commenced operation in 1981. During the construction period and the first year of operation, there were more than 20 environmental incidents and breaches of regulations (Noonan & Sweeney, 2005). This was indicative of the mine’s future operations; occurrences included leakages and spills of contaminated water into creeks and billabongs (Noonan & Sweeney, 2005; Tatz et al., 2006). “The trees they killed. The dirt they killed. The rocks they killed. And they started to destroy the place” (Yvonne Margarula in Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2013, 41:43). In 1982, a mining agreement for Jabiluka was granted; the Mirarr maintain that “they were tricked, cajoled and pressured by the NLC and the mining company” into signing (Graetz, 2015, p. 135). This agreement, following on from the Ranger conclusion, left the Mirarr feeling disillusioned and powerless (Tatz et al., 2006). “I’ve given up. It’s been six years now. I’m not fighting anymore” (Toby Gangale in Graetz, 2015, p. 135).

In 1984, in response to growing political pressure by an emerging environmental movement, the Hawke Labor Government introduced legislation to restrict the number of uranium developments in the country to three mines (Graetz, 2015; Hintjens, 2000). This resulted in delaying any further mines and blocked the commencement of the Jabiluka mine. However, Ranger continued to operate and, over the next decade, a series of over 50 malfunctions and operational shortcomings put both the environment and the community at risk of harm (Noonan & Sweeney, 2005).

12 years later, with a change of government came a renewed momentum to commence the Jabiluka mine, and further pressure on the Mirarr community (O’Brien, 2003). In 1995, the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation (GAC), with a board of directors comprising Mirarr elders, had been established to represent the Mirarr for the disbursement and management of funds derived from the Ranger Mine. This Corporation was to play a central role in the opposition to Jabiluka (Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2010).

Construction at Jabiluka commenced in June 1998, despite pleas from the European Parliament due to the World Heritage value of Kakadu and not withstanding another government review into the social impact of mining (Scientist, 1997). This report outlined extensive displacement of the traditional owners and widespread disempowerment among Mirarr people resulting from mining and its associated impact (Scientist, 1997). The report reflected strong opposition to the controlling and paternalistic structures that the government

had established within the Kakadu region. “Our law comes from grandfather, clan, ceremony, skin name, language. But balanda don’t respect our law and we have to follow balanda law” (unnamed traditional owner in Scientist, 1997, p. 74).

The Mirarr took their opposition of Jabiluka to the international stage and was the catalyst to the formation of an environmental movement, the Jabiluka Action Group (JAG) (Hintjens, 2000). This group directed funds to legal actions, shareholder protests, direct action and international appeals (Hintjens, 2000). This gave the Mirarr a voice across Australia and globally. Additionally, Australian society had shifted in its recognition of cultural land rights due to the Native Title Act of 1993, granting rights to Aboriginal people over their illegally occupied land and the invalidation of *terra nullius* (Banerjee, 2000; Hintjens, 2000). JAG activated a massive public outcry, which included protests in capital cities and ultimately led to 5,000 protestors staging a blockade of the Jabiluka site for eight months (Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2010; Hintjens, 2000). During the blockade, around 500 people were arrested, including senior traditional owners who were charged with trespassing on land to which the Mirarr legally held title (Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2010).

> It is a very large number of people who see this mine as a bad thing. The agreement was arranged by pushing people and does not accurately reflect the wishes of Aboriginal people who own that country. We all stand together on that (Yvonne Margarula in Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2010, p.7).

Although there was widespread opposition to the mine, initial tunnelling commenced through the Boyweg-Almudj sacred site within the boundary of Kakadu, violating the cultural rights of the Mirarr. This disregard for cultural sensitivities in defence of profit over rights, only created further outrage amongst the growing number of people opposed to the mine (Hintjens, 2000). “They don’t believe these areas are sacred sites…they are killing our culture intentionally. They are killing us” (Yvonne Margarula in Hintjens, 2000, p.381).

Preparatory construction at Jabiluka ceased in September 1999, following plummeting share prices, public dissent, delays and the veto of the Mirarr to approve a viable development option to process the ore. The site was put into a standby phase (Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2010). In 2005, the Mirarr signed an agreement with Rio Tinto, the current Jabiluka lease holder, which prevents mining at Jabiluka without the written consent of Traditional Owners (Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2013; Smith & Thompson, 2013).

A Legacy of Administrative Violence and Rights Violations

The Ranger mine ceased operation in January 2021; rehabilitation of the area is proposed to enable it to be incorporated into Kakadu National Park (ABC News, 2021). The Mirarr are concerned about the rehabilitation process and future impacts on health and environment due to environmental accidents and breaches of licence conditions, including a period when the mine was closed temporarily due to uranium being found in Jabiru drinking and washing water. The rehabilitation process will require decommissioning of a uranium mine containing millions of litres of toxic water and tailings, with few precedents to draw upon (Lea et al., 2018).

Reports and records pertaining to uranium mining on Mirarr country are almost exclusively written from the dominant and paternalistic state perspective (Altman, 2009). Consideration of the effect of mining and its disruption to Mirarr ways of living, of relating to country, and family kinship is almost always absent and not documented. This provides a biased perspective, primarily focusing on legal and environmental matters with an absence on cultural and social matters. Aboriginal culture considers nature and eco systems as part of society (Watts, 2013); the Mirarr consider themselves as extensions of the land. The colonial perspective disrupts this worldview and provides a dominant discourse of development as being both intrinsically good and beneficial to society. Consequently, there is limited information about the cultural impact on the Mirarr, their language, family kinship, diet, health and wellbeing in any government reviews or departmental reports concerning the mining.

Mining approvals followed extended struggles and protracted legal battles indicative of the first encounters of the Mirarr with colonialists. Two industries that caused the greatest dispossession of Aboriginal peoples from their lands were the pastoral and mining industries (Banerjee, 2000). When competing interests and conflicts arose, governments were sympathetic to mining corporations rather than traditional owners with little recognition that Aboriginal people warranted a legitimate role in the decision-making process (Katona et al., 1998).

> Our attachment to land and the nature of the geography of our country often makes us disparate, and that's presented quite a problem for many years. It makes it easier for government to keep us not communicating with each other, to prevent us from looking at ways of taking action to assert any rights that may still be recognised (Jacqui Katona in Katona et al., 1998, p.6).

The government narrative defiantly fails to acknowledge the ongoing impact of colonialism or, indeed, the colonial bias to "development" (Banerjee, 2000). Both government and mining interests were given precedence over the needs of the Mirarr. This is consistent with the brutal processes of colonisation which consistently involves the displacement of traditional land owners (Duff et al., 2020; Lea et al., 2018). Whilst many of the decisions to mine uranium may have been "within the law", those laws were racist, paternalistic and generated trauma and suffering on the Mirarr people in a form of administrative violence under active colonisation (Lea et al., 2018). It was justified under the false promise of "development" and "the national interest". Historically, the creation of wealth in Australia has been built on the expropriation of Aboriginal lands, under the guise of development, with Aboriginal traditional owners being denied mineral and resource rights and their consent overridden by "national interest" provisions (Altman, 2009).

The economic agenda of development has underscored the relentless pressure for Mirarr agreement to uranium exploration and mining and, when unsuccessful, to exclude them from the process, financial gain and power. Land rights legislation purported to give the NLC agency to act on the behalf of the Mirarr, although ultimately, they were accountable to the government (Katona et al., 1998; Lea et al., 2018; O'Brien, 2003). Land rights legislation needs to be grounded in an Aboriginal worldview to support the Mirarr people's values and beliefs (Katona et al., 1998).

The Mirarr people have experienced a range of negative impacts from the mining development, from a decrease in the practice of traditional culture, decreased health and

welfare, and the destruction of country and significant sites (Graetz, 2015). The Ranger agreement specified "as many local Aboriginals as is practicable are employed", however Mirarr employment has been limited and at minimum skill levels (O'Faircheallaigh, 1986). There has been inadequate health monitoring, despite many industrial accidents and breaches of safety regulations (Tatz et al., 2006). In 2010, the Government regulator acknowledged that the Ranger tailings dam is seeping at a rate of around 100,000 L/day" (Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, 2013, 37:47). Epidemiological research has found a significant overall increase in the incidence of cancer among Aboriginal people living in the Kakadu region, with a 90 percent increase in expected rates (Tatz et al., 2006). However, accurate population and health data for people living in these regions is often insufficient.

Alcohol has continued to be a problem, although this is often defined from a balanda perspective with a focus on threats to urban civility and public drunkenness rather than as a symptom of the dispossession and violation of traditional land owners (D'Abbs, 2012). Much of the research has focused on social issues without presenting a wider framework which includes colonisation, culture and social justice. The construction of the town of Jabiru increased the availability of alcohol and its misuse, perpetuated by the helpless situation that many Mirarr people experienced (Graetz, 2015).

Conclusion

The effects of uranium mining on the Mirarr have left a legacy of "rights violations, the denial of agency, unwanted social impacts, the imposition of an unwelcome industrial culture, a decline in living tradition and, accordingly, a sense of despair, loss and dependency" (Graetz, 2015, p. 140). The Government disregarded the rights of the Mirarr and imposed a toxic industry in an area of World Heritage value (Lea et al., 2018). The Mirarr were denied the right to exercise consent over their lands and were side-lined when their opposition did not meet the goals and agenda of the government or mining companies. Inquiries and investigations reflected the dominant colonialist values of the time and the legal institutions failed to understand the connection to country that is so important to traditional owners. The perspective of the Mirarr that they are custodians of the land and play a protectionist role for the land, is in direct contrast with the profit making, exploitive view of mining companies.

Trigger (2005) proposes mining projects possess an incongruity between Aboriginal and mainstream views about economic and cultural futures. This is a result of Australian law being skewed to an economic basis, under the guise of progress and development. This conflict is described as a clash between market-based and kin-based economies (Altman, 2009). Historically, Aboriginal land owners have sought to maintain the environmental integrity of their land, whilst mining companies seek to exploit the land's non-renewable resources. Aboriginal people consider the land and the landscape as a cultural asset, not a commercial asset. However, the dominant paradigm continues to view Aboriginal interests as subordinate to commercial interests, with legal restraints often placing limitations on Aboriginal organisations' capacity to negotiate (Lea et al., 2018). This imbalance in power and ideologies brings into question, who should decide what is in the national interest?

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Chapter 9

Analysing the Impacts of Neoliberal Development on an Indigenous Community: Adani Enterprises versus Australian Traditional Owners the Wangan and Jagalingou peoples

Ana Blazey

Abstract

This paper goes beyond the mainstream discourse of development that focuses on employment opportunities and economic growth to explore the impact that large scale developments have on everyday people. The Adani coal mine in Queensland, Australia, threatens to destroy the traditional homelands of the Wangan and Jagalingou peoples. The ongoing story of the Wangan and Jagalingou people's fight against this development exemplifies the magnitude of suffering and violence neoliberal development can impose on traditional people, their culture and their environment. The dominant, colonial values underpinning development are examined, drawing attention to the failure of development discourses to recognise and implement Indigenous knowledges. Within the extractivist industry, the dismissal of Indigenous cultural knowledge and sovereignty creates social and environmental destruction. The Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), are also examined in the context of the proposed Adani Carmichael mine. It is argued herein that extractivist development perpetuates colonial history in Australia through neoliberal and capitalist intentions that violate and dismiss Indigenous human rights.

Introduction

The fundamental ideology that underpins development is neoliberalism; a philosophy which is criticised as unilaterally valuing its "euro-centric self," and its "own assumptions and perspectives" (Morgan & Cole-Hawthorne, 2016, p. 57). In this context, Indigenous knowledges – like traditional protocols for caring for country – are ignored and development programs are manipulatively planned to support capitalism and economic growth (Morgan & Cole-Hawthorne, 2016). In the extractivist industry, "the exploitation of natural resources is capitalist in nature" and reflects the "specific sectional interests of transnational corporations" (White, 2017, p. 56). The controversial Adani coal mine proposal in the north of the Galilee Basin in central Queensland Australia is underpinned by this neoliberal and capitalistic ideology. The proposed development comes as an extreme threat to the environment, and as such, the Traditional Owners of the land it seeks to be built upon. The Wangan and Jagalingou Nation are the ancestral custodians of a vast area of land in the Galilee Basin in central Queensland whose groundwater and biodiversity will be destroyed if the proposed mine goes ahead (Lyons, 2016). This land is paramount to the cultural wellbeing of the Wangan and Jagalingou peoples. They consider their ancestral lands as an "interconnected and living whole; a vital cultural landscape" (Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council, n.d., para 1). The multinational company behind the proposed development, Adani Enterprises, has been backed by the Australian Government in their attempt to dismiss the Rights of the Wangan and Jagalingou peoples, as outlined by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP; Lyons, 2018). In their dismissal of Indigenous Rights and their inability to recognise Aboriginal knowledges that are linked to the land, state and corporate powers continue the violent legacy of colonisation (Morgan & Cole-Hawthorne, 2016). This paper explores the current and future social and environmental impacts of the proposed Adani Carmichael coal mine from the perspective of Traditional Owners the Wangan and Jagalingou Nation, gathered through independent publications and the Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council campaigning efforts.

Political Nature of Development

Development is fundamentally grounded in economic advancement and the socio-political gains of multinational corporations and powerful institutions (Sikka, 2011). However, the term "development" has positive connotations for most people, resulting in the assumption within mainstream society that development leads to only one thing: improvement and progression. When United States President Harry S. Truman announced to the world his intentions to develop and improve "underdeveloped" countries and peoples as a part of political propaganda in the late 1940s, he reinforced this economically-driven ideology (Esteva, 2009). On the 20th January 1949, American politics and hegemony not only labelled two billion people as "underdeveloped," but gave rise to the "era of development" (Esteva, 2009, p. 1). Understanding the historical, neoliberal political nature of development is crucial to critically analysing development today and the impact it has on people and cultures. Neoliberal leaders and capitalist corporations are revealed as the driving force behind the mainstream discourse of development (Sikka, 2011). Within this discourse, the lasting impacts of colonisation and the "traditional cultural preferences" of those directly impacted

by development are omitted (Nandy, 1995, p. 1). Extractivist mining in Australia is an example of this. Multibillion-dollar transnational companies, backed by neoliberal governments and conservative citizens, exploit both people and the land to extract natural resources they can turn into private capital. Irreversible damage to the environment, social injustices and multiple violations of Indigenous Rights are an inseparable part of this process (Lyons, 2018).

Opponents of the Carmichael coal mine articulate environmental damage, social injustices and violation of the human rights of the Wangan and Jagalingou people as fundamental impacts of this development. Gautam Adani plans to ship 60 million tonnes of coal per year from Queensland to India to burn in thermal plants (Talukdar, 2016), despite the proven detrimental impacts burning fossil fuels have on the environment (Bradley, 2019). The capitalistic basis and imbedded neoliberal ideologies behind this development are notably concerning. Talukdar (2016) has described Adani's "moral reasoning" for the proposed coal mine in Queensland as a neoliberal construct that hides desires for capital gain "behind helping the poor" (p. 135). The moral case put forward by Adani and the Indian and Australian Governments for the construction of the world's largest coal mine in Australia is based on increasing access to electricity for people living in poverty in rural and remote parts of India. Adani are playing a large role in India's ambitious target to double their coal production by 2020, supposedly in order to address the millions of people currently living without electricity (Talukdar, 2016). Whilst it is undeniable that equal access to electricity is critical to alleviating poverty, it is also important to question who will actually benefit from this targeted development. Adani claim that coal exports out of Australia will lift millions of Indian citizens out of poverty, but contradictory research concludes that recent rates of high economic growth in India show no correlation to a reduction in poverty (Talukdar, 2016). The alleged "moral case" is Adani's strongest argument against the increasing social and environmental concerns against this development. Economic theories such as the "Machiavelli Theorem" describes Adani's primary focus on economic growth as rendering them "morally blind", as it suggests "no one will pass up a profitable opportunity to exploit someone else" (Collier & Hoeffler, 1998). An in-depth investigation of the neoliberal nature of Adani is beyond the scope of this paper, however it is important to note the ideologies behind this corporation, and the lengths they will go to for economic gain in the name of development.

Connection to Country and Community Impact

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the original custodians of Australia. Their culture, built primarily on a deep connection to land and nature, is the oldest existing culture in the world and dates back at least 80,000 years (Poroch, 2012). The social and environmental impacts of this development are detrimental to the Traditional Owners of the land in the Galilee Basin: the Wangan and Jagalingou peoples. Like all First Australians, the Wangan and Jagalingou peoples hold a deep connection to *their* country that runs much deeper than the western understanding of ownership of land. Indigenous Australians' connection to country is a fundamental part of their culture and spirituality (Poroch, 2012). Within Aboriginal people's strong connection to country lies a connection to their ancestors and Dreamtime stories (Korff, 2019). Research also suggests that there is a steadfast

connection between the happiness and health of First Australians and the health and natural condition of their ancestral lands (Ganesharajah, 2009). For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia, particularly the Wangan and Jagalingou peoples, it is clear that this development will have devastating and lasting impacts. According to Kingsley et al. (2013), when Traditional Owners experience a disconnect or separation from their country there are detrimental outcomes including grief, hopelessness and a decreased sense of belonging. This is just one of the negative social impacts that Adani's proposed coal mine threatens on the Wangan and Jagalingou peoples.

Currently, the Wangan and Jagalingou Owners are already suffering from a division driven through their community by the proposed Carmichael mine. According to Lyons, divisions within Indigenous communities are "a salient feature of mining and extractivist projects" (2018, p. 3). As part of the Native Title claim over Wangan and Jagalingou ancestral lands, multiple Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUA) have been proposed between Traditional Owners and Adani (Smyth, 2016). According to the Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council (W & J Council) three separate ILUAs proposed by Adani in 2012, 2014 and 2016 were all strongly voted against (Lyons, 2018). However, in April 2016 Adani made another attempt to settle an ILUA with a different group of Wangan and Jagalingou Owners, which was successful. According to a spokesperson for the W & J Council this "sham agreement" demonstrates the "relentless bullying from the Queensland Government and Adani" (Lyons, 2018, p. 3). This Agreement is the subject of continuing legal arguments and is at the centre of divisions amongst Wangan and Jagalingou community members. At the core of this division is the enticement of employment opportunities and economic advancement, versus the protection of ancestral lands and the environment (Lyons, 2018). This dynamic is both unavoidable and common when Indigenous communities are met by mining developments in Australia. Eckerman et al. (2010) states that the individual health and wellbeing of First Nation peoples greatly relies on the wellbeing of their entire community, highlighting detrimental impact of this division on the community.

In addition to the division created within the Wangan and Jagalingou community, the economic agenda behind the proposed mine is causing even greater divisions among society at large. The propaganda and political campaigning for the Carmichael mine have exaggerated the economic advantages of this development and successfully framed the Adani coal mine as a solution for high unemployment rates and the current economic downturn within the mining industry. It is likely that much public support for the Adani mine comes from the politicisation of employment opportunities and economic contributions of the project regularly cited by Government representatives (Lyons, 2018). The Queensland State and Australian Federal Governments publicly announced the project would deliver over 10,000 jobs in regional Queensland, which was disproved during a trial against Adani in the Queensland Land Court which revealed the actual number was 1460 jobs (Smyth, 2016; Lyons, 2018). To frame opposers of the proposed mine as threats to public interest and the country's economy, corporations and government have used the media to construct security issues in the public sphere, through the use of "human security" language (Barry, Weaver & Wilde, 1998). Politicians and developers use strategic language and terminology such as "job security" to gain support for their cause, as it is difficult to criticise and undo what quickly becomes a "security issue," accepted by the public as a threat to society (Barry, Weaver & Wilde, 1998). This can be seen in the Adani case, where those who oppose the mine are criticised of jeopardising economic growth and employment rates.

Colonial History Repeated

The construction of "human security issues" in relation to the Adani coal mine within both Queensland and the entire country are provoking increased conflict and racism. Recent federal campaigning in support of the proposed mine in the central Queensland town of Clermont (the closest town to the proposed mine site, also situated on Wangan and Jagalingou country) has been described as a "conflict zone" (Lyons, 2019, para 19), as pro Adani campaigners were met by strong opposition from the Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council (W & J Council). Far right political leaders, including Pauline Hansen and Clive Palmer, fuelled the intolerance for the W & J Council and others who oppose the mine (Lyons, 2019). Traditional Owners were met by disrespectful slogans and refused entry into certain establishments, highlighting the belief of most local residents that the mine will bring employment and economic gains and that the W & J Council are preventing these gains (Lyons, 2019). The conflict and racism in Clermont typify the manner in which liberal, economic governments prioritise economic and political motives over the impacts their projects have on the lives and experiences of minority groups. The increased division between W & J Council members and the non-Indigenous residents of Clermont has been described as the "ongoing encounters between the settler colonial state and Indigenous people" (Lyons, 2018, p. 2). Throughout history, racism and repudiation of Indigenous culture and rights to land have imposed extreme cultural and systemic violence on Indigenous Australians (McGlade, 2018). The Carmichael coal mine continues this legacy as the rights of the Wangan and Jagalingou people are subjected to the detrimental social impacts of the proposed mine.

Extractivist development is measured in terms of economic growth and output, with little importance placed on the environment or the communities and cultures that are destroyed. This extractivist orientation is both capitalistic and colonial in nature. Within the mining industry, economic rewards for companies can be great, whereas the cost on the environment and climate are greater (White, 2017). The proposed Adani coal mine will destroy the ancestral homelands of the Wangan and Jagalingou people beyond repair, as well as add to the global climate crisis (Steffen et al. 2017). In particular, the coal mine will threaten the Doongmabulla Springs, a rare water source in the otherwise dry and arid area, which is connected to the country's largest aquifer the Great Artesian Basin (Bradley, 2019). Doongmabulla Springs is fed by more than 60 other rivers and streams and a place of "exceptional ecological significance" (Bradley, 2019, p. 32). It is a vital water resource and a significant environmental focus of the W & J Council's campaign against the Carmichael mine. Doongmabulla Springs not only hold ecological significance but
is also a place of "profound cultural significance" to the Wangan and Jagalingou community (Bradley, 2019, p. 32). Engrained in Indigenous culture and spirituality is a belief in Dreamtime stories that explain the creation of the land and people. This ancient lore provides meaning and purpose for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through a deep spiritual connection to the natural environment (Clarke, 2007). Wangan and Jagalingou peoples believe that the waters of Doongmabulla Springs are home to the Rainbow serpent Mundunjudra, who is the creator of their lands (Bradley, 2019). For the Wangan and Jagalingou community, destroying Doongmabulla Springs would be much more than just destroying the ecology; it would insult and destroy the very essence of them as a people and a

culture. Mr Burragubba, a Wangan and Jagalingou spokesperson, says that his people view themselves as the "water protectors," and that they will stand their ground "in defence of our country" (Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council, n.d.). Bradley (2019) suggests there is a high probability that the proposed mine site will completely drain Doongmabulla Springs, and states Adani are reluctant to address these concerns. Similarly, the National Water Initiative (NWI) blatantly discredits Indigenous perspectives and opinions on water conservation projects in Australia. Vague and unbinding terminology such as "wherever possible" is used in a deceptive attempt to incorporate Indigenous protocols and conservation methods into the planning of water rights and resources (Ganesharajah, 2009). The Queensland Government have recently passed Adani's water plan, which the W & J Council claim "imperils sacred Doongmabulla Springs" (Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council, n.d., para 8). Historically, disrespect and contempt for Indigenous cultural beliefs is an inherent part of Australian Government systems and mainstream society. Since colonisation in Australia, Indigenous knowledges and beliefs have been devalued and ignored by western ideologies. In the words of Mr Burragubba, "the Queensland Government simply continues the relentless dispossession of our lands and waters that our people are forced to endure" (Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council, n.d., para 8).

Aboriginal Protocols for Caring for Country Dismissed

The Wangan and Jagalingou people's land is also home to several unique species of animals that will be placed at risk of extinction were the mine to go ahead. The southern black-throated finch is at risk of becoming extinct at the hands of this development, although it was labelled as endangered under the Federal *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Vanderduys et al., 2016). Indigenous people's traditional protocols for the protection of the environment have sustained plants and animals for thousands of years and allowed them to live in harmony with nature (Kingsley et al., 2013). Aboriginal people have a "customary obligation" to care for their country. This is deeply embedded in culture, as their country is the source of all knowledge and values that sustain their life and spirituality (Morgan & Cole-Hawthorne, 2016, p. 56). However, despite research that suggests the importance of implementing Indigenous knowledges to aid environmental issues, the discourse of development continues to operate from a western and capitalist perspective (Morgan & Cole-Hawthorne, 2016). In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, animals are an integral part of country and are therefore part of the people. This is evidenced by totem animals which spiritually link both individual people and entire tribes to their country (Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council, n.d.). Aboriginal protocols for caring for country "reflect a sophisticated knowledge of the rituals and management practices required to maintain biodiversity and affirm life's balance and continuity" (Morgan & Cole-Hawthorne, 2016, p. 56). The dismissal of Aboriginal knowledge and culture by Adani and the Queensland government highlights "political biases, power and the legacy of colonisation" (Morgan & Cole-Hawthorne, 2016, p. 56).

Violation of Indigenous Human Rights

Adani Enterprises represents violations of Traditional Owner's rights to free prior and informed consent over mining on their land, (Lyons, 2018). This is a blatant breach of Article

32 (section 2) of UNDRIP (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2012). Section 32 of the Declaration directly relates to mining on Indigenous lands and states that:

> States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the Indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with development, utilisation or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2012, p. 273).

Traditional Owners have never consented to Adani mining their land, yet the State and Federal government are continuing to support the development, declaring it "critical infrastructure" (Lyons, 2016, para 2). Articles 8 and 10 of UNDRIP state Indigenous peoples have "the right not to be subjected to the destruction of their culture" and "shall not be forcibly removed from their lands" (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2012, p. 262-263). These rights have also been dismissed by governments and other supporters of the mine. In Australia, the rights outlined by UNDRIP are not protected by laws or treaty, resulting in corporations and governments being able to violate these rights without committing a legal crime (Smyth, 2016). Again, this omission represents the ongoing colonial legacy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's struggle against the colonial system and dispossession from their lands (Lyons, 2018).

Conclusion

The stark contrast between Indigenous knowledges and ideologies and neoliberal and capitalistic thinking could not be more apparent than in the Wangan and Jagalingou people's fight against Adani and the Queensland and Federal governments. Despite some evidence of an attempt to recognise and respect Indigenous world views, Australian governments continue to perpetuate a colonial history of dispossession and violations of Indigenous people's rights (Lyons, 2018). The neoliberal philosophies that underpin extractivist development directly threaten Indigenous culture which is centred on a physical, spiritual and emotional connection to land (Poroch, 2012). The destruction of the Wangan and Jagalingou people's ancestral lands to make way for Adani's Carmichael coal mine will ultimately result in the destruction of a community. This destruction will have "cascading effects" onto other Traditional Owners and their communities, waterways and animals (Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council, n.d. para 3). It is disheartening to think that such devastation can be justified by corporate interest and capital. From the W & J Council's perspective, the social and environmental costs of this development clearly outweigh the economic benefit and, as such, they "will not give up our fight" (Wangan and Jagalingou Family Council, n.d.). The W & J Council have not been quiet in their campaign to "protect and defend" their land and their fight is gaining international support and momentum (Lyons 2018). The W & J Council's campaign represents the sovereign rights of Indigenous peoples universally and challenges the colonial powers and ideology embedded in the mainstream discourse of development.

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Chapter 10

The Cost of Harmony:
Impacts of Modernisation on Xinjiang's Uyghur Population

Ben Claessens

Abstract

Currently, the Chinese province of Xinjiang is undergoing an economic, social and cultural transformation. State-led development initiatives – such as the Silk Road Economic Belt – have contributed to this change. By encouraging regional investment, authorities seek to modernise Xinjiang's infrastructure and to stimulate local industry. However, despite promises of "poverty reduction", many of Xinjiang's residents do not substantially benefit from these initiatives. Specifically, the Uyghur population (alongside other ethnic minorities) continue to face discrimination and economic disadvantage. Moreover, such development initiatives contribute to a social environment which is hostile to Uyghur cultural heritage, language and customs. This paper explores the impacts of modernisation on the Uyghur population of Xinjiang. I will argue that contemporary development initiatives in Xinjiang aim to promote social cohesion; however, they attempt to do so partially by displacing Uyghur cultural identity with that of the ethnically Han Chinese.

Introduction

Over the past 20 years, the Chinese province of Xinjiang has undergone numerous large-scale development projects. Throughout this process, trillions of Chinese yuan have been funnelled into the region's infrastructure, industry and expanding urban centres (SCIO, 2014; Godbole & Goud, 2012). A relatively recent initiative, the Silk Road Economic Belt promises to continue this trend into the coming decades. Chinese authorities suggest that such initiatives will deliver prosperity, stability and progress towards the "Chinese Dream" – "the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" (Yinan, 2013).

However, as I will argue, many of Xinjiang's residents do not substantially benefit from such projects. Specifically, the Uyghur population – alongside other ethnic minorities – continue to face discrimination and economic disadvantage (Zang, 2011). Moreover, such development initiatives contribute to a social environment which is hostile to Uyghur cultural heritage, language and customs.

This paper explores the impacts of modernisation on the Uyghur population of Xinjiang. To this end, I will begin by outlining relations between the Xinjiang region, the Uyghur people and the Chinese party-state. I will then trace the history of development in Xinjiang through to its contemporary form. Finally, I will examine the economic, social, cultural and political impacts of this process on Xinjiang's Uyghur communities.

I should note that ethnic minorities in Xinjiang face injustices over and above those that I will discuss here. I will focus particularly on the impacts of recent development initiatives, and not on human rights abuses which transpire somewhat independently to these. I will draw primarily from academic sources which are themselves based on either first-hand experience in Xinjiang or direct reports from Uyghur people.

Xinjiang and the Uyghur Population

The Uyghur people are native inhabitants of China's Xinjiang province – officially the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). They live predominantly in the Tarim Basin of southern Xinjiang, with significant diasporas in neighbouring Central Asian territories (Shichor, 2009). Uyghur cultural heritage is Turkic-Muslim; most Uyghur people practice Sunni Islam and speak Uyghur – a Turkic language (Wickeri & Tam, 2011).

Uyghur communities are the most populous of several ethnic minorities in Xinjiang (Chan, Tang & Zhang, 2018). Census data from 2010 indicate that approximately 46% of Xinjiang's population were Uyghur, and 40% were Han Chinese (Pantucci & Lain, 2016). This is a stark contrast to 1953 data, at which time 75% were Uyghur and only 6% were Han (2016). Such demographic changes have exacerbated inter-ethnic tensions; some Uyghur groups advocate for Uyghur separatism and, accordingly, regard Han migrants "both as job competitors, and as a threat to their identity as a nation" (Hopper & Webber, 2009, p. 194; Mehta, 2018).

However, the Chinese party-state vehemently resists Uyghur claims to nationhood. From the central government's perspective, Xinjiang is an indispensable economic and political asset. As a sixth of China's total landmass, the territory holds approximately 40% of the nation's coal, 30% of its gas, and is the primary route through which crude oil is imported (Altay, 2016). Additionally, Xinjiang is China's leading producer of cotton, and thereby

supports China's competitive textile industry (2016). Moreover, although the territory is landlocked, its location offers a potential conduit for trade connecting South Asia, the Middle East and Western Europe (Toops, 2016). Indeed, as I will now indicate, many development initiatives in Xinjiang are largely predicated on securing this lucrative promise.

Developing Xinjiang

Concerted efforts to modernise Xinjiang began in 2000, as part of the Go West campaign. Chinese authorities presented Go West as a long-term initiative designed to bridge a growing economic gap between China's western and eastern provinces (Pantucci & Lain, 2016). In Xinjiang, this primarily resulted in the mass construction of roads and railways, with additional investments in the region's agricultural and energy industries (Moneyhon, 2003).

To fuel the subsequently booming construction industry, central authorities encouraged the migration of Han Chinese workers. Despite preferential selection policies, most of the growing economic opportunities went to Han migrants – and not to Xinjiang's indigenous ethnic minorities (Moneyhon, 2003). In 2005, with the stated aim of redressing this economic disparity, the Chinese government significantly expanded a "bilingual" education program (Gupta & Veena, 2016). This program mandated that the Han dialect Putonghua become the primary language of instruction for approximately 145,000 ethnic minority students – to enhance their future employability. In 2011, this program was universalised across all Xinjiang schools (Pantucci & Lain, 2016).

In 2013, President Xi Jinping announced plans for the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB). In many respects, the SREB augments the Go West campaign initiated 13 years earlier; it promises to further bridge the economic rift between China's east and west. However, the SREB also aspires to connect China to foreign markets, and to do so with "opt-in" international cooperation. To this end, the central government has committed $40 billion USD to establish the requisite roads, railways, airports, pipelines, security and administrative systems (China—Pakistan, n.d.). As the nexus of three proposed "economic corridors", much of this investment is directed towards Xinjiang (Toops, 2016).

Concurrently, Xinjiang is undergoing an accelerated process of urbanisation, following the construction of "dozens of new cities and towns in the region, particularly in its Uyghur-dominated south" (Roberts, 2016, p. 47). Indeed, the Chinese party-state estimated that 68% of Xinjiang's population would live in cities by 2020 – a notable change for a traditionally agrarian community (2016). The central government has "vigorously promoted" this transformation, implementing land-rights reforms which enable authorities to dispossess and resettle Uyghur inhabitants with greater legal ease (Cappelletti, 2015; SCIO, 2014).

One striking example of land reclamation occurred in the predominantly Uyghur-inhabited city of Kashgar, between 2009 and 2014. Throughout the city's "old town", authorities reconstructed ancient buildings as part of the Uyghur Historical and Cultural Preservation Project. This project sought to render the buildings earthquake resistant, to improve sanitation, to protect Uyghur heritage and to promote tourism (Bellér-Hann, 2014). However, in doing so, 31,000 households were effectively "demolished and re-built in what authorities have labeled 'ancient Islamic architecture'" (Steenberg & Rippa, 2019, p. 283). In practice, this mass reconstruction has cleared space for modern apartment buildings, and thereby contributed to Xinjiang's growing trend towards urbanisation (Bellér-Hann, 2014).

Chinese authorities justify these various development initiatives by weaving an optimistic narrative of progress and modernisation; such measures promise to "improve living conditions for the people and win the battle against poverty" (Xinjiang Party, 2016). State-owned media support this narrative by routinely emphasising broad indicators of economic progress: that Xinjiang's gross domestic product (GDP) is growing at a rate faster than the national average, that over 500,000 stable jobs have been created since 2012, or that – according to a 2016 projection – economic poverty would ostensibly be eliminated by 2020 (China Focus, 2017; Economic Development, 2017; Xinjiang Party, 2016). Such figures are widely presented as indelible steps towards an ideal "harmonious society" (Cappelletti, 2015).

Less conspicuously, the Chinese party-state regards economic development in Xinjiang as vital to ward off the so-called "three evils": extremism, separatism and terrorism (Toops, 2016). Given the wealth and strategic importance of Xinjiang, central authorities are highly incentivised to maintain regional political stability (Chaudhuri, 2010). Indeed, according to Clarke (2018), the past 20 years of development initiatives in Xinjiang – from Go West to the SREB – have largely been directed towards this end. That is, such projects signify an ongoing attempt to pacify Uyghur discontent – to "buy" Uyghur loyalty with economic prosperity.

However, many Uyghur people have yet to meaningfully benefit from Xinjiang's development. Rather, as I will now argue, such initiatives fail to support Xinjiang's ethnic minorities on their own terms and, in doing so, adversely impact these populations' collective agency and empowerment.

Impacts of Modernisation

For many Uyghur people, Xinjiang's modernisation is largely a top-down process, whereby officials in distant Beijing control the means, ends and manner of local development (Cappelletti, 2015). Uyghur people, and especially Uyghur women, are poorly represented in senior government positions (UHRP, 2017). Consequently, transformative projects – such as the so-called "renovation" of Kashgar – rarely reflect genuine local participation (Powers, 2014). Such projects instead mark the "socialist creative destruction" of an uncompromising "bulldozer state" (Bellér-Hann, 2014, p. 179).

Moreover, modernisation in Xinjiang occurs alongside a process of "formalisation", whereby traditional social practices are progressively restructured to fit an impersonal, legal and bureaucratic model. As Steenberg and Rippa (2019) observe, social interactions within Xinjiang are increasingly regulated by the Chinese party-state's austere policies – partially to orient the region towards economic growth. However, such measures of control displace the traditional customs and institutions of Xinjiang's ethnic minorities, resulting in a widespread marginalisation of non-Han identities (2019). For many Uyghur communities, this process has a range of interrelated economic, social, cultural and political consequences – each of which I will address in turn.

Economically, China's trickle-down approach to regional prosperity has largely neglected minority communities (Chaudhuri, 2010). Certainly, Xinjiang's GDP per capita has increased, while the incidence of officially recognised "poverty" has decreased. However, such figures conceal an inequitable distribution of wealth, and overlook the factors

contributing to such inequality. For example, there continues to be substantial disparity between northern and southern Xinjiang, such that "southern Xinjiang, with [a] 95 per cent non-Han population, has an average per capita income half that of Xinjiang as a whole" (Abudureyimu & Han, 2014, p. 847). Indeed, the primary economic beneficiaries of Xinjiang's development have been Han Chinese people (Cappelletti, 2015; Steenberg & Rippa, 2019). Unlike Xinjiang's ethnic minorities, they do not face systematic social and linguistic barriers to education and employment (Hasmath, 2011).

Additionally, 20 years of Xinjiang's induced urbanisation have generated a sustained rise in land prices; Kashgar, for example, reports a two- to five-fold increase in market price per square meter (Cappelletti, 2015). Consequently, whenever land comes to be reclaimed by authorities, poorer Uyghur families cannot generally afford to live in newly constructed housing. As Cappelletti (2015) observes, such factors tend to push farming communities towards urban centres to find employment. In turn, this increases the dependency of many families upon welfare benefits, and upon state-institutions more generally (Steenberg & Rippa, 2019).

As a social consequence of Xinjiang's skewed economic growth, a rift has emerged within the Uyghur population; specifically, there is a growing class divide (Cappelletti, 2015). Many Uyghur people are unwilling or unable to integrate into Xinjiang's newly formalised economic and social institutions. However, a small cadre of Uyghur people *have* integrated and are thereby able to profit from Xinjiang's modernisation (Chan et al., 2018). This latter class is a "bridge society"; it acts to maintain the status quo, while serving as "a mediator between the Han establishment and Uyghur communities at large" (Cappelletti, 2015, p. 173).

This intra-ethnic class divide has distorted Uyghur social networks of support, once maintained by reciprocal hospitality. As Xinjiang became increasingly defined by a formal economy:

> Social capital created through labor contributions and gift giving was displaced by economic capital. Poor families, now devoid of much of their social capital but without the monetary means to substitute for this, could no longer afford the kinds of wedding, gifts, and hospitality necessary to remain socially integrated (Steenberg & Rippa, 2019, p. 282).

In this manner, the degree to which someone is willing or able to adapt to Xinjiang's process of modernisation directly impacts upon their sense of belonging. Those who do not benefit by social "progress" are alienated from – and marginalised by – those who do (Hopper & Webber, 2009).

Accordingly, Xinjiang's bridge society enjoys a social prestige denied to the rest of the Uyghur population. These socio-economic elites tend to perceive themselves as embracing both social progress and – often implicitly – a superior Han culture. Conversely, some Uyghur elite disparage traditional Uyghur identities as "animals" or "backward people" (Cappelletti, 2015). For ethnic minorities, discriminatory attitudes such as these are additional barriers to the equitable access of public services, to economic independence, and to collective self-determination.

The recognition and respect of Uyghur cultural heritage is adversely affected by such dynamics. Given that Xinjiang's modernisation is orchestrated by a Han-dominant authority, the priorities of the marginalised non-bridge population are invariably neglected. Indeed, the

party-state's policies – such as mandatory education in Putonghua – are perceived by many as actively imperialistic; they attempt to dispossess ethnic minorities of their language, knowledge, history and land (Hasmath, 2019). As Bellér-Hann notes, the mere presence of freshly-tarred roads can be perceived "as expressions of Chinese territorializing efforts" (2014, p. 177) and representational projections of the party-state's power.

Moreover, although the Uyghur bridge society may shun traditional identities to embrace Han modernism, such behaviour is highly contextual. In certain social domains – particularly among co-ethnics – "Uyghur-ness" becomes a social performance, or a marketable symbol of faux solidarity (Cappelletti, 2015). In this manner, the cultural heritage of the integrated Uyghur elite enables authorities to gratify an inclusive and multicultural self-image (SCIO, 2018). Despite such appearances, however, the party-state simultaneously prohibits civil servants, teachers and students from fasting during Ramadan, for example (Payton, 2016). As a result of Xinjiang's "development", ethnic minorities are less able to resist such policies while remaining socially supported and financially independent.

Finally, the social and economic restructuring of Xinjiang has indirectly shaped the region's contemporary political landscape. Specifically, by fostering a culturally oppressive atmosphere, the process has added to the grievances against the Chinese party-state held by many Uyghur communities – some of whom desire Uyghur separatism (Van Wie Davis, 2008). Such sentiment threatens both Chinese national legitimacy and Xinjiang's economic promise. The party-state's response has been exceedingly militant; authorities have grossly expanded regional surveillance, censorship and policing (Rollet, 2018; Unger, 2018).

Xinjiang's increased securitisation starkly contrasts with the officially touted narratives of poverty reduction and progress. As Unger (2018) points out, a $6.1 billion USD airport expansion in Xinjiang's capital, Ürümqi, will hardly benefit those of the Uyghur population who have had their passports confiscated (China Approves, 2018). Tragically, this militant trend continues in the form of state-sanctioned "re-education" camps, where people of ethnic minorities are currently being detained without trial (Joplin, 2018).

Conclusion

Development initiatives in Xinjiang, from past to present, are not benign steps on the path of progress. Nor is the self-determination of Xinjiang's ethnic minorities an inevitable casualty of modernisation. The Chinese party-state, however, tacitly endorses these assumptions. The Go West campaign, the SREB and Xinjiang's induced urbanisation each represent human well-being as sufficiently defined by rates of per capita income. Simultaneously, the culture and norms of the Han ethnic majority are implicitly universalised and imposed as basic "standards of living".

As I have outlined, such a process of modernisation has significant costs for the Uyghur population of Xinjiang. Uyghur people must contend with inequitable barriers to employment, education and social integration. Moreover, the formalisation of Xinjiang's economic and administrative institutions has diminished the substantive freedom of many Uyghur communities: to speak their language, to express their religion and, more generally, to be whomsoever they choose.

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Chapter 11

The Cultural, Social, and Economic Impact of Papua New Guinea's Liquified Natural Gas Project

Emily Munro

Abstract

Over time, colonial discourse has determined how Indigenous and non-European citizens, subjects and land spaces are perceived, particularly in the sense that they are "savage" and in need of "civilising". This ideology has paved the way for the invasion and domination of non-European people and land, and is still present in modern ideology, particularly when spoken about in terms of the "developing world" and in "development projects" by European, American and Australian organisations (West, 2016). These "developments" often prioritise profit and western goals, while marginalising and oppressing indigenous peoples.

This chapter will examine the Papua New Guinea (PNG) Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project, which was projected to bring great economic growth to the state and local people of PNG. However, the project has underperformed in terms of employment, economic benefits and promised infrastructure, and left the indigenous people dispossessed from their traditional ways of life, culture and identities. The project has also compromised the local marketplace and brought upon social problems such as lower access to education and healthcare, increased crime, adultery, and alcoholism, broken down traditional family ideals, and generated feelings of loss around indigenous ways of life and land. Additionally, inadequate access to formal land titles, royalties and benefits has been widely reported as a major failure of the development (Raitt & Battrick, 2012).

Natural resource extraction development, and the commodification of such resources, should not be prioritised over the cultural and social well-being of the local and indigenous people. Therefore any "developments" that should come about in PNG (or elsewhere) should work to advantage indigenous people and amplify indigenous voices, histories, traditions and knowledge. We should ask, is the loss of indigenous life, culture and traditional economic systems worth the monetary value of a mining project?

Introduction

The Papua New Guinea (PNG) Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project is the largest gas development in the country and is operated by Esso Highlands Limited, a subdivision of ExxonMobil. It involves the mining and transportation of compressed hydrocarbon gas from the Highlands of PNG through pipelines to processing and storage facilities at Port Moresby (Wielders, 2011) where the gas is liquefied and shipped to the international market (McIlraith, 2012). The extraction, processing and trade associated with mining is a means of generating opportunities and capital for the local economy and a range of national and international stakeholders (McIlraith, 2012).

The PNG LNG mainly impacts two regions. The first is the Hela region; the people within this region are known as the Huli and their economy relies on agriculture, family trade remittances, and cash transactions for household goods (McIlraith, 2012). The natural gas is extracted from the Hela region and transported to a plant site which is located on the coast, near Port Moresby (Wielders, 2011). The second region is located closest to this plant site and is known as the Hiri District which is comprised of two groups known as the Motu-Koita or Motu-Koitabu people (Wielders, 2011). The project also impacts many other outer communities, as gas wells are placed on people's land before being pipelined to the main system. As such, this project has a broad reach (Minnegal & Dwyer, 2017).

These two regional groups have a long history with missionaries and colonial power, which has significantly impacted the traditional culture of the people and contributed to the loss of customarily owned land (Wielders, 2011). They are some of the poorest and most marginalised in PNG and experience poor agricultural potential, no main electricity coverage, limited access to roads, low adult literacy and school enrolment, limited access to healthcare and education services, and an average life expectancy of only 62 years (McIlraith, 2012). Examining past mining projects provides evidence that mining can further disadvantage these vulnerable people and further marginalise them from their homes, society and culture (Oxfam, n.d).

Local PNG people have spoken about benefits promised in the primary stages of the PNG LNG development, such as improved standards of living, health, education, infrastructure, water supply and sanitation, which have not been met (Wielders, 2011). The LNG project was initially predicted to "double PNG's gross domestic product and result in significant social and economic change" (Wielders, 2011), and represented a critical crossroad in the country's development as investors attempt to rebuild past economic declines and failures (McIlraith, 2012). After a turbulent decade of economic development (Avalos et al., 2015) and a history of corruption by government bodies and foreign investors (Blazey & Perkiss, 2016), the challenge for stakeholders is to interrupt this cycle and ensure the project has an on-going positive influence on the people of PNG (McIlraith, 2012). Therefore, there is a significant need to address the wider impact associated with mining beyond the guise of economic prosperity, as it is shown that the resource development sector presents few benefits for most of the population yet introduces serious environmental and social problems for communities (McIlraith, 2012, p. 8).

Background

Papua New Guinea has a long history of trade and connection with other areas and has attracted scientists since the early 19th century with its rich diversity of flora, fauna and ecosystems (West, 2016). The island's abundance of natural and mineral resources has also been sought out and commodified with sporadic success and economic growth (Avalos et al., 2015). Over time the Papua New Guinean land, identity and culture has been disrupted by outsider-driven exploration and development. Early explorers, scientists and navigators who visited the island constructed the Papua New Guinean landscape and geography with political, cultural and textual representations which reflected the European discourse (Stella, 2007). These colonial representations tended to reduced nature and culture to "the jungle" and "the native", rather than appreciating Papua New Guinean history and knowledge (West, 2016). Colonial discourse also "naturalised the process of domination" as it portrayed Indigenous people as inferior and, therefore, created a justification for the conquest of "civilizing" non-European people (Stella, 2007). This ideology was extended to the land which was portrayed as waiting to be "discovered by intrepid white explorers" (West, 2016). Controlling representation, which operates as an act of silencing, is almost always connected with power as it produces social knowledge (Stella, 2007) and impacts how Papua New Guinean people and spaces are perceived. The goal of this representation was dispossession and allowed the dominant groups to overpower the "others". This ideology permeates modern society, as westerners enter non-western states – often under the guise of development.

The notion of "development" is prominent in South Pacific politics, media, sermons and policy reports and impacts people from outlying villages to gatherings of urban elites; this development is often mentioned alongside "'economic rationality', 'good governance' and 'progress'", while pushing aside the importance of culture, tradition, custom and identity (Hooper, 2005). These ideas assume that Papua New Guineans did not have their own forms of representation, cultural expressions or political institutions (Stella, 2007). However, the indigenous people have a long history of societies, politics, traditions, markets and tribal tensions before global development began. But the changes brought upon by international mining development companies were from a different system and positioned the PNG people on the periphery of a larger world influenced by outside sources of power and wealth, along with the reality that new opportunities may not be equally distributed (Minnegal & Dwyer, 2017). Inequalities are "produced, lived, and reinforced in today's globalized world" and the rhetoric of representation is deeply socially embedded in development (West, 2016), and the PNG LNG project is an example of how this inequality manifests.

The Impact on the Local Economy

Communities sometimes welcome developments such as resource extraction projects under the pretext of economic opportunities of wage income, employment, community funding, improved infrastructure and royalties or dividend payments from the resource development (McIlraith, 2012). However, the promises made by LNG developers have not lived up to expectations. The size of the economy was predicted to double but has only risen 10%, household incomes were predicted to raise by 84% but are down 6%, and employment which was promised to raise by 42% is down by 32% (Fox, 2018). These failures have impacted

various sectors of the PNG economy, particularly the local market economy, employment and environment which are deeply intertwined.

Introduction of Monetary Economy

One of the biggest changes that the PNG LNG has brought is the introduction of a western monetary economy (i.e., cash wages and cash-only exchange for market goods) to areas which have not traditionally used cash in their markets. The cash influx has disrupted old traditions such as trade and barter, has raised the price of living, and threatened food security (McIlraith, 2012). The surrounding regions have suffered from "hyper-development" whereby a sudden boom of cash, services and infrastructure have a disproportionate impact on a community (McIlraith, 2012). Money management in the areas has also raised concerns. When new western financial institutions such as banks entered the regions, they were not accompanied by community education about the new economic system or how to make informed choices with their wages including savings, investments, paying tax or simply visiting a bank (McIlraith, 2012). These challenges surrounding new economic circumstances reportedly caused confusion, apathy and dissatisfaction amongst the local people (McIlraith 2012). International institutions, like commercial banks, exist within a larger system of dispossession and create structural barriers, and may increase inequality (West, 2017). Papua New Guineans were pushed into this "modern monetary system" which assumes the western notion of how people and society are meant to be ordered and organised, however the focus on creating particular types of state-citizens and particular relations to land and natural resources "set the stage for ongoing dispossession" (West, 2016).

Employment in Education and Health

The mining project also disrupted other work sectors in the community. Particularly, there was a problem with professionals in the education and healthcare sectors abandoning their jobs for "improved pay and conditions" with the LNG project (McIlraith, 2012). Some smaller schools are forced to close without teachers (Wielders, 2011). This is concerning as access to formal education is already lacking, particularly in disadvantaged and rural areas of PNG (McIlraith, 2012). Equal access to basic education and healthcare plays a critical part in reducing poverty and inequality, as it enhances productive employment opportunities (Raitt & Battrick, 2012). This would be beneficial to school leavers in the regions, who are chronically under or unemployed (McIlraith, 2012). The PNG health care system has also been addressed by the World Health Organisation; the overall inadequacy of the current healthcare system is due to the "poor awareness and knowledge about health, high healthcare worker absentee levels, and abandoned health facilities", which are directly related to the LNG project (McIlraith, 2012). Deteriorating public services and lack of health and education professionals is a major concern of the area and is contributing to the overall well-being of the locals.

Environmental Impact

The PNG LNG project has seen physical environmental damage including land clearing, construction, poor waste management and pollution such as oil spills, gas flaring and emissions (McIlraith, 2012). Environmental harm is also hindering people's abilities to maintain their traditional ways of life including gardening, trading, hunter-gathering practices and cultural activities (Minority Rights, 2018). The heavy dust downfall pollutes and covers

people's gardens, hindering the growth of bananas, mangoes and papaya, leaving them unsuitable for market, therefore affecting people's income (Wielders, 2011). Water pollution is a major problem in the two local regions as a result of construction sites and traffic. Drinking water is contaminated with mud, petroleum runoff and increased littering of non-biodegradable materials, such as plastic (McIlraith 2012). The contaminated waterways also disrupt self-employed small-scale agricultural businesses who rely on water access from rivers or streams (McIlraith, 2012), again impacting people's livelihoods and threatening job security. Besides the difficulty in producing goods, there is also poor infrastructure and networking for local markets and local businesses struggle to compete with the increased price of living and cheaper outsider products being bought into the markets (McIlraith, 2012, p. 44, 45). There is very little incentive for local producers to continue their traditional roles.

The question becomes, how could the LNG outsiders understand the complexity of Papua New Guineans' livelihoods and the flow on effects that environmental damage would have on their employment and economy? Development, sustainable or otherwise, has become preoccupied with results that are quantifiable, materialistic and economically beneficial for the developers (Kavaliku, 2005). Economic development revolves around the colonial discourse that indigenous people "lack capacity" to make decisions on their own "primitive" lives, therefore development is seen as "beneficial". However, this creates a set of conditions whereby Papua New Guineans are dispossessed of their economic rights, employment, their rights of representation and sovereignty over their land and biodiversity (West, 2017). Solutions for problems of development require regional cooperation, specifically from ordinary people who are connected to the land and understand the economic benefits of traditional use of the land. Due to the failure of the PNG LNG to seek the ordinary persons' experience, the project has disrupted the local economy in many ways.

Impact on Social and Cultural Life

Culture comprises "the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, intellectual and emotional features that characterise society or social groups. It includes not only the arts…but also different modes of life, the fundamental rights of human beings, value systems, traditions and belief" (Kavaliku, 2005, pp. 22-23). Culture is also intertwined with identity, traditional practices and social ways of life, and therefore must be central to the decision making of development policies. Especially when dealing with colonial discourse, we must be critical of the colonial powers' attempt to assert their own superiority against the "inferiority of the Indigenous people" (Stella, 2007, p. 12). The PNG LNG project has had many social and cultural impacts on the local people in the mining regions of PNG, including the loss of land autonomy, loss of culture, gendered issues and social disease. It is important to acknowledge that these are among only *few* of the many issues that indigenous people are facing as a result of the LNG project and that impacts are felt in various ways and intensities across the country.

Women

The impacts of mining are gendered, with women in particular disproportionately experiencing the negative effects (Oxfam, n.d.). Women are generally more vulnerable in PNG due to limited formal education, lower incomes, lower life expectancies and higher chances of experiencing poverty and violence than men (McIlraith, 2012). The large cash influxes into the community have increased issues with gender-based violence in the regions. For example, men with increased wages are now able to afford to pay a higher "bride price" for more women, therefore maintaining gender power relations in the community (McIlraith, 2012). These power relations also dictate that women are not consulted on mining companies' negotiations, and often compensation is paid to men "on behalf of" their families, denying women access to financial benefits – worsening gender inequalities (Oxfam, n.d.). In LNG regions, women were excluded from community consultations and less informed than men, with one Hela resident stating: "we the women from Hela have no idea what it is and what's actually happening" (in McIlraith, 2012, p. 9). Women in the mining regions are stripped of their authoritative dialogue and therefore unable to fulfil their rights as citizens or participate in self-determination when it comes to land rights and democratic life (Romany, 1993).

Social Disease

The migration of westerners to the mining region has introduced many social diseases. There has been an increase in petty crime, more criminal enterprises, and violent armed robberies which target people who receive cash wages (McIlraith, 2012). Small arms are a significant concern of locals, who report that landowners were stockpiling weapons in anticipation of civil retaliation regarding unfair benefit sharing by the LNG developers (McIlraith, 2012). Law and order are also not being carried out properly, as many officials remain occupied with landowner protests and issues, resulting in compromised general personal safety and security (Wielders, 2011).

Alcohol abuse, particularly in young men, has increased due to the influx of foreigners, who have a culture of drinking, and the general increase of money for leisure (Wielders, 2011). Adultery is another issue; the risk of infectious diseases has increased, as has prostitution (McIlraith, 2012), which is often a result of a male majority workforce (Oxfam, n.d.). Evidence shows that adultery is causing an increase of breakdowns of marriages and compromising the integrity of the traditional family unit, which is spoiling the spiritual life within the clans (Wielder, 2011).

Loss of Land Autonomy

The civil unrest and tensions between local indigenous communities and the LNG-corporation is a huge matter of contention (Minority Rights, 2018). Land is central to Papua New Guinean lifestyle and identity, and as most land is customarily owned, landownership claims can be complex. Over 90 percent of the land in Papua New Guinea is "customary land", meaning extended family groups hold land titles through generations, additionally specific family relations to land and sea are considered genealogical, meaning that people have kinship relation with the environment (West, 2017). It is, therefore, imperative for the LNG project and government to negotiate with landowners and customary landowners to ensure their perspectives are represented.

Royalties and development levies have arrived well below promised amounts, if at all, and disputes have begun to have landowner claims recognised (Barrett & Westbrook, 2019). The benefit sharing processes have failed and most people feel that the government's support and advocacy for landowner rights was very poor (McIlraith, 2012). In response, landowners are blocking access to gas wells on their land and demanding that their outstanding royalties are paid before they will allow further work to commence (Tlozek & Harriman, 2017). The two regions have little legal experience with large scale resource extraction corporations, which brings upon challenges with self-advocation relating to benefit-sharing and compensation contracts (Wielders, 2011). The political and legal processes surrounding the LNG project are immensely complicated and local groups possess comparatively less knowledge and power in relation to LNG stakeholders and legal teams (McIlraith, 2012). Self-advocation and self-determination becomes particularly difficult when people speak a different language to their oppressors, coupled with the fact that the Hela and Hiri districts have very low literacy levels (McIlraith, 2012) and are not familiar with western legal systems. The local people are placed in a disadvantaged position; therefore, the LNG can take advantage of indigenous peoples and deprive them of the benefits and royalties.

Loss of Traditional Ways of Life

The growing changes brought upon by the LNG project have added complexities to daily routines, social practices, cultural beliefs and traditional ways of life. Within small traditional communities, key resources such as sago, bananas, wild pigs and fish were seasonally available, and people established new gardens as needed. Individuals and households were likely to be delegated tasks such as hunting, gardening, fishing or processing sago, and these tasks and produced goods were often shared between families, friends and neighbouring villages (Minnegal & Dwyer, 2017). Sharing was a daily process, an act of goodwill (often to ward off sorcery or the risk of harm), but also a necessity as resource acquisition (Minnegal & Dwyer, 2017). However, these daily routines and gatherings are interrupted as more people travel away to work long days on the project. People also relied on the mangrove environment for hunting fish and mud crabs, gardening and building materials, but are no longer able to access these environments due to exclusion zones around pipelines. As one local says, "the project has taken that away from us" and younger generations are losing their indigenous skills and incomes (Wielders, 2011, p. 16).

The movement away from traditional work is exacerbated by the increased dependence on store-bought goods (McIlraith, 2012) and consuming western culture through the new market goods. There are reports of consumerism and self-expressions as "modern people" such as new fashions, the use of disposable nappies, and bought "baby carriers" in favour of a string bag on their back (McIlraith, 2012; Minnegal & Dwyer, 2017). These were statements of "status, of membership within a new world of possibilities—of belonging to the category of those who wore such things" (Minnegal & Dwyer, 2017, p. 110). Despite this, many locals have explicitly expressed that they do not want to change their lifestyles, but "maintain their culture" (Wielders, 2011, p. 16). For many, living off the land represents traditional identities and livelihoods, but there is concern that it will take time to relearn the sociocultural skills of the community once the project is complete (McIlraith, 2012). People reportedly view these actions as disrespectful towards traditional cultural order, forgetting the "old ways", becoming greedy for money, disobeying their parents and elders, and only thinking of money (McIlraith, 2012).

Family traditions such as church and "holy days" are being abandoned due to work commitments or socialising, which is seen to be spoiling traditional spirituality (Wielders, 2011). The churches play a vital role in the lives and wellbeing of many people in the Hela region, but people expressed frustration towards the LNG project for being a negative influence on a large number of people who were "turning away from the church", thus demonstrating how the LNG project does not accommodate for people's close affinity to the land, sociocultural or religious beliefs (McIlraith 2012). Overall, the PNG LNG has disrupted the indigenous peoples' way of life in many ways and has caused generational harm to the local people and culture.

Conclusion

Natural resource extraction development, and the commodification of such, should not be prioritised over the cultural and social well-being of the local and indigenous people. Therefore any "developments" that come about in PNG (or elsewhere), should work to advantage indigenous people and amplify indigenous voices, histories, traditions and knowledge. Mining can impact local communities both positively and negatively. But as demonstrated in this chapter, although positive community development projects may exist, they do not off-set the negative effects (Oxfam, n.d.). Over the years, development became a "global project", operating as a "top down" process driven by macroeconomic principles within the context of nation states (Hooper, 2005). In pursuit of this, the PNG LNG project has left people dispossessed of their land, estranged from their culture, and left without promised benefits and royalties from the use of their land. It has even been reported that the country would have been better off without the project (Fox, 2018).

How can we recover from such severe social and cultural damage and how can we move forward with development in Papua New Guinea, or indeed any places where people are dispossessed from development projects? In the interest of repairing the damage which has occurred to the local PNG people, the LNG should work towards improving the overall access to education and healthcare (McIlraith, 2012), however this must be done in a way which opens the space for indigenous intervention and control, both in the way of capital and content to ensure that the programs are appropriate for the local people and areas. Importantly, the PNG LNG sponsors and lenders should provide sufficient royalty payments to the traditional landowners, as promised. However, it could be argued that royalties are insufficient compensation for loss of land and traditional roles and economies, as the loss of indigenous ways of life has the potential to cause intergenerational harm to indigenous peoples. There needs to be support and encouragement towards indigenous ways of life, particularly towards agriculture, gardening, fisheries, local environments, marketplaces, trade and other sectors as determined by the indigenous peoples themselves, to ensure the reproduction and preservation of local knowledge and culture. The key here is reinstating local ownership. These sectors should be rightfully controlled, owned and directed by the indigenous people to ensure that they have full autonomy over any changes in their local areas and ways of life.

A number of important questions were ignored by the LNG project: What is important to the local people? What is socially and culturally meaningful? What priority is given to family and social obligations? What do they consider as wealth for the individual, family,

relatives and friends? Are these meanings the same for a Pacific Islander as to a westerner? (Kavaliku, 2005). Paths of development should always consider these cultural factors and how they shape the local society, and importantly, how “societies conceive their own future and choose the means to achieve those futures” (Kavaliku, 2005, p. 26). With these strategies and dialogue in mind, society should move towards an idea of change and development which does not focus on profit, but rather, is collective and has indigenous communities, identities and culture at the forefront of its priorities.

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Chapter 12

Women and Neoliberal Economic Development

Adele Aria

Abstract

Economic development has typically been designed, underpinned by neoliberal principles, to support global market integration of states which ultimately demands women to compete with men in the labour market (Fodor & Horn, 2015). However, this fails to consider whether this positioning of women in the public domain is ideal, desirable or even truly attainable without addressing the inequities and gendered differentials that come with the attendant inequities around perceptions of women's labour and women's contributions in unpaid labour (Calkin, 2015a; Mezzadri, 2016). It also neglects to consider and challenge the supposition that the public domain of labour is the only model that ought to be perpetuated and instituted as a symbol of successful development. There are significant consequences to the ongoing positioning of the public domain as the superior form of valued labour when women's labour is largely undervalued, given it continues to occur largely within the private domain even in the "developed" nations and in contemporary settings. This unpaid and devalued labour of women not only marginalises them in a way that is arguably unquantifiable, it takes a very real toll on their capacity to enjoy health and wellbeing and participate in the so-called developed global market as equivalent actors with their own voices.

Women and Neoliberal Economic Development

This paper seeks to consider the gendered experience of the dominant development discourse. It examines the ways in which the prevailing neoliberal development models champion male-centric and capital-driven ideals of work and the consequent effect of women's work being undervalued and relegated to a sphere that is deprioritised. Under this model of economic development, women suffer from the expectation to discharge unpaid domestic labour in the private sphere whilst simultaneously participating and "developing" themselves as agents in the neoliberal market. Whilst Harvey (2007) argues that neoliberalism has failed to show more than limited effectiveness in driving sustainable economic growth with positive social outcomes, it remains the hegemonic theory of globalised political economic practice. Women and girls are effectively sacrificed to achieve development, while often "presented as the key to development" (Eisenstein, 2017, p. 36). They are drawn into capitalist operations, their efforts used to ensure others can be productive and fully realised economic agents. Concurrently, their labour and challenges in becoming actualised participants themselves are dismissed. The approach of neoliberal-oriented economic development efforts will also be scrutinised specific to its approach to gender, namely the problematic positioning it imposes upon women. The ideology operates with some arguably unchallenged assumptions around the definition of ideal outcomes.

For the purposes of this paper, the term "women" is applied in a relatively narrow manner yet not intended to be considered in an exclusionary way. It is recognised that gender is experienced on a spectrum. It is also important to acknowledge that much of the research has historically considered domestic life through a lens of heteronormativity, particularly as applied to the central defining intimate relationship in which women participate.

As a theory, neoliberalism proposes human wellbeing can be advanced through the maximisation of entrepreneurial freedoms and the institutional framework is characterised by free trade markets with minimal state intervention, private property and individual liberty (Harvey, 2007). The United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Gender Equality measure focuses strongly on economic and political participation and capacity to generate income (United Nations, n.d.; Angrist, 2012). This reveals an expectation that economic influence is reflective as a marker of individual attainment of agency within a "developed" nation. Economic development is predicated upon accumulation-driven growth where labour complements capital in the process of accumulation (Dimova & Nordman, 2014).

The corresponding generation of jobs is anticipated to absorb or, more accurately, transform surplus labour beyond subsistence level wage rates (Lewis in Dimova & Nordman, 2014, p. 388). Theoretically, this shift would mark the change from underdevelopment to modern development, and labour would become peripheral to the process. This fails to consider the difference in individual experience to labour and the consequences and benefits associated with those, nor gendered and other barriers to engaging with labour for accumulation.

Fodor and Horn (2015) suggest economic development, particularly designed with neoliberal principles toward global market integration, tends to orient toward resourcing women to compete with men in the labour market. It assumes this to be ideal positioning. However, questions arise around whether this addresses inequities regarding gendered wage differentials and perceptions of women's labour as conventionally understood (Calkin

2015a). This is further complicated when such labour is also seen as disposable or owed (without recompense) and conducted in the private domain and therefore invisible (Mezzadri, 2016; Smith, 1975). This speaks to using the framework of the public and corporate domain of labour, typically defined through the lens of men's labour, to be the dominant and "correct" ideal to aspire to. It is against this which all other forms of labour efforts strive to be legitimised.

Smith (1975) posits that the typical western organisation of society leads to an inherent separation of family and private domain from the public sphere of productive enterprise. Notably, the western model is central to the design embedded in and elevated by many development programmes. Family effectively becomes the realm of supportive social relations and management of service to the lauded public world. Women's work in managing households are often done, with little to no acknowledgement or appreciation, in service of both husbands or male intimate partners, and children. This work is in aid of male partners' and children's progress and achievement in public spheres. Often this will be at the detriment of women's own capacities to participate economically. It also limits their opportunity to progress or equitably access tools and experiences necessary for fulfilment, health and wellbeing, particularly in capitalist societal structures.

The supportive social relations within the household bear a significant strain as the main arena for expression and meeting of psychological need. It is also the space for accompanying impacts given capitalist structures themselves demand a separation of emotionality, especially anxieties, from organisational life and the public domain (Smith, 1975). To exacerbate this effect, those emotions that are relegated beyond the public realm are brought or kept home and given over to women to manage. The considerable emotional labour is largely invisible in a neoliberal capitalist economic setting. Consequently, this labour is undervalued if not completely unvalued, as if men (and dependents) have no feelings or requirement to process them for themselves and those emotions are laid at the feet of women (Hamlett, 2019; Yong, 2019). The unchallenged assumption is that no recompense is necessary nor appropriate for the work this requires. Smith (1975) posits that the home is where people seek psychological repair due to the injurious nature of our capitalist world which demands of individuals a level of productivity to validate their place in the machinery of society. If home is a place of safety and restoration, there is an implication that someone holds a responsibility to generate and maintain this phenomenon. As it stands, this role typically falls to women.

The home and family unit become crucial not only to individuals' capacity to be viable contributors to a neoliberal capitalist society, but also "to the survival of children" (Smith, 1975, p. 68). This is a substantial burden, not only on expectations of physical safety and survival but also with regards to psychological safety and recovery in response to the challenging "external" world. Whilst there may be compensation and acknowledgement of labour in the outside world, there is not a comparable system of understanding and valuing the efforts conducted within the private domain. The labour conducted within the home is not paid for in a way which translates to economic participation equivalent beyond the confines of the domestic space.

Disconcertingly, development efforts are designed as though economic participation in the public sphere is the ideal outcome, without considering that there is a cohort of the population being exploited and exhausted by this unpaid work. These same exploited individuals are then expected to simultaneously still be grateful for the opportunity to step

outside to take on the second (and effectively possibly third, fourth and fifth) paid job beyond the domestic sphere. The toll of this as a daily experience for women is difficult to quantify. Additionally, the challenge of expressing the significant demand this places upon them is, in itself, another burden.

This is further complicated when one considers how emotional labour is a significant factor supporting others' ongoing potential to continue being functional, healthy and well participants in the public sphere (Hamlett, 2019; Yong, 2019). Yet it remains unpaid and the providers (i.e., women) of this labour are themselves dependent on the household members (men) who typically have higher earning and production capacity in the capitalist economic structure (Smith, 1975). There is often a background context where women are further marginalised by diminished access to education and experience in the formal labour market in comparison to men which in turn exacerbates "their vulnerability to patriarchal subjugation" (Fodor & Horn, 2015, p. 287).

Economic development seeks to demand the participation of women in labour markets with little consideration of these exacerbating forces that already heavily undermine their competitiveness whilst failing to account for the unpaid labour they have previously and will continue to provide in domestic and private spaces. It is especially galling when one considers that, even in a supposedly "developed" sovereign state such as the United States of America, estimates place the total of unpaid labour to be equivalent to seven years (Gates in Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2019). Given neoliberalism relies on the supposition that advancements to wellbeing require free trade, individual liberty and freely functioning markets, such factors combine to create a gendered experience where women are grossly marginalised and effectively severely compromised in their capacity to be competitive economic actors (Harvey, 2007).

It is particularly concerning that development programs seek to replicate a form of economic system as seen in a "developed" nation such as Australia in which women persistently experience wage disparity, compromised rights, lack of recognition of domestic labour, and are vulnerable to gendered violence (Gender Equity Victoria, 2020). Preliminary research was conducted only weeks after federal and state restrictions were imposed in response to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Gender analysis revealed a significant gendered disparity in impact experienced (Gender Equity Victoria, 2020). Women are disproportionately at risk as they are over-represented in frontline services ranging from essential service delivery, retail, education, family violence response, and housing and social support. Women were also found to be disproportionately facing job insecurity and loss due to underemployment, casualisation and the sectors in which they were over-represented (Gender Equity Victoria, 2020). The researchers also found evidence of women facing increased risk of gendered violence both in domestic situations and in frontline positions (Gender Equity Victoria, 2020).

As more work adapted to infection and risk reduction, unpaid care work within households increased dramatically and there was a significant increase of this type of domestic and emotional labour borne by women. The Victorian Government's Report estimated the unpaid labour within its state alone to be valued at $205 billion and early researchers projected that the value and scale of that work would only increase with the social changes brought about by the pandemic (Gender Equity Victoria, 2020).

The public sphere, where production and therefore arguably, manifestation of personal value in a neoliberal society, occurs, is also where history is defined and is

effectively designated to be the sphere of "male" activity (Smith, 1975). As such, this allows men to be the definers of society, holding the dominant influence over the sphere in which most of our societal history is created, told and considered. The male perspective is accordingly afforded a stronger voice in generating development discourses and designing activities. Men's power and ways of being in the public sphere becomes the definition by which all humans (and genders) are expected to be measured against. Thus, development activities practically posit the male version of the public domain and those associated sets of aspirational outcomes as the unchallenged ideal to which others should strive. Not only does this serve to devalue other ways of being, it simultaneously further legitimises and reinforces the existing patriarchal structuring of the so-called productive public world.

Fodor and Horn (2015) also contend that the jobs for which women are employed have often fuelled economic growth precisely because there is a perception that they can be valued at a lesser level and the cheaper pay incentivises foreign investment (Calkin, 2015a). This suggests a pervasive experience of gendered disparity is likely in multiple factors including pay, employment options, recruitment and industry representation. Although discriminatory practices might be reduced due to legal and cultural constraints associated with foreign investment, there is evidence there were still concerning hiring preferences in action (Villareal & Yu, 2007). Women tend to be hired in lower-skilled jobs due to perceptions around their apparent lower cost and docility. It effectively justifies the creation of more employment opportunities for supposedly "lower skilled" and more affordable women. The result is a contentious improvement as it generates a new degree of economic independence (Lim in Fodor & Horn, 2015, p. 289). Concerningly, it also seems to be heavily reliant on the idea that women should be grateful for tokenism rather than equality, progress rather than equal rights, partial compensation rather than equitable recognition and empowerment.

Relatedly, perhaps there ought to be critical examination of who has attained the right to make such assessments of what is "lower skilled" and determining the hierarchy of skills and associated compensation systems. How has this power been earned or obtained and how is it being upheld? The judgements around hierarchy seem intrinsically bound to the perception that women have a lower productivity without due scrutiny to how this is related to their responsibilities being conducted largely within the private sphere. Yet the public sphere and the wellbeing of society and all people appears to be effectively and practically heavily reliant on the emotional labour conducted in that invisible and undervalued space. The labour of preserving and upholding wellbeing is also not exclusively conducted within domestic spaces but tends to be persistently undervalued.

Interestingly, Blanton and Blanton (2015) further admonish development efforts in playing a predatory role on women's labour. They argue that a key component of supporting development activities is through the cultivated attraction of foreign direct investment. There is a deliberate leveraging of the improvement of women's status with the offer of utilising a higher-skilled and diversified labour pool made available whilst simultaneously taking advantage of women's persistent secondary status as labour participants (Calkin, 2015a; Coleman in Blanton & Blanton, 2015, p. 62). Foreign investment and development programmes can congratulate themselves on addressing rights and empowerment challenges in so far as upskilling women to make them attractive workforce participants. Ultimately, women make an overall workforce more attractive, positioned as an attractive component specifically because they are able to be perceived as more dispensable, able to be

underemployed, at lower rates, with less benefits, less security, typically less associated demands for labour rights, and are considered more disposable than male counterparts (Calkin, 2015b). Development efforts effectively serve to redirect women's labour into a public domain. Yet these activities remain complicit in deliberately not valuing them equivalently. Worse, they are failing women's labour specifically in positioning it to be attractive because it is available to be comparatively undervalued. This is done to entice foreign direct investment to prop up further development activities. This predatory undervaluation is a convenient "added value" proposition for investors to engage the previously underutilised population group in the workforce.

Women, as family aids and helpers or homemakers, until integrated into the global neoliberal economy, are not seen as "proper" workers (Mezzadri, 2016). Their disposability, in practice, is not an exaggeration. Indeed, in situations where development models bring a challenge of underemployment, often the male heads of family units make the choices as to which family members will take up the finite and limited opportunities for work. These are typically reserved for male members, relegating the women to "helper" roles for the "productive" employed males (Mezzadri, 2016). This serves to deny women opportunity, legitimacy and economic agency in a neoliberal capitalist system. The exploitative nature of the development discourse is, in effect, replicated on a micro level within the family and domestic unit in the private domain. It extends the marginalisation into the private space even as the development program ostensibly seeks to promote progress and improvement in a region.

Gendered disparity in wage rates, conditions, employment options and representation in industries are frequently observed in nations in which development efforts have taken place. As an example, Costa Rica is often touted as having exceeded many developmental standards of most categories for the region, with both strong enrolment and retention rates by women and girls in the education system (Osborne, 2013). However, upon closer inspection, an enduring significant gender disparity in the labour force is found. It is theorised that this is largely due to the perseverance of prescriptive gender roles severely stunting women's socio-economic engagement and the institutional practices reinforcing and perpetuating discriminations which foster gender disparity (Osborne, 2013). Although there is evidence of Costa Rican women pursuing education to support attainment in the professional and public sphere, an expectation remains that those ambitions will be forfeited in favour for the fulfilment of domestic responsibilities (Osborne, 2013). Despite gross national economic growth, Costa Rican women have persistently experienced poverty. Poverty has effectively undergone a feminisation. Women, including Costa Rican women, currently "represent a disproportionate percentage of the world's poor" (Chant in Osborne, 2013).

Similarly, Angrist (2012) suggests the Arab world reveals significant gender disparity in female labour force participation rates and other measures of gendered economic discrimination. Having suffered dismantling of their own states, the region endured a subsequent imposition of development and western capitalist ideological norms. Angrist (2012) argues that this historical context and the phenomena of inequity and limitations on female autonomy are related. Ultimately, the Arab countries were found to be associated with reduced female achievement in labour, however, this was distinctly found not to be a result of Islamic cultural influence (Donno & Russett in Angrist, 2012, p. 58). Angrist contends that economic globalisation forces, whilst boosting women's workforce participation, tended to disproportionately employ women's labour in particular areas specifically because their

labour is perceived to be lower skilled and cheaper (Villareal & Yu in Angrist, 2012, p. 59). As a workforce, they were assessed to be more docile and less likely to organise (i.e., unionise for improved conditions). Foreign investment has been deliberately enticed with this rhetoric.

Unionisation and popular organisation are often deliberately dismantled in the wake of the institution of the neoliberal model, under the guise of development. The neoliberal state formation in Chile saw the removal and often violent repression of social movements and organisations including community health centres (Harvey, 2007). The rhetoric used suggested the labour market of Chile, after Pinochet's coup, was ostensibly freed from regulatory and institutional restraints, but the effect was the removal of trade unions which had organised for the benefit of workers. The reconstruction of the Chilean economy was done to replicate theoretical constructs, as taught by Milton Friedman, with the privatisation of previously public assets and the facilitation of foreign direct investment (Harvey, 2007). What ensued was evidence that the country, a small group of ruling elites and foreign investors were able to profit and enjoy success economically while the majority of the population suffered. Neoliberalisation processes are observed to be unbalanced in their impacts due to factors such as geography, class structures and other social forces. Chilean women were disproportionately represented in poverty, underemployment and domestic labour expectations during this period (Harvey, 2007).

The economic model that came to be established within Chile resulted in a form of deliberate cultivation of unemployment as there was a shift away from rural, "traditional" informal industry and employment. This served to generate a pool of low-wage surplus labour which is specifically convenient for the process of accumulation of capital in a neoliberal market (Harvey, 2007). Given women as workers and women's labour as a form of contribution is undervalued, this resulted in their vulnerability to providing the ideal low-cost surplus for asset-rich capitalists to predate upon them. Again, women suffered disproportionately.

Perhaps even more disconcertingly, foreign investment and development discourse often encourages a problematic way of valuing the integration of women as economic participants. It extols their supposedly gendered virtues of being "more responsible, altruistic", perpetuating a problematic essentialist gender perspective (Calkin, 2015a, p. 614). This invites a degree of predation in the ready situating of women, supposedly predisposed to prioritise the needs of others, within the newly imposed economic model. Furthermore, the associated language positions women as an untapped development resource (UN Women in Calkin, 2015a). The implications extend beyond the idea that women are risk-averse and responsible, but that they are available to bear the weighty burden of the emotional and private domain management of family units and social lives. Women are to serve as rescuers of the entire global economy. Their previous exclusion and underrepresentation, as a cohort, is somehow the true driver of the failure of global development. Now women, underequipped as they inevitably are in most development programs, must take up this lofty responsibility too. If only they could be sufficiently "unleashed" and "liberated" or sufficiently "tapped" into, like a dehumanised resource within a great machinery of change, we would witness the thriving of humanity (Care International in Calkin, 2015a). This rhetoric itself relegates the historic and contemporary contributions of women, particularly in social and reproductive labour and private domains, to a grossly undervalued contributor in what has been achieved.

There is also a disproportionate representation of female workers engaged in informal labour and the form of activities that are not only poorly paid, but poorly protected (Dimova & Nordman, 2014). Informal labour can include but is not limited to work such as street vendors, production which takes place in households, or without a distinct employer-employee relationship and consequently are often unprotected by typical legal and social protections afforded to formal workers. It is potentially symptomatic of vast pools of hidden unemployment in developing countries as it is generally indicative of vast numbers of self-employed, informal arrangements and under-employed workers (Mazumdar & Fields in Dimova & Nordman, 2014, p. 390). Developing countries tend to witness a majority of employment outside the formal waged sector with a growth in entrepreneurship and self-employment. However, sustained economic development activities result in self-employment reducing with a consequent increase in formal waged employment (Margolis in Dimova & Nordman, 2014, p. 390). However, theorists contend much of the movement toward formal employment is contingent upon educational attainment, particularly of children (Dimova & Nordman, 2014). These activities and achievements are supported significantly and predominantly by women in the domestic sphere.

The utilisation of women is seen similarly in projects that supposedly empower them but simultaneously predate upon them, both as end consumers and as agents of capitalist action. An example is the "Shakti Project", which Eisenstein (2017) suggests was a thinly veiled attempt by Unilever to expand its market in South-East Asia. The messaging of "empowered mothers" used the network of local women to sell Unilever products to rural consumers, targeting Indian villages. Parallel networks were set up in other countries following the success of the first iteration. Unilever enjoyed a vast extension of reach, accessing previously untapped potential customers where there was otherwise no established distribution network, supportive infrastructure or advertising coverage (Eisenstein, 2017). The project was supported by local NGOs, local governments, and instrumentalised women as messengers. Whilst the program and the women were supposedly contributing to the enhancement of community health, they provided connection to a massive pool of new consumers and delivered health objectives through exclusively private capitalist supply channels (Eisenstein, 2017). Prugl (in Eisenstein, 2017, p. 41) damningly terms such efforts as "neoliberal feminism" referring to neoliberal capitalism co-opting feminism for the purposes of favourably presenting capitalism.

As Calkin (2015b) notes, perhaps one of the most dangerous tendencies of neoliberalism in application to development is its tendency to be employed as a universally appropriate panacea. Economic improvements may not be inherently problematic in all applications. Larner concedes neoliberalist ideology to be multifaceted and demands market logic be "expanded into all areas of political and social life" (in Calkin 2015b, p. 296). Ultimately, this has considerable implications for the lived experience of women where these development strategies are deployed. Whilst such strategies strive to impose neoliberalist outcomes, they appear to be inextricably intertwined with patriarchal positioning of women and perceptions of "women's labour" – and this is by no means an empowered gendered experience.

The service of women is of benefit to others and neoliberal economic progress. Development efforts largely seek to impose a system of economic participation where labour is defined by an empowered few who influence the discourse in ways that benefit their historic strengths. The imprint of gendered disparity in the so-called developed world persists

in contemporary experiences and remains difficult to overcome. Unchallenged and unquestioned, the insidious influence is being embedded into other places through development efforts as neoliberal principles demand global market integration. The positioning of women in the public domain comes at a price and with little pause for considering why this outcome is deemed ideal. Simultaneously, the sphere in which women's contributions have persisted continues to be undervalued or deliberately framed in language of devaluation for purposes of predation. Women and their labour are at risk of being commodified in the name of development if we do not interrogate the way in which development efforts are designed and implemented, and generate intended and unintended consequences.

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Afterword

Baden Offord

This book, through its diverse stories of development, is hard to put down. What we call development is found in a perverse conjuncture of systems of power and knowledge that have deep roots in the collective human story on our beautiful planet earth. As a concept, development has colonised minds and material life to such an extent that its deceptive tyranny has become the norm. We have come to accept its overarching presence in every aspect of our lives – accepted its gifts, light, darkness and terrors – as ubiquitous to all knowledge production and every kind of mining, whether material or psychological. As human beings we have become not just co-opted by the great story of human "progress and development" but complicit in its making. None of us is an innocent bystander: now, in the age of industrial-techno-capitalism we face the effects of development as never before. We are a society poised on the precipice of global environmental catastrophe brought about through unleashed energies that defy resistance, conscience, shame, evidence, goodwill, appeals, education and protest.

The dominant idea of development that brought us here has its roots in the historical convergence of industrialisation, colonialism and the imperial energies of the European Enlightenment. Entangled with other significant ideas such as progress, civilisation and evolution, development has become an unbending and often unchallenged template across the world informing and guiding all contemporary structures of economic, technological, social, political and psychological systems and power. On the one hand, development is justified through a lens of communal, individual, national and global betterment, economically and politically rationalised through Enlightenment questing for equality, freedom and liberty. On the other hand, development is revealed to be a myth, a not-so-innocent idea that has failed dismally to end poverty, war, nuclear danger, protect the environment, and make the world a better and peaceful place. Ultimately development has entrenched itself as a concept above other concepts, glamoured us into submission. A false promise.

As critical human rights educators and students, the demand before us, if we are to understand this concept of development with our eyes wide open – unblinking – is to work towards decolonising the world, to de-glamour our minds and foster and create alternative futures. This book provides a crucial and critical intervention into the momentum that insanely comes with a "progress" oriented world. Through the foundation of a critical human rights educational framework, the authors examine, discuss and analyse a range of diverse contexts across the globe in ways that galvanise our attention, unsettling and potentially shifting our understanding of development. To disrupt its glamour.

Such a radical book as this not only offers an antidote to the accepted positive script of development, but the possibility of unleashing new energies to question the path we should go.

Contributors

Adele Aria
Born overseas and speaking languages other than English, Adele is grateful to have been welcomed onto Noongar Boodjar. Adele has served as CEO, Board Director, and senior Executive in the Arts, not-for-profit and community services sectors. Their personal experiences as a multicultural LGBTQIA+ individual with chronic illnesses, disability and trauma inform their commitment to advocating and amplifying the stories and voices that are often excluded, deprioritised or suppressed. Adele writes non-fiction, poetry and short-form fiction and has been published in anthologies and collections from Singapore and Australia.

Naomi Arnold
Naomi is the co-founder of the Feminist Coach Academy (FCA) where helping professionals are taught to integrate inclusive feminism and social justice into their life, business and client practice in order to stop replicating oppressive systems, minimise harm and more fully serve their clients, selves and societies. Naomi is also an award-winning life and business coach, has a Bachelor of Psychology with Honours, a certified life coaching qualification, is currently completing a Master of Human Rights and is certified as a B-Corporation.

Ana Blazey
Ana was born and raised in the South West corner of WA, on the traditional lands of the Wardandi Noongar peoples. She is a mother of two, and has a Bachelor in Communication from Murdoch University. She has worked as a lecturer for the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University since 2015, where her knowledge and appreciation of Indigenous Australian culture has grown immensely. She is privileged to teach and mentor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students within the Centre's enabling courses, and to share her understanding of Indigenous cultures with non-Indigenous students throughout Curtin. She has a strong passion for teaching and sees education as a vehicle for change, particularly in relation to Indigenous Human Rights within Australia. She is currently completing postgraduate studies through Curtin's Centre for Human Rights Education.

Ben Claessens
Ben is a Philosophy PhD student with the Graduate Center, City University of New York. He is interested in applied ethics, metaethics and the interface of these with various issues in the philosophy of language.

Emma D'Antoine
Emma graduated from Swinburne University of Technology in 2017 with a Bachelor of Social Science in Psychology, where she was specifically interested in societal attitudes and behaviour and the effects of social exclusion, as well as factors contributing to social anxiety. She holds a Master of Human Rights degree and has a particular concern for the psychological effects of displacement and the influence of the type of reception received once in the host nation. She has been involved with Amnesty International from a young age. She is currently undertaking a Ph.D., researching the psychosocial effects of working offshore

and with the aim of developing a mental health model for the industry. In the near future, she aims to return to the field of Psychology, where she plans to undertake Honours and become a registered psychologist.

Grace E. Dowling
Grace is a Master of Human Rights student living in Naarm/Melbourne. She is a proud unionist and activist, fighting for equity for the more vulnerable or under-represented members of our working community. In her studies, Grace is particularly concerned with the relationship between neoliberalism and colonial processes in Australia, including but not limited to the epistemic violence of western development discourse.

Gaylene Galardi
Gaylene has worked as a photographer, administrator and research assistant across the small business, not for profit and education sectors. Currently working as an administrator in the School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry at Curtin University, Gaylene has a strong interest in combining her broad experience working with child focused organisations in the not-for-profit sector with higher education research and learning.

Dr Eyob Balcha Gebremariam
Eyob is a Research Associate at Perivoli Africa Research Centre, University of Bristol, UK. He was a Fellow at the London School of Economics & Political Science from 2017-2021 where he taught postgraduate courses on African Political Economy and African Development at the International Development Department. He completed his doctoral studies at the University of Manchester, UK, in Development Policy and Management.

Meg Gill
Meg is currently undertaking a Master in Human Rights at Curtin University, having previously completed a Bachelor of Arts with majors in Anthropology and Business Management at the University of Western Australia in 2014. Her focus on the darker aspects of development aims to illustrate that neoliberal views commonly dictate the direction of development projects often undervaluing the need for local communities to have a say in what is important, resulting in an over emphasis on profits which often don't reach the people most intensely impacted by development projects.

Dr Rebecca Higgie
Rebecca is a scholar and writer from Perth, Western Australia. She has a PhD in cultural studies from Curtin University, where she also worked as a Sessional Academic. In 2015-2016, she was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for Comedy Studies Research (CCSR), Brunel University London. Her academic research focuses on the study of texts that envisage and engage with politics in unconventional and often mischievous ways. Her work is concerned with how politicians engage with such texts, how this influences the way they campaign, and the way voters understand or evaluate politics. She is also a novelist who has conducted writing workshops with hundreds of adults and children, and her creative work combines whimsy and play with extensive research and critical insights. Her novel *The History of Mischief* won the 2019 Fogarty Literary Award for an unpublished manuscript and was published by Fremantle Press in 2020.

Selena Knowles
Selena has been concerned about social justice issues since childhood. One of her earliest political protests at seven years of age was against the Springboks tour to Australia in 1971. As an adult she has built an extensive career in health promotion and the delivery of public health services, promoting equity and access to health services; and more recently in planning improved public health services across Western Australia. She recently completed a Master of Health Administration with a focus on human rights through the Centre for Human Rights Education. Selena has lead projects focused on service improvement and access for disadvantaged cohorts, particularly in mental health services and Aboriginal health. She is deputy chair of a not-for-profit organisation which provides individual advocacy services for people with a disability.

Emily Munro
Emily has recently completed her Master of Human Rights at Curtin University. Previously, she completed her Bachelor of Arts majoring in Sociology and Social Enterprise at Griffith University. Her work focuses broadly on feminist and gender issues, identity studies and activism. Presently, she is living on the Gold Coast, Australia with her husband and two young children and is working towards future studies and publications.

Erin Thomas
Erin is a white Australian with Irish, Scottish, German and Wiradjuri heritage. Her known Wiradjuri family have long been divorced from their lands and assimilated into coloniser ways of living. Although this process can never be complete. Erin is a Freelance Writer and graduate of the Centre for Human Rights Education. She has lived remotely across Australia: in the West Kimberley, Far North Queensland, Outback South Australia and Darwin. Erin currently lives and works in Perth where she swims in the ocean year-round and writes about trauma recovery and prevention.

Dr Yirga Gelaw Woldeyes
Yirga is a Senior Lecturer, multidisciplinary researcher and creative writer based in Curtin University's Centre for Human Rights Education. His research focuses on the critical study of development, education and law, and the importance of lived experience and epistemic diversity for decolonial and sustainable futures. He researches African experiences and Ethiopian traditions, and writes creatively on belonging and diasporic lives. He teaches postgraduate courses face-to-face and online and has won university and industry awards for his teaching, research and creative writing.

"This book, through its diverse stories of development, is hard to put down…Such a radical book as this not only offers an antidote to the accepted positive script of development, but the possibility of unleashing new energies to question the path we should go."
Emeritus Professor Baden Offord

Development as a human rights concept conjures up images of progress and betterment, of people being lifted out of poverty and hardship. Voices from the Darker Side of Development unsettles this notion, offering counter perspectives that are often left out of dominant human rights discourse and scholarship. From mining projects on Indigenous lands to the harmful impacts of seemingly positive programs like clinical volunteerism and welfare, the book shows how the notion of "development" is weaponised to justify the denial of vulnerable peoples' human rights. The book is a project where human rights academics and students enter into dialogue. Student papers from the Centre for Human Rights Education, Australia, sit alongside critical reflections on the history of development discourse and human rights pedagogy from leading human rights scholars. The book shows how scholars and students can work together to challenge the persistent lie of "progress" and champion those who are silenced by the darker side of development.

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