Playing a Serious Game:
Encounters Between the Local Community and Western Volunteers in Malawi

By

Lisa Bintrim

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

(Anthropology)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

2014

Date of final oral examination: 12/17/2013

The dissertation is approved by the following members of the Final Oral Committee:

Claire Wendland, Professor, Anthropology
Larry Nesper, Professor, Anthropology
Kirin Narayan, Professor, Anthropology
Jo Ellen Fair, Professor, Journalism
Jim Delehanty, Associate Director, African Studies Program

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

The metaphor of childbirth is often used to describe the process of producing a dissertation. This dissertation has had many midwives, for whom I am incredibly grateful. Foremost, I must thank Claire Wendland and Sharon Hutchinson for their guidance, support, critiques, and encouragement throughout my graduate career. I am grateful to the members of my committee—Jo Ellen Fair, Larry Nesper, Kirin Narayan, and Jim Delehanty—for their valuable comments. I greatly appreciate all of the faculty and staff of the University of Wisconsin–Madison Department of Anthropology and African Studies Program for the innumerable ways that they have supported me.

I have been fortunate to be surrounded by so many intelligent, kind, generous, and encouraging fellow graduate students. I am particularly grateful for the members of the Friday Night Dinner crew for providing support and levity in equal measures. I thank all of my friends for their patience and persistence in helping me "give birth" to this work.

Unfortunately, many of those who contributed the most to this dissertation—the community members, volunteers, project managers, and research assistants who made this work possible—must go unnamed to preserve their confidentiality. All ethnography is ultimately collaborative, and I appreciate their generous participation. I would like to give special thanks to Jean and Joshua Hara, Amos, Ethel, Ellie, Gwen, and all of the other wonderful friends who became my family in Malawi. I can never repay your kindness. I am grateful to Sr. Evelyn and the Canossian Sisters in Malawi for their hospitality and assistance; to Mario Thodi, Arnold Mboga, and all of the staff at the Centre for Language Studies for their help with my language studies and research, as well as for their friendship; and to Wiseman Chirwa, Blessings Chinsinga, Ephram Chirwa,

Pierson Ntata, and Peter Mvula at Chancellor College for their time and insights into Malawian history, politics, and culture. I am thankful for the support of the Center for Social Research at Chancellor College.

This research was financially supported by the University of Wisconsin–Madison Department of Anthropology travel awards; the Graduate Student International Field Research Award from the Division of International Studies, University of Wisconsin–Madison; the Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship; and a U.S. Student Fulbright Award.

Last, but far from least, I am grateful for the love, support, and generosity of my parents, Ray and Doris Bintrim, and for the inspiring example and persistent encouragement of my sister, Dr. Katherine Marx.

1. Introduction

Kapiri sat high in the hills on the outskirts of Blantyre. Getting there was not easy. Only two minibuses went from Blantyre's central market toward Kapiri, and they only ran once they were full: twelve passengers squeezed into three cramped rows of vinyl seats patched with duct tape and leaking molded foam, plus two more up front next to the driver. Minibuses in Malawi are generally not known for their comfort or safety, but the ones that run toward Kapiri seemed to be in particularly poor condition. On one, the entire steering apparatus appeared to be made of duct tape; on the other, the front passenger-side door tended to swing open on sharp right turns.

The minibus wove its way through downtown, heading south. It passed through Sunnyside, one of the more upscale areas of Blantyre, where the houses had well-tended lawns, satellite dishes, and high guard walls topped by broken glass or barbed wire. Then, as the minibus crossed a one-lane bridge, the paved roads and green lawns gave way to a dusty road and desolate, brown fields.

Momwe, a small but busy town, was the end of the minibus line. Kapiri was still about three kilometers away, but the road was too steep, rutted, and gravel-strewn for the minibus. Only private cars and lorries used the road; those were too few and far between to reliably hitch a ride. Just about anyone who wanted to get to or from Kapiri had to walk the hilly, shadeless road.

The volunteer project site at Kapiri was in a low, cleared field off the main road. It consisted of three buildings: a maize mill; a classroom block that had been temporarily converted to living quarters for volunteers; and a medical clinic. The clinic was a long concrete building, painted white and roofed with green tin sheets. It had four examination

rooms and an open-air waiting area with concrete benches. When I was there, the site was largely empty except for a few clinic staff hanging around. They had been struggling to get the medical supplies promised by the central hospital in Blantyre; without those supplies, they couldn't treat patients.

Until this clinic was completed, the nearest medical facility was Queen Elizabeth Hospital on the northern end of the city, nearly thirty minutes by car. Because neither the minibus nor the ambulance would drive the road to Kapiri, however, the journey could take hours: walking to Momwe, taking one minibus to central Blantyre, transferring to a second minibus to get to the hospital.

Now Kapiri had its own clinic, with a nurse and several health surveillance assistants. It had the maize mill for generating income, and the classroom blocks for community education programs. Several dozen students received school fees through the project office. All of these changes were made possible by Western volunteers.

The project wasn't without problems. The maize mill sat unused because there wasn't electricity to power it. The clinic also lacked electricity, which limited what tests and treatments it could offer, and it was perpetually short on supplies. The most serious cases still needed to be referred to the central hospital. But people in Kapiri saw the project overall as a huge improvement in their lives and a promising sign for their future development. They were thankful for the volunteers who came to help.

Malawian community members in villages like Kapiri can clearly benefit from working with international volunteers. Although community members have the local knowledge and motivation to initiate development projects, the volunteers can bring the resources

and attention needed to get the projects done. Both the community members and the volunteers, however, bring much more to these projects than technical knowledge and material resources: they bring their various histories, values, imaginations, and personal goals. These volunteer projects are more than a cross-cultural exchange; they are an interaction of subjectivities. As a result, the participants are not only constructing a medical clinic or a maize mill; they are also constructing ideas about relationships, morality, and development. These ideas can be just as—or even more—transformative for the community as a new building. For while the mill and the clinic lay fallow, the ideas remain vital, shaping decisions and interactions well beyond any particular project.

Despite the ubiquitous presence of international volunteers in developing nations, scholars have yet to critically examine their role in socioeconomic development. The scant existing literature seems to exempt volunteers from critique by situating them apart from their social and historical contexts—implying that volunteering is a "pure" humanitarian endeavor, removed from the political, economic, and social movements that have shaped contemporary development. In what follows, I will demonstrate that quite the opposite is true.

In addition to training a critical lens on international volunteering, my research diverges from the bulk of development literature in two other important ways. First, a central aspect of my research has been to include the ideas and actions of both the community members and the volunteers. Prior research on volunteering has focused on the Western volunteers' experience, whereas research on globalization and development

has tended to focus on the response of local community members. In my study, I have examined how community members and volunteers both construct their encounter.

A second important aspect of my research has been to complicate the traditional Western hegemony–versus–local resistance model of development by considering the subjectivities and agency of individuals—both Malawian and Western—who participate in development and by locating discourses of development outside of institutional settings (such as government agencies and international financial institutions). The dominant model of development, which emphasizes hegemonic institutional discourses, is not adequate for understanding development as it is practiced in the field. Missing from this model is the dialogic, dynamic process—and the individuals who take part in that process—through which local community members and Western development workers pursue their goals, co-produce experiences, and make meaning of those experiences. In contrast, I have focused on small-scale encounters between individuals. As I will illustrate, these small-scale encounters not only shed light on how development is actually practiced in the field, but also reveal the broad-scale processes of development.

The existing literature on development focuses almost exclusively on formal development at the institutional level (e.g., Cooper & Packard 1997, 2005; Escobar 1995; Ferguson 1994, 2006; Fisher 1997; Grillo & Stirrat 1997; Hobart 1993; Smillie & Minear 2004). At the same time that anthropologists have emphasized individual agency in resistance to development (Ferguson 1994; Scott 1985), they have all but ignored individual agency in the practice of development. Yet, I would argue that just as resistance should not be simplified as a homogenous response to dominance (Ortner

2006; Scott 1985), development should not be simplified as a homogenous practice of dominance. If, as Gramsci ([1929–1935] 1971) proposed, hegemony is a constantly moving equilibrium that creates spaces for contestation as it interacts with lived experience, then the practice of development by individuals in the field—where "facts on paper" meet "facts on the ground" in ways that challenge official knowledge (Scott 1998)—becomes an essential site for the study of the hegemonic discourses of development.

Some scholars have challenged an encounter model that posits Western hegemony against African resistance in their studies of colonialism (Comaroff 1997). These scholars, however, often focus on complicating the resistance side, by introducing African "middles" (Hunt 1999) or the "entanglement" of Western and African cultures in African societies (Livingston 2005; Thomas 2003). Western colonists remain a "taken-for-granted, faceless presence," with little or no thought to how the colonial encounter affected colonists or Western society (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991: 54). Moreover, even as scholarship on colonialism is taking steps to correct an oversimplified encounter model, studies of development and humanitarianism continue to perpetuate that model (see, for example, de Waal's [1997] anonymous "humanitarian international;" also, Escobar 1995; Ferguson 1994).

Missing from the hegemony–resistance model are the process of encounter and the subjectivities of the individuals who participate in the encounter. In their corrective historical ethnographies, scholars of colonialism do not deny the role of a hegemonic Western ideology in shaping interactions between Africans and Westerners. Rather, they see the hegemonic structure as mediated by individual subjectivities through a dialogic

process that results in co-produced experiences, reshaped subjectivities, and redefined intentions (see, for example, Comaroff & Comaroff 1991, 1997; Stoler & Cooper 1997; Vaughan 1991).

Responding to contemporary theories and practices of development will require a similar rethinking of anthropological frameworks. The anthropology of development provides a rich foundation for a critical theory framework through which to consider global political, economic, and social systems; to understand how development actors construct their identities—and have their identities constructed—within those systems; and to recognize the myriad creative ways in which communities are interacting with development. The anthropology of development, however, has not yet adequately explored some shadowy spaces (Ferguson 2006) in critical theory. I would like to suggest two of these spaces as particularly important for understanding the current practice of development.

The first shadowed area is the informal sector of development. Across the social sciences, scholars have focused almost exclusively on formal institutions of development: the IMF, the World Bank, the various UN agencies, and the African state. The Third Way paradigms of development, however, emphasize more informal development sectors: civil society, nongovernmental organizations and community-based organizations (particularly small-scale, specialized organizations), voluntary organizations, and individuals. To understand how discourses of development become enacted and reproduced, anthropology will need to shift from looking at formal development institutions to considering the informal development actors who reside in the shadows of the formal institutions. Moreover, examining this shift may shine a brighter light on both

the formal and informal sectors by illuminating how the formal sector is responding to its re-imagined role. Carolyn Nordstrom (2004) describes the importance of "shadows" in her examination of the extra-state—and often illegal—economic and political activities that accompany humanitarian interventions in war-torn areas. Using "shadows" to describe networks of non-formal, extra-state political and economic powers that operate outside formal, state-based channels, Nordstrom suggests that these shadow operations not only are "fundamental, and possibly necessary, to development in devastated communities" (113) but also "may foreshadow new power formations barely emergent on the horizons of political and economic possibility" (117). Considering the informal sector of development as a shadow raises important questions: How are states establishing and protecting their authority in the absence of a gatekeeper role? How is the movement from state-based to civil society-based development affecting other social and political processes, such as democratization? How are the international financial institutions pursuing their goals and reconstructing their identities within the new paradigm of development? How does the informal sector (which includes the Western volunteers) construct its identity in relation to the formal institutions? How do local community members categorize and locate development?

The second shadowed area is negotiation. The anthropology of development has traditionally seen development actors in a dichotomous relationship: hegemony versus resistance. The structural institutions of development impose a hegemonic discourse of development; the community resists that discourse. Yet anthropologists and other scholars have also long noted that hegemony is neither totalizing nor static. It is always contingent, flexible, contested, and changing (Gramsci [1929–1935] 1971; Williams

1977). Furthermore, hegemony is always responding to contingent, flexible modes of resistance (see, for example, Hebdige 1979). As Sahlins (1994) noted, not even the capitalist world system is impervious to the effects of its articulation with local contexts. The shift from formal institutions of development to informal development sectors diffuses power. As a result, it increases both the frequency of articulation and the relative power of local contexts. I suggest that we need to create a theoretical framework that imagines development actors in a dialogic rather than dichotomous relationship. Within that relationship, the various actors engage in negotiations to achieve their projects. Through the negotiations, they mutually construct identities, projects, and ideologies. Following from Abu-Lughod's insightful critique of resistance (1990), such a framework would have to account for differences in power among the actors and how that power defines and constrains the negotiations.

I propose a corrective model for understanding contemporary relations of development through an ethnographic study of international volunteering that examines the encounters between the Malawian community members and the Western volunteers as a "serious game." Sherry Ortner (1999, 2006) defines the "serious game" as a particular experience in which individual purpose, social and cultural contexts, relationships, and structures of power become entwined. Ortner uses the term "game" to reference the intentions and strategies that participants bring to these experiences; the "rules" (social and cultural contexts) that frame those intentions and strategies; and the relationships through which participants pursue their intentions. She uses "serious" to reference the real consequences for the participants. As Ortner (2006) notes, although these "games" take place on a small scale among individual participants, they reveal "the

larger forces, formations, and transformations of social life" (130). In other words, through these "serious games," we can see the interaction of structure and agency, of ideology and subjectivity, and the consequences of those interactions at both the small (individual) and large (social) scale.

International volunteering, which emphasizes individual contributions as part of institutional efforts, is a logical site for studying the impacts of individual subjectivities, intentions, and strategies on the practice of development, yet volunteerism is almost entirely absent from the critical literature on development. The anthropological literature on volunteerism generally falls into two areas: the ethnographer as "volunteer" (Pink 1998) and volunteerism as an internal phenomenon (members within a society assisting each other; but cf. Sheridan & Price 2006; Vrasti 2012). Expanding beyond anthropology reveals a more abundant literature on international volunteerism, but this literature also largely ignores the interactions of individuals in volunteering (e.g., Beigbeder 1991; Jedlicka 1990; Korten 1990; Smith & Elkin 1981; Wearing 2001; Wilson 2000). Moreover, although this general literature links volunteerism to the larger project of development, it does not apply critical theory to the concept or practice of volunteerism. Volunteerism has been seen as an unqualified good, without considering the tensions and negotiations it produces.

In the following, I hope to complicate this view and begin a critical conversation about the role of international volunteering within the broader field of development. Moreover, I hope to challenge dominant models of studying and understanding development by focusing on small-scale, individual encounters. I will describe and analyze encounters between Malawian community members and Western volunteers in

order to understand the subjectivities that individuals bring to these encounters; the ways in which those subjectivities are enacted and interact in practice; and the implications of these encounters for the community and development. I will argue that the community–volunteer encounter is a crucial site for reproducing and challenging dominant discourses of place, morality, and development.

I begin by setting the framework for my discussion through a description of my methods (Chapter 2) and a historical overview of the Western "helper" in Southern Africa (Chapter 3). In Chapter 4, I provide a broad outline of some of the most salient aspects of the subjectivities among Malawian community members and Western volunteers, describing how they think about themselves and each other. Within the serious games model, Chapters 3 and 4 establish the intentions of the "players" and the "rules" of their interactions. These chapters will lay the groundwork for examining various strategies and relationships through which individuals pursue their goals in two key areas of the community–volunteer encounter: money (Chapter 5) and geography (Chapter 6). I conclude by locating international volunteering within the broader field of development to consider the serious consequences of the game: how community members and volunteers reproduce dominant discourses of development and structures of power.

2. Methods

The data discussed here were collected during two ethnographic field studies in 2008 and 2010–2011. My analysis is based on notes from interviews, focus groups, informal conversations, and participant observation collected over a total of twelve months. I also draw on my journals and "head notes" from my year as a volunteer in 2003.

Preliminary Research

I conducted the first, preliminary study over ten weeks, from June to August 2008, in Zomba, a mid-sized city in the southern region of Malawi. Although my primary purpose during that stay was to study the Chichewa language through an intensive course at the Centre for Language Studies at Chancellor College, I also used the time to visit potential field sites, develop contacts, and conduct initial interviews. I took advantage of being at Chancellor College—the main campus for the University of Malawi—to interview professors and researchers with expertise in Malawi's socioeconomic development and its relationships with the West. These semi-structured interviews provided valuable background as published histories of Malawi tend to end at or shortly after independence in 1964. Moreover, these interviews helped establish a context in which to situate and understand the "Malawian" subjectivity that emerged from later interviews, conversations, and observations.

With the help of a local research assistant, I also visited about a dozen village development projects (including the Millennium Villages Project) to begin exploring how development was being thought of, talked about, and practiced within Malawian communities. These visits and the informal conversations that took place during them

helped me identify the dominant development discourse, as well as begin to understand how discourses of place and morality intersected with development. Through these visits, I got a better sense of how Malawians thought about themselves, development, and Western "helpers."

Finally, I used this time to begin exploring my proposed topic. I traveled to volunteer projects throughout the country to identify potential field sites. At these sites, I conducted preliminary interviews of Western volunteers and community members about their experiences as or with volunteers, their views of themselves and each other, their ideas about development, and their perceptions of the value of volunteers.

During this preliminary research, I focused on short-term volunteers, or "voluntourism."[1] At the time, voluntourism was an emerging and rapidly growing industry, bringing numerous Western volunteers to developing countries. I intended to use voluntourism as a lens onto the larger turn to privatized, commodified humanitarian action. Moreover, I hoped that as an emerging practice that seemed to blur the traditional categories that structure relationships (e.g., volunteer/recipient; tourist/host), voluntourism would provide opportunities for community members and volunteers to rethink their relationships.

My preliminary findings supported my assertion that centering my research on voluntourism would allow me to examine the dominant discourse of development and how that discourse is enacted, reproduced, and challenged through the frictions produced in encounters between volunteers and community members. I returned to Malawi in August 2010, intending to continue my study of voluntourism in Zomba.

My plans changed. In the years between my two research trips, the world was

struck by a global economic crisis. Voluntourism—as well as the entire tourism industry—severely contracted as fewer people could afford to travel, particularly those who make up the base of voluntourism: students and retirees. Those who did continue to volunteer in developing countries were less likely to take part in organized voluntourism programs, both because of the cost and because of a popular backlash against commercial voluntourism. In speaking with various individuals from England, I also learned that because of changes at UK universities (tuition hikes, fewer spots for admission), fewer students were taking gap years or using gap years to travel and volunteer overseas. Furthermore, I was told at a number of former volunteer sites that voluntourism programs were pulling out of Malawi because of perceived corruption and volunteer complaints.

As a result of these changes, fewer organized voluntourism sites were operating in Malawi when I returned in 2010. Whereas previously voluntourism programs had been running continuous cycles of volunteers at multiple sites, they now had either stopped running trips to Malawi altogether or had reduced their presence to one annual trip at one site. Most of the sites that I had visited two years earlier were no longer hosting volunteers. Short-term volunteers still came to Malawi, but their presence was irregular and scattered. I struggled to identify a community that had a consistent presence of short-term volunteers where I would be able to observe encounters between community members and volunteers.

Field Work

I conducted the second study over nine months, from August 2010 to May 2011. During the second study, I was primarily located at two field sites: Blantyre, a large urban,

commercial center in the southern region, and its surrounding villages; and Lakeshore Town, a resort town in the northern region.[2] As in my preliminary study, I also traveled to sites in all three regions—southern, central, northern—for short stays, although I spent significantly less time in the central region than in the southern and northern regions.

Blantyre

Located in the southern region of Malawi and almost entirely surrounded by low mountains, Blantyre is one of the oldest urban centers in southern Africa. It has a population of about 750,000, most of whom live on the outskirts of the city or in villages in the mountains, commuting daily into the city for work. Originally established as a trading center, Blantyre continues to be the commercial capital of Malawi, and its downtown area is crowded with banks, commercial offices, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), shops, restaurants, and upscale hotels.

After failing to find a suitable field site in Zomba, I relocated to Blantyre in the hope that a larger city would offer more opportunities for my research. Through contacts I had made during preliminary research, word of mouth and casual conversation, and the COMESCO directory of aid organizations, I identified several short-term volunteer programs. Unfortunately, these programs were suffering the same volunteer recession as those in Zomba. Most of the people I contacted at these organizations, however, were enthusiastic about my research and assisted me in visiting project sites that had recently hosted volunteers. I eventually visited more than two dozen sites in the Blantyre area, where I interviewed community members who had worked with or known past volunteers. A few of the sites were currently hosting volunteers, but for various reasons,

including a sporadic volunteer presence and difficulties in securing permission for research, these were not viable long-term field sites. [3] I, however, was able to interview the volunteers and returned to several of these sites multiple times.

I spent most of my time in two villages on the edge of Blantyre, Kapiri and Chinsinsi.[4] The director of an NGO that ran volunteer projects in the villages was particularly supportive of my research and put me in contact with several of the local staff members who became my research assistants: securing approval from the village chiefs, arranging interviews, guiding me through the villages, and providing translation.

While in Blantyre, I stayed at a lodge that was popular with short-term volunteers, temporary NGO workers, and British medical students doing a rotation at Queen's Hospital. Again, I benefited greatly from others' interest in my research topic. The volunteers whom I met at the lodge not only were willing and eager to be interviewed and have me visit their project sites, but also referred me to other interview subjects and sites.

Although during my four months in Blantyre I conducted dozens of interviews with community members, volunteers, program coordinators, NGO and community-based organization (CBO) staff, and others, I had very limited opportunities to observe at volunteer sites. I continued to search for a site where I could engage more directly in participant-observation.

Lakeshore Town

During my preliminary research, I had learned about a lodge in Lakeshore Town that ran a volunteer program. Because of my limited time, I was not able to travel there during that trip. With a more flexible schedule on my second research trip, I went for what I

thought would be a one-time visit.

In the northern region of Malawi, Lakeshore Town has a population of just more than 12,000 people who rely primarily on fishing, subsistence farming, and tourism. Lakeshore Town's beautiful beaches, inexpensive lodging, and reputation for a "relaxed" lifestyle (including easy access to *chamba*, or Malawian marijuana) make it a popular destination for both overland backpackers and Western volunteers from the surrounding area.

During this initial visit, Lakeshore Town and the lodge proved to be a fertile field site. The lodge was the income-generating arm of an NGO run by two English women, and its volunteer program attracted a steady flow of Western volunteers. Moreover, because the lodge offered a discounted rate to guests who volunteered, many of the backpackers became volunteers during their stay. The lodge owners were supportive of my research and allowed me to observe at the lodge and its project sites; they also let me know when new volunteers arrived at the lodge, helped me identify a research assistant, and referred me to other volunteer programs in the town and the surrounding area.

As I prepared to relocate to Lakeshore Town, I also rethought one of the fundamental assumptions of my research: that time was a significant factor for categorizing volunteers. As I noted earlier, I thought of voluntourism as an emerging practice that created a new set of relationships and encounters, distinct from those of long-term volunteers or development workers. In my assumption, however, I was imposing my own set of values and categories. In my continuing interviews with community members, and particularly in Lakeshore Town, I found that my assumption did not hold up. Malawians have long hosted a diverse range of Western helpers who

have come with myriad labels for various purposes and durations. Through these encounters, Malawians have formed their own concepts and categories of Westerners. In the Malawian scheme, the length of time individuals actually spent in Malawi was not an important, distinguishing criterion. In focusing on "voluntourists," I was both imposing my own mental map and unnecessarily limiting my research. The more salient category for understanding these encounters was simply "volunteer." (See below for a discussion on defining "volunteer.") Thus, in moving to Lakeshore Town, I not only changed my field site but also expanded my research to include both short-term and long-term volunteers.

In January 2011, after wrapping up interviews and site visits in Blantyre, I moved to Lakeshore Town for most of my remaining five months.[5] I split my time in Lakeshore Town between the volunteer program at the lodge and a community-based organization in town. At both of these sites, I was able to observe more directly the encounters between community members and volunteers as I participated in their daily activities. Moreover, because of the much smaller size of Lakeshore Town as compared to Blantyre, I was better able to participate in and observe everyday life for both the volunteers and the community members: at soccer matches, parties, and bars; at church; during shared meals and casual conversations; on walks between town and the lodge; while riding in the minibus and shared taxis; and in home visits. With a research assistant, I conducted interviews and focus groups with community members. I also conducted semi-structured interviews with volunteers. Even more so than in Blantyre, people were very willing to talk with me about my research, and as word got around, both community members and volunteers approached me or my research assistant to offer to be interviewed.

Methods

Over the course of my two research trips, I conducted semi-structured interviews with more than seventy-five Malawian community members, about forty volunteers, and more than forty "other" informants (scholars, volunteer program staff, NGO/CBO staff, tourism workers, and others whom I interviewed in their professional capacity). With both the community members and the volunteers, my questions focused on their ideas about themselves and the other, development in Malawi, and their personal experiences with or as volunteers. For these interviews, I asked a set of prepared questions to elicit comparable data, while also allowing the conversation to range naturally according to each individual's answers. I adjusted my prepared questions as my research progressed and I found that some questions were not relevant or successful, or that other questions had emerged. With the "other" informants, I focused on gaining a macro-level understanding of discourses of place, morality, and development, adjusting my questions to each individual's area of expertise. Most of these interviews took about forty-five minutes, although the time ranged from fifteen minutes to two hours, based on the individual's responses and interest. With the volunteers, other informants, and community members fluent in English, I conducted the interviews in English. With community members who preferred to speak in their local language, I spoke Chichewa, with research assistants providing translation and clarification as needed.[6]

Toward the end of my research, as certain themes began to emerge on which I wanted additional, direct comment, I conducted six focus groups with Malawian community members: three in Lakeshore Town, three in the villages near Blantyre. A total of thirty-five community members participated in the focus groups. For these focus

groups, I used a prepared set of questions (see Appendix). These questions addressed Malawians' perceptions of themselves, Westerners, development, corruption, jealousy, and care. On average, the focus groups lasted about ninety minutes (although one particularly vocal group spoke for more than two hours, and at their request, we met again for another two hours). As with the interviews, participants spoke English or their local language as they preferred, with a research assistant providing translation.

For both the interviews and the focus groups, I recorded the conversations using a digital voice recorder, while taking copious notes. Due to a technical failure, I did not have an audio recorder for approximately six weeks and relied on my notes from interviews. Regardless of whether I had made an audio recording, I also summarized each interview in my field notes as soon as practical.

Through the interviews and focus groups, I gained a deeper understanding of the subjectivities of each group. An important part of my research, however, was to move beyond discourse analysis to examine how Malawians and Westerners actually enact their subjectivities in the field. To this end, I engaged in participant-observation throughout my two field studies.

During my preliminary research, I lived with a Malawian woman, her brother, and a continually shifting series of her relatives and friends. I spent most of my time outside of the classroom with them: sharing meals, going to the market, watching television, or having informal conversations.

Although as noted my opportunities for participant-observation at volunteer sites were initially limited, while in Blantyre I had opportunities to participate in and observe the "imponderabilia of everyday life" for both Malawians and Western volunteers. As

space/place emerged as an important area for analysis, I spent much of my time in shared spaces, such as food courts, restaurants, and shopping centers. In Lakeshore Town, I was able to participate at volunteer sites, allowing me to directly observe interactions between Malawian community members and Western volunteers, in addition to my participation in and observations of daily life.

I had planned to conduct archival research to fill in the historical context of Western volunteers in Malawi. Unfortunately, in consultation with the director of the Malawian National Archives, we determined that searching the archives for this information would be a Herculean task. Because neither the subject of "volunteering" nor specific volunteer programs were catalogued by the archives, locating records related to volunteering would be akin to finding a needle in a haystack, with no assurance that the needle was even there. Within the archive's library holdings, I was able to locate several published works on the history of specific volunteer programs, which were helpful in understanding the historical development of some of the major organized programs still in operation today. Certainly a thorough historical ethnography of volunteering would be a worthy project, but it was beyond the scope of my present research.

Participants

As noted, a crucial element of my research was to include the perspectives and experiences of both Malawians and Westerners. In total, my research included approximately 110 Malawian "community members," as well as about 30 "other" Malawians (program directors and staff, professors and researchers, other professionals). The Malawian participants ranged in age from 18 to more than 80 years old, with the

average around 35 years. They were about evenly split by gender, although the majority of the "other" Malawians were men.

My research also included about 40 Western volunteers and 15 "other" Westerners. The majority of the volunteers were from the United Kingdom or North America (see "Volunteer Nationalities" table). The volunteers' ages ranged from 18 to more than 60 years old, although half were 18–24 years and three-quarters were under 35 years old. They also were about evenly split by gender, with slightly more women than men.[7] Their volunteer service ranged from several days to two years.

Volunteer Nationalities

England	12
Canada	8
United States	8
Scotland	3
Australia	3
Germany	2
Italy	2
Denmark	1
Holland	1
Lithuania	1
Sweden	1

The majority of the volunteers were white; a small minority was of Asian descent but born and raised exclusively in the West. I did not intentionally exclude black volunteers; I simply did not encounter any. A conversation with a black American missionary, however, suggested that black volunteers may bring different subjectivities and have different relationships with Malawians than white volunteers. Moreover, although there are non-Western volunteers in Malawi, particularly from Japan, I did not seek them out for this research because the history of encounters between Malawi and Asian countries is meaningfully different from Malawi's history with the West. Both of

these areas—black volunteers and Eastern volunteers—would be fruitful areas for future research.

As is evident from the above, my research sample included more than twice as many Malawians as volunteers. This imbalance is partly a result of my initial focus on short-term volunteers and the difficulties I had locating them during my fieldwork in 2010–2011. It also reflects a possible limitation of my study, in which I relied more on interviews for data from Malawian community members and more on participant-observation with Western volunteers. As a white, Western woman, I could more easily and unobtrusively insert myself into the daily activities of the volunteers. As I described earlier, however, I did engage in extended participant-observation with individuals from both groups. Moreover, despite the differences in sample size and methods, my data include both enough continuity and diversity in responses within both groups that I feel confident that my findings are representative (although certainly not exhaustive) of the experiences and perspectives of these two groups.

Defining "Volunteer"

One of the challenges of this research was determining who is a volunteer. In interviews, Malawians and Westerners[8] generally agreed that a volunteer is a person who performs work without expectation of payment. This definition seems simple and straightforward. In practice, however, it was anything but.

Central to the definition is the idea that a volunteer does "work." This work is what differentiates volunteers from tourists. Malawians and Westerners, however, imagined the volunteer's work in different ways. For Malawians, "work" involved an observable

impact or perceived usefulness. A staff member at a youth organization noted that a volunteer is someone "who actually delivers services . . . so that at the end of [the person's] time, they should create change." A primary school headmistress described a volunteer as "a person who comes just to assist the needs of the community." In comparing volunteers and tourists, a teacher said that if someone can bring technical knowledge that improves the community's material welfare, he or she is useful and thus can claim to be a volunteer, regardless of the duration of the person's service. Someone who does not materially contribute to the community is just a tourist.

Westerners agreed that a volunteer performs work, but whereas the Malawians' ideas of that work implied expertise, knowledge, and skill, Western ideas of volunteer work implied a lack of the same. For Westerners, "volunteering" seemed to carry embedded ideas of amateurism and avocation. Several Westerners whom I approached to interview as volunteers told me that they did not think of themselves as volunteers because they had a formal position, with a job description and set hours, in which they were using their professional knowledge and skills. A law school professor who had brought a group of law students from the United States for a week-long clinic vehemently rejected the idea that the students were volunteers because they would be performing work for which they had trained. By the same token, a Peace Corps volunteer working in the southern region said that he saw himself as a volunteer in part because he was not trained for his position and did not have a regular schedule. Westerners who self-identified as volunteers often spoke about their work as a learning experience in which they were gaining knowledge and skills. Indeed, even as Western volunteers saw their "work" as differentiating them from tourists, they saw their lack of formal training for

that work as differentiating them—positively—from professional development and aid workers.[9]

The other key aspect of the definition of "volunteer" is that a volunteer performs work without expectation of payment. As I will discuss in Chapter 5, for the volunteers, the *expectation* of payment was more important than whether one actually receives payment for his or her work. In practice, most long-term volunteers do receive some kind of payment, even if just a modest stipend to cover basic living expenses, and some programs offer a "resettlement bonus" of as much as several thousand dollars at the end of the volunteers' service. Many of these volunteers also eventually benefit from the social capital of having been a volunteer through graduate school admissions, jobs, and even book deals,[10] although it was generally considered taboo among the volunteers to explicitly state that you were volunteering with any future goal in mind.

Short-term volunteers generally do not receive any kind of living stipend; rather, they often pay several thousand dollars to volunteer programs or travel agencies for their placements (as noted earlier, however, the practice of paying to volunteer had become controversial by the time of my fieldwork in 2010). Of the short-term volunteers whom I met, most paid for their trips with money they earned through work or received from family—what some of the British volunteers referred to as coming on their own back—although some engaged in fundraising to cover at least part of the cost. Online crowdfunding sites such as Kickstarter and IndieGoGo have provided another source of funding for potential volunteers.[11]

In the Western imagination then, a "volunteer" isn't someone who doesn't *receive* money but rather someone who doesn't *care* about money. The volunteers used this idea

to differentiate themselves from tourists (who care about what they receive for their money) and development workers (who care what money they receive). The volunteers also used this idea to create a hierarchy among themselves. Although the short-term volunteers more strictly fit the definition of a volunteer as an unpaid worker, they were often seen by long-term volunteers as "buying" their experience—thus, like tourists, caring about what they would get for their money—and therefore were placed at the bottom of the volunteer hierarchy. Even other short-term volunteers were critical of those who paid a third-party agency for their placement, rather than finding their placement on their own.

Malawians also were generally not concerned with the volunteers' actual financial status while they were working as volunteers, perhaps because they already assumed that all Westerners are wealthy[12] (or because they were not aware that the volunteers were receiving financial support). As with Westerners, Malawians were more concerned with the expectation of payment than actual remuneration: A volunteer was someone who came to perform work without any intention of making money. This element of the definition became problematic for Malawians when they saw individuals they had known as "volunteers" return in another capacity in which they were perceived to be benefitting financially: as paid development workers or to set up businesses or their own NGOs.[13] As I will discuss more in Chapter 5, Malawians imagined their encounters with the Western volunteers as creating a particular type of relationship that persisted over time and space. Thus, for Malawians, once an individual was identified as a volunteer—and a relationship was formed based on that identity—he or she was always thought of as a volunteer. When I asked Malawians about volunteers in the community, they would sometimes start

talking about individuals who had initially come to Malawi as volunteers but had long since become permanent residents who ran businesses or NGOs.[14] Malawians still categorized these individuals as "volunteers" and, therefore, still expected them to not have the intention to make money. When former volunteers returned in a nonvolunteer capacity in which they were perceived to be making a profit, they broke the "rules" of the relationship. Malawian community members saw this as exploitation and questioned whether the person had ever truly been a "volunteer."

Given that for both Malawian community members and Western volunteers the category of "volunteer" was complex and contingent, I have forgone any strict definition or criteria for "volunteer" in my research and analysis. In the following discussion, the group of "Western volunteers" comprises those participants who self-identified as such. I have also attempted to make clear where Malawian participants were speaking about former volunteers or individuals who did not self-identify as volunteers.

Challenges and Limitations

Although I was fortunate that nearly everyone I spoke with was supportive of my research and willing to participate or assist me,[15] I did face some challenges in completing this research. As noted earlier, finding a field site for long-term participant-observation was more difficult than I had initially anticipated. The interviews and site visits that I conducted during the first months of my research provided a wealth of data, and allowed me to focus my observations when I did secure access to volunteer sites, but my discussion here is limited by the amount of direct observation of community–volunteer interactions.

Language also posed a challenge. Through intensive lessons and ongoing practice, I was able to achieve conversational fluency in Chichewa, the most common indigenous language, and my attempts to converse with community members in their own language certainly ingratiated me to them. I, however, relied on translators to conduct interviews with non-English speakers. Moreover, in the northern region, most community members spoke either Chitimbuka or Chitonga, and many would code-switch between those and Chichewa, making my language training moot. Language also limited some of my interviews with Malawian community members because the participants wanted to speak English despite lacking fluency, which affected the depth and quality of their responses. Language was also a challenge with some Western volunteers for whom English was a second language.

Another challenge was managing expectations of my role at volunteer sites. Most Malawians understand what a researcher does—they have encountered plenty of them—and I tried to be very clear about my purpose at volunteer sites. My role, however, was somewhat confused because I was undertaking participant-observation. Thus, even as I was conducting interviews and observing others, I was also participating in volunteer work with various programs. Particularly in Lakeshore Town, where I was more deeply embedded in the community and participating regularly with two volunteer programs, I faced increasing demands on my time and resources, and I had to remind others—and myself—that my primary purpose was to conduct research.

Finally, in a discussion of how subjectivities shape encounters, I should take a moment to explore my own subjectivity as a white, Western woman, an anthropologist, and a former volunteer, and the effects of that subjectivity on my encounters. Although

Malawians have a well-deserved reputation for their friendliness and hospitality, from which I benefited a great deal, they are also wary of foreigners and particularly foreign researchers. Malawians are sensitive to being exploited and to being portrayed negatively—all-too-common outcomes of prior encounters. As noted above and discussed more throughout, many Malawians have had experiences with foreigners in which they felt misled or used. I tried to allay their concerns by being open about my purpose, securing informed consent for interviews and photographs, and making myself available for their questions and concerns. In addition, I made efforts to show my respect for local norms and ways of living by dressing and behaving modestly, using local modes of transportation, and conversing with people in their local language. These small gestures went a long way toward differentiating myself from other Westerners and establishing rapport in the community.

Despite these efforts toward cultural competency, I would be naïve to believe that being a white Westerner did not have an effect on my encounters with Malawians. As I discuss in more detail in Chapter 4, many Malawians believe that Westerners are superior to Malawians. Although I attempted to ensure informed consent, this deeply embedded power difference may have exerted an unintentional coercive force on participants. It may also have influenced their responses if they were trying to anticipate what they thought would please me. At the same time, as I will argue throughout, Malawians strategically interact with Westerners to pursue their goals, and I am sure that at least some of the Malawian participants used those strategies in their interactions with me.

My experience as a volunteer was both a help and a hindrance in my research. Beyond being the impetus to conduct this research, my experience assisted me in

accessing both Malawian participants and Western volunteers. The background knowledge of Malawian culture, history, politics, economics, and language certainly helped me hit the ground running, so to speak. Being able to claim a "volunteer" identity also helped create rapport and credibility with the Western volunteers I encountered; long-term volunteers in particular were sometimes reluctant to speak with me until they learned that I had spent a year as a volunteer in Malawi.

My volunteer experience was also a hindrance, however, in that I came into the field with certain preconceptions, assumptions, and attitudes about Malawians, Westerners, development, and volunteering that I had to consciously challenge, sometimes with great effort. As a white Westerner and a former international volunteer, my research was partly what might be called "insider" or "native" anthropology. Thus, I had to be aware of when I was imposing my own assumptions about what the Western volunteers thought or meant based on my experience and subjectivity. As Kirin Narayan (1993: 672) advises,

> [W]hat we must focus our attention on is the quality of relations with the people we seek to represent in our texts: are they viewed as mere fodder for professionally self-serving statements . . . or are they accepted as subjects with voices, views, and dilemmas—people to whom we are bonded through ties of reciprocity and who may even be critical of our professional enterprise?

I was helped in this effort both by my academic advisors[16] and by my own explicit intention to rethink the traditional model of "bad" Western hegemony versus "good" local resistance. Moreover, following Narayan's imperative and Lila Abu-Lughod's (1991) call to write "ethnographies of the particular," I have grounded my analysis in the ethnographic details of the individuals I encountered in the field. Although I will make

general statements throughout the following chapters, I have strived to ensure that such statements are supported by specific examples from interviews or observations. In doing so, I have not only challenged my own deeply embedded beliefs and assumptions, but also I hope written an honest, fair discussion of encounters between Malawians and Westerners that goes beyond simplistic binaries and discourse analysis to begin understanding how Malawian community members and Western volunteers think and act in the field. Finally, however, I take heart in Sherry Ortner's (2006: 61) observation that "in both writing and reading one enters a corpus of texts in which, in reality, a single representation or misrepresentation or omission never goes unchallenged."

3. The Western "Helper"

The volunteers whom I met in Malawi during my fieldwork are just a few among the many people from the West who have traveled to Africa with the intention of "helping"—or "saving"—Africans. They are part of a centuries-old tradition of the Western "helper" in Africa.[17] In this chapter, I will explore the historical roots of the Western helper and its treatment in scholarly literature. In part one, I will provide a historical overview of the tradition, from colonial-era missionaries through contemporary development workers and volunteers. Through this historical overview, I will situate the Western helper in particular social, economic, and political contexts to understand better how the form and practice of "helping" has been shaped by these contexts. I will also suggest that despite the heuristic break between colonial and postcolonial eras, the Western helper reveals discursive continuities in Western approaches to Africa. In part two, I will consider how scholars have dealt with the Western helper in their studies of African societies. I will argue that even as scholars have attempted to complicate a hegemony–resistance model of encounter between Africans and Westerners, the Western helper has remained a "taken-for-granted, faceless presence" (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991: 54). Finally, I will suggest how we can build on this scholarship to develop a better understanding of encounters among and between Western helpers and African community members.

My primary focus is on the tradition of the Western helper in Malawi. Because the literature on the Western helper is limited, however, I will extend my review to encompass southern Africa. Bauer and Taylor (2005) argue for treating southern Africa as a cohesive region due to the common colonial histories and contemporary

interconnections shared by the nations that make up the region.[18] Although Malawi has its own historical particularities, which I will note where appropriate, it has never been isolated from the regional and global forces of colonialism, nationalism, and postcolonial development. Therefore, a review of the regional literature can illuminate the tradition of the Western helper in Malawi.

Part I: Historical Overview

Before beginning a historical overview of the tradition of the Western helper in southern Africa, I need to make two caveats. First, dividing the history of the Western helper in Africa into colonial and postcolonial eras is largely a heuristic device. Various categories of helpers have been present across historical periods; development workers and volunteers began arriving in Africa during the colonial era, while missionaries have remained active up to the present. Moreover, the rhetoric of "saving" Africa and the emphasis on "technical" assistance in education, health, and agriculture have remained largely the same throughout the tradition of the Western helper in Africa. The division into colonial and postcolonial eras, however, does point to significant trends in the history of the Western helper, particularly the shifts in responsibility for African development: from private philanthropic and missionary societies, to the public sector in the form of colonial governments and state-based foreign development assistance, back to the private sector through nongovernmental organizations and volunteers.

A second caveat is that much of the scholarship on Western involvement in Africa comes from Western sources. Journals, reports, and other published sources from Westerners in Africa form the bulk of the available primary sources on the tradition of

the Western helper in Africa. Moreover, most of the canonical analyses of Western interventions in Africa come from Western scholars. These accounts and analyses are generally devoid of African voices and, therefore, the African response to Western helpers. My research in Malawi is one attempt to begin filling this void, with the limits inherent in any single research project.

Colonial Era

Missionaries

The tradition of the Western helper in Malawi[19] began in the 1850s, with the arrival of Protestant—and mostly Scottish—missionaries, led by the (in)famous David Livingstone. These missionaries were not the first Westerners to arrive in Malawi or in southern Africa. The Portuguese had established settlements and trading routes along the southeastern coast by the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the Dutch East India Company set up a wayfaring station in Cape Town, South Africa, in 1652. For the most part, however, these early Western arrivals were interested only in creating trade agreements and extracting resources, whether in the form of ivory or slaves (Pachai 1973).[20] They generally met with considerable resistance from the native populations of Malawi, who levied taxes on Portuguese traders and offered little assistance to expeditions headed to the African interior (Pike 1968).

Why, after more than two hundred years of uneasy trade relations, did the Western helper take hold in southern Africa? The answer lies in the social, economic, and political changes taking place in both Europe and Africa.

In the early 1800s, Western social ideologies underwent massive shifts. The abolition movement took hold in Europe and the United States. Although the extent to

which the end of the Atlantic Slave Trade was the result of ideological or economic forces is greatly debated (Davis 2009), the abolition movement had a strong impact on public opinion of the West's relationship to Africa and provided a human-rights rhetoric that European governments adopted to justify colonialism. Reports from European traders and missionaries of the ongoing Arab and African slave trades thus attracted the attention of both church-based abolitionists and European imperialists.

Moreover, throughout Europe, benevolence and philanthropy had become a "society craze" (Gray 1908: 8). Initially, help for the "distressed classes" was thought to be the purview of private-sector charities because poverty and its attendant conditions were thought to be the fault of the individual. By the 1830s, that attitude began to shift toward increased state responsibility. One factor in this shift was the introduction of statistics. According to Gray (1908), "Not only did [statistics] define the problem, but it helped to determine the attitude of men to the problem" (15). By aggregating individuals into generalized categories, statistics shifted the focus in social analysis from the individual fault to the general cause. Thus, statistics "revealed" that poverty and its conditions were widespread and dependent on general—social—causes. Also in the mid-1800s, social philosophy was undergoing significant shifts, including the emergence of the idea of political economy and the growth of sociology. Led by Auguste Comte, who theorized a social whole, and Henri de Saint-Simon, who wrote about sympathy as a social value, sociology conceptualized individuals as part of a larger whole—society—in which they are intertwined and interdependent (Gray 1908). In turn, this social imagination led to conceptualizing individual ills as public—and therefore state—concerns.

Together, these social movements contributed to a new way to encounter Africans. Rather than being property, Africans were now the responsibility of Westerners; drawing on broader ideologies of the West's role in the global expansion of capitalism, the "White Man's Burden"[21] was to raise Africans out of their savage, heathen state and into Christian civilization. The European state was increasingly seen as having the legitimate authority to direct such an endeavor.

Changes were also taking place in Malawi. Landeg White (1987) argues that by the mid-1800s, local power structures were shifting forms. He writes, "As the political map of the Highlands [in southern Malawi] was being redrawn, the relationship that came to matter was not that based on kin or 'tribe' but that between patron and client, the protector and the protected" (49). Intratribal conflicts had fractured traditional power structures, leaving chiefs and communities vulnerable to myriad forces, internal and external. Whereas native populations had once resisted Western intrusions, they became more welcoming to anyone who could serve as their "protector," including the new wave of white missionaries who arrived with guns and cloth.

The Scottish missionary and explorer David Livingstone embodied the new Western approach to Africa. Traveling through southern and eastern Africa in the 1850s and 1860s, he was appalled by the ongoing Arab slave trade but encouraged by the Africans' reception of and assistance to his expedition. Livingstone called for "the civilizing influence of Christianity" in Africa (Pike 1968: 70), as well as the provision of an economic alternative to slave trading for African communities. His call was taken up by the Universities' Mission to Central Africa. The first mission, led by Bishop Charles Mackenzie, set out to establish a permanent mission site in southern Malawi in 1861.

Spiritual salvation was the missionaries' ultimate goal, but "saving" the Africans involved more than religious conversion (Comaroff & Comaroff 1997; Fields 1982). Following Livingstone's call for "Christianity and Commerce," missionaries generally practiced "lifestyle evangelism," a two-pronged approach that linked spiritual and material development (Bornstein 2005). The first prong was that the missionaries would live in solidarity with the local community, learning the local language and subsisting on local foods, to model the Christian lifestyle in context. The second prong was to encourage "moral" alternatives for material development. The missionaries hoped to overcome such heathen practices as slave trading by providing economic alternatives that would make slave trading undesirable. To achieve this goal, the missionaries indoctrinated the African natives not only in the religious tenets of Christianity, but also in the secular tenets of capitalism. Missionaries developed agricultural projects, built schools, and provided biomedical health care with the goal of transforming Africans into moral subjects who then could be saved through religious conversion.

Some scholars contend that these helping projects were more about control than salvation. Megan Vaughan (1991) argues for missionary medicine as a means of control: "in British colonial Africa, medicine and its associated disciplines played an important part in constructing 'the African' as an object of knowledge, and elaborated classification systems and practices which have to be seen as intrinsic to the operation of colonial power" (8).[22] Paul Landau (1996) suggests that missionaries in colonial Botswana used dental surgery—particularly tooth extraction—as a means to compete for power against local healers. In writing about missionaries in South Africa, John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff (1991) note, "Where the Boers wished to dominate the blacks through relations

of production, the missionary set out to control them through relations of exchange," by creating material wants that could only be satisfied by the missionary (270). Harry G. West (2005) examines how missionaries in Mozambique used education and access to schooling to encourage conversions and gain power by creating an educated elite class of youth who promoted Western ideals and challenged the authority of traditional elders.

As these scholars demonstrate, missionaries were often closely entwined with structures of power—both local and colonial. The missionaries themselves sought to maintain the Western ideal of separation of Church and State (White 1987). Africans, however, did not share this ideal—or even the idea that church and state could be separate—and early missionaries were quickly drawn into political disputes. The missionaries began to act as "chiefs" and used their control of the means of development to exert political influence (Powdermaker 1962).

In Malawi, Bishop Mackenzie and his colleagues were at the center of negotiations between warring factions and were active participants in raiding parties on villages that were identified as slave holders or as threats to the mission (White 1987). White argues that the mission's political role had long-lasting ramifications for local structures of power. The missionaries were eventually forced to abandon the mission site, in part as a result of the political strife they had created.[23] Other mission sites in Malawi had similar difficulties in maintaining the separation of Church and State because of their opposition to the local slave trade, their claims to authority in punishing offenders, and their control of the means of development.

Missionaries were also implicated in colonial politics, although much like with local politics, the relationship was fraught and complex. Peter Pels (1997) describes a

contradictory relationship between missionaries and colonial authorities, in which the missionaries individually resisted colonial authorities even as the practices of mission (education, conversion) supported the institution of colonialism. Comaroff and Comaroff (1991) observe that missionaries occupied a liminal space in colonial Africa: "By virtue of their championing of the interests of indigenous peoples, they alienated other European factions. Yet by virtue of being white, they were always open to the suspicion of being colonial agents" (46). As Erica Bornstein (2005) notes, missionaries were suspicious not only because of their physical resemblance to colonists, but also because they often acted with and as colonists. She writes, "Christian missions worked arm-in-arm with the state to provide education and agricultural training in attempts to 'civilize' Africans, and at the same time, to create a docile, productive rural labor force for colonial capitalism" (11).

Bornstein (2005), however, also notes that missionaries came into conflict with colonialism in their advocacy for indigenous rights and support of independence movements. Both historians and political leaders have credited the Scottish missions with fostering opposition to colonial rule in Malawi. John Pike (1968) quotes Malawi's former president Hastings Kamuzu Banda as saying, "the seed-bed from which grew the Nyasaland African Congress was the Livingstonia Mission" (123). Other scholars suggest that the tension between missionaries and the colonial authority was less about indigenous rights than about opposing goals (see, for example, Fields 1982). Whereas the colonial government, acting under the theory of indirect rule, was willing to tolerate traditional practices when necessary to uphold the authority of the designated chiefs, the missionaries sought to eliminate "heathen" traditions and fully indoctrinate native

populations in Christian culture. Where these goals came into conflict, the missionaries took an anti-colonial stance in order to bolster their own authority.

Colonists

The colonial authorities, for their part, were generally content to let the missionaries see to the development—both spiritual and material—of the African natives while they focused on collecting taxes and maintaining civil order (Vaughn 1991). The extent to which colonial authorities involved themselves in the welfare of their colonial subjects was limited to their own self interests (Cooper 2002; Powdermaker 1962). Not until the 1940s did the colonial authorities take an interest in "developmental colonialism," again spurred by changing contexts in Europe and Africa (Cooper 2002). Beginning in the 1930s, workers across Africa began to protest inhumane working conditions in a series of strikes, demonstrations, and riots. At the same time, World War II had increased the European imperialists' dependency on raw-material exports from Africa. World War II also raised questions, among both Europeans and Africans, about the racist ideologies that underpinned colonialism. As Cooper (2002) notes, "Hitler gave racist ideologies and racist theories a bad name" (37). The twin needs to reconsider their justifications for colonialism and to respond to workers' rights movements led the colonial powers to adopt a policy of developmental colonialism that would help the Africans eventually achieve economic, social, and political parity with Europeans. As with earlier colonial helping projects, however, developmental colonialism often only extended as far as it served European interests and often benefited white settlers more than native Africans (Cooper 2002).

The new helping projects undertaken by the colonial authorities were strongly imbued with the European faith in modernity. Stoler and Cooper (1997) note that many colonists viewed the African colonies as "laboratories of modernity, where missionaries, educators, and doctors could carry out experiments in social engineering without confronting the popular resistances and bourgeois rigidities of European society at home" (5). Relying on statistics and "scientific" knowledge to guide their policies, colonial powers began to invest in agricultural schemes, infrastructure to support the mining industry, education and technical training, and health initiatives.

In Malawi, where colonial policy had long been one of benign neglect, developmental colonialism had the unintended consequences of stunting economic growth and increasing resistance to colonial rule. Intending to bolster the economic strength of the region and protect its colonies from the predations of South Africa's apartheid government, the British colonial authority forced together Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland (Malawi) to create the Central African Federation in 1953. Talk of a federation had begun as early as 1923, and Malawians were almost immediately opposed to the plan. Migrant workers returned from the mines of Southern Rhodesia with reports of harsh labor conditions, institutionalized segregation, and violent oppression (Pike 1968). Malawians feared that under a federation, they too would be subject to the oppressive, segregationist policies of Southern Rhodesia and South Africa—and that they would lose their land to white settlers. Indeed, the creation of the federation allowed racist ideologies to expand through the region—fostering nationalist movements—while failing to spur economic growth outside of Southern Rhodesia (Cooper 2002).

African Americans

Scholars have generally imagined encounters between Africa and the West as not only a geographic opposition, but also a racial opposition: black Africans and white Westerners. Not all Western helpers in Africa have been white, though. From the late 1700s through the early 1900s, the Black Atlantic Missionary Movement brought black missionaries from the United States and West Indies to Africa (Killingray 2003).[24] In the early part of the movement, white congregations sent freed black slaves "back to Africa" to evangelize their African kin. For the black missionaries, the movement was a way to "redeem" their race, both in the eyes of God and in the minds of their white sponsors. For the white congregations, sending black missionaries to Africa was a way to increase the evangelical presence in Africa while mitigating the risks to themselves.

The black missionaries had the same mixed response to colonialism as their white counterparts. According to historian David Killingray (2003), many black missionaries shared the dominant Western view of Africans as savage heathens who required the civilizing influence of colonialism and the saving grace of Christianity. Other black missionaries were critical of colonialism and advocated for African self-rule. Racist ideologies and fears that black missionaries would incite rebellion eventually led colonial governments to restrict black missionaries' entry to Africa in the early 1900s (even though white missionaries were as responsible—if not more so—for encouraging African rebellion against unjust colonial policies; Killingray 2003).

Interlude: Political Economy of Development

The history of the Western helper in Africa is closely entwined with the history of the political economy of development. Movements in development discourse have strongly influenced the role of the Western helper as imagined by both the Western helpers themselves and the communities and nations in which they served. Here, I will pause in the history of the Western helper to give an overview of the history of the political economy of development as a way to bridge the colonial and postcolonial periods and to provide necessary context for my discussion of the contemporary Western helper.

I begin my overview in the post-World War II era. The idea of development extends much further back in time, but I have chosen to start in the 1940s for two reasons.[25] First, it signals the beginning of a focus on international development. Prior theories of development largely concerned Western domestic development. Second, the major actors of African development did not emerge until the 1940s: the international financial institutions (i.e., International Monetary Fund and World Bank), the United Nations and its agencies (e.g., World Health Organization, UNICEF, UNESCO), and the African states.

The Development Orthodoxy

The years of World War II brought significant shifts in economic power and theory (Cooper & Packard 1997; Edelman & Haugerud 2005). The European imperial powers were greatly weakened by a second large-scale war. Britain, France, and Germany needed to tend to domestic reconstruction, leaving them with little capacity for or interest in maintaining their colonial empires. They began to explore how to transform their dependent colonies into independent, self-sustaining states through decolonization (Leys

2005). At the same time, the Western powers understood that international economic stability was essential to maintaining peace.

Economist John Maynard Keynes had gained prominence in the interwar years for his prescient views on the effects of war reparations and economic instability. During the Great Depression, Keynes advocated for an interventionist approach to economic development (Edelman & Haugerud 2005). According to Keynes, the state should play an active role in spurring economic growth through public spending. As the chief British delegate to the Bretton Woods Conference, Keynes strongly influenced the creation of a new set of international financial institutions designed to support sovereign states in developing their economies, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

Development theory was thus shaped by Western desires to rid themselves of economic obligations to their dependent colonies and to avoid another major war by establishing international economic stability. The state was to be the major agent of development. The role of the new international financial and governance institutions was to support sovereign nation-states in achieving economic development. From this political and economic milieu emerged the "development orthodoxy" that formed the basis of policy and practice in the 1940s and that remains the core of development discourse today: "that foreign aid and investment on favorable terms, the transfer of knowledge of production techniques, measures to promote health and education, and economic planning would lead impoverished nations to become 'normal' market economies" (Cooper & Packard 2005: 126).

To put this orthodoxy into practice, a host of international aid agencies were created, mostly under the umbrella of the United Nations: the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Health Organization (WHO). As with the IMF and World Bank, these organizations were formed and administered by the Western powers—the United States and Europe—and although their stated goals were to contribute to prosperity and stability for all, in practice they often served the interests of the West (Cooper & Packard 2005). Some scholars have suggested that although the rhetoric of development promoted state sovereignty, the practice was intended to extend imperial control over the colonies (Cooper 2002). Under the guise of "development," the Western powers could justify continued colonial rule. Development theory, however, was also adopted by African nationalist movements to push for independence.

In contrast to the prevailing Western models of nationalism, African nationalism focused on political and economic unity rather than creating cultural unity (Ágh 1984; Guibernau 1996; Williams 2003). Because few, if any, "true" African nations existed prior to colonialism, African nationalists felt that they needed to construct their nations as a political community, rather than as an ethnic community. Most African nations were (and still are) multiethnic; therefore, national identity would be based on the state.[26] Certainly some Western nationalisms also have emphasized a state-based civic unity—France, most notably—but those nationalisms included goals for cultural unity, such as a single "national" language, to reinforce their civic unity (Brass 1991; Weber 1976). African nationalism, according to Benyamin Neuberger (2000), "was principally a kind

of political and territorial nationalism and had no ethno-cultural goals and aspirations" (295).

In addition to a common identity tied to the state, Africans shared a common identity as an oppressed economic class (Williams 2003). Although some apologists would argue that colonialism benefited Africans through the development of infrastructure, the general consensus among African policymakers and scholars was that colonialism was an exploitative economic arrangement in which the colonies were purposefully underdeveloped to serve the needs of the colonial powers. African nationalists argued that African sovereignty was a necessary precondition for solving the economic and social problems caused by the colonial authorities. Thus, African nationalism had an economic character: In order to overcome their economic oppression, Africans needed to join as a nation to become self-governing states (Ágh 1984; Benjamin 1992; Hodgkin 1957; Young 2001). Development theory provided a strong organizing principle for the African state: only strong, sovereign states participating equally in the world economy could foster economic growth and political stability for Africans.

Modernization Takes Off

By the end of the 1950s, it was becoming increasingly clear that creating economic stability would not create economic growth in poor economies. Development theorists then turned to a new paradigm: modernization theory (Leys 2005). Based on economic historian W. W. Rostow's (1960) stages of economic growth, modernization theory held that the colonies would need large inputs of supports to move quickly through the stages of development and become "modern." These supports included not only financial aid but also technology, education, and cultural transfers. As Rostow noted, economic

change was integrally related to political and social change, both as a cause and a consequence. Reaching the "take-off" stage, in which economies moved from traditional agriculture to modern industrialization, required changes in the social and political systems, as well as in the economic structure (Cooper 2002).

Modernization theory found plenty of willing participants to put the theory into practice. In the aftermath of colonialism, the newly independent African states faced myriad social and economic problems (Guibernau 1996; Pike 1968; Smith 1983). Many of them were saddled with debt created by the colonial powers, and the state economies were severely underdeveloped by colonial emphasis on agriculture and resource extraction. The nationalist movements felt that they needed to spur immediate economic development to solidify their local power and to legitimize themselves in the international arena, so they initiated large-scale social and economic development schemes, such as universal education, agricultural extension, and centrally planned industrialization (Guibernau 1996; Isbister 2001). To finance these schemes, the new governments began to borrow heavily from international financial institutions, regional banks, and other states.

Modernization theory also found support on the donor side. The Western world was eager to develop Africa, Asia, and Latin America as markets for its exports (Rostow 1960). Moreover, as the European colonial powers exited Africa, the United States and the Soviet Republic rushed in to secure allies in their cold war. Each side hoped to promote its economic and political ideology—U.S. capitalism or Soviet communism—by providing development assistance to the newly independent states (Isbister 2001; Spicer & Reichardt 1992). A state's ability to attract and keep this financial aid depended on the

leadership's willingness to adopt the "core values" of the donor, or at least to espouse those values in public. In reality, both the United States and the Soviet Republic were often supporting dictators and despots who had no intention of implementing social or economic programs that reflected the donors' core values.

Through this state-based development, the new African governments became "gatekeeper states" (Cooper 2002: 92). Development discourse provided a legitimized language for creating economic and political ties with the external world, while also internally positioning the state as "the prime mover for raising the standard of living" (Cooper 2002: 92). James Ferguson (1994) notes that even when development projects failed in their stated goals, the projects bolstered the role of the state by expanding the state's reach into rural areas. Ferguson posits that the "government services" tied to development were often more tied to establishing power and the right to govern rather than to providing services.

The Incredibly Shrinking State

Modernization theory was dealt a fatal blow by two coinciding economic crises: the 1973 oil crisis and the concomitant debt crisis in the Third World. During the oil crisis, developing and underdeveloped economies in Africa and elsewhere were crippled by rising oil prices, which stunted their nascent export sectors and severely restricted the states' ability to provide basic social services. To cope, the states took out more loans from the IMF and World Bank. The heavily indebted states then began to default on their loans, leading the IMF and World Bank to declare a debt crisis in Africa.

At the same time, Africa's strategic importance declined as the Cold War came to an end. The donor countries that had poured money into African economies in return for

political allegiance began to question the value of their "investments" in this new environment (Spicer & Reichardt 1992). As donor countries and international financial institutions looked more critically at foreign development assistance (FDA) in Africa, a new paradigm emerged: structural adjustment. With this new paradigm came new strings attached to FDA: neoliberal markets and "good governance" (Benjamin 1992).

Depending on one's attitude toward the IMF and World Bank, in the years following the debt crisis, these institutions were either strict benefactors who bailed out the African states through tough love or instruments of the industrialized world that propped up the failing economies only so that the former colonial powers could continue to extract their pound of flesh. In either case, the IMF and World Bank stepped in to prevent the African states from entirely defaulting on their loans. The institutions extended long-term loans to governments, restructured the states' debts, and helped secure states' access to commercial credit. This time, however, the states had to agree to more than a repayment schedule. They had to adopt the IMF and World Bank's fiscal policy recommendations—or structural adjustment program (SAP)—including devaluing local currency; liberalizing imports, foreign exchange, and agricultural markets; reducing government spending; and privatizing public services, such as telecommunications, transportation, health care, and education (Williams 2003). In other words, the African states had to agree to restructure their economies as (neo)liberal markets (Hanson & Hentz 1999).

Furthermore, the African states had to meet standards of "good governance" (Benjamin 1992) This requirement has generally been interpreted within the Western framework of democratization and human rights (Spicer & Reichardt 1992). To meet the

standard of "good governance," the states had to demonstrate such policies as a free press, open and fair elections, and a multiparty system.

In practice, FDA donors emphasized liberalization of markets over good governance, although as has been seen in Malawi, the good governance standard could be invoked when donors wanted to stop FDA payments to a state. Moreover, the extent to which either requirement was met varied greatly throughout the African continent. Some states, such as Uganda, adopted almost all the IMF and World Bank policy "recommendations" (Cheney 2007), whereas other states agreed to the standards but never made any real effort to implement the recommended policies.

Critics of this neoliberal development paradigm dubbed it "neocolonialism" (Hanson & Hentz 1999; Isbister 2001; Spring 2004; Stoneman & Suckling 1987; Young 2001). Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania, wrote, "What all this [International Monetary Fund activity] amounts to is an increasing tendency toward a kind of international authoritarianism. Economic power is used as a substitute for gunboats . . . in enforcing the unilateral will of the powerful. The sovereign equality of all nations is ignored, as is the future stability of the world" (quoted in Callaghy 1987: 148). According to critics, neoliberal development policies perpetuated the exploitation of underdeveloped nations by industrialized nations instead of encouraging economic growth and independence. Daniel Osabu-Kle (2000), a political science scholar, argues that the structural adjustment plans required by the IMF and the World Bank are

> not primarily concerned with solutions to economic problems in Africa but about organizing for human projects in which decisions about who gets what, when, and how have become the source of the power struggle between the Bretton Woods institutions and African leaders. This struggle may be conceived as an attempt by the Bretton Woods institutions to recolonize Africa on behalf of their allies. (p. 515)

Economic dependence led to political dependence as states were increasingly required to adopt not only the economic policies but the social and political "core values" of the FDA donors, leading to questions of the sovereignty of the recipient states (Benjamin 1992). Osabu-Kle (2000) contends that whereas neoliberal economic policies were a mechanism for appropriating the means of production for Western interests, "good governance" policies were intended to destabilize governments and "render African countries politically and economically weak enough to be dominated and exploited" (524).

State sovereignty was further eroded by the IMF and World Bank's programmatic emphasis on individual participation in global structures and de-emphasis of the state's role in economic and social development (Thompson 1987). For example, the World Bank's education policies push for privatization of schools (removing the state) while promoting a curriculum focused on preparing students for the "global market" (emphasizing individual and global structures; Spring 2004). One such World Bank initiative was the African Virtual University (AVU). Begun in 1997 as a pilot project in six English-speaking countries (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, and Ghana), AVU was created to provide courses in such areas as business communication, computer repair, business development, information technology, and math and science. Rather than working with African universities to provide the courses, the World Bank contracted with thirty "leading universities in the North," according to their own report (Spring 2004: 64), a decision that some critics interpreted as perpetuating colonial domination of the intellectual and economic life of Africa.

The AVU program also demonstrated another critique of FDA: that it was recreating the colonial myth of the savage, backwards, and helpless African. By undermining local and regional efforts to promote economic development and by reducing the state's role in providing such crucial social services as education and health care, FDA donors and international institutions perpetuated the colonial rhetoric, through the lens of modernization theory, that the more evolved and civilized Western states were "saving" the poor, starving Africans who lack the capacity to help themselves. Michael Maren (1997), in his critique of international humanitarian assistance, describes how nongovernmental organizations funded by international financial institutions shaped the modern cultural archetype of the starving African as part of a rhetoric that justified imperialist policies as "humanitarian interventions."

Whether or not one agreed with neoliberalism, toward the end of the 1970s, just about everyone could agree on one fact of development: it had almost entirely failed in Africa. Asia, by contrast, was beginning to prosper as the result of investment in industrialization and the adoption of new agricultural technologies, an initiative known as the Green Revolution that had been first successful in Mexico in the 1940s. As a result, many policymakers, theorists, and practitioners focused—and continue to focus—their attention on identifying reasons specific to Africa for its economic failures (Biersteker 1993). Why had modernization succeeded in other nations but failed in Africa? Some of the proposed "reasons" included geography (Herbst 2000), population (Ndulu et al. 2007), cultural traditions such as patrimonialism (Boone 2003; Chabal & Daloz 1999; Hyden 1983; Medard 1982), ethnic competition (Bates 1983; Habyarimana et al. 2007; Laitin 1986), corruption, and poor governance (Keefer 2004; Reno 1998).

Locating the source of failure within African served Western purposes in two ways. First, it divested the West of responsibility for global poverty and its attendant conditions. Western powers, both directly through their national policies and indirectly through international financial institutions, could justify reductions in development aid under the reasoning that the African states would simply squander the money through corruption and mismanagement. Second, it allowed the West to maintain a rhetorical commitment to "development" without having to address the flaws in international financial systems that perpetuated underdevelopment. The problem wasn't with the Western economic system but with the African political systems (Leys 2005).

Development in the New Millennium

By the mid-1990s, neoliberalism and structural adjustment programs (SAPs), which had dominated development policy for more than two decades, had not only failed to achieve economic growth in Africa but were being blamed for declining economic and social conditions. According to anthropologist Paul Farmer (2005), "By almost every measure, social inequalities—both within affluent societies and across borders—have risen sharply over the past two or three decades. The social pathologies associated with rising inequality give pause to even the cheerleaders of neoliberal economics" (161). The IMF, World Bank, and Western powers quickly abandoned SAPs and other explicitly neoliberal policies in favor of a so-called "Third Way" to development (Gledhill 2005). Third Way, or alternative, development is premised on strengthening civil society as a counterweight to the power of states and global corporations. Furthermore, these theorists champion NGOs and "third sector" voluntary organizations as the driving force for "responsible capitalism" and socioeconomic change (Gledhill 2005: 382).

Anthropologist John Gledhill critiques these Third Way theories for focusing on individual citizens as the unit of change and for adopting a "blame the victim" stance that locates the problems of poor nations inside those nations. Rather than addressing the root problems of an unequal political and economic world-system, Third Way development stresses individual initiative and equal opportunity. Thus, Third Way theorists assert that every child should have access to education and health care while ignoring the structural barriers that prevent that access and blaming the child for lacking initiative when he cannot overcome those barriers.

The most prominent of the Third Way theories—and the dominant paradigm for development today—is the United Nations' Millennium Project, of which Jeffrey Sachs has been the primary architect.[27] According to this paradigm, by investing heavily in highly creative entrepreneurs who are developing low-cost, high-impact technologies for health care, agriculture, and communication and then disseminating these technologies through global networks, we can significantly reduce poverty and its attendant conditions by the year 2025. The program is intended—and presented—as a radical corrective for previous development failures, and it has gained significant purchase among policymakers, development practitioners, and the general public. It has become enshrined in the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, which have been translated by numerous countries—including Malawi—into national poverty reduction strategies. It also informs a wide range of development practices and agencies, including volunteering, small-scale NGOs, microfinance, and large-scale research foundations, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Strongly reminiscent of Rostowian modernization, Sachs asserts that that economic growth follows a regular pattern, or "ladder": subsistence economy, commercial economy, emerging-market, and technology-based economy (Sachs 2008: 209). Societies are propelled up the ladder by entrepreneurship, democratic values, and technology (Sachs 2005: 33). Societies that have not yet climbed the ladder to development are simply lacking one or more of the key traits.

Sachs explicitly rejects dependency theories of structural inequality: "Technology has been the main force behind the long-term increases in income in the rich world, not exploitation of the poor" (2005: 31). He further asserts that "all parts of the world have the chance to join an age of unprecedented prosperity building on global science, technology, and markets" (2). Moreover, the lack of technology in poor countries is their own fault. Sachs blames postcolonial isolationist policies for the lack of growth in poor nations: "The nonaligned third world countries lost the chance to participate in the technological advance of the first world mainly because they did not trust the first world" (48).

The role of developed nations and international institutions, then, is to "help [the poor] onto the ladder of development, at least to gain a foothold on the bottom rung, from which they can then proceed to climb on their own" (Sachs 2005: 2). Sachs emphasizes the role of NGOs, civil society, and corporations in providing this helping hand onto the ladder of development (2008: 52). Although he recognizes that "market forces alone cannot solve these problems" (2008: 32), Sachs envisions a minimal role for states and international financial institutions: reducing barriers to entering the market and providing substantial, sustained financial support, to be administered by the NGOs and civil society.

Part I: Historical Overview Continued

Postcolonial Era

Most African nations gained their independence in the 1960s, including Malawi in 1964, but independence hardly brought an end to Western influence or to the tradition of the Western helper.[28] By the early 1960s, a new wave of Western helpers, working with or at least strongly influenced by movements in the development orthodoxy, had begun to arrive, including development workers, volunteers, and celebrities.

Development Workers

During the transition from colonialism to independence, African nations and people sought to distance themselves from their former colonial rulers and those they saw as complicit in that rule—including Christian missionaries (although as seen below, the new African governments took a more measured approach to relations with Western governments than many African people may have liked). International nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), by contrast, were seen as an independent source of development assistance and therefore welcomed to fill the roles once occupied by colonial authorities and missionaries (Manji & O'Coill 2002).[29]

At the time of African independence, a network of INGOs was ready and eager to step into those roles. Although private charity and relief groups are a centuries-old tradition, the modern INGO emerged during World War II to serve the growing number of Europeans who were impoverished, injured, or orphaned by the war (Barrow & Jennings 2001).[30] By the 1960s, European recovery was well underway, and such groups as CARE, Save the Children, and Oxfam were in danger of losing their financial support

if they could not find a new cause to rally public sentiment. They found that cause in Africa.

In the early years of INGOs, they were seen as marginal to the African state and "official" development programs; they operated at the pleasure of the state and according to its conditions (Manji & O'Coill 2002). Moreover, much like colonial-era missionaries, INGOs were ambivalent about their roles in African communities. At their inception during World War II, many INGOs had been openly political anti-war advocates. After the war, these same organizations re-imagined themselves as apolitical charities, in part to secure government funding for overseas work (Barrow & Jennings 2001). INGOs, however, also sought to move from a reactive "relief" model to a proactive "development" model. In doing so, they became part of a larger debate on whether or not "development" was a political action. By the mid-1960s, Western governments had largely resolved that development was a charitable action, not a political one, opening a larger role for INGOs.

On the ground, INGOs tried to retain an apolitical position between often corrupt, oppressive governments and the poverty-stricken, oppressed people the INGOs served. As a result, INGOs largely focused on providing social services to remote areas that the state ignored or lacked the resources to serve (Manji & O'Coill 2002). Yet, much like their missionary forebears, INGO staff members were drawn into local politics because they had access to valuable goods and were perceived as having power (Barrow & Jennings 2001).

Over time, INGOs became tied to "official" development as both foreign and national governments began to contract with INGOs for service delivery (Manji &

O'Coill 2002). INGOs were seen as more efficient and flexible than government-based development agencies (Barrow & Jennings 2001). Moreover, as noted above, Western donor countries were shifting to a neoliberal ideology that de-emphasized the role of the state and emphasized private-sector service delivery (Pfeiffer 2003). In the wake of the 1970s oil crises, the concomitant debt crisis, and a series of violent military coups in Africa, Western donors and international financial institutions were wary of sending funds to African governments, preferring to channel aid through Western INGOs. This change to seeing INGOs as a partner—rather than an outlier—of official development had significant consequences for the NGO sector, allowing it to grow rapidly and to gain power (Edelman & Haugerud 2005; Manji & O'Coill 1998). Indeed, the 1980s became known as "the NGO decade" in development (Tvedt 1998).

Another set of development workers also emerged as a result of World War II: transnational and national development agencies. As noted above, much like INGOs, transnational development agencies (e.g., UNESCO, UNICEF, etc.) were initially formed to address the problems of postwar Europe. Western national governments also set up agencies for overseas development. Again, these agencies were initially focused on postwar Europe, but were reorganized in the 1960s in response to the emerging Cold War to provide assistance to newly independent African states, as well as Latin American and Asian states.

Religious organizations, seeking to distance themselves from their colonial associations and find new inroads for their work, also re-imagined themselves as development workers through faith-based INGOs, such as World Vision and Christian Care. As part of their postcolonial transition, the newly formed faith-based INGOs shed

their rhetoric of saving Africans from heathen beliefs in favor of a rhetoric of saving Africans from poverty (Bornstein 2005). Faith-based INGOs, however, preserved the missionary method of lifestyle evangelism, linking economic development to spiritual conversion. Moreover, faith-based INGOs often used spirituality as a way of distinguishing themselves from secular INGOs; they saw themselves as more effective in creating sustainable development because they were converting the whole person, not just changing economic behaviors.

Manji and O'Coill (1998) observe that even as INGOs were welcomed into Africa because of their perceived independence from colonial governments, they continued to perpetuate colonial discourses: "the dominant discourse of development was framed not in the language of emancipation or justice, but with the vocabulary of charity, technical expertise, neutrality, and a deep paternalism" (574). Moreover, they argue that INGOs reinforced the hierarchal positions, established during colonialism, of a modern, civilized West versus a primitive, undeveloped Africa. Graham Hancock (1989) similarly suggests that in marketing themselves to a Western audience, INGOs have perpetuated the idea that non-Western peoples are "helpless" victims who "can do nothing unless we, the rich and powerful, intervene to save them from themselves" (19; see also Moro 1998). Terje Tvedt (1998) writes, "[NGOs] have emerged as symbols of societal responsibility and global morality. The NGO channel has thus been important for Western images of 'the other' and 'us'" (2). Both Arturo Escobar (1995) and James Ferguson (2006) note the importance of this dichotomy to a postcolonial, neoliberal discourse of development. As a result, although perhaps as reluctantly as the colonial-era missionaries who helped spread

imperialist ideologies, development INGOs have played a role "in expanding and consolidating neoliberal hegemony in the global context" (Manji & O'Coill 1998: 582).

Scholars also criticize development workers in general for failing to achieve any measurable, sustainable development. Rather, according to critics, development workers have perpetuated the very conditions that inhibit development. Hancock (1989) notes that Western development workers often lack the necessary skills and knowledge to be effective. He further criticizes them for failing to consider the insight and expertise of local community members in making and implementing development plans. Michael Maren (1997) similarly calls out Western development workers—particularly those from Save the Children—for lacking the requisite knowledge and skills while discounting local knowledge. Maren argues that INGOs are primarily in the business of raising money to support their own organizations, rather than focused on appropriate and sustainable development for Africa. Alex de Waal (1997) argues that instead of alleviating hunger, development workers actually perpetuate and worsen the suffering from famines by failing to engage in the politics of famine. According to de Waal, the rise of the "humanitarian international" (his term for development workers) has created an obstacle to eradicating hunger: "the cosmopolitan elite of relief workers, officials of donor agencies, consultant academics and the like . . . is avowedly dedicated to fighting famine, but does not in fact operate in a way that enables this to be achieved" (4). Humanitarian internationals and their institutions cannot engage in effective political action without losing the public support that ensures their existence.

Today, hundreds of INGOs operate in southern Africa and employ thousands of Western workers in the field. Although explicitly neoliberal development policies have

gone out of favor, so-called Third Way development theories—including the highly influential UN Millennium Project—continue to emphasize the role of the private sector, including INGOs, in development. Yet despite the growing presence of these Western "helpers," little research has been done on how development workers act—and interact—with Africans and each other in the field.

Volunteers

Alongside—and often indistinguishable from—INGO staff came an influx of international volunteers to Africa.[31] Although presaged by such privately funded volunteer organizations as Operation Crossroads Africa, the American Friends Service Committee, and International Voluntary Services, international volunteering in Africa took hold in the 1960s at the impetus of Western governments. Thousands of Western volunteers—generally middle class, white, and just out of college—traveled to Africa through the United States' Peace Corps, the British Voluntary Services Overseas, the Netherlands' Bureau for International Technical Assistance, and other government-sponsored programs.

The rhetoric of these programs was steeped in ideas of volunteerism, development, and humanitarianism, but the programs' objectives had firm roots in Western political goals and Cold War ideologies. Charles Wetzel (1966) notes that the Peace Corps was developed "as a weapon of American foreign policy against communism" (3). This political underpinning did not go unnoticed by the Africans whom the volunteers were sent to serve. Neil Boyer (1966) recalls his arrival as a Peace Corps volunteer in Ethiopia in 1962: "Not only did no one on that day (or for at least another year) thank us for coming, but they asked us why we came and accused us of being neocolonialists and

Central Intelligence Agency spies" (56). African governments, eager to demonstrate cooperation with Western donor nations in order to secure development funds, welcomed airplane loads of volunteers despite such local resistance. Moreover, newly elected African leaders quickly found that they faced significant barriers to delivering the development they had promised as part of independence movements. As with INGOs, international volunteers were a means of filling the gaps in government services.

International volunteers—both then and now—focused on many of the same areas of development as the missionaries had: education, health and hygiene, and agricultural extension.[32] Education was a particularly important focus for international volunteers. During the 1950s, Africans began to view Western education as the key to economic prestige and political power. In Malawi, secondary school registrations tripled between 1956 and 1962 (Pike 1968). The government and missionaries were focused on primary schooling, so international volunteers became essential for meeting the new demand for secondary schooling. More than half of Peace Corps volunteers in the 1960s worked as teachers; in Malawi, nearly 80 percent of Peace Corps volunteers worked in education (Deutchman 1966). International volunteers also played an important role in health care in Malawi as former president Banda's increasingly oppressive rule led to massive out-migrations of doctors and other health care workers (Lwanda 2002; Wiseman Chirwa, personal communication).

Like the missionaries (and their contemporaries in INGOs), international volunteers debated their role in the community. According to Arnold Deutchman (1966), Peace Corps volunteers were initially viewed by policymakers and program administrators "primarily as catalysts of institutional change, and only secondarily as purveyors of

skills" (80). Yet many Peace Corps volunteers were reluctant to become involved in community development outside of their assigned jobs, and both Deutchman (1966) and Boyer (1966) note that Peace Corps volunteers' attempts at institutional change often resulted in conflict with the community—and between governments. Malawi's former president Banda attempted to limit foreigners' influence by placing restrictions on their movement, confining them to their assigned work, and using the Malawi Young Pioneers (the youth arm of Banda's Malawi Congress Party) to monitor volunteers' interactions with the community (Wiseman Chirwa, personal communication). The Malawi Congress Party, under Banda's direction, also expelled international volunteer programs, including the Peace Corps, for several years because the government suspected volunteers of organizing opposition groups in the villages; the programs were allowed to re-enter only after assuring the Malawian government that they would focus on technical projects and not participate in community organizing (Lwanda 2009).

Apart from some historical work on the Peace Corps and volunteer memoirs, the literature on international volunteering—in Africa and elsewhere—is scant. The anthropological literature on volunteerism generally falls into two areas: the ethnographer as "volunteer" (Pink 1998) and volunteerism as an internal phenomenon (members within a society assisting each other; but cf. Sheridan & Price 2006 and Vrasti 2012). Expanding beyond anthropology reveals a more abundant literature on international volunteerism. This literature focuses on the demographic characteristics of volunteers, the motivations of volunteers, and the benefits of volunteering to the individual and the community (e.g., Beigbeder 1991; Brown 1999; Jedlicka 1990; Korten 1990; Pastor 1974; Smith & Elkin 1981; Wilson 2000; Wilson & Musick 1999). Although this general literature links

volunteerism to the larger project of development, it does not apply critical theory to the concept or practice of volunteerism. The literature on international volunteerism generally views volunteerism as beneficial to development, with some authors asserting that volunteers are the only way to achieve real development in underdeveloped nations (Beigbeder 1991; Jedlicka 1990). Smith and Elkin (1981) take a more measured, but still laudatory, approach to volunteerism: "Voluntary action is only a minor part of the . . . solutions to the problems of [lesser developed countries], but it can be an increasingly significant part" (154). They also place volunteerism firmly within the discourse of development when they write that volunteerism "is relevant not only as a means of improving material conditions but also as a modernizing influence and an aspect of quality of life in society—an end in itself" (154). Development critics who include volunteers within the development pantheon generally exempt them from critique, noting that volunteers are "well motivated" (Hancock 1989: xiii) or citing the "genuineness of the humanitarian motive" (de Waal 1997: 4). In stark contrast to scholarly critiques of INGOs, volunteerism is largely seen as an unqualified good, without considering the tensions and negotiations it produces.

The tide may be turning, though. Before leaving for my field work in 2010, I could find virtually no literature from anthropology or any of the other social sciences on international volunteering. Since then, the growth of volunteer tourism (or voluntourism) has captured scholarly attention. This literature has thus far been narrowly focused on volunteer tourism and has largely addressed issues of efficacy and motivation. It still does not apply critical theory to the concept or practice of volunteerism. One notable exception is Wanda Vrasti's recent book, *Volunteer Tourism in the Global South: Giving Back in*

Neoliberal Times (2012), in which Vrasti examines how volunteer tourism performs as a mechanism for producing neoliberal subjects and social relations. Although Vrasti's work is an important contribution to the literature on international volunteering, her analysis is still limited in only considering the subjectivities and experiences of the Western volunteers.

Celebrities

A third group of Western helpers—smaller, but highly influential—also took an interest in Africa during the postcolonial era: celebrities. In the 1950s, actors Danny Kaye and Audrey Hepburn became the first goodwill ambassadors for the United Nations to raise awareness about such issues as hunger, poverty, education, and illness in developing nations. Hepburn, in particular, became an iconic figure of the Western helper in postcolonial Africa through images of her holding starving children in impoverished villages. By the 1980s, when Irish rock singer Bob Geldof launched the celebrity-driven Band Aid and Live Aid campaigns to raise awareness of and funds for famine relief in Ethiopia, Africa had become a cause célèbre. Today, dozens of celebrities travel to Africa on "fact-finding" trips; serve as spokespeople for charities and development agencies; start their own Africa-focused charities; fund orphanages and hospitals; build schools; and advocate for human rights, humanitarian assistance, and economic development.[33] Malawi gained international prominence as the "poster nation" for poverty after a visit by rock singer Bono (alongside "aid celebrities" Jeffrey Sachs and Paul Farmer) as part of a "fact-finding" mission. Pop singer Madonna has visited Malawi multiple times, funds an orphanage, made a documentary about AIDS in Malawi, has contributed to building schools, and has even adopted two Malawian children.[34]

Although the number of celebrities working as Western helpers in Africa is relatively small, they have an outsized influence on public perceptions of and public policy toward Africa. According to P. David Marshall (1997), "Celebrity status confers on the person a certain discursive power: within society, the celebrity is a voice above others, a voice that is channeled into the media systems as being legitimately significant" (x). Lisa Ann Richey and Stefano Ponte (2008) suggest that celebrities "act as emotional sovereigns, in the classical republican sense where the sovereign manifests the true will of 'the people'" (719). In the case of postcolonial Africa, "celebrities totemically embody the 'good'" by providing a "trustworthy" image of how Westerners can resolve "the disparity between rich and poor, well and diseased" (719). As Richey and Stefano (2011) argue, "celebrities have become proxy philanthropists, statesmen, executives, and healers."

Celebrities have been praised for raising awareness about issues that might otherwise be ignored in a world that is both oversaturated by media and overwhelmed by humanitarian crises (Boustany 2007; Johnston 2006; Pitsula 2008; Rushe 2007). Critics, however, note that for all the hype surrounding celebrity activism, the involvement of celebrities has led to little progress. Other critics argue that celebrity activism may actually hurt humanitarian and development efforts by drawing attention to a select few "pet projects," by focusing attention on the celebrity rather than on the issue, or by overshadowing local efforts and alternative voices (Cowell 2005; de Waal 2008; Iweala 2007). For example, Cooper (2007) notes that by shaping activism into consensus-oriented, mainstream campaigns, celebrity activism "defuses, drains, or even suffocates more radical forms of protest and political mobilization." He further contends that

"because of its ability to act as a magnet for attention, any success of this form of celebrity activity comes at the expense of alternative voices," such as local activists. Richey and Ponte (2011) suggest that development workers "see the 'cult of celebrity' as a threat to their own organizational identity" and as a skewed representation of what development work actually entails. Some critics also suggest that Africa is being recolonized by celebrities who "go to Africa to make themselves feel 'special'" (Richey & Ponte 2011). Similar to INGO marketing campaigns, celebrities represent Africa in ways that reinforce colonial hierarchies and a hegemonic Western approach to African development (Yrjölä 2009) by imagining themselves as the "heroes" who will save the "helpless" Africans (de Waal 2008).

Role of Anthropologists

Anthropologists, of course, are deeply entangled in the history of the Western helper. Talad Asad (1973a) notes, "It is not a matter of dispute that social anthropology emerged as a distinctive discipline at the beginning of the colonial era, that it became a flourishing academic profession towards its close, or that throughout this period its efforts were devoted to a description and analysis—carried out by Europeans, for a European audience—of non-European societies dominated by European power" (14–15; see also Ferguson 1997). Although the image of the anthropologist as the "handmaiden of colonialism" has become commonplace (but cf. Lewis 2007), Wendy James (1973) suggests a more complicated relationship between anthropologists and colonial authorities. James refers to the anthropologist as a "reluctant imperialist" who was inclined to be critical of colonial policies but was forced to rely on the colonial authorities for secure access and support in order to study African societies. Sally Falk

Moore (1994) similarly argues, “Despite the fact that the anthropologists came from the dominant society, they were preoccupied with the dominated population, its affairs, and its well-being” (20). Anthropologists had to temper their criticisms of the colonial authorities in order to continue working in the colonies, but they were not willing cooperators. Asad (1973b), by contrast, is more critical of anthropology’s role in the colonial project. He argues that functionalist anthropology’s focus on traditional forms of rule “[obscured] the systematic character of colonial domination” (109) and “helped to justify colonial domination at particular moments in the power encounter between the West and the Third World” (118).

The Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Northern Rhodesia provides an example of the complex, ambiguous relationship between anthropologists and colonialists (Brown 1973; Moore 1994). Established in 1937 by the British colonial administration and funded through a “voluntary” tax on colonial companies, the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute (RLI) was an experiment in applied anthropology (Ferguson 1997). Tensions quickly arose among colonial authorities, mining companies, and anthropologists over the role of the institute and the anthropologist. Colonial authorities argued that the institute would generate knowledge that would be useful in ruling over the African people and in extracting labor, even as they remained concerned about putting an anthropologist in charge of the institute. (The Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald described anthropologists as “rather difficult folk to deal with” [quoted in Brown 1973].) Some colonial officials preferred to train their own officers to conduct anthropological research rather than contend with the “peculiar ways” of anthropologists (Moore 1994: 19). The mining companies were skeptical about the usefulness of applied anthropology and

concerned that anthropologists would be critical of labor practices. The institute's first director, anthropologist Godfrey Wilson, was indeed critical of the mining companies and sought to document the social changes brought about by colonialism (Moore 1994). He also saw the institute as a center for social engineering, a view not shared by many of his colleagues, and later directors attempted to refocus the institute on more "pure" academic work and scientific independence. As Brown (1973) notes, although the institute was never the "marriage of convenience between science and government" that the colonial administration sought, it also provides "a clear reminder that the pursuit of knowledge at the RLI did not occur in a vacuum" (197).

Whereas anthropologists had to play nice with the colonial authorities even if they did not agree with colonial policies, they were openly antagonistic in their critiques of missionaries—despite occupying a similar position as missionaries vis-à-vis the colonial authorities. Claude Stipe (1980) notes, "Anthropologists in general have a negative attitude toward missionaries, especially when they conceive of missionaries as agents of change" (165). In ethnographies, anthropologists often obscured or erased missionaries, and the few mentions of missionaries were generally disapproving of their attempts to "destroy a society's culture and self-respect" (Stipe 1980: 165).

In practice, according to Sjaak van der Geest (1990), "The relationship between anthropologists and missionaries [was] ambivalent, uneasy, and fraught with contradictions" (588). Van der Geest argues that anthropologists shared more in common with missionaries than they may want to admit. Both were guests in a foreign culture with an ethnographic interest in understanding local practices and knowledge. Indeed, van der Geest contends that missionaries actually had greater access to ethnographic information

and were more deeply immersed in local culture than anthropologists; missionaries stayed longer and viewed their position in the community as permanent, whereas anthropologists stayed a few years at most and perceived their position in the community as temporary. Moreover, even as anthropologists accused missionaries of "destroying" culture, they too were bringing cultural change through their presence. Van der Geest suggests that, despite anthropologists' efforts to differentiate themselves from missionaries, "most likely the local populations saw (and see) missionaries and anthropologists as more or less equivalent" (590).

As van der Geest (1990) and Peter Forster (1986) note, the relationship between missionaries and anthropologists was frequently more cooperative than ethnographic critiques would suggest. Anthropologists often used missionary accounts as source material, while missionaries studied ethnographies to prepare for or improve mission work. Scottish missionaries in northern Malawi adopted ethnographic methods in their efforts to gain local acceptance and adapt church practices to local traditions (Forster 1986). Some missionaries even left their missions to become professional anthropologists (although van der Geest notes that he knows of no examples of anthropologists becoming missionaries). More recently, evangelical churches have incorporated anthropology into the curriculum at mission colleges (Stambach 2010). For their part, some contemporary anthropologists (such as Erica Bornstein and Amy Stambach) have sought a more balanced approach to the study of missionaries in Africa.

Even as anthropologists continued to negotiate their views on missionaries, the emergence of the postcolonial development complex brought a new set of complicated relationships between anthropologists and Western helpers in Africa. In the 1940s and

1950s, as the Bretton Woods institutions and associated development agencies began to plan for Africa's transition to independence, anthropologists played prominent roles in shaping foreign aid policy (Edelman & Haugerud 2005). According to Allan Hoben (1982), however, "the theoretical and methodological bias of mid-century American anthropology appears . . . to have limited anthropologists' role and to have reinforced the development paradigm's stereotype of traditional society" (354). Anthropologists largely dropped out of official development until the mid-1970s, when backlash against a technology-driven modernization paradigm led development agencies to give greater emphasis to social and cultural change (Hoben 1982). In 1975, USAID adopted Social Soundness Guidelines that required analysis of project impacts on local communities. Other development agencies, including the World Bank, followed suit, creating a demand for anthropologists to work as part of development teams (Ferguson 1997).

At the same time, the rise of reflexivity and a professional reckoning of anthropology's role in colonialism created a split in the profession on the ethics of anthropologists working as "hired handmaids" for official development projects. The split pitted development anthropology—"the work of practitioners who actually design, implement, or evaluate programs of directed change"—against the anthropology of development, which "calls for a radical critique of, and distancing from, the development establishment" (Edelman & Haugerud 2005: 40; see also Ferguson 1997). Those in favor of development anthropology (such as Michael Horowitz, Kathleen Gough, and Nancy Scheper-Hughes) have argued that anthropologists have a moral duty to involve themselves in "critical contemporary issues" (Edelman & Haugerud 2005: 41). Critics of development anthropology (such as Arturo Escobar) viewed development "as a Western,

colonial, or imperial cultural construct" (Edelman & Haugerud 2005: 43). As with missionaries during the colonial era, development workers were posited as "cultural producers" who corrupt local culture, in contrast to the anthropologists who sought merely to document culture (Pink 1998).

The debate was largely moot, as anthropologists quickly found themselves marginalized in the same development projects for which they were hired (Ferguson 1997; Hoben 1982). Although some anthropologists succeeded in inserting themselves as influential advisors on development projects, many others were reduced to a symbolic role, brought in at the end of the project design in order to fulfill bureaucratic requirements. Moreover, much like anthropologists and missionaries in the colonial years, Africans made little distinction between anthropologists and development workers, grouping them all together as foreigners and thus potential patrons (Pink 1998).

The relationship between anthropologists and international volunteers in the field is more difficult to ascertain because of the dearth of studies on international volunteers. Anthropologists have been involved in programmatic evaluations of international volunteer programs such as the Peace Corps (see, for example, Textor 1966), while international volunteer programs have been fertile recruiting grounds for anthropology and other social sciences (Schwimmer & Warren 1993). One could wonder whether the preponderance of former volunteers in anthropology is a reason for the lack of critical study.

Part II: The Western Helper in Ethnography

To reiterate my earlier caveat: Dividing the history of the Western helper in Africa into colonial and postcolonial eras is largely a heuristic device used to highlight the

consistencies and changes in the tradition of the Western helper over time. The historical division also has significance for considering how anthropologists have presented the Western helper in ethnography.

As noted above, the rise of anthropology as a discipline is strongly tied to colonialism. Beginning in the 1920s, early ethnographies focused on issues of concern to the colonial authorities: the political and legal structures of "traditional" African societies. Anthropologists working in Africa tended toward a functional (and later structural) approach in these ethnographies, in which they attempted to document "pure" African cultures. Sally Falk Moore (1994) notes, "The British social anthropologists sought to discover what the native traditions had been when they were 'intact,' uncorrupted by contact with the West" (23–24). Thus, even though these studies were undertaken within the context of colonialism, anthropologists tended to erase other Westerners, including missionaries and colonial authorities, in order to present an untainted, traditional African culture. When other Westerners were included in ethnographies, they were used as foils: the ignorant, uncouth interlopers versus the enlightened anthropologist.

In the 1940s, influenced by Marxism and world systems theory, anthropologists began to incorporate the Western presence in Africa into their ethnographic accounts. Anthropologists redirected their efforts from recreating "pure" cultures to understanding how "primitive" societies were being transformed by Westernization and the economic world system. Moreover, anthropologists were concerned with how peasant societies were resisting Western intrusion. Max Gluckman and the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute,

with their emphasis on understanding social change, played a significant role in shaping this new ethnographic direction (Moore 1994).

Yet even as anthropologists began to incorporate Western influences into their ethnographies of African societies, they continued to obscure the Westerner. They presented colonialism as a "coherent, monolithic process" (Comaroff 1997: 165), largely disembodied except for the occasional "taken-for-granted, faceless" official. For example, in Victor Turner's (1957) ethnographic account of conflict in an Ndembu village, the effects of colonialism are keenly felt, but the colonialists are all-but-absent. Moreover, the anthropologists generally considered the change in only one direction: the influence of Westernization on African societies. They rarely considered how the experience of colonization influenced Western individuals and Western society, even as African colonies served as "laboratories of modernity" for social experiments that were then exported back to Europe (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991; Stoler & Cooper 1997). Thus, anthropologists set up a dichotomy of embodied local resistance versus disembodied Western hegemony.

One notable exception to this trend is Hortense Powdermaker's (1962) ethnography of copper miners in Northern Rhodesia. Powdermaker describes the complex, myriad relationships that Westerners had with Africans—relationships that ranged from collegial to paternalistic to exploitative. In particular, Powdermaker argues for the importance of class and nationality in understanding these relationships.

In contemporary historical ethnographies, anthropologists have attempted to correct for the hegemony–resistance model by considering the subjectivities of missionaries and colonialists. Comaroff and Comaroff (1997) contend, "Despite their existence as

powerful discursive tropes . . . Neither ‘the colonizer’ nor ‘the colonized’ represented an undifferentiated sociological or political reality” (24). They further note, “The colonizer typically consisted of cadres divided, to a greater or lesser degree, by social status, ideological disposition, and various kinds of interest” (24). Similarly, Stoler and Cooper (1997) write, “Colonial regimes were neither monolithic nor omnipotent. Closer investigation reveals competing agendas for using power, competing strategies for maintaining control, and doubts about the legitimacy of the venture. . . . Nor is it altogether clear how those we have assumed were reliable ‘agents of empire’—planters, low-level bureaucrats, and subordinate members of colonial armies—participated in those ventures” (6). Writing on colonial medicine, Meghan Vaughn (1991) also argues against a “monolithic” account, noting that there were “many points at which biomedicine argued with itself” (25).

Like Powdermaker, John Comaroff (1997) argues for the importance of understanding the social roots of Western helpers in order to understand their actions and relationships in Africa. Stoler and Cooper (1997) contend that “class impinged in the making of empire . . . constraining who came to the colonies, what visions they harbored, what features of European class culture were selectively reworked" (27). Moreover, both Comaroff and Comaroff (1991, 1997) and Stoler and Cooper (1997) suggest that colonial subjectivities—both of the African and of the European—were co-produced through a dialogic of colonial domination and local resistance. Africans and Europeans encountered each other in unanticipated—and unintended—ways that reshaped both.

Contemporary studies of development and humanitarian assistance, however, largely continue to perpetuate the disembodied hegemony–embodied resistance model

that historical ethnographers are writing against. As Edelman and Haugerud (2005) note, few *ethnographies* of development have been written. Most critiques of development and humanitarian assistance tend to be broad based and theoretical. Yet even ethnographies of development and humanitarian assistance generally erase the Western helper as an agentive individual in the field. For example, James Ferguson (1994), in his ethnographic study of a development project in Lesotho, writes, "It is necessary to demote intentionally . . . as only part of a large 'machine,' an anonymous set of interrelations" (275). Throughout his ethnography, Ferguson refers to the actions of "the project" rather than of the Western individuals who plan and implement the project.

In his ethnography of human rights NGOs in Malawi, Harri Englund (2006) similarly erases the Western helper even as he describes the influence of Western discourse on the NGOs' practice. Malawian community members resist the hegemonic Western discourse by circulating a counterdiscourse in song, rumors, and other forms of popular culture, but the disembodied Western hegemony is impervious to the influence of local ideologies. Englund's analysis points to the complexity of relationships and negotiated positions among the various people involved in implementing a human rights agenda (local NGO workers, elites, women, laborers, international donors), but he fails to develop this complexity beyond local resistance.

Harry West (2005), in his discussion of attempts by Western researchers and NGOs to "recapture" traditional healing knowledge in Mozambique as part of neoliberal development reforms, at least embodies Western hegemony by considering how particular individuals, such as anthropologist Edward Green, approach "tradition" through a particular subjectivity that limits their understanding of Muedan traditional

healing. He, however, still portrays Westerners as sharing a homogenous, hegemonic discourse of tradition—and as being incapable of acting outside of the Western hegemony.

James Pfeiffer (2003) comes closest to addressing the absence of the Western helper in his analysis of the impact of INGOs on primary health care in Mozambique. Pfeiffer argues for the importance of understanding the "social dynamics of international aid" (728), noting that there is a "surprising dearth of research on these relationships" (727). Pfieffer's research findings do focus on his observations of Western INGO workers and local health care workers (although rarely together), but his analysis is largely of disembodied NGO policies and the results of those policies on local health systems. Much like Ferguson (1994), Pfeiffer portrays the project—not the people—as having the greatest agency. Indeed, his conclusion focuses on recommendations for policy changes through an INGO code of conduct, rather than recommendations for improving how individuals interact in the field (with the exception of his fifth suggestion: to eliminate expatriate compounds).

An Encounter Model

For hundreds of years, Westerners have traveled to Africa with the goal of helping—or "saving"—Africans. Although these Western helpers have shared much in common with each other—a salvation rhetoric, faith in modern technology, imaginations of Africa—they have never represented a homogenous, monolithic reality. As Comaroff and Comaroff, Stoler and Cooper, and other contemporary scholars of colonial Africa have noted, individuals bring varying subjectivities, ideologies, and intentions into their roles

as Western helpers in Africa. Moreover, once in Africa, these individuals encounter Africans and each other in a dialogic process that results in co-produced experiences, reshaped subjectivities, and redefined intentions.

This process of encounter—and the individuals who take part in it—are largely absent from contemporary studies of development and humanitarian assistance. Even as scholars of colonialism in Africa have made efforts to render hegemony and resistance more complex, contemporary studies of development and humanitarian assistance continue to reproduce a model of disembodied Western hegemony versus embodied local resistance. In their corrective historical ethnographies, scholars of colonialism do not deny the role of a hegemonic Western ideology in shaping interactions between Africans and Westerners. Rather, they see the hegemonic structure as mediated by individual subjectivities that extend beyond "Western" and "African." Thus, as Comaroff and Comaroff (1997) argue, instead of thinking in terms of "African resistance" or "Western hegemony," we should seek out "patterns of variance" in how both Africans and Westerners encounter each other: "not to talk about 'agency' in overgeneralized, vacuous, monologic terms, but to trace out its specificities and multiplicities, its determinancies and indeterminacies" (48).

Through my research and the analysis presented here, I make an effort to extend this corrective model to contemporary relations of development through an ethnographic study of international volunteering. No one work can fully address the needs I have raised in this chapter. I have attempted to take initial steps toward an encounter model in the anthropology of development by focusing on individual subjectivities and embodied practice and by bringing the subjectivities and experiences of Malawian community

members and Western volunteers into conversation with each other on two domains: money and moral geography.

4. Subjectivities

We sat in the warm, cramped living room, dimly lit by the sun filtering through thin curtains. Our knees budged up against the coffee table as we leaned forward in our chairs. Open on the table was an oversize ledger; its lined pages were divided into neat columns filled with indecipherable writing and lists of numbers.

We all focused on the book. Christopher[35] folded his tall, lanky frame into an upholstered arm chair draped with lace doilies. I balanced on the edge of a matching chair next to him. Across from us, Mary sat on a small couch. Sitting between us, along the edge of the table, Andrew shifted his focus from side to side like a referee at a tennis match. A half dozen other members of the widows group gathered at a wooden kitchen table or sat on the floor in the doorway.

Mary was acting at the main representative for the widows group at our weekly meeting to review the progress of their newest income generating activity: making mandazi[36] and small cakes to sell around town. Mary was slender but muscular, her arms shaped by years of manual farming with a rough-made hoe. Her hands were calloused and her knuckles thick. She didn't think twice about reaching bare-handed into the hot brick oven to retrieve a muffin tin filled with the spice cakes her group was baking for sale. Her arms and shins bore burn marks from splattered oil. Her feet were broad and flat; she sometimes used them to brace the piece of aluminum roofing that served as an oven door, as the coals spat embers. She wore her short hair pulled tightly back into a small nub and a faded, thread-bare chitenji wrapped high around her waist. In her raspy voice, she went through the group's income and expenses for the week.

Esme, a tall, heavy woman with a serious set to her expression and closely shaved hair, dragged bags of supplies from the kitchen and silently held each item aloft as Mary described the inventory. Mary then went through the ledger entries, and Christopher interjected with questions: What items were selling well? Why hadn't they baked a second batch the previous week? Had they collected the money from all of the lodges where they were selling the cakes? Mary answered, with the others occasionally chiming in from the side and Andrew translating: The mandazi sold well. There had been a funeral during the week, so they hadn't been able to make a second batch as planned. They were having a problem getting the money from one of the lodges.

The baking project was still in early days, and the group was just breaking even from week to week. The women were also working on a sewing project—making bags, hammocks, and coin purses from chitenji cloth to sell to tourists—but they felt that competition with another women's group in town was limiting the project's income generating potential.[37] Although several of the women continued to work on the sewing project—and despite obvious competition in the mandazi market—the women thought that they could do better with the baking project. The women approached a community-based organization (CBO) with their plan to ask for the seed money. Around the same time, Christopher arrived from England to volunteer with that CBO.

Christopher was a tall, tanned British man in his early thirties with the lanky build of a long-distance runner. Before coming to Malawi, he ran a marathon to raise money to donate through the volunteer organization. Back in England he worked in skilled manual labor, and he had hoped he could put some of his skills to use through a volunteer project

in Malawi. He didn't want to be "just a tourist." He wanted to meet the local people and find out about the culture of Malawi.

When Christopher arrived, the CBO was on the verge of having its funding cut by its main sponsor in England because it was several months behind in submitting required reports on its activities. Instead of using his labor skills, Christopher was thrust into a project manager role: helping staff members at the CBO write reports, monitoring and evaluating projects to decide where to donate the funds he had raised, and giving advice on how to run projects.

After an earlier meeting with the women to discuss their plan and set a budget, Christopher had agreed to give the women the start-up money. His donation had two conditions: He and Andrew would go with the women to purchase the initial supplies, and the women would keep an accounts ledger that they would review with someone from the CBO each week.

Several weeks in, the project wasn't losing money—enough to count it as a success compared to most similar projects—but it wasn't generating any income for the women. The women looked to us—Christopher and me—for guidance: What could they do?

Subjectivity

Much like Clifford Geertz's ([1973] 2000) famous story of the Berbers and the Jews, this encounter between Malawian community members and Western volunteers takes place within "webs of significance" (5). As Geertz notes, the encounter is not merely

"suspended" within those webs; the actors are spinning the webs as they enact their subjectivities in the encounter.

Sherry Ortner (2006) defines subjectivity as "the ensemble of modes of perception, affect, thought, desire, and fear that animate acting subjects, as well as the cultural and social formations that shape, organize, and provoke those modes." She argues that subjectivity is the basis of agency: "agency is not some natural or originary will; it takes shape as a specific desires and intentions within a matrix of subjectivity—of (culturally constituted) feelings, thoughts, and meanings" (110).

To understand encounters between Malawian community members and Western volunteers, we need to understand their subjectivities: the ways that they think about themselves and the other, the intentions and "rules" that they bring to the serious game of their encounters. Recognizing that any attempt to describe a collective subjectivity is necessarily reductive and flawed, I identified through my interviews, conversations, and observations some commonalities within each group that can begin to allow a "thick" understanding of encounters such as the one above.

The Self

Malawians

The Malawian national motto is "The Warm Heart of Africa," and the Malawian people are proud of their reputation for being welcoming and peaceful. In focus groups and interviews, when I asked Malawians to describe Malawi and its people, they would invariably describe themselves as friendly, hospitable, and welcoming. At a focus group held in a village on the outskirts of Blantyre, Peter, a skilled laborer in his forties, said,

"Malawians believe in peace and also unity." Lydia, an NGO worker in her fifties, told me, "Malawians don't believe in wars. We welcome our visitors from other countries." Participants in focus groups in Lakeshore Town similarly described themselves as "very friendly" or even "too friendly," peaceful, happy, and full of respect.

In this respect, Malawians compared themselves favorably against other African countries. From various informants, I was told that Tanzanians are thieves, Botswanans are unfriendly, and South Africans are hostile and xenophobic.[38] Any violence in Malawi was attributed to outsiders; Malawians blamed the problem of increasingly violent home invasions on Nigerians and South Africans who bring in guns and drugs, form gangs, and rob wealthy homes.

Malawians, however, did not deny that they have problems, the greatest of which is extreme poverty. Just as invariably as they described themselves as welcoming, Malawians said that they are poor. In response to the same question—to describe Malawi and its people—my informants spoke about the number of orphans, lack of education, unemployment, inadequate health facilities, high rates of HIV/AIDS and other illnesses, and failing infrastructure.[39] In these terms, Malawians ranked themselves very unfavorably against both other African countries and the rest of the world. Joshua, a day laborer in the northern region, said, "The UK, you cannot compare to Malawi. South Africa cannot compare to Malawi. UK is a developed country. Malawi we are trying to develop. But we're not there."

Some Malawians saw these two dominant characteristics as inextricably linked. As Maureen, a former schoolteacher and head of a church-based HIV/AIDS outreach program, said, "Malawi is poor, but peaceful. Perhaps it is peaceful because it is poor."

Maureen's statement is revealing not only of Malawians' self-identity—as both peaceful and poor—but also of an underlying trepidation, a fear of development and Westernization. It suggests that Malawians understand that their peace is not just a cultural tradition but also a consequence of their circumstances: No one fights because there is nothing worth fighting over.

James Ferguson has identified "twin fears" that have emerged in Africa in the neoliberal era: the fear of not being modern and developed enough according to Western standards, and the fear of not being authentic enough according to African standards. Professor Wiseman Chirwa of Chancellor College in Zomba described this tension to me as a "moral panic," in which Malawians fear losing their culture through an imposed Western development and struggle to define for themselves what development means. As John, a teacher from Lakeshore Town, put it, "It's good that we're poor because we don't lose our values."

This moral panic was perhaps most clearly manifested in a national obsession with corruption and jealousy. Not a day went by during my field work that the major newspapers didn't have at least one story about corruption in government or civil society. Malawians saw corruption and jealousy as deeply embedded in their culture. Steven, a Malawian man in his mid-twenties from Cape Maclear, said that corruption is "like air, water, food" for Malawians. His friend David joked, "It's our traditional culture." Although Steven did not think that all Malawians were corrupt—"otherwise God would have destroyed Malawi"—he said that many people were. A focus group participant said, "Malawi is number one for corruption." Similarly, another informant noted that

"Malawians are fond of jealousy." Even the national anthem addresses the issue, entreating God to "Put down each and every enemy / Hunger, disease, jealousy."[40]

For Malawians, corruption and jealousy were both cause and consequence of poverty. Regarding corruption, a focus group participant said, "It is one of the problems that are destroying Malawi," but he thought it would be very hard to eradicate because of poverty: "People are looking for personal gain, not public gain. So people are trying to divert money to their own pocket." Ethel, a mother of four who volunteered at a feeding station,[41] similarly noted that people may misuse money sent for development projects because they are thinking about their own problems. Another focus group participant explained,

> Corruption is because of poverty. For example, police traffic in the road. You find that maybe the driver has no license. But instead of arresting him, they can say, oh just give me money and off you go. Because the policeman is poor, he wants money.

Comparing Malawians to Westerners, Andrew noted that he had heard that there is no corruption in the UK and "that is why it is developed."

About jealousy, Madalitso explained:

> This jealousy comes because of poorness but if they can improve their lives I think they can be not jealous. We Malawians are jealous because we are poor and also because of less education. That's why Malawians are fond of jealousy. But if their lives can be improved, I think they cannot be jealous.

He continued that jealousy prevents development because people do not want to volunteer to help others. During a focus group in a village outside of Blantyre, one participant noted, "Sometimes if you are trying to develop yourself, some people will come and vandalize, and some will try to discourage you from trying to achieve whatever

you wish to achieve." Participants also noted that those who display signs of wealth or achievement may be accused of using witchcraft or even of being a witch. According to Ethel, "Azungu cannot be greedy because they are blessed and have love for others. Malawians are also blessed but don't have kind hearts to assist each other." She described those Malawians who do help others as acting "like Westerners." A focus group participant said, "Malawians are lacking love for each other." Along those same lines, a young Malawian man who was thanking a volunteer for assisting him with learning a computer program said, "Here you can't find so many people who want you to do well."

Many Malawians see corruption and jealousy as insurmountable, endemic barriers to development in Malawi. As several informants noted, money and other resources sent for development are "eaten" by the people in charge of development: the government, chiefs, and committee heads. Many other Malawians, however, believe that they can do the work of developing their communities on their own if given the necessary resources, such as training and money. Henry, a night watchman at a backpacker's lodge, believed that although people in the West have more "psychologies" (intelligence) than Malawians, "We have power for work." George, a member of a village development committee outside Blantyre, similarly said, "If we have money around, we can do anything."

Volunteers

Jane was an outgoing, bubbly English woman in her mid-thirties. She was in many ways typical of the Western volunteer that I observed in Malawi: a white woman, from a middle-class background, going through a transitional stage in her life.

Although my sample had a near even split between male and female volunteers, Malawians generally perceived that volunteers were largely female, and their anecdotal evidence supports their view.[42] This gender disparity was initially pointed out to me by a teacher at a secondary school that regularly hosted volunteers through a gap year program; during our interview, she asked me why the school had only ever received female volunteers. Other volunteer program staff members similarly observed that almost all the volunteers at their sites had been female; one estimated that out of every hundred volunteers, only two or three had been male.

Moreover, most of the volunteers whom I met came from middle-class backgrounds. They tended to be college-educated or planning to attend college after their volunteer experience. Those who were volunteering later in life—either during a career break or after retirement—most often came from middle-class, white-collar jobs, such as teaching or engineering. The economic status of the volunteers was likely influenced by the financial barriers to volunteering. Most long-term programs, such Peace Corps or Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), require tertiary education. Short-term volunteer opportunities generally require the volunteer to pay his or her own expenses, and some organized voluntourism programs cost as much as $5,000 for a three-month placement.

The volunteers most often came during a transitional stage, such as the gap year before attending college, immediately after graduating from college, during a career change, or after retirement. They decided to travel to Africa because they “didn’t have other plans,” “needed something to do,” “had time available,” or “wanted a different experience.”

Jane had a friend whose mother had grown up in Africa, and her stories made Jane keen to explore for herself. In explaining her decision to come as a volunteer to Malawi she echoed Christopher, saying, "I didn't want to just randomly travel. I wanted to be someplace where I could really get to know a community, and be involved in the community, and experience the way of life out here."

Like Jane and Christopher, most of the Western volunteers with whom I spoke were motivated by a desire for experience and knowledge. The volunteers did talk about helping the poor and giving to the community, but they gave altruism as their secondary or tertiary motivation. When I asked them why they were participating in a volunteer program, their first response was most often that they wanted deep cultural immersion and a more cosmopolitan world view. As one volunteer put it, "It's very interesting if you live in the West to get exposure to Africa." Another said that he wanted to get a better sense of a culture that is different than his own and that volunteering could "open your eyes a bit about the world." They saw volunteering as a necessary learning experience in a globalized world. A married Canadian couple saw such educational value in international volunteering that they had pulled their two preteen children out of school to spend a year traveling and volunteering in Africa.

Moreover, these volunteers saw volunteering as providing a particular kind of learning experience—a deep, intimate knowledge of people and culture—that distinguished their experience from that of other Westerners. As Jane's and Christopher's remarks show, it was important to the volunteers to set themselves apart from tourists, who were seen at best as merely getting a superficial experience and at worst as exploiting others for their own amusement. The volunteers also distinguished themselves

from paid development workers. The volunteers often seemed to take pride in being "outside" of the official development apparatus, which was seen as being inefficient, ineffective, and out of touch with local realities. They intentionally sought opportunities that they saw as "grassroots" or community-based. Even as the volunteers admitted that they generally lacked relevant experience or transferable skills for their placements, they seemed to feel that their naive/novice position allowed them to understand the community and its needs in ways that professional development workers could not.[43]

In asserting their identity as volunteers, they seemed to be reacting against perceptions of Westerners as ignorant, insensitive, and imperialist—images that cut across both tourism and development. Both the rude tourist and the overbearing aid worker are well-established categories in contemporary discourse. By contrast, the international volunteer is largely seen as an unproblematic category, without the negative connotations associated with other categories of outsiders in developing countries. Rather, the international volunteer in Western discourse is valorized as brave, selfless, even heroic. Many universities (including both my undergraduate and graduate institutions) take great pride in being top recruiting grounds for international volunteering programs such as the Peace Corps and promote a variety of international volunteer opportunities as an integral part of their academic mission. Movies, magazines, and even coffee commercials further promote a valorized image of the international volunteer.

The Other

Volunteers on Africa

My first experience in Malawi began in December 2002. I arrived in Balaka, a town in the southern region, on the paved road, riding with three other new volunteers in a white pickup truck driven by a no-nonsense Italian sister who had spent more than half of her life in missionary service. The stretch of road leading into town was wide, smooth, and infrequently used; we only occasionally had to swerve to miss potholes or overloaded bicyclists. Entering Balaka, I immediately noticed the Italian basilica, a large white edifice set back from the road on a nearly perfect rectangle of green lawn.

We turned left, just after the first coffin maker, to bump and jostle down a dirt road barely wide enough for the truck. Steep ravines on either side of the road allowed little room to avoid rocks, pits, and oncoming traffic—fortunately few other cars used this road. We passed a long, white building resembling a chicken coop with a blue-and-white billboard identifying it as a secondary school. We drove down a deep ditch that in the rainy season would fill to waist-level with muddy water. The children would play in the makeshift pool, while older siblings and mothers washed clothes and cookware, glad not to have to walk the extra half mile to get water from the pump. Just past the ditch was a cluster of one-room huts, the largest ones no more than about 20 feet square, made of hand-formed, misshapen mud bricks, with openings for a door and a window. Patchy thatched roofs reached past the walls to rest on thin, crooked poles, creating a small, shaded “porch” where the women would sit during the day on bamboo mats with their legs extended straight, crossed at the ankles, their hands folded between their legs and their backs rounded. The surrounding fields were brown: brown, withered stumps of corn

stalks jutting out of the cracked brown earth; brittle brown weeds crushed under rough brown soles. Despite my exhaustion from two days of traveling, I perked up at this glimpse of our African village. Mud huts, dusty fields, dirty children: This was the "real" Africa as I had imagined it. This was what I had come halfway around the world to see.

Like many, if not most, people living in the West, I had a mental image of Africa that I formed long before I arrived in Malawi. My image of Africa came from a variety of sources: textbooks, magazines, television, film, news media, church, charity appeals. Yet, despite the number of sources, the image was remarkably consistent: Africa was a place where exotic natives living in mud huts suffered from hunger, poverty, and illness.

Although many of the volunteers whom I spoke with claimed that they came to Malawi without any preconceptions, others admitted that they had an image of Africa much the same as my own. Steven, a Danish volunteer, said,

> I didn't have any special expectations about Malawi because I didn't know the country very well, but I thought about, in Africa, you always see the poor people on television, the hungry ones, the refugees, the wars. So that was kind of what I expected even though I had been told [Malawi] was quite a good country. But still that was my idea of Africa.

Jane noted,

> I really tried really hard not to have any preconceived ideas about what life was going to be like, what the people were going to be like, but you do. I have to say, in so many ways, it's been so completely different from anything I could have imagined. How easy it is to live here. I thought it was going to be a lot harder, in terms of eating and sleeping and just in day-to-day living. It's actually much more civilized.

Raymond, a Peace Corps volunteer, similarly said that he had expected people to live in huts and was surprised to find electricity, running water, and the Internet.

The image of Africa as a failure in need of Western help was a recurrent theme in my interviews and conversations with volunteers in Malawi.[44] The volunteers perceived a duality between the West (the haves) and Africa (the have-nots). As Christopher noted, volunteering was "the least you could do" when you travel from a wealthy place to one that has a lot of poverty. The volunteers didn't question whether their "help" was actually needed or wanted in Africa; rather, they assumed that Africa is "a series of lacks and absences" waiting to be filled by the West (Ferguson 2006: 2). Indeed, they generally expressed a sense of fulfillment from contributing "even a small amount," under the assumption that something is better than the "nothing" that the community had before the volunteer's arrival.

Typical of this view was Raymond, a Peace Corps volunteer in his early twenties. He had recently graduated from college and joined the Peace Corps "to find out if I could do something like this" while gaining work experience. He was assigned to a village in the southern region as a community health volunteer, which generally meant doing health education. Although Raymond did not have any experience in health care or education, he saw himself as bringing essential skills to Malawian health care workers, such as better methods for teaching and resource management. He contended that there is a "huge need" for health volunteers in Africa to engage in capacity building with local health care workers. He noted that there is a "crapload of money," particularly for HIV/AIDS projects, but that Malawians were not able to use those resources appropriately or run their own programs. At his volunteer site, Raymond was paired with a local counterpart—a health surveillance assistant (HSA). According to Raymond, "I'm assisting him with resources and helping him become more productive in his

community." He continued, "This is a kind of stepping stone in [the HSA's] career. It's a privilege for them to work with Peace Corps volunteers."

Raymond had been at his volunteer site for about a year, and although he still had a year left, he was already considering extending his contract because he was concerned that the Malawian health care workers wouldn't be able to continue the projects that he had started. Maria, a Dutch volunteer with an INGO, also was concerned that her project—teaching people to make candy to sell at the market—would not continue after she left. She felt that Malawians generally lacked initiative and had to be told what to do: "People want things handed to them."

Other volunteers took a slightly more positive view of Malawians. John, a British volunteer in a gap-year program, noted, "You see there is a will and a drive to develop." He, however, agreed with the other volunteers that Malawians needed volunteers to bring "more enterprising ideas." Reflecting on the potential of the baking project with the widow's group, Christopher contrasted Malawi and the West:

> I think maybe, when I have gone, will it carry on? I don't know. From what I know about things that have happened in the past, probably not. A lot of it is to do with imposing Western ways of doing things into a Malawian culture, which has a different way of doing things and expecting it to work. The whole entrepreneur thing that we value so highly is not valued here. It never has been until we came in and said this is how it should be. In the West, we have it drilled into us from a young age: Go out, get a business, make money. These are the important things in life. In Malawi, these are not so important, so people are perhaps not as prepared to work so hard or put so much effort in to achieve those aims.

Michael, a retired school teacher from Scotland in his late sixties, made a similar observation:

> The guy who services our car sometimes drives for us. We have in mind that we're going to leave Lilongwe early in the morning and be there by

> lunchtime to do some jobs in the afternoon. His mindset is, the job is to get to Mzuzu today. It's Africa. You have to realize that people don't have multitasking as a mindset.

Donald, a Scottish volunteer in his early fifties who works as a college lecturer, also noted that Malawians seem to lack initiative, although he linked it to Malawians' self-perception:

> Culturally Malawians are quite modest. They seem to be saying, "Oh the problem with Malawians is" and putting themselves down. And actually I think one of the biggest resources they have is the people, the really positive people. But ambition seems to be lacking a wee bit.

Although the volunteers generally imagined Malawians as lacking—in ideas, initiative, material resources—they did see Malawi as having an abundance of two things: corruption and crime.[45] Volunteers traded stories of home invasions and muggings. It seemed that everyone knew someone whose home or hostel had been broken into by a gang (although I only met three people who had actually been robbed).[46] Less dramatic but more common were tales of being cheated. Conversations among volunteers often turned to swapping stories of inflated "azungu" prices for food, lodging, taxis, and curios.

On a more positive note, the volunteers overwhelmingly agreed with the Malawians' assessment of themselves as friendly, warm, and welcoming. Raymond noted, "Malawi is one of the friendliest countries" and a "peaceful place." He further said that he had "fallen in love with the people." In this "Afro-optimist" perspective, the volunteers imagined that despite the poverty and suffering, the people are filled with joy and rich with culture. The "Afro-optimism," however, was often couched in terms of gratitude for the volunteer's presence and service. Katie, an Australian volunteer at a

school outside of Blantyre, said, “They love that we’re here. They are always thanking us.”

Malawians on the West

The crowd completely enveloped the dusty soccer pitch, standing five deep along the road. Mostly men and young boys, they watched quietly and swayed listlessly until their team scored a goal. Then, the crowd would briefly erupt into a festival, with spectators pouring onto the field to dance and the most avid supporters marching along the road, waving the team flag, beating on drums, and bleating on vuvuzelas, which had become popular after the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

The scene in the center of Lakeshore Town was the same nearly every weekend, as people from the surrounding villages gathered in town to watch their local club teams compete. In the evenings, the men would fill the two sports bars that broadcast matches from Europe on large, flat-screen televisions.

During one of the local matches, I asked someone which team was his favorite. Arsenal, he replied. I had noticed that although Malawians supported their local club teams, they were most fanatical about the UK teams. They wore jerseys and scarves from their favorite teams and decorated their cars with team medallions. When I asked this young man why he preferred Arsenal over the local club or even the national team, the Malawi Flames, he explained that UK players were real soccer players because they had actual skills, whereas Malawians players were not as good.

According to Pierson Ntata, a lecturer in sociology at Chancellor College, Malawians often have a skewed image of the West. They see Westerners as superior in knowledge

and skills. Brenda, a local coordinator for an international volunteer program, concurred that "we think that white is better," tracing this perspective back to colonialism. A Malawian doctor who taught at the College of Medicine similarly attributed Malawians' perceptions of themselves and the Western Other to the colonial era. Timothy, a Malawian tour operator who organizes volunteer opportunities, observed that when people in the villages see white people, they think that those people are the "masters."

During focus groups, participants said directly that they believed that Westerners were superior to Malawians. For example, one man said, "People of the West, we think of them as at a higher level. We see ourselves as below their standards." Another added, "They are the first ones to be civilized." This perception of Western superiority was also evident in my observations at project sites and my interviews with Malawians. In meetings, the Malawians often deferred to the Western volunteers. At several of the volunteer sites that I observed or visited, I was pressured to help with their educational programs, seemingly under the assumption that, as a Westerner, I have superior knowledge and skills for teaching.

Many of the Malawians with whom I spoke believed that they needed Western assistance—beyond money—in order to develop. The following conversation with a woman in Chinsinsi illustrates a typical perception among Malawians:

> LB: Why did you need the volunteers to build the school? Why could the community not build the school on its own?
> C: On our own we cannot manage because we realized that they [the volunteers] came with their own new knowledge which they imparted on us and they helped us in the most difficult part.
> LB: What kind of knowledge did they bring?
> C: They teach us that we can be hard workers when doing developmental projects.
> LB: Before the volunteers came, were people not working hard at development?

C: They were working but they were going backwards.

Kenneth, an instructor at the College of Nursing, echoed this sentiment:

> I was happy to see azungu because these people are well-developed people, so they can manage to develop me or develop our country. They can change the life of Africans. Indeed it is so because we see so many people going outside to learn from white people. So as of now, we see that Africans have developed because of white people.

Of course, not everyone shared this view of Western superiority. Some, like Ennifer, a teacher at an informal school run by a CBO, thought that the Western volunteers needed to be more open to learning local ways of doing and thinking. Ennifer noted, for example, that at the school, "Sometimes what they [the volunteers] are doing is boring" to the students, but the volunteers weren't willing to take criticism or adjust their plans. Teresa, a teacher at a nursery school, similarly felt that volunteers caused problems when they tried to impose inappropriate teaching practices.

As Kenneth's comment shows, the "evidence" of Western superiority was their material development. The Malawians with whom I spoke unanimously agreed that Westerners are rich. In focus groups, when I asked Malawians how they would describe azungu,[47] they all thought that white people are wealthy. One participant said, "I think they are rich and those people are happy people every day," while another added, "You see that those people seem to be well-to-do." In a focus group in Lakeshore Town, Maria said, "They have more money." Others described azungu as "very rich" and having "everything." While staying with a Malawian family during my initial research trip in 2008, my host brother would often ask me about stories he had heard about the wealth of Westerners, such as that when they tired of their cars, they would simply leave them at

the side of the road and buy new ones. (One story that he thought was too fantastic to be true was that azungu have machines to wash their dishes for them.)

Although Malawians thought of Westerners as materially superior, they considered them to be spiritually poor. Malawians on the whole are extremely religious. Affiliation with a church is important, and I was often asked what church I attended. Malawians generally perceived Westerners as lacking religion. During our conversation in Cape Maclear, Steven and David said that they though that few people in the West "know how to worship."

Closely tied to this lack of religion was a sense that Western culture is morally corrupt. Although it may seem contradictory that Malawians saw themselves as more corrupt and jealous, but Westerners as more immoral, there were differences in how these things were imagined. As noted, for Malawians, corruption and jealousy were reactions to poverty; these behaviors were publicly and officially denounced but privately understood. By contrast, such "immoralities" as drinking, smoking, or homosexuality were the result of a lack of religion and therefore not acceptable. Some Malawians feared that Western development will corrode Malawian culture by encouraging such immoral behaviors. Homosexuality was a particularly salient issue during my field work. During my research trip in 2010–2011, debates around homosexuality intensified as Western governments and NGOs pressured Malawi to release two men who had been jailed for marrying each other. Many Malawians felt that donor nations were pushing Malawi to adopt foreign values and not respecting Malawian culture and laws. A student at Chancellor College in Zomba felt that homosexuality was "invading" the culture from

outside influences, while a teacher in Lakeshore Town compared it to miniskirts as an example of the West imposing its values on Malawi.[48]

A "Thick" Encounter

Returning to the cramped living room in which this chapter began, we can begin to see the intentions of the participants and the "rules" by which they play the serious game of their encounter. The location of the meeting, for example, becomes more meaningful when viewed through the subjectivities of the various individuals. Malawians, as noted earlier, placed a high value on being seen as welcoming. For the Malawian women in the widows group, inviting Christopher and me into their home would be an important gesture for reaffirming that value and, as I will argue in subsequent chapters, a strategic move in forming a relationship with us. For Christopher, meeting with the women in a home would reinforce the "authenticity" of his experience and the intimacy of his knowledge. It would also support his sense of participating in "grassroots" development. The meeting itself was the product of the expectations and assumptions that the participants had of themselves and the Other. The women believed that Christopher and I had valuable knowledge, skills, and resources solely by virtue of our being white Westerners. Christopher's presence in Malawi—his decision to become a volunteer—suggests that he believed that he had knowledge, skills, and resources that would be useful to Malawians.[49] The weekly meetings and ledger are revealed as not merely "good" business practices but technologies of power, in which the inferior and corrupt Malawians must submit to the superior Westerners.

Subjectivity and Serious Games

Ortner (2006) asserts, "The anthropology of 'agency' is not only about how social subjects, as empowered or disempowered actors, play the games of their culture, but about laying bare what those cultural games are, about their ideological underpinnings, and about how the play of the game reproduces or transforms those underpinnings." In the following chapters, I examine the ideological underpinnings of the serious game played between Malawian community members and Western volunteers as they are enacted through money and moral geography.

5. Money

A rough dirt road, just barely wide enough for two cars to pass—and not quite wide enough at several spots, runs from the center of Lakeshore Town up to the lodges at the top of the hill. About halfway between the town and the lodges, the road is lined on both sides by a row of jury-rigged stalls made from crooked wood poles, plastic sheeting, and thatch. Each stall is crammed with curios: wood carvings stained with shoe polish, brightly colored paintings on canvas, jewelry made from seeds, beads, and wire. Young men in their late teens and early twenties, wearing baggy pants and Bob Marley t-shirts, lounge on intricately carved "chief chairs" or hammocks made from chitenji cloth. They spring into action when an mzungu walks by. They call out greetings, emerge from their shops to walk alongside the passerby. They invite the mzungu to just take a look—no need to buy anything, just look—but promise a good price if he or she wants to get a wood bowl or a set of candlesticks. They chat with the person: What is your name? Where are you from? Why have you come to Malawi? They suss out whether the person seems inclined to "help" or has friends who might also want to buy souvenirs—in other words, whether it is worthwhile to form a relationship.

The azungu often walk past briskly, irritated at being hassled by the "beach boys," whom they deem not to be "real" Malawians. Others stop to take a look around, shopping for an authentic, handmade souvenir, but determined not to be cheated. They ask the price, knowing that they won't pay it. Negotiation is expected at markets and roadside stands. But, beyond that, everyone "knows" that the prices are inflated for foreigners, that the locals will cheat anyone with white skin. So the azungu negotiate. They say the price

is too much. They want the “local” price, not the azungu price. Many will say, “I have no money. I’m a volunteer. Give me a discount.”

Most encounters between Malawian community members and Western volunteers are not as explicitly monetized as the exchange at curio shops. Rather, both Malawian community members and Western volunteers perform a great deal of work to obscure the role of money in their encounters. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, however, money is central to community–volunteer encounters. Moreover, the underlying dynamic—the subjectivities, goals, and strategies that individuals bring to the serious game of their encounters—is the same, whether at the curio shops or in the village. In this chapter, I will explore how Malawian community members and Western volunteers enact ideas about money in constructing their identities, managing relationships, and pursuing their goals.

The Prosperity Paradox

The DJ played an upbeat love song while the master of ceremonies excitedly called out numbers: one hundred, two hundred, five hundred! About a dozen guests danced in a circle. Some tossed kwacha bills into the air; others thrust them at the ground, peeling the bills from thick stacks as the bridal party sat stoically on the stage. When the song ended, designated cashiers collected and counted the money. Guests rushed to the cashier table to change their large bills into smaller ones: the more bills you had to throw, the longer you could stay on the dance floor. The day before, I had gone to the bank with some of the bride’s friends so they could take out money in Kw20 bills, the preferred

denomination for the perekani-perekani.[50] The master of ceremonies announced the total collected during the dance and called up the next group for their turn as a new song started.

The perekani-perekani dances are a staple of Malawian wedding receptions. The explicit purpose of the dances is to provide the newlyweds with a dowry to establish their household together.[51] This ritual, however, is also illustrative of how Malawians use money to construct their identities, manage relationships, and pursue goals.

For many Malawians, wealth is strongly tied to ideas of morality and religion. Wealth can be a sign of divine blessing. Being able to distribute money during the perekani-perekani dance or to partake in conspicuous consumption of goods is a testament of God's love and proof of one's religious faith. When Malawians have money, therefore, they tend to focus their spending on items that can be readily observed by the community. A typical middle-class Malawian home will have a front room that is crammed with upholstered furniture, stained-wood tables, curio cabinets, and an oversize television—while the kitchen consists of a two-burner hot plate and the children sleep two or three to a bed. A satellite dish will be perched on the roof and a car parked outside, even as the family continues to use an outdoor pit latrine and bathe in a plastic tub because the house lacks indoor plumbing. Those lower on the economic ladder attempt to emulate these status markers; a tiny, one-room house might have a satellite dish outside despite not having a television inside.

Yet, wealth can also be deeply suspect—a sign of greed, corruption, or witchcraft. Those who have wealth are often suspected of getting it through illegitimate means, while those who lack wealth blame their status on the jealousy and machinations of others. Malawians accuse each other of "eating" money that was intended for the community.

Moreover, even as Malawians use conspicuous consumption as a means to demonstrate that they are economically upwardly mobile—and therefore blessed—I observed some ambivalence about material consumption and economic development. Malawians desire material development and Western material goods as markers of status, but many are afraid of the effects of that development on their culture, traditions, and morality. In one telling example, my host sister during my first research trip to Malawi—a graduate student at the University of Malawi and a member of the growing Malawian middle class—was taking driving lessons in anticipation of purchasing a car but resisted the idea of getting a washing machine because she thought it would make her seem "lazy."

Scholars have linked contemporary African attitudes toward money and wealth to the spread of the prosperity gospel through charismatic Pentacostal churches in the late-twentieth century (Czeglédy 2008; Hasu 2006; Meyer 2004). The prosperity gospel centers on the idea that wealth is a gift from God, bestowed upon those who have "earned" it through their faith and right living. Prosperity is not measured solely in monetary terms—it also encompasses health, family relations, and spiritual development (Haynes 2012)—but material wealth plays an important role. By displaying markers of wealth, one not only demonstrates his or her own faith, but also testifies to the power of

God in order to convert others. At the same time, however, the prosperity gospel warns against succumbing to the temptations of wealth and modernity. Birgit Meyer (2004) writes,

> [Pentacostal-Charismatic Churches] appear to alert believers of being wary not to lose themselves in crude consumptive behavior and to use wisely the money they earn. People should avoid drinking alcohol, leading a loose moral life, and, in the case of men, squandering money with 'cheap girls.' . . . The ideal is a moral self, not misled by the glitzy world of consumer capitalism nor misguided by the outmoded world of tradition, but instead filled with the Holy Spirit. (460)

As Naomi Haynes (2012), Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (2000), and others have observed, even as the prosperity gospel has grown as a response to the neoliberal, capitalist world system, its promise has been tempered by the reality of that system. Comaroff and Comaroff suggest that individuals have responded to this failure in a range of ways that include both reinvigorating the prosperity gospel and a rise in occult practices. They write:

> A good deal is to be learned about the historical implications of the current moment by eavesdropping on the popular anxieties to be heard in such places: on the mounting disenchantment with liberty under libertarian conditions; on the nostalgia for past regimes, some of them immeasurably repressive; on moral panics occasioned by rapidly rising suicide rates; on the upsurge of assertions of identity and autochthony; on the widespread fears . . . concerning the apparently preternatural production of wealth. (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000: 300)

Many of the popular anxieties identified by Comaroff and Comaroff were apparent in Malawi during my research trips. Both former president-turned-dictator Hastings Kamuzu Banda and former president Bakili Muluzi, who had long been suspected of—and in 2009 was officially charged with—corruption, were being reinvented through a nostalgic popular discourse into misunderstood, maligned, and even heroic figures.

Stories of witchcraft and the supernatural, second in national interest only to corruption, were shared in conversations, appeared in the daily newspapers, and featured prominently in popular Nigerian films shown in make-shift movie houses and bottle shops. Through both official government policies and popular sentiment, Malawians were pushing back against the imposition of external discourses.

As Comaroff and Comaroff suggest, eavesdropping on these popular anxieties can reveal much about how people in so-called peripheral economies have responded to the rise of capitalism in the past half century. Following from Comaroff and Comaroff's popular anxieties and Ferguson's twin fears, and drawing on conversations with the Malawian historian Wiseman Chirwa, I suggest that Malawians' attitudes toward and practices with money reflect a moral panic. By "moral panic," I mean the discordance felt by Malawians between externally imposed discourses of development and their internal senses of identity. This moral panic has resulted in such paradoxical stances as believing that wealth is both a sign of divine providence and evidence of witchcraft, viewing themselves as both more corrupt and more moral than the West, and desiring and fearing Western-style development.

Sharing is Caring

Lucy crouched in front of the hotplate, stirring the thickening nsima with a long wooden spoon. With quick efficiency, she switched out the pot of nsima for a pan of chopped beef, not bothering to protect her hands from the hot handles. It was a source of amusement—and some pride—for Malawians that azungu lacked the strength to do such simple things as handle a hot pot.

While Lucy cooked, I sat on the doorstep and watched her children play in the small, fenced yard. I had met Lucy at church, and because her house sat on the road that ran between town and the backpacker lodge where I was staying, I passed her regularly, stopping to exchange greetings when she was in the yard or sitting at the weathered, wooden table where she sometimes sold mandazi and packets of roasted nuts. She tried to teach me Chitonga; I was a poor student.

A few weeks after we had met, Lucy invited me to have lunch at her home. Like almost every other Malawian I knew, Lucy was determined that I should try nsima. A thick porridge made from maize or cassava flour and water, nsima is the staple food for most Malawians. Many Malawians think of nsima as the only food—everything else is "relish;" if they haven't had nsima at least once during the day, they simply haven't eaten, no matter what other food products they may have consumed. Despite my assuring Lucy that I had eaten nsima many times before, she insisted that she would cook it for me.

The meal was modest—nsima with a few bites of tough beef and a thin tomato sauce—but I knew it was no small gesture for Lucy. She lived in a cramped, two-room brick house with her husband and four children. The children had the thin limbs and bloated bellies of the hungry. I suspected that their lunch would consist of whatever was leftover after I ate.

In the perekani-perekani dances, the dancers are not just demonstrating their wealth—and, thus, their blessings—but also are using their wealth—sharing it—as a way to reaffirm their relationships with the bride and groom, and by extension, the broader

community. These relationships are often made explicit as the master of ceremonies calls up specific groups to participate in the dance: members of the bride's family; members of the groom's family; those from one of the home villages; school friends. The bride and groom may also signify special relationships by distributing flowers—usually fabric roses—to particular guests, who are then invited to participate in a dance.

Wealth is to be shared. When one person achieves financial success, he or she is expected to share it out among his or her family: by building a family compound in the village, sending younger relatives to school, and assisting with whatever needs the family or close friends may have. As Haynes (2012) argues, conspicuous consumption is important not just for establishing one's status but also for establishing social relations:

> Items like cookware or satellite dishes . . . serve as a language through which people establish their social position. . . . When people are ranked by their financial status, and status is made visible through demonstrations of wealth, it is things like new cooking pots on the kitchen shelf that open the door for kin and neighbors to make specific material requests based on the evidence of another's ability to respond. (134–135)

Through sharing, Malawians establish relationships of care. Whereas caring in the Western perspective is often more of an affective stance, in Malawi it is a material action. As a focus group participant explained, "Caring means you'll be looking after that person for some time. Any problem that [the person] comes to face, you are supposed to help with it." Other focus group participants defined caring as sharing food, looking after someone who is sick, giving clothes or blankets, and helping those who lack money.

In their encounters with Western volunteers, Malawian community members often seek to establish these relationships of care. As noted in Chapter 4, Malawians place a high value on hospitality and take great pride in their reputation as the "warm heart of

Africa." They show their hospitality to outsiders in a number of ways, including walking with them (often going far out of their own way), "chatting" with them to learn more about them and to share their own stories, and inviting them into their homes for a meal. Although these gestures are rooted in a desire to be perceived as friendly and peaceful, they also serve another strategic purpose: to create relationships of care.

Malawians seemed to see these relationships as inherently—if only theoretically—reciprocal. By showing hospitality, inviting volunteers in their homes, or giving discounts on goods and services, the Malawians were in essence proffering the first gift, which then created an obligation for future care. Geoffrey, a subsistence farmer in a village north of Lakeshore Town, noted, "If you've got a problem, or a friend of yours has got a problem, as someone coming from the UK, you make penpals. Then if you have a problem, [he] can help solve it." Matthew, a manager at a lodge near Livingstonia that promoted volunteering, likewise described his "big" relationship with some of the volunteers, which "connected us together as one mother, one father." As a result, he felt, "Whatever we need, we'll be sending each other."

Lest these relationships seem nothing more than thinly veiled opportunism, the Malawians with whom I spoke seemed to express a genuine belief that they could help the volunteers, as much as the volunteers could help them, albeit perhaps in less explicitly material ways. For example, Matthew noted, "Maybe [the volunteers] have a problem. For them, it's not easy to be in Malawi. Maybe they can ask their Malawian friend and say, 'Oh, he has a good idea.'" Matthew's earlier comment that "we'll be sending each other" things also suggests that he imagines the relationship to be reciprocal, rather than one of patron and client.

Malawians often imagined that their relationships with the volunteers continued long after the volunteers had left, again even if the ongoing connection was largely theoretical. This imagined relationship was clear in speaking with Geoffrey, who spoke highly of the volunteers who had worked in his village. He talked specifically about one of the volunteers he had met, Steve, whom Geoffrey called "my best friend." Steve gave Geoffrey his e-mail address: "That's the real friendship. . . . I can e-mail any time for his help." Although, according to Geoffrey, Steve had never given him any material goods and had not been in contact since he left, Geoffrey felt that, if needed, he could call on Steve for help.

For the Malawians with whom I spoke, such material care—whether real or imagined—was the primary value of the volunteers. Repeatedly, in focus groups and interviews, local community members stated plainly that volunteers were most beneficial when they brought money into the community. The headmistress at a primary school that hosted volunteers for three-month terms admitted that the immediate contributions of the volunteers were very limited because they lack the language skills to be useful in a primary school classroom where children are taught in the local language. But she welcomed the volunteers to her school because the short-term experience would sometimes become a long-term financial commitment. For example, she showed me several classroom blocks that had been built with donations from a former volunteer. For her, volunteering's usefulness lay in its potential to develop relationships that would lead to financial commitments, not in its immediate effect. Staff members at a youth organization held a similar view, suggesting that the most useful thing a volunteer could do is raise funds for the organization.

Malawian community members often assumed that CBOs and individuals in the community who are working with the volunteers have these relationships of care and thus are receiving material support from the volunteers. This assumption led to expectations that the wealth would be further shared out with the community, and when those expectations were not met, the community accused local staff members or other Malawians of being corrupt and greedy. Staff members at a youth organization in Blantyre noted that the community expects more from CBOs when they see white volunteers. The organization's director stated that managing those expectations was the biggest challenge of working with volunteers. At another CBO in Blantyre, staff members similarly said that the community thinks that volunteers bring resources to people who are in high positions in the organization. They added that some volunteers make promises to the community, such as providing school fees or creating programs. When the volunteers leave, the community looks to the organization to fulfill those promises; when it can't, community members accuse people within the organization of being corrupt and taking the money that the volunteers sent for the community.

Although Malawians most commonly accused other Malawians of corruption and "eating" money, they were critical of Western volunteers whom they perceived as violating the terms of their relationships of care and, thus, breaking the rules of the game.[52] Mary, an orphanage director in Blantyre, noted that the volunteers seemed to develop close relationships with the Malawian caretakers, but then did not stay in touch after they left: "When they go back, they don't correspond. Do they just forget us? Even if we give them a good welcome, when they go back, they forget about us." Staff members at a youth organization similarly remarked that the volunteers seemed to

"forget" about them after leaving. Other Malawians were upset when volunteers were seen as trusting other azungu over Malawians. Stephen, a curio seller in Lakeshore Town, put it plainly: "You mzungu trust each other." A musician from Lakeshore Town similarly noted, "Mzungu to mzungu, they trust each other so much," while Amos, a farmer in Lakeshore Town, said that Western volunteers "don't trust the people who are suffering." Malawians often took this as a tremendous insult as they felt that through their hospitality and sharing, they had developed close, "big" relationships with the volunteers—as "real friends" or "like relatives."

Asceticism & Authenticity

We needed transportation. We had gone to a bar on the outskirts of Blantyre because it was supposed to have a happy hour with good prices on beer. After being informed that the bar no longer ran a happy hour, the group of volunteers that I was with decided that the regular prices were too high. The proprietor, a white South African, was unhappy that we were taking up a table in the otherwise empty bar and was threatening to kick us out.

After some debate about where we could get food and drinks for the least amount of money, we had decided where to go; now we needed to decide how to get there. The fastest and easiest way would be to take a taxi. As the volunteers discussed what fare they were willing to pay, each one claimed to know a driver who would take us for a successively lower fare. Eventually we settled on a driver who offered to pick us up and take us to our next destination for 1,000 kwacha. Divided among six of us, the fare would have been less than one dollar a piece. As we waited for the taxi, however, the volunteers decided that the fare was too expensive. As one of them explained to me, they were Peace

Corps volunteers and "can't afford" the cost of the taxi. Instead, the volunteers decided to go by minibus or get the ultimate travel bargain: hitching a ride.

As previously discussed, the Western volunteers sought to establish their unique identity as a *volunteer*, distinct from such other Western archetypes as the tourist and the aid worker. One important way that volunteers constructed their identity was through their attitudes toward and behaviors with money.

Most volunteers saw themselves as living on tight budgets or even as poor. Some volunteers went to extremes to demonstrate their low economic status: sleeping in tents, subsisting on little more than bread and peanut butter, traveling only by bicycle or hitchhiking. In Lakeshore Town, a Peace Corps volunteer noted that it had taken him all day to reach the lodge from the village where he was based. When I inquired why—knowing that the journey should not have taken more than a couple of hours by minibus—he echoed the volunteers in Blantyre, saying that he had to hitchhike because as a volunteer, he could not afford even the minibus fare. The volunteers' consumption behaviors, however, often seemed idiosyncratic. The same volunteer who had hitchhiked to Lakeshore Town then spent $40 on alcohol in a single night at the lodge. Other volunteers similarly would eat nothing but peanut-butter sandwiches and then run up large bar tabs, or complain about the cost of lodging but then book a pricey safari trip to Zambia.

Despite these inconsistencies, many of the volunteers genuinely thought of themselves as "poor," perhaps because their point of comparison was with other Westerners. Certainly, compared to what they would have earned and been able to access

had they remained in their home countries, and compared to tourists and aid workers in Malawi, the volunteers had very little money and few material luxuries. This self-perception of their relative economic status likely influenced their consumption behaviors.

At the same time, I would suggest that for the volunteers, more important than actually being "poor" was demonstrating a detachment from money and wealth. Helen, a Dutch volunteer whom I met in Blantyre, noted, "[volunteers] don't care at all about money," a sentiment that was repeated by other volunteers. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 2, a lack of caring about money was generally seen a defining characteristic of volunteers: a volunteer is someone who doesn't seek or expect payment for work. This detachment from money, however, went deeper than simply not desiring remuneration for their work. For the volunteer identity, it was important not only to not *have* money but also to not *need* money. The performance of being able to live without money or material goods—hitchhiking, eating simple foods, wearing old clothes—was an important part of establishing their identity as volunteers, even if their college educations, digital cameras, and ability to travel to a far distant country belied their claims to being truly poor. Their behavior was driven more by ideas of conspicuous consumption, authenticity, and reciprocity than by any real economic restrictions.

The behaviors and attitudes toward money that I observed among the Western volunteers seem strongly rooted in the Protestant Ethic, and particularly in its proscriptions on attachment to wealth and conspicuous consumption. As Max Weber ([1930] 2002) explains, according to the Protestant Ethic, wealth itself is not problematic: "What is

really reprehensible is *resting* on one's possessions, *enjoyment* of wealth" (106, original italics). Weber continues, "Protestant asceticism works with all its force against the uninhibited *enjoyment* of possessions; it discourages *consumption*, especially the consumption of luxuries" (115, original italics).

Secular volunteering had its own asceticism, which was necessary to an authentic experience. Whereas the Protestant Ethic warned against worshiping money as a false god, the volunteers seemed to believe that money created a false experience. By eschewing wealth and the consumption of "luxuries," the volunteers were seeking the "really real"—an experience that could not be purchased or consumed, but only gained through sacrifice and labor. Money was seen as a barrier to—even antithetical to—an authentic experience because the "real" Malawi was poor. By extension, those things that required money—such as "expensive" lodges, taxis, or certain restaurants—were defined as not "real" or "azungu." The volunteers either avoided places that were deemed "azungu" because of price or used those places as a sort of "free zone." In occupying these "inauthentic" spaces, the volunteers gave themselves license to consume such luxuries as alcohol and Western foods because they felt they were outside of "real" Malawi and therefore inconspicuous.[53]

Relationships that were based on monetary exchange were also not "real" or authentic. Christopher, for example, noted that he wasn't bothered by the curio sellers because they weren't "real Malawians." Other volunteers were similarly critical of Malawians whom they saw as seeking relationships with Westerners for monetary or material gain. Particularly in Lakeshore Town, I was warned by the Western volunteers to be cautious about my relationships with local Malawians, and some of the male lodge

employees had a reputation among the Westerners for having multiple Western "girlfriends" from whom they scammed money. As I will discuss more in Chapter 6, the volunteers located the "real" Malawi in villages and generally had a more positive view of their experiences in the village in part because they felt that their relationships with the local community were not based on money, whereas in the urban areas, as one volunteer put it, they felt that Malawians saw them as a "walking money machine."

Further echoing the Protestant Ethic, the volunteers put a high value on labor as a mark of their identity and a measure of their experience. Although, as noted in Chapter 2, volunteering was generally seen by Westerners as an avocational, amateur pursuit, the volunteers still expressed a need to feel that they were doing work and being useful. The Peace Corps motto makes the importance of labor clear: "The toughest job you'll ever love." The volunteers were disappointed when they felt that they weren't working enough or weren't having their time put to good use. Although the volunteers tried to be realistic about what they could accomplish, they also wanted to feel that they were doing something substantial. Two German girls who had recently graduated from college expressed frustration with their volunteer experience at an after-school program because only a few children came to the program, and some days none showed up.[54] Christopher similarly noted disappointment that he was working with the widows' baking project and in an informal school, rather than using his skills in manual labor, while Jane admitted that she didn't have skills that were needed at her project site and as a result spent most of her time at a lodge in Lakeshore Town rather than at the site.

Wanda Vrasti (2012), in her study of volunteer tourism in Guatemala and Ghana, suggests that volunteers rationalize their lack of efficacy and usefulness by focusing on the "authenticity" of their experience and their cultural knowledge: "These more culturally oriented activities helped volunteers compensate for the nagging feeling of not being useful and, more importantly, allowed them to demonstrate their affective credentials in ways that strict volunteer work could not" (122). I observed a very similar reaction among volunteers in Malawi. As noted in the previous chapter, the volunteers saw themselves as forming a deep, intimate knowledge of the culture and people, and saw this knowledge as a unique product of their "work" as volunteers. One important means for demonstrating their "affective credentials" was money—knowing the "local" prices, having the skills to negotiate, and being able to live like a "local," that is, without money or material luxuries.

The volunteers saw themselves not only as gaining cultural knowledge and skills, but also as sharing their own culture with the local community. Indeed, the volunteers saw this cultural "sharing" as their primary value for the local community. When I asked the volunteers what they were contributing to the community, they spoke of broadening horizons, giving new perspectives, or exposing people to ways of life they wouldn't otherwise encounter. Some of the volunteers espoused a secular lifestyle evangelism in which they saw themselves as modeling modern behaviors and attitudes. A female volunteer from Australia, for example, said that she hosted male guests overnight even though she was aware that doing so violated local moral norms because she thought that the local children would benefit from seeing that male–female relationships didn't have to be sexualized. A female Peace Corps volunteer similarly saw culture change as part of

her role, particularly modeling such modern women's rights as wearing trousers. This lifestyle evangelism, however, was often in tension with the volunteers' romantic imagination of Malawi's traditional culture and their desire to preserve its purity (see Chapter 6).

An Aristocracy of Authenticity

Vrasti (2012) argues that the volunteer experience ultimately "always somehow gets brought back into the fold of capitalist value production" (119). I agree that many of the volunteers transform their experience into social capital that can be spent back in their home countries to improve their socioeconomic position within the Western neoliberal capitalist system (whether or not that was their initial motivation). I, however, suggest that we can also see the volunteers' pursuit of an "authentic" experience as resistance to that same Western neoliberal capitalist system.

The Western volunteers whom I met in Malawi largely came from the working and middle classes. Back in their home countries, they would have been indoctrinated into a secular version of the prosperity gospel, in which education and hard work lead to socioeconomic success. For many of the volunteers, however, the promise of neoliberal capitalism was as elusive as it was for the Malawians, albeit on a very different scale. Among the working and middle classes in the early twenty-first century, education and hard work have been more likely to result in debt, underemployment, and stress than in socioeconomic success. The volunteers expressed their disaffection with their situation in their home countries by saying that they didn't have "much going on," that they felt a lack of purpose, or that they didn't have "a reason to stay" in their home countries. In

their Western home countries, the volunteers were playing a serious game in which the deck was stacked against them and the house always eventually wins.

Thus, I suggest that their pursuit of an "authentic" experience was the pursuit of an alternative to that game. I propose that the volunteers were seeking a system in which they could measure their own self value in ways other than money and material consumption. This desire seemed most evident in their romanticizing of village life, in which Malawians were imagined as "poor but happy" or as having alternative forms of wealth, such as tradition and culture. In interviews, the volunteers also spoke about finding a higher purpose for their lives, feeling appreciated, and being a part of community—things that they seemed to feel were lacking in Western society. Christopher, for example, said that one of the main differences he saw between the West and Africa was "the sense of community. Here [in Malawi] no one is left to fend for themselves."

As just discussed, the volunteers generally imagined their value in abstract, immaterial terms: culture, education, creativity, energy, enthusiasm, ideas, work ethic. Although neoliberal capitalism purports to reward those qualities through entrepreneurship, the likely reality for most of the volunteers was that they would have limited opportunities and receive little reward for engaging with these values within the Western neoliberal capitalist system. Through their volunteer experience, the volunteers were seeking ways to assign value to these qualities, to create the opportunities that neoliberal capitalism had promised but failed to deliver, to exercise their own agency. In other words, they were seeking power.

In this regard, contemporary volunteers are reminiscent of the colonial administrators and missionaries of a century before. John Comaroff (1997) notes that the administrators and missionaries often came from the low and middle classes in their home countries (especially England); taking a position in the colonies was a way to improve their social status. Through the "aristocracy of color," they were able to claim considerable power in management positions that would not have been available to them in their home countries. Similarly, contemporary volunteers—who are generally young, female, and from the working or middle classes—would likely have relatively low status and little power in their home countries, and their opportunities for moving up the socioeconomic ladder would be limited despite the promises of neoliberal capitalism. In Malawi, however, these same individuals had relatively high status and much power. They were often put in supervisory positions, even though they had little or no experience in the field in which they were working. If they were dissatisfied with their assigned work—which many of them became after a few weeks or months—they could pursue their own projects, through charities or businesses, with very low barriers to entry and little-to-no personal risk. As a Scottish teacher put it, "You are free here to do what you want." The volunteers were still part of a serious game, but now one in which they held the trump card: being a white Westerner.

The obvious paradox is that the very experience of volunteering through which the volunteers attempt to resist Western neoliberal capitalism "produces subjects and social relations congruent with . . . neoliberal capitalism" (Vrasti 2012: 120). Moreover, as I will discuss in the final chapter, an unintended consequence of the volunteers exercising their agency is that in empowering themselves they subjugate the local community.

A Little Knowledge . . .

I was going to meet a local volunteer coordinator at his office near the polytechnic college in Blantyre. I had taken the minibus along that route many times and had always paid the same fare: 50 kwacha. That day, sitting wedged between the other riders—three on a bench seat meant to fit two—I wordlessly passed up my fare to the tout as usual. He looked at me and said, "70 kwacha." I immediately felt indignant. I wasn't some naive tourist; I knew the correct fare, and I wasn't going to pay a cent more (at the exchange rate at the time, it was a difference of about 10 cents). I didn't often have cause to argue the minibus fares. The fares were standardized, and I was almost always charged the same as any other rider. But this time, I was convinced that I was being cheated. So I dug in my heels and began to argue with the tout and driver. I tried to rally support from my fellow riders, but they all remained silent. I eventually wore down my adversaries and won the fight.

After arriving at the office, I proudly told my informant and some of his staff members of my experience—only to be told that I was wrong. The correct fare was 70 kwacha.[55]

Volunteers' self-identity was perhaps most evident in their common refrain: "Give me a discount. I'm a volunteer." In conversations volunteers complained about the cost of living in Malawi and their perceptions that they were being charged exorbitant prices because they were foreigners. More than just an economic survival strategy, knowing where and how to get the "best" prices seemed to carry a social cachet by signaling both the volunteer's lack of material wealth and his or her insider knowledge and cultural

understanding. Being able to get the lowest taxi fare, the cheapest curios, or the best discount on lodging served as evidence of the knowledge borne of their volunteer experience.

In a variation on "give me a discount," volunteers would often ask for the "local price," instead of the "azungu price." With this tactic, they were explicitly claiming both insider knowledge—that is, asserting that they "knew" that a race-based price structure existed—and insider, local status. Moreover in asking for the "local price," the volunteers were drawing on their perceptions of reciprocity and the role of money in relationships. In return for their volunteering—both the contributions and the sacrifices they made—the volunteers expected the Malawians to recognize their special status as "volunteers." The rules of the game, as defined by the volunteers, obligated Malawian community members to repay the "gift" of volunteering by treating volunteers differently than other Westerners; more specifically, the volunteers felt that in exchange for volunteering they should be treated as locals. Or, at least, as the volunteers imagined that locals were treated. I make this distinction because, as previously noted, for Malawians, being treated as a close friend or a relative—that is, as a local—created the very obligation to share one's wealth that the volunteers thought they should be exempt from.

These negotiations over prices steeped not just in the volunteers' self-perceptions but also in their perceptions of Malawians. As noted in the previous chapter, the volunteers—and Westerners in general—often expressed a sense that Malawians—and Africans in general—are corrupt, untrustworthy, and dangerous. The volunteers therefore often entered into their encounters with Malawians with a sense of trepidation and an assumption that they would be cheated by virtue of being Westerners.

The volunteers brought this same trepidation into their encounters with community members in their volunteer projects. For example, an Italian couple volunteering with a CBO in Lakeshore Town wanted to leave money for the project, but they were wary of giving money to the CBO's local director; they worried that he would steal or otherwise misuse the money. Sometimes these fears resulted in such direct refusal or concerns, but often the volunteers' actions were more indirect. The volunteers would insist on handling the money or create reporting mechanisms, such as the ledger and weekly meetings with the widows group described in Chapter 4. In one instance, a Canadian volunteer working with a widows group on a sewing project had used some of her own money to purchase materials. The widows then made various items—bags, aprons, napkins, and so forth—that the volunteer took to local shops and lodges to sell. The volunteer handled all of the money. When she was ready to leave, she took back her initial expenses and doled out the rest of the profits to members of the group. Although they stopped short of accusing the volunteer of stealing money, the group members were suspicious because they had been kept out of the loop. They didn't know how much the original investment had been, nor did they know how much was sold, so they had no way of knowing whether the volunteer had only taken back the start-up expenses or if she was making a profit off the project. As I will discuss more in the final chapter, in enacting such beliefs about money and the Other, the volunteers were (inadvertently) reinforcing structures of power and dependency, while contributing to the conflicts in and with the local community described previously.

Both Malawians and Western volunteers attempted to obscure the role of money in their encounters with each other. They spoke about "sharing" with each other, framed their encounters in terms of immaterial values (relationships or cultural exchange), and stigmatized those who deviated from the obscuring performance. Yet, as is evident from this chapter, money was central to community–volunteer encounters. Both the Malawian community members and Western volunteers were taking part in a serious game in which money was a key strategic resource. Individuals from both groups used money to construct their identities, manage relationships, and pursue their goals. Malawian community members sought relationships of care that would provide the social and economic security net that neoliberal capitalism had dismantled. The volunteers sought power to construct and enact an "alternative" system that would provide the rewards promised by neoliberal capitalism.

Also evident from this chapter are the close relationships between discourses of wealth, value, and money and discourses of place. The next chapter will explore in more detail how Malawian community members and Western volunteers mapped their ideas of wealth and value onto moral geography and how they strategically used that imagined moral geography.

6. Moral Geography

A blast from the horn signaled the ferry's arrival. Those of us who were debarking—about a dozen passengers—began to gather our belongings and crowd around the gate. The rain had let up, and the lake was calm as we climbed over the side of the ferry and dropped into a wooden dinghy. We perched on the edge of the boat while the center was filled with cargo. One family was bringing what appeared to be a complete bedroom set: headboard, bed frame, chests of drawers.

The dinghy motored to the beach where a crowd had gathered to welcome the arrivals and see off those going out to board the ferry as it continued its southbound route along the western lakeshore. The ferry passed this village twice a week: northbound on Mondays, southbound on Sundays. A smaller ferry ran midweek, but by all accounts, it was a thoroughly miserable experience—cramped, damp, nauseatingly choppy. Once I hopped from the dinghy to the sandy beach, I would be staying for the week, unless I wanted to brave the midweek ferry or carry my overstuffed backpack several miles to a road.

I looked along the beach for the porter sent to escort me to the lodge where I would be staying. In front of me and to the right, I saw nothing but beach and trees; to the left, I saw a few mud-and-thatch houses, suggesting the edge of the village. There were no roads, no electricity, not even access to either of the two mobile phone networks. This was about as remote a place as one can find in Malawi.

I had traveled to Nsatukuka because I had been told by multiple people in Lakeshore Town—both Malawians and Westerners—that it was an example of "good" volunteering. Even the Malawians who said that they "hated" Western volunteers thought well of the project there. After my visit, however, I struggled to understand what was so "good" about it. To me, the project at Nsatukuka did not seem all that different from any of the other projects that I had visited. Previous volunteers had helped construct a few buildings that now largely sat empty and unused. While I was there, the project had only one volunteer—Jane—who was rarely at the site; she spent most of her time in Lakeshore Town because she felt isolated and not useful in Nsatukuka

My confusion about how to understand Nsatukuka as a "good" volunteer site dovetailed with a larger conundrum: how to make sense of the different reactions toward volunteers I had found in Blantyre and in Lakeshore Town. Although Malawians expressed a range of perceptions about volunteers at both sites, in general, the people I spoke with in the villages around Blantyre were much more positive about volunteers than the people I spoke with in Lakeshore Town. Certainly multiple factors affect both questions—why Nsatukuka was seen as an example of "good" volunteering; why some people were more positive toward volunteers than others—but in my reflection on these questions one common theme emerged: the village.

In this chapter, I explore how individuals imprint their subjectivities onto spaces and places to create an imagined moral geography (Cresswell 1996). I examine the dominant discourses of place that are embedded in individual subjectivities and that shape individuals' experiences. At the same time, I consider how individuals actively construct spaces and places in order to assert their identities, manage relationships, and

pursue goals. I focus in particular on how Malawians and Western volunteers construct "the village" as a field of play for their serious games.

Encounters of Imagination

According to Ferguson (2006), "In most accounts, scholarly as well as popular, Africa is understood in relentlessly negative terms. . . . Its people appear as victims many times over" (8). This discourse of Africa, and the images that it shapes, have persisted for hundreds of years. Today's images of Africa are not much different than those found in Stanley's influential and popular account of his famed search for Dr. Livingstone at the end of the nineteenth century (Jones 2001). This persistence across time and despite change reveals the power of discourse: "what we must respect and try to grasp is the sheer knitted together strength of [discourse], its very close ties to the enabling socio-economic and political institutions, and its redoubtable durability" (Said [1979] 1994: 6). Mengara (2001) contends that although scholars and historians have begun to deconstruct the Western-made image of Africa, these images persist because they are still useful to political and economic interests. Those interests, scholars argue, also have not changed much since the days of Stanley and Livingstone. According to Mengara, the images of Africa as a dark, savage, chaotic, and primitive land emerged out of a need to justify the colonial process: "Such a justification could be validated only if the lands to be conquered and the peoples who inhabited them were expropriated of their own identities and constructed in the Western mind as objects of devastation, ignorance, and primitivism that needed to be saved by the West" (3). Similarly, contemporary images of Africa as deficient and failing become justifications for "economic missionaries," who

bring economic and political reforms designed to align African states with the standard global model while securing their own interests (Ferguson 2006; Hawk 1992; Moro 1998).

Ferguson (1994) suggests that much of the work of creating this discourse takes place within the development apparatus, through the careful construction of an institutional knowledge that enables the apparatus to become a self-perpetuating "anti-politics machine." Building on Ferguson and Said ([1979] 1994), Escobar suggests that the Western powers created the Third World as a geopolitical space in order to dominate and manage the space for Western interests. Escobar contends that mainstream development literature has imagined

> a veritable underdeveloped subjectivity endowed with features such as powerlessness, passivity, poverty, and ignorance, usually dark and lacking in historical agency, as if waiting for the (white) Western hand to help subjects along and not infrequently hungry, illiterate, needy, and oppressed by its own stubbornness, lack of initiative, and traditions. (8)

According to Escobar, "the production of the Third World through the articulation of knowledge and power is essential to the development discourse" (12). In order for the discourse of "development" to move from knowledge to practice, the development apparatus needed to create a space for that practice. In creating the space, the development discourse also created the subjectivities of the actors, "through which people come to recognize themselves as developed or underdeveloped" (10).

Ferguson (2006) later incorporated Escobar's ideas into his examination of how "Africa" in particular has been constructed as discursive space—"how a vast, complicated, heterogeneous region of the planet has come to occupy a place-in-the-world called 'Africa' that nowadays is nearly synonymous with failure and poverty" (5)—and

the implications of a postcolonial Africa discourse in shaping development. Ferguson contends that "a wide range of social actors on the continent understand their own situations, and construct their strategies for improving them, in terms of an imagined 'Africa' and its place in the wider world" (6). Thus, Africa as a geopolitical space, constructed through and interacting with a development discourse, "is at once dubiously artificial and powerfully real" (6).

Although Ferguson, Escobar, and others were critiquing the discourse of development within political and economic institutions, this same discourse has permeated popular culture through the media and other forms of popular culture (Lutz and Collins 1993; Moeller 1999; Pires 2000). Hawk (1992) argues that news coverage of Africa has a common theme: "Africa is a failure and needs our help" (6). He further notes the Western norms inherent in news coverage of Africa's "deficiencies": "Coverage of Africa which emphasizes poverty, disease, and famine corresponds to the existing view of Africans as have-nots" (9). This image of Africa extends far beyond news coverage. Recent shifts in development policy and practice—increasing focus on private-sector interventions, the growth of small-scale NGOs and volunteer-driven programs—have led NGOs, charities, philanthropists, and for-profit companies to spend billions of dollars to promote their development projects to consumers through direct marketing, product branding, celebrity endorsements, and entertainment media. Such philanthrocapitalist[56] efforts as Product(RED), which uses the sale of branded goods to raise money for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, have made development into popular culture

phenomenon through fashion, music, celebrities, and consumer goods while disseminating the dominant discourses of development and Africa.

The Really Real Africa

Although many of the volunteers claimed that they came with no preconceptions of Africa or Malawi, the pervasiveness of images of Africa in Western media as poor, sick, dysfunctional, and empty makes those claims dubious. Rather, those images often became the standard for the "real" Africa that the volunteers not only expected but actively sought as part of an authentic experience.

Jane, in a blog entry describing a bus ride, wrote:

> [It's] not quite as 'luxury' as the website makes out and for a second I panic and wonder if we are on the right one. No reclining seats, toilets or air con and the seats have seen better days—the base of mine fell off when I sat down initially! However, after looking around the rest of the bus station, it doesn't take too long to figure out that this IS actually the luxury bus after all. [It's] not too bad, and actually once we get moving I'm glad it's not up to national express standards. This is Africa after all, and there is a natural pull to embrace what is real, and not hide behind western levels of luxury. With all the windows open, you are able feel more in tune to your surroundings, the sights, smells and sounds.

Jane states the goal of many of the volunteers: to embrace what they imagined to be the real, authentic Africa. Moreover, the volunteers sought an affective, unmediated experience of the real. Mazzarella (2009) refers to this as the "fantasy of immediation, of a social essence . . . that is autonomous of and prior to social processes of mediation" (303). Brada (2011), in her dissertation on U.S. medical students in Botswana, discusses the importance of a sense of closeness or immediacy to the "really real" to the medical

students' perceptions of their own experiences. Proximity to "realness" was valued, and in this case, measured by perceived bodily risk and physical proximity to "risky" bodies.

For the volunteers, the "really real" was located in the village. Christopher noted the importance of getting out to the village in order to learn about local culture: "The worst kind of tourist is the one who never leaves the lodge . . . has a good time, meets some good people, but has no idea really about the town or the country." Another volunteer also used the village to make the distinction between herself as a volunteer and tourists, saying, "When you are in the community, it gets rid of that touristy feel." Raymond emphasized the importance of the village by comparing his experience to that of volunteers who lived in towns or cities. He felt that those volunteers lacked cultural exchange by not having exposure to village life, "which is Malawi." By contrast, he noted, "Most of the time, you'll find me in the village."

As both Christopher and Raymond make clear, the village and the volunteer experience were often inextricably linked. For Raymond, being in the village was essential for understanding local culture and, therefore, for being an effective volunteer. Greg, a volunteer with a Christian organization in Zomba, similarly lamented that, since moving from a house in the village into nicer living accommodations in an upscale neighborhood, he felt that he had lost his "cred" with the community. Christopher also suggested that being a volunteer gives one access to the village that would be impossible as a tourist. Thus, being physically in the "really real" was essential to being a volunteer, and being a volunteer—as opposed to a tourist or a development agency worker—was essential for gaining access to the really real.

Many other volunteers agreed with Raymond's and Christopher's view. In general, the volunteers I spoke with expressed greater satisfaction with their time in rural areas as opposed to their time in urban areas. Two British volunteers provided an explicit comparison. They were spending three months of their gap year volunteering with an orphan-care program that had homes in both a tony neighborhood in Blantyre and a more rural town along the lake shore. After having spent time at both locations, they noted that they had seen more of the real Malawi in the rural town. Whereas at the home in Blantyre, they had mostly stayed within the program's compound, at the second home, they went out to the market, beach, and local clubs. Moreover, although they acknowledged that they were spending less time with the children at the second home, they felt that they were "doing more" as volunteers by going around the community.

Of course, not all of the volunteers shared this sense of the centrality of the village or a desire to be there. A VSO volunteer who was based in a large town poked fun at Peace Corps volunteers by joking that all of their stories begin with "This one time in my village." An Australian volunteer at a rural school admitted that she preferred Blantyre to the village: "Everyone wants things [in the village] or wants to sell you things. You really stand out [here] but not as much in Blantyre." Jane, despite her early enthusiasm to "embrace what is real," found that she could be more useful to her project by staying in a town close to an urban area, where she could communicate with the project sponsors in England, arrange supply purchases, and help negotiate support from local agencies, rather than at the project's remote rural site. A former volunteer who had since become a permanent resident in Malawi had a balanced view; she noted that although she had loved being in the village and seeing "how African I could be," she couldn't stay there forever.

For those volunteers who located the really real in the villages, they often had a particular image of what a really real village is. Jane's blog entry suggests this image: poor, broken, lacking even the most basic amenities, and different than the West. A U.S. volunteer working with a business-development project made the point even more starkly:

> For me in the villages, the only thing I want from the villages—I don't know what they want, but what I want—when I go to the villages . . . I don't even know if I really want electricity. I don't know if I'd be happy to see electricity. Or running water. Like they have the well projects, and that's really good, but a flush toilet and all that, I don't think I'd be happy to see [that]. At least from the impression I've had so far, the people in the village are really happy . . . because they have this strong community and most of the family is there, living with their huts all lined up. I don't want any of that to change.

"Do you think it's a bad thing for Malawi to have electricity and paved roads?" I asked. He replied:

> Honestly, if that happened all over Malawi, I'd probably leave. Unless Malawi could stay Malawi, but I don't think it could. What we think of as Malawi and what I defined as a Malawian, would that be the same if every hut in every village had electricity and every road was paved and everybody had satellite TV? No, I'm sure it wouldn't. It's impossible that the people would remain the same. It couldn't happen.

Raymond similarly noted his disappointment that he had electricity at his home. Further, he echoed the sentiment—common among volunteers—that Malawians were better off without Western development: "In the villages, people are content with their lives. They don't need our innovations."

This imagination of the village is not just about how the volunteers perceive Malawians but also how they perceive themselves. Sheridan and Price (2006) note that international volunteering has long been connected to notions of adventure:

> "Adventure" has long marked the shape of Peace Corps service. An early slogan, "the toughest job you'll ever love," linked extremes of effort with extremes of emotional fulfillment. Later, the agency posed the question, "How far are you willing to go to make a difference?"—linking extremes of commitment with extremes of impact. Now Peace Corps simply issues would-be volunteers the challenge: "Life is calling. How far will you go?" Despite these subtle shifts in emphasis, the overall point is clear and consistent: Peace Corps is a difficult and challenging experience that offers innumerable social and personal rewards—an adventure of the highest moral purpose. (179)

As with the medical students that Brada observed, the volunteers seemed to equate proximity to realness with proximity to risk, particularly the bodily risk associated with the hardships of the village. By exposing themselves to those risks—to life in the village—the volunteers could imagine themselves as "activist adventurers" (Sheridan and Price 2006) who, in the grand tradition of adventurers, explorers, and frontiersmen, were having an unmediated, "really real" experience.

Map Making

The Malawi Sun Food Court sat at the top of the hill that formed downtown Blantyre, down a narrow, poorly paved road, tucked between two upscale hotels and behind the Adventist hospital. It had a fast-food restaurant, a bakery, an ice cream shop, and a convenience store that mostly sold overpriced food imports to foreigners staying at the hotels who were desperate for a familiar treat. There were indoor and outdoor seating areas, although the indoor area was largely empty except when it rained. Even then, most patrons would rather squeeze under the table umbrellas or awnings outside.

The food court was popular with downtown office workers. For Kw350 (at the time, a little more than $2), you could get a large plate of chicken and chips with a bottle of

soda. At lunchtime, the tables were full of men and women dressed in office attire—a button-down shirt and tie for the men; slim-fitting suits and heels for the women—all tapping out text messages on cell phones.

Urban areas and tourist towns threaten to disrupt an image of Africa that is intricately tied up in the volunteers' subjectivity through both a deeply ingrained discourse of place and their own desires to construct a particular identity through a particular experience. If Africa is imagined as poor, sick, needy, and empty, then the volunteers can imagine themselves in comparison as abundant—full of energy, knowledge, training, modern ideas, and good intentions—and, as many of them expressed, any small contribution they make is necessary and important. As already noted, the volunteers often felt that they were contributing more when they were in the villages—where the need was more visible in ways that matched their expectations—even when they were doing less work than they had done in the urban areas.

In the urban areas, however, the picture is more complicated. Although poverty is still persistently evident, it is mixed with signs of modernity, cosmopolitanism, and a growing middle class. There are cars, banks, high-end hotels, and fast-food chains. Bethany, an Australian volunteer, said that Blantyre was "a shock": "It was a little more advanced than I thought. I didn't expect so many cars." Other volunteers expressed that in the cities, they felt like they could be "anywhere" rather than specifically situated in Africa. As a result, the volunteers often explicitly marked off urban areas as less real, less authentic, than the rural villages.

Within urban areas and tourist towns, the volunteers often sought to resolve the contradictions between their imagined experience and lived experience by creating "moral maps" (Wendland 2012) that marked off spaces within places as either "authentic" or "azungu." Although these mental maps were highly individualized, ad hoc, and contradictory, collectively they revealed an internally consistent set of rules for categorizing spaces. The absence or presence of other Westerners was an important criterion. A British volunteer declared a fast-food restaurant downtown to be more authentic than the Malawi Sun Food Court—despite serving similar food to a similar clientele—because she didn't see any other azungu there at the time, while Raymond stated that he preferred not to patronize a bookstore-cafe in Zomba because it served Western-style food to a mostly white clientele. The volunteers were often particularly keen to physically separate themselves from "ugly Westerners." A British medical volunteer avoided the Malawi Sun Food Court after witnessing an offensive exchange between a white South African family and the Malawian server.

Price—or at least perceived price—was also a factor in determining authenticity of a space. As noted before, not having—and more important, not caring about—money was crucial to the volunteers' subjectivity and self-identity. Places that reaffirmed that self-perception by offering discounts to volunteers were deemed authentic, while places that did not were corrupt or azungu. A bar in Blantyre went from being authentic to azungu in a single afternoon after a group of volunteers discovered that it was no longer offering happy-hour prices and would not give them a special discount for being volunteers.

Collective lore also played a role in the construction of these mental maps, particularly for lodges. In both Blantyre and Lakeshore Town, comparably priced lodges

were differently categorized based on word-of-mouth reputation as reported by other volunteers.

Finally, general location or neighborhood factored into distinguishing spaces as authentic or azungu. For example, Blantyre had two lodges that catered to budget-conscious Westerners.[57] Both charged the same nightly rate. One was located in a run-down part of town, just next to the bus depot; the other was in one of the upscale neighborhoods, surrounded by large, gated homes. The former was preferred by volunteers as authentic, while they generally disdained the latter as too touristy and azungu.

These mental maps served not just to create a moral geography for the volunteers, but also as a way to construct their identity as volunteers. As noted earlier, the volunteers saw place and identity as inextricably linked in a two-way relationship: place allowed them to claim a particular identity even as their identity allowed them to access particular places. Their ability to demonstrate an "insider" knowledge of the place—knowing which places were authentic and which were azungu—further reinforced their self-perceptions of their experiences as authentic and their self-identity as distinct from other Westerners. They knew the really real Africa.

Making Space

We piled into the wooden boat—about fifteen people, plus several crates of beer and yellow plastic grocery bags stuffed with food. Liz, an American in her mid-twenties, had organized the outing as a birthday/farewell celebration for herself. Liz had originally come to Malawi the year before as a short-term volunteer with a voluntourism program;

she left the program after only a few weeks, feeling disappointed and disillusioned. She finished out her stay by volunteering at the lodge in Lakeshore Town and then decided to set up her own NGO to build schools in the villages near Lakeshore Town.

Tensions were high as we set off from Lakeshore Town. Liz had invited a small group of friends, Western and Malawian. Some of the invited Malawian guests had brought along Malawian friends whom Liz and several of the other Western guests did not want joining us. As we motored along Lake Malawi on a clear, calm, sunny day, however, the mood lightened. We chatted and drank beers or sodas mixed with cheap liquor, stuff named Powers and Tyson, clear grain alcohol that smelled like paint thinner and was often sold in single-shot packets (*masacheti*).

Liz had picked a spot well past the popular beaches and populated areas. As we pulled up at the deserted stretch of beach and began to unload the boat, a crowd—seeming to materialize from nowhere—gathered to watch us. We had an audience of a couple dozen adults and children as we swam, drank, and built a bonfire. Some of the Westerners complained of feeling like animals in a zoo, so a few of the Malawian guests attempted to chase off the onlookers, which only pushed them back a few yards.

Even as the volunteers sought the immediate experience of the real, they used place as a way to mediate that experience and manage their relationships with others. In particular, they sought to impose rules on where and when they would participate in the serious game with Malawians.

As noted earlier, the volunteers generally located the real in the village and thought that going out to the village was necessary to have an authentic experience. The “going

out" begins with the volunteers leaving their Western homes to go to Africa.[58] The volunteers often emphasized the importance of travel as an opportunity for learning and personal growth. They needed to "go out" from the West in order to experience the Other and test their own abilities as an "activist adventurer." Once in Malawi, however, their emphasis shifted to staying. Yet again seeking to distinguish themselves from other Westerners—particularly tourists—the volunteers spoke about their desire to spend time in one place so that they could get to know a community. Joseph, a Danish volunteer in his late twenties, said, "I like to go in-depth in a country." Kristen, a U.S. volunteer on a one-year teaching placement, similarly expressed the importance of staying: "You need at minimum three months to know a place." She added, "I didn't want to be that azungu who comes in for five minutes."

Yet, I would suggest that even as the volunteers stay in Malawi, they continue the process of "going out" by creating both physical and social barriers between themselves and Malawians. Few of the volunteers actually live in the villages (Peace Corps volunteers being a notable exception). Many of them stay at lodges in towns or cities, commuting daily in project-provided transport to their project sites, or reside within the project site compound. In Nsatukuka, for example, the volunteers stayed at a secluded lodge several kilometers away from the village. Those who do stay in the village still generally live apart from the rest of the community, in a house set aside for the volunteers, often with a gate and a guard (again, PCVs are often—although not always—an exception to this). Indeed, being able to provide volunteers with "adequate" housing is often a prerequisite for a community to receive them through organized programs, and several of the volunteer project coordinators mentioned housing as a limiting factor in

placing volunteers at project sites. Some programs placed volunteers in home stays with local families, but those were often unsuccessful because the volunteers found the home stays too difficult. Christopher admitted that he had originally planned to stay with a family in the village, but after a week he relocated to a lodge because of the living conditions (including have to share a bed with one of the sons).

The volunteers varied greatly in their attitudes toward inviting Malawians into their homes. Kristen, for example, said that she keeps her door open and is rarely alone at home, and indeed, as I was interviewing her in her home, several students from the school dropped by to visit. Other volunteers, however, maintained firm boundaries between their home/private and volunteer/public lives. One of the common complaints I heard from Malawians about the volunteers was that they kept to themselves too much. At a school outside of Blantyre, two of the Malawian teachers specifically noted that they had never been invited to the volunteer house. Another teacher in Lakeshore Town, in response to my question about what makes for a good volunteer, suggested that the volunteers need to visit Malawians in their homes and invite visitors to their homes.

When the volunteers did go out from their homes, they continued to make strategic decisions about what places and spaces to occupy based on their mental maps of "authentic" and "azungu" spaces. Within the "authentic" spaces, however, they often created microspaces, self-segregating into exclusively or primarily azungu groups, into which only a select few Malawians were admitted—those who were known to the group and had proven that they understand the rules of the game as the volunteers defined them. In other words, those who wouldn't beg from or hassle the volunteers. This breach of space seemed to be the crux of the tension during Liz's beach outing. The unwanted

Malawian guests were those who had a reputation among the azungu in the group for trying to take advantage of them. This de facto segregation was also evident at the lodge where I stayed while in Lakeshore Town. By seemingly unspoken rule, certain areas were marked off as either shared or "azungu-only" spaces. For example, with very rare exceptions, the dining area was azungu-only apart from the Malawian staff, the Malawian husband of one of the owners, and a few select high-status Malawians. The bar, however, was often primarily occupied by Malawians, although it became highly integrated during organized parties. Thus, even a semi-public place such as a lodge became divided through social—if not physical—barriers into private, azungu-only spaces and public, integrated spaces.

Volunteers would also select places where they believed that they would not be begged from or hassled. One of the lodges in Lakeshore Town was particularly popular among the volunteers as a drinking spot, even though its prices were significantly higher than the bars in town or even some of the other lodges (which was why very few of the volunteers actually stayed at this particular lodge). When I asked about its popularity, some of the volunteers explained that they liked hanging out there because they knew they wouldn't be hassled for money or favors by Malawians. Several of the lodges tried to maintain this "safe haven" for the volunteers (and other Westerners) by chasing away the curio sellers or others who were seen as "hunting" Westerners.

In addition to selecting spaces within places, the volunteers also moved between places as a way to mediate their experiences and manage their relationships with Malawians. Both Blantyre and Lakeshore Town were popular getaway spots for volunteers based elsewhere. Often these weekend—or sometimes mid-week—getaways

would involve considerable amounts of drinking, smoking, and partying. A Peace Corps volunteer contended that the volunteers were just "blowing off steam" from the pressure of living in the village. Another Peace Corps volunteer insisted, "Don't judge us by how we act [in Lakeshore Town]. We're different in the village." Several Peace Corps volunteers with whom I spoke in Lakeshore Town made the same argument: that while in the villages, they adhered to local norms, abstaining from alcohol, cigarettes, wearing "immodest" clothes, and so forth (or, at least, in public view). Although the volunteers did not shed their identity as volunteers when they left their project sites—they still used it to claim discounts at lodges or with local vendors—many of them seemed to imagine their relationships with Malawian community members very differently when they were away from the village and in the less "real" places of tourist towns and urban centers. They no longer felt a social obligation to abide by local norms or to "set a good example," as some of them described their behavior choices in the villages.

An important note is that not only did the volunteers actively construct and use spaces according to their mental maps, but they also felt free to move among these spaces: between the village and the urban areas, between "authentic" and azungu spaces. I first took note of this white privilege while on an outing with my host brother during my preliminary research. On a dare, I agreed to walk with him from our house near "Zomba zero"—the base of the Zomba Plateau—up the steep and winding road to the top of the plateau. When we reached the top, we were hot and thirsty, so I suggested that we go to the Meridian hotel where we could sit and enjoy the view while drinking some cold sodas. It didn't occurred to me that I couldn't go to a nice hotel—even as dirty and sweaty as I was at that point—to sit on the veranda and have a drink. My host brother,

however, became visibly uncomfortable—fidgeting and looking around—as he asked repeatedly whether it was okay for us to be there. By contrast, I never heard a volunteer question whether he or she could or should occupy a place or space; the volunteers generally assumed that they had both the ability and the right to do so.

A Dual World

In another village, more than 350 miles to the south of Nsatukuka and a twelve-hour bus ride away, Chifundo took me on a tour. Chifundo was a slim twenty-year-old, with close-cropped hair, a small round face, long lashes, and a stern, serious expression that lit up with a playful smile when she was with her family or her boyfriend. She attended a private college to study development; during school breaks, she worked as a community liaison for a small charity. On this day, we went to her home village, on the outskirts of Blantyre. I asked Chifundo to take me on a "photo tour," instructing her that I wanted her to tell me what photos to take. I was hoping to get a sense of how a Malawian would represent her home to foreigners.

Chifundo was not an entirely naive informant for this project. She had already spent several weeks with me as a research assistant, guiding me through the villages that she monitored for the charity, securing permissions from the various village heads, setting up and translating interviews with people in the village. She also had more experience with azungu than many of the villagers, through her work with international volunteers at the charity and as a research assistant for another anthropologist who had conducted fieldwork in the village the year before I arrived.

She was also—as is typical of Malawians—eager to please. It took a while for her to warm up to the exercise. She kept asking me what I want to see, even as I insisted that I wanted her to tell me what photos I should take to show people in the United States about life in Malawi.

Eventually Chifundo began to suggest some photos. She focused on things about Malawi that she thought were different than life in the West: thatched-roof houses, an oven for baking bricks, women and children doing laundry in a small stream. She also wanted me to see her home and to photograph her family. She introduced me to her mother and sisters, posing with them in their home garden and on the front porch of their house. She then directed me to take photos of the maize storehouse, the outhouse, and the cooking shed.

After her home, Chifundo said that she wanted to show me a special spot. We crossed a narrow stream and climbed a small hill to get a panoramic view of the maize fields, bright green from a good rainy season and dotted with trees, surrounded by the mountains in the distance. She spoke eagerly about the natural beauty of Malawi as she suggested that I take photos of the fields, the mountains, and the stream.

We climbed back down the hill and across the stream, and her focus shifted again. She pointed out smoke rising in the fields and told me that people were making charcoal illegally from poached lumber. Chifundo then took me to a local beer brewer, which was unusually empty that day, and talked about the problem of alcoholism in the villages.

In her memoir, *Unbowed*, Kenyan environmental activist Wangari Maathai describes learning as a child both the indigenous and the colonial names for the various spaces and

places around her. She observes, “This created a schism in many Africans’ minds and we are still wrestling with the realities of living in this dual world” (6). As Escobar, Ferguson, and others have argued, the postcolonial development apparatus has exacerbated this schism by imposing its own discourses on Africans, resulting in what Ferguson identifies as the “twin fears” of not being developed enough and not being authentically African enough.

The schism that Maathai observes was evident in Chifundo’s photo tour and in the interviews and focus groups I conducted with Malawians: Malawi is poor but peaceful, beautiful but backwards, welcoming but rife with corruption and jealousy. Earlier I described how the friction between external and internal discourses has resulted in this schism—or moral panic—in Malawians’ subjectivity. Here I will examine Malawians’ construct of the “village” as an example of how they enact their subjectivity—and in particular their moral panic—through spaces and places.

The “Real” Malawi

Throughout my research, I was constantly told by Malawians that if I wanted to see the real Malawi, I had to go to the village. On one level, this is a very literal statement: the vast majority—approximately 80 percent—of Malawians live in rural areas. Moreover, the village is the center of political life in Malawi, with village heads and chiefs often wielding considerable power both locally and within national parties. When I asked Malawians in the villages, “Who is responsible for development?,” they most often answered “the chief.” Beyond the more concrete demographic and political roles of the

village, however, the "village" is also an imagined moral geography, rooted in Malawians' subjectivities.

Regarding the importance of the village to Malawians, Harri Englund (2002) notes: "Mudzi translates not only as 'village' but also as 'home,' the ultimate 'our place' (kwathu), an idiom imbued with affection and moral sentiment" (137). In his research on internal rural-to-urban migration, Englund found that the vast majority of Malawians who migrate to the city do so not to escape the village but to seek opportunities to improve conditions back in their home villages, with many willing to accept a lower standard of living in towns or cities in order to focus their resources on the village. These migrants maintain close ties to the village, by cultivating gardens or building homes, and see their stay in towns and cities as temporary, even if their ultimate goal—to return to the village—is only realized after death.

Sharing an experience similar to my own, Ulrika Ribohn (2002) was repeatedly told that the village was the real Malawi. In seeking to understand this assertion, Ribohn describes a strong affective tie to the village:

> "Culture" is interpreted as synonymous with rural community life. . . . The village is where a person works, lives and has relatives and resources. The village is also a place where people have rights to land and can get help from neighbours and relatives. Informants described the village as a place where they shared ideas and knowledge and understood each other. To be part of a community is essential to one's identity, respect and security. (171)

Ribohn's analysis of the tensions between Malawian ideas of tradition and international human rights discourse, however, suggests that Malawians construct their ideas of tradition, culture, and the village not just in terms of what they imagine to be the most authentically Malawian, but also against what they imagine as Western.

These constructs have their historical roots in the political ideology of former president Hastings Banda. While attending college and medical school in the United States and England, Banda was struck by what he saw as a permissive, immoral Western culture—and by the hypocrisy of missionaries and colonial authorities enforcing moral laws in Africa that were not equally enforced in the West. In 1962, while a minister in Nyasaland's transitional government, Banda declared, "It was not only politically that we were enslaved, colonised. We were also enslaved and colonised culturally" (*Malawi News*, December 7, 1962; quoted in Forster 1994). Although Banda did not share the pan-Africanist ideals of many of his contemporaries, he sought to promote traditional African culture as equal to—and perhaps even morally superior to—Western culture. Furthermore, he saw establishing a national culture as essential to overcoming ethnic and tribal divisions in building an independent nation. Reclaiming an "authentic" Malawian culture thus became a key plank in Banda's political platform.

In promoting a Malawian national identity, Banda emphasized the role of the villages in preserving traditional culture and creating a moral community. He often compared the "ordinary villager" favorably against the educated elite, and although establishing the University of Malawi had been one of Banda's top priorities after independence, he saw its educational role as secondary and subservient to that of the village in instilling youth with the proper knowledge and values.

While I was a volunteer in 2003, I was told that Banda had taught Malawians that the three most developed nations in the world were the United States, England, and Malawi. Although Malawi was never entirely cut off from the Western world, Banda exercised

strict control over the flow of information inside the country. Anyone who threatened to disrupt that control—whether Western or Malawian—was jailed or expelled from the country. Twice during Banda's reign, the Peace Corps was ejected from Malawi because Banda feared that the volunteers were spreading both Western values and anti-regime propaganda. When they were allowed in the country, Peace Corps volunteers and other aid agency staff were closely monitored by members of the youth wing of Banda's political party, the Malawi Congress Party.

By the time I first arrived in Malawi, Banda had been out of power for almost a decade—replaced by Bakili Muluzi in a democratic election—and information was flowing more freely, if still slowed by the lack of telecommunications infrastructure. The international development community had flooded in, bringing not only projects and people to Malawi, but also its own ideology. Thus, Malawians learned that they were among the least developed nations in the world.

Yet even as this new ideology took hold, Banda's constructs of tradition, morality, and place, which were deeply inculcated in two generations, continued to influence Malawians' perceptions of themselves and others.[59] The friction has resulted in a moral panic—a struggle to define what it means to be both Malawian and developed. I suggest that Malawians' imagination of—and insistence on—the village as the "real" Malawi is an expression of this moral panic.

My photo tour with Chifundo is illustrative of this imagination of the village as a moral geography. Chifundo tacked between showing me the "best" of Malawi—welcoming me to her home, sharing her strong ties to family and community, showing me the beauty of the natural environment—and the "worst"—a broken brick wall,

alcoholism, environmental degradation. She began her tour by directing my attention to things that she thought were different than—and inferior to—the West, emphasizing Malawi's lack of comparative development. Despite these deficits, Chifundo felt a strong affective tie to the village, reflecting Englund's and Ribohn's findings. Chifundo wanted to share with me her home and her family. On previous research trips into the village, she had spoken with pride and affection about her family and pointed out her family's fields, and she later invited me to her home for a meal. She was also careful to ensure that I conformed to local traditions and norms, such as getting permission from the village headman (or headwoman) before conducting interviews.

Her affective ties extended to the land, and like many other Malawians with whom I spoke, she was eager to show off Malawi's natural features. Although I do not want to suggest that Malawians prefer or romanticize the natural over the developed, I did find that many Malawians seemed to derive great satisfaction and pride from their intimate knowledge of the land. For example, my various guides and informants almost always suggested that we take the "shortcut" when walking from place to place; although these shortcuts often seemed no more efficient than the main roads, they invariably were narrow, rocky, meandering paths that required an insider's knowledge of the geography and an adeptness for traversing it. Often as we walked along the shortcuts, my guides would gently tease me about my lack of agility or share stories of other azungu who struggled on the paths. In much the same way that the volunteers' claimed insider knowledge as a way to assert identity and status, I would suggest that in these excursions, the Malawians were seeking to establish their status with me and their authority over

local knowledge. They, perhaps, were also implicitly reminding me of our reciprocal relationship by noting my inability to navigate the local terrain without them.

Chifundo's affective ties to family, land, and tradition, however, were tempered by an awareness of Malawi's many social and economic problems, with the village seemingly at the epicenter of those as well. The village was often imagined as stuck in outdated traditions, backwards, and ignorant, leading to such social problems as child defilement, spousal abuse, and alcoholism. Chifundo, in introducing me to villagers who made charcoal or brewed beer, suggested not only that these people were engaging in survival behaviors, but also that they were acting out of ignorance or stuck in traditional ways. Malawians who had left their home villages and become successful sometimes felt uncomfortable—or even afraid—when returning to the village because they thought they would be subject to jealousy, gossip, and possibly even witchcraft.

As Chifundo's photo tour demonstrates, for many Malawians, the realness of the village was often imagined as counterposed to the West: the village was the "real" Malawi because it was the most unlike their view of the West. Many, if not most, Malawians seemed to have internalized the same external discourse of place that the Western volunteers brought with them: Africa is poor, sick, corrupt, and lacking, whereas the West is rich, full, and developed.[60] Yet, Malawians hadn't internalized the external discourse uncritically, and their comparisons with the West were not always construed as a critique of Malawi. The village was not just "not West" but also not Westernized. It was imagined as uncorrupted by corrosive Western culture. The village was the center of family, community, and tradition. As noted, middle- and upper-class Malawians who lived in larger towns and cities still sought to retain their ties to their home villages by

supporting their families in the villages, cultivating land, and building homes, with the intention to someday return to the village. The village was central to their self-identities and subjectivities, both positive and negative, and many Malawians could not imagine themselves permanently apart from the village. As Englund (2002) found, however, an increasing number of Malawians are apart from the village, requiring them to negotiate and navigate other spaces and places.

The Known World

One Wednesday at lunchtime, I sat at an outside table at Kip's, a fast-food restaurant in downtown Blantyre that was popular with office workers from the surrounding buildings. Although on that day there were few patrons and plenty of empty tables both inside and outside, a Malawian man in his mid-to-late twenties asked if he could share my table. We exchanged the usual greetings. I remarked on how few people were eating at Kip's that day; he explained that most people came at the beginning or end of the week, after they had been paid.[61] He told me that he worked in marketing, and while we were there, he took out a leather portfolio and made several phone calls. In each phone conversation, he mentioned that he was at Kip's and could be found there. Later that evening, as I wrote my notes from the day, I realized that he hadn't ordered any food—not even a drink.

My attention to how individuals used space and place really began with this incident and my reflection on it. Previously, I had considered the role of discourses of place—Africa and the West, rural and urban—in the political economy of development and in shaping subjectivities, but this brief encounter made clear to me that individuals—whether

Western volunteers or Malawian community members—do not merely absorb discourses of place but also actively construct and use spaces and places to shape or assert their identities, manage relationships, and pursue goals.

The village was one important space for claiming a particular identity. As Ribohn found, Malawians not only saw the village as the "real" Malawi but also identified those who lived in the village as "real" Malawians. Like the volunteers, however, Malawians used various places and spaces to construct shifting, contingent identities. In the above example, my lunch companion was using an urban, public space—a restaurant—but not for its intended purpose; rather, he was using the semiotics of the space to construct and assert his identity as a successful urban professional. On another occasion, a Malawian acquaintance in urban Lilongwe took me to an Italian cafe in an upscale shopping center. As she ate gelato, she noted that she and her friends came to this cafe when they wanted to "be Western."

Malawians used places and spaces not only to construct their own identities but also to identify the Other. In interviews with Malawians in the villages, they spoke very differently about the azungu they encountered in urban areas compared to those whom they knew in the village. Although most of the Malawians I spoke with had encountered Westerners in the cities or towns, they often said that they did not speak with them or only interacted with them as workers. By contrast, they described "knowing" the azungu who came into the villages. Tadala, a young mother who lived in one of the villages near Blantyre, said, "At first we were afraid about azungu because we thought that we were different . . . But when they came and stayed near us we realized that they are our relatives. And we were staying with them as relatives." Peter, who worked at the

volunteer project site in Nsatukuka, said, “When they were coming here, we know each other deeply because we were working together.”

This idea of “knowing” was linked to defining Westerners—and specifically Western volunteers—as “good” or “bad” based on their physical location in Malawi.[62] In Lakeshore Town, Amos recalled a “good” volunteer who had stayed in the village and gotten to know real Malawian life. According to Amos, however, few volunteers live in the village: “Most of them, they live with their friends. Like from back home, or different country, but same color. Mzungu. And for those azungu, it’s difficult for them to know of life in the village.” Focus group participants similarly asserted that “good” volunteers went to the village. One participant summed up the general sentiment: “When volunteers come . . . they need to go in the village. That is how he or she can get more information about how people are staying.” Volunteers who stayed in the cities and towns—particularly those in resort areas such as Lakeshore Town—were seen at best as not useful and at worst as corrupt, using Malawians for their own profit.

Also like the volunteers, Malawian community members constructed mental maps of places and spaces, designating them as good or bad, authentic or azungu, according to a set of rules that aligned with their ability to manage relationships and pursue goals. Thus, although the village was clearly important to Malawians’ self-identity, I would argue that Malawians’ insistence that volunteers needed to go the village to see the “real” Malawi was less about ensuring the authenticity of the volunteers’ experience than about establishing a field of play in which community members could manage their relationships with the volunteers and pursue their goal of establishing one-on-one

reciprocal relationships of care. As just discussed, Malawians felt that they could "know" the volunteers better—and be "known" by them—in the village more than in urban areas. In the village, there were fewer perceived barriers and gatekeepers, therefore enabling Malawian community members, like the volunteers, to engage in the "fantasy of immediation." In the village, Malawians could imagine a less mediated encounter between themselves and the volunteers in which they would establish one-on-one relationships, rather than engaging with the volunteers through such intermediaries as program coordinators, lodge owners, or other azungu.

Within the village, the home was an important space for creating relationships with the volunteers. Maureen, a teacher in Lakeshore Town, insisted that volunteers should visit Malawians in their homes in order to learn about their lives—and that the volunteers should extend reciprocal invitations into their homes. Similarly, in Nsatukuka, Patience described the volunteers who came to her home as her "real friends." As both a volunteer and a researcher, I was frequently invited into people's homes to share a meal and get to know their lives. These visits often ended with my Malawians hosts effusively expressing their gratitude and making declarations of our enduring relationship, such as that I was now a part of their family and I should not forget them.

Outside of the village, whether a space was good or bad seemed to largely depend on whether the space inhibited—or even prohibited—individuals' ability to pursue their goals. Thus, in Lakeshore Town, backpacker lodges that did not allow curio sellers to hawk their wares on the premises were "azungu" and their proprietors suspected of corruption and theft, while lodges that were more permissive were good and their proprietors praised.

Unlike the volunteers, however, Malawians were often more constricted in their ability to move between and use places and spaces. Although many Malawians had lengthy daily commutes between their homes in the village and their work in cities or towns, few Malawians traveled for leisure. Despite Malawi's small size—about the area of Pennsylvania—those who moved from their home villages were rarely able to return for visits. Malawians could go years—even decades—without seeing relatives who lived only a few hours drive away.

At the same time, Malawians were often constrained—by rules, social norms, or economics—from occupying the same spaces as the volunteers. An educator in Lakeshore Town spoke about a de facto "apartheid" created by such barriers as restaurant prices, which excluded many Malawians from spaces within their own cities and towns. Even where explicit barriers did not exist, implicit ones often acted to segregate Western volunteers from Malawian community members, particularly outside of the villages. For example, in Lakeshore Town there was a restaurant with a downstairs bar and an upstairs veranda. The local community generally took a favorable view of the proprietor—a white European woman—and at night the bar was often packed with a mix of Malawians and Westerners. The veranda, however, was almost exclusively occupied by Westerners, with the exception of Malawians who were romantically connected—through dating or marriage—to Westerners. The few times that I invited Malawian informants to meet me in the upstairs area, their demeanor reminded me of the excursion with my host brother: They seemed uncomfortable, nervous, unsure of how to situate themselves. By some rule, unspoken as far as I was aware, this space was not open to Malawians.

This is not to say that Malawians did not imprint their own subjectivities on places and spaces or exercise their agency to actively construct and use those spaces to pursue their own goals. Clearly, as described here, they did. In these places and spaces, however, that agency came into contact with the structures of power that will be discussed in the next chapter.

7. Conclusion

Poverty is big business. Global institutions, governments, nongovernmental organizations, research groups, and philanthropists have spent billions of dollars to find and implement possible solutions to poverty and its attendant conditions. What those solutions are, how the money will be spent, and who gets to spend it are the subjects of a continuous and contentious debate.

Recent shifts in development policy and practice, most prominently the United Nations' Millennium Project, have focused on private-sector interventions, the growth of small-scale NGOs, and volunteer-driven programs. International volunteering is part of an increasingly privatized, individualized model of development in which responsibility for resolving global inequalities is transferred from political institutions to private citizens. Thus, although individual volunteers act on a small scale, their encounters with local community members have high stakes.

In the Introduction, I proposed to examine encounters between Malawian community members and Western volunteers as a "serious game." In previous chapters, I have described some of the elements of that game: the subjectivities of the players; the historical, social, and cultural contexts that form the rules; the players' strategic use of money and moral geography in pursuing their goals. In this concluding chapter, I will argue for the seriousness of the game. I will locate international volunteering within the broader field of development and discuss the very real consequences of this "game" for the local host communities and for development at large.

Doing Development

The epitome of the current dominant development paradigm in practice is Jeffrey Sachs's Millennium Villages Project. Twelve clusters of villages were selected in ten African nations based on a convoluted algorithm that includes geographic diversity, state support, and likelihood for success. Each of the village clusters received large initial inputs of fertilizer and seeds (sponsored by Monsanto), as well as bed nets, vaccinations, school fees, and other basic social services. The inputs were then supposed to be gradually scaled back on a five-year plan toward self-sufficiency.[63] Each cluster was overseen by a partnership of Sachs's Earth Institute and an international NGO already based in the country (usually the United Nations Development Program). The clusters were managed by a village development committee. According to the Millennium Villages Web site, the initial village clusters were serving as a living laboratory to test Sachs's assertion that large-scale funding for advanced technology agricultural inputs; investments in basic health; investments in education; power, transport, and communication services; and safe drinking water and sanitation (what Sachs refers to as the "Big Five" development interventions, 2005: 233–234) can reduce or eliminate poverty in a short time span. Once the theory is proved successful, the intention is to scale up the model to national levels.

My own fieldwork in Malawi suggests that Sachs failed to account for the difference between "facts on paper" and "facts on the ground." The individuals in Malawi's village cluster whom I interviewed in 2008 were resisting the shifting balance of inputs required to move from external support to internal sufficiency, in part because the shift did not account for catastrophic events, such as the heavy rains that eroded the soil and severely reduced the most recent harvest. Moreover, rising oil prices in the

global market had nearly quadrupled the price of fertilizer from the previous year. Even if the villagers had sufficient harvests to sell some of their maize, they still would not be able to afford to purchase fertilizer to make up for reduced inputs.

Among the essential "facts on the ground" are local subjectivities. In addition to the environmental and financial hardships, the villagers were resisting the shifting balance of inputs because they suspected corruption in the village development committee. As per the five-year plan, the development committee had required villagers to contribute bags of maize to a collective store. According to the plan, the collective store would serve two purposes: some of the maize would be sold to pay for fertilizer and seed for the next year, and some would be kept to build up an emergency reserve that could assist community members during poor harvest years.

Based on my interviews with individuals in the village cluster and at the project office in Zomba, the committee appeared to be following the project guidelines. The villagers with whom I spoke, however, either were not aware of the five-year plan or did not understand its implementation. They were angry with the development committee for requiring an increased contribution of maize, despite a poor harvest year that left many Malawians in the southern region with not enough maize to meet even their basic subsistence needs, and for refusing to distribute the maize from the collective store that had been earmarked for sale as individual supplies dwindled. As I described in Chapter 5, Malawians' preconceptions of themselves as susceptible to corruption and their tendency to view Westerners as superior, when combined with a lack of transparency in externally imposed project design and implementation, can result in conflict within the community that derails any development efforts. In this case, rather than attributing the problems to

poor program design, community members accused the development committee of stealing their maize to sell for personal profit.

The influence of the Millennium Project and its discourse of development extends far beyond the village clusters. Through his partnerships with such "philanthrocapitalists" as Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, Sachs is influencing the allocation of billions of dollars in private funding for development (Bishop & Green 2008). Celebrity activists, such as pop idols Bono and Madonna, are spreading the gospel of Sachs to the general public through magazines, concerts, and merchandise.

I saw the pervasiveness of this paradigm during my fieldwork in Malawi. Like Sachs, both the community members and the volunteers located the cause and responsibility for "African" poverty in Africa, with Africans. Malawians attributed their poverty to traditional culture, jealousy, and corruption at the local and national level. Volunteers likewise saw traditional practices, corruption, and a lack of leadership and initiative as barriers to development. Both groups believed the solution was to implement Western technology, ideas, and practices at the local, "grassroots" level through small-scale community-based organizations and income-generating projects, with minimal government involvement—similar to the village cluster model. No one—either Malawian community members or Western volunteers—mentioned such international-level reforms as trade practices, debt policies, or human rights agreements. Instead, the Millennium Development Goals dominated political speeches, news coverage, and conversations on development. The Peace Corps was explicitly aligning its volunteer projects with the

Millennium Development Goals. A Peace Corps volunteer noted," Most of us are trying to implement strategies to achieve those goals."

Development in the Shadows

In the Introduction, I identified two shadowed areas that the anthropology of development has not yet adequately considered: informal development actors and negotiation. Throughout this dissertation, I have attempted to shine some light on the first shadowed area—informal development actors—by examining encounters between local community members and Western volunteers. In this last part, I will turn to the second shadowed area to explore these encounters as a mutually constructed, dialogic relationship, albeit one in which power differences play an important role.

A Negotiated Discourse

In the summer of 2008, I was eager to begin my research on international volunteers in Malawi. I had arranged with my research assistant, Patrick, to meet some voluntourists at a project site near Zomba. Patrick, however, insisted that first I needed to see the "real" Malawi. We took a short minibus ride out to Patrick's village. As we walked along the dusty road, Patrick asked if I had ever seen a "real" Malawian house, by which he meant one without a poured-concrete floor. Despite answering that, yes, I had seen such houses in Malawi, he directed me to a house along the road and asked the family who lived there if we could look inside. The small house—about 12 feet square—was made of hand-formed bricks. The main room was littered with dirty clothes, children's sandals, and a charcoal cook stove; David explained that the family slept on bamboo mats.

Blaming the Western volunteers for perpetuating a hegemonic Western discourse would be easy—but overly simplistic. Understanding encounters—at all levels—between Western "helpers" and Malawian community members requires discarding outmoded models of Western hegemony versus local resistance. Rather, as the ethnographic evidence throughout this dissertation makes clear, these encounters are a dialogic, dynamic process through which local community members and Western "helpers" pursue their goals, co-produce experiences, and make meaning of those experiences. The Western volunteers may bring preconceptions that Africa is poor, backwards, and failing and the West is abundant, modern, and successful, but the Malawian community members reinforce those ideas when they assert that the village is the "real" Malawi or give preferential treatment to azungu.

In community–volunteer encounters, each individual's ability to achieve his or her goal depends on the participation of others: the volunteers need Malawian community members to provide an "authentic" experience and reaffirm the volunteers' unique status among Westerners, while the Malawians need the volunteers to provide material support through ongoing relationships of care. Both the volunteers and community members engage in a series of negotiations with each other in order to pursue their goals. If we return to the story of the widows group at the beginning of Chapter 4, we can see those negotiations in action. Christopher was seeking an authentic experience in which he was not "just a tourist." He was wary of Malawians, such as the curio sellers, who only wanted to get money from him, and he was concerned with not contributing to a dependency syndrome. Yet, he also seemed to understand implicitly that donating money to local projects such as the widows group was the price of admission for the experience

he sought. The women in the group, in turn, paid deference to Christopher and me and allowed themselves to be subjected to our regulatory devices in order to secure the money they needed and in the hopes of establishing an ongoing relationship of care. Often these negotiations are microdecisions, made in every day encounters, yet the accumulation of these small-scale negotiations has very real effects on large-scale development.

Even as we consider community–volunteer encounters as a dialogic process, however, we have to acknowledge that the negotiations of that encounter do not take place on an even playing field. Encounters between local community members and Western volunteers both shape and are shaped by structures of power.

Power Play

"Perhaps you can teach us a song." Two caretakers (*amayi*, or mothers) and about two dozen children looked at me expectantly. I had come to the orphan care center to do research, but whether through miscommunication or wishful thinking, the staff thought that I was there to volunteer. Even after I made my purpose clear, they asked me if I could teach them some new songs or games to play with the children. Not wanting to appear ungrateful after interviewing the staff for my research, I stood in front of the children in the concrete hall and sang the only two kids' songs I knew: "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes" and "The Wheels on the Bus." The caretakers and children knew the former, but they hadn't heard the latter before, and the amayi asked me to write down the words so they could remember it.

The center was about a thirty-minute minibus ride from downtown Blantyre and set back about two miles from the paved road. Behind a rickety gate with no guard, it consisted of three single-story concrete buildings, attached in a C-shape, painted in faded,

chipped blue. The small, weed-filled yard had three or four pieces of poorly built, rusting play equipment. Inside the main hall, nursery school children sat on small metal chairs or on the bare concrete floor, while the amayi led them in songs and games. The center had at one time offered preschool day care, afterschool programs and material support (such as food, clothes, and school supplies) for the primary and secondary school students, and school fees for secondary school students. While I was there, they had cut back the programs to only providing day care.

The center had hosted volunteers through a British for-profit travel agency that specialized in gap-year experiences. Although the agency continued to place students at other sites in Malawi, they had stopped working with this center. According to my research assistant, the volunteers had complained to the agency that the center's staff members had been begging from them. One of the center's staff members, Patrick, told me that the volunteers simply misunderstood when staff members had tried to share the conditions of their lives as part of cultural exchange with the volunteers.

As part of the volunteer placement program, the agency had provided funding for the center. When it stopped sending volunteers, it also cut off that much-needed funding. In addition to eliminating most of their programs and services, the center staff were receiving only half-time pay for full-time work.

There are a multitude of projects like the orphan care center, abandoned or laying fallow after the volunteers leave. The community-based organization in Lakeshore Town where I spent much of my time was undergoing a similar contraction. The organization had been established by two British volunteers; one of those volunteers continued to fund the

organization through an NGO based in England.[64] When I arrived, the British NGO was funding an office that included a small lending library and a computer with Internet access; two informal "shelter" schools for primary-school children, with a hot lunch provided for the children; a youth soccer team; a community garden project; material support for a school for the blind; and salaries for two teachers and three office workers. During my time there, the sponsoring NGO decided to change its funding model to focus on specific, short-term projects, rather than providing ongoing support for the organization. All of the salaries were eliminated, the group was facing eviction from its office space, both shelter schools were in danger of being shutdown, and the rest of the projects were on hold. Instead, the sponsoring NGO decided to fund an art contest for local school children.

Volunteers wield a great deal of power, whether intentionally exercised or not. What projects get funded, where those projects are located, and who benefits from them are often largely determined by volunteers. A local volunteer coordinator, for example, noted that volunteers usually prefer to work on a project that they can see from start to finish. As a result, short-term, low-skill projects such as painting buildings or digging a well tend to get prioritized over longer-term or skill-intensive needs, such as training programs. Although the short-term projects may address a need, they don't necessarily reflect the community's priorities. Communities may get some nominal voice in what projects are undertaken, but they rarely get any say about which volunteers they will host, despite the considerable investment that many communities have to make in order to "qualify" for volunteers (such as providing "adequate" housing or making the initial material investment in a project). Staff members at several organizations that I visited

expressed disappointment—and some anger—because the volunteers they received lacked relevant skills or experience for the positions to which the volunteers were assigned. Many volunteer organizations and volunteers seem to believe that any Western help is better than the "nothing" in Malawi, and volunteer desires for cultural exchange and learning experiences are often prioritized over local needs for knowledge and skills. And, as in the example above, conflicts between the community and volunteers are frequently resolved by closing the volunteer project. This power difference can create a chilling effect on the community. In Kapiri, I was told that the village chief had reprimanded a community member who complained about her child's picture being used in fundraising materials without her permission; the chief was afraid that the group for which the materials had been made would be upset and pull its support from the projects in Kapiri.

The volunteers' power extends through time and space as they shape the narrative of their experiences in Malawi.[65] Through social media, blogs, books, print and broadcast media, and public presentations, the volunteers disseminate their ideas of themselves, Malawians, development, and morality—with little-to-no opportunity for Malawian community members to respond to these representations or present counternarratives. Thus, the volunteers' narratives become the official, authoritative narrative through which "facts" about volunteering, Malawi/Africa, and development are constructed (see Latour 1987).

“Better to light a candle than curse the darkness.”

In my research and analysis, I have sought to illuminate the effects of individual subjectivities, intentions, and strategies on the practice of development through a critical analysis of international volunteering. Much still remains in the shadows, though. Given the paucity of critical literature on international volunteering, additional research is needed to confirm—or perhaps even challenge—my findings here. Moreover, the encounter model that I have used for my research and analysis could be usefully applied at various levels of the development apparatus—from small-scale NGOs through large-scale, multinational projects—to understand better how individuals in the field actually “do” development. My hope is that this dissertation will serve as a spark to ignite a conversation that questions traditional analytical models, broadens the field of development studies to include both formal and informal sectors, and considers development as a dynamic, embodied practice undertaken by complex, subjective, and diverse individuals.

Appendix: Focus Group Questionnaire

1. How would you describe Malawi to people who don't know your country?
2. How would you describe Malawian people?
3. What does the word "development" mean to you?
4. Is Malawi developed?
5. What are the barriers to development in Malawi?
6. What is most needed in order for Malawi to develop?
7. Do you think that your government does a good job of helping Malawi to develop? Why or why not?
8. Do you think Malawi will ever be a developed country?
9. Do you think that jealousy is a problem in Malawi?
10. What causes jealousy?
11. Have you been a victim of jealousy? Can you describe your experience?
12. Do you think that corruption is a problem in Malawi
13. What causes corruption?
14. Do you think that Western nations have corruption?
15. Do you think Malawians are more corrupt than Westerners, less corrupt, or as corrupt?
16. How would you describe Western countries?
17. How would you describe people who come from Western countries?
18. Where do you get your ideas about the West and Western people?
19. What does it mean to care for someone?
20. Who do you care for?

Notes

[1] I defined *voluntourism* as the practice of traveling outside of one's community for less than three months to perform unpaid work, as an alternative to or in conjunction with traditional leisure tourism.
[2] Because Blantyre is easily identifiable—Malawi only had two cities at the time—I have used its name here. All other locations have been given pseudonyms.
[3] One site that I approached for a long-term field site denied my request because the director was concerned that there were already sufficient volunteers and did not want the project to become an "azungu" place. See Chapter 6 for more discussion on how spaces were categorized.
[4] In Malawi, "village" refers to an administrative unit. Cities, towns, and periurban areas—as well as rural areas—are divided into villages that are overseen by a headman or headwoman. See Chapter 6 for a discussion of the role of the village in Malawi.
[5] I returned to Blantyre for a couple of weeks toward the end of my research trip to conduct focus groups and follow-up interviews, and to bid farewell to my friends and colleagues there.
[6] Chichewa is the primary local language in the southern region, whereas Chitonga and Chitimbuka are the primary languages in the northern region. Chichewa, however, is the national language and generally understood throughout Malawi.
[7] Although my sample was about evenly split by gender, there was a perception among Malawians that the majority of volunteers are women.
[8] Here I am using the more generic term "Westerner" because I am drawing on interviews and conversations both with individuals who self-identified as volunteers and with those who did not see themselves as volunteers.
[9] See also the section on Western volunteers' perceptions of themselves in Chapter 4.
[10] Paul Theroux, who was a Peace Corps volunteer in Malawi, is perhaps the most famous returned-volunteer author, although these narratives are abundant.
[11] Returned volunteers, both short- and long-term, are also using these sites to fund books, documentaries, and other projects based on their volunteer experiences.
[12] See the section on Malawians' perceptions of Westerners in Chapter 4.
[13] In interviews, several Malawians expressed concerns about my own intentions and whether I would use the information I was gathering to set up a volunteer program for my own profit.
[14] This was more common in Lakeshore Town, which had a larger number of former volunteers return as permanent or semi-permanent residents. Very few former volunteers returned to work in the villages around Blantyre.
[15] Some individuals did not want to be included in my research, and I have respected their wishes.
[16] I am grateful to the preliminary members of my committee for pointing out my preconceptions and prejudices and for challenging me to question my own subjectivity.
[17] I have placed "helping" and "helper" in quotation marks to signal that these terms are socially constructed and subjective. For readability, I have only signaled these words on their first use, but the reader should assume that the caveat carries throughout.
[18] Bauer and Taylor (2005) define southern Africa as comprising Malawi, Zambia, Botswana, Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa.
[19] Like most contemporary African nation-states, the geopolitical space known as Malawi has undergone several name changes in its history. For the sake of clarity, I will use "Malawi" throughout this chapter.
[20] Although Portuguese missionaries often accompanied trading expeditions, conducted surveys of Southern Africa, and established missions in some parts of Africa, the histories of Malawi do not indicate that any serious attempt was made to convert or "save" the native populations of Malawi. Historians agree that the Scottish missionaries were the first to settle in the area for the purpose of Christianizing and civilizing the native populations (see, for example, Pachai 1973; Pike 1968).
[21] The phrase "white man's burden" is attributed to Rudyard Kipling's poem, "The White Man's Burden," which originally appeared in *McClure's* magazine in February 1899. Although the poem addressed the role of the United States in the Philippines, its central theme—casting Western imperialism as a noble pursuit—applies equally to Western attitudes toward Africa at the time, and its title has been used by scholars as a shorthand for Western "development" efforts generally (see, for example, William Easterly's book *The White Man's Burden*.)

[22] Vaughn, however, notes that although these African subjectivities took hold in the Western imagination, they rarely had much effect on the health practices of Africans due to the limited presence of Westerners on the ground.
[23] The former mission site, re-established as a coffee plantation, was again the center of political strife when proto-nationalist John Chilembwe attacked the site and killed three Western managers, including Livingstone's grandson (White 1987).
[24] Although the majority of black missionaries were sent to West Africa, a small number did settle in South Africa, Mozambique, and Southern Rhodesia (Killingray 2003).
[25] For a more thorough history of development, see Edelman and Haugerud (2005), Cooper and Packard (1997), and Cooper (2002).
[26] See Chapter 6 for a discussion of former president Banda's nation-building policies in Malawi.
[27] Jeffrey Sachs has served as special advisor on the Millennium Development Goals to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and his successor Ban Ki-Moon. He is the director of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, co-founder and chief strategist of the Millennium Promise Alliance, and director of the Millennium Villages Project, and he headed the advisory board that developed the UN's action plan for implementing its Millennium Development Goals. Thus, although the Millennium Development Goals and Millennium Project have been enacted under the auspices of the United Nations, it seems fair to identify Sachs as the lead architect.

The UN Millennium Project paradigm isn't the only development paradigm currently in circulation, although it is by far the most well entrenched. Others include Paul Collier's (2007) governance-based development (referred to by critics as "philanthropic imperialism"); Amartya Sen's (1997, 1999) rights-based development; Joseph Stiglitz's (2002, 2006) social democracy model of globalization; and William Easterly's (2006) localized development.
[28] Most published histories of Malawi that were available to me end their accounts with Malawi's transition to independence in the mid-1960s. Therefore, my review of the Western helper in the postcolonial era is necessarily broad. My attempts to use archival records to fill out this history were unsuccessful.
[29] The designation "NGO" lacks a clear definition or specific criteria. Most sources agree that an NGO is, at its most basic, a not-for-profit organization created in the private sector. In this chapter, I have taken a broad definition, based on organizations' own self-designations. For a discussion of "NGO" as a problematic term and the various categories of NGOs, see Barrow and Jennings (2001) and Tvedt (1998).
[30] Save the Children was formed even earlier—in 1919—as part of World War I relief efforts.
[31] Much like NGOs, the term "volunteer" lacks a clear definition. Some scholars refer to NGOs as "voluntary" organizations, suggesting that their staff members are "volunteers" (e.g., Hancock 1989). Other scholars distinguish between the "professional" staff of NGOs and "amateur" volunteers (e.g., Tvedt 1998). See Chapter 2 for my discussion of how local community members and volunteers define the term.
[32] Interview conducted with Dr. Wiseman Chirwa, professor of history at Chancellor College, University of Malawi, on June 18, 2008.
[33] For an overview of celebrity involvement in Africa, see http://motherjones.com/politics/2010/03/africa-celebrities-madonna-oprah-brangelina-george-clooney
[34] The extent of Madonna's actual contributions to Malawi is greatly contested, and her relations with the Malawian government were strained at the time of writing. See, for example, Mapondera and Smith (2013) and Harding (2013).
[35] All individuals have been given pseudonyms and identifying details have been generalized or altered as needed to preserve confidentiality.
[36] Fried dough, similar to beignets, sometimes called Kenyan donuts.
[37] Both groups claimed that the other had stolen the idea. Given that both groups were being sponsored and directed by a white Western volunteer, it's more likely that neither group directly "stole" from the other but rather that the volunteers were drawing from the same well of development ideas.
[38] During my first research trip in 2008, there were a series of violent attacks in South Africa against migrant workers, including Malawians, which contributed to Malawians' strongly negative view of South Africans.
[39] Although food shortages and hunger were prominent concerns for many Malawians—particularly those in the southern region—during my research trip in 2008, these issues were not raised in 2010–2011.
[40] Gonjetsani adani onse, Njala, nthenda, nsanje.

[41] Feeding stations provide free meals—phala (porridge made of maize flour and water) or nsima (a thicker form of phala)—for children in the villages. Most often funded by foreign charities (Mary's Meals was the most pervasive in Malawi), feeding stations are usually purpose-built concrete shelters with a small kitchen and a covered eating area, although some were based in abandoned buildings or houses.
[42] Volunteers are not overseen by any regulating agency, governmental or otherwise, and the Malawi immigration office does not have a visa category for "volunteers," so demographic information on the volunteers is largely based on observation.
[43] For their part, as noted in Methods, Westerners working in more "professional" positions—that is, those who had training and work experience relevant to their positions in Malawi, or who were working in office environments—often objected to being labeled as "volunteers," even if they were working for little or no remuneration.
[44] For a more detailed discussion of Africa and the discourse of place, see Chapter 6.
[45] For US volunteers at least, ideas about corruption and crime may have been reinforced by official rhetoric. During my security briefing at the US Embassy in August 2010, the regional security officer encouraged participants to share stories of when they had been the victim of a crime and warned us not to trust household staff members, even suggesting that we prevent them from becoming too friendly with each other because they might collude against us.
[46] Home invasions did happen, particularly in wealthy urban neighborhoods. Malawians themselves also contributed to this storytelling by warning Westerners not to go out at night. In one particularly memorable instance, one of the workers at a lodge where I was staying in Blantyre called to a guest who was walking out the gate after dark, "Please do not go out. It's not safe. You are white."
[47] *Mzungu* (pl. azungu) refers to foreigners, most specifically white people.
[48] Similarly, at a fashion show in Lilongwe, Malawian designers borrowed heavily from Western influences and the audience enthusiastically applauded women's pantsuits, but they were less receptive to such styles as miniskirts and baby-doll dresses, which were included only in the collections of non-Malawian designers. The Malawians at this show seemed eager to adopt Western influences, but willing to allow those influences to go only so far.
[49] My presence as a researcher also implies that I believed that I had something useful to contribute.
[50] Lit. Give me, give me.
[51] Increasingly, the money from the dances is used to pay for lavish, Western-style weddings.
[52] Accusations of corrupt Westerners tended to be more common in Lakeshore Town, where the community members encountered Westerners in a greater variety roles—volunteer, tourist, business owner, and so forth—and where Westerners' identities were more fluid. For example, several of the business owners had originally come to Lakeshore Town as volunteers and then established their businesses. In the villages outside of Blantyre, where community members generally only encountered Westerners in "helper" roles (volunteers, NGO staff), accusations of corruption tended to be more focused inward, on other community members.
[53] See also the discussion of mental maps in Chapter 6.
[54] I heard from some community members that the language barrier was the reason that the children weren't attending the program. The girls were not fluent in English and spoke with a heavy accent. The children couldn't understand the girls and therefore didn't see value in attending the program.
[55] I learned that day that fares differed based on whether you got on the minibus inside the "stand" (a large, muddy field) or on the street just outside the stand.
[56] *Philanthrocapitalism* refers to the practice of applying capitalist market practices to philanthropic projects. See Bishop and Green 2008.
[57] A third comparable lodge was also known as "authentic" but because it gave discounts to volunteers. There were also a number of much less-expensive, and more basic, guest houses, but Westerners rarely stayed in those.
[58] I use the more generic "Africa" here intentionally because for most of the volunteers, the specific country was incidental. They wanted to see Africa, or often even more generally, the developing world. Many of the long-term volunteers were assigned to Malawi; among the short-term volunteers, they chose Malawi because an organized trip coincided with their schedules or because they had a connection from back home with a particular program.
[59] Banda's legacy not only continued to influence Malawians' subjectivities, but it was undergoing a renaissance in which many Malawians expressed a nostalgia for Banda's regime.

[60] When I tried to explain that poverty, homelessness, and hunger exist in the West—and that some people in the United States live in conditions not much different than the village—Malawians were generally surprised and skeptical.
[61] Similarly, weddings are often held at the beginning or end of the month because guests will have been recently paid and have money for the perekani-perekani dance.
[62] As a group, Westerners were considered relatively "good," as compared to other non-Malawians, such as Indians and the Chinese. One criticism of Indians was that they lived in segregated communities. None of the Malawians with whom I spoke, however, seemed to connect the Indians' living arrangements with Banda's strict regulations on where Indians could live and work or with the continued tensions between Indians and Malawians. Rather, most Malawians seemed to believe that Indians chose to live apart from the community.
[63] As of 2014, the timeline had been extended to ten years and none of the villages had reached self-sufficiency.
[64] The other founding volunteer split from the organization to start her own community development program.
[65] I explored this topic in more depth in "We're From the West, and We're Here to Help: Discourse in Volunteer Narratives," a paper presented at the Central States Anthropology Society Annual Conference, Urbana-Champaign, IL, April 2, 2009.

References

Abu-Lughod, L. (1991). Writing against Culture. In R. Fox (Ed.), *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present* (pp. 137–162). Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.

Agh, A. (1984). *National Development in the Third World*. Budapest, Hungary: Institute for World Economy, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Asad, T. (1973a). Introduction. In T. Asad (Ed.), *Anthropology & the Colonial Encounter* (pp. 9–20). London: Ithaca Press.

Asad. T. (1973b). Two European Images of Non-European Rule. In T. Asad (Ed.), *Anthropology & the Colonial Encounter* (pp. 103–120). London: Ithaca Press.

Barrow, O., & Jennings, M. (2001). *The Charitable Impulse: NGOs and Development in East and North-East Africa*. Bloomfield, CT: James Currey.

Bates, R. (1983). Modernization, Ethnic Competition, and the Rationality of Politics of Contemporary Africa. In D. Rothchild and V. Olorunsola (Eds.), *State versus Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas* (pp. 152–171). Boulder, CO: Westview.

Bates, R. (2008). *When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late-Century Africa.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bauer, G., & Taylor, S. D. (2005). *Politics in Southern Africa: State & Society in Transition*. Boulder: CO: Lynne Rienner Publications.

Beigbeder, Y. (1991). *The Role and Status of International Humanitarian Volunteers and Organizations: The Right and Duty to Humanitarian Assistance*. Dordrecht: M. Nijhoff.

Benjamin, L. (1992). Southern Africa: The Moment of Truth. In L. Benjamin & C. Gregory (Eds.), *Southern Africa at the Crossroads: Prospects for Stability and Development in the 1990s*. Rivonia: Justified Press.

Biersteker, T. J. (1993). Evolving Perspectives on International Political Economy: Twentieth-Century Contexts and Discontinuities. *International Political Science Review / Revue internationale de science politique*, *14*(1), 7–33.

Binns, T., & Nel, E. (2002). Tourism as a Local Development Strategy in South Africa. *The Geographical Journal*, *168*(3), 235–247.

Bishop, M., & Green, M. (2008). *Philanthrocapitalism: How the Rich Can Save the Worl*d. New York: Bloomsbury Press.

Boone, C. (2003). *Political Topographies of the African State.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bornstein, E. (2002). Developing Faith: Theologies of Economic Development in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, *32*(1), 4–31.

Bornstein, E. (2005). *The Spirit of Development: Protestant NGOs, Morality, and Economics in Zimbabwe*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Boustany, N. (2007, June 10). Hollywood Stars Find an Audience for Social Causes. *The Washington Post.*

Boyer, N. A. (1966). Volunteers in the Field: Great Expectations. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *365*, 55–62.

Brada, B. (2011). Botswana as a Living Experiment. PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago.

Brass, P. R. (1991). *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*. New Dehli: Sage.

Brokensha, D. W. (1965). Peace Corps Training for Africa. *African Studies Bulletin, 8*(2), 24–38.

Brown, E. (1999). The Scope of Volunteer Activity and Public Service. *Law and Contemporary Problems, 62*(4), 17–42.

Brown, R. (1973). Anthropology and Colonial Rule: Godfrey Wilson and the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, Northern Rhodesia. In T. Asad (Ed.), *Anthropology & the Colonial Encounter* (pp. 173–198). London: Ithaca.

Brown, S. A. (2005). Voluntourism—Traveling with a Purpose: Understanding the Motives and Benefits. Master's thesis. Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana.

Callaghy, T. M. (1987). Between Scylla and Charybdis: The Foreign Economic Relations of Sub-Saharan African States. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *489*, 148–163.

Chabal, P., & Daloz, J. (1999). *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Cheney, K. E. (2007). *Pillars of the Nation: Child Citizens and Ugandan National Development*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Comaroff, J. L. (1997). Images of Empire, Contests of Conscience: Models of Colonial Domination in South Africa. In F. Cooper and A. L. Stoler (Eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (pp. 163–197). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Comaroff, J., & Comaroff, J. L. (1991). *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume I*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Comaroff, J. L., & Comaroff, J. (1997). *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume II: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cooper, A. F. (2007). Beyond Hollywood and the Boardroom: Celebrity Diplomacy. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, *8*(2), 125.

Cooper, F. (2002). *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cooper, F. & Packard, R. M. (1997). *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Cooper, F., & Packard, R. M. (2005). The History and Politics of Development Knowledge. In *The Anthropology of Development and Globalization* (pp. 126–139). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Cousins, J. A., Evans, J., & Sadler, J. P. (2009). "I've Paid to Observe Lions, Not Map Roads!" An Emotional Journey with Conservation Volunteers in South Africa. *Geoforum*, *40*, 1069–1080.

Cowell, A. (2005, June 30). The Politics of Aid and Celebrities' Mass Activism. *The International Herald Tribune*.

Cresswell, T. (1996). *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Czeglédy, A. P. (2008). A New Christianity for a New South Africa: Charismatic Christians and the Post-Apartheid Order. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, *38*(3), 284–311.

Davis, D. B. (2009, December 17). The Universal Attractions of Slavery. *The New York Review of Books.*

Deutchman, A. (1966). Volunteers in the Field: Teaching. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *365*, 72–82.

DeVries, H. (2008, April 9). Africa Top Destination for Global Voluntourism. UC San Diego, Center for Global Volunteer Service.

Easterly, W. (2006). *The White Man's Burden*. New York: Penguin.

Edelman, M., & Haugerud, A. (2005). Introduction. In *The Anthropology of Development and Globalization*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Englund, H. (2002). Ethnography after Globalism: Migration and Emplacement in Malawi. *American Ethnologist*, *29*(2), 261–286.

Englund, H. (2006). *Prisoners of Freedom: Human Rights and the African Poor*. Berkeley:

University of California Press.

Escobar, A. (1995). *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Farmer, P. (2005). *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ferguson, J. (1994). *The Anti-Politics Machine: "development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Ferguson, J. (1997). Anthropology and Its Evil Twin: "Development" in the Constitution of a Discipline. In F. Cooper and R. Packard (Eds.), *International Development and the Social Sciences* (pp. 150–175). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ferguson, J. (2006). *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Fields, K. E. (1982). Christian Missionaries as Anticolonial Militants. *Theory and Society*, *11*(1), 95–108.

Fisher, W. F. (1997). Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *26*, 439–464.

Forster, P. G. (1986). Missionaries and Anthropology: The Case of the Scots of Northern Malawi. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 16(2), 101–120.

Forster, P. G. (1994). Culture, Nationalism, and the Invention of Tradition in Malawi. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, *32*(3), 477–497. doi:10.2307/161985

Geertz, C. ([1973] 2000). Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture. In C. Geertz, The *Interpretation of Cultures* (pp. 3–30). New York: Basic Books.

Gledhill, J. (2005). Disappearing the Poor? A Critique of the New Wisdoms of Social Democracy in an Age of Globalization. In *The Anthropology of Development and Globalization* (pp. 382–390). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. New York: International Publishers.

Gray, B. K. (1908). *Philanthropy and the State*. London: P.S. King & Son.

Grillo, R. D., & Stirrat, R. L. (Eds.). (1997). *Discourses of Development: Anthropological Perspectives*. Oxford: Berg.

Guibernau, M. (1996). *Nationalisms: The Nation-State and Nationalism in the Twentieth*

Century. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Habyarimana, J., Humphreys, M., Posner, D., & Weinstein, J. (2007). Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision? *American Political Science Review, 101*(4), 709–725.

Hancock, G. (1989). *Lords of Poverty: The Power, Prestige, and Corruption of the International Aid Business*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press.

Hanson, M., & Hentz, J. J. (1999). Neocolonialism and Neoliberalism in South Africa and Zambia. *Political Science Quarterly*, *114*(3), 479–502.

Harding, A. (2013, April 12). Madonna, Malawi and the Infamous Attack. *BBC*.

Hasu, P. (2006). World Bank & Heavenly Bank in Poverty & Prosperity: The Case of Tanzanian Faith Gospel. *Review of African Political Economy*, 33(110), 679–692.

Hawk, B. G. (Ed.). (1992). *Africa's Media Image*. New York: Praeger.

Haynes, N. (2012). Pentecostalism and the morality of money: prosperity, inequality, and religious sociality on the Zambian Copperbelt. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (N.S.)*, 18, 123–139.

Hebdige, D. (1979). *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. New York: Routledge.

Herbst, J. (2000). *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Hobart, M. (Ed.). (1993). *An Anthropological Critique of Development: The Growth of Ignorance*. London: Routledge.

Hoben, A. (1982). Anthropologists and Development. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *11*, 349–375.

Hodgkin, T. (1957). *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*. New York: New York University Press.

Hunt, N. R. (1999). *A Colonial Lexicon of Birth Ritual, Medicalization, and Mobility in the Congo*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Hyden, G. (1983). *No Shortcuts to Progress: African Development Management in Perspective*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Isbister, J. (2001). *Promises not Kept: The Betrayal of Social Change in the Third World*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press.

Iweala, U. (2007, July 15). Stop Trying to 'Save' Africa. *The Washington Post*.

James, W. (1973). The Anthropologist as Reluctant Imperialist. In T. Asad (Ed.), *Anthropology & the Colonial Encounter* (pp. 41–70). London: Ithaca Press.

Jedlicka, A. D. (1990). *Volunteerism and World Development*. New York: Praeger.

Johnston, K. B. (2006). Celebrity Activists. *Sojourners Magazine*, *35*(7), 38.

Jones, J. E. (2001). In Brightest Africa. In D. M. Mengara (Ed.), *Images of Africa: Stereotypes & Realities*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

Keefer, P. (2004). What Does Political Economy Tell Us About Economic Development—And Vice Versa? *Annual Review of Political Science*, *7*, 247–272.

Killingray, D. (2003). The Black Atlantic Missionary Movement and Africa, 1780s–1920s. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, *33*(1), 3–31.

Korten, D. C. (1990). *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*. West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press.

Laitin, D. (1986). *Hegemony and Culture: Politics and Religious Change among the Yoruba*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Landau, P. S. (1996). Explaining Surgical Evangelism in Colonial Southern Africa: Teeth, Pain, and Faith. *Journal of African History*, *37*, 261–281.

Latour, B. (1987). *Science in Action*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Livingston, Julie. (2005). *Debility and the Moral Imagination in Botswana*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Lewis, H. (2007). The Influence of Edward Said and *Orientalism* on Anthropology, or: Can the Anthropologist Speak? *Israel Affairs*, *13*(4), 774–785.

Leys, C. (2005). The Rise and Fall of Development Theory. In *The Anthropology of Development and Globalization* (pp. 109–125). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Lutz, C., & Collins, J. L. (1993). *Reading National Geographic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Maathai, W. (2006). *Unbowed: A Memoir*. New York: Knopf.

Manji, F., & O'Coill, C. (2002). The Missionary Position: NGOs and Development in Africa. *International Affairs*, *78*(3), 567–583.

Mapondera, G., & Smith, D. (2013, April 11). Malawi Accuses Madonna of Exaggerating Humanitarian Efforts. *The Guardian*.

Maren, M. (1997). *The Road to Hell: The Ravaging Effects of Foreign Aid and International Charity*. New York: Free Press.

Marshall, P. D. (1997). *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Mazzarella, W. (2009). Affect: What Is It Good For? In S. Dube (Ed.), *Enchantments of Modernity: Empire, Nation, Globalization* (pp. 291–309). London: Routledge.

Medard, J. (1982). The Underdeveloped State in Tropical Africa: Political Clientelism or Neo-Patrimonialism? In C. Clapham (Ed.), *Private Patronage and Public Power: Political Clientelism in the Modern State* (pp. 162–192). New York: St. Martin's Press.

Mengara, D. M. (Ed.). (2001). *Images of Africa: Stereotypes & Realities*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

Meyer, B. (2004). Christianity in Africa: From African Independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *33*, 447–474.

Moeller, S. D. (1999). *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War and Death*. New York: Routledge.

Moore, S. F. (1994). *Anthropology and Africa: Changing Perspectives on a Changing Scene*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.

Moro, H. (1998). Ambivalent Messages: Organizational Purposes of NGOs and Images of the South. *Development in Practice*, *8*(1), 74–78.

Moyes, A. (1966). *Volunteers in Development*. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Narayan, K. (1993). How Native Is a "Native" Anthropologist? *American Anthropologist*, *95*(3), 671–686. doi:10.2307/679656

Neuberger, B. (2000). Ethnic Groups and the State in Africa. In S. Ben-Ami, Y. Peled, & A. Spektorowski (Eds.), *Ethnic Challenges to the Modern Nation State*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Ndulu, B. J., O'Connell, S. A., Bates, R. H., Collier, P., & Soludo, C. C. (2007). *The Political Economy of Economic Growth in Africa, 1960-2000* (vol.1). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nordstrom, C. (2004). *Shadows of War: Violence, Power, and International Profiteering in the Twenty-First century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Nowak, H. (2007). Volunteer Tourism as an Alternative to or Supplement of Community-Based Development: A Ghanaian Case Study. Master's thesis. York University, Toronto, Ontario.

Ortner, S. B. (1999). *Life and Death on Mt. Everest: Sherpas and Himalayan Mountaineering*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ortner, S. B. (2006). *Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power, and the Acting Subject*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Osabu-Kle, D. T. (2000). The Politics of One-Side Adjustment in Africa. *Journal of Black Studies*, *30*(4), 515–533.

Pachai, B. (1973). *Malawi: The History of the Nation*. London: Longman.

Palmberg, M. (Ed.). (2001). *Encounter Images in the Meetings between Africa and Europe*. Sweden: Nordic Africa Institute.

Pastor, R. A. (1974). The Platonic Acorn: A Case Study of the United Nations Volunteers. *International Organization*, *28*(3), 375–397.

Pels, P. (1997). The Anthropology of Colonialism: Culture, History, and the Emergence of Western Governmentality. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *26*, 163–183.

Pfeiffer, J. (2003). International NGOs and Primary Health Care in Mozambique: The Need for a New Model of Collaboration. *Social Science & Medicine*, *56*, 725–738.

Pike, J. G. (1968). *Malawi: A Political and Economic History*. New York: Praeger.

Pink, S. (1998). The White 'Helpers': Anthropologists, Development Workers and Local Imaginations. *Anthropology Today*, *14*(6), 9–14.

Pires, M. (2000). Study-Abroad and Cultural Exchange Programs to Africa: America's Image of a Continent. *African Issues*, *28*(1/2), 39–45.

Pitsula, P. (2008). Hollywood and Human Rights in the Curriculum. *Education Law Journal*, *17*(3), 275.

Powdermaker, H. (1962). *Copper Town: Changing Africa, the Human Situation on the Rhodesian Copperbelt*. New York: Harper & Row.

Ranger, T. (1987). An Africanist Comment. *American Ethnologist*, *14*(1), 182–185.

Reno, W. (1998). *Warlord Politics and African States.* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Ribohn, U. (2002). “Human Rights and the Multiparty System Have Swallowed Our Traditions”: Conceiving Women and Culture in the New Malawi. In H. Englund (Ed.), *Democracy of Chameleons* (pp. 166–177). Uppsala, Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

Richey, L., & Ponte, S. (2008). Better (Red) than Dead? Celebrities, Consumption and International Aid. *Third World Quarterly*, *29*(4), 711.

Richey, L.A., & Ponte, S. (2011). *Brand Aid: Celebrities, Consumption, and Development.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Rostow, W. W. ([1960] 1971). *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (2nd ed.). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rushe, D. (2007, March 11). If Bono Makes Us See Red, It’s No Bad Thing. *Sunday Times (London).*

Sachs, J. (2005). *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*. New York: Penguin.

Sachs, J. D. (2008). *Common Wealth: Economics for a Crowded Planet*. New York: Penguin.

Sahlins, M. (1994). Cosmologies of Capitalism: The Trans-Pacific Sector of ‘The World System.’ In N. Dirks, G. Eley, and S. Ortner (Eds.), *Culture/Power/History* (pp. 412–459). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Said, E. W. ([1979] 1994). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.

Schickel, R. (1985). *Intimate Strangers: The Culture of Celebrity*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Schwimmer, B. E., & Warren, D. M. (1993). *Anthropology and the Peace Corps: Case Studies in Career Preparation*. Ames: Iowa State University Press.

Scott, J. C. (1985). *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Scott, J. C. (1998). *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Sen, A. (1997). *Development Thinking at the Beginning of the 21st Century*. London: ESRC.

Sen, A. (1999). *Development as Freedom*. New York: Random House.

Sheridan, M. J., & Price, J. J. (2006). The Toughest Job You'll Ever Love: The Peace Corps as Adventure. In *Tarzan Was an Eco-Tourist* (pp. 179–196). New York: Berghahn Books.

Smillie, I., & Minear, L. (2004). *The Charity of Nations: Humanitarian Action in a Calculating World*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press.

Smith, A. D. (1983). *State and Nation in the Third World: The Western State and African Nationalism*. Brighton, UK: Wheatsheaf Books.

Smith, D. H., & Elkin, F. (1981). Volunteers, Voluntary Associations, and Development: An Introduction. In *Volunteers, Voluntary Associations, and Development*. Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill.

Smith, V. L., & Brent, M. (Eds.). (2001). *Hosts and Guests Revisited: Tourism Issues of the 21st Century*. New York: Cognizant Communication.

Spicer, M., & Reichardt, M. (1992). Southern Africa: The International Community and Economic Development in the 1990s. In L. Benjamin & C. Gregory (Eds.), *Southern Africa at the Crossroads: Prospects for Stability and Development in the 1990s*. Rivonia: Justified Press.

Spring, J. (2004). *How Educational Ideologies Are Shaping Global Society: Intergovernmental Organizations, NGOs, and the Decline of the Nation-State*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Stambach, A. (2010). *Faith in Schools: Religion, Education, and American Evangelicals in East Africa*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Stiglitz, J. E. (2002). *Globalization and Its Discontents*. New York: Norton.

Stiglitz, J. E. (2006). *Making Globalization Work*. New York: Norton.

Stipe, C. E. (1980). Anthropologists versus Missionaries: The Influence of Presuppositions. *Current Anthropology, 21*(2), 165–179.

Stirrat, R. L., & Henkel, H. (1997). The Development Gift: The Problem of Reciprocity in the NGO World. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *554*(The Role of NGOs: Charity and Empowerment), 66–80.

Stoler, A. L., & Cooper, F. (1997). Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda. In F. Cooper and A. L. Stoler (Eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (pp. 1–56). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Stoneman, C., & Suckling, J. (1987). From Apartheid to Neocolonialism? *Third World Quarterly*, *9*(2), 515–544.

Stronza, A. (2001). Anthropology of Tourism: Forging New Ground for Ecotourism and Other Alternatives. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *30*, 261–283.

Textor, R. B. (1966). *Cultural Frontiers of the Peace Corps*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Thomas, Lynn M. 2003. *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Thompson, C. B. (1987). Cooperation for Survival: Western Interests vs. SADCC. *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, 16(1), 30–36.

Turner, V. W. (1957). *Schism and Continuity in an African Society; A Study of Ndembu Village Life*. Manchester: Published on behalf of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, Northern Rhodesia, by Manchester University Press.

Tvedt, T. (1998). *Angels of Mercy or Development Diplomats?: NGOs and Foreign Aid*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

Vaughan, M. (1991). *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Van der Geest, S. (1990). Anthropologists and Missionaries: Brothers Under the Skin. *Man, 25*(4), 588–601.

Vrasti, W. (2012). *Volunteer Tourism in the Global South: The Self as Enterprise*. London: Routledge.

de Waal, A. (1997). *Famine Crimes: Politics & the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

de Waal, A. (2008). The Humanitarian Carnival: A Celebrity Vogue. *World Affairs*.

Wearing, S. (2001). *Volunteer Tourism: Experiences That Make a Difference*. Wallingford, Oxon: CABI.

Wearing, S. (2004). Examining Best Practice in Volunteer Tourism. In *Volunteering as Leisure, Leisure as Volunteering: An International Assessment* (pp. 209–224). Cambridge, MA: CABI.

Weber, E. (1976). *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press

Weber, M. ([1930] 2002). The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, and Other Writings. Ed. and trans. by P. Baehr and G. C. Wells. New York: Penguin.

Wendland, C. (2012). Moral Maps and Medical Imaginaries: Clinical Tourism at Malawi's College of Medicine. *American Anthropologist*, *14*(1), 108–122.

West, H. G. (2005). *Kupilikula: Governance and the Invisible Realm in Mozambique*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wetzel, C. J. (1966). The Peace Corps in Our Past. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *365*, 1–11.

White, L. (1987). *Magomero: Portrait of an African Village*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Williams, G. (2003). *Fragments of Democracy: Nationalism, Development, and the State in Africa.* Cape Town, South Africa: HRSC.

Williams, R. (1977). *Marxism and Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wilson, J. (2000). Volunteering. *Annual Review of Sociology, 26*, 215–240.

Wilson, J., & Musick, M. (1999). The Effects of Volunteering on the Volunteer. *Law and Contemporary Problems*, *62*(4), 141–168.

Young, C. (2001). Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Africa. In M. Guibernau & J. Hutchinson (Eds.), *Understanding Nationalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Yrjola, R. (2009). The Invisible Violence of Celebrity Humanitarianism: Soft Images and Hard Words in the Making and Unmaking of Africa. *World Political Science Review*, 5(1).

Zahra, A., & McIntosh, A. J. (2006). Volunteer Tourism: Evidence of Cathartic Tourist Experiences. [Unpublished manuscript].

Zavitz, K. (2004). International Volunteers at the Costa Rican Organic Farm: Sheepish Volunteers, Proud Tourists, and Unwitting Developers. Master's thesis. Brock University, St. Catherines, Ontario.