Declaration

This senior honors thesis is submitted for review by the Anthropology Department of Brandeis University for consideration of Departmental Honors to Hannah Young in May of 2015. With regard to the above, I declare that this is an original piece of work and that all non-cited writing is my own.

Acknowledgements

This journey would have been impossible without the support, love, and kindness given to me by my informants, my advisors, my friends, and my family. Endless thanks to my host mother in Uganda, Passy Nalwanga. She provided guidance through both of my trips to Uganda, and welcomed me into her family for which I will always be grateful. Thank you to my informants in both Uganda and South Africa, who shared their experiences and insights with me and helped me gain a better understanding of the world and global connections, which ultimately made this thesis possible.

Thank you to my primary advisor, Professor Moises Lino e Silva: for your constant support, your thorough revisions, and your ability to drive me to consider my data and analysis on multiple levels. Thank you to my second reader, Professor Janet McIntosh, for pushing me further and for encouraging me when difficulties in this process presented themselves. Last but certainly not least, thank you to my third reader, Professor Wellington Nyangoni, who largely inspired my interest in the study of development both in theory and in practice. I am so grateful to have been able to enroll in your insightful courses over the past four years, and to be so lucky to have such an inspiring and knowledgeable mentor.

I would also like to thank Brandeis’s International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life, as well as the Provost’s Undergraduate Research Fund for financially supporting each of my trips to Uganda over the past two years.

Special thanks to my dear friend Nelly Schlăfereit for sharing the senior thesis writing experience with me this past year, and to the rest of my family and friends for your constant support throughout the pursuit of my studies and interests during my time at Brandeis.
Table of Contents

Declaration & Acknowledgements..................................................................................2

Introduction
  Preface.........................................................................................................................4
  Defining Development..................................................................................................11
  Methodology...............................................................................................................15

Chapter 1 – Introductions to Development and Encountering Universals in South Africa.18

Chapter 2 – Arnold: The Legacy of Colonialism and Community Aspirations............33
  Present.........................................................................................................................41
  Community Needs.......................................................................................................45

Chapter 3 – Kate: The Presence and Influence of International Volunteers...............51

Chapter 4 – Jacob: Frictions and Their Impact on Individual Aspirations...............67

Chapter 5 – Christopher: Actualizing the Origins of Influence...............................79

Conclusion..................................................................................................................92

Appendix.....................................................................................................................95

Bibliography..............................................................................................................99
Introduction

Preface

My first experience in sub-Saharan Africa was in 2011, when I spent a semester in Memel: a rural town tucked into a valley within the Drakensberg Mountains, located about three hours southeast of Johannesburg, South Africa. I was not prepared for the complexities of this trip before my arrival, nor was I aware of them until after having been present for a month when I befriended another American, who had completed her undergraduate degree in Anthropology at Bard College just months before. We stayed awake late into the night as she described the Anthropological theories that outlined the complexities of our presence in Memel.

At that time, we were both working for an American couple who founded a girls empowerment program years before. The woman was a former representative for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Her husband was in real estate. Listening to what my friend had to say about her courses and professor at Bard helped me problematize the fact that these two Americans were running not one, but two non-profit organizations (NGOs) in Memel. Despite my development of thoughts, the couple seemed welcomed by the community. Their projects were well liked. Since the program had started, seventh and eighth grade pregnancies in the primary school had gradually decreased to the point that there hadn’t been one in years. There was a new library and computer lab at the primary school as well due to one of the couple’s programs. I saw these changes, which were all regarded as improvements, but was left with more questions than I arrived with.

This experience ignited an interest in the presence of NGOs in “underdeveloped” communities. I had worked for an organization run by Americans, but I wanted to see this process from a different perspective. That is why I secured an internship 15 kilometers outside of
Kampala, Uganda in 2013, after having started the Anthropology track at Brandeis, as per my friend’s advice. The internship was with a small community based organization (CBO) in the Nansana Town Council, a network of civil society organizations (CSOs) aiming to fulfill the needs of communities surrounding Kampala, to make up for the drawbacks of governmental organizations and lack of support in the area.

At the organization, I expected my position to be that of an administrative assistant, or perhaps a teaching assistant. Instead, when I arrived, I was asked to fill a full-time teaching position, making me responsible for the education of about 60 students ages five through twelve in English, Music, and Art. In addition to this, I was asked to give input on almost a daily basis regarding the future of the organization, and the best way for it to sustain itself within the community.

This organization had three facets: an Education Center, a youth social empowerment program, and a women’s economic empowerment program. Their purposes were very much intertwined but each program was capable of functioning independently. The Education Center served as a private school within the community, serving almost 200 students total, some of who paid full tuition, but many of which received partial scholarships or full scholarships because of their health status. The school fees paid to the Education Center were the primary financial means that the center is run off of. I observed that families tended to send their children here because of the relatively low fees in comparison with other private schools in the area. While the school operates on an open enrollment basis in that anyone can attend, there is a relatively small capacity, so students are turned away once capacity is filled. The youth program provided a forum to engage local youths with the goal of deterring them from “at-risk” activities, in the words of the founder of the organization. The women’s program provided resources for HIV
positive women to produce products for sale. While each program had opportunities for improvement, I observed that overall, each was capable of fulfilling its purpose within the community.

Outreach for the organization was at an all-time high, and a fundraiser had just concluded which ultimately allowed the Education Center to take on an additional 100 students. The organization provided exactly the learning experience that I had anticipated: it was run by Ugandans, for Ugandans. I believed that it would provide insight to working towards development goals that the community actually desired, rather than goals pushed by foreigners were entering the community in an attempt to change it. The director and founder of the organization, as well as its representative for the Nansana Town Council (who was also elected as the chairperson of the civil society network within the council), were both Ugandan. This seemed to fit within my preconceived notions of authenticity. The organization drew quite a few youth volunteers from the community, all Ugandan. The teachers (with the exception of myself for those three months): all Ugandan.

However, after having been at the organization for several weeks, during which I met with the director and founder on almost a daily basis, I learned that a great deal of input was provided by previous international volunteers, each of whom were by then, back in their home countries: the United Kingdom and Canada. Now, the United States was added to the list because of my contribution. The director sought advice from these “alumni” volunteers regarding improvement of the organization, despite he himself having maintained the organization almost independently for the past decade. I was very curious about this. From my perspective, it seemed as though he had the most experience and therefore the most significant contributions regarding
how to run the CBO. The notions of authenticity that I had entered the environment with were challenged.

I realized the significance and the weight of my perspective, and that of several of the other “alumni” volunteers one afternoon while sitting in the office of the Education Center with the founder and director of the organization. These perspectives were very much informed through the experiences and circumstances of our upbringings, and our experiences were in turn then used to inform opportunities for growth and improvement within the organization. On that day, the director, Arnold, began by asking my opinion on the development of one of the organization’s programs. Several “universals” arose in our conversation. Gayatri Spivak defines the universal as “what we cannot not want” (Tsing 2004). She suggests that the universals that we encounter imply that certain things are supposed to be certain ways. Anna Tsing adds that these universals are not possible without friction: the interaction between the global and local in the emergence of universals. These frictions evidently blur the line between “global” and “local” to the point that they are undistinguishable between one another.

I saw that blurred line as a connection between our expectations of the realities that we were considering. Despite the constantly arising similarities in expectations, I snapped back to one of my previous perceptions: that our reality inevitably differs and I ought not reveal my perspective, because of the danger in imposing it. So, after a brief discussion, I suggested that he ask some of the Center’s teachers for their opinions, as they had much more experience than I did.

“But the bazungu¹ are so much more developed than we Ugandans,” he replied to me, as if it was the most normal thing to say, all the while with a smile on his face.

¹ Luganda for “white people”, but is not used to refer to the privileged (for the most part, foreigners from the United States and Western Europe)
I had been fidgeting, looking through my notebook and some other papers, but stopped dead in silence.

I was shocked at the words I just heard come out of his mouth.

I looked up at him, but initially could not come up with an appropriate response. My shock was rooted in several thoughts. First, because of my exposure to anthropology as a discipline, my point of view consistently drew validity from the perspectives of those around me, particularly when those people were of a different cultural origin. I had become perhaps overly critical of my own practices and overly accepting of others’. Second, because of my study of development from an anthropological perspective, I was determined to work from a position that drew out “authentic” points of view and ideas on development in community improvement projects. I would later learn that my previous notions of “authenticity” ought to be challenged because of the exchange of ideas. The origin of these ideas were actually quite complex and “authenticity” did not fit within the narrow definition that it previously had in my mind. But, my priority was still to participate in initiatives that community members thought best. Before this encounter, I failed to consider where these ideas of improvement stemmed from.

I did not know what an “authentic” point of view consisted of, but I perceived that it had to do with a level of removal from influence of the “other” – and I saw myself as that “other”. I did not consider that perhaps those universals that I had noticed in our conversation suggested a different reality than the one I had ingrained in my mind. Evidently, I was seeking something culturally specific, and saw culturally specific as the opposite of “universal”. Despite these “universals” of global trends that I recognized within the community that I had entered, when politicized, these “universals” became quite complex. In my simplified understanding of them, I had “limited [myself] to the cultural specificity side of the equation” (Tsing 2004: 1). In her book
Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection, Anna Tsing discusses the complexity of universals and the “friction” that occurs as a result of an in conjunction with global flows – resulting in exactly the opposite of a bounded culture. The emergence of these global trends which had translated themselves into universals uncovered a dangerous power dynamic, and an offer for those adopting the universals (in this case, the Ugandans that I encountered) to “participate in the global stream of humanity” (Tsing 2004: 1) – at a cost that some might say sacrificed the local in exchange for the global, but what I will argue to invite a dialogue of ideology through which one group (in this case, the Ugandans that I interacted with) came into the equation underneath a power dynamic that, while seemingly inevitable, maintains a neo-imperial quota. This is because, while the universal provides the opportunity for empowerment, it also provides an opportunity for compromise (Tsing 2004).

After consideration, it became evident that the reliance on “alumni” volunteers within the organization was not because they provided extraordinary experience or input regarding organizational steps, but because of the exchange of ideas that they provided, from an international level, within the scope of the community that the organization was attempting to impact. I will also consider that the perception of each volunteer within the organization was very much informed by local perception of the volunteers, and contributing factors were: the volunteer’s country of origin, their attitude towards the organization, their perceived gender, perceived age, perceived socioeconomic status, and perceived experience level. Drawing from the perceived knowledge base of the volunteers gave the organization an advantage within the community. This is because people within the community saw us as an opportunity for global connection and exchange when it came to topics like “progress” and “improvement”.
I began noticing this tendency beyond the organization; other CSOs in our area in Uganda often followed our perceived notions of what was “right” and what was “progress”, and as a result, I repeatedly questioned: how does one separate authentic ideas coming from community members, from those which hegemony has implied “should” happen? Tsing’s book allowed for the realization that there do not need to be such stringent definitions on what is “authentic” and what is “legitimate” in the foreign versus local debate. Rather, there is the potential for a constant exchange and dialogue. Local narratives inform the international narratives, and similarly, international narratives can also inform local narratives. Questioning the meaning of “development” was important, but perhaps development was a collection of universals that were constantly a part of this global exchange, rather than a hegemonic ideal that sought to reform “developing” nations in the post-war era of the Twentieth century.

Realizing this exchange was largely what encouraged me to take on this thesis. I entered wanting to dissect development and to examine the intersection of perspectives on development in theory and in practice as a conversation rather than an imposition, and rather than a prescribed notion. Furthermore, I wanted to examine the presence of development programs within the community. I saw the ways that these programs seemed to influence the community, but I also wanted to see the way that the community influenced the projects.

Through the research that I conducted in 2014 after traveling back to the same community in Uganda, it was evident that a global exchange was extremely present, and it contributed to global connection. In defining development, certain aspects of those prescribed notions that came about during the post-colonial era were present. However, they were not the only ideas that were present. Community members that I encountered within the organization that I was observing were offered agency within these projects – and they seized it. In a sense,
even the desire for agency became a universal surrounding development. I will explore this through the ethnographic data present in the narratives throughout this thesis. Most of all, as evident through my range of local and foreign subjects, there was an exchange occurring. Foreign perspectives contributed to the programming, but local perspectives very much shaped the foreigners entering the community and the attitudes they adopted on the community, on the organization, and on development projects, as evident through my ethnographic data.

Defining Development

It is often argued that development and its presence in the modern world came about in 1949 during President Truman’s call to action to assist the “global South”, which he defined as “underdeveloped”, and those who were a part of it (Sachs 1997: 2). It was from this address that the notion of modernization came about, outlining a linear method via which these so-called underdeveloped nations ought to progress, moving towards an end goal of true capitalism (but more importantly, away from communism). While an explicit emphasis on capitalism does not necessarily distinguish “developed” from “underdeveloped” in modern discourse, it is still a factor. In his critical analysis of development, The Development Dictionary, Wolfgang Sachs argues that development is and has always been, first and foremost, concerned with “nothing else than the Westernization of the world” (Sachs 1997: 3-4).

Drawing back from the political implications of the word, it is important to examine the definition of development. Development, when not applied in a socio-political context, is defined as the progression of an entity progressing towards its “full-fledged form” (Esteva 1997: 8). This implies that the entity in question was previously incomplete or inadequate before reaching a stage of development. This definition of development has become a universal as well, in that it is
implied as an aspiration, as something that “we cannot not want”, despite the irony in that statement.

Since this socio-political paradigm emerged, much has changed regarding relations between the “global North and South”. While some type of dichotomy does undoubtedly exist, the superiority--inferiority one is not as prevalent as it once was. I would argue that the only reason it did was because of the imperial influence and global hegemony of the United States and Western Europe. Perhaps “development” was created in order to draw that hegemony out into the post-colonial world. This method suppressed any challenge to Euro-American hegemony by labeling it as “right” while everything else was labeled “wrong”. “The metaphor of development”, as Gustavo Esteva puts it, certainly did “[rob] peoples of different cultures”, attempting to invalidate their legitimacy all the while idealizing a facet of the Euro-American way of life (Esteva 1997: 9).

It is essential to give attention to every aspect of development. This study largely examines the social aspects, but the economic aspects must also be considered. While few of my subjects mentioned the economics of development at all in our conversations, the aspiration for economic status was never one of abundance; rather, it was one of survival. This emphasis on finances and economic status was perhaps the first emergence of the universal that I encountered. While it has become a universal via global flows and the importance placed on them, the presence of capital and the role that it plays exists throughout each society only through friction. This became clear through the way that my informants spoke of community improvement rather than individual growth. Economic status was considered, but only through a local interpretation of the universal. This draws on Julius Nyerere’s ideas of African socialism and its mission for community development. Nyerere’s emphasis on “communalism and humanism” reflects the
inherent traditions of many sub-Saharan African societies, rather than the neoliberal emphasis on capitalism (Payne and Nassar 2012: 107).

Because of the disconnect between the development theory that I have studied and the lived realities that I encountered in Uganda, I would argue that there is a disconnect between academic theory and practice. This is expected to a certain degree, but there is also a productive potential in this disconnect for growth. In the evolution of developmental theory, a new narrative has emerged: that “development is dead” (Smith 2008: 1). His book, *Bewitching Development: Witchcraft and the Reinvention of Development in Neoliberal Kenya*, James Howard Smith discusses the overwhelming narrative that he encountered of development ideals effectively delegitimizing traditional ideals. This aligns with the thought behind post-development theory. Post-development is important because it rejects the role of the global North in “improving” the global South, and although there was a reaction to reject development as a whole, “post-development theory’s call to reject development [has] remained marginal, while its calls for decentralization, participation, and emancipation have gained widespread acceptance” (Rapley 2007: 6). Even though post-development theorists argue that the period of modern development as we see it is over, the first, and most important purpose of the post-development theory in this context is to question the way that we define development. Now, the paradigm also attempts to re-legitimize different ways of life that vary from the status quo.

Despite this essential presence as a “rejection of a status quo” (Smith 2008: 8), we must keep in mind that for many of those attempting to “achieve” a stage of development, development as a whole “should not be dismissed, especially by anthropologists” (Smith 2008: 3). This is because development continues to remain an aspiration for many all over the world,
and theorists attempt to stop that is also perhaps an imperial imposition of morals and values. The balance between the two camps, then, becomes seemingly impossible to navigate.

Accepting the reality of development and its presence is important, but acknowledging that it need not be an imposition of values is a relevant aspect of development practice that can move to impact development theory. Perhaps even more dangerous is the way that it considers development as a single narrative, rather than considering the complex and multidimensional meaning of development. Alan Thomas discusses this in his article, “Development as Practice in a Liberal Capitalist World”. He highlights the dangers of following dominant trends in development thought, and rather, liberating it from those limits and considering the way meaning can adapt to the specific conditions within communities (Thomas 2000: 773).

In her book *Aging and the Indian Diaspora*, Sarah Lamb discusses the global and local realities of accepting that there can be multiple modernities in the local pursuit of development. Lamb argues that there are two ways of understanding modernity. One, “that modernity is a uniform, culture-neutral destination to which all paths of development lead” (Lamb 2009: 9). This notion, she says, is “based on the premise that the past was significantly different from the present and characterized by traditional beliefs and allegiances” (Lamb 2009: 9). The second way of understanding modernity claims that “modernities are multiple: persons and nations engage in often passionate projects of negotiating and fashioning particular forms of modernity that are historically and culturally contingent” (Lamb 2009: 9). This second interpretation emphasizes “culture, particularity, human agency, creative adaptation, and the complicated blurring of distinctions between the traditional and modern, local and global” (Lamb 2009: 9). Lamb acknowledges that there is a somewhat unequal exchange between these modernities, even if their universals are a transnational exchange. In this examination of how people create their
worlds, it is evident that some universals are accepted while others are not and this often is because of where those universals stem from. In its application to my research, this is clear through the eagerness of Arnold to adopt recommendations of the “alumni” volunteers, but scarce occurrence of these foreigners to do the same.

Throughout this thesis, I will examine the universals that emerged through my ethnographic data, and how these universals adjusted through friction to find their place in lived realities in South Africa and Uganda. I will do this through the presentation of the narratives of five encounters that I have had with development throughout my research. Through these narratives, it became evident that while expectations for development have become somewhat homogenized, those homogenized ideas were rarely taken and directly put into practice. Rather, the application of projects and programs would not fit within the community without some friction: the collision that is necessary for any type of movement. I will also examine the implications of this friction. Ultimately, development emerged as a collection of universals in and of themselves. This made the unilinear approach to development seem increasingly irrelevant, especially because of the variation of values that altered the movement towards modernity that I observed. Through this friction of the universal and its relevance to modernity, I will convey a narrative that demonstrates the relationship between the foreign and the local, and how this is inevitably leads to multiple modernities within development projects, an interaction between what the universal offers, and what the community makes of it (Tsing 2004, Thomas 2000).

Methodology

In an attempt to gather these narratives, I conducted research within the same organization that I previously worked for during 2013. In 2014, I traveled back to central
Uganda, where I conducted a series of interviews with people who were working within the community. I relied on work of mouth to find interviewees, and for the most part, used the network of the organization. I told each potential interviewee about my project before asking if they were interested in participating (see Appendix A for a copy of my recruitment script). My goal upon entering this study was to interact with a range of participants in the particular CBO that I had interacted with in the past, as to gain an understanding of the relationship between operations of the organization, its role in community development, and where the dominant ideologies conveyed through these narratives stemmed from. I intended to interview twenty community members. Ultimately, I interviewed ten community members, as well as four foreigners who were living within the community. I asked questions regarding individuals’ interpretation of ideas like development, improvement, and progress, as well as individuals’ experience with and opinions of the development programs that they encountered (see Appendix D for my interview guide).

Among my participants included the founder of the organization, employees of the organization, and beneficiaries of the organization. The foreigners who I interviewed were international volunteers who were working with that organization at the time, as well as one who was working with several other NGOs within the community.

This study was conducted as per standards set by the Brandeis Committee for Protection of Human Subjects. Each participant was given an Information Sheet or Informed Consent Form and each interview was conducted only after having obtained either written or oral consent (see Appendix B for a copy of the Informed Consent Sheet and Appendix C for a copy of the Information Sheet). Each interview was recorded into an audio file and then transcribed for reference for the information quoted throughout my thesis.
I observed the CBO’s activities every day during my research period, from attending meetings, to observing program activities, as well as attending classes in the Education Centre. I was also able to attend Civil Society Network meetings for the Nansana Town Council.

To review my findings, I will outline the encounters I’ve had with development through community members, both foreign and local. I will begin in Chapter 1 by discussing the initial exposure I had to development projects in South Africa, as well as the universals and their power dynamics that became increasingly evident as I became more involved with a specific project there. Then, in Chapter 2, I will provide a background on the similarities and differences between how development is approached in South Africa versus how it is approached in Uganda, and why. I will also present the narrative of Arnold, the founder and director of a community based organization in Uganda. In Chapter 3, I will use Kate’s narrative, a foreign volunteer within the community that worked as an HIV Program Officer for the organization, to realize the altering perspectives of foreigners entering the community and the frictions occurring between differing expectations. In Chapter 4, I use Jacob’s narrative, the chairperson of the Nansana Town Council, who also served as an administrator within the organization, to show examples of instances of friction of the global and local in the emergence of universals. Finally, in Chapter 5, I will use Christopher’s narrative, a foreign volunteer who had exposure to several other organizations within and without the community, and the impact of multiple exposures on his concept of development to show a heightened awareness of who “development” is catering to and where the hegemonic ideas generally accepted are coming from.

Ultimately, I will explore how the intersection of these perspectives informs the universals of the development programs within the community that I observed, and the realities that they maintain within peoples’ lives.
Chapter 1

Introductions to Development and Encountering Universals in South Africa

South Africa's present is very much affected by its rich but complicated history. Before traveling to a rural area of the Free State province in 2011, I knew very little about why that is.

During my gap semester before beginning at Brandeis, I had originally intended on taking courses at a university in London. The financial cost of the program was an obstacle, so when I was given the option of working for a family friend in South Africa for several months I jumped at the opportunity. She needed to find someone to work for her in order to put together a library at the primary school in her town, and to work at her organic farm cooperative. After considering it, I thought traveling to South Africa would be an interesting adventure, and one that I had little background knowledge about. My suburban public school education had paid little to no attention to history or culture outside of the Europe and the Americas, so I thought that traveling outside of that scope, to South Africa, would be an interesting experience that could perhaps combat that gap in my education.

Just after making the decision to go, I recall sitting in a circle in one of my peer’s backyards at a high school graduation party. Everyone was sharing his or her plans for post-graduation, and when it was my turn, I shared mine. One of the boys did not even attempt to contain his laughter.

“So, when you go to Africa, will you be living in a tipi?”

I ignored his comment, not knowing how to combat his ignorance with my little background knowledge. I had been told about the town I would be living in, and that it was very similar to my own home. I did not know exactly what it would be like, but I pictured a white house that looked like the house that I grew up in, surrounded by gardens (I was not very far off).
When I failed to respond, he continued to laugh. He pushed again. “What about wearing a loincloth?” he spat out in between giggles.

I took a deep breath, and one of my other friends addressed his comments with more rigor than I would have been able to draw up. I thanked her and the next member of the circle shared that he would be attended Northeastern University.

I tried to ignore the ignorance that my peer had displayed. He had grown up just several houses down the street from mine, and although it felt as if he was mocking me, in reality he was mocking an entire continent. His lack of awareness reflected the culture that we grew up in. We were extremely privileged within our comfort zone, and for many of my peers, that gave no incentive to leave that comfort zone. The majority of my high school class was staying in Connecticut for college or work, and then a fraction was moving to Boston or New York. A handful of my peers were going beyond that two-hour radius. I wasn’t sure if our education system thought that expanding our spectrum of exposure to knowledge was not valuable, or if they simply thought that we would not need it.

Nevertheless, the irony of this peer’s statement did not escape me: he was referencing teepees and loincloths, two aspects of culture that were present in some American Indian groups in our own country generations ago. Imperial-minded settlers attempted to delegitimize these (and other) aspects of traditional culture in a way similar to the “settlers” (also imperial-minded) spread throughout so many communities in sub-Saharan Africa seeking to delegitimize and “correct” traditional culture, and to replace it with a Euro-centric mindset. This was the first emergence of the “universal” that I witnessed. My peer accepted our lifestyle not only as a universal, but as the universal – and I asked myself where these universals come from. In reality, the narratives that emerge as “universal” in the global scope of things are actually just individual
ways of life that emerge as dominant narratives (Tsing 2004). My peer was taking his way of life, and applying it as the standard for acceptable on a global scale.

I wondered whether the ignorance that he displayed was due to a lack of cultural relativism, or if it was due to the gap in our education. Cultural relativism is the theory adapted by Franz Boas in the Twentieth century that there are no objective standards by which to evaluate a culture and that a culture can only be understood in terms of its own values and customs. It was evident that my peer could not evaluate another culture, and his lens may have been the reason behind this. An additional contributing factor was that if sub-Saharan Africa had ever been presented to us academically, it was through the lens of cultural imperialism. Even when we were presented with the map of Africa in seventh grade geography, we learned about post-colonial borders and nations, almost all of which were determined by colonial powers during the Scramble for Africa, when they slashed across territories on a map with their pens and claimed regions in the name of “civilization”.

The way that my peer had referred to the entire continent of “Africa” was his first action of distancing and disconnecting our privileged lives with that which is portrayed by the dominant media sources that we were exposed to in the United States about countries within Africa. But, even the name of the continent: “Africa” is largely imperial: the word is of European origin. The national borders within the continent were determined by colonizers, therefore, these borders created national identities that may not have existed otherwise. South Africa is a perfect example of this. A country with eleven national languages, and hundreds of dialects coinciding with the vast number of ethnic groups suggests that there are much more specific identities that people

---

2 http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/45742?redirectedFrom=cultural+relativism#eid129084834
3 http://crawfurd.dk/africa/word.htm
could choose to use in their self-identification. Uganda is also an excellent example. The entire nation-state called “Uganda” was named because a colonist misunderstood the word “Buganda”, the name of one of the many kingdoms that resides in present-day Uganda (Karugire 1980: 1). So, every national within the country is ascribed with an identity: “Ugandan”, a mispronunciation of a word intended to describe one singular group. By using this identity given by imperial minds, we assume national identities that were created in the first place, by the very imperial legacy that, as scholars, we are attempting to withdraw from.

Therefore, throughout this thesis, when I identify individuals, I will attempt to use forms of identification that were self-imposed through interviews and observations. If the labels that emerge throughout these narratives that I encounter align with identities that emerged from colonialism, I will examine reason why the identity may be used and the implications of using that identity.

In South Africa, there are multiple layers of expressed identities. One layer, as it seems, is race. This emerges first because it dictates the dichotomy of the perceived oppressor versus the perceived oppressed, due to the nation’s history of immigrants, who, like those who established colonies in the Americas, often refer to themselves as “settlers” (Marks 1972). Another layer of identity is ethnic group. As previously stated, there are a vast number of ethnic groups in southern Africa, and the dynamics between them extend far further into history than those of race, as they existed prior to the white presence in southern Africa. Yet another layer is social class, which has come to separate itself from race, especially in the post-independence era. Gender and sexuality are also layers of expressed identities that ought to be considered.

These layers of identity can become almost invisible to a person who has experienced immense privilege, growing up in a community where white, middle-class, and gender
conforming, hetero-normative identities were accepted as “normal”. This normalization very much reflects the society in which I lived, which has attempted to perpetuate its value on this “norm” as universal, although it, arguably, has not succeeded. Meanwhile, normalizing these identities created a dangerous dichotomy for my peer (as evident through the expression of his thoughts about my trip), but it also created a dangerous dichotomy for myself. While I was interested in one of anthropology’s missions of “making the strange familiar”, I did not quite understand the other core concept of “making the familiar strange” when I first traveled to the predominantly Zulu /Afrikaner community in South Africa. I reference this group as a community despite the divisions within it. This is because the development project through which I viewed the community (or, two communities) was attempting to bridge that gap and rather than viewing it as two communities, therefore, perpetuating a narrative of one community trying to mitigate the grievances within them in an attempt to move forward to a new, democratic, non-racial South Africa.

Nevertheless, my circumstances were normalized and my perception of encounters were influenced by either my acceptance of the circumstances that I grew up with, and as time went on, they were influenced by my rejection of the circumstances that I grew up with. I wouldn’t realize until later that neither of these perspectives were productive in my interpretation of new surroundings.

When I first drove down the main road in town that I would be living in for those few months, I was in the passenger seat of my host's dark gray Land Cruiser. There were only two paved roads in town: the road leading in, and the road leading out. It only took about five minutes to see the entire town. Despite the fact that it was small, everything that we needed was there. While driving down that road, we first passed several houses, a retirement home for the
elderly, the post office (which had three international pay phones in front), the hotel (which also served as the only restaurant and bar), two grocery stores, the butcher, and the municipality. That was it.

The town seemed developed as per the standards I was used to, although evidently, it was much more rural than what I was used to. Despite this, it reflected aspects of my life that I did not realize had universal scope until I encountered them in South Africa, where they were also normalized. For example, houses were built with brick or concrete. I did not see houses made out of wood like those at home, but the structures and set-ups of the homes in the town were very reflective of what I was used to. In a way, what I was familiar with was reflected, but this made me consider that perhaps what I was familiar with was not the origin of my norm. The similarities could have stemmed from shared European influence instead.

I say this because the town certainly did not fit within the narrow category that my peers had envisioned “Africa” to be like. I was used to everything I could ever want or need being within a twenty-minute drive of my house, often less. Here, everything was within a five-minute walk. This sunk in once I learned the ins and outs of the house I’d be staying in. It was a beautiful white house with three bedrooms, three bathrooms, a living room, an office, and my favorite room: the kitchen. The kitchen was painted an awfully bright shade of yellow. It was where I sat with my closest friend there, who worked for my hosts, as she taught me words and phrases in Zulu. The house was on a large compound with two (now three) other houses within it, as well as an organic farm that may have been small, but certainly produced enough food for everyone who was living there and everyone who worked there, with leftovers to be sold in town and in the township.
The township provided quite a different reflection of the concept of universals that I thought I had been encountering. The town may have been scarcely populated and shockingly quiet, but the township just steps beyond a row of eucalyptus trees behind our house was just as bustling and lively as almost any urban area that I had seen in the United States. The township was (and still is) in quite a different state than the town itself. The paved road did continue into its lower section, but the potholes were so deep that it was even dangerous to drive the Land Cruiser through them. The rest of the dirt roads went up and down at larger proportions than the mountains we were located in. Since the roads were made up of such loose dirt, their humps and ditches rose and fell with the rain.

While the houses in town were permanent and made out of concrete, the houses in the lower township were sometimes brick or concrete, but as one ventured farther into the upper sections, houses were often made with sheets of tin, something that is removable and re-locatable. The inside of the metal would be lined with newspapers. Sometimes advertisements, other times celebrity magazine photos of Beyoncé or Rihanna lined the insides of the room. Most of the temporary homes had a water tap outside in the yard, as well as a latrine nearby.

The conditions in the area were largely due to the fact that the town was in the middle of nowhere: there was nothing else for an hour in any direction. However, the lack of development – and difference in accessibility to development and opportunity – was alarming racial. The division was clearly a class division, in considering what families could afford to live in town versus which families were forced to live in the township. While some were beginning to cross that color line, the majority were clearly still restricted by it.

Within the town lived a very small population of white Afrikaners. Afrikaners came to southern Africa as settlers of largely Dutch and German descent. Their name – “Afrikaners” –
came about as it means “Africans” in their language: Afrikaans. Because of the religious oppression that they faced in Europe, the settler group had created a mentality from their first landing at the Cape of Good Hope that southern Africa belonged to them, and that it was G-d's gift to them. They thought it was their duty to “civilize” black Africans, and therefore created a theory of arrested development, claiming that without European influence, black Africans could not fully develop. They claimed that institutions of African origin were behind or backwards, creating a very dangerous relationship between the two groups from the start. They created the system of apartheid, literally meaning “apartness” in Afrikaans (Clark and Worger 2011: 3). Not only were blacks and whites completely segregated under this system, but it also created a totem of racial subjugation that left them at the top of the entitlement list and blacks at the bottom. This totem would largely determine economic opportunities for nationals during apartheid, and continues to do so to a certain degree in the post-apartheid era.

Many victims of apartheid internalized the stigmatization that the settlers placed on them, which is why, despite two decades of independence, society in South Africa “remains segregated and unequal” (Durrheim et al 2011: 4). The imperial sentiment between European settlers and locals seemed to destroy the pride and the ability of South Africans to thrive. The economic dependence on Afrikaners created by the apartheid system made postcolonial development nearly impossible, leading to an exacerbated dichotomy within the new system (Nattrass and Seekings 2001). Therefore, due to the economic implications, the “upper classes have rapidly de-racialized” but the economic and racial divides within the lower classes are a reality in post-apartheid South Africa (Durrheim et al 2011: 4).

These were some of the topics that my American friend told me about after she joined me at the organic farm and the girls’ empowerment program that I was working at. We would shell peas
in a cooler on the table in the gardens, and she would tell me about her college experiences and the courses she had taken throughout her years there. After listening to her perspective, the inequalities that I had been observing all along gained a historical relevance and reality in my mind. She recommended a book for me to read: *Country of My Skull*, by Antjie Krog (1998), about truth and reconciliation commissions in the newly democratic South Africa. I read about the road that victims of apartheid were asked to go down in order to forgive the perpetrators. Somehow, through the truth and reconciliation process, it did not seem as though justice was served. This was because despite attempts to equalize racial grounds, economic barriers were becoming more and more firm throughout the process and attempts to move forward, past apartheid and its legacy.

It became evident to me that its legacy was still very present in the small town. I was told that just ten years ago, a bell was rung to indicate to the township-dwellers that they ought to leave the town each night at sunset. I watched friends work from before sunrise (when I could be found leisurely picking strawberries in the garden) until just before sunset. And despite the long hours and rigorous labor, a particular woman that I connected with repeatedly voiced her dissatisfaction with her home, hoping that someday she would be able to build a brick house, rather than live in her house made of tin sheets. Her dream was to pick herself up from her bootstraps, in other words, to achieve these goals through her own hard work. According to the American dream, this ought to be a possibility. A dream that had come to define my home nation was flowing into this community, flowing into the aspirations of my friend. However, she had to manifest that dream into an aspect of her life that was unique to her and her family. This demonstrates the friction occurring between this dream, which, while spreading as a universal, did not mean that it was accepted in the same way globally. Rather, it may be accepted
differently in different places – this was just the way that in manifested within her aspirations. To be able to build the brick house was something that was a far reach, but ultimately achievable in her life. This further illustrated the way that racialized barriers were just transitioning into economic ones.

Meanwhile, Afrikaners within the town led quiet lives. The amenities that most families had could be likened to those secured in the town that I grew up in. Again, it was not clear whether that universal stemmed from American exceptionalism or whether it stemmed from historical presence and influence of Europe. There was a gap, but the expectations were similar. I noticed the perfectly pruned yards around their houses; the large, vicious-sounding dogs that chased me along the yard as I (or anyone else) walked down the road; the high-security fences that seemed adequate for someone on house arrest rather than elderly couples in a town where you wouldn't see anyone on the street past six o'clock in the evening. What would the implications be for the “new, democratic” South Africa if such divisions were highly intentional?

Most of all, something that I noticed was the lack of young Afrikaners within the town. Everyone under thirty years old seemed to have traveled to Johannesburg, or more likely, Pretoria or Cape Town, to pursue academic or career opportunities. That was one aspect of development that struck me: development, at least here, largely meant access to opportunity. And that was a substantial difference between the Afrikaner and majority black African populations.

My privilege in the town was just as prominent as that of the white community members, but I was perhaps more privileged because while I carried the white privilege that they did, I also possessed the privilege of being an outsider. In this context, that meant I was disconnected from the racialized history of the region. My first perceived identity was that of a white person, and my second was that of an American, because I was one of the few white people who was not
limited to the socioeconomic and racial divide that the rest of the town was limited by. In other words, because of my nationality, my privilege lied in an opportunity to bridge that gap within my own interpersonal relationships. It was O.K. for me to hang out in the township and befriend black Africans: Zulus, and Shonas who had migrated from Zimbabwe for work. This was not a privilege that all Americans were given; some separated themselves into the Afrikaner population as well. It was a choice which friend group American outsiders belonged to, but it ultimately came along with social expectations. Evidently, there were social barriers that Americans entering the community were forced to either “respect”, or to transcend.

My American identity was ever-present throughout my stay in the rural town because my hosts were a white American couple who were well known throughout the community. The woman was a former representative to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, having worked throughout the Middle East, Asia, and East Africa throughout her tenure. Her husband was involved in real estate both in South Africa and in the U.S. They were commonly referred to and thought of as the “American” couple, despite their global backgrounds. This air of American-ness gave them a sense of authority on global expectations for improvement, as evident through the agency they were given by the community in terms of creating and implementing local development projects. Their presence in the town seemed to be accepted, and their ideas and aspirations celebrated. They were working to create sustainable systems of living through property, housing, and farming. They were also seeking to make a positive impact with their girls’ empowerment program. Their presence reflected the ways that universals often overlap with morality. This was shown in the reaction of the community to their presence. Their attempt to integrate the principles of a good life that they had observed throughout their experiences brought a huge amount of foreign influence into the community.
The couple had decided to settle in this town for part of the year during their retirement, and the woman organized the girl’s empowerment program during her free time. Its mission was to engage young girls at the primary school level in extracurricular activities in order to increase their opportunities in the future beyond the township. It began by creating an informal soccer league at the primary school and a formal track and field team that would travel throughout the province for competitions. Later, they also added opportunities for yoga classes, art classes, a choir, and reading programs for the girls. The point was to develop these girls’ skills, and ultimately to empower the community through the empowerment of the girls. This introduced a whole new set of complexities: how could the community become empowered via a small group of girls, when they were given little agency or say within the communities every day life anyway? Did the American woman and her volunteers possess the power to empower the girls to begin with? What does “empowerment” mean anyway? Empowerment is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as “the fact or action of acquiring more control over one's life or circumstances through increased civil rights, independence, self-esteem, etc.”4. However, because of the way that the word is loosely thrown around in development discourse, the meaning can potentially alter, or a user of the word may forget the implications of that word. Ultimately, there are many different meanings of the word “empowerment”, some of which stem from the colonial encounter, some of which stem from the struggles for independence within previously colonized nations, and some of which stem from the non-profit world. Despite this, the differentiation is rarely distinguished. Perhaps due to this lack of distinction, aspiration for empowerment and the appeal for empowerment within development discourse emerged as a universal within my ethnographic data. This will be demonstrated through Arnold’s discussion of empowerment.

4 http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/61400?redirectedFrom=empowerment#eid
While I would like to discuss each of these issues in more depth, unfortunately they branch out into too broad a scope for this thesis.

I recall one specific evening when my friend and I were having dinner at the only restaurant in town with our hosts. We ordered chicken curry, our favorite meal there (even after we learned that it was made from a packet in the microwave). They brought up a problem that two of their employees, who happened to be married, were having with each other. These particular employees—who had become our friends—were essential in success in the daily operations of the organic farm. They were fighting because the husband supported polygamy whereas his wife did not. Our hosts considered firing the husband if he did not change his mind.

This struck me because, while I believed they were doing well at navigating their role within the community in general, to impose their views on social actions and interactions of their workers and threaten termination of employment should employee views stray from their own would be crossing a boundary that they had seemingly worked hard to establish. Evidently, it was another circumstance through which the universality of their morals arose. This was an attempt to apply the morals they had molded within other circumstances, without allowing them to adapt and flow with local norms. They had gained credibility within the community and respect from their employees, and as foreigners, had navigated the waters between foreign and local realities fairly well. But this situation had the potential to undo the positive dynamic that they had established. I questioned the limited scope on what was “acceptable” within the micro-community that they had created and whether or not that was reflective of their own thoughts and values, or those of the people that they were working with, the people whose lives they had hoped that they could impact positively. It seemed, now more than ever, an attempt to move
towards the hegemonic foreign ideals that they were advocating for, even within a micro-topic like marriage.

Their intervention created an unnecessary divide between ideals which they thought to be the “best” or “correct”, and those which are just different, but made to be seen as “worse” or “wrong”, just the way that so many values and lifestyles were brushed aside with colonialism, pushing locals to move towards emulating the ideals that were pushed upon them. This is just one of the many instances in which morality manifested itself as a universal. Their presence had begun to imply that development required a foreign presence, and that the foreign presence was the only way to achieve what was “best” or “correct”. This sentiment is detrimental to the overall development of the community, as it leaves the community with a sense of helplessness, or removes feelings of responsibility.

In this situation, Tsing advises that we examine the power dynamic within which universalities are presented. She argues that “heterogeneous and unequal encounters can lead to new arrangements of culture and power” (Tsing 2004: 5), which challenges the positive relationship that I had perceived to exist. What if this relationship stemmed from one of power, and because of this, the flow between foreign and local could not occur in a productive manner? Rather, what if that flow began to remove agency from locality, therefore reducing the possibility of friction occurring and therefore prohibiting the development of universals? Evidently, connection was there, and it was growing. The nature of this was partially due to the American couple’s presence. It was also due to the presence of the American girls that worked for them.

This began to reflect on the role that I perceived the organization I was working for in the community to hold. I wondered if its mission aligned with what community members were looking for, or if the founder had taken the experiences she had all over the world and developed
a project based on the needs she perceived the community to have. The idea of an outsider entering a community and making these decisions with little to no input from the community that it was affecting bothered me. Yes, the founder had worked with the Afrikaner teachers at the primary school to develop the program, but was the combination of foreign thought and (newly) local thought an imposition of values, or do we all share similar aspirations for improvement and progress? I thought back to my experiences growing up, acknowledging their role in my own values and aspirations. It was at that moment that I decided I wanted to navigate the waters between insertion of foreign and local influence and how they work together and against each other to create universal directions. I thought that the best way to do this would be to work for an organization run solely by the community that it was attempting to chance, as to see the difference between the scope of organizations run differently, if they met the needs of their communities and at what capacity they met those needs. Ultimately, this was what first led me to Uganda.
Chapter 2
Arnold: The Legacy of Colonialism and Community Aspirations

Like South Africa, the British colonized Uganda. The implications of the “creation” of these nation-states therefore, are largely similar. This is in that the existence of communities and nations and their relationship with one another predates colonial history. Both regions are home to a diverse range of ethnic groups that tend to be categorically lumped into one: “Ugandan” or “South African”. But, even the formation of these national identities was a result of colonial impositions. In his book, *A Political History of Uganda*, Samwiri Rubaraza Karugire discusses the implications of Uganda coming about as a nation-state at the hands of the British. The point he starts with emphasizes that the history of “Uganda” complicates itself in that it effectively began “as a result of European intrusion” and therefore, “by the logic of this argument the history of Uganda begins from about 1900 onwards” (Karugire 1980: 1). People form governments, he highlights, they do not simply exist or come into being (Karugire 1980: 1); the formation of these governments is the spread of a universal concept of the nation-state, and colonization played a role in normalizing the nation-state (Tsing 2004). Karugire discusses the irony in Uganda’s history effectively “beginning” upon the arrival of colonists, and this irony largely lies in the fact that, as previously mentioned, “their interpreters mispronounced the name of the kingdom of Buganda as a result of which the whole country obtained its name” (Karugire 1980: 1). With this mistake came a legacy of changed interaction and dynamics between communities within the new nation state. The relationships of the communities with the colonial heads of state played a big role in these changing dynamics, and they attempted to undermine the “common experiences and [influence]” that they had shared in “various ways” “before the coming of colonial rule” (Karugire 1980: 1). All in all, because of the way Ugandan history (as well as the history of other
African nation-states) it is easy to forget that “the history of their people predates the creation of the single state in which they came to live”; this is due to the attention paid to historical periods, the written records distributed of these periods; and, it is traced back to the very notion that we label the entirety of history under the name of a nation-state that was imposed by imperialism (Karugire 1980: 1).

Britain’s relationships with South Africa and Uganda as colonies, however, were quite different. This is because South Africa operated under direct rule whereas Uganda operated under indirect rule; direct rule was centralized and often occurring within a settler colony, whereas indirect rule was often decentralized and occurring within a non-settler colony (Gerring 2011). The intentions of the British and what they sought to get out of each colony was, therefore, categorically different.

In fact, the Ganda people (Baganda) played a huge role in the extension of British influence throughout the Protectorate of Uganda” (Roberts 1962: 435). The British and the Baganda, in essence, partnered together in order to exert more power over neighboring ethnic groups. In order to spread their influence, the British pushed to enlarge the Buganda kingdom. Because of this, between 1894 and 1900, Buganda obtained control of further territory on its western boarders” (Roberts 1962: 435). Territorial expansion and “the growth of royal power” began to characterize the history of the Baganda. This changed the traditional hereditary aspect of the chieftainship, as well as the “original” ethnic groups of the region (Roberts 1962: 437).

This was how the kingdom ultimately changed. There was no longer a ruling caste, so “political authority was largely based on achievement”. The Kabaka (king) maintained a powerful role and exerted influence over the Buganda kingdom, and still continues to do so. The British maintained a relationship with the Kabaka, and this is largely how they maintained
unquestioned influence. But, despite their governing powers, “the Badanda still regarded themselves rather as chiefs owing allegiance to a Kabaka than as government officials” (Roberts 1962: 440). Influence spread to the degree that old chieftaincies were rarely considered, and structurally, ethnic groups other than the Baganda began shaping their structures like the Baganda. This became so normalized that the new structures were at times considered “tranditional”. This particularly held true throughout eastern Uganda (Roberts 1962: 442).

The Baganda certainly enjoyed privilege under British rule, and it has been “essentially the survival of a historic imperialism in appropriately modified forms” (Roberts 1962: 449-450). Furthermore, the colonial government and its relationship with the Baganda ensured advantages that would come to help the Baganda maintain power and influence throughout the coming decades in Uganda. In fact,” the official attitude could fairly be described as ‘Buganda-centric’…” , which created other tensions within Uganda throughout the twentieth century (Roberts 1962: 449-450). While the Baganda do not hold as much power as they used to within Uganda, there is still a sentiment in the central region where I conducted my research of Baganda superiority. Often times, Africans (both Ugandan nationals and beyond) are discriminated against within this specific community for not having a Ganda identity.

Alongside the political development of these modern-day nation-states, social development itself is constantly shifting and evolving alongside historical trends, resulting a variety of theories and paradigms that tend to align with and create the dominant worldviews of the time.

The theories that we believe in as individuals are personal; they are largely tied to our own experiences and our backgrounds. This became evident through the interviews that I conducted in Uganda. The people that I spoke with each had an opinion on development and
progress that was largely shaped by their experience within the community, the education that they had received, and that which they aspired for the community in the future. Though these aspirations were often shared based off of universal expectations for improvement, the path towards them were very much dependent on experience. We must consider the tie between theory and evidence, and how theory has the power to impact peoples’ lives. An overwhelming number of the people that I spoke with had little-to-no exposure to development theory in academia; despite this, they had experience with the lived realities of development theory and how they results of it play out on the ground. There were common notions of what ought to be aspired to, and what was the “end-goal” of the projects. I wondered if these shared notions stemmed from a synergy of thought, especially because of the impact of the foreign on the experience of those community members that I connected with (particularly because of the integration of international volunteers into programming). The biggest actors in the sphere of international influence tended to impact the way that people participating in development projects saw the possible modernities most, but I doubted that the possibilities they saw were limited by hegemonic influence. I saw more agency within their projects than hegemony allowed for. This is why it is essential to examine development from multiple perspectives.

In his article, “Development as Practice in a Liberal Capitalist World”, Alan Thomas examines the importance of opening up the definition of development in modern discourse. He specifies that “a dominant trend in development thinking restricts it to a rather limited meaning, referring specifically to the practice of development agencies” (Thomas 2000: 773), so considering development and its impact on expansive terms provides more opportunity to cater to the specific wants and needs of a community in its development. Development agencies have come to mold development discourse, which can be both beneficial and detrimental. It provides
more opportunity for change than a government agency may, but it also limits the perspective that development projects come from. Often times, projects and project ideas are coming from “development experts” rather than community members whose lives will be impact by those projects. A complexity that arises is that hegemonic notions of development have been idealized from the mid-twentieth century onwards. This plays into the power dynamics of universals that are accepted globally.

Therefore, one must examine the agency to control and impact the development that a community is moving toward, which is something that I specifically looked at within the case of the organization that I focused my research on in central Uganda. As evident through my interviews, in the case of this organization, the foreign voice carried a degree of importance within development discourse – but the power given to that voice depended large on the perception of the person it was coming from. The local voice was by no means muted, but it perhaps limited itself after seeing the connection to hegemony that the foreign voice possessed. It is important to emphasize the power that the local voice did possess, though. That agency was by no means removed. This is evident through the integration of local values specifically through the values of the women who were involved in the economic empowerment programs. The importance of these voices is highlighted through my interaction with Arnold.

It would be extremely restrictive to argue that through globalization, the local voice has been muted. It has not been muted. Rather, as Tsing argues in her book, the ideology within the culture is created via “the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference” that inevitably come about within the ever-globalizing world (Tsing 2004: 4). The local voice, therefore, is not and has never been “purely local” – global and local are only relevant within specific contexts. Lived realities are always an interaction between the two.
Globalization, therefore, may play a role in perpetuating hegemony, but it also plays a role in challenging that hegemony, and ignoring this would be removing warranted agency from the localities that we consider, and others whose ideologies are thought to have become marginalized via globalization (Tsing 2004: 6). Rather than one perspective limiting the other, they engage in this awkward friction because while hegemonic influence may be claiming its own agency, the women working in this particular organization were claiming their own agency, and in turn propelling another rising universal and creating their own reality of it via friction: feminist values.

In relation to my field research, the emerging voice that comes about as a result of dialogue between the foreign and the local may not look like the “hegemonic ideal” that the foreign pushes, but that is O.K., and that is where Alan Thomas’s concept of multiple modernities comes into play. I saw this emerging through my research. Dialogue was ever-present. Reciprocity between the voices was at the very core of what this organization sought to represent within the community. The very core of the organization represented the friction occurring between what global expectations of development implied and that which the people within the community sought to get out of development projects. This became evident through conversations with the founder and director of the organization, Arnold, who shared his story and vision for the organization in an interview, as well as through many other conversations and contexts.

I first met Arnold almost two years ago, and it was he that helped facilitate my travels to Uganda. I first contacted him in September 2012 about the possibility of an internship at his organization. I sent him a copy of my CV along with an application outlining why I was interested in the position.
I received a response fairly quickly after sending my application and those that I was in touch with seemed eager about the possibility of me coming to work for the organization. The volume of international volunteers fluctuates from year to year, and at that time, the organization was stuck in the middle of a low-volume period. A highly involved volunteer from Canada was the only international member of the organization working directly in Uganda at that time. He was just concluding a very successful fundraiser when we were put in contact with one another, which allowed one of the three sectors of the organization, the Education Center, to expand from serving about forty children to serving one hundred children. While this was extremely promising for the organization as a whole, Arnold was looking for support via new international volunteers to continue the work that the young man from Canada had kick-started, as he intended to leave by January.

I was told that another young woman was planning on arriving within the next few months. She would help fill the gap left by the previous volunteer, but the volume of work was quite substantial so the organization was still seeking more support. I was told there was a network of previous volunteers, and while most continued to help out when they could virtually, it was difficult to sustain a productive momentum without a full staff on the ground. All of this was being communicated to me through the Canadian volunteer. He told me about Arnold, but it was a week or two before we were in touch. I recall a Monday morning when Arnold called me on my American cell phone, and it was the first time that we spoke other than several emails back and forth. I did not recognize the country code of the number on my caller ID, and it took me a moment to place what he was saying before it clicked that he was calling from Uganda. The first question that he asked me was when I would be available to come to Uganda. I explained that I was still in school, and needed to complete the academic year before traveling,
and on top of that, I was waiting to secure funding for the internship. I would not find out until December that I had received a fellowship enabling me to go. We were in touch throughout that process for the coming months, and finally met in May when I found my way to Uganda.

It was a Thursday morning when Arnold and the other international volunteer picked me up from the airport in Entebbe. My flight had been delayed a full twenty-four hours, and I was afraid that I would be lost in the airport. I had tried calling Arnold from a layover in Amsterdam, but none of my calls seemed to be going through. I stepped out of the small shaded building into the morning sun to about a dozen cab drivers asking where I wanted to go. After glancing to my right, I saw a smiling face. Arnold had recognized me from our Skype conversations, when we went over the logistics of the internship and what my role would be within the organization. Despite my concerns, luckily he had tracked my flight and was able to adjust the plans for travel. We walked through the parking lot, paid for parking at the electronic kiosk, and found the rented car and driver that would bring us to our destination. We drove an hour and a half on Entebbe Road, leading from the airport by Lake Victoria in Entebbe to Kampala, through the busy city, and then to the dusty roads of the suburb that would become my home for the following three months.

Over the course of those three months, I worked for the organization as a teacher, providing support at any and every capacity that I was capable of. Arnold’s dedication and drive to advocate for the beneficiaries of the organization and to ensure its success on a daily basis was unwavering. Not only did he run all three sectors of the organization, but he also worked as a butcher in town. His presence was enjoyed and respected by all those who I encountered. At that time I understood very little about how the organization worked, or why it worked. I observed the daily operations of the Education Center, the women’s economic empowerment program, and
the youth empowerment program. I saw the faces of the employees and beneficiaries of the organization every day and got to know some of their stories. Despite this, it was not until a year later, when I came back to the town to learn about the inner workings of the organization and its successes and setbacks as a civil society organization within the community, that I began to grasp the full picture.

Present

Arnold and I are sitting in a dimly lit classroom at the Education Center. Lunchtime has just passed and the sun is shining at its brightest, but the only open window is in the next room over. Some of the neighborhood girls who are enrolled in the preschool at the Education Center are standing outside the window ledge calling for us to come outside or to let her in, but school is not in session. We are in the middle of August break, and classes are scheduled to resume during the upcoming week. The large garage door to the classroom that we are sitting in is closed to indicate that school is closed today, but we can still hear the gathering of children outside. One of the younger girls seems to have gathered them together after realizing that Arnold and I are sitting in the classroom. They see me as Teacher Hannah, and even though international volunteers generally do not serve as teachers, I taught almost all of the children that have gathered outside, last summer, during my first stay in town.

One child who I have not seen since then calls my name; she has just arrived back from a month-long trip to her family’s village, and is coming back now because the break is almost over. Because of I have only been in town since the start of the school break, I have not seen her since the previous year. I quickly squeeze her hand through the window and tell her that I will come outside to hear about her year in a few minutes.
I walk back into the garage classroom, and sit down with Arnold on the green plastic chairs that can be found throughout the Education Center. The company that makes them is called Mukwano (friendship). Because of the dim light, I can see the dust particles floating in the air in between where I am sitting and where Arnold is sitting. He calls out to the girl standing outside, and then turns to me, beginning a story.

“You know, Hannah, all of the teachers here now call this girl “Teacher Hannah”... After you left last year,” he goes on, “she started calling all of the teachers “Teacher Hannah” even though none of them are mzungu (white) like you; so, they just started calling her “Teacher Hannah” instead.”

I laugh, and like clockwork, the woman who works in the school’s office, Josephine, comes into the classroom. “Hannah, Teacher Hannah is looking for you in the office.”

I consider my mixed feelings about this young girl referring to all of the Education Center’s teachers as “Teacher Hannah”. She does not use my name while speaking to the other foreigners, only the local teachers who are working within the Center, all of whom identify as Baganda (meaning of the Ganda people/ of the Buganda kingdom). This is an interesting power dynamic that I find myself in. She identifies my role, therefore, with that of a teacher – not that of a mzungu, the word used to identify foreigners. While mzungu literally means “white person”, it is used to identify all foreigners within this community, including the international volunteer who has recently arrived, who has a dark complexion. While her color is similar to some people within the community there, the word mzungu is used to describe her to account for her perceived economic and foreign status. I am labeled mzungu by almost everyone within the community, but the term is never used to describe me within this forum (the school setting). Here, I am always referred to as “teacher” first. I wonder why this is – but it is reflected in this
young girl using my name to describe other teachers. Despite our different racial and ethnic
statuses, our shared status of teacher seems to carry the most important connotations. I consider
that perhaps this could be due to the importance placed on education within the community,
especially within the community that this organization is working with. Because of this
emphasis, education begins to emerge in my mind as another universal of development – one that
falls into a category that Tsing points out, is thought to contribute “to a better life for all
humanity” – the aspiration that all universals strive for (Tsing 2004: 9). In my study of
development, education always emerges as one of the most important factors in pushing a
community “forward” – but, the same obstacle arises: what education, and what development?
Education and its importance in development is most certainly a universal, but the methods
through which we approach education are again, the normalization of one narrative of what
education ought to look like: just one narrative, just one reality. But, it explains why, even
decades after dismantling the colonial state, hegemonic frameworks of education continue to be
implemented in both South Africa and Uganda. There is no widespread acceptance of an
alternative (yet) to the system that came about largely as a result of British influence.

Josephine asks if Arnold or I want butunda (passion fruit juice) from down the street. She
is going to take a walk to get some. We thank her, and continue with our conversation.

“I was born in and grew up in the village,” Arnold begins, “and I came to know about
Kampala when I was 16 years old. [Kampala] was described to me as heaven,” he says. “It was a
very rural area, and my mother was a farmer. My father was a doctor working in Kampala, and
he would come home on the weekends.”

“I started putting on my first shoes when I had joined secondary [school] in 2001. [Before
that], we used to move around barefooted… We had school uniforms, which we also wore to
church,” he explains. “Everything we had to get, we got from the garden; [the closest] shop was two miles away.”

He tells me a little bit more about his village, which is about 45 miles from Kampala. He described it as very rural, in the central part of Uganda. He is from the Buganda ethnic group, and grew up speaking Luganda.

The Buganda is a kingdom that reigns in central Uganda, including the capital city of Kampala. I am told that it is the largest kingdom in present-day Uganda, and that it gained much of its reputation and power through its relationship with colonial administration. Arnold explains that even today, the *Kabaka* (King) of Buganda owns many of the government buildings in Kampala. Therefore, the king still holds a great deal of political influence.

Arnold tells me about his experience founding the organization. He begins by telling me about how he started the programming during his internship [at university]. His studies were focused on providing support for people with HIV/AIDS, which is why he decided to connect with a group of five ladies living in the community, close by to the place he works as a butcher (three of these ladies are still working with UYWEFA). He discusses how he brought these women together and created programs to de-stigmatize HIV in the community, because they were feeling marginalized, and even a bit rejected within the community. He tells me that there were very few resources for them at that time, as it was before the non-profit industry boomed around Kampala; “There was no other organization at that time to unite women with HIV within the area,” he says, “so [these women] were looking for something to create a sense of community. There was [an organization located in the central business district of Kampala], but it wasn't close enough for women to take advantage of on a regular basis.”
He tells me that the most important thing to him has been “talking to the woman and seeing exactly what they want to get out of [a community-based organization]”, rather than making assumptions about what he thinks that they need. He wants to “bring them together [so that they can] share their skills and solve their problems together”. So, that is how they started, he explains: “It was very small. We didn’t even have an office, but we were given a table under the tree by the town council.”

The women that he began working with wanted to start out by talking about stigma of HIV/AIDS. That is why they decided to bring in youth who are not affected by HIV/AIDS, so that they could engage with multiple populations within the community. They also went into local schools and did programming about de-stigmatization. This is how the women’s empowerment aspect of the organization came about. The youth empowerment organization grew after the youth started engaging with the women, and then took it a level further by participating in theater and dance, and shaping the themes of the projects around de-stigmatization. The school, he tells me, was the last point of growth for the organization. His pride shines through his words. “We were the first organization in this community to help those affected by HIV/AIDS [in this capacity]. The only other organizations available to them were not accessible because of transportation… Many of these women cannot afford transport costs all the time. It can also prevent them from getting their medications, so this has been a great resource for the women.”

Community Needs

I am eager to hear about what Arnold perceives the needs of the community to be, specifically because of his passion for listening to the women’s goals and aspirations, rather than placing his own agenda on the group.
“Different people in the community have different needs,” he says. “There are high rates of unemployment, and a high number of people affected by HIV… There are also high rates of domestic violence, especially towards women and children in this community.”

“One of the main needs of the community is [that many people do not have access to an] education.” He tells me that even those who study at universities cannot always take what they have studied and apply it to a practical, income-generating career. This reminds me of institutional problems with education in my own country. This, he tells me, is one of the reasons he believes his organization to have a positive impact within the community. It gives practical experience to all those involved and gives them the opportunity to engage in activities that will ultimately give them the opportunity to develop marketable skills. This draws back to the idea of education as a universal ingredient to development and “progress”.

He expands: “One way to solve this [and to reach beyond the scope of our organization] is to promote vocational training [above university], because vocational training can help people develop skills for practical areas of work.” This goes hand in hand with another community need that he outlines: “creating more employment and income-generating activities.” Arnold tells me about how he believes education is the only way to address the needs within the community. In this particular area, students have access to free, government-sponsored primary schools. However, many families do not take advantage of these resources because the education at government schools is perceived to be low quality. Nevertheless, private primary schools are accessible. Their fees are generally not high enough to discourage families from sending their children to school, he explains, and now, with organizations like ours, children that come from disadvantaged backgrounds can access a private school education for free, or for a reduced price. However, “primary schools are not enough,” he concludes, “there is not a single public
secondary school in the area.” According to Arnold, it is at this level that families tend to stop sending children to school, because fees are too high at the local secondary schools. On top of that, they increase each year a child is in school.

“So, [children] drop out of school at the age of 13 or 14, [and these] are the ones that are at the most risk.” Arnold articulates his fears to me: that these children are particularly vulnerable and susceptible to negative influence.

“Kids like to imitate what they see,” he tells me, “which is why we put so much pressure on international volunteers here. We ask that they dress and act in accordance with local culture.”

This distinction is particularly important because it draws a line, marking a level of awareness regarding aspects of life that come from external influence versus influence and values from within the community.

I see Arnold’s reaction when an international volunteer does not act in accordance with the organization’s expectations. She smokes cigarettes publicly (and often in front of the children at school), which is highly stigmatized for women within the Buganda culture. She also spends nights at her boyfriend’s house, and displays affection towards him publically, which is also very stigmatized. Arnold’s fears come alive within my own host family: the youngest girl, who is seven years old, is found one afternoon attempting to hold old cigarette butts in her mouth. The international presence here does hold substantial influence, and can be seen throughout youth reflection of international media and popular culture. Nearly every youth interacting in the organization’s empowerment program saw their inspiration in American media and communications.

However, with that being said, there is still an evident friction between national popular cultures with that foreign influence. As Arnold emphasized in our discussion, there is a level of
rejection of foreign popular culture because it is thought to pass bad values on to young children.
This rejection is a perfect example of the flow that Tsing describes. It exemplifies Tsing’s take on
“friction”, and the interaction of multiple influences and the interaction of culture that is
accepted as authentic and legitimate. It demonstrates that authenticity does not always need to be
entirely from tradition, nor does legitimacy need to be entirely foreign, reflecting back into
Thomas’s take on multiple modernities. It shows us that universals do not have the power to take
over the world, “even in transcending localities” (Tsing 2004: 8). Tsing reminds us that while
universals exist and play a large role in the global flow of culture, they are not “politically
neutral”, but rather, “deeply implicated in the establishment of European colonial power” (Tsing
2004: 9). Universals were used as a tool to imply hegemony, and the political implications that
they carry are still reminiscent of that imperial mindset. This is evident through the way that
expectations of progress manifest themselves in development discourse. It is also evident
through the way that certain aspects of development programming are still accepted as universal,
for example, the continued widespread use of the British education system in post-colonial
communities. This is largely in part because universalism represented “the traveling power of
reason” Tsing emphasizes that dictating instructions did not have power, but portraying the
desired action via reason had the potential to convince communities of their legitimacies. She
states that: “Only reason could gather up the fragments of knowledge and custom distributed
around the world to achieve progress, science, and good government” (Tsing 2004: 9).

This interaction of the foreign and the local, plus the power of the universal is also
reflected in Arnold’s words, and in the daily strategies of the organization. In discussing its
primary goals, he mentions a balance of promoting a community where those affected by
HIV/AIDS can support themselves, and he also emphasizes, time and time again, one word:
sustainability. This word is often thrown around in international development discourse to the point that it loses its meaning. Something that is “sustainable” is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as: something that is “capable of being maintained or continued at a certain rate or level”\(^5\). When ask who he developed the plan for sustainability with, he tells me that it was with the Canadian volunteer. Evidently, the concept comes from a foreign voice, but the meaning of the word takes shape when placed in the context of this organization. Arnold tells me that when he was growing up, after losing his father, his mother had a difficult time providing for the entire family.

“In other words,” Arnold describes, “she was not self-sustainable… So my goal is to help the women and the families involved with this organization become as self-reliant, sustainable, and independent as possible.”

This reflected another rising universal: feminism. However, its presence within the community does not reflect the feminism that I have encountered in the United States. Women’s role within the community is important within this community, and everybody is aware of that. Unlike that which I experienced in the United States, women, and particularly older women: *jajjas*\(^6\) (grandmothers) receive the most respect out of anyone within the Baganda culture. When a *jajja* is met, it is expected that one will kneel in front of her and if there is mutual love and respect, she will take your hands in hers. This is what I am told. I see no similar act towards men of any age. Women, as Arnold pointed out in his narrative about his family, carry the weight of running the household, and she even ran a farm. She did have economic difficulties, but its significance in Baganda culture has a different one than that which is found in the culture I grew up in.


\(^{6}\) This term can be used to refer to both grandmothers and grandfathers. The proper noun, *Jajja*, can be used as a name for a grandmother or grandfather.
up with. This is why I am hesitant to label Arnold’s push for economic opportunities for the HIV positive mothers as “feminism” specifically. It is allowing a word to define an idea, rather than allowing an idea to define a word. Feminism means “advocacy of equality of the sexes and the establishment of the political, social, and economic rights of the female sex; the movement associated with this”7 but this aspiration within the community in central Uganda was reflective of the disadvantages the women encountered because of their HIV status and stigma associated with HIV, not necessarily the inherent inequality within society. Health status was also a factor in the position Arnold’s mother was in. I perceived the view to be that women and men do have their own roles within society and within the household, and sameness was not something that was sought after. In fact, women were already more present within the community (and I was also told that this was a result of health statuses). Feminism did not manifest itself in the same level of universality that it is seen, especially within the capacity of a university setting, within the United States. However, the presence of its values displayed the exchange that the global fight for women could be influenced by the value that is placed on them from within communities like this.

7 http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/69192?redirectedFrom=feminism#eid
Chapter 3
Kate: The Presence and Influence of International Volunteers

Throughout the year that I spent away from Uganda, I kept in touch with my host family, particularly my host mother. I call her Jajja because that is what everyone else living at home calls her: she was the head of the household, and depending on the time of the year, between three and seven of her grandchildren live with her.

Before coming back, I called her and asked if I could stay with her again. It meant my same bedroom was ready for me when I came back from Entebbe, after friends had come and pick me up. The main difference from last year is that this year, two other mzungu girls are living at our house. They stay in an apartment within the compound, but outside of the main house. They are best friends from college, and they have come to Uganda because of a class that they took together that sparked their interest. The class had a project on NGOs, and her friend discovered this organization through that project. And here they are.

It is a weeknight and Jajja is at a meeting for female business owners in the community, although it has gotten dark, and she usually does not stay out late after dark. We have already had dinner with the kids, who are sitting in the living room watching music videos on the television. They are also playing with Kate’s laptop at the same time (one of the two girls who lives with us). We are sitting at the dining table drinking tea, and when the kids call her, she occasionally gets up from the table, walks into the living room, and resets the game that the kids are playing for them. I am surprised that she is letting the kids play on the laptop; evidently, each foreigner has a different comfort zone when it comes to what material goods they give to the people that they meet. I have never given my computer to the kids to play with, other than when we have watched a movie on it together when the power was out, when we could not use the regular
television. I have worked hard during my time here to build organic relationships with my host siblings so that they understand me despite my otherness, rather than seeing me as a vehicle for electronic entertainment. This is a major change that has come along with welcome Kate and her friend into the household; each evening when I come home from the Education Center, I find the kids playing outside Kate’s apartment window with her iPhone. They have taught themselves how to navigate its games, camera, and music capabilities. Each evening she has almost a hundred new selfies on her camera roll. So, they are enthralled with the game, as they sit on the couch, with music videos playing on the TV waiting for Jajja to come home. And we continue to drink our tea.

She begins to tell me about her undergraduate university experience. She has just graduated from a small liberal arts college in the United States, and has a background in Health Communication and Media Writing.

“One thing that has always interested me throughout my studies has been concepts of unilateral and bilateral communication,” she says. I am not familiar with them, so I ask her to explain the concepts.

“Bilateral communication invites the conversation of the other party, but unilateral focuses on what the speaker things. Bilateral is ideal. When I traveled to the Gambia with my International Politics class, I noticed a lot of unilateral communication in the way their political system is set up. It is very “this is what you believe” and people sort of accept that without demanding a bilateral system,” she tells me.

“In some ways, I think it might be the same in Uganda… but I haven’t been here long enough to tell. But, generally less educated populations are more susceptible to unilateral communication… this is true in America, too.”
I think she is referring to Yoweri Museveni, the president of Uganda, and his anti-gay legislation that has been a popular topic in discourse between Uganda and the United States in the past few months⁸. She might be talking about how voters generally accept Museveni’s policy without questioning it. She has voiced her frustration with Museveni’s anti-gay politics to me several times over the last few weeks. It is an internal dilemma for her to have even visited Uganda in the first place because of his politics. It is a difficult topic for most international volunteers that have come to the organization in the past year or so. The Ugandans that we speak with in the organization outwardly are loud supporters of Museveni’s legislation. Behind closed doors, on the other hand, several of them have displayed their curiosity and asked me about how homosexuality is approached in the United States and why.

I wonder where she is going with this, but then she sort of changes direction in her thought process. “It is so difficult to break the mold here,” she states.

“What makes you say that?” I ask. I suspect that she will go on about her problems with Ugandan politics, but she deters to another topic.

“Well, there is this notion that America is so modern, and so great. Everyone here thinks it is wonderful that we are from there, and now we are here… but there is something missing [in America]… otherwise you wouldn’t see so many mzungus coming over here,” she says.

While this change in topic throws me, she is right on a certain level. Despite the harsh reaction against Museveni and his politics in the United States and parts of Western Europe, I have encountered more and more foreigners within Uganda lately. Clearly his stances are not affecting tourism in the way that aid-giving nations threatened that it would. I consider her words, and think about why I first came to Uganda. I think about why the other foreigners that I

⁸ http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/25/world/africa/ugandan-president-to-sign-antigay-law.html?_r=0
know in the area have come. Reflecting on my own experience, I originally came to learn about non-profit organizations, and the internship I was offered as an opportunity to do so—even that is largely motivated by furthering my own self-interest. When others come to volunteer, that is also based off of self-interest. “Helping” these communities that they have labeled as different from themselves, or disadvantaged, reflects to a degree that they are seeking something that they cannot find at home. Evidently, that is not limited to volunteer experience because every community has room for improvement, and opportunities to get involved in one’s own community are always there. It seems as though Kate is right, although I’m not sure she is thinking about her words in the same way that I am. She is looking at this community in Uganda through rose-colored glasses, something that I did when I first went to South Africa: rejecting my own reality and glorifying the “other” reality. Perhaps if we considered the parallels in humanity instead of otherness, that divide need not exist. It seems like the meaning of her words fall into a sort of escape from the individualistic-capitalist-environment that we are overwhelmed by at home. But that is rising within some parts of the community here, too. There is this assumption that there are two harsh realities. The possibility that the two places are more similar than different is generally not something that foreigners (or locals) consider. Rather, perhaps that the class divide is more present than we perceive, and that foreigners coming into this community to volunteer are transcending more of a class barrier than one of “development”. She goes on:

“When I’m speaking with Ugandans, most of what people say when they think about the U.S. is related to the entertainment industry. They want to model, to sing, to dance, and to act... and it seems like they sort of need to be connected to the newest thing in the U.S. or in the U.K.... But in the U.S., people like the music that they like, they don't really care about what is popular but here the newest thing connects them to the rest of the world.”
It is not the first time that she and I have spoken about the emphasis on connection within this community. It has come up before: particularly through the frequent use of social media by many of our local friends. Facebook and social media have become yet another universal within the community. Tsing reminds us that “the universal offers us the chance to participate in the global stream of humanity” (Tsing 2004: 1), which is exactly what social media gives the opportunity to do. But the nature by which social media is used is evidently different, adjusted to be compatible with what locals want out of it. While in the Facebook culture that she and I are accustomed to, we would not accept friend requests from someone that we do not know, an interesting aspect of the youth Facebook culture within this community is that the social media website is used for making friends just as it is used for staying connected with friends. Youth use it to make global connections, and have made Facebook friends with people in places all over the world, from islands in the Pacific, to Asia, to the Middle East, to North America. This is one of the many ways that an interest in connection is made evident.

She shifts back to the importance of popular culture that she sees in the youth that she has befriended from the organization. “It seems like aspirations here definitely have to do with aspirations in the West, because many people have aspirations for a career in the entertainment industry in the West.”

I ask her about this label she is using: “the West”, one that is thrown around in international affairs constantly. What makes a country a part of the Western world, especially since the geographical implications of the West are shifting?

“The difference is, to me, between developed and developing countries. Developed countries are self-sufficient; their resources are sort of circular within the community. Financially, skills and stuff are self-sufficient, and people can support themselves. But more
developing countries have a greater tendency to lean on the developed ones. For example here we see a lot of aid pouring into these countries, and it’s so difficult first of all, because it’s hard for developed countries to really chew the costs... You can't give to everything, so how do you decide what you're going to give to? But its really difficult, because in a sense that leaning on developed countries can be taught. It depends on the reinforcement that it’s given.”

I think back to the start of her conversation and the implied comments about Museveni. I find it interesting that she dismisses aid as something that “developing” countries need, and something that “developed” countries have a hard time fulfilling. This is particularly because aid is much more than a “gift” given, it is a tool used to enforce a level of neo-imperialism within “developing” countries (Sachs 1997). Aid, rather, is largely an instrument of power and its legacy goes back to the colonial period. It promotes control and dominance – a compromising power dynamic. What is interesting about Museveni is that his anti-gay legislation, while highly controversial, in the global sphere, is a largely a reaction against the neo-imperial influence that aid-giving nations are attempting to exert upon Uganda. Essentially, when aid-giving nations threatened to cut their contributions if the bill was signed into law, Museveni’s actions said, “Ok, keep your aid, you are choosing to give it to us, we are not asking for it”10. This is an instance where the universal is being rejected; its place the particular society is not as accepted as some other universal.s Aid-giving nations didn’t know how to take that. Nevertheless, despite the contents of Museveni’s attempted law, the politics of his actions speak loudly. Developing a country off of aid removes a large degree of agency, and on top of that, it is not sustainable: the

---


very buzzword that this organization (and so many others) are attempting to encompass in their actions. Kate relates this back to the organization:

“For example,” she says, “Arnold has been talking a lot lately about sustainability of the candle program, and having it be able to stand on its own, because you can't just keep throwing money at something and expect it to get better.” She is referring to the aid that the candle program is currently receiving from a U.S. government mission to Uganda. Arnold previously applied for a grant through the mission, and has been receiving supplies for almost one year now. “You have to actually build a structure and have it stand within the community, that can help it. Like, if the aid gets pulled out for whatever reason,” her voice carries off and she breaks our eye contact, taking a minute to think.

Even the situation that she is referring to demonstrates the dangerous dynamics of aid. Arnold has told me on several occasions that he has had to adjust the candle-making program to satisfying the U.S. mission to Uganda that is currently funding it. He has pointed out to me that before receiving those funds, the women had more agency to run the program as they saw fit; now, each move of the program must be deliberate, and it must fit in with the mission’s standards. In some capacities it is good, because it makes sure the program is driven and that goals are being achieved on a daily basis. The question is: whose goals? Whose development has this become?

All of a sudden my youngest host brother calls out for Kate. “Can you reset the game?!” She has not checked on them in a while, and he seems to be distressed. She gets up to find that he has beaten the game and she buys them next level, as they have used up their free trial. She comes back to the table, picks up her tea, and holds it between her hands as if she is trying to warm herself.
“I think a lot of people who haven't traveled much,” she begins, “might see development as the creature comforts that we lose when we come here, like the shopping malls that disgust us here because they remind us too much of home... But I think it is much, much deeper than that.”

She is referring to a mall that is about 20 minutes away from our house, one that could have come out of a wealthy neighborhood in New York. To be honest, the mall is much fancier than those in the area that I grew up in. It is a huge building with security at the entrance, and everyone who enters must go through a metal detector and is subject to a pat-down by the security guard. It is in a neighborhood where there are several other bars and restaurants that mzungus frequent, but I have observed that the mall welcomes wealthy mzungus as well as wealthy locals. There, a cup of coffee costs double what it costs at home. I have only stepped inside it once to use the bathroom one evening while passing by. When Kate says the malls “disgust us”, she is referring to the conversations that the group of international volunteers at the organization have (which at the moment, amounts to six people--an all-time high). The group rejects this mall and its place within Kampala, and to my suspicion, this is because it reminds them of the world that they thought they left behind before coming to Uganda. The mall reflects the consumer nature at home, and more than anything, it reflects the exact opposite of their realities they have molded within the community: one with a counter-consumer nature, a rejection of the realities that they grew up with. Again, this is likely also due to class difference, not necessarily to national differences.

This, in my eyes, is the danger of a division between what Kate refers to as “the West” and the “developing” world. According to this narrative, the “developing” world is a sort of antithesis to “the West”, and divisions seep through in every perception of the community. By creating this division, there is a narrative and its opposite, which perpetuates a dangerous
perception of seeing the community, of seeing Uganda, and of seeing Africa as a world with realities differing from one’s own (of seeing otherness).

This division also creates an interesting dynamics through which international volunteers enter the community, how they see themselves, and how they perceive others to see them. I have observed this now through over four cycles of volunteers and have noticed several factors that impact the community’s perception of the volunteers: the volunteer’s country of origin, their attitude towards the organization, their perceived gender, perceived age, perceived socioeconomic status, and perceived experience level. Once Kate begins to talk about her opinion on international volunteers, it becomes clear that we have had drastically different experiences. I suspect that stems back to the way we are perceived within the community, and the way that we perceive ourselves.

Kate begins by saying, “The opportunity to bring [international volunteers] in [to the organization and to the community], is to bring tangible resources in. For example, [my friend] brought two video cameras that she is donating to the program. But [the way I see it], the youth program doesn't exist without an international intern that is coordinating it. [I think] that the program hasn't existed since the last intern was here.”

This is one of the problems that arises when foreigners are not only perceived as, but when they perceive themselves as the “other”. While it may be valuable for the organization to have access to volunteers, I believe that when they do not rely on them entirely is more valuable. I have observed dangerous affects of international volunteers entering the community and granting themselves more agency than they ought to: this can imprint the notion that international contributions are more valuable than those which community members have the capacity to give. International volunteers have often been behind large fundraising projects, but
their names painted on the side of the Education Center tells us that their money and material goods are of more value than the community members’ time. I was led to believe this after the Canadian volunteer’s large fundraiser, which ultimately allowed for the expansion of both the Education Center and the women’s empowerment program. Despite its importance and the ways that it enabled the organization to move forward, it seems as though this previously volunteer is now glorified in the minds of the community. His presence and role is idealized whereas in reality the project could not have moved forward without the contributions of Arnold, the women, and teachers in the Center in mobilizing the project expansions.

This has also created a culture of expectation through which the organization is able to obtain tangible resources from volunteers (and this is also displayed through my host siblings’ use of Kate’s electronics). Her friend, who also lives with us, brought two cameras for the youth program to use during her time as a volunteer, and after. However, it seems like there is a disconnect between what participants of the projects want to use and what is practical to shape the program around. While it would be wonderful for the youth volunteers to be able to use the cameras (they had the opportunity to use some as well with a previous volunteer) obstacles have arisen. Over the past six months or so, the government has started a development project to remake the main road coming into town. Because the power lines are underground, digging the road has resulted in frequent power outages—in fact, during the week this year we have only had power for about half of the week, if we are lucky. This will end when the road project is finished, but because of this, Kate’s perception of the youth program is one that is unproductive and unsuccessful. There is a disconnect: I have seen it flourish over the course of the past year, but our expectations and exposure vary because we have had different experiences. I have had several conversations with Arnold, who is frustrated with the international volunteer’s perception
that the program must rely on the use of the video cameras. The program, he says, has the potential to provide so much more.

The youth program was created to encompass much more than use of media and learning how to use equipment. In fact, that is just one of the new functions of the program since the group has had access to technology. From other interviews, I have learned that the youth program originally began years ago as a supplement to the women’s program. Arnold gathered together a local group to help provide at-home assistance to widows who were HIV positive within the community. The youth would help with washing clothes and fetching water, and the program has since expanded to media forums. However, the fundamental aspect of integration with the women’s program continues to be a core aspect of the program. In fact, Arnold has articulated to me that it is the volunteer’s limited scope for the project that is causing these challenges and frustrations to arise, not necessarily the lack of power.

Kate continues with her thought: “Our individual expertise and physical resources [are utilized]... but the ideas that we bring in are not necessarily respected. There is an idea of “this is how things are done here…”

“This is the biggest problem that I have with [the organization]. I try to bring in ideas for the [women’s economic empowerment] program, but those ideas are rejected because they are a deviation from how things have worked previously…”

I regret that this has been Kate’s experience with the organization, because it seems as though every volunteer has had a different experience. I think back to the Canadian volunteer, and how welcomed his ideas were. I wonder if he has gained more respect because he is male. Another representation of feminism takes hold. Kate explains to me that feminism is a value that is extremely representative of her time with this organization because of her own role and
because of Ugandan politics and her place in the social sphere, but also because one of her jobs includes working within the women’s empowerment program. The notions that Kate and other international volunteers bring in largely influence the way that universals manifest within the community, and feminism is a perfect example of this.

In her article “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses”, Chandra Mohanty discusses “Third World Feminism” and the danger of imposing hegemonic feminist values from imperial powers onto formerly colonized nations. She begins by discussing the implications of colonization in general: she argues that “colonization almost invariably implies a relation of structural domination, and a suppression—often violent—of the heterogeneity of the subject(s) in question”, and that colonization seeps into so many different aspects of life, including womanhood and therefore feminism (Mohanty 1984: 333). She points out that hegemonic “feminist discourse and political practice is neither singular nor homogeneous in its goals, interests or analyses”, and that therefore, its dominant ideologies should not be imposed through universals (Mohanty 1984: 334). But, “privilege and ethnocentric universality” creates a system that assumes “a world system dominated by the West on the other, characterize a sizable extend of Western feminist work on women in the third world”, even when that may not be the case (Mohanty 1984: 335).

Construction of difference, i.e. Western and non-Western, or First and Third World, is detrimental because the variation within these categories invalidates the categories in and of themselves. They promote the “[appropriation] and “[colonization]” [of] the fundamental complexities and conflicts which characterize” these societies, and also those which characterize feminism, and “the lives of women of different classes, religions, cultures, races and casts in these countries” (Mohanty 1984: 335). To assume that there is no influence between what
Mohanty describes as first and third world feminism would be to “ignore the complex interconnections…and the profound effect of this on the lives of women in these countries” (Mohanty 1984: 336). While she uses these distinctions, she notes that they are dangerous to use uncritically because they “are made on the basis of the privileging of a particular group as the norm or referent” (Mohanty 1984: 337).

Mohanty’s points are essential in the consideration of feminism and its presence within the organization. The structure of the organization assumes a specific end goal for women involved based on an expectation created by hegemonic ideas – ideas which are not necessarily relevant in the lives of the women involved. Even if they are relevant in the women’s lives, we must ask why the hegemonic ideas are relevant to begin with. Mohanty points out that they have become relevant only because “women are produced through these very relations as well as being implicated in forming these relations”: another reality of the friction of feminism in the lived realities of women involved in the “empowerment” programs that the organization provides (Mohanty 1984: 340).

But, the experience must be due to a different factor because I always felt that my ideas were welcomed and respected during my previous internship with the organization. It seems as though we all receive some degree of respect because of our nationalities, but a substantial part of one’s place in the organization, I think, is about how much one respects and accepts Arnold and Jacob’s thoughts and ideas. I perceive mutual respect to play a big role in the experience one has at this organization as a volunteer. This means that while foreign perspectives are welcomed, they are taken with a grain of salt. In other words, an idea will not be taken blindly just because it comes from someone who has a perceived expertise in a certain field. A big part of how thoughts...
are taken into the sphere of the organization is how the community members involved react to the alternatives proposed.

All of a sudden the volume on the television in the living room goes up and all of the kids are up in the living room dancing to one of this summer’s most popular songs, “Go Down Low”. They’ve mastered the dance that is shown in the music video and sure enough, one of the girls is dancing about two inches off of the ground during the chorus of the song. They are all clapping, and Kate and I laugh. As much as I want to get up and dance with them, the song ends and they turn the sound on the TV back down to almost silent.

She turns back towards me, from readjusting to look at the TV while the music video was playing. She sighs, and we start talking about our presence within the house and within the community. She asks me a little bit about my experiences during the year before. She has been getting frustrated with the way that everyone calls her *mzungu*. I identify with her frustrations, as I experienced similar ones the previous year. It wasn’t so much that I got used to it and stopped caring, as much as I realized why some people (especially children) are so vocal about it. Kate starts to come to a similar realization:

“For every person that will come up to [me] and call [me] *mzungu* and ask for 500 shillings (Ugandan currency, amount to less that twenty cents) to buy a *chapatti* (a snack that can be purchased for vendors on the street), there are plenty of people, and its good to remind myself that sometimes they are just legitimately excited to see us because we're different…at first, it was hard to look at it like that...”

This was a similar feeling that I had when I first came to the community. I was taken aback by the inability to walk down the street without hearing “Mzungu! Mzungu!” at least a dozen times. I was initially uncomfortable with it… But then I became appreciative of it. The
reason for that is because it served as a reminder of my privilege. Within this community, I wasn’t allowed to forget about my whiteness for even a minute. This is not true at home in the United States; whiteness is easily forgotten and a privilege of that whiteness is being able to forget about it. Being made aware of it was initially uncomfortable for me because it served as a harsh reminder of the reality of so many people in my own country. I did not belong in Uganda. But people of color are reminded of the color of their skin on a regular basis—and they do belong in the United States. Coming to terms with this privilege is important, especially in a community where your presence carries so many implications. Histories of colonialism and oppression by white colonial power in Uganda are tied in with perceptions of wealth and the “other”, and what Kate is referring to is being disoriented by discomfort in a place that you have grown to love, and to want to feel comfortable in. She reaffirms this:

“Because, especially once [I started] feeling comfortable here, [I didn’t] really want to be acknowledged for being different. We'll never fully fit. I think that's the hardest thing…” She goes into an observation that she thinks that this occurs in the U.S. too, but that it is still quite different. “It's much subtler here...because for us it is very overt, here its not even prejudice. It's just like: “Oh, you're different than me…” In the U.S. it's very rude… to call someone out because of their race. But here's it's just like: “Yup, you're different, and I'm calling you out for that, and maybe I'll ask you for some money because I associate your color with that,” and that's probably the worst thing that's going to happen to you... Probably.”

Clearly race has different implications in the United States than in Uganda, especially considering whiteness doesn’t grant people injustices or negative discrimination, generally. Something that international volunteers are forced to think about is their role as a white person
and as a foreigner coming into this community, attempting to push it towards ideas of “improvement”.

   Kate notes that “[getting called out about race is] probably actually the most sinister thing that could happen to us because of our color, and it's also a form of privilege here. Like, [people are excited to work with the organization] because they have the opportunity to work with international volunteers... Whatever their motives are to want to work with us, it's just because we're different... have different ideas, and different experiences.”

   Her thoughts about race and place within the community come full circle with aspects of globalization that ought to be given attention: the integration of foreign ideas, specifically through the voices of international volunteers. In a sense, the very presence of Kate, as well as other international volunteers, has taken its place as a universal as per the assumption that volunteers are an integral aspect of development. While these volunteers’ presence and the integration of ideas is inevitable, the “arrangements of culture and power” (Tsing 2004: 5) that it has the potential to create could potentially be reminiscent of the lasting imperial legacy that exists in so many former colonies.
Chapter 4

Jacob: Frictions and Their Impact on Individual Aspirations

Jacob, an administrator at the organization, has a unique background in comparison with other members of the community. He not only serves as the organization’s representative to the Nansana Town Council, but he is also the chairperson of the council. Jacob is from the Western region of Uganda, whereas most other members of the organization are from the central region (from Kampala and its surrounding areas). He is not Baganda; rather, he is Bayankore, or of the Nkore peoples of southwestern Uganda. Jacob is the tenth born in his family, out of eleven children. He grew up speaking Nyankore, the language normally used in the Western region of Uganda, but spoke English, the national language, at school. Now he primarily speaks Luganda, because that is what the Baganda people use in Central Uganda. His presence at the organization is a bit different than that of the other Baganda administrators and teachers because of the power of the Ganda people in the central region. While his coworkers respect him, he does not receive the same privileges as they do. This, however, is different from non-Baganda students, who are often tormented by their peers because they may speak a different language or have different cultural practices at home. I have seen Nuer girls (from South Sudan) tormented by the Ganda children.

Jacob studied in Western Uganda up to senior four (secondary school), when he came to Kampala, finished high school, and attended Makerere University in Kampala. At Makerere, Jacob studied through the Institute for Adult and Community Education, where he became a trained social worker, with an emphasis on community work and community development. He finished university in 2007, and then in 2008 he started working for a money lending business, but realized he wasn't working in line with his education. He started working with the
organization to orient himself more with his interests in community development. After working there for just four months, he was appointed to be the chairperson of all civil societies in Nansana, and he's been there for two years now. He emphasizes that he really loves his work.

I am eager to hear Jacob’s opinion about community development within the Town Council, and about this organization in particular because of his extensive training. I wonder what more formal training in this field means exactly. He is eager to tell me that “[his work with the Town Council has already] ignited quite a bit of change” within the community. I start out by asking him a little bit about the CSOs (which is an umbrella term that encompasses both CBOs and NGOs within this particular area) that he works with in the Town Council. So, he invites me to a CSO network meeting that he is attending later in the week. I excitedly thank him and agree to attend.

---

Now, just two days later, he is knocking on the iron gate to my compound at seven o’clock in the morning. He is wearing a suit, and I’m wearing the most formal dress I could find for the meeting. I’m told that some women will be wearing gomezi (traditional Baganda formal dress for women).

“Hannah,” he begins, “Do you know how to drive?”


“Great! Let’s drive to the meeting instead of taking public transport.”

Before I can say anything in return, for example, that I have never driven in Uganda before, or that I am not comfortable driving on the roads in this town, with so many children running around in the morning, or that it would probably end up being easier taking public
transport anyway because I do not know where the meeting is, we are walking to Jacob’s friend’s house down the road. His friend had agreed previously to let us use his car, he tells me.

We arrive at the house. It is on a grassy patch about halfway up the highest hill in the town. All I can think about is the bumpy road going down, which is even less level than the dirt roads I encountered in the township in rural South Africa almost two years before. We get in the car, and I try to start it, but it stalls.

“Oh, I guess we should probably take public transport instead,” I say.

He reaches over me and starts it. I ask him if he wants to drive, but he tells me that he doesn’t know how. So, I slowly put the car into drive and we begin turning down the hill. We haven’t yet gotten to the main road before seeing a group of at least a dozen kids, who are jumping up and down exclaiming, “The *mzungu* is driving! The *mzungu* is driving!” I have never seen these children before, as I rarely venture into this part of town. It is a bit far from the Education Center and home.

As I pull onto the main road, which is equally as uneven as the last, three times as many children emerge, this time including several that I know well from the Education Center. They look at me with wide eyes, and their mother waves to Jacob and I.

“Goodbye Teacher Hannah! Goodbye Teacher Jacob,” she waves. Jacob is does not teach at the Education Center, but he is granted the same level of respect, if not more, than any other teacher.

I smile and wave to her as well and then quickly turn my attention back to the road when I hear the bottom of the car scrape against the top of the road. I am concerned that this will damage the car but it continues to happen throughout the drive no matter how slowly or cautiously that I drive. I’m worried that if the car gets damaged, it will be my responsibility to fix
or replace it. I drive slower and slower until I am teased for my caution. I ask Jacob about the meeting that we are going to in order to ease my stress about driving. He tells me that we are going to a town about 10 minutes away from ours, where another member organization of the Nansana Town Council has its headquarters. Member organizations, he tells me, take turns hosting each meeting. It will be our turn to host the meeting next month. The network is composed of CSOs (civil society organizations) within the area, and their goal is to network and share resources, but most of all, give each other support. He tells me that this meeting was called to discuss strengthening referrals, whereby member organizations will be able to easily refer their beneficiaries to other member organizations, should they be unable to fulfill a specific one of their needs. This has been an ongoing topic within the council for several months at this point, but he tells me they have been unable to develop a functioning system through which to approach the goal.

Driving here reminds me of the friction of the global and local that I have been observing within the organization, as well as without development in general within the community. Somehow, driving the car, despite the impracticality of it because of accessible public transportation, has become a universal within the context of this community, as evident through Jacob’s desire to drive to the meeting: “what we cannot not want”, according to Tsing’s and Spivak’s analyses. The cars seems to drive us towards homogenization, but the frictions of this particular universal prevent us from doing so. Despite Jacob’s desire for us to drive the car to the meeting, the presence of the car has not indicated a homogenizing universal in this circumstance. This is because the presence and use of the car is, at present, much different than that on a universal scale. So, the car – and the impracticality of driving individually – is a universal, but it is not one that wipes away the local. Its presence has become a dialogue (a friction) of
discovering the place for this universal within the community. There is the global – importing the
cars and the desire to use them in order to relate to what has emerged as a global “norm”, and
there are the local obstacles to use of the car in the way that it is advertised. This reality emerged
during my drive with Jacob. The locality prevents the universal from homogenizing this
particular aspect of culture within the community. The physicality of driving also represents the
friction that a universal undergoes. The collision between the wheel and the bumpy, dirt road and
the slow speed I must proceed with while driving symbolically represents the way that universals
take hold within the context of development.

We arrive at the organization’s headquarters, and I am in awe. In comparison with our
organization’s headquarters, this one is very spacious. There is a huge parking lot that can fit at
least twenty cars, if not more. There are several small buildings on the property, and as we get
out of the car, several employees come to greet us and direct us to the largest building, where we
are asked to wait until the meeting begins.

Among the others who are waiting, Jacob introduces me to a man who has come to the
meeting to represent the national government. I am very confused as to why he is here, because I
am under the impression that CSOs function as NGOs – separate from the government, as
implied in the very title of the organizations. I ask Jacob to clarify my confusion.

“As CSOs, we partner with the central government,” he tells me. “Most of the work we
are doing is supposed to be done by the central government, so for us, we are helping the
government in doing some of these things. We can stand in [where gaps are left by the
government].”

I am surprised by the intertwined nature that he describes of CSO purpose and
government setbacks, but it is apparent that this is another instance of friction. In the universal
interpretation of an NGO as literally a non-governmental organization, we assume disconnect, whereas locality and friction almost requires the community to rethink that disassociation. Here, the presence of local government and its role in the structure of these organization requires an adaptation to ensure their success.

He goes on: “Despite their involvement with the government, though, CSOs are still considered NGOs.” I ask him if the organizations are able to effectively fulfill the needs left by the government, or if the projects are too big to tackle.

“To some extent, these CSOs have achieved their goals but to some extent they have not, due to limited resources. CSOs have funding from volunteers and well-wishers on one hand, and on the other hand, from grants. Depending on how big the organization is, they can get funding internationally or domestically. USAID helps some, and some other governments help as well. For example, the Netherlands and Japan are also funding several projects in the area.” He tells me that even the particular organization that we are visiting today is funded by a foreign government. This is why the organization is so well endowed.

“Largely CSOs are run by people around,” he says. I have noticed this already, because most of the employees greeted me in Luganda, so chances are, they are Baganda. “But finances are limited,” he continues, “so sometimes one international organization will come in and cover the biggest funding needs of a local organization.”

I ask him if their involvement with the government has limited the scope of any of these organizations, if maybe, they carry influence over what CSOs are able to accomplish, or if the organizations receive any funds from the government. I am told that they do not receive any funds from the government, and in fact, the government has little to no say over that which the organizations undertake. It is simply the responsibility of the organizations to undertake these
issues. How they do so is up to them and the civil society network, the meeting of organizations that I will be observing and that he will be taking part in this morning.

“I believe that CSOs have done commendable work in the development of Uganda, perhaps even more than the central government, whereby even some grants now are being passed through the civil society because of their way of doing things. The government has shown that there is too much corruption, because every [funding opportunity] they get, the swindle it, but CSOs have really done their work in the development of Uganda.”

He continues to tell me, “Our organization has brought together HIV positive members of the community and changed their way of thinking, and given them hope. We have made these people see that HIV doesn't mean the end of life. They can live with it and have a better life, and even think about the future, not thinking that they will die tomorrow.”

His words remind me about what is truly important behind the missions of these organizations. In considering where their funding comes from, how they function, and other practical aspects, at the end of the day the organization has largely impacted its beneficiaries. Jacob knows this from his close interaction within the community. He and Arnold both know the families that come to the organization very well, and they make an effort to show that they deeply care about the well being of not only the community, but also each person within it. The level of dependence the community has come to have on them and the organization is immeasurable, but I am told that support could disappear any day. I am told that within the community, it is difficult to get financial support for the organization. The Education Center, for example, is essentially run off of the school fees that about half of the students pay. Most of the students receive a full or partial scholarship because of their health status, and school fees at the Education Center are already lower than any other school within the town. Nevertheless, they are
able to sustain off of the small amount of money that they do get. Another large portion of those fees go to paying the rent for the school. The organization’s major obstacle, I am told, is the fact that it does not own its own land. This leads to Jacob telling me about the largest obstacles that he perceives the community to face.

“The biggest problem is poverty: people are still looking for food, clothes, and an education...All of that requires money. The per capita income [in Uganda] is still low. Those who have money have it in abundance, those who don't have it are living under the poverty line…”

This narrative hits close to home. The income gap is very real in Uganda. It has become extremely difficult for people to transcend that gap, he tells me, because of corruption within the government. The wealth is very concentrated. It seems as though corruption has become a perceived universal to promoting development. There is no fast route to development, but the perception is that it comes quickly with money. So, it is almost universal to seek money in the pursuit of development. This also emerges differently to adjust with localities. I ask Jacob if this issue relates to that which community members are seeking when they try to “develop” or “improve” the community. He tells me:

“The biggest desire of people is definitely to have income generating activities where they get daily income so that they can earn a living, especially so that they can attain a good education, medication, etc. That’s why poverty affects all sectors. You cannot have a good education when you don't have money. You cannot sleep in a good house when you don't have money to build it.”

“Even the public education system requires students to pay,” he goes on. “Even those who go for government sponsorships [in university] usually only get 10%. The biggest number of students... pay for themselves. Children of the rich get government sponsorships because they
good to good schools, so they have the highest chance of earning the highest marks and therefore gaining government sponsorships.”

I ask him about the role he perceives the government to play in a child’s education. Education has come up time and time again as one of the universals that is required for development in any given nation, due to the expectations that have been set on what is considered good development. Education has certainly adapted to the unique circumstances in central Uganda. However, Jacob tells me a little bit about the structure of the education system and how he does not believe that its functionality is practical. He tells me about the extent to which it is based off of the British education system. He thinks that the government still pushes for it to resemble that system, decades after colonial rule has ended, but how that system does not really fit in with community life or needs. This friction, evidently, is one that is not working.

“Still,” he says, “in primary level, [the government sponsors an option for free education] but the teachers aren't paid well, so they don't take teaching seriously. So, students still aren't getting the education that they need. The private schools give better educations, so parents would much rather take their children to private schools.”

“The organizations definitely address these main problems that the community face, they are organizations that really help vulnerable children. The population of vulnerable children, they help a few, but many students are actually left behind... Of course there are very many but you can't help all of them, because unfortunately, there aren’t enough resources.”

He tells me that the education system is not working largely because of the high volume of vulnerable children within the system. He tells me that it is difficult for them to worry about their education when they haven’t met their basic needs yet. I ask him to tell me a little bit about what constitutes a vulnerable child.
“Vulnerable children are those ones who can have like two meals a day or less. Many don't have a good education, clothes to put on…” he explains.

By now, about a dozen other people have entered the room to join us for the meeting. We are sitting in rows, as if we were in a church. A woman who seems to be in charge stands before us and welcomes us. She asks us to rearrange the pews so that we are arranged in a circle. When all of us are sitting in the circle, looking at each other, we go around the room and introduce ourselves. I introduce myself as a part of the organization along with Jacob, so that I don’t seem out of place while observing the meeting.

The woman in charge, who introduces herself as Juliette, passes out an agenda for the meeting. It says we are to begin with an opening prayer, so Jacob leads. The inclusion of this prayer emphasizes the importance of Christianity within the community and within this region of Uganda. While Uganda has a large Muslim population, and even a small Jewish one, Christianity is the most celebrating religion within the country (REF).

After prayer, Juliette continues to review the agenda. We are to discuss the referral network within the network. Then, we are scheduled to hear from the government representative that I was previously introduced to. Finally, Jacob will give remarks as the chairperson.

The government representative raises his hand and requests that he be moved to first on the agenda as he has to leave in thirty minutes. He had intended to stay for the entirety of the meeting, he tells us, but we are starting over an hour late due to late arrivals. Juliette agrees and we continue.

When we are nearing the end of the agenda, while Jacob is addressing the council, Juliette and other women working for our host organization begin passing out muffins and soda. I am told this is a big part about hosting the meeting, being able to serve the guests refreshments.
For some organizations it is extremely difficult to find the funds for the refreshments, which I know will be the case for our organization when we host the meeting next month. For others, it is easy and they needn’t give it a second thought. A case of soda can cost about $25, but two cases and baked goods is a substantial amount of the budget for the organization to give up.

We conclude with Jacob giving a closing prayer. We thank our hosts, and head back to the car. This time, I have a substantially higher level of confidence about driving home. Jacob asks if I would like to stop at the Town Council headquarters before going home. I happily say yes. On our way to the headquarters, he tells me a little bit more about the organizations involved, and the goals they are trying to achieve within the community.

Jacob emphasizes that “The goal of CSOs is to be change agents,” he says, “We want to change what we think is still unchanged, especially with all of the issues that we talked about, the government can also give us a hand and we can change our country so that the development can reach everyone. The government is meant to care for its citizens, but because of corruption and everything, we are on their mercy, because whatever they decide, we have to go for it.”

Seeing him think back to government involvement with the organizations shows how substantial they are in determining the capacity of each organization, and what they are capable of achieving. Evidently, he tells me that while they do not necessarily dictate what an organization does, they choose which organizations are recognized, and therefore which are able to receive resources. I ask him, government aside, how he thinks that the community should go about a development program. He answers:

“The best way for a community to develop is working together. Though we are blaming the government, we are the government. We need to have positive thinking towards our development, towards what we want to attain in life. Though the government controls most of
the sectors in the development, we also have a stake. It brings all of us together to see that we
can realize what we need in life.”

He goes on to say that “the best way for a community to improve is to have all our eyes
on income generating activities” he also emphasizes the importance of creating a “culture of
saving [money] so that people will have the finances to put towards community improvement, so
as not to rely on the government.”

Jacob tells me that his dream is to see a changed community, and as a social worker, he
has the potential to be a change agent. He happily states that after the work he has been doing
with the CSOs, he has seen a lot of improvement. He hopes that what he accomplishes within
this community can some day be a model for other communities. “Already,” he tells me, “our
Nansana umbrella organization is widely known. People are already attempting to emulate what
we are doing.” Jacob is proud to see himself as a part of that.

“I still have goals to lead a better life, and I’m still looking forward... Some day, I would
like to be one of the best politicians in Uganda. Because of all of the work I have done with the
CSOs, I have seen the problems within the government. I believe I can be an agent for change [in
that arena, too].”
Chapter 5
Christopher: Actualizing the Origins of Influence

It is a dusty day during the last week in August; I am sitting in the back of a Nansana Town Council meeting, hosted by our organization. We have set up a tent outside of the Education Center headquarters to accommodate guests from the civil society network in a continued discussion about referrals between the member organizations. I am observing the discourse between several CSOs that are discussing the efficiency of community change. Representatives from the organization are present, including Arnold and Jacob, and two bazungu (plural of mzungu), Kate and myself. Several other organizations also have sent representatives, the rest of which are all from the communities within which they are working, with one exception: a German woman representing a children’s shelter located several towns over from ours. Jacob is leading the meeting, directing a discussion about the importance of bringing different CBOs and NGOs within the community together to help fulfill the needs of the beneficiaries of each organization.

“We are unable to provide our students with their basic needs. We can provide an education, and we can provide meals… but if a child needs treatment for malaria, we cannot provide it for him… if a family needs access to antiretroviral medication (ARVs), we cannot provide it for them…”

He is speaking about how each organization within the town council has the capacity to provide a service to its community. However, each organization is unable to provide all necessary services to the community. Reciprocity between the organizations could mitigate this obstacle. If the organizations are to share resources in this manner, a greater need could be met.
About forty minutes into the meeting, a *boda boda* (motorcycle) pulls up next to the tent we have set up outside of the Education Centre headquarters. Another foreigner hops off and pulls off his helmet to reveal a messy head of hair. Christopher, one of the organization’s international volunteers who comes once a week on Fridays, has come for his weekly information technology (IT) lessons with the Education Center students. He has forgotten that the town council meeting was being held today instead. After a moment of confusion, he sits down under the tent and is served a soda by Josephine, just as everyone else already had been. Those already in the group seem interested by his arrival, but the meeting continues on.

Kate chimes in:

“I can create a database for the CSOs so that we can organize each of the services provided by member organizations, to make referrals easier and more efficient.”

Jacob nods his head and takes comments from other member organization representatives.

The meeting eventually begins to slow down, and we conclude with a Christian prayer just before lunchtime. It is at this point that Christopher and I wander into the dining room of our friend’s house next door to the Education Center headquarters and sit down for a conversation. He immediately begins by reacting to the meeting that we have just left.

“I think a potential issue here in Uganda from my experience is the plethora of NGOs that currently exist, its phenomenal... I’ve met a lot of friends/expats and almost every single one of them is at a different NGO, there's so many of them... I know that Uganda, Kampala specifically is a particular hot spot for NGOs, but with that many of them working it makes it harder for them to make a direct impact because you're competing with people that are trying to do positive things just like yourself. You know, if you're competing with each other in business fair enough,
its the consumer who decides. But if you're competing to help people's lives that's a different story, because it's valuing one life over another, isn't it?"

We have just left the meeting of a network where over a dozen CSOs were present – and that does not consider the organizations that are a part of the network but not necessarily present. This network is maintaining a sense of communication between the organizations, but how much collaboration is possible really? Christopher discusses a sense of competition that he finds to exist not only between business models within the NGOs that he worked for, but in the “achievement” of the organization in general. What is “achievement” in a micro-scale, locally run organization in central Uganda? Is it outreach? Is it resources provided? Is it the capacity to “improve” the community?

Christopher articulates, “For [him], that's a major barrier... if everyone's trying to achieve [success within their organization]” competition can outweigh achievements. He references the women’s economic empowerment branch of the organization, which provides supplies with which women in the program make candles and sells them within the community for a profit. Then, the money made is used for more supplies, and the women involved in the program earn a salary on top of that. Christopher elaborates, “selling these products in Uganda can be hard because with the candle making project, for example, I see they sell [locally made candles, which are not produced at the organization] in Tusky's (a large grocery store in Kampala) and the [groups] that get in touch with Tusky's… I'm guessing [that it is] another NGO that already tapped into that market and they're the ones selling them at Tusky's”. This interest in widespread sale creates an unhealthy competition within organizations. He draws this back to his initial point by pointing out that these CSOs ought to be working together toward a common goal. They
aren’t a business, but business-like aspects of the organizations place a price on people’s lives by declaring that their beneficiaries deserve more help than the beneficiaries of other organizations.

He speculates that perhaps more regulation around the creation of CSOs could deter people from starting an excessive number of organizations within the community. Rather, it may encourage them to get involved with organizations that are already operating. He praises the “entrepreneur spirit in Uganda”, referencing that “it's fantastic this hardworking nature that they have... But too much competition can outweigh the demand”.

Christopher’s background in business in the United Kingdom shines through his opinions of CSO operations within the community. His observations are not solely informed by his experience as an IT teacher and website developer at the organization. He works for two other NGOs in central Uganda. At the second organization, he works at developing business strategies for a bead-making project (a women’s empowerment program very similar to the candle making program at the organization). At the third, he works as a football (soccer) coach in slum outside Mulago Hospital, the largest hospital in Uganda.

Given his background in business, I was curious to listen to Christopher’s opinion on development within the community. I anticipate a view tilted falling within the neoliberal paradigm. The reason I assume this is because of his talk about business and competition already. It is clear that his ideal would be trying to maximize production within the organizations, and profit. This does not necessarily mean monetary profit, but rather, capacity to have a higher level of outreach or “success” within the community.

Neoliberal thought advocates that big businesses are the most important actors on the road to development. It condemns state action, claiming that “rapid development” is only possible “if the state [is] rolled back” (Rapley 2007: 3). In other words, neoliberalism calls for
privatization and an increase in private enterprise, advocating for free market ideology (Rapley 2007: 63). Neoliberal theorists consider the private sector to be the only sector that really has the ability to push nations towards development, via competition.

Neoliberalism advocates for each man to work for himself, and the idea behind it is that individuals will always operate in a selfish manner, and that “if individuals are left to pursue their narrow self-interests, society as a whole benefits, whereas if individuals are compelled to pursue collective interests, society as a whole suffers” (Rapley 2007: 64) Individuals, then, are the “building blocks of society” (Rapley 2007: 66). Neoliberal paradigms claim that state power in developing nations leads to corruption, and therefore reducing state power “would at the same time reduce opportunities for corruption” (Rapley 2007: 67). Then, because there would be no profit in civil service, instead of investing in civil service positions within the government, each individual would seek “to create their own opportunities for enrichment in the private sector”, and that competition would lead to development (Rapley 2007: 67).

I expect Christopher to emphasize a necessary growth within the private sector in order for development to occur in central Uganda. This is particularly because most people that I have encountered in his field call attention towards the economics of development. Privatization has certainly become a universal within this community as an expectation for success in an attempt to “develop”. This is evident through the way that he highlights the business aspect of the projects. It is also evident through one of the other points made in the meeting we had attended: that NGOs carried a level of responsibility in developing the community, and this is inherently a private sector despite its affiliation with the local government. However, his thought process veers off in a different direction.
He begins by talking about what it means to improve, and the goals that NGOs in the community strive for. He says that the European-run NGOs he encounters “consider improvement as driving something towards the ‘Western’ lifestyle”... This often means “three consistent size meals a day, sleeping in a bed, under a mosquito net... a clean house, whatever it might be, having a TV, having a computer. All of these kinds of things... Cooking your meals on a stove or oven, eating out often, whatever…”

And then he stops, takes a moment, looking at me. “But these are not the things that a Ugandan family or an African family would want, because that's not necessarily what they're craving for”. I am surprised to hear him say this. This comment shows a deeper understanding concerning the implications of the work that he is doing. The work that I have participated in as well. This is refreshing because so many of the foreigners that I have encountered working for non-profit organizations within the area seem to share a similar do-gooder mindset. He shifts the conversation and references that “improvement” need not be reminiscent of “Westernization”; rather, it can be seen as “making something better than it is currently”. Better does not have to have a static meaning, he tells me.

His identifying of community members as “Ugandan”, i.e. using a national identifier, is interesting to me. This is mostly due to the fact that Christopher is British, and the word carries a colonial legacy. His presence, in fact, is also likely due to a colonial legacy. Many former colonial powers continue to hold bonds with former colonies (REF). Christopher’s presence is very much linked to that. He tells me that he actually came to Uganda because his girlfriend is working for a British education organization that is running a project in Kampala. While I do not know exactly what this feels like, as I am American, I do feel the implications of cultural
imperialism. It is something that comes to mind often. I wonder if Christopher realizes that without Britain, “Uganda” as a nation-state would likely not exist.

Anyway, Christopher elaborates, “improvement in an NGO context is a difficult… because it's often driven by Western standards... to get to understand what the Ugandans want” is what is truly important in this industry.

He says that through his encounters, he sees glimpses of what “Ugandans” want, but it is often dominated by the imposition of outsiders through development programs. He says that is why “it's very important to have a Ugandan influence, or you know, a local influence on any local NGO that's working” here in the community.

My mind wanders back to the complexities while debating these multiple perspectives, especially on development. While I agree with Christopher’s point about focusing on local influence within a project or organization, sometimes it is difficult to trace back to where these ideas come from. From the local points of view that I have encountered, it seems as though ideas of development are often geared towards the ideas of “progress” and “improvement” that I grew up with in the United States.

This could be because of the modernization paradigm. Although President Truman introduced modernization in 1949 as an economic policy promoting development, because of the United States’ global influence in the post-war era, modernization became more of an ideology or worldview than an economic policy. This is a topic that we discussed in “Communication and Social Change in Developing Nations”, a course offered in the Brandeis African and Afro-American Studies (AAAS) Department with Professor Wellington Nyangoni. We reviewed that through modernization theory, countries in the “global South” are told exactly what are the “best” things to do as per hegemonic standards, so over time, they internalize those ideas. The
ideas become a part of people in the global South, and they begin to demonstrate these values in
day-to-day life, because it is what is expected. In class, Professor Nyangoni described that it is
like socialization in a way because people are socialized to accept the values, the cultures, and all
else that comes along with that. He said that this began to happen in the 1950s and the 1960s
when the modernization theory took hold.

People are educated through hegemonic values in such a way to emulate and identify
their values, so that we just become a part of the system instead of challenging it. However, even
this viewpoint is too generalized. It does not consider the flow of ideas that inevitably takes place
as a part of globalization. While these ideologies have also been adopted by financial institutions
like The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the American International Bank
for Investment, churches, and, oddly enough… NGOs, their approaches often disregard the
importance of exchange in globalization and modernization.

I began to think about how it makes sense that NGOs, intertwined with their attempt to
spread development, become a part of this “routinization” process of ideals. Christopher further
elaborates on this by discussing “a perception that we think that we lead generally, as Westerners,
better lives than Ugandans. We think that because of what we have. But is that really better?”

He takes a minute and looks around the room we are sitting in. It is a large dining area,
with a table big enough to fit the entire family. Sometimes there are up to eight or nine kids at
home at any given time. The kids share a large bedroom with mattresses placed neatly in a row
through the center, each with a large mosquito net hung placed perfectly above it. The living
room consists of furniture that is sold along the highway from Kampala, all newly made with
matching fabric, and large enough to sink nearly down to the floor. Each coffee table is draped
with a lace covering, as are the windows. The dining area is open and therefore covered in dust;
it is no matter, because the family that lives here rarely eats in this room. Rather, they gather here
to watch television in the evenings. Almost no one is home during the day, besides our friend’s
mother, who, though she speaks little English and doesn’t speak with us, always has a large smile
spread across her face.

He smiles back at her, as she enters and leaves the room, then goes on: “There's this
theory that I have about happiness: if you compare three people's lives... A starving child from a
slum in Uganda, compared with someone from lower-middle class in the UK, compared with
someone like Paris Hilton...so that's three different ends of the spectrum...and there's three
different types of presents, right? You give a hamburger to this little kid, and he'd be overjoyed at
it. You give a hamburger to me, and I'd be a bit like hmm… “Yeah, cool, that's nice.” You give it
to Paris Hilton and she'd be like “what's this?” and chuck it away. The other present would be a
really nice shirt... The kid would be ecstatic at that, I'd be happy, and she'd be like “yeah, ok,
that's nice” like how I was with the burger. And then the last one is a sports car. The kid would be
absolutely even higher than ecstatic, and then I'd be more than happy, like the kid was with the
shirt, and she'd be like “oh that's really nice, thanks for the gift.”

I begin to laugh a little bit, trying to imagine a sports car driving down the roads of this
small suburb. The holes in the road are nearly too large for a van to roll over, let alone a small
car. I know this from my experience driving earlier this month… In my thoughts, the
impracticality of such a car in the first place is astounding at home in the United States, let alone
on the streets here. He perfectly takes this thought and describes a scale of satisfaction that is
completely circumstantial to the lifestyles that we have grown up with. What we are accustomed
to, he goes on, determines what we are happy with, no matter how practical or impractical it may
be. Because of the nature of development in our lower-middle class lifestyles, we have come to
Christopher’s theory is very much aligned with one of anthropologist James Howard Smith, which he describes in his ethnography, *Bewitching Development*. Smith is fascinated with the central aspect of development in Kenya that involves his participants comparing their own circumstances to “an ideal representation of other places and times” in an attempt to provide explanation for why their conditions are not as good (Smith 2008: 4). Development becomes an imaginary, only “to exist in another place (another person, another village, another ethnic group, another country, another time)”, but all the while, serves as a goal through which society may move “forward” (Smith 2008: 7).

Moving beyond the imaginary aspect of development, which is dangerous in and of itself, development becomes detrimental in that the mindset it requires becomes “a reminder of what people are not”, promoting the rationality of embracing the status quo and furthermore, a negative outlook on one’s own origins (Esteva 1997: 10). With the acceptance of one ideology comes a rejection of another. Smith points out that unfortunately, with the acceptance of development often comes the rejection of one’s own society. He elaborates that this rejection can manifest in “everyday life” or in one’s sentiments towards political structure; often, however, it manifests in both (Smith 2008: 8).

Christopher’s mindset (which very much deviates from the neoliberal mindset I anticipated) reflects Smith’s observations. Christopher, like Smith, offers precaution about
representing the realities in much of the global South as “the antithesis of development” (Smith 2008: 9). He advises, “what would be a smarter way of developing would be a slower, more sustainable method of development that would make people happy but over a longer process and keep that cultural perception”. This way, he elaborates, their “normal understanding” of what is “right” (i.e. their traditions and cultures) remains the organic, whereas a dramatic change may lead to a “boost” to what is possible and then a “fall” when it doesn’t remain the reality within the community, as it is not a fundamental aspect of its culture or tradition.

However, this viewpoint also forgets about the complicated nature of development in a globalized world. On one level, by assuming that communities are completely susceptible to external influence by assuming that acceptance of global realities assumes a rejection of locality. On another level, it claims that communities have the capacity to completely reject global realities and preserve some sort of traditional culture that everyone assumingly desires (this is likely not the case due to global influence). The reality is likely somewhere in between these two opposites. While the global realities do introduce a potentially dangerous power dynamic, as Tsing discusses, universals in globalization have become a part of reality, and because of global connection and exchange, we have no control of stopping universal aspirations. There is no longer a boundary that can be crossed, as there are so many complications and nuances in determining the old from the new, the right from the wrong, the best from the worst. The global reality calls for a lot more of a gray area than that.

Christopher falls silent, and we conclude our conversation. My phone begins to ring the same Nokia ring tone that rings out from almost everyone’s phone. Or, at least, everyone that I know. Arnold is calling.

“Where are you? Did Christopher leave?” he asks.
We stand up and walk over to the front door, moving aside the lace curtain blocking us from view, and wave. He is standing outside of the Education Center, and laughs when he sees us.

“Come back! You are missing lunch,” he calls out.

We slip on our sandals, thank our hosts and walk across the yard back to the Center. Our feet are again covered in red-brown dust by the time we cross the 5 meters that it takes to arrive back under the tent. Arnold, Jacob, and the rest of the Education Center staff is eating lunch: potatoes with chicken and sauce and fresh avocado on the side. Everyone else is almost finished with his or her plates, but they have saved us each a huge portion of food. They have also saved us each a Coca-Cola: a reflection of global influence in and of itself. The drink with the power to bring a smile to any child’s face. We thank Arnold, and begin to eat.

While Christopher offers a compelling view on community driven development in Uganda, the privilege that he experiences shines through his argument. Christopher, like myself, and like the other international volunteers at the organization, have the luxury of holding an opinion that development (and its implications of modernization within this particular community) is attempting to change Uganda, and anywhere considered to be “underdeveloped” in general, in a way that promotes a unilinear path to what is “right”, what is “progress”, and what is “good”. Despite our rejection of the hegemonic ideals that modernization ideology has spread, we continue to lead lives in the “developed” world, with our overhead showers instead of jerry cans, and upright toilets instead of latrines, as Christopher points out so many times throughout our talk. However, that is not the reality for community members here. If they choose to reject that ideology, they are effectively disconnecting themselves with what they are told to want, something that through my ethnographic data, a connection that, it seems, young people
have a hard time rejecting. From a place of privilege, it is simple to request a rejection of the status quo, but living with what is considered “behind” in a world that is increasingly pushing “forward” suggests disconnect.

I will never forget one thing that I observed during the beginning of my first stay in this community. I sat in the living room with Jajja and all of the kids in the house were watching music videos on television. Jajja needed to charge her phone; there were only two outlets in the house, one being used by the television and the other, by the refrigerator. Without hesitation, she got up from her seat and unplugged the refrigerator while the kids continued to watch television.

In the ever-globalizing world, maintaining a connection is important to communities that are often portrayed as disconnected. Smith’s analysis of development is harsh, and it is scary. Considering that those who live in communities that are not granted the agency to define themselves, but rather, defined as the “opposite” by a status quo that deems their way of life as the “antithesis of development” reflects poorly on the current lens through which development is defined. Although this is not the attempt of new-thought theorists who increasingly emphasize a people-centered model, because of the apparent disconnect between theory, people and their on-the-ground perception of what they ought to aspire to, it seems as though a dangerous dichotomy continues to thrive.
Conclusion

To conclude, development discourse has been molded again and again throughout the present and it is often difficult to arrive at an accurate notion of what development actually means, both in theory and in practice. This disconnect has lead to a tension regarding the role of development and how it potentially impacts the lives of those who are supposed to be “benefiting” from development programs, and it has also led to an opportunity for productive potential. Often times, a prescribed notion of how to approach development is given. Either communities are told to embrace local “tradition” and stay true to their roots, or they are taught to chase after global ideologies. The danger in this is that global ideologies, in reality, are just normalized and popularized notions of one group’s specific norm that has gained hegemonic influence (Tsing 2004).

Rather than walking on a tightrope between these two opposite ends of the spectrum, through this thesis I have chosen to examine multiple realities of development. I have found that two dominant narratives arise. One is in regards to the exchange of ideas, the global flow that has become an inevitable aspect of globalization in the modern world. This global flow, as Tsing points out, need not push “developing” communities towards one reality, and away from another, as Smith claims in *Bewitching Development*. Rather, Tsing argues that the global flows require a friction of realities, whereby local realities influence and effect global realities in complex ways, and vice versa. The second emphasizes that development in and of itself is a collection of these universals, or that which “we cannot not want”, ironically enough.

Several dominant universals arose through my ethnographic data. These universals were by no means adapted blindly from hegemonic influence. Rather, they were taken from the global flows, and they altered (in some circumstances drastically, in others not) in order to best fit within the needs of the specific community that I conducted my research in. The community, in essence, took what the universals had to offer and created new, alternate modernities with them. One of my informants, Arnold, spoke to me quite a bit about the organization that he founded and the values that were instilled in the organization. I found that these values were largely
rooted in universals. While his ideals evoked many universals and were largely rooted in neoliberal thought that could perhaps be routed in a reaction against the colonial encounter, I found that his desire for agency and modernity stood out. Agency was highlighted as a means for development, and modernity as an end goal. Modernity, however, is a particularly interesting universal because while it is thought to be an end goal, evidently through the interaction of how Arnold made these universals applicable to his organization, he did play a role in the creation of an alternate modernity; this, still, an aspect of development. He also touched upon feminism as a universal, and so did Kate, one of the international volunteers whose narrative I outlined in Chapter 3. Kate’s notions of gender identities and roles within the community that she was entering, interpreted through Chandra Mohanty’s “Under Western Eyes” gives an interesting perspective on how feminism enters a community, and how community members accept or reject hegemonic notions of it. I also noticed the very presence of volunteers as a universal that emerged through Kate’s narrative. Volunteers, it seemed, were given inherent value, as they seemed to play a role in the development that the community was seeking. In Jacob’s narrative, one of the universals that stood out to me was the desire to participate in an act like driving to a meeting, despite the impracticality of the presence of this universal within the specific context. Lastly, Christopher’s narrative demonstrated a heightened awareness of the exchange of ideas and its implications, and how certain global expectations (which can also be seen as “universals”) impact how things are done within the development organizations with which he was working.

As evident through the narratives that I have outlined, the pursuit of development is not as simple as choosing which reality to live. It is a complicated exchange that occurs between multiple forces, and those forces become even more complex when foreigners (in this case, international volunteers) introduce themselves into the picture. Then, individuals meet each other, interact with one another, and therefore alter one another. These narratives illustrate those complexities and the dangers, as well as the advantages of development. They teach us that perhaps one prescribed notion of development is not the solution, but rather, that altered notions
of development arise as global flows increase. Most of all, they teach us that this is O.K.: that development need not mean one aspiration or one dream, but rather, it references the frictions and fractures occurring between the universal and how they are either accepted, adjusted, or rejected from peoples’ lives, in the creation of multiple modernities.
Appendix A: Recruitment Script

Recruitment script:

My name is Hannah Young and I am researching community-driven development and the implications of Western involvement in the non-profit sector in Uganda. Would you be willing to speak with me about the role of non-profit organizations in your community, and your opinions and experiences with community development and change? My research emphasizes the importance of the impact that Westernization has on individual life in Uganda. Would you be willing to participate in an interview? I am interested in finding out about what you think about growth and change within your community. Please let me know if you are interested in speaking with me about these topics.

*This is a sample of the script that I will be using in order to recruit potential subjects for my research process.
Appendix B: Informed Consent

Consent form for Exploring Means and Methods of Community-Driven Development in Uganda
*Required by the Brandeis Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects

Who is responsible for this study?
You are being invited to participate in this study by Hannah Young, an undergraduate student at Brandeis University (MB #0218 Brandeis University, Waltham, MA 02454, USA; hfyoung@brandeis.edu).

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of this study is to learn how notions of development impact the lives of Ugandans, and how those notions of development influence aspirations for community change and growth. I would also like to learn about what you think are the best agents for community change.

What will I be asked to do if I choose to participate?
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview. The interview will contain a variety of questions about your community and your perception of development within the community, as well as your perception of what improvement would look like. The interview will take about one hour to complete. With your permission, I would also like to tape-record the interview.

What are my rights as a participant?
Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. If at any time you wish to refrain from answering a question, you are at liberty to do so. If you prefer that I do not use information that you have volunteered to me after it has been submitted, I will honor your request. You may ask any questions and I will answer them fully and honestly.

Your answers will be confidential.
Records of this study will only be accessible to the investigator. They will ultimately be used to complete my senior thesis at Brandeis University, but in the report that is made public, I will not include any personal information that will make it possible to identify you.

If you have questions:
If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant, or if you have any questions or complaints regarding this research project, you may contact the Brandeis Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in the Office of Sponsored Programs at Brandeis University. (MS #116, P.O. Box 549110, Waltham, Massachusetts, 02454-9110, USA. Phone: +1 781-736-8133. Fax: +1 781-736-2123. You may also contact Professor Sarah Lamb (who is serving as the project’s principal investigator) via email: lamb@brandeis.edu or via telephone: extension 6-2211.

Statement of Consent: I understand the above explanations and give consent to my participation in this research project. I, the undersigned, am at least 18 years of age. I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

_________________________________  ___________________________________  ______________________
Subject’s Signature                  Printed name                      Date

_________________________________  ___________________________________  ______________________
Signature of Investigator            Printed name

In addition to agreeing to participate, I consent to having my interview tape-recorded. ___________________________________
Subject’s Signature
Appendix C: Information Sheet

Information Sheet for Exploring Means and Methods of Community-Driven Development in Uganda

Who is responsible for this study?
You are being invited to participate in this study by Hannah Young, an undergraduate student at Brandeis University (MB #0218 Brandeis University, Waltham, MA 02454, USA; hfyoug@brandeis.edu).

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of this study is to learn how notions of development impact the lives of Ugandans, and how those notions of development influence aspirations for community change and growth. I would also like to learn about what you think are the best agents for community change.

What will I be asked to do if I chose to participate?
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview. The interview will contain a variety of questions about your community and your perception of development within the community, as well as your perception of what improvement would look like. The interview will take about one hour to complete. With your permission, I would also like to tape-record the interview.

What are my rights as a participant?
Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. If at any time you wish to refrain from answering a question, you are at liberty to do so. If you prefer that I do not use information that you have volunteered to me after it has been submitted, I will honor your request. You may ask any questions and I will answer them fully and honestly.

What are the risks and benefits of participating?
The risks to you in this research project are minimal. The social risks of participation in this study include loss of privacy. All possible precautions will be taken in order to minimize these risks. Possible benefits include the opportunity to articulate and share their ideals regarding community growth and improvement.

Your answers will be confidential.
Records of this study will only be accessible to the investigator. They will ultimately be used to complete my senior thesis at Brandeis University, but in the report that is made public, I will not include any personal information that will make it possible to identify you.

If you have questions:
If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant, or if you have any questions or complaints regarding this research project, you may contact the Brandeis Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in the Office of Sponsored Programs at Brandeis University. (MS #116, P.O. Box 549110, Waltham, Massachusetts, 02454-9110, USA. Phone: +1 781-736-8133. Fax: +1 781-736-2123. You may also contact Professor Sarah Lamb (who is serving as the project’s principal investigator) via email: lamb@brandeis.edu or via telephone: extension 6-2211.)
Appendix D: Interview Guide

Open-Ended Interview Guide

Where did you grow up? Were you raised in a city, in a suburb or in a village?
How do you describe yourself?
If applicable: What is your current university? Have you attended others? Please list all.
What year are you in college? What is your major(s)/minor(s)? Why did you choose these major(s)/minor(s)? What kind of classes do you take?
What languages do you speak and what is your knowledge level in each?
What was the primary language spoken in your home? Was this same language spoken throughout your community and at school?
In your opinion, do non-profit organizations seem to have a presence in your community?
In your opinion, what role do non-profit organizations play within your community?
In your opinion, do the goals of non-profit organizations seem to reflect the desires of your community, and the needs that your community faces?
Could you please elaborate on your perception of what goals non-profit organizations in your community seem to be?
Do you think that non-profit organizations within your community achieve their goals? Why or why not?
Do you think that non-profit organizations within your community fulfill the wants and needs of your community?
According to your perception, who runs non-profit organizations in your community?
According to your perception, who funds non-profit organizations in your community?
In your opinion, what is the biggest need within your community?
In your opinion, what is the biggest desire within your community?
Where do you think ideas of these wants/needs come from?
In your opinion, what does “improvement” look like? Why?
In your opinion, what does “development” look like? Why?
What do you think is the best way for a community to improve?
What do you think is the best way for a community to develop?
What does “progress” mean to you?
Do you see yourself as having a role within the improvement of your community? Why or why not?
If you could change your community in any way, what would it be? Do you think that this change is possible?
What do you think is the best way for your community to go about making that change?
Tell me about your work. Where do you work? What do you do at your job? How did you come to work here?
What is the best part of your work? Can you describe a particularly memorable situation?
What is the most difficult part of your work? What makes it challenging?
Tell me about how you spend your time in day-to-day life. Could you describe a typical day? What kinds of things do you enjoy doing or not enjoy doing in your daily life?
Is there anything else you would like to share with me?
Is there anything else you would like to tell me to help with my research project or that you think I should know?
Bibliography

Cowell, Alan  

Cowen, M., and R. Shenton  

Escobar, Arturo  

Esteva, G.  

Gerring, J., Ziblatt, D., Van Gorp, J. and Arevalo, J.  

Hansen, Holger Bernt, and Michael Twaddle, eds.  

Karugire, S. R.  

Marks, Shula  

Mohanty, Chandra  

Molloy, Antonia  
2014  Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni says gay rights demands attached to Western aid are ‘sinful’. The Independent, July 4.

Moss, Todd J.  

Nattrass, N. and Seekings, J.  
Payne, Richard J., and Jamal R. Nassar  

Pieterse, Jan Nederveen  

Rapley, John  

Sachs, Wolfgang, ed.  

Thomas, Alan  

Thomas, Allen  

Tsing, Anna L.  