Power, Paternalism, and Partnership:

A postcolonial critique of the philosophies and practices of

empowerment within a Sport for Development programme in Malawi

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I confirm that the word count of this thesis is less than 100,000 words.

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Summary

The period since the turn of the new millennium has witnessed the burgeoning growth of sport within international development efforts which has been underpinned by an uncritical acceptance of the value of sport in facilitating sustainable development and empowerment (Lindsey and Darby 2018). Situated within development discourse, empowerment is a "buzzword" (Kingsbury *et al*. 2012) that remains loosely defined (Rowlands 1995). Its lineage reveals that empowerment can be understood through two broad variants: the radical model that pursues emancipation from the unequal structures that (re)produce "underdevelopment", and the neoliberal version that aspires for individuals to be effective within the system through personal transformation (Inglis 1997). Despite this "fuzziness" (Cornwall 2007), empowerment is synonymous with the aspirations of the Sport for Development (SfD) field and yet there is a lack of research into this concept within SfD. This thesis redresses this lacuna by analysing how empowerment is understood and practiced in the programme, Sport Malawi, by exploring the forms of empowerment enacted and what facilitates or mitigates these. To address this aim, a broad postcolonial theoretical framework rooted in critiques of empowerment was adopted (Jönsson 2010; Deepak 2011). For the purposes of gathering the perspectives of stakeholders in the programme's "aid chain" (Banda and Holmes 2017; Darnell and Hayhurst 2012), ethnography was adopted to analyse the "view from above" in the "sending community" ($n = 28$) and the "view from below" in the "host community" ($n = 49$) (Sherraden *et al.* 2008). This thesis illustrates that this SfD programme: enacts the neoliberal variant of empowerment; is characterised by a paternalistic partnership that privileges the interests of the global North partner; reinforces the white-saviour complex prevalent elsewhere in mainstream development; negates historical and contemporary power structures that sustain poverty; and offers neoliberal solutions that (re)produce the conditions that reinforce inequality.

Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CBOs	Community Base Organisations
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EfS	Education for Sustainability
FBOs	Faith Based Organisations
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISI	Import Substitution Industrialisation
ITO	International Trade Organisation
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MNCs	Multi-National Companies
MWK	Malawian Kwacha
MYPs	Malawi Young Pioneers
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
PE	Physical Education
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes

SDP	Sport for Development and Peace
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SfD	Sport for Development
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UoG	University of Gloucestershire
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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Introduction

This thesis emerges from my experience of founding and co-ordinating the Sport for Development (hereafter, SfD) programme at the centre of this study, Sport Malawi, from 2008 to 2012. This period also witnessed the burgeoning growth in the use of sport within international development efforts. These efforts have become increasingly institutionalised since the turn of new millennium, particularly in light of sports perceived ability to contribute towards meeting the eight global development targets set in the United Nation's (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In the post 2015 development agenda, and following the growing influence by SfD actors and agencies, sport was also acknowledged as an important tool in facilitating sustainable development. This was manifest in the explicit mention of sport in the opening declaration of Resolution 70/1 which details the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and enshrines the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

> Sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development. We recognise the growing contribution of sport to the realisation of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives (UNGA 2015, p.10).

Lindsey and Darby (2018) have noted that this statement signals a significant step change in the potential mainstreaming of sport within the global development community. Such a move is reflective of the growth of the SfD "movement" and its prevalence globally (Kidd 2008). As a central component of programmes, the concept of "empowerment" has become synonymous with the aspirations of the SfD field. This reflects the wider insertion and positioning of empowerment within orthodox development thinking, policy and practice. When considering empowerment within SfD more closely, it is clear that the field follows the same trajectory of mainstream development, with knowledge, skills, and resources required to instil empowerment in the global South flowing from the global North (Darnell 2007).

Despite its prominent place in both development and SfD, empowerment remains a loosely defined concept (Rowlands 1995). To fully grasp what is meant by empowerment within development discourse, policy and practice it is important to recognise that empowerment has had different meanings attached to it. These have been articulated in various linguistic equivalents (Batliwala 2007a) by postcolonial leaders, progressive educators and feminist activists during the course of struggles for decolonisation, social justice, and the emancipation of the poor and marginalised, respectively. At the centre of its rise to prominence, spearheaded by critical development theorists, was the foregrounding of the critical issue of power within debates on the nature and practice of development. Of particular importance in the emergence of the idea of empowerment was the argument that inclusive, equitable, sustainable and participatory approaches were required to counter the Western, top-down, ethnocentric and economic bias of development (Kabeer 1994). However, empowerment was later co-opted within the mainstream development lexicon (Luttrell and Quiroz 2009), and as a result it was fashioned into an apolitical "motherhood" buzzword, similar to "partnership" and

"participation". As a consequence, its emancipatory associations and aspirations were diluted (Kingsbury *et al.* 2012; Rist 2007; Cornwall 2007).

This has led to debates about the nature of empowerment and its impact, and through these debates we see two broad fault lines in terms of how empowerment is conceptualised. These two variants are the radical model of empowerment rooted in postcolonial theory and the neoliberal model of empowerment. The former is oriented around the collective struggle to rebalance political, economic, and social power and enabling the poor and marginalised to challenge the structural conditions that underpin their material conditions in which they live (Rai *et al.* 2007; Petras 2011). However, co-opted in the neoliberal agenda, the latter model of empowerment overlooks the structural causes of underdevelopment and denotes development as a more individualistic process whereby success is achieved through individual action, responsibility and participation in the "free market" (Batliwala 2007a). Therefore, while the rhetoric of empowerment may still imply bottom-up and equitable approaches to development, in practice it does little to transform the structural conditions that make development interventions in the global South necessary in the first place (Leal 2007).

Despite these ongoing debates on how empowerment is interpreted and operationalised within mainstream development discourse, there have been limited efforts to problematise and/or better understand this concept. Indeed, as it has become increasingly prevalent in the SfD field, empowerment has assumed a taken-for-granted meaning, one that has been uncritically accepted. However, in recent years the notion that sport is empowering in its developmental efforts has been questioned by critical theorists of SfD. This fledgling academic analysis of empowerment within the field of SfD is crucial given that it is a core aim of many projects and undergirds many of the mechanisms employed within the sector, such as capacity building, peer leadership,

partnership, and entrepreneurship. Particular attempts to interrogate how empowerment is understood and practiced in SfD include analyses of: sport and gender empowerment of women and girls in India (cf. Samie *et al.* 2015; McDonald 2015; Kay 2013b); sport as a tool for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) education in southern Africa (Jeanes 2013; Mwannga 2011; Mwaanga and Banda 2014); and collaborative sports equipment in west Africa (Lindsey and O'Gorman 2015). Despite these examples of research exploring empowerment in SfD, there has been limited academic efforts to theorise what variants of empowerment are exhibited in the field, what enables or constrains the enactment of the radical or neoliberal models, and the intended and indeed unintended consequences of these divergent forms of empowerment as they play out on the ground.

These wider issues of the positioning of empowerment as a key aim and aspiration of both development and SfD, the critical acceptance of empowerment as desirable, and the problematising of the concept all crystallise in Sport Malawi. As a result, this programme is a fertile site in which to redress the limited efforts to theorise empowerment within this field. Sport Malawi was founded in 2008 at the University of Gloucestershire (UoG) by a core group of staff drawn from the School of Sport and Exercise, the Institute of Education and Public Services, and the Chaplaincy and Faith Department in a "social partnership" (cf. Trendafiova *et al.* 2017) with an organising committee in Malawi, consisting of local stakeholders with connections to the sport, education, and development sectors. At the time of conducting the research for this thesis, over forty UoG students had participated in Sport Malawi with the purpose of delivering "needs-based" workshops to partners in Mzuzu. With an emphasis on educating indigenous sports community workers through workshops, the role of student-volunteers is central to the empowerment mechanisms employed by Sport Malawi and as such they are positioned as external experts and "change-agents". Since the inception of the

programme, over 1,500 Malawian sports coaches, Physical Education (PE) teachers, and youth workers have participated in these workshops, with the intention that they would be empowered to design and deliver local and largely autonomous SfD projects in their own communities.

According to the UoG, "Sport Malawi's mission is to help the people of Malawi to tackle health and social issues" (UoG 2015c). The University seeks to achieve this mission by developing a network of trained sport, development and outreach workers in Malawi who use sport to "tackle issues such as poverty, gender, inequality, education and preventable diseases, such as Malaria and HIV" (*ibid*). Since its initiation, the concept of empowerment has been central in the project. Reflecting on the conditions in which poverty thrives in Malawi, those behind the project at UoG believe that;

> Sport and play has [sic] the ability to contribute to overcoming these social problems and therefore we seek to work with a variety of practitioners in Malawi to deliver contextually specific workshops underpinned by social justice to enhance practitioners [sic] skills, whilst also *empowering* them to take ownership over their lives (Sport Malawi 2015a).

This theme of empowerment is made explicit in the multilevel aims of the programme. At the University level, the first aim is to "provide students with a challenging and dialogical learning experience, seeking to empower learners to realise and fulfil their ambitions." At the Malawi level, the second aim is "to build strong dialogical relationships and empower local practitioners to take ownership of their lives." Finally, at the international level, the third aim is "to provide an authentic and transparent contribution to the Sport for Development sector, alongside building relationships and sharing examples of best practice" (*ibid*). These aims and the way they are expressed clearly align with the discourses of other global North SfD organisations that send volunteers to the global South (cf. Darnell 2012; 2007), and suggest that the process of

students taking on the role of "change-agents" is presumed to be not only empowering to them, but a means of empowerment and social change in the countries they work in.

Sport Malawi employs a number of mechanisms to achieve these empowerment aims. The first activity is knowledge transfer and is centred around the delivery of workshops in Malawi by the UoG staff and student-volunteers (Sport Malawi 2015b). Linked to this are activities designed to develop the agency of workshop participants (cf. Hennink et al. 2012). Acknowledging that these are insufficient on their own, Sport Malawi has encouraged opportunity structures (Sport Malawi 2015b). To do this the project has connected with government and non-government organisations (NGOs) to encourage multilevel partnership and an enabling environment within which SfD organisations and practitioners operate. The fourth empowerment mechanism employed is capacity-building. Through a range of activities, the programme seeks to mobilise individuals, communities and organisations to take ownership of SfD programmes. The next empowerment mechanism is the provision of resources and includes the provision of sports equipment and kit, and financial resources to oversee training, evaluation and programme support. However, there have been recent attempts to move away from this practice of "hand-outs" because of the concern that it increases external dependency. This is linked to the final mechanism which focuses on generating long-term sustainability and local ownership and control of projects even after UoG ceases to send teams. This description of the aims of Sport Malawi and how it seeks to achieve its goals reveals that empowerment underpins the *modus operandi* of the programme.

The period in which I undertook the role as co-ordinator for Sport Malawi exposed to me a myriad of challenging questions surrounding what forms of empowerment were being enacted, intentionally and unintentionally, through the programme. However, these could not be fully and critically explored due to the pressures I faced as a SfD practitioner

who was expected to advocate the value of SfD and widen its appeal, secure funding and awards, and promote the project's "success". The motivation for undertaking this study centred around the opportunity to step back from "practicing" SfD in order to be able to interrogate the philosophies and practices of empowerment from a more critical perspective and to contribute new knowledge that would feed back to the project and the SfD field more widely. The experience of being on the "frontline" delivering Sport Malawi and negotiating relationships with various stakeholders in the United Kingdom (UK) and Malawi accentuated a crucial issue at the heart of this thesis; that of asymmetrical power relations. This was grounded in the realisation that I belonged to the economically privileged in an unequal world and had opportunities and material possibilities that were outside the reach of many Malawians whom I encountered. This study is rooted in a broad postcolonial theoretical framework, and this combined with the empirical accounts of participants, guided the process of rereading my own experience in SfD and my place within the wider power inequalities that play out within international development, and that have overflowed from European colonisation. As such I do not see myself as removed or superior from the voices that will be heard in this thesis because I too am shaped by the colonial and post-colonial legacies of unequal power relations, with all that they entail.

In order to fully understand Sport Malawi, its organisational objectives, and the extent to which its philosophical and practical constitution is likely to elicit empowerment, this thesis set out to address a number of aims and research questions. The contextual considerations detailed above underpin the overall aim which is to interrogate the philosophies and practices of empowerment within Sport Malawi. In order to address this aim, the research questions explore what are the: a) perceived outcomes for UK volunteers and the sending community of the UoG; b) perceived outcomes for host individuals, organisations and communities in Malawi; c) perceived understandings of

empowerment and the mechanisms employed to facilitate it, and; d) the theoretical contribution to understanding empowerment within Sport Malawi? In order to address these questions and the overall aim of the study, the research design draws on Jönsson (2010) assertion that comprehensive analyses of empowerment and power should include the views of all stakeholders from "above" and "below", as well as be informed by critical theory, which she calls the "view from the side". Therefore, the study examines the perspectives of the UoG stakeholders from "above" as well as the perspectives of UoG stakeholders from "below", and together these are scrutinised from a deeper theoretical perspective from the "side". Furthermore, the terms "sending" and "host" communities, derived from the work of Sherraden *et al.* (2008), are employed to connote the *actual* existence of the traditional aid relationship in Sport Malawi and its role in (re)producing uneven power relations between UK and Malawian participants.

The theoretical framework employed in this study is rooted in postcolonial critiques of empowerment. This was influenced by the recognition that the perspectives of the various Sport Malawi stakeholders on the core issues of empowerment and power are profoundly contoured by the distinct and yet interconnected historical, political, economic, social and cultural contexts of the UK and Malawi, instigated by colonisation. To analyse understandings of empowerment between stakeholder groups, power is firstly considered to exist in the discourse and relations of development (McEwan 2009), including the distinct binary of donor/recipient (Baaz 2005; Heron 2007). However, because power is relational, it is important to consider the location of stakeholders within broader structures and how this constrains or enables them to assert their agency. Secondly, to examine understandings of empowerment, specifically at the discursive and psychological levels, this thesis draws on Rowlands (1995; 1998) to explore whether/how the various manifestations of "internalised oppression" are manifest in Malawi, including the inferiority and dependency complexes and the persistence of a "colonial mentality"

(Nkrumah 1964). In relation to analysing the mechanisms intended to facilitate empowerment through Sport Malawi, the role of external "change-agents" in instilling internal capacity for the creation of autonomous and self-sustaining SfD projects is deemed hugely problematic, even paradoxical (Freire 1972). These mechanisms are further problematised by drawing on Kelsall and Mercer's (2003) critique of the homogenising tendencies of development discourse and its role in concealing both unequal power relations *and* conflicting agendas.

The thesis begins with a chapter that contextualises empowerment within broader development theories and debates. In recognising that "development" is also a complicated and contested concept (Kabeer 1994), the mainstream models of modernisation and neoliberalism which have shaped Western notions of development are explored. These pervasive paradigms perpetuate the lopsided traditional donor/recipient aid relationship and have been challenged by a range of critical development theories, including dependency, postdevelopment, and postcolonialism. Research informed by these perspectives has sought to not only challenge but also advocate for approaches to development that would level out unequal power relationships within this field. The role of NGOs in reinforcing dominant models of development or creating alternatives to it are discussed before the chapter closes with a discussion of the development field in Malawi.

Chapter two explores the growth of the SfD field and that when examined closely it largely follows the same trajectory of mainstream development in maintaining the donor/recipient aid relationship (Darnell 2007). This is a significant issue given that empowerment underpins many SfD projects. To understand the extent to which SfD is characterised by asymmetrical power relations, this chapter maps the SfD field and the extent to which SfD reflects elements of the mainstream development theories, and how critical development theories, including postcolonialism, have been used to critique

power relations within and present alternative understandings of the SfD field. The chapter identifies the value of adopting a broadly postcolonial approach to the analysis of Sport Malawi and concludes by examining the broader SfD field in Malawi, which is still in its infancy but has contemporary characteristics shaped by colonial legacies.

A deeper consideration of the concept of empowerment is presented in chapter three to reveal how it has become a "central plank of the development agenda" (Levermore and Beacom 2012, p.18), despite remaining loosely defined (Rowlands 1995). As part of this discussion the origins and lineage of empowerment within development discourse are explored, and the chapter details how its emancipatory possibilities were diluted as a result of the incorporation of the concept within the wider neoliberal development agenda (Leal 2007). Following this is an exploration of the various and contested conceptualisations of empowerment in the literature and a discussion of the conceptualisations of empowerment and power within the critical development literature, and the postcolonial critiques therein. Building on how empowerment has been understood and practiced within the SfD field, the theoretical framework employed in the thesis is presented, including a discussion of how it will be applied to this study.

Building on the range of theoretical approaches, emanating from fields of development and SfD, and the critical development literature on empowerment, chapter four connects the conceptual framework with the research design of this study. It specifically outlines how interpretive methodological approaches are more appropriate to capturing how empowerment is understood and practiced through the perspectives of Sport Malawi stakeholders in the global North *and* the global South. As Hartmann and Kwauk (2011, p. 296) have proposed, "transformative development must begin [with research] interrogating the relations of power underlying sport-based interventions".

Therefore, research into understandings and practices of empowerment in Sport Malawi required the interrogation of power dynamics by capturing the perspectives of all programme stakeholders (Banda and Holmes 2017; Darnell and Hayhurst 2012). A postcolonial research orientation is outlined which gives voice to all in the "aid chain" (Darnell and Hayhurst 2012, p.120). In line with this, the justification for the employment of ethnography for this study will be presented, as well as detailing the selected methods of data collection and the sampling procedures adopted to gather perspectives of all Sport Malawi stakeholder groups.

Drawing on the insights captured from the preceding chapters and the call for critically informed studies that combine theoretical frameworks with ethnographic data, chapter five interrogates "the actual practices" of empowerment (Guest 2009) within Sport Malawi from the "view from above". The perspectives of "the sending community" (Sherraden *et al.* 2008) include three sets of UK based stakeholders, namely senior management of the UoG, staff from the University who facilitate, oversee and deliver the programme, and the students recruited to the programme as volunteers. More specifically, this chapter utilises postcolonial critiques of empowerment to uncover and analyse the variant of empowerment that the UK stakeholders promote and enact through the programme. Three core themes emerged from the data. The first of these relates to the existence of a paternalistic form of empowerment within Sport Malawi, one rooted in colonialism and that (re)produces a neo-colonial "white-saviour" complex. The second addresses the impact of this form of empowerment on how the Sport Malawi partnership operates and the extent to which there is an awareness of the pervasive donor/recipient relationship within the programme, and how this connects to the wider and historic power imbalances. The final key theme discussed in this chapter relates to whether the programme has an external orientation and acknowledges and/or seeks to address deeply rooted structural inequalities between the global North and South.

Chapter six presents the "view from below" by drawing on the perspectives of stakeholders in the "receiving community" (Sherraden *et al.* 2008). Stakeholder groups comprised of key figures in the local community not directly involved in the project, the Malawi Team that oversee and sustain project activities, workshop participants trained to deliver SfD projects, and finally, the participants of these projects. Crucially, this chapter reveals the importance of grounding the concepts of empowerment and power within colonial history and development discourse, to demonstrate how development has fostered a generation of localised elites who are resource dependent. Aligned to this, the discussion here also illustrates that the "host community" cannot be considered homogenous, and that contestation exists in what individuals seek to achieve from Sport Malawi. Furthermore, it reveals significant power imbalances between UK and Malawi participants and problematises the assertion that external input is required to instil internal capacity for sustainable, autonomous SfD projects. Finally, the chapter reveals that the messages propagated by the five SfD projects being supported through Sport Malawi reflect a neoliberal understanding of empowerment, one that depoliticised development and reinforced the perspective that hard work and individual responsibility were crucial in escaping poverty and achieving success in life.

In conjunction with the views from "above" and "below" presented in chapters five and six, chapter seven analyses empowerment and power via the "view from the side" (Jönsson 2010). While the discussion of the data from the "sending" and "host" communities was inflected with a postcolonial analysis, this chapter reflects on the themes and issues that emerged from a deeper theoretical vantage point. In doing so, it engages more deeply with the range of conceptual tools and analytical approaches, detailed at the end of chapter three, and this provides a fuller understanding of how power and empowerment plays out in Sport Malawi. Firstly, it explores how understandings of empowerment were characterised by neoliberal notions of empowerment. Here a

paternalistic understanding of partnership was prominent and the white-saviour complex was reinforced on the part of student-volunteers rather than challenged or disavowed (Vanderplatt 1998; Deepak 2011; Spivak 1985). Secondly, the chapter examines the mechanisms employed to operationalise empowerment, which reveals practices that are characterised by asymmetrical and top-down relationships and moulded to the paternalistic aspirations of the more powerful group, and these in turn reproduce uneven relations of power (Smith 2015; Jönsson 2010). The thesis concludes by outlining the contribution of this study to knowledge and offering alternatives to how empowerment might be understood and practiced within the SfD field so as be transformative for the intended beneficiaries of empowerment-focused interventions.

Chapter One: The Idea of Development

Introduction

The exponential rise of SfD in the global North and particularly in the global South is evidenced by the growing number of NGOs purposively seeking to achieve international development through sport; the increasing support from multilateral organisations and governmental development departments; and the enthusiastic athletic and student volunteers looking to work, support, and do degree research projects on programmes and organisations operating along the "development-sport nexus" (Black 2010, p.121; Kidd 2008). The expansive growth of this new "movement" (Kidd 2008; Kay 2009) or "sector" (Levermore 2008; Giulianotti 2011) has not gone unnoticed within the academy, with many sports scholars and some international development specialists researching on issues relating to sport and health, gender empowerment, child and youth development, disability, peace building, and monitoring and evaluation, among others (SDP IWG 2007; Levermore and Beacom 2009). With a view to prioritising practice early literature was mostly non-critical and failed to thoroughly engage with development scholarship. As

latecomers to the development enterprise there is the benefit of hindsight meaning that the SfD movement could learn from the failures of development rather than repeat them (Darnell 2012; Black 2010; Kidd 2008). Against this backdrop, it is important to place the SfD sector, including the programme that forms the focus of this study, within broader development debates and associated "historical and political ideologies and legacies" (Giles and Lynch 2012, p. 91).

Development however is not a straightforward concept and SfD scholars who have wrestled with it testify to the "contentious and contested character of this ubiquitous concept" (Black 2010, p. 122), and its "politically complex and sensitive" nature (Kay 2013, p. 282). The meaning of development is hugely contested and within development literature there is little consensus on what it actually means. Often development is equated with phrases like "progress", "improvement" and "economic growth", and assumes that development follows a linear path (Levermore and Beacom 2012, p. 257). The traditional donor/recipient view understands international development as the "benevolent deliverance of aid, goods and expertise from the northern, 'First World' to the southern, 'Third World'" (Darnell 2007, p. 561). However, from the conventional donor-recipient prism development can be also interpreted as unwanted interference, dominance and cultural imperialism, through which richer nations safeguard their economic and political interests at the expense of poorer nations. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that development is neutral or apolitical (Kabeer 1994).

Ambivalence also surrounds terms used to describe the beneficiaries and benefactors of development. Recently, some authors of international development and SfD literature have leaned towards Minority World/Majority World (Kay 2013) and One-Third World/Two-Thirds World (Hayhurst et al. 2013) terminologies to circumvent the geographical and ideological baggage associated with terms such as first world/third world, global North/global South, high-income/low-income countries, and

developed/developing countries. The application of these terms sheds light on assumptions underpinning development that either challenge or perpetuate the hegemony of conventional models of development that privileges the global North (Kay 2013). This further reveals the political and contentious nature of the development enterprise.

To thoroughly understand the various perspectives on development it is vital to grasp the underlying paradigms that have shaped this enterprise. This chapter therefore considers the key competing perspectives on international development. It does so with the intention of laying the groundwork to understanding how empowerment has emerged to become a central concept within development and crucially, how it has been conceptualised, understood and operationalised in the SfD organisation under consideration in this thesis. While empowerment has become one of the most utilised concepts and policy objectives in international development and SfD in the last four decades (Kay 2013; Levermore and Beacom 2012), it remains loosely defined (Rowlands 1995). The multi-level nature of the empowerment means it is a challenging and problematic "buzzword" that is bandied around without clarity of what the concept actually entails and how it is to be operationalised in the efforts of international development. Some theorisation of empowerment efforts through SfD has taken place and to date has predominantly focused on gender empowerment (e.g. Samie 2015; McDonald 2015; Kay 2013) except for a studies on HIV and AIDS education through SfD (Jeanes 2013), the empowerment of people living with HIV and AIDS (Mwannga 2011), and a collaborative sports equipment project (Lindsey and O'Gorman 2015).

This chapter therefore begins to address this scholarly gap by contextualising empowerment within broader development theories and debates. It starts with a section on the paradigms (modernisation and neoliberalism) that have shaped Western ideas of international development and subsequent policies since the mid-twentieth century. Then it moves on to look at critical development theories (dependency, postcolonialism, and

postdevelopment) that have challenged the ideologies underpinning mainstream paradigms. This will flow into the third section on the emergence and role of NGOs in development. As part of the discussion here, two themes central to this thesis will be explored: the positioning of empowerment within NGO agendas and the impact of short-term volunteerism therein. In order to begin to shift attention towards the specific context that this thesis focuses on, the chapter finishes by examining how development has played out in Malawi.

1.1. Modernisation Theory and Development

As a geopolitical endeavour of governments and international organisations the modern development project in the global North can be traced back to the years that immediately followed the end of World War II. The global order was transformed in this period. This was manifest in the creation of the UN and the UN Security Council consisting of the victor states; the emergence of the Cold War; and the diminished power of the old European empires with growing nationalism and decolonisation in Asia and the intensification of similar currents across Africa. It was in this geopolitical and socio-economic context that the first development paradigm of modernisation came to prominence. Hoogvelt (1978, p.51) notes that modernisation is "amongst the most, if not *the* most, popular and prolific theories about social change in contemporary developing countries." To understand this model clearly it is important to briefly acknowledge that its seedlings were planted in the previous three centuries and fashioned in the works of "classical sociology".

The rapid socio-economic change that was occurring throughout Western Europe during the nineteenth century on the back of rapid industrialisation and associated

urbanisation was of particular interest to "classical sociologists" including Emile Durkheim and Max Weber who held varying theories on the genesis, nature and prospects of societies as they transitioned from *traditional* to *industrial* (read modern). Informed by Darwin's theories on evolution, Durkheim was particularly influential in theorising this complex transition to *modernity* and in his seminal work, *The Division of Labour in Society* (1984) first published in 1893 he suggested two types of society, the "traditional" and the "modern". The former had "mechanical solidarity" which described a society that had independent self-sustaining patterns to life characterised by agrarian and tribal bonds, a simple rural lifestyle and traditional belief systems (Webster 1990). In contrast, Durkheim saw "modern" societies as coming into existence through high population growth that led to greater competition for fewer resources. Making sense of this through a Darwinian lens, he argued that when survival was at stake society would have to adapt or face demise. He saw the answer in greater social division of labour and thus, the creation of a new *modern* society characterised by high levels of specialisation and increasing interdependence among people (Webster 1990).

Max Weber's theorising on the development of capitalism in Western societies also tells us much about the underpinnings of modernisation theory. He too sought to explain the emergence of industrialisation and the transition from traditional to modern societies. The distinction he drew was focused on the socio-economic and religious landscape of Western Europe and what he saw as the cultural value of "rationalisation" that stressed steady profits and capital accumulation. This "new spirit, the spirit of modern capitalism, had set to work" (Weber 1971, p.7) and trumpeted the value of rationalisation and was characterised by growing secularism and a shift away from the religious to the rational. For Weber, the transition from traditional to modern societies was underpinned by a prioritisation of "the principles of rationality and less by the customs of tradition" (Webster 1990, p.48).

The theories of Durkheim and Weber on social change underpinned modernisation and would eventually inform ideas on how to spread Western models of development in 1950s and 1960s. In the mid-twentieth century, Parsons (1951), an ardent advocate of modernisation, argued that social evolution required four processes that would transition a society from "traditional" to "modern". These processes were "differentiation" which creates functional systems within the overall main system; "adaptation" which allows systems to be more efficient; "inclusion" in which new *outside* elements are embraced, and finally; "generalisation" as new values are accepted across the whole system. The cultural diffusion and emulation of "modern" traits and values such as "achievement" in entrepreneurship and invention would be seen as crucial in the development process (McClelland 1961; Hagen 1962; Lerner 1964). Modernisation was normally interpreted against the two-type society model as explored above, although this was slightly amended by Lerner (1964) who added an intervening stage which he described as the "transitional society".

The "stage" model of modernisation process was developed further by the economist Walter Whitman Rostow who became hugely influential in shaping early development policy. In *Stages to Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (1960, p.4) he proclaimed:

> *It is possible to identify all societies, in their economic dimensions, as lying within one of five categories; the traditional society, the preconditions for take-off, take-off, the drive to maturity, and the age of high mass-consumption.*

Rostow analysed the Industrial Revolution in Britain and argued that "take-off" was a watershed experience for societies in their transition from "traditional" to "modern". Before the watershed lay obstacles that hindered economic growth such as inadequate capital accumulation and investment. This ubiquitous theme within modernisation literature "appears as *the* lesson to be learnt from Western experience and to be mechanically applied to the rest of the world so that they can repeat the transition"

(Roxborough 1979, p.16). Thus modernisation would be measured as relative progress in per capita economic growth and compatibility with modern values and norms.

Modernisation then quickly became the paradigm through which "less developed countries become more developed" (Hoogvelt 1978, p.53) and it was based on the assumption that this could be achieved via the (re)creation of societies through new (Western) institutions, processes, values, customs and worldviews. Modernisation (often equated with industrialisation and Westernisation) was for decades the *agreed* "blueprint for development" for all countries (Webster 1990) and the features of modernity that it identifies were used as a yardstick to map progress. According to this perspective, where "progress" is found wanting in particular countries the blame can be confidently levelled at the prevalence of "tradition" and "backwardness".

This paradigm was hugely influential in the emergence and growth of development policy and practice from 1945 through to the 1970s and this became manifest in a number of ways. Firstly, the economic facet of modernisation was operationalised through the institutional framework set up at the Bretton Woods conference in 1944 (Parpart and Veltmeyer 2004), and included the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, subsequently renamed The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Trade Organisation (ITO). Originally created for the reconstruction efforts in Europe, later they would play leading roles in the development project and the enduring aid-led economic framework that underpinned it. Furthermore, under the Marshall Plan (1948-1952) this framework expanded to government-to-government aid, with the United States (US) providing a rescue package to fourteen European states. This gave credence to the idea that investment capital was critical for economic growth and thus modernisation. As Moyo (2009, p.13) asked rhetorically, "if aid worked in Europe, if it gave Europe what Europe needed, why couldn't it do the same everywhere else?" The less developed regions of the

world were deemed ripe for the prescriptions of modernisation, particularly given their levels of education and wages, an exceptionally narrow tax base, diminutive participation in global markets and limited or non-existent infrastructure. Thirdly, the nation-state was assigned by the UN and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) a central role in overseeing national development (Kingsbury *et al* 2012). With the adoption of Keynesian economic principles, states were encouraged to provide economic growth through industrialisation and the emulation of Western values and institutions. The 1950s and 1960s saw the state playing a key role in providing a wide range of infrastructural facilities, economic interventions, and social services. Fourthly, in the 1950s as nationalist dissent swept across the African and Asian continents, colonialism began to fall. The new independent states had two priorities: improving living standards and consolidating their independence by earning economic equality denied under colonialism (Rapley 2007). "Independent they may have been on paper", notes Mayo (2009, p.14),

> *but independence dependent on the financial largesse of their former colonial masters was the reality. For the West, aid became a means by which [the colonial powers] combined their new-found altruism with a hefty dollop of self-interest – maintaining strategic geopolitical holds (ibid).*

Also for these new independent countries the path to modernisation was going to be different from that of their former colonisers who were able to develop industrialisation off the back of plundering their colonies. Thus, claimed third world nationalists, "independence would be illusory if the colonial economic structure was not overthrown along with the colonial masters" (Rapley 2007, p.20). Latin America which experienced independence and modest industrialisation in the 1800s gave witness that absolute autonomy did not follow automatically with independence. Rather, agrarian economies remained tied closely to the superpowers, and a political order was dominated by authoritarian leaders who controlled with the agrarian elites. Finally, modernisation required alignment to Western capitalist values and this ultimately redrew the geo-political structure with the creation of the third world. Originally, "the third world"

signified non-advanced capitalist ("the first world"), nor communist ("the second world") states; although later it would denote all *developing* countries (most of whom had been colonies) regardless of ideological affiliation. Modernisation became a tool for political conquest and this was evidenced in the battle for hegemony between the United States of America (USA) and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) (Reinert 2008).

Both the theoretical underpinnings and the operationalised components of modernisation explored above are all echoed in the inaugural speech of President Truman in 1949. As part of his speech, Truman announced a "fair deal" for the entire world which he argued included a responsibility on the West to resolve the problems of "underdeveloped areas":

> *More than half the people in the world are living in conditions approaching misery.... For the first time in history humanity possesses the knowledge and the skill to relieve the suffering of these people… I believe that we should make available to peace-loving peoples the benefits of our store of technical knowledge in order to help them realise their aspirations for a better life… What we envisage is a programme of development based on the concepts of democratic fair dealings… Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace. And the key to greater production is a wider and more vigorous application of modern scientific and technical knowledge* (Truman 1964).

There was strong agreement on the idea that underdevelopment was the original condition of all countries and that the first world had progressed out of that state into a more prosperous one (Kingsbury *et al* 2012). It was considered unacceptable that the third world would not follow the linear path to development and modernity set out by the first world. The core principles of modernisation theory were considered fundamental in this process. Thus, when a group of "experts" convened by the UN (1951, p.3) published policies for underdeveloped countries, this paradigm was explicit: "Economic progress is impossible without painful adjustments. Ancient philosophies have to be scrapped; old social institutions have to disintegrate… [those] who cannot keep up with progress have to have their expectations of a comfortable life frustrated."

From the perspective of modernisation theory, the Truman and UN rhetoric made perfect sense (Escobar 1995), and as a consequence it would prevail within development for three decades without much opposition until the 1970s (Marglin and Schor 1990). The assumption that development equals economic growth (via industrialisation) and the idea that the emulation of Western cultural values and institutional practices will bring about this economic growth, although less prominent, still exists to some degree. However, this approach to development underpinned by modernisation was considered inadequate by the 1970s, and at the end of that decade, another paradigm of development called "neoliberalism" rose to prominence.

1.2. Neoliberalism and Development

As detailed in the previous section, the modernisation perspective saw development as part of a linear trajectory that societies could achieve provided that the prescriptions outlined by the Bretton Woods institutions were adhered to. However, during the 1970s, it became clear that outcomes had failed to match the optimism which had launched it. Chasms in this paradigm emerged and two very diverse theories emerged within these voids; namely neoliberalism on the right and dependency theory on the left. The former will be considered now and the latter discussed in the next section. The discussion on neoliberalism concentrates on two aspects. Firstly, it briefly reflects on the context that gave rise to neoliberalism and outlines its theoretical underpinnings. Secondly, it explores how neoliberalism was implemented into development policy and practice, and the impact it has made therein.

After three decades of dominance it was discernible that all was not well with the modernisation paradigm of development and its capacity to deliver growth was seriously

undermined by a range of global economic currents during the 1970s. Firstly, the oil crises in the 1970s, which lead to the quadrupling of the cost of petroleum by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), had severe consequences for third world countries and resulted in many defaulting on their loans from the IMF and the World Bank, as well as on country-to-country loans (Adesina 2004). As a consequence, the IMF gradually decided to move from loans to grants as deficits in the third world grew to insurmountable levels. Secondly, the worsening economic situation in third world countries led to the *Basic Needs Approach* in the 1970s as the World Bank and Western governments redirected aid from infrastructure to rural and agricultural programmes as development tried to take on a more human-face (Kingsbury *et al* 2012). This deteriorating economic situation led many countries back to a renewed reliance on donors. Thirdly, as the post-war boom ebbed it was apparent that the economies of many third world countries were not growing at the required rate needed to improve standards of living. It was clear that state-led development expended more than it produced due to inefficiency, corruption, rent seeking and nepotism (Lambsdorff 2002). The old orthodoxy of development thinking and practice was flailing.

Against this backdrop a fundamental shift in economic and development thinking was gaining momentum. For three decades, the state was viewed as the spearhead of the modernisation approach to development, that is to say, "governments were the ultimate arbiter of resource allocation" (Moyo 2009, p. 19). However, increasingly the state was being seen as a hindrance to global prosperity. This view was central in the emergence of neoliberal theory which would go on to dominate development thinking in the decade to follow. Neoliberalism is also referred to as neoclassical theory and this tradition of economic thinking dates back to the 1870s (Adesina 2002). It assumes that "individuals behave as rational utility maximisers… people are self-interested, they know what they want, and they also know best how to get it. In the pursuit of their goals, people act

rationally and efficiently" (Rapley 2007, p. 64). Going back as far as Adam Smith and his seminal work *The Wealth of Nations* (1910), neoclassical theorists believed individualism and entrepreneurial freedom lay at the heart of thriving economies and thus argued against trade regulation and taxation that were designed to redistribute wealth. The central "doctrine of unintended consequences" (Mandeville 1962) argued that social prosperity was best achieved by freeing individuals to pursue their own self-interests, and that society suffers when individuals are obligated to seek shared interests. When juxtaposed with Keynesianism which influenced modernisation theory, neoliberalism was a radical departure in development thinking. With the belief that welfare was a hindrance to entrepreneurship, advocates of neoliberalism called for a rollback of the state and liberation of the market. In the post-war era the economist Milton Friedman had strongly advocated neoliberalism; however, it was not until the global recession of the 1970s that ears turned to his tonic for economic and development ills.

Friedman's solution was to call for a dramatic reduction in the economic role of the state, and a reduction in the role of government to "provide a monetary climate favourable to the effective operation of those basic forces of enterprise, ingenuity, invention, hard work, and thrift that are the true springs in economic growth" (1968, p.17). By taking away the economic and development agenda from states it was believed that ultimately the economy and state would benefit in a "trickle down" manner (Kingsbury et al 2012). The idea that the benefits of strong economic growth in successful regions would spread to more peripheral areas was both a central tenet in modernisation theory (cf. Rostow 1960) and neoliberalism, however the latter questioned the ability of states to produce and sustain economic growth.

The modernisation paradigm had done little to facilitate a strong capitalist class in the third-world and the state had become *the* entrepreneur (Parpart and Veltmeyer 2004). While some viewed populations in the third-world as "backward" and "traditional"

and as holding values not conducive to market rationality (Schultz 1964; Johnston 1964), neoliberalism saw all individuals as "rational utility maximisers" regardless of race and culture. Opposed to market distortion via state intervention neoliberal theorists demanded the dismantling of restrictive trade and labour regulations, credit rationing, import substitution industrialisation (ISI) and overstretched welfare systems. Furthermore, neoliberals argued for approaches to prosperity that prioritised trading their primary produces to the first-world. These were the major theoretical underpinnings of neoliberalism that would become dominant.

At the start of the 1980s Thatcherism and Reaganism led the charge as the West swung to the right. Unchallenged by a fragmented left (Parpart and Veltmeyer 2004), neoliberal influence gained currency in the corridors of the World Bank and IMF. As Rapley (2007, p. 63) has observed, soon "a new drummer was setting the beat of the world economy – a drummer that used its lending power to prod third-world governments to radically alter their development policies." The World Bank formalised neoliberal policy into long-term development practice through Structural Adjustments Programmes (SAPs) signalling abandonment of the Basic Needs Approach of the 1970s. After the fall of Soviet Union and Eastern European communism, all third world countries were encouraged to embrace liberal capitalism. Indeed, alignment to such policies was not optional but conditional to much needed aid (Parpart and Veltmeyer 2004).

Through the implementing arm of SAPs, neoliberal policy as set out in the Washington Consensus pushed the market to the forefront and relegated the state to a supporting role while at the same time foregrounding the notion of individuals as *rational utility maximisers*. Parpart and Veltmeyer (2004, p.45-6) describe seven key elements of SAPs:

> *(1) a realistic rate of currency exchange (that is devaluation) and measures to stabilise the economy…; (2) privatisation of the means of production and state*

enterprises...; (3) liberalisation of capital markets and trade…and opening up domestic firms to free competition and market prices; (4) deregulation of private economic activity…; (5) labour market reform: reduced regulation and employment protection…; (6) downsizing of the state apparatus…; (7) a free market in both capital and tradable goods and services, first regionally and then worldwide.

These elements, particularly the latter, suggest that this development model relied on a "new world economic order" (Ostry 1990; Petras and Veltmeyer 2003) where all economies are integrated into one in the form of globalisation. The adoption of SAPs ensured that neoliberalism would overtake modernisation to become the dominant approach to development globally.

It has been argued that SAPs have done more harm than good by exacerbating inequalities and worsening the plight of the poor through fiscal austerity. The burden of reforms was "disproportionately borne by the poor (especially women and children)" (Parpart and Veltmeyer 2004, p.46) and their vulnerability was echoed by a growing global civil society that urged for the neoliberal development paradigm to take on a more "human face". Although Latin America and the so-called "tiger" economies of South East Asia remained largely unscathed (Parpart and Veltmeyer 2004), the reforms were felt hardest in Africa while failing to cure the continent's economic woes (Rapley 2007). The promised "trickle-down" effect has for many remained illusionary and stoked fires of leftist ideology.

To tackle dissent from the left, appease concerns surrounding the harshness of SAPs and the failure to bring promised growth to the poorest, the Bretton Woods Institutions sought to reform neoliberalism and give it a social dimension and a human face (Kingsbury *et al* 2012). These reforms included promoting a policy of centralisation and a participatory form of sustainable development; tackling extreme poverty through specific projects; supporting a New Social Policy that targeted the poorest; and importantly, looking towards NGOs as strategic implementing partners and as a link with

grassroots organisations and communities (Parpart and Veltmeyer 2004, p. 46). Despite these reforms, the core tenets of the neoliberal development approach remain and continue to dominate mainstream development policy and practice. The two orthodox development models considered in this section have encountered strong criticism (Brohman 1995) and have given rise to more critical perspectives on development.

1.3. Critical Development Theory

Modernisation and neoliberal orthodoxy has been seriously questioned by critical development perspectives. The critiques directed at modernisation and neoliberalism are many but the main ones will be considered briefly here. Firstly, critical development theorists would argue that mainstream development theory has been constructed within a Western worldview by a few Northern "developed" countries with little input from the global South. In this ethnocentric manner, progress through Western emulation is celebrated whilst the maintaining of global South cultures and values is dissuaded (Brohman 1995). Secondly, economics has dominated mainstream development theory, policy and practice, to the detriment of positioning sociocultural, political, and environmental factors in the development process. Thirdly, critical development theorists would strongly argue that mainstream development approaches have failed to rebalance lopsided power relations, structural inequalities, and close the widening gap between the rich and poor. Fourthly, from a postmodern view there is a lot of scepticism around attempts to impose singular "top-down" notions of development (Kingsbury et al 2012); and universal formulaic solutions that neglect the importance of "contextuality" in development efforts (Brohman 1995). Some critical perspectives went further to suggest

that the whole development project is fundamentally flawed and should be scrapped rather than repaired, thus, ushering in a new era of postdevelopment (Sachs 1992).

These major grievances with modernisation and neoliberal orthodoxy gave rise to aspirations for alternative models of development. The new paradigms aimed to go beyond what were regarded as outmoded development models and introduce alternative approaches that were more inclusive, participatory, sustainable and equitable (Goulet 1989; Rhaman 1991). Critical development theory, as Veltmeyer (2011, p. 34) has observed, "provides a critically important toolbox of ideas for revisioning and rethinking development – from bringing about social change, genuine progress and 'another world' of real development." Such ideas are evident in the theoretical underpinnings of critical pedagogy (Freire 1972), community development (Chambers 1987), and gender empowerment (Kabeer 1994; Moser 1993). Attention will now turn to how the critical development theories of dependency theory, postcolonial theory, and postdevelopment theory specifically criticised modernisation and neoliberal orthodoxy; and to briefly demonstrate how these new paradigms contributed to changes in development practice.

1.3.1. Dependency Theory

Dependency theory first surfaced in the 1950s in work of Baran (1957) as a direct reaction to Latin American underdevelopment and the prescriptions advocated by modernisation theory to address this. Dependency theorists argued that systemic change was needed (Parpart and Veltmeyer 2004) and advocated a completely different approach to development. Rather than bringing about progressive change, they argued that modernisation harmed many countries in the third world and maintained them in a perpetual state of poverty. For example, it was posited that the diffusion of Western values to the third world through the modernisation approach to development did not lift poor

populations out of poverty and into prosperity. It further impoverished all but the third world bourgeoisies who allied themselves with the powers in the West (Baran 1957). As Rapley (2007, p.26) suggested: "Imperialism had not exported capitalism to the third world; rather, it had drained the colonies of the resources that could have been used for investment, and had killed off local capitalism through competition… [cutting] short the natural process of capitalist development that Karl Marx had identified." Dependency theory saw two forces concurrently at work behind the development *façade*. Borrowing the centre-periphery model used by Latin American structuralism (Parpart and Veltmeyer 2004) they were able to argue how through development, resources flowed from the periphery (third world) to the core (first world); enriching the latter at the expense of the former. From this perspective, development and underdevelopment are two sides of the same coin. Developing this further, dependency theorists argued that the stagnation of third world countries was (pre)determined by their respective standing in the world capitalist and political system. That is to say the underdevelopment of some and the development of others were linked and dependent on each other. Frank (1966) termed the underdevelopment of peripheral countries by strategic interventions of an enriched metropole as the "development of underdevelopment".

Dependency theorists including Frank (1966) turned their attention to the role of the indigenous bourgeoisie in examining processes of underdevelopment. In their pursuit of defending their interests the capitalist countries of the first world allied themselves with the capitalist classes in the third world who were seen as a *dependent* oligarchy. This reciprocal dependency profited them through export market revenue and the resources to consume imported luxury goods. To safeguard their privileged position, dependency theorists believed that the indigenous capitalist class would resist measures to distribute wealth through industrialisation, increased taxes and restrictions on imported goods.

In the end, dependency theory was influential in academic circles but not policy (an enduring issue of alternative development approaches) and was criticised for offering a rigid and simplistic understanding of development. It was unable to explain economic growth in some third world countries which led to the notion of "dependent development", which acknowledges that some growth is possible but is limited and dependent on some inclusion within the global economy (Rapley 2007). Though not a criticism, dependency theory called out for more statism and detachment from the world economy with countries constructing strategies that would endeavour to develop all classes within society and not just the dominant one. Without the patronage of policy makers, the theory had little impact on development policy and practice and as such it was unable to facilitate systemic change against the might of conventional development thinking. As seen in the last section, statism diminished in 1970s and the development of third world countries was left to the mercy of free-market economics.

1.3.2. Postdevelopment Theory

By the 1980s there was a view that development theorising had come to an impasse with the demise of dependency theory (Parpart and Veltmeyer 2004). Although the mainstream development policy makers at the IMF and the World Bank did not embrace it, dependency theory did succeed in signposting the plight of the poor within the world. Critical development theorists started to piece together a new paradigm in the form of postdevelopment theory that would be "initiated not from above (by government within the state apparatus) or the outside (by multilateral and bilateral NGOs), but from within and below" (Parpart and Veltmeyer 2004, p.48). The main tenets of this new critical paradigm will now be considered.

Drawing on poststructuralism and postmodernism, postdevelopment theorists tackled modernisation theory and the idea that the global South had to emulate the path taken by the West (Schuurman 1993; Edwards; 1993), arguing that this project was motivated by a desire to extend Western hegemony (Rapley 2007). Thus, postdevelopment places the issue of power, and in particular how power operates through the discourse and language used within the global development project at the centre of its analysis (Escobar 1995). Postdevelopment theorists began to create a substantial body of literature that speaks to the dominance of the global North voice in development theory, policy and practice and the comparative silence of the global South voice (Mallon 1994). The work of Foucault has been applied by postdevelopment theorists to highlight how power is everywhere, including in knowledge and discourse (Foucault 1991). His work also points to the need for a more nuanced analysis of power that does not negate the agency of the marginalised, and in particular, women (Parpart et al. 2002; Crush 1995; Ferguson 1990). Foucault's departure from previous ideas on power has been hugely influential, and within development has been used to critique policy, discourse and practice. A fuller consideration of Foucault's exposition of power will be provided in chapter three.

Connected to this is the construction and representation of the third world or global South as produced through discourse. The pervasiveness and persuasiveness of the concept of development is verified by how readily it is internalised, to the extent that many countries have come to see themselves as "underdeveloped" (Escobar 1995). This phenomenon was brought to light in the works of Said (2003), Ferguson (1990), Mudimbe (1988), Mitchell (1988), and Mohanty *et al.* (1991). In his seminal work, Said explores the influence of post-Enlightenment European discourse and culture on constructing the Orient in political, social and ideological terms, and he argues that it is through this process that the West is able to secure hegemonic rule over it. Similarly, Mohanty *et al.*

(1991) explores how the West has represented third world women in a homogenous manner as possessing the characteristics of being uneducated, backward, powerless, passive and poor. Such powerful constructions send out caricatures that do not reflect what exists in reality, and as such, they function in ways that influence how people think and act towards those in the global South.

These conclusions have led many postdevelopment theorists to argue that the whole global development project is flawed and they question its very existence (Esteva and Prakash 1998). As Sachs (1992, p.1) had proclaimed over two decades ago, "The time is ripe to write its obituary". Postdevelopment theorists would argue that orthodox development can never be an emancipatory force for the global South because ultimately it seeks to serve the interests of the global North, and as such, should be abandoned. However, other postdevelopment theorists would argue that the issues highlighted above "cannot simply be thought away" (Parpart and Veltmeyer 2004, p.52) and that the theory's downfall is that it "opposes more effectively than it proposes" (Rapley 2007, p. 190). Therefore, there has been a call for a more reformist attitude that seeks to give practical alternatives rather than just criticisms. Here the emphasis is placed on approaches to development that involve working *with* rather than *for*, that respect and utilise local knowledge, and encourage locals to draw on their own capacity rather than depend on outside help. Empowerment is a key concept within this alternative approach, and in particular, understandings and out-workings of *power* in development policy and practice. Such issues will be explored in chapter three and in the empirical chapters (Rowlands 1997; 1995).

The "mental structure" of mainstream development (Sachs 1992) has started to be deconstructed and this effort is ongoing by those who take a postdevelopment perspective. Within development studies questions linger about the direction that postdevelopment might take thinking and practice about development. There is a view

that it does not present a "plausible alternative development strategy" (Munck 2011, p.44). However, it has made important contributions to debates and this includes the importance of moving development thinking beyond global North paternalism and the homogenous notions held about the global South. It also challenges the Western construct of development and the states and institutions that prop it up, and, argues for a plurality of development approaches based on contextuality rather than top-down and singular notions of what is best for all societies in the world (Kingsbury *et al*. 2012; Hochachka 2010). Fundamentally, postdevelopment theorists would say that the future of development lies with a strong civil society and "its struggle for emancipation" in overcoming inequalities of power (Kingsbury *et al*. 2012, p. 73). Similar critiques of development are also evident in postcolonial theory.

1.3.3. Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory (or postcolonialism) became established in the 1980s alongside postdevelopment theory. This section will give a brief account of the main differences between postcolonial theory and postdevelopment theory; address the nomenclature of "post" within postcolonialism; highlight the main tenets of the theory, and finally; demonstrate how it helps to make sense of development. In distinguishing postdevelopment and postcolonialism, it is important to firstly recognise that the former concerns itself with the creation and ongoing endeavours of the global development project from the 1940s onwards. Little is mentioned within this body of literature pertaining to the histories, experiences, and interactions of cultures and societies before the "age of development." Postcolonial theory, however, does this and shows how "the conditions, both discursive and material, produced by colonialism facilitated the need for development" (Giles and Lynch 2012, p.91). It uses extensive methods and concepts to examine the legacies of imperialism and colonialism. Features of these legacies include

"political and legal domination over an alien society, relations of economic and political dependence and exploitation between imperial power and colony, and racial and cultural inequality" (Johnston *et al.* 1994, p.75). So postcolonialism is not solely concerned with the era after colonial rule, but with the experience of imperialism in former colonies and its influence on them from independence to the present-day. Postcolonial theory explores both the traces of colonisation left in former colonies and on former imperial powers. Thus, it is a "double edged sword" that explores the effects of colonisation on the once colonised and the once coloniser, and the relationship they now hold with the *Other*.

Secondly, postcolonial theory questions the generalisations and essentialisms sometimes evident within postdevelopment. In an attempt to defend their position some postdevelopment theorists *can* romanticise the traditional way of life and overlook evidence pointing to the apparent benefits of development to human wellbeing. Such an approach "redefines every success in development a failure, every failure as a victory, and every penetration by the market as a consolidation of capitalist hegemony rather than something that might be sought by ordinary people" (Rapley 2007, p.194). There are many in the global South who aspire to a *modern* way of life and wish to be consumers of luxury goods (Sylvester 1999). Such hybridity of traditional and modern values does not resonate well with the broad strokes of modernisation and postdevelopment theories. Indeed, as colonisation came to an end, modernisation was largely and enthusiastically welcomed amidst the waves of independence and nationalism. Thus, a more nuanced analysis of third world voices is required, one that reflects the richness of contextual meaning and experience and this is something postcolonial theory offers (Sylvester 1999).

To fully appreciate the theory of postcolonialism it is important to consider the nomenclature of "post" within the term. This matter is complicated by different views on what the "post" actually refers to. To some the term postcolonialism describes the era we live in now where formal colonisation is (mostly) a thing of the past (McEwen 2009). For

others, this view is contestable because the effects of colonialism are still to be erased, and as a result there is still a need overcome colonialism. When we link these conceptualisations of the "post" within postcolonialism to neo-colonialism then it is possible to say that a country can be both postcolonial and neo-colonial. That is to say, the country has political independence *but* economic and cultural dependence. This links with Lenin's (1949) connecting of imperialism (not be equated with colonialism) with a particular state in the development of capitalism. This type of imperialism is described as the "highest stage of colonialism" (Loomba 1998, p.6) and is often referred to as neo-colonialism or neo-imperialism. Crucially, it does not require direct colonial rule as it creates dependency through economic and social structures. The concerns of postcolonialism therefore extend to neo-colonialism and particularly with how unequal power relations between the once colonised and the West persist and are maintained in particular ways. Within this context Tucker (1999) argued that development constituted a form of imperialism as the idea was advanced in the interests of imperial rule (Parpart and Veltmeyer 2004).

At the core of postcolonial theory are notions of representation, repossession and cultural hegemony and it is important to briefly discuss each of these. The issue of representation has been central in the works of many critical development theorists and relates to the ways in which those in the global South, or who Spivak (1985) referred to as "subalterns", are portrayed and perceived by those in the global North and the consequences that this has in the world. Ingleby (2010, p.56) has argued representation to be "history written by the victors" and in the words of Benjamin (1999, p.248) postcolonialism calls for a contextualised reading of colonisation and development and their associated ideologies and legacies that "brush[es] history against the grain." As noted earlier, Said (1978) played a major role in highlighting the Western representation of the Orient. He argued that representation was one of the main ways in which unequal

power relations between the once colonised and the West are maintained. It involves the negative portrayal and stereotyping of those in the global South as helpless, passive, inferior and crucially as *Other*. This powerful process of "Othering" works through creating an "us" and "them" mentality; increasing social distance; focusing on difference; polarising and simplifying complex issues, and demonising the *Other*. Over time this process reinforces and reproduces positions of domination and subordination. Representation in postcolonial theory applied with development studies focuses on how Northern benevolence is rooted in colonial understandings of the *Other*.

The concept of repossession is also central to postcolonial theory. In the process of colonisation, traditional ways of life, worldviews, histories, cultures, identities, and a sense of equality were changed forever (Loomba 1998). Postcolonialism understands that colonialism has changed the world irreversibly and that repossession involves "coming to terms in an inventive and imaginative way with the very forces – political, cultural, economic – which caused the dispossession in the first place" (Ingleby 2010, p.44). Some postcolonial theorists would argue that making sense of repossession was already underway before many countries experienced independence and this is evident in concepts of "interpolation" and "mimicry" (Ashcroft 2001; Bhabha 1994; 1990).

Gramsci's understanding of cultural hegemony has also been used with postcolonial theory to show how one "class" can control another, not only through economic and political means, but also by exercising cultural dominance. This is done through the effective projection of worldviews held by the dominant class on the others in such a way that they become "common sense" and "normal". Ingleby (2010, p.35) argues that cultural hegemony is aided by the indigenous bourgeoisie of the global South who "manage to make the system work for them" (*ibid*) and who offer little resistance to development orthodoxy (Goldsmith and Mander 2001; Brohman 1995). There is a bourgeoning body of literature which examines globalisation as a process of

Westernisation. Postcolonial theorists would argue that globalisation is met with varying forms of resistance and one of them is "glocalisation" (Ingleby 2010). This is the process whereby local *traditional* values are blended in a form of hybridity with more *modern* ones. Glocalisation shows that recipients of cultural imperialism (read "globalisation" or "Westernisation") cannot merely be understood as being passive without any agency to construct cultural identity (Bhabha 1994).

These main tenets of postcolonial theory offer important contributions to the thinking and practice of global development. Firstly, postcolonial theory helps to theorise global development as a set of highly influential ideas, discourses and practices. Although the birth of the modern development project did not occur until the mid-twentieth century, the ideas that underpinned it date back to the European Enlightenment in the sixteenth century to what is viewed as the beginnings of modernity (McEwan 2009). Central to Enlightenment was the belief in universality and the idea that freedom and progress should be applied to all societies. As highlighted earlier in this chapter this "one size fits all" approach has pervaded orthodox development models. Postcolonialism looks to the assumptions and values underpinning development and seeks to cast light on its flaws.

Secondly, postcolonial theory has much to say on the discourse of mainstream development and the power of representation (Said 1978, 2003). The critical views held by postcolonial theorists highlight the ethnocentric and particularly Eurocentric bias of development discourse that is rooted in the experience of a few Western countries and reflective of the dominant Western worldview. Through representing the global North as developed and modern, and the global South as underdeveloped and backward, development discourse perpetuates thinking and practices deeply enshrined within colonialism. The theory encourages new discourses that counter the cultural hegemony of the global North and the universalising processes of both colonial and global development discourses.

Thirdly, postcolonialism links development knowledge to power, and helps place the issue of power and how it is conceptualised and operationalised more centrally within development debates (McEwen 2009). Development knowledge still resides mostly in the global North including many of the institutions which generate and control development thinking and policy. For postcolonial theorists, decolonising development knowledge is central to rebalancing power inequalities between the global South and the global North. Finally, postcolonial theory explains how neo-colonialism in the form global capitalism controlled by a few powerful nations and corporations rely on sustaining unequal power structures and cultural superiority over the once colonised nations (Darnell 2014). Thus, the postcolonial voice which represents the *Other* and seeks to repossess what is dispossessed is one worth acknowledging when seeking to make sense of development (Fanon 2001).

1.4. The Emergence and Role of NGOs

Before we are able to conclude this discussion of critical development theory, it is important to reflect on the emergence and role of NGOs, and their evolution into central characters within global development. NGOs are often seen as better facilitators of development due to the perceived limitations of the state and the market. This is partly due to the perception that they are more attuned to the needs of local communities and draw upon local knowledge and resources in "bottom-up" approaches to development. Furthermore, they are seen to be able to deliver on non-material aspects of development which include participation, empowerment and democratisation (Willis 2005). Therefore, it can be argued that the practice of NGOs has been informed by alternative approaches

advocated in critical development theory. The themes on NGOs briefly outlined here will be considered more fully in chapter three.

The last thirty years has witnessed exponential growth in the number and influence of NGOs within global development. This is evident no more so than in Africa and includes both international NGOs and more recently an emerging host of indigenous NGOs (Igoe and Kelsall 2005; Michael 2004). The term "non-governmental organisation" is instantly recognisable within the development lexicon and such organisations are normally characterised as being voluntary, not-for-profit, and independent of outside inference (from both government and business). The emergence of NGOs was welcomed as a panacea to the ills of top-down development rooted in dominant development paradigms of modernisation and neoliberalism. The discourse surrounding NGOs in the 1980s was largely uncritical even though they emerged as part of the neoliberal worldview that swept the globe during this decade (Mkandawire 2004). As discussed earlier, neoliberalism brought a market-led approach to development that sought to limit the role of the state as the key player in driving development (Willis 2005). NGOs were viewed as a solution, the panacea to providing essential social services that states could no longer deliver due to restrictions placed on them by SAPs. Much of the literature on NGOs from early the 1980s to the mid-1990s was written by policy-makers influenced by neoliberalism, and NGO practitioners promoting their alternative, "bottom-up", and empowerment centred approach to development (Hearn 2007).

By the mid-1990s this began to change with the emergence of more critical perspectives. Firstly, there was the auto-critique of the NGO community by the community itself (Igoe and Kelsall 2005). This critique tackled technical and procedural issues with a view to making NGOs function more effectively within the orthodox development system (*ibid*). A second critique took to task the "positive, pluralist, de Tocquevillean views of African NGOs" (Hearn 2007, p.1097) but fell short of theorising

how NGOs played a role in maintaining and entrenching unequal power relations within development orthodoxy (cf. Michael 2004). The third critique, however, picked up this theme by connecting NGOs within the past and present geo-political relationship between Africa and the West, and positioned them within Western hegemony as a "new strategy of global control which now places less emphasis on the state and prioritises direct influence and control over communities through funding NGOs" (Africa World Review 1994, p.5). Hearn (2007, p.1097) however, argues that the latter criticism has not been fully expanded upon and that the adverse effects of NGOs are still to be thoroughly theorised. She proposes comprador theory (Hearn 2007) as a helpful lens to theorise how NGOs further neo-imperial expansion through exercising an external orientation towards the interests of foreign aid money and away from the needs of their own communities.

Another important theme in the NGO literature investigates the role of volunteering within development, particularly the participation of (young) Westerners in projects in the global South. Often termed as volunteer tourism or "voluntourism", international volunteering programmes are frequently criticised for propagating "neo-colonialism" (Harrison 2008) in that there is a lack of reflexivity on the causes of poverty (Raymond and Hall 2008; Simpson 2004), and that the interests/needs of the volunteers are prioritised over the interests/needs of recipient community (Brown and Hall 2008; Matthews 2008). Such volunteering opportunities are increasingly being offered by universities in the developed world and mostly in the form of short-term group placements to a developing country (Palacios 2010). Often, the purported motivation behind such volunteering is to help, and such paternalism is considered problematic by critical development theorists. For example, as Gronemeyer (1992, p.53) has argued, helping should be seen as an "elegant exercise of power". For her volunteering is "a means of keeping the bit in the mouths of the subordinates without letting them feel the power that

is guiding them, elegant power does not force, it does not resort either to the cudgel or to chains; it helps" (*ibid*).

These issues pertaining to the rise, role and impact of NGOs and "voluntourism" are important in terms of the aims of this thesis and the analysis of the SfD programme that it engages in. As such, they demand more attention than is afforded here and their significance in the empowerment agenda within development will be picked up again and explored in more detail in chapter three. In conclusion, critical development theory in the shape of dependency theory, postdevelopment theory, and postcolonial theory offers hard-hitting critiques of thinking and practice of orthodox development models; evincing how "mainstream development theory has been almost entirely rooted in the historical and social experiences of a few Western industrialised societies" (Brohman 1995, p.121). Significantly, in the context of a SfD industry that has been infused with neoliberalism (Levermore and Beacom 2009), these critical perspectives reveal flaws in this approach to global development. These include the fact that development orthodoxy has been typified by an ethnocentric approach rooted within a Western worldview and experience of a few global North countries; a universal model heavily focused on economics that has widened inequality and failed to rebalance power relations, and; an approach that imposes singular "top-down" notions of development which neglect contextuality. In all of this, critical development theorists point to power as the central issue within development and argue that power is exercised in the interests of the West and to facilitate their continued control of the global economy. In order to foreground the ways in which some of these issues have played out in the context under consideration in this thesis, this chapter concludes by focusing on how development has unfolded and impacted on Malawi.

1.5. Development Theory, Policy and Practice as played out in Malawi

Despite the dearth of literature that directly analyses the impact of mainstream development theories on Malawi, namely modernisation and neoliberalism, it is still possible from existing scholarship to discern the outworking of such paradigms on the country. The lack of research on development in Malawi highlights the novelty and originality of the research presented in this thesis. This concluding section will provide a brief history and profile of the Republic of Malawi, followed by an overview of how orthodox development policy and practice has been evident in and impacted on Malawi from independence to the present.

The Republic of Malawi is located in southern Africa and is landlocked by Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia. Just over thirty years following the appointment of the explorer and missionary David Livingston as the British Consul to the Eastern Coast of Africa and the independent districts in the interior in 1858 (Morton 1975), the boundaries of present-day Malawi were drawn and a British Protectorate over the land was declared in 1891. This led to full British control in 1904 and later in 1907 it was renamed Nyasaland Protectorate. As Britain became more "development minded", it instituted the 1929 Colonial Development and Welfare Act and Nyasaland became a recipient of meagre aid to assist cash crop production (Morton 1975, p.6). It was hoped that this would drive economic growth, relieve poverty, and stem the flow of material and human resources to other parts of the region. In 1953, Nyasaland reluctantly joined the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, formed as the result of settler petition from Northern (Zambia) and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) to the British government, wishing to secure their hegemony in the region. After much opposition from Nyasaland the Federation was dissolved in 1963 and Nyasaland became internally self-governing. The following year it gained its independence from Britain and was renamed Malawi.

Fifty years after independence, Malawi is situated towards the bottom of development indices and the failings of the global development project as far as Malawi is concerned are clearly apparent (Gaynor 2011). Malawi's Human Development Index (HDI) ranking has tumbled from 138 (out of 178 countries/UN-recognised territories) in 1990 to 174 (out of 187 countries/UN-recognised territories) in 2013. In the assessment of progress in health, education, and living standards, Malawi's 2013 HDI of 0.414 is below average for countries in the low human development group and below average for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Human Development Report 2014).

The development history of Malawi can be separated into two broad (Chinsinga 2007) or four distinct eras (Cammack and Kelsall 2011). The former discerns the first phase from the year of Malawi's independence from British colonial rule in 1964 to 1979, and the second phase is the period instigated by the implementation of SAPs in 1980 to the present day. Cammack and Kelsall (2011) split this second phase into three and thus view the phases of development in Malawi as being from 1965 to 1979 (similar to Chinsinga 2007); 1980 to 1994; 1994 to 2004; and finally, 2004 to 2009. Cammack and Kelsall (2011) connect their last two phases to the country's political history, demonstrating that development is rarely apolitical. In these phases Malawi transitioned from a one-party authoritarian state led by Dr Kamuzu Banda of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) who manoeuvred himself from Prime Minister to President for Life to a multiparty democracy (Chinsinga 2007). Given the interconnected nature of Malawi's development and political histories, these are now considered together chronologically.

Between 1964 to 1979 Britain was a major donor (Kayuni 2011; Morton 1975) and Malawi experienced rapid growth rates in almost every sector (overall, 5.9 per cent per annum (Cammack and Kelsall 2011)), and enjoyed comparatively favourable repayment plans on loans aimed at driving modernisation. Such was the extent of the country's "progress" that by the mid-1970s it was earmarked alongside the Ivory Coast

as a star economic performer (Kayuni 2011). Politically, this period was characterised by an unyielding centralisation of power as Banda skilfully positioned himself "at the apex of an extensive party machinery, crushed and outlawed the political opposition, and put him[self] in control of state systems" (Cammack and Kelsall 2011, p.2). Unlike the "Afro-Socialism" strategies of neighbouring Zambia and Tanzania (Kayuni 2011), Banda's approach was "state monopoly capitalism" (Harrigan 2001, p.37) or "pragmatic unilateral capitalism" (Kayuni 2011, p.112) that was manifested in a modern economic infrastructure that grew commercial farming and the Malawi business class. This state-led development delivered further change with new tarmac roads, a railway, a university, and the new capital city: Lilongwe (Cammack and Kelsall 2011). Evident here is the influence of the modernisation paradigm (Kayuni 2011) and the use of capitalism, technology, and the nation-state to spearhead development. As observed earlier, from the genesis of the global development project (late-1940s) the state was encouraged to play the role of the entrepreneur, mobilising resources and prioritising infrastructure to aid capital expansion. Held back by colonial rule Malawi only had one and half decades to implement this development model before statism gave way to the neoliberal economic and political model.

The next phase of development in Malawi from 1980 to the present day sits juxtaposed as a polar opposite to the first fifteen years after independence. As seen above, during the first phase, development in Malawi was centred on a state-led approach and therefore was incorrectly diagnosed as a "classical paragon of a free market and non-interventionist capitalist economy" (Chinsinga 2007, p.2), due to the state's manipulation of wage, labour, monetary and subsidisation policies, and agricultural prices. The high growth in the first phase was engendered by the bourgeoning (estate) agriculture sector and not a thriving industrial sector. By 1980 development in Malawi stagnated because as Harrigan (2001, p.43) observed, "the intricate relationship between Malawi's

corporate, parastatal, and banking sectors, used by President Banda to foster the estate boom of the 1970s were no longer sustainable."

With the economy and creditworthiness of Malawi in a tailspin the country looked to the Bretton Woods institutions for remedial help. They in turn prescribed SAPs as conditionality for aid, and their stipulations for Malawi included deregulation of prices, devaluation, removal of agricultural subsidies, and public sector reform (Kayuni 2011). The post-1979 era witnessed enormous regression across sectors and volatile "boom-and-bust" recovery cycles, underpinned by high inflation and interest rates, low agricultural productivity and mounting debt. Clearly, neoliberal reforms had not worked. As noted by Chinsingu (2007, p.3); "SAPs failed to alter the structure of the economy but instead greatly contributed to the exacerbating in the levels of vulnerability, which have been compounded by frequent bouts of drought and flash floods in recent years." This era of development overlaps with the second half of Banda's reign and is characterised by a weakening of centralised power once held by a now aging President. Compounding this were the external pressures of the World Bank and IMF with the imposition of SAPs for loans that further weakened the ability of the state to deliver development.

Marrying international development policy with the internal political economy of Malawi from 1964 to 1979, it is possible to deduce that for much of his time as President, Banda harnessed the power of the state to spearhead development *and* hold political hegemony. Patrimonial activities were harshly punished and as a consequence the highly educated and technocratic civil service were able to implement national development policy. As Cammack and Kelsall (2011, p.90) remark:

> *The strength of the technocracy emerges as an important part of the Malawian story. An enthusiastic Anglophile, Banda, inherited and adapted the British colonial model of public service to his own ends. Europeans remained in many principal secretary and other senior positions for several years after independence. They set the tone and standards for two decades: it was a "dedicated civil service that was clean, efficient and corruption-free".*

However, with claims of human rights violations and exploitation of the masses by the ruling elite it is problematic to describe the one-party regime as developmentalist and welfarist. As Chinsingu (2007, p.18) notes: "Instead of trickle down there was trickle up of the benefits of development to a minority segment of the population." As such, the three-decade rule of Banda is judged to have been a development disaster, particularly given the optimism that dawned with independence (Ross 2013).

The second period of Malawi's political history, beginning in 1994 and characterised by multi-party democracy has witnessed four presidential changes and yet this has failed to bring about sustainable, meaningful development. Muluzi (1994-2004) navigated his way through opposition and elections by using patrimonialism to buy loyalty and this resulted in cronies running the civil service and rampant corruption. This "political economic 'free-for-all' produced negative growth in what has come to be called the 'lost decade'" (Cammack and Kelsall (2011, p.92). Recent presidents (Bingu wa Mutharika, Joyce Banda, and currently Peter Mutharika) have not improved the predicament of the people, and have also exhibited "anti-developmental opportunistic behaviour" (*ibid*). In this second political period, the "state has found itself presiding over a period of rampant economic decay and the progressive weakening of the state machinery to spearhead development" (Chinsingu 2007, p.3).

Recent studies would suggest that modernisation (read Westernisation, cf. McNamara 2014) and neoliberalism have been both embraced and resisted in Malawi. Ansell *et al.* (2012) analysed a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) publication punctuated with neoliberal values and governmentality designed to guide youth policy development, and found that Malawi chose to adopt some of values in its own youth policy while integrating more *traditional* values such as respect for elders and culture, national unity, obedience, loyalty and patriotism. This could be interpreted as subtle postcolonial "interpolation" (cf. Swidler

2013; Moyo 2009). A more explicit case of resistance is found in the 2005/06 Fertiliser Subsidy Programme that witnessed the Malawi government go against the advice of the experts and donors (IMF, USAID) who advocated liberalisation reforms. The donors strongly warned Malawi against directing money from its budget to intervene in the crop markets by subsidising fertilizer for farmers, many of whom could not have afforded it otherwise (Chinsingu 2010; 2007). The subsequent and unprecedented harvest yield resulting from the subsidy programme highlighted the impact of agricultural liberalisation on food security (Chilowa 1998). This however, was not a renaissance of the former developmental state. Donor dependency and hegemony coupled with whimsical policy-making and an incompetent civil service mean it is difficult to envisage the Malawian state setting the development agenda based on the needs of its people.

To cushion the blow dealt by a weakened and inefficient state, in part due to SAPs and in part due to disarray in the political arena since 1994, NGOs (international and indigenous) have grown exponentially across the country, particularly from the 1990s onwards. As Gaynor (2011, p.24) argues, "NGO-ism is big business in Malawi." However, some of the more general problems associated with NGOs that were discussed earlier have been evident amongst this sector in Malawi. "Good governance" discourse was first directed at patrimonial politics, but this now also extends to the burgeoning NGO sector. NGOs are often criticised for the large salaries/allowances allotted to their staff, and for satisfying the neoliberal agenda while neglecting the real needs of the poor (Lewis and Opoka-Mensah 2006; Tembo 2003; De Santiseban 2005; Ayers 2006). Indeed, the patron-client relationship so pervasive within political and religious life in Malawi now permeates the NGO sector (Swidler 2013; Maranz 2001).

This concluding section only scratches the surface of many prevailing issues that impact and have impacted development in Malawi. However, it testifies to the contested and political nature of development and the struggle over power in development

partnerships. Such themes will be returned to and applied to the SfD programme at the centre of this thesis in the chapters to come because to fully understand a (sport-for-) development project in Malawi requires a thorough understanding of the country's historical context. As Vail (1984, p.1) remarks: "Many of today's problems [in Malawi] are the results of historical decisions and processes… economic underdevelopment is not merely a country's condition: it is the *product* of history" (cited in Kayuni 2011, p.116).

Conclusion

At the outset of this chapter the SfD movement was acknowledged as a latecomer to global development. This has given practitioners and academics within the SfD field the opportunity to learn from the missteps of development rather than replicate them (Darnell 2012; Black 2010; Kidd 2008). With this rationale it is crucial to locate SfD organisations and projects, including the programme under consideration in this study, within broader development theories and debates. This chapter has sought to do just that. Firstly, it revealed that development is a complicated and contested concept, and that to fully engage with the various perspectives on development it was important to grasp the paradigms that underpin and shape understandings of development. The two dominant paradigms of modernisation and neoliberalism, which form development orthodoxy, were discussed in turn. There were some similarities in these two models but they did differ, particularly on the role of the state and the market as drivers of development. Both however are hugely focused on economic growth and the superior position and knowledge of the global North over the global South.

As seen, the main grievances critical development theory has towards modernisation and neoliberal orthodoxy are that they are seen as models developed solely

within a Western worldview; that progress is seen as emulation of Western economic policy, institutions and values; that the approaches are "top-down" and do not allow for contextuality, and; that development has widened the gap between the rich and the poor (Kingsbury *et al* 2012; Willis 2005). Dependency theory, postdevelopment theory, and postcolonial theory offer new approaches to thinking about development. They advocate for an approach to development that is more equitable, sustainable, participatory, and inclusive; and they interpret mainstream development as unwanted interference and as characterised by dominance and cultural imperialism, through which the West safeguard's its economic and political interests at the expense of poorer nations. The exponential rise in NGOs and volunteering in the global South in the service of development has raised questions around whether they actually strengthen development orthodoxy or facilitate alternative approaches to development. Some of these wider concerns with and criticism of development are also manifest in Malawi. As the discussion here reveals, from colonisation to independence and from the implementation of SAPs to the present day, the history of Malawi is permeated with Western influence and this is evident across the political, societal and economic spheres. Development has not lifted the poor out of poverty and debates abound as to why this is the case.

The theories, history and debates surrounding development examined in this chapter are necessary in making sense of empowerment. The competing views of mainstream theories and alternative perspectives on international development provide the context in which the emergence of empowerment as a central concept within development can be fully understood. Critical development theory shows that development is far from apolitical (Kabeer 1994) and that the issue of power is central to development. Empowerment is intrinsically linked to power (Rowlands 1995) and as such it has been important to consider the wider political, historical, and cultural contexts in which power is conceptualised and operationalised within development. Before the

detailed exposition of these issues that follows in chapter three, the next chapter focuses on how development orthodoxy and competing critical perspectives have been manifest in and shaped SfD.

Chapter Two: Sport for Development and Empowerment

Introduction

The use of sport within international development efforts has received significant backing over the last two decades. When considered more closely, it is clear that SfD operates along the same trajectory as orthodox development, with resources flowing from donors in the global North to recipients in the global South (Darnell 2007). This is accompanied by an uncritical belief that SfD is inherently empowering. This is a significant issue for the sector, as "empowerment" is a central component of SfD programmes and underpins many of the mechanisms employed in the field, such as partnership, capacity building, peer leadership, and entrepreneurialism. In the context of a thesis that seeks to analyse how a specific SfD programme articulates with empowerment, it is important to unpack how this concept has been theorised and operationalised. While this task will be addressed specifically in chapter three, this chapter begins this process by examining, amongst other things, the extent to which SfD is characterised by asymmetrical power relations. Given that the use of the word "empowerment" in SfD and in the development field more generally, implies a flattening out of the power relations between programme delivers and

recipients, this is an important task. This chapter, therefore, examines how these issues have been explored to date in the literature, while also helping to contextualise in SfD literature, debates and theories introduced in the next chapter.

To do this, the chapter starts with a section that maps the SfD field and explores key elements of policy and practice. This is followed by a discussion around the extent to which SfD has reflected the core elements of the mainstream development theories of modernisation and neoliberalism, and how the critical development theories of dependency, feminism, Foucauldian analyses, and postcolonialism have sought to present alternative understandings of the SfD field. As part of the discussion here, the chapter identifies the value of adopting a broadly postcolonial approach to the analysis of Sport Malawi in this thesis and in doing so begins to build towards the specific theoretical framework employed in this study (and detailed at the end of chapter three). The final section of the chapter concludes by examining SfD in Malawi, how it has been shaped by colonial legacies, and the contemporary characteristics of the SfD field in the country.

2.1. Mapping the Sport for Development field

There has been an exponential growth in the use of sport within international development efforts over the last decade and a half, with a wide range of actors and motivations involved. The use of sport to advance development and peace building is widely referred to as Sport for Development and Peace (SDP). SDP generally refers to "the intentional use of sport, physical activity and play to attain specific development and peace objectives" (SDP IWG 2007, p.3). While some have SDP as a new field (cf. Kay 2009; SDP IWG 2007), others argue that the use of sport to bring about economic, social, and cultural change is not a new endeavour. Scholars such as Levermore (2013), Coalter

(2013), Watson *et al.* (2005) and Mangan (2006) for example point to the long tradition, dating back to the mid to late nineteenth century, of sport being used in Britain and throughout the empire to address a range of individual and societal development concerns.

Nonetheless, from the late 1990s, there has been an enormous upsurge in the numbers of SDP providers and projects. Attempts have been made by scholars to plot the rapid institutionalisation of this field with Kidd (2008) listing 166 organisations involved in SDP, and Lyras *et al.* (2009) noting 200 in 2005; growing to 1500 SDP providers in 2009. Despite these relatively precise figures, a number of factors complicate the plotting of the scale of SDP. Firstly, SDP projects and providers take on many different forms and guises. There are high profile NGOs that are well known and established in the SDP field such as Right to Play, Magic Bus, and Mathare Youth Sports Association, with the former two availing of well-resourced public relations departments. However, there are countless community-based and indigenous SDP projects that are invisible on the global scale. As Kay (2013, p.282) points out:

> *The omission of such activity in published audits underplays both the scale of activity being undertaken, and the pro-active role of indigenous organisations in its initiation. Sport and development work should not be seen, therefore, as primarily the product of externally funded development investment, but as a complex jigsaw resulting from the interaction of internal and external interests.*

The visibility of SDP providers and projects in the global South is often impacted by having little or no online presence due to the limited scale of their work, remote geographical location, lack of external partners and/or funding, and scarcity of resources required to maintain effective external communication.

Secondly, there are multiple definitions ascribed to this field. These include Sport *for* Development (used in this thesis), Sport *in* Development, Sport *and* Development, Sport *for* Peace, and also Sport for Social Change. These definitions are encompassed in SDP, and are sometimes all used interchangeably (cf. Schinke and Hanrahan 2012). This

definitional and conceptual dissonance is problematic in seeking to plot the scale of the SDP field. Furthermore, it must be noted that some community-based SDP providers may not use such terminology to describe their work. In the global North, for example, some providers of what could be described as "SDP" see themselves as simply offering "community sport". Likewise, in the global South, projects fitting the "SDP" remit may have little or no engagement with external SDP policy makers and funders, and therefore many of the terms bandied around within SDP literature (academic and grey) have not (yet) reached their lexicon. These two factors show why it so difficult for scholars to construct an accurate picture of all the various actors operating within the SDP field (Giulianotti 2012). Partly as a consequence of this, scholars have moved beyond attempting to map the scope of the SDP field and have increasingly examined a range of complex issues evident within it. Such endeavours characterise more recent academic contributions and this is a clear move away from the non-critical thinking that dominated early literature. Before these complex issues can be unpacked more fully it is important to elaborate on key elements of SDP policy and practice.

The key tenet shaping SDP policy is "the perceived compatibility of sport with the wider international development agenda" (Kay 2013, p.281). Sport is viewed as an alternative and low-cost means of meeting development goals and over the last two decades has received support from UN agencies, international sport federations, NGOs, and national governments (SDP IWG 2007). As a central player in promoting SDP, the UN set up in 2002 an Inter-Agency Task Force to examine how sport might contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The report (2003) from the Task Force argued that sport was a viable development tool and would be effective in promoting life-skills, healthy lifestyles (physical and mental), social mobilisation, education, economic growth, peacebuilding, and a diversion from harmful activities. The resulting adoption of resolution 58/5 by the UN General Assembly in November 2003

witnessed the "birth" of SDP as it affirmed a commitment to sport as a tool for achieving education, health, development and peace goals (Burnett 2015). In that same year the first international conference on SDP convened in Magglingen, Switzerland, and drew representatives from sports federations, UN agencies, governments, athletics, civil society and the media. This was closely followed by the first Next Step conference in the same year, which drew practitioners from SDP to share best practices. Such was the momentum gathered that within two years, 2005 was named as the UN's International Year of Sport and Physical Activity (IYSPE).

The intervening period has seen an acceleration of conferences and forums supporting the advancement of development through sport, including the establishment of the Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport, the European Commission's White Paper backing SDP within international development policy, and in 2014 the UN establishing 6th April as the "International Day of Sport for Development and Peace". Such developments in the sector are evidence of the strong belief in the ability of sport to bring tangible transformation to regions of the world where "orthodox" development models have failed. This has been aided by endorsements from high profile statesmen including Nelson Mandela and Kofi Annan.

Between the start of the new millennium and 2015, ideas around development through sport were often framed by the MDGs (Kay 2013). Indeed, many "sports evangelists" in the SfD field would agree with Beutler (2008, p.359) when she claimed:

> *It has been proved that the systematic and coherent use of sport can make an important contribution to public health; universal education; gender equality; poverty reduction; prevention of HIV and AIDS and other diseases; environmental sustainability as well as peace-building and conflict resolution.*

In this statement Beulter refers to sport as a *proven* and "innovative instrument" (*ibid*) to meet seven of the eight MDGs. Furthermore, SfD is considered particularly effective in policy areas concerned with children and young people (Kay 2013; Levermore 2013).

Beyond 2015 the SfD community canvassed for sport to be included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which build on the MDGs and converge with the post 2015 development agenda. For example, the compatibility of sport with the SDGs was emphasised by the UN in a resolution adopted by all Member States in 2014 which "encourages Member States to give sport due consideration in the context of the post-2015 development agenda" (IOC 2015, p.2). In addition, a report by the International Olympic Committee on this issue argued that sport had the capacity to help attain five out of the seventeen proposed SDGs. Indeed, when the SDGs were published, sport was acknowledged as an important tool in facilitating sustainable development. Lindsey and Darby (2018) have noted that the inclusion of sport in the opening declaration of Resolution 70/1 *"Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"*, which outlined the SDGs by the UN's General Assembly was a significant step change for the global development community. They argue that this significant move acknowledged the extensive growth and influence of the SfD field since the commencement of the MDGs. Without doubt, from the turn of the millennium at a policy level, the sport and international development relationship has been strengthened, and yet in the words of Kay (2013, p.283), "despite the rhetoric and momentum surrounding it, researchers and policy makers do not know whether sport actually 'works'". This important issue of how the success or otherwise of SfD is monitored and evaluated will be expanded upon in the next section of this chapter.

At this point in the discussion though, it is imperative to comment on the range of actors and interests engaged in the SfD sector (Coakley 2011). Giulianotti's work (2012, p.282-3; 2011) is useful in this regard and it sets out four main categories or "types" of SfD actors, each with "different objectives and *modus operandi*". The first are international, national and local NGOs that either specialise in SfD delivery, or more mainstream NGOs which use sport in some programmes to supplement their overall

work. The second category includes intergovernmental and governmental organisations such as various UN agencies, the British Council and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), that influence SfD policy and practice. The third category that Giulianotti identifies is the private sector. Through corporate social responsibility (CSR) and voluntary initiatives, private sector organisations and businesses involve themselves with SfD. This can have less altruistic motivations, as multinational corporations (MNCs) may be more interested in expanding their reach into the global South than supporting the achievement of development through sport (Levermore 2013). Fourthly and finally, there are the radical SfD NGOs and social movements. This final category is less apolitical and seeks to advance the cause of human and civil rights, and social justice, within and through, SfD. It is important to note that this typology does not capture every actor in the field, and some crossover between types is inevitable. Indeed, partnership-based SfD is characterised by actors from a range of categories often collaborating together (Levermore and Beacom 2009). An example of this is the volunteering programme called International Inspirations, which was part of the UK's 2012 Olympic legacy programme and involved a partnership between the British Council, UK Sport, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and SfD NGOs in the global South who delivered projects and hosted young student volunteers from the UK.

SfD operates globally and the development goals that are presumed to be attained through sport are similar for both the global North and global South. Sport is seen as a valuable tool in both personal development (physical and psychological) and in wider social development, including the achievement of social cohesion and integration, and crime reduction (Kay 2013). In the global North, the utility of sport is more framed by "political, legal, and normative issues relating to human development, such as social justice and human and civil rights" (Giulianotti 2012, p. 281). While SfD projects are evident in the West, a majority appear to be more focused on and active in the "developing

world". This is particularly true of organisations and projects that sought to address the MDGs, which are more relevant to societies in the global South. The field is dominated by international NGOs who have headquarters in the global North but mostly operate in the global South such as Right to Play. It is no surprise then that SfD predominantly targets regions that are traditionally seen as the recipients of aid and development. Populations in these regions face "precarious conditions" which Levermore (2013) describes as involving one or a combination of: sustained poverty; high prevalence of disease; conflict and/or political instability; low levels of economic growth; and significant levels of discrimination and exclusion. This criterion has led to sustained SfD activity in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of South America, Asia, the Pacific and eastern/central Europe (*ibid*).

There are many different models and methodologies applied in efforts to achieve economic, social and cultural development through sport. It is helpful to understand the different approaches to SfD delivery using the *sport plus* and *plus sport* distinction proposed by Coalter (2013). This fits "development *of* sport" and "development *through* sport" archetypes suggested by Levermore and Beacom (2009), although it is important to acknowledge that the distinctions between them can often be blurred. *Sport plus* programmes focus primarily on sports participation and development, ahead of more developmental activities. For example, mega sports events could be described as *sport plus,* and hosting such events is thought to bring enormous economic benefit to host nations. The last two decades have seen an increase of such events in the global South, and examples include the rugby, cricket and football World Cups in South Africa between 1995 and 2010; the 2008 Olympic Games in China; the 2010 Commonwealth Games in New Delhi; and more recently, the 2014 football World Cup and 2016 Olympics in Brazil. The perceived developmental benefits accrued from delivering megasports events are

derived from attracting sports' tourists, public and private investment, and improving in-country infrastructure (Levermore 2013).

In *plus sport* the primary focus of projects is not sport but development, through for example the effective use of role models and relationships with peer leaders to provide a safe forum to discuss and influence issues affecting young people and their life chances (Kay 2013). Within *plus sport* approaches, sports celebrities are recruited as goodwill ambassadors with the belief that they are effective in communicating in a value-neutral manner important messages on health, education, and aspiration to populations that have become despondent to development institutions and politicians (Levermore 2013). Another example of integrated and life-skills approach of *plus sport* would be the use of peer mentors, particularly in programmes located in the global South. The role of volunteers is a particularly important issue in SfD practice given how predominantly they feature at the point of delivery, both local volunteers who support long-term delivery, and external volunteers who seek to support delivery short-term through team expeditions or internships (Darnell 2010). Reliance on this major human resource brings into question the long-term sustainability of many programmes within the field (Kay 2013; 2009). In the context of this thesis, it is important to move beyond mapping the SfD field, to examining how sport for international development has been theorised. In order to do this, the next section addresses how the two primary mainstream development theories, modernisation and neoliberalism have influenced SfD policy and practice and how others have sought to draw on more critical development perspectives to explore the limitations and possibilities of this field.

2.2. Sport for Development, Development Orthodoxy and Critique

Positioning sport within international development raises some difficult questions and challenges. The inclusion of sport within mainstream development strategies, and, in particular using it for the purposes of social development in the global South, is in the words of Levermore and Beacom (2012, p.1), "partially a result of the recognition that the orthodox policies of 'development' have failed to deliver their objectives". As discussed in the previous chapter, those policies that have proven to be ineffective in tackling absolute poverty across the Majority World emanated from the modernisation and neoliberal paradigms, which prioritised economic development over social development. As a result, alternative approaches drawing on "culture and vehicles of culture" (*ibid*) have been enlisted in development efforts, including, as seen already in this chapter, sport and exercise. So called "sports evangelists" (Giulianotti 2004; Coalter 2012) would argue that sport brings added value because it is not associated with corruption within development and is not linked with the failures of past policies, actors, and practices.

Despite the fact that the use of sport for international development has been framed as "alternative" in the sense that it seeks to attend to non-economic development issues, much SfD policy and practice remains wedded to modernisation and neoliberalism. Rather than offering an alternative to these dominant mainstream perspectives, Levermore and Beacon (2012) contend that SfD extends rather than curtails the core principles of modernisation and neoliberalism. SfD can be seen as contributing towards modernisation and neoliberalism in three ways. The first relates to the link between sports and strengthening infrastructure (Levermore 2012). As outlined in the previous chapter, the dominant perspectives of development have argued that this process is best served by building the sort of physical infrastructure that helps to create the material conditions that enable the private sector to generate the economic wealth

required for development. The most prominent example of this is the linking of sports mega events with wider development agendas (Cornelissen 2012). These events require hosts to develop new and existing sports infrastructure and invest significantly in supporting physical infrastructures such as hotels, transportation networks and telecommunications. International sports federations and prospective hosts have argued that sports mega events in the global South encourage inward investment and decrease levels of inequality between countries in terms of sports, and also, physical infrastructure. The development of the latter is a key aspect of modernisation. It is also a central element of neoliberalism, particularly when state involvement in markets is limited and MNC's are able to expand their interests through both sponsoring sports mega events, and in the longer term, through utilising the new and improved physical infrastructure to reach out to capture a new market. For some states, however, hosting such an event can result in a financial loss. For example, this was the case with the 2007 Cricket World Cup hosted in the Caribbean, which left "a legacy of debt and bankruptcy" (Levermore 2012, p.31), while the World Cups in South Africa and Brazil in 2010 and 2014 respectively have failed to produce significant financial gains (Zimbalist 2015).

The second link between sport and the dominant development paradigms is the argument that sport contributes towards socio-economic development. Economic development is the priority of modernisation and neoliberal approaches to development and they argue that this is dependent on the creation of a skilled, flexible, and entrepreneurial labour force. Capacity building amongst the work force is therefore a central element of neoliberal development, and this tenet of development orthodoxy is reflected in SfD policy and practice. SfD projects often frame their mission around capacity building. Levermore (2012) suggests two ways in which sport can increase capacity building. The first is through SfD NGOs who seek to build capacity through empowering young people, women and children, generating investment, community

development, encouraging a stable political environment, and growing leadership skills (cf. Nicholls 2012; Crabbe 2012). The second method Levermore (2012) highlights is private businesses that transfer knowledge and employment skills to local SfD providers and participants, in the hope, that this sharing contributes towards a more knowledgeable and skilled workforce. Therefore, when linked with creating and contributing towards a stable political and economic environment, sport is positioned as an important economic and social development driver.

The third and final link Levermore (2012) identifies between sport and modernisation and neoliberalism relates to how sport encourages and facilitates private and business involvement in development. A key shift that the neoliberal development paradigm brought to mainstream development practice was decreasing the role of the state and increasing the role of private enterprise as a central driver of economic development. Again, this tenet of development orthodoxy is reproduced in SfD where MNCs have penetrated the sector. This mirrors the contemporary set-up of global sport, which is, as Maguire (1999, p.35) argues, "structured by a political economy in which multinationals play a decisive part." This last link is connected to sport being valued as a socio-economic driver, and the rationale that private and business actors engage with SfD programmes because of educational, health and peace-building objectives. Alignment with the neoliberal agenda is evident in the "top-down" approach of private and business actors who support and fund SfD in the Majority World through CSR programmes and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Such strategies work towards creating the political and economic climates in global South countries that make them more receptive to neoliberalism. Presumed (incorrectly) to be an apolitical tool, sport is able to decrease the role of the state as a key driver of development by bringing together, collaboratively, private and business actors, NGOs and civil societies to take on a more pivotal role in development through expanding SfD programmes.

For some advocates of SfD, the fact that these elements of modernisation and neoliberalism are reflected within the field is perfectly acceptable. Moreover, these three links between sport and the dominant development paradigms strengthen the "impression that the sport/development relationship is almost tailor-made to support the dominant mantra of development" (Levermore 2012, p.36), and therefore it is no surprise how modernisation (Heinemann 1993; Frey 1988) and neoliberalism (Darnell 2012) perspectives might view SfD in a positive light. However, more recently we have witnessed the emergence of critical voices, which like the critical development theorists of mainstream development, consider the pervasiveness of modernisation and neoliberalism throughout the SfD field as hugely problematic. Such individuals consider the way that power plays out across the SfD field to be the key issue. Before examining this issue, it is important to consider some of the more general criticisms concerning whether SfD actually works and if there is "evidence" of this.

Amongst the critical scholars of SfD, there are some commonly agreed criticisms. Coalter has long been one critical voice who has drawn upon middle-range theories to critique SfD policy and practice. He has four main criticisms of the sector and these will be considered in turn. Firstly, Coalter (2010a; 2009) joins other scholars (Kay 2013; 2009; Guest 2005) in criticising the lack of robust evidence on whether sport *actually* works as a development tool. However, he labels fellow critical scholars in the SfD field who take a particular epistemological position as "liberation methodologists", that is, they would argue their research "gives voice" to, and challenges the oppression of, marginalised peoples in the Majority World (Coalter 2013a). He considers those who draw on macro theories such as postcolonialism, feminism, Gramscian hegemony, Foucauldian perspectives as engaging in "ideological over-reach" (Coalter 2013a, p.47-49) and academic posturing in the pursuit of advancing their self-ascribed "radical" credentials (*ibid*). These scholars, however, would argue that Coalter's research is heavily

reliant on positivist ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods (Kay 2010; 2009; Lindsey *et al.* 2010). Coalter strongly defends his mixed methods approach, which he claims has been effective in questioning the apparent positive outcomes of sport. For example, in one study (Coalter 2013a, p.59-81) which examined if a SfD programme built self-efficacy, he found that sport led to marginal improvement in some, but in others, particularly young females, the programme actually decreased their self-efficacy. Such findings challenge the assumption that sport and SfD programmes only offer positive outcomes to individuals and communities.

Secondly, Coalter looks beyond the anecdotal evidence given by sports evangelists and takes aim at the "grandiose claims of the self-interested conceptual entrepreneurs" (2013a, p.5) which are not supported by "robust research evidence, or even coherent theory-based explanations" (2013a, p.4). He aspires to replace the unfounded optimism in the *inherent* good of both "sport" and "development" that shapes SfD policy and practice with a more objective approach that draws upon programme theory, with the aim of better knowing (and generalising) the mechanisms that enable specific outcomes to occur in the lives of young people who attend SfD programmes (Coalter 2012). For sports evangelists, the idea that sport may be an ineffective development tool, or that at best it contributes to modest outcomes but only when combined with non-sporting activities and approaches, is difficult to countenance. This leads to Coalter's third criticism, which is that critical voices within the sector are blacklisted from influencing SfD policy and practice. He argues that those with a vested interest in seeing the SfD sector flourish are often blinded by an evangelical belief in the "power of sport" to deliver development outcomes, and that they seek to discourage debates on the shortcomings of policy and practice in the field and isolate those who think more critically about SfD. For Coalter (2013a, p.3), this is detrimental to the longer-term progress of the sector,

> *Sadly such a debate [on 'development' and the intended 'beneficiaries'] seems not welcomed at many of the conferences, or congregations, of sports evangelists that seems to be dominated by forms of 'incestuous amplification' in which sceptics are barely tolerated and agnostics and atheists banished. A policy area that cannot accept sceptics and agnostics is doomed to remain underdeveloped.*

Coalter's implicit point here is that without the input of critically engaged scholars, the SfD sector will struggle to gain credibility within mainstream development networks, and, notwithstanding its place in the 2030 development agenda (Lindsey and Darby, 2018), sport will remain marginal to mainstream development and it will be difficult to attract the partners it needs to make SfD programmes a real and validated success.

Coalter's (2015; 2013a; 2013b; 2010a) final major criticism relates to the use of what he describes as "limited-focus programmes" that typify SfD to tackle "broad-gauge problems" (Weiss 1993). He argues that this leads to considerable overreach and inflation of the claims made about the effectiveness of SfD to tackle significant development issues. Indeed, Coalter suggests that "displacement of scope" or equating micro level impact in individuals such as improved self-efficacy, self-esteem, and social skills, with meso and macro level impact on for example, social cohesion, economic growth, gender equality, and peace, is rife within this field. The main questions for Coalter (2015; 2013a; 2013b; 2012; 2010b; 2010a) is the extent to which outcomes on the field transfer beyond the touchline to other aspects of a young person's life and how these might contribute to development at the meso or macro level? Within the wider development aid paradigm that has shifted from a sole focus on economic development, to including cultural and social development, sport has benefited enormously. However, for Coalter (2013a, p.21) practitioners seek to "offer solutions via focusing on a single concept" and this causes displacement of scope, which in this case is overestimating the meso and macro impacts. Sometimes "evidence" presented by SfD organisations is in favour of promoting the effectiveness of sport in wider development agendas and goals rather than providing a clear picture of actual development impacts and outcomes. Coalter argues therefore that

there is a need to move away from overstating development outcomes of SfD programmes to more realistic assertions about what they can contribute within the limitations of wider socio-economic and political environments in the global South.

The wider contexts within which SfD operates are of deep concern for other academics, who view the enhancement of "life skills" delivery in SfD programmes, such as self-efficacy, self-esteem, and social capital at the near exclusion of tackling wider socio-economic inequalities as, in the words of Guest (2010, np), "naïve at best and imperialistic at worst". For these individuals, their theorisation of SfD has moved beyond the general criticisms offered by Coalter, to focus on the asymmetrical power relations that are evident in the SfD field, and within mainstream international development. The adoption of critical development theory into theoretical frameworks examining SfD has allowed for a more critical interrogation of this field. The main theories drawn upon in SfD research to date include dependency theory, feminism, Foucauldian perspectives, and postcolonialism. The latter has more pertinence to this study, and therefore it will be given greater prominence in the ensuing discussion; however, it is important to briefly consider how the other critical development theories have been used to analyse the sport/development relationship and how they allow us to make sense of the operation of power in the SfD field.

2.3. Critical Development Theory and Sport for Development

One theory taken from critical development perspectives and applied to assessing the impact of sport on society, and more recently but scantily to the SfD field, is dependency theory. In the first chapter, it was noted that dependency theory was critical of the core aspects of development orthodoxy and its outcomes (Frank 1966). Some scholars of SfD

draw on the core-periphery thrust of dependency theory to express concerns about the involvement of private sector entities, corporations and organisations based in the global North that seek to promote their brand through a CSR agenda that includes investment in SfD in the global South. Adopting a broadly dependency theory perspective, Akindes and Kirwin (2012) argue that these interests are primarily concerned about what can be *extracted* from the "periphery" to *add value* to the "core" and their involvement in SfD perpetuates unequal power relationships and sustains the supposed beneficiaries of development in a state of "underdevelopment". The private and commercial interests of organisations based in the West through adopting a "greenwash strategy" (Hamann 2006; Crabbe 2012) can "hijack more altruistic developmental creeds" (Levermore 2012, p.44). For example, the prominence of sports merchandising companies within SfD comes at the expense of local suppliers (Guest 2010) and clashes with local needs for employment and sustainable development. Some have drawn on dependency theory to suggest that greater South-to-South partnership between governments, NGOs, businesses, and sports governing bodies are needed to break the hegemony of the global North in the SfD field (Fokwang 2012).

Recently, a range of scholars have used feminist strands of the critical development perspective to interrogate how gender power relations play out in the field (Samie *et al.* 2015; Saavedra 2012; Hayhurst*et al.* 2011; Hayhurst 2009; Nicholls *et al.* 2011). This perspective examines the historical and ongoing marginalisation and discrimination faced by women, particularly in the global South. More recently, it has been extended to examine how women are marginalised within the neoliberal development model, and how they are negatively and disproportionately impacted by the adoption of SAPs. Furthermore, feminist theory has challenged how Anglo-Western women's experience are generalised to symbolise all women (Young 2001). Powerful critiques of the "Third World woman" as constructed by white Western feminists have

shown racial tendencies that represent woman in the global South as the homogenous *Other* whose lives are characterised by poverty, helplessness, and without agency (Giles and Lynch 2012; Mohanty *et al.* 1991).

Feminist perspectives of development have some important implications for SfD. Firstly, women have long been marginalised in sport (Saavedra 2012; 2005). This marginalisation is reflected in SfD and indeed the largest target group for programmes are young males (Giulianotti 2004). Aside from programmes that are oriented specifically around the empowerment of marginalised groups, particularly young females, the inclusion of females, the elderly, and the disabled (cf. Beacom 2012; Donnelly 2008) in projects are sometimes tokenistic gestures. Secondly, the representation of women in SfD discourse and imagery as poor and helpless can be exploited in attempts to fundraise for SfD NGOs (Samie *et al.* 2015). Thirdly, a link has been drawn between the lack of evidence discourse that pervades some of the critical literature on SfD and the marginalisation of practitioner voices, particularly the views of Black female peer educators (Nicholls *et al.* 2011). This suppression of knowledge is a result of colonial legacies and the supremacy of the "scientific/academic" over local experience/knowledge which renders the views of young African women as meagre tales and not evidence (*ibid*). Feminist theory then, unveils uneven power relations in SfD characterised by the marginalisation of women, particularly recipients and practitioners (cf. Nicholls 2012). As with critical development perspectives more generally, this perspective is inherently political (Saavedra 2012) and encourages resistance to, and the dismantling of, wider social, political and economic injustices as they impact on women.

Foucauldian theory has greatly informed strands of the critical development literature, and more recently, Foucault's theorising of power has been applied to the sport/development relationship (cf. Nicholls 2012; Nicholls *et al.* 2011; Darnell 2012; 2010; Mwaanga 2011). His work has transformed understandings of power in the social

sciences. In particular, Foucault focuses on the disciplining of bodies and the regulation of populations through knowledge production and control, and he terms this "bio-power". This form of power is used to control entire populations, and Darnell (2012, p.29) who has used Foucauldian theory extensively, notes that the "traditional, sovereign right to intervene in the management of the population through threat or use of physical force was replaced by new forms of bio-power that linked knowledge and power to the 'making' of life and lives." Both "development" and "sport" are sites for "making" life and the *popular* ideas underpinning and transmitted through SfD are avenues for bio-power.

Foucault's power/knowledge concept is helpful in understanding power in development as discourse (Foucault 1991). This discursive perspective focuses on how meanings are constructed and realised through discourse, and as such, development is situated in particular (Northern) "regimes" of knowledge/power and "truth". Discourse legitimises (Northern) development practice, as well as what is thought and spoken about it (Rossi 2004). The discourse surrounding the neoliberal worldview is "a technology in the service of power, which helps deprived groups to be more contented in their deprivation" (Sadan 2004, p. 161). Foucault (1998, p.63) saw that "power is everywhere", and in a capillary fashion infuses all social relationships. Thus, he was able to write that power is "never localised..., never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or place of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation" (Foucault 1980, p.98). Coercion and physical force are as Darnell noted classic features of "sovereign" power, but modern "soft power" is typified by embodiment, enactment, diffusion, cooperation, and discursion. Going beyond the structure/agency binary, this form of power as a "regime of truth" is always in flux as it permeates and negotiates continuously within all social relationships.

It is helpful to examine the sport/development relationship and practice through the concept of discursive formation because it allows us to understand "development" as

a social construct, and to analyse how power operates within this construct. Foucauldian theory has been increasingly employed to help interrogate how power plays out across the SfD field. Mwaanga (2011) was one of the first to examine power in SfD as the subtle diffusion and acceptance of "perceived wisdoms". Subsequent research employing Foucauldian theory has enabled a greater appreciation of the complexities of power dynamics in SfD, particularly because it helps the debate on power to move beyond the use of polarised terminology such as donor-recipient and powerful-powerless. Rather than the possession of the powerful, power is a site for struggle, and as it is present in all social relationships, it *can* be productive and emancipatory. By the same logic, SfD discourse on "sport" and "development" and the intersection between those two sites can also repress populations. Indeed, the dominance of (Northern) modern sport (within SfD) with its particular (spoken and unspoken) rules and etiquette is in the words of Frey (1988, p.69) a "mechanism to reinforce the hegemony of the ruling elite."

Research on SfD from a Foucauldian perspective reveals that coupled with development discourse, SfD is potentially a powerful site for the exercising of "bio-power". For example, focusing on the role of peer leaders and the position of youth in SfD, Nicholls (2012) has used Foucault's writings on power, discourse and subjugated knowledge to examine the "vertical hierarchy" in donor/recipient and North/South partnerships. She observes how young people, particularly peer leaders, are located at the bottom of hierarchies, and their voices are neither included within SfD policy nor financial and programme planning. Structures that are more "horizontal" are necessary to challenge neo-colonial power relations in the field and break North/South binaries (Levermore 2012). "Power is everywhere" in SfD and discourse diffused through relationships and programmes can be pathways for both emancipation and (re) colonisation. One could view SfD programmes along a continuum with sites for

acceptance of "perceived wisdoms" on one side, negotiation in the middle, and resistance against hegemony on the other side.

Postcolonialism, another key critical development perspective, also positions the concept of power as a fundamental issue within development thinking, discourse, policy and practice (Said 2003; Deepak 2011; McKay 2004). This perspective has been used by a range of scholars to analyse contemporary power relations within SfD and how they operate within wider historical, political and cultural contexts. Although the three critical development perspectives mentioned above help to explain the operation of power across the SfD field, postcolonialism is especially useful in foregrounding power within international development and SfD in ways that are much more relevant and useful for this thesis. In the previous chapter, the key elements of postcolonial theory were outlined. Rather than revisit this material, the subsequent discussion focuses on detailing why the theoretical framework employed in this thesis (and outlined at the end of the next chapter) is underpinned by postcolonialism.

Firstly, in keeping with the emphasis on postcolonialism in contextually situated analysis, it is important that any discussion on SfD programmes, including Sport Malawi is located within the historical, political and cultural heritage of the country in which they operate. Thus, the analysis of Sport Malawi in this thesis is appropriately contextually informed (Annett and Mayuni 2013). In chapter one it was noted that Malawi was a colony of the British Empire from 1891 until 1964. It was also observed that the nomenclature of "post" within postcolonialism is important and that most authors (cf. Hayhurst *et al.* 2013) who use a hyphen in the term ("post-colonialism") do so to refer to the time period after colonisation when colonies gained political independence. Postcolonialism, however, denotes the fact that colonialism and its impact on both the "colonised" and "coloniser" has not ceased. Postcolonial theorists argue that the global South has been re-colonised by the spread of global capitalism and neoliberal

globalisation; processes also referred to as neo-colonialism (Darnell 2014; Hayhurst *et al.* 2013). Countries in the Majority World such as Malawi can be simultaneously in a "post-colonial" and "neo-colonial" state; having political independence, but economic and cultural dependence. Thus, this critical theory encourages us to examine the material, social, cultural and political inequities of "the recent impacts of global capitalism, the historical effects of different forms of colonisation, and how all of this affects lived experiences" (Hayhurst *et al.* 2013, p.355). International development, and by extension SfD, have been acknowledged by some as being tied to the historical and political ideologies and legacies of colonialism (Giles and Lynch 2012). This is made explicit by Darnell and Hayhurst (2014, p.34) who write,

> *What is rarely acknowledged within SDP discourse, rhetoric and policy is the fact that many current programmes… operate within a social, political and geographic context directly and indelibly marked by the history of colonisation. Indeed, implementing a SDP project to redress issues of underdevelopment… can be understood as the mobilisation of sport to overcome current social and political inequalities that have roots in the European colonial project and are implicated in processes of neo-colonialism.*

Therefore, the colonial history of Malawi and the connection with neo-colonial practice, and the effects thereof, need to be acknowledged when examining the operation and impact of Sport Malawi in both the UK context and in Malawi.

Secondly, as Sport Malawi sits on the intersection between sport and development, it is useful for this thesis to use a theoretical framework that has a tradition in both sport and development studies (Darnell 2012). Postcolonial theory has this tradition, and it has been employed to analyse the diffusion of modern sport more generally and to analysing the role of sport in international development. Sport, employed as it was as part of the broader "civilising mission" that accompanied European imperialism, played a significant role in the colonisation of much of the Majority World by European imperial powers (Coalter 2010; Giulianotti 2012; MacAloon 2006; Watson *et al.* 2005; Mangan 2006; Darnell, 2012). This is true for Malawi and the political, social,

and cultural purposes of sport in the modern history of the country will be detailed in next section of this chapter. There are implications for SfD in all of this. Darnell (2014; 2012; 2007), Hayhurst *et al.* (2011), Giles and Lynch (2012), and Manzo (2012) note that neo-colonial relationships are prevalent within the field, with the aims and objectives of programmes, and methods for monitoring and evaluation determined by Northern governments, institutions, and funders (Levermore 2012). However, Mwaanga (2011) argues that these asymmetrical power relations within SfD conditioned by colonialism and development orthodoxy can be challenged by alternative development approaches informed by postcolonial theory.

Thirdly, within development studies, postcolonialism has a tradition of critiquing the discursive and material legacies of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Destabilising neo-colonial discourses is a central issue for postcolonial theory because, in the words of Hayhurst *et al.* (2013, p.357), "it is in the ability to define, represent and theorise about "*others*" that the real colonial power lies" (emphasis in original). The homogenising discourses of the West have constructed powerful stereotypes of "Others" in the non-West, such as "the Orient" (Said 2003) or "the African" (Mudimbe 1988). As a result, people and knowledge in the former colonies are subjugated while the people and knowledge in the global North are privileged (Nicholls 2012). For the SfD sector, this means that power relations "exist in an already charged atmosphere" (Giles and Lynch 2012, p. 98). (Mis)representation or "unreflecting thoughtlessness" (Mwaanga and Banda 2014, p.178) is an issue for current SfD policy and practice, as participants of programmes in the global South are often portrayed in funding, marketing, and training discourses as deficient, backward, disempowered, and in need of external help (Darnell and Hayhurst 2014; Cornelissen 2004). For the purposes of analysing relations and processes of power within the SfD programme that constitutes the focus of this thesis, postcolonialism offers a lens to examine whether the initiative destabilises or reinforces ethnocentric and neo-

colonial regimes of truth about the receiving community in Mzuzu as the "helpless, passive, inferior Other" (Darnell 2012, p.15).

Fourthly, and to redress this issue, postcolonial theory has urged the "subaltern" voice to be recovered in development thinking and policy-making (cf. Spivak 1988). Advocates of this perspective argue that new approaches and methodologies are needed to recover the voices of those within the global South who have been marginalised and oppressed through colonialism and neo-colonialism. The inclusion of local people and their knowledge is required to reconstruct knowledge production so that it no longer misrepresents them or denies them meaningful contributions to interventions intended to "develop" them (Said 2003; Bhabha 1994; Freire 1973). According to Hayhurst *et al.* (2013, p. 357), "decolonising approaches pay attention to the neo-colonial forces that create silences and to the collaborative alliances that can be built to surface and act upon Two-Thirds World voices." Within SfD, postcolonial theorists have interpreted the current ethnocentric policies and practices as systematic discursive control that privileges the position of outside "experts" over indigenous peoples (Mwaanga 2011; Darnell and Hayhurst 2014). Challenging dominant colonial and neo-colonial voices is needed to halt the silencing of non-white, Southern knowledge, and the privileging of, and dependency on, white, Northern knowledge (Nicholls 2012; Hayhurst *et al.* 2013). Spivak's (1988) question of "Can the subaltern speak?" is useful to analysing the extent to which local voices are included within the Sport Malawi initiative, from overall programme management to the processes of knowledge production and transfer during annual training workshops facilitated by UoG staff and students.

Fifthly, and moving from the discursive to the material legacies of colonialism and neo-colonialism, postcolonialism claims that the impacts of imperialism have necessitated and sustained the modern development project. The continuing impoverishment of regions in the global South is viewed as a by-product of colonial and

post-colonial asymmetrical power relations that sustain recipients of development aid (and SfD) in a perpetual state of "underdevelopment" (Beacom 2012; Darnell 2014; Darnell and Hayhurst 2014). Postcolonial theory highlights that the flow of resources from peripheral regions to those in the core is crucial in cementing the dominant position held by richer countries in the geo-political structure, which is maintained by their economic and military superiority (Escobar 1995). Although many richer countries have *formally* relinquished their colonies, they still exercise significant control over them through trade relations, development aid, and cultural diffusion (cf. Akindes and Kirwin 2012). The dominance of the global North in international development and SfD raises the question of who actually benefits most from interventions such as Sport Malawi. SfD programmes that are designed and managed from a (neo)colonial perspective will fulfil the needs of the donor/volunteer (e.g. CSR programme to advance a company's brand, or an internship to enhance career prospects) ahead of the needs of the targeted community (Beacom 2012). Giles and Lynch (2012, p. 95) argue that when that happens, "fundamental inequalities form between those delivering and those receiving sport for development initiatives, with policy target groups becoming the subjects of, rather than partners in, policy and programme development." The prioritisation of the needs of the donor/volunteer over the needs of the local community reproduces notions of white supremacy and perpetuates the "underdevelopment" of countries like Malawi. However, these issues of material legacies of (neo)colonialism can go unnoticed because the use of the rhetoric of empowerment in SfD discourse masks "vertical" hierarchies and asymmetrical power relations (Nicholls 2012; Giles and Lynch 2012).

Sixthly, and looking to the next chapter, postcolonial theory is helpful in interrogating empowerment discourses and mechanisms utilised within SfD, and has already been applied to examining the impact of SfD programmes in empowering girls and women (Hayhurst *et al*. 2013) and people living with HIV and AIDS (Mwaanga and

Banda 2014). Scholars have suggested that postcolonialism possesses much potential in unpacking the empowerment rhetoric used in SfD discourse, the nature of partnerships (Giles and Lynch 2012), and the role of volunteers, all of which are commonplace within the field (Darnell 2012; 2007). Indeed, Sport Malawi explicitly identifies "empowerment" as a key aim and employs "partnership" to work towards this and as such postcolonialism constitutes a useful lens through which to analyse this programme.

When it comes to the use of notions of empowerment within SfD, it is easy to romanticise the efforts of SfD programmes to empower participants, but the underlying empowerment discourse and whether these programmes do actually empower individuals or communities needs more interrogation. Using postcolonialism, Hayhurst *et al*. (2013) have argued that it is crucial to go beyond neo-colonial understandings of empowerment that emphasise individual responsibility and entrepreneurship over social and structural transformation. By framing project aims within the "harmonising rhetoric of global development" (*ibid*, p.357) such as the MDGs or the SDGs, they suggest that SfD programmes let go of local cultural aspects that make them more likely to be empowering and effective in improving the life chances of participants. Moreover, the neo-colonial rhetoric of individual empowerment conceals how colonisation and globalisation have created and sustained the material conditions that many participants of SfD in the global South experience daily (*ibid*). Thus, it is critical to unpack the participatory rhetoric of "buzzwords" such as empowerment, which underpin much of the SfD thinking, policy and practice, and postcolonial theory is invaluable in facilitating this.

The mechanisms used in the efforts to empower participants of SfD also require analysis. The sport/development relationship exists in the realm of donor-dependent NGOs, and this brings many emerging and contentious issues (Giles and Lynch 2012). Partnerships are "ubiquitous as a *modus operandi"* (Lindsey 2010, p.517) across the SfD field, and it is assumed that this approach is beneficial and empowering to all stakeholders

involved. Yet, projects in the global South that are driven by external partners and donors can result in programme providers and participants having an intervention imposed on their community, being stereotyped as "passive recipients" (Hayhurst 2009), and then excluded from important decision-making that affects their lives. This neo-colonial approach to partnerships in SfD relies on a deficit model to identify material, social and cultural "failings" within the local people and their communities (Darnell and Hayhurst 2014, p.42). In this model, empowerment is understood as fixing inherent problems in the targeted population and encouraging them to emulate Western notions of progress to overcome "deficits" (Rowlands 1995). This results in the contextual and structural constraints that inhibit life chances of the poor being left in place while securing the "current colonising hierarchies" (Darnell and Hayhurst 2014, p.34). However, it has been suggested that postcolonialism could help volunteers and practitioners to enact empowerment mechanisms that promote, rather than inhibit systemic transformation, for example, using SfD to promote "international debt relief, fair trade practices and distributive justice" (*ibid*, p.43). Thus, there have been calls to decolonise SfD practice to enable genuine empowerment (Kay 2009; Darnell 2010), and Mwannga and Banda (2014) have argued that a sustained postcolonial approach would do this in two ways; firstly, by centralising local culture within programme planning and practice, and secondly by promoting the agency of participants.

Postcolonial theory can clearly be used to shed light on the SfD/empowerment relationship, and the partnership dynamics and power relationships therein. A number of scholars have called specifically for this (cf. Darnell 2007; 2012; Giles and Lynch 2012; Mwaanga and Banda 2014; Mwaanga and Mwansa 2014). However, aside from Wachter (2014) who used postcolonial theory in his research on Mathare Youth Sports Association in Kenya to make sense of how empowerment and power dynamics operate through the methodology of "partnership" in SfD, there has been little empirical research conducted

across the field on this important issue. For this thesis, postcolonial critiques of empowerment, discussed in the next chapter, are used to explore whether Sport Malawi is a tool for neo-colonisation or the decolonisation of the material and social hierarchies and structures that sustain poverty in Malawi. This allows the thesis to make an important contribution to our understanding of SfD and more specifically, the employment of the notion of empowerment within this field. As Darnell and Hayhurst (2014, p.52) comment, "a vigilant post-colonial critique of encounters in SDP remains called for."

The discussion thus far reveals that, rather than providing alternatives to the dominant paradigms evident in orthodox development, much of the SfD sector operates in the same *modus operandi* with resources flowing from the global North to the global South. In this model, the relationship between the donor and recipient is inherently asymmetrical with resources, instructions, knowledge and ideologies, in the form of funding, equipment, manuals and training workshops, *etcetera,* from the North permeating former colonies. This issue is made more acute given the centrality of partnerships within SfD in implementing community projects, and the wider belief in mainstream development that empowerment approaches level uneven playing fields. Analyses of SfD that draw on postcolonialism highlight the current level of ahistoricism and apoliticism in the theorisation of the sport/development and SfD/empowerment relationships. They demonstrate that efforts to bring about "development" and "empowerment" through sport can be significantly political, hegemonic, and contested (Darnell 2007; 2010; 2012). Moreover, postcolonialism urges an interrogation of the discursive and material colonial legacies that shape neo-colonial power relations within SfD and thus helps to ignite a conversation on some of the most difficult and contentious issues within the field; namely, power, inequality, and control.

Engaging with the more critical development perspectives examined above is important for stakeholders involved in shaping SfD policy and practice, because as

scholars have noted, the field is "rife with ways for good intentions to go wrong" (Guest 2005, np). Power is the central concept across all critical development theories (Jarvie 2011; Darnell 2010), and the application of these perspectives to SfD has yielded some serious criticisms of the sector. These include how SfD has mostly been constructed within a Western worldview, and exported to the "developing" world; that the sector perpetuates rather than rebalances lopsided power relations and structural inequalities; and that it is managed in a "top-down" fashion by northern organisations, policies, and funding. In particular, these critical perspectives argue that the neoliberal agenda that has dominated mainstream development work in recent years aspires to maintain a power relationship in the global economy that prioritises the interests of the West, big business, and profit before development in the global South. Scholars drawing on critical development theories to interrogate the SfD field have argued that because the sport/development relationship reflects the wider concerns about the donor-recipient binary of conventional development, it does not actually bring about "development" in the Majority World. As such, SfD theory, policy and practice are considered hugely problematic because they contribute little to sustainable "development" and are characterised by a "top-down" or "vertical hierarchy" approach to development that sustains unequal power relations. The global North sets the agenda (Levermore 2012), while the global South has little power to impact the global SfD agenda, or even control their own agenda. In other words, empowerment, a central plank underpinning SfD, appears to be absent. To address these concerns, a range of scholars advocate a process of "decolonisation" to ensure the inclusion of indigenous voices within programme planning, policymaking and funding decisions (Darnell 2010; Kay 2009). This, they argue, will help to challenge Northern hegemony in the field and to ensure that programmes are locally responsive and are informed by local knowledge.

Some scholars and activists in the field argue that this process has been occurring in SfD practice in the global South (cf. Mwaanga 2011; 2010; Mwaanga and Banda 2014; Lindsey and Banda 2010; Lindsey and Grattan 2012). In flagging examples of this, they argue that critical development perspectives on SfD are unnecessarily pessimistic and argue that SfD can be empowering. They have criticised academics that draw upon critical development theory to argue that all SfD is dominated by "top-down" power-laden relationships that further neoliberal oppression (Darnell and Hayhurst 2012). Those who believe that SfD can be empowering point to examples of innovative SfD practice where locals in the global South participate fully, take control of projects, and are empowered by them (Lindsey *et al.* 2017). Examples of these sorts of projects include EduSport and Sport in Action in Zambia, and MYSA in Kenya, all of which encourage a grassroots "bottom-up" approach, with leadership provided by those in the community, and that appear to be contextualised to local needs and are able to deliver on a range of development targets (Levermore 2012).

Lindsey and Grattan (2012) in particular, have cautioned against the uncritical adoption of critical development theory when analysing power relations within the international SfD movement. Based on their analysis of Edusport and Sport in Action in two communities in Lusaka (Zambia), they argue that local stakeholders in the global South have more agency within SfD than is portrayed within much of the current literature (*ibid*). They also suggest that in some cases, SfD programmes are being used to build communities, and therefore they can resist rather than spread "individualising aspects of neo-liberal philosophies" (Lindsey and Grattan 2012, p.107). This alternative perspective questions the generalisation of the North-South resource flow, highlights evolving approaches that are more contextually and culturally relevant and suggests that SfD knowledge is now also moving from the global South to the global North (Fokwang 2012). These "bottom-up" examples suggest that SfD can have an empowering impact.

The extent to which they can be understood in this way depends on how one understands the concept of empowerment and this will be the focus of the next chapter. Setting the SfD scene and foregrounding important debates within the theorisation of sport/development relationship is helpful in making sense of SfD programmes that seek to empower individuals and communities in the global South, such as Sport Malawi. To understand the programme more fully it is also imperative to contextualise it within the broader history of sport in Malawi. The next section will detail how sport has developed, been perceived, and used in the country during the colonial and post-colonial eras.

2.4. Sport for Development in Malawi

Towards the end of chapter one, the impact of the mainstream development agenda on Malawi was detailed, and it is crucial to do likewise for the influence of SfD on the country. Africa clearly is at the epicentre of the SfD field with the continent registering the highest levels of SfD activity. However, unlike its Zambian neighbour (Banda *et al.* 2008), SfD in Malawi remains in its infancy and has to date received scant academic attention. A small number of studies exist in the two most popular sports in the country with Guest (2007) examining the cultural meanings and motivations for playing association football in Malawi, and Mansfield (2013) and Guest (2010) examining Malawian women's experience of netball. Similarly, SfD in Malawi has only caught the attention of a handful of researchers (Mchombo 2006; Annett and Mayuni 2013; Mansfield 2013). While the literature is limited, it does shed light on the significance and history of sport in the country and in order to properly contextualise the operation of Sport Malawi, in keeping with the postcolonial thrust of this thesis, it is useful to provide a brief overview of the role of sport in Malawian society and the emergence of SfD activity there.

The impact of British colonialism on sport in Malawi cannot be underestimated. The entrenched belief that football is a man's game and netball a women's game still dominates today (Mansfield 2013), and is a legacy of Victorian ideas on sport and its relationship with gender, conduct, morality, and health. As noted earlier in the chapter, sport played an important role in the expansion of colonialism, and under the guise of muscular Christianity, it was used in a range of colonies to teach Christian manliness, self-control, loyalty, and a strong work ethic in the service of Empire (Hokkanen and Mangan 2006; Mangan 2006; MacAloon 2006; Kidd 2006). European sports such as cricket, rugby and football were widely used to discourage and ultimately supplant the practice of local cultural dances and rituals that were deemed immoral and contrary to the Christian and European worldview (Mansfield 2013). In the 1800s Malawi, like much of Africa, witnessed the influx of missionaries whose mission was to spread Christianity, civilisation and commerce. Across the continent, schools and mission stations were established and these served to diffuse colonial culture, education, and sport (Chepyator-Thomson 2014). In English speaking Africa, the British curriculum for Physical Education (PE) and sport was introduced to colonies in 1933 to develop athleticism and build character (*ibid*). This was generally reflected in the work of the Scottish missionaries in Malawi, who having held a less prominent "muscular Christian" ideology than some of their counterparts, were still "important intermediaries for modern sport in Malawi" (Hokkanen 2005, p.748). Alongside instilling an "industrial ethic", mission stations at Blantyre and Livingstonia used team sports and drills to develop mission pupils' athleticism and moral character (Hokkanen and Mangan 2006).

In the post-colonial era following Malawi's independence in 1964, sport and physical activity were harnessed in order to garner obedience and loyalty to the "one-man, one-party, one-nation" government (Mansfied 2013). The Malawi Congress Party (MCP) under the guidance of President Banda established the Malawi Young Pioneers

(MYP) (Phiri 2010), and although the organisation was embedded in secondary schools and had a strong focus on sports competition, physical wellbeing and good health, it was effectively a paramilitary wing of the governing party. During the thirty years that followed independence, Malawians had little freedom and access to information outside of state-run media outlets, and the self-proclaimed Life President espoused four cornerstones of personal conduct: obedience, discipline, loyalty, and unity. The development of sport was used by the MYP to instil these values in the youth (Lwanda 1993), and they contrasted with individualistic notions of sport that developed at the same time in the Western world (Guest 2009).

Since the introduction of multi-party politics in 1994, there has been a shift away from the use of sport to engender social order and collectivism, and this is evident by the low status of sport and PE and the lack of trained PE teachers in the education system (Guest 2009; Annett and Mayuni 2013). Even with its low status in schools, sport is still a very popular pastime in many communities, even though there remains little career prospects or employment opportunities through it. Nonetheless, sport, and particularly football and netball continue to be politicised and are exploited by political candidates to make themselves more appealing to voters (Mchombo 2006). This is often done through politicians supplying sports equipment to impoverished districts, hosting namesake tournaments, providing substantial monies for tournament winners, and using major sports events to host political rallies. More recently, and under efforts to boost trade relations with African countries, China has built Malawi a much needed new national stadium in a concessional loan to be repaid within twenty years (BBC Sport News 2012).

With this in mind, it is important to note how the current policy environment in Malawi affects SfD and how the sport/development relationship is perceived within the government, the education sector, and civil society. A particular challenge facing sport development and SfD in Malawi is that PE is not an examined subject and is denied parity

with other subjects. Where PE classes do take place, they often equate to pupils playing football and netball on wasteland near schools. The level of training in PE, curriculum development, and sports facilities at schools is currently weak (Annett and Mayuni 2013), and this is reflected in many other former British colonies across Africa. Chepyator-Thomson (2014) has argued that the weak economic position of newly independent countries in Africa compounded by neoliberalism and SAPs has driven PE to the margins of educational curriculum due to enforced government cuts on social and educational services. This has also affected other government departments overseeing sport and development in Malawi, such as the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Development which is modestly funded and consequently holds "little more than token value" (Mchombo 2006, p.322). With the recent influx of civil society actors, the government, which has traditionally prioritised its meagre human and material resources towards elite sports and international tournaments, has played a secondary role in supporting community sport and SfD, and as such, it is NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs) and faith-based organisations (FBOs) that are spearheading SfD initiatives across Malawi.

This has opened the way for external stakeholders to provide funding, planning, and training to local SfD and community sport providers. Partnership with "outsiders" is the foundation for many development and SfD programmes in Malawi, and this is evidenced by emerging collaborations with external institutions, and the willing acceptance of assistance from outside volunteer "experts". This partnership approach is the preferred *modus operandi* of the some of the most well-known SfD projects in Malawi, namely PlaySoccer Malawi, Malawi Youth Soccer Project, and Sport Malawi. Most of these organisations base their projects in urban centres (cities, larges towns and slums), and not much is known about what SfD activity, if any, takes place in the rural districts. Another characteristic across projects is the presence of "social entrepreneurs" who are able to leverage their social networks, particularly in the global North, to receive

the funds, resources, and knowledge needed to sustain their community projects. Such arrangements, however, are susceptible to dependency and entitlement tendencies (cf. Mchombo 2006), and to approaches that are incompatible with wider cultural and power dynamics (Mansfield 2013). Yet, across Malawi, there are myriad projects too small to register external interest, and though oftentimes aspiring to catch the attention of "outsiders", are able to function modestly in their own communities by utilising local networks and resources.

Setting the SfD scene in Malawi and understanding the wider policy and practice context is helpful in making sense of Sport Malawi. Using Giulianotti's (2012) four typologies for actors within the sector, the initiative fits the private sector category, but also the NGO category because although not formalised as an NGO, Sport Malawi possesses many of characteristics of such organisations in being nongovernmental, not-for-profit, and through its more general *modus operandi*. Through partnerships with the Malawi Department for Education, the Department for Youth, Sport and Development, and the Malawi National Council of Sports, the project also engages with the second type of SfD organisation in Giulianotti's categorisation (2012). The main methodology applied are annual workshops in Malawi which are led by UoG staff and student volunteers seeking to train existing and potential new SfD providers who are either sports coaches, youth workers, or PE teachers. The former two constituents are normally volunteers within their own programmes unless they can formalise their project into a local CBO, FBO, or NGO and attract external funding. Under the umbrella of Sport Malawi, projects take on an array of *plus sport* and *sport plus* approaches. For most of the youth workers, sport is predominantly a hook with which to engage young people to mentor, transfer life-skills, and promote education and healthy lifestyles. For coaches the focus is predominantly sport development, although, this can change when funding is available on the condition that projects deliver life-skills, and health and educational benefits.

For both the "sending" and "host" communities and in keeping with the increasing number of "outreach" initiatives run by universities, which is also reflective of transnational SfD projects more broadly, Sport Malawi was envisaged as a programme that would be implemented through "social partnerships" (cf. Trendafiova *et al.* 2017). From its inception, the aspiration was for a totally collaborative partnership between the core group of cross-departmental staff in UoG and an organising committee in Malawi working together to operationalise the project. Within the "sending community" staff delivering Sport Malawi were drawn from the School of Sport and Exercise, the Institute of Education and Public Services, and the Chaplaincy and Faith Department. They spearheaded the delivery of the project and this involved liaising with the Malawi Team that oversee Sport Malawi in Mzuzu to develop itineraries and understand the needs and expectation of the partners in Malawi. It also involved communicating the needs of the UK Team, including those of the student-volunteers, who came from a range of undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses, such as sports and exercise science, education, youth work, drama, and health and social work. Within the UoG, staff responsibilities included the promotion of the project and the recruitment to it. This generally occurred in the autumn to allow the selected student-volunteers time to develop as an effective team, fundraise individually and collectively, and plan the workshops and coaching sessions which would be delivered when the team travelled to Malawi for four weeks during the UK summer. Three strands of workshops, including sports coaching, sports education, and sports mentoring were created to cater for the training needs and interests of local workshop participants who worked either in sport, education, or the community development sector.

At the time of conducting the research for this thesis, over forty student-volunteers had participated in the programme with the aim of delivering these "needs-based" workshops. With an emphasis on educating indigenous sports community workers,

student-volunteers are central to the empowerment mechanisms employed by Sport Malawi (which were discussed briefly in the introduction and in more detail in chapter five) and as such they are positioned as external experts and "change-agents". Prior to travelling to Malawi, the student-volunteers attend training sessions organised by the staff, and covers preparatory topics such as vaccinations and what to pack, Malawian languages and culture, and workshop preparation and coaching session guidance and advice. To help the student-volunteers with their orientation, if possible, a Malawian who is familiar with Sport Malawi, would deliver a session to talk about the importance of cultural awareness and what is expected from the student-volunteers from the locals' perspective. While the engagement of most staff in Sport Malawi generally continued from year-to-year, the engagement of student-volunteers in the programme usually tailed-off after their return from Malawi, unless they were recruited to return for a two or third year as a student-mentor who would then assist staff in preparing and supervising new teams of student-volunteers.

At the time of conducting the research, over 1,500 Malawian sports coaches, PE teachers, and youth workers within the "host community" had participated in the Sport Malawi workshops, with the intention that they would be empowered to design and deliver local and largely autonomous SfD projects. However, from the outset Sport Malawi was influenced in various ways by the pervasive donor-recipient framework that has assumed a central place in development practice. This power imbalance was initially concealed by the rhetoric of "partnership" and "empowerment" used by the project, and through the friendship between those in UoG and two members of the organising committee formed when the latter were studying in the UK. Importantly, the key stakeholders in Malawi could see a partnership working with UoG because the University was considered to have philanthropic obligations and saw itself as a social as well as a business entity. Therefore, while not a traditional development actor, they were keen to

build a partnership with UoG because they perceived that it could resource the project in terms of volunteers, knowledge and training, and equipment and funding.

In Malawi, a national organising committee was established, and the personal networks of the Malawian stakeholders were drawn upon to establish a local committee in each of capital cities of the Southern, Central, and Northern Regions, namely Blantyre, Lilongwe, and Mzuzu. These local committees consisted of representatives from the sports, community, and education sectors. During the first three years, the UK team conducted workshops in these main cities. The local committees had the responsibility for engaging with local partners and inviting existing and potential SfD providers to the UK-led workshops, such as sports coaches, youth workers, and PE teachers. The main methodology employed was three weeks of intensive workshops, one week each in Blantyre, Lilongwe, and Mzuzu, with three streams of workshops running concurrently for sports coaches, youth workers, and PE teachers. Each week-long workshop attracted approximately thirty participants for each stream, meaning that over the course of three weeks during the UK team trips, up to 270 workshop participants were trained in SfD across Malawi. Interspersed between the training workshops were visits to local SfD projects, and the whole trip was bookended by a short period of orientation at the start of the trip to learn more about the culture first-hand and a brief time of rest and relaxation by Lake Malawi before departing for the UK.

During this phase of Sport Malawi's operation, the impetus from both the "sending" and "host" communities was to put considerable effort into establishing multi-sectoral partnerships, involving the public, private, and voluntary and community sectors, whilst also promoting the project and its mission in the Malawian media. Every opportunity was taken to build relationships with key stakeholders within the Government, commercial sports, and community and international development actors. As offshoots of these discussions, partnerships were built with the Malawi National

Council of Sports, the Football Association of Malawi (FAM), and the Malawi Olympic Committee (MOC), with the latter leading to the UoG's hosting the Malawian Olympic team prior to the London 2012 Olympic Games. As the concept of using sport for development was still a novelty in Malawi, during UK team visits, Sport Malawi received extensive media attention. This included coverage in the national print press, national and local radio stations, and on Television Malawi (TVM), a state-owned television station run by the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC). As a SfD programme, Sport Malawi highlights many of the challenges, ambiguities and complexities evident across the sector. To complement the description of Sport Malawi here and in the introduction to this thesis, a more detailed discussion on the aims, objectives and operation of Sport Malawi in both the UK and Malawian contexts will be provided at the beginning of chapter five and six.

Conclusion

The discussion presented in this chapter has sought to outline key debates on the sport/development relationship. A close inspection of SfD reveals that the dominant ideologies underpinning this field are reflective of and informed by modernisation and neoliberal approaches to international development (Levermore 2012). Following the same trajectory, SfD programmes are often founded on partnerships between global North policy makers, donors and volunteers, and global South implementers and recipients, and the flow of resources and knowledge are predominantly "top down". As such, the SfD field is laden with asymmetrical power relations that are argued to serve the interests of the West, and as a result, many programmes struggle to provide alternative "bottom-up" approaches that truly empower the supposed beneficiaries. Although purported as a central component, understanding (dis)empowerment processes in SfD is complex and further research is needed to provide a more holistic picture. This is particularly true of partnerships and power dynamics at work between "donors" and "recipients". To

interrogate how power plays out in SfD, a more detailed interrogation of empowerment, partnership and NGOs is needed, and this will form the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Three: Empowerment and Sport for Development

Introduction

In the opening two chapters of this thesis, the ways in which power permeates mainstream development and the use of sport in the wider development agenda have been key concerns. Consequently, they have laid the foundations for a deeper consideration of the concept of "empowerment". Empowerment is one of the most utilised concepts in international development and SfD policy and practice, and yet it remains loosely defined (Rowlands 1995). Given that it lies at the heart of Sport Malawi and is central to this study, it is crucial to focus in this chapter on how empowerment has been conceptualised and operationalised, and how it has emerged to become a "central plank of the development agenda" (Levermore and Beacom 2012, p.18).

As noted in chapter one, the modern development project was launched in the 1940s as a Western, top-down, ethnocentric and economic project that viewed the underdevelopment of the global South as a *problem* that could be overcome through emulating Western values, practices and institutions (Kingsbury *et al.* 2012). The

"benevolent" flow of Northern knowledge, expertise and resources needed for the modernisation of the global South was based on the assumption that power resided in the first world and the motives underpinning what were framed as altruistic interventions went largely unquestioned. However, by the 1960s these suppositions were starting to be challenged by critical development theorists, and the issue of power and empowerment rose to prominence within development thinking, policy and practice.

The critical perspectives of development discussed in the opening chapters criticised power imbalances between the global South and the global North, and advocated new approaches to development that were more inclusive, equitable, sustainable and participatory. In this context, empowerment was considered as a challenge to top-down, ethnocentric development orthodoxy, and a route to bottom-up, grassroots community-based approaches that might achieve *authentic* development for the poor (Kabeer 1994). Interpreting development as the enhancement of people and conditions to emancipate themselves (cf. Sen 2001), this approach saw empowerment as "the process of challenging existing power relations, and of gaining greater control over the sources of power" (Batliwala 1994, p.130). However, as this chapter reveals, the emancipatory potential and opportunities offered by this perspective have been diluted as a result of the incorporation of the rhetoric of empowerment within the wider neoliberal approach to development. Indeed, some critical theorists would argue that this was motivated by a desire to appease criticisms of development orthodoxy whilst maintaining the capitalist and geo-political *status quo*. Kingsbury *et al.* (2012) for example, have argued that empowerment has lost its real meaning and has become an apolitical "motherhood" term within mainstream development thinking, policy and practice while Rai *et al.* (2007, p.1) ask, "Why is empowerment so adaptable, so acceptable to such disparate bedfellows?"

These issues and concerns have not been lost on critical SfD theorists, and the assumption that sport is inherently empowering has recently been challenged. The inclusion of empowerment more centrally in SfD research is entirely appropriate given that it is a core component of many SfD programmes and underpins many of the mechanisms employed, such as partnership, capacity building, peer leadership, and entrepreneurialism. There have been some attempts to better understand empowerment in SfD and these include analyses of: sport and gender empowerment of women and girls in India (cf. Samie *et al.* 2015; McDonald 2015; Kay 2013b); sport as a tool for HIV and AIDS education in southern Africa (Jeanes 2013; Mwannga 2011; Mwaanga and Banda 2014); and a collaborative sports equipment project in west Africa (Lindsay and O'Gorman 2015). Building on the previous chapters which contextualised empowerment within broader development and SfD theories and debates, this chapter considers more closely the concept of empowerment and how it has been operationalised within development and SfD policy and practice. To do this, the chapter starts with a section on the origins and lineage of empowerment within development discourse. Then it explores the various and contested conceptualisations of empowerment in the literature. The third section discusses conceptualisations of empowerment and power within the critical development literature, and the postcolonial critiques therein. The penultimate section then considers how empowerment has been understood and practiced within the SfD field, and then drawing on all of this, the final section situates the theoretical framework within the thesis and delineates how it will be applied to the empirical data to interrogate the empowerment philosophies and mechanisms adopted by Sport Malawi.

3.1. Origins and Linage of "Empowerment" within Development Discourse

As is the case with "development", the meaning of "empowerment" is hugely contested (Kingsbury *et al*. 2012). To fully appreciate what is meant by "empowerment" within development discourse it is important to trace the origins and linage of the concept, and crucially, the meanings originally attached to it. The term "empowerment" precedes the emergence of development in the 1940s and has been traced back to the Protestant Reformation, Quakerism, Jeffersonian democracy, and early capitalism (Gaventa 2002). The concept has been articulated in various linguistic equivalents (Batliwala 2007a) and embedded in struggles for decolonisation, social justice, and the emancipation of the poor and marginalised. "Empowerment" is traditionally a term loaded with political meaning, and in the twentieth century was first adopted to shape more equitable and participatory perspectives and approaches to international development (*ibid*). The grafting of the term into development discourse has an important lineage and is grounded in the work of postcolonial leaders, progressive educators and feminist activists, and these will be considered in turn.

While the first President of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, did not use the term "empowerment", he constructed an applied philosophical basis for decolonisation in Africa that he believed would bring about development in newly independent African states. Nkrumah called his approach "philosophical consciencism" and it resonated with subsequent interpretations of empowerment that emerged within development discourse (Nkrumah 1964). One of the key messages of consciencism was that colonialists distorted traditional African values with imported ideas on economics, politics, culture and spirituality (Adejumobi and Olukoshi 2008). Nkrumah acknowledged that the post-colonial continent could not return to its pre-colonial state, and in a similar fashion to the concepts of "interpolation" and "mimicry" in postcolonial theory (Ashcroft 2001; Bhabha 1994; 1990) highlighted in chapter one, he argued that a new society needed to be forged

through social revolution rather than social reformation (Nkrumah 1964). While emphasising the importance of repossessing traditional African values and the humanistic and socialist principles underpinning them, he also sought to harmonise these with foreign influences. He went on to argue that positive action towards decolonisation required Africans to develop a greater degree of consciousness which would be achieved through the "instruments of education" (Nkrumah 1964, p.100).

Nkrumah strongly warned against the rise of a bourgeois class in the dawning of independence across the continent. Reflecting Marxist thinking on class, consciencism was rooted in dialectical materialism, and Nkrumah believed that the emancipation of Africa (and indeed the wider world) relied on the "restitution of the egalitarianism of human society, and… the logistic mobilisation of all our resources towards the attainment of that restitution" (1964, p.78). The emergence of an elitist class in Africa would, he argued, bring about new forms of imperialism (i.e. neo-colonialism), disunity and lack of development, and together these would "militate against the realisation of a social justice based on the ideas of true equality" (*ibid*, p.98). He suggested that neo-colonialism would pose a greater threat to decolonisation than traditional colonialism because it would use an "oppressive enterprise of greedy individuals and classes" (*ibid*, p.99) to "incautiously become instruments of suppression on behalf of the neo-colonialists (*ibid*, p.102).

Scholars agree that philosophical consciencism was instrumental in developing an understanding of the importance of political, economic, social and cultural emancipation in efforts to decolonise former colonies (Adejumobi and Olukoshi 2008; Zizwe Poe 2003). Central to consciencism was the erasing of the "colonial mentality" (Nkrumah 1964, p.106) and the fostering and enhancement of the agency of the indigenous people. As Nkrumah (1964, p.113) expressed it; "a people can only be redeemed by lifting themselves up, as it were, by the strings of their boots." This ideology was central to developing notions of pan-African empowerment and South-to-South cooperation

(Jinadu 2008), and for some Africanists, it remains relevant today. As Zizwe Poe (2003, p.7) argued, "the move for political, economic, social and psychological wellbeing of Africans… is in dire need of a qualified African centred perspective to address problems of African agency." The contribution of consciencism towards developing the concept of empowerment within development discourse should not be underestimated. Indeed, Jinadu (2008, p.25) observed that an "Afrocentric decolonisation of the mind and of economic and political processes in Africa – has been and continues to be the vitality, the contribution, and the relevance of Nkrumah's idea of pan-Africa for Africa and the rest of the world." His work continues to help us see the importance of transforming political, economic, and social structures in empowerment processes that seek to emancipate the poor, and the threat of capitalist-driven globalisation to these processes.

In the 1970s the concept of "empowerment" was further developed through the work of the Latin American progressive educator, Paulo Freire, particularly in his renowned book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972). While he also did not use the term empowerment specifically, Freire advocated the importance of enabling recipients of development projects to have "more practical political power over the goals and outcomes of the development process" (Kingsbury 2012, p. 252). He shared Nkrumah's view that improving education and literacy levels was central to achieving this because he believed that the empowerment of the oppressed required them to have the "abilities to understand, question and resist structural conditions for your poverty and to have the capacity to change those conditions" (*ibid*, p.253). This approach was termed "conscientisation" and Freire argued that this was crucial in generating the capacity of the poor to participate in development (Gardner and Lewis 1996). The prominence of education as a means for conscientisation and tackling power imbalances was significant in forming understandings of "empowerment", and critical development theorists, particularly in the global South drew on Freire to expand their conceptualisation of empowerment within

development and this led to the growth of bottom-up and informal education approaches such as Participatory Action Research (Rahman 1993).

While education of the type advocated by Freire certainly aided reflection on the structural conditions that impoverished Latin America, this did not necessarily equate with resisting these conditions. Freire recognised this and insisted upon a two-pronged approach, *praxis*, to transform asymmetrical social and economic relations that married individual reflection with collective action. Those despondent with development orthodoxy saw empowerment, in the words of Rai *et al.* (2007, p.4), "as a local, grassroots endeavour, concerned with inspiring the poor to challenge the *status-quo*." This emancipatory pedagogy was not primarily dealing with development or "poverty alleviation", but rather the "struggle to be more fully human" (Freire 1972, p.29), which is to say, true development comes from transforming the economic, political and social structures that reproduce poverty and marginalisation. Leal (2007) argues that mainstream development has been largely futile in correcting oppressive structures because it was established to maintain the hegemony of the global North.

The issue of power is central to the concepts of conscientisation and praxis, and Freire's work shows that control over decision-making and resources will not be "gifted" to the poor (Freire 1972). This is a major contribution to understandings of "empowerment" because it purports that when power is *supposedly* given to the poor, it is invariably conditioned. Freire (*ibid,* p.47) articulated this when he wrote that to "liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects which must be saved from a burning building, it is to lead them into the populist pitfall and transform them into masses which can be manipulated." As he saw it, the poor can only obtain power through seizing it through the processes of conscientisation and praxis. For Freire, authentic empowerment cannot be transferred

from the powerful to the powerless. Rather, those with less power can *only* empower themselves (Kingsbury 2012; Leal 2007).

By the 1980s the concept of empowerment was also writ large in the work of feminist theorists and activists who through advocating for women's rights and equality contributed important insights to debates on the nature of empowerment within development. Building on the ideas of critical development theory and conscientisation, they understood empowerment as a key component in the struggle against patriarchy, and structures of race, ethnicity, and class which determined the subordinate position of women in many global South countries (Batliwala 2007a). This gender dimension, overlooked in previous understandings of empowerment within development discourse, incorporated women into the "subaltern" class and drew attention to their silence and lack of agency in Western and hierarchical development processes. Using Foucault's perspective on power, feminist scholars challenged the notion that power is possessed, but rather that it is exercised in relationships and embedded in struggles over discourse, meaning and knowledge (Rai *et al.* 2007). As seen in work of Nkrumah, Freire, and feminists, the concept of empowerment, although articulated in linguistic equivalents (Batliwala 2007a), was embedded in struggles for decolonisation, social transformation and women's emancipation (Pettit 2012).

As the term rose to prominence within development discourse, by the early 1990s, it was universally adopted into the development lexicon (Luttrell and Quiroz 2009). In the hands of mainstream development institutions, policy makers and practitioners who continually seek out "sexier catchphrases and magic bullets" (Batliwala 2007a, p.559), "empowerment" became a buzzword and was stripped of the philosophy that informed it (Rist 2007). Similar to "participation" and "partnership", the original meaning and value of empowerment was diffused and diluted, and in the process of being "mainstreamed"

the concept became a "fuzzword" (Cornwall 2007) and lost its transformative edge. Batliwala (2007b, p.89) describes this as the,

> *…distortion of good ideas and innovative practices as they are lifted out of the political and historical context in which they evolved and rendered into formulas that are "mainstreamed". This usually involves divesting the idea of its cultural specificity, its political content, and generalising it into a series of rituals and steps that stimulate its original elements, but lacking the transformative power of the real thing. Thus good ideas – evolved to address specific development challenges – are altered into universally applicable panaceas. Transferring the correct rhetoric – buzzwords and catch phrases emptied of their original meaning – is a vital part of this legerdemain.*

The new meanings attached to "empowerment" were far removed from its radical roots and empowerment within development discourse became oriented around rebalancing political, economic, and social power between individuals and groups, rather than enabling the poor to challenge the structural conditions that created their impoverishment (Rai *et al*. 2007; Petras 2011). Co-opted into the neoliberal agenda, the concept was changed from denoting a collective struggle for systemic change to an individualistic process. As SAPs were introduced across the global South, this new understanding of empowerment was used to justify the decreased role of the state in development affairs by arguing that empowered communities freed from the shackles of the state and participating in a "free-market" would control their own development (Leal 2007). To do this successfully the term had to be depoliticised and this was achieved by subverting the underpinning concepts, and thus, "empowerment" transitioned from a noun denoting collective changes in political, economic and social power, to a verb intimating increased power, achievement and status at the individual level (Batliwala 2007a). By reinventing its discourse, development orthodoxy was able to persuade the recipients of aid that development had become more bottom-up and equitable, all while implementing SAPs and maintaining the structural conditions that necessitate and sustain the development enterprise (Leal 2007; Chossudovsky 2002).

Tensions between agency and structure remain at the centre of empowerment debates, and the ability of mainstream development actors to facilitate authentic empowerment without the transformation of power structures (Leal 2007) is highly questionable. These concerns, however, have not diminished the prominence of this malleable concept within development discourse, and this is evidenced by Rai *et al.* (2007, p.10), when they assert,

> *No project can get through without proving its sensitivity to community concerns and its willingness to collaborate and cooperate with the poor. Even the current preoccupation with knowledge based development, which apparently runs counter to this tendency by reinforcing the superiority of Northern knowledge, is often cast in terms of participation, empowerment and partnership with specific small-scale communities.*

From the rhetoric used in small-scale knowledge based development programmes such as Sport Malawi to the discourse used by the Bretton Woods Institutions, development policies are littered with "buzzwords" such as "empowerment", but with little mention of the forces that produce poverty (Cornwall and Brock 2005). Leal (2007, p.543) argues that the vague and pliable nature of "buzzwords" means that "in the hands of the development industry, the political ambiguity has been functional to the preservation of the status quo." These supposed "depoliticised" concepts are still political because they extend neoliberal hegemony (Cornwall 2007). To this end, Leal (2007, p.545) asserts that, "institutionalised understandings of empowerment seek to contain the concept within the bounds of the existing order, and empowerment becomes the management of power when in the hands of the powerful." Without doubt, this "mainstreamed" understanding of empowerment is far removed from the original connotations of power and empowerment embedded in the struggles for decolonisation, social transformation and the emancipation of women.

In a thesis that seeks to examine the ways in which empowerment is understood and has been operationalised in the context of a specific SfD programme, and in light of

this dissonance between the radical roots of empowerment and its reinterpretation within mainstream development, it is crucial to further interrogate the concept of empowerment. Thus, the next section begins by highlighting the range of ways that empowerment and power are conceptualised in the literature before exploring how critical development, particularly postcolonial perspectives, have sought to explain the operation and enactment of empowerment in the development industry.

3.2. Conceptualising and Problematising "Empowerment"

Both mainstream and critical development thinkers, policymakers and practitioners continue to use the language of empowerment, but seldom articulate clearly the meanings they attach to it (Batliwala 2007a). This inhibits attempts to understand "empowerment" and the ways it might improve the process and outcomes of projects that seek to empower the poor and marginalised. Scholars have a tendency to concentrate on the empowerment efforts of community-based programmes at the local level (cf. Friedman 1992). However, in an "interconnected global/local world", Rai *et al.* (2007, p.2) argue that to focus on just the micro-level is inadequate because it "paper[s] over the complexities of em(power)ment both as a process and a goal, at a multiplicity of governance levels – local, national and global." In order to adequately understand empowerment, Luttrell *et al.* (2007) argue that a more nuanced reading of "empowerment" and "power" is necessary. This section seeks to present such a reading by examining the key ways in which empowerment and power have been problematized and debated in the literature.

As has already been shown, from a critical development perspective, empowerment is articulated as the process of taking power over decisions and resources (Jupp and Ali 2010). Therefore, understanding power has been central to academic excavations of the concept of empowerment. In this literature, power has been understood

to operate on three levels. At the *personal* or *psychological* level power involves an individual's ability to achieve their goals. The next is the *discursive* or *cultural* level which relates to discourse and its capacity to create structures of power as discussed in the work of Foucault (1980; 1991; 1998). Power through discourse, as Hugman (1991, p.37) argued is, "about the interplay between language and social relationships, in which some groups are able to achieve dominance for their interests." This level of power constructs reality and influences notions of power at the individual level. The last level of power outlined in most literature is concerned with *structure*, and this relates to an individual's position in social hierarchies across class, race, ethnicity and gender domains. Through a process of "autopoiesis" (cf. Thompson 2006), structural and cultural formations work together to reproduce power. This dynamic view of power is presented in the work of Gaventa (2006) who differentiates between places of power (global, national, local), spaces of power (provided/closed, invited, claimed/created) and visibilities of power (visible, hidden, invisible/internalised). This idea that power operates in different arenas has been important to debates on empowerment and has aided a more multi-level analysis of levels of power and the influences of one level on another.

Another key issue that has been raised in the literature on empowerment relates to the use of homogenising terminology that is often applied to the basic categories of either the *powerful* or the *powerless,* and to broad groupings such as "the community", the "poorest" and the "marginalised" (Fook 2002). The use of such terminology tends to gloss over and conceal unequal power hierarchies within these categories or groupings (Thompson 2006; Cooke and Kothari 2001). Kelsall and Mercer (2003) consider this problematic for two reasons. Firstly, they argue that "homogenous" communities do not work harmoniously for the benefit of all and are impacted by divisions of class, gender, ethnicity *etcetera*, and secondly, the empowerment of some in "the community" leads to the disempowerment of others (cf. Kaiser and Rusch 2015). Lukes (2005) further

challenges homogenising tendencies in the literature on empowerment by arguing that power is not only determined by one group controlling resources and institutions. Asserting that power is also exercised by controlling agendas, he proposed a three-dimensional perspective on power. At the one-dimensional level, power is exercised by the behaviour of one group to achieve their interests, even if contrary to the interests of the other group. A two-dimensional perspective focuses on the power exercised in setting the agenda in the first place, and the three-dimensional viewpoint takes into consideration the wider social and cultural context. Lukes (2005, p.26) explains how the wider societal context reproduces unequal power relations, by stating that,

> *The bias of the system is not sustained simply by a series of individually chosen acts, but also, most importantly, by the socially structured and culturally patterned behaviour of groups, and practices of institutions, which may be manifested by individuals' inaction.*

Foucault (1998; 1991) also resisted the idea that power is a possession held by a particular individual or group, and purported that power permeates all social relationships and exists only in its exercise within relations between individuals, groups and institutions. His major contribution to notions of empowerment was to show how repeated patterns of language and behaviour form "institutionalised practices" that work to "discipline bodies". Although this analysis of power did not extend to the wider economic and political structures (Rai *et al.* 2007), it showed the importance seeing power as more than a zero-sum possession between the powerful and the powerless.

The relationship between agency and structure, a critical issue in the wider social scientific analysis of power, has also been explored in the literature on empowerment. As Thompson (2007) has noted there is a dialectical interplay between the two, with the former referring to the capacity of a person to make decisions and act independently without constraints, and the latter relating to structures such as class, gender, ethnicity and so on, that determine the opportunities available to individuals (Luttrell *et al.* 2007).

Critical theorists would assert that real empowerment requires the transformation of power relations at the level of agency and structure. Mainstream development discourse, by and large, perceives empowerment through the neoliberal paradigm and therefore emphasises the individual's responsibility to develop agency. Many *instrumental* empowerment interventions focus on the "practical needs" that are a consequence of an individual's location in the social hierarchy, rather than tackling the underlying "strategic needs" (Luttrell *et al.* 2007). However, this is insufficient because both agency and structure, and the interplay between them must be taken into account when theorising power and operationalising empowerment practices (Pettit 2012; Luttrell and Quiroz 2009; Kelsall and Mercer 2003). This is because structural inequalities impact negatively on the conditions needed to develop agency (Hennick *et al.* 2012; Kabeer 1994).

Another key debate shaping understandings of empowerment is the role of *external* development programmes and practitioners in building *internal* capacities for autonomous action and the contradiction that therefore lies between autonomy and heteronomy (Rahnema 1990). Critical development perspectives would argue that dependency on "top-down" and external intervention is the antithesis of empowerment. In practice, however, the central place of "outside experts", "change-agents" and "volunteers" in development programmes infers that the communities in which these programmes are inserted are unable to discern or do what is needed for their own development. "In this light, the agenda of 'empowerment'," writes Kelsall and Mercer (2003, p.295) "…secretes an insidious form of power, subjugating and subjectifying its objects in the process of fabricating them as 'subjects'… [who are] only able to achieve their autonomous destiny by being transformed from the outside." This tension between autonomy and heteronomy will emerge later in discussions on the empirical findings.

The work of Rowlands (1997; 1995) has been particularly significant in problematising and informing the debate on the nature and operation of empowerment

within the more recent development literature. In her seminal article, *Empowerment Examined*, Rowlands (1995, p.101) asserted that the "often uncritical use of the term 'empowerment' in development thinking and practice disguises a problematic concept." Like other critical scholars, she argues that deconstructing the root-concept of "power" is imperative to interrogating "empowerment". As we have seen, some notions of empowerment and power are over-simplified and reductionist and have been subject to critical scrutiny. This has led to a more nuanced and multifaceted understanding of these concepts. By utilising a broader analytical perspective that combined Foucauldian perspectives on power as fluid and relational with feminist concerns on "internalised oppressions", Rowlands (1995; 1998) has greatly contributed to this trend.

Her critique of the relationship between empowerment and power focuses on zero-sum and positive-sum conceptualisations of power. Drawing on the longstanding distinction made in the literature between the exercising of power as either "power over" or "power to", Rowlands' (1995) analysis added two more categories which included "power with" and "power within". A zero-sum notion of power posits that the more power one group holds, the less others have, and therefore "power over" refers to asymmetrical power relations and the ability of one group to subordinate and coerce others. This domination takes place at personal, cultural and structural levels and these domains work in tandem to exert "power over" as structural dominance is strengthened by cultural assumptions and discourses which in turn determine *normal* and *acceptable* behaviour at the personal level. The operational implication of this form of power within empowerment means transforming the uneven structures that impede the amount of power that the less powerful can access and possess (Luttrell *et al.* 2007).

In contrast, the other three forms of power are more positive-sum (Rowlands 1995), and this is seen for example in "power to" which relates to the potential of individuals and groups to organise and change existing hierarchies and achieve their own

ends. This form of power then, involves the capacity to overcome obstacles that stand in the way of empowerment. The corresponding outcome of this generative form of power would be individuals and groups realising increased capacities and opportunities to control decision-making and resources (Luttrell *et al.* 2007). The third interpretation is "power with" and this forms the basis for partnership working (Rowlands 1995). This form of power is reliant on the notion of the whole being greater than the sum of parts, and that collaborating with others rather than individuals working in isolation can generate more power to bring about change in structural and cultural levels (Rowlands 1998). Empowerment is therefore more than a personal issue, and the implication of this for practice is to increase collaboration through collective awareness and desire for change (Luttrell *et al.* 2007).

Lastly, "power within" refers to an individual's critical consciousness and inner resilience (Rowlands 1995). This power or "spiritual strength" (Rowlands 1998) can enable an individual or group to hold a position despite fierce opposition and shapes perceptions about their rights and capacity. This is similar to Thompson's (2006, p.127) notion of "authenticity" which "involves being able to recognise the boundary between those aspects of our lives that we can control and those that we cannot, and making sure that what belongs in the first category does not get assigned to the second." This capacity to discern what barriers to empowerment are self-deceiving is related back to the idea of "internalised oppression" advocated by feminists including Rowlands (1995). By systematically denying power, negative discourses are implanted in the powerless who in turn believe them to be "truths". To overcome this a process of conscientisation is needed (Freire 1972), and when shared can lead to collective action and "power with" others in a *politicised* struggle for transformation (Rai et al. 2007). Within empowerment processes this "power within" builds solidarity to challenge structural constraints (Luttrell *et al.*

2007). In view of this, empowerment is more than *mere* participation in decision-making arenas, but believing that one is *entitled* to occupy such spaces.

These more generative understandings avoid the criticisms of the over-simplified zero-sum concepts of power. Rowlands' (1995) point is that power is simply not a possession be given away. Rather, power is exercised from the "bottom-up" through the poor and the marginalised having the "power to", "power with" and "power within". In this nuanced reading of power within development discourse, Rowlands (1995, p.107) pinpoints that the "careless, deliberately vague, or sloganizing" use of "empowerment… takes the troublesome notions of power, and the distribution of power, out of the picture." The major contribution of Rowlands' (1998; 1995) work has been to show that vague definitions of empowerment weaken the value of the concept as an agent for transformation and as a tool for analysis. The absence of power analysis, and strategies to rebalance unequal power dynamics result in development programmes that claim to empower, but, crucially do not address the key issue of power.

3.3. Postcolonial Critiques of Empowerment within Development

As shown above, a major concern within critical development literature on the theory and practice of empowerment is the lack of analysis of power. In chapter one it was noted that power is a central theme in postcolonialism, and in this section, this perspective is used to further draw out the complexity of empowerment practices and power dynamics that are embedded in historical, structural and transnational contexts. The critiques of empowerment and power informed by postcolonial theory have focused mainly on partnership, paternalism, and the role of NGOs and volunteers in development and these will be examined in turn.

Postcolonial theory argues that paternalistic notions of empowerment within development discourse and practice have their roots in European colonialism. Mainstream development discourse makes little reference to these historical (and contemporary) structural inequalities that have privileged the global North. As discussed in chapter one, development orthodoxy views the poor and marginalised in the former colonies as being in need of external aid, while the modernisation paradigm posits that the barriers to the poor and marginalised becoming empowered are technological and cultural, rather than historic and structural (Vanderplaat 1998; Deepak 2011). The practice of development, including the work of many NGOs, is aligned to this paradigm and therefore is unable to critique or offer an alternative to it. Paternalistic understandings of empowerment, therefore, extend the civilising mission of colonialism (Escobar 1995) and promote the narrative of the West being the *saviour* to passive victims in the third world on whom the responsibility for lack of development is blamed (Spivak 1985). This perspective relies on the hierarchical categorisation of people as being "developed" or "developing", "modern" or "traditional", "us" or "them" and "saviour" or "victim" (Deepak 2011; Escobar 1995). For postcolonial theorists, rather than facilitating empowerment, the modern development project and the associated social and economic processes of globalisation have negatively affected the poor and widened global inequality (Jönsson 2010). While claiming to be an "empowering" force for the poor and marginalised, development in reality has disempowered many of the recipients of aid. Postcolonialism seeks to resist and challenge the *white-saviour* narrative embedded in colonialism and mainstream development and calls for it to be rewritten in ways that might make empowerment possible.

The postcolonial critique of the role of partnership in facilitating empowerment asserts that, when employed in international development efforts, partnership is based on the control of one partner over the other (Smith 2015). Therefore, partnership denotes an

asymmetrical and top-down relationship between development actors in the global North and South (cf. Kreitzer and Wilson 2010). This is because the notion of partnership in development is traditionally tied to the paternalistic motivations of the more powerful group. Deepak (2011, p.788) argues that "transnational solidarities" would be more effective in facilitating counter-hegemonic relationships and would help to move development away from the idea of the global North *saving* the global South. Guided by postcolonial theory, this new approach to partnership within empowerment programmes acknowledges the historic and contemporary power imbalances that favour the West. To address the limits of agency that arise from structural inequality, processes of *conscientisation* and *praxis* would be employed by both practitioners and volunteers in the global North and their counterparts in the global South. Furthermore, this approach calls on Western "change-agents" to leverage their position within social hierarchies to advocate for structural equality. Deepak's contribution to the debate on empowerment through partnerships is important because it offers a unique vantage point from which to foreground the colonial and neo-colonial contexts in which partnerships operate and that reproduce asymmetrical power relations.

As noted in chapter one, the orthodox understanding of development has greatly influenced NGOs and how their staff members and volunteers perceive their role in empowerment processes. The dominant discourse of empowerment focuses on the transfer of knowledge, resources and skills to the global South in order to help the poor and marginalised emulate the thinking and practices of the global North (Kelsall and Mercer 2003). This view of empowerment is not only held by global North NGO practitioners and volunteers, but also by indigenous NGOs workers who are often well educated elites and who adhere to, rather than challenge, mainstream notions empowerment and power (Jönsson 2010). Viewed in this way, NGOs offer self-help and individualised notions of empowerment that fit within the neoliberal mind-set (Smith

2015) and they purport to possess a special ability to facilitate empowerment because they are seen to be embedded in communities and applying a "bottom-up" approach (Hur 2006). With the rollout of SAPs, NGOs help to meet the social and welfare needs of the poor, and reduce the social costs of free market economics (Pearce 2000). It is argued that many NGOs do not empower or garner the non-elite "voices" (Mohan 2006), and that under a neoliberal agenda that espouses individualism and consumerism, they do not address the need for structural transformation. Those who advocate an alternative, postcolonial perspective suggest that when aligned with the radical roots of the concepts of empowerment, NGOs do have the capacity to facilitate collective empowerment at agency and structural levels (Jönsson 2010). In summary, a postcolonial reading of empowerment examines multiple power relations that extend beyond the coloniser-colonised binary (Bhabha 1994), and considers the nexus between colonial legacy and the current unequal development playing field. These are important considerations to be taken on board when analysing a SfD project that seeks to empower global South stakeholders while *also* benefitting stakeholders in the global North. The next section discusses the theorisation and operationalisation of empowerment within SfD.

3.4. Empowerment within Sport for Development

Drawing on the discussion in the last chapter relating to critiques of development orthodoxy evident within SfD thinking and practice, this section explores how the sport/empowerment relationship has been analysed in the literature. As noted, there are some scholars and activists (cf. Mwaanga 2011; 2010; Lindsey and Banda 2010; Lindsey and Grattan 2012) who hold the position that SfD programmes can be empowering. They are not alone, and mirroring mainstream development, empowerment is a prominent concept within SfD policy and practice. To date, however, it has remained largely under-theorised and as a consequence, our understanding of how empowerment might be

effectively operationalised in SfD efforts is limited. This is remarkable given that almost all SfD activity seeks in one way or another to "empower" and employs a range of mechanisms designed to bring this about, including peer mentorship, capacity building, self-efficacy, gender equality, health education, and crucially, entrepreneurship.

There have been an abundance of calls to deconstruct the theorisation and operationalisation of empowerment in SfD discourse (Straume and Hasselgard 2014) and programmes (Spaaij 2009; Giulianotti and Armstrong 2014; Giulianotti 2012; Black 2010; Lawson 2005; Mwaanga and Mwansa 2014), and to interrogate how cultures of dependency (Rossi 2015; Schulenkorf *et al.* 2014) and power relations are played out and reproduced in the field (Giulianotti 2004; Darnell and Hayhurst 2014; Kidd 2011; Schulenkorf 2010). These calls are partly based on a recognition that the "mission drift" that often occurs in SfD as organisations seek out the funding and resources required to sustain their programmes (Hartmann and Kwauk 2011), can lead to SfD interventions disempowering the communities they seek to serve and in doing so, cause more harm than good. The discussion here outlines how the sport/empowerment relationship has been broadly conceptualised in the literature, and this is followed by exploring the empowerment mechanisms employed within SfD, and the extent to which some programmes may facilitate empowerment.

3.4.1. Conceptualisations of Empowerment and Power in the SfD Literature

There have been some seminal contributions on issues around empowerment and power within the SfD field (Hartmann and Kwauk 2011; Spaaij and Jeanes 2013; Manzo 2012). These interrogations of the sport/empowerment relationship have been theorised mainly through the lenses of critical pedagogy, neo-colonialism, neoliberalism, and postcolonialism. Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) assert that SfD policymakers and

practitioners have a fairly simple and benign understanding of development and the role of sport therein, which leads to serious consequences for the programmes they plan and implement. Drawing on critical development theory, critical pedagogy, and their own research, they categorise approaches to SfD as involving either a *dominant vision* or an *interventionist vision.* The first vision of SfD details how the sport/development relationship essentially reproduces asymmetrical power relations by conferring life skills and values for "modern social life". This "reproductive vision" of SfD is not concerned with structural transformation but rather the capacity of such programmes to re-socialise and recalibrate "at-risk" participants within the existing order, and therefore, "serves to maintain power and hierarchy, cultural hegemony, and the institutionalisation of poverty and privilege" (Hartmann and Kwauk 2011, p.291). They argue that there are various ways in which SfD programmes serve the interests of the more powerful, and that without critically analysing how knowledge, power dynamics, and identities are (re)produced, "deploying sport may actually extend Western cultural neo-colonialism in the name of education and development" (*ibid.* p.293). The consequence, whether intended or not, is to normalise structural inequalities, rather than empowering marginalised participants to overcome them.

The second, *interventionist vision* outlined by Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) looks at how the sport/development relationship can be shaped to facilitate fundamental change and transformation. This more critical approach would interrogate the structural inequalities that make "development" necessary and then apply counter-hegemonic approaches to empower participants to challenge the broader conditions that constrain them (Darnell 2010). This approach to SfD has its roots in the radical notions of empowerment that are embedded in the work of postcolonial leaders, feminists, and progressive educators such as Freire (1972). Drawing on the latter, Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) argue that in this alternative approach to SfD, the employment of the educational

process of *conscientisation* would lead to *praxis* as programme providers and participants working together to transform the conditions that perpetuate their subordination.

In the field, SfD programmes would need to find ways to integrate sport and critical pedagogy to engage "participants in a mutual process of grappling with power, inequality and identity" (Hartmann and Kwauk 2011, p.297). Central to this would be to transform the pedagogical practices within interventions and in particular the role of the coach, facilitator and mentor, and their relationship with participants. Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) assert that three assumptions underpin the teacher-coach-facilitator in SfD. Firstly, the teacher is the sole owner of knowledge. Secondly, their knowledge is universal, static and neutral, and transfers effortlessly to any project location. Thirdly, transferring and controlling knowledge adjusts the attitudes and behaviours of the participants. A more empowering approach to SfD re-orientates this coach-participant relationship to make them both co-learners in how to challenge structural inequalities and unequal relations of power. Hartmann and Kwauk's (2011) critique and recommendation around how to reconstruct SfD has been an important contribution to the literature because it highlights the oft-overlooked aspect of education within SfD programmes and the role it plays in shaping empowerment practices.

Building on this study, Spaaij and Jeanes (2013) also drew on the work of Freire to critique empowerment practices in the SfD field. Similar to Giulianotti's (2011) *critical model*, discussed in chapter two, they advocate a reflective and critical approach to SfD programmes that emphasises social transformation. Spaaij and Jeanes (2013) argue that the relevance of Freire's critical pedagogy to SfD is threefold. Firstly, his theories on power and empowerment are relevant to many cultural contexts. Secondly, his framework resonates with postcolonial critiques of SfD and the need for decolonisation, and finally, his thinking can be applied to both institutional and non-institutional educational contexts. Spaaij and Jeanes (2013) identified three major pedagogical approaches that are widely

used in SfD but that they consider ineffective in engendering empowerment. The first, involving the use of *traditional didactic pedagogies,* is criticised for being too technocratic and hierarchical, and favouring external knowledge and interests (Giulianotti 2011) while knowing little of the local contexts (cf. Guest 2009). In this way such programmes have been described as "neo-colonial" (Spaaij and Jeanes 2013) and as promoting the tenets of neoliberalism (Darnell 2010). The second, *peer education,* is purported to promote "horizontal dialogue" that elevates participants to the position of co-learners alongside programme providers, and together they can devise initiatives that are culturally and contextually appropriate (Nicholls 2012). However, Spaaj and Jeanes (2013) consider the capacity of peer leaders to be limited in fostering the agency required to tackle unequal power relations locally, nationally, and internationally. The final approach, *relationship building,* which seeks to foster positive relationships through promoting achievement and autonomy is criticised because it promotes individualistic notions of empowerment with knowledge and decision-making still flowing in a "top-down" direction.

These three pedagogical strategies in SfD are considered ineffective in challenging power dynamics and facilitating empowerment at structural levels, and Spaaij and Jeanes (2013) advocate for Freirean notions of education as emancipation to be theorised and operationalised into SfD programmes. This would have at least three implications. Firstly, curriculum and manuals need to be developed from the "bottom-up" by the community in collaboration with educators (Jeanes and Magee 2011). Secondly, to develop *conscientisation* there is a need to (re)develop critical pedagogies that are different to the didactic pedagogies enforced during colonisation that disempowered local communities. Thirdly, the role of the educator is not to assert authority but rather to create an open atmosphere that allows active and critical engagement. Implementing these

strategies would go some way to enhance the capacity of SfD programmes to facilitate empowerment at the agency and structural levels.

Manzo's (2012) work is also useful in illustrating the limitations of neoliberal SfD and the possibilities of more postcolonial approaches. She argues that SfD NGO-led community development has neoliberal and postcolonial variants, and these are determined in practice by operating partnerships, institutionalised histories, and opposing divisions of labour, interests and demands. Overlap between these two models often occurs and there is a struggle between them within all SfD sites. As Manzo (2012, p.552) puts it, "those looking for pure, unpolluted alternatives to neoliberalism will therefore not find them on the ground… neoliberal methods of evaluation and conceptions of empowerment are clearly at work." The neoliberal model of community development emphasises social entrepreneurship which creates "change-agents" who bring free-market values and skills to development projects (O'Reilly 2010; Brainard and LaFleur 2008). NGOs that operationalise this model promote neoliberal notions of empowerment such as individualism and independence, offer a paradox, given how these same NGOs promote dependency on external funding and partnerships (Manzo 2012; Hearn 2007). A postcolonial model of community development, according to Manzo (2012) seeks to challenge hegemonic social structures, and invests time to listen to the "felt needs" of *subaltern* communities. Drawing on the work of Kapoor (2008), she argues this model is hyper-reflective and involves programme providers and participants *unlearning* top-down development before being able to "learn from below". Part of this more radical view of empowerment entails practitioners unlearning development orthodoxy, didactic pedagogies and colonial hierarchies. These conceptualisations of empowerment shape the mechanism of empowerment employed in SfD practice, as discussed next.

3.4.2. Mechanisms of Empowerment in SfD Practice

It is widely acknowledged that practices intended to generate empowerment are ubiquitous across the SfD field (Jeanes 2013; cf. Woodcock *et al.* 2012; Schulenkorf 2012) and that many mechanisms are deployed in this process including health education, partnership, capacity-building, gender equality, and peer leaders, amongst others. Mwaanga (2011) was the first to interrogate the SfD/empowerment relationship by looking at the mechanism of health education. Examining the processes of empowerment and disempowerment through a SfD programme for people living with HIV and AIDS in Zambia, he drew upon Foucauldian theory and linked (dis)empowerment with dominant ideologies. The wider "learned hopelessness/helplessness," Mwaanga argued, is a legacy of colonial discourse that has impacted negatively on the self-perception of "agency". He concluded that colonial and development discourses disempower indigenous people from being able to set the agenda and determine their future life chances.

Reflecting the wider critical development literature, the role of partnership as a tool for achieving empowerment has become prominent in SfD debates. This is partly a consequence of the fact that much SfD practice is founded on, and characterised by partnerships and networks (locally and globally), and the tendency to always view these partnerships and networks as inherently "good". Effective partnership is seen as vital to the sustainability of the sector, the programmes within it, and the attainment of development goals (Banda *et al.* 2008; Lindsey and Banda 2010; Kidd 2008). Not only has partnership become "ubiquitous as a *modus operandi"* (Lindsey 2010, p.517) for attaining policy goals, it is also an end in itself as prescribed by goal seventeen of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which notes that partnership between public sectors, private sectors, and civil society is crucial to delivering sustainable development. This reflects the prevailing notions that "development" and "sport" are apolitical sites for neutral collaboration and mutual benefit (Levermore 2011). As a dominant mantra in

sport/development discourse, Guilianotti (2004) has challenged partnerships in development work by questioning the extent of dialogue that takes place in donor/recipient relations; who actually has "ownership" of projects, and what power dynamics are at play? These questions are also tackled by Lindsey and O'Gorman (2015), who examined empowerment in a sports equipment programme operated by a UK university and two Ghanaian universities. The authors acknowledged structural constraints that inhibited collaboration and gave rise to power imbalances, but advocated that innovative and accessible communication methods could help level the SfD playing field. This could be challenged by the idea that giving aid automatically confirms the donor as more powerful than the receiver (Saavedra 2012; Nicholls *et al*. 2011).

In the 1980s NGOs became vital players as neoliberalism was implemented and this led to an increase of North-South partnerships that operate within hegemonic geo-political structures and discourses. This NGO model is the dominant institutionalised form of delivering SfD programmes in the global South and is reliant on a network of Northern partners that operate in a competitive, neo-liberal environment. Some studies on the neoliberal influence in SfD have criticised the sweeping and vague references to "neoliberalism" (Hayhurst and Frisby2010; Hayhurst *et al.* 2010). McDonald (2015), however, in her analysis of the strong neoliberal influence within SfD, separates the economic principles of neoliberalism, namely, free markets, privatisation, and less state-run social service; from neoliberalism as a worldview, which encourages self-reliance, personal transformation, individualism and economic efficiency as solutions to social ills. This discourse within SfD has meant that the perceived wisdoms of empowerment are centred on the neoliberal focus on the individual (McDonald 2015). For McDonald, SfD NGOs suffused with dominant development ideology and practices further neoliberal hegemony in communities in the global South. In doing so, they support the expansion of "top-down" orthodox development, rather than provide "bottom-up" alternatives to it.

Most of the theorisation of empowerment efforts through SfD has predominantly focused on gender empowerment (cf. Samie *et al.* 2015; McDonald 2015; Kay 2013b). Feminist theorising on empowerment and power have been utilised to question patriarchal and hegemonic relations within SfD. A range of studies on the role of SfD in addressing issues of gender inequality have highlighted that deficit-based approaches involving "experts" identifying what is needed in *others* often leads to harmful interventions (Chawansky and Hayhurst 2015; Williams and Chawansky 2014; Hayhurst 2011, 2014b; Hayhurst*et al.* 2013; Swai 2010). This is because they are based on the values and customs of the more powerful group, an approach that has been termed "development-as-Westernisation" (Rowlands 1995), and is one criticism levelled at SfD projects working with girls and women in some regions of the global South. Samie *et al.* (2015), for example, contend that gender empowerment through SfD rests on two assumptions. Firstly, women in the Majority World are oppressed, marginalised and disadvantaged in their own social and political contexts. Secondly, that empowerment with the help of outside "experts" is the only pathway for these women to overcome external and internalised oppression (*ibid*). The authors expand on this to say,

> *Little attention is also placed on making sense of what the term "empowerment" means to/for beneficiaries, and the various (economic, cultural, political or material) conditions necessary to foster empowering changes in the foreign individual's community is ignored (Samie et al. 2015, p.3).*

The outworking of this is poorly constructed programmes that are unable to actually empower girls and women. Kay (2013b) has added that SfD efforts to empower women must go beyond the sole (neoliberal) focus on the individual, to tackle deep socio-cultural structural obstacles to women's participation, empowerment, and sustainable development. If this is not taken into consideration, partial empowerment risks doing more harm than good.

More recently, a handful of academics have applied Freire's critical pedagogy (1972) to critique the use of peer leaders in SfD efforts to engender empowerment (Spaaij and Jeanes 2013; Nicholls 2012). The use of peer leaders within programme delivery is invariably framed as a "bottom-up" approach, but Nicholls (2012) has questioned whether their involvement can be described as full participation due to their position at the bottom of "vertical hierarchies" and therefore excluded from important planning and decision-making. As an alternative approach to development, peer mentorship was originally intended to empower communities to challenge oppressive structures by reflecting on conditions that constrain, resisting outside help, and finding a collective solution within in the affected community (Freire 1972). This potent combination of reflection and action or "praxis", is the approach advocated by "bottom-up" programmes such as the EduSport Foundation in Zambia. Another well-used mechanism for empowerment in SfD is training workshops. The "train the trainers" approach is widely used in mainstream development and has been adopted by Sport Malawi, and others, in SfD. Many believe that this approach provides greater opportunities for the inclusion and participation of locals, and increases the sustainability of community-based programmes, as over time the influence and presence of "outsiders" are phased out. However, the harsh realities of the resource-poor and donor-driven SfD sector mean that adequate support is often not provided to peer mentors or trainers, and thus the empowering potential of these stakeholders are not realised (Nicholls 2012).

As the discussion here shows, empowerment is a key aspiration of much of the SfD sector and has become a buzzword in SfD discourse. However, there are significant questions about the extent to which the mechanisms used in the SfD field to contribute towards or facilitate empowerment actually achieve this. Clearly, some interventions are more attuned to the conditions needed for empowerment, such as those employing "bottom-up" structures, "co-operation" (Schulenkorf 2012; Banda *et al.* 2008), and long-

term commitment (Jeanes 2013). However, doubts remain about the efficacy of SfD to empower the "individual" in the face of overwhelming structural realities. It is clear, therefore, that more empirical research is required in order to better understand how power plays out in attempts to empower various communities through SfD programmes.

3.5. *Framing Sport Malawi theoretically*

The central concern of this thesis is power and how "empowerment" is understood and operationalised within Sport Malawi, and to interrogate whether the forms of empowerment enacted through the project reflect neoliberal or more radical, postcolonial variants of the concept. This chapter has been crucial in developing and fleshing out the broad theoretical framework through which these issues are examined in the thesis. It reveals that empowerment was originally derived from critical perspectives that were motivated by a desire to level out the power imbalances in development orthodoxy, and generate forms of empowerment that offered a route to more equitable, participatory development (Kabeer 1994). The emancipatory potential of this concept, however, was diluted with its co-opting into hegemonic development agendas dominated by neoliberalism (Townsend *et al.* 2004). As part of this process, and responses to it from critical scholars, it has come to be understood as the collective transformation of the asymmetrical power structures that (re)produce poverty (Leal 2007), *and*, in a much more restricted sense, as a process of individualistic change manifest by increased personal power, achievement, and status (Batliwala 2007a). Recognising this dissonance between the radical roots of empowerment and its reinterpretation in mainstream development is crucial, theoretically, for a thesis that seeks to examine the forms of empowerment at play

through Sport Malawi and what understandings and mechanisms of empowerment facilitate and mitigate these.

The theoretical framework employed in this project is rooted in postcolonial critiques of empowerment emanating from the critical development literature. The perspectives on empowerment of the various stakeholders in Sport Malawi's aid chain are shaped by the distinct and yet interconnected historical, political, economic, social and cultural contexts of the UK and Malawi, instigated by British colonial rule. In this thesis, the terms "sending" and "host" communities, derived from the work of Sherraden *et al.* (2008), are employed to connote the *actual* existence of this traditional aid relationship in Sport Malawi and its role in (re)producing uneven power relations between UK and Malawian participants. Alongside partnership, the mechanisms by which the project seeks to facilitate empowerment are knowledge transfer, developing agency and opportunity structures, capacity building, provision of resources, and encouraging long-term sustainability, and these are elaborated on further in chapter five. More specifically, the analyses of how empowerment is understood and practiced through Sport Malawi and the implications of this that follow in subsequent chapters are informed by three core postcolonial criticisms of empowerment within development. The first asserts that empowerment is paternalistic, rooted in colonialism and is both infused by and perpetuates the "white-saviour" complex (Escobar 1995; Spivak 1985). Secondly, empowerment is essentially about one group controlling another, while ignoring the power imbalances between them (Smith 2015). The final core criticism of empowerment employed in this thesis is oriented around the extent to which the external orientation of NGOs and volunteers contributes to aspirations to emulate or mimic the global North rather than levelling out the inequalities between the Minority World and the Majority World (Jönsson 2010; Mohan 2006). In raising significant questions about the nature of

empowerment within development, these sensitising positions offer opportunities for nuanced analyses of empowerment as it is envisaged and operates within Sport Malawi.

In relation to the understandings of empowerment at play in the project, this thesis draws on the idea, developed in this chapter, that power is not possessed by individuals or groups, but rather that it is exercised in the relations and discourse of development (Foucault 1998; 1991; Rowlands 1998; 1995). Postcolonial theorists have explored how the binaries constituted in colonialism and development such as traditional/modern, backward/civilised, developing/developed, and donor/recipient (McEwan 2009; Baaz 2005; Heron 2007), fashion the identities of us/them and self/other. Postcolonial readings of the implications of the deployment of such binaries in mainstream development practice are useful in explaining the interactions between student-volunteers and local actors involved in Sport Malawi. These power relations inherent in these binaries shape the material conditions that (re)produce poverty and necessitate development. Such polarised representations then interconnect at the structural, discursive, and psychological levels in a process of "autopoiesis" (cf. Thompson 2006) to silence and constrain the agency of the "subaltern" class in Western, hierarchical development processes. This becomes manifest in the form of inferiority and dependency complexes in the global South. The analyses in chapter six illustrate that the versions of empowerment operationalised through Sport Malawi entrenches the broader dependency on external aid that is evident elsewhere in Malawi. However, this does not negate the power that various Majority World stakeholders have, who can be active participants in traditional models of development, as well as, subjects of it. Some engage with NGOs and development projects for their own material benefit, while others carve out space to assert agency to operationalise alternative forms of development aligned with more radical understandings of empowerment (Townsend *et al.* 2004). The concern here is how this exercise of power facilitates or mitigates the enactment of the various models of empowerment.

Furthermore, to trace how understandings of empowerment are shaped, particularly, at the intersection where power is exercised between the discursive and psychological levels, the thesis is inflected with Nkrumah's (1964) view that a prerequisite for decolonisation is the erosion of the "colonial mentality" because of the way it inhibits the agency of the African populations. More specifically, it draws on Rowlands (1995; 1998) concept of "internalised oppression" which shows how discourse shapes the way individuals view their role in development and often explains why unequal power relations go unchallenged. In light of this, external dependency inhibits radical variants of empowerment, and therefore overcoming or beginning to challenge it is a prerequisite for authentic empowerment, and the enactment of more generative forms of power such as "power to", "power with" and "power within". The extent to which neoliberal understandings of empowerment have been internalised, is illustrated particularly in chapter six, by SfD project participants in the "host community" who have come to believe that hard work and individual responsibility are required to overcome passivity and the impoverishment they face. The understandings of empowerment synthesised from the work of Nkrumah (1964) and Rowlands (1995; 1998) help to critically determine the impact of the mechanisms intended for empowerment. Furthermore, they illuminate the forms of empowerment these understandings enact to reveal the actual outworking of these concepts in practice.

The translation of these perspectives of empowerment into practice is centred on a donor-recipient axis underpinned by the ubiquitous notion within development that empowerment must be injected into local communities from the outside to transform and make them more autonomous. Yet, according to critical development theorists (Rahnema 1990; Kelsall and Mercer 2003), dependency on external intervention is the antithesis to empowerment and produces unintended consequences that mitigate against authentic forms of empowerment. These critical insights are used in the thesis to problematise the

role of UoG staff and student-volunteers who are tasked with building internal capacities in the workshop participants to enable them to establish autonomous SfD project. As will be shown in chapters five and six, the work of Rahnema (1990) and Kelsall and Mercer (2003) constitutes a useful way of thinking through the model employed by Sport Malawi to engender empowerment, one that is heavily reliant on external resourcing and input.

The operationalisation of empowerment through Sport Malawi will be further illuminated by drawing on Kelsall and Mercer's (2003) problematising of the homogenising tendencies of development discourse which delineates stakeholders or actors into the categories of "donors" and "recipients". This, they argue conceals both unequal power relations and conflicting agendas on what can be achieved through projects (*ibid*). To move beyond the homogenous view of the "sending" and "receiving" communities, the thesis draws on Luke's (2005) three-dimensional view of power. This allows us to analyse power as the ability of one group to achieve their interests over another and also as the capability to set agendas. Furthermore, power can be crucially viewed as the capacity to exert agency within the broader social and cultural structures of development which facilitate or mitigate empowerment, depending on where stakeholders are situated in the aid chain. This perspective is useful in chapter five in analysing how competing agendas within the "sending community", and particularly among University management and staff members involved in the delivery of the project, impacted on the version of empowerment enacted through Sport Malawi. Equally, understanding those in the "receiving community" as being comprised of heterogeneous groups with differing aspirations enables the question, who is the subaltern class in Sport Malawi, to be investigated. Chapter six shows for example, that the promotion of the self-interests of the organising committee in Mzuzu, an intermediary group between UoG staff and student-volunteers and workshop participants and SfD projects, is connected to the disempowerment of their fellow Malawian stakeholders. The varied forms of

empowerment analysed here are discursively constituted. Through Luttrell *et al*'s (2007) concept of "practical needs", empowerment can be viewed as a means for individuals to survive their location in the social hierarchy, as exercised by members of the Malawi Team. Alongside this, their concept of "strategic needs" (*ibid*) allows empowerment to also be considered in more postcolonial and radical ways that seek to tackle the underlying power inequalities that shape collective living conditions.

To summarise then, in seeking to interrogate how empowerment is understood and operationalised through Sport Malawi, this thesis draws on a broad postcolonial framework and more specifically, particular elements of the postcolonial critique of empowerment. To analyse understandings of empowerment among the range of stakeholder groups, participants, staff and student-volunteers involved in the project, power is firstly considered to exist in the discourse and relations of development (Foucault 1998; 1991; Rowlands 1998; 1995; McEwan 2009), including the distinct binary of donor/recipient (Baaz 2005; Heron 2007). This powerful binary is (re)produced structurally, discursively, and psychologically to maintain the inequalities between the global North and South that necessitate development interventions. However, because power is relational, it is important to consider the power each stakeholder in Sport Malawi can exercise and how their position in the aid chain constrains or enables them to assert their agency. Secondly, to interrogate understandings of empowerment, specifically at the discursive and psychological levels, this thesis draws on Rowlands (1995; 1998) to explore the various manifestations of "internalised oppression" which are evident across Malawian stakeholder groups. These include inferiority and dependency complexes and the persistence of a "colonial mentality" (Nkrumah 1964) in Malawi which not only mitigate radical or authentic forms of empowerment but facilitate more neoliberal variants of empowerment through the project. In relation to analysing the mechanisms intended to facilitate empowerment through Sport Malawi, such as knowledge transfer,

developing agency, and providing resources, the role of external "change-agents" in instilling internal capacity for the creation of autonomous and self-sustaining SfD projects is deemed hugely problematic, even paradoxical (Kelsall and Mercer 2003; Freire 1972; Rahnema 1990). Secondly, these mechanisms are further problematised by drawing on Kelsall and Mercer's (2003) critique of the homogenising tendencies of development discourse and its role in concealing both unequal power relations *and* conflicting agendas. This opens opportunities to interrogate both the "sending" and "host" communities as heterogeneous, characterised by complex and often competing internal power relations, and as seeking to pursue diverse agendas (Luke 2005; Luttrell *et al.* 2007).

Conclusion

The relevance of the concept of empowerment to SfD, and to projects such as Sport Malawi is clear to see. Building on the first two chapters in this thesis which situated power within broader development and SfD debates, this chapter interrogated the concept of empowerment and the root concept of power, and how they have been understood and practiced with the field of development and SfD. The chapter started by exploring the radical origins of empowerment and how it rose to become a prominent "buzzword" within mainstream development (Cornwall 2007). Following this was a discussion on conceptualisations of empowerment and power within the critical development literature (Rowlands 1995), and the postcolonial critiques therein. The next two sections explored how empowerment has been analysed and operationalised within SfD. This has been revealing in two important senses. Firstly, it illustrates how little SfD empirical research has been undertaken on empowerment/sport relationship. Secondly, the focus in this thesis on both the empowerment of UK and Malawi participants reveals a tendency in previous SfD research, with the exception of Lindsey and O'Gorman (2015), to focus on empowerment in the global North *or* in the global South (cf. Darnell 2012). The final

section outlined the theoretical framework that will be applied in this thesis to analyse how empowerment is understood and practiced by the various stakeholders in the Sport Malawi aid chain. Before engaging in this analysis the focus will now turn to detailing the methodological approach and methods employed in this study.

Chapter Four: Methodology and Methods

Introduction

The previous three chapters have illustrated that a range of theoretical approaches, drawn from the fields of international development and SfD, and the critical development literature on empowerment, inform the core issues at the centre of this thesis. It is important to recognise that these theoretical approaches should not be seen in isolation from particular methodologies. Indeed, the research design of critical studies of SfD, such as that employed here, is informed by these theoretical approaches. Of particular relevance here is that methodological approaches to development have ranged from positivist measurements of development outcomes such as Gross National Product (GNP) and the UN Human Development Index (HDI) to ethnographic, interpretive approaches of development experiences as employed by critical development scholars. Debates between proponents of these methodological approaches are crucial to exploring fully how empowerment is understood and practiced through the perspectives of Sport Malawi stakeholders in the global North *and* the global South. Accordingly, this chapter begins by examining these in mainstream development and SfD, and the ways in which they

have informed the particular epistemological and methodological position adopted here. Following this the focus shifts to outlining the research design, the methods of data collection during fieldwork and modes of data analysis. Central to all of this is sensitivity to the still muted subaltern voice, that continues to be under-represented and even misrepresented (cf. Manley *et al*. 2016) within SfD research (Darnell and Hayhurst 2011). Noting how "SfD research continues to be indissolubly related to global North dominance, power and control", Banda and Holmes (2017, p. 4) have called for a counter-hegemonic approach that would "redress the marginalisation of subaltern voices." Therefore, research into understandings and practices of empowerment within a SfD programme must begin by interrogating power relations by capturing the perspectives of all programme stakeholders (Banda and Holmes 2017; Darnell and Hayhurst 2012). This aligns with the broader calls to "decolonise" the theoretical and methodological approaches within mainstream development (McEwan 2009; Baaz 2005; Heron 2007). Therefore, a postcolonial research orientation gives voice to all in the "aid chain" (Darnell and Hayhurst 2012, p.120) and puts the spotlight on the ideologies and practices that silence and misrepresent the very people that SfD aspires to empower.

4.1. Research Methodologies in Social Science and Development Research

There are significant ontological and epistemological disagreements on how to conduct research in the SfD field that themselves reflect broader concerns in parent disciplines about what constitutes social scientific research. To select an appropriate research strategy requires clear epistemological and ontological considerations, and the various methodologies that can flow from these (Crotty 1998). Ontology concerns the "nature of reality" (Bloyce 2004) and whether knowledge is "out there", or "in people", and whether

the position of the researcher is one of "knower" or "discover". The "nature of knowledge" is the concern of epistemology and questions, in the words of Bryman (2008, p.11), of "whether the social world can and should be studied according to the same principles, procedures, and ethos as the natural sciences." However, it is important to acknowledge that such dualisms are not always helpful and research is a "messy process", because as Bloyce (2004, p.146) suggests, "knowledge and reality are not separate entities; they are part of the same process." There are two main philosophical traditions in research and these are positivism and interpretivism. The former posits that objective knowledge is derived from observation, while the latter is concerned with interpreting and understanding phenomena through the meanings that people attach to them. Such questions underpin all theoretical positions and are therefore relevant to the subsequent choices of quantitative and qualitative research methods (Creswell 2007; Malcolm 2008).

Quantitative research methods align more with the positivist epistemology, and qualitative with the interpretivist epistemological perspective. Quantitative research methods follow a deductive approach, which uses research to test theory, whereas qualitative research is inductive in form and generates theory from research (Bryman 2008). In this approach, discovery is as important as method. Their proponents regard quantitative approaches as objectivist in that social phenomena are viewed as fixed, external to and largely independent of peoples' influence. Qualitative approaches, on the other hand, are constructionist in that social phenomena and their *meanings* are created, shaped and influenced by the perceptions and actions of people (Gratton and Jones 2004; Bryman 2008; Malcolm 2008), which are grounded at the same time in the material conditions of social life. In other words, social life is not a literal social construction and the interpretive paradigm emphasises sensitivity to rational and irrational thought and to people's lived experiences and emotions. These general considerations on social scientific research, together with the discussion next of the differing approaches to SfD

research, have informed the research strategy selected for this study. Such discussions also bear significance for development research.

Since the conception of the modern development project in the mid-1940s, particularly with its focus on economic growth, development has been viewed as definable and measureable. This is still evidenced by how major development organisations and donor countries gauge progress, such as in gross national income (GNI), gross national product (GNP), and the Human Development Index (HDI). The latter is arguably more holistic because it measures non-economic dimensions such as the health and education of a population. However, reducing development to purely quantifiable measures is problematic, because as McEwan (2009, p.91) notes, such indicators often "mask more than they reveal about poverty and inequality. Average and aggregated measures are meaningless in terms of representing the real situation on the ground… and reveals nothing about the poverty that underpins most of its variables." Modernisation and neoliberal approaches to development are based on the notion that progress is linear and much of the development research has largely aligned with this ethnocentric view. It was only in the 1980s that approaches to development research started to take into account the perspectives of the "recipients" of development interventions by asking poor people how they themselves saw issues relating to poverty and development (cf. Chambers 1983).

Postcolonial theory, which forms the basis for the theoretical framework underpinning this study, has tried to re-centre development research in a number of ways, but particularly by recovering the "voice" of the subaltern. Therefore, it has had much to contribute to the research design here. Crucially, postcolonial theory does not reject Western knowledge or advocate for cultural relativism. Rather it situates Western knowledge within its historical context, but as McEwan (2009, p.72) noted, "there are difficulties in provincializing European knowledge because academic disciplines,

including development studies, are inextricably bound to their European cradle" (McEwan 2009, p.72). Consequently, reflexivity on the formation of knowledge in the research process is crucial. Speaking from a feminist perspective, Hooks (1990, p.132) writes that "if we do not interrogate our motives, the direction of our work… we risk furthering a discourse on difference and otherness that not only marginalises people of colour but actively eliminates the need of our presence." Furthermore, Spivak (1985) argued that the "voice" of subalterns is silenced because, in order to be heard in development research, conducted by researchers and "experts" from the global North who occupy a privileged position, they often have to communicate with Western words and concepts. This is a form of "epistemic violence" because of the way it expunges and belittles alternative ways of understanding the world (McEwan 2009). As a result, Briggs and Sharp (2004, p.664) have argued that the subaltern is "caught in translation, never truly expressing herself, but always already interpreted." Thus, the ontological and epistemological tradition of interpretivism steered this research away from seeing knowledge as "out there" to seeing it "in people" (Bloyce 2004) and highlighted the importance of the "voice" of participants, brought to the fore subsequently via qualitative methods. Related ethical issues on the privileged position of the researcher are discussed later in the chapter.

4.2. Research Methodologies in the Sport for Development field

The same philosophical points raised within social sciences and mainstream development research also arise when considering the methodologies employed in the SfD field. This section foregrounds how postcolonial sensitivities have informed the research design in two key ways. The first is that the nature of the research questions reflected the fact that

knowledge was not "out there" waiting to be found but constructed in *and* through social interaction. The second is that the focus on empowerment, at the level of individuals and SfD projects and from the bottom-up and the top-down, required a theoretical sensitivity to social dynamics that were best revealed through a qualitative research design.

Conducting research into the social impact of SfD programmes presents many challenges. Initial research in this area was characterised by descriptive and non-critical accounts (Coakley 2011) which, to some extent helped to map this emergent movement (Kidd 2008). In domestic and international contexts, the sport/development relationship was considered to be a powerful development tool and the policy and celebrity rhetoric had raised expectations in sport's instrumental value (Levermore 2008; Hartmann and Kwauk 2011). With only descriptive research characterising the early years of research in the field, claims regarding SfD have overreached their research base but the lack of evidence did not actually disprove the potential of sport to meet policy goals (Kay 2009). Those in favour of strengthening the role that sport could play within development advocated for research to be undertaken to "prove" that these programmes worked (Coalter 2013a; Burnett 2008).

The political need to "prove" the instrumental value of sport has been evident increasingly in national and international policy contexts. From the end of the 1990s in the UK, "evidence-based" approaches to social policy grew under the New Labour government; however, much of this research lacked a critical and theoretical ethos. Nevertheless, there was a need for research and evaluation to show how sport programmes might work to meet social policy goals (cf. Collins *et al.* 1999). In the new millennia this approach was extended internationally to the bourgeoning SfD field (LeCrom and Dwyer 2015), and in particular, there was significant interest in conducting frameworks to evaluate impact (Coalter 2008; Cronin 2011). Aligned to existing orthodox approaches to development research, the emphasis was on identifying indicators, that

were definable and measurable, often by global North researchers, "out there" in the global South (McEwan 2009). Those in favour of this approach advocated for logic models that integrated detailed planning for development outcomes with performance measures used in evaluation procedures (cf. Coalter 2013a; 2008; 2007; Draper and Coalter 2016; Höglund and Sundberg 2008; Burnett 2008). There are limits, however, to this instrumental or rationalistic approach to research (Akindes and Kirwin 2012; Nicholls *et al.* 2011; Levermore 2011b; Darnell and Hayhurst 2012) because it does tend to be descriptive and relies upon viewing SfD projects as linear processes with clearly defined stages, in which individual and programme-level outcomes are then evaluated. Other limitations include the reliance on written English language and the bureaucratic, time-consuming nature of administrative frameworks and evaluation systems that ultimately reflect and prioritise the interests of external partners (Kay 2009; 2012; Beacom and Levermore 2008).

As already noted this approach is reflective of the wider research on, and measurement of, international development. Monitoring and evaluation is the most widespread source of knowledge in mainstream development (Kay 2012). The conceptualisation of development is connected to how it is operationalised and measured. This is significant here because as Kay (2012, p.6) notes,

> *Knowledge is crucial to power within development. How information and knowledge about development is produced determines how development as a whole is perceived, how specific "problems" are defined, how "solutions" are constructed and how "success" is measured.*

The two major paradigms that have underpinned the modern development project, namely modernisation and neoliberalism, defined the process in mainly economic terms. Dominated by the Bretton Woods institutions that have framed how it is understood and operationalised, development is so often measured by macro-economic performance. Critical development theorists, particularly those advocating for radical empowerment

and grassroots community development, highlighted the importance of understanding the social contexts and the needs of the poor and marginalised, through more qualitative and participatory approaches to research (Batliwala 2007a; Chambers 1987; 1983). The representation of aid recipients in conceptualisations and measurements of development affect how they are perceived *and* included in development (Nicholls *et al.* 2011), and this is because as Kay (2012, p.8) argues; "systems of knowledge production… are important in sustaining or challenging inequitable and culturally specific constructions and neo-colonial power relationships."

SfD research grounded in positivism is problematic for a number of reasons. Lindsey and Grattan (2012) and Kay (2009), for example, have expressed concerns over research that is solely focused on specific programmes to instrumentally gauge ways to improve the effectiveness of these programmes and the implementing organisations. Such approaches to SfD are unsuited to understanding empowerment because the processes involved in developing people and communities through sport are neither linear nor are they characterised by easy-to-evaluate outcomes. Others (cf. Darnell 2007; 2010; Hayhurst and Frisby 2010) have noted that much of the current research in this field has been undertaken either by Western researchers or on specific SfD programmes in the global South that were conceived in the global North (cf. Hasselgård and Staume 2014). Consequently, the aims, objectives and findings of such research projects are externally and internationally orientated (Lindsey and Grattan 2012), and when such studies are taken as a whole, the account of SfD globally reflects a Western perspective (Mwaanga 2013). Kay (2009; 2013a) has thus called for the cultural orientation of SfD research to be critiqued. Consequently, this study has been shaped significantly by calls from Nicholls *et al.* (2011) and Darnell and Hayhurst (2011; 2014) who advocated for the decolonisation of SfD research, including the methodologies utilised, so as to understand the "actual practices" of SfD from global South perspectives (Guest 2009).

Notwithstanding the practical and methodological challenges of conducting SfD research in the global South, Darnell and Hayhurst (2012) acknowledge the value of such "decolonising" methodological approaches used to capture community-based perspectives on SfD (cf. Lindsey and Grattan 2012; Guest 2009; Forde 2008). They point to the need for critically informed studies that couple theoretical frameworks such as postcolonial theory with ethnographic data. Indeed, ethnographic work strengthens an understanding of the dynamics of postcolonial life in the global South and it is more appropriate than depersonalised, descriptive (positivist) accounts of empowerment, and of development more widely. Without such an approach to investigating the actual practices of SfD (Guest 2009), researchers, in the words of Darnell and Hayhurst (2012, p.112), fail to produce work "that is complex and nuanced in understanding and exploring issues of power, resistance and agency", all of which are not only pertinent to the field of SfD but specially to questions of "empowerment". They add that studies exploring global South perspectives, gathered via ethnographic work, should not be viewed as oppositional, but instead complementary, to research conducted on global North organisations (*ibid*). Apart from Lindsey and O'Gorman (2015), this approach, which combines perspectives from global North and global South stakeholders, is largely absent within SfD research.

There is also a wider discussion on the "healthy and creative tension" between research and evaluation within the SfD field in efforts to produce "better" research (Kay 2012, p.13). This includes serious questions about whether positivist forms can contribute to knowledge production, such as survey reports from programme participants for instance, particularly when capturing accurately the perspectives of those whom SfD programmes target (Lindsey and Grattan 2012; Spaaij 2011). Kay (2012, p.13) suggests that studies that seek to develop a deeper understanding through qualitative reflexive approaches would be beneficial in understanding how issues of empowerment and power

play out within SfD programmes. Coalter (2013a, p.46), however, claimed that the qualitative, reflexive approach posited by Kay (2012; 2009), Lindsey and Grattan (2012), Darnell and Hayhurst (2012), and Nicholls *et al.* (2011) and others was equally diffused with "notions of politics, power and liberation", whose desire "to be on the side of the oppressed seems to lead to epistemological and methodological over-reach" (2013a, p.51). His disquiet towards these "liberation methodologists" centres on the link they make between managerialist research rooted in Western rationality and the perpetuation of asymmetrical power relations through neo-colonial hegemonic subjugation. Coalter struggles to see how a qualitative, reflexive methodological approach conducted by global North researchers is in any way liberating for indigenous participants, in particular "how this can be linked, however loosely, to structured poverty and neo-colonialist hegemonic power relations" (2013a, p.50). In his desire for 'objectivity' and the promotion of a hierarchical model of the sciences, Coalter perhaps overlooks the important postcolonial concern with the knowledge-power nexus, and the need for reflexivity on the part of the researcher about the production of knowledge, in which existing epistemological and methodological approaches have silenced voices in the global South (McEwan 2009).

Coalter has also criticised researchers, who have drawn upon postcolonialism to illuminate the neo-colonial tendencies in SfD practice, for universalising "critical abstract assertions" (2010a, p.307) and, joined by Lindsey and Grattan (2012, p.95), all three have questioned the reification of "singular and abstracted accounts of development". These claims of ideological overreach were countered by Darnell (2015) who argued that such theoretical frameworks are needed to analyse structures of inequality that are embedded in development, and by extension, SfD. He adds that the different research approaches in this field can be complementary in their efforts to understand "the possibilities and limitations" of SfD programmes (Darnell 2015, p.316-7). Indeed, the opposing standpoints of SfD researchers may not actually be too far apart. For example, Coalter

(2013a, p.159) asserts that for SfD to make meaningful impact this has to be done "via a stable, bottom-up and embedded organisational setting, than via isolated teams or short-term projects dominated by non-indigenous volunteers." For Darnell (2015, p.316) this view is "entirely compatible with participatory methods and research driven by postcolonial theorising."

Given the various epistemological and ontological concerns within social scientific research, and in light of the postcolonial theoretical framework adopted for this study, a qualitative position was adopted. An inductive approach that emphasises reality congruent theoretical frames permitted an exploration of how empowerment is conceptualised and operationalised within the Sport Malawi programme. An interpretivist epistemological position and a constructionist ontological orientation is appropriate for capturing the views and experiences of stakeholders located in the global North and global South, particularly for listening to and learning about their lived experiences in relation to their own involvement and knowledge.

As noted, there are many epistemological and methodologies challenges in researching the sport/development relationship. These are exacerbated when Minority World researchers conduct work in the global South that, according to Kay (2013a, p.283), rely on "culturally specific research models that reflect the values of the global North." Such approaches privilege the position, voice and knowledge of the researcher usually at the expense of local voices and knowledge. Critical scholars have therefore called for epistemologies and methodologies to be decolonised to develop understandings that originate from the people and communities who deliver and participate in these programmes in the global South (Kay 2013a; 2012; 2009; Lindsey and Grattan 2012; Darnell and Hayhurst 2012). Kay (2013b, p.309) offers some "tactical steps" towards decolonising research, which have been well rehearsed in the mainstream research methods literature. These include better social, economic and political contextualisation

of studies; more empirical research conducted at the local level; and a greater utilisation of reflexive methodologies that centre global South voices. These are not magic bullets, however, and as Kay (*ibid*) acknowledges, these steps are "a limited gesture towards democratising unequal power relationships in a situation circumscribed by the legacy of colonialism; failing to use such methods, however, is a significant gesture to perpetuating them." Taking on board these recommendations around unequal power relationships in the production of knowledge, this qualitative, reflexive study sought to address the need to decolonise SfD knowledge through a research strategy that provides opportunity for the local, often marginalised, voice to be heard (Mwaanga 2013; Burnett 2015). However, such an approach did not negate the fact that within this study the white Western researcher remained the filter for the voices of the dispossessed, who ultimately decided what is heard and how this is represented on the basis of the academic conventions of presenting data in the subject field. However, because often the "subaltern cannot speak", Spivak (1985) concedes that it is the responsibility of the researcher, whether from the global North or not, to represent them and make the importance of their voice known (Loomba 1998; Kapoor 2009).

This research approach is consistent with the postcolonial theoretical framework used throughout this thesis. A postcolonial position seeks to recover the "subaltern" voice (Spivak 1985) in SfD thinking, policy-making and practice (Mwaanga 2013). Decolonising approaches to research pay attention to the forces that have silenced, misrepresented, and excluded the local people for whom SfD interventions seek to develop (Hayhurst *et al.* 2013). Methodologically speaking, this required a research design that prioritised "giving voice" from the "ground up". Such a postcolonial research orientation was beneficial "for understanding, integrating and, where appropriate, challenging institutions, practices and ideologies that uphold and maintain structural inequality" (Darnell and Hayhurst 2012, p.120). They merit the pairing of decolonising

methodologies with postcolonial approaches to research, especially, since there is a lack of studies that do this, and that also consider "the perspectives of all stakeholders in the aid chain" (*ibid*) and the range of related interests and agendas (Kay 2013a). These are the unique contributions of the research strategy adopted in this study.

4.3. Research Design: Ethnography

The qualitative approach of multi-sited ethnography was deemed appropriate for this study. Over recent years this has become prominent within the multidisciplinary field of sports studies, and in particular, the social investigation of sporting cultures (cf. Sparkes 2002). It has long been used in development studies (cf. Ferguson 1990), and originated from anthropology, which emphasises the primacy of field research and participant observation (Denscombe 2010; Amit 2000; Creswell 2007). With such a history in both sports and development studies, and deemed well suited to studies exploring "issues such as power, resistance, and dominance" (Creswell 2007, p.70), it is no surprise then that ethnographic accounts have increased more recently in the field of SfD research (cf. Lindsey and Grattan 2012; Kay 2013b; Guest 2009).

A key feature of ethnography is the researcher's *in situ* position and "being there" in a particular community, even if only for a short period of time (Wilding 2007) gathering descriptive and analytical elements (Creswell 2007; Bryman 2008). This involves the observation and analysis of a specific real life social situation in which the ethnographer is the data collection 'instrument' (Brewer 2000). Ethnographic research has been criticised for its tendency to focus on cultural and social systems without consideration of their historical development (Malcolm 2008). This ahistorical perspective is linked to the criticism of some ethnographic approaches that view research subject(s) in isolation from the influences of wider social, economic and political

structures at work at regional, national and international levels (*ibid*). For this study, it was crucial therefore to adopt an ethnographical approach that acknowledged how agency can be constrained by the broader structures in which people live and operate within. This was more akin to "critical ethnography" which takes into account the historical legacies and power structures that shape people's lives (Hammersley 1992). Van Maanen (1995, p. 19-20) elaborates on this particular point when he argues that:

> *Classical ethnographies of remote, invisible, or otherwise "out of the way" people have become increasingly unpersuasive, in part because the presumption of the great divide between modern and traditional communities has broken down and in part because of the idea of a bounded, independent, undisturbed and self-contained society [that] is today suspect.*

The social situation under investigation cannot be disconnected from the wider historical, political, economic and social contexts in which it is situated, even if these are not readily or immediately apparent to research participants. This is important because theoretical positions, such as postcolonialism and theories of empowerment, can be applied for the purpose of directing the study and interpreting the data (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995; Creswell 2007; Stewart 1998).

4.3.1. Pre-Fieldwork

The qualitative and reflexive nature of this research dictated the use of data collection methods (Fetterman 2010). It has been argued by Malcolm (2008, p.86) that the central purpose of ethnography is "the illumination of a cultural environment." In order to do this the researcher needed a "tool kit" of qualitative methods in the field. A variety of methods was preferable as it helped facilitate an understanding of the social situation and the associated meanings or realities from the participants' perspective(s), and generated, it is hoped, a more authentic and grounded account of the social phenomenon (Amit 2000). Four such tools were chosen for this study.

The method at the centre of this ethnographic work is *participant observation*. This involves the researcher living within, participating in, and observing the community or social situation at the heart of the study through intensive fieldwork, even if only for a short period of time (Wilding 2007). It has been contested that fieldwork is both a method and an experience for the researcher (Bryman 2008). This point is taken up Malcolm (2008, p.86) who asserts,

> *Nothing is less useful than an incident without meaning, an encounter without notes, and much of the data of fieldwork comes through rather tedious observations and recordings. The deepest insights, however, may derive from a flash of understanding that comes from engagement and encounter. As the term "participant observation" suggests, fieldwork combines objectivity and subjectivity, routine and adventure, system and openness.*

Through this method, it could be said that data were not collected, but rather generated through interaction between the researcher and people living their ordinary lives. This process is inevitably affected by the social position of the researcher and the nature of the relationship that is constructed between the researcher and participants while in the field (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995).

Interviews are another crucial method for ethnographic research because they enable participants' perspectives to be explored and for them to elaborate on complex issues within their social world (Creswell 2007). In this study, interviews ranged from informal to semi-structured. It was anticipated that the former would take place during opportune moments throughout the fieldwork period to complement participant observation. The latter was utilised for recorded conversations as the open-ended questions, outlined in the interview schedule (Appendix A), ensured all important topics were covered and enabled the researcher and the participant(s) to discuss other pertinent issues (Legard *et al.* 2003). In this respect, semi-structured interviews were flexible and allowed the order of questions to be changed to suit the flow of conversation, and the interviewee had the freedom to elaborate on important issues or emerging concepts

(Denscombe 2010). For interviews to be successful, it was critical for the ethnographer to immerse herself in the local community to build rapport with participants and reduce interactional difficulties. Without this, the researcher could have been perceived as distant, impersonal, and intrusive. Therefore, the researcher required closeness with the participant(s) and to achieve the stance of "interviewer as friend" while in the field (Cotterill 1992). The result of all this was more nuanced and richer accounts grounded in local perspectives (Reinharz 1992).

The *focus group*, another type of interview method, was also part of the "toolkit". It allowed for several participants to be interviewed at the same time by the researcher (Finch and Lewis 2003), who in this role was more a moderator or facilitator, and was expected to guide the conversation in a non-intrusive manner (Richards and Morse 2013; Bryman 2008). In this way, the participants had the opportunity to direct the conversation and share their viewpoints (Crang and Cook 2007; Denscombe 2010). In addition to these distinguishing features, this method emphasises the interaction of group participants in collectively making sense of a phenomenon and the associated construction of meaning (Gray 2014; Richards and Morse 2013). This helped the researcher understand *why* participants felt the way they do on a particular issue, each probing and challenging each other, and qualifying or modifying their own contributions. Therefore, it was useful for capturing a variety of perspectives on issues pertinent to this study; particularly for SfD project participants who benefited from the interactive nature of the focus groups and having familiarity with the other participants (cf. Bryman 2008).

Documentary evidence was the final form of data collection utilised for this study. When used in qualitative research, this method can cover a wide variety of sources (Denscombe 2010; Bryman 2008; Scott 1990), and has been widely used in recent research into the various philosophies underpinning SfD organisations (cf. Hayhurst *et al*. 2010; Mwannga and Banda 2014; Hasselgård 2015; Hasselgård and Staume 2014;

Tiessen 2011). Here, this included official material, such as webpages and documents detailing the aspirations and structures of Sport Malawi, produced by UoG. It can be difficult for researchers to access certain documents if they are on the "outside" of an organisation, other than what is in the public domain (Richards and Morse 2013). However, alongside participant observation and interviewing, documentary evidence can help the researcher understand an organisation, and in the case of Sport Malawi, how the programme aligns with the University's vision and mission. In this case, access to documents previously unseen by the researcher, allied to prior insights into the programme, led to a reinforcement of empirical insights and generated additional data around claims of empowerment, which collectively strengthened the research. Crucially, such material did not represent *the* reality of the organisation, such as its culture or ethos, but it was *one* reality "written in order to convey an impression, one that [was] favourable to the authors and those whom they represent[ed]" (Bryman 2008, p.527). This ontological issue had implications for a qualitative, reflexive epistemology; for in order to generate a rich and nuanced account other sources of data collection methods were required, accessed through a combination of methods, to avoid a sole reliance on official documents. While the methods were not informed directly by critical discourse analysis, it was important to consider the ways in which the language used to describe Sport Malawi was invested with particular meanings, shedding light on both the literal and hidden realities. Considerations around data analysis will be elaborated further in the next section. Together, these tools of participant observation, interviews, focus groups and documentary evidence facilitated the researcher's understanding of the social phenomenon and its associated meanings and realities from the participants' perspectives. Furthermore, it gave primacy to the voices of Sport Malawi stakeholders gleaned from the "view above" and the "view below".

The ethical issues relating to this study played a significant part in shaping the research design at the pre-field work stage. With the research design being determined by the research questions at the centre of this study, which in turn required differing perspectives on "empowerment" across two broad sets of stakeholders in the UK and Malawi, data collection was broken down into two distinct stages. The first stage focused on the perspectives of staff and students at UoG who either had directly or indirectly supported or facilitated Sport Malawi, and prior to fieldwork, ethical approval was obtained from Ulster University for "Category A" research (FCR40). The second stage of the study focused on the perspectives of the host community to Sport Malawi in Mzuzu, and required separate ethical approval for "Category B" research prior to fieldwork commencement (REC/13/0230). Some of these participants were aged under 18, and were therefore classified as a vulnerable population. It was important to engage with this group as this study is centred on capturing multiple perspectives "on the ground", including those of children and young people who are the main participants of SfD programmes. At all stages of the fieldwork and before any data collection was conducted, participants were fully informed of the procedure and aims of the study, and prior informed consent was sought from the research participant and from a parent/guardian if the participant was under the age of 18. A copy of the participant information sheet and consent form are presented in Appendix B and C, respectively. If, due to a limited grasp of the English language, participants were unable to understand the nature of the study, their role within it, and the questions put to them, a local interpreter was arranged to translate in Tumbuka, the main language for the Northern Region. Methodological challenges and implications relating to the use of an interpreter will be discussed later when reflecting on fieldwork. The ethical guidelines of the British Sociological Association and the Data Protection Act of 1998 were adhered to at all times. Accordingly, measures to preserve confidentiality and anonymity were adopted for participants, and this has included both pseudonyms for

all participants and projects in Mzuzu, however, all participants agreed to being identified as part of or connected to Sport Malawi. All data, including electronic recordings of interviews and focus groups, and transcripts and field notes are stored securely with no third party having access.

There were ethical issues and risks involved in a project of this nature, brought to the fore by postcolonialism. Postcolonial theory reveals how discursive constructions are profoundly shaped by the position of the researcher, including socio-economic status, gender, race, nationality, geography, history, and institutional location. Such factors could not be avoided and required an enhanced sense of reflexivity on how these positionings influenced the researcher's interactions in the field and her discursive representations of participants. On the issue of discursive power still residing in the global North, Spivak (1985) wrote of the ethical need for researchers to "unlearn" privilege as loss. This is because such privileges become a hindrance to the ability of the Western researcher to gather knowledge from the field. As McEwan (2009, p.274) argued:

> Privileges may have prevented us from gaining access to Other knowledges, not simply information we have not yet received, but the knowledge that we are not equipped to understand by reason of our social positions… "unlearning" of privilege involves working hard to gain knowledge of others who occupy those spaces most closed to our privileged view and attempting to speak to those others in a way that they might take us seriously and be able to answer back.

Therefore, the researcher had to be cognizant of the inevitable partiality of her privileged academic view and be alert to the power relationships in which she is implicated, as well as recognising how some voices in Sport Malawi are marginalised while others dominate. Indeed, it would be "dangerous" as McEwan (2009, p.204) adds to "assume that 'we' can encounter the South, and especially the 'Third World subaltern', on a level playing field." Notwithstanding this, given that SfD research has been criticised for focusing too much on the knowledge and experiences of global North stakeholders (Banda and Holmes 2017), the postcolonial concern with recovering the voices of global South stakeholders

adopted in this study provided a much needed counter to much of the Eurocentric perspectives presented within research on the SfD field.

An appropriate *sampling method* was required to explore the experiences, perceptions and views of the participants in relation to understandings of empowerment and how it is operationalised in Sport Malawi. Qualitative researchers, generally, use non-probabilistic sampling techniques because of their concern with understanding social processes, rather than achieving statistical representativeness (Angrosino 2007). In line with this, purposive sampling was employed by this study and this involved choosing projects and participants to take part based on their particular activities, characteristics and perspectives relevant to the research question (Denscombe 2010). As such, a range of stakeholders at UoG and Mzuzu were chosen due to their direct and indirect involvement *in* Sport Malawi and their knowledge and experience *of* the programme. Used alongside this technique was a combination of snowball and theoretical sampling which required the researcher to be sensitive to those data regarded as potentially important to the study (Bryman 2008). The previous involvement of the researcher in the SfD programme meant that it was relatively straightforward to identify and access stakeholders through purposive sampling. However, in the case of new University students and staff members, and participants and projects in Mzuzu not known to the researcher, snowballing was employed and this meant asking existing contacts to guide and introduce the researcher to others that they perceived could make a valuable contribution to the study (Denscombe 2010). There is a good fit between this method and theoretical sampling (Bryman 2008), which helped the researcher anticipate when categories of participants and new data had been saturated. Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criterion for reliability in qualitative research, which includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, guided this determination. In relation to sampling, the latter two relate to whether findings are consistent, repeatable, and fashioned by the

participants. In the ethics application, relatively broad indicators of participant numbers were given, and in the field, this allowed the researcher to determine when data collection met this criterion and could be halted at saturation.

4.3.2. Fieldwork

This section presents a description of the research sites and data collection procedures, and is interwoven with reflections on the fieldwork and the role of the researcher in the field. Due to the multi-sited nature of the research, data collection was conducted at the research sites in two sequential stages. For this study, the researcher's shared experience and former position within the Sport Malawi programme facilitated and benefited access to the field and the data collection processes therein. The first stage of fieldwork focused on the perspectives of global North participants at UoG which hosts the Sport Malawi programme. This phase of the research was conducted during two intensive one-week fieldwork visits in May and November 2013. Through a process of purposive sampling, contact was made before each visit with former colleagues and past and present students known to the researcher, to invite them to take part in the study. Given the prior involvement of the researcher in Sport Malawi, including already established networks and contacts at the University, these fieldwork visits were maximised to the full in terms of conducting interviews. Snowball sampling recruited students unknown to the researcher, and one of the members of staff who leads the programme acted as a "gatekeeper" or "key informant" (Creswell 2007) emailed students introducing the researcher, the research study, and encouraging them to take part. Having worked previously at the University and in its Sport Malawi programme for four years prior to undertaking this research, the recruitment of participants was abetted by the status of being an "insider-outsider" to the institution (Corbin-Dwyer and Buckle 2009). The University assented to the research and three broad categories of participants were

recruited. These included: *students and graduates* who have been on Sport Malawi (*n* = 17); *staff* who directly support/facilitate Sport Malawi (*n* = 6), and; *management stakeholders* in UoG who influence the broader financial and policy conditions of the programme (*n* = 5). There are of course distinctions within each participant category, for example, *staff* includes lecturers, chaplains, and senior management, and *students and graduates* encompass students who were about to take part, those who had already taken part once, and finally those who had been in involved twice or more and therefore had taken on more responsibility in the programme.

The first block of fieldwork took place in May 2013 and during this preliminary visit semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants from each of the student, staff, and management stakeholder categories. A key group of respondents for this visit were the students taking part in the programme for the first time, and it was important to capture their perspectives of the programme before they travelled to Malawi in June 2013. Along with the subsequent block of fieldwork in November 2013, 28 interviews were conducted in total. Most of these took place at the Oxstalls Campus in Gloucester or at The Park Campus in Cheltenham, which was more convenient for some staff members. The interview schedule designed for the study is presented in Appendix A. Although some interviewees within the University hierarchy recited much institutional rhetoric and revealed less of their own viewpoints (Denscombe 2010), the emic standpoint of the researcher (Fetterman 2010) allowed most participants to divulge rich data. This was well illustrated when one member of staff uttered "I have so much to tell you" (field notes, 15 November 2014) before the interview began.

Building on the previous involvement of the researcher in Sport Malawi and already established networks in Malawi, the second stage of this multi-sited research involved a prolonged and intensive three-month period of fieldwork between January 2014 and April 2014 in the small city of Mzuzu in the Northern Region. Embracing a

"decolonising praxis" to this research study (Darnell and Hayhurst 2011) required a focus on the voices of local individuals and communities who are recipients of the Sport Malawi programme. Again, this stage of fieldwork used a combination of purposive and snowball sampling, and this method ensured participants were selected because they possessed knowledge and experience relevant to the study. To capture the range of different stakeholders within this global South locale required sampling across four broad participant categories. This included *committee members* who manage and organise Sport Malawi's internal activities ($n = 3$); *project deliverers* who attend(ed) Sport Malawi training and run SfD programmes ($n = 10$); *project participants* of SfD programmes ($n = 30$), and; *community stakeholders* who observe Sport Malawi and its associated SfD projects in action ($n = 8$). A committee member offered a homestay for the duration of the research on the outskirts of Mzuzu but this was politely declined on the grounds that the position of the researcher might have been compromised if she were perceived to be "taking sides" with a particular stakeholder. Consequently, the first six weeks were spent in two self-catering units subsequently vacated due to cockroach and mice infestation. Drawing on contacts made during the fieldwork, a development worker offered a homestay in their annex. Living in a large compound that consisted of homes and offices for development workers enabled a broader understanding to be gleaned of the development context and culture within which Sport Malawi operates.

Sport Malawi has been active in Mzuzu since 2009 and has delivered workshops annually to project deliverers (in paid or voluntary roles) who are sports coaches, school teachers, or youth workers. During the preliminary three weeks at the start of the fieldwork, the researcher was immersed in the community and visited many of the projects. This was helpful in listening to voices on the ground and selecting which projects would be followed as will be outlined below. During this time the three committee members, acting as "key informants" (Creswell 2007), accompanied and introduced the

researcher to the project deliverers. Site visits were undertaken with coaches, youth workers, and teachers during weeks one, two, and three respectively, and were invaluable to understanding the "layout of the land" and building relationship with project deliverers. In preparation for conducting fieldwork across the various sites in and around Mzuzu, it was anticipated that six projects would be followed on a weekly basis. However, it became apparent that only one teacher was doing SfD activity in his/her school as was intended. This raised questions about the claimed local impact of the programme and meant that only five projects were included in the fieldwork. This situation affirmed Bryman's (2008) view that, often, ethnographers have to gather data from whatever sources are accessible to them. Aside from their availability, projects were included if there was a tangible relationship between Sport Malawi and the project deliverer, a strong SfD element in the project, and within a reasonable distance for the researcher to access either by walking or using a bicycle taxi or car taxi. The list of project sites that fitted these criteria is listed below with pseudonyms applied to projects and project deliverers.

All Star Girls is a girl's football club run voluntarily by Mphatso who is a school teacher and interested in the development of women's football in Malawi. She has attended at least four years of Sport Malawi training under the coaching stream. All Star Girls uses football as a diversionary tool for school age girls and Mphatso seeks to be a role model for female empowerment. Out of her relatively modest salary she sponsors school fees for some of the girls who have dropped out due to lack of finances.

Bouncing Futures is a SfD NGO founded by Kondwani based in Mzuzu. The organisation uses both paid and volunteer coaches to teach mainly racket sports in schools around Mzuzu and has over 600 children registered to its programmes. It has one international donor that funds its activity, and most sessions involve opening prayer, warm up, HIV awareness education, main sports activity and then warm down. Kondwani

and other coaches in Bouncing Futures have attended sports coaching workshops within Sport Malawi.

Aspirations United is a Christian SfD CBO formed by Taz who is one of the committee members for Sport Malawi and has attended training under the youth work stream. The aspiration of the organisation is for the "underprivileged to become independent and therefore transfer to the privileged but who go back and give a helping hand" (field notes, 25 January 2014). Using football and netball it attracts around 50 young people, most of whom are male. Aspirations United provides mentorship, counsels families and encourages young people to stay in education. It also trains members in media production and uses this as a means to raise finances for the project and cover some young peoples' school fees when possible.

Big Dreamers is a local NGO that was founded by Annex after he participated in the Sport Malawi workshops for youth workers. It is run by volunteers and uses a combination of sports, music and drama to raise the aspirations of children and young people in multiple locales in Mzuzu. Big Dreamers also works with homeless street children and views sport as a tool for diversion from activities that could be deemed harmful, such as underage drinking and drug abuse. They offer educational support to help children and young people continue in their education, and operate a small agri-business to support the project and cover school fees for those who cannot afford.

Hope Secondary School has sent one of its teachers, Esther, to the education workshops as part of the annual Sport Malawi training. Esther was the only teacher that had undertaken Sport Malawi training and was delivering SfD activity in her school. As a participant in the programme, Hope Secondary School was informed that their progress would be assessed each year when a Sport Malawi team returned. With this in mind,

Esther has started Physical Education (PE) classes using the manual and sports equipment left by UoG students and staff.

The preliminary period of fieldwork built trust between the "researcher" and the "researched" and ensured data collection started promptly in the form of participant observation and informal interviews. After this three-week period, subsequent weekly visits were made to each project listed above and other forms of data collection were added, including semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Ethnographic methods were employed and participant observation was crucial to immersion into the social context and "uncovering meaning and significance of a social phenomenon for people in those settings" (Ragin 1994, p.91). The role(s) adopted by the researcher in the projects sites varied and reflected Gold's (1958) continuum of involvement which ranges in varying degrees from "complete participant" to "complete observer". The first visit to a training session of All Star Girls, after the preliminary research period, "kicked off" with an awkward silence as the coaches and participants stared at the researcher with the expectation that she was there to coach. There was difficulty in communicating to mainly Tumbuka speakers that the researcher's role was not the same of that assumed by UoG members of Sport Malawi. To overcome this expectation and to avoid "going native" (Creswell 2007; Bryman 2008), long skirts and flip flops were worn to training sessions indicating that the researcher's primary role was observer rather than participant. Following a period of reflexivity, this "complete observer" stance was later relaxed to that of "observer-as-participant" and "participant-as-observer" and roles included childminding babies of project participants, taking part in training, cheering from the side-lines and being the bottle carrier on match days. Other project deliverers appeared wary at the beginning, thinking that the researcher was part of the "vertical hierarchy" (Nicholls 2012) of Sport Malawi who was there to access and evaluate, and hold project deliverers to account (Kay 2009; 2013a; Levermore and Beacom 2012c). Therefore, until

clarification and assurances were given, some research participants were understandably nervous that what was said and done could impact upon their position and reputation within Sport Malawi. The method of participant observation, accompanied by continual reflection in the field, illuminated understandings and practices of empowerment and its associated realities from the various perspectives in the local community.

4.3.3. Fieldwork Reflections

As the fieldwork progressed the process of *getting stuck into* the local community and the life of projects presented many opportunities for semi-structured interviews with committee members, project deliverers, and community stakeholders. In all interviews lay language was used to ensure clear and inclusive communication. Most Malawians are trilingual, in that they can speak English, which is seen as "the business language"; Chichewa, the national language; and their own regional language. Much of the population in the Northern Region descend from the Tumbuka tribe, and as proud Tumbukas many in Mzuzu prefer to speak Tumbuka rather than Chichewa. With basic Chichewa and non-existent Tumbuka, an interpreter was required to conduct an interview with a local chief. The rest of the interviews were conducted in English with some of the terminology and phraseology being modified, depending on the level of knowledge on the subject matter and proficiency in English. In line with the ethnographic approach, interviews were conducted in an informal and conversational manner at locations convenient to the participants. These interviews enabled issues relating to the research and observations from fieldwork to be probed further from various stakeholder perspectives, including those from government, civil society and community leaders. For example, interviews were held with participants who had attended Sport Malawi workshops annually but never implemented SfD projects and this divulged new and important information. One respondent noted how "fly in - fly out" approaches to research

often miss what is really happening as a particular reality can be presented to the researcher for a brief period of time. For example, one interview revealed that a committee member, who was a key informant, sought to block the "back regions" (Goffman 1956) of the programme by encouraging the other committee members "not to give the whole picture" to the researcher (field notes, 25 February 2014).

The projects typically attracted large numbers of young people and these were the final cohort of respondents. It was important to include project participants given the study focuses on the experiences and "empowerment" of individuals and communities through the Sport Malawi intervention, and also because much of the existing scholarship neglects this population in qualitative studies (Kay 2009). Focus groups captured the views of project participants because they are more informal and interactive in nature than interviews, and naturalistic and snowball sampling was employed within project sites. It was hoped that these features alongside the facilitator relinquishing some control over the direction of discussion would reduce the power gap between the researcher and the young people. However, it was the focus group sessions that highlighted most starkly the ways in which race, social class, age, and gender, impinge on the research process and influence conversation dynamics (Burgess 1986). These social characteristics played out in different ways in each focus group. In a focus group held for male respondents of Aspirations United, certain "alpha males" dominated the session and the researcher was corrected on several occasions for mispronouncing certain names of people and places. The patrilineal system of the Tumbuka tribe means men have more entitlements and decision-making power than women, and are typically better educated and employed (Kerr 2005); as a result, the male participants felt they could assert their authority over the female researcher. This was in stark contrast to the focus group held for female respondents of Aspirations United who had asked to be interviewed separately from the young men. Indeed, many of the female participants struggled to attend training due to

the high workload of household duties placed on them. During the fieldwork they requested that they be taught football by the researcher so they could play the same sport as their male counterparts. In the process a strong bond was built. Whereas the males had to have chairs, the females were content to chat on the floor, and whereas the males tended to talk *down to* the researcher, the females talked *with* the researcher.

It was also clear that participants from disadvantaged communities but with good education enjoyed the opportunity to prove their proficiency in English to a European, whereas participants from more deprived communities were extremely hesitant to speak and engage with the researcher. Two of the focus groups required an interpreter and the dynamic between researcher, interpreter, and respondents was fraught with difficulties (Edwards 1998). This impacted on the data generated. For example, in the Big Dreamers session, when a serious topic was communicated and then interpreted, the response was often laughter with short responses, and in another session with respondents from All Star Girls, there was little eye contact between the researcher and participants, and the interpreter was unable to elicit much conversation. On reflection, the impact of the social position of the interpreter, and their judgement on and experience of how to communicate complex and sometimes sensitive topics, were not taken into account (Desai and Potter 2006). No doubt the constraints of communication and the social distance between interpreters and respondents added layers of complexity to this data collection method. However, the shy, nervous and sometimes giddy atmosphere in these two sessions would, on the whole, have to be attributed to the presence of the young, white, European researcher, which in turn produced many disparities of power.

The whiteness of the researcher had significant impact on interactions during fieldwork. Indeed, the role of the researcher is a key methodological issue in SfD research (Kay 2009; 2013a; Lindsey and Grattan 2012; Darnell and Hayhurst 2012) and it is important to consider how the researcher's social position and background contoured the

fieldwork (Brewer 2000; Denscombe 2010). As already noted, the attributes of being white, European, female, educated and young, as well as being previously active in Sport Malawi played an unavoidable part in the production of knowledge for this study. Whiteness along with the credentials of previous involvement in the programme facilitated access to people and projects. This is partly due to the enhancement of social status through being associated with a "mzungu", which in the colonial era meant "aimless wanderer" but nowadays is the moniker for a white person. Furthermore, a "mzungu" is considered wealthy and well-connected. For many Malawians who see a white person with a local person or project, they assume that financial giving is part of that relationship. In this case, three out of the five projects requested monies during and after the field trip. It was important to try and build authentic relationships rather than replicate donor-recipient relationships that pervade development and SfD. This was crucial to developing understandings that originated from the local community and that were not distorted by trying to please the researcher who might become a donor (Kay 2011). Indeed, challenging the privileging of, and dependency on mzungus, was part of encouraging locals to make their *real* voice heard; views that have been marginalised through paternalistic, ethnocentric and neo-colonial approaches to development and research (Rossi *et al.* 2013; Rossi and Rynne 2014).

4.3.4. Post-Fieldwork Data Analysis

The methods described above were the tools for data collection, and are only part of the research process, because according to Malcolm (2008, p.87), it is "the making, reporting and evaluation [of data] that is the key role of the ethnographer." On return from the field all recorded material from interviews and focus group sessions were transcribed verbatim. These data, along with field notes from participant observations and documentary evidence was analysed through an interpretative framework informed by the sociological

imagination of postcolonial theory and this steered the study from drifting into "abstract empiricism" and ethnocentrism (Bramham 2002; Loy and Booth 2004). In line with the broad postcolonial theoretical framework overarching this study, thematic analysis was chosen because it helped to collate emergent themes arising from participant perspectives from "above" and "below" (Ritchie *et al.* 2003; Flick 2014), and understanding "patterns or topics that signifies how the cultural group works and lives" (Creswell 2007, p.72). Through repeated and thorough reading of data, patterns and clusters of meanings were discerned and interpreted to form themes. Ryan and Bernard (2003) contended that in this analytical approach, researchers should look out for repetitions; indigenous typologies or categories; metaphors and analogies; transitions of topics between sources; similarities and differences between how participants discuss topics; linguistic connectors; missing data or what participants omitted to say, and; theory-related material. The thematic research method applied to the data involved manually coding transcripts to explore participants' understanding of phenomena, and the broader historical, economic, social and political conditions that influenced their accounts of the phenomenon.

Given the amount and richness of prose, data was coded in accordance with the interview topics developed from the aims of the study, and covered areas such as: understandings of "development"; outcomes for UK volunteers; outcomes for Malawi hosts and participants, and; understandings of "empowerment" and how it is operationalised in Sport Malawi. This allowed the same topics to be analysed from "the perspectives of all stakeholders in the aid chain" and compare multiple geopolitical perspectives (Darnell and Hayhurst 2012, p.120). For more in-depth analysis, two approaches were adopted from the thematic analysis literature, and these included data-driven, "bottom-up" induction (Spencer *et al.* 2014) and theoretical, "top-down" deduction (Crabtree and Miller 1999). This hybrid approach meant that themes and clusters of meaning were coded in accordance with labels that emerged inductively from

the data. To complement this, themes and meanings in data were coded with labels derived *a priori* from the theoretical concepts of postcolonialism and empowerment. This iterative and reflexive process between data and coding meant that interconnections could be made between the research data and theory (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2015). Thematic analysis has been criticised for placing an "emphasis on what is said rather than on how it is said" (Bryman 2008, p.553) and thus may lose some of the nuanced complexity of data, however, employing both "bottom-up" and "top-down" approaches can address this issue in data analysis. This approach to analysis and write-up also ensures participant anonymity, as it is the emergent themes that crosscut participant categories, as opposed to, particular and therefore distinguishable features of participants or projects, which are focus of the research.

Conclusion

This chapter began by exploring general tensions in social scientific research and approaches and critiques used within SfD research. This led into an explanation of the ontological, epistemological and methodological debates that informed the research strategy for this study. Following this, a description of the research design was given as well as the methods of data collection employed during fieldwork, and the data analysis method used after fieldwork. The empirical chapters next present core themes from the data. Chapters five and six interrogate understanding and practices of empowerment within Sport Malawi from the perspectives of all stakeholders in the Sport Malawi "aid chain" (Darnell and Hayhurst 2012, p.120), from "above" and "below". Flowing on from this, chapter seven explores the "view from the side" which is to say it discusses the theoretical implications emanating from the perspectives of participants from both the global North and the global South in light of the literature.

Chapter Five: The View from "Above"

Introduction

This thesis has argued thus far that a clear understanding of the concept of empowerment is required in order to analyse how it is understood and enacted through Sport Malawi by UK and Malawi based participants. Chapter three in particular emphasised the fact that within the fields of development and SfD, empowerment is understood and operationalised in divergent ways. On the one hand, it is infused with a distinctly neoliberal character where individual responsibility and action on the part of disadvantaged communities in the global South is presumed to be the foundation of empowerment. In this version, the historical and on-going structural causes of inequality are disregarded and the role of the West in sustaining these inequalities is ignored (Vanderplaat 1998; Deepak 2011). Instead, the West is presented as the "saviour" of the global South, which in turn is blamed for its own underdevelopment (Spivak 1985). Viewed through a postcolonial lens this is hugely problematic because of how it impacts on the nature of partnership and the role of NGOs and volunteers in development and SfD. The postcolonial critique of partnerships operationalised in this model of

empowerment is that they are paternalistic and based, invariably, on one partner having control over the other (Smith 2015). As a result, many development programmes that espouse empowerment are characterised by asymmetrical and top-down relationships and moulded to the paternalistic aspirations of the more powerful group, and these in turn reproduce uneven relations of power. Notwithstanding this, many development practitioners and volunteers, including indigenous NGO workers, hold to the neoliberal model of empowerment and do not address the need for structural transformation (Jönsson 2010). As chapter three reveals however, the idea of empowerment has much more radical roots that can be found in the work of postcolonial leaders, progressive educators, and feminists and embedded in the struggles for decolonisation, social justice, and the emancipation of the poor and marginalised. In this version of empowerment, the need to address and dismantle wider structural relations of power is foregrounded.

Drawing on these insights and informed by Darnell and Hayhurst's (2012) call for critically informed studies that merge conceptual frameworks with ethnographic data, this chapter interrogates "the actual practices" of empowerment (Guest 2009) within Sport Malawi. The "view from above" presented in this chapter explores perspectives from "the sending community" (Sherraden *et al.* 2008), in this case three sets of UK based stakeholders, namely senior management of the UoG, staff from the University who facilitate, oversee and deliver the programme, and the students recruited to the programme as volunteers. More specifically, this chapter utilises postcolonial critiques of empowerment to uncover and analyse a range of themes that emerged from the data. These include: the existence of paternalistic empowerment within Sport Malawi, its colonial roots and how it reinforces the neo-colonial "white-saviour" complex; the impact of this on power relations within the partnership and the awareness, or lack thereof, of historic and contemporary power imbalances, and; whether the programme has an external orientation and sees any need for structural transformation.

In order to fully present the analysis of Sport Malawi from this postcolonial orientation, this chapter opens by placing the emergence of Sport Malawi within the historic Anglican identity of UoG and against the neoliberal policy agenda shaping higher education in the UK. Drawing on documentary evidence, including the Sport Malawi website and UoG's website, strategic plans and other documents outlining approaches to sustainability, pedagogical development, and its Anglican identity, it examines the discourse used by UoG to describe the programme and the mechanisms it employs to seek to bring about empowerment in Malawi. Contextualising Sport Malawi in this way, allows the chapter to foreground the broad postcolonial framework that underpins this thesis and, more specifically, to interrogate how "empowerment", and the mechanisms employed by Sport Malawi to achieve it are underpinned by with neoliberal and postcolonial understandings of empowerment. The subsequent three sections present the core themes that emerged from the data generated from semi-structured interviews with three sets of stakeholders from the UoG.

5.1. *Sport Malawi within the sending community*

To fully understand the emergence and development of Sport Malawi within the UoG it is first of all important to situate it within the historic Anglican identity of the University. Since its inception in 2008, this programme has been delivered by a core group of staff drawn from the School of Sport and Exercise, The Institute of Education and Public Services, and the Chaplaincy and Faith Department. This collaboration and the involvement of the Chaplaincy and Faith Department in particular, are indicative of the wider University history and culture. UoG was designated as a University in 2001 and was formed from an amalgamation of vocational and professional education colleges with the Colleges of St Paul and St Mary, both of which emerged from Cheltenham Training College established in 1847 for the education of teachers and underpinned by an overt

evangelical Anglican Christian ethos. This historic faith basis was carried over into the University's Articles of Association which include, a commitment "to reflect and show both its civic and evangelical Church of England foundation" (Anglican Identity 2013, p.3); the provision of teacher training and courses on theology and religion, and the provision of a chaplaincy led by a Chaplain who is ordained in the Church of England. An Anglican Foundation consisting of two hundred Fellows from clergy and laity is also associated with the University and they seek to preserve the Anglican legacy and support the wider work and mission of UoG.

There has in recent years been some debate around how, and to what extent, this Anglican identity should influence what is a modern multicultural university. Although UoG does not proselytise, it aspires for its Anglican identity to "be a source of strength, and a distinctive characteristic and asset for the University" (Anglican Identity 2013, p.4). The meaning of the Anglican identity and how it should be expressed has altered over time but it is currently reflected in four broad areas of culture and activity. The first relates to the *civic benefit of education* and includes a commitment to broadening access and the provision of public service programmes which include teaching, social work, community engagement and youth work. Secondly, the Anglican heritage is expressed in the area of *Christian theology and partnerships*, and includes offering theology on combined taught programmes, establishing research units such as the Centre for Sport, Spirituality and Religion which supports Sport Malawi as well as partnerships with specialist faith-based colleges, and finally affiliation with the Cathedrals Group of Church-founded Universities and Colleges. The third strand of the University's Anglican identity is manifest in the work of *Chaplaincy* which is supported by the Anglican Foundation and connected to the Diocese of Gloucester. The Chaplaincy was pivotal in driving Sport Malawi forward at its inception, and given their strong links to Chaplaincy, the Fellows and the Diocese have provided regular financial resource to support the programme. The

final strand where UoG seeks to express its Anglican identity is in its *corporate values and sustainability* which include nurture, creativity, sustainability, service, respect and trust. There is a particularly strong focus on care for the environment and broader sustainability and Sport Malawi has helped the University achieve recognition and awards in this area. This final strand has promoted a culture of volunteering that encourages students and staff to get involved in outreach programmes, locally and internationally.

Beyond its Anglican identity, the emergence and development of Sport Malawi is situated within, and has been facilitated by, the wider neoliberalisation of higher education. As discussed in chapter one, neoliberalism emerged in the early 1980s as the dominant paradigm shaping international development and was underpinned by a belief that the "free market" would deliver prosperity for all (Ostry 1990). This economic and political rationality has become "a common-sense of the times" (Bush *et al*. 2013, p.16) and its most notable impact on higher education is the rise of a corporate culture that imposes private sector type management (Giroux 2009). Universities are expected to meet the needs of the market and they do this partly by producing workers who have the right skills to compete effectively in the workforce (Apple 2005). Students are now seen as responsible for investing in their own education (Radice 2013). As a result, they have become consumers in the competitive academic market with universities now marketing "the student experience" in the belief that it is the students who "are best placed to make the judgement about what they want to get from participating in higher education" (Bush *et al*. 2013, p.28). This is no more so the case than in England where the tuition fee cap was raised to £9,000 in 2010. In promoting the benefits of its international exchange opportunities, such as Sport Malawi, the UoG is clearly sensitive to the competitive environment that it is operating in. This is evident in how the University "sells" itself to prospective students;

> In an age where practically everyone seems to have a degree, experience studying or working abroad can separate you from your peers in the job market. So stand out from those peers - study with us and undertake an international experience as part of your degree. Employers recognise the value of time spent abroad - it demonstrates personal growth, an ability to embrace new challenges, a highly sought after confidence, and an ability to make a meaningful contribution to their organisation. As a result, graduates with an international experience typically secure jobs faster and earn higher starting salaries (UoG 2016).

The neoliberalisation of higher education evident in the rise of managerialism, marketization and vocationalisation, impacts on the role universities play in society. The theory of academic capitalism posits that as rational thinking consumers, students make educational decisions based on what institutions and courses can help them realise a return on their hefty investment (Slaughter and Rhoades 2004). As a direct result, Dimitriadis (2006, p.370) argues that universities have become "less concerned with developing citizens who can thoroughly deliberate the 'common good' in the public sphere than with producing workers ready to take their attendant positions in the economic system." On the other hand, there are those who in the context of neoliberalism see opportunities for universities to undertake socially productive activities (Barnett 2000; Apple 2005) and "excel both in their academic and civic participation" (Bush *et al*. 2013, p.41). Some view the shift towards vocationalism, work-based learning and transferable skills as an opportunity to enhance the employability of students as well as their critical thinking skills. This perspective is reflected by Hardman and Pitchford (2013, p.13) who advocate for service-learning pedagogy at UoG and assert that, "as students enter the increasingly competitive and consumerist higher education market place, there will be a need for academics to find ways of teaching that support good scholarship, employability and the development of global citizenship." Extending this, Beacom and Golder (2015, p.4) see a new critical function for academics that requires them to connect the employability agenda with critical pedagogy in ways that "empowers classroom participants to critically reflect upon the social inequalities and to question the status quo."

In light of these debates, Sport Malawi could be viewed as an initiative that uses experiential learning to prepare students for the market-place, and perhaps also adopts a critical pedagogy to develop students to become global citizens who think critically about "how their actions can both positively and negatively impact the lives of others" (Sport Malawi 2015a). The way that the University markets Sport Malawi and other international exchange programmes would appear to lend support to the former interpretation. However, the positioning of empowerment at the centre of the mission and philosophy of the programme can be viewed as seeking to contribute to the latter view.

At the time of conducting the research for this thesis, over forty UoG students had participated in Sport Malawi, with some returning once or twice more. The programme could be described as a form of commodified voluntourism because it combines volunteering and travel (Waldorf 2012). During the four-week trip which costs approximately £1,500 to students, and with the direction of staff, students are tasked to deliver "needs-based" workshops and coaching sessions to Sport Malawi partners in Mzuzu. The University claims that there are two main benefits to these student-volunteers. The first is that taking part facilitates a broadening of their mind-set and worldview (Green Gown Awards 2012). This is based on the idea of "transformational" or "transformative" learning (Taylor 1998) and is considered by Mezirow (2000, p.4) as a process of "becoming critically aware of one's own tacit assumptions and expectations and those of others and assessing their relevance for making an interpretation" for the purposes of directing future action. This approach is built broadly on Freirean pedagogy and is reliant upon the interaction of three variables, learner, teacher/facilitator and context (McEwen *et al*. 2010), and can lead to student empowerment through acquiring new knowledge and skills. The second benefit for students is that they "act as catalysts for social change" (Green Gown Awards 2012, p.2). With an emphasis on educating indigenous sports community workers through accredited workshop-based courses,

student volunteers are positioned as experts and change-agents who "train the trainers". Since the inception of the programme, over 1,500 Malawians have been "trained" through receiving "tangible and relevant" knowledge and skills from the volunteer students (Sport Malawi 2015a). Students of all levels and from various UoG courses can be selected onto the programme, and therefore there is an assortment of knowledge and skills offered to workshop participants (*ibid*). The role played by volunteers is central to the empowerment mechanisms employed by Sport Malawi, and although these were briefly outlined in the thesis introduction, a more detailed account of them are required, as considered next.

The first activity used to support empowerment is *knowledge transfer* and this relates to the flow of workshops, curriculum, and manuals from UoG to sport, development and outreach workers in Mzuzu. At the beginning of the project, workshops were informal and open to large numbers of attendees in Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu. More recently, Sport Malawi has focused its attention on Mzuzu and access to workshops has been tightened, and the education has become more formal with the introduction of tiered accredited courses. This is intended to engage *only* with those who want to "facilitate change" (Sport Malawi 2015b). Furthermore, online resources are provided to allow for distance learning and the establishment of "communities of practice" in Mzuzu (*ibid*). In whatever guise, knowledge transfer is an important mechanism because it informs self-identity, decision-making and courses of action. Linked to this are activities designed to *develop agency*. The workshops are intended to empower attendees to act independently to become SfD practitioners and be able to reach and educate others in their communities. To do this they enact agency, which in the context of development work, is generally considered to comprise of three components which include self-confidence to set goals, the ability to make informed decisions, and, the ability to take action to achieve goals (Hennink *et al.* 2012). At the community level, Sport Malawi aims

for autonomous SfD programme providers in Mzuzu to plan and implement projects and advocate and/or secure resources or services for themselves.

Acknowledging that knowledge transfer and agency are on their own insufficient, Sport Malawi has encouraged *opportunity structures.* That is to say, for workshop participants to deliver programmes it is essential for them to have the necessary opportunities to do so (Sport Malawi 2015b). To do this the project has connected with the Malawi National Council of Sports, Ministry of Youth, Sport and Development, Ministry of Education, SfD NGOs such as PlaySoccer Malawi, and a myriad of NGOs, FBOs and CBOs to encourage multilevel partnership and an enabling environment for SfD organisations and practitioners to operate within. As outlined in chapter two, the SfD sector is still in its infancy in Malawi, and as a consequence there are social, political, and institutional obstacles to overcome for such partnerships to be enabling and empowering.

The fourth empowerment mechanism employed is *capacity-building*. Through a range of activities, the programme seeks to mobilise individuals, communities and organisations to take ownership of SfD programmes. The Malawi Team is intended to be a committee or a core community that facilitates empowerment and sustains participation in Sport Malawi throughout the year, and in the process, supports largely self-sufficient SfD projects. To strengthen the capacity of the Malawi Team and the wider group of programme providers, the UK Team act as mentors through what are intended to be dialogical workshops and the provision of online resources to fledgling SfD projects. The overall aim of this mechanism is to empower community sports workers to implement programmes for the development of their own communities. The next empowerment mechanism evident in the practices of Sport Malawi is the *provision of resources*. This is linked to capacity-building and during each annual visit to Malawi, students and staff bring new and used sports equipment and kit. The project has also provided financial resources to the Malawi Team to oversee training, evaluation and programme support

while the UK team is not present. There have been attempts to move away from this practice of "hand-outs" to running workshops that help participants gain the knowledge and skills to acquire resources for themselves. As will be discussed later in this chapter, some behind the programme think that resource provision is counterproductive to empowerment and may actually deepen dependency on external resources.

Finally, this is linked to the empowerment mechanism of *generating long-term sustainability*. At the centre of Sport Malawi's mission is an aspiration to facilitate practitioners of SfD projects in Mzuzu to work towards sustainable projects and to be able to identify and develop their own resources to ensure their SfD projects are self-sufficient and continue long after UoG ceases to send teams. Sustainability is considered both a core component of empowerment processes and an outcome of it. However, because Sport Malawi has clearly been instigated and hosted by UoG, and the delivery of the programme has been primarily overseen by the UK Team in the University, there are concerns about its long-term sustainability. At the present time, the Malawi Team plays a secondary role, but *if* the "train the trainers" approach is implemented successfully, then the Malawi Team and other programme providers who successfully complete the tiered workshops could make the role of UoG redundant. There are significant questions, of course, about whether this is actually the intention of the UK Team, and of other corporate actors within the University.

This description of the aims of Sport Malawi and how it seeks to achieve its goals reveals that, superficially at least, "empowerment" underpins the *modus operandi* of the programme. However, as observed in chapter three, empowerment possesses myriad meanings and interpretations and these have played out not only in mainstream development but also within SfD. Consequently, there is considerable debate as to the nature of empowerment within both fields and a lack of clarity around whether the approaches to empowerment employed therein facilitate a neoliberal model of

empowerment, or a more radical, postcolonial version. The empirical data presented in the rest of this chapter critically analyses understandings and practices of empowerment within Sport Malawi from the various stakeholder perspectives within the University, and begins to tease out how they chime with neoliberal and postcolonial variants of empowerment.

5.2. The perspective of management stakeholders

Drawing on data gathered from interviews conducted with UoG senior management stakeholders ($n = 5$), this section explores how Sport Malawi is understood, framed and represented within the mission and identity of the University. These perspectives offer insights into the broader policy and financial conditions of the sending community that impact on the programme. In extracting these views, this discussion makes an important empirical contribution to the literature of SfD. Indeed, except for Waldman and Wilson (2015), no research has elicited the views of top-level management of SfD initiatives, particularly on how they frame and represent the recipients of programmes and who they view as the "real" beneficiaries.

5.2.1. Sport Malawi as "outreach"

All senior management respondents understood Sport Malawi as part of the wider outreach portfolio of the University that helped fulfil its corporate social responsibility agenda and was in the words of one senior manager, "very laudable and worthy" (Interview, George, 22 May 2013). There is an expectation on all universities to deliver benefits to the wider society (Beacom and Golder 2015), and for UoG, engaging in outreach work both achieves this purpose and has become a defining feature of the

institution. Following New Labour's renewed focus on participation rates in higher education from 1997 onwards, UoG started extensive local outreach. Although the county in which the University is situated is relatively affluent, Gloucestershire contains rural and urban areas of acute deprivation, and as a University that considers itself, *of* and *for* Gloucestershire, it felt it had to in the words of Rose, "provide opportunities for outreach, inclusion and education" (Interview, 27 November 2013) in these more disadvantaged communities. Sport played a significant role in this regard. By moving the School of Sport and Exercise to a new campus in Gloucester in 1999, which is home to some of the most deprived areas, the hope was that it would raise aspirations in the city and the west of the county. Interviewees felt that this outreach impulse has permeated the new campus culture and stimulated a range of student-led sport outreach programmes in the locality.

Management stakeholders viewed these projects as important in promoting and preserving a culture at the University where enterprising, student-led outreach activities that facilitated opportunities for placement and volunteering could take place. As, Stewart explained, these projects have "really got an awful lot to do with our approach to outreach; creating that permissive environment and it being part of the raison d'être of the place" (Interview, 22 November 2013). Sports based projects have been prominent and Sport Malawi has added an international dimension to the University's established outreach portfolio. Some interviewees were keen to stress that this was not a deliberate attempt to "internationalise" the institution but rather an extension to the local outreach work:

> Having had that sense of wanting to root itself in communities that suffer disadvantage in one shape or another, it has actually made the development of the Sport Malawi project a straight forward one (Interview, Stewart, 22 November 2013).

Against this strong outreach ethos, the initiative is seen as one that according to Jonathan, "connects really well with institutional values, institutional mission, and the things that make this institution quite distinctive" (Interview, 21 November 2013). Like other SfD

projects in the global South initiated by Western actors the motivation of those senior University managers involved in the programme appears to be rooted in an altruistic and genuine desire to "help". However, as Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) caution, partnerships between the West and disadvantaged communities in the non-West that are seemingly underpinned by benevolent motivations can in actuality be comprised of practices that are to varying degrees, infused with neo-colonialism. The extent to which Sport Malawi can be considered in this way is a theme for the remainder of this chapter.

5.2.2. Sport Malawi as missionary work

Connected with this desire to reach out to disadvantaged communities and the aforementioned Christian foundation of UoG, Sport Malawi was framed by a few management interviewees as a form of Christian missionary work and this is tied to the University's historic evangelical Anglican heritage. Although the programme is led by a core team of staff from different parts of the University, it was the Chaplaincy and Faith Department that gave the original drive, undertook the funding and logistical responsibilities and in the process shaped its broad philosophical approach. Some senior managers attributed the missionary impulse of Sport Malawi to the Senior Chaplain, who is, as mandated in the University's Articles of Association, an ordained priest in the Church of England (Anglican Identity 2013).

> It started with a sense of mission…if you like, as a private faith-based initiative where we went *out there* and *worked in* communities in Malawi (Interview, James, 22 November 2013).

> Malawi has got an *incredible record on poverty*, and I think [the Senior Chaplain] was interested in seeing if sport was a vehicle for evangelism in *that context* (Interview, Rose, 27 November 2013).

The faith dimension of the programme and its relation to the Anglican identity of the University was instrumental in enabling it to obtain regular funding from the Foundation

Fellows and the Diocese of Gloucester, and the support of Rose, who became a keen patron of Sport Malawi and "backed it because we are a church institution and exploring different ways of spirituality, faith and understanding the world is all part of that, and that is part of the educative process" (Interview, 27 November 2013).

After reflecting on the contemporary significance of its evangelical Christian heritage, the UoG has recently asserted that although it does not seek to proselytise, the Christian foundation should be a "distinctive characteristic and asset" (Anglican Identity 2013, p.4) that influences the institution's core values. This shift was explained by George who said: "We are somewhere in the middle [between Christian and secular] and there is a spectrum and on various sliding scales different things develop" (Interview, 22 May 2013). The changing role of faith within UoG is symbiotic of wider socio-religious vicissitudes of a post-Christendom society. As a result, management stakeholders sought more nuanced expressions for the faith legacy of the University:

> I remember in governing body meetings when Chaplaincy did their report, some of the Fellows would ask "how many people go to Chapel?" and I used to say, "that's not the way to judge what's going on in a University – it's something deeper and it's something about values, about how you care for one another and how you care for the world and so on" (Interview, Rose, 27 November 2013).

In line with this statement, Sport Malawi was defined less as a form of missionary work *per se* and more as a project than expresses the wider values of the University:

> It is so obviously a project that has a strong developmental purpose, but closely aligns with the sense of *helping* your fellow humanity. Whether you use explicitly Christian affiliation or not I think is less important than it is a very good project in terms of the fit with the values of the University, supporting development, supporting disadvantaged communities, you know, sort of *reaching out* across the world and trying to improve mutual understanding, and all of these are things you want to do and I think they come together in that project in really quite a special way (Interview, James, 22 November 2013).

Whether Sport Malawi was perceived as missionary, or, more generally as an expression of the values underpinned by UoG's Anglican identity, does not deflect from the assertion made by some management stakeholders, that the project is inherently altruistic.

This view is reflective of wider development discourse on the need for actors in the global North to "help" and "reach out" to those in the global South, and in this way sport was understood "as one element in the armoury of how the wealthy West can support development in Africa" (Interview, James, 22 November 2013). From a postcolonial perspective, these comments are revealing in terms of the extent to which aspects of the philosophy of Sport Malawi reflects colonial ideas about "Africa" needing to be "saved", both spiritually and materially. To "evangelise" about the *power of sport* in this process reinforces the connection that has been made by other scholars between SfD and colonial missionary activity (Kidd 2008; Giulianotti 2004; Guest 2009; Forde 2015). It must also be noted that the faith component has enabled Sport Malawi to partner with FBOs and churches in Malawi, whose involvement in SfD in the global South has received little acknowledgment (cf. Lindsey and Grattan 2012).

5.2.3. Sport Malawi as transformational learning

Alongside being viewed as an outreach project with roots in the University's Anglican heritage, management stakeholders also framed Sport Malawi as a vehicle for *transformative learning* (Taylor 1998; Mezirow 2000) and developing student-volunteers as critical thinkers capable of reflecting on their impact on the world, positive and negative. As noted earlier in the chapter this approach to the pedagogy behind this programme is intended to align with the Education for Sustainability (EfS) approach which is intended to reflect Freirean pedagogy, even though "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" deals with how disadvantaged communities might reflect on, recognise and the change their situation. The approach adopted for external agents, however, coalesces around three important components; learner, teacher/facilitator, and context (McEwen *et al.* 2010). With regard to the learner and building on local placement and volunteering opportunities,

Stewart felt that Sport Malawi was part of a "ladder of opportunity, *awareness raising*, and [it] sort of works for us in that respect as a really good example of where students and the *broadening of their mind* and perspectives can go" (Interview, 22 November 2013). While acknowledging the broader neoliberal understanding of higher education, Sport Malawi was perceived beyond the notion of preparing students for the work force (Apple 2005; Barnett 2000), to include developing learners who could deliberate "the common good" in the public sphere and undertake socially beneficial activities (Interview, Rose, 27 November 2013). Therefore, Sport Malawi was viewed as somewhat of a microcosm of what the University aspired to offer to the learner: opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for employability, alongside developing a broader worldview and concern for social justice.

Respondents observed that the role of the teacher/facilitator in bringing about transformational learning through Sport Malawi was shaped by both internal and external influences. Reflecting on the internal culture of UoG and how the spiritual and civic were subsumed, in what it calls a "whole-of-institution" approach to sustainability (Learning for Sustainable Futures 2013), Rose recalled: "We said 'this is going to be a different sort of place for learning to take place; it is going to be a learning community... and it appears to work because it's something about staff culture and people who *got the vision*" (Interview, 27 November 2013). Drawing on the UN's Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2016) many universities adopted EfS-inspired pedagogies which are centred on notions of global citizenship and the need to address global challenges relating to social justice, environmental concern, and economic fairness. The pedagogical approach advocated by EfS which has gained traction within UoG urges teachers/facilitators to encourage students to envision and work towards alternative futures; work collectively towards positive and democratic change; challenge the mindsets and priorities that drive unsustainable development; engage with others to

explore shared and divergent interests and needs; and understand professional responsibilities in this area (Learning for Sustainable Futures 2013). Having drawn on EfS, Sport Malawi is regarded as an example of best practice for embedding these principles into teaching and learning practices within UoG (*ibid*). On the other hand, external influences such as government policy and student surveys have impacted on the extent to which volunteering programmes such as Sport Malawi are vehicles for transformative learning or whether they have come to reflect the neoliberalism in higher education discussed earlier. Talking about the push towards "practice-based" learning, Jonathan noted how "national policy is shifting institutions much more towards that way of delivering their curriculum" (Interview, 21 November 2013). In line with the neoliberal idea of higher education as a site primarily for preparing a workforce, co-curricular and within-curricular activities and achievements are now recorded within students' extended transcripts through the Higher Education Achievement Report. Indeed, UoG was one of the first universities to implement this initiative (UoG Strategic Plan 2012-2017). In this way the teacher/facilitator is encouraged to have a utilitarian understanding of transformational learning which views it as enhancing "the student experience" and developing transferable skills, rather than one that could be described as reflecting a Freirean pedagogy, that sees Sport Malawi as an opportunity for learner conscientisation.

The third variable of transformative learning is *context* and living in Malawi for a month was considered to offer "for a very small number of people very large impacts in terms of their understanding and experience" (Interview, James, 22 November 2013). Respondents felt these impacts emanated from students being situated in what they described as a challenging environment which exposed them to the needs of local people. Rose, for example, asserted she supported Sport Malawi because it put "students in a context where they would be challenged in a different way and then they would hopefully reassess their lives and hopefully become more socially aware" (Interview, 27 November

2013). The narrative from management stakeholders was that ultimately the experience of Sport Malawi was unequivocally empowering for students, and that it was this aspect, and not the opportunity to empower communities in Malawi, that was the ultimate appeal of the programme. Rose was most forthright in echoing this sentiment:

> Was I committed to Malawi? Probably not… it was not so much for me about Malawi, as about our students and what the educative process is really about for me (*ibid*).

The learning context in Malawi provided an "unsettling" experience which is crucial to transformative learning (McEwen *et al*. 2010) and this "development gaze" (Heron 2007) was seen, uncritically, as a trigger for the individual empowerment of students.

5.2.4. Sport Malawi within neoliberal higher education

It was clear from the interviews that all management stakeholders explained the contribution of Sport Malawi to the UoG in terms of the wider neoliberal tendencies permeating higher education. Firstly, in terms of marketization and internationalisation, the programme was considered as an effective tool in promoting UoG as an engaged institution to employers and as one that was an attractive and interesting place to study for students. The importance of Sport Malawi to the University in this regard became much more discernible when, in 2012, the programme became central to a partnership between the University and a wider Gloucestershire consortium that saw the Malawi Olympic Team being hosted at the University prior to the London Olympics Games. Because of the "Olympic factor", Rose noted that "now the University can see some value, and prestige and reputation to them" (Interview, 27 November 2013). Jonathan, another member of management gleefully remarked:

> Hosting the training camp for Malawi prior to the Olympic Games, was the icing on the cake, in the way that it *gave us* a lot of institutional profile, and it gave the broader Sport Malawi further profile through awards, through the media and the recognition, and that's been fantastic (Interview, 21 November 2013).

Another important component in securing the programme as an important part of the University's activities was the shift towards marketing UoG as a Christian foundation university and Sport Malawi as an example of how it expresses this. With a particular focus on attracting international students, George said that his "perspective is that the University is trying to use the Anglican identity within a particular business plan… to secure [its] future" (Interview, 22 May 2013). In terms of internationalising the academic portfolio, it was felt that "it would be mad not embrace the Malawi dimension" (Interview, Stewart 22 November 2013). Within a competitive academic market-place other respondents noted the increasing role Sport Malawi plays in marketing and internationalising UoG. When reflecting on the poor performance of UoG in one university league table, Rose remarked that "there have got to be other drawers" to attract consumers, because "it's highly competitive and much goes in reputation. I mean if Sport Malawi flourishes, there's a halo effect… and it's getting your name out there in the market place" (Interview, 27 November 2013).

Secondly, all of the management stakeholders spoke of how Sport Malawi connected with UoG's strategic priorities of enhancing student experience and employability. With consumerism now at the heart of higher education, there is enormous pressure on universities to offer the best consumer experience over their competitors and for students to find employment to repay their student debt and justify their choice of institution and course (Bush *et al*. 2013). In line with the trend of narrowing higher education to an accumulation of qualifications and transferable skills for the workforce, Sport Malawi was viewed as a unique commodity that could entice and ready consumers for the workforce, as well as a means of educating students to become responsible global citizens *and* empowering Malawians:

> The reason we need to be an engaged institution is to ensure we've students who are equipped well to be in employment, to have the skills and the attributes to succeed in employment in the future (Interview, Jonathan, 21 November 2013).

The overt focus on employability has reduced teaching and learning to its instrumental value and this is at odds with the ethos of critical pedagogy, that is claimed to underpin Sport Malawi, which aims to empower those lacking power and to transform structural inequalities. Rose noted this tension when she lamented: "I'm rather depressed about higher education" because "now employability is seen as very hard, whereas in the past you were talking about transforming the individual" (Interview, 27 November 2013). As a consequence, the extent to which Sport Malawi provides opportunities for transformative learning for UoG students or, for that matter, conscientisation among Malawian participants is undermined by the need for UK universities operating in a neoliberal marketplace to prioritise employability and the acquisition of transferable skills. Viewed from a postcolonial perspective, this raises questions about the ability of the programme to impact asymmetrical power relations that perpetuate conditions of poverty in Malawi.

Thirdly, Sport Malawi is also subject to the values of private sector management. Aside from attracting funding from by the Foundation Fellows and the Janet Trotter Trust, for its contribution towards the Anglican identity and transformative learning agendas respectively, UoG did not put financial resource into the project except for the staff time of one employee. This meant that often staff would have to apply for external funding, and/or finance their own position, take on additional responsibilities outside of their workload allocation and use annual leave for the duration of their time in Malawi. One senior manager described how Sport Malawi operates within an organisational culture that "says to people: 'It's valued, it's a good thing, sort of get-on with it'… rather than necessarily saying it's a line on our faculty accounts" (Interview, Stewart, 22 November 2013). Within the tenets of profit-driven instrumental rationality, another management stakeholder, Jonathan, articulated what he saw as the project's cost-value benefit:

> With Sport Malawi I think the headline would be that there are *some modest costs* of engaging in this type of activity. But the value we could articulate in many and various ways and *the value would be good*, certainly for the School but probably also the University as a whole (Interview, 21 November 2013).

Despite the lack of financial investment in Sport Malawi, there was no doubt amongst respondents that the programme brought significant and quantifiable value to UoG. As Jonathan went on to assert: "From the perspective of empowering people here, it serves that aim really well… [but] I would have a hunch that it might be perceived as less empowering for local community groups [in Malawi]" (*ibid*). The increasing neoliberal tendencies of higher education institutions has ensured that Sport Malawi was steered by management toward serving the needs, interests and brand of UoG. What this reveals is the emergence of a gap between the aspirations of the project to facilitate empowerment in Malawi and the reality of this particular SfD project's activities and outcomes (cf. Intolubbe-Chmil *et al*. 2012). This disconnect was also one of the central themes in the interviews with the UK-based Sport Malawi staff and their views will be presented in the next section.

5.3. The perspective of staff who deliver Sport Malawi

This section will focus on the perspectives of the Sport Malawi "staff" ($n = 8$) who are employed by UoG and who have supported and/or been involved in the delivery of the programme for an extended period. According to Ninnes and Hellsten (2005, p.1), the drive to internationalise universities has offered "increasing opportunities for academics to become global travellers, makers of difference, effectors of personal change, and facilitators of global progress". UoG staff members involved in running Sport Malawi saw the programme as a way to use their knowledge and skills to tackle issues affecting the global South. They generally viewed their role within higher education as involving

a civic dimension and aspired for a model of "engaged scholarship" (Intolubbe-Chmil *et al.* 2012) that reflected the core principles of empowerment. Coming voluntarily and predominately from community sport, youth work, health and social care, and human geography backgrounds, this core team of staff were familiar with theories of empowerment and how it should be operationalised. As such, they were more aware than the other stakeholder groups within the sending community of the challenges of using sport to bring about empowerment in Malawi. As Susan cautioned:

> We should also have awareness of the things we do that can potentially become damaging for the host country… We need to have that expertise because its complex isn't it? It's not just "here's a manual and off you go" and it's all fabulous. It's a complex area which has potential to do good but also has the potential to be *quite damaging* as well, so we have to make sure we are on the right side of those tracks (Interview, 22 November 2013).

Being situated on the "frontline" of delivering Sport Malawi they were on the interface with UoG management, student-volunteers, and Malawian stakeholders and as such were crucial in the versions of empowerment that manifested themselves in the programme.

5.3.1. Response to the management stakeholders' view

In the interviews with Sport Malawi "staff" they revealed concerns about how Sport Malawi had become subsumed within the University's wider marketing and CSR agenda, and the extent to which this had impacted the project's original focus of facilitating empowerment on the ground in Malawi. Staff felt that the main motivating factor for UoG supporting Sport Malawi was its self-interested need to be seen to be "helping". Robert, who was involved at the outset of Sport Malawi when it had very little profile observed this change in the position of the programme within the institution, particularly in raising the profile of the UoG and marketing it as a Christian foundation university:

> I can see that the way Sport Malawi is treated now. "Isn't it an amazing thing" they'll be saying and being really proud of it because once they are seen to be

> supporting a project in the developing world that's a massive box to tick. Because it looks great: "Wow, aren't we an amazing University, we run all these projects in Africa, oh, we're cool; come and study with us" and that's the shiny packaging on the outside (Interview, 25 November 2013).

So alongside enticing students-as-consumers with a broad portfolio of opportunities, staff felt that Sport Malawi had been co-opted into the University's CSR agenda. Alongside this was a concern that this had led to the project becoming inflected with neo-colonialism. Philip noted this: "The more powerful agenda is the development agenda, where we are seen to be helping somebody; some colonial thing about helping somebody in a far-off land" (Interview, 19 November 2013). Rather than engage with the aspirations of Malawi partners, the view from these staff was that management were content see a project superimposed on the host community that served the needs and interests of the University. In articulating his reservations about this, Dan suggested that this neo-colonial positioning "always undermines the work these projects do: 'Oh yeah we help people in Africa' and this notion that Africa needs helping because it's so infantile and can't do anything for itself, and that's obviously not the case" (Interview, 22 May 2013).

As a consequence of the way that Sport Malawi had been subsumed within the wider CSR activities of the University and its use as a tool to market the student experience at UoG, staff felt that their influence over the components, political orientation, structures, aims and objectives of the project were curtailed by management stakeholders who did not share the same rationale for Sport Malawi. This exasperated Susan: "I feel frustrated because for the University it's very much about the product, but if you're bringing back really good practice in terms of community development, they're really not too worried about that" (Interview, 22 November 2013). There was resentment that they were not given recognition for their day-to-day involvement such as workload allocation or support to embed learning and practice into curricula. Spaaij *et al.* (2016) note that operationalising critical pedagogy underpinned by radical notions of empowerment requires a supportive organisational culture in order for it to be effective.

The lack of appreciation and investment in the project, its vision, and the staff, on the part of the University compromised empowerment efforts and resulted in low staff morale:

> You don't get paid for Sport Malawi, you don't get anything for Sport Malawi, it's largely the goodness in your heart that keeps you going and I always see the value in Sport Malawi… I have a vision on something they [the management] do not share (Interview, Dan, 22 May 2013).

> The University is taking it for a ride and giving an image across and saying: "This is what we are doing for the world", when actually it's not putting anything into it at all, apart from the staff and students who just happen to be there and have that heart… They are not worried about how that affects morale or someone being completely worn-down, and so they will quite happily put that sort of pressure on people and take the benefits that come with it and not put anything in (Interview, Bill, 21 November 2013).

Taking into account the desire to burnish the University brand despite the lack of investment in Sport Malawi, it was felt that the capacity of the programme to facilitate empowerment in Malawi was being seriously curtailed. This view was rooted in the fact that the understanding of empowerment and how it should be operationalised held by programme staff was not one that they felt was shared by University management. As Susan saw it:

> A true empowerment model is that it comes from the people… That's what gets lost in these things; they think they are going and giving something to them. The minute we do that, empowerment is gone. We work with them to build the skills, the environment, whatever their demands are in the host community. The other thing I would think with empowerment is the endgame of empowerment is a removal. Now interestingly, are we ever going to do that with Sport Malawi, given the profile? If we've done our job well, we've upskilled them to such a level that we no longer need to be there. Empowerment is about power and that is the key point, and we need to make sure we don't abuse our power in that relationship (Interview, 22 November 2013).

From her perspective, having an exit strategy from Malawi and handing over responsibility to locally based Malawians was considered problematic and the University was more interested in ensuring that Sport Malawi was maintained as a highly marketable product to entice prospective students and maintain a positive brand. Susan went on to argue: "The University higher up the food chain I'd have thought aren't too worried about empowerment. Is the community need at the top of the University's agenda? Unlikely!

At the top of the University's agenda are bums on seats" (*ibid*). Staff delivering Sport Malawi acknowledged that UoG needed to move the project beyond the superficial rhetoric of empowerment because as Phillip observed: "if we are not careful we perpetuate a historic understanding of what projects *like that* look like" (Interview, 19 November 2013).

5.3.2. Students are catalysts or recipients of empowerment

All of the programme delivery staff were in support of the aims of Sport Malawi to be built on respect and reciprocity and provide pathways to connect SfD with local empowerment *and* transformative student learning. It was felt that Sport Malawi offered students a unique opportunity to transform their worldview and engagement with issues affecting the world around them. To do this the programme leverages training workshops with coaches, teachers and youth workers, local SfD project visits and cultural encounters, and reflective activities to critically think about the realities they are observing in local communities and how they connect to structural inequality. To facilitate "amazing awakenings" (Interview, Robert, 25 November 2013) among student-volunteers to the social, political, historic and economic dynamics that sustain poverty, staff and local partners were required to help students wrestle with the complexities of development and SfD work in different cultural contexts. However, staff were concerned that students were not prepared for the issues they would come face-to-face with in Malawi. Phillip, for example, acknowledged: "There is an empowerment spinoff for those students but I don't think they necessarily have the conceptual and theoretical tools before they get there to fully benefit from that environment" (Interview, 19 November 2013). For one interviewee, the programme provided "access to this whole different world" before adding that "and it's really interesting but also privileging place to be because you see first-hand the impact certain things are having on the world, like capitalism and

consumerism that are infiltrating these spheres of Malawian life" (Interview, Dan, 20 November 2013).

The core team of staff leading Sport Malawi had to mediate the internal needs of Malawian stakeholders with the external needs of UoG student-volunteers. In addressing the question of whether this led to the interests of one group being prioritised over the other, interviewees argued that Sport Malawi was empowering to varying extents to both parties. For example, reflecting on developing critical consciousness through the programme workshops, Beth said: "Although I want those workshops to have an impact on those [Malawi] participants I think it has an impact on the students as well" (Interview, 21 May 2013). By utilising critical pedagogy in the form of transformative learning or EfS, it was felt that students would be challenged to critically reflect on their assumptions, values and lifestyle; and direct themselves towards critical engagement and global citizenship. This would in turn benefit populations in the global South longitudinally:

> If the student is a winner in terms of developing a passion for other people, a passion for countries and communities that need intervention, help, support and development, then they are not the only winners, because all the other people benefit as a result of the student benefit (Interview, Jeremy, 22 May 2013).

The vision of Sport Malawi, one that seeks to radically empower all learners can be considered oppositional to the current narrowing of higher education to accumulating credentials for the market-place (Intolubbe-Chmil *et al.* 2012). There was recognition however that placements and experiential learning opportunities could simply serve the interests of the students rather than the host community. Dan acknowledged that this issue is "a contentious area of service learning; who's being serviced and if we manage that correctly… [it] *could* be a mutually beneficial relationship" (Interview, 22 May 2013). Reconciling the needs and interests of stakeholders in both the global North and the global South in a "mutually beneficial" fashion was complicated by the emergence of the student as consumer (Slaughter and Rhoades 2004). By turning Sport Malawi into a "product" to

attract students, Susan questioned: "What's interesting and this may be cause and effect is because we are now marketing it as a product, they [the students] are going to latch onto that… and understandably they view it as something to be consumed" (Interview, 22 November 2013).

As far as staff were concerned, student-volunteers could be categorised into three broad groups: those who wanted to embrace a different culture and prioritised local needs; those who wanted the experience to bolster their employability and had selected UoG because of this; and those who saw it as a form of commodified voluntourism and treated the trip predominantly as a holiday (Interview, Kenneth, 27 November 2013). There was irritation towards some of the student voluntourist behaviour, particularly the visible application of hand sanitizer when interacting with locals. Students were encouraged not to follow the example of other Western volunteers staying in Mzuzu who socialised within their clique and did little to integrate into the local community. One incident took place in Mzuzu Coffee Shop which Dan referred to as a "hub of Westernisation". Here students observed other Western volunteers and assumed that they were different to them. Dan's response to the student-volunteers is recalled in the following quotation:

> "When you scratch under the surface, some are you guys are the same". We had two or three quite frank conversations and to the whole group I went: "Aside from the Malawi committee, how many of you have taken time to go and talk to a Malawian?" And not one person put their hand up. Not one of our students had done that and that was a real disappointment (Interview, 20 November 2013).

This discussion reveals that there is a gap between the rhetoric of empowerment in Sport Malawi and the reality of working with student-volunteers, some of whom, perhaps inevitably, see their involvement as an opportunity for themselves. The capacity of the programme to equitably empower both student-volunteers and local participants is hampered by the neoliberal impulse permeating higher education which has commodified projects such as Sport Malawi into products to be consumed by students. Seeking the best "student experience" these consumers are focused on the employability benefits they can

accrue, and as a consequence their framing by Sport Malawi as "change agents" and catalysts for empowerment is questionable at best.

5.3.3. Negotiating power relations with Malawi partners

The final interface for staff on the "frontline" of delivering Sport Malawi was with Malawi stakeholders and in particular with the Malawi Team who acted as an organising committee for the programme's activities in Mzuzu. Staff assumed the role of development workers and with backgrounds in community development they aspired to operationalise postcolonial variants of empowerment. It was clear that this core team wanted to enact an alternative model that was different from mainstream development which, as noted in chapter one, is regarded by critical development theorists as extending Western hegemony and an ethnocentric view of development centred on economic growth and enacted through top-down mechanisms (Brohman 1995; Kingsbury *et al.* 2012). Respondents in this stakeholder group felt that this model of development was outmoded, neo-colonial and incompatible with empowerment. This view was clearly articulated by Bill:

> I think it goes right back to the dominance of Western culture, in general, over everyone else, and the underlying subtext of Western ideology. It seems that aid and development are normally given but with conditions… it's a survival thing and *it's a power thing.* Nonetheless it's the West flexing its muscle and going: "You can't have this". That's not an empowering thing to say to someone. It's like training a dog: "We'll give you this biscuit if you sit". Actually the West doesn't want poorer countries to be empowered properly in case they become another threat. I don't think that we live in a world where we consider everyone can be equal… Even saying they're "developing" in the first place, or "third world"; they are all derogatory ways of looking at it; they are all a way of looking at someone as being lesser than yourself (Interview, 21 May 2013).

It is clear from these comments that versions of development rooted in neoliberalism or modernisation were considered problematic by staff leading Sport Malawi. Indeed, they advocated an approach to development that was more inclusive, participatory, sustainable

and equitable. The opportunity to engage in a project that had the potential of building this form of development drew Dan to get involved in Sport Malawi: "It wasn't sold as *that* 'third world' Africa project: 'You're going to go there and build some wells and change lives because *that's what we do*, that's what it's all about'" (Interview, 22 May 2013). Reflecting on empowerment mechanisms and power relations within Sport Malawi, Dan added: "I had read Paulo Freire's 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' and everything sort of slotted together for me… The feeling I got was: 'Yes, we are helping people but we're not kind of patronising them, we're treating them on a level kind of playing field'" (*ibid*). In keeping with Dan's perspective, other interviewees repeatedly framed Sport Malawi as a "dialogue" or a "partnership" that enabled reciprocal development. The empowerment mechanisms employed by the project were intended to be a means to realise broad-based transformation. As staff saw it, however, this would not come about through paternalistic behaviour of *doing to* and *doing for*, because as Jeremy noted: "It's very easy to think that: 'I'm doing something good' but not recognising that there is a dialogue… that you are *doing with*, and enabling people to do it for themselves ultimately" (Interview, 22 May 2013).

Although UoG staff members expressed a commitment to dialogical working methods and a collective approach to leading Sport Malawi, there was a recognition that "unintentional disempowerment" at times characterised the programme, particularly when information and decision making was not shared and Malawian partners were overlooked due to heavy workloads in the sending community and logistical and technical difficulties in the host community. This impinged on the opportunity to share responsibility and ownership of the structures that would enable the global North actors to *do* Sport Malawi *with* their global South counterparts. Furthermore, it was expressed that workshop delivery was often done, inadvertently, in an oppressive and dismissive

manner by the tendency to lapse into a colonial mindset and view the position and knowledge of UK participants as superior to that of Malawian participants:

> It's possible for all of us to look on mass and even if you're not doing it consciously, subconsciously saying: "I've got more knowledge" and *exalt yourself* in relation to the people you are teaching; I think almost inevitably that sort of attitude will result in some sort of disempowerment, even if it's just ignoring worries, fears and problems (Interview, Jeremy, 22 May 2013).

Although there was no ambition to perpetuate colonial platitudes, staff conceded that it was very easy to fall back into the colonial stereotypes. For example, Dan confessed: "After the first week I thought: "What an idiot I've been" because I'd like to say I'm not your typical ignorant white person… with an ethnocentric view of: "We know best and we're going to tell you what to do". But in hindsight I had *a bit of that in me* I think" (Interview, 22 May 2013).

Despite these sorts of lapses, the programme delivery staff expressed understandings of empowerment that correlated with some of the more radical interpretations discussed in the chapter three. They often alluded to the multilevel nature of power and how empowerment was needed at psychological, discursive and structural levels (Gaventa 2003). However, there was also recognition that the capacity of Sport Malawi to facilitate radical empowerment at these levels was often limited. For example, staff acknowledged that the Malawian stakeholders, including the committee and workshop participants, did not appear to feel entitled, nor had the capacity and the "power within" (Rowlands 1998) to participate fully in knowledge transfer and decision-making processes. This was attributed to a history of colonial relations that were systematically imposed to deny power to Malawians and that has resulted in a form of "internalised oppression" (Rowlands 1998). As Bill notes: "It goes back to that idea of the: 'white men are thinkers and we're not thinkers'. You only have power when you realise it" (Interview, 21 May 2013). To explain what this meant, Bill added:

> It's like an abused child who sees the abuse taking place as completely natural, it doesn't know any different and feels it deserves to be treated that way, and therefore that affects it for the rest of its life, and it doesn't realise that actually it shouldn't be like that. And so it's a level of oppression (*ibid*).

Alongside noting psychological and cultural power imbalances, interviewees also highlighted how the structural inequalities impacting on Malawian participants limited possibilities for empowerment. Speaking about the empowerment mechanisms employed by Sport Malawi, Robert stated that the project is:

> …empowering people to take control of their own lives, not to be restricted, to have resources and knowledge and a sense that they can develop…. but [also] I suppose being conscious of what's around them as well that could be the brick walls: political, economic and religious systems. All those can either enhance or stifle development (Interview, 25 November 2013).

In stressing the social, economic and political structures that impede the extent of the power that can be accessed by local participants, this notion of empowerment chimes with the radical roots of the concept. Although interviewees analysed how power plays out in Sport Malawi and how it impacts on its mission to bring about empowerment, there was an absence of strategies to rebalance these unequal power structures that (re)produce poverty. Therefore, while staff were able to highlight inequalities in power as a key issue for Sport Malawi, they were unable to challenge these, resulting in an operational gap between radical empowerment theory and practice within the programme. Dan elaborated on this issue in the following way: "[With] community development we're talking capacity building, partnership working, and developing and learning… but when I got out there some of those key terms just got shot down" (Interview, 22 May 2013). Nonetheless, as Robert noted, without multilevel, radical empowerment: "you get this dependency and reliance culture which happens a lot and sometimes we are to blame for that" (Interview, 25 November 2013). In this way, "empowerment" like other development buzzwords had no real transformative power (Batliwala 2007b).

According to the staff participants in this study, one of the other key issues that impacted on the capacity of Sport Malawi to bring about empowerment was the significant impact of poverty on how the Malawian participants came to see and engaged with the project. Heron (2007) observes that a "colonial continuity" left over from European imperialism is the perception that whiteness equates with wealth. This material disparity in the host community needed continual negotiation and UoG staff acknowledged that it hindered dialogical relationships. Perceiving their relative affluence, interviewees reflected on how Malawians often requested money and in-kind donations during workshops and project visits: "The real difficulty in doing development work in such contexts is that the initial agenda of the Malawians might be to get as much out of you, *materially*, as possible" (Interview, Jeremy, 22 May 2013). Staff felt that it was hard to change this mentality and for their Malawi partners to perceive the relationship in any other way than as one between donor and recipient. Under the direction of the Malawi Team, Sport Malawi provided sports equipment and kit to workshop participants to resource their own SfD projects. This was thought to be the main motivation for some locals to participate in Sport Malawi: "I think sometimes, dare I say it, that a lot of them come to the programme just to get bits of kit" (Interview, Bill, 21 May 2013).

In line with the culture that has grown up around NGO led development, lunch and travel allowances, and what locals call a "sitting allowance" were given to workshop participants. Also referred to as "per diems", the latter is used to incentivise the "participation" of local people in conferences and training in order to build capacity within communities (Søreide*et al*. 2012; Hanson 2012). Interviewees were discouraged when workshop participants complained that the allowance amount was not comparable to that offered by other NGOs. This all impacted on the development of dialogical relationships: "because they see the skin colour and think: 'white person, he's got money'; for me it's quite upsetting because they see your value in monetary terms" (Interview,

Dan, 22 May 2013). As white people they felt that their Malawi counterparts were "demanding a great deal" (*ibid*) by assuming that Sport Malawi had the same resources as large NGOs. On balance, rather than essentialise this behaviour as greed, corrupt, or "African", it should be contextualised against the broader development culture and global structural inequalities (Conteh and Kingori 2010). This theme will be explored in greater depth in the next chapter.

In recent years the UK team resolved to move away from the practice of "hand-outs" as they believed it was counterproductive to achieving empowerment, perpetuated a view of the programme as being based on an unequal donor-recipient relationship, and that reinforced dependence. Members of the staff team were able to empathise with the situation Malawi participants found themselves and recognised that this shaped their engagement with the programme. As Jeremy observed: "If I was in that situation: lacking resources, lacking money, lacking opportunities because of poverty… [which] creates almost a *passive mindset*, the solution is: do you get it from the rich white people who come?" (Interview, 22 May 2013). In highlighting the existence of this sort of mindset amongst Malawian participants and the role that Sport Malawi had played in reproducing it, Jeremy and other staff acknowledged both the limits of the programme and the challenge in addressing a wider sense of inferiority and powerlessness among those locals who engaged in it. As Gates and Suskiewicz (2016, p.3) have argued of SfD more generally, "learned helplessness" is detrimental to the development of critical thinkers who have the "ability to challenge the existing order and thus to change their lives." Likewise, the presence of learned helplessness among the Malawian participants was considered a major constraint in the amount of power they could exert over the nature and direction of the programme and the extent to which it could function in a "bottom-up" manner: "Sport Malawi is a bottom-up model of development and locals *can* control it. It's very difficult because they're not thinking like that, and they're desperate for any

attention, any help that comes their way" (Interview, Robert, 25 November 2013). Oftentimes, the historic and contemporary structures that inhibit the agency of locals within SfD programmes are not accounted for (cf. *ibid*). Dan, however, reflects on how systemic inequalities relate to power dynamics at the discursive level and how this impacts on Sport Malawi:

> Because we being a mass of Westernised lump of ignorance, we have just thought: "Go out there and throw money at things and it will just work". Malawian culture developed and adapted to that and… that's where the largest tension has been because Sport Malawi is very true to itself about how it doesn't seek to do that and it's trying to break that mould… And while I don't think it has slotted in whole-heartedly culturally, in that respect, it didn't need to either (Interview, 22 May 2013).

What we can observe in all of this are asymmetrical power relations created through colonisation in Malawi being carried over into development practice and producing a culture of dependency in the host community. This reflects much of NGO led development practice which reproduces and normalises these unequal power dynamics and roles adopted by stakeholders in both the sending and host communities (Smith 2015). When operationalising aspects of "bottom-up" delivery in Sport Malawi, there was often pressure from Malawians to revert back to the dominant "top-down" model that prioritises Western knowledge, values, and ways of doing things (Heron 2007). This was noted by Jeremy: "You can do things that you don't recognise you are doing because *it's almost like you are being pushed*, and in some cases, *being pushed by Malawians to be what they expect you to be*… it's so easy to fall into that and that is just reinforcing the inequality" (Interview, 22 May 2013). For staff it was difficult to shake off the colonial stereotype of the white person being the giver of knowledge and resources to the hapless/helpless Africans.

It is clear then that the lack of power possessed at the psychological, discursive and structural levels impacted on the extent to which locals engaged in the Sport Malawi programme in ways that allowed it to be more empowering. To address this, staff

members tried to put in place measures that would encourage more local participation such as ensuring student-volunteers listened to the needs of Malawi participants prior to workshop design. This was important for Beth who was involved in the workshop stream for teachers: "I really want the teachers to feel that the students *want to know them…* be a little more proactive, in going out there and delivering what they want. I want them to give those teachers a *proper voice*" (Interview, 21 May 2013). All respondents from this stakeholder group highlighted the importance of listening to local people and trying to build the programme around their needs and to fit their culture. This approach, they recognised, was different to the pedagogies employed by colonial and missionary educators in Malawi who were much more didactic in their approach. This didactic teaching style has persisted and remains prevalent throughout the country. Indeed, as Gates and Suskiewicz (2016) note, rote learning is prevalent across Africa and has produced generations of dependent learners who do not question the knowledge imparted to them. Staff felt it was important to move away from this traditional, colonial approach to education, to a more dialogical practice that sought to level out the relationship between workshop participants and workshop facilitators. However, despite this aspiration, there was a disconnect with what actually took place on the ground and some staff raised concerns about the extent to which the pedagogical approach employed through Sport Malawi was encouraging or facilitating empowerment. For example, on her return from one programme trip, Beth commented:

> I still wonder if the Malawians are being given enough of a voice about what they want… I really think there is a role for them [the local educators] leading some of the workshops. I think we are really underestimating some of them and *it doesn't quite fit right with me* because the whole project is supposed to be about empowering them to take control (Interview, 25 November 2013).

Others argued that workshop delivery tended to be "a bit lecturery" (Interview, Robert, 25 November 2013) with student-volunteers assuming the role of "consultants" who possessed the knowledge that locals lacked and prescribed solutions to complex,

local problems. Robert asserted that rather than adopting this role which he contended is based on an "old worldview", students instead should aspire to be "coaches", which he described as being "about listening and finding what they want; it's a new way of engaging local people in a deep conversation to identify a range of solutions that suit them" (*ibid*). However, as seen in chapter three, power is also determined by groups who are able to control agendas. So while this participatory approach was assumed to be the key factor in facilitating empowerment, the reality was somewhat different. By applying Lukes (2005) three-dimensional perspective on power which considers overt power through decision making, non-decision making power through setting agendas, and finally, ideological power, dialogical approaches to pedagogy can be analysed beyond what is perceived to be taking place on the surface level. At a one-dimensional level it appears that the interests of the workshop participants were prioritised, but from a two-dimensional level it becomes clear that the students and staff were still setting the overall agenda of workshop content, and importantly, at the three-dimensional level, as already seen, the wider cultural and structural context elevates the position and knowledge of the UK participants above that of locals.

Another issue affecting the extent of local input and engagement with the programme delivery was the fact that sport was perceived to be a low status activity within Malawian culture. Annett and Mayuni (2013, p.103) argue that since independence and in the midst of poverty, "sport is now seen by many Malawians as a relatively worthless pastime", and is often associated with antisocial behaviour and distracting young people from education which is seen as crucial for their development. Some respondents noted that this cultural context partially explained the slow "take-up" by local stakeholders of the Sport Malawi vision. For example, Phillip observed:

> There's frustration about the potential Sport Malawi has as a project and because of various social and cultural factors it doesn't achieve this; precisely because there are these amorphous things in the inertia about what sport means there, and

whether children should be doing their homework rather than playing sport (Interview, 19 November 2013).

Aside from the cultural perceptions of sport that may inhibit the desire of locals to use it as a development tool, it was also noted that the harsh realities of living with poverty made it difficult for workshop participants to set up SfD programmes. For example, when Jeremy reflected on his conversations with locals he highlighted how low salaries, poor working conditions, and lack of resources and support resulted in low morale and the lack of enthusiasm to implement SfD programmes within their local communities: "they are so overwhelmed with practical issues, and it's very hard to persuade them to even bother [with SfD] in the first place" (Interview, 22 May 2013). Working with these cultural and historical circumstances, staff felt that fostering dialogue and winning "hearts and minds" to SfD was crucial to securing local input into the Sport Malawi programme. Without genuine "buy-in" local people would perceive themselves as the objects of yet *another* development intervention. One of the key roles of the student-volunteers who took part in Sport Malawi was to deliver the programme and act in ways that helped to facilitate this local "buy-in".

5.4. The perspectives of the student-volunteers

Drawing on data from interviews conducted with UoG students who went through a selection process to participate in Sport Malawi (*n=17*), this final section of the chapter analyses their perspectives. Up to the point of concluding data collection for this thesis approximately forty students had taken part in Sport Malawi and they included undergraduate and postgraduate students from a range of degree courses including sport, youth work and education. The preceding empirical data reveals that the student volunteers are central to the Sport Malawi initiative both as deliverers of key elements of

the programme and as beneficiaries. Thus, understanding what attracted them to the programme, how they made sense of their role within it, their perspectives on global South recipients and their views on the concept of empowerment and the mechanisms that were employed to facilitate it are crucial in detailing the "view from above".

5.4.1. Reinforcing the "white-saviour" complex

In chapter two, a number of studies were discussed that revealed tendencies on the part of volunteers from the global North who were working on SfD projects in the global South, to reproduce the colonial trope of white people being the saviour to non-whites who are perceived to be unable to help themselves (cf. Forde 2013; Darnell 2007). Often described as the white-saviour complex and discussed within postcolonial critiques of development (Jönsson 2010), this phenomenon validates the position and privilege of the global North stakeholders. The student-volunteers recruited onto the Sport Malawi were central in operationalising the empowerment mechanisms employed in the programme. In working towards knowledge transfer, developing the agency of Malawian participants, building capacity and providing resources, the volunteers adopted the role of coach/teacher. Although Sport Malawi aspires for a dialogical, participatory and broadly Freirean pedagogy within the workshops it delivers, the volunteers often justified the elevated role that they assumed on the programme by conveying views that were inflected with a neo-colonial logic, one that positioned the West and its inhabitants as more civilised, intelligent, wealthy and benevolent in relation to those in the non-West. As outlined in chapter two, the SfD field is beset with neo-colonial practice and worldviews (cf. Hartmann and Kwauk 2011; Tiessen 2011), and the responses of some student-volunteers reveal that this was also the case within Sport Malawi. This can be observed clearly in Ryan's words:

> When we go out there it'll benefit them because they can see from us, and I think they believe us; that's the main thing – they trust us – *that we're right*. I think a lot of people, especially Africans look at England as being quite a rich country, and quite a well-educated country which is correct in most terms, so we'll be their teacher and they'll believe what we say (Interview, 25 May 2013).

The student-volunteers credited their perceptions of "Africa" to media representations, and particularly, the television advertising campaigns for aid and development related charities. Consequently, there were narrow expectations of what Malawi would be like. Jason, for example, suggested that; "From England you have this this stereotypical view of Africa as this wasteland of nothingness and mud huts with people who drink from lakes that are filled with dirty water and die all around" (Interview, 23 May 2013).

By exploring how the white-saviour complex is reproduced through Hollywood and educational representations, Cammarota's (2011) work illustrates that media representations are significant in instilling racial prejudice and privilege, and we see these same processes at play amongst some of the volunteers on the Sport Malawi project. As was discussed in chapter two, the role of race and its impact on SfD has received some scholarly attention which reveals that many SfD programmes using global North volunteers construct whiteness as a normative ideal (cf. Darnell 2007; 2010; 2012; Forde 2013). At the time of this study, all student-volunteers were white, and Darnell (2007) notes how whiteness as a defining racial characteristic enables global North volunteers to take up superior positions when in the global South. It is clear that whiteness or Northernness shaped the self-identities, roles, and approaches to pedagogy assigned by staff and accepted by the student-volunteers. The normative, superior social position of the interviewees supported the rationale that the non-white bodies participating in the programme should be grateful for the knowledge, assistance and resources they received. This view is exemplified in this excerpt from Scott who delves into the perceived gratitude shown to white people or "Msungus" as they are known colloquially in Malawi:

> They were so happy to have Westerners come over and share. For them to have us sharing an experience that we take for granted but they had no idea of the concepts and the things we were talking about. It was weird because they were a lot older than me and speaking to adults sat down in a classroom and writing down all you had said was a bit of a surreal experience. Everything that was said they took on board… They were trying to get everything they could out of us, and because they were a select group of people, for them it was probably like getting selected for the national England squad (Interview, 26 November 2013).

This description of SfD interaction between global North and global South actors in Sport Malawi illustrates how whiteness and the associated white-saviour complex are (re)produced and secured as a normative ideal. As discussed at the outset of this section, this neo-colonial complex is underpinned by the assumption that non-whites are in need of saving, and this can be only be done with the help of white people. What is particularly interesting in this excerpt is that the depiction of the pedagogy employed is strikingly didactic and at odds with the aspirations of Sport Malawi to empower workshop participants through dialogical exchanges. It also reveals the tendency of the student volunteers to view themselves as more knowledgeable, depositors of information to workshop participants who are considered to gratefully and uncritically, absorb this knowledge. This further highlights the gap between Sport Malawi's educational processes and its wider objectives around empowerment. In particular, it problematizes the role of SfD volunteers who have inherited the white-saviour complex and demonstrates a lack of capacity to move away from a "banking" pedagogical approach towards one that is more critical and that seeks to deconstruct power relations and structural inequalities in the ways that Freire (1972) advocated. Furthermore, because didactic teaching is normative across Africa there is little pressure applied from the "bottom-up" to implement critical pedagogy within the workshop scenario.

Reflecting on this uneven student-teacher relationship and the empowerment mechanism of knowledge transfer, interviewees often expressed elation when the information and skills they transferred were emulated by the workshop participants:

> We were amazed people were interested in what we had to say and were so polite, and it seemed they were genuinely taking on the information. And maybe that's Malawi culture; that they're so used to having people give resources and information and so *they are in that way* (Interview, Niall, 28 November 2013).

> In all honesty they were buying it in the sense it was coming out of our mouths and they were taking that as gospel and it was a little bit like *playback* and *copying* what we were saying and teaching to them (Interview, Scott, 26 November 2013).

The sense of satisfaction was particularly evident when the volunteers witnessed at first hand, the impact of their teaching during visits to local SfD projects setup and run by workshop participants. For example, talking about a school visit to follow-up if and how a teacher was implementing what s/he had learnt in the workshops, Pauline said: "We just stood there dumbfounded. It was amazing" (Interview, 22 May 2013). What the student had witnessed was a workshop participant who refused any input from the student-volunteers in order to demonstrate what s/he had learned. Seeing their instruction being put into practice in this way served to reinforce the white-saviour complex in student-volunteers. This can be observed in the words of Pauline who recalled; "At the end we met the head and a lot of us were close to tears because she said that with *our help* these kids would have their lives sort of saved by the education that we could provide" (*ibid*).

On the whole, older students and those who had been on earlier Sport Malawi trips showed themselves to be able to reflect more critically on their role within the programme. This was evident from Anna, who mulled over a similar experience when observing a workshop participant, whom she had taught the previous year, deliver a SfD HIV and AIDS awareness session: "I got emotional: 'Wow, they're actually using what we taught them'. But then I was like: 'Well, are they putting that on for a show because they know that's what we delivered and that's what we want to see?'" (Interview, 23 November 2013). In this more critical reflection we see a hint that just as student-volunteers played the position of coach/teacher, workshop participants assumed the role of emulator, knowing that this would please/appease their global North partners. In many ways this reflects the broader dichotomy established through colonisation and mainstream

development policy and practice, that of coloniser/colonised and developed/developing, respectively. What is particularly interesting is that although the white-saviour identity was self-induced by those in the sending community, that same narrative was also applied to student-volunteers by the recipients of the programme in Mzuzu. This point is perfectly illustrated by Taylor:

> [An] element of hope is cast in a Malawian mind through someone who comes from afar, a stranger who can be deemed as something that they are not, in what they project an image onto. Whether someone had projected something onto me, that I was going to come and help them out with money and goods; that was never going to happen. But it was easy for someone in that setting to think and project that on, but I don't know if me leaving has resulted in a negative view of people who don't fulfil *the role that I was there to do* (Interview, 21 May 2013).

While he was adamantly opposed the role of white-savour, Taylor perceived that this was the image envisaged of him by the host community.

As discussed in chapter three, with the rise of voluntourism, attention has shifted from the needs of supposed local beneficiaries to what consumers of development "products" might expect to accrue from them (Palacios 2010; Waldorf 2012). To meet the expectations of the consumers, many programmes are designed with the needs and interests of the volunteers at the forefront. In line with this, Bell (2013, p.15) notes that "for the white-saviour to exist, it must have the Other, in this case Africans as a singular timeless human monoculture that bears little resemblance to 'us'". When contemplating how Sport Malawi galvanises the white-saviour complex and sustains power inequality, Taylor said:

> With Sport Malawi for that month people take on an identity and you fit into whatever you want to be… because there is an assumption and acceptance that, rightly or wrongly, a white person in *that setting* has better knowledge than a black person… Sport Malawi has created a platform from which the white person can speak and the black person can listen (Interview, 21 May 2013).

This reflection illuminates how Sport Malawi presented student-volunteers with the opportunity to assert a racialized sense of power and privilege over Malawian workshop participants. This was also evident in the student-volunteers' engagement with coaches

and heads of sports governing bodies "who [were] accepting of my opinion and what we had to say" (Interview, Niall, 28 November 2013).

The maintenance of power inequalities rooted in neo-colonial mindsets ensured that UK participants were able to access opportunities and positions in Malawi that would not have ordinarily been available to them in the UK. Reflecting on the overall experience of opportunities offered to volunteers while in Malawi, Ryan said: "As a student I've never had a group of people come up to me and say: 'Thank you so much for coming, it was such a help'… It definitely exceeded my expectations. The African people are lovely" (Interview, 25 May 2013). On the issue of the privileged access afforded to student-volunteers and how this reinforces the white-saviour complex, the Nigerian-American writer, Cole (2012, np) notes how: "Africa serves as a backdrop for white fantasies of conquest and heroism… a space onto which white egos can conveniently be projected. It is a liberated space in which the usual rules do not apply." As a direct result, "A nobody from America or Europe can go to Africa and become a godlike saviour or, at very least, have his or her emotional needs satisfied" (*ibid*). Problematizing the elevated role of coach/teacher and how it validates privilege and the white-saviour complex, Anna questioned: "We go over there because *we think* something needs developing and it doesn't appear to be as good a life as we supposedly live … but is that what matters and what they want?" (Interview, 23 November 2013).

By assuming a superior role in Malawi, student-volunteers were unable to embrace the crucial position of "co-learner" that is paramount to critical and dialogical pedagogies. Speaking about operationalising such pedagogies within SfD, Spaaij *et al*. (2016, p. 582) argue that "continued negotiation, denunciation of hegemonic beliefs and the annunciation of an alternate set of possibilities" are constantly required between educators and learners. However, when knowledge and worldviews presented by Malawi participants diverged from those held by student-volunteers it was discounted: "It was

ultimately like if they had a view that was different from what we were teaching it was: 'Well, you're wrong' basically and so there was that kind of conflict... [and] being point-blank: 'Well, that's rubbish'" (Interview, Anna, 23 November 2013). By students assuming a superior position in relation to knowledge, local participants were sometimes portrayed as backward, uncivilised and uneducated: "They haven't got facts, they are more going on beliefs... You've got to go and show them another way... without being horrible but explain where they are going wrong" (Interview, Jason, 23 May 2013). This only reinforced the white-saviour complex as evident in Brittany's response: "I could not get over the simple things for me would just blow them away... it made me realise how much we could help in terms of knowledge (Interview, 22 November 2013).

Finally, with the underlying white-saviour complex, student-volunteers wanted to evangelise the message about the *power of sport*. Echoing the missionary ethos of the colonial era they felt sport could be an educative and civilising instrument in Malawi. Testifying about the impact on their own lives, respondents described sport as a universal language and credited it for developing life skills, communication, teamwork, and loosing significant body weight. Therefore, it was assumed that sport could also "save" and develop others in Malawi and this "truth" was considered universal and absolute. For example, Jason said: "Sport is something everybody in the world should be involved in and I can't understand people who have no interest in sport. When people say they hate sport, well what else do they do? I just don't understand" (Interview, 23 May 2013). Some believed that it was their responsibility to share this religious zeal for sport and SfD with the people of Malawi because in the words of Pauline: "Obviously they don't really see the purpose of sport and don't understand the importance of it so I would quite like to go out there and get it across" (Interview, 22 May 2013).

5.4.2. Overlooking historic and complex structural inequalities

When asked why they thought Malawi needed development, many student-volunteers were unaware of the historic structural inequalities created through British imperial rule and what corrective action could be taken to redress the uneven power relations that this has heralded. Many understood development in the way Amy expressed: "Working together as a global community, maybe trying to help those who aren't necessarily well off as you and to help them progress and develop… to achieve the same goal which is to *be on par with each other*" (Interview, 21 May 2013). Amy perceived that development is orientated towards levelling out the unequal playing field for each global citizen which suggests that there must be a power imbalance in the first place. However, there was no explanation forthcoming from her, or from most of the other volunteers who took part in the programme on how this inequality came about. Bell (2013, p.8) cautions against the West's tendency to prescribe a cure without undertaking a thorough diagnosis because, "African peoples become 'victims' of poverty and disease, problems which apparently sprang, without history, from hapless circumstance, poor choices, or rotten luck." Such an apolitical reading disconnects the development enterprise from its own colonial history and as a result the problems facing Malawi are attributed to cultural and political essentialisms. Echoing mainstream development paradigms, the causes of and roadblocks to development in Malawi were considered by some students to be cultural backwardness, lack of good governance and endemic corruption;

> It comes down to power and they [the Malawi government] keep all the money and have all the final decisions, and so all of it is a bit corrupt really… they keep their country poor by the way they devise things (Interview, Leah, 23 May 2013)

> They have these aspirations but they are bound by leaders, bound by money and they don't have the organisation to go about changing that… Obviously there is a lot of charity work and we try and make sure that those people over there get a fair life, that they are not disadvantaged, *which they definitely are*, but I don't think there is going to be bridge from their lives to sort of Western culture. You might say it is sad but it is the way it is (Interview, Scott, 26 November 2013).

While there was little acknowledgement of the global structural inequalities that inhibit the life chances of Malawians, a few student-volunteers were able to offer vignettes of occasions where the lopsided power dynamics were suddenly made visible to them. This account from Scott provides a micro example of this power imbalance:

> At the end of each course there was an examination and there were some people who didn't pass and it was really weird being on the other side of that experience… To see it on someone else's face and to me what we were teaching was insignificant but for them it was obviously something massive. That was the only time you realised that what we were doing had a *power effect*. And they would say: "Please I want to pass, what can I do?"… Some of them were twice my age and with more experience. I hadn't got teaching qualifications, this is just something I learned for the workshops… They haven't seen the fact that they're being taught by a twenty-year-old kid, they haven't actually caught on to that yet. And that's a bad reflection of us as Westerners that we assume that they will listen to us, but then again that is part of the culture thing, it is what it is. And that's why it's good to go out there and see a bunch of people twice your age will listen to someone like me (Interview, 26 November 2013).

Scott began to see the patterns of power at work that maintained the higher status of UK participants and the inferior position of local participants in the workshop environment. The inferior stance of the workshop participants heightened the status and power of the student-volunteers who felt empowered within the vertical and (neo)colonial hierarchy that was maintained. Scott felt uncomfortable in commenting on whether this was exploitive: "[I] stop my mind from focusing on that aspect too much because I think if you do that it's degrading to your experience… It's not pleasant but there's nothing you can do about it" (*ibid*).

The power inequality was also manifest in the luxury possessions of student-volunteers which were on show during workshops and project visits. Some students did not assume this was a negative thing as it would give a glimpse into Western consumerism and encourage locals to work harder to attain such commodities. The underlying message is that poverty exists because of the lack of individual responsibility as opposed to the oppressive global political and economic structures. This is perfectly illustrated by Leah:

> None jump on a plane wanting to spread Westernisation but we don't realise [we do it]… It's teasing them really and having all these gadgets is showing them something they are never going to get in their lifetime because it's so expensive. It's good in some ways, like it might instil a bit of passion and drive to go out there and get a job and build on their education to get these materialistic things. But with the way the world is, politically and getting jobs, the way it is out there, I don't think it is completely achievable… From that perspective Sport Malawi creates more unequal relationships (Interview, 23 May 2013).

Culpability for the (re)production of poverty was levelled by the students mostly at the lack of determination, education and resourcefulness on the part of the Malawian participants that they encountered and as an upshot the social, economic and political causes were, in the main, ignored (Cammarota 2011; Straubhaar 2015). In the first Sport Malawi trip, Thomas spoke of an occasion when local children stared into the stationary minibus carrying the team and their belongings. In contrast to Leah his reaction was to "feel so greedy and awkward and uncomfortable" (Interview, 21 November 2013). Rather than blaming the deficiencies of the onlookers, Thomas remarked: "and all they wanted was our empty water bottles so they could get some money for them and it made me question the trip and more than that, it made me question the distribution of wealth globally" (*ibid*). This account was as far as any student-volunteer was willing to implicate themselves in the structural inequalities of race, class and globalisation. The muted feeling was generally one of: "Development politically is quite a big issue, but it's not something I'd typically want to go down" (Interview, Ryan, 25 May 2013).

What is striking from the data is that volunteering and living in the host community did not stimulate dialogue in critical directions for the student-volunteers. Instead, respondents elaborated in great detail about how they made significant decisions in Malawi which were enacted on return to the UK, such as those relating to marriage, career, and the life they wanted to pursue. For example, Ashley said:

> On the last week we spent hours on this pontoon in the lake talking about the rest of our lives and what we were going to do and how Malawi had given us an opportunity to think because we didn't have any *obligations* at that point, and you were *completely separate from your world*, and we talked for hours about how

this had changed our lives… And I've always come back to that and think: "Right, have I gone in the direction that I want to go in and do I want more of this in my life and how do I get more of what Malawi gave me?"… You've got a reference point you can always relate back to in terms of realising things are not too bad here (Interview, 22 November 2013).

Feeling free from "obligations" and "completely separate from [the] world", some student-volunteers reflected more on their own personal, academic and professional futures as opposed to committing themselves to working with disadvantaged communities. This could be interpreted as a direct consequence of UoG promoting Sport Malawi as a way for student-volunteers to enhance their student experience and employability. In this way the "corporate culture" permeating higher education reduces global citizenship to what Giroux and Giroux (2004, p.252) call a "solitary affair whose aim is to produce competitive, self-interested individuals vying for their own material and ideological gains." As the needs of the student-volunteers are prioritised the result is that the white-saviour complex is burnished while the needs of the Malawi participants are marginalised and the causes of structural inequalities ignored.

5.4.3. Empowering the neoliberal self

A strong theme emerging from this stakeholder group was that their view of what empowerment was and how it might be achieved correlated strongly with the neoliberal version of empowerment detailed in chapter three. As discussed in chapter three, this neoliberal version argues that empowerment comes from within and is rooted in individual responsibility. Assuming a relatively equal playing field, neoliberalism posits that through hard work individuals can improve their position materially regardless of the limitations of the circumstances they encounter (Ostry 1990). Given the prevalence of neoliberalism in the society where they come from, it is hardly surprising that the student-volunteers understood empowerment, and how it might occur in Malawi, in this way. When transferred to the Malawi context this message of individual responsibility

becomes post-racial in that it assumes that structural inequalities are largely irrelevant to socio-economic progress. Also known as "colour-blind racism" (Cammarota 2011; Bell 2013; Straubhaar 2015) this ideology discounts racial inequality and colonialism as bygone issues, and as a result abrogates the "colonial continuities" (Heron 2007) that continue to oppress and marginalise Malawi and its people in the global economy.

In line with this post-racial stance the student-volunteers saw their role as revolving around empowering local participants to take personal responsibility to tackle their own problems. Consequently, and despite the perspectives of the staff members of the programme, there is a tendency in Sport Malawi to cultivate within the host community the notion that individuality is the panacea for complex structural problems, but, in such a way that it is seen as a "universal non-ideological truth" (Bell 2013, p.13). The overwhelming perspective of this stakeholder group, then, was that empowerment should be understood and operationalised at the personal or psychological level. This is captured well in Shawn's comments;

> Empowerment is about having that belief and understanding of yourself and knowing what you are capable of, and feeling confident to make decisions that are inevitably going to affect your life… So what empowers? The processes are very much based on training and learning and understanding because if they picked up new skills and believed they could do something then they could back to their communities and say: "Look, I can do this and here it is." And that is their sense of self-empowerment; that they had been provided with those skills and understanding… and fitting in with that is dialogue and discussion and sharing knowledge… The biggest thing is that sort of confidence and self-belief and knowing that they are capable (Interview, 28 November 2013).

With the onus on individuality, the empowerment mechanisms of knowledge transfer, developing agency, and building capacity are understood by the volunteers as invaluable in helping local participants to become SfD practitioners who work efficiently within oppressive conditions rather than overcome them. Furthermore, seen through a postcolonial lens, local needs and interests in this view of empowerment are defined by outside "experts" who want to save the Other, often from themselves, their deficiencies

and their culture, rather than acknowledge and address the injustices they are implicated in. In tandem with this neo-colonial (re)positioning (Giulianotti 2011), the neoliberal empowerment model with its individualistic solutions to historical structural inequalities, may actually disempower those for whom Sport Malawi aspires to empower. In the context of maintaining unequal power dynamics any radical empowerment of the type espoused by the staff members is illusionary, because as Taylor notes: "Someone else has got the power because we put you [the Malawian] in a place where you think you are empowered, but, actually you're just being manipulated, and that is actually disempowering" (Interview, 21 November 2013).

Although the neoliberal view of empowerment is highly problematic in the context of Malawi, it suited what the student-volunteers wanted to achieve. Some interviewees sought to use Sport Malawi to produce philanthropy as an aspect of their persona. It was important for them to belong to a University that had corporate social responsibility as part of its brand: "When you look through the prospectus and it says Sport Malawi it looks good… it says we are giving back" (Interview, Taylor, 21 November 2013). Involvement in humanitarian work is considered fashionable (Bell 2013) and as Taylor went on to admit: "going to Malawi has a glamour and an appeal" (Interview, 21 November 2013). In constructing the philanthropist identity, they exercised their privilege and power to define a common good that served a myriad of personal, academic, professional, social and emotional needs. Ashley articulates this motivation in the following excerpt:

> It's something that I want to do so if people ask about me: "Oh well last summer I went and did sport for development over in Africa". Like I want that to be part of who I am because it makes me feel happy and that's a big part of it. I haven't got a lot of experience because I've just started my career but to know I've that information is exciting; I can build upon that (Interview, 22 November 2013).

Influenced by the principles of profit-driven instrumental rationality, student-volunteers weighed up the cost-value benefit of their participation in Sport Malawi. Going back to

the notion, mentioned by staff, that the project had become a "product" to enhance the "student experience", consumers had to be satisfied that Sport Malawi gave them enough back to justify the "purchase". This often came in the form of emotional give-back that reinforced the white-saviour persona they wanted to construct. For example, Ryan reflected on: "seeing the smiles on their faces and realising that they actually appreciate us being there, and I could have went there going: "They don't need us there, they know what they are doing", *but*, I don't feel that" (Interview, 25 May 2013). As a result of the perceived appreciation at his presence he concluded: "It was worthwhile, worth the money, worth the trip, worth all the jabs" (*ibid*).

Furthermore, student-volunteers spoke extensively about how Sport Malawi had enhanced their student experience and employment prospects. When it came to academic assessment they used Sport Malawi as the basis for dissertations and work-based learning modules. It was perceived that participating in the programme gave this stakeholder group an advantage over their peers when it came to practical assessments and presentations: "Coming back here and teaching the students seemed like a breeze and I just wasn't bothered because I was like: "I've done this in Africa so this is nothing" (Interview, Abby, 19 November 2013). In addition, they deemed that it enhanced their experience and developed transferable skills that would ready them for the workforce: "As long as you've got the results to get the degree that placement experience is what singles you out and any opportunity to improve my CV I take… Sport Malawi is a big thing in what I've enjoyed this year" (Interview, Jason, 23 May 2013). Recent graduates who took part in the research for this thesis all attributed Sport Malawi to being crucial in securing employment in the fields of education, sport development, international development and SfD. Thomas, who secured a management role within a SfD NGO, said: "There's no way I would have got the job if I hadn't had the Malawi experience. It certainly gave me a passion for international development and it made me feel my skillset was credible and I

can contribute" (Interview, 21 November 2013). Due to its ability to enhance their experience and employability respondents echoed Niall's assertion that "it [Sport Malawi] justified my choice of Gloucestershire really" (Interview, 28 November 2013).

In an instrumental fashion student-volunteers were empowered in tangible ways. There was acknowledgement that Sport Malawi had an external orientation, as Taylor revealed: "You never really do it for the people you meet out there… The long lasting impact will be on those who went on Sport Malawi from England rather than those guys out there" (Interview, 21 November 2013). Noting their privileged position, student-volunteers by their own admission saw Sport Malawi as largely self-serving:

> There's a bit of compromise 'cos I'm also trying to get the experience. So we're obviously there giving and offering help but I want them and the place to give me the experience I want to come out of it. So in the timeframe I don't think I'm terribly empowering because I want the place and the trip to give me something, so it's not a purest, selfless experience. I'm not completely going over there and saying: "I'm doing this for you…" My life is going to carry on as normal and I want the place to empower me a bit (Interview, Scott, 26 November 2013).

The efforts to facilitate empowerment in Malawi through student-volunteers who are ultimately aspiring to empower themselves appears to undermine efforts to rebalance uneven power dynamics and wider structural inequalities initiated under British colonialism and that continue to impoverish Malawi today.

Conclusion

Drawing broadly on postcolonial theory this chapter critically explored "the actual practices" (Guest 2009) of Sport Malawi viewed from "above". By situating the programme against UoG's Anglican identity, the neoliberal tendencies shaping higher education, and discussing the empowerment discourse and mechanisms employed, the perspectives of management, staff, and student-volunteers were analysed to understand how they chimed with neoliberal and postcolonial understandings of empowerment.

Through probing the perspectives of these stakeholder groups, the philosophies and practices that impacted on the empowerment or otherwise of the people for whom Sport Malawi aspires to empower were elicited. It has been noted that senior management and student-volunteers to varying extents possessed a broadly neoliberal perspective of empowerment which positioned individual responsibility as the panacea to deep structural inequalities. Members of staff involved in the planning and delivery of the programme sought to promote a more postcolonial reading and radical understanding of empowerment, however, they were not able to instil this into Sport Malawi because of the restrictive organisational culture in the sending community (Spaaij *et al*. 2016) and the local culture of dependency in the host community (Heron 2007). As a result, Sport Malawi was externally oriented to serve the needs, interests, and brand of UoG, while enhancing the student experience and employability.

Underlying all of this is the material legacy of (neo)colonialism that necessities and sustains development and unequal power relations. As this chapter has illustrated, this has privileged the needs of the UoG and the student-volunteers over those of local participants and the host community. In this way, this chapter aligns with Wilson and Hayhurst (2009) and Darnell and Kaur (2015) who note how SfD programmes can be "ironic" in that they *supposedly* address complex structural issues, but, their neoliberal solutions only (re)produce these conditions and reinforce inequality. The "thick description" used throughout this chapter reveals how UK participants often assumed to know the thoughts of the Other (Spivak 1985). But as Bell (2013, p.7) writes, "To speak *for* is to maintain the order of things" and therefore the next chapter gives voice to the Malawian stakeholders by looking at the view from "below".

Chapter Six: The View from "Below"

Introduction

The previous chapter revealed a largely neoliberal version of empowerment and an external orientation at the centre of how Sport Malawi is understood and operationalised by key stakeholders and project deliverers at the UoG. This chapter accounts for the view from "below" by focusing on the experiences of local deliverers and intended beneficiaries of Sport Malawi in the "host community" (Sherraden *et al.* 2008). More specifically, the chapter employs a postcolonial lens to critically interrogate how empowerment is understood, operationalised and enacted through Sport Malawi by four sets of Malawi-based stakeholders. These are comprised of key figures in the local community not directly involved in the project, the Malawi Team that oversee and sustain project activities, workshop participants trained to deliver SfD projects, and finally, the participants of these projects. To fully present the analysis of Sport Malawi from this postcolonial orientation and to properly contextualise the project, this chapter begins by drawing on ethnographic observation and documentary evidence to sketch out how Sport Malawi operates within Mzuzu. The discussion here will examine the origins and nature

of the relationship between the Malawian "recipients" and UoG, the operational structure of Sport Malawi, and the range of stakeholders involved. It will then detail the positioning of the five SfD projects in Mzuzu that were followed during the ethnographic phase of the research. After this the chapter will detail the view from "below", and specifically how empowerment and the mechanisms employed by Sport Malawi to achieve this reflect neoliberal and postcolonial variants. By focusing on the views of the four sets of stakeholders in Malawi, this chapter gives voice to, and, interrogates "the perspectives of all stakeholders in the aid chain" (Darnell and Hayhurst 2012, p.120). By drawing on the "thick description" to probe "the actual practices" (Guest 2009) of Sport Malawi these sections offer a synopsis of the broad themes that emerged from their responses.

6.1. Sport Malawi within the receiving community

Given the high-profile nature of the partnerships and media coverage as outlined in the description of the programme at the end of chapter two, there was a desire from the national organising committee for UoG to draft a constitution to instigate the process of registering Sport Malawi as a NGO. However, amongst UoG staff there was concern that Sport Malawi was experiencing *mission drift* and losing its focus on empowering local communities to use sport to further sustainable bottom-up development. With the fear that the project was too thinly spread over the three main cities of Malawi, and consequently that it lacked the depth required to facilitate meaningful empowerment, the decision was taken predominantly by UoG staff to focus on the main urban centre of the Northern Region, Mzuzu. The rationale for this move was three-pronged. Firstly, the Northern Region was less developed than the other regions and has been overlooked by both state and non-state development actors relative to other regions. Secondly, workshop

deliverers felt that workshop participants in Mzuzu were more attentive and less reliant on hand-outs than their counterparts in Blantyre and Lilongwe. Thus, it was believed that Mzuzu offered the best opportunity for the creation of autonomous locally-run SfD projects that could operate independently following an initial period of support. Thirdly, a member of the national organising committee who lived in Mzuzu was appointed as the co-ordinator for Sport Malawi and it was hoped that he could drive the initiative and encourage local ownership, as well as carry out more systematic monitoring to feed into long-term planning. This decision left the national organising committee disillusioned with the new direction of the project, and without a presence in Lilongwe and Blantyre, this committee disbanded, and all planning and communication was subsequently channelled between the UoG and the local committee in Mzuzu. Given that it constitutes the focal point for the Sport Malawi initiative, it is important to provide some further context on Mzuzu and to describe how the project operates in this context.

As the capital city of the Northern Region, Mzuzu serves as a base for banking and commerce, industry, government administration, services distribution, conference tourism, and NGOs for the Northern Region. The designation of Mzuzu as a city in 1985 was intended to rebalance development in Malawi. Mzuzu does not have the colonial era infrastructure manifest in Blantyre and the former capital, Zomba, nor the infrastructure and amenities of Lilongwe which developed when it became the new capital city for Malawi. To this day many residents in the Northern Region feel that their region is still lagging in terms of development, with the government and non-government actors focusing their efforts on the other two regions. As a result, there has been a continuous "brain drain" with many educated residents moving to these bigger cities in search of better employment opportunities. To curb this migration drift, the development of Mzuzu was intended to act as a "counter-magnet" (Mzuzu City Council 2013, p.14).

The largest tribe in the Northern Region is the Tumbuka and their dialect is the main language spoken in Mzuzu. Tribalism is still very much a part of Malawian society and many locals felt that their fellow Malawians from the other regions resented them. This was in part due to the perception that Tumbukas were traditionally more educated because of the Livingstonia mission station which, located in the Northern Region, offered the best schooling during colonial rule. Due to the education received by some Northerners, much of the first government cabinet after independence consisted of Ministers from the Region. This has led to subsequent antipathy with many Northerners feeling that their region has been purposefully and systematically underdeveloped since. However, precisely because of being overlooked by state and non-state actors, many regarded their communities to be more autonomous and less dependent on external aid as their counterparts in the Central and Southern regions (field notes, 12 February 2014).

Mzuzu is experiencing rapid growth and there is a proliferation of informal settlements. The local government estimates that due to the lack of low cost housing and building plots that over sixty percent of Mzuzu's population are squatting (Mzuzu City Council 2013, p.9). In 2013, it was estimated that 195,078 people lived in the city, and that by the year 2020 that this figure would rise to 306,000 (*ibid*). There is continual rural to urban migration into Mzuzu with many young, unskilled and uneducated migrants aspiring to make a living in the informal jobs sector. With such exponential growth, there is a "land grab" underway for both private housing and commercial premises. With land in the city perceived to be now in short supply, some interviewees were keen to highlight how they were urgently attempting to procure a building plot and construct a house either for their family or to rent out to bring in an additional income. A by-product of this is that open spaces in the city that were/are used for sports and recreation are being squeezed.

The economy in Mzuzu is transitioning from one focused on being an administrative centre to becoming a commercial hub for the Northern Region. With the

growth of NGOs and the presence of donors, conference tourism is thriving and workshop facilities are provided by premium hotels, budget motels, guesthouses, churches, and educational institutions. For the first three years Sport Malawi used Mphato Motel and then more low-cost facilities such as the William Koyi Guesthouse, Saint Andrew's Church, Mzuzu University, and a covered part of Mzuzu Stadium before the wind blew off the roof. However, unlike workshop facilities, sports facilities in Mzuzu are limited. Alongside the shrinkage of open spaces, sports amenities in the city are inadequate to meet demand and are in poor condition. For example, Mzuzu Stadium, owned by the city council and built in the 1970s to cater for football, athletics, netball and other indoor sports activities, is in a general state of disrepair (field notes, 12 February 2014). There are also more informal facilities that sports teams and SfD projects use which are owned by Mzuzu University, schools, churches, the Malawi Defence and Security Services, and the Sunbird Hotel. Although these amenities are located on sites demarcated for other purposes, they are often available without any fee to local sports clubs and SfD projects (*ibid*). The situation is well summed by the City Council which state that "Mzuzu really can be considered a city of sport without space for recreational activities" (Mzuzu City Council 2013, p.86).

This is the context within which the five SfD projects that fall under the remit of Sport Malawi operate. The deliverers of these projects all undertook the UK-led Sport Malawi workshops and were recipients of modest amounts of sports kit and equipment sourced by UoG staff and student-volunteers. Due to their geographical location, modest scale, and being largely initiated by locals, these community-based SfD programmes lack the visibility of larger SfD externally funded NGOs in the global South. However, their engagement with Sport Malawi highlights the complex nature and varying extents to which even modest SfD projects interact with both internal and external stakeholders and agendas (cf. Kay 2012). Although the specific location(s) of SfD projects cannot be given

to ensure anonymity for the research participants, they operated across several neighbourhoods and townships in Mzuzu. All the projects targeted participants under twenty years of age, a demographic that constitutes fifty-three percent of Mzuzu's population (Government of the Republic of Malawi 2010). It is estimated that one in ten families in Mzuzu live in a state of poverty to the extent that they do not have enough income required to meet the minimum standard for daily-recommended food requirements, school fees or medical care (Government of the Republic of Malawi 2009).

With this context in mind, the chapter now proceeds to articulate the view from "below" which is crucial in understanding to what extent the empowerment focused activities of Sport Malawi are aligned to extending or transforming the trajectory of unequal power relations set in the colonial era and maintained by mainstream development practice. The empirical data presented in the rest of the chapter critically analyses understandings and practices within Sport Malawi from the various stakeholder perspectives within Mzuzu, and begins to tease out how they chime with neoliberal and postcolonial understandings of empowerment.

6.2. The perspective of community stakeholders

Drawing on data gathered primarily from interviews conducted with community stakeholders in Mzuzu ($n = 7$) and from field notes taken during the fieldwork, this section explores the power relations, practices and mindsets that contour the operation of the development sector in general across Malawi. Sport Malawi does not operate within a social vacuum and therefore it is crucial to foreground these local power dynamics, mindsets, and practices that have become the "norm" in the "receiving community". This enables a more considered interrogation of the views of the Malawi Team, workshop

participants, and project participants, and whether Sport Malawi aligns with or disavows these power relations, mindsets, and practices. Therefore, these perspectives from development workers, local chiefs, government officials, and school principals, who all observed Sport Malawi from their own vantage points, offer key insights into the broader development context in which Sport Malawi operates, and the historical, cultural, social, political, and economic conditions that impact on the project and shape how empowerment is understood and operationalised.

6.2.1. Dependency and inferiority: the legacies of colonialism

It was noted in chapter three that empowerment discourse and practice in development is characterised by paternalism, and the roots of this go back to colonialism. Mainstream development has been criticised for overlooking the historical structural asymmetries that privilege the global North (McEwan 2009) and failing to understand that the impediments to empowerment are historic and structural rather than technological and cultural (Vanderplaat 1998; Deepak 2011). The postcolonial lens reveals that development can disempower the intended beneficiaries by reinforcing the narrative that the West is the *saviour* to the passive non-West which is blamed for its own underdevelopment. To develop this view in regards to Malawi, this section examines the connection between the current reliance on external aid and the histories of colonialism, independence, and development in the country.

These themes of inferiority and dependency on external intervention threaded their way through all the interviews with those in this stakeholder group, with respondents tracing them through the various stages of Malawian history, from the current era of multiparty politics and the influx of NGOs, to independence and dictatorship, and then to colonial rule. In accounting for the role of colonialism in imbuing in Malawians a sense

of inferiority and dependency, some respondents commented specifically on the uneven relations of power between Malawians and the British that were institutionalised during colonial rule. For example, Gabby who is a principal of a primary school that participated in the Bouncing Futures project pointed to the self-interest manifest in colonial rule and how it produced a disempowering political, economic and social environment for locals: "during that era each region had a governor and over them was a governor, and they were *all* British and *no powers were given to us*" (Interview, 26 March 2014).

This is not to suggest that Malawians were passive or complicit in these power relations in the colonial period, or indeed, that all Europeans sought to entrench them. The emergence of a vibrant nationalist movement and the paradoxical role of the missionaries in helping to stoke nationalism is revealing in this regard. Although they enabled colonialism and propagated social Darwinism, respondents did not equate the missions with "empire", for two reasons. Firstly, as noted by a government official called Lois, "MPs were white settlers and missionaries were taken as *representing the African interests*. So, they were fighting for government, education, health, and agriculture" (Interview, 26 March 2014). Here, she is referring to the exclusion of Malawians from the Legislative Council, while a seat was reserved for a missionary who would represent their views, needs and interests (cf. Ross 2013). Secondly, the missions helped Malawians to critique colonialism and develop political associations, and this formed the basis for a nationalist movement to emerge (*ibid*), as illustrated by Rhone, who works for a NGO:

> Missionaries influenced independence with their theology; you are predestined to do whatever you want to do, and if you want to achieve independence you can achieve it… They picked up some of what we were called then, Nyasas, who could understand politics through theological courses, stuff like that, and were taught that *you need to fight for your own independence* (Interview, 10 March 2014).

The desire for independence intensified when the white settlers proposed a Federation between Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland. Fearing that this would further embed white supremacy, Malawians strongly opposed the amalgamation,

referring to it as an arrangement between a rider and a horse, with Malawi being under the control of the elites in the richer territories. Due to the lack of economic development under British rule, the value of Malawi lay in its labour which was used to extract natural resources from the commercial plantations in the Rhodesias (field notes, 15 February 2014). Due to this British-imposed positioning in the region, Malawians still consider their country as inferior to the other two territories, now called Zimbabwe and Zambia.

In the era that followed independence, respondents noted that "colonial continuities" (Heron 2007) still shape their self-identities and the material conditions of their lives. Nabila, who works in local government describes the psychological and discursive after-effects of colonial rule in the following terms:

> When the British were here, the Africans admired the way they did their things, whether it was wrong or right. It was the way things were so if it was British or white it was better, so *psychologically we were trained*; that's how our minds work so that anything British or white was much better than anything black or Malawian (Interview, 18 March 2014).

Here we can see how power was operationalised at the personal and cultural levels to enable white people to (re)produce dominance in colonial and post-colonial Malawi. While Malawi continues to be ideologically influenced by the UK, new global power relations also shape political and economic neo-colonial processes of control and dependency. This new hegemony takes on novel forms such as aid conditionalities, debt, and unfair trade relationships (Moyo 2009). Gabby (Interview, 26 March 2014) expands on the latter: "As things were on the up they said 'you depend on us' and they took resources to the West and brought back finished products at exorbitant prices. It's like a continuation of colonialism; *people are still dependent on the West for everything*." This observation, reflected in the analyses of dependency theorists, highlights that after independence, as the global North was promoting the modernisation approach to development, it was also maintaining Malawi in a state of underdevelopment to enable access to cheap materials needed to enrich and further develop itself (cf. Kayuni 2011).

It is important to acknowledge that the cultures of inferiority and dependency that persisted in the post-colonial era were also induced by internal developments in Malawi. The first was the creation of a one-party authoritarian state led by Dr Kamuzu Banda. Rhone hypothesised that Banda's style of leadership which only gave power to the ruling elite was inspired by what he witnessed during British rule: "He actually admired Queen Victoria, Winston Churchill, I mean he lived in Britain for a long time so this style of administration, of dictatorship was British" (Interview, 10 March 2014). Along with Kenneth Kaunda and Kwame Nkrumah, Banda was considered one of the "big men" of African nationalism. Paradoxically, he adopted aspects of British aristocracy such as his attire which included a three-piece suit, furled umbrella, and Homburg hat, spoke only in English, had puritanical Victorian views on dress, and established a public school modelled on Eton. Within the religious-political context of Malawi he called himself a "Black Scot" and used his credentials as an elder in the Church of Scotland to legitimise his position and approach to governance (Ross 2013).

The second factor was the paternalistic nature of Banda's rule and how he regarded the populace as "his children" and considered all women to be "his wives". Despite this, he was well regarded by respondents, as encapsulated by Gabby: "I would classify him as a 'benevolent dictator'. He used top-down power to develop this country and benefit the people… That guy was a do-er, a do-er. He was a dictator but he *dictated on good things*" (Interview, 26 March 2014). Banda did not follow the "Afro-Socialism" path of Kaunda and Nkrumah, but instead pursued Rostow's "stage" model of modernisation and was the sole driver behind the infrastructure projects, economic interventions, and social services rolled out during his reign. The third factor was that Banda's economic strategies disproportionately benefited the ruling elite. The state-owned corporations gave Banda an enormous source of patronage. The economy, heavily reliant on the tobacco industry, was closely tied to the global superpowers who allied

themselves with the Malawian capitalist class so that any investment was channelled, in the words of Frank (1966), to a "dependent oligarchy." Rhone outlines the consequence of this practice by the elites:

> The Malawian elite behave *just like* the colonialists; the top ten percent are controlling the ninety percent and so all the wealth stays with them… It trickles down as supporters are given allowances by pure association which could have provided schools, clean water, drugs for hospitals (Interview, 10 March 2014).

This sentiment echoes Nkrumah's concerns (1964) when differentiating between two types of colonialism, the external and the internal. For Nkrumah, the latter would pose a greater threat to economic prosperity and stability in Africa. Within this set of power relations, elites and sub-elites accrue and exercise "power over" other Malawians, and this in turn encourages passivity, compliance and conformity of the majority to the power being exerted over them by the minority. In doing so, this further (re)produces dependency and inferiority.

The cultures of dependency and inferiority that have become entrenched in Malawian society have meant that in the current NGO-dominated era of development, ushered in with the introduction of multiparty politics, there has been little resistance to neoliberal reforms and the influx and influence of international donors and NGOs. While Banda's approach to the Bretton Woods institutions and particularly his reluctance to introduce some of their development prescriptions such as devaluation earned him some respect among Malawians, subsequent governments have been deemed weak and more corrupt than Banda's regime due to increased rent-seeking activities. Jen who has worked in development for over two decades reflected on the post-Banda separation of the state from development and the subsequent influx of NGOs: "[Banda] didn't encourage NGOs because *he wanted to be the 'empowerer'*, he wanted to *control everything*… Whereas when NGOs came it was them dictating… but they fail because it's not what people want" (Interview, 30 March 2014). The first president under democratic dispensation, Bakili

Muluzi, was "big into hand-outs" (Rhone, Interview, 10 March 2014) and welcomed the international development community. He was labelled the "fifty-kwacha president" because as Laila, a school principal, expanded, "It was all *about giving out money* so he would go around throwing fifty kwachas, but there wasn't a lot of development" (Interview, 15 March 2014).

In the current NGO dominated era, development is equated with receiving funding and resources from external donors, and because of the inferiority and dependency complexes established through colonialism, entrenched by totalitarianism, and extended by NGOs and donors, "people do not say 'no'"! (Interview, Jen, 30 March 2014). The reason for this is because, "We always think that *it is good to get things… * We put up with [NGOs] because it's all about money, we are going to get something now" (*ibid*). Respondents were clear that the pervasive donor-recipient model does not deliver sustainable development because "NGOs come and do their projects, they go, and everything goes back to normal" (Interview, Gabby, 26 March 2014). The unadorned reason for local development workers indulging donors and NGOs is captured by Rhone: "In my own NGO, without donors we wouldn't be making a living, we wouldn't, so if I chop their hand off *we are nothing*; we'll be on the streets like so many organisations" (Interview, 10 March 2014). Along with the relatively small public sector, the other place for Malawians to fund or aspire to a Western lifestyle is in the development industry, and the "widespread self-seeking tendencies" of the public sector are also present here (Chinsinga 2005, p. 529). This important theme and the ways it impacts efforts by Sport Malawi to facilitate empowerment will be developed as the chapter progresses.

When coupled with inferiority, external dependency provides a plethora of challenges to the implementation of a radical, postcolonial variant of empowerment. It is rare to find autonomous projects because as Jen noted, "with NGOs they have created a dependency syndrome where 'why do we bother when we can just ask for it and get it?'…

The NGOs I work with *all depend on the outside*" (Interview, 30 March 2014). Another challenge lies in the increase of people-to-people partnerships, evident in Sport Malawi. The interviewee goes on to reflect on the challenges of this evolution in partnership:

> [Now] anyone can come and do anything. It has created a lot of problems because they are not linked to a main office… And sometimes people here want a lot of things and people overseas think they are helping so they give them everything; *not realising they are actually creating dependency syndrome* (*ibid*).

These people-to-people partnerships circumvent traditional development structures, and while this can make them appear to be more "bottom-up" and empowering, it can also result in ill-judged projects in local communities. This is because these partnerships often reinforced the donor-recipient relationship that they claim to disavow because "You're wanted as a white person because you'll bring in money and that's the bottom line" (Interview, Nabila, 18 March 2014). As the discussion in this section reveals, Nabila's perspective here is reflective of deeply imbued senses of inferiority and dependency that can be traced from colonial rule through to Malawi's contemporary history.

6.2.2. "Internalised oppression" and the culture of silence

Orthodox understandings of development and the donor-recipient relationship have greatly influenced how stakeholders in development projects consider their role in the empowerment process. Development as both knowledge and a form of intervention emanating out of colonialism implies that agency resides in the global North and passivity in the global South (McEwan 2009). A postcolonial reading of empowerment reveals that the flow of knowledge and resources from the global North is intended to be emulated and that established binary power relations of "donor" and "recipient" are to be adhered to. Paradoxically, this mainstream understanding of empowerment is also held by those in the global South (Jönsson 2010). This section teases out how this understanding of empowerment and power has become embedded in the mindsets of Malawians. It is

centred on the hierarchical power structures which have created a culture of silence amongst the wider populace, characterised by passivity and deference towards those holding positions of power.

The essence of this mindset is constructed through a process of "internalised oppression" which Rowlands (1995) described as the exercise of discourse to shape how individuals view their role in society and it explains why unequal power relations often go unchallenged. The ways in which this process operates in the Malawian context is captured clearly by Laila: "We are just quiet because, we have that *culture of fear*, that *culture of silence*, when something happens, nobody wants to talk about it" (Interview, 15 March 2014). Several participants connected this culture to pre-colonial tribal power structures. Laila for example, pointed to the tribal nature of pre-colonial Malawian society, which persists to a lesser extent in some of the rural areas: "You were under a chief, you had no right to go above so you had to keep silent. Unless you are from the chief's family you are nothing… when you are told to do something, do it!" (*ibid).* The price for speaking out was exclusion from the village and its protection. Others argued that the passivity of the populace was further cemented by British colonial rule. The hierarchical processes and power dynamics are aptly captured by Rhone:

> The District Commissioner controlled the chief and the chief controlled their people and at the end of the day *it was the British controlling*. You see pictures of British guys being carried like a chief… But before the colonial era the chief was carried in the same manner. They just copied! They ruled directly and indirectly using the situation before they came and so that system continued. So, that's where the culture of silence comes in" (Interview, 10 March 2014).

This culture continued when allegiance to the one-party state regime was enforced at all levels. "In Banda's era" remarked Jen, "you were not taught to think or to reason… [therefore] people don't question, they just listen and accept and that's not a good way to be." (Interview, 30 March 2014). To control the populace, Banda instilled fear by airing

propaganda on the only radio station, monitoring postal mail and telephone calls, and censoring literature that the regime considered ideologically problematic.

The implications of "internalised oppression" manifest in the culture of silence on development have been threefold. The first is that local recipients are primarily passive in their development encounters with decision-making deferred to those in the community deemed more "powerful". As Rhone explained:

> People are so afraid, so afraid! They think that if you say, 'we need water', that they will be detained for life. But those are their rights and they say, 'MPs will turn against us' but I say, 'you have power'… We should be telling them what we want in our communities" (Interview, 10 March 2014).

Similar to the fear of being ostracised by traditional elites such as a chief, people are now afraid of speaking out against political or administrative elites in case "they turn against us". These local elites use handouts as a source of patronage, and according to Gabby, "We should demand simple things [but] when they give you handouts, we go: 'Yeah, yeah, yeah!" (Interview, 26 March 2014). To prompt gratitude the elites would say: "Oh, that is *my money*; government has given me that money" (*ibid*). In this way, recently established elites curtail the empowerment of others, while retaining power to serve their own social, political, and economic interests, and this was observed by Jen: "In every sector of society the top people dictate *because they have the power*, the money, and poor people suffer" (Interview, Jen, 30 March 2014). In the contexts of politics, church, and the development sector, with their diverse forms of patronage, power relations are akin to a social contract, allowing for interaction but not for the poor to exercise the same power available to local elites. Within this type of community hierarchy, Freire (1972) notes that power will not be "gifted" to those with less power. In effect, deeply entrenched hierarchical structures intensify "internalised oppression" which perpetuate passivity and lead people to defer control to the elite and sub-elites of their society.

The second outcome of "internalised oppression" as it relates to development is deference to external development actors, who interpret the unquestioning acceptance of local people as permission to shape agendas and dominate decision-making processes. While some NGOs try to understand complex social structures and cultures, most, according to Lois, "come in and *think they know it all* and they tell the locals 'this is what you need, and this is what you must do'. And unfortunately, people will just say, '*OK*'" (Interview, 30 March 2014). There are also networks of patronage between local people and outside aid providers, and due to the hierarchical nature of social structures and the culture of silence in Malawi, external actors often use local elites as intermediaries with the people on the ground. Jen explains this external patronage relationship: "The problem is that the money comes from the outside and therefore you work to whatever the outside people want" (Interview, 30 March 2014). This view is supported by Barber and Bowie (2008, p.749) who argue that "the impetus for the activities of these NGOs is not really the situation in Malawi… but the demands of their donors. To stay in business, donors must be satisfied." Well positioned, educated locals are often recruited to facilitate these external interventions because they are well qualified English-speaking nationals, and in turn, they aspire to benefit financially; to access some of the money and power that the global North actors have at their disposal. In this arrangement, both the superior position of external actors and the structures that inhibit the transformation of social and political power to enable ordinary people to participate fully in their own development remain unchanged. The pervasiveness of this culture of silence means that the external-internal networks of patronage, in which the participation of the intended "beneficiaries" is manipulated, continue undisrupted.

The third result of "internalised oppression" in Malawi is deference towards external knowledge. Development knowledge is largely disseminated through reports, manuals, and workshops. The culture of silence (re)produced in colonialism, dictatorship,

and in development practice, has left an environment where "people are not very confident about sharing [their] knowledge because they think *it's not good enough.* Whereas they think somebody coming from the outside will know more" (Interview, Jen, 30 March 2014). Furthermore, reliance on outside knowledge is connected to funding. Often locals will passively accept the curriculums of donor organisations without questioning the content or cultural appropriateness because they do not want to miss out on crucial subsidies. As Jen noted: "That's why things are not developing, because we don't question, and we *don't have the confidence* to say, 'our way is better; your way is not right'… If you challenge them, you may not get money" (Interview, 30 March 2014).

6.2.3. Understanding development as self-enrichment for local elites

As discussed in chapter two, a major concern of postcolonialism is the lack of analysis of power within development and it has drawn out the complexity of power dynamics and empowerment practices that are embedded in macro and micro contexts (Jönsson 2010). This reveals that while projects can claim to empower the "receiving communities", these communities are not homogeneous and therefore while some individuals and groups may be empowered, others are disempowered (Kelsall and Mercer 2003). Furthermore, Mohan (2006) argued that NGOs do not garner the "voices" of the non-elite and that they espouse the neoliberal tenets of individualism rather than work towards structural transformation to the benefit of all. This section reveals that the dependency and inferiority complexes, and the culture of silence have forged an environment that enables local "elites" to tap into development for self-enrichment.

Increasingly wealth in Malawi is considered a sign of success and the perception elicited from some respondents in this stakeholder group is that local elites siphon off development funds for self-enrichment. This is clear in excerpts from two interviews.

"It's very interesting" said Rhone, "when you look at how people understand development now, it's about buying cars or living in a nice house... But, I say 'no', it's part of it, but it's not helping the poor as the West talk about development" (Interview, 10 March 2014). A headman of one township in Mzuzu, Chief Chavula, tried to rationalise this behaviour: "They think 'this money came from the West, they are rich'…When they see money from donors and they take, it is: 'Oh I've *just taken a little bit from the pool of resources*'" (Interview, 8 March 2014). This suggests that self-enrichment from development aid is often justified because of the relatively trivial sums being taken from the wealth of Northern development actors.

As neoliberalism heralded a shift from aid to loans with conditionalities, the amount of aid to non-state actors has increased exponentially, leading to a surge of new NGOs dependent on external funding. Fowler (1991, p.9) argued that "many NGOs are a product of the space and resources newly available to them. The type of NGO produced by this situation can be described as responsive or opportunistic, depending on your viewpoint." He adds that many NGOs "seldom have a constituency at all. They are effectively owned by individuals, but choose non-profit legal status in order to gain easier access to funding" (*ibid*). The primary motivation given by respondents for working with NGOs is encapsulated by Chief Chavula: "They go into projects with *nothing in mind but money*… if they see another guy wants some of the pie, they'll get him fired or something" (Interview, 8 March 2014). To outsiders this phenomenon often goes unseen and therefore it continues to harm local communities (De Maria 2010; Burger and Owens 2010). A dismayed Rhone pointed out the impact of this: "We are *going back to underdevelopment*. As much as money is being poured in, it's like a basket with holes … it's always draining away. The progress of the people is intangible" (Interview, 10 March 2014).

A prevalent method of individuals surviving and navigating through exceptionally difficult economic circumstances is through attending development training workshops

(Nkamleu and Kamgnia 2014; Vian and Sabin 2012; Peters 2010; Smith 2003). Informants noted that international NGOs started the workshop culture when tackling HIV and AIDS became a major development focus, and they wanted to incentivise "people to learn about it and see if they could help in society" (Interview, Nabila, 18 March 2014). When prompted to describe the purpose of workshops, Jen responded, "They say it's empowerment in many cases; it's to give people knowledge" (Interview, 30 March 2014), and when asked if this was her view: "No, I wouldn't say it was *that empowering*. For some they genuinely want to learn… but most go because it's a free week… And [that] money *could be going into development on the ground* and it's not" (*ibid*). Furthermore, it is rare for monitoring to be undertaken by the donors to inquire if and how the knowledge is being implemented: "Nobody seems to follow-up to see if anybody is doing anything with the information" (Interview, Chief Chavula, 30 March 2014). Jen explains what lies beneath the popularity of workshops:

> Workshop culture is something else… Everybody wants to go to workshops because they get free accommodation, they get free food, they get allowances; *it's all about allowances*. And if you provide workshops without allowances you will find half the people do not come because they are only coming for the money (Interview, 30 March 2014).

All workshop providers feel obligated to provide allowances. It is very unusual to attend workshops without receiving per diems in return for participation. When funding for workshops is so copious, NGOs often compete with each other to attract attendees by increasing their allowances (Nkamleu and Kamgnia 2014; Vian and Sabin 2012).

Allowances are also given by donors to workers attached to development projects to cover expenses while travelling. It is common practice, though, for the full amount to be kept even if the expenses are less, enabling the surplus to act as a "salary top-up". In the words of Gabby, "People are not there because of community development, they are there to make money for themselves, and that's the biggest challenge" (Interview, 26 March 2014). Therefore, rather than see allowances for both workshops and project visits

as money to cover expenses, it is considered imbursement for attendance and participation, which supplements other income sources. Where accountability is imposed, even in people-to-people partnerships, the result is often a breakdown in relationship (field notes, 10 March 2014). Due to their negative outcomes, many donors are trying to retract allowances, including Sport Malawi as noted in the previous chapter. However, this is invariably met with recalcitrance and is compounded by the ingrained hierarchy that constrains ordinary people from challenging the behaviour of local elites, or whistleblowing to the external partner.

Global economic inequality feeds into a scarcity mentality which is manifest in the various approaches adopted by elites towards living off the development industry. In comparison to their global North counterparts who receive sufficient salaries, localised elites with lower salaries must devote time and energy to other income-generation activities to make ends meet, cover additional costs such as school fees and healthcare resulting from the rollback of the state, and meet the financial needs of extended family. This latter point is picked up by Jen who says that when individuals seek workshop allowances and expenses "we can have an excuse: 'My father was in hospital and I had to pay the hospital bill'. It's a real challenge because people don't have a lot of money and when they see a lot of money it is a temptation' (Interview, 30 March 2014). They are, in the words of Baaz (2005, p. 92) "preoccupied with the question of *survival*". This scarcity mentality is worsened by pressures to attain a Western lifestyle which includes owning a car, a decent house, and other commodities such as satellite television. But as Jen reflected:

> It's very difficult because salaries here are not going to be enough to give you *that kind of lifestyle*, so therefore how are you going to do it? Are you going to work for an NGO or are you going to go to workshops where you receive allowances, or are you going to divert funds, or else you make friends with the outside and beg? (Interview, 30 March 2014).

The local expression "diverting the money" is used to describe activities undertaken for self-enrichment (field notes, 10 March 2014).

Another way of using development for personal or familial survival and self-enrichment, particularly for those with links to the global North, is to establish a NGO, and those interviewed provided examples of individuals in Mzuzu who had created bogus NGOs and projects, such as orphanages, to attract external funds. The creation of NGOs as a means of earning a livelihood is well documented in development literature (cf. Jakimow 2010; Barber and Bowie 2008; Chinsinga 2007b). In the words of Rhone, this practice enables an individual to "make money for yourself as well… Gender, HIV, all these things are easy to get money for from donors. It's a way of milking the system and *if you can do it why not*?" (Interview, 10 March 2014). When established, "for every project they will ask for a vehicle, they will ask for a computer, they will ask for land… [And] donors, they just provide all" (*ibid*). One way to do this is to misrepresent the needs of locals so that donor resources benefit only the elite, as illustrated in the following account given by Jen: "You've people going to the West, they talk about all their poverty… [But] they are not poor… It's all about 'we need laptops, we need iPads', things you need Wi-Fi for, you need electricity for, that *most of the country don't have yet*" (Interview, 30 March 2014). These extracts claim that rather than improve the lives of the marginalised and poor, development, has fostered a generation of local elites highly dependent on external aid that is used to enrich and empower themselves in the neoliberal sense (cf. Erasmus *et al.* 2017). The key outworking of this for Sport Malawi as it operates in Mzuzu is that this scarcity mentality has rendered some members of the Malawi Team unable and in some cases unwilling to leverage their position and work with others to implement authentic forms of empowerment rather than those rooted in neoliberalism.

6.3. The perspective of the Malawi Team

The focus of this section moves to the core group of local men on the Malawi Team who constitute the organising committee for Sport Malawi activities ($n = 3$). This group is intended to play an integral role, bridging the "sending" and "receiving" communities, facilitating the empowerment related aims of the project, and sustaining participation when the UK team is absent. Within the "receiving community", committee members have a higher social status than workshop participants, who regard them as "big men" in the church and the NGO circles in which they orbit. Given this status and their access to external and internal organisations, they can be considered as localised elites whose access to the resources that come with working in development, has elevated them into the relatively small urban middle class of Mzuzu. Of course, class and wealth are relative concepts. However, Norman *et al.* (2016) characterise the middle class in Sub-Saharan Africa as having a non-agricultural salary, higher education qualifications, ownership of durable goods such as a fridge and television, possession of a masonry house, and a modern lifestyle with a small family. Furthermore, the middle classes can be segmented into lower-middle, middle-middle, and upper-middle (*ibid*), determined by income, education, and social and political networks. Against this criterion, members of the Malawi Team are considered lower-middle and middle-middle on the spectrum. The committee interacts mainly with project stakeholders at three interfaces: externally with the UoG, internally with each other on the Malawi Team, and finally with the workshop participants intended to deliver local SfD projects in Mzuzu. This section looks at each interface in turn and interrogates how this group approaches the partnership with UoG, how it operates internally to oversee the Sport Malawi activities, and the extent to which they facilitate the wider empowerment related objectives of the workshops delivered to participants charged with delivering projects.

6.3.1. Approaching partnership with external actors

While not all development actors have detailed partnership polices, most frame their work within the concept of partnership, both with external and/or internal stakeholders. The language of partnership emphasises that development is not an intervention done *for* people but *with* them, and therefore it is envisaged as empowering rather than paternalistic (Crew and Harrison 1998). However, the development context, including in Malawi, is permeated with structural inequalities, evident not just in the donor-recipient relationship, but also in the contrasting living conditions of the "sending" and "receiving" communities. These inequalities shape identities and interactions within development projects, and these, as revealed above, are constituted by colonial and post-colonial histories. Although the term partnership implies non-paternalistic equal relationships where all partners strive harmoniously toward agreed aims and objectives, it downplays the uneven power relations, conflicts of interests between various stakeholders, and the ways in which partnership is (re)interpreted by them (Baaz 2005). Members of the Malawi Team reflected these varying perspectives on partnership, and understanding these are vital given that their relationship with UoG underpins the Sport Malawi project and its *modus operandi* of operationalising empowerment. The analysis offered here adds empirical weight to the argument that the maintenance of lopsided donor-recipient relationships that characterise partnership approaches to development mitigates against the implementation of a radical, postcolonial variant of empowerment, and at best facilitates a neoliberal model that emphasises individualism and leaves broader unequal power structures unchallenged (Smith 2015; Jönsson 2010).

The perspective of the Malawi Team on the partnership with UoG reveals the skewed power relations at play within Sport Malawi, as revealed in this remark by Davies: "We want them, and I know they want us, but they *still want to rule* from the top" (Interview, 31 March 2014). Within this donor-recipient relationship, economic

inequalities and material conditions characterise the partnership and shape understandings and practices of empowerment, manifest in a series of paradoxes. For example, the committee are not passive recipients of an external intervention, but are active participants who possess the agency to liaise with UoG and local actors to achieve their own personal aspirations. This helps to understand development as a complicated process in which empowerment and power are appropriated and reinterpreted differently by the various stakeholders in the aid chain. Baaz (2005, p.73-74) has argued that the traditional aid partnership should be theorised not as "a harmonious relationship based on mutual goals and interests but as a battlefield." This view of partnership is reflected by Taz, who noted that the donor-recipient model is flawed because it was designed primarily not to help the global South, but to protect the dominance of the global North, and many local elites facilitate this (cf. Manji and O'Coill 2002):

> It's not that the system is corrupt, but *it's that the system itself is corruption*. It's not that we have a right system that is being corrupted, but that the system itself is corruption, so don't think that anything good can come out of it... So, whatever is happening is coming from a corrupt system, *right from its conception* (Interview, 21 March 2014).

At the centre of this critique of the uneven donor-recipient relationship is the reliance of partners on each other to realise their own aspirations. The broader development context, as described by community stakeholders revealed the high stakes for many locals at the centre of these skewed power relations, such as accessing monetary resources.

Within the partnership there was the aspiration from some committee members to pursue their own empowerment rather than the collective empowerment of the workshop broad themes and project participants. In exchange for hosting UK teams and organising workshops, members of the Malawi Team were paid an allowance, with the co-ordinator receiving a larger allowance for the increased responsibility. The co-ordinator allowance was equivalent to four months' salary for committee members employed by indigenous NGOs. With rising inflation and continuing devaluation, the cost of living outstrips

salaries, and due to recent redundancy from a NGO one of the committee members, Mickson, was in a more precarious situation and he was left reliant on obtaining per diems to make ends meet. Indeed, across the development industry, due to the scale of per diem payments, many workers see allowances as more important than salaries (Erasmus *et al.* 2017). However, for Sport Malawi, indecision over allowances, rooted in the concern of the UK Team that remuneration perpetuated dependency, made it difficult for Mickson to commit to the project: "One might stand back but when you know [there is an allowance] it is easier to commit" (Interview, 24 March 2014).

These issues around the disbursement of allowances led to suspicion between members about whose interests they were representing. Speaking of Mickson, Davies said: "For this friend of mine it is about gaining something… This guy will be quick to come when there is a pool [of resources] or money, he will be there and *show to be very good*" (Interview, 31 March 2014). However, this respondent also pursued his own interests, rather than adopt a communitarian approach that would benefit all local stakeholders. Within the donor-recipient paradigm he aspired for Sport Malawi to be formalised into a NGO, which would then afford him a salary and benefits package harmonised with that of international NGOs. His rationale for this approach is revealed in the following excerpt:

> I am looking at what will motivate me… If [UoG] want to show that they are still looking at me as our own ambassador and that I am the one who is going to boost Sport Malawi, *they should commit themselves to my welfare*… They have to have knowledge of what NGOs are doing because if they are just in their box, Gloucestershire, then they will not move, but they should come out and say, "how much is a national co-ordinator receiving for a NGO?" And they should be told, "An international NGO should be around six, seven hundred-thousand [per month] … but when he is going out we have to pay for an allowance for him." If they can *study how NGOs are operating* and give their staff *the same* then this thing will move as a fast rate (*ibid*).

It is well known that smaller local NGOs cannot compete with the salaries and allowances of larger external NGOs (Chinsinga 2007b; Nkamleu and Kamgnia 2014; Vian and Sabin 2012) and this unequal playing field means that proactive equitable partnerships are undermined by the motivation for financial gain. This reveals how individuals can work within the boundaries of an unequal partnership to accrue material benefits for themselves, and this aligns to the forms of self-enrichment manifest more broadly in the development industry described by the community stakeholders. The aspiration to pursue individual rather than collective empowerment is a local reflection of the competitive ethos of neoliberalism that is permeating subaltern communities, with local elites actively participating *in*, rather being passive victims *of*, neoliberal notions of empowerment.

The empirical data also reveals compliance on the part of some interviewees with the unequal power relations in the partnership with UoG which they saw as necessary for the continued North-South flow of resources. This is evident in the remarks of Mickson who stressed that if Sport Malawi became a NGO then the UoG should maintain ownership of it: "For it go well, the English must draw up the constitution… that brings the security that Sport Malawi has got connections. It *should always be attached* because *there are a lot of benefits*… but if we are independent it will be difficult" (Interview, 24 March 2014). Some members felt they had to comply with the UoG and prioritise its needs over those of the "receiving community" to continue accruing material benefit. For example, when discussing an incident in which Mickson failed to challenge the UK Team's decision to reduce food and travel allowances for workshop participants, Davies remarked: "[Mickson] destroyed relationship with local partners for the sake of those [UK] guys. He wanted to please those people so at the end they would give him something" (Interview, 31 March 2014). The practice of paying allowances enabled UoG to obtain the services of local elites but this further institutionalised per diems and sustained the unequal donor-recipient relationship. By pursuing individual vested

interests and complying with the unequal power relations, Sport Malawi was "serving the system but not really touching the base" (Interview, Mickson, 24 March 2014).

However, there was willingness on the part of some committee members to question these power relations in the partnership with the "sending community". This was apparent in the readiness to reflect critically on and challenge the power imbalance implicit in the partnership, and seek to reform it in ways that would bring greater benefits to local stakeholders. For example, Davies was explicit about the neoliberal impulses of Sport Malawi and where most value was being accrued from the partnership: "Sport Malawi connected the University to Malawi institutions, the Olympic Committee, you see Malawians being hosted at Gloucestershire, *that is the fruit of Sport Malawi*, so *it raises the flag of the University*" (Interview, 31 March 2014). He also discerned the more self-interested motivations of student-volunteers: "The kind of people who are coming they are *easily taken up with other things* [sightseeing, soaking up the sun, etc.] … It is *just an NGO and there is that freedom*" (*ibid*). This last statement connects Sport Malawi with a much less benign view of NGOs which argues that they allow volunteers from the global North to *experience* poverty and development projects in the global South (Palacios 2010; Waldorf 2012). Furthermore, Taz perceived that UK participants restricted their interaction with locals because "[They are] taunted by the thought, 'maybe those people will get into our lives and beg from us'" (Interview, 21 March 2014). Paradoxically, however, he notes that the "white-saviour" complex was "*developed in us* by the Western world: 'we are donors' so when [Malawians] look at you, we think we are seeing money in your eyes" (*ibid*).

The problematising of power relations was also evident in the collective decision-making, or lack of, around workshops and allowances. The previous chapter revealed that UoG staff aspired for an alternative form of partnership that would enable the implementation of an authentic version of empowerment. Therefore, they attempted to

redress issues of paternalism and dependency by emphasising Malawian ownership and responsibility, and as part of this curbed allowances. Davies reflected on these policy shifts determined by the UK Team:

> In those [early]days, we were sitting down and the UK Team was very sensitive to what the Malawians were saying and from there they would start their workshops… But as time goes… "they know better" [mentality] has come into things… When they said, 'concerning this and this, we have agreed' I thought 'you are becoming very powerful… We are moving as if we are under a *colonial way of doing things*!" (Interview, 31 March 2014).

There was frustration at the deviation from the normalised traditional donor-recipient relationship. The paradox is that while the respondent described the moves by the UK Team to reduce dependency as "colonial", the preservation of the aid relationship and the dominant position of the UK over Malawi leaves locals in a state of dependency, and in doing so functions as a form of neo-colonialism. Davies concluded that Sport Malawi is "supposed to be in the [aid] system" (*ibid*) and this admission exposes how locals *can* perpetuate asymmetrical development binaries. This stance sustains unequal structures and mitigates against the operationalising of postcolonial forms of empowerment.

The questioning of power relations was not only evident in relation to the external partnership with UoG but also with the internal dynamics of the committee: "The *big issue is trust*… I'm suspicious of the [Malawi] Team, and then when I look at [UK Team] and think should I tell them, then I think there is also a problem with them as well" (Interview, Taz, 21 March 2014). This was one of a number of references about suspicions around how some committee members exploited their position with Sport Malawi for their own self-interests, rather than empowering the intended beneficiaries on the ground:

> The UK Team suspects the Malawi Team to be *money oriented* and we suspect the UK Team as using us as a *commodity*. If we can overcome that then there is the beginning of great things, but without that we will keep ploughing on the same mediocre level that we are accusing our politicians of (Interview, 21 March 2014).

The respondent noted, however, that the hierarchical structures of power within Sport Malawi and the deeply ingrained "culture of silence" constrained opportunities to redress

these issues: "It's hard for me to tell the truth because I am *minding the relationship*… [So, we] continue giving mediocre services to the community. It's sad that we can be doing stuff like that." (*ibid*).

6.3.2. *The "middle men": internal power struggles*

The perspective of the Malawi Team has revealed the conflicting interests that exist at different levels in the aid chain and this highlights the importance of seeing beyond the homogenous terminology used in development discourse, such as "the community" (Fook 2002), which disguises uneven power relations at work *within* groups (Thompson 2006; Cooke and Kothari 2001). At the internal interface of the Malawi Team there was concern and contestation over the centralisation of resources and control within the hands of the Sport Malawi co-ordinator. While there was a desire for power to be shared out among the group, there was also the individual ambition for this position due to the larger allowance and enhanced status associated with it. When Davies returned to Mzuzu to resume the role, Mickson recalled: "When he came back I expected him to work together with me, but there was silence… When the [UK] team was coming, he was not consulting me, maybe he thought I would take his role. I think I posed a threat to him" (Interview, 24 March 2014). The hierarchical structure of the Malawi Team meant that the main share of economic resources went to the co-ordinator, with the others receiving smaller allowances and resources such as smart phones, items of UoG branded clothing, and sports equipment. Even to localised elites these in-kind benefits are not inconsequential. However, alongside access to these same resources, the co-ordinator had the opportunity to sightsee with the student-volunteers at Games Reserves at the weekends and holiday on the shores of Lake Malawi at the end of the trip. Due to their expense and exclusivity these amenities are typically only frequented by Western tourists and expatriates or by

wealthy Malawians. The incentive for prioritising resource acquisition at the expense of colleagues is explained in the following quotation:

> When money controls it cripples your thinking because you want to satisfy yourself, so you can use a crippled system deliberately so that you can enrich yourself. Not that you don't know what is straight, but that you want to use the crooked to *divert wealth to you* (Interview, Taz, 21 March 2014).

This manoeuvring within projects can be traced back to the introduction of multiparty politics when external interventions were welcomed. As Davies notes, "Like business being a way to make money, NGOs flooded [in] because there was that freedom and people began to show what was in their minds: 'If I go this direction I'll receive funding'" (Interview, 31 March 2014). This reflects the view gleaned from community stakeholders; that NGOs and development projects serve the primary aim of accessing economic resources for personal gain rather than developing the whole community.

In addition to resource acquisition, the centralisation of power also took the form of decision-making being monopolised within the committee. There was unease that comprehensive conversations had taken place between one member of the Malawi Team and the UK Team regarding the procurement of a vehicle, land, and building a centre, all allegedly intended for the Sport Malawi project. This is evident in the following remark by Mickson: "I don't know where the ideas of getting land and building some structures came from. In some meetings, I wasn't present… Davies would just tell, 'Okay, we're going to do this' but not why!" (Interview, 24 March 2014). The lack of transparency and participation led to the possibility of the co-ordinator manoeuvring the UK Team towards decisions not representative of the views and interests of the whole Malawi Team, and indeed the wider stakeholders in Mzuzu: "I think Davies was talking with them, and they were landed into making those decisions because *they have been told something*" (*ibid*). Mickson added that he was apprehensive that this individual was trying to influence the global North partner to steer the project is a manner that would be self-enriching: "You

would wonder what purpose your friend is having in not disclosing important things... But ah sometimes, you know people have got some different interests" (*ibid*). This perception was shared by Taz who lamented that: "Sport Malawi is about building a person's own empire" (Interview, 21 March 2014).

The individualistic, utility maximising approaches of the Malawi Team had profound impacts on the outworking of empowerment through the project. Firstly, their dependency on allowances meant that they were reluctant to carry out activities for Sport Malawi without receiving per diems. Speaking of Mickson, Taz remarked, "He is *playing the game* from a distance and seeing what is happening, waiting for a meeting [where he will receive an allowance], which has been the same as me as of late" (Interview, 21 March 2014). Here, Taz is articulating what he considers to be the erosion of volunteerism, something that he attributes to the wider individualism evident in the country's middle classes. It was felt that this impacted on opportunities for Sport Malawi to facilitate greater empowerment of the local community through its work. Secondly, the individualism of the Malawi Team hinders the empowerment of the intended beneficiaries of Sport Malawi. Taz articulates this point when he critiques the self-interests of the committee, which interestingly he is a member of: "The donors are victims and the *ultimate beneficiaries on the ground are victims*, but the middle men are enjoying it" (Interview, 21 March 2014). The lack of a communitarian approach by the Malawi Team meant that: "On paper it [delivers] empowerment, but I wouldn't say it has *gone to the level of truly empowering*, because you understand, we are dealing with middle men here, *it's not like we are going to the ultimate beneficiaries on the ground*" (*ibid*). The centralisation of power and the broader individualism within the committee resulted in them abdicating their role in empowering workshop participants and project participants. Instead they prioritised on empowering themselves, which came at the expense of the other stakeholder groups in Mzuzu, an outcome the committee was aware of.

6.3.3. Workshop Participants: "they think that money is being hidden"

In keeping with the contention explored above that homogenising terminology conceals unequal power relations and conflicting agendas of various stakeholders within the recipient community (Fook 2002), this section explores the relationship between committee members and workshop participants. The relationship between these two stakeholder groups impacts profoundly on the capacity of Sport Malawi to establish and sustain autonomous SfD projects (cf. Kelsall and Mercer 2003) and impacts on what forms of empowerment are facilitated and mitigated through it. Prior to workshops commencing, the committee had the responsibility for recruiting local sports coaches, teachers, and youth workers. They were also responsible for sustaining Sport Malawi after the workshops by monitoring participants to observe if they were applying what had been taught and supporting them as community sports workers to deliver SfD projects.

Three issues were evident at this interface. Firstly, the relationship between these two groups was distant, with the committee struggling to find contact numbers and the project locations for the project deliverers. As a result, interviewees felt that workshop participants were suspicious of the role and motives of the committee. This is evident in the following excerpt:

> I wouldn't be surprised if they said, "we are opportunists" in the sense that we exploit them because we work when the UK team is about… "Where were you all this time? Now the UK team is about to come and you are busy. I think you have *swallowed the money*, you have used the money that you were supposed to have used for the project" … I wouldn't blame them because it's been happening for three or four years (Interview, Taz, 21 March 2014).

To "swallow the money" is a phrase used to describe the behaviour of NGO workers who divert funding to enhance their own lifestyle. At the time of the fieldwork for this project, the co-ordinator had been allocated 170,000MWK for the Malawi Team to follow-up SfD projects. This monitoring was not undertaken and the interviewee surmised that workshop

participants viewed them as simply playing host to UoG due to their external orientation: "The Malawi Team is taken as a *tour guide* and somebody alluded: 'But you guys, you seem not to be implementing [SfD projects]'" (*ibid*).

Although respondents discerned that workshop participants were suspicious of their motivations, they felt it was unlikely that these concerns would lead to confrontation. This, as revealed above, is connected to hierarchical social structures and the culture of silence that prevail in Malawi: "They wouldn't [challenge you], the question will be, 'If I tell them to go, what will become of us? It is better that they should be cheating on us.' That's the mediocre reasoning now that is injected into peoples' thoughts" (Interview, Taz, 21 March 2014). This could be interpreted as reflecting a "colonial continuity" (Heron 2007) in which traditional local elites were accountable to the coloniser and not to the local people. The extract also reveals the patronage networks that exist even within small development projects. Workshop participants feared that they would be excluded from opportunities to receive knowledge and sports equipment, as well as connections, however tangible, to global North actors, if they spoke out against the Malawi Team.

Secondly, the Malawi Team was aware that not all workshop participants, even those who had attended for several years, had implemented what they had learnt by establishing SfD projects, and that some attended simply to access allowances and other resources. Taz alludes to this: "People look at Sport Malawi as sponsors… Deep down they know *they will get something*" (Interview, 21 March 2014). This is reflective of the "workshop syndrome" institutionalised within international development where participants often attend the same workshop repeatedly, and by giving positive feedback ensure the resource flow continues. Due to their contribution to the entrenching of the "syndrome", allowances are generally deemed more harmful longitudinally, despite the temporary gains for participants (Vain and Sabin 2012). Regarding the workshops delivered by Sport Malawi, due to the lack of follow-up, there was no pressure on

participants to deliver SfD projects. As Davies notes: "Maybe we're the ones who have failed because they may say 'we are doing something' but have we gone to see? Maybe if we were to say, 'we are coming' that would be the beginning to start doing something" (Interview, 31 March 2014).

Notwithstanding this, there was a reluctance to exclude participants from future workshops on the basis that they were not delivering SfD projects. As Davies added, "Others may not [be implementing], but they will not be happy to hear that we have a workshop and we have left them out" (*ibid*). Interpreted within the patron-client framework (De Maria 2010; Maranz 2001), this response highlights the cultural importance of maintaining relationship and assisting "clients" of lower social status to access meagre resources in return for loyalty and respect. This hindered the empowerment process because some individuals were not fulfilling the empowerment related ambitions of the workshops. This point was raised by Mickson, "If the project is to go forward you can't go with those who are idle… if you are clinging to people who are doing nothing *the project will not have any impact*" (Interview, 24 March 2014).

Finally, members of the committee discerned how the inferiority complex of workshop participants hinders empowerment processes. As noted from the perspective gleaned from community stakeholders, and as accounted for by Baaz (2005), inferiority is a legacy of colonialism and when coupled with dependency, leads to locals becoming passive in their own development and reliant on external intervention. This viewpoint is contrary to the more radical versions of empowerment which envisage it as a form of agency that enables less powerful groups to challenge and transform the wider structures of inequality that constrain their lives. In articulating his views on this, Davies acknowledged that an inferiority complex among his fellow Malawians mitigated against this version of empowerment or anything resembling it: "I don't know whether it's our background, [but] you feel like 'Ah, can we really do something?'" (Interview, 31 March

2014). However, a paradox emerges whereby the involvement of the UoG is deemed necessary to empower those within Mzuzu, as manifest in this quotation:

> There is that inferiority mentality, that is why they [workshop participants] want to grow and not to miss [out] because it seems like they know they can be somewhere but there are no resources to take them there…*On our own we still feel like* "*Ah no, we cannot!*" (*ibid*).

The role of external "change agents" in building internal capacity has already been problematised within the wider debate between the autonomy and heteronomy of development projects (Kelsall and Mercer 2003). This is important given that the aim of Sport Malawi is to create autonomous, self-sustaining SfD projects. It is apparent from the revelations of this chapter thus far that heteronomous approaches to empowerment further reinforce the inferiority complex, and its counterpart, dependency.

In conclusion, the perspectives gleaned from this stakeholder group highlights that "recipient" groups cannot be considered as homogenous, as often depicted with SfD literature. Even within and between local stakeholder groups there are complex power relations playing out, and varying and conflicting views on what can be achieved through Sport Malawi. It is important, therefore, not to take an essentialist view of the "receiving community" and how the individuals within it understand and operationalise empowerment. The data suggests that some members of the committee who are intermediaries between UoG and the stakeholders in Mzuzu use Sport Malawi to empower and enrich themselves. By exercising "power over" (Rowland 1995), they prioritised their own interests and this contributed to the disempowerment of workshop participants. This inhibited the operationalisation of any kind of postcolonial variant of empowerment through the Sport Malawi project that would develop opportunities for building the collective agency of whole community that might allow them to begin to challenge the structural conditions that constrain their lives and limit their opportunities.

6.4. The perspective of workshop participants

This penultimate section focuses on those who had attended the three streams of Sport Malawi training workshops, namely sports coaching, sports education, and sports outreach and youth mentoring ($n = 9$). Prior to embarking on the fieldwork, it was anticipated that all respondents in this group would be leading local SfD projects. However, the perspectives presented below both include those implementing projects, including All Star Girls, Aspirations United, Big Dreamers, Bouncing Futures, and Hope Secondary School, as well as those who did not run. Situated within the lower strata of Malawian society, the workshop participants interviewed here had a lower income, education, living standard, and exposure to outside development actors than the committee members. This group typically interacted with Sport Malawi at three interfaces and these interfaces revealed much about the capacity of the project to engender particular variants of empowerment. Their interactions with the UoG staff and student-volunteers during workshops tended to reinforce traditional development binaries and were suggestive of a process whereby the empowerment of student-volunteers was prioritised over the needs of the workshop participants. This raises significant questions about approaches to empowerment built on the use of external "change-agents" (Kelsall and Mercer 2003). The interface between the workshop participants and the Malawi Team highlighted the heterogeneous nature of the "receiving community" and provided insights into the uneven relations of power between local stakeholder groups within Sport Malawi. More specifically, the interviews emphasised a view among workshop participants that the Malawi Team did not advocate on their behalf or follow up with them after workshop because of their external orientation. Finally, at the interface with SfD projects it was evident that external dependency increased individualism, which is incompatible with radical, postcolonial variants of empowerment, and that deliverers of more autonomous

projects evidenced generative forms of power, such as "power to", "power with", and "power within" to sustain them.

6.4.1. The view towards UoG: empowerment and dependency are incompatible

The workshop training delivered by the UoG teams was met with some unease by workshop participants. This concern firstly related to the cultural relevance of the curriculum and the material used in the workshops to development issues on the ground. Annex who founded the SfD project, Big Dreamers, argued that, "Sport Malawi doesn't go straight into the culture. There is a gap between the material and real life" (Interview, 20 March 2014). The second critique related to a perception that the workshops made some participants feel "inferior" to their UK counterparts. In the previous chapter a student-volunteer called Scott noted how the uneven power relations in the workshops were made visible when teachers were examined at the end of the workshop. In the following vignette, Esther reveals the local perspective on this issue:

> [Fellow workshop participants] were demotivated because for a teacher to fail an exam, you know? [laughs]. To some it was shocking. They were like embarrassed because that's not what they expected. That was a problem, students examining teachers… You know when you are in Malawi *as long as you are mzungu you can do anything*! It's true because I can be taught by students from UK which cannot happen in Malawi. We believe all mzungus are intelligent but even during the training I could see that some of the students had problems (Interview, 26 March 2014).

Esther's words can be seen to reflect the power inequalities established through colonialism which gave mzungus licence to "do anything" within development projects because of their perceived superiority in terms of wealth, knowledge, and social status. Furthermore, it revealed that the empowerment of student-volunteers through delivering workshops can lead to the unintentional disempowerment of workshop participants.

In addition to the power dynamics of the workshops, there was disappointment at the social distance created by the student-volunteers between themselves and the

participants. In speaking about the lack of engagement with participants beyond that which occurred in the workshop setting, Boni said that "We feel like maybe *they were taught to do like that*. At lunch, they would go out to the car and come back when the break is over. That was disappointing to Malawians… that spirit of individualism" (Interview, 24 February 2014). The "white-saviour complex" among some of the volunteers relies on the maintaining the development binary, including that of developed-developing, teacher-student, and donor-recipient, and sustaining the boundaries of spatial differentiation between them. This explains why the respondent surmises that the UK participants were "taught" to keep their distance because to do otherwise would challenge the mzungu identity that enables them to assume authoritative positions within Malawi. It was also felt that the high turnover of student-volunteers was a hindrance to breaking down this development binary. The motives behind their participation in the project were questioned by Bettany: "We have been receiving different people throughout *but are they remembering why Sport Malawi was started*? Most of them when introducing themselves say "It's nice to be in Africa, this is my first time in Africa" [laughs] (Interview, 7 March 2014). Other respondents noted the tendency on the part of student-volunteers to homogenise the space of the *Other* and indicated that they were drawn to Sport Malawi because of the "African" experience *they* could accrue, a perspective that runs contrary to the original aim of Sport Malawi to empower the local community. The entrenched image of locals always requesting resources (re)produced in "donor-recipient" binary is another reason a vexed Annex gave for their unwillingness to integrate: "They should find a way to spend time with locals *and I'm not talking about giving resources*." (Interview, 20 March 2014).

It has been noted above that dependency on external actors and funding is the antithesis to empowerment (Kelsall and Mercer 2003), and that as a consequence, the UK Team decided to withdraw travel allowances and reduced the "hot lunch" to a "light

snack" for workshop participants. This may appear at first glance to be an insignificant issue but the institutionalisation of allowances through NGOs and development projects offers participants what Maranz (2001) calls "micro-solutions to macro-problems". Simply put, given the levels of poverty that characterise their daily lives, per diems offered important and immediate means to survival. Boni, who attended the workshops each year but did not run a project, described the significance of allowances in the following way: "The mentality is not to get the skills to help our lives, but to get *money for today*, for *food for today*" (Interview, 24 February 2014). When projects do not adhere to the rules now considered customary in development practice, it is difficult for them to attract and retain local interest, as Sport Malawi found out when some participants dropped out of the workshops. Nkosi, who attended annually, expanded upon this point: "So, people say 'Okay, you break *our etiquette*, you don't want to launch this NGO in *our context*, you don't want to do this through us but around us? Thank you… goodbye'" (Interview, 11 March 2014). He finally walked away from Sport Malawi because he did not deem the allowances sufficient to justify his time spent in the workshops. The UK Team's argument that there was not enough money to cover travel allowances and a "hot lunch" did not hold with respondents, as expressed by Bettany: "They say 'we don't have money' and yet they go to Nkhata Bay and that place to Malawians is very expensive! So, we think 'Oh, so they want to use us as scapegoats for coming to Malawi to do their own interests'" (Interview, 7 March 2014).

These misgivings on workshops, social distance, and allowances, however, were concealed from the UK Team by the workshop participants. In elaborating on their reluctance to broach their concerns directly with UoG staff, some respondents drew on culturally relevant anecdotes, for example, Boni, in the vignette below connects resource dependency with the culture of silence:

We don't really speak the truth; we hide some things… culturally Malawians are like that. They don't want to disappoint somebody, they don't really want to speak, to express themselves, what they are passing through. Say, if you are looking for a house they'll say 'Oh, he's just staying near…and you go and they'll say 'Oh, it's not far'… Then you keep on going, keep going, you see now? They'll not tell you [that the house is far away]. *If they tell you, they'll know you'll be discouraged and you'll not go…* So, when you reach Malawi we smile at you, even if you have wronged us (Interview, 24 February 2014).

This testimony is important, because as explained by the community stakeholders, locals consider it better to receive something than to get nothing at all, and that if they challenge donors and NGOs they may end up with no resources. This in part explains why workshop participants did not air their grievances with the UK team. What is also at work here is the "internalised oppression" described by Rowlands (1995). As delineated earlier, the systematic denying of power to the Malawian populace initiated through colonialism, maintained via authoritarian rule, and now extended by much of the mainstream development practice, has resulted in the powerless generationally internalising "truths" about themselves. These negative discourses mean that the barriers to their empowerment are often hidden and they are frightened to speak truth to power. When asked to explain this characteristic of workshop participants, Nkosi went back into early post-colonial history to retrieve an anecdote to illustrate: "Once Kamuzu [Banda] went to see the Zambian President and he asked him: 'How come we are hearing a lot of noise from Zambia?', and Kaunda replied, 'I rule the living and *you rule the dead*'" (Interview, 11 March 2014). Internalised oppression is invisible power playing out, shaping how individuals and communities consider their place and role in society, locally, regionally, and internationally, and this is crucial to explaining why workshop participants were reluctant to give "voice" to their reservations around the lopsided power dynamics brought to light in Sport Malawi.

6.4.2. The view towards the Malawi Team: "make sure you don't piss them off"

The rationale for the involvement of the Malawi Team in Sport Malawi was considered dubious by the workshop participants, especially by those who were conducting SfD projects. However, there was little appetite to challenge committee members. On the matter of travel and food allowances, it was felt that the external orientation of the Malawi Team, manifest in their desire to appease their counterparts in the UK, limited their inclination to advocate on behalf of local interests. This concern was raised by Bettany, a community sports worker, who unlike most of her co-workshop participants received a salaried income. Her view was that it was the responsibility of the Malawi Team to reason with their UK partner so that they could understand the material conditions of the workshop participants. Bettany adds, "They misguided those people from UK because here you cannot live on coke… I understand the argument from the UK side… *but the Malawi Team were supposed to reason with them*" (Interview, 7 March 2014). As revealed by the committee members, the directive to change the policy on per diems came from UoG staff with the intention of mitigating dependency. Although the committee took directives, and not without contestation, from their global North partner, within the receiving community they operated a "closed space" (Gaventa 2006) whereby they controlled the power, decision-making, resources, and knowledge available to them, rather than share them with other local stakeholders.

Beyond accusations of failing to advocate on behalf of local people, workshop participants also criticised committee members over the absence of efforts to sustain Sport Malawi activities after UoG teams left and follow up with project deliverers. The detached nature of their relationship with this stakeholder group lead to Bettany expressing the view that: "They are *strangers* and moreover they *cannot even chat*", before concluding that "they are not serious about this project" (Interview, 7 March 2014). Annex concurred and suggested that the absence of oversight may lead to a perception

that "this Sport Malawi is not a serious thing" (Interview, 20 March 2014), or that it constituted a "*briefcase NGOs*" (Jakimow 2010; Schuller 2007; Burger and Owens 2010). He added that this impacted negatively on workshop participants and on the operationalisation of empowerment through the project: "They should bring people together within Sport Malawi to share ideas on moving forward, but that has not been there, that's why I find that it's getting cold" (*ibid*). However, as noted by the Malawi Team, these concerns about them had already been raised, and their motives for leading Sport Malawi in the "receiving community" were questioned by other stakeholders.

These complications in the Malawi Team giving "power to" or sharing "power with" workshop participants were expounded upon by Nkosi who argued that the "decentralisation of Sport Malawi is *tricky* but a risk that has to be taken. If the leadership became answerable to the local stakeholder, where the power is in the stakeholders, then we would have a project!" (Interview, 11 March 2014). He then divulged the reason why distributing power away from the committee would be difficult:

> Believe you me, criticising someone with drinks and allowances is like *going uphill*! No one wants to do that! When someone shows up with allowances you want to make sure you don't piss them off! And if you *tell the truth it will piss them off; you're better not to take that risk*. These people we cannot criticise or they will ban us from the allowances and we don't have money so what do we do? Simple! Get the allowances. Eat the allowances! (*ibid*).

This reveals how even small development projects create new external and internal patron-client structures, with the latter impacting on the ability of ordinary people to access allowances as "micro-solutions" (Maranz 2001) for survival in return for compliance to localised elites. Through this patronage process the operation of "power over" by the Malawi Team is sustained. Transforming these power relations would require greater accountability to ensure that resources flowed more appropriately and this argument is made by the interviewee: "The idea of decentralisation is to give power to the people… People should be able to say 'Why have you not had a quarterly meeting?

What's happening to those finances?'" (*ibid*). However, the reality of trying to dismantle inequitable power structures is laid bare in the subsequent admission: "If you ask them tough questions you will never be called back to the next workshop! (*ibid*). The outcome of this was that the existing power relations within Sport Malawi remained intact and the continued subordinate position of workshop participants was preserved.

6.4.3. The view towards local SfD projects: "survival is through struggles"

There were two divergent views expressed by workshop participants towards the local SfD projects delivered through Sport Malawi. The first suggested passivity on the part of project deliverers and participants and a reliance on external help to make the projects function. All the projects except for one relied on volunteers and this lead Bettany to pessimistically express, "I don't see a future for us. *There's no future!* Except for maybe those with Bouncing Futures because [name of international donor] is supporting them" (Interview, 7 March 2014). Given the lack of paid employment opportunities within the field of SfD, economic conditions in Malawi and the lack of a welfare state, Bettany notes: "With the voluntary basis you cannot feed your stomach" (Interview, 7 March 2014). Nkosi, whose project folded due to the lack of funding, noted that the main reason why people start projects is to source an income for themselves, a theme explored in the wider development literature on NGOs (cf. Jakimow 2010; Barber and Bowie 2008):

> I have a reputation of developing [project] concepts and people will come to me to get a concept that will convince somebody to let go of their money… We have mastered the art of creating a *prima facia*… We know exactly the consumer behaviour of the donors; what pictures to send to them, what to write in the proposals, it's just like developing a skill (Interview, 11 March 2014).

This instrumental view of NGOs as a means for self-enrichment or survival is permeated with neoliberal impulses, as made explicit, by Nkosi; "No one works for benevolence in the world of survival of the fittest. People work for the sake of selfishness" (*ibid*). Across

this cohort of respondents, there was a tangible correlation between the amount of external resource dependency and levels of individualism apparent among project deliverers, manifest for example in the erosion of volunteerism and a reluctance to run programmes when the donor delayed sending through the necessary funding.

In those SfD projects with less reliance on external assistance, it was possible to observe a more collective spirit playing out. These coaches, youth workers, and teachers did not consider themselves as passive or dependent on external intervention, as often is representative of global South actors in development discourse. This is manifest by Annex when speaking about the internal orientation of his project, Big Dreamers, "We are working based on relationship, that's the thing we are teaching in our communities, relationship is the best sponsor because *we should first look from within and what we have, before we start looking outside*" (Interview, 20 March 2014). The self-reliance approach adopted by this project deliverer meant that his project's "survival is through struggles" (*ibid*), however, Annex drew on more generative and positive-sum notions of power, manifested as agency, to find ways for the participants of Big Dreamers to have the "power to" realise their capacity to resource the project internally. Another variant of power is also playing out here, and that is "power with" which the respondent notes is central to empowerment efforts:

> Empowerment is *community first* and you should be the last person… There are times I'll take all my salary and put it into activities. Empowerment is not about giving out duties, it is a tool for transformation by giving people freedom… And *we go as a team, it's not a one-man team* (Interview, 20 March 2014).

By going "as a team" it is realised that more can be achieved than when individuals work in isolation or for their own self-enrichment. "Power within" is also evident here and this allows project delivers such as Annex to find the inner resilience to resource their projects internally while also managing to personally survive. This variant of power is also explicit in this extract from Mphatso who runs All Star Girls: "*Inside me I have got the passion.*

I love these girls. I don't want them to suffer…When I am talking of empowerment what I want is *for these girls to stand on their own*… That is why we are trying our best with the very little we have! (Interview, 21 March 2014). These generative forms of power evident from these few respondents illustrate the potential for postcolonial variants of empowerment to exist in the midst of a context characterised by resource dependency.

The more SfD projects are drawn into the orbit of external actors, the more the possibilities for models of empowerment that reflect the original meaning of the concept are reduced. This is because of the pervasiveness of the donor-recipient aid relationship and the inherent unequal power relations within it which can be obscured by the rhetoric of partnership. Therefore, empowerment in a radical sense and resource dependency are incompatible. This is a point articulated by Annex: "For me, depending on donors cannot take us anywhere. We should see what we have and use that, rather than saying, 'can you send us A, B, C, D', [because] *then we're not doing empowerment!*" (Interview, 20 March 2014). Tackling the dependency syndrome also entails addressing the inferiority complex (re)constructed through processes of "internalised oppression" (Rowlands 1995). As Townsend *et al.* (2004, p.876) argued, "For alternative NGOs, empowerment requires the undoing of internalised oppression, as one must become able to think of oneself as able to make choices." In reflecting on this issue, Annex spoke about the need to disavow the donor-recipient model of development that has reinforced passivity and dependency:

> If we want to change the mindset of Malawians it's good to give them a garden and teach them how to grow maize than sending them bags of maize, because some day that ship will sink into the sea… With donors, it doesn't so much work out, *it should be the community supporting the community and then we don't need outside help* (Interview, 20 March 2014).

The solution to passivity and resource dependence offered here is to dismantle the traditional aid (donor-recipient) model of development. Without rebalancing the unequal power imbalances inherent within this model, development projects, including Sport

Malawi, will continue to claim to empower, but will achieve little in materially impacting the lives of project deliverers and participants.

6.5. The perspective of SfD project participants

This final section of the chapter focuses on the perspectives of the participants who attended the SfD projects associated with Sport Malawi ($n = 30$). These participants, made up of children and young people, constitute the final stakeholder group in the Sport Malawi "aid chain" and are the primary intended beneficiaries of the project. These participants typically come from families with low income who struggle to afford school fees and who have little or no direct access to outside development workers. The discussion of their perspectives reveals that their engagement in the SfD projects inculcated in them a neoliberal and depoliticised understanding of empowerment, one that identified individualism and entrepreneurship as the routes to overcoming poverty. As part of this ideology, they were encouraged to shake off their perceived passivity and become active in generating incomes to sustain the projects they were involved in.

6.5.1. "It's up to us!": Empowering the neoliberal self

The motives of participants in the various Sport Malawi projects were overtly connected to the material conditions they faced and how they might navigate their way through or out of these conditions. One of the attractions of the projects was the fact that all but one offered financial aid in the form of scholarships to some participants who could not pay their school fees. In Malawi, only primary education is free and due to the fees required for secondary education, many families have to delay their child(ren)'s education until they have saved enough money or withdraw them altogether. Bouncing Futures, which

had an external donor, offered twenty scholarships to its six hundred participants and these were awarded for sporting and educational performance. As Florence explained: "I won a tournament so I am sponsored… *it's conditional*, not all of us will be paid, but I can say that fortunately there are some [who] are picked to be sponsored" (Focus Group, 17 March 2014). Jarrod, a recipient of a scholarship explained how the project impacts on the mindset of other children in the local community:

> If you have paid and your friends haven't then they will feel jealous. Some of them will feel very sorry. So, it makes some learners *fight harder*, work hard so maybe Bouncing Futures will sponsor you… They motivate me by giving money (Focus Group, 17 March 2014).

It was also common practice for the SfD projects to send teams to participate in local sports competition with the aim of winning small monetary prizes. In one project, the allowances won were taken home by the participant(s) to their family, and this for some acted as a form of income for their household (Focus Group, 17 March 2014). For participants in other SfD projects that were internally resourced, winnings had to be handed over to the project deliverer to sustain the project. "It's better to give the money" expressed Joyce, "because if I keep the money it can be lost and it would be difficult for me to give it back again, because other times we feel hungry and when you have that money *it can be eaten*" (Focus Group, 17 March 2014). In this honest extract, the respondent notes the temptation to use the winnings to pay for food, a necessity of life, but that she would rather forgo this than worry about owing money to Aspirations United which she may not be able to repay.

These practices reveal that the core message promoted in all the projects was that participants should be diligent and take responsibility for their own lives and livelihoods. This message is partly rooted in the racialised discourse that underdevelopment stems from idleness and individuals not taking responsibility, in contrast to the image of the active and responsible global North partner. The image of the "lazy native" can be traced

back to attempts to validate colonialism. Baaz (2005, p.121) states that this construct "came to define the white man's burden: to awaken the African from his passive and indolent disposition and infuse him with the work ethic and energy." As another "colonial continuity" (Heron 2007) this discourse was carried over into the modernisation approach to development with the emphasis on the need for poorer countries to eradicate their backwardness and emulate the institutions, practices, and values of the richer countries in the West. Furthermore, the idea that the dependency syndrome produces passivity is also central to justifying the neoliberal model of development. By focusing on individuals as inherent rationale utility maximisers, state and social interventions are deterred because they are seen to create dependency and passivity and therefore deprive individuals of the entrepreneurship that is required for them to take control of their lives.

These principles of neoliberalism were evident when participants reflected on whether they felt the projects were empowering, as illustrated below by Kenji when speaking about his project deliverer:

> He said "*my friends, you should not relax, you have a lot to do*! When you find something do it because that's your future". So, it's like to each and every one of us he has told him something what to do and he really encourages us to work hard on the pitch, at school, even at home (Focus Group, 11 March 2014).

According to this depoliticised vision of development, success in life is not dependent upon external structural factors, as argued by critical development theorists, but on internal factors such as a person's initiative and entrepreneurship. This perspective was evident among other project participants. For example, when asked what impact the project had on their lives, Cornel used a sporting metaphor to explain how it shaped his view of succeeding in life: "The thing that binds you is discipline. Once you lose discipline it means all the games you are going to play you will be losing… *so you have to find discipline to win* (Focus Group, 11 March 2014). Against the construct of the passive native, participants are encouraged to be active in their own development.

However, unlike the UK participants in Sport Malawi, Malawians do not have a welfare state, or free education and health services, and yet, these economic needs are relegated to the side-lines by the neoliberal philosophy which is now firmly embedded in the both the "sending" and "receiving" communities. As a result of substantial cuts in state expenditure, local participants relied upon their families and kin to survive by sharing out available resources, as explained by Eliza, "Most people here rely on each other. First thing I need is a family to support me… *It's up to us!*" (Focus Group, 18 March 2014). What can be observed in these testimonies is that the discourse conveyed through the Sport Malawi projects tends to depoliticise development, which can be discerned in the neglect of the wider structural inequalities that sustain and perpetuate underdevelopment, and in the promotion of the neoliberal philosophy that individualism and taking responsibility for oneself and one's immediate family is a viable route out of poverty.

6.5.2. "Let's make friends": Passive and active approaches to resourcing projects

All project participants identified the lack of sports equipment and kit as their main frustration. As Spiwa recounted, "The worst [part] is that we do not have enough boots and the attire itself… When it comes to games we would always borrow the boots, yeah, but we do that with money, it is not for free (Focus Group, 17 March 2014). Sourcing these materials or finding funding for them was often understood as a key role of the project deliverer due to their connection to the Sport Malawi programme: "The coach gives us balls to play, he is one who goes and gets them" (Focus Group, Joyce, 18 March 2014). Due to the link between her project and Sport Malawi, and therefore with people from the global North, Joyce responded to a question about whether the project was empowering with: "Yes, because we know *if we continue like this we can go further* into other countries …to your home [laughs]… It empowers us because we'll have many friends who are there and *we'll not lack anything because we're going to have everything*"

(*ibid*). This excerpt is important because in it the discourse of passivity can be discerned and the common view that the involvement of white people will *inevitably* lead to well-resourced projects. This perspective on resource dependency on the West was manifest in following dialogue with participants in Big Dreamers (Focus Group, 15 March 2014):

Researcher	How do you view the mzungu walking about town?
Glen	Let's *make friends* with him [laughs].
Eva	Sometimes white people come with their own ideas... I think the best way [is] to look at our budget and come in, not them making a budget for us, or making activities for us *because that makes people not want that thing*...We need to own it and if they are there to help they should just give us the resources which we need so that that project should be sustainable.
Priscilla	We should be formulating incomes activities as Bouncing Futures. We shouldn't just use the money because *it will end*.
Russell	To create an idea that will change the society you first have to live in the society and understand how people survive… *A good donor* tells him this is the money, or these are the resources, go ahead with what you wanted.

The first view reflects the point that was raised by UoG staff and student-volunteers, that the term "mzungu" signifies alongside whiteness, economic privilege and superior social status. Therefore, the answer to obtaining much needed materials was to attempt to connect with white people because of the ample resources they are perceived to possess which could be shared. The second and fourth responses express the feeling that outside donors should give resources to make a project sustainable without exercising undue control over it, however, the third respondent notes that the funding will eventually runout so there needs to be other internal strategies to raise funds.

What some participants observe is that the donor-recipient aid relationship is often top-down, with partners having conflicting ideas of what the community needs. From the perspective of the global North, "good recipients" do not question external partner interventions (cf. Baaz 2005), while from the perspective of the local community, as expressed by Russell, "a good donor" gives funding and resources but leaves the locals

to decide how best to use it. This approach has been critiqued by the community stakeholders and some workshop participants for increasing resource dependency, and for also perpetuating the notion of the passive recipient, cossetted by donors, and therefore lacking the desire to work themselves to obtain resources. UoG staff sought to tackle the perceived passivity through partnership by empowering local stakeholders through developing agency and building capacity to generate ownership and responsibility for Sport Malawi, but according to their own vision of how the project should evolve, whereby demands for financial support are illegitimate. Due to the lack of external donors and perhaps also in a bid to shake off some of this assumed passivity, participants felt they had to contribute to project costs themselves. In addition to participating in sports competitions for meagre winning allowances, some projects such as Bouncing Futures and Aspirations United had enterprises attached to their projects to generate funds for their programmes. This included growing vegetables to sell on a small piece of land donated by a chief, and a multimedia enterprise. Commenting on the latter, Desi asserted that, "*We have to* do some other things… to generate income so we do the multimedia stuff, for example somebody says we should capture a wedding, we do that. We take the money and we bring to Aspirations United" (Focus Group, 11 March 2014). There is a paradox at work here. While the project participants are encouraged by the project deliverers to be independent and use their own resources, the link now established between these SfD projects and Sport Malawi draws them further into the orbit of external actors, with the consequence of intensifying resource dependency.

Conclusion

Drawing broadly on postcolonial theory this chapter has interrogated "the actual practices" (Guest 2009) of Sport Malawi viewed from "below". By situating the programme against the backdrop of the receiving community of Mzuzu, the origins and mechanics of the partnership between "sending" and "receiving" communities were

outlined. This was crucial in contextualising the subsequent postcolonial informed critique of the perspectives of community stakeholders, the Malawi Team, workshop participants, and the project participants, and whether the forms of empowerment aspired to or engendered through Sport Malawi could be considered to reflect neoliberal or postcolonial understandings of empowerment. The importance of grounding the concepts of empowerment and power within colonial history and development discourse was revealed in the responses by research participants.

From the perspective of the community stakeholders, development, rather than improve the lives of the powerless, has fostered a generation of localised elites who are highly dependent on external aid to enrich and empower themselves. Linked to this, the prevailing "scarcity mentality" in Malawi rendered them unable, and in some cases unwilling, to leverage their position to work with others to implement postcolonial notions of empowerment. The interviews with the Malawi Team illustrated that the "receiving community" cannot be considered homogenous, and that contestation exists in what individuals seek to achieve from Sport Malawi, and that the promotion of the interests of the committee is connected to the disempowerment of other stakeholders in the project's aid chain. The data which emanated from the interviews with workshop participants highlight power imbalances between this stakeholder group and the UK participants, that resource dependency is connected to the extent of external involvement and this highlights the flaw in the contention that external input is required to instil internal capacity for sustainable, autonomous SfD projects. Finally, the views of project participants revealed that the messages they received within the five SfD projects reflected a neoliberal understanding of empowerment, one that depoliticised development and reinforced the perspective that hard work and individual responsibility were crucial in escaping poverty and achieving success in life. Furthermore, they were encouraged to shake off the construct of the passive recipient and become active in generating incomes

for the projects themselves. Rather than address inequality, neoliberal empowerment enacted through Sport Malawi reproduces the conditions that reinforce unequal and paternal power relations between the "sending" and "receiving" communities. Underlying all of this is the material legacy of (neo)colonialism that necessities and sustains development and unequal power relations globally *and* locally.

The "thick description" used throughout this chapter and the previous chapter have presented two localised perspectives: the "view from below" and the "view from above". By focusing heavily on the local, Mohan and Stokke (2000) have warned of the dangers of localism because of the tendency to view these communities in isolation from the broader economic and political structures. Therefore, the next chapter will look at the "view from the side", which is to say that the power relations and local inequalities impacting on the empowerment processes of Sport Malawi elicited in the empirical accounts will be further interrogated from a theoretical perspective. For as Mohan and Stokke (2000, p.262) note, "the linkages between scale and politics have become more complex, but more crucial, in these global times."

Chapter Seven: The View from "Side"

Introduction

The analysis in chapters one and two were concerned with how empowerment and power operates both in development and SfD. The discussion in chapter three charted the emergence of empowerment as a response to the failure of mainstream development and the critiques of it emanating from critical development theory. The last two chapters examined empirically, how power and empowerment have been manifest in and experienced through Sport Malawi from the perspectives of all stakeholders. These chapters also began to tease out the value of interpreting these empirical accounts through a broadly postcolonial lens. In conjunction with the vantage points of "above" and "below", Jönsson (2010) argues that an analysis of empowerment and power should also include the view from the "side", which is to say the analysis should also be critically informed by a theoretical framework. While the discussion of the data from the "sending" and "host" communities was inflected with a postcolonial analysis (chapters five and six), this chapter will reflect on the themes and issues that emerged from a deeper theoretical vantage point. In doing so, it engages more deeply with the range of conceptual tools and

analytical approaches, detailed at the end of chapter three, and this provides a fuller understanding of how power and empowerment plays out in Sport Malawi.

The empirical data has illustrated that the complex and contested concept of empowerment is understood and operationalised in divergent ways in Sport Malawi. However, chapters five and six reveal that the dominant model at play is the neoliberal variant of empowerment which places individual responsibility and action on the part of participants in the projects as the foundation of empowerment while at the same time ignoring or downplaying the structural conditions that constrain opportunities for more authentic forms of empowerment. Viewed through a postcolonial lens this is hugely problematic for Sport Malawi which espouses empowerment as it *modus operandi*. To flesh out this position, the first half of this chapter explores how understandings of empowerment were characterised by stakeholders, with the exception of some UoG staff and workshop participants in Mzuzu, by neoliberal notions of empowerment. Here paternalistic understanding of partnership was prominent and the white-saviour complex on the part of student-volunteers was reinforced rather than challenged or disavowed. These neoliberal and paternalistic understandings of empowerment make little reference to the structural inequalities that have, and continue to, privilege the global North (Vanderplatt 1998; Deepak 2011). Instead, the North assumes the position of *saviour* of the global South, which is blamed for its own underdevelopment (Spivak 1985).

Following on from this the second half of the chapter examines the mechanisms employed to operationalise this dominant variant of empowerment in Sport Malawi, including partnership, and how these are based invariably on one partner having control over the other (Smith 2015). As a result, while the project espouses empowerment, it is characterised by asymmetrical and top-down relationships and moulded to the paternalistic aspirations of the more powerful group, and these in turn reproduce uneven relations of power. In theorising more deeply these understandings and practices of

empowerment in Sport Malawi, the chapter illustrates how particular stakeholders in the project's aid chain hold to a neoliberal model of empowerment that disregards the historical and on-going structural causes of inequality, ignores the role of the West in sustaining these inequalities and negates the need for structural transformation to enable more authentic forms of empowerment (Jönsson 2010).

7.1. Philosophies of empowerment within Sport Malawi

Empowerment is situated at the centre of Sport Malawi, with the original intention of the SfD programme to empower local communities in Malawi (Sport Malawi 2015a). This approach to empowerment aligns with the wider view in SfD (cf. Darnell 2007) and development that external "change-agents", experts and volunteers are required to instil internal capacity in the recipients of interventions in the global South for the creation of autonomous communities (Kelsall and Mercer 2003). Within Sport Malawi, student-volunteers were to be not only the catalyst for the empowerment of Malawian participants in the programme, but also as a key stakeholder group that would also be beneficiaries of empowerment. Against the criticism that mainstream development is ethnocentric, Western, top-down and overly focused on economics, empowerment is typically considered as a bottom-up alternative approach (cf. Kabeer 1994) and therefore because it is seen as benign by some it circumvents the same scrutiny levelled at orthodox development philosophies and practice (Cornwall 2007). This thesis, however, is centred on the importance of interrogating the philosophies and practices of empowerment within Sport Malawi, and the forms of empowerment playing out in the project, and the impact they have on the "sending" and "host" communities and the power relationships between *and* within them. This first half of the chapter utilises a postcolonial lens to illustrate how

within the context of Sport Malawi, empowerment is understood in mostly neoliberal terms, both in the very different contexts of the UoG and Mzuzu.

In this view of empowerment, individual responsibility and action is presumed to be the foundation of empowerment, despite the economic, political and cultural structures and legacies of colonisation that may inhibit (or enable) an individual's agency. In this way, the historic and on-going structural causes of inequality are disregarded and the role of the West in sustaining these are ignored. Following this, the section explores how the neoliberal understandings of empowerment within Sport Malawi are paternalistic, and as such, continue to privilege the interests and position of the global North partner (Vanderplaat 1998; Deepak 2011). Finally, the pervasive understandings of empowerment that chime with neoliberalism are interrogated from the perspective that they are underpinned by the "white-saviour" complex in which the global South partners are blamed for their own underdevelopment (Spivak 1985).

7.1.1. The extent and causes of understandings of empowerment within Sport Malawi

Within Sport Malawi, empowerment as a means for development was framed in diverse ways. Understandings of empowerment that chime with radical notions of the concept which can be traced back to postcolonial leaders, progressive educators, and feminists immersed in the struggles for decolonisation, social justice, and the emancipation of the poor and marginalised, did not feature prominently in the project. At the heart of this understanding of empowerment is the issue of power and the need to destabilise and deconstruct the structural power inequalities that constrain the agency of many people in the global South (Rai *et al.* 2007; Batliwala 2007a). The understandings of empowerment that were more pervasive in Sport Malawi chimed with the neoliberal view of empowerment which promotes individual responsibility and action on the part of the poor

and the marginalised as the basis to their development (Leal 2007; Chossudovsky 2002). Subsumed within this neoliberal framework, empowerment is largely now an apolitical "motherhood" term that negates the historical and contemporary structural causes of poverty and inequality, and the role of the global North in creating and sustaining these conditions (Kingsbury *et al.* 2012; Luttrell and Quiroz 2009; Cornwall 2007; Batliwala 2007b). The distinction between these variants of empowerment is significant; the postcolonial, radical version challenges unequal power relations, whilst the neoliberal variant of empowerment focuses on empowering individuals to work within the capitalist and geo-political status quo rather than challenge it. The perspectives from the UoG and Mzuzu illustrated how understandings of empowerment in Sport Malawi are fashioned by the contexts in which stakeholders operate and live within. To comprehend how these contexts impact on how empowerment is framed, the perspectives of the sending and host communities need to be interrogated from a deeper theoretical perspective.

The "view from above" revealed that neoliberal understandings of empowerment were more ubiquitous, particularly amongst the UoG senior management and the student-volunteers. While members of staff on the frontline of delivering Sport Malawi held more radical understandings of empowerment, they were unable to operationalise this in the project because of the wider organisational culture in which they operated. This culture was shaped by the neoliberal impulses permeating higher education which also influenced how empowerment was framed by those within the "sending community". The impact of this on understandings of empowerment was three-fold. Firstly, with students now consumers of higher education, UoG within a competitive marketplace had to enhance the "student experience" and "employability" (Slaughter and Rhoades 2004) and Sport Malawi played a significant role in achieving this for the student-volunteers. In this way, empowerment was connected to the core principles of neoliberalism. For example, Sport Malawi was used to market the UoG as a stimulating place to study for *consumers* and as

an engaged institution to employers, therefore helping to fulfil the expectation that universities are to serve the "free markets" by producing graduates with transferable skills (Apple 2005). Moreover, Sport Malawi as the UoG's only long-term international student volunteering project has played a crucial role in internationalising the institution. This was done in part by using Sport Malawi to attract international students and by framing it as reflecting the University's core values derived from its Anglican heritage which was seen as a "distinctive characteristic and asset" for UoG (Anglican Identity 2013, p.4). The contribution of Sport Malawi to the UoG was also evident in its hosting of the Malawi Olympic Team prior to the London Olympic Games in 2012. As part of this initiative, Sport Malawi secured significant media coverage, awards and kudos for the University. In summary, within a competitive market-place Sport Malawi plays a crucial role in marketing and internationalising UoG and making it more appealing to consumers and connecting it to employers. This has all taken place within an increasing corporate culture (Giroux 2009) that has limited the financial resources channelled into the project, despite the conspicuous benefits accrued from the project by the "sending community".

Secondly, the broader neoliberal context in which the UoG operated meant that senior management stakeholders saw Sport Malawi operating as a work-based learning experience that developed the transferable skills needed for employment, as well as developing the critical thinking skills of the student-volunteers. Therefore, they attempted to frame empowerment beyond the notion of solely preparing graduates for the work-force (Apple 2005; Barnett 2000; Beacom and Golder 2015). This view of Sport Malawi aligns with transformative learning (cf. Taylor 1998; Mezirow 2000) which encourages students to become global citizens who think critically about their impact on the world. However, this is not to say the neoliberal understanding of empowerment did not permeate this pedagogical approach. From a deeper theoretical perspective, while loosely based on Freirean pedagogy (McEwen et al. 2010), Inglis (1997, p.4) notes that

transformative learning is directed primarily at the "true realisation of the self". Freire (1972), on the contrary, argued that this approach to empowerment failed to fully account for structural, discursive, and the psychological nature of power. By negating to analyse the interconnected nature of power, particularly between discourse and practice, the transformative learning approach to Sport Malawi reinforces a neoliberal variant of empowerment that sees little need to challenge unequal power structures. The primary focus of readying the student-volunteers for the workforce led to a utilitarian understanding of transformative learning, rather than a Freirean one which considers Sport Malawi as an opportunity for conscientisation and empowering those with less power to challenge structural inequalities.

Finally, the neoliberal impulses within UoG shaped how Sport Malawi was considered a key "outreach" initiative that helped the University fulfil its corporate social responsibility agenda and internationalising the institution. Similar to a small number of other UK universities, SfD has enabled UoG to partner with projects in the global South and burnish its brand by being seen to "help" tackle impediments to development that orthodox actors and interventions have failed to address (Levermore and Beacom 2012). This motive to "help" has been questioned as constituting neo-colonial practice (Hartmann and Kwauk 2011) due to the global North partner accruing most of the benefits from development projects, such as enhanced reputation and brand development, staff development (Trendafiova *et al.* 2016), and particularly for UoG, enhanced student experience and employability. Furthermore, in line with the reliance of volunteer tourists across the nascent SfD field to run and fund many projects (Smith *et al.* 2016), Sport Malawi became commercialised and externally oriented towards meeting the needs of the student-volunteers and the wider "sending community" and as such there was an increasing de-emphasis on the empowerment of stakeholders in Malawi. Within the neoliberal context of higher education, Sport Malawi perpetuated neo-colonial

development binaries in which relatively wealthy student-volunteers were able to empower themselves, in the neoliberal sense, and use the project to enhance their experience of higher education and their employability thereafter. Taking all this into account it is apparent that Sport Malawi served the needs, interests and brand of the UoG, did little to challenge or raise consciousness of the material legacy of neo-colonialism that sustains underdevelopment and unequal power relations, and tended to privilege the needs of the "sending community" over the needs and interests of the "host community". What is striking is that within the neoliberal understanding of empowerment, a focus on power, power relations, and the need to challenge structures of unequal power, is largely absent. The external orientation of Sport Malawi highlights the gap between the rhetoric of empowerment and what is actually intended (cf. Intolubbe-Chmil *et al.* 2012), and how empowerment has become a strategic discourse employed by UoG that enabled its stakeholders, particularly the student-volunteers, to make a success of the existing system and structures of power, rather than resisting and challenging them (cf. Inglis 1997).

More recently, there have been calls for corporate social responsibility initiatives (Trendafiova *et al.* 2016) and SfD programmes (Darnell and Hayhurst 2012; Lindsey *et al.* 2017) involving actors from the global North partnering with and operating in global South locations to be analysed from the perspective of the "host community". This study has been rooted in such an approach and has revealed that within the context of Mzuzu, neoliberal philosophies of empowerment which accentuate the responsibility of the individual to succeed within the global economic status quo, have also been prominent among the various stakeholder groups within the "host community". The voices, however, of the recipients of such empowerment interventions are often inadequately represented in the academic research (cf. Manley *et al.* 2014), or as noted in the previous chapter, intermediaries such as the Malawi Team may not convey the views and interests of the other stakeholder groups in their community to the Minority World partner. Giving

"voice" to all stakeholders in the aid chain is crucial though to better understand how power relations and empowerment plays out in the local communities where Sport Malawi operates. Within the "host community" the pervasive donor-recipient model of development has deeply shaped how recipients of development interventions understand empowerment and crucially their role in the empowerment process. Indeed, the "view from below", detailed in chapter six, demonstrated that agency is still considered to reside in the "sending community", and that passivity is pronounced in the "host community" (Jönsson 2010). Therefore, Sport Malawi operates within a highly charged environment in which the binary power dynamics of "donor" and "recipient" are still considered the "norm" and in which the knowledge and practices of the global North partner are expected to be emulated (McEwan 2009). This broader context in which development projects operate is a significant impediment to locals understanding empowerment in a way that chimes with the radical and postcolonial variant of the concept which seeks to challenge asymmetrical structures of power that inhibit the agency of many people in the Majority World (Batliwala 2007a). The neoliberal understandings of empowerment, held by many within Mzuzu, crucially overlooks the historic and structural causes of the material conditions in which they live and operate within that also constrain their life chances.

How this neoliberal variant of empowerment came to be entrenched in the mind-set of Malawians can be explained by the process of "internalised oppression" (Rowlands 1995), whereby hierarchical power structures (re)produced in colonialism, dictatorship, and development practice have created a culture of silence which is characterised by passivity and deference towards those in positions of power. These embedded discourses have contoured how recipients of aid see their role in development and illuminates why lopsided power relationships remain intact. The impact of "internalised oppression" on how empowerment is understood and practiced in Sport Malawi has been significant. Three issues arise in this regard. Firstly, passivity has tended to dominate local encounters

with the project, with "recipients" generally content to confer decision-making to those deemed more "powerful" in their community. Secondly, this has allowed external actors from the "sending community" to shape agendas and dominate decision-making, partly because passivity was (mis)interpreted as acceptance of an external presence and ideas, and; finally, deference towards external knowledge has been very much in evidence.

The postcolonial lens employed in this thesis is useful in both accounting for these issues and thinking through how they might be addressed. Postcolonialism ultimately seeks to unravel the processes of colonisation, including that of the mind (McEwan 2009). In line with this view, radical notions of empowerment as espoused by Kwame Nkrumah (1964), reveal the importance of erasing the "colonial mentality". However, the absence of sustained efforts to engage in this process in Malawi, explains why Eurocentric ideas about development theory, policy and practice continue to be taken as the "norm" in the country. Decolonising this mindset requires that connections are made between the material and discursive legacies of colonialism and the geopolitical and economic relationships between the global North and global South and the "sending" and "host" communities, respectively. The interconnected nature of these relationships highlights that the legacies of colonialism continue to shape both the mindsets of the participants in Mzuzu, and those of actors at the UoG. Overcoming "internalised oppression" (Rowlands 1995) and the "colonial mentality" (Nkrumah 1964) is required for stakeholders to be able to understand and frame empowerment in ways that chime with the radical, postcolonial variant of the concept (Batliwala 2007a). Without erasing such entrenched mindsets, local participants perpetuate their own passivity and defer control to external actors and local elites, and accept a neoliberal understanding of empowerment which shifts the blame for underdevelopment onto their own shoulders and their apparent laziness and deficiencies.

The belief in the universalism of the dominant neoliberal model of development is particularly problematic for Sport Malawi stakeholders in Mzuzu. Due to the economic, political and cultural legacies of colonisation that have continued into the modern development project, the "sending community" of the UoG are in a position to use Sport Malawi to make itself and the student-volunteers operate more effective within a neoliberal context, while in Malawi these legacies have entrenched a passive mindset and a belief that underdevelopment is down to their own inferiority and inability to emulate Western values, institutions, and practices. Discourses of *Otherness* (Said 2003) which were central during colonialism and prominent in orthodox development practice are predicated on how participants in Sport Malawi can empower themselves, individually, in the neoliberal sense. For the student-volunteers to use Sport Malawi to enhance their "student experience" and "employability" they are required to assume an enhanced position that deems them and their knowledge and skills as more superior and advanced than the local participants in Malawi. This process is reliant though on an inferior, backward *Other*, willing to accept external knowledge and skills. This reflects the quandary of the concept of "mimicry" within postcolonialism (Fanon 2001; Bhabha 1994), in that the universalism of neoliberalism advocates that individuals, regardless of context and the causes of material conditions, can overcome poverty through participating effectively in the "free market" and pursuing individualism. This is based on the desire for the global North partner to see a "reformed, recognisable Other" (McEwan 2009, p.126), however to maintain the "us/them" binary which enables the student-volunteers to assume their enhanced roles in Malawi, the recipients must "simultaneously, remain different – 'almost the same, but not quite'" (*ibid*). Even through emulating the same neoliberal values and practices of the student-volunteers, participants in Malawi cannot be empowered to the same extent as their UK counterparts, due to their political, economic and cultural status, conditioned by the legacies of colonialism. In this way,

understandings of neoliberal empowerment in both the "sending" and "host" communities disadvantage Malawian participants who cannot access the same status and privilege that would enable them to act effectively within the existing structures of power (Inglis 1997).

7.1.2. Paternalistic partnership underpinnings to understandings of empowerment

The concept of partnership was grafted onto the development project to create more equal relationships and redress criticisms that it sustained lopsided power relations between actors in the global North and South. The notion of partnership was at the heart of Sport Malawi and the project sought to operate collaboratively, particularly between the UK Team and the Malawi Team, who were on the "frontline" of delivering the project in the sending and host communities, respectively. However, the practice of creating an equal relationship had proven difficult in the programme due to the pervasive donor-recipient framework within development thinking and practice. As a result, the philosophy of empowerment at the centre of the project was not shaped by notions of equal partnership, but rather by paternalism. That this transpired was due in part to an assumption that changing the language of "senders/donors" and "recipients/beneficiaries" to "partners" levels out uneven power relations (Baaz 2005). Asymmetrical power dynamics rooted in colonisation, were initially obscured in Sport Malawi by the rhetoric of partnership and the emphasis placed on doing development *with* locals, not *for* them. However, the gap between this rhetoric and actual practice in the programme aligns with the "yawning chasm" that Crew and Harrison (1998, p.188) see "between the stated goals of development and its practices and outcomes. Ambitious aims of partnership… often appear disappointingly empty."

Viewed through the critical perspective offered by postcolonialism, the perspectives from "above" and "below" illustrated that the partnership at the centre of Sport Malawi was characterised by a lopsided donor-recipient relationship and this

facilitated the neoliberal model of empowerment in which structural inequalities remain unchallenged (Smith 2015; Jönsson 2010). However, partnership was simply not adopted as empty rhetoric to mask the self-interested motives of all stakeholders within the UoG. The interface between the UK Team and the Malawi Team reveals that those in the former, with backgrounds in community development, had the intention of creating a more equal partnership in which the latter could take steps to operationalise a postcolonial variant of empowerment. However, this aspiration was inhibited by the sorts of inferiority and dependency complexes in Malawi and also by the senior management of the UoG that were discussed earlier. The core group of University staff aspired to enact a model of development that was different to mainstream development which they regarded as ethnocentric, top-down, neo-colonial, and centred on extending Western hegemony and therefore incompatible with empowerment (cf. Kingsbury *et al.* 2012; Brohman 1995). At the centre of this was an understanding that power is exercised in relationships and discourses (Foucault 1998; 1991) and that within the transnational relationships of Sport Malawi there was a requirement to give "power to" and have "power with" their global South counterparts, rather than paternalistically exercising "power over" (Rowlands 1998). Notwithstanding this, there was an awareness that "unintentional disempowerment" often characterised the relationship between the sending and host communities and that there was a tendency to lapse into a colonial mindset and view the position and knowledge of the UK Team as superior to that of the Malawi Team. Even with best intentions, UoG staff fell back into colonial stereotypes and perpetuated such tropes (cf. Heron 2007).

The unequal power dynamics constituted through colonisation and normalised in much of development practice in both the sending and host communities, meant paradoxically that the efforts to operationalise a "bottom-up" delivery of Sport Malawi were often met with resistance from the Malawi Team who preferred to revert back to the

dominant "top-down" and "donor-recipient" relationship ubiquitous in development practice. This paradoxical phenomenon was due to "internalised oppression" (Rowlands 1998) discussed earlier, which resulted in many Malawians not feeling that they have the "power within" or the "power to" participate fully in development interventions. Furthermore, given the material disparity between the sending and host communities, it was difficult for those in the global South not to equate whiteness with wealth and to perceive the partnership with UoG in any way other than one between a donor and a recipient. These psychological, discursive and structural legacies resulted in the (re)production of the inferiority and dependency complexes in Malawi (Pettit 2012) and hampered the framing of empowerment in a postcolonial and radical way.

This is not to suggest that all Malawian participants were passive recipients without agency and power (Trendafiova *et al.* 2016), but rather that their ability to exercise agency and power was constrained by the broader structures that have fashioned the inferiority and dependency complexes. This predicament, also called "learned helplessness" (Gates and Suskiewicz 2016), strongly influenced the amount of power local stakeholders could assert over the programme. As a consequence, within Sport Malawi, empowerment and partnership like other buzzwords in development became empty rhetoric with no real transformative power (cf. Batliwala 2007b).

The postcolonial "view from the side" expounded thus far in the chapter has been useful in tracing the interconnections between colonisation and development and in understanding that the relationship between the sending and host communities is shaped fundamentally by colonial and post-colonial histories. So, while there are power relations in each locality that need to be interrogated in terms of how they impact on understandings or philosophies of empowerment, postcolonial theory allows us to see the UoG and Mzuzu not as two separate localities with separate histories and trajectories, but places that intersect and shape one another in many unequal ways (McEwan 2009). Crucially,

this perspective reaffirms the need to account for these interconnections in analysing how empowerment is understood in both settings. Such an analysis shows that the epochs of colonisation and development overlap, with many "colonial continuities" (Heron 2007) manifesting themselves discursively and psychologically in paternalistic notions of partnership, despite the best intentions of some stakeholders to change this power relationship.

Unequal power relations are needed for the continued North-South flow of resources, and as the previous two chapters illustrated, these resources are not shared out equally in the host community, which has its own uneven power relations and conflicts of interests between stakeholder groups. Sport Malawi is therefore a development site in which empowerment and power are appropriated and reinterpreted differently by the various stakeholders in the aid chain (Baaz 2005). There is an interdependence between the global North and South partners on each other to realise their own aspirations within the asymmetrical power relations of the programme, and for the Malawi Team in particular the stakes of the relationship with the UoG were high and centred around access to monetary resources. Indeed, Sport Malawi is a microcosm of the development sector more widely across Malawi, in which individuals involved in development projects *may* work within the boundaries of unequal partnerships to accrue material benefits for themselves through obtaining salaries and allowances from larger NGOs (Chinsinga 2007b; Nkamleu and Kamgnia 2014; Vian and Sabin 2012).

This manipulation of resource dependency reflects what Patel and McMichael (2004, p.241) observed of elites who had become economically reliant on their former colonisers, which is that "development was used by retreating colonisers as a pragmatic effort to preserve the colonies…[and] that colonial subjects understood this and turned the ideology of development back on the colonisers, viewing development as entitlement." By paying allowances, Sport Malawi further institutionalised dependency

within the host community. However, when the UK Team tried to curb allowances, there was vexation at the deviation from the normalised aid relationship, one that increased dependency and therefore functioned as a form of neo-colonialism. This exposes the role local stakeholder groups, particularly project intermediaries, can play in maintaining development binaries which reproduce lopsided power relations and that obstruct the enactment of more authentic forms of empowerment. Postcolonial theory situates the stakeholder within their locality and social structures while also recognising the historic and contemporary global structures that influence power relations, constrain agency, and shape outcomes of projects such as Sport Malawi (Trendafiova *et al.* 2016).

The postcolonial informed critique presented here reveals that understandings of empowerment within Sport Malawi are radically shaped by paternalistic power relations and this calls into question the ability of development projects to operate outside of the pervasive donor-recipient paradigm. Power (2003) argues that the concept of trusteeship adopted by colonial powers to justify their supervisory control of their colonies was replaced in the post-colonial era with neo-colonial rhetoric of partnership which he sees as equally problematic. Trusteeship, writes Power (2003, p. 131) was centred on "the mission to civilise others, to strengthen the weak, to give experience to the 'childlike' colonial peoples who required supervision." Although the term was dropped in the post-colonial era because of its colonial connotation, the tenets of trusteeship such as the development binaries of modern/backward and donor/recipient were preserved in the discourse of partnership (Cowen and Shenton 1996). The paternalistic undertones of trusteeship and partnership places agency with the global North actor, and childlike passivity with the global South *Other*. Within these power relations, "Just as in colonial times" writes Power (2003, p.132), "the frameworks and strategies of development are authored outside the country concerned and are grounded in foreign (neoliberal) ideologies." So, while partnership can be used to refute allegations of neo-colonialism,

development projects including Sport Malawi are problematically characterised by similar power relations and reproduce the active/passive development binary (McEwan 2009; Baaz 2005). While it appears that partnership, which is at the heart of operationalising empowerment within Sport Malawi, is about giving equal ownership, responsibility, and power to the Malawian stakeholders, in reality development relationships are strongly influenced by colonial legacies which operate at structural, discursive and psychological levels to allocate individuals and communities to particular binaries, predicated on their spatial location. As noted, paradoxically, binaries within development that perpetuate unequal power relations are often reinforced by "partners" in the global South who exhibit inferiority and dependency complexes. Thus, partners in the global North continue to, intentionally and unintentionally, reproduce unequal power dynamics and determine development trajectories in the South.

7.1.3. The impact of the "white-saviour" complex on understandings of empowerment

In addition to paternalistic notions of partnership, a deeply entrenched "white-saviour complex" was prominent among *and* internalised by a range of stakeholders in both the sending and host communities, and this impacted significantly on the philosophies of empowerment evident in Sport Malawi. The core premise underpinning this "complex" is a narrative which depicts actors from the West as engaged in a civilising mission and acting as *saviour* to passive victims in the Majority World. In this worldview, the idea that the Majority World is at fault for its underdevelopment is normalised (Said 2003; Spivak 1985; Escobar 1995) with little acknowledgement of the historical and contemporary structural inequalities that have privileged the Minority World and constrained the Majority World (Vanderplaat 1998; Deepak 2011). As discussed in chapter three, the power dynamics instigated by colonisation are not only political and economic, but also cultural and discursive and determine who has the power to

(mis)represent people and history. Postcolonial theorising reveals that this power still overwhelmingly resides in the West and has enabled the hierarchical categorisation of people in the sending and host communities as being "developed-developing", "active-passive", "donor-recipient" and "saviour-victim", respectively (Deepak 2011; Escobar 1995). Applied to Sport Malawi, these binaries have become internalised by stakeholders and participants in both the sending and host communities and these have been significant in shaping neoliberal understandings of empowerment and maintaining unequal and top-down relationships that are moulded to the paternalistic aspirations of the sending community. Postcolonialism is also useful in making sense of uneven power relations *within* Malawi and how members of the host community, particularly the Malawi Team, have developed a neoliberal understanding of empowerment, one that does not seek to challenge the structural causes of underdevelopment (Jönsson 2010). This was due to an awareness of the limitations, if not paradoxes of empowerment but, who owing to the pervasive structural inequalities of their everyday lives, choose not to challenge these and to focus on survival. Without challenging the white-saviour complex embedded in mindsets it was difficult for stakeholders in the Sport Malawi aid chain to frame empowerment in a way that chimes with the radical, postcolonial variant of the concept.

The view from "above" and "below" detailed in chapters five and six, expose the significance of development discourse and how it impacts on the lives of the recipients of empowerment related interventions. For the student-volunteers, the colonial trope that people in the global South need to be saved, embodied in the white-saviour complex, was for many reinforced by participating in Sport Malawi. Across SfD practice there is an assumption that external volunteers and "change-agents" are required to empower local communities (Forde 2013; Darnell 2007) and therefore the field has been criticised for being beset with (neo)colonial worldviews (Hartman and Kwauk 2011; Tiessen 2011). At the centre of this complex is the validation of the superior position, privilege, and

knowledge of those from the sending community, particularly when present in the host community. Ethnocentric portrayals of the African *Other* in the media and also in many aid and development campaigns, led to student-volunteers to consider themselves as wealthy, knowledgeable, civilised, and altruistic in comparison to Malawians. These distorted images obscured the heterogeneity and agency of the host community (Cammarota 2011; Said 2003) and reinforced the identities and roles adopted by UK participants shaped by their whiteness and/or Northernness.

The interface between the student-volunteers and the workshop participants showcased Fanon's (2001) insistence that white superiority relies for its existence on black inferiority. As a result of their perceived superior status, many student-volunteers believed that the workshop participants should be grateful for the knowledge and resources imparted to them. Such power relations secured through this normative ideal significantly impacted interaction with Malawians on the programme. It meant that student-volunteers assumed the elevated role of coach/teacher, and as McEwan (2009, p.111) argued, relationships framed within the white-saviour paradigm are deeply "unequal in terms of economic exchange and exploitation, political influence and the geographies of knowledge and culture, which have roots deep in a history whose legacies cannot simply be transcended by good intentions." As shown in chapter five, this sentiment was echoed by a few student-volunteers, who acknowledged that while they played the role of coach/teacher, workshop participants equally played the role of student/emulator, knowing that this would please their UK counterparts. This revealed how the mental image of the white-saviour was also applied to the student-volunteers by members of the host community. As Heron (2007, p. 148) notes, global North volunteers enter a highly-charged environment because the "essentials of the colonial encounter are pre-formed within the European psyche, pre-recorded in the deep waters of European life and merely waiting for actual faces and landscapes to take up preordained roles." This

illuminates how passivity, deference, inferiority and emulation characterised the participation of Malawians in Sport Malawi, in comparison to the activation and reinforcement of the white-saviour complex within the UK student-volunteers.

Postcolonialism problematises the representations produced in colonial and development discourse to show how their political, economic, and cultural legacies continue to distinguish stakeholder groups between *and* within the sending and host communities. The perspectives of Malawian participants revealed that the inferiority complex was instigated by the colonised internalising the coloniser's image of them as being sub-standard and subordinate to white superiority (Fanon 2001). In the words of McEwan (2009, p.47), "the colonised come to look at themselves through the eyes of the coloniser." The white-saviour complex was normalised within Mzuzu by the pervasive donor-recipient development framework. The uneven relations of power that this framework (re)produced had been internalised to the extent that it was difficult for locals to imagine a more equal alternative that would allow for a more authentic understanding of empowerment, one that might offer potential to challenge these power relations. This inferiority complex and the underlying lopsided power relations were made particularly visible in the workshops led by the student-volunteers and delivered to local sports coaches, teachers and youth workers. More critical voices emanating from the workshop participants noted how "mzungus" had a licence to do anything in Malawi because of their whiteness which was equated with superior wealth, knowledge and social status. Participating in Sport Malawi enabled the student-volunteers to activate their perceived racial and social superiority in the roles assigned to them within the SfD project. However, there was a willingness on the part of some stakeholders in the host community to question these power relations. For example, some questioned the apparent self-interested motivations of the student-volunteers which aligned with Heron's (2007, p.46) view that "altruism becomes our passport to the South." Within the SfD field more

broadly it has been noted that with the rise of volunteerism, mission drift has often occurred, with the focus shifting from meeting the needs of local communities to meeting the needs of the Western "consumers" (Palacios 2010; Waldorf 2012). There was also an awareness in the host community that Sport Malawi was ultimately oriented towards UoG and that the desire to "help" from the sending community should actually be understood as a profound desire to help one's "self" as opposed to the *Other* (Heron 2007).

Through the theoretical lens of postcolonialism, it is clear that the discourses used to justify development interventions are problematic, particularly due to the unintended consequences they can cause in the host community. Hence, it is crucial for SfD programmes in the global South, including Sport Malawi, to acknowledge the links between the rhetoric and representations within development and the practices of development. As seen, development binaries shape Western representations of the *Other* who are considered in need of empowerment from the outside. Good intentions and altering semantics are in themselves not enough to collapse the white-saviour complex and the development binaries in which it is rooted. As the UK Team attested, it is very difficult for SfD programmes to modify development discourse and dismantle the ubiquitous us-them and donor-recipient power relationships that play out across the wider aid environment which shape how stakeholders see and act out their roles (McEwan 2009). The process of *Othering* originating from colonisation continues to this day to (re)produce and reinforce the internalised images of the West as superior to and saviour of the non-West in both sending and receiving communities (Said 2003). Consequently, stakeholders in the Sport Malawi aid chain assume their subject positions according to these very "colonial continuities" (Heron 2007).

7.2. Mechanisms and platforms to enact the neoliberal variant of empowerment

As outlined above, the understanding of empowerment held by actors in the host and sending ends of the Sport Malawi aid chain reflect the neoliberal variant whereby individual responsibility and action are considered to the catalyst for empowerment, and the role of global North in sustaining the historical and contemporary causes of inequality and uneven relations are largely ignored. Furthermore, neoliberal understandings of empowerment are rooted in paternalistic notions of partnership and reinforce the white-saviour complex (Vanderplaat 1998; Deepak 2011) of the UoG student-volunteers and further entrench an inferiority complex within workshop participants (Spivak 1985). These philosophies of empowerment are revealed in the practice of Sport Malawi through a range of mechanisms employed within Sport Malawi to facilitate the neoliberal model of empowerment. These mechanisms, outlined in chapter five and elaborated upon below, reveal that in the operationalisation of neoliberal empowerment, the partnership at the centre of Sport Malawi reflects broader development practice in that it is characterised by top-down asymmetrical power relations, moulded to the neoliberal and paternalistic aspirations of the global North partner (cf. Smith 2015). Alongside this, many Sport Malawi stakeholders, including those in Mzuzu, hold to neoliberal empowerment practices that do not address structural transformation or enable the true participation and inclusion of the subaltern "voice" (cf. Jönsson 2010). The discussion on the operationalisation of empowerment mechanisms reveal that development and SfD practices should not be disconnected from development discourses given the deep-rooted entanglements between the two (McEwan 2009). It is also crucial to consider how "colonial continuities" (Heron 2007) play out in the programme and how power cuts through encounters between those from the sending and receiving communities to impact on the practices of empowerment.

7.2.1. Controlling the Other: Partnership, knowledge transfer, and developing agency

The empowerment practices of knowledge transfer, developing agency, opportunity structures, capacity-building, the provision of resources, and ensuring long-term sustainability within Sport Malawi require partnership and this create interfaces by which UK and Malawi participants encounter each other. In particular, partnership and the empowerment mechanisms create spaces for the discourse, power, agendas and priorities of the different stakeholders to intersect and reveal how tensions between structure and agency play out in practice to determine empowerment outcomes, both intended and unintended. The postcolonial lens accounts for both the structures that facilitate and inhibit forms of empowerment, while also considering the ways that communities and individuals within them negotiate the pre-ordained power relations shaped by the colonial experience (Banks *et al.* 2016). The perspectives from "above" and "below" reveal that the vertical donor-recipient partnership at the centre of Sport Malawi is largely based on the control of UoG over stakeholders in the receiving community. This form of partnership, which is prominent in mainstream development practice, has been widely criticised because of how it orients development towards the paternalistic and self-interested agendas of Global North partners (Smith 2015; Kreitzer and Wilson 2010). Due to the uneven economic, political, and cultural structures that have spilled over into development from colonialism, the UK stakeholders are able to exercise more power than their Malawian counterparts.

The empowerment mechanism or process of knowledge transfer is particularly revealing of how the Sport Malawi partnership is characterised by the global North partner having power *over* the *Other* (Rowlands 1998). This process relates to the flow of knowledge from UoG to Mzuzu mainly in the form of workshops, designed for the most part by the student-volunteers. Due to the perceived dependence on workshop allowances, the UK Team decreased the number of workshop places, introduced tiered

accredited courses, and end-of-course assessments. Taken without the approval of the Malawi Team this move was intended to engage *only* community sports workers who wanted to "facilitate change" and establish "communities of practice" in Mzuzu (Sport Malawi 2015b). In this guise, knowledge transfer was considered a key mechanism in the empowerment of Malawian participants. However, knowledge operates as a form of power. Notwithstanding the time constraints to design workshops prior to departing for Mzuzu and the difficulties of gaining meaningful collaboration from Malawian stakeholders due to poor internet access, most student-volunteers considered knowledge from the global North as superior to that from the global South. Indeed, workshop participants had internalised similar discourses regarding their inferiority and therefore within the workshop context, authority was automatically given to the possessors of knowledge, the student-volunteers. This reveals within development and SfD programmes, that power is exercised by those who are able to name, represent and theorise (cf. McEwan 2009). It must be acknowledged that staff members did attempt to operationalise dialogical pedagogy practices to ensure that the locals were listened to during the delivery of workshops. However, the effectiveness of this was mitigated by the didactic teaching style that remains prevalent throughout the education system in Malawi. Rote learning, the most prominent pedagogy in this system, has produced passive learners who often accept the knowledge imparted without questioning its validity or relevance to their context and culture.

Lukes' (2005) three-dimensional view on power is useful in making sense of the dynamics that underpinned this process of knowledge transfer. As was outlined in chapter three, Lukes' approach to power reveals that power is more than one group having hegemony over organisation and resources. In this more multifaceted view, power dynamics are analysed firstly by looking at how one group exercises power over another to achieve their interests, then by exploring who sets the agenda, and finally by examining

the wider social and cultural context that enables certain groups to exercise decision-making power, while inhibiting others. Lukes' theorising can be usefully deployed in understanding the power dynamics underpinning the process of knowledge transfer in Sport Malawi. For example, it highlights that while it may have been intended for the needs and knowledge of locals to be included during workshop design and delivery, in reality it was the staff and student-volunteers shaping and determining workshop content, and this was reinforced by the wider structural context and development culture that elevates the position and knowledge of "mzungus". Thus, the traditional aid partnership is predicated not just on North-South flow of finances and materials, but also on the flow of knowledge and ideas. Knowledge transfer reproduces asymmetrical power relations, and even when workshop participants do speak, they often play roles that are expected of them by fellow community members, the intermediaries, and the donor organisation. As was illuminated in the perspectives of UoG senior management, UoG is engage in SfD for reasons that are rooted in the wider strategic ambitions of the University. By operating within already established power relations of the development industry, the sending community is able to generate and disseminate knowledge about SfD that is contoured significantly by social and institutional expectations rather than the true needs and interests of the host community.

Another empowerment mechanism that reveals how the Sport Malawi partnership is characterised by the global North partner having "power over" (Rowlands 1995) the *Other* are activities designed to *develop agency*. The workshops were intended to empower participants to plan and set up local autonomous and self-sufficient SfD projects and to enable this these participants require agency (Hennink *et al.* 2012). The perspective of workshop participants, including those running local SfD projects and those who were not, reveal that their agency, or lack of, must be understood in relation to historic and contemporary structures that operate to reproduce uneven power relations. McEwan

(2009, p.200) has warned of the "the problem of 'particularism'" in which global structures of inequality are overlooked by a myopic view of the local. A multilevel power analysis is, however, required to understand how political, economic, social and cultural contexts impact on ability of Malawian participants. Impacting on the practice of developing agency are the stereotypes of UK participants being active and responsible and Malawian participants being passive and irresponsible. When workshop participants raised concerns over the lack of, or reduction in allowances and food provision, or did not implement SfD projects despite attending numerous workshops, this was perceived as non-commitment, deference, and passivity by UoG stakeholders. However, these characterisations of the active *Self* and passive *Other* (Baaz 2005) must be analysed against the backdrop of dependency and inferiority complexes internalised in Malawians initiated during colonial rule, and reinforced through Banda's authoritarian rule and the current NGO-dominated development era. More generally within Sport Malawi, this meant that Malawian participants, including the Malawi Team, exercised less power over the programme than their UK counterparts. In this way, more powerful groups were able to modify Sport Malawi to fit their agendas, which was often to pursue neoliberal forms of empowerment and that crowded out alternative approaches to running the programme.

While the rhetoric behind Sport Malawi is strongly centred on empowerment, the platform of partnership and the mechanisms of knowledge transfer and developing agency in practice reinforced unequal power relations and were unable to develop agency and give "voice" to locals in ways that would transform structural conditions. Instead the agency that is visible within Sport Malawi is problematic because of how it positions agency as individual responsibility and that locals are responsible for their own empowerment through efficient participation in the "free market" and therefore should not rely on the state (McEwan 2009). Aside from improving individual action and responsibility, the practices of partnership, knowledge transfer, and developing agency

within Sport Malawi are futile in challenging the structures that inhibit the power Malawians can exercise within the programme and beyond it (Inglis 1997).

7.2.2. Capacity-building and providing resources: The pedagogy of the non-oppressed

In line with understandings of empowerment discussed in the first half of this chapter, practices of empowerment shaped by the pervasive the donor-recipient paradigm are centred on the notion that empowerment must be instilled from the outside in order to make host communities more autonomous. This view was expressed in the empowerment mechanism or process of *capacity-building* which is intended to enable local communities, organisations and individuals to take ownership of SfD projects. Crucial to building local capacity are the workshops run by UoG staff and student-volunteers and the role of the Malawi Team who are expected to facilitate empowerment and sustain local participation in the absence of UoG teams. From a critical development perspective, this approach is considered problematic because it is based on dependency on outside actors and as a result mitigates against the operationalisation of radical forms of empowerment (Rahnema 1990; Kelsall and Mercer 2003). This critical insight calls into question the role of UoG staff and student-volunteers who deliver workshops with the aspiration of building internal capacities to enable local sports community workers to empower other community stakeholders to develop and run their own SfD projects. The perspectives of workshop participants, outlined in chapter six, revealed that the extent of resource dependency was connected to the amount of external involvement.

Practices of empowerment determined by the donor-recipient axis at the centre of Sport Malawi also include the empowerment mechanism of providing resources to local SfD projects. This approach is based on the fact that many communities did not have the resources to get projects off the ground, and that for empowerment to take place locals must be given external resources to enable the creation of autonomous and largely self-

sufficient SfD projects. Linked to the mechanism of capacity-building, staff and student-volunteers transport new and used sports equipment and kit from the UK to Mzuzu, and furthermore, financial aid is also provided to the Malawi Team to allow training, evaluation and project support to be continued in between UoG team visits. As noted, however, the UK Team endeavoured to moderate the practice of "hand-outs" in the form of workshop and travel allowances due to the belief that this practice was counterproductive to empowerment and worked to deepen dependency and inferiority complexes. There is a quandary presented in the perspectives of student-volunteers detailed in chapter five in that when it comes to providing resources, particularly in terms of allowances which Malawians were generally adamant that they should receive, that the disparity in wealth was starkly revealed between UK and Malawian participants. This in turn caused some unease amongst the student-volunteers and, along with desire to limit resource dependency, this led to workshop allowances being restricted. The assumption that whiteness equates with wealth and the common requests for money and materials that typified the relationship between workshop participants and UoG staff and student-volunteers came to be considered as problematic and fed into this decision. However, the rationale underpinning this move can be viewed as rooted in a narrative that presents locals as "greedy" without accounting for the broader political, economic and cultural contexts that shape practices within the host community, and as such allowed UK participants to ignore how they might be implicated in these structures of unequal power (cf. Heron 2007).

Both the practices of sending external volunteers and change-agents to build internal capacity and provide resources can be viewed as replicating past colonial and racialised practices (Deepak 2011; Jönsson 2010). These mechanisms also give expression to the neoliberal understanding of empowerment that overlooks Sport Malawi programme as a space where interactions between UK and Malawi stakeholders

reproduce unequal historical and racialised power relationships. Left unchallenged, these practices reinforce in stakeholders in the sending and receiving communities the colonial trope that recipients are passive, deficit, and in desperate need of capable and generous development workers and volunteers from the Minority World. Furthermore, by tapping into the growing trend of "voluntourism", SfD projects as seen in Sport Malawi can succumb to "mission drift" whereby the main objective becomes focused on satisfying the needs of the volunteers rather than locals.

The postcolonial informed critique of these practices within Sport Malawi sheds light on the privileged position the UoG holds in the partnership with stakeholders in the receiving community in Mzuzu. It also reveals the extent to which the programme has an external orientation, and operates in a way that fulfils the needs and interests of stakeholders in the UK. Rather than providing an opportunity for the student-volunteers to reflect on the historic and contemporary power imbalances and engage in practices that might work towards structural transformation, such as the adoption of critical pedagogical approaches within the programme, the University appears to use Sport Malawi to develop transferable skills in the student-volunteers to prepare them for entry into the competitive labour market, thus aligning with the neoliberal agenda permeating higher education.

These self-interested motivations for global North volunteers are reflected across the development industry. As Heron (2007, p.2) has argued, development has from its beginning "axiomatically assumed to be altruistic. It is touted as a 'life-changing' experience for *us,* and its constitutive effect on… Northern development workers' identities is considered indisputably laudable." The importance of Sport Malawi to enhancing the "student experience" and their "employability" often took precedence over altruistic motivations of empowering locals. Taking part in Sport Malawi and playing a central role in capacity-building and providing resources is thus a means for an improved university experience for the student-volunteers. For this to take place the Malawian

participants are positioned in such a way that they serve the learning and personal growth aspirations of the student-volunteers. Imperceptible to most student-volunteers is the commodification of Otherness, particularly when the opportunity for student-volunteers to see poverty first-hand was portrayed as a point of attraction in travelling to Malawi and participating in the programme. Furthermore, central to student-volunteers casting themselves as altruistic individuals, encountering the *Other* was pivotal in attaining this benevolent vision of themselves. However, the desire to fulfil self-interested and altruistic aspirations co-exist and this was manifest in the desire of some UoG staff for Sport Malawi to be both empowering for Malawian participants as well as for the student-volunteers. While there are no straightforward answers to these dilemmas raised by sending student-volunteers to design and deliver workshops in Mzuzu, these fieldtrip visits could provide the opportunity to challenge perceptions and provoke student-volunteers to ask profound ethical questions, including how their privileged position within North-South power relations has been conditioned by deeply entrenched lopsided historical and contemporary structures (McEwan 2009).

7.2.3. Opportunities and sustainability: Lack of "subaltern" participation and voice

Alongside the platform of partnership and the mechanisms of knowledge transfer, developing agency, capacity building, and providing resources, Sport Malawi has also sought to operationalise practices that would encourage opportunity structures and generate long-term sustainability for the programme. In relation to opportunity structures it was felt that for workshop participants to be able to deliver SfD projects they need to have the necessary opportunity structures to do so (Sport Malawi 2015b). To this end the project reached out to national government departments and bodies such as the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Development, Ministry of Education and the Malawi National

Council of Sports, as well as myriad local NGOs to encourage multilevel partnership and enable an environment for SfD projects to thrive.

However, as noted in chapter two and according to the view from "below" and "above" presented in chapters five and six, the SfD field is still in its infancy in Malawi, and as a consequence there are social, political, and institutional obstacles to overcome for partnerships to be enabling and empowering. One of the obstacles to encouraging opportunity structures is the impact of neoliberalism, which in Malawi has reduced state intervention and social spending meaning that many of these Government departments and bodies do not have the resources to invest in SfD projects. Due to the economic growth-first approach of neoliberalism, the "free market" is given prominence while social and welfare concerns are deprioritised. With the implementation of SAPs in the 1980s and 1990s, a proliferation of NGOs flooded into Malawi following the end of Banda's authoritarian rule in response to the diminution of state services, leading to the institutionalisation of NGO-led development. In this tradition, by facilitating the neoliberal model of empowerment, Sport Malawi within the broader development industry serves a globalised economy that reproduces inequality and uneven power relations (Heron 2007).

The mechanism or process of creating opportunity structures as part of the ambition of Sport Malawi is connected to the aim of generating long-term sustainability for the programme. At the heart of Sport Malawi's empowerment *modus operandi* is the aspiration for workshop participants to deliver sustainable SfD projects in Mzuzu without UoG intervention. As a key concept within bottom-up grassroots development approaches, sustainability is a core component of empowerment processes and an outcome of it. However, in Sport Malawi UoG stakeholders exercise more "power over" (Rowlands 1995) the programme than their Malawian counterparts, and the Malawi Team plays a secondary role to the UK Team, particularly in terms of decision-making and

delivering training and support to local SfD projects. As a result of these entrenched relations of power within the programme, the aspiration for long-term sustainability and local ownership is undermined.

With this in mind, a "train the trainers" approach was operationalised to enable the local committee and workshop participants to take over control of Sport Malawi and in time make the role of the UoG redundant. However, due to the ways in which the programme aligns with the University's ambitions in a neoliberal UK higher education sector, it is questionable if it would be willing to give "power to" (Rowlands 1995) or complete autonomy to the Malawi stakeholders. This was because of the potential that the programme would develop in directions that run counter to what the University seeks to gain from it, a point raised by a number of UoG staff. Furthermore, an obstacle to generating local sustainability of the programme is the homogenising tendencies of development discourse which works to conceal both the conflicting agendas and unequal power relations within the host community (cf. Kelsall and Mercer 2003). As evident from the views from "above" and "below", that the sending and host communities were characterised by complex and conflicting internal power relations, with individuals pursuing diverse agendas (Luke 2005; Luttrell *et al*. 2007).

The theoretical and practice implications that emerge from the use of postcolonialism, problematise the ways in which Sport Malawi seeks to encourage opportunity structures and generate long-term sustainability. What the analysis here reveals are that the project has limited success in practice to garner the participation and "voice" of stakeholders in Mzuzu who hold lower social positions. During colonialism, colonial powers were able to assert their dominance through grafting colonial power onto existing structures of local power, such as local chiefs. By co-opting local elites, colonial rulers were able to exercise "power over" (Rowlands 1995) the masses, with more subservient groups having to navigate their position relative to the local elites. The

"subaltern" therefore within postcolonial theory refers to ordinary people and not local elites and highlights the need, in the words of McEwan (2009, p.61), "to recover the silenced voice of the formerly colonised without losing sign of the structural inequalities between the dominant and the subjugated." Even with the mechanisms that were intended to empower, the broader development culture which is permeated with colonial legacies contoured the practices and behaviour of the student-volunteers and the Malawi Team, and inhibited the less privileged stakeholders from being able to speak and be heard in the programme. In the main, both the student-volunteers and the Malawi Team did not link their behaviour and practices with historical and contemporary relations of dominance. To help explain this, Heron (2007, p.103) argues that volunteers from the global North try to distance themselves from the development industry as a whole by believing the "myth of alternative development" in which they consider their approach, often surrounded in the rhetoric of empowerment, as more virtuous and meaningful. As Heron explains, "It is as if taking an oppositional stance in certain regards is sufficient to place us outside of, or to safeguard us from being implicated in, the impact of the development enterprise, which we recognise as questionable and sometimes harmful" (*ibid*). The postcolonial view of empowerment requires global North volunteers to question their own position and complicity within global power relations (Said 2003; Spivak 1985) and as manifest in the perspectives of stakeholders from the UoG this sort of critical reflection was largely absent.

Conclusion

Building on earlier chapters which explored how empowerment and power operates in development, SfD, and within Sport Malawi, both from the vantage points of "above" and "below", this chapter has analysed empowerment and power from the "side" (Jönsson

2010). This chapter has demonstrated that postcolonial theorising and critical perspectives of empowerment are a useful, and indeed, necessary lens through which to understand the philosophies and practices of empowerment apparent in Sport Malawi. The analyses here show that empowerment within Sport Malawi was largely understood and practiced within the neoliberal variant of the concept. As a result, individual responsibility and action was understood by most actors as the key to empowerment rather than challenging the constraining which reproduce unequal development. The first section of the chapter revealed how the neoliberal model of empowerment within the programme was characterised by a paternalistic partnership that reinforced the white-saviour complex of UoG participants. As such, this neoliberal version of empowerment did not encourage actors either in the sending or host communities to reflect on or seek to challenge the structural inequalities that continue to privilege the global North (Vanderplatt 1998; Deepak 2011; Spivak 1985).

Flowing on from the analysis of the understanding or philosophies of empowerment manifest in the perspectives of Sport Malawi stakeholders, the second section interrogated the mechanisms intended to operationalise the neoliberal form of empowerment in Sport Malawi. In this regard, the various empowerment practices employed were characterised by an asymmetrical and top-down partnership moulded to the paternalistic aspirations of the UoG, a negation of unequal power structures, and a disregard for the historical and contemporary multilevel causes of inequality and underdevelopment in which the West is implicated (Jönsson 2010). These two sections highlight that the discursive and material legacies of (neo)colonialism are deeply entwined and work together to reinforce the privileged position of the UK participants over their Malawian counterparts in the Sport Malawi programme. In this way, when considering the outworking of empowerment and power within Sport Malawi, it is in the words of McEwan (2009, p.22), "relatively easy to make the case that colonial

relationships have not ended." With this mind, it is very difficult for stakeholders within the Sport Malawi aid chain to acknowledge, resist and challenge such deeply entrenched structures of power (cf. Inglis 1997), and therefore the neoliberal form of empowerment is futile in beginning to challenge or solving the underlying causes of inequality and uneven development.

Conclusion

This thesis critically analysed how the concept of empowerment is understood and operationalised in the SfD programme, Sport Malawi. This is a timely and valuable contribution to the SfD literature given the growing recognition of sport's potential to facilitate sustainable development and empower the poor and marginalised (cf. Lindsey and Darby 2018). Despite empowerment becoming synonymous with the objectives of and practice within this field, there have been limited efforts to problematise, better understand, and analyse this ubiquitous concept within SfD. The notion that sport is empowering, however, has more recently been the enquiry of some fledgling academic analyses, including analyses of sport and gender empowerment of women and girls in India (cf. Samie et al. 2015; McDonald 2015; Kay 2013b); sport as a tool for HIV and AIDS education in southern Africa (Jeanes 2013; Mwannga 2011; Mwaanga and Banda 2014); and collaborative sports equipment in west Africa (Lindsey and O'Gorman 2015). Despite these explorations, empowerment remains a loosely defined (cf. Rowlands 1995) and an uncritically accepted concept with the SfD field. This study set out to redress this lacuna by theorising what variants of empowerment understandings and practices are

exhibited in and through Sport Malawi, interrogating what facilitates or mitigates varying forms of empowerment, and exploring the consequences, intended or otherwise, of divergent forms of empowerment.

As noted in chapter three, empowerment is a slippery and contested concept and within development discourse, its lineage has given rise to two broad variants. The first is the radical model of empowerment which is rooted in the thinking of postcolonial leaders, progressive educators and feminist activists who struggled for decolonisation, social justice, and the emancipation of the poor and marginalised, respectively (Nkumah 1964; Freire 1972; Batliwala 2007a). This understanding of empowerment foregrounded the issue of power and the need to challenge the Western, top-down, ethnocentric and economic bias of mainstream development (Kabeer 1994). Infused with emancipatory possibilities, this authentic form of empowerment in the words of Jönsson (2010, p.394), "represents the needs and efforts of marginalised groups for a social environment free of inequalities which disfavour them socially, politically and economically." This version, however, was later stripped of its emancipatory potential through its co-opting into the lexicon of orthodox development (Luttrell and Quiroz 2009; Rai *et al.* 2007). In doing so, the focus shifted from structural to individual transformation (Batliwala 2007a). The result of this apolitical (re)interpretation of empowerment is that while the language of empowerment continues to allude to "bottom-up" development approaches, in practice it falls in tackling the unequal structures that underpin underdevelopment and sustain the need for development projects (Leal 2007). As Cornwall (2007) has illustrated, the fact that empowerment has become a malleable "fuzzword", it has frequently been taken out of its historical and political context of emancipatory struggle to become a term that is applied as a universal applicable panacea, without any real transformative edge.

To address the neglect of enquiry and analysis of empowerment within SfD and provide some conceptual clarity to the *fuzziness* of the concept and how it is understood

and practiced, this thesis undertook a fine grained analysis of the philosophies and practices of empowerment within Sport Malawi. To fulfil this aim, the research questions posed in this study interrogated the: a) perceived outcomes for UK volunteers and the sending community of the UoG; b) perceived outcomes for host individuals, organisations and communities in Malawi; c) perceived understandings of empowerment and the mechanisms employed to facilitate it, and; d) how the understandings and practice of empowerment in Sport Malawi might be understood theoretically. Jönsson's (2010) suggestion that a postcolonial critique of empowerment should be informed by views from "above", "below", and from the "side" was drawn on to shape the methodological and theoretical approaches to address these questions. To gather the perspectives of, *and* give "voice" to, all the stakeholder groups (Banda and Holmes 2017), an ethnographic research approach was adopted for this study, with the inclusion of stakeholders from both the "sending community" of the UoG (*n* = 28) and "host community" of Mzuzu (*n* = 49) (cf. Sherraden *et al.* 2008). This interpretive methodological approach was most instructive in interrogating empowerment and the power relations underpinning Sport Malawi; issues at the heart of the research aim and questions of this study.

To address the study's aim and research questions, a broad postcolonial theoretical framework rooted in critiques of empowerment was adopted. To explore understandings of empowerment, this conceptual framework analysed power as existing in development discourse and relationships (McEwan 2009), particularly the pervasive donor/recipient binary (Baaz 2005). Stakeholders' positions within broader structures and the impact this has on the ability to exercise power and assert agency were also explored. Furthermore, by drawing on Rowlands (1995; 1998) concept of "internalised oppression", discursive and psychological aspects of how empowerment played out in Sport Malawi were analysed, including the presence of inferiority and dependency complexes and the persistence of a "colonial mentality" in the mindsets of Malawian participants (Nkrumah

1964). The ways in which this shaped the mechanisms employed to operationalise empowerment within Sport Malawi were explored by drawing on a postcolonial framework that problematised the use of external "change-agents" (UK student-volunteers) to create autonomous SfD projects in Mzuzu (cf. Freire 1972). The mechanisms employed to achieve this were further critiqued by acknowledging the homogenising tendencies of development discourse and the way they obscured asymmetrical power relations *and* conflicting agendas (Kelsall and Mercer 2003).

The value of drawing on postcolonialism in this study illuminated four particular issues that were particularly salient. Firstly, in analysing the perspectives from the sending and host communities, this perspective ensured the foregrounding of the core issues of empowerment and power as both separate *and* intersected, accounting for the overlapping political, economic, social and cultural histories of the UK and Malawi, traced back to British colonial rule. Secondly, it opened up opportunities for a more nuanced understanding of power relations within SfD. In particular, viewing Sport Malawi through a postcolonial lens revealed how and what forms of power are exercised between stakeholders. These included generative forms of power, including "power to", "power with", and "power within", as well as the more pervasive and zero-sum forms of power, most notably "power over" which is centred on the ability of stakeholders to influence and coerce others to realise their own aspirations from the programme (cf. Rowlands 1995). Thirdly, the postcolonial framework also revealed how power operates at different levels, from the global to the national and down to the local, highlighting how the interests of the economically privileged in an unequal world are prioritised, while *Others* are marginalised from decision-making and material possibilities. This perspective illustrated how power operated in various spaces within the programme, including closed decision-making arenas, and has various degrees of visibility, including the invisible and insidious form of power executed through "internalised oppression"

(Luttrell *et al*. 2007). Finally, the potential offered through postcolonialism for a multilevel analysis of power prevents an overemphasis on the local which inhibits understanding the role of global and historic structures in marginalising those who are often the intended *beneficiaries* of empowerment interventions. Thus, this framework brought into clear view the central role played by SfD volunteers and interrogated the extent to which they are able to empower their counterparts in the global South, and the importance of not viewing the sending or host communities as homogenous with agreed programme aspirations and agendas (Kelsall and Mercer 2003). All of these valuable insights drawn from the broad postcolonial theoretical framework were reflected in the study's findings.

Drawing on these insights, chapter five critiqued the philosophy and practice of empowerment within Sport Malawi from "above". By contextualising the programme within the UoG's Anglican heritage, the broader neoliberal tendencies permeating higher education in the UK, and detailing the empowerment discourse and mechanisms employed, the perspectives of senior management, staff, and student-volunteers were interrogated to understand how they chimed with neoliberal and postcolonial variants of empowerment. The analysis revealed that senior management stakeholders drew on Sport Malawi to market the University and attract prospective students, while also enhancing the "student experience" and employability of the student-volunteers who participated in the programme. Therefore, the more radical understanding of empowerment evident in the programme's early development was diluted as Sport Malawi was subsumed within the neoliberal agenda sweeping across the UK higher education sector. However, within this changing environment, the staff members on the "frontline" of delivering Sport Malawi endeavoured to operationalise a model of empowerment that correlated with the more radical and postcolonial understanding of the concept. However, these aspirations were curtailed due to the organisational culture of the University determined largely by

the management stakeholders (cf. Spaaij *et al.* 2016) and the local culture of dependency in the host community (cf. Heron 2007). As a result, the interests of the student-volunteers were prioritised within the programme. The privileging of the needs and interests of UoG stakeholders over those of local participants in Malawi was enabled by the underlying material legacy of (neo)colonialism which (re)produces unequal power relationships and maintains the need for development interventions. By taking all of this into account, it was clear that Sport Malawi enacted a neoliberal model of empowerment which advocated individual responsibility and action as the solution both to addressing poverty in the Malawi and preparing UoG students for their post-graduation lives.

Chapter six undertook a postcolonial critique of the understandings and practices of empowerment "from below" and in doing so, provided space for the voice of Malawian stakeholders of Sport Malawi. Again, by contextualising the programme within Mzuzu and considering the origins and mechanics of the partnership between sending and host communities, the perspectives of community stakeholders, the Malawi Team, workshop participants, and the project participants were examined to understand how they related to neoliberal and postcolonial variants of empowerment. The perspectives of community stakeholders uncovered that the model of empowerment operationalised in and through Sport Malawi, while intended to facilitate a "bottom-up" approach to development, actually intensified the external resource dependency that is manifest elsewhere in Malawi. In doing so, it further entrenched a "scarcity mentality" that has rendered some local stakeholders as passive and unable to leverage their position to work with others to implement postcolonial forms of empowerment. The perspectives of the Malawi Team were illustrative of Kelsall and Mercer's (2003) assertion that host communities cannot be considered homogenous, with individuals having divergent agendas on what they would seek to achieve from Sport Malawi. Furthermore, they reveal that the neoliberal empowerment of individuals often intersects with the disempowerment of other

stakeholders. The interface between workshop participants and student-volunteers exposed stark power imbalances and revealed that resources dependency is connected to the extent of involvement with external actors. This highlighted the flaw in the contention that external "change-agents" are required to install internal capacity to enable workshop participants to run autonomous projects. Finally, the perspectives of the participants of the five local SfD projects followed for this study showed that the dominant understanding of empowerment imparted to them correlated with the neoliberal (re)interpretation of the concept. As such, the overwhelming take-home message they received from the projects was that individual responsibility and action were the real means to pulling themselves out of the material conditions in which they live. These findings align with the view that SfD programmes can be "ironic" in that they claim to address complex and entrenched structural issues, but in reality and on the ground, their neoliberal solutions only (re)produce these conditions and reinforce inequality (Wilson and Hayhurst 2009; Darnell and Kaur 2015).

To augment the localised perspectives captured in the views from "above" and "below", chapter seven critiqued empowerment from the "side" (Jönsson 2010). This approach which interrogated the findings of the study from a deeper theoretical perspective prevented an overemphasis on localism and helped to contextualise participants' views within the broader historical and contemporary structures in which they operate (Mohan and Stokke 2000). By applying the broad postcolonial theoretical lens adopted for this study, the chapter provided a "big picture" perspective on the philosophies and practices of empowerment apparent in Sport Malawi. From this theoretical vantage point, it was noted that empowerment understandings were largely aligned within the neoliberal model of the concept. This pervasive version of empowerment was characterised by a paternalistic partnership that privileged the interests of the UK partner and reinforced the white-saviour complex in student-volunteers.

Furthermore, this understanding of empowerment inhibited participants in both the sending and host communities from having an awareness of the need to challenge structural inequalities that continue to privilege the global North (Vanderplatt 1998; Deepak 2011; Spivak 1985). The empowerment mechanisms employed through the programme were characterised by an asymmetrical and top-down partnership moulded to the paternalistic aspirations of the UoG. Moreover, there was a negation of unequal power structures and a disregard for the historical and contemporary multilevel causes of inequality (Jönsson 2010). These postcolonial critiques of the pervasive neoliberal understandings and practices of empowerment within Sport Malawi reveal the entwined nature of the discursive and material legacies of (neo)colonialism, which work together to reinforce the privileged position of the UK participants over their Malawian counterparts. Against this backdrop, the neoliberal form of empowerment is ineffective in tackling the underlying causes of uneven power relations and development.

The findings of this study have a number of important implications for, and point to possible alternatives in how empowerment is understood and practiced within the SfD field. As McEwan (2009, p.289) argued when writing about postcolonial approaches and their implications for development: "If we constantly critique but pose no alternatives we are at risk of discouraging affective attachment to the world; it is essential that hope is not extinguished in critique." Therefore, five alternatives will now be presented by way of offering "affective attachment" and "hope" to the future utilisation of empowerment within SfD. Firstly, the implementation of a postcolonial variant of empowerment within SfD programmes would challenge and destabilise the dominant discourse of development binaries that are inherently Western and ethnocentric in their conceptualisation. This thesis drew on the terminology of sending and host communities, derived from the work of Sherraden *et al.* (2008) on international volunteering in development to denote the *actual* existence of the traditional aid relationship in Sport Malawi. These terms helped

to centre the existence of uneven power relations between UK and Malawian participants in the programme. However, similar to other development binaries such as developed/developing, modern/backward, and crucially donor/recipient, postcolonial theory challenges the homogenising tendencies behind these dichotomies. It also shows how the prescribed labels of *Self* and *Other*, and *us* and *them* (Baaz 2005; Heron 2007) are designed to enable one group to exercise "power over" other groups (Rowlands 1995). Furthermore, because these binaries have been deeply entrenched and normalised by mainstream development stakeholders in the global North *and* the global South, they are uncritically accepted and as seen in this study, they are often reinforced by participants in the Majority World. Therefore, the implication for the SfD field is the need to move beyond these ubiquitous terminologies given the intersection between discursive and material legacies of colonialism and development (cf. McEwan 2009).

Secondly, in order to overcome these entrenched binaries, those on the "frontline" of delivering SfD programmes and training need the conceptual means to locate their privileged position within global power relations and within a development industry infused with a range of colonial tropes, including the white-saviour complex. Postcolonialism elucidates how the discursive power of the white-saviour complex profoundly contours development encounters and how the concept of empowerment is understood and operationalised. At the centre of the white-saviour trope is the pervasive notion that external "change-agents" are required to instil agency and build the capacity of host communities (Kelsall and Mercer 2003). Indeed, the "white man's burden" (Fanon 2001) of having to inculcate in "passive" communities in the Majority World a strong drive for private enterprise and individual initiative, while maintaining unequal power relations, is central to neoliberal understandings of empowerment. While many practitioners delivering SfD projects may be critical of the white-saviour complex and its associated negative representations of locals and the unequal power relations they

reproduce, they continue to perpetuate the pervasive discourse, oftentimes unintentionally, that the Western development actor is the saviour to the non-West helpless/hapless host community (Deepak 2011).

Thirdly, the postcolonial critique has clearly problematised the practice of paternalistic partnership which is characterised by exercising control over the Other, as manifested particularly in the empowerment mechanisms of knowledge transfer and developing agency. Partnership is intended to level out unequal power relations that characterise the development industry through increasing the participation of local recipients in their own development. Beyond increasing local control over development interventions, more radical variants of participation would focus on involving local knowledge and increasing the agency of local participants so that they are able to overcome oppressive social structures that constrain their life chances (Mohan and Stokke 2000). This more radical practice of participation would counter donor-driven and outsider-led development (McEwan 2009). However, as participation has become mainstreamed in development practice alongside empowerment (Cornwall 2007), it has become considered by some as the "new tyranny" (Cooke and Kothari 2001). As noted from the perspectives of stakeholders in Mzuzu, it takes time and energy for locals to participate, and the heterogeneous nature of the community and conflicting agendas leads to the marginalisation of stakeholders with less power. Therefore, participation does not automatically lead to empowerment, particularly in ways aligned to radical forms of the concept because of the failure to tackle the structures that sustain inequality (Willis 2005).

Fourthly, to move away from hegemonic relationships and the idea of "change-agents" from the global North saving passive global South recipients, Deepak (2011) has advocated that "transnational solidarities" would be more effective practice than partnership which is analogous to colonial notions of trusteeship (Power 2003). The postcolonial lens has revealed that the structural inequalities between and contrasting

living conditions in the UK and Malawi, constituted by colonial and post-colonial legacies, have deeply shaped identities and interactions within development. Therefore, the partnership at the centre of Sport Malawi is a key interface in which discourse, power, agendas and interests of the global North and South partners intersect and it illuminates how broader political, economic and cultural structures impact on local agency and the extent to which it is inhibited or enabled (Trendafiova *et al*. 2016). Partnership as a form of paternalism underpins neoliberal empowerment understandings. To offer a counter-hegemonic alternative, this "transnational solidarities" approach acknowledges the historic and contemporary power imbalances that privilege the West and limit agency in the non-West, and seeks to position this fact at the centre of development practice through the Freirean processes of conscientisation and praxis (Deepak 2011). This perspective on empowerment through partnership foregrounds the (neo)colonial ways in which empowerment practices operate and sustain uneven power relations.

Finally, this study has revealed that within Sport Malawi empowerment was shown to be a "fuzzword" (cf. Cornwall 2007) in how it was understood by the various stakeholders in the programme's aid chain, and that this significantly influenced empowerment practices. Therefore, as a way forward there is need for conceptual clarity on empowerment within the SfD field. Inglis (1997) has noted the important distinction between neoliberal and radical forms of empowerment, and challenged the idea that the latter can be achieved through personal transformation. Furthermore, in conceptualising empowerment he highlighted the importance of foregrounding the issues of power and distinguishing "between individuals being empowered within an existing social system and struggling for freedom by changing the system" (Inglis 1997, p.3). Applied to SfD, this illustrates that there is a need to talk and write about empowerment in ways that speaks clearly to the issue of power and distinguishes between individuals being enabled to work within the system to survive and the more emancipatory possibilities that are

centred around communities transforming the systemic issues limit their emancipation. To this end and despite the concept's originally lineage, it may be time for this radical and postcolonial understanding to cut its ties with the term empowerment and frame itself instead as "emancipation" (cf. Inglis 1997; Jönsson 2010). This new term within SfD discourse would therefore allude to aspirations to destabilise and challenge unequal social, economic, and political structures that constrain collective stakeholder groups, leaving empowerment as a signifier of individual transformation.

Having drawn on postcolonial theory it is important to offer some final reflections on the positionality of the researcher and to consider how the socio-economic status, as well as the gender, race, geographical location and previous involvement in Sport Malawi of the researcher influenced on data collection and interpretation within this study. In terms of data collection, the researcher as noted in chapter four was referred to by many locals in Malawi as a "mzungu" and it was clear that race, and particularly whiteness, played a considerable role in contouring interactions with the various research participant groups, namely community stakeholders, the Malawi Team, workshop participants, and SfD project participants. On the one hand, the status of "mzungu", which is generally now a moniker for a "white person", in addition to the credentials of helping to originally create and co-ordinate the programme was advantageous in facilitating access to the people and projects covered in this study. On the other hand, "mzungu" which is also associated with being considered wealthy and well-connected, created a social distance with participants which could not be fully closed, as particularly illustrated with the research participants in some of the focus groups. The impact of these social positions required an enhanced sense of reflexivity. As acknowledged in the introduction to this thesis, the researcher is cognizant of the power relations in which she is implicated. With this in mind, the call was heeded to implement modest strategies to decolonise the research process. This included Spivak's (1985) ethical requirement for the global North

researcher to "unlearn" their privilege as loss and acknowledge the ways in which our social position, including history and institutional location, are a hindrance to fully accessing and being equipped to capture and understand local perspectives and knowledge. However, to ensure that all voices were heard during data collection it was recognised that power relations between the stakeholders in Sport Malawi could mean that some groups could be marginalised in the research process, with their perspectives being deemed as less important by other groups or even by the researcher. Therefore, stringent efforts were made to include all stakeholder groups during fieldwork. The empirical data chapters used "thick description" from participants in each stakeholder group of the Sport Malawi "aid chain" to accentuate these local voices and perspectives.

In addition to influencing the researcher's interactions in the field, postcolonial theory highlights how positionality shapes the discursive representations (McEwan 2009) of the people and projects depicted in this study. With the intention of trying to "unlearn" and offset the privilege of the researcher, the representations of participants in this study focused on contextualising power relations, practices and mindsets within the broader operation and culture that has enveloped the mainstream development sector. The study sought to recognise the legacy of the colonial past on present-day development practice and revealed how contemporary power relations and inequalities are manifestations of long-standing historical injustices originating from colonialism. This approach provided a rich and complex picture of the myriad ways in which empowerment is understood and practiced in a SfD programme. It also revealed the gap that existed between the aspiration for radical empowerment held by some stakeholders, such as UoG staff and the Malawian workshop participants, and the actual operationalisation of a more neoliberal form of empowerment through Sport Malawi. As a result, discursive constructions of the "sending" and "host" community were not presented as homogenous and harmonious, but rather revealed a complex picture of unequal power relations *between* and *within* both

the UoG and Mzuzu, with various stakeholder groups having conflicting agendas and using their positions and power to realise these.

The contribution of this thesis to Sport Malawi, SfD research, and development studies more widely is chiefly twofold. Firstly, by answering Darnell and Hayhurst's (2012, p.120) call for more research with a postcolonial research orientation that gives voice to all in the "aid chain", this study makes a novel and valuable contribution to SfD scholarship capturing the perspectives of all the stakeholders in a SfD project and presenting empirical findings that are detailed and deeply embedded in ethnographic research on the ground. This approach turned the spotlight on the ideologies and practices of empowerment that silence, misrepresent, and exclude the same stakeholders that Sport Malawi aspires and claims to empower. The comparative and complimentary approach of exploring the views from "above" and "below" and the interfaces through which they interact revealed the interconnectedness of the histories and "colonial continuities" (Heron 2007) between global North and global South stakeholders. Rather than concentrating on "here" *or* "out there", combining the two vantage points of UK and Malawian perspectives, together which the deeper theoretical "view from the side" highlighted points of synergies in how empowerment was understood and practiced. It also revealed areas of disjuncture, and foregrounded the crucial issue of power and asymmetrical power relations between *and* within communities and stakeholder groups.

Secondly, in terms of offering a theoretical and scholarly contribution, this study adds to the body of knowledge around empowerment within both SfD and development. In particular, it presented a fine grained, highly detailed analysis of the understandings and practices of empowerment and provided conceptual clarity that will be insightful to stakeholders in Sport Malawi, the SfD field, and the broader development industry in terms of empowerment-focused interventions. It has been noted that the lack of conceptual clarity or "fuzziness" can in itself be disempowering for development

stakeholders because there is no accountability as to what the actual aspirations of the external donors and programmes facilitators are (Luttrell *et al.* 2007). This has been heavily criticised for the way it permits empowerment-focused development interventions to circumvent the need to address asymmetrical power relations. The concern here is that empowerment can be misused to imply "bottom-up" approaches to development, while on the ground enacting a model of empowerment that reinforces "top-down" development (Rowlands 1995). Indeed, empowerment practices based on external "change-agents" exerting "power over" local recipients, focus on enabling individuals to participate and survive within, rather than challenge, unequal structures. In this way, the neoliberal model of empowerment helps individuals meet their "practical needs" and survive within the system (Luttrell *et al.* 2007). Jönsson (2010, p. 398) has argued that such an approach to empowerment is inadequate and that "improving individual capacities, such as self-confidence and consciousness, should be combined with the change of structures that oppress." She goes on to add that "it is futile and can also be considered as unethical for professionals to help solve problems while ignoring the systematic barriers… that allow or maintain inequalities" (*ibid*). Luttrell *et al.* (2007) note that empowerment that addresses "strategic needs" requires approaches that transform the underlying structures of inequality. In addressing these issues and the "fuzziness" of the term empowerment, this thesis argues that there should be a distinction made in Sport Malawi, SfD, and the broader development industry between empowerment which would refer to the aspirations of enabling participants to work within the system, and emancipation which would denote more radical attempts to transform unequal systems that currently constrain agency (Inglis 1997).

While these are timely and unique contributions to knowledge, there is much research still to be done at the intersection between sport, development, and empowerment. This study has been a useful avenue in making sense of how

empowerment is understood and operationalised within SfD generally, and Sport Malawi specifically. However, given that empowerment within this field remains under-researched, with only this study providing multi-stakeholder and detailed analysis on empowerment and power, further research should be conducted to investigate empowerment within SfD. This could include examining how empowerment within other SfD programmes is understood and operationalised in different post-colonial sites in the global South where the sector is more established, similar to the research conducted by Mwaanga and Banda (2014) in neighbouring Zambia (formerly Northern Rhodesia). This would determine how post-colonial sites with their distinct colonial and development histories contour understandings and practices of empowerment, and whether there are areas of convergence or divergence with the Malawian perspectives elicited in this thesis. Furthermore, while within SfD research there has been some enquiry into power dynamics *between* donor organisations and recipient communities, there has been a lack of analysis of power disparities *within* them. More research is required to understand the heterogeneous nature of donor and recipient communities and the nature of power relations therein, and the impact of this on agenda setting and what forms of empowerment can be enacted. As a result of such uneven power relations, the benefits from participation in projects can be spread selectively and unevenly due to the heterogeneity within donor and recipient community. Furthermore, future research could also concentrate on other organisations, and perhaps other universities engaged in SfD, with a focus on empowerment to examine whether they correlate with radical or neoliberal variants of the concept, and if so, to examine why this is the case. Furthermore, more postcolonial informed research centred around empowerment is required to raise awareness of entrenched inequalities and to give voice to global South participants who have often been invisible, and oftentimes muted, within development and SfD research, due to the limitations of sampling techniques employed by global North researchers

(Banda and Holmes 2017). However, as Kapoor (2009, p.4) importantly reminds us: "Coloniality cannot be museumized or moth-balled and will need to be continually re-engaged in the interests of the long march of decolonisation."

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Appendix A: Interview Schedule

The interview schedule below presents a guide to the types of questions that will be asked during interviews at the University of Gloucestershire.

These questions will help construct a Case Study on Sport Malawi examining:

- Perceived outcomes for UK volunteers and the sending community
- Perceived outcomes for host individuals, organisations and communities in Malawi
- Perceived understandings of empowerment and mechanisms employed to facilitate it
- A theoretical contribution to understanding empowerment within Sport Malawi.

Student Participants

Background Information

- Name
- Course
- Year of Graduation
- Year(s) of Sport Malawi participation

Motivations for going

- What has been their experience at UoG to date?
- As part of what UoG offers what particularly appealed about the Sport Malawi programme?
- Would the experience help with their studies and career direction and prospects?
- What else would they gain/receive from the experience?
- Is this their first volunteering experience / overseas experience?
- What role do they see themselves procuring as a volunteer in Malawi (e.g. coach, learner, teacher, developer, friend)?
- What change in Malawi would they like to see as a result of their presence?

Perceived understanding of Malawi and underdeveloped countries

- What in their view is 'development'?
- Do they view Sport Malawi as a form of development – and if so, how?

- What do they expect Malawi/Africa to be like – how much do they know already?
- What do they see as the socio-economic challenges the people of Malawi face?
- Do they feel their individual contribution will benefit the people/communities they encounter?
- Does sport bring anything to the 'development' table for underdeveloped countries?
- Do you have any worries about going or what you will be doing?
- What do they understand of Malawi culture and where have they developed this understanding?
- Do they feel the Sport Malawi approach is appropriate for the culture and what is the importance of this on practice?

Reflections on volunteering in Malawi

- How did they find interacting with the locals – both positive and negative experiences?
- Was their participation in the Sport Malawi programme beneficial for themselves – how and why?
- Has the programme changed them in any significant ways?
- Do they see the programme as beneficial for the wider University community – why or why not?
- Do they feel their participation in the programme was beneficial to the host individuals, organisations and communities in Malawi – how and why?
- Do they think there were any negative impacts that may have occurred as a result of the team's presence?
- What was the extent of local input on the overall programme and workshops?
- Do they think that going to Malawi was justified – why and why not?
- Has the experience changed their perception of Africa / poor people / underdeveloped countries?
- Do they feel the programme is making enough impact on both sending and receiving communities to justify continuation?
- Qualities they possessed that were attractive to the programme?

Empowerment through Sport Malawi

- What in their view of 'empowerment'?
- In their opinion did Sport Malawi live up to its own motto of *exploring and engaging in culturally relevant ways while educating, equipping and encouraging Malawi to use sport for outreach and development?*
- Do they think Sport Malawi was empowering to host individuals, organisations, and communities?
- How did the programme facilitate empowerment through the short-term trip – was this sustainable?

- Can they give any examples where they felt clearly that they had empowered a person/group?
- Did they feel at any point that they or the programme was disempowering anyone?
- Are there constraints on enabling empowerment by volunteering only short-term?
- Has Sport Malawi changed their views on international development – why or why not?

Concluding Question

- Is there anything they would like to add that has not been covered?

Staff Participants

Background Information

- Name
- Job Title
- Their connection to Sport Malawi and their involvement in it

Outcomes for the University

- In the portfolio of opportunities presented to students and staff, what does Sport Malawi offer?
- Does the programme align with the University's Strategic Plan?
- Does it attract prospective students to the University?
- Do they feel it feeds into teaching and research across departments?
- Does it benefit the students who go, how and why?
- Are there any other benefits that it brings to the University?

Outcomes for Malawi

- As an 'outreach' initiative do they feel it is having a positive impact in Malawi? If so, why?
- Do they feel Sport Malawi is beneficial to host individuals, organisations and communities in Malawi – how and why (Or how does it impact on Malawi)?
- How would they describe the positives of the programme for host communities (Rephrase around impact, occurrence, and measurement)?
- How would they describe the negatives of the programme for host communities?
- What is their understanding of 'development' – linked to impact?
- Has the programme impacted cultural awareness within the University community – changed perceptions of Africa and the Majority World?
- What is the extent of local input into the directing of the programme –follow up, questions, why?
- Do they feel the programme is justified and should continue to be supported by the University?
- Who benefits most from the programme – the senders or the receivers?

Empowerment through Sport Malawi

- What in their view is 'empowerment'?
- Do they think Sport Malawi is empowering to host individuals, organisations, and communities?

- How does the programme facilitate empowerment through the short-term trips – is this sustainable?
- Are there constraints on enabling empowerment by volunteering only short-term?
- Has Sport Malawi changed their views (institutionally and personally) on international development – why or why not?

Concluding Question

- Is there anything they would like to add that has not been covered?

<u>**Interview Schedule**</u>

The interview schedule below presents a guide to the types of questions that will be asked during interviews in Mzuzu, Malawi.

These questions will help construct a Case Study on Sport Malawi examining:

- Perceived outcomes for UK volunteers and the sending community
- Perceived outcomes for host individuals, organisations and communities in Malawi
- Perceived understandings of empowerment and mechanisms employed to facilitate it
- A theoretical contribution to understanding empowerment within Sport Malawi.

The ethnographic approach to the study necessitates an informal, conversational approach to interviews and focus groups. Some of the terminology and phraseology detailed below will be modified depending on the participant. The study will sample across 3 levels: a) Programme Delivers, b) Stakeholders, and c) Participants/communities. Therefore, the questions below will be applicable to some respondents but not to all.

If participants are unable to fully understand the nature of the study and their role within it due to a limited grasp of the English language, a local translator (unattached to the programme) will be on hand to translate both orally and in written form into the national language of Malawi, 'Chichewa', or the regional language of the North, 'Tumbuka'. As detailed above, the researcher will seek to always speak in lay language as this will help with clear and inclusive communication, that if needed can be translated without great difficulty for the local translator. Most Malawians are trilingual in that they can speak English (the 'business' language), Chichewa, and their own regional language.

Questions

<u>Background Information</u>

- Name
- Role
- Project Name and Location
- Year of first engagement with Sport Malawi

<u>Perceived understanding of 'development'</u>

- How do you understand 'development'?
- How has 'development' been manifested in Malawi over recent decades?
- Does sport contribute to 'development' in Malawi?
- Do you view Sport Malawi as a form of 'development' – how and why?
- What are the socio-economic challenges the people of Malawi face?

- Do you feel the Sport Malawi approach is culturally sensitive and that projects are respectful of local cultural norms?

Reflections on outcomes for UK volunteers

- What were your experiences of interacting with the UK teams – both positive and negative?
- Do you feel that volunteering in the programme beneficial for volunteers – how and why?
- Do they see the programme as beneficial for wider University sending community – why or why not?

Outcomes for Malawi hosts

- Do they feel their participation in the programme has been beneficial?
- What is the impact on host individuals – positive and negative?
- What is the impact on host organisations – positive and negative?
- What is the impact on host communities – positive and negative?
- How is the impact of Sport Malawi currently monitored and evaluated?
- What is the extent of local input on the overall programme and workshops?
- In terms of achieving development, do you think the Sport Malawi programme is justified?
- Has interacting with UK teams developed your understanding of "msungus"/White people?

Empowerment through Sport Malawi

- What is your understanding of empowerment and how might it manifest itself?
- In your opinion did Sport Malawi live up to its own motto of *exploring and engaging in culturally relevant ways while educating, equipping and encouraging Malawi to use sport for outreach and development?*
- Do you think Sport Malawi was empowering to host individuals and communities?
- Does the short duration of visits by UK based Sport Malawi teams impact on whether the programme might facilitate empowerment?
- Can you give any examples where they felt clearly they were being empowered?
- Did you feel at any point that the programme was disempowering them?
- Has Sport Malawi changed their views on international development?

Concluding Question

- Is there anything you would like to add that has not been covered?

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

Title of study: Sport for Development and Peace in Malawi

Invitation to take part in a research study:

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important that you understand what the research is for and what you will be asked to do. Please read the following information and do not hesitate to ask any questions about anything that might not be clear to you. Make sure that you are happy before you decide what to do. Thank you for taking the time to consider this invitation.

Purpose of the Project:

The research project seeks to develop a case study of Sport Malawi, a Sport for Development (SfD) programme hosted by the University of Gloucestershire (UoG). The Sport Malawi motto has been "exploring and engaging in culturally relevant ways while encouraging, educating and equipping Malawi to use sport for outreach and development". This project seeks to examine the outcomes for UK volunteers and sending community, and the host organisations and communities in Malawi. It also assesses understandings of 'empowerment' and perceived impact of international volunteering in the developing world on the host organisations and communities. Given that you are/were directly/indirectly involved in the Sport Malawi programme this project would like to include you as a subject.

Participation:

Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without your rights being effected in any way. Your status as a participant in this study will involve being involved in focus group interviews/one-to-one interviews (lasting no more than 1 hour). Your identity will be preserved through the use of pseudonyms. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep. You will also be asked to sign a consent form. If you choose to take part, you can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study without giving a reason. If you change your mind about participating in this study after the interview/focus group has taken place, you can ask the researcher not to use any of this information. You can ask to see transcripts of interviews and field notes and to alter the content, withdraw statements or provide additional information at any time.

Procedures:

If you agree to be involved in this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview with the researcher (Elizabeth Annett), and/or a focus group interview with 4-8 other persons who are/were involved in the Sport Malawi programme. If you do not wish to answer particular questions during the interview, you may say so and the interviewer will move on to the next question. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else will have access to the information documented during your interview. The entire interview will be recorded and the recording will be stored in a password protected computer. The information recorded is confidential, and no one, except the researcher and the principle investigator will have access to it.

Risks:

There are no risks involved. There is no direct benefit to you either. You will not be provided with any incentive to take part in the research. If during the course of the interview you feel uncomfortable about discussing particular topics you can ask the interviewer to move on or you can withdraw from the study.

The Research:

The research is funded by the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland. Any ethical issues associated with this project have been dealt with through the University of Ulster Research Governance policy.

Contact:

If you have any queries about this research, please contact:

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<u>**Participant Information Sheet**</u>

Title of study: Sport for Development in Malawi

Invitation to take part in a research study:

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important that you understand what the research is for and what you will be asked to do. Please read the following information and do not hesitate to ask any questions about anything that might not be clear to you. Make sure that you are happy before you decide what to do. Thank you for taking the time to consider this invitation.

Purpose of the Project:

The research project seeks to develop a case study of Sport Malawi, a Sport for Development (SfD) programme hosted by the University of Gloucestershire (UoG). The Sport Malawi motto has been "exploring and engaging in culturally relevant ways while encouraging, educating and equipping Malawi to use sport for outreach and development". This project seeks to examine the outcomes for UK volunteers and sending community, and the host organisations and communities in Malawi. It also assesses understandings of 'empowerment' and perceived impact of international volunteering in the developing world on the host organisations and communities. Given that you are/were directly/indirectly involved in the Sport Malawi programme this project would like to include you as a subject.

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Procedures:

If you agree to be involved in this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview with the researcher (Elizabeth Annett), and/or a focus group interview with 4-8 other persons who are/were involved in the Sport Malawi programme. If you do not wish to answer particular questions during the interview, you may say so and the interviewer will move on to the next question. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else will have access to the information documented during your interview. The entire interview will be recorded and the recording will be stored in a password protected computer. The information recorded is confidential, and no one, except the researcher and the principle investigator will have access to it. Recordings and transcripts will be kept for at least 3 years and will not be destroyed until all publications emulating from this study are in the open domain. All electronic data will be stored on a password protected PC belonging to the researcher during the study. All hard copies of data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office until the time they can be destroyed.

Risks:

There are no risks involved. There is no direct benefit to you either. You will not be provided with any incentive to take part in the research. If during the course of the interview you feel uncomfortable about discussing particular topics you can ask the interviewer to move on or you can withdraw from the study.

The Research:

The research is funded by the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland. Any ethical issues associated with this project have been dealt with through the University of Ulster Research Governance policy.

Contact:

If you have any queries about this research, please contact:

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Appendix C: Consent Form

Consent Form

Title of Project: Sport for Development and Peace

Chief Investigator: Dr Paul Darby (University of Ulster, Northern Ireland)

Please initial

I confirm that I have been given and have read and understood   [   ]
the information sheet for the above study and have asked and
received answers to any question.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am   [   ]
free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and
without my rights being effected in any way.

I understand that the researchers will hold all information   [   ]
and data collected securely and in confidence and that all efforts
will be made to ensure that I cannot be identified as a participant
in the study (except as might be required by law) and I give
permission for the researchers to hold relevant personal data

I agree to take part in the above study   [   ]

Name of Subject: _____   **Date:** _____

Name of Person Taking Consent: _____   **Date:** _____

Name of Researchers: _____   **Date:** _____

Consent Form

Title of Project: Sport for Development in Malawi

Chief Investigator: Dr Paul Darby (University of Ulster, Northern Ireland)

Please initial

I confirm that I have been given and have read and understood   [   ]
the information sheet for the above study and have asked and
received answers to any question.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am   [   ]
free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and
without my rights being effected in any way.

I understand that this interview/focus group will be audio   [   ]
recorded

I understand that the researchers will hold all information   [   ]
and data collected securely and in confidence and that all efforts
will be made to ensure that I cannot be identified as a participant
in the study (except as might be required by law) and I give
permission for the researchers to hold relevant personal data

I agree to take part in the above study   [   ]

Name of Subject: _____   **Date:** _____

Name of Person Taking Consent: _____   **Date:** _____

Name of Researcher: _____   **Date:** _____

Consent Form for Parents/Guardians

Title of Project: Sport for Development in Malawi

Chief Investigator: Dr Paul Darby (University of Ulster, Northern Ireland)

Please initial

I confirm that I have been given and have read and understood   [   ]
the information sheet for the above study and have asked and
received answers to any question.

I understand that _____ participation is voluntary and that   [   ]
they are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason
and without their rights being effected in any way.

I understand that this interview/focus group will be audio   [   ]
recorded

I understand that the researchers will hold all information   [   ]
and data collected securely and in confidence and that all efforts
will be made to ensure that _____ cannot be identified as a participant
in the study (except as might be required by law) and I give
permission for the researchers to hold relevant personal data

I agree for _____ to take part in the above study   [   ]

Name of Subject (Under 18): _____   **Date:** _____

**Name of Parent/Guardian
Taking Consent:**   _____   **Date:** _____

Name of Researcher: _____   **Date:** _____