

Negotiating Development: a psychosocial study of
Bangladeshi development workers

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Abstract

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A complex web of development organisations has emerged from efforts to alleviate the problems of enduring and gross inequalities in formerly Third World countries such as Bangladesh. While the social and economic circumstances of Bangladesh have improved, its democratic institutions have struggled, leading to a so-called 'paradox' of development. In this context economists and political scientists question the role of a growing global middle class, while postcolonial critics interrogate the very notion of 'development' and advocate alternative 'post-development' scenarios. In this milieu it is important to understand how dominant macro-policies and different perspectives affect the material realities of working for development on the ground.

Previous research on the personnel of development aid has revealed a host of ethical, moral and political dilemmas, contradictions and paradoxes associated with aid work not least those faced by feminists within bureaucracies. The literature has tended to focus on international NGO workers from the global north. By contrast, this is a study of 24 English-speaking Bangladeshi individuals who are engaged in development work through NGOs, and other forms of activism within their own country. The aim of the research is to understand how these development workers negotiate the complex dilemmas and conflicting demands, and manage the emotional labour and demands of working for progressive social change.

A psychosocial approach transcends the usual altruism-egotism binary to better understand the actions of and influences on this group, and allows for the interrogation of privilege, power and agency, and the relationships and emotional investments at stake. A narrative methodology helps reveal the conditions in which an individual life is lived and given meaning, and in which the development of the self and others can occur. Analytically, the study draws upon Bourdieusian models of social class distinctions, contemporary theorizations of the politics of emotions, and is informed by British psychoanalytic traditions.

The study found a stratum of reflexive, well-resourced and highly committed workers and activists who skillfully manage the everyday dilemmas of development, albeit at some emotional cost. They are constrained by subjective classed and gendered identities and objective structures of governance. The women in the study were struggling for empowerment and opportunity both inside and outside the workplace despite the equalities discourse espoused by their NGO employers. The significance of family and kin, and wider identifications, compete with the ed framings of a neo-liberal development paradigm and further suggest the need for a re-consideration of the ethos and ethics of 'development'.

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AL	Awami League (ruling Party in Bangladesh)
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BGMEA	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers & Exporters Association
BNP	Bangladesh National Party (main opposition party)
BRAC	formerly Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee, then Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, and later as Building Resources Across Communities
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of the OECD)
DfID	Department for International Development (responsible for UK Govt overseas aid)
IFI	International finance institutions (IMF, World Bank)
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
MDG	Millennium development goals
NGDO	Non-governmental development organisations
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPM	New public management
ODA	Official development assistance (a measure of aid used by DAC)

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development
PPP	Purchasing power parity
RMG	Ready-made garments (sector)
SDG	Sustainable development goals
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WB	World Bank

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my dear Mum, Gillian Beedell, née MacLean, (1924 – 1997) who worked tirelessly to change things for herself and others; and to my beloved daughter Nguny Nellie Zibia-Beedell for whom I hope it might make some small difference.

And to all the courageous, progressive and determined change-makers in Bangladesh and across the world, this is for you too.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This research is the product of three driving forces, which are borne out of my own personal and professional experience. The primary motor is a long-standing curiosity about processes of progressive social change that are normatively conceptualized as 'development'. Supplementing this curiosity is a supposition that we are missing some of the most illuminating stories of change from people caught in the middle of these processes and their discourses; and thirdly, my conviction that their perspectives might be gainfully explored through a psychosocial study based upon their life history narratives.

This thesis posits that the realm of social change and development as an inherently dilemmatic space. It seeks to understand how a purposive sample of professional, English-speaking Bangladeshi development workers manage to negotiate the complex and sometimes conflicting demands of their positions, and the resources and capacities they draw upon to do so. The thesis is conventionally structured and this introduction situates my research in the widest context of contemporary geopolitics and shifting claims to power and knowledge.

Recognizing the dominance of the three-sector model of development as an idealized partnership between state, private and so-called 'third' sectors, this thesis contributes to discussions on the role of development organisations within the third sector and particularly on the position of the individual within this framework.

Chapter 2 provides insights into the social, economic and political context of the English-speaking Bangladeshi nationals who participated in this study. Offering a necessarily brief portrait of the country, it explains how Bangladesh, a long-time recipient of foreign aid, has become known as a 'paradox' of development and how past and contemporary political settlements have affected the operation of development organisations within the country, signaling the flaws in the three-sector model of development which will be critiqued in chapter 3. Chapter 2 also provides statistical information on the characteristics of the population and a discussion of the class structure and its relevance to development. Engagements with higher education emerged as highly significant in participants' data and therefore some additional contextual information on the HE landscape in Bangladesh is included in this chapter.

Chapter 3 consists of three relatively distinct but connected sections. It begins by offering an insight into the origins and rationale behind this study that led to the formulation of my research questions and influenced my methodological approach. The research questions are clearly laid out at the beginning of this chapter. A brief overview of the history and politics of the development project is included here, and the first section concludes with an exploration of what has become known as 'Aidland'. The middle section of the chapter sets out my transdisciplinary theoretical, which meld social and affective dimensions of analysis. The final section of this chapter consists of a comprehensive review of the existing literature on (and by) people working in the development sector. It covers research humanitarian aid workers, internationally mobile development professionals and studies of 'national' staff and concludes with a consideration

of different modes of social activism in relation to development. This review reflects on the emergence of particular tropes of aid and development workers and their motivations and reveals a lacuna in the literature on local workers, especially those working at a professional level, suggesting a rather narcissistic gaze within development studies that marginalizes the contributions of local staffs and social activists.

Chapter 4 is in two main parts: the first section considers the conceptual issues associated with psychosocial and narrative approaches to methodology, including a discussion of the conceptual debates and issues involved. I am using the term psychosocial to signify an approach to understanding human action with the explicit acknowledgement of the relationship between our 'interior' and 'exterior' worlds (Clarke and Hoggett, 2009), each of which is taken to influence and constitute the other. I will show how life-history methods of data gathering and narrative analysis complement this approach and have been used in similar work, justifying their use within this study. This section will include consideration of the concept and importance of reflexivity within the research process and explain the model I have chosen to aid my own reflexivity. My own reflections on the research process, and an examination of how my subjective position and perceived positioning by participants affected the interview encounters and the research process, are provided in appendix 8.

The second section of the chapter is a more descriptive account of how the study was carried out, the issues that arose and details of the pattern of recruitment and interview process. It includes specific information about participants' attributes in terms of age and gender, education, occupation and

organisational affiliations. I discuss and detail the process of transcription and analysis. The overall aim of this chapter is to explain the rationale behind conscious decisions taken in the study and provide details of my methodological approach as well as what actually happened in conducting of the research.

The findings are presented in chapters 5 – 8 and are arranged as themed collections of the participants' stories, flowing from the particularities of the material from individual participants and the sample as a whole. The findings bring to light the material and affective conditions of this stratum of development actors and the influences on their motivations and capacities to negotiate the complexities of their developmental roles. The first three findings chapters trace, in broad strokes, the genealogy of the participants' own development: from their social class backgrounds through their formative life experiences and the routes taken to arrive in their present positions and their experiences of Aidland.

Chapter 8 demonstrates how gender specifically shapes womens access to the world of development work and how structural and institutional factors impact differentially upon the social actions of women and men in the study. As a coda to these findings one participant's story - PIYA's story – is provided in appendix 9. PIYA's story illustrates how the affects of classed orientations; shifts in the discourse of mainstream development; processes of identity formation; subject positions; and organisational professional practices combine in one individual's account and have consequences for the operations of a particular development organisation involved in ostensibly 'ethical' development. The motivation for this

inclusion is discussed at the end of in my reflections on the whole research process contained in appendix 8.

Chapter 9 begins by briefly revisiting the policy and discursive contexts in which this study is situated and the rationale for the research. The remainder of the chapter discusses the implications of these findings with relevance to three main areas of focus for development studies: the characteristics of their middle class-ness and how this might effect their roles in development; the cross-cutting affect of gender and the reproduction of inequalities particularly in relation to the notion of 'good authority'; and the flaws of, and alternative to, the 3-sector model of development. In order to bring the individual into the realm of development this chapter considers a four-sector 'care diamond' based on feminist social relations approaches and an overarching ethic of care. The final part of this chapter acknowledges the limitations of my study and points to potential further research directions. Chapter 10 provides a conclusion to the thesis by re-addressing the research questions, and highlighting the originality in scope and methodology and the utility of my contribution to further knowledge of Aidland and its personnel, but I first want to consider the much broader context in which this research is situated.

A review of our past, present and future approaches to social change and human development is demanded by the persistence of gross injustices and the continued suffering of large populations due to poverty, conflict and the effects of climate change. The urgency with which such a reassessment needs to be addressed is emphasized by the realisation of our planet's limitations and the proximity of reaching a tipping point in global warming that requires concerted

action (McMichael, 1993, Lovelock, 2003, Gore, 2006, Klein, 2015). While the poorest people in the world are already disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of climate change, we are all faced with the unprecedented challenge of negotiating a sustainable future in this the Anthropocene or 'man-made' era.

Three broad, dynamic and interconnected phenomena are impinging on our responses to this challenge, which might be depicted as the destabilization of 'top down' grand economic and political theory, a rapid expansion of the middle classes globally, and the welling up of more equitable, pluralistic and relational claims to power.

Shifts in economic and political power over the last 40 years have displaced post-war, colonial, and Cold war era international political relations. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the 'end of history' was much trumpeted by neo-liberal economists who elided free-market capitalism with social democracy as 'the endpoint of mankind's ideological evolution' (Hanlon, 2017, Fukuyama, 2006 2nd Edn. p.xi). When measured globally, economies have indeed grown in size, poverty has been significantly reduced and overall indicators of human development have shown improvement. However, measurements of global poverty are notoriously contested, and skewed by the inclusion of the highly populated nations of India and China in the statistics. In the aftermath of the 2007/8 financial crisis further interrogation of the meritocratic social equilibrium this free-market model promised was found not to have been delivered (Piketty, 2014, Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009). Claims that global, largely neo-liberal economic growth has both sustained and created new inequalities within and across 'developing' and 'developed' countries have led to assertions that the

free-market model linking economic growth with inclusive development is 'broken' (Narberhaus, 2013) and is inadequate to deal with the challenges of climate change or respond to the rise of political extremism. Certainly, the model of association between neo-liberal economics and social democracy as mutually-reinforcing has been considerably weakened and convincingly portrayed as an ahistorical fiction (Chang, 2002).

Concomitant with debates over poverty reduction and social mobility, the characteristics of the swelling middle classes and their political and economic significance, once the preserve of political scientists and sociologists, has become a new focus for development studies (Wietzke and Sumner, 2014, Ravallion, 2010, Fernandes and Heller, 2006, Birdsall, 2015). Relying on the economic marker of dollar-per-day income in terms of Purchasing Power Parity Wietzke and Sumner (2014) note the global population of those earning between \$2 - \$10/day PPP- a level above the global absolute poverty line and associated with decreased vulnerability – has doubled in a twenty year period from the early 1990's (Sumner, 2012). At the same time, the growth of the middle classes earning over \$10/day PPP in emerging economies has been dramatic, such that their actual numbers are equal to or exceeding those of the developed countries.

Over the same period, popular demands for drastically new political, economic, social and environmental dispensations are becoming increasingly loud and widespread. In the 21st century alone, from Brazil to Hong Kong via the Arab Spring uprisings, through to the anti-austerity rebellions and migrant crises gripping parts of Europe, influential citizen-led social movements have

emerged. The rapid growth of new social movements has been assisted by the relative ease of global travel and technological revolutions in the way in which we communicate. The demographic bulge of young people concentrated in countries of the global south is also likely to be contributing to the upsurge of new digitally connected, widely heterogeneous social movements. This has enabled a flexing of citizens' powers as consumers, producers of knowledge and agents of change and has facilitated the forging of new globalized and politicised identities and affinities. This calling to account of national and global economic and political institutions has added momentum to reassessments of the direction of global development.

Political scientists have long challenged the neo-liberal and de-politicised hegemony of development thinking and its neocolonial tendencies (Escobar, 1992, Escobar, 1995, Crush, 1995, Ferguson, 1990). Alternative modes and models of development are receiving increasing attention although there is little consensus of what such 'post-development' futures might look like. In this context, the factors driving the direction of development efforts and the political and economic significance of emerging social classes in developing countries needs to be addressed.

The foremost international institutional response to these contemporary challenges has been the inclusion of 'civil society' into structures of global governance, alongside sovereign governments and existing accommodations of the interests of global capital. With this relatively new dispensation, there has been reconsideration by the UN and its multilateral agencies of the stated ends and effective means of building 'a better world with no one left behind' (UN,

2017). The widely adopted Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provided a valuable impetus and direction of travel that helped governments and development organisations to achieve significant measurable improvements, although it is acknowledged that the MDGs were not fully or evenly achieved by the target of date of 2015 (UN, 2015). On expiry, the UN formulated and announced a set of longer-term Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) setting the agenda for development at least until 2030 with the umbrella aims of 'ending extreme poverty, fighting inequalities and injustices and tackling climate change' (UN, 2017).

Another response by some sections of 'civil society' to associated criticisms of aid inefficiency and ineffectiveness, and the continued dominance of Northern INGOs operating the South, has been to drive forward a programme of 'localization'. Since Chambers' 'Whose Reality Counts?' (Chambers, 1995) it has become accepted wisdom that building local capacity and 'ownership' of the development discourse is crucial to the sustainability of interventions, but as ever, the devil is in the detail of implementation. One definition of 'localization' in this regard has been posited as:

The transformation of a northern programme in the south into a national organisation with an independent governance structure that is free to determine its development philosophy, its organisational and programmatic goals, and its partners. (Cordell, 2008)

But it can just as well refer to a geographical narrowing of activities, or the process of devolving responsibilities. Paradoxically as Cordell points out, 'localization' can also connote elements of 'internationalization', as in the case

of Northern INGOs extending their by establishing 'local' fundraising branches or, more rarely, the wholesale relocation of international HQs to the global South, as in the case of Action Aid. Equally, 'localization' can mean the franchising out of operations to semi-autonomous country-specific offices, as Care International and Save the Children have done, enabling the 'local' offices of these INGOs to take advantage of global branding and efficiencies of scale. Despite these qualifications, 'localization' and the shifting of responsibilities, if not autonomous powers, to 'local' development actors in the South is on the agenda of many development organisations.

My curiosity with processes of social change and development is focused upon efforts that are driven by these development goals and influenced by the shifts in global economic and political power alluded to above. However, to discuss these kinds of changes as 'development' is to use a polysemic word, enabling different interpretations of an amorphous and contested concept. Development invokes the idea of change, growth, emergence or evolution, but what of the shorthand and common usages of 'development' as also referring variously to an employment sector, an industry, a professional career path, a personal trajectory or indeed an academic field of study? 'Development' encompasses all these things alerting us to the scope and scale of its reach as an idea or set of ideas. According to Michael Cowen and Robert Shenton (1995, p.28) development 'defies definition, although not for a want of definitions on offer'. They conceptualize development as both means and end, as 'intentional practice' and as an 'immanent process', which suggests there is a need to be

able to perceive both aspects alongside each other. Lois Weis and Michelle Fine use an approach they call 'critical bifocality'. That is:

[A] way to think about epistemology, design, and the politics of ... research, as a theory of method, in which researchers try to make visible the sinewy linkages or circuits through which structural conditions are enacted in policy and institutions as well as the ways in which such conditions come to be woven into community relationships and metabolized by individuals. (Weis and Fine, 2012, p.173)

My intention in this thesis is to take the reader on an investigative journey that pays heed to the idea of 'critical bifocality', foregrounding the subjectivity and detail of development worker's experiences whilst still being able to see this in the context of wider processes of historical, social, cultural and economic development and change. This psychosocial study of an under-researched segment of change-makers - professionally-skilled and local development actors in Bangladesh - is particularly prescient bearing in mind the 2015 World Development Report entitled 'Mind, Behaviour and Society' (World Bank, 2015). The report draws attention to the interplay of the social and psychological aspects of development and explicitly challenges what it terms the 'development community' to engage in greater critical self-reflection and reflexivity.

Whether this turn to self-reflection and the acknowledgement of the psychosocial interface is a response to the frustrations of implementation by an economist-dominated development establishment, or an implicit acknowledgement of the credence of post-colonial and feminist criticisms by an enlightened generation of World Bank consultants is yet to be judged. What it

does perhaps represent is a belated apprehension of the subjectivity and potential unconscious bias of development practitioners and a recognition that not only should interventionist development projects, programmes and policy initiatives - the 'what' of development - be objects of study and analysis, but that the personnel - the 'who' - of development should look to their own and each others emergent 'mindsets' [sic] in order to better modify, reform or indeed revolutionize the way we understand and approach development. Thinking about the epistemology, design and politics of my research, my own limitations and subjective positionings as a white, female British academic researcher are also not beyond scrutiny and must be taken into account in any study that has an interpretive aspect and especially so in psychosocial studies.

Practically, I have only been able to gather my data in English, although all participants were (at least) bi-lingual. My limitation has served as a proxy for a certain measure of cosmopolitan 'middle-class-ness' and represents the linguistic dimension of the sample's characteristic quality of being in-between and 'of both'. This quality is highly significant because the English-speaking middle class Bangladeshi development workers that I am studying can be thought of as simultaneously the means and ends of development. They are both the relatively well-resourced and well-educated skilled professionals tasked with helping to achieve the SDGs and the beneficiaries of wider national and international development. Spatially and socially mobile, simultaneously precarious and stable, this stratum of development workers occupy an especially metaxic, in-between and dilemmatic position in the social and structural ordering of development. Their unique position as both the products

of late-capitalist development and the means through which international development is achieved, should be of significant interest to understanding how change-makers in civil society contribute to and are constituents of processes of sustainable human development.

By investigating the emotional and social dispositions of this sample of people, the aim is to illuminate the kinds of emotional or psychosocial habitus (Reay, 2015) of these crucially placed but hitherto overlooked agents of change. My findings will provide a timely contribution to understanding the ways in which development workers are operating in their own country, strategizing and stretching their ability to define what is of value within and beyond the orthodox model of development. In the light of the findings, I will suggest the neo-liberal ethos at the heart of this model might be beneficially replaced by an ethic of care rooted in a social relations approach.

If the move towards an ecologically socially, politically, and economically sustainable, 'post-development' future is to be realised, the attitudes, affinities and actions of these 'home-grown' change-makers will prove vital to that process. This study is intended to help understand what it takes to capitalize on our individual and collective resources and 'be the change' we wish to see in developing a socially just and ecologically sustainable world for us all.

The preceding brief introduction has painted a wide geopolitical backdrop to the thesis and given some indication of the methodological approach.

These types of workers and activists have been variously theorized as civic actors, street level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1980), and unruly brokers (Lewis,

2010); and their modalities and motivations encapsulated in characterizations of knights and knaves (Le Grand, 2003); or as missionaries, mercenaries, misfits (Le Grand, 2003). Despite these wide-ranging theorizations, empirical research on these kinds of national development workers in the field of international development are uncommon; and an in-depth psychosocial narrative approach is rare.

Chapter 2: Context

This chapter offers a concise portrait of Bangladesh to help situate the research within the political, economic and social dynamics of the country. It will explain how Bangladesh has come to be called a ‘paradox’ of development; and how past and current political settlements have influenced the history of development aid and NGOs inside the country. Detailed information on Bangladesh’s population and class structure and a brief discussion of the discourse of class within development studies provides a more specific socio-economic context for the research sample. The chapter ends with a brief consideration of Bangladesh’s higher education sector, which emerged as of significant relevance to this study.

History and geopolitical position

From its roots in the sophisticated Mughal empires of the 16th century, through British colonial rule and the upheavals of partition, Bangladesh emerged as a nation state in 1971 after a short but brutal War of Liberation. The language movement, which erupted at Dhaka University in 1952, was an assertion of Bengali identity and lent considerable weight to the later uprising against the Urdu-speaking East Pakistan administration, giving the country an unusual two-fold history of anti-colonial struggle. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman ‘Bangabandhu’¹ played a pivotal role in the popular armed struggle and became Bangladesh’s first president. He is still referred to respectfully as ‘father of the nation’. The

¹ Literally ‘Friend of Bengal’

1971 conflict devastated the economic infrastructure and genocidal violence including mass rapes (Totten, 2012) displaced millions of people and severely disrupted the familial and social order (Sajjad, 2009, Hossain, 2017). A series of floods and bad harvests, combined with the politicised withholding of billions of tonnes of food aid by the US, in the context of the Cold War precipitated a devastating and widespread famine in 1974 (Sobhan, 1979). Hossain (2017) details how a post-famine social contract, a political settlement of sorts, emerged from the mutual interests and interactions of the state, the rural and urban elites, foreign aid donors and the masses which mitigated the effects of the famine and protected the population from crises of survival and subsistence, turning Bangladesh into a virtual 'Aid Lab'.

Once apocryphally dismissed as a 'basket case' by Henry Kissinger (Hossain, 2017), Bangladesh has been transformed, economically, to the point where it is now considered a 'middle-income' country (Asian Development Bank, 2016), a threshold indicator of successful development. At the time of my fieldwork (2014) this status had not yet been achieved but was widely predicted and anticipated. Bangladesh has been a member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) since 1973 and according a recent statement by the Foreign Ministry still 'believes in the continued relevance of NAM in the ever changing global realities' (BD News 24, 2016).

With access to the sea and potential mineral wealth in the Bay of Bengal, the country occupies a geopolitically strategic position between India, with whom it has a close but fractious relationship, and countries within China's sphere of influence (Kamruzzaman, 2017). A steep rise in Islamist violence (Choudhury,

2015) and the mass influx of Rohingya refugees from neighbouring Myanmar (Milton et al., 2017) present immediate and pressing political challenges for Bangladesh, domestically and internationally. Undoubtedly the greatest long-term challenge facing Bangladesh, and the most significant development issue facing all nations, whether designated low-, middle- or high-income countries, is the effect of climate change. Despite producing less than 0.1% of global greenhouse gas emissions (as opposed to the USA's 24% contribution), rising sea levels and more frequent episodes of extreme weather make this low-lying, densely-populated territory one of the regions of the world that is most vulnerable to the impacts of anthropogenic climate change (Huq, 2001). A place in which the poor are both disproportionately vulnerable and least well-equipped to cope (Brouwer et al., 2007)

'Good' growth and 'bad' governance: the so-called paradox

When measured by key indicators, which constitute an international language of development, Bangladesh has been hailed as a success in terms of its economic and social progress. The proportion of people living below the poverty line has reduced from 56 per cent in 1991, to 24 per cent in 2016 with a significant reduction in extreme poverty (World Bank, 2018). Enrolment in primary and secondary education has soared and gender parity achieved in school admissions. Literacy rates in the 15-24 year old population have risen dramatically in recent decades and reached gender parity at 92% in 2016 (UNESCO, 2016). Maternal mortality has declined by 40% in the last decade and the under-fives mortality rate fell below the MDG target of 48 per 1,000 in

2013 (Bangladesh Planning Commission, 2015). Contributing to the health of the population, an increasing proportion of people now have access to improved sanitation (currently between 55-64%) and drinking water (98%) (Bangladesh Planning Commission, 2015). In addition, and likely to be contributing to the economic and cultural dynamics of the country, approximately 64% of the population have mobile phone subscriptions and around 20% have access to the internet (Bangladesh Planning Commission, 2013).

Incomes have risen steeply, from \$230 to \$330 per capita Gross National Income (GNI) between 1985–1995 to \$540 in 2005 and \$1,190 in 2015 (World Bank, 2016a). The globalization of trade since 1990 has led to exponential growth in the ready-made garment (RMG) sector and provided new employment opportunities for millions of women (Rahman, 2013). Remittances from expatriate workers, largely in the middle east, have also become an important contributor to the economy (World Bank, 2007a). While this economic growth has undoubtedly contributed to notable progress as measured against the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), substantial challenges remain, in the areas of food security, nutrition, environmental hazards including climate change effects, the provision of quality education at all levels, income equality and the ‘creation of decent wage employment for women’ (Bangladesh Planning Commission, 2015, p.9). Crucially, and despite the ‘good governance’ agenda favoured by powerful institutional and government-to-government aid donors (Andrews, 2008) the country faces formidable challenges that impede its ability to implement further change.

Transparency International has listed Bangladesh as the world's most corrupt nation for five years running (1997 – 2001) and the quality of governance in Bangladesh has been labelled 'abysmal' (Kabeer et al., 2012). Bangladesh's 'bad governance' takes the form of strong patron-client relations within its structure and a corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy and judiciary which has a negative impact on its regulatory capacity (Devine, 1999)

Relations between political parties are historically antagonistic, increasingly polarized and confrontational (The Daily Star, 2014b). The post-1971 political scene has been dominated by two dynastic factions: those allied to the founding father's socialist-leaning Awami League (AL) and those aligned with the more economically and socially conservative Bangladesh National Party (BNP). In 1975, Sheik Bangabandhu was assassinated along with most of his family. After a series of military coups, which included the assassination General Ziaur Rahman in 1981 and the ending of the secular state in 1991 under General Ershad, a period of relatively stable multi-party democracy was established. Over the following years, mediated by transitional 'caretaker governments', power swung equally between the BNP, headed by Ziaur Rahman's widow Khaleda Zia, and the AL headed by Sheikh Hasina, Bangabandhu's surviving elder daughter.

From this ostensibly functioning democratic settlement, the extraordinary ramifications of circumstances in which two aggrieved dynasties vie for power, has developed into a political impasse between the ruling and opposition parties has that has fuelled violence, unrest and suppression (The Daily Star, 2014b, The Committee to Protect Journalists, 2016, Freedom House, 2016, Lewis,

2010). Critics accuse Khaleda's BNP of collusion with former anti-liberation fundamental Islamist factions, while Hasina's AL continues to make political capital from her father's status, sustaining a populist national narrative. Both parties maintain an uneasy relationship with the military and state bureaucracy (Hassan, 2013). The general election in January 2014 was widely recognised by donor governments and civil society as lacking credibility (UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 2014, Kalimullah, 2014). Boycotts, uncontested seats, low turnout, violence, intimidation and blatant vote rigging contributed to the democratic deficit (Abu Hena, 2014, The Daily Star, 2014b, The Daily Star, 2014a). This has left the main political parties and their allies embroiled in enduring rivalries with religious, historical and affective undercurrents, making overall economic gains vulnerable to capital flight.

Bangladesh's progress is thus widely perceived as a 'paradox' of the association between neo-liberal free market economics and functional democracy by economists and commentators (World Bank, 2007a, World Bank, 2007b, Mahmud, 2008, Kabeer et al., 2012, Hassan, 2013, World Bank, 2013).

As Hassan explains:

It is a paradox to the extent that growth and social development took place in the context of 'bad' governance characterised by systemic political (patron-clientelism) and bureaucratic corruption, an inefficient state, weak regulatory capacity, confrontational politics, political instability and politicised and corrupt judicial institutions. (Hassan, 2013, p.4)

What this so-called paradox implies for the future of mainstream development discourse is a contested subject, but as Hossain argues, Bangladesh has

assumed an ideological role and become iconic in the genealogy of development aid – what she describes as the sweetly smiling, scarf-wearing, female face of global capitalism (Hossain, 2017). Given these tensions and contradictions, the country offers a compelling site, as a dilemmatic space, in which to explore the lives of the ostensible change-makers.

Party-archy and political settlements

From the post-liberation period (Jahangir, 1977) to the era of neo-liberal globalization (Hassan, 2013), the people of Bangladesh have been trapped 'within systems of non-transparent, personalized transactions' (Wood, 2012, p.4, Wood, 2000) and subject to the loyalty demands of family, class solidarities and other associational connections. Jahangir reported on class struggles whereby rural land-owning elites created political allegiances with, and within, the state bureaucracy to defend their interests in the face of state interventions. Following the same trajectory, Hassan claimed constitutional organisations such as the Supreme Court and Human Rights Commissions were only formed under external pressure as 'ritualistic compliances' to international norms and standards (Hassan, 2001, Hassan, 2013, North, 2009). Such structures were largely subject to informal limiting actions of a political elite who directly control or entirely capture institutions and extend the reach of patron-client relations to lower levels of social, political and economic development. The result, Hassan asserted, is a 'partyarchy' (Coppedge, 1997): an ostensibly democratic system in which formal engagement from outside the established parties is practically impossible and 'the very nature and dynamics of the social order' is deeply politicised along party lines, and asserts control over the state, civil society and the private sector (Hassan, 2013, p.10).

From a feminist perspective, Hossain (2017) argued that the social and economic disruption caused by mass wartime rapes and the phenomena of large numbers of women without male protection, represented a breach of the 'patriarchal bargain' (Kandiyoti, 1988). Hossain linked this failure of patriarchal protective authority to the emergence of what she referred to as 'the woman issue' in public policy, that saw an upsurge of more gender-aware developmental programming and the eruption of WID/WAD debates across the development discourse. Huq (2012) makes a similar connection between the loss of *izzat* (personal and family honour) experienced on a national scale after the mass rapes of 1971 and the state's subsequent attempts to rehabilitate the so-called *Birangona* or 'women warriors', which was said to have only increased their marginalization and stigma (Huq, 2012). Hossain claimed that it was this sometimes ugly, political and gender-inflected political settlement rather than market-oriented economic liberalization that lies at the heart of Bangladesh's much-celebrated development successes such that:

While poverty, exclusion and oppression remain significant problems, the Bangladeshi state has now made the Aid Lab into its own machine, setting itself up as a model of the ideas and technologies of human development, leaving the 'basket case' label far behind. (Hossain, 2017, p.75)

Whether it is the legacy of this long-tailed political settlement, supported by international aid and/or liberalization of the global economy that is responsible for Bangladesh's MDG achievements, the status quo is in danger of destabilization on several fronts. The very elements of globalization, which brought benefits to Bangladesh via the RMG sector, international migration, and

international aid, are now increasingly susceptible to volatility and any domestic-led consumption growth is highly dependent on middle class expansion (Hossain, 2017). At the same time, a younger population and a new generation of feminists is demanding greater social justice and accountability and is mobilizing with the aid of social media to confront the government, whilst the influx of refugees from Myanmar adds a further strain on the Bangladeshi state's international relations.

As a pre-condition for the achievement of a normalized state of citizenship and the creation of a truly democratic social order, Wood (2000, p.224) argues that progressive development actors, bureaucrats, NGO workers and social activists must free themselves from the 'dark sides' of social capital - meaning the avoidance of adverse incorporation and the social closure implied by 'partyarchy'. Whether this is feasible within the current NGO landscape and whether continued economic growth will lead to democratic consolidation by 'promoting a social infrastructure for democracy' (Hassan, 2013, p.42), is yet to be seen.

Development aid, NGOs and the disciplining of civil society in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has been the recipient of internationally funded relief and development aid almost since its formation. At its height, in the early 1990s, official development aid (DAC-ODA) reached approximately US\$ 3bn per year. This level of funding fell sharply within five years, but has remained static at approximately US\$ 1.5 bn per year with a slowly decreasing trend (2011a, p.105). As a proportion of Bangladesh's GDP, DAC-ODA has declined from 5.6 per cent in 1990 to just 1.6 per cent in 2011 (OECD, 2013).

In the mid 1990s, the World Bank and ADB had an explicit interest in promoting partnerships between Government and NGOs as part of the 'good governance' agenda. This itself relies upon the normative acceptance of the three-sector model of development which envisages mutually reinforcing relationships of accountability and co-operation between the public/state sector, the private/business sector and civil society, of which NGOs are taken to be an important part. The assumptions underlying this model and its limitations are examined in Chapter 3.

Davis (2006) provides a comprehensive overview of the history of development organisations in Bangladesh, noting that estimates of numbers of NGOs vary widely according to definition. Fernando and Devine found up to 20,000 home-grown NGOs ranging in size and scope from the myriad small, localized organisations (Fernando and Devine, 2003). A far fewer number of large-scale internationally-renowned agencies such as Grameen Bank and Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) stand alongside a phalanx of international development organisations such as Save the Children, Care, Oxfam, World Vision and other similar agencies who retain a long-standing and significant presence in the NGO landscape of the country (Davis, 2006). A notable aspect of Bangladesh's development path is that BRAC, the world largest development NGO (Lewis, 2010), has expanded and diversified its activities into areas of banking, education, and other 'social' businesses to an extent that its accountability and potentially unfair competitiveness is increasingly questioned (Ahmed, 2015).

The role this vibrant and extensive network of NGOs has played in Bangladesh's development has been both widely critiqued and fêted (White, 1999, Karim, 2001, Stiles, 2002, Lewis, 2004, DfID, 2000, Wood, 2009, Salehin, 2016), in effect positioning alternative manifestations of civil society - trades unions, social movements or independent media for example - as the neglected 'Cinderellas' of the development story. The rise to prominence of certain types of organisations as normative representations of 'civil society' has led to a process dubbed 'NGO-isation' (Hearn, 1998), in which activists and activist groups are constituted into more formal organisational structures in order to gain access to funding, resources, and increased recognition within policy fora.

Bangladeshi scholars, following other writers from the global south (Jad, 2004, Alvarez, 2009), have described NGO-isation as an operative process shaped by neoliberal values, whereby 'collective concerns are transformed into isolated development projects, without taking the social, political and economic context into consideration' (Nazneen and Sultan, 2012, p.56). Lewis argued that larger NGOs faced internal capacity pressures caused by their rapid expansion and external pressures from donors concerned with performance targets, including the MDGs, and ever-tightening regimes of accountability. NGO-isation has presented particular challenges for the feminist movement in Bangladesh who have long been involved in consciousness-raising and the political mobilization of women alongside the delivery of services. In particular, the organisational pressures associated with NGO-isation are held to have exacerbated generational and class-based tensions amongst feminist activists who contest

the 'professionalization' of womens activism (Mahmud et al., 2012, Nazneen and Sultan, 2012).

Chronicling the disciplining of civil society organisations by the Government of Bangladesh, Lewis (Lewis, 2010) characterized different activities as radical in the Gramscian tradition; and liberal, allowing the state to shift its responsibility for citizens' welfare into the realm of civil society. Lewis explained how throughout the early and troubled years of multi-party politics in the 1990s certain NGOs were seen as more radical and their leaders, workers and activists were targeted, harassed and violently attacked and more than USD50 million in donor funding was blocked. Subsequent efforts by the government to rein in the influence and activities of NGOs took the form of tighter Government regulation and oversight. The enduring legacy of this rift between the NGO sector and the government has been that NGOs, including BRAC, now tend to distance themselves from any activities that could be perceived as political or partisan. They are 'keeping politically neutral; and negotiating with whoever is in power' (Lewis, 2010). But as Lewis pointed out:

The reality today is that donors no longer carry the same level of influence they once did in Bangladesh, since the role of foreign aid has been overtaken within the overall economy by the growth of export income and remittances. (Appadurai, 2001, p.23)

It has been be argued that after more than 40 years of donor-funded interventions, the social and economic development of Bangladesh is now increasingly driven as much by the indigenous and multi-national private sector and remittances, as by government intervention or donor-funded interventions

(Sen, 2014), a situation that is not unique amongst middle-income countries of the global south.

Population characteristics: Age, employment, gender and social relations

The population of Bangladesh currently stands at over 160 million (World Bank, 2018). In 2008, over three-quarters were under the age of 44, more than half were under 24, and at least a third of the total population was under 15 years old (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2008). With such a population profile the potential for a social and economic demographic dividend certainly exists (Roy and Safiullah Kayesh, 2016) but there is growing concern that low levels of educational achievement and the quality and standards in education will act as constraints. Over 90% of the population is Muslim and Bengali-speaking, rendering society relatively homogenous culturally and ethnically. The overall literacy rate is approximately 56%, although still slightly lower for women (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2018).

Despite qualified claims to have achieved gender parity in some areas of education women are vastly under-represented in the country's labour force and the creation of employment opportunities for women remains a 'major bottleneck' (Bangladesh Planning Commission, 2015, p.47). Womens' labour is notoriously difficult to quantify, with statistics varying between 31% to 60% of the female working population involved in waged employment (Bangladesh Planning Commission, 2015, p.44). As an indicator of the extent to which the non-agricultural labour market is open to women, in 2013 womens share of the total waged employment in industry and services was under 20% of the total waged employment in this sector, a percentage that has barely changed in

twenty years (Bangladesh Planning Commission, 2013, p.51, World Bank, 2017b). If these figures include women working in the RMG sector, it can be inferred that only a small sliver of the female population appears to be employed in graduate-level, professional positions.

Bangladesh has been described by Kabeer (2011a) as sharing many features of Kandiyoti's classic patriarchy (Kandiyoti, 1988). Authority and decision-making are vested in senior male members of the household; a patrilocal pattern of residence is common; and inheritance normatively follows the male line leaving women exposed to 'patriarchal risk' and hence engaged in a 'patriarchal bargain' (Kandiyoti, 1988) or rendered, as Kabeer put it, 'genealogically irrelevant' (Kabeer, 2011a, p.105). The legacy and contemporary iterations of *pardah* continue to restrict women's physical mobility, limiting their access to the public realm and social relations beyond the family. Likewise, the burden of maintaining *izzat* on behalf of the extended family falls heavily and individually upon women, restricting their behaviour (Huq, 2012). Such constraints are more extensive in the socially and religiously conservative northern region of Sylhet, but the relatively privileged women in my sample were also affected by notions of upholding both self-respect and the prestige or honour of their families (Gunasinghe et al., 2018).

The middle classes and development discourse

The people I set out to study are the presumed agents of change caught in the middle of this milieu and they represent both the instruments and object of development. This characteristic of in-between-ness and their presence in a dilemmatic social and occupational space was the primary contextualizing

feature of the research design. By necessity, the research was conducted in English. This constraint served as a proxy for a certain level of class, inflected by education and transnational experience that locates participants in the midst of historic colonial economic and cultural discourses. Socio-economic class analysis is not the major focus of this thesis, but how participants classified themselves and their subjective experience of class is highly relevant to a psychosocial approach to analysis.

A key and enduring discourse in mainstream development theory, informed by observation of the European bourgeoisie by modernization theorists, is the idea that the establishment and growth of the middle classes are crucial to economic growth and a facilitating condition of stable democracies (Wiemann, 2015, Birdsall, 2015). This is an especially relevant narrative in South and East Asian economies (Asian Development Bank, 2010), where per capita incomes have grown especially strongly in recent decades. However, disparities in opportunities for social mobility have been noted in the context of macro-level policies of 'poor economics' which are directed at harnessing the productivity of unskilled, or low-skilled labour (Sen, 2014) such as in the RMG sector, and which are still grappling with the role of informal and domestic reservoirs of labour (World Bank, 2016c). This approach has lifted large numbers out of poverty, to become the 'vulnerable non-poor' but has not translated into significant opportunities for upward social mobility: to either the 'vulnerable middle class' or 'fragile middle' (López-Calva and Ortiz-Juarez, 2014, Birdsall, 2014) nor into the secure or upper middle classes (Sen, 2015). These findings have complimented debates on the existence and avoidance of falling into the

'Middle Income trap' – an apparent state of arrested development measured by per capita income and economic structure (Paus, 2017, Felipe et al., 2012, Kharas, 2010).

The definition of a 'global middle class', and its measurement by per capita consumption expenditure is the subject of much debate (Birdsall, 2014). It varies from between 2 to 10 \$US PPP (Banerjee and Duflo, 2008, Ravallion, 2010) and up to \$20 - \$100 (Kharas, 2010). Taking a hybrid approach of absolute and relative measures Birdsall (2014) posits a definition of a global middle class by their consumption expenditure of more than \$10 per day and a position below the 9th decile in income distribution.

Analysts from the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) recently conducted research using official statistics and their own data to help quantify the size and trends of the middle classes and shed more light on the drivers behind the emergence of a 'new' middle class and their potential role in development (Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, 2013). BIDS currently apply a criteria of between 2 - 4 US\$ per day adjusted for local wage rates to refer to the middle classes but complications arise when considering absolute measures as a marker of class. A comprehensive understanding of the nature of the contemporary middle classes in Bangladesh would be illuminating, but the resources to provide this are limited and definitions are inconsistent and problematic.

The 2005 basic income distribution curve for Bangladesh (See figure 1) shows a wide disparity in income levels between the 8th and 10th decile. This model

suggests a tiny wealthy elite, a small prosperous upper middle class, and a wider more diverse range of lower middle classes.

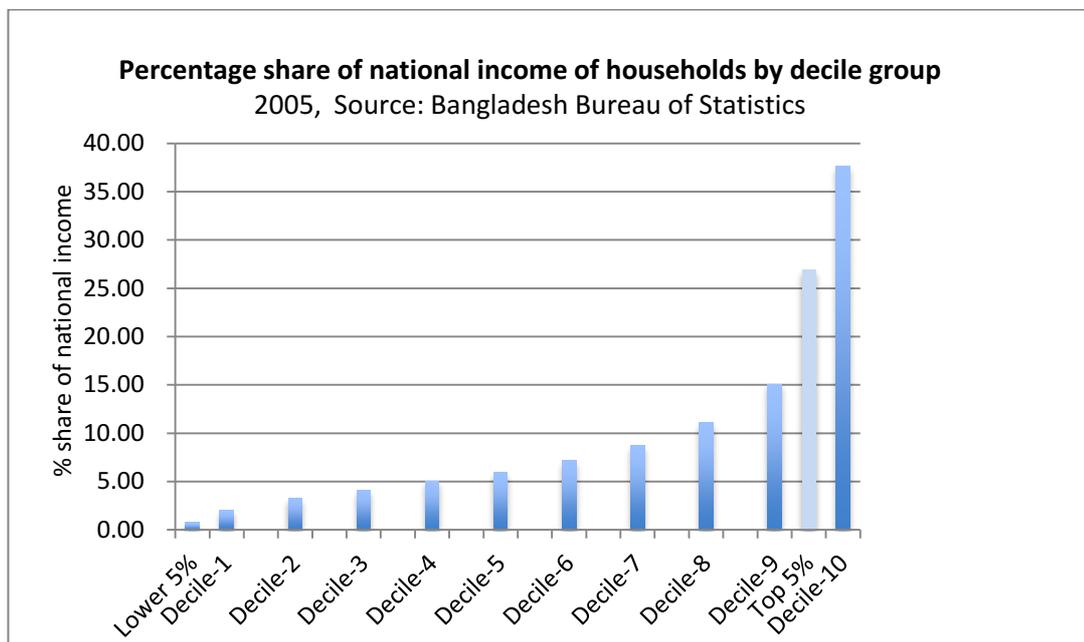


Figure 1: Distribution of national income across the population, 2005

By 2016, levels of extreme had fallen from 18.5% in 2010 to 13.8% and less than a quarter of the population was deemed to be living in poverty, down from one third in 2010 (World Bank, 2017a). While the levels of inequality as measured by the GINI index are slightly below that of other countries in the region (World Bank, 2016b), the World Bank reports that, ‘despite accelerating growth, the pace of poverty reduction has slowed’ and most measures of inequality have increased in Bangladesh between 2010 and 2016 (World Bank, 2017a).

Hassan (2001, 2013) argues that Bangladesh’s substantial economic growth has disproportionately boosted the incomes of the existing middle classes and that the ways in which the middle class as a whole evolves, and the potential

role it plays in demanding rule-bound governance and inclusive development will be crucial. Jahangir (1977, p.2064) discussed Bangladesh's political development in terms of the conflicting and converging 'outlooks' of rural and urban and interests; and Haque (1979, p.920) took a Marxist perspective of the class struggles between the 'rising bourgeoisie and the ruling petty-bourgeoisie'. In the UK, a post-Marxist perspective has experimented with measuring class through a Bourdieusian lens, including indicators of social and cultural capital encompassing occupational categories and qualifications and the idea of emerging capitals (Savage, 2013).

The BIDS (Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, 2013) research followed a slightly more orthodox line, identifying occupational categories of 'routine business and factory owners, self-employed family entrepreneurs, English-educated salaried workers, managers, teachers, doctors, engineers and other professionals, [and] medium level NGO functionaries' as middle class. My own sample includes many individuals in these categories. Interestingly, BIDS also associates a socio-political function with each broad category, including those in 'civil society think-tanks' and 'opinion makers' into the middle class; locating the 'governing class' and 'political elite' within the upper class. Such elisions demonstrate the complexities and challenges of defining 'class' transnationally.

In the context of wider debates on the economic impact class formations have on development, this study explores how the affective, subjective and moral dimensions of class identity (Sayer, 2005) impact on the activities and agency of a group of broadly middle class development workers. These are people who

are, on the face of it, using their own material, cultural, social and/or psychological resources and capacities to help build the resources and capacities of their fellow citizens. My interest is the psychosocial, intersecting aspects of class rather than objective quantitative measurement of assets or capitals. I am interested in how participants see themselves in relation to others and how class, and other subjective aspects of identity is recognised, felt and experienced.

Consistent with the current statistical data from the BBS survey my participants reflect the wide range of income and economic circumstances amongst the middle classes, with some weighting toward the established middle class and upper end. A full account of my recruitment strategy and process is included in chapter 4. Apart from their direct engagement with developmental social actions, a feature that all participants had in common, which emerged unanticipated from the data, was their graduate level of education. One of the characteristic ways in which the middle classes distinguish themselves from other classes, as Bourdieu observed (Bourdieu, 1984, Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, Ball, 2003), is in adopting educational practices that can and do pay dividends across the generations and therefore the higher education sector in Bangladesh warrants some further contextual consideration.

Higher Education in Bangladesh

The Bengali upper and middle classes have had access to recognisably modern higher education institutes for much longer than many developing countries. Dhaka and Rajshahi Universities both have their roots in 19th century colleges. Before 1971, there were at least five well-established HE institutions in

East Pakistan, including Dhaka University, (est. 1921), which in the 1950's became the seat of the language movement, a precursor of the liberation struggle. A handful of other public institutions including specialist agricultural, engineering and technology universities were established in the post-partition era of modernization 1953- 66. Between 1971 and 1992 further public institutes followed focused on science, engineering and technology, and just prior to General Ershad's declaration of Islam as the state religion, an Islamic university was established.

The Bangladeshi middle classes have habitually invested in higher education in technical subjects such as medical or engineering degrees, subjects still much favoured by the older generation, suggesting a continuity with the skill demands of colonial-era civil service, but participation in HE is still below the comparable South East Asian regional cohort average of 18%. In 2011, only 13% of the university age cohort in Bangladesh were in tertiary education, up from 6% in 2002, (BANBEIS Educational Database, 2018). Domestically, diversification of the HE sector has seen a rapid rise in the number of private universities and increased female enrolment in tertiary education (Bangladesh Planning Commission, 2013).

After the 1992 Private University Act, which reflected a global trend in the marketization of HE, there was a gradual then rapid expansion of provision to meet the growing demands of a bulging young population. Some of this increased provision was publically funded, but two thirds of universities, including the sizeable BRAC University, are now private enterprises or internationally sponsored by donors. Figures suggest the number of private

universities rose from just 19 in 2000 to 66 in 2011 and 94 privately financed institutions in 2016 (University Grants Commission of Bangladesh, 2016). The widening of participation in HE and the effects of marketization and globalization have encouraged a broader curriculum and presented new professional opportunities in banking and finance, textile sciences and IT. However, concerns have been raised (Mahmud, 2014) as to whether the Government's 'Education for All' policy is doing enough to harmonize the development of the country's human resources with national long-term development needs and goals.

Gender parity in tertiary education in Bangladesh is far below that found in secondary education. The wealth of new universities may have provided the ground for an increase in women's enrolment but women are still significantly under represented in tertiary education as a whole and the foothold women have in HE remains precarious. Of the nearly 600,000 students enrolled in tertiary education (0.37 % of the total 160m population) in 2012, only 30% were female (BANBEIS Educational Database, 2018). The 2008 opening of a US donor-funded women-only university in Chittagong coincided with a marked improvement in the gender parity index² to 0.32 in 2001 to 0.73 in 2012, but the rate of change has levelled off (Bangladesh Planning Commission, 2013).

Debates around the role of HE in the long-term development of the country and the dynamics of a 'brain drain' or 'brain gain' have emerged alongside concerns about the rising level of graduate unemployment. It is also unclear if or how the

² 1.00 being perfect parity

dynamics of middle-class female employment are changing. Many women graduates seem to continue to be funneled into employment in HE teaching as indicated by the relatively high figure of 17% of tertiary level teachers being female in 2014, a figure that has barely changed in 15 years (World Bank, 2017b).

Summary

For over forty years, Bangladesh has faced myriad challenges in tackling widespread poverty, ameliorating territorial vulnerability, and establishing democratic and accountable institutions, and has consequently been the site of countless development interventions. The country has achieved notable successes and met important milestones in terms of its development since 1971, but significant social, political, and environmental challenges remain unresolved. The potential affects on Bangladesh's development of the demographic dividend combined with shifting patterns of economic growth and volatile political dynamics are largely uncertain, although the affects of climate change are somewhat more predictable and profound (Yu et al., 2010, McCarthy et al., 2001, Alam and Rabbani, 2007). With accumulated social, economic, and cultural capitals the middle classes of developing countries are held to be well-positioned to effect changes not only materially in the economic sphere, but also in political and social arenas, encouraging 'good governance' (Birdsall, 2015, Wiemann, 2015). It has been acknowledged by scholars of Bangladesh that the middle classes, old and new, can be seen as both part of the problem as well as a part of possible solutions (Wood, 2000, Wood, 2012, Hassan, 2013). It is important therefore to understand the values, constraints and extent of agency of those sections of the middle classes who are ostensibly

most closely involved in developing such solutions within development organisations and through social activism.

Chapter 3: Conceptual framings and literature review

Introduction

This chapter begins by offering an insight into the origins and inspiration for this study, describing how the design and findings of an innovative psychosocial study of frontline community development workers in the UK provided the epistemological and conceptual foundations for this thesis. I will draw out contemporary parallels between that project and my own study and the theoretical and conceptual connections and pathways, which have shaped my approach and helped refine my research questions. These questions are: How do individuals engaged in development work in Bangladesh negotiate the complex and often conflicting demands that arise from their activities? What resources do they draw upon? And what significance do these findings have for development theory, policy and practice?

To answer these questions I will set out my theoretical framework, but not before digging a little deeper into the theoretical and material context of my study to interrogate the history and politics of international development. I will consider the underlying assumptions and limitations of the dominant three-sector model of development and describe the emergence of 'Aidland' as a sobriquet to describe the industrial scale of contemporary aid operations.

To elaborate on my theoretical framings, I will argue for the suitability of applying a transdisciplinary lens utilizing contemporary Bourdieusian sociological framings, cognisant of feminist and postcolonial concerns, and informed by the application of psychoanalytic concepts and the study of political

emotions. Such a perspective is alert to the affective dimensions of psychic and social reality, and the subjective experience of, for instance, class and gender that grounds our sense of who we are in relation to the social world of others. The transdisciplinary nature of this study demands a broad view of the conceptual landscape and a more detailed discussion of the psychoanalytic aspects of the psychosocial approach I am taking, which recognises the limits to knowledge of the individual interiority of the subject, is contained in chapter 4 on methodology.

The latter half of this chapter contains a substantial review of the existing research and literature on, by and about people who work in the development aid industry. To help locate my selection of participants within this canon of literature I return to the metaphorical concept of Aidland as the space in which these third sector workers operate and offer a visual model of the landscape that demonstrates their liminal position, neither at the centre nor quite (or not always) on the periphery.

Recognizing the heterogeneity of workers in Aidland, the literature review covers research on humanitarian relief workers; professional development workers and field workers – the latter with a particular focus on South Asia - and a brief discussion of how development practice relates to different forms of social activism. I will demonstrate that research on the personnel of development is fragmented and often limited in its scope and perspective, revealing a particular gap in our knowledge that this thesis begins to fill. The chapter concludes with a summary and synthesis of issues to be addressed, but

I shall begin with a brief genealogy of the research that provided the rationale for taking this work forward and assisted in formulating the research questions.

Origins, rationale and research questions

This thesis was inspired by an original and ground-breaking research project '*Negotiating the Dilemmas of Development Work in Contested Communities*' conducted from 2003 to 2005 under the auspices of the ESRC's 'Identities and Social Action Programme' (ESRC, 2017). As a Research Associate on the project, I was closely involved in conducting a series of interviews and enquiry groups with over 30 workers in two UK cities. Participants were variously engaged as managers and frontline professionals in community development, youth work and in urban regeneration programmes. The aim was to develop an understanding of the ways in which these development workers' personal backgrounds and experiences were woven into their motivations and values as 'professionals active within structures of governance' (Hoggett, 2009c, p.7). As a research team we were following and developing the psychosocial methodological route previously laid out by Hollway and Jefferson (2000). My role in this research project was to build a rapport with participants over a number of research encounters and to elicit stories of their lives, careers and professional dilemmas. I would present the data and my initial interpretations, queries and analysis to the rest of the research team for a collective analytical discussion and comparison with data collected by other interviewers. In this way the research provided a valuable and substantive stimulus both methodologically and conceptually for my own investigation and alerted me to

the subjective features of my own analysis, which I later explored in a published book chapter (Beedell, 2009).

Epistemological roots

At the turn of the 21st century, psychosocial study was a nascent field, offering a trans-disciplinary, somewhat contested epistemological proposition. Within this ESRC-funded project 'the psychosocial' was understood as a psychoanalytically informed (and inspired) sociology (Hoggett, 2009c, Hoggett et al., 2010, Clarke, 2006). The '*Negotiating Dilemmas*' study brought together Bourdieusian social theory and psychoanalytic theory in the British tradition of Object Relations (Frosh, 2012) and captured accounts of participants' life histories and career trajectories, and stories of real time dilemmas as they were experienced.

Published as '*The Dilemmas of Development Work: Ethical Challenges in Regeneration*' (Hoggett, 2009c) the authors contributed to a growing body of work examining the relationship between emotions, political action and citizen's social movements following lines of thought articulated by Hochschild (1983), McAdam et al. (1996), Sevenhuijsen (1998), Jasper (1998), Nussbaum (2001) Gaffney (2002) and Sennett (2004). The work of Lipsky (1980) was of particular relevance with regard to 'street-level bureaucracy' and the exercise of discretion, but the value of exploring the interconnections between the personal and political and the contribution of feminist moral philosophy and psychoanalysis was also specifically recognised (Young, 2002, Benjamin, 1990, Benjamin, 2004). The '*Dilemmas*' work also drew on the literature on reflexive practice from the care and social work fields (Banks, 1995, Banks, 2004, Taylor and White, 2000, Waddell, 1989) and placed itself in territory of political and

social theorists of difference (Honig, 1994, Honneth, 1995), democracy (Mouffe, 1993, Mouffe, 2000), professionalism (Freidson, 2001) ethics and values in bureaucracies (Du Gay, 2000, Le Grand, 2003) and the disciplining of society through the dynamics of knowledge and power (Foucault, 1977, Foucault, 1980).

Contemporary context

Situating their work within the contemporary political economy, Hoggett et al noted how workers were engaged in mobilizing and providing services and advocacy for disadvantaged communities in the context of deep budget cuts and a deliberate rolling back from principles of universality in the provision of public services. In the UK, from the 1980's onwards, neo-liberalism in congress with a regime of New Public Management (NPM) established themes of disaggregation, competition, and incentivization (Dunleavy and Hood, 1994) characterized by an ethos borrowed from the private sector including a targeted approach and almost obsessive concern with 'what works'. In practice, this required an evidenced-based approach to community and social development and gave primacy to predictable, tangible, measured and measurable outcomes.

New Public Management, has had a particularly strong influence in shaping the policies, practices and internal cultures of public and third sector organisations tasked with providing care, welfare and human services in the UK and beyond (McCourt, 2002, McLaughlin et al., 2002), including in the international activities of the UK's DfID. NPM establishes the conditions, as Hoggett et al noted, which have the potential to produce paradoxical and contradictory outcomes and

associated dilemmas. The centralized approach of NPM, expressed in the ubiquity of tightly defined numerical targets for instance, is contradicted by a concurrent agenda of de-centralization, which has found its form internationally in the move towards localization of development management (Glennie et al., 2013, Cordell, 2008, Kumar, 2015). Claims that the NPM philosophy and the working environment it tends to create has become a global and problematic one-size-fits-all paradigm (McCourt, 2008) are disputed (Hood, 1995), but a decade later it was acknowledged that NPM is still working it's way through in countries that are not at the leading edge of governance research, theory and practice (Dunleavy et al., 2006). This direction of travel has relevance for my own study insofar as understanding the extent to which such policies, management practices and organisational cultures still hold sway, affecting the attitudes, agency and practices of development workers in Bangladesh.

Dilemmatic space

Hoggett et al drew particular attention to the relationship of development workers to the state and its approach to social welfare, characterizing them as working both 'in and against the state' (p.2) navigating a way forward whilst engaged in everyday negotiations with the apparatus of power and authority on behalf of disadvantaged, complex and contested communities. This has obvious relevance for my own study's participants in that their occupational positions place between the top-down demands of management and bottom up needs of beneficiaries. These conditions were conceptualized by Hoggett as a 'dilemmatic space' derived from Bonnie Honig's idea of a terrain in which there is no clear right or wrong answer, but a number of different options for action, or inaction (Honig, 1994). Dilemmatic space represents a domain that is 'in-

between' knowing and not-knowing, a state of certainty and uncertainty, a locus of negotiation and judgment, which acts in Hoggett's words, as an 'incubator for politics' (Hoggett, 2009c, p.15).

Teske considers the related concept of 'political space' as one in which the dance between universality and relativity is enacted and where 'the global and the local are much more than multiple and different locations, they interweave and interpenetrate each other' (p.73). In *Conscious acts and the politics of social change* (2000), she notes Arendt's understanding of 'the in-between' as essentially relational, rather than absolute. Described as a simultaneous multiplicity of spaces not tied to temporal or geographic space but consisting of a politically significant field, much like 'dilemmatic space', where action is possible, power is salient and in which common responsibilities are grounded.

Such a quality of in-between-ness has been conceptualized as metaxy (Falconer, 2011, Whelan, 2008) in referring to a state of belonging simultaneously to two different autonomous worlds, neither one nor the other, but 'of both' (Linds 2006). In dilemmatic space, the quality of options seeming both right and wrong simultaneously might be described as a metaxic condition. Homi Bhabha (Bhabha, 1984) applied the notion of hybridity to the theorizing of postcolonial identities as well as combinations of values, and modes of operation and governance. Dar applied this notion of hybridity to ways of operating and doing development (Dar, 2014) but Merry (2006) applies a similar concept of hybridity to ways of being for human rights activists of the global South. They are, she contends, 'not fully in one world or the other' (Merry, 2006, p.48), but intermediaries who understand both transnational and local cultural

discourses, who can 'can look both ways' (Merry, 2006, p.38). Roth identifies a related common quality of liminality amongst development workers, a notion which implies the transitional and experimental nature and circumstances of their work as well as an existential 'ongoing destabilization and questioning of the self' (Roth, 2015, p.66) .

This dilemmatic, political, 'in-between' space, with its implication of hybridities, metaxy and liminality was the conceptual terrain for Hoggett's study and provided a significant springboard for my own research methodologically and as a conceptual touchstone for a transdisciplinary approach. Like Hoggett, I am interested in exploring the everyday political and social actions of people living and working in, and constituted by, these dilemmatic spaces, in-between social, cultural, moral, institutional and economic discourses and hierarchies, all of which are products of historical and geographical relations involving subordination, privilege and difference.

Capacities and 'fluid potentialities'

Hoggett (2009c) identified a stratum of public and third sector workers engaged in negotiating complex and often conflicting demands, seemingly caught between a top-down, increasingly neo-liberal managerial approach to community development, and the messy realities of bottom-up community engagements and local relationships. Caught between these differing discourses, the resilience and effectiveness of these public and third sector regeneration workers and community activists was associated, Hoggett argued, with their 'fluid potentialities' (Hoggett, 2009c, p.98) or that which is 'potentially realisable' rather than 'specific capabilities' (Hoggett, 2009c, p.22) that tend to

captivate managerialist regimes as measurable competencies. In other words, the value of these development workers resides in the 'latent power' on which they can draw (Hoggett, 2009c, p.174); on their personal *capacities* rather than the more statically inscribed *capabilities* described by Nussbaum (2000, 2001, p.224-9) and critiqued to some extent by Sen (2002) as overly prescriptive

The capacities Hoggett identified as crucial to the role of a development worker were four-fold. First is the capacity to weather and contain uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity. Hoggett extended Keats' notion of 'negative capability' (Ou, 2009) psychoanalytically, identifying the capacity to resist binary 'splitting' of psychic objects into contrasting good/bad, black/white, them/us categorizations. Secondly, a capacity for self-authorization, meaning the capacity to act courageously in the face of conflicting demands or otherwise unclear choices – where there is no obvious right or wrong. Drawing on psychological resources linked to identity and life history was particularly critical in this regard. Thirdly, a capacity for reflexivity and the positioning of oneself, one's 'values and beliefs, one's strengths and weaknesses, and the nature of one's power and authority' (Hoggett, 2009c, p.174) as objects of exploration, which enabled development workers to sustain a critical approach to their being and practice. Lastly, the capacity to contain one's feelings and emotions including disappointment, anger, hope and cynicism without suppressing their presence, defined the capacity to be both passionate and thoughtful, decreasing the likelihood of experiencing emotional exhaustion or 'burn out'. Hoggett argued that complex configurations of emotional, psychological, social, political and cultural experience were in operation, which affected the practices

of individual development workers and their interactions with other structures of governance. The kinds of forces that govern our inner worlds and impinge on our horizons for action were referred to by Hoggett as 'structures of feeling', inspired by Raymond Williams (1977, p.131) notion; a psychoanalytically-informed concept that Hoggett associated with James Jasper's (1998) 'abiding affects' and Deborah Gould's (2009) idea of 'emotional habitus', although Hoggett acknowledged that these concepts and their related-ness was still under-developed. While this conceptual ground remains rather ambiguous and may represent a weakness in Hoggett's approach, the overall strength of the psychosocial approach Hoggett took, and the path I am following to a large extent, lies in its power to explore the interface between internal and external structures, processes and mechanisms in a way that is not blind to the forces of ideological and economic structures, which development scholars have tended to interrogate as isolated entities.

Parallel worlds of development workers

In considering the future of development work in a high-income 'developed' but increasingly unequal nation, Hoggett et al noted parallels with the international aid industry and international development in terms of the spread of managerialist, neo-liberal modes of governance across the third sector.

Identifying similarities in terms of the conflicting demands both domestic and international development workers face - which present comparable personal, emotional and ethical challenges - Hoggett et al were explicit in their support for further psychosocial research into the personal experiences of development practitioners across the globe. These kinds of parallels seem quite obvious although Hoggett's work was limited by its examination of the lives of a

relatively homogenous community of workers, where differentiations between development brokers may have appeared less striking. I have acknowledged, like other authors (Roth, 2015), the significant heterogeneity of development brokers in the international arena, working in a diverse variety of contexts.

Lewis (Lewis, 2013), also recognised the 'parallel worlds' (p.184) of domestic and international development work and the colonial roots of the separation of the two discourses in policy and research. His prior attempt (Lewis, 2008) to breach the divide was to conduct life-history research in London with mostly urban, middle class, mid-career development practitioners who worked for organisations involved in development either 'at home' or 'away' (Lewis, 2013, p.186). All his participants appear to have been UK-based British nationals (Lewis, 2008). This approach underlines the ethnocentric assumption that 'home' is always in the global North, and 'away' refers only to the global South. It obscures the very existence of development workers operating in their own countries in the global South and reiterates the colonially-rooted, myopic and rather narcissistic gaze that constitutes development workers as a white, Westernized, Northern-based 'us'.

Feminist writers De Jong (de Jong, 2017) and Kabeer (Kabeer et al., 2008) attempted to draw attention to such north-south divides through an issue-based approach. Kabeer was particularly and refreshingly explicit in reversing the neo-colonial gaze by exploring experiences of promoting gender equality in developing countries and Scandinavia. Its contributors, largely from the global south, helpfully examined the commonalities and discontinuities apparent in specific historical contexts and development strategies. Similarly Tiwari (Tiwari

et al., 2013) has begun to explore commonalities of good practice in tackling inequalities across British and Indian contexts.

Emblematic of such contrasting neo-colonial and post-colonial perspectives, the use of the word 'international' in the development discourse often conflates geographical context with national origin and ethnicity. 'International development aid' is habitually used to refer to Northern donor funded interventions in the global South, while the 'international' of 'international development workers' could and should, for accuracy's sake be replaced by 'foreign', in opposition to 'indigenous' or 'domestic'. In the same vein, aid workers are rarely considered 'migrants' or 'immigrants' (Lucassen and Smit, 2016), indicating how the nomenclature in itself is problematic as will be discussed later. This illustration of taken-for-granted elisions and assumptions brings into sharp focus the pertinence and audacity of Raymond Apthorpe's provocative question: 'who is international aid?' (Apthorpe, 2011). Approaching the subject from an anthropological perspective he was conscious that Development Studies as a discipline has largely concentrated on the 'what' and 'how' of policy formation and implementation, to the neglect of comprehensive studies on the personnel of development. Apthorpe went on to suggest that sociological and biographical methodologies could yet yield fruitful answers.

Research questions

My study of Bangladeshi development workers rises to Apthorpe's challenge, extends the work of Hoggett et al and broadens the purview of authors such as Lewis by filling a particular lacuna in the literature on 'domestic' or 'national' development workers operating in less-developed, previously 'Third World'

countries of the global South. My research contributes to a fuller understanding of the personnel of development aid by asking how such individuals, engaged in development work in Bangladesh, negotiate the complex and often conflicting demands and dilemmas that arise from their activities? What resources from their own personal backgrounds and experiences do they draw upon in this regard? And what significance do these findings have for development theory, policy and practice?

These three key areas of focus relate directly to Apthorpe's question of who is doing international development, and the nested questions of why they do it; how they manage this work and under what conditions they might be better equipped to affect the contemporary aims of development and progressive social change. To help lay the ground for a discussion of the conceptual frameworks I am using, the following section briefly considers the historical and contemporary discourse of development relevant to this study.

Development: history and politics

The history of development thinking, research and practice has a narrative of its own, of course. Rooted in colonial anthropology of the 19th century and later, patrician Keynesian economics, the project of 'development' in the 20th century has, to a large extent, been the concern of countries with large, strong economies (often existing or former imperial powers) pursuing an agenda of modernisation and industrialisation in economically and politically weaker countries, often former colonial territories. Following the post-WW2 wave of independence from colonial powers the development process became deeply

inflected by Cold War geopolitical and economic imperatives (Rist, 2014).

Marxist and neo-Marxist postcolonial critiques, emanating from Latin America, Africa and the Caribbean challenged the imposition of the Western modernist model of capitalism. In concert, to some extent, with radical educationalists such as Freire (1972) and Illich (Illich, 1973, Illich and Lang, 1973), the neo-colonial production and re-production of social and cultural knowledge and values through education was questioned (Campbell, 1991) and concepts of underdevelopment and dependency emerged (Cardoso and Faletto, 1979, Oxaal and Barnett, 1975) with demands for political, economic, social and cultural emancipation and decolonization (Lewis, 1998).

Flowing from the social, cultural and political upheavals of the 60's and 70's, and propelled by the crippling debt crises of the 1980's – a phenomenon traceable to the early models of Western development (Payer, 1991) - the latter decades of the 20th century saw a growing recognition of the moral and practical economic reasons for a more democratic, inclusive and ecologically-sensitive attitude towards global development (Chambers, 1995). Following the UN decade for women (1975 – 1985), the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, prompted a marked shift in development policy, placing gender to the fore on the global agenda, although not without critics who noted the simultaneous de-politicisation of feminist concerns with women's experience of development (Bunch and Fried, 1996, Baden and Goet, 1997).

The 1989 fall of the Soviet Union which was held to hail 'the end of history' and neo-liberalism capitalism as triumphant (Fukuyama, 2006) coincided with increasing demands for attention from diverse social justice movements and a

rise in the influence of 'civil society' particularly in the form of INGOs. Through the mechanism of the World Social Forums from 2001 onwards, this movement of 'global civil society' onto the world stage facilitated the re-assessment of development policy and helped re-ignite latent debates about alternative 'post-development' futures and the de- and re-politicisation of development policy and aid disbursements (Fisher and Ponniah, 2003, Escobar, 1992, Escobar, 1995, Ferguson, 1990, Hart, 2001). Alternative 'post-development' philosophies with specific provenances in the global South have been posited, including the concepts of 'Ubuntu', 'Swaraj', 'Buen Vivir' and 'De-growth' (Kothari et al., 2014, Metz, 2011, Gudynas, 2011, Kothari, 2014, Du Ploy, 2014) which rely on more pluralistic and relational understandings of the social world and of the subject. 'A person is a person through other people' is the core understanding of Ubuntu, which demands an intersubjective view of the person and acknowledgement of collective responsibilities.

The process of reassessment of what development means and the direction of travel has not proved easy, creating new fractures and alliances. Hart (2001) in particular noted how critiques emanating from neoliberal, state-limiting economists and neo-Marxists converged in opposition to the global interventionist development project. Biccum (2002) expanded on what she saw as the difficult relationship between a de-politicised development discourse and theories of postcoloniality too tightly focused on literary and cultural analysis (Sylvester, 1999, Sylvester, 2006).

Notwithstanding but in partial response to growing demands for global social justice, the orthodoxy of development discourse was strengthened by the

formulation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs drew heavily on the work of economist Amartya Sen and the practical philosophy of Martha Nussbaum who together formulated and refined what became known as the capabilities approach. The accompanying discourse of inequalities rather than equality as implicated in Marxist tradition, might be seen as a turn to difference, which can be traced back to Rawls' 1971 *A Theory of Justice*. This 'capabilities' perspective on humanity, and its role in re-articulating the project of development, was highly influential in informing the UN's Human Development Index (HDI). Widely accepted, although also strongly criticized for its inherent limitations (McGillivray, 1991, Chowdhury, 1991, Clark, 2005) the HDI became the 'summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development' (UNDP, 2016) in terms of lifespan and health; schooling and education and attaining a decent standard of living, prompting governments across the world, and especially in the global South, to re-orient their strategies for development. Whether viewed as an effective mechanism contributing to significant change or simply another NPM-style measure against which governments can hail their limited achievements, as with Bangladesh's achievement of gender equality in school enrolment (see chapter 2) the HDI, and the capabilities approach has served as the epistemological backbone for the more specific Multi-Dimensional Poverty and Gender Development Indexes.

On the plus side, the capabilities approach to welfare economics has extended development theory beyond objective measures of wealth and income, to focus on inequalities in effect and peoples differing capacities and 'the extent to which people have the opportunity to achieve outcomes that they value and have

reason to value' (Sen, 1999, p.291). This has provided a more nuanced view of development than previous orthodoxies, including implying a subjective experience of development, but it has also drawn criticism for its over-emphasis on the individual (Fine et al., 2001, Fine, 2004 , O'Hearn, 2009).

Over time, 'development' has been seen variously as a matter of philosophy and ideology, a programme of deliberate intervention dominated by the actions of the 'First World' upon the 'Third World' and as a process emanating from and inexorably tied to capitalism and individualism. Hart addresses the ambiguity of the term 'development' by reference to Cowen and Shenton's (1996) definitions of big 'D' Development as intentional practice, intervention in other words; and little 'd' development as an immanent process of advancement and growth. Hart claims there is an affinity with these distinctions in her own more specific dissections of the word. She includes the emergence of constructions of the 'Third World' in the idea of big D Development, and views small 'd' development as the development of capitalism in profoundly contradictory historical processes alluding to the inevitable, naturalised, characterization of the capitalist trajectory. Thus, Hart posits, the very concept of 'D/development' is contradictory in the sense of being both inevitable and a process involving intervention.

Contemporary Development: the tripartite model in question

The tripartite or three-sector model of development envisages public, private and civil society entities theoretically working together in partnership, enabling co-operation and holding each other to account to bring about social and economic development (Lewis, 2010). The model rose to prominence in the late 1990s amongst debates about the role of the state (Salamon, 1995) and corporate citizenship (Marsden, 2000) in sustainable development, and still dominates development policy discourse in its pursuit of ideal forms of partnership working (Warner and Sullivan, 2017, Googins and Rochlin, 2000, Selsky and Parker, 2005). This three-sector model provided a much-needed theoretical solution to the seemingly incommensurate needs and demands of global business capital; gave credence to the status of 'civil society' in the form of NGO's and social justice movements, and integrated a limited but developmental role for the state after nearly two decades of ideologically inspired state shrinkage (Lewis, 2010).

This multi-sectoral framework provided a foundation for the 'good governance' agenda that emerged at the end of the 20th century. This idea draws upon Etzioni's (1961) analysis of three modes of power: coercive, remunerative and values-based power, which determine organisational forms, and is not incompatible with the Foucauldian notion of power as saturating every social realm and relationship (Foucault, 1977, Foucault, 1980). The tripartite model holds that the state sector operates through the exercise of its legitimate but essentially coercive authority to enforce the rule of law; the private or business sector asserts power through the negotiation of exchange values and governs by reward and remuneration; and 'civil society' and its constituent parts are

disciplined by consensual compliance with shared values. The parallel Foucauldian concepts of discipline and governability (Foucault, 1991) can be inferred as operational here, but this simplified structural-functional analysis is not without critics. Remnants of the project to reproduce the industrial and social development of the First World in the Third World by Weberian tinkering with institutions are evident and fail to account for the multifarious identities and subjectivities of the people on whom the development effort is enacted. Further concerns about the effects of elite capture of the three sectors has emerged amid the increased financialisation of aid (Hanlon, 2010, Hanlon, 2017). Nevertheless, the three-sector model retains its primacy amongst development thinking and continues to exert substantial influence across the global south in countries like Bangladesh (White, 1999).

Lewis (Lewis, 2010) offers clear examples of how the conceptually pure mapping of well-defined sectors does not reflect the complexities and shifting vagaries of power holders and their relationships, nor the diversity of 'civil society' and the political, social and economic values and interests that exist in reality. Complementing Lewis, Kaldor (2003b), and Edwards (2009) have gone further in examining the influences and values which fracture civil society, identifying 'liberal' and 'radical' wings. The 'radicals' typically bound together by political values and interests and accountable to their grassroots constituencies, although these can in themselves be divergent and contested. The 'liberal' wing of civil society has evolved into relatively de-politicised and professionally organised social movements and service providers (Kaldor, 2003a) accountable to global structures of governance in the pursuit of legitimacy, resources and

access, in a process that has become known as 'NGO-isation' (Roth, 2016, Haque and Sowad, 2016, Alvarez, 2009, Jad, 2004). This process of outsourcing of development activity shapes the organisational culture within NGOs, but as Watkins and Swidler (2017) have observed, NGOs are also 'shaped as much by how they are imagined as what they actually do' (Watkins et al., 2012, p.286). Much more has been written about the characteristics and role of 'civil society', but my concern here is with the people working within the nexus of organisations involved in the delivery of development aid, in what is broadly referred to as the 'third sector'.

Widespread criticism of aid inefficiency and intense pressure to demonstrate 'value for money' (DFID, 2011) has led to increasing pressure on this professionalised branch of civil society, the development sector, to 'adopt patterns of logic and ways of operating that have been imported from the corporate sector' (Fechter, 2017, p.3-4). This indicates that the theoretical mechanisms of governance, coercive, remunerative and values-based, are capable of shifting from one sector to another, blurring distinctions between the sectors' different modes of power, values and role (Eikenberry and Kluver, 2004). Watkins has pointed out the The disjuncture between the clarity and logic of the three-sector model and the ambiguities, contradictions and paradoxes of material reality (Lewis, 2013) suggest the need for a recalibration of the development project and a reassessment of this hegemonic paradigm.

Hoggett (Hoggett, 2009c) juxtaposes Le Grand's (2003) economic exploration of incentives in the provision of public and welfare services with Titmuss (1971) and Mauss's (1954) emphasis on relational and moral motivations. Both Etzione

(Etzioni, 1961) and Le Grand acknowledged peoples' 'moral' engagements with organisations, which led Le Grand to characterize public workers as 'knights' and 'knaves', but both authors relied on the oppositional dyad of self-interest versus altruism. What Hoggett (Hoggett, 2009c) found missing from these economic models of motivations, incentives and governing modes was the important role that beliefs and values played in the lives of public servants and development workers. In his ground breaking study how development workers in the UK managed to negotiate the dilemmas and contradictions inherent in their jobs, Hoggett (Hoggett, 2009c) was struck by the significant ways in which identity, and by implication culture and difference, influenced attitudes towards society and social action, and the emotions that sustained or drained these workers. This finding substantiates the justification for taking a qualitative psychosocial approach to my research with Bangladeshi development workers, but also unearths particular theoretical challenges, in terms of representation and notions of self-identity and emotion. Before embarking on those discussions, a final part of this contextual jigsaw must be explained, which adds to our understandings of how the development milieu has evolved; and makes a further connection between objective structures, ideology and subjective experience.

Aidland: Development activity on an industrial scale

What is abundantly clear in any investigation pertaining to development is that spending on official development assistance (ODA) has reached leviathan levels, standing at over US\$131 billion in 2015, its highest ever level, with the US by far the biggest donor, followed by the UK, Germany, France and Japan

(OECD, 2016). What is less clear is the means by which to capture and describe the multifarious web of donor organisations, management and technical agencies, policy research institutions, Government and non-government organisations, and other consultancy and advocacy bodies that have evolved to administer and implement development programmes in the global South. Once described as a 'machine' (Ferguson, 1990) this conglomeration of organisations has grown into an 'industry' (Fechter, 2017). Such terms allude to the world of commercial manufacturing and business enterprise with regard to the scale, spread and complexity of operations, and real parallels can be found in the global mobility of capital across borders; the demand for a flexible and variously skilled labour force; the drive towards ever greater cost-effectiveness; the use of outsourcing; and ultimately, the logic of the 'bottom line' in producing quantifiable outputs and outcomes.

A convenient sobriquet - 'Aidland' - which is gaining currency for its resonance with the lived experience of development workers, has been coined to name this particular region of the 'third sector' and readily describes its half-imagined industrial-scale landscape (Apthorpe, 2005, Eggen, 2012, Mosse, 2011, Shutt, 2012, Roth, 2015). The elision with business and industry seems designed to flag up the imperfections in the tripartite model of development, drawing attention to internal ironies and the ambiguity of the Etzionian modes of power involved. As David Mosse acknowledged in 2009 in the preface to the 2013 edition of *'Adventures in Aidland'*:

Aidland is the international development parallel to both the finance crises and contemporary US policies, constituted simultaneously as both

real and surreal (or virtual) and held together by a puzzling 'utopian realism' (Mosse, 2011, p.vii)

Both Mosse (2011) and Lewis Lewis (2013, p.185) endorsed Apthorpe's original description of Aidland as 'not a nowhere exactly but inexactly a somewhere' although Apthorpe's fuller quotation contains explicitly reference to emotions and hints at something more ominous.

While real enough to those who have to plan, manage and deliver [aid] – those subject to it also know it well – Aidland's trick *trompe l'oeil* quality is one of something being there and not there. Not a nowhere exactly but inexactly a somewhere with the characteristics of a nowhere. *An idea of a somewhere, but one about which more is desired – or feared, neglected, denied or evaded – than known or learned.* (Apthorpe, 2013, p.20, my emphasis added)

Perhaps what Apthorpe is hinting at are the more discomfiting aspects of the development aid industry which have the potential to be fundamentally disturbing– a fear of failure, impotence or irrelevance (Stirrat, 2008); a neglect of internal contradictions (Ferguson, 1990, Eyben and Turquet, 2013); the denial of the exclusion of 'others' (Crewe and Fernando, 2006); evasion, even, of the responsibility to care to change the social order from within (Hancock, 1989). Apthorpe alludes to a sense of 'psycho-logic' (Hoggett, 2009c) when he further characterizes Aidland as having 'its own mental topographies, languages of discourse, lore and custom, and approaches to organisational knowledge and learning' (Apthorpe, 2013, p.199).

Interacting with these veiled affective aspects, are the material and ideological aspects of Aidland which are inconsistent, resulting in varied islands of smaller

Aidlands within Aidland (Apthorpe, 2013). To a much larger extent however, Aidland is heavily influenced and shaped by the managerialism of a neo-liberal capitalist industrial system (Roth, 2015, Carroll and Jarvis, 2015, Lewis and Gellner, 2010). Mosse (2008, p.120) drew attention to the macro- and micro-scale affects of the development industry's modes of policy-making and knowledge production, which, he said, enables 'economics to retain its pre-eminence as the diagnostic and rule-making discipline of Aidland'. He argued that contemporary aid agencies are now part of a system that 'no longer seek[s] to intervene but merely to support the conditions' for development (Mosse, 2008, p.119). Invoking Craig and Porter's (2005) notion of 'vertical disaggregation' Mosse observed that on the one hand, rule-making and value-allocating powers are delegated upwards from the ostensibly flawed governments of the global South to global institutions, INGOs and multi-national companies. On the other hand, the burden of effecting development and the realisation of policy is delegated downwards towards local authorities, small communities and ultimately into the intimate space of individuals' own psyches in processes of increasing 'responsibilization'. The work of Goetz (Goetz and Gupta, 1996, Goetz, 2007), Mahmud (Mahmud and Sultan, 2010) and others, reviewed later in this chapter in an examination of the experiences of local field workers and feminist activists has added substantial weight to these claims.

While Apthorpe seemed to be referring to the targeted recipients of aid, my position is that in such a system, those who are most intimately involved in the planning, managing and delivery of aid at every level are also 'subject to it'. It is these workers, consisting of discernably different groups but collectively defined

by their field of labour as dwelling in the nowhere/somewhere of Aidland to whom I will turn my attention in a detailed review of the literature in the last section of this chapter.

Theoretical frameworks

A transdisciplinary approach melding social and affective dimensions of analysis

This section will position my study of the personnel of development within a theoretical and conceptual framework that has a Bourdieusian sociological basis but is attentive to and informed by feminist theorizations of intersectionality and postcolonial critiques of representation, as well as by the study of the politics of emotions. Further explanation of my particular psychosocial approach, and the place of psychoanalysis in it, is provided in the context of methodology in chapter 4.

Bourdieu and Bourdieusian iterations

Following a theoretical route taken by Hoggett et al (Hoggett, 2009c), a Bourdieusian sociological framework has considerable utility in its ability to conceptualize the widely varying assets, contexts and potentials of the diverse array of aid workers operating in and around Aidland; and to account for the constellations of pre-dispositions and processes of distinction that shape and define the *habitus* of both individuals and organisations. Aidland itself can be said to constitute and operate as a Bourdieusian 'field' (Roth, 2015): a structuring structure shot through with power differentials, where, as Apthorpe (2013, 2012) and Mosse (2005, 2008) allude to, taken-for-granted capacities for

both setting and knowing the 'rules of the game' interact with accumulated, acquired and inherited resource capitals to produce and reproduce the social order.

The concept of economic, social and cultural capitals, which have variable currency in different fields, or domains of power, appears deceptively simple and easily grasped by those with an economic perspective. However, Bourdieu's attempt to provide an heuristic theoretical tool using explanatory terms that appeal to scholars beyond the discipline of sociology, is in danger of losing its original potency (Robbins, 2016).

The notion of 'social capital' in particular, has slipped almost unhindered into mainstream development discourse, exemplifying how this economic analogy has gained acceptance despite new interpretations and iterations that may depart significantly from Bourdieu's original conception and usage. A common criticism of the popularity of 'social capital' is its potential for the de-politicisation of development policy (Mosse, 2008). As Mosse notes in his critical discussion of the co-option of anthropology and anthropologists into the realm of technical development expertise, this recourse to Putnam's version of social capital can be discredited as 'the outcome of tactical concessions by a vulnerable group of social scientists to economic paradigms' (Mosse, 2008, p.121).

Putnam's seminal examination of Italian governance, *'Making Democracy Work'* (Putnam et al., 1994) was, however, an attempt to quantify the conditions that create functioning democratic economies and political systems. He saw social capital as comprising three elements: moral obligations and norms; forms of

social trust; and voluntary social networks or associations (Putnam, 1995, Putnam, 2000, Putnam et al., 1994, Siiminen, 2000, Tzanakis, 2013). The book title itself resonates with the then-emergent regime of New Public Management (NPM) and the pursuit of 'what works' that took hold particularly strongly in the UK in the 1990s (Dunleavy and Hood, 1994) as noted previously. NPM constitutes part of the 'travelling rationality' of development that prioritizes 'the universal over the particular, the travelled over the placed, the technical over the political and the formal over the substantive' (Craig and Porter, 2006, p.120). NPM has been critiqued for its capacity to produce unintended and adverse consequences in the delivery of human services (Dicke and Boonyarak, 2005, Frederickson, 2005) being in its universality, utterly divorced from social context or social relations and organised so as to be able to 'produce paradigm success out of program failure' (Mosse, 2008, p.121). This approach to policy was in effect and showing its flaws and unintended consequences when Hoggett et al undertook their study of public and third sector regeneration workers. NPM and Putnam's notion of social capital has continued to influence aid governance and development policy more broadly, despite more recent claims of its obsolescence and usurpation by 'adaptive' and 'digital-era' governance strategies (Dunleavy et al., 2006, Folke et al., 2005).

Within this context, Putnam's version of social capital emphasizes the concept of a generalised trust in authority and institutions and an assumption of shared moral obligations and norms that govern and enable micro- and macro-level acts of mutual reciprocity, which reinforce this trust. Putnam's Italian study

identified alliances and alignments as horizontal and vertical social networks that, he proposed, pre-determined to a large extent the political and economic development of different geographical regions, producing development actors that are either citizens in horizontal networks or subjects in vertical networks. One of the short comings of Putnam's' conception of social capital is his narrow focus on civic activity in voluntary associations, especially sports and cultural groupings and his proclivity to pathologize social and political movements and critique their advancement of narrow group interests. This limited ability to address conflicting interests and discrepancies of power between or within civil society associations has been criticized as echoing a de-politicised, idealized pluralism in the de Tocquevillean tradition (Sii en, 2000).

In contrast, Bourdieu's concept of social capital relates to the operation of social class and distinctions and differentiations within class fractions, rather than simply between civil society and the state. Bourdieu emphasized conflicts of interest and social struggles carried out in various arenas (or fields of power) where social relations, as resources, have the capacity to enable actors to advance their interests. This conception of social capital has the potential for a far more politicised perspective on the social order and is of greater relevance to the political agency of development actors than the Putnam view. This may be especially true in the context of Bangladesh where patron-client and horizontal associational relations operate across different realms (Wood, 2000) as discussed in chapter 2, and where Bourdieu's more specific form of symbolic capital – associated with prestige, honor and reputation – may be observable in operation.

Another of Bourdieu's strengths is in making the taken-for-granted visible. His concept of three forms of cultural capital as objective, institutionalized and embodied (Bourdieu, 1986) is able to capture not only the value that is imbued in the objective possession of cultural artifacts (books, paintings etc.) and academic competencies or skills that can be certified institutionally through qualifications; but it is also able to conceive of value that is embodied in ways of speaking, use of language, accent, manners and deportment. Bourdieu's conceptual tools can account for cultural assets that have significantly variable currency in post-colonial and post conflict societies as Botsis' (2018) study of English usage in post-apartheid South Africa has found. Competence in the English language is an especially significant and valuable professional asset all across Aidland, and the possession of fluency in the languages of other former imperial powers (French, Spanish and Portuguese) has a particular currency in particular regions of the global south. Bourdieu's tools are able to capture the nuances in value of these embodied cultural assets.

As well as elucidating different species and sub-species of capital, Bourdieu conceptualized cultural and social capital as inseparable from economic capital, enabling the exploration of the logics of transmission and exchange of these resources. These logics elaborate the mechanisms of social reproduction and demonstrate how the social world is internalized (Botsis, 2018). Economic capital for instance, has the potential to be transmitted almost instantaneously between actors and generations, whereas 'embodied' cultural capital - 'the long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body' - takes time to accumulate and is the most hidden form of hereditary transmission (Botsis, 2018. p.54).

The easy appeal of an economic metaphor, as employed heuristically by Bourdieu, has contributed to scholarly quests to identify other qualities and characteristics as capitals. These include 'identity capital' (Côté, 1996, Côté, 2005, Ho and Bauder, 2012) which can be linked to Philips (Phillips, 2016) notion of sociable curiosity as cultural capital and the capacity to 're-invent' one's subjectivity. A form of 'psychological capital' deriving from a tradition of positive psychology and yet another form, human capital, has been proposed (Luthans et al., 2004) which finds some congruence with Hochschild's idea of emotional labour (1983), but the concept of 'emotional capital' has so far proved rather inadequate to encompass the emotionality of social and political struggles and the affective aspects of social mobility (Reay, 2015).

Bourdieu paid rather scant attention to affect and emotions (Sayer, 2005, Sweetman, 2003), although he recognised the 'naturalised' sociological state of having a 'feel for the game' and the converse discomfort of feeling like 'a fish out of water' positioned in a field that is both at odds with the *habitus* beyond the perceived horizons of action, and where ones capitals are inadequate. However, his later clarifications of *habitus* and the mechanisms of social change (Botsis, 2018, Bourdieu, 1985, Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) acknowledged that individuals do make affective choices within (and congruent with) their *habitus*. The concept of habitus is more complex to grasp and the Bourdieusian notion of a constellation of predispositions, beliefs and orientations is often misrepresented (Reay, 2004b) and construed as overly deterministic, rather than understood as a generative array of potentialities, specific to social groups and individuals. Botsis (2018), through a conjugation of postcolonial and post-

structuralist perspectives that weave together the epistemologically diverse theorizing of Althusser, Butler and Bourdieu, emphasizes that social structures and subjectivity are accepted as mutually constitutive. She argues that the way power is reproduced is therefore subject to both continuities and discontinuities, contending that it is the 'discontinuity that makes incremental change possible, because every performance of the habitus is not repeated in the same way' (Botsis, 2018, p.54). As such, Botsis articulated a 'framework that can account for a subject that is constantly *re/positioning* him/herself in relation to others *and* in relation to shifting fields where cultural capital is differently valued' (Botsis, 2018, p.54, original emphasis).

An iteration of Bourdieu's habitus appears as the notion of *institutional or organisational habitus*, which has been widely applied to areas as diverse as journalism (Schultz, 2007), financial management (Goddard, 2004) and education (Ingram, 2009, Thomas, 2002) as well as to development organisations (Pickering-Saqqa, 2015). *Family habitus* is another variety of the same idea, that continuities in the taken-for-granted, 'naturalised' pre-dispositions and cultural capital, including language use, within organisations or familial groupings operate as invisible forms of power, sanctioning certain actions and identities and discounting others. The notion of a collective habitus has been sympathetically criticized as theoretically problematic, with Atkinson clarifying that 'the habitus is the possession of an individual' (p.340). Atkinson (2011) argues that, 'a generalised sense of what is done' - Bourdieu's *doxa* - may constitute layers *within* the habitus but it 'transcends any one particular habitus' (Atkinson, 2011, p.340), meaning these collective forms of habitus,

whilst commonly spelled the same in singular as in plural, in theory consist of and are sustained by *multiple* habitus(es) or shared sets of values, orientations and beliefs. The rather different conceptual quality of *emotional habitus* has been invoked in studies of contemporary and historic social movements (Gould, 2009, Kane, 2009) and educational inequalities (Reay, 2015) and places far more emphasis on the fluid dynamics and interaction between sets of potentials or pre-dispositions, further resisting the tendency towards seeing habitus as deterministic.

Before exploring the concept of emotional habitus further within a review of the study of emotions and their political role, it must be said that a large part of Bourdieu's legacy was his insistence on the sociologist's duty to be reflexive about their own position. In this sense he has something in common with the feminist tradition of qualitative enquiry, but Bourdieu's lack of gendered analysis is otherwise conspicuous by its absence. Nevertheless, feminist sociologists (Skeggs and Loveday, 2012, McKenzie, 2015, Garratt, 2015) have found Bourdieu's tools applicable for instance, in conceptualizing femininity as a form of cultural capital, legitimized as middle class and respectable (or de-legitimized as working class and extreme) within Bourdieu's theory of practice.

Feminist and postcolonial considerations

The application of a European sociology and philosophy of practice to research contexts in the global south is, of course, wide open to criticisms of neo-coloniality. Puwar (2009) has argued that the focus of Bourdieusian scholars, particularly in the UK, on class overlooks how Bourdieu's own formative research in Algeria informed his thinking on domination, pacification and

symbolic violence, and precipitated the development of his key concepts including habitus, field and reflexive sociology, prefiguring to some extent more recent postcolonial studies (Go, 2013). This British sociological focus on class obscures both Bourdieu's contributions to unpicking the different forms of power that constitute coloniality and the utility of his theoretical tools in studies of non-western, previously colonized societies. Bourdieusian theory has been effectively applied to questions of pedagogy in Burundi (Ndayipfukamiye, 1996), Hong Kong (Chan, 2002), and South Africa (Botsis, 2018), particularly in relation to language and the legitimation of cultural capital, but has also been usefully invoked by Crewe and Fernando (2006) in their exploration of racism in development organisations.

Postcolonial feminists have long debated issues of power and agency and the contested notions of voice and representation, which are implicated in claims to express collective or subaltern narratives (Spivak, 1985, Mohanty, 1988, hooks, 1990, Spivak, 1993, Narayan, 1993, Maggio, 2007). These arguments reiterate the imperative for an historicizing contextualization and transparent reflexivity in conducting research with non-Western subjects, but there have also been warnings against the potentially paralyzing effects of hyper-reflexivity (Kapoor, 2004). Ilan Kapoor's critical perspective on Spivak's work, paid respect to the influential tenor and integrity of Spivak's position, while offering a more practical line of thought for researchers in development studies.

Acknowledging complicity with dominant discourses and institutional structures is the most obvious implication emanating from Spivak and other postcolonialist writers; along with an explicit recognition that one is always in negotiation with

discourse, never outside of it. Kapoor (2004) complains however, that there are degrees of complicity, overlooked by Spivak; and reasons that 'it is possible to work within the belly of the beast and still engage in persistent critiques of hegemonic representations' (Kapoor, 2004, p.640). As well as these primary acknowledgements, Ilan Kapoor recognises Spivak's 'unlearning of our privilege as loss' as ceasing 'to think of oneself as better or fitter' (Kapoor, 2004, p.641); and as adjunct, urges the acceptance of our failures and the inevitability of incompleteness. Spivak's 'learning to learn from below' is perhaps the most difficult challenge on which to adjudicate ones degree of success or failure as a researcher and one in which strategic use of psychoanalytic concepts of transference and counter-transference can offer insights. In my study, Kapoor's invocation that 'I have to clear the way for both me and the subaltern before I can learn from him/her' (Kapoor, 2004, p.641) affects not only the researcher, but also the research participants who are themselves often allocated the task of learning from the dispossessed and voiceless poor, and yet are also relatively invisible and voiceless as the personnel of Aidland. Attenuating such complexities Ozkazanc-Pan (2012) offers a relational understanding of subalterity in contrast to a comparative approach that is able to acknowledge and account for the instabilities of positionings. Consideration of the intersectionalities of class, 'race' and gender and the dynamics of my positioning in relation to participants during the fieldwork and analysis is provided in Appendix 8.

A relational approach rooted in feminist philosophy (Tronto, 1993, Tronto, 1996, Gilligan and Attanucci, 1996, Gilligan, 2018) and the politics of difference

(Young, 2011, Honig, 1994) has challenged the primacy of concerns for justice over the value of care and the tendency towards static understandings of culture, which limit consideration of the structural processes that underpin the formation of social groups. Such conceptualizations are ill equipped to conceptualize the cross cutting effects of gender (de Jong, 2014). Robinson (1997, 2003, 2008, 2011) has done much to bring attention to the relevance of a feminist ethic of care into the realm of International relations and development theory. By recognising that 'dependency' and 'vulnerability' are not 'conditions to be overcome', but 'ways of being for normal human subjects' (Robinson, 2011, p.845) she proposed that 'relations and responsibilities of care are central to human life, and that care is a public value that must be negotiated at a variety of levels, from the household to the international community.' (Robinson 2011, p.846). Similarly, Mackenzie (2014) called for a reconceptualization of vulnerability and autonomy, key notions in contemporary development discourse, and argued against analyses of citizen-state relations that contrast the vulnerable subject with a mythical autonomous, liberal subject. With these debates in mind, the applicability of an ethic of care across the development sector as a guiding and organising principle will be further discussed in chapter 9.

Working on two assumptions, that the social actions inherent in development efforts are contested and therefore politicised, and that our actions are influenced by affective forces, it is now necessary to address what is meant by 'emotion' and the interplay between emotions and politics.

Political emotions

Jasper stated that 'for decades, psychoanalysis had offered the only serious tool kit for talking about emotions in politics' (Jasper, 2011, p.288) but he also recognised that the addition of cultural and sociological approaches enabled a more comprehensive way in which to think about emotions and social action; that is, through what has become known as a psychosocial approach. Looking back over 20 years of theoretical thinking and research on the subject of political emotions, Jasper identified at least three problems that have had to be addressed, although he acknowledged that making 'blanket statements' about the categorisation of emotions was a flawed endeavour (Jasper, 2011, p.286). The foremost problematic, now largely resolved across the spectrum of approaches to the study of emotions, is the unsustainability of an oppositional dyad of emotionality versus rationality as distinct drivers, or catalysts for social action. Feminists have long contested essentialism and the gendering of emotion, and contributed to the dispelling of several related dichotomies, of mind over body and the public/private realms of emotional expression (Calhoun, 2009). Despite a 'residual suspicion' (Jasper, 2011, p.285) to the contrary, thinking and feeling are now widely acknowledged as interacting and parallel processes (Nussbaum, 2001).

A secondary issue is the difficulty of labeling emotions: bringing everyday terms such as fear, shame, and anger into the discourse when these labels can encompass quite different qualities of emotion. Shame, for instance can be associated with an immediate on-rush of individual humiliation, 'a kind of cowing' (Jasper, 2011, p.286) that may also be experienced by non-humans. Alternatively, shame can be understood psychoanalytically as a longer-lasting

ed state of feeling or experienced as a socially and culturally mediated affect such as when a community feels a specific moral code has been broken. The categorisation of emotions as 'primary' or 'secondary', now a widely accepted framework by psychologists, and their social ascriptions and deployment (Leyens et al., 2000) adds a further layer of complexity to the debate. Thirdly, Jasper contended, is the problem of a conflation of generalised statements about emotion that, across languages and cultures, refer to different expressions, gestures, feelings, interactions, attitudes and descriptive labels.

Holding in mind the progression of these debates, Jasper offered a middle-way typology of emotions that avoids the extreme positions of reification or rejection of emotions and enables an understanding of emotions as both helpful and harmful to social movements and political action. In summary, Jasper (Jasper, 2011) proposed a typology that includes urges; reflex emotions; moods; and moral emotions. *Urges* were classed as immediate or nagging bodily feelings such as fatigue, lust or addiction (Elster, 1999), and can appear entirely visceral, although in psychoanalytic theory urges have historically been associated with drives or motivating identifications (Jasper, 2011, Frosh, 2012). *Reflex emotions* and *moods* are more easily located within an everyday conception of emotion as they can be seen and felt as physical responses to objective conditions, and may become evident as 'primary emotions' for instance, in facial expressions that materialize and abate relatively quickly (Ekman et al., 1972). As fleeting responsive feelings, *reflex emotions* differ from *moods* which tend to persist overtime and contexts and may lack a direct object (Damasio, 2003). More complex constructions of mood-like emotional states

encompass affective commitments and loyalties, or what might be conceived of as attachments in relational psychoanalysis (De Bei and Dazzi, 2014, Mitchell, 1999). These facets of the emotions require an object and have a potentially long-lasting stable quality either positively, as in love, trust or admiration, or negatively as with dislike, repulsion or suspicion. Jasper noted that 'moods both condition our reflex emotions and are changed by them' (Jasper, 2011, p.287). *Moral emotions*, he concluded, are similar complex judgments and valuations based upon socially and culturally determined principles and sensitivities, including compassion, hope, indignation, anger, shame or guilt.

Accepting this typology, emotions can therefore be conceived of as both individual (Craib, 1995) and relational (or social) (Burkitt, 1997) and accepted as functioning interactively. On this basis, Hoggett (2009a) articulated how interactions between social and individual psychological conditions, in specific political, economic and cultural contexts, have the potential to create collective feeling-thinking states that can be considered as '*structures of feeling*' (Williams, 1977, p.131), '*abiding affects*' (Jasper, 1998) and/or '*emotional habitus*' (Gould, 2009).

Going beyond the thinking of crowd psychologists, 'structures of feeling' in particular, can be understood not as individual emotions 'writ large' (Hoggett, 2009a) but as constellations of feelings, emotions and emotional states pertinent to a particular era and social context which impact upon the ways in which people act (or do not act) and feel (or do not feel) within themselves and society. Hoggett (Hoggett et al., 2013, p.571) was keen to point out that there are two aspects to the 'structure' of structures of feeling, one is the inner

structure of psycho-logic, which can be understood through psychoanalysis, and the other is the external social structure understood through sociological, cultural and political analyses. Hoggett (Hoggett et al., 2013) viewed relatively fleeting emotional reactions, such as moral panics over paedophiles, or the outpourings of grief upon the death of Princess Diana, not merely as temporary media-generated storms, but as symptomatic of specific structures of feeling characteristic of contemporary modernity.

Hoggett held that deep but free-floating, object-less anxieties generated by neo-liberal capitalist modernity and accompanying austerity measures for instance, become emotion when labelled as fear. This 'fear' is then capable of being mobilized by the media, politicians and social movements alike, and thus a fleeting emotional reaction can become tangible in protest actions, voting patterns and other social and political actions as has been demonstrated by recent events in the UK (Hobolt, 2016, Viskanic, 2017, Browning, 2018) and USA (McElwee and McDaniel, 2017). A similar pattern is beginning to emerge to account for the roots and triggers of the genocidal ethnic cleansing of Rohingya in Myanmar (Coates, 2014), which tragically underscores the importance of understanding what emotions are, what they do and how they function (Ahmed, 2013).

'Abiding affect' is a term coined by Jasper (Jasper, 1998) and used by Hoggett (Hoggett, 2009a) to describe an enduring feeling shared by a particular group, community or social class that is generated by historical circumstance, or particular political regimes. An abiding affect is a feeling that does not evaporate after its cause is gone, such as is induced in populations who have

lived under despotic regimes, the military dictatorships of Latin America, or the repressive colonial administrations of Southern Africa, for example. Frost and Hoggett (2008) have linked class oppressions to Bourdieu's idea of *social suffering* (Bourdieu and Accardo, 1999): the miserable feelings of humiliation, anger, despair, shame or guilt etc. that may accompany people's lived experience of class, race and gender and is associated with qualities of respectability and social status. Frost and Hoggett argue this social suffering is an abiding affect. Following (Reay, 2005), they concur that when the means to resist or even make sense of causal structural conditions are foreclosed, the collective emotional experience becomes ed, and potentially embodied.

'Emotional habitus' was identified by Calhoun as a 'characteristic way of relating emotions to each other, and of relating emotions to cognition and perception', 'never altogether conscious or reducible to rules – even when it seems strategic' (Calhoun, 2009, p.53). The concept was used by both Kane (2009) and Gould (2009) to elucidate the affective culture of social and political movements. Kane explored the emotional processes at work in the late 19th century Irish land rights struggles referring to a 'habitus of humiliation' (Kane, 2009, p.256): the shared feelings of anger and indignation that led, via the use of narrative metaphors, to a blossoming of feelings of pride, enthusiasm and love resulting in sense of solidarity and empowerment. In the same vein, Gould examined the changing affective characteristics of campaigns to fight AIDS in 1980's USA, from shame and fear, through anger and pride to a final sense of ennui with the contentiousness of mainstream politics. Gould produced clear evidence that traced the movement's 'inclinations toward certain feelings and

ways of emoting' that fed into a sense of 'what is to be done and how to do it' (Gould, 2009, p.10) echoing the Bourdieusian layers of *doxa* that constitute *habitus*. The fluidity and mutability of emotional habitus concurs with Hoggett's (Hoggett, 2009a) assessment of collective emotions as labile, unstable and subject to change and oscillation, following their own logic and contained only contingently by discourse. The vacillation between pride and shame or from hope to despair may resonate with the emotional habitus of many development workers.

Hoggett (2013) holds that the notion of structures of feeling and associated ideas of abiding affect and emotional habitus are as yet underdeveloped. In reviewing the study of emotions, Jasper (Jasper, 2011) lends some support to this idea in his assertion that Hochschild's (1983) theorizing of the 'feeling rules' imposed by employers to manage and exploit emotional expression, has eclipsed two other threads in the sociological study of emotions. These are Kemper's (1978) idea of linking individual experiences of emotion to hierarchies of power which may impact on an individual's capacity to respond to unfulfilled or disrupted expectations; and Hiese's (1979) affect control theory, which although opposed to psychoanalysis (Calhoun, 2009), implies a connection to the capacity to weather uncertainty, and the ability to respond to complexity and ambiguity without resort to hard and fast splitting of the good from the bad.

Jasper (2011) claimed all three of these 'traditions' in the study of emotions – of Hochschild, Kemper and Hiese - had not yet been applied systematically to social and political action. The dominance of Hochschild may have implications for the identification, understanding and interpretation of Hoggett's (2009c) fluid

capacities, but the management of emotions identified by Hochschild differs from Hoggett's containment of emotions insofar as the capacity to be both passionate and thoughtful requires a capacity to harness rather than suppress emotional response.

Connecting the study of emotions to the literature on the experiences of development workers, anthropologists might recognise a quality that Jasper identified as 'emotional energy' which is generated in rituals and social interactions and which has potential to generate further actions and emotional iterations, emphasizing the labile nature of our affective life. The ethnographies referred to below certainly contain accounts of social interactions and forms of ritualized social and spatial separations from racialised others, which may solidify subjective and collective responses and entrench political trajectories (Cook, 2005, Cook, 2007, Heron, 2007, Smirl, 2015).

Scheer (2012) has suggested that practices 'not only generate emotions, but that emotions themselves can be viewed as practical engagement with the world' (Scheer, 2012, p.193). Using the Bourdieusian concept of *habitus*, not only in terms of classed distinctions, but also in relation to Gould's (2009) notion of *emotional habitus*, and related notions of structures of feeling and abiding affects, it can be understood that individual and collective emotions are not only socially situated and historicized, but also subject to sets of pre-dispositions that may nurture or hinder the emergence of new ways of being in the social world. A reflexive psychosocial study informed by Hoggett's (2009c) notion of fluid potentialities and capacities that seeks to ascertain the kinds of biographical, sociological, cultural, familial and internal identity resources that are drawn upon

to regulate and harness emotions, may therefore have political significance for the practice of development.

As an introduction to the review of literature on aid and development workers I will first return to the metaphorical terrain of Aidland to help situate my participants in relation to their work roles and activities and look more closely at the material realities of working in the development industry.

The inhabitants of Aidland: who are these workers?

The precisely imprecise nature of Aidland makes estimating exactly who, and how many people globally make their living within it difficult to quantify and prone to teleological definition. Roth (2015) in her expansive study of 'passionate professionals' used 'Aidland' as an umbrella term for a highly complex and heterogeneous landscape of organisations and modes of aid delivery, recognising the blurring of boundaries between humanitarian and development aid. Indeed, the rise to prominence of NGOs from the 1990's onwards led many to become multi-mandated organisations, subject to changes in the flow and focus of funding streams which has, in some cases, required aid workers to advocate for human rights whilst also providing humanitarian aid to displaced populations. The programmes that have swung into place to cope with the recent influx of Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh is one such example. Conversely, organisations tasked with longer-term development have sometimes been required to alter their mandate in response to immediate humanitarian emergencies. During my fieldwork in Bangladesh, anecdotal evidence and observation showed that anti-poverty programmes had to

respond quickly to assist their sometimes additionally burdened flood-affected and displaced beneficiaries.

What is undeniable is that there are hundreds of thousands of people (Apthorpe, 2011) working in multiple ways to effect the implementation of humanitarian and development policies and programmes - as directors, coordinators, managers, team leaders, project officers, technical experts, supervisors, 'extension' and field workers and in myriad essential supporting roles as ancillary staff, translators, drivers, accountants and administrators. They may work as consultants, or as volunteers and activists, as salaried staff, or on short- or long-term engagements at home or abroad. What defines and unifies these workers, broadly speaking, is their involvement with organisations whose purpose aligns (usually explicitly) with the achievement of the MDGs and SDGs; their presence in low-income 'developing' countries³; and in some sense, their liminality, positioned at the boundaries of cultures, values, and modes of action, straddling the in-between, occupying I would posit, a 'metaxic' space.

One of the things most authors had agreed upon by the time Apthorpe asked 'who is aid?' was that in trying to tame the heterogeneity of this area of research, the nomenclature presents particular difficulties. Distinctions can be made by professional or voluntary status; area of expertise, type of employer or contractual conditions; by national origin or settlement pattern; or by different

³ Or 'pre-occupation with' - if one is to include those working in the global North as desk officers and HQ staff for INGOs and other development institutions.

forms of aid or developmental action. Fetcher and Hindman (2011) have used 'aid worker' and 'development practitioner' interchangeably, but acknowledge that this short-hand does not fully describe the range of categorisations that are possible, nor the complexities of the inferences drawn from them. The experience of technically skilled foreign professionals working short-term in emergency relief or conflict situations for example, will differ greatly from those working on longer term development projects for governments or agencies or as volunteers. Added to which, such roles and contexts may also be combined or sequential throughout the life-course (Fechter, 2017, Lewis, 2008).

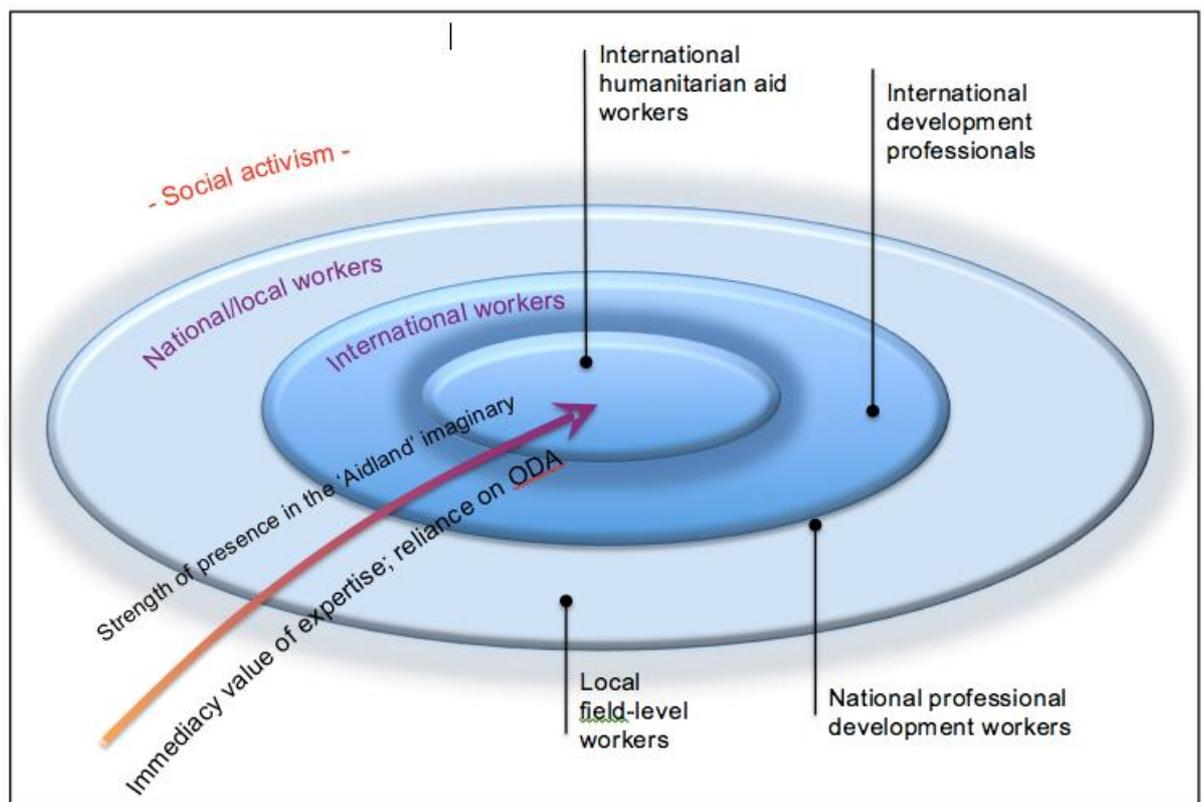
For the purposes of this review, searches for literature were made using a variety of key words: 'NGO worker', 'development worker', 'aid worker' 'humanitarian' 'field worker' 'activist' and 'development professional'. These terms cover a huge range of job titles, positions, functions, areas of activity and orientations. They seem not only too broad and non-specific to adequately capture the kinds of professional identities individuals adopt but are also labels largely composed by Western scholars, without heed to the cultural load of additional meanings that may be evoked. 'Activist' as one of my research participants explained, connotes an argumentative and 'trouble-making' attitude. Another, employed as a 'Gender Monitoring Officer' preferred to call herself a 'human rights worker', yet both were involved in similar work with very similar aims. The adjectives 'international' 'national' and 'local' also evoke ambiguities of meaning, as noted at the beginning of this chapter. They imply both a geographic scope of work, national affiliation or ethnicity that may be misleading or indeed diminishing and discriminatory (Crewe and Fernando,

2006). There seems to be no appetite for using the more accurate word 'foreign' in place of 'international'. I myself feel a pressure to stick with the customary, more euphemistic label of 'international' or 'Western' in this thesis to describe the highly mobile professionals, largely Euro-Americans working outside their home countries and the terms 'local' or 'national' to refer to those working inside their own countries. As Cook (2005) noted these terms are still ambiguous, homogenizing, exclusionary and over-inclusive. Apthorpe (2011, p.208) in an attempt to find some parity of esteem, proposed the term 'impatriate' as distinct from 'expatriate', but this seems even more contrived than the 'in-country national' used by some NGO personnel departments and still derives its meaning from being 'other' than the normalized 'ex-pat'. Despite the relevance to the study of development and development workers of analyses of race, ethnicity, class and gender, and acute awareness of this problematic in some quarters (Roth, 2015), the continued use of racialised linguistic conventions seems to conveniently paper over issues of difference.

The following review examines the existing research on workers who unequivocally occupy the centre-ground of Aidland and has sought out literature on those who occupy its peripheries. The searches, followed up by further probing of sources revealed a broad sweep of peer-reviewed academic literature and 'grey' institutional reports, plus a number of blogs and online forums written by development workers themselves.

I have identified three broad (and still imperfect) categories into which the literature on the personnel of the development industry falls: humanitarian workers; internationally mobile development aid professionals and the more

amorphous grouping of local development workers and activists. These categorisations stem from different types of interventions and the different occupational conditions of individuals that are associated with skills and qualifications. Taking these categorisations, particular inhabitants as represented in the literature might be plotted at various points across the imaginary landscape or social space of Aidland (see figure 2). Notwithstanding the broad aggregations contained within it⁴, the model serves to help organise the different personnel and associated research on development workers and locate my own participants - the national professional development workers - in this context.



⁴ Less easily accounted for in this schematic model of 'Aidland' are the 'voluntourists', unqualified volunteers (Denskus, 2011) or celebrity humanitarians, which are beyond the scope of this review.

Figure 2: Schematic visualization of Aidland mapping the inhabitants of this virtual landscape. While estimates of the numbers of workers involved are hard to make, national development workers may outnumber international workers by a ratio of 1:10 (Roth, 2015, p.128) therefore this representation is hardly to scale.

Humanitarian aid workers are placed at the centre, not just because their work typically involves direct and intensive interventions in emergency or post-conflict contexts, but their work is also almost totally reliant on foreign donors and high-value specialized knowledge (e.g. in medicine or logistics), suggesting their centrality to the running of the development 'machine'. A further consideration in placing humanitarian aid workers at the centre of Aidland is their position in the imaginary of Western publics who contribute a significant proportion of aid funding through direct charitable donations.

In this visual representation, there is a blurred boundary between the international humanitarian and international development workers, but a much more rigid boundary between international and national development professionals, reflecting the difficulties of making this leap for locally recruited staff and the friction created at this particular interface (Crewe and Fernando, 2006, Long, 2003). That is not to say there are no internationally-mobile development workers from the global South, far from it, but they are the exception rather than the rule (Roth, 2015). It is on the outside of this hard boundary that my own tranche of research participants are situated, separated from their field-level compatriots by the possession of greater amounts of institutionalized cultural capital in the form of higher education, differentiated professional experience and to some extent by the pull of urbanization. For some national workers, this separation may have a temporal element in so far as the local professional workers may have begun their careers as field

workers, operating on the margins of Aidland, literally remote from the metropolitan centre, and metaphorically on the edge of a 'nowhere'. And yet, paradoxically when humanitarian disaster strikes, as has happened with the influx of displaced Rohingya in the southwest corner of Bangladesh, field-level workers may suddenly find themselves in a 'somewhere' working hand-in-hand with the international humanitarians and development professionals.

To various degrees, the local field-level foot soldiers, project supervisors and mid- and senior-level managers in the Aidland industry are crucial intermediaries between the donors and intended recipients of humanitarian and development aid. We might envisage these workers not only as operating on a horizontal plane of the three-sector model alongside the public and private sectors but also on a vertical plane caught between the macro-scale policy environment and the messy minutiae of material resources and lived reality.

These different groups have been written about in discernably different ways and although each subject of research is evolving in different directions to some extent, there are also perceptible areas of convergence and continuity. The literature on humanitarians, professionals and field-level workers is assessed in the following review, taking into account the range of research subjects studied, the insights offered into the nature of the challenges and constraints they face, and the tenor of the discourse. Particular consideration is given to the commonalities, differences and features of the literature relevant to my study of development workers in Bangladesh, bearing in mind its origins and psychosocial approach.

Humanitarian aid work has indeed become a 'dangerous business' (Roth, 2015, p.32) with numbers of attacks on aid workers rising from 73 in 1997, to 339 in 2014 (Humanitarian Outcomes, 2017) (Humanitarian Outcomes, 2017).

Despite the limitations of the data⁵ what is clear (Roth, 2015) is that eighty to ninety per cent of reported woundings, kidnaps and killings have involved national staff rather than international workers⁶. Nevertheless, the response from aid organisations has been to direct extra security measures towards protecting the international personnel of Aidland (Stoddard et al., 2006, Stoddard and Harmer, 2006) rather than local staff.

The literature on humanitarian aid workers reflects this one-sided interest in the security and well-being of Westerners working away from home. Nordahl (2016) found a marked bias in her review of over 70 studies (2005 – 2015) which included a further six meta-reviews. Forty-five per cent of respondents were Westerners, 20% were classed as 'multinational', 12% from Asia and only 3% had African national backgrounds. Health-related professionals from the global north, and especially those from Europe, America and Australia predominated amongst the research subjects despite the vast geographical

⁵ The Aid Worker Security Database (AWSDB), defines 'Aid workers' as the 'employees and associated personnel of not-for-profit aid agencies (both national and international) that provide material and technical assistance in humanitarian relief contexts'. Including emergency relief and multi-mandated (relief and development) organisations, but excluding UN peacekeeping personnel, human rights workers, election monitors or purely political, religious, or advocacy organisations. There is no knowing the extent of under-reporting.

⁶ Since 1997, eight violent incidents have been recorded in Bangladesh, involving six national and three international workers, half of which occurred in 2015/16. Bangladeshi gay rights activist Xulhaz Mannan, who worked for USAID and was hacked to death at his home in Dhaka in April 2016 is included on the AWSDB, but his fellow activist who died in the same attack and a local university lecturer and literacy campaigner murdered two days before (all killed by militant conservative extremists), do not feature in AWSDB figures.

scope of humanitarian interventions (Strohmeier and Scholte, 2015). Most were employed by INGOs, but some studies included unqualified volunteers and a small minority of national NGOs and local-recruited staff. Disaggregated research on local humanitarian workers was found to be both limited in scale and by methodological scope, such as studies of American workers aiding victims of Hurricane Katrina in the USA (Clukey, 2010, Weber and Messias, 2012).

As well as the over-representation of 'international' humanitarians (for which read white Westerners) in these studies, there is a medicalized, quantifiable focus on PTSD (Friedman, 2016). Nordahl found plenty of robust survey evidence of serious work-related stresses that lead to adverse health consequences and an increase in health-related risk factors (Ager, 2012, Cardozo and Salama, 2002, Eriksson, 2013, Connorton, 2012). Acute stressors included personal exposure to incidents of trauma or violence and/or vicarious trauma (Armagan, 2006, Shah, 2007, Cardozo, 2013, Shamia, 2015), which affected a minority of humanitarians, ranging from 26% in Uganda (Ager, 2012) to only 6% of national workers in Kosovo (Cardozo, 2005). Chronic stressors were revealed by qualitative studies in the form of cognitive frustrations and feelings of self-doubt and powerlessness in the face of the scale of the challenges, and emotional or moral disturbances that represent an 'emotional burden' (Asgary, 2014) and contribute to feelings of alienation, social isolation, anxiety and depression.

Research is highly focused upon ed and demographic risk factors, including youth and inexperience, which leads to framing workers negative feelings,

attitudes and outcomes as burnout and compassion fatigue (Clukey, 2010, Musa and Hamid, 2008, Van der Auwera et al., 2012, Weber and Messias, 2012). Juxtaposing the two impulses most often used to characterize the motivations of aid workers Nordahl concluded:

Research shows that naked idealism or obsessive passion may leave one vulnerable to mental illness, while a balance between extrinsic (altruistic) and intrinsic (self-serving) motives is the most psychologically protective' (Nordahl, 2016, p.56).

Connecting an assumed altruistic urge directly to an individuals' sense of identity produces a theory of maladies such as 'altruistic identity disruption' (McCormack et al., 2009). One of the capacities of effective workers identified by Hoggett et al (2009c) was an ability to draw upon biographical and identity resources, including previous work experience, to sustain a beneficial capacity for self-authorization. Therefore is it unsurprising that the inexperience of youth, deficiencies in pastoral support and lack of wrap-around training were all implicated as predictors of adverse mental health consequences in humanitarian workers (Brooks, 2015).

While there have been calls for humanitarian organisations to introduce more preventative measures, including mental health assessments into their care programs for staff (Holtz et al., 2002), the organisational response is often expressed through the issuing of standard operating procedures, codes of conduct and guidelines (IASC, 2007, IASC, 2018) rather than transparent pursuance of structural, organisational or sociological analyses and mitigation strategies. Organisational issues such as job insecurity, programme design and

variable workload had limited coverage in Brook's meta-review of 61 studies (Brooks, 2015), although it was found that pre-departure preparedness, clarity of role, leadership, organisational support and interagency co-operation were crucial factors in determining the mental resilience and well-being of workers. This list of factors brings to mind another of the capacities identified by Hoggett, which is the capacity to weather high levels of uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity, common features inherent in emergency interventions and unpredictable contexts.

There were conflicting suggestions that being a 'national', working in one's own country, in itself puts humanitarian workers at increased risk of mental ill-health when compared to 'international' staff exposed to the same situations (Nordahl, 2016). Wang et al (2013) found national workers who were part of the earthquake-affected communities fared worse than their international counterparts, but there is little causal evidence linking stress levels to national origin. Instead, it was over-identification with victims, or becoming obsessively passionate that was correlated with higher levels of stress, self-neglect and injury (St-Louis et al., 2016). Objective and differential conditions of service however, may indeed have a detrimental affect on local workers. A quantitative needs assessment of local humanitarian staff in Jordan and Iraq (Eriksson, 2013) found that from a pre-determined list of factors only national staff reported financial concerns as the number one chronic stressor.

One aspect of humanitarian work that is recognised but sparsely interrogated in this tranche of literature is the ethical and moral dilemmas and political challenges faced by workers. Vaux's *The Selfish Altruist* (2001) was an

unusually frank 'insider' account, based upon experience of working in Kosovo and Ethiopia; detailing the personal and institutional dilemmas of undertaking relief work in areas of conflict and famine and the kinds of soul-searching reflection this entailed. In a rather plaintive and a self-conscious conclusion Vaux advocated for a guiding yet still ill-defined principle of humanity that demands a new kind of morality.

Most prominent in Nordahl's review (in 45% of 70 papers, 2005 - 2015), are reports of similar subjective experiences of ethical dilemmas, moral challenges or 'moral distress' leading to 'inner conflict'. Nordahl noted that most of these studies are not specifically asking about these ethical and moral issues, suggesting a significant gap in research and knowledge. According to Nordahl, these types of subjective experiences and feelings 'arise as a central theme from almost all qualitative and mixed methods studies combined' (Nordahl, 2016, p.34). Stoddard and Harmer (2006) recognised the ethical and political challenges faced by humanitarian workers and hinted at the emotional labour involved when they acknowledged such workers 'are at pains' to maintain political impartiality and operational neutrality in contested political environments. Feelings of guilt, shame, and self-doubt are articulated by humanitarian workers across other studies, adding weight to the argument that humanitarian work involves a good deal of 'emotional work' and ethical deliberation (Brooks, 2015, St-Louis et al., 2016, Hunt, 2008).

Nordahl (2016) found that gender was barely mentioned in the 70-plus studies she reviewed, except in relation to sexual violence and physical attacks. This boxing off of 'gender' as simply another risk factor among many reflects a focus

on the security and sustainability of workers as a human resource in situations of complex demands and acute incidents. Side lining such structural issues, the research on humanitarian aid workers has so far failed to address the differential constraints, perspectives, impacts and coping strategies of men and women in this field. During the writing of this thesis, and prompted by wider concerns with sexism in other industries (Maddaus, 2018, Amour-Levar, 2017) , explosive revelations of sexual abuse (Plummer, Feb 2018) and harassment within development organisations and towards beneficiaries have surfaced which have placed an unprecedented spotlight on issues of gender equality in the workplace (UK House of Commons, July 2018).

Factors that protected humanitarian workers from mental distress, and/or captured the perceived benefits to well-being of engaging this kind of meaningful work were also rarely the subject or focus of the studies covered. As with ethical and moral dilemmas, as Nordahl reflects, 'humanitarian workers seem to be thinking and talking about salutogenic factors and effects more often than researchers seem to ask about it' (Nordahl, 2016, p.34).

Salutogenesis in this context refers to medical sociologist Antonovsky's focus on factors that support and promote health and well-being rather than on pathogens (Antonovsky, 1996). Qualitative studies on humanitarian workers tended to show that emotional resilience and well-being is positively associated with feelings of personal fulfillment, preparedness, confidence, competence, work satisfaction, and the existence of social and professional support networks. These factors all contributed to better health outcomes (Nordahl, 2016, Brooks, 2015). St Louis (2016) found high levels of job satisfaction

deriving from good working relationships and organisational support contributed to what they call a 'harmoniously passionate' mental state. This again concurs with Hoggett's (2009c) 'fluid potentialities' relating to the capacity for reflexivity and capacity to contain feelings and emotions without suppressing them. In other words, the aggregated capacities to recognise one's emotional state and be both passionate and thoughtful enables workers to measure and harness their emotional responses to a situation in order to transform it.

What emerges from the literature on humanitarian workers is that these particular inhabitants of Aidland have been examined from a strongly medicalized, quantitative perspective that focuses on enumerating pathogenic risk factors, which in turn have implications for and are applied to the management, security and sustainability of human resources. More reflective accounts of humanitarian workers' lives and careers are beginning to emerge (Alexander, 2013, Zurkuhlen, 2015), and coalesce with the qualitative, rather more anthropological studies and scholarly auto-biographical accounts of professional-level development workers: a move in keeping with the increasingly blurred and much-crossed boundaries between the humanitarian and development realms of Aid.

Studies of humanitarian workers are undoubtedly dominated by the voices from the global North and are severely limited by the relative invisibility of locally recruited or 'national' workers and the lack of any significant analysis of the gendered and structural dimensions of this sphere of work. Ethical, moral and political aspects, as well as the 'salutogenic' affects of engaging in meaningful, rewarding work are emerging as significant facets of humanitarian workers'

experience but such topics are more extensively covered in the literature on development professionals rather than specifically in relation to humanitarian work.

As Roth (2015) suggests, humanitarian aid focuses on need rather than solidarity with the communities they serve and this orientation is reflected in the literature on its personnel. Questions of whose need – organisational needs or individual needs - and solidarity with whom, or what, are raised by examination of both the content and range of the literature on humanitarian workers. The continued and disproportionate privileging of the voices and concerns of workers from the global North, as demonstrated by this canon of literature, underscores how far development scholarship still has to travel to fully understand and appreciate the efforts of locally recruited staff working in the global South.

Professional development workers: Feeling the discomforts and doing it anyway

The research and literature on humanitarian aid personnel has emerged from an audit-orientated perspective, deriving from concerns with security, operational efficacy and individual health and well-being. The literature on professional-level international development personnel has emerged from different roots, most strongly from an anthropological viewpoint, taking an ethnographic approach towards aid and development NGOs, which has given birth to a genre of 'aidnographies' and a range of concerns around the interplay of policy, professional identities, representation, subjectivities and emotions.

Discussion has evolved along two broad but intertwining themes: professional identities and gender politics; but the scope of coverage continues to centre around the experience of the archetypal, normalized internationally-mobile white aid worker from the global North. The experience of development professionals from the global South, with rare exceptions, tends to be either assimilated into the 'insider' accounts of the internationally-mobile white/Northern experience, or aggregated into 'outsider' investigations of local Southern fieldworkers experiences. On the fringes of these discussions lie a number of works on a variety of other development actors: volunteers and 'accidental', non-professional development workers from the global North for instance (Pollet, 2014) and political activists of the South (Gellner, 2010, Lewis, 2010, Strulik, 2010). I shall trace the emergence of professional development workers as object of analysis before examining the most recent literature in a more thematic manner, using key texts to make connections with discussions of (de)coloniality and feminism and their intersections. Turning to the experience of the local development worker, and focusing on South Asian contexts I will attempt to locate the 'local' in the discussions of development workers' dilemmas linking this to different forms of activism.

Emma Crewe and Elizabeth Harrison took up Chambers' (1997b) challenge to reflect personally as well as politically on who really benefits from aid. The publication of *Whose Development? An Ethnography of Aid* (Crewe and Harrison, 1998) fundamentally questioned the oppositional division of an 'us' and a 'them' and significantly advanced discussion of the development professional's role. Works that have become known as aidnographies consist

mainly of reflective auto-ethnographic accounts, drawing upon the author's own career in development, and effectively narrowed the gap between abstracted explorations of development policy and management philosophy and more personal, experiential accounts.

One of the earliest of these reflective personal accounts came from an 'ordinary' international development professional who laid bare the 'almost surrealistically absurd goals' of the development industry (Morris, 1991, in abstract). At the start of a decade that saw the rapid rise to prominence of the notion of 'civil society' in global policy circles, Morris brought attention to the resistance of the third sector to self- and upwards-facing criticism. Significantly, he revealed his own day-to-day sense of despair while employed as an Aid worker in the Yemen. Across the 1990's, criticism of the aid industry, its processes, macro-politics and effectiveness, had grown louder (Ferguson, 1990, Esteva, 1997, Crush, 1995, Escobar, 1992, Escobar, 1995) and more explicitly self questioning (Pieterse, 1998, Chambers, 1995, Chambers, 1997b, Fowler, 2000a). Two doctoral studies, by Barbara Heron (1999, 2007) and Nancy Cook (2003, 2007) began to reflect rather more quietly, but no less incisively on the detail of the lives of development workers in the context of gender politics, subjective identities linked to place and origins, and imperialism: crucial issues implicated in the construction and operation of Aidland.

Barbara Heron undertook qualitative research with 18 white female Canadian development workers, herself included, who had all returned from postings in Sub-Saharan Africa (Heron, 1999, Heron, 2007). Focussing on the identity work contained in their narratives, she found unwitting continuities of a colonial

legacy, affirming a cultural superiority over racialised Others associated with the compulsion to 'do something for someone somewhere' as one participant put it (Heron, 1999, p.250). This legacy, Heron claimed, was overlaid by the construction of a bourgeois subjectivity of the good and moral woman, congruent with a Canadian national narrative as the 'good guys of the world' in which they were innocent of complicity in racialised systems of domination either overseas or at home.

Heron found participants' relations with local people were highly valued and yet the participants' emphasis on 'culture' as an obstacle to these relationships functioned to obscure both material differences and power relations. Similarly, Cook, studying the subjectivities of female international development workers in northern Pakistan, described how the seemingly minor choices these Western women made about what to wear had become 'arenas of socio-cultural inclusion and exclusion' (Cook, 2005, p.351). In processes of identification and differentiation, Cook concluded, distinct clothing styles were used to 'naturalise power hierarchies between Western and local Muslim women' (Cook, 2005, p.351). Heron described similar processes of distinction as 'containment strategies' that female Canadian development workers employed in order to preserve and protect their moral narratives of self. Distinctions were made, for instance, between their own practice and legitimized complaints, and the '*really*' racist talk of other expatriates (Heron, 1999, p.156). This position helped to perpetuate a 'myth of alternative practice' (Heron, 1999, p.227) and legitimize their own locus, but left the question of racial discrimination and domination as the unspoken 'elephant in the room' (Crewe and Fernando, 2006).

Heron underlined the need for an intensely self-reflective and profoundly honest interrogation of the powerful investments made by development workers, but at the same time held that the 'domination inhering in the North's control of the development enterprise cannot be fundamentally interrogated from within Northern development discourse' (Heron, 1999, p.229). She reasoned:

'The necessity to think ourselves moral prohibits substantial reflection regarding how we are implicated in these issues, which in fact comprise enactments of domination. We are crucially invested in *not* seeing ourselves in these terms because of our need to stay innocent in order to protect our moral selves - and in order to continue to *make our selves*.' (Heron, 1999, p.230, emphasis in original)

What is needed to overcome this apparent impasse, she urged, is to make the discourse and enterprise of development less of a white space, recognising the right of those in the global South to not only define what domination consists of, in their own terms, but also to take more control over the process of development. In this regard, there is a deep resonance in Heron's thesis with postcolonial issues of representation, voice and the dynamics of power.

Such entreaties emphasize the need for a rather more comprehensive explanation of Hoggett's set of 'fluid potentialities' than the simplified pattern I presented briefly at the start of this chapter. That is, one that historicizes, politicizes and situates the work of development practitioners, taking account of the specificities of subject positions, e.g. the whiteness and gender of Heron's participants, as well as the power dynamics and 'constellation of affects, feelings and emotions' (Gould, 2009, p.10) or Hoggett's 'structures of feeling' in operation. A flaw that might be discerned from Heron's analysis however, is that

in concluding that Canadian womens' 'desire for development can be understood as a profound desire for self' (Heron, 1999, p.239). Heron may be implying a rather more cohesive and unitary conception of self and selfhood than either Hoggett or myself would subscribe to.

Despite this caveat, Heron was bold in including herself as object of the critique, and she and Cook were exceptional at the time in bringing a nuanced, intersectional analysis to the barely-begun discussion of connections between development workers' roles, actions, identities and subjectivities and the hegemonic affects of development policy (Fowler, 2000a, Fowler, 2000c, Fowler, 2000b). It could be argued that both Heron and Cook were in some ways part of the movement towards transdisciplinary, psychosocial studies and analysis which was gathering momentum in British universities⁷ at the time, and turning attention, via Hoggett et al (2009c), to development workers' affective resources.

Both Heron and Cook's theses were published as books in 2007 but have received far less attention than the insider accounts of Morris (1991) and later, David Mosse's *Cultivating Development* (2005). The latter were personalized 'insider' perspectives but still essentially anthropological and ethnographic discussions of development policy and practice. Mosse's book was based upon his own lengthy entanglement as a social anthropologist with a flagship British aid project in rural India. Methodologically he used his archive of

⁷ Several other institutions within and beyond Europe were also showing increasing interest in psychosocial scholarship, the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa is one such example.

contemporaneous notes and reports, supplemented by interviews with key informants, and tempered by comments from former colleagues and collaborators to strengthen, he claimed, the objectivity of his observations. Contra Heron, Mosse claimed that only from this embedded position, could a comprehensive picture be drawn of how the vagaries of relationships over the course of a decade, shaped the fortunes of a development intervention as much as, if not more so, than shifts in policy.

From a similar embedded perspective, McNamara and Morse (2004) wrote of their own collective 50-years-plus experience with an NGO in Nigeria. They addressed the 'neglected issues' of motivation; ways of learning; and the significance of individual relationships – 'the dominance of the human element' - in the success or failure of development projects (McNamara and Morse, 2004, p.256-266). They detailed the challenges faced over a period of time by NGO staff in their relationships with each other and staff in the Northern-based donor HQ; and how the concerns of workers and managers on the ground (both foreign and local) were overridden by the donor to the detriment, ironically, of the very localization policy everyone was trying to implement. Of the donor HQ staffers, they write:

It is not that they do not care, but caring gets wrapped up with the mechanics of 'doing' and projects are no longer about people but [about] log frames, outcomes, indicators, targets and cash flows. That is not to say that these are unimportant; after all one should also 'care' about those who provide the funds for development. However, feelings have to be recognised as authentic and intuitions respected. (McNamara and Morse, 2004, p.267)

McNamara and Morse's contribution was not just a tale of donor insensitivity and bureaucratic arrogance. They also reflected upon the emotionality present in the organisation and the demolition of trust that resulted. They noted, importantly, that although a reflective learning process was encouraged by the donor and doggedly pursued within the Nigerian NGO, the tendency was for the rhetoric of reflection and learning to 'serve as a veneer without being internalized' (McNamara and Morse, 2004, p.265).

McNamara and Morse endorsed the notion of care and authentic emotional engagement as an attendant ethos of development, bringing some specificity to Vaux's plea for a more generalised sense of 'humanity' in guiding the development process (Vaux, 2001). As they conclude:

Perhaps there is a need for more explicit emotion and a recognition that people working within both N-NGDOs and S-NGDOs bring their own personalities, weaknesses, strengths, desires etc. to their work, and what they do and how they interact are a function of this as well as of the institution's formal agenda. (McNamara and Morse, 2004, p.267)

With greater clarity than either Morris (1991) or Mosse (2005), McNamara and Morse supported calls for more attention to be focused on both the inter-personal *and intra-personal* levels of interactions, as Cook and Heron had done in their examinations of the interiority of the person as active within a structure, shaped by and shaping the praxis. In addition they explicitly acknowledged the limitations of reflection and representation, as well as acknowledging both the need for, but intrinsic limitations of, social and institutional levels of analysis.

A modest body of literature exploring the professional positions, and the dilemmatic experiences of development workers from a range of angles has gradually accumulated in the first decade of this century (Kothari, 2005, Crewe and Fernando, 2006, Dunér and Nordström, 2006, Heaton Shrestha, 2006, Lewis and Mosse, 2006, Denskus, 2007, Arvidson, 2008, Lewis, 2008, Stirrat, 2008). Latterly, scholarly interest has gained momentum with the publication of a handful of edited collections, fewer single-authored books, and a steady stream of articles (de Jong, 2009, 2011, Fechter and Walsh, 2010, Fechter, 2012b, McWha, 2011, Yarrow, 2011b, Denskus, 2012, 2013, Eyben, 2012, 2013, 2014, Roth, 2012, 2015, 2016, Shutt, 2012, Gould, 2014, Stubbs, 2014, Dar, 2014, Smirl, 2015, Cameron et al., 2016). Not all of these works might be called ethnographies, but Harrison (2013) has claimed that ethnographies of aid tend to rest on an unrealistic view of the development world. She calls for studies of development workers to avoid diverting attention from 'both the politics and the material effects of development intervention and the relations of power within which they are embedded' (Harrison, 2013, p.263). The following section explores how development workers have been researched and written about, but what becomes apparent is that the voices of national workers, which may provide new insights into material effects and relations of power, are rarely heard.

Professional identities and (de)coloniality

Only ten years ago, Stirrat (2008) recognised the 'thousands of people', millions of dollars' and 'huge range of activities' involved in the development aid industry' (p.406) and noted that:

[O]ur understanding of people working within it, who they are, where they are from, their hopes and dreams and their own views of what they are doing is still very limited. (Stirrat, 2008, p.406)

Stirrat used the then-solidifying characterizations (of anonymous provenance) of international development workers as 'mercenaries', 'missionaries' or 'misfits' as a means to examine the tensions and contradictions apparent in the way development workers see themselves and each other. The mercenary archetype, he claimed, is rooted in both popular (Hancock, 1989) and more respected (Chambers, 1997a) depictions of the highly-paid, sometimes ineffective, profit-seeking professionals who are sequestered in comfortable locations away from the reality of Third World poverty but with a vested interest in the maintenance of it. Stirrat noted how 'development consultants'⁸ in particular embraced this cynical self-representation, often and openly comparing fees and country conditions amongst themselves and vying for better opportunities. And yet, Stirrat found, they also displayed a defensive investment in and deep engagement with the projects in which they were involved. Stirrat described this as an over-commitment of time and energy on the surface (Stirrat, 2008, p.410), but viewed it as a more fundamental commitment to new, perhaps more just and equitable, social forms. Stirrat posited that this dissonance within the self-image as cynical yet committed was the product of guilt and new uncertainties surrounding the value of social rather than physical development. Whereas a bridge, a dam or a road was, in a previous era, tangible evidence of success, the achievements of 'empowerment' and

⁸ By 'development consultants' Stirrat seems to mean those employed by development management agencies and research institutions.

'sustainability' are far more questionable and easily criticised. Thus, Stirrat concluded, a mask-like form of defence, or the 'veneer of cynical disinterest' (Stirrat, 2008, p.411) is a way of dealing with the uncomfortable feelings and uncertainty evoked by development work. The archetypal missionary self-image on the other hand, according to Stirrat, inhabits an NGO/charity-based world of ostentatious 'commitment, enthusiasm and verve' (Stirrat, 2008, p.412) and is motivated by a romantic identification with the poor and preparedness to suffer alongside them. Typically, Stirrat adds, the missionary identity implies a model of the individual, whether aid worker or beneficiary, who is 'strangely asocial, acultural' and universal (Stirrat, 2008, p.415): that he/she is removed from context, simply the giver or receiver of aid.

Accepting that there are, of course, exceptions to the general rules of these characterizations, Stirrat observed that the oppositional positions of mercenary or missionary self-images had more in common than the workers themselves would acknowledge. He argued that both were separated to a greater or lesser degree from the lived experience and social circumstances of the poor, as Smirl (2015) has testified in detail; both were increasingly concerned, in a competitive funding environment with their own professional credibility and were increasingly engaged in processes of credentialisation. Stirrat cites the rise of the importance of the MBA in this regard, but the increasing demand for degree-level qualifications by NGOs and development organisations and the concomitant supply-side response from Higher Education institutes offering Development Studies courses substantiates this claim that institutionalized forms of cultural capital are gaining currency.

Moreover, both 'mercenary' and 'missionary' were committed to an ed, universalized subject from which to build a 'modern' social order and persons 'in their own image' (Stirrat, 2008, p.416); and both types are subject to powerful emotions which underlie this commitment that requires some form of emotion management and control. Stirrat also noted that 'mercenary' types are often the offspring of colonial civil servants and 'missionary' types the offspring of actual missionaries, suggesting the presence of inherited pre-dispositions towards a commitment to the 'civilizing' or 'conversion' tasks associated with 'mercenary' and 'missionary' identities respectively.

The third characterization, that of 'misfit' was found to be of a different order from the other two: not motivated by material reward or charitable urge but negatively propelled by a sense of discomfiting dislocation or alienation, seeking a new place of belonging and/or escape, and with it an acceptable status and identity. At work here, Stirrat suggests, may be a nostalgic hankering after an idealized, pristine sort of world, and the contradictory desire to be on the frontier of a new and different world.

Implying a conception of professional identity that aligns more closely with contemporary notions of self and selfhood as mutable, multiple and narratable (Zahavi, 2007, Zahavi, 2008), Stirrat argued that although easily recognisable in some individuals, the three apparently contrasting portrayals are qualities that may ebb and flow in intensity throughout a person's career, possibly even over the course of one working day. Although he observed that it was more likely that 'missionaries' would become 'mercenaries' over time, due to increased exposure to the competitive culture of Aidland he was less concerned with the

embodied existence of these archetypes and more with their cognitive function for development workers themselves in explaining and justifying their own behaviours and that of others. Stirrat claimed the tensions between these characteristic identities are a common theme of the contemporary development workers' experience and are perceived by them as part of the new and modern 'white man's burden' (Stirrat, 2008, p.406).

Stirrat's characterizations echoed the quasi-iconic depictions of public servants as 'knights' and 'knaves' in the literature on public service professionalisation in the global North (Le Grand, 2003) and his work in examining the self-images of development workers provided an appropriate ground which later ethnographic studies were able to build upon. Fechter and Walsh (2010) who looked at development workers through the lens of elite migrant studies, concurred with Stirrat, underlining the continuities with 'big D' development's colonial past (Fechter, 2010). Following Stirrat, they suggested that more is known about the lives of colonial bureaucrats, missionaries and wandering philanthropists of the 19th and early 20th century than is known of their 'modern-day equivalents' (Fechter and Walsh, 2010, p.1187), adding that our understandings of these workers are not only limited, as Stirrat also concluded, but rarely examined from a postcolonial perspective.

Taking up themes of migration, and alluding to mutable post-modern identities, the aid workers of Roth's more recent studies (Roth, 2012, 2015, 2016) appeared to have rather more thoroughly mixed motivations than Stirrat's subjects. Roth's evidence suggests an increasing proclivity, in an era of precarious and competitive employment conditions (Roth, 2016), towards

'mercenary' practices and a greater degree of integration of the desires for an alternative lifestyle associated with the so-called 'misfit' identity. Roth's informants had essentially mobile careers, moving from job to job, country to country, and possessed the qualities of 'entrepreneurial selves' (Roth, 2015, p.62). These contemporary workers appeared to be willing and able to seek out opportunities effectively, adapt to the needs and trends of the labour market, deliver measurable results as required and accrue 'profits' in the form of specialisms in geographic areas, contexts or issues that may well be re-invested in further enterprises, or consequent contracts. In addition, and perhaps appealing simultaneously to both the sybaritic 'mercenary' and pared-down 'misfit' in-search-of-authenticity identities, Roth found the patterns of aid work offered periods of intense activity with the prospect of holidays and rest and recuperation (R&R) breaks in nearby exotic and desirable locations. This cycle of operation, Roth notes, is particularly characteristic of the contemporary aid workers career path.

A kind of missionary zeal for involvement in development work is still evident in both Roth's (2015) study and in Fechter and Hindman's collection (2011) but it has shown itself to be rather more self-interested and self-serving than saintly, and more tightly integrated with the escapism of Stirrat's 'misfit'. Aid work can provide access to meaningful work and be perceived as a vocation or calling rather than a simple career choice. Roth found evidence that aid work presents opportunities for 'self-realisation' and personal growth which frequently stem from workers' experiences that are associated with shock or trauma – either from their own personal experience of moral and physical challenges or their

proximity to the trauma and suffering of others. Roth notes however, that international aid workers do not seem to be attracted to activities such as volunteering in hospitals or working in deprived inner cities in their own high-income countries, but instead, echoing and substantiating Heron's findings, show signs of enchantment with the prospect of assisting the poor in countries at the opposite end of the income scale.

Roth argues that for many, the interest in international development work is both an expression of disenchantment with, and response to, work and living conditions in late capitalism, associated with 'post-material values' (Inglehart, 1981). There is a sense in which aid work offers a means to get away from contemporary Western society and get into a less conventional, more adventurous and meaningful lifestyle (than is perceived to be available in the Westerner's home country); and the possibility of a comfortable yet pared-down, 'slow living' existence away from the fast-moving and multiple pressures of a Western urbanized environment. But rather than embedding themselves in the local culture and social life, there is a strong and contradictory tendency among international aid workers towards 'ghetto-isation' within exclusive, Westernized physical and social spaces (Smirl, 2015). McWha's (2011) finding that being in receipt of a relatively high salary induced feelings of guilt among international workers and negatively affected their relationships with local colleagues suggested an additional sense in which the 'getting away from' imperative is

complicated and paradoxically, preserves and sustains the dominant cultural values and traditions of a white Western lifestyle⁹.

Aidnographies, reflections, representations and self-representations of the professional development worker's experience are still very much taken from the standpoint of the white, Westerner, and written on the whole by insiders with substantial experience of working for INGO's – the 'independent scholar-consultants' as Apthorpe has referred to them (Apthorpe, 2011, p.197)(p.197) - or social scientists drawn from academia into Aidland via contractual arrangements for applied development research (McNeill and Lera St Clair, 2011). In this regard, Roth's research stands out as conducted explicitly by an 'outsider' academic, without personal or professional ties to Aidland. What has become observable, since Stirrat's 2008 paper and Morris (1991) and Mosse's (2005) well-known ruminations on their own development experience, is that the research on aid professionals is increasingly authored by female writers (Heather Hindman, Anne-Mieke Fechter, Rosalind Eyben, Laura Turquet, Katie Walsh, Silke Roth, Uma Kothari, Sara de Jong, Lisa Smirl, Emma Crewe, Priyanthi Fernando to name a few) following a path forged by Barbara Heron (1999), Nancy Cook (2003) and others (Miller and Razavi, 1998). This subtle evolution has emphasized the extent to which the dilemmas, contradictions and

⁹ A range of 'spaces of Aid' have been examined in detail by Smirl, including specially reserved housing compounds and modes of transport, exemplified by the white air-conditioned 4 x 4 vehicle which has become the ubiquitous symbol of UN interventions. Smirl also recognises the significance of exclusive social clubs and 'ex-pat' bars which function as culturally safe spaces in which to practice a Western lifestyle, by providing familiar cuisines and easy access to alcohol - a significant challenge in predominantly Muslim countries like Bangladesh. These spaces also become the terrain for the re-inscription of national identities through the hosting mass-media sporting events, the showing of European football league games on TV for instance, or more traditional markings of identity such as St Patrick's or St Georges Day and Christmas celebrations.

paradoxes are perhaps most keenly felt in the arena of gender relations and are not just a new form of 'white man's burden' as Stirrat would have it, but are part of a gathering and pernicious 'white woman's burden'.

Gender and Feminisms

Towards the end of a period which saw a sharp rise in the prominence of NGOs in development policy discourse and the sparking of gender in/and development (GID/GAD) debates, another two pioneering women, Miller and Razavi (1998), using characterizations of 'missionaries' and 'mandarins' brought attention to the different strategies and forms of political action adopted by women working for gender equity in international bureaucracies and NGOs. Over a decade later, Cornwall and Whitehead (2007) were similarly explicit in connecting the contradictions, contestations and challenges of professional development workers to a feminist agenda. The latter, especially, placed their discussions in the context of assessing the effectiveness and impact of 'mainstreaming gender' in development and the conundrums of multiple 'feminisms'. The same issue of diverse strategies adopted by feminists in development was particularly well-exposed in Kabeer et al's (2008) examination of the continuities and (mostly) discontinuities of feminist advocacy across global North and South contexts.

Cornwall concluded through her prior investigations of development discourse (Cornwall and Brock, 2005), that 'gender' had lost 'its political and analytical bite' (Kabeer et al., 2008, p.69) by its lack of specificity, ubiquitous use and effective 'domestication' by Aid organisations (Cornwall, 2007). Molyneux (2007) also argued that one of the myths of development was that gender has

now been so successfully brought into mainstream policy design that there is no longer a need for specific gender programmes. Furthermore, she claimed, this mainstreaming of the mainstreaming narrative has produced a sense of ennui or 'gender fatigue' within organisations. Lucy Ferguson (2010), echoing Cornwall's charge of a lack of specificity, later argued that the complex and contradictory ways that gender is understood by different development actors within international, national and local organisations can work to the detriment of stated development goals.

Eyben and Turquet's book (Eyben and Turquet, 2013), a focused collection of insider accounts - some anonymous - from gender specialists in large organisations, explains in detail how gender(ed) development workers are often occupying a profoundly dilemmatic and marginalized position within INGOs. Taking an action research approach that allowed for conversational reflection, Eyben and Turquet's participants and contributors noted how their roles were often presented and articulated as a particular policy prescription rather than of intrinsic value to the effectiveness of the organisation. These particular workers may be doubly burdened by working to transform the lives and opportunities of socially distant beneficiaries outside the organisation as well as attempting to transform the bureaucracy itself. The self-identified feminist bureaucrats are conscious of the potential contradictions inherent in the dual inferences of effecting progressive feminist change and the tendency of bureaucracies to maintaining the status quo. One of the added complexities of the work of gender specialists in development organisations, is the accusation by other feminists of co-option into, and legitimation of, a neo-liberal agenda (Ferguson,

2015). As Ferguson argues, from the insider perspective there exists both transformative potential, and contradictions to be acknowledged and embraced while involved in the daily work and politics of being a gender 'expert'. Hence these feminist bureaucrats can easily be thought of as 'in and against' the institutions in which they operate, mirroring the relationship with the state of some of Hoggett's participants (Hoggett, 2009c). Feminists in development organisations are navigating a way forward on behalf of disadvantaged others and themselves, whilst engaged in everyday negotiation with the structures and apparatus of power and authority.

Eyben and Turquet are aware, like the gender specialists in their book, of the ever-present problematic of maintaining some kind of integrity with feminist values in the context of multiple interpretations of that categorization. Well aware of the limited constituency represented by contributors to their book - a small sample of professional women (and one man) from the global north - the editors are explicit in acknowledging the potential for narcissism in the task of reflection. Eyben and Turquet manage the challenge by following an explicitly political as well as scholarly agenda and what Weis and Fine (2012) advocate for and claim as a critical bi-focal approach, concerned with keeping an eye on the bigger picture, whilst not obscuring the minutiae of everyday practices.

However, if one were to deconstruct the front cover of *Feminists in Development Organisations* (Eyben and Turquet, 2013) that pictures two young white women in a revolving door, one in a business suit and the other wearing a t-shirt emblazoned with 'This is what a feminist looks like', it is not clear whether the editors (or designers) are conscious of the irony, or simply unconscious of

the depiction of people 'in their own image' in Stirrat's (p.416) words. The challenging task of authentic and inclusive representation in such minutiae is perhaps emblematic of the contemporary 'white woman's burden' referred to earlier and has obvious allusions to contestations that have dogged feminist theory and practice for decades.

Likewise, discomfiting feelings of culpable guilt alongside committed solidarity are explicit in the title and content of de Jong's *Complicit Sisters* (de Jong, 2017): a study of variously 'geographically promiscuous' international and national development workers concerned with gender-based issues. As in Lewis's (2008) study, De Jong's sample of 'reflectors' (Stirrat, 2008, p.421) are all based in the global north, although concerned with serving women of the global south in different ways, through work for global institutions and INGO's or with asylum-seeking and refugee women in Europe. De Jong brings an intersectional approach to her research, combining analysis of the 'macro-structures of social divisions with the micro-level of subjective experiences' (de Jong, 2017, p.5) in order to understand the interaction and interlocking of dominant structures. Invoking the critiques of black feminists of the 1980's she brings attention to the characterizations of white feminists as saviours, progressives, innocents, and only relatively subordinated which echo and take forward in more subtle and nuanced ways both the characterizations illuminated by Stirrat (2008) and the idea of the discretionary power of Lipsky's (1980) street level bureaucrats.

By focussing on gender-specializing development workers, Cornwall and Whitehead (2007), Eyben and Turquet (2013), Kabeer (2015), Ferguson (2010),

and de Jong (2017) not only trace the lines of continuity along debates within feminism, but also appear to support an intersectional, multi-level and transdisciplinary lens through which to view and analyze the work of aid and Aidlanders: those who are, as de Jong puts it, 'at the nexus of feminist, postcolonial and development critiques' (de Jong, 2017, p.3).

Locating the local: Professionals, field workers and activists

Despite growing recognition that the white Western voice and ex-pat experience dominates the modest catalogue of aidnographies and literature on humanitarian aid and development workers, the reflections of Southern-origin development professionals are still only rarely disaggregated within this body of research. Research on 'im-patriates' (Apthorpe, 2011), who make up the vast majority of aid workers (Roth, 2015), tends to focus on field-level workers and organisational analyses, particularly in the context of Bangladesh and South Asia. This tranche of research has leaned toward a view of local staff as abstracted instruments of policy within organisations (Kaler and Watkins, 2001), rather than as agentic reflections of development professionals, but Swidler and Watkins (2017) recent longitudinal country-specific cultural sociology of the response to a multi-faceted development challenge provides insights into the heterogeneous experience of local development 'elites'. This section attempts to locate the 'locals' within the fractured literature on development workers and tease out the similarities and differences in their experiences and representations with reference to the literature.

Like Swidler and Watkins (2017), research conducted by Smith (2012), Yarrow (2011b) and Arvidson (2008) stand out as specific studies of professional-level 'local' development workers in the global South. Swidler and Watkins wide-ranging study of the response to AIDS in Malawi highlights the effect on the local NGO ecosystem of an in-rush of donor aid, a feature of Aidland that was also noted in Smith's (2012) ethnographic case studies of Nigerian AIDS-focussed NGO employees. Using the instruments of participant observation, insider knowledge of specific organisations and unspecified interviews with staff, Smith investigated perceptions of corruption and ethical practice amongst Nigerian AIDS-oriented NGOs. He described how local NGO managers are easily and often characterized in the popular discourse as the unintended 'beneficiaries' and swindlers, and how power inequalities define relations between these civil society actors, the state, international aid donors. In their examination of the affect of donor-funded development on opportunities available to local development brokers, Swidler and Watkins (2017) identified four types of elites; the cosmopolitan elites, the national elites, the regional elites and the interstitial elites, who benefitted to varying extents from the influx of aid money into Malawi. The differentiation between these groups was related to their position in the aid chain: the proximity of the cosmopolitan elites to foreign donors on the one hand or the closeness of the interstitial elites to 'villagers'¹⁰ on the other. The positions of these development actors in a hierarchy of elites was they noted, heavily calibrated by the level of education

¹⁰ Swidler and Watkins (2017) use the broad term 'villagers' to refer to the supposed and intended beneficiaries of aid, the ultimate objects of what they also refer to as the 'altruists from afar'.

they had achieved and was accompanied by corresponding levels of duties and obligations to their families and extended social networks.

Smith observed that it is not simply a question of dividing the honest from the corrupt NGOs and by extension the character of their staffs, since the terrain is messy and ambiguous. But he asserted that the NGO 'owners' in his research should 'be analyzed both empathetically and critically' (Smith, 2012, p.482) since people who run corrupt NGOs and those who work for trustworthy NGOs are not so 'completely different' (Smith, 2012, p.482) from each other. Following the pattern of ex-pat employees of INGOs who are seen to 'do well' while 'doing good' (Fechter, 2012a), Nigerian NGO founders and managers, Smith claimed, expect generous rewards for their good works; and although a pattern of 'institutional isomorphism' (Swidler, 2006) is implied, donor policy is often adapted, appropriated, subverted and resisted by the local personnel (Bornstein, 2005, Kaler and Watkins, 2001, Smith, 2003).

Smith found that in a context where there is an awareness of global inequalities and double standards and where, despite general discontent some degree of corruption is normalized, a conditional tolerance for the diversion or misappropriation of donor funds is fostered. Justification (and therefore tolerance) is dependent upon the perceived extent of redistribution or 'social use' of those funds over forms of corruption for the sake of individual gain, which inspires anger and disgust. Smith found evidence that so long as the NGO professional as was acting in the manner of a 'good patron' (Smith, 2012, p.483) congruent with an established clientelistic political economy, similar to Bangladesh, and especially with regard to the treatment of fellow workers and

sub-ordinates, the enrichment of their personal networks of colleagues, kith and kin was overlooked, even expected. Smith concluded that these local professional development workers were operating in a particularly liminal and complex social space, at 'the intersection of inequality, morality, and everyday life' (Smith, 2012, p.483).

McWha's (2011) quantitative survey of staff in aid organisations in Africa, Asia and Oceania, in which over three quarters of the sample were local workers, reiterates how the dynamics of inequality and morality can affect the emotional life and politics of everyday interactions. Where there was a perception of fair levels of pay and opportunities, McWha found that local staff valued their relationships with foreign co-workers. Conversely, when there were perceived pay injustices, the national workers felt particularly de-motivated, less competent and viewed relationships with foreign co-workers negatively. Such conditions might engender a view, from the Westerners' perspective, of the local worker as disgruntled, difficult and self-interested.

Preceding Smith, Yarrow (2008) had earlier acknowledged that widespread assumptions about the self-serving nature of relatively privileged Africans, in Aidland as elsewhere, had eclipsed exploration of the issues of motivation, personal ethics and morality and how development workers see themselves in relation to wider political and social struggles. Yarrow used a life-history interview method with Ghanaian NGO managers, programme officers and project coordinators that has commonalities with my own approach. Yarrow noted the self-identification of these development workers as 'activists', who traced the roots of their motivations back through their country's political history

and based much of their contemporary ontological positions on ideas of sacrifice for the sake of a commitment to a political ideology.

Yarrow (2011b) further explored the value of friendships and personal relationships borne out of these shared 'activist' experiences that contradict Wood's (2000) negative portrayal of cross-cutting ties and social connections as limiting and without virtue, despite the prominence given to Putnam's trust-based version of social capital in development discourse. The former Ghanaian activists turned development workers of Yarrow's study found these personal ties meaningful in, for instance, facilitating improved access to local media and government ministries where parties could be held to account; and importantly in maintaining a degree of autonomy, enabling the circumvention of publically antagonistic government positions or donor conditionalities. However, solidaristic personal relationships were not viewed by Yarrow's subjects as wholly unproblematic, especially by the younger and more marginalized workers who did not possess such rich social and cultural capital.

The value of personal relationships and the loyalties and obligations that go with them continues to be the source of debate and contestation. In the same manner as the ambiguous practices of some Nigerian NGO managers were governed by locally defined rules and conditions (Smith, 2012), Yarrow found the ideological basis of personal relationships between former activists – the abiding affects of political solidarity - governed behaviour in their present development worker roles. Yarrow argued that while formal recognition of such personal relationships is an impossibility, the existence of such relationships can positively enhance values of transparency and accountability and improve

efficiency. While Yarrow's stance that policy prescriptions should not be so tightly drawn as to exclude the acknowledgement of such relationships, in a politically fractured and contested context such as Bangladesh this proposal might be far more problematic.

Turning to the South Asian context, between 1998 and 2005 Arvidson (2008) studied how a small number of NGOs in Bangladesh and their staffs engaged with communities at the village level, and supplemented her observations and informal discussions with in-depth semi-structured interviews with other NGO staff and directors. The focus was on how the NGOs presented themselves and the dilemmas that arose in practice, producing contradictions and confusions. Arvidson (2008) and Smith (2012) employed a theoretical framework, similar to my own approach, which challenges the oppositional dyad of altruism and self-interest and emphasizes the socially embedded qualities of actors and the plurality of their orientations and obligations. Arvidson (2008, p.115) makes a point of considering 'how we view the employee and the individual', but rather uneasily for me, does not seem to consider the employee as *an* individual with a unique life experience. This may be a small point, but it seems to shore up a view of the local development actor as an abstracted human resource commodity contained within organisations, governed by a managerial balance of incentives and regulation and only with some caution, to be trusted with individual discretion and autonomy. It is only later that she acknowledges that '*a staff identity* does not constitute the whole person' (Arvidson, 2008, p.120).

Arvidson argued that ambiguous practices, including 'bossy attitudes and hierarchical thinking' should not be seen as evidence of 'deceitful minds'

(Arvidson, 2008, p.110) or malign personalities, but as expressions of the dilemmas inherent in work that is marked by a disconnect between the idealized, altruistic rhetoric of development organisations and the complex realities of work with grassroots communities. The parallels with the 'caught in the middle', 'in-between' position of my own participants and with Hoggett's regeneration workers is striking and the need for generative opportunities for reflexive practice is reiterated.

While these dilemmas are without any real solution, they can be the basis for reflection and learning that enhances capacities of individual staff as well as development organisations. However, without an environment, constituted by local as well as international actors and institutions, that allows for and encourages such a reflection, a serious engagement in our understanding of the relationship between development policy and development in practice ... cannot be achieved. (Arvidson, 2008, p.134)

Arvidson brought to attention the importance of organisational rhetoric in the formation of occupational identities even at the grassroots level and the significance of developing non-authoritarian but respectful, friendly personal qualities in the face of strongly hierarchical organisational and cultural structures and regimes of accountability that encourage or impose the opposite. Arvidson, despite reinforcing the idealism of self-less altruism, noted the changing circumstances of NGOs in Bangladesh such that:

[T]he pressure to perform according to certain formula of accountability has made them bureaucratic, leaving less room for flexibility and innovativeness, and less room for staff to practice according to an altruistic ideal and participatory ideology. (Arvidson, 2008, p.130)(p.130)

In related research, which predates the work of most of the gender-focused writers previously mentioned, Goetz (1996) studied the attitudes and experiences of low-level Bangladeshi public servants and NGO workers who were engaged in promoting women's empowerment through participation in micro-finance and small-scale income generating activities. Applying Lipsky's (1980) model of how street level bureaucrats use discretion to guide her analysis, Goetz offered a description of the position of these field-level development workers which resonates with studies of frontline humanitarian workers and Hoggett's 'fluid potentialities', in particular the identified capacity to weather uncertainties and ambiguities:

Their work is structured by top-level policy directives, which they are expected to implement in environments which policy cannot predict, amongst beneficiaries who may not fit policy descriptions, using uncertain methods with inadequate resources. Their role is essentially to manage a chaotic situation, for which they invent ad hoc coping strategies.'(Goetz, 1996, p.11)

Goetz noted how the gender mainstreaming agenda was accompanied by an upsurge in the numbers of female field workers employed, and argued that these frontline workers were:

...de facto policy-makers, because of the recursive effect of an accretion of local everyday decisions upon programme outcomes and upon the knowledge which informs policy-making. (Goetz, 1996, p.21)(p.21)

In other words, that a gradual accumulation of localized, everyday decisions influenced by socially and culturally constructed individual biases operate iteratively and recursively to affect programme outcomes and inform policy-

making, often by prioritizing performance indicators over transformative and strategic actions. The outcome of this process, Goetz observed, was the 'ghettoization' of women's work in home-based, smaller scale, low-return activities, and control of loans transferred to husbands while women retained sole responsibility for repayment. She later wrote of this asymmetric responsabilization process as a task of political 'cleaning', a washing away of moral responsibility rooted in an essentialized view of women as less corruptible than men (Goetz, 2007). Goetz (1996) found that 'street level' (or more accurately field-level) discretion in implementation was usually used in negative ways that undermine more progressive aspects of policy and reinforce existing gender-based power relations. But Goetz also identified workers who 'display a species of local heroism' (Goetz, 1996, p.10) by using their discretion positively to manage and challenge the dominant and oppressive framings of women's capabilities, roles and needs. As the reflections of the white Western feminist development workers have shown, the burden of managing programmatic pressures and their inherent dilemmas is noticeably gendered and as Goetz's evidence demonstrates, this has been the reality of working on the periphery of Aidland for some time.

Despite class differences between the educated, mostly urban-based field workers of Goetz's study and the illiterate rural beneficiaries, a gendered pattern of discretion was apparent, insofar as female field workers demonstrated a greater understanding of the obstacles faced by poor rural women and thus a greater receptivity to the equity concerns of policy. While not explicitly psychoanalytical, Goetz suggests these female field workers had a

greater sense of identification, and thus solidarity, with beneficiaries. Goetz warned however, that a distinctly gendered 'receptive capacity' to the difficulties of female beneficiaries circumstances 'to which men are less sensitive' (Goetz, 1996, p.13)(p.13) was not completely unequivocal, noting that some women field workers, whose social and professional positions were particularly precarious, were keen to distance and distinguish themselves and their own position from that of the targeted beneficiaries.

This equivocation by some women brings forth issues of intersectionality with class and to some extent age, or generational identities. Ahmad (2007) examined the situation of front line workers employed by a range local and international NGOs in Bangladesh and found most were from rural, 'middle class' families (defined by fathers' occupations as farmers, traders or in ancillary government jobs). Some women, from richer more influential families were employed by an INGO for overtly instrumental reasons to take advantage of the social and symbolic capital they possessed. Ahmad found that at this field-level of development work, local employees were to a large extent 'underpaid, undervalued and overworked' (Ahmad, 2007, p.349). Furthermore, the younger, least-educated, lower middle class female field workers were even more marginalized and liable to be exploited, being 'more obedient' (Ahmad, 2007, p.355). Understandably, not all these workers were enthusiastic about their jobs, but this employment was reported as having provided some level of independent income and raised status until the women were obliged by custom and social pressure to give up work upon marriage.

Like White (1992) and Murshid (1995/2004) before her, de Jong (de Jong, 2009, 2017) has written about the complexities faced by South Asian women in negotiating a path towards autonomy and emancipation and the compromises that have to be made. In the same vein, Bangladeshi academics Mahmud and Sultan have explored through qualitative enquiry how local health workers employed by NGOs paint a 'mixed picture of continuity and change' (Mahmud and Sultan, 2010, p.11) with regard to their own struggles for empowerment through employment in rural Bangladesh. Mahmud and Sultan reported that despite certain enduring curtailments on their freedoms, these female NGO workers have leveraged the advantages of increased confidence, self-esteem, and social status acquired through their work. One of the more specific achievements cited was overcoming their feelings of intimidation and inadequacy in the presence of foreign aid workers. Importantly, these gains have been transferred into the private/domestic realm outside of their working lives, demonstrating the unintended but beneficial consequences of womens employment in NGOs beyond the often short-term project-focused confines of Aidland.

Nazneen and Sultan (2012), building on research by Goetz (2001), Kabeer (2002) and Hossain and Welchman (2005) on the politics of development and social movements in Bangladesh, have explored the effects of donor funding on the feminist movement in the country. In particular, Nazneen and Sultan examined how the NGO-isation of womens organisations, which has occurred over a relatively long period, has fuelled a generational rupture and impasse amongst feminist activists. The authors noted different approaches between

older feminists whose activism grew with anti-colonial struggles at the vanguard of the movement in the 1970s, and the younger, professionalised urban middle class activists who have grown up with the gender mainstreaming agenda.¹¹ Nazneen and Sultan drew attention to the contentiousness of issues such as the monetization of activists labour; time constraints on volunteers and new or different technological forms of activism which have affected older and younger and middle class and working class womens involvement in feminist actions in different ways. The older feminists, according to Nazneen and Sultan, tended to focus on consciousness-raising and street agitation while the younger generation viewed gender equality activism as normalized within the development discourse and in NGO-led programmes. Given the limited purview of Northern feminist aid workers (Eyben and Turquet, 2013) and the tenuousness of the connection between policy rhetoric and organisational reality referred to above (Arvidson, 2008), the lived experience of 'mainstreaming gender' for Bangladeshi women in development organisations deserves further investigation.

Conscious of the compromises that NGO-isation has wrought, in terms of policy emphasis (apolitical service delivery over advocacy for systemic changes) and accountability (vertical to management teams rather than horizontal to members), Nazneen and Sultan found some long-standing feminist organisations had made strenuous efforts to distinguish themselves from the label 'NGO'. Despite identifying as membership and social-movement-based

¹¹ Underlining the generational differences, the older feminist activists, Nazneen and Sultan noted, were often referred to by younger women as the *Khalamma* (or Aunty) Brigade.

organisations, almost all the feminist-oriented development associations they studied *had* registered as NGOs and taken donor funding, albeit under internally-defined conditions to maintain some level of autonomy and independence. Equally, despite enduring differences in approach across class and generations within the Bangladeshi womens movement the commitment of older activists to bringing feminist research and a more political analysis into the mainstream development discourse is matched by the commitment of younger feminists to take action within the realm of Aidland, and beyond.

This section has attempted to locate the 'local' development worker in the literature of Aidland. There are demonstrable similarities in the experiences of ex-pat and im-pat aid and development workers insofar as both groups engage in ambiguous practices and are driven by a mixture of motivations. Both groups are exposed to the paradoxes and challenged by the dilemmas presented by a neo-liberal consensus in the operation and delivery of development aid. The literature shows this is especially true of feminists and female gender specialists working in Aidland. While much of the discourse of development is concerned with the negotiation of pathways towards womens political, economic and social empowerment, local female development workers, like their ex-pat counterparts are by no means immune to the forces that influence or disrupt their progress towards achieving these goals.

At the same time, research has shown there are significant differences in the experiences of local and foreign workers, not least in the remuneration and conditions of employment on offer, and in the representations of their experience. Of Stirrat's (2008) rather simplified characterizations, the local

development worker, whether at professional or grass-roots level, has had to fight off the 'mercenary' label (Smith, 2012) perhaps to a greater extent than most international workers. The local workers have not been attributed with a 'misfit' identity in the same way as ex-pats, suggesting post-materialist values or a sense agency in wanting to escape hegemonic societal conditions, but have been acknowledged more explicitly as politically contextualized actors (Yarrow, 2008, Yarrow, 2011b). Nor have they been widely painted, or self-drawn as deeply committed, altruistic 'missionaries' as Stirrat reported. Instead, the locals have at best tended to be presented as the stoic, compromised, at times politically emasculated foot-soldiers of development; as instruments of policy operating within organisations, mere cogs in the development machine rather than as agentic authors of their own self-identities negotiating progressive change under difficult circumstances in their homelands.

This evaluation chimes with Bhabha's argument that colonized people are produced as historical objects, and denied their 'ability to perform themselves as subjects' (Dar, 2014, p.134). In reviewing this canon of literature, I would argue that locally-employed 'national' development workers have been relegated more often than not, to bit-part players and incidental characters in the white Western imaginary of Aidland. They are more likely to be characterized as liminal beneficiaries than altruistic change-makers; sometimes recalcitrant, unruly, contradictory, compromised and not above suspicion.

Of all the heterogeneous varieties of Aidland's personnel, the local, im-patriate female development worker whether field-level or professional-level occupies perhaps the most liminal position of all. They are at the very sharpest end of

the dilemmas, contradictions and paradoxes of development; simultaneously occupied in working for the emancipation of others and themselves, located at the intersections of class, ethnic, gender and generational identities; negotiating cultural and epistemological differences not only with regard to relations with their organisations, colleagues and beneficiaries in the professional sphere (and in some cases with fellow activists) but also in the realm of their community, domestic and private lives.

Development and social activism: a world within and beyond Aidland

In acknowledgement of the fluid boundaries of what can be called 'development work' and in recognition of the ways in which different professional or activist identities can exist simultaneously in different realms, or sequentially over the life-course, I set out to study a stratum of society who occupy an apparently metaxic and therefore dilemmatic position within the discourses of development. My research participants are all English-speaking, and by this proxy measure relatively well-resourced people who work *for* or *with* development-focused NGOs in Bangladesh. I am referring to them as 'development workers' although conceptualizing them as active and progressive change-makers. With this in mind, my purposive snowballing recruitment strategy produced a small minority of participants (5 of 24 or 20%) who are not directly employed by NGOs or funded by ODA and might therefore be categorized as social entrepreneurs or social activists. As such, it is worth briefly considering how this kind of activism has been theorized and reflecting on their relationship to mainstream development work in order to make the dynamics that affect this heterogeneous group apparent.

Addressing the experience of those who are active on what I identify as the margins of Aidland, Gellner (2010) and Lewis (2008, 2010) have explored the variety of experience encompassed by the term 'activism', including actions within and outside formal institutions. They acknowledge the border-crossings between different spheres, particularly between employment in the third sector of NGOs and the state or public sector. Silke Roth (2016) has elaborated on this association between development work and activism further by discussing various forms and areas of activism, enumerating several different types: digital, bureaucratic, occupational, academic, lifestyle/consumer activism; and realms: employment, insider/outsider and institutional activism.

The nature of some of these categorizations is self-evident, such as digital activism referring to online campaigning and engagement, but Roth offers a particularly nuanced understanding of the different forms and realms of activism, acknowledging the capacity these classifications have to overlap and/or apply sequentially to engagements undertaken over the life-course.

'Bureaucratic activism' Roth states, is closely linked to processes of 'NGO-isation', which is itself often characterized by a focus on organisational sustainability and professionalisation, and brings activism inside the 'institutional' realm of activity. As well as offering limited scope for action by employees and volunteers this model for affecting social change is open to accusations of de-politicisation, and co-option by competitive market forces operating within the development industry in the clamour to provide value for money.

'Occupational activism' is a form of activism also closely associated with the realm of employment and together with 'bureaucratic activism' is perhaps the most relevant categorization to apply to the development workers employed by NGOs in this study. Cortese (2015) refers to 'occupational activists' not only as those who perceive their work-lives as 'activism' such as teachers, but includes those who participate in or are occupied to a greater or lesser extent in the activities of social movements. 'Occupational activism' may also encompass 'academic activism' and lead for instance to the identity of 'scholar activist', performing the key function of knowledge generation.

'Consumer and lifestyle' activism not only refers to the tangible product choices that are made as consumers, but can, as Roth infers, refer to intimate and interpersonal relations and behaviours taking place within the private, domestic realm of people's lives. This latter understanding of lifestyle activism points to the borderlessness of activism and action for social change. Cortese also begins to recognise the connections between form, realm and identity, of both 'doing' activism and 'being' an activist, which might also apply to the ontology of the 'development worker'. In this sense 'occupational activism' can refer to activism that 'occupies' or inhabits the individual across all spheres of their lives; has impacts on lifestyle, consumer, personal and professional choices, which may or may not contribute to the congruence between individual values and social and professional actions that sustain 'activism' or 'development' more generally.

Roth (2016) has also drawn attention to the emphasis that has been put on leadership and the associated focus in the literature on social movements on

the identification of 'key figures' (or functions). Roth isolates 'brokers', 'consultants', 'founders', 'knowledge producers' and 'femocrats' among others, as examples of these representative roles or functions. Her detailed descriptions of these archetypes imply relatively powerful positions in institutions, businesses, organisations and political contexts and do not fit well with the far more precarious and disempowered positions of the participants in this study who are constrained within the realm of institutions and NGOs and by the limitations of the 'bureaucratic' form of activism. Nonetheless, it can be perceived that the development workers and social activists in my study undertake similar roles and responsibilities within their employment and in 'outside' activities. As project officers and managers they mediate and 'broker' relationships within and between organisational levels; as researchers and monitoring officers they are tasked with generating and disseminating knowledge, sometimes developing specialist knowledge that may serve them in consultancy roles. As gender-equality advocates they operate as nascent 'femocrats' within organisations, and three of the five participants not directly employed by NGOs were founders of socially responsible organisations or social enterprises.

As these authors acknowledge, while theoretical categorizations are useful for understanding the variety of experiences of social activists and the shifting and dynamic contexts in which they operate, in practice, NGO workers, humanitarians and development workers, field workers and social entrepreneurs and activists - like the participants in my study - are engaged in all manner of 'border-crossings' between forms of activity, spheres of activity,

functional roles and professional identities. As such, my sample embody a segment of change-makers that are very much 'in the middle', 'in-between' and at times 'of both' when it comes to categorizing the forms, functions and realms that constitute their activism and development work.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter, I laid out the original psychosocial impetus for this study and considered the parallels between development work in the global North and in the global South that provided the initial rationale for my research.

The three-sector model and its associated theoretical modes of governance have become the hegemony of development discourse, but it is apparent that the ideological adoption of neo-liberal modes of operation through regimes of New Public Management collides with the 'messy' reality of development practice (Lewis, 2013), and disrupts this reified conceptual framing of civil society and its relations with state and private sectors. I have acknowledged calls for alternative post-development approaches, and suggested these are more congruent with a social relations approach, connecting this to considerations of an ethic of care.

Recognizing the industrial scale through which contemporary development aid is delivered and policy implemented, I have presented a model of 'Aidland' and mapped its workers in relation to their proximity to the centre or periphery of what I consider to be a Bourdieusian field of power. In doing so, I am cognisant of the different porosities and temporal vagaries of identity positions and the border crossings that may occur within and beyond Aidland. The manner in

which the personnel of Aidland, and its bordering realm of social activism, have been theorized and represented has been discussed, and the literature has been reviewed to demonstrate the range of physical, emotional and psychological risks, as well as the dilemmas, contradictions and paradoxes these populations confront.

Conceptually, I am situating my research, following de Jong at the 'nexus of feminist, postcolonial and development critiques' (de Jong, 2017, p.3) in order to answer to the primary research question of how these relatively well-resourced individuals who are engaged in development work in Bangladesh negotiate the complex and often conflicting demands and dilemmas that arise from their activities. My supplementary research questions relate to the kinds of personal, emotional, biographical and social resources participants draw upon for support in these circumstances and the possible implications for theory, policy and practice.

The work of interpretation and analysis will be discussed in more detail in the following methodological chapter, but like Smith, (Smith, 2012, p.483) I shall be exploring participants experience at 'the intersection of inequality, morality, and everyday life' and thus issues of representation justify an empathetic listening as well as critical analysis. Within the scope of this study, lies the potential to understand why participants choose to pursue development work; how dilemmas, contradictions and paradoxes are framed and experienced, paying particular attention to gendered aspects of experience; and how their professional lives are affected by hegemonic neoliberal and neo-colonial modes of governance and operation.

The task of this thesis is to provide insights into the existence and extent of the 'fluid potentialities' of the sample and examine their capacities to negotiate pathways through the psychosocial challenges inherent in the processes of development. More broadly, the research will be alert to the notions of structures of feeling, abiding affects and emotional habitus and the affects these political emotions may have on processes of social change and development associated with Aidland. The foregoing literature and conceptual review serves as an effective point of departure from which to launch this psychosocial study of Bangladeshi development workers and the following chapter sets out my methodological stance and research process.

Chapter 4: Methodological theory and practice

Introduction

This chapter is in two main parts: the first section considers the conceptual issues associated with psychosocial and narrative approaches to methodology, including a discussion of the conceptual debates and issues involved. As indicated in the previous chapter, I am using the term 'psychosocial' to signify an approach to understanding human action with the explicit acknowledgement of the relationship between our 'interior' and 'exterior' worlds (Clarke and Hoggett, 2009), each of which is taken to influence and constitute the other. I will show how life-history methods of data gathering and narrative analysis complement this approach and have been used in similar work, justifying their use within this study. This section will include consideration of the concept and importance of reflexivity within the research process and explain the model I have chosen to aid my own reflexivity. An examination of how my own subjective position and my (perceived) positioning by participants affected the interviews and research process is provided in appendix 8, which contains reflections on my experience of conducting the study.

The second section of the chapter is a more descriptive account of how the study was carried out, the issues that arose and details of the pattern of recruitment and interview process. It includes specific information about participants' attributes in terms of age and gender, education, occupation and organisational affiliations. I also detail and discuss the processes of transcription and data analysis.

The overall aim of this chapter is to explain the rationale behind conscious decisions taken in the study and provide details of my methodological approach as well as reporting what actually happened during the conduct of the research.

Methodology in theory

A psychosocial and narrative approach to methodology

This section of the chapter sets out the theoretical understandings that underpin my psychosocial approach, before addressing some of the debates that have taken place within the still-evolving field of psychosocial studies. Connections will be made between psychosocial and narrative approaches that demonstrate how both fields represent evolving and overlapping approaches to inquiry, each with their own 'dialects' rather than prescriptive or entirely separate sets of methods. Different modes of narrative analysis will be considered, followed by an explanation of a relevant psychosocial approach to data gathering through interviews and different modes of analysis. The final section will briefly examine the concept of reflexivity and lay out the strategy that I followed.

Theoretical basis of the psychosocial approach employed in this study

As explained at the beginning of chapter 3 this study was inspired by my involvement in an innovative research project conducted between 2003-2005 with a cohort of British community development and urban regeneration workers (Hoggett, 2009c), when academic psychosocial studies were still at an embryonic stage within the social sciences.

Employing life-history and event-centred interviews, Hoggett et al were able to glean insights into the personal and professional identities of UK regeneration workers, their emotional investments, and the kinds of dilemmas they experienced. It paid attention to both the discursive content and the imagery invoked by participants and located these elements within personal, professional and social-historical contexts. In this way Hoggett et al were able to develop understandings of the 'structures of feeling' in operation, and the subjective positions, psychological resources and coping strategies available to these community or 'street-level' bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1980).

My framing of a psychosocial approach follows this trajectory as a psychoanalytically-informed sociological inquiry (Clarke, 2006), oriented towards the politics of emotions, with a threefold methodological basis which has been articulated by Clarke and Hoggett (2009). To begin with, this approach holds that structural explanations are able to illustrate how, but not why particular social phenomena occur. Stirrat (2008), for example, struggled to fully explain why development consultants were both deeply cynical and highly committed to their work. Secondly, by recognising the role the unconscious mind plays in constructing social reality, psychoanalysis is able to address this deficiency insofar as feelings and emotions, prompted by our unconscious, are able to shape our perceptions and motivations, contributing to the ways in which we act and perceive others and the world around us. Importantly, psychosocial studies also recognise the role the researchers own unconscious mind plays in shaping the research encounter and the way in which realities are interpreted. Lastly, by consciously integrating social, cultural, and historical

factors into our analyses insights into unconscious processes, motivations and defences may be gleaned. In the case of Stirrat's research, and one can only speculate at this remove, perhaps it was an unconscious fear of failure in the face of somewhat intangible goals and the consequent prospect of a loss of a sense of professional or self-identity that produced a defensive expression of cynicism and contributed to the performance of the archetypal mercenary identity.

In taking this psychoanalytically informed approach to sociology, psychosocial scholars have challenged the artificial separation of emotion from cognition as discrete drivers of social action and resist any recourse to a simplified structure/agency dyad. The psychosocial conception of the human subject, inferred by this approach, is one in which our psychological processes in relation with the sum of our life experiences impinge upon our motivations, values and social actions; and that external actions or circumstances inseparably shape our subjective emotional and psychological responses in a continuous and dialogically evolving process. The image of a Mobius strip symbolizes this inseparability of inner psychological mechanisms from sociological and external processes in a perpetual loop of interaction (Clarke and Hoggett, 2009), but it is not an image that satisfies all scholars involved in psychosocial studies.

Debates within psychosocial studies

Psychosocial studies, has been described as an emergent perspective, neither quite a discipline nor discrete field of study, but an approach that is distinguished by an attitude towards, or position taken, *in relation* to the subject

of study (Clarke and Hoggett, 2009, Clarke et al., 2008). It can be considered as associated with the relational turn, which itself can be traced to developments in feminist and postcolonial cultural studies from the early 1970s onwards, and the questioning of positivist assumptions about the validity of knowledge production and theoretically contradictory assumptions of the extent to which the subject, can be 'known' or remains un-knowable. Within this broader post-structuralist movement, the epistemological roots and validity of psychosocial studies are diverse and sometimes contentious (Frosh, 2003, Frosh, 2014). Debates have taken place that were concerned with the nature of the unconscious and the differing theoretical schools of psychoanalysis that are employed.

In 2000, Wendy Hollway and Tony Jefferson made an influential contribution to nascent psychosocial methodologies by publishing *Doing qualitative research differently* (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000), which assisted in marshalling the use of psychoanalysis in social science research and informed Hoggett's later work (Hoggett, 2009c). Hollway and Jefferson (2000) specifically posited the idea of a psychoanalytically-interpreted 'defended subject' whose unconscious attempts to ward off anxiety lead to particular subject positions being adopted in relation to particular discourses. Frosh and Baraitser (2008) later identified that while sociologists are critical of what they see as the top-down epistemology and objectifying interpretative practice of psychoanalysis and sharply ed focus, social and discursive psychologists, it was said, claim that the 'unconscious' is constituted both externally and internally and therefore can be identified by critical realists as a 'psychic reality' (Frosh & Baraitser 2008).

The debate over the nature of the unconscious, the manner in which it might be perceived and the separation or integration of psycho- and social- theoretical formulations led to disagreement over the semiotic employment of the hyphenated 'psycho-social' as opposed to the unhyphenated 'psychosocial' which has now become the norm and was adopted by the British Association for Psychosocial Studies (Association for Psychosocial Studies, 2018) upon its formation in 2013. Frosh and Baraitser went on to discuss the kinds of psychoanalysis that can be useful to the research, rather than the clinical, encounter. They accused accounts such as those of Hollway and Jefferson, which draw upon a Kleinian 'infant-centred' interpretive strategy as 'pious' and 'predictable'. Frosh and Baraitser seemed to endorse a Lacanian view of psychoanalytic interpretation as *interruption*, as a means of 'opening up the text' to 'produce a new motion' rather than seeking a more cohesive, therapeutic resolution than that which Hollway et al are said to have pursued. Frosh (Frosh, 2003, Frosh and Baraitser, 2008, Frosh, 2014) claimed that in some readings of the psychosocial the 'inner' and 'outer' are artificially separated and, following Parker's interruptive perspective proposed the idea that the 'unconscious' is only brought into being, produced, in the intersubjective space between the analyst and analysand, or by implication, between the psychosocial researcher and the researched.

Hoggett, (2008) suggests that while a 'shared psychic reality' can be expressed in a more integrative approach, the temptation to blur and dissolve the affective/discursive boundaries of the 'unconscious' should be resisted. Drawing on Bion (1970) he insists that our first and foremost communication is affective:

that, as in the infant stage, we are (and in the research encounters can also be) pre-discursive. Hoggett's stance is that as human beings we are the 'site of sensuous experiences' (Hoggett, 2008, p.381), and that there exists a separate 'inner world' that should not be confused with the relational qualities of a 'psychic reality'. This inner world is 'governed by its own rules of structure formation...part of what we call our psycho-logic' (Hoggett, 2008, p.383). Psychoanalysis in the Kleinian tradition, Hoggett claims, has contributed to our understanding of these governing rules by identifying mechanisms such as splitting, projection and identification. Viewing the psychosocial as a political sociology of the emotions Hoggett argued for the preservation of the hyphen as a reminder to respect the differences between inner and outer, private and public, which cannot be dissolved. Alluding to the conceptual territory of Winnicott (1991) and Benjamin (Benjamin, 2004), the hyphen, Hoggett contended, can signify a transitional space of overlap and interpenetration, a link that both joins and separates, creating a third entity.

Neither psycho, nor social, the hyphen connotes what is "other than" both, that is, what is different from either of the two milieus that generate it. (Hoggett, 2008) (p.384)

According to Hoggett, this 'meeting and mating' of two equal but separate partners, utilizing the psycho- and social- rules of formation, enables the elaboration of 'structures of feeling' (Williams, 1977) 'abiding affects' (Jasper, 1998) and 'emotional habitus' (Gould, 2009). While Hoggett seems to have been unsuccessful in preserving the hyphen, the particular version of psychosocial studies he espoused is one among many still emerging 'dialects' of psychosocial studies (Association for Psychosocial Studies, 2018).

Connecting psychosocial and narrative approaches

Psychosocial studies, like narrative research, owes much to feminist theorizations of subjectivity and intersubjectivity; both perspectives have emerged from similarly diverse antecedents including literary studies, history, politics, anthropology, sociology, and discourse psychology and hence enjoy a breath of applicability. Narrative research, like psychosocial studies, attracts the attention of scholars from a wide range of disciplines, operates at multiple levels and draws upon a richness of theoretical understandings and source material (Andrews et al., 2013). It is a field 'characterized by extreme diversity and complexity' and 'there is no single way to do narrative research' (Riessman, 2013, p.259, Riessman, 2008).

Reflecting the growing ubiquity of 'narrative' in social research (Andrews et al., 2013), much of the existing academic literature on development professionals, has adopted a narrative form using auto-ethnography, life-history and experiential accounts (Lewis, 2008, Yarrow, 2011a, Eyben, 2012). Life history narratives have been used to glean insights into the experience of development workers by examining both the minutiae of their lives and their location in larger discourses (Yarrow, 2008, Fechter and Hindman, 2011, Lewis, 2008). Lewis, in particular has articulated the value of the life-history method for social policy research in his study of NGO workers, and Hoggett et al's original enquiries with UK regeneration workers employed a both a life-history and event centred narrative methodology. In the same vein, Murray and Zeigler's (2015) research on UK-based community health workers parallels my own rationale for studying the everyday lives of Bangladeshi development workers using a psychosocial

narrative methodological approach. With reference to this group of workers, and alluding to broader discursive forms, Murray and Zeigler wrote that:

... their views have largely been ignored. In some ways, they are portrayed as ciphers of larger schemes with little sense of agency. A narrative approach opens up an opportunity to grasp their perspective and how they deal with contradictions in their everyday practice. (Murray and Ziegler, 2015)

By providing 'bottom up' accounts, life history narratives, also referred to as biographical or personal narratives, have been characterized by their potential to reveal hidden aspects of social, economic and political conditions (Dyck, 2005). In addition, a psychological exploration of individuals' narratives, and groups of narratives, can provide a gateway to comprehending how people frame and understand their social, subjective and self identities and the affective challenges they face.

Feminist narrative work has made explicit the connections between individual narratives and collective narratives; society, self and other; and the particular and the universal. Olivia Guaraldo (2013), among others (Fine, 2012, Riessman, 2008, Kapoor, 2017), has drawn our attention to the relationship between feminism and the narrative form, which, as Kapoor states 'has the power to circumvent the demands of objectivity in functionalist research paradigms' (Kapoor, 2017, p.58). In this way, Guaraldo claims, narratives are able to contribute to the emergence of 'new political subjects and their awareness' as well as 'renewed notions of subjectivity, embodied self and the relations between self and other' (Guaraldo, 2013, p.63).

Alerting us to some political pitfalls Goodson (2017), in a detailed consideration of narrative and life-history research warns of the possible misuse of narratives, especially those 'devoid of historical context' and argues, following Stenhouse (1975), for 'a story of action within a theory of context' in which the 'development of contextual understandings is vital' (Goodson, 2017, p.4). Taking an approach that is attuned to historical context and social location, Goodson (2017) asserts that understandings of the agency of people or groups of people can be produced through the life histories of the agents themselves. He asserts that the production of a contextualized understanding of human agency is both an intellectual and political exercise, particularly where narrative studies expose ruptures between dominant narratives and objective social reality. Goodson gives the example of the ability of the (dominant) narrative of state over-spending as precursor to the financial crash of 2007/8 to obscure the (objective) reality of the banks risk-taking behaviour as root cause. In the same way, the testimonies of Aid workers, humanitarians and aidographies have played a part in puncturing the previously dominant narrative of aid workers as saintly, self-sacrificing altruists.

Both narrative research and psychosocial studies are characterized by a shared appreciation of how complexity can be apprehended through transdisciplinary means. Both approaches consist of families of varied and sometimes internally conflicting iterations (Riessman, 2008) or 'dialects' (Association for Psychosocial Studies, 2018). Thus narrative research and psychosocial studies represent evolving and overlapping approaches to inquiry rather than prescriptive or entirely separate sets of methods. For the researcher, this

presents an array of opportunities and challenges in seeking theoretical clarity and crafting the research design and methodological implementation.

Narrative analyses

Phoenix (2013) describes a psychosocial version of narrative analysis that is capable of addressing and generating understandings of how values and identities are formed and enacted in a contextualized environment. This approach emerged from what has been characterized as a second wave of narrative analysis (Georgakopoulou, 2006) which began to understand narratives as socially and culturally situated stories of experience (Squire, 2013) rather than the 'construction of an objective event sequence' (Labov, 1982, p.232). Labovian analyses of narratives became paradigmatic and deconstructed the constituent parts of story texts into functional elements: the abstract; orientation; complicating action; result; evaluation and coda (Labov, 1972, Labov, 1967). A focus on the signifying features of text and search for cohesiveness led to a stripping down of transcripts to core narratives (Patterson, 2013) and problematically indistinct categorizations (Squire, 2013). This early model of narrative analysis allows for specific narrative structures to be revealed and compared, but relies on the linguistic form and tends not only towards the 'tyranny of the transcript' but also isolates the story from its surroundings and foundations. In this isolation, little allowance is made for the constructed and partial nature of the storytelling; it's intersubjective nature and the reflective agency of the narrator. My own treatment of interview transcripts and my attempts to resist the reification of language as text is detailed in the

latter part of this chapter, which deals with the practicalities of the research process.

Taking another approach that explores the cultural and social structuring of personal narratives, and applying it to the narratives of people with HIV in South Africa, Squire (2013) recognised that culturally specific genres and canonical stories may be employed to provide explanatory power and bring meaning to accounts of experience. The political power of personal narratives may operate as 'bids for representation and power of from the disenfranchised' narrators' (Squire, 2013, p.62).

The development of narrative analyses produced a debate, now largely resolved, over the relative attention paid to 'small' and 'big' stories (Andrews et al., 2013, Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008, Georgakopoulou, 2006). 'Small story' advocates tend to pay attention to the everyday micro-linguistic, including paralinguistic, features of social structure that occurs within conversational and 'natural' interaction. This terrain of singular events or situations, whether imagined, real or anticipated, provides fertile ground for discourse and conversational analysis. 'Big' stories attend to wider interpretive frameworks and their analysis in the experience-centered approach is concerned with the 'sequencing and progression of themes within interviews, their transformation and resolution' (Squire, 2013, p.57). Giving examples from research on mixed-race children and their parents, Phoenix (2013) identified 'small' stories as accounts of particular incidents and anecdotes which may constitute 'big' stories about identity, values and the roots of motivations. These narratives are located, produced and read in the context of both the immediacy of the

interview and wider societal concerns and can reveal claims to authorial power as Phoenix has demonstrated. In considering such contextualized narratives, Phoenix (2013) notes how an increasing number of narrative analysts attend simultaneously to 'small' and 'big' stories, recognising the value of interweaving both approaches.

The elements of human experience and interaction that Phoenix described are particularly relevant to my own research and congruent with the perspectives of critical bi-focality (Weis and Fine, 2012). I will be looking at the small stories and collections of small stories that together build into themes, which relate to bigger stories and narratives. Combined with a psychoanalytic lens on subjectivity this approach can help to reveal intimate psychological processes and larger social, political or cultural 'structures of feeling' in operation at a broader level.

Psychosocial narrative methods of data gathering and analysis

First-person spoken stories have consistently been a large part of narrative studies and researchers have set about gathering spoken data in different ways (Riessman, 2013). Kvale has argued that qualitative researchers 'need not re-invent the wheel' (Kvale, 2003, p.31) but can learn much from classic psychological interview practices and modes of analysis carried out across research, clinical and commercial settings.

Two contemporary techniques identified as specifically psychosocial and narrative are the free associative narrative interview method (FANI) as developed by Hollway and Jefferson (2000); and the biographical narrative interpretive method (BNIM) articulated by Wengraf (2006). Hollway and

Jefferson propose a process relying on four principles, some of which are by no means exclusive to this qualitative approach. Firstly, the use of open-ended questions invites the interviewee to range freely, taking the subject matter in the direction they wish. Hollway emphasizes the importance of free-association in interviews claiming that it allows for the narrator's whole story or more than the sum of the parts, to emerge. Secondly, Hollway recommends the explicit eliciting of stories with questions such as 'Can you tell me about a time when...?' to help connect accounts to real events, requiring selection and prioritization on the part of the interviewee which can be revealing. Thirdly, Hollway advises the avoidance of 'why?' questions, which 'tend to invite an intellectualizing response rather than one connected to their real lives and experiences' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000, p.32)(p.32). Finally, they recommend using the interviewee's own phraseology in follow-up questions as a way to retain and respect the meaning-making and frames of reference of the respondent. FANI and BNIM share much in common in terms of interview techniques, and as guiding principles have much to offer the psychosocial researcher, but they differ markedly in modes of analysis.

BNIM lays a great emphasis upon a highly structured, methodical and fine-grained process of interpretation by a panel concerned with sifting elements of the 'told story' from the 'lived life'. This differs from Hollway's recourse to supervisory group analyses of the data and explorations of the written reflections of the researcher (Hollway and Jefferson, 2012) following encounters - interviews and/or observations - with research subjects (Elliott et al., 2012). A further contribution to the analysis of psychosocial data has been made by

Hoggett et al, (Hoggett et al., 2010) who advocate a dialogical approach feeding back initial findings to participants that is in some ways more democratic, although not without ethical concerns over how sensitive or unfavorable data might be presented. The very different emphases of these methods stem in part from the disciplinary approaches of, respectively, history, psychology and social policy of their authors and particularly in the case of Hoggett's dialogical approach are an attempt to answer the critiques of a top-down objectifying psychoanalytic approach. However, these techniques of analysis that involve panels and teams of researchers who delve deep beyond the surface content present practical and epistemological challenges for the lone researcher (Hollway and Jefferson, 2012) and provide a justification for turning to narrative and thematic analyses informed by, but not entirely reliant on, psychoanalytic concepts together with a systematic approach to reflexivity.

Reflexivity

Before moving on to a description of the practicalities of the research process and details of the sample this section considers the concept of reflexivity and provides a detailed account of my own systematic approach to reflexive practice.

Kvale (2003) and Hoggett (2009c) point out that the quality of knowledge generated in psychosocial studies depends to a large degree upon the craft of the reflexive interviewer, but in a contemporary review of the literature on reflexivity, D'Cruz et al (2007) found a 'lack of clarity about the concept in terms

of who is being exhorted to be 'reflexive', when and how' (D'Cruz et al., 2007, p.73).

Shades of reflexivity

D'Cruz considered reflexivity in the context of social work and education and noted how 'reflexivity' and 'critical reflection' are often used interchangeably. D'Cruz identified a version of reflexivity that draws on Giddens (1990) and Beck (1992) and is viewed as 'the ability to act in the world and to critically reflect on our actions and in ways that may reconstitute how we act and even reshape the very nature of identity itself' (Ferguson, 2003, p.199). Elliot (2001) reiterates this notion of reflexivity as '*a self-defining process* (emphasis added) that depends on monitoring of and reflection upon, psychological and social information about possible trajectories of life' (Elliott, 2001, p.37). This conceptualization reflexivity may have parallels with how reflexivity is perceived and practiced by development workers who are involved in transformational work at the individual, household and community levels and relates to one of the key capacities identified by Hoggett (2009c). A version of reflexivity that perhaps has a greater significance for the practicing researcher is characterized by a critical approach to how knowledge is generated. Brown (2006) in particular recognised that 'psychosocial forms of reflexivity require sociological and psycho-logical analysis' (Brown, 2006, p.193).

Reflexivity for the researcher, operates in multiple ways (Etherington, 2004): being aware 'in the moment', (Sheppard, 2000, p.46) as well as continuously over time and at both concrete and abstract levels, of what is influencing our internal responses and external actions in relation to our participants, our data

and our topic. These influences shape our engagement with theoretical, institutional, cultural and personal constructs, affect our progress, and can colour our representations of the data (Etherington, 2004). Being attuned to these influences means being able to recognise the sometimes uncomfortable taken-for granted as well the more obvious forces at work. Being able to adopt an 'evenly-hovering' attention between listening and observing: being attuned to affect, emotion and bodily presence in the encounter as well as linguistic content, is identified by Kvale (2003) as a key skill. Hollway and Jefferson (2000), invite researchers to adopt the role of 'invisible catalyst' in the interview and Frosh and Baraitser (2008) endorse a kind of reflexivity that 'keeps an honest gaze' (Frosh and Baraitser, 2008, p.359) on what the researcher brings to the research.

This version of reflexivity as a vigilant, self-implicating and painstaking ethical practice attuned to power relations (Kapoor, 2004, p.644) can support us as we attempt to address the imbalances of power operating within our research. Kapoor contends that while Spivak challenges us to engage in reflexivity in intimate and dialogical ways, especially when narrativising the 'Third World other', she does not offer practical or institutionally compatible ways of how might we do this beyond a mode of face-to-face 'ethical encounter' with the subaltern. Accordingly, Kapoor asserts, not attending to issues of do-ability gives [Spivak's] work a romantic, utopian dimension' (Kapoor, 2004, p.643). So how might the researcher practically demonstrate reflexivity?

Being transparent in documenting and taking account of our responses and actions is an ethical imperative for the reflexive researcher. It invites audiences

to make their own judgments on the validity and rigour of our findings (Etherington, 2004) and on the level of our practice of reflexivity within the research (Finlay, 2002). In social research and in contemporary higher education processes, much is made of the use of reflective journals as a method of bringing to light our assumptions, belief systems, and goals (Russell and Kelly, 2002) and how these shift over time. Michelle Ortlipp (2008) found the literature was sparse on the purposeful practice of using journals as an integral part of the research process. She explored the notion of transparency as always partial and imperfect, but demonstrated how keeping a reflective journal both before and during a doctoral project can have concrete effects on research design and steer the theoretical approach. Although recognising the utility of self-reflection as a way of considering disparities of power in the generation of knowledge, Ortlipp was conducting research interviews with ex-colleagues and peers within a specific professional and epistemological setting familiar to her and her participants. In this regard she understands the importance of recording how her thoughts, feelings, fears, and desires impact on her interview practice noting how these elements 'are not visible in the data or the transcriptions' (Ortlipp, 2008, p.703). She suggests that 'the process of reflection helps to bring the unconscious into consciousness and thus open for inspection' (Ortlipp, 2008, p.703)(p.703), echoing Frosh's understanding of the unconscious as only brought to light through dialogue.

Working the hyphens, a practical strategy for reflexivity

Michelle Fine (1994) posited the notion of 'working the hyphens' between self-Other (or researcher-respondent) as an intellectual and political exercise enabling exploration of the multiplicity and fluidity of our social relations, identity

positions and subjectivities. This use of the hyphen to represent continuums is rather different from the symbolic notion of a third entity advocated by Hoggett (Hoggett, 2008). Fine (1994) argues that recognising, and 'working the hyphens' as spaces of both identity convergence and divergence, means exploring how our presence influences others, and how their presence influences and changes us. It means self consciously 'unpacking notions of scientific neutrality, universal truths, and researcher dispassion' (Fine, 1994) (p.71). While Fine's ideas have influenced gender studies, feminist psychology and sociological research, Cunliffe and Karunanayake (2013), synthesize the idea of this workable hyphen with the concerns of cultural anthropologists, critical feminists, and postcolonial scholars and apply it to empirical ethnographic research. Using Geetha Karunanayake's experience of studying the lives of tea plantation workers in Sri Lanka, the country of her birth, these authors offer the notion of 'hyphen spaces' as 'a way of emphasizing not the boundaries, but the spaces of possibility' and demonstrate how working the 'hyphen spaces' is a practical and useful way to help map the dynamic tensions and connections in research relationships and their impact on research identities, design and practice (Cunliffe and Karunanayake, 2013, p.365).

Karunanayake's position was one Spivak might describe as 'native informant', however, Cunliffe and Karunanayake elaborate a more nuanced set of researcher-researched relationship variables that broadly cover location, values, subjectivities, emotionality and political engagements. The hyphen spaces used to map these variables are then related to identities of insidership-outsidership; qualities of sameness-difference; the extent of emotional

engagement - distance; and politically active - actively neutral stances. These 'hyphen spaces' were used to frame my own reflexive account – my part in the research story – that is included in appendix 8. Before moving on to the practicalities of the research, it is worth briefly exploring how each of these notional taxonomic categories relate to other methodological issues and concepts and my own research context.

Four hyphen spaces, four oppositionals

The oppositional of insider-outsider has been the subject of differing definitions over time and discipline (Milligan, 2016) but will be familiar to ethnographers, anthropologists and researchers across the social sciences. Cunliffe and Karunanayake were guided by Louis and Bartunek (1992), and consider a researcher whose only interest is in generalisable knowledge and who is unconnected to the research site as having an 'outsider' identity; whereas a researcher with an ongoing relationship with the research site and an interest in the practical application of the knowledge generated is considered an 'insider'. Banks (1998) developed further ways of thinking about the outsider-insider dimension in terms of acceptance by the community under study through a congruence of values between the researcher and researched. Researchers might be 'indigenous' or 'alien' to the context of research subjects; and either sensitive or indifferent to the values and customs of the community of respondents. Thus the 'indigenous insider', Banks contends, is not only a member of the community under study but is accepted by the research subjects because they are perceived as sharing experiences, knowledge, customs and values. 'Alien outsiders' it follows, are disconnected from the context and are perceived to have values and social customs that are at odds with those of the

researched community. Two more categories spring from Banks' writing. One is the 'indigenous outsider', who may share origins and cultural knowledge with the researched but are treated with suspicion because of their acculturation with values and social norms from outside the research site. This was Karunanayake's initial experience. The other is the 'external insiders' who originate from outside the research location but have been accepted by the community they are studying because they have adopted or acculturated to the same customs and values. My position within Bank's taxonomy was somewhat ambiguous in terms of 'acculturation' but was perhaps closest to 'external-insider' - if one considered the rights-based discourse underpinning MDGs for instance, or a respect for Higher Education, as a set of shared values. A number of authors (Arthur, 2010, Katyal and King, 2011, McNess et al., 2013), including Cunliffe and Karunanayake have sought to reconsider this insider-outside-ness not as fixed but fluid, and highly contextualized socially, politically and culturally.

Sameness and difference in social science research contexts, is usually understood in terms of demographic and identity characteristics of age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality or class; and in terms of the extent of shared life experiences between researchers and the researched. Cunliffe and Karunanayake (2013) were aware that the task of collecting data entails the 'ongoing negotiation of meaning'. In my research, the extent of sameness-difference between my participants and myself coalesced around three areas relevant to the negotiation of meaning: our medium of communication (English); educational experience and educational values; and gender. Doing research in a classically

patriarchal, socially conservative society it was inevitable that gender would be the most visible and significant sign of difference and/or sameness between the participants and myself. Gender has been established as a powerful mediating factor in qualitative research (Herod, 1993, Arendell, 1997, Cotterill, 1992) and explored as both a resource and delimiting factor (Broom et al., 2009).

The third 'hyphen space' is one that relates to emotional distance – closeness. In a deeply patriarchal context, it might be expected that a level of shared experience facilitates rapport between same-sex interviewees and interviewers in the research encounter, although intersecting with other elements of biography, class or age instance. Same-sex pairing might also be expected to enhance the potential for the researchers empathy with the interviewee. Gair (2012) draws attention to feminist and grounded theory approaches that regard empathy as critical to social work practice and qualitative research methods. She reviews the approaches of sociologists, philosophers, researchers and methodologists who hold that empathy is at the root of our understandings of everyday lived experiences and who advocate its role in creating the conditions in which the research subject feels heard, accepted and understood. Conversely, as Gair notes, authors such as Lather (2009) and Watson (2009) have argued for the de-reification of empathy and criticized the logic of sameness on which it is based. These critiques do not so much argue against empathy but call for 'a kind of a gap', a lacuna in our 'capacity to know' (Lather, 2009, p.23), to enable researchers to listen without the presumption of mutuality, or the existence of sameness or 'common wounds' implied by empathy.

Finally, Cunliffe and Karunanayake describe the hyphen space between politically active and actively neutral as the ‘most challenging for researchers’ (Cunliffe and Karunanayake, 2013, p.381) and one that is most closely tethered to Fine, Kothari and other feminist and postcolonial scholars’ continued calls for a critical engagement with the political nature of our research designs. Much of this discourse pertains to research with particularly marginalized research subjects at the intersections of race, class, gender and age in conditions of poverty or deprivation. I have not set out to conduct psychosocial research with the deeply marginalized ‘subaltern’, nor the poor and ultra poor ‘targets’ of development aid. Indeed, for me to do so alone with rudimentary language skills would be almost impossible. Instead, I have chosen to study those with whom I share some common ground albeit one that is shifting and shot through with different configurations of relations of power.

As Michelle Fine (2016) argues, it is not enough simply to ‘accumulate narratives of those who embody lives of critique and desire’ but that we should work together to produce ‘testimony that that challenges dominant stories and makes legible the underbelly practices that sustain the current ‘democratic project’ (Fine, 2016, p.347). De Jong (2009) has examined the notion of ‘constructive complicity’ and in this study there are indeed elements of my own complicity with dominant structures and ways of being.

Both constructive complicity and reflexivity are about recognising and making explicit one’s positionality. Both are developed in response to the realisation that knowledge production cannot operate in a moral vacuum and is therefore inescapably fraught due to the existing power inequalities in the world. (de Jong, 2009. p.391)

My preferred use of the word 'participant' to describe the people I interviewed, rather than 'subject' is largely a recognition of their taking part in the construction of knowledge derived from this study. Although, despite participating in the active production of their own narratives they remain unequal participants: their data shaped to some extent by the imposition of the research design, in the research encounter and analyzed at a distance.

Using the hyphen-spaces paradigm

The schema of hyphen spaces is a useful heuristic tool that can assist us in mapping positionality and examining relationships between the researcher and the researched, but the complex realities of fieldwork relationships and the processes of data-gathering cannot always be neatly accommodated as distinct points on a spectrum or spectrums. Cunliffe and Karunanayake emphasized the 'fluid and agentic nature of researcher-respondent identities' (Cunliffe and Karunanayake, 2013, p.364) and these dynamics operate both inside and well beyond the interview. To study, appreciate and effectively represent the experience of research participants, as Corbin Dwyer and Buckle propose, it is not the particular status that is the 'core ingredient' of a prudent researcher but the 'ability to be open, authentic, honest, deeply interested in the experience of ones research participants, and committed to accurately and adequately representing their experience' (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle, 2009, p.59).

Etherington (2004) points out that some of the dilemmas that arise from our attempts to be reflexive researchers stem from a fear of being judged as narcissistic or lacking in self-awareness; and anxieties over public exposure and loss of privacy. The result, she asserts, can be an air-brushed version of the

reflexive accounting-for process. In my account, I therefore purposefully include the most awkward, intellectually troubling and emotionally demanding episodes of my research journey. I believe their inclusion not only corresponds with the frankness of the participants themselves - a minor gesture of solidarity in itself - but also that the most awkward moments have perhaps the greatest capacity to reveal the intricacies, complexities and sheer messiness of the work we do emotionally and cognitively, as qualitative researchers. Whilst we may use a variety of tools, such as the notion of hyphen spaces to assist us, I would suggest that it is necessary, if we care about the integrity of our research, to surrender to a certain amount, perhaps a good deal, of discomfort and anxiety in our attempts at reflexive research practice for social transformation (Beedell, 2009).

Summary

The forgoing section has set out the psychosocial 'dialect' that was applied to this research and examined the how 'the psychosocial' has been theorized within recent British scholarship. I have briefly considered debates concerning the extent to which the psychoanalytic element of the unconscious is viewed as accessible; and different schools of psychoanalytic analysis. I have explored the connections and overlaps between psychosocial studies and narrative research and the different ways narratives may be analyzed. I have discussed the ways in which a critical bifocality approach to analysis, paying attention to big and small stories and cultural and social framings of narratives in combination with a psychoanalytic lens on subjectivity can help to signal intimate psychological and larger social, political or cultural forces operating at a broader level.

My methodological approach can be summarized as a psychoanalytically informed sociology aimed at producing a narrative of themes from life-history and experience-centred interview data. This task involves reflexive practice on the part of the researcher in order to offer a robust interpretation how NGO workers and social activists manage to negotiate the dilemmas of development work.

Reflexivity, although a slippery concept, is key to the psychosocial and narrative approach I am taking. The holistic scope and flexibility of the notion of 'hyphen spaces' makes it a useful concept with which to chart my own positionality as a white, British middle-class woman doing qualitative research with subjects in Bangladesh. In conjunction with reflective journals kept over the course of the entire research period, I have used 'hyphen spaces' as a tool to engage in critical practice and to provide the framework for a transparent, although inevitably incomplete, account of the subjective processes affecting the research. In the following section I address the practicalities of the research process and describe what actually happened.

The practicalities of the research process

Introduction

The second half of this chapter is devoted to detailing how the research was undertaken and what actually happened in practice, including theoretical reflections on and justification for the decisions taken along the way. This section will describe how the sample was recruited; how issues of confidentiality and anonymity were approached; the particular characteristics of individual

participants who made up the sample; how the series of interviews progressed; how the data was treated, including the how transcriptions were produced; and finally, how the audio and textual material was analyzed.

To provide a little background, and some insight into my relationship with Bangladesh and its aid landscape relevant to the practice of reflexivity, I will first offer a sketch of how I became familiar with the country and a tiny slice of its population. My first visit to Bangladesh was in late 2010, when my British partner, who already had several years experience of living and working in Dhaka, was employed as a team leader to manage a large, relatively long-term (5 years +) ODA funded national anti-poverty programme. At that time I was employed as a university Research Associate in the UK and over the course of the next three years I visited Bangladesh regularly, up to three times a year, staying for two or three weeks at a time. After enrolling as a doctoral student and receiving ethical approval for my research in December 2013, I spent most of the following eight months (Dec 2013 – Aug 2014) in Dhaka, conducting interviews, managing the data and studying the existing literature, with occasional short breaks to go on work-related trips to the provinces with my partner. I was, of course, also socializing during all these visits: usually with my partner's Bangladeshi and semi-transient ex-pat colleagues and their friends, but also with visiting British academics and consultants connected to the ODA project. In this way, I found myself performing, to some extent, the expected role of 'trailing spouse' (Fechter, 2010) but this liminal position enabled me to observe some of the intricate machinations of Bangladesh's Aidland and to make fruitful connections with potential research participants outside of formal

organisational channels. Further biographical information is provided in appendix 7 and an account of my personal reflections on the research process and my positionings can be found in appendix 8. The following explication details my recruitment strategy and how the process progressed.

Entering Aidland: defining and recruiting the sample

The primary feature the participants in this study had in common, and the categorization that enables their identification as a unified object of research, is that they were both Bangladeshi citizens and recognisable development actors. They were all living and working in Bangladesh and actively involved in efforts to bring about normatively defined development goals that address problems of social inequality and the needs of the poor. My interest was in exploring how these individuals negotiated the complex demands and dilemmas that arose from their activities. The research was bounded by the limitations of English as the medium of communication, meaning the participants were pre-defined as relatively well-educated English-speaking professionals, theoretically and empirically part of the growing middle classes. In many respects, this segment of society can be viewed as both the products and promoters of social and economic development. This gives rise to a secondary and complimentary conceptual feature of commonality across the sample, which was their shared quality of discursive metaxy, a state of being of-both and in-between as explained in the previous chapter.

Casting a wide net in the recruitment of participants offers the potential for analytic insights into an otherwise under-researched group and lays the ground

for more focused research (Kabeer, 2011b, p.330) in future. Acknowledging that these local development actors may operate on the outer reaches of 'Aidland' as well as in its heartlands I sought out development professionals in the NGO and INGO sector as well as those involved with social enterprises, advocacy and philanthropy. This broad but purposeful sampling, and recruitment on the basis of informal contacts, snowballing and cold-calling combined with a life history method mirrors Kabeer's attempt to explore the under-researched narratives of citizenship and collective action with a variety of grassroots social movement organisations in Bangladesh (Kabeer, 2011b). My original intention was to recruit a broad but manageable sample of up to 20 men and women, evenly spread across an age range of 20- 50 years old. In this way gendered differences might become visible and features of these workers career trajectories and inter-generational dynamics might be illuminated.

The recruitment process was iterative in nature, grounded as much in the possible as in the ideal. I used existing and opportunistic contacts within international development NGOs and agencies based in Dhaka to recruit participants directly and gain access to civil society networks. I attended a number of conferences, seminars and issue-specific symposia including TED-X Dhaka and a DfID-funded Extreme Poverty Day and informally recruited interviewees and intermediaries at these events. There seemed no shortage of these kinds of opportunities at which a variety of foreign and Bangladeshi development actors congregated. These events were organised by NGOs and civil society organisations, such as the Centre for Policy Dialogue, but representatives from the state and private sectors were often present. These

civil society gatherings could be considered 'contact zones' (Singh and Doherty, 2004) both sectorially and internationally, with a diversity of foreign nationalities present, mostly from the Global North, but always in the minority. Swidler and Watkins (2017) have referred to these kinds of events as the cultural rituals and productions of Aidland, which provide opportunities for reassuring rather than anxiety-producing interaction between foreigners and locals. It was only on one occasion, during an international symposium for stakeholders in the RMG sector, that I witnessed any direct (and searing) criticism from Bangladeshi development workers of the foreign representatives in the room. Formal proceedings at these events were usually, although not always entirely, conducted in English and were therefore somewhat exclusive. Despite their linguistic exclusivity, the people attending such meetings represented a fairly broad cross section of professional statuses from junior project officers to regional managers and directors. Occasionally, a Government minister would be 'guest of honour'. Most of these events took the form of formal presentations followed by Q & A sessions and they always included informal and sociable lunches and refreshment breaks. Snowballing from contacts accrued at these events proved invaluable in opening up access to a cluster of research participants who rarely attended such events.

In practice, I conducted a total of 56 interviews with 37 people aged 25 to 69 between December 2013 and July 2014. Given the sheer weight of the data generated, which is a commonly acknowledged feature of qualitative research, I decided to focus on the younger cohort of 24 individuals - those born after independence in 1971 - with whom I recorded 39 separate interviews: 22

interviews with 12 women and 17 interviews with 12 men. The oldest of this tranche of participants was 44, meaning that this younger cohort of participants are part of a post-Liberation-War generation that corresponds, demographically and politically, to the so-called 'free-born' generations in South Africa and Zimbabwe, although perhaps tellingly, this is not a term that has been applied to the younger generation of Bangladeshis. The cohort of 'elders', born before the Liberation War, offered a greater opportunity to explore generational differences in attitudes towards social action. Many of the 'elders' had personal memories of the Liberation War, and on the face of it, offered a more politicised perspective on Bangladesh's development progress. Their evidence may support claims of a generational de-politicization of development work but this extensive analysis, requiring the inclusion of the testimony of the elders is beyond the scope of this thesis, and from here on all details, numbers of interviews etc, pertain only to the younger, under age 44 cohort. Nonetheless, the accounts of the elders provided a valuable historical backdrop to the younger participants experiences that helped to inform my understanding of the political, social and institutional context in which the research took place. Throwing a wide net was beneficial in enabling the capture of a smaller, more tightly defined sample and provided additional familiarisation with the context, but at the same time the strategy consumed a substantial amount of time and energy.

The majority of participants (19 of 24) were current or past colleagues of intermediaries who included three 'elder' interviewees and two white Europeans. Five participants had worked, at different times, with one particular

organisation and were contacted through a European peer-level former colleague. Another five participants were accessed through a European intermediary who had professional seniority and indirect contact with them through their different organisational employers. Two elders and four participants were recruited directly. One directly recruited participant introduced me to six less senior colleagues (and one other) and this cluster provided insights into the operations and relationships within one particular organisation. Figure 3 maps the connections made in enlisting participants and illustrates the organic nature of the process. Illuminated by this diagram and in hindsight, the fact that all intermediaries were privileged by age, gender and/or whiteness is indicative of the persistence of the hierarchical and patron-client structure of social relations in Bangladesh (Devine, 1999, Wood, 2000, Wood, 2011) and reiterates the necessity to reflect on naturalised taken-for-granted processes at work across the research.

Logistically I was restricted, at least initially, to interviewing people in Dhaka. This constraint may have steered my study towards a particular section of the upper and established middle classes - the urban elite - one that may prove all the more crucial to future development policy and practice in a context where power is concentrated and emanates from the capital. A cluster of interviewees accessed through an intermediary broadened the overall class profile of interviewees. Opportunities were pursued to reach a number of development workers in the provinces but this presented difficulties in arranging second interviews. Only two of the younger cohort worked permanently outside Dhaka.

Participants were self-selecting and limited by the time they were able to contribute to the research. Some participants were very interested in the research and motivated to take part while others seemed slightly less engaged, but willing to assist. I did not face any explicit obstacles in the recruitment of participants. My enquiries were generally met with interest and enthusiasm and the challenge was rather to limit the number of people recruited via a particular route or shared social space.

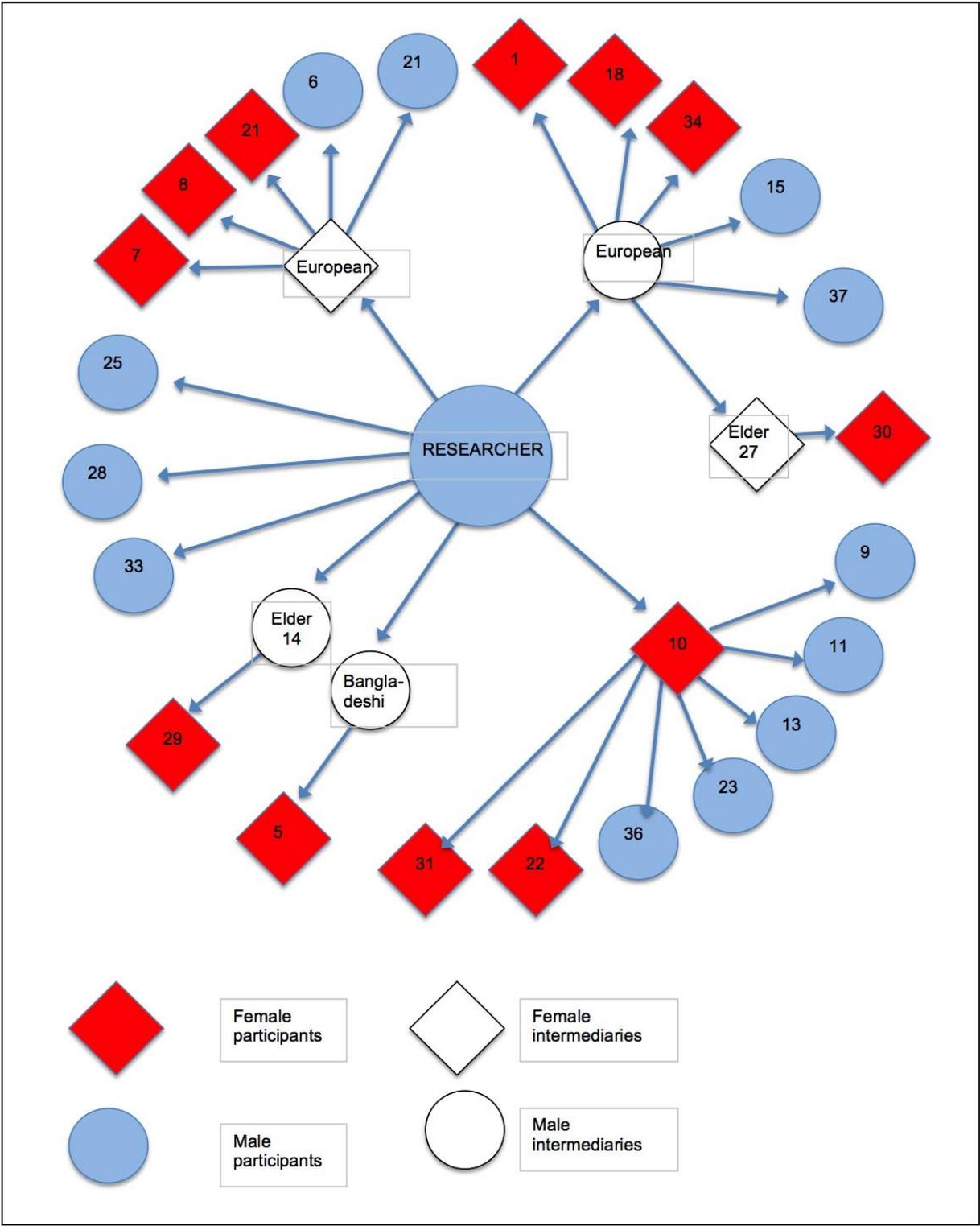


Figure 3: Map of access to participants. Numbers indicate the participants place in the sequence of first interviews. The full cohort of 'elders' is not shown

Confidentiality and anonymity

Aware of the potentially critical and therefore sensitive nature of the interviews, both personally and politically, the offer of anonymity and a degree of confidentiality was made to all participants in this study. Some authors argue that assuming participants will want anonymity and confidentiality can be disempowering and undermine commitments to transformative justice (Baez, 2002) therefore the decision was left up to individual participants. The offer was well received, accepted by all and positively insisted upon by some people. Maintaining internal confidentiality within the cluster of participants working for the same organisation was more difficult, even in the interview situation when colleagues and fellow participants occasionally walked in during interviews or doors were left open. The level of internal confidentiality and anonymity was a matter of negotiation with each of these participants. In processing and presenting the data, care was taken to anonymize participants through the use of pseudonyms and non-specific substitutions for occupations and organisations. Such obligations to anonymity have the potential to compromise the richness and specificity of the data (Saunders et al., 2015). Referring to organisations only in general terms may have compromised the analysis of connections between specific participants stories and specific kinds of organisations, but it is the aggregate experience of working within and on the margins of 'Aidland' that is the focus here. Similarly, I have elected to generalise people's job titles as less relevant, and list only areas of developmental activity without individual attribution.

Providing pseudonyms is not a neutral process (Guenther, 2009) either. Researchers' choices in such seemingly minor matters are, in Guenther's words 'important components of the experiences of conducting fieldwork and presenting and disseminating data, and should not be taken for granted' (Guenther, 2009, p.412). In South Asia names carry significant symbolic power as markers of social class, ethnicity and caste. To avoid imposing meanings in this way, the choice of pseudonym was left up to participants in 19 of the 24 cases. The remaining five cases, in which the researcher chose the pseudonym, resulted from simple oversights or coincidental conflicts arising from similarities with other participant's real names. Throughout the thesis, pseudonyms are displayed in capitals to make clear their fictional status and as a reminder of the tendency to draw social and cultural inferences from given names. Some of the participants chose their pseudonyms with great care, and it was only after some time that I realised there was cultural and political meaning embedded in some of their choices, adding a nuance to Baez's claim that anonymity can be disempowering. See Appendix 5 for further details on the significances of participant-chosen pseudonyms.

Participants professional and personal characteristics

The table of participants below (figure 4) is arranged by gender and age and despite generalised descriptions demonstrates the range of roles and contexts in which the sample is active. Twenty of the twenty-four participants were directly employed by organisations in the international development sector that might be considered typical of 'Aidland'. However, only four participants worked directly for familiar global NGO's such as (but not necessarily including) Save

the Children, Concern, Care International, or Oxfam - organisations whose work relies to some extent upon charitable donations from Northern publics alongside significant work contracted by and funded through official development aid (ODA). Twelve participants, half of the sample, were employed by Northern-based specialist development management agencies whose contracts to deliver and implement programmes appeared to be funded by ODA. Seven of these participants were involved in interventions in the RMG sector, some of which was also funded by private sector CSR budgets. Four other participants, to differing degrees, combined their work in the private sector with development activities within their professional roles and/or through voluntarily or philanthropic activities. These latter participants represent the rather fuzzy edge of what we might consider as the development sector, or Aidland, but are nonetheless involved in social action for change inside and outside of their professional roles.

Participants were involved in two broad areas of developmental activity: poverty reduction, mostly through the promotion of income generating activities; and rule of law or rights-based work through projects focused on RMG workers, women's and children's rights. Overall, the sample reflects a seam of professional workers who are in different ways and different combinations of ways involved in social change – as full-time development workers, as freelance, part-time or short term contracted consultants; as social entrepreneurs, as philanthropists and as unpaid volunteers and activists.

Although the sample is purposive rather than strictly representative, there were noticeable gender differences in the types of development activity the

participants were engaged in. The women in the sample tended to be active in gender- and care-related activities including monitoring and evaluation; women's income generating projects; women's skills training & education; RMG sector labour rights; and as gender specialists working with domestic violence; in old age care; and in health and nutrition. The men in the sample tended to be engaged more broadly with technical activities: in income generating projects; rule of law/human rights advocacy; development communications; small business development; general skills training & development; and agriculture/farmer support.

As well as gender, age and occupational attributes, the mini-vignettes of participants' provided in Figure 4 also indicate marital status and the nature of their education. Further details of participants HE is provided in appendix 6. All but one of the participants had a Masters degree. These two aspects of participants lives, marriage and education, were often spoken about as pivotal to their self- and social- identities and as indicators of social and cultural capital these features are highly relevant to the analyses and presentation of findings. I have also identified participants who were interviewed more than once: that is, five men and nine women, or 14 out of 24 in total, and will account for these differences in the following section.

While the details in Figure 4 are brief and devoid of too much detail in order to protect participants' anonymity, the list is also intended to provide readers with an easy reference to help situate the narrators of the following stories in terms of their age, status and other relevant characteristics.

Figure 4 (overleaf): Participants characteristics. * Pseudonyms chosen by researcher (following page). Unmarried unless indicated otherwise.

WOMEN

RAINA*, age 25
Intern/project officer with ODA funded agency.
English medium schooling. HE overseas.
Interviewed twice.

SHAYLA, age 25
Project Manager with ODA funded agency.
Married
Interviewed twice.

MARIUM*, age 26
Monitoring officer, ODA funded INGO
Interviewed twice.

KATARINA*, age 27
Private sector, multinational company.
Private philanthropist/CSR, English medium schooling
Interviewed twice.

JUDI, age 29,
Project Manager, with ODA funded agency.
Some English medium schooling overseas, HE overseas

RUBY, age 30
Activist, Project Manager, with ODA funded agency,
English-medium schooling, HE overseas,
Previously married
Interviewed twice

BROWNTIA, age 36
Project Manager with ODA funded INGO
Married with children

ANIKA, age 38, private philanthropist, manager of charitable foundation
Some HE overseas, married, with children
Interviewed twice

ROSE, age 41
Project Co-ordinator, with ODA funded INGO
Previously married, with children

PIYA, age 43
Country Manager, ODA & CSR-funded agency
Married with children
Interviewed three times

HELENA*, age 44
Project Officer, ODA & CSR-funded agency
Married with children
Interviewed twice

ROKEYA, age 44
Project Officer, ODA & CSR-funded agency
Married with children
Interviewed twice

MEN

DANIEL, age 26
Project Officer, ODA & CSR-funded agency
English medium schooling outside Bangladesh
Interviewed twice

SHARIF, age 26
Project Manager, ODA & CSR-funded agency
Some English-medium schooling, first in family to graduate

STUART, age 27
Social business manager/director
English medium schooling overseas, HE overseas
Co-habiting

AZAIRAA, age 27
Project Officer, ODA & CSR-funded agency

NAZMULHAQUA, age 28
Programme Officer, local ODA funded NGO
First in family to graduate, married with children

NAZBUL, age 28
Office Manager, ODA & CSR-funded agency
Interviewed twice

MANJUL*, age 32
Team Leader, ODA funded agency
Some English medium schooling, Married with children
Interviewed three times

NEMO, age 32
Research officer, International Finance Organisation
Married

FARABI, age 36
Communications Manager, ODA funded INGO
Some HE overseas,
Co-habiting

SPIDER, age 38
HR Manager/CSR, Private sector, multinational
Interviewed twice

ORLANDO, age 40
Project Officer, ODA funded INGO
Some English medium schooling overseas
Interviewed twice

MINTU, age 44
Activist, Private sector entrepreneur
Some English medium schooling overseas, HE overseas
Married with children

The interview process

To generate the high quality emotionally inflected data required for psychosocial research, it was important that interviewees felt at ease in their surroundings.

Since the explicit focus of the research was their work in the development sector, and for mutual convenience, interviews usually took place on the participant's own professional territory while others preferred social spaces with varying degrees of privacy and intimacy. Convenience and amenity for participants was usually the primary factor in the choice of interview settings.

Dhaka is one of the most densely populated cities in the world with a population of over 14 million people. As a consequence the city has infamously time-consuming traffic congestion, so the onus was on the researcher to travel to the participants workplace, accept venue suggestions or offer suitable alternatives.

Privacy, and relative quiet to aid the audio recording of the interviews, was requested by the researcher. As a cultural construct the level of 'privacy' achieved was variable, relative and rarely absolute. Thirteen, or just over half the participants were interviewed in relatively private offices at their workplaces during the day. Six people accepted my offer of being interviewed, after work, in the seclusion of one of two international members-only clubs to which I had privileged access; two chose quiet but public café settings near their workplaces and two were interviewed in my own rented apartment. One participant was interviewed in a provincial hotel room and later invited me to her Dhaka home for a second interview. Four of the six interviewed in the international clubs were already familiar with these exclusive spaces of aid (Smirl, 2015) while the two others were explicitly curious and took advantage of the opportunity to enter

these privileged spaces. As an indication of the variability of positionings of researchers in class-based studies and interview settings (Mellor et al., 2014), these latter two participants displayed a certain visceral curiosity and may have positioned and deployed me as a kind of temporary stepping stone into an exclusive milieu. At the same time, the two self-described 'elite' participants interviewed in my own home were gracious in response to my self-consciousness that the well-located but spartan and transient feel of the apartment was not quite up to their standards.

All participants were provided with a briefing note describing the study and were invited to take part in a life-history interview, in English, with an opportunity to discuss particular dilemmas as part of their initial account (where a second interview was unlikely) or in optional second interviews. See appendix 2 for a copy of the briefing note provided to participants. UEL's ethical approval and a copy of the participants consent form are provided in appendices 1 and 3 respectively. Basic demographic information was gathered before a prompt question invited a life history and free association around issues of managing dilemmas, the roots of motivations and values, and the route into their present role. A second prompt question was crafted for second/extended interviews and was aimed at eliciting more specific stories associated with ethical dilemmas. See appendix 4 for copies of the interview schedules.

The first half-dozen interviews (including some with the older cohort) served as pilots for the interview schedules and over the course of the whole interview series, the single- prompt free associative invitation was adjusted to a semi-structured biographical enquiry. This move away from the more open free

association method was precipitated to a large extent by the expectations of the participants, as I explain in my reflections on the process in appendix 8. Using English as the medium of communication sometimes prolonged the interviews as both interviewee and interviewer took time to articulate and clarify meanings to ensure a level of mutual understanding. Interviews usually lasted between 60-90 minutes but on seven of 39 occasions, interviews ran for up to two hours.

To aid the process of reflexivity in preparation for analysis, shortly after each interview, usually within one or two hours of completing the interview but occasionally the following day I wrote up field notes and reflections in a journal. These reflections noted my own emotional and cognitive responses, and included observations on the immediate environmental context of the interview, such as the degree of privacy afforded, and the quality and content of any pre- and post- interview conversations and interactions, which might give an indication of their positionings of me and their attitude towards the research. My journal notes also recorded my impressions of the physicality of the interview participants in terms of dress, appearance and demeanour. To a large extent this was done as a personal aid to help me remember each participant and distinguish between them in the months that followed, but it was also useful in capturing any physical gestures or mannerisms such as head shaking or gesticulating that might visually signal an emphasis of particular parts of their speech.

Treatment of the data: transcription and immersion

Transcription is an often taken-for-granted practice in qualitative research (Davidson, 2009), but the process is increasingly acknowledged as a theory-laden, selective and interpretive process (Ochs, 1979) with inevitable variations and limitations that shape the analytic potential of the material. These choices and processes must be made transparent to invigorate the validity of the data (Davidson, 2009).

The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed in two main stages: first by commercial transcribers who produced 'raw' versions containing understandable errors, and then these versions were corrected and fully anonymized by the researcher. My aim for the transcriptions was to capture, as far as possible, not only the substantive content, but also the style, emphasis and indications of emotionality through the paralinguistics (laughs, sighs, sharp intakes of breath etc.) of the participants' interview material.

The weight and richness of the material made it practical to employ a commercial transcription service. Originally, I sought bi-lingual transcribers in Dhaka, partly assuming that they would be attuned to the stronger accents, Bangladesh-English phraseology and local references. Although two local transcribers were found, the process was not as smooth or as fast as I had hoped. It transpired that both transcribers had worked for organisations associated with some of the participants and the potential for breaches of confidentiality and anonymity arose. As an alternative, the bulk of transcriptions were done by a US-based internet service who offered to engage bi-lingual

South Asians for the task. Tilley and Powick (2002) have identified practical and confidentiality issues as problematic when employing outside transcribers, but my problem was almost the reverse: the initial transcribers were in fact too closely networked inside the NGO sector in Dhaka. Tilley and Powick also pointed to the need for clear instructions from the researcher when commissioning transcriptions and emphasize the benefits of returning to the recorded data rather than relying upon the accuracy of transcriptions.

The US-based transcription service was asked for verbatim transcriptions including false starts, repetitions and paralinguistic elements, which they delivered with variable degrees of success as they were sharing the transcriptions among several audio typists. Misinterpretations were usually explained by the interviewee's strong accent or the transcriber's lack of local knowledge of, for instance, acronyms and place names. The vagaries of intermittent extraneous traffic noise, heavy rain or more often the readjustments of air-conditioning fans also sometimes left brief portions of speech indecipherable to the remote listeners. As the interviewer, the process of correcting these errors was relatively easy: a matter of paying close attention to the topic in context combined with my prior knowledge of vernacular terms, proper nouns, and jargon used. Minor complications arose from the phraseology used by some of the second-language English speakers. In a handful of cases, transcribers strayed from verbatim accounts and tidied up the text, replacing 'what this is?' with 'what is this?' for instance, or omitting repeated words transcribing 'I don't, no, I don't' as simply 'No, I don't'. Whilst I largely accepted this 'tidying up' in the three or four transcriptions concerned, in

treating the transcripts as textual representations of the audio material I have overall, and in the quotations used here, tried to remain faithful to the flavour of the speakers voice by preserving the original phraseology.

Ensuring the quotations are legible to readers (see below), became the third and final stage of development of the transcripts from raw rather erroneous versions to accurate working documents for analysis and then into more comprehensible edited versions of the scripts (Mondada, 2007). In quotations from the interview data I have made only minor substitutions or alterations where they might be particularly helpful for readers and I have signaled all these modifications in square brackets [] following Davidson's call for transparency (Davidson, 2009). Thus the example above would be rendered 'what [is this]?'. Jaffe (2007) has considered how different styles or levels of detail in transcriptions can affect the validity of evidence derived from the speakers own voice, suggesting that simplified transcription, with minimal distractions for the reader, may allow more direct access to elements of the interview. Despite my instructions, pauses were often left unmarked by the hired transcribers and have been re-inserted by me as '(pause)' where they are judged as significant moments of reflection rather than mere hesitations over choice of vocabulary. These judgments are one of the challenges of second-language interview transcription (Vigouroux, 2007).

Mutual negotiation of meaning between a mother tongue and a second language speaker can produce long-winded dialogical explanations. To condense meandering speech into more concise quotations, the omission of certain portions of speech was necessary and the omissions are marked as

[...]. Whilst doing the transcriptions myself may have proved a more straightforward albeit time-consuming means of immersing myself in the material, in addition to listening without reference to a text, as immersion implies (Hollway, 2009), the detailed process of inspection, correction and preparation of portions of transcripts for inclusion in the thesis has complemented the listening process. This kind of immersion enabled and facilitated my thinking about the content, its substance and allotted weight within the interview, the dynamics of pace and variations of intonation and volume all of which contributed to my interpretation of the material and the manner of its presentation. Whereas some researchers take transcripts as data (Ochs, 1979), Hollway warns that 'the transcript loses layers of meaning conveyed in tone, pace, emphasis, flow, rhythm and so on' (Hollway, 2009, p.462) such that, she suggests, the actual person disappears.

With an understanding of feminist and postcolonial critiques as referred to in the previous chapter, I have sought to preserve an accurate sense of the voice of the person, I accept that a degree of subjective judgment, compromise and interpretation is inevitable. I have resisted reification of the texts, giving greater weight to the audio recordings as data (Mondada, 2007, Coates and Thornborrow, 1999) and the participants quotations included in this thesis have been repeatedly checked against the audio recordings for representative accuracy.

The process of analysis

Alert to both big and small stories (Phoenix, 2013), the data was explored individually and in its totality. To begin with, the participants data was examined person by person through immersion in the audio alone and later through the development of transcripts (Mondada, 2007) that accurately reflected the discursive content of the interviews. Where two or more interviews were conducted, these were listened to in sequence. A summary of each participant's total data was prepared, as an aide memoir of the interview material, which took account of the substantive and discursive content, for instance: whether they had been educated overseas or not, the progression of their careers; and the kinds of dilemmas, constraints and rewards and sources of support or coping strategies they articulated. These summaries also noted the pace, tenor and relative prominence of different elements of their stories.

In addition, a spreadsheet of all the participants' characteristics was generated from the summarized material, audio and transcripts, which included detailed notes on salient demographic and sociological features. As well as age and gender, these features included participants accounts of their parents and grandparents occupations and levels of education; self reported class descriptions; self-reported faith and political orientations; schools, colleges and universities attended and qualifications; job titles; types of development activities with which they were involved and the kinds of organisations they worked for, plus an indication of their monthly take home salary. This matrix of information was used to identify and analyze patterns and variations of reported

experience across the whole sample and garner a measure of the participants' social, cultural and economic capitals.

In this way it was possible for the prominent features and absences, commonalities and differences, story format and thematic content to emerge from the data. The biographical aspect of the interviews facilitated an historical reach into representations of past generations and past times and documented processes of change, in patterns of continuity and disjuncture. This temporal perspective is relevant to the research focus on the nature of the biographical and identity resources that this sample of development workers draw upon in order to negotiate and manage the complex and often conflicting demands and dilemmas that arise from their actions.

The images and imaginaries contained within the discursive content indicated the participants' contextualizing cultural and social understandings and suggested ways in which conflicting and complex dilemmas were framed as constellations of social, emotional and professional dilemmas. In this analysis, the strength and prominence of social position, education and gender came to the fore, somewhat eclipsing the focus on professional lives that has been the defining feature of aidographies and studies of humanitarian personnel.

Attention was paid to elements of constraint, agency and the roots of motivation and ethical position, with special attention to influences across the life-course and on occupational career paths.

My approach to the material derived from a series of in-depth life-history and experience-centred interviews has been alert to the ways in which the stories

are told and framed, bearing in mind the perspectives, constraints and ethical issues explored in the first section of this chapter. This approach nonetheless allowed some scope for tentative explorations of unconscious processes and illumination of psychosocial elements of experience such as structures of feeling, abiding affects and emotional habitus.

The analysis has taken the form of immersion in both the audio recordings and transcribed text, with an attitude that is open to themes emanating from the material itself, which pays attention to how the participants have framed and prioritized different elements of their life histories and experiences. The framings that emerged pertain to family background and social class; experiences of education and identity formation; orientations towards development and career trajectories; and cross cutting issues related to gender. The data presented in the following chapters illuminates the nature of participants subjectivities, their cognitive and affective investments; their internal and external resources; the constraints and precarities in operation; and their capacities and coping strategies.

Presentation of the findings

The following chapters are intended to bring to light through life-story and event centered interviews, the material and affective conditions of this stratum of development actors and the influences on their motivations and capacities to negotiate the complexities of their developmental roles. The findings are presented as four themed chapters, flowing from the particularities of the material from individual participants and the sample as a whole. The first three

findings chapters trace, in broad strokes, the genealogy of the participants' own development from their social class backgrounds through their formative life experiences and the routes taken to arrive in their present positions.

In Chapter 5, *Classed Stories*, the data demonstrates how social class backgrounds are more diverse and dynamic than the homogenizing term 'middle class' can satisfactorily accommodate. In the participants' accounts, classed identities were fractured along historical fault lines as well as between disparities of income and prosperity. Stories of education and the negotiation of identity in chapter 6 sheds light on the conditions that contribute to participants' identity formation and identifications, providing clear examples of how participants negotiate the conflicting discourses to which they are exposed and from which they manage to generate transformations. This chapter explores how this cohort manage the tensions between reproducing familial, social and cultural norms *and* cope with the disruptions, resistance and transgressions that arise in the pursuit of contemporary social- and self- identities. Stories of Aidland in chapter 7 illuminates the ways in which participants entered the Aidland workforce, and provides insights into their experiences of working for social change alongside foreign aid personnel and the constraints and conditions they are subject to and rewards they garner from those experiences.

Chapter 8 will demonstrate how gender specifically shapes womens access to the world of development work and how structural and institutional factors impact differentially upon the social actions of women and men in the study. As a coda to these findings one woman's story - PIYA's story - is provided in appendix 9 to illustrate how the affects of classed orientations, shifts in the

discourse of mainstream development, processes of identity formation, subject positions and organisational professional practices combine in one individual's account to impact on the operations of a particular development organisation engaged in ostensibly 'ethical' development.

The findings demonstrate to what extent and in what contexts participants are situated in the middle of discourses and, at times, on the margins of power. My commentary alongside these thematic narratives will explore the extent to which, in Bourdieusian terms, participants are equipped with a taken-for-granted habitus, how they accumulate symbolic capitals, and how these assets hold currency in negotiating different 'fields' or domains. I will explore the internal and external resources and capacities apparent in the participants' accounts and posit an interpretation of how their social circumstances and psychological apparatus impact on their pursuit of developmental goals and their capacities to face constraints and precarities. Further reflection, interrogation and discussion of the findings and a consideration of the implications for policy and practice follows in Chapter 9.

Chapter 5: Classed Stories

Despite growing interest in the role of the global middle classes in contemporary development discourse, as discussed in chapter 2, the literature on aid and development workers, reviewed in Chapter 3, pays very little attention to the classed identities of these personnel. In this study, at the start of each interview, participants were asked some initial demographic questions about their age, job title, qualifications and earnings; and a direct question about which social class they felt they belonged to. The responses were diverse and covered a wide range of subject positions congruent with the scope of the upper quintile of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics income distribution curve (see figure 1, chapter 2). While the earnings data gave an indication of a participant's individual economic position, what is at stake here is how class is recognised, felt and experienced, and how the subjective and affective dimensions of class identity and the experience of being caught in the middle of differing discourses impacts on the activities, capacities and agency of this group change-makers.

In response to my stated interest in 'discovering the roots of peoples motivations and values'; and the prompt to 'tell me about your life history and how you came to be in your present role' (see interview schedules appendix 4), the entire sample of participants accounted for their actions, values and motivations in a succession of life-stories with reference to their parents and extended families. In at least half the cases, these stories harked back to their grandparent's generation. These accounts, in which participants distinguished and categorised themselves, provided insights into socially contextualized narratives – the 'classed stories' presented here – in which social class

trajectories and differing value orientations carried moral, ethical, motivational and agentic implications (Sayer, 2005) as well as taxonomic challenges.

To help situate the sample within the social structure of Bangladesh and to aid the reader in understanding the biographic data featured in subsequent chapters, I will first sketch out the range of class origins and positions the participants described, before attending to the various class dynamics and orientations that emerged.

Social class was primarily expressed by participants according to their father's occupation, and included references to the wealth of the wider family. Thus the unit of analysis employed by participants extended beyond the traditionally narrow and orthodox means of classification of an individual's socio-economic by their own current occupation. In general, participants were confident and unequivocal about identifying themselves as 'middle class', sometimes 'middle-middle class'¹² or 'upper middle class'. Two participants explicitly identified themselves as part of a rich 'elite', while two more acknowledged that they may be perceived as part of a wealthy elite due to their overseas university education.

The following groupings are not intended as definitive categorisations of class fractions, but are based upon participants' subjective self-identifications. In addition, paying heed to the Bourdieusian schema used by Savage et al (Savage, 2013) to distinguish class fractions, the analysis of positions and

¹² 'Middle-middle class' was how FARABI described his social class background and it seems appropriate to utilise this term for others in similar circumstances.

origins is supplemented by evidence of symbolic cultural and social capitals presented in the interview data. While it was easier to locate participants in the established upper-middle and elite classes, the distinctions between the lower- and middle- middle class participants are more equivocal. In these categories, some participants' class positions were affected by changing circumstances over the life course and across the family history. These dynamics have been considered as aspirational and restorative narratives that have had an affect on participants' career trajectories. The final section of this chapter explores additional class fractions emerging from the data: the distinctions made by participants between 'service' and 'business' oriented classes, and the affective dimensions of these classifications.

Class positions, classed origins

The lower middle class (three participants)

At one end of the socio-economic scale, NAZMULHAQUA (aged 28) described growing up in modest circumstances in provincial Bangladesh with a father who was employed as a lowly '2nd Class' government clerk. He is the first in his family to go to university and as an employee of a small local NGO, was the lowest paid individual of the entire sample earning 26,000 Taka (\$330) per month¹³. Similarly, NAZBUL (28) and AZAIRAA (27), a pair of brothers included in the study, described being raised in rural Bangladesh with a modest family

¹³ These self-reported monthly incomes are not directly comparable to the PPP or daily consumption expenditure figures used by, for instance, Banerjee & Duflo (2008) and Birdsall (2014). Currency conversions are expressed in US dollars and are rounded up and calculated using the 2014/2015 exchange rate of 1: 0.0128 or 1,000Tk = 12.8 US\$. The Bangladesh Taka has since fallen slightly against the US dollar.

income derived from their father's long-term occupation as a semi-skilled migrant labourer in the Middle East. They both worked for an international development agency and earned 42,000 Tk (\$540) and 75,000 Tk (\$960) per month respectively. All three had MBA's from Bangladeshi universities.

The 'middle-middle' class (seven participants)

DANIEL (26), SHARIF (26) NEMO (32) and FARABI (36) appeared to have had slightly more economic wealth and cultural capital within their families, although FARABI's father reportedly struggled to make an honest living in the corruption-ridden construction business. NEMO's father was a schoolteacher in the provinces. Both SHARIF and DANIEL's fathers were said to have been previously active in local politics and government structures, although their outlooks, ethics and lifestyles appeared to have differed significantly.

Individually, these four men were earning between \$820 and \$1,300 per month.

KATARINA (27), BROWNIA (36) and HELENA (44) were perhaps more equivocal members of this middle-middle class grouping, having historically dynamic features in their biographies that included a father's disinheritance; parental lack of education; and a family history fractured by early bereavement.

The latter two women, although older and/or more highly qualified than the four men referred to above, were earning \$980 and \$1,220 per month respectively.

This group of participants were employed by a variety of INGOs and development agencies; NEMO worked for an international financial institution.

KATARINA, was employed in the private sector and involved in CSR and voluntary work. DANIEL had been schooled outside of Bangladesh, and

FARABI and NEMO had been foiled in their attempts to enroll in HE in Anglophone countries.

The established, upper middle class (ten participants)

Half the sample self-identified and/or could be classed according to their apparent symbolic capitals, as part of the established, upper middle class. These participants tended to describe stable and relatively affluent family circumstances that included significant land and property ownership. Their parents were reported to be graduates and their fathers tended to have worked in professional positions as doctors, engineers and high-level bureaucrats. In three cases, the participants' mothers were also graduates with professional careers. Seven of the 12 female participants fell into this group and appeared more 'of a piece' than the rest of the sample. Six of these women - RAINA (aged 25), SHAYLA (25), MARIUM (26), RUBY (30), PIYA (43) and ROKEYA (44), and two men - MANJUL (32) and ORLANDO (40) - were employed by INGOs and development agencies. ROSE (41) worked for a local NGO, and SPIDER (38) was involved in CSR in the private sector. RAINA and RUBY had graduated from overseas universities, and both made references to being perceived by others as part of a particular (or particularly educated) elite because of this.

An elite (four participants)

At the other end of the social scale from NAZMULHAQUA, STUART (27), JUDI (29), ANIKA (38) and MINTU (44) were distinguished both by their levels of personal income (upwards of \$2,500 per month) and their accounts of accumulated family wealth, which far exceeded that of other participants.

All four recognised themselves part of a very wealthy, well-established and well-connected upper class and all had experienced English-language higher education in North America, Australia and/or Europe. Only JUDI worked for an INGO whilst the others were involved in social enterprise, philanthropy and voluntary activities.

Dynamic stories: aspirational and restorative narratives

As with class identifications, participants' accounts of the roots of their motivations and values were situated within broader, family-based rather than in individualised narratives. The mutable, dynamic character of classed identities was apparent in aspirational narratives that appeared within the lower-middle and middle-middle class fractions, exemplified by NAZMULHAQUA's and BROWNIA's stories. Restorative narratives appeared across lower, middle and elite class fractions, particularly the stories of SHARIF, KATARINA, and JUDI. Both kinds of narratives were characterized by a sense of responsibility not only for their own personal development but that of their families and the wider, national society. An imperative to build anew and/or restore a sense of honour and dignity alongside the effort to improve material conditions pervades these accounts.

Aspirational narratives

NAZMULHAQUA is the third-born of four children. His parents, he said, were 'simple persons' and his grandfather a 'landlord-type' farmer, which, he explained, is why he studied agriculture. His wife and child live with extended family outside Dhaka. The small locally run NGO he works for sits, it might be

said, at the lower end of the Aid 'food chain' in terms of its size, status and funding. The organisation, he explained, survives on a series of research contracts from overseas academic institutions and delivers specific strands of ODA-funded projects handed down by larger development agencies. For the last few years he has invested a large proportion of his income in his education, with a view to improving his 'position' and has just completed an MBA. He said he would like to get a 'high position' with an international NGO.

In many ways his account appears rooted in instrumental motivations for career progression for the sake of material reward and improved social position, and could be read as somewhat 'mercenary' (Stirrat, 2008), but the richness of the data unfurls a constellation of feelings of gratitude, sorrow, compassion and hope as well as a dedicated orientation towards learning. NAZMULHAQUA explained that his father did not guide his education or career, which was a 'sorrow' for him, alluding to a feeling of disappointment that his father did not fulfill this expected role. NAZMULHAQUA's educational and professional trajectory, he explained, was due in large part to the support, encouragement and sacrifice of his mother and wife for which he expressed gratitude: 'Because of her dedication I'm coming to this position' he said. He went on to describe coming to Dhaka for education and how living in proximity to the city's slums inspired his ambition for development work.

I was living beside the slum area. So, so many poor people are staying there, beside my part. They were staying in all these houses there, and from that time my thinking was I would work for them, and how they can develop, how they can change....And it is constantly related to... It's not constantly related to *me* as my position from now, but it's linked up, I

think, because I was not financially solvent, my family was not.... Middle-class families, persons, always want to go the higher level.

As an agriculturist, I like to work for our poor people, that means our farmers. That's why am working here, and until now my ambition is to work for our country at top level. That means international NGO. I am always saying 'international NGO', because it was my dream. Working in a top position....working in the sector, holding the top position in society. I have to go long and far to [get] this thing. But I'm trying.

(NAZMULHAQUA, Int.1)

NAZMULHAQUA seemed to identify with the slum-dwellers' precarity and directly associated their potential for change with his own personal aspirations, which he identified as a distinctly 'middle class' characteristic, perhaps as a justification for his own ambition. In addition, he implied that his own trajectory was closely linked to that of the farmers, poor people and the nation as a whole.

At another level, BROWNIA appeared to have moved into development work with an INGO as a result of her effort to secure and enhance her family's social position and long-term well-being. As we sat in her provincial office, BROWNIA pointed out the window to a tin-roofed '*katcha*' house as an example of the kind of dwelling she grew up in. She has an older brother and had a younger sister who died at the age of 11. By her own account, BROWNIA was an outstanding, 'star marks, first division' student though, she admitted, somewhat disobedient and headstrong. Her father was low-ranking civil servant, and she was prevailed upon to pursue medicine as a career, although she said she would have preferred another, less pressurized branch of science. In her recollection of her father's career advice there are signs of an imagined social identity that was

inculcated into the young BROWNIA. Her brother, she said, having taken a different career track, placed BROWNIA in a 'last chance' position as far as her father's vision was concerned, adding an extra burden of responsibility upon her for carrying forward the family's social identity.

I joined medical school. And it was not actually my choice. I was going to go to Dhaka University because it was a, you know... I can do politics there, I can have more freedom, I have to study less, and I can expose myself...big school, big campus, many people, many students, that was my wish. But my father said 'No... I had a dream [for you] to be a doctor'. So, I couldn't do that because his family was not that much educated and not financially that much sound. So, and they were from a small city out of Dhaka. So, he couldn't do that. So, my father wanted me that... 'Okay I want one of my child[ren] should become a doctor to fulfill my dream.' And by that time, my brother, the elder brother he graduated already from y'know, economics. So, his track was not to be a doctor.

(BROWNIA, Int.1)

And [father] he made me, y'know, explained that, what my future would be like, look like. Like a doctor, you can have prestige, you would be a first class citizen of a country and you will earn a lot and everybody will respect you and you can help people, you can...y'know, it's a noble profession. No other profession can be like this. (BROWNIA, Int.1)

BROWNIA explained how she capitulated and attended a private medical college for five years in which formal politics 'was forbidden for students'. Instead, BROWNIA said, she took on leadership and pastoral responsibilities as head of her womens hostel. Three years after graduating as a doctor, and choosing a union of 'love' over the concerns of her parents, her husband's support enabled BROWNIA to open her own innovative clinic in an under-

served low-income neighbourhood – a highly unusual step for a woman of her age, she suggested. She gave an account of working relentlessly to provide a comprehensive and sustainable private health service locally, winning the admiration of her former teachers. However, after some years, she said she reached a point of 'burn-out' and from this self-made, entrepreneurial position, she turned to employment in the aid-funded development sector. Within six years she had moved from working for a national NGO to her present, more prestigious INGO employer and proudly announced she has been promoted three times. Her latest job as a public health project manager satisfied her desire for 'hands-on experience' that would, she felt, ensure her future, but it did not present the professional challenge she craved.

One fine evening, I was so tired of doing, running business that clinic, and I found I didn't see sunset since four years, in the last four years. So I was very upset at that time. And just within one night I decided that I will switch, I will switch this clinical practice. I will go to NGO or public health.

I was manager in Dhaka of the adolescent program. From there I took this opportunity to learn, you know. Because I used to give technical assistance to the partners, to the NGOs and everything. I did manage 40 districts out of 64 districts in Bangladesh and I managed 250 NGOs in Bangladesh, local NGO and everything.

So in that prospect, I have landed... I should have something in hands-on experience so that in the next 30 years, I draw my future you know; where I should I be in 30 years. So in competition, I should have some... I have to compete with other colleagues. So, if I have some hands-on experience in implementation, so it will be good resource for me, for lifetime. So, that's why I took this project manager [job], I took this responsibility. Also, my organisation was searching for someone who can take challenge and [be] very diversified, having knowledge and

everything, of patients, and it was a big staff - I manage 50 staff. It's a huge complex mix, y'know.

In every stage, every changes in my life, I took some challenges and if anything, you know, if I cross a challenge and if it is on-going routine work ... I get bothered, bored. I don't know why. Now, in my job, I'm just bored. It happens every time. I don't know. It's my psychology or something. What I should say? I don't know. If anything's routine, if anything on-going, there is no innovation, there is no challenge, no more things to y'know, [to] learn, [to] gain from it, only just doing... (BROWNIA, Int.1)

BROWNIA and NAZMULHAQUA were seeking to establish themselves and by extension secure their respective families' social identity by forging new routes through social and institutional structures, developing themselves in the process of developing others. NAZMULHAQUA had become the first in his family to attend university and had high ambitions for himself and his work. BROWNIA, having strived to establish herself professionally despite compromising her own wishes and well-being, and although now 'landed' is continuing to seek out personal challenges and to consolidate a long-term career in the face of 'competition'. Like most other participants, but perhaps especially because of their more modest roots, BROWNIA and NAZMULHAQUA saw their own, and by extension their family's, social and professional development lying unproblematically alongside the work of interventionist development programmes. Indeed, their personal and professional paths can be seen as complementary, intermingled and their motivations interrelated.

Restorative narratives

A small segment of the sample provided what might be considered as intergenerationally restorative narratives, in which participants also situated themselves as developmental actors within a wider context, describing remedial processes of making good, of rebuilding damaged or lost social identities. This restorative endeavour takes place at different levels, from different class positions. It is a relational phenomenon that is evident at the lower socio-economic level in SHARIF's account; at the mid-level in KATARINA's interviews and at the highest socio-economic level in JUDI's data.

SHARIF described how his family's fortunes plummeted over the generations. His grandfather, he reflected, had 'huge lands' employing most of the people in the village, but his father and uncles squandered the family assets and failed to save or invest in the future. When SHARIF's father became incapacitated through illness, the family found themselves in very reduced circumstances. SHARIF's older brother had apparently inherited his father's profligacy and so it fell to SHARIF to take on the responsibility of supporting himself and the household. As a consequence, he said, he struggled with his own educational and professional development. At the time of the interviews, aged 26, he had become the main breadwinner for his extended family and had made 'something' of himself, 'changing things' not only 'for the workers' but also, and implicitly, rectifying the imprudent tendencies of the senior male members of his family.

You know, from the beginning, I was really kind of sensible and dependable and [a] very calm guy in my family and kind of mature, the

core, actually. I don't have any idea why, why it's happened, but [in] that situation and in anybody, any person they [could] do that, but I did [it].

I started my doing, my things off my own, so that's the way these things formed up, being, you know, really responsible... That's why they think I'm different from other persons.

I'm feeling good actually because, you know, everybody [is] doing their jobs, actually earning money is [an] everyday purpose. If I'm getting money, that's why I'm working here. But beyond the money I have something that is, I am working with the workers, I'm working with the development and improvement for prosperity of things. So it feels better for me that is 'yes I'm something, I am changing'. (SHARIF, Int. 1)

KATARINA's account is also in essence, the story of a family's fall from grace and her place in the subsequent recapturing of the family's status and dignity. She emphasized that her father came from 'one of the most aristocratic families'. After a family dispute over his choice of spouse – an honourable matter of principal as KATARINA portrayed it - her father forfeited his inheritance and settled with her mother in a place where 'living standards are low'. KATARINA's father, she said, made 'sacrifices' to be able to send her to a 'top-notch' school and university where she did extremely well despite feeling socially isolated – an 'outcast' as she put it - from the generally more privileged students. As the only child of her parents, she appeared to have become a lightning rod for her father's 'noble' ethic, echoing the sentiment described by BROWNIA.

My father actually came from a very well off family and he used to belong to one of the aristocratic families of the country.... they were well-off and

they were educated. They were an aristocratic family...Very popularly known in the country and they were very conscious about their image.

He walked out of his family and settled down in a remote corner of the country...where expenses are low, living standards are also low. But my Dad, belonging to the family he belonged to ... he couldn't give up his own ethics and his own values. So he successfully passed them into me. Although we lived in that part, we were not really a part [of] that city or region. (KATARINA, Int. 1)

As a teenager, KATARINA seemed struck by the disempowerment of women living in the neighbourhood around her, and particularly disturbed by the extent and level domestic abuse. She recalled how she worked her way through college and university, becoming involved in advocacy and developing a role for herself as mentor and counsellor to other young women, despite the opprobrium this garnered from conservatives in her neighbourhood. Financial independence and economic security was closely tied to her own and her family's social identity and had evidently affected her career choices. As the only child and anticipated sole breadwinner KATARINA pursued a well-paid career in the private sector and continued her advocacy work within a multinational company.

Because he [her father] belongs somewhere - he had to settle down to this level. And then he had to bring me up. So he tried his level best. And today he is happy that he made the choice. And he stood up for his own ground...for his own reasons...and not only that, and he's glad that me... his only daughter... his only child... So he is ... he practically is proud that ... I broke all the boundaries....today, not only, I am successful by the lord's grace, and also, when compared to my cousins...I am actually the most successful one so far.

...I had to...because it was just...I had to...I had to take the challenge. And I'm working, and I'm taking care of my own family...because my Dad is just on the verge of retirement now. So I am taking care of my family, taking care of myself. I'm taking care of my extended family. (KATARINA, Int. 1)

Her father's social position and orientation, his trust in his daughter and support for her education, combined with the family's living circumstances seemed to have contributed to KATARINA's commitment to developmental goals both for herself and for others. The family history had apparently compelled her to 'break boundaries' – in this case, it appears, simply by going out to work. This impulse to repair and restore the family reputation, to prove her father's worth as well as her own, had provided a strong impulse for her development work as well as for the development of her own career.

By contrast, JUDI admitted she didn't have to work to maintain her comfortable lifestyle, but she was similarly driven by family circumstances to achieve some kind of reparation and in her words, echoing SHARIF, to 'become something'.

My father, like I mentioned, he's a very big business man. He's one of the top few in Bangladesh at the moment...but he wasn't always so well-off. He struggled, and then he became a very big man. From a very young age, that ambition was put into me, that I have to become something, that I knew that I have to become something. I have to prove myself with such a business environment in the home. (JUDI, Int.1)

I've got a few stepbrothers, and they are pretty spoiled... and they didn't complete their education, because they didn't have to, and they had it inside their head, some of them got into drugs and some of them got into bad influence of friends and there was a lot of chaos in the family...there

was a lot of unrest at one point in my home, and when I was a little kid, I told myself, I made a promise to myself that I'll never put my parents in this situation again. And for that reason, I'm a very disciplined person. (JUDI, Int.1)

I always had it in me that I have to be very well-educated because my stepbrothers, they dropped out of college and my parents were very, very disappointed. And with that promise as well came that I'll be very, very educated. I'll make my parents very proud of me. (JUDI, Int.1)

Whether privileged by wealth or struggling financially, a sense of responsibility and differentiation feature strongly in these stories of 'triumph over adversity'. This conquering narrative is often associated with struggles for dignity, respectability and social acceptance and a striving to become 'good enough' (echoing D.W.Winnicott's (1971) ideal care-giver) in the eyes of others. Personal and professional lives were interwoven in a far more socially embedded manner than Fechter's analysis of ex-pats portrays (Fechter, 2012b). These stories were more than descriptions of individual career aspirations; they were narratives of emotional and relational attachments that entail reciprocal duties and responsibilities to self, family and others, enabling a more subtle, intimate and positive understanding of Wood's 'dark-side[d]' 'personalised transactions' (Wood, 2000, p.224, Wood, 2012, p.4). Here, the accounts demonstrate how a duty of care to family and the disadvantaged poor are linked, and how individual biographies and family histories are used as a resource for sustaining commitment to development work. How these classed stories of motivation intersect with gender is further explored in Chapter 8.

Class fractions: Differing orientations, ethics and engagements

A further dimension of 'class' that participants used to distinguish themselves, cut across all levels of socio-economic class position, and was associated with their family's occupational orientation. Two specific orientations, or 'classes' were frequently and explicitly mentioned: clear distinctions were made between their belonging to a 'service class', as in BROWNIA's account, or a 'business class' background, implied by JUDI's reference to a 'business environment'. Participants also detailed differing ethical and value orientations, which were embedded within these categories. The 'service class' was associated with a public service ethos, congruent with a view of development that is rooted in social solidarity and relational obligations; by contrast, the 'business class' was associated with an economistic, capitalist materialism that is individualistic in nature. These categorizations were acknowledged as inherited dispositions, and can be understood as constituting a conscious aspect of the participant's *habitus*. In at least three cases involving female participants, the 'service' and 'business' class orientations had converged in spousal relationships, lending a certain *connaissance* of the 'business class' to these 'service class' women.

A 'service class' orientation

The consistency of participants' predecessor's employment in the public service as opposed to the private sector was striking (see figure 5). BROWNIA's account of her family background and its affect on her career choices draws upon an oppositional understanding of the 'service' and 'business' class categorizations, which is evident across the whole sample. She demonstrates that her predecessor's history of working for the state - as 'service holders' in

the vernacular - had a powerful intergenerational affect, including through the female line.

My father's parents were farmers. They were a bit mixed. Some of my father's uncles were in service, some of them were in business. They were mixed. But what I have seen is that all my aunts are service holders. All [my] uncles are service holders. My father was a service holder...all my childhood ... whoever I saw, I've seen that they are service holders. So, I was very much attached with my maternal relatives in the family. So they all were in service. (BROWNIA Int.1)

This data exemplifies the Althusserian process referred to by Hoggett et al (Hoggett et al., 2006) and Grad and Rojo (2008, p.17) whereby subject identities are 'hailed by discourse'. Hoggett's argument for the acceptance of the notion of 'the changing same' in identity theory (Hall, 1996, p.2, citing Gilroy) suggests an historical familial disposition towards 'service' roles is leading to the development sector being perceived by these contemporary workers as an extension of, or perhaps a replacement for, public sector employment.

<i>Broadly classed by participants as:</i>	<i>Male participants fathers occupations</i>	<i>Female participants fathers occupations</i>
'Service'	Director of parastatal Government doctor 2 nd class government officer 2 nd class government officer UN/IMF technical professional* UN/National politician* School teacher* Local & national politician* Assistant to local/national politician*	1 st class Govt. officer (professional) 1 st class Govt. officer Director of parastatal Government doctor Government doctor Government engineer Military officer School teacher UN technical professional
'Business'	Businessman	Businessman 'Big' businessman 'Very rich' businessman
(Unclassified)	Expatriate construction manager	
* Indicates those fathers who were reported to have had direct involvement in Bangladeshi party politics		

Figure 5: Summary of participants' fathers' reported occupations. Almost all fathers were described by participants as retired or semi-retired, and are assumed by the author, in the absence of contrary evidence, to be Bangladeshi nationals.

While it seemed relatively straightforward for participants to categorise their forbears as either 'in service' in the public sector or 'in business' in the private sector a more subtle attribution of affective characteristics, of spirit, manners, attitude and ethos, was associated with these classes. These distinctive features were most apparent in the stories told by women who had made, in their words, 'love marriages' rather than formally arranged marriages, across this cultural class divide.

A 'business class' orientation

Three women in particular, BROWNIA, PIYA, and SHAYLA, have encountered, adapted to and accommodated the values and practices of what they described as 'business' class families. The women's biographical narratives indicated these unions garnered a fair degree of family disapproval due to what might be described as their cross-cultural nature, highlighting the significance of the business/service distinction.

PIYA (aged 43) provided a detailed illustration of how the public/private sector ethos was expressed in her everyday experience. Her father was a 'high-up' government official with a background in engineering. She described her husband's family as 'business people' with a different 'mindset' and attitude. First, she mentioned their seeming indifference to the value of education and later described an attitude to risk unlike her own family who were 'in a good place', surviving on a modest but secure income. Getting to know her in-laws PIYA noticed:

..there is lots of abnormalities which is [a] surprise to me because ...I feel that education is a priority but [it] is not that much [of a] priority to them. Their thinking, their way of style, their way of living is different.

They are very straightforward. They behave in front of anyone very badly, and they mention that this is - they express [in a] very straight way, ... it's a very, you know, it's a very, what kind of word I can say? Not gentle, it's very rude... this is totally unusual behavior to me.

..but some areas they are very quick. They quickly decide...they take risk very easy. Which is [not so] for my family because we are in a, we are born in a part that is a good place, so we feel uncomfortable to take

risk...So they are - very easily, they invest money, they think [in a] different way, they go, 'okay, so this amount they need to invest' totally, they are sort of business mindset. (PIYA Int 1)

PIYA described how this 'quick' 'business mindset' had positive applications with an example of how her father-in-law helped her set up a small beauty-parlour business, to supplement her income, taking care of costings and arranging installation of fixtures and fittings. But with the 'business mindset' came a more individualistic and highly commodified disposition that irritated PIYA. As she reported, some members of her extended family had high expectations of their entitlements and a tendency towards profligacy that was at odds with PIYA's values. She distinguished her own family values of collective civility, deliberation and a long-term view from the individualist, short-term materialism of her husband's family.

[They] stay together, all are sister, brother, father, mother, but when there is some financial problem... everybody keeps silent, nobody puts their hand in their pocket. In our family, when we all sit together and there is, for example, a need to buy six cups and plates. That time we'll say 'okay how much money is needed? How much we can pay for that? So, who can contribute how much?' We resolve this issue. But in their family, that sort of problem... I mean, the small, small [problem] but nobody makes a solution because you need to pay for that ... so they don't want to pay ... Their mind set is a business mind-set. That's what they're thinking. ... I feel that they think that 'if I have to buy [the six cups and plates] at the end of the day... who will own this?'... They are thinking in a different way. (PIYA Int 1)

My sister [in-law] is there, okay, 'I want to buy this dress, I want to buy this cosmetic, why [doesn't] my uncle give me, because he has more

money'. That sort of expectation is there.... I cannot handle that sort of - because I don't have that much extra income. ... if it's a necessary item, it is there....If it is your birthday that time I can give you a gift. ... I cannot call for a party that will be 30 people and you need to spend 30,000 Taka... it's not possible for me to do... if I wish to spend this money, it is better to spend this money for a poor family who can buy something, necessities, and also can earn. That would be my thinking, it would be different. (PIYA Int. 1)

Similarly, SHAYLA, a woman in her twenties from an established middle class family like PIYA's also talked about the differences between a business-minded family's values and her own family's 'social work' orientation. SHAYLA's father was a government doctor and philanthropist. She began by describing a loving and mutually supportive family upbringing and later contrasted her own father's love and 'adoration' for his children with the stern and distant character of her father-in-law. She also noted the hypocrisy in her father-in-law's attitude to alcohol consumption - a symbolic marker of religious piety. Her husband's family was portrayed as 'crazy', rapacious and profit-focussed and, she suggested, had very little sense of social solidarity or loyalty to a greater nationalist project of development.

'Like, my father used to love me so much, my Mom, Dad and I used to have like... all the members of our family, we were all like, together. I have aunts, uncles. It was a happy big family. But, I mean, we were really happy.'

If I come to my marriage, it's a completely, drastically, different, environment, different society, different background, where I am living now. My values and ideas that I have, into me, from my father and my mother and my family, this is exactly opposite to what my in-laws are. My

in-laws, they are very like, business people. They think about money, money, money all the time. And my father or my background is opposite to that. That thing is always into me from my childhood that I should do something for people. Like, I should not necessarily, for financial benefits, I should, I should help others.

Their ideals are different. I mean, they are rich but their ideals, their thinking, they will never think of giving something for the environment. They are going to abroad for, they have money, they're getting citizenship over there, do... 'what the hell, and go [to] hell with Bangladesh!' [laughing] (SHAYLA Int. 1)

The 'go to hell with Bangladesh' dismissal of the 'business' class in SHAYLA's account hints at an undercurrent of nationalism and national solidarity within the data that underpins much of the participants' commitment to development and social change.

Summary

It is not my purpose here to examine in detail the history of Bangladesh in terms of its social class formation, but rather to acknowledge the bifurcation of a 'business' class ethos from a 'service' class ethos as perceived by the participants. The history of Bangladesh's feudal land-owning classes, of colonial occupiers and nationalist administrations and the related development of a modern business or service class is beyond the scope of this thesis, but the distinctions made above alert us to the attribution, reproduction and expression of certain kinds of ethics that are inherent in different family histories. These are not static histories nor fixed ethical dispositions, but are constantly evolving within larger discourses.

This chapter has provided an outline of the different 'middle class' positions of the Bangladeshi development workers in the study. It has explored their socio-economic conditions to some extent and sketched the subtle affective and historic variations of ontology and orientation. The chapter has drawn attention to the varied dynamics of social position and the wider familial trajectories of which they are a part.

In all the participants' discussions of class position it is clear that these workers have a conceptual framing of self-identity that is at least, if not more, reliant upon the family unit as upon the individual. A range of socio-cultural orientations that are historically embedded, affectively perceived and morally inflected have also emerged from the data, and yet it is evident that such orientations are not static but are mutable, evolving and themselves subject to influence.

As hinted at here, the experience of education, and higher education in particular, has proved to be highly significant for many participants. In the next chapter I will consider how the experience of university and studenthood and broader, complimentary roles as mentors and tutors, has shaped their conceptualisations of themselves in relation to others and helped to develop the ethical and political frameworks that are employed in negotiating everyday dilemmas of development.

Chapter 6: Stories of education and the negotiation of identity

Introduction

The preceding chapter has endeavoured to situate and orientate the participants in what Bourdieusian theorists would regard as 'social space', based upon data provided in their testimonies and consideration of their perceptions and reflections on their family histories. As the classed stories have shown, education is a highly valued asset, particularly by the 'service' orientated fraction of Bangladesh's middle classes, however, there is no particular pattern to participants' early scholastic achievements. In accounts of their educational trajectories, at least four women explicitly stated they were high achieving pupils, while two male participants proudly declared their good school grades. Another handful of participants reported that despite access to relatively high quality education, they had done considerably less well academically. Two men described their schooling as having 'gone off the rails' and a further four participants, described themselves as simply average or 'not good' students.

ORLANDO, a 40-year-old project officer with an INGO, admits to his own 'under-achievement' and commented on the apparent wide-spread social preoccupation with educational measures at the expense of broader knowledge, articulating what he saw as the need to develop other 'peripheral issues'. He went on to connect the project of societal change and development with what might be considered as a reflexive project of the self.

My academic career was always horrendous - it doesn't sound good to brand oneself as a kind of underdog, or an under achiever...but I think even in Bangladesh, people give weightage to your grades more than what you know ... you have to develop the peripheral issues also. So Bangladesh I think - society is still in nascent stage... and people have lot of pretensions here.

[But] before changing the society, even changing the mindset of a particular person, you have to change yourself. Change should first come from within you. (ORLANDO, Int 1)

ORLANDO's analysis provides a neat summary of the argument emerging from this chapter as it begins to tease out a number of themes arising from participants' reflections on their experiences of learning both formally and informally and the experience of higher education. As a formative life-stage, life at university featured prominently in all their biographical accounts and affected their ethical and political outlooks and career choices. From this data, themes of omnivorous curiosity, autodidacticism, resistance and negotiation emerged, which featured elements of care and creativity, attentiveness to needs and responsibility that are relevant to later professional practice.

While these theoretical categories of capacities and ethical qualities will be revisited throughout the thesis, this chapter begins by turning attention to the data on how parental influences on early education were experienced and recounted. The second section explores re-evaluations and processes of identity formation, including instances where parental and social expectations were disrupted and the final section looks at the experience of university with

special regard to opportunities for empowerment through leadership and responsibility roles.

Richard Phillips, (2016) drawing on diverse philosophical, sociological and political works recently espoused the idea of 'sociable curiosity' that seems highly relevant to the findings on schooling and early life experiences. He recognised the double-sided ethics of curiosity, its connection with taxonomy and classification, and the 'advantages and disadvantages of an open disposition towards and interest in' others (Phillips, 2016, p.123), suggesting that:

[I]f we get it right, being curious about others can be a way of reaching out to them, forging relationships that can have particular significance in diverse and arguably fragmented societies.' (Phillips, 2016, p.124)

The participants' accounts also provoke consideration of Côté's notion of 'identity capital' to the extent that intangible resources, or the 'personality attributes' of 'an internal locus of control, self-monitoring, self-esteem' and 'a sense of purpose' (Côté and Schwartz, 2002, p.575) provide 'the wherewithal individuals use when engaging in transactions as they attempt to negotiate the tricky passages created by the obstacles of late-modern society' (Côté, 1996, p.424). The findings relating to experiences of schooling, identity formation and higher education also speak to Hoggett's (2009c, Hoggett et al., 2006) identified capacities for self-authorization and reflexivity in perceiving of oneself as an object of exploration and analysis and the ability to put oneself in another's shoes.

Patterns of early childhood experience, the arena of social and political engagements and circumstances occasioning re-evaluation were identified by Roth (2015) as three specific contexts from which her respondents' interests in aid work gradually emerged. What she found to be the unifying element in their biographies was a quality of liminality either expressed as 'a transition from one life stage to another, or a straddling of different cultures' (Roth, 2015, p.66). In this chapter, the emphasis is on formative and generative transitions: stories of personal development early in the life-course, which nonetheless incorporate encounters with cultural difference. The next chapter will pay greater attention to the participants' negotiation of, and adaptation to, different organisational cultures, ideologies and values present in the development sector by focussing on experiences of getting in, and getting on in Aidland.

'Let's taste it': Educationally omnivorous and sociably curious

ORLANDO and FARABI, displayed strong interests in the arts and literature and depicted a broad familial approach to education and an early sense of curiosity when they talked about their habit of reading 'out of the syllabus'. ORLANDO was inspired by his grandfather, a scholar of Sanskrit; his father, a high-level civil servant; and his mother an Urdu-speaking poet.

I used to study a lot but it was, you know, out of syllabus, that was the thing. When I was 6 to 13 years old I used to read voraciously and I completed most of the classics in Bangla if not in the original form but in the abridged form...[A] lot of people in my family speak English [but] my father, he never taught me English in that way, because we had... a small library, collection of books and most of them are English. So, when

I was very young I used to – I was a very inquisitive child in that sense.
(ORLANDO, Int. 1)

I read a lot of books out of my syllabus like stories, not the books from my syllabus from my school, I read a lot of stories, novels, all these types ... In Bangla, I mean like I started when I was five, I secretly read my elder brother's books, I thought I would be, some day I can write this way, I was thinking I could express myself the way these amazing, these guys, amazingly described, themselves. I thought I could do that. I thought I'm gonna be a writer, I mean ... Yeh so like six, seven. But like that was the point, actually, like I wanted to do something different.
(FARABI, Int. 1)

FARABI's 'out of syllabus' learning clearly generated thoughts of 'what exists and what could exist' (Foucault, 1988) in terms of his own creativity and identity, a point I will return to shortly. NEMO's account also hints at the beginnings of an emerging project of self-discovery, and strongly suggests a mixture of wonder and care for others congruent with Phillips' (Phillips, 2016) idea of 'sociable curiosity'. NEMO described his respect for his school-teacher father and the latter's encouragement of reading broadly, which led to NEMO's interest in people, coupled with an impulse to offer support. This, he indicated, laid the path to his later work in poverty research and his current professional role with an international development organisation.

[B]asically my effort in the education was minimal. ... But I wanted to be a good person. And I wanted to know every person and what they are just like. (NEMO, Int. 1)

I was quite interested in psychology when I was like 13 or 14 or 15 like that. I mean if I see someone like different, [who] is not kind of normal then I went there, and got involved with that person, spent time and tried

to really learn why this person is like that ... I was curious about people. Even [when] I see that one person with a bizarre hat or clothes ... I just followed him, why this person is like that? I begin to talk with him and I wanted to know what story he is keeping [to] become the person like that, what right now he is. And I wanted to, people who were sad with melancholy inside and is doubting himself. Anyway my hobby was to help them. (NEMO, Int. 1)

ROSE and MANJUL both mid-career project leaders, were less supported in their learning but spoke of finding satisfaction in self-directed education as solace from restrictions imposed by their conservative, and by their accounts, less well educated mothers.

My mother did not want to mix me with other people... So, my routine was to go to school and then come to my house. And then I have my own room. I made my own arena. Me and one tape recorder, I listen[ed] to songs and also read books. Many books. I can complete one book in one day ... This is my world. When I was in class 8, I wanted to learn music, but my mother said, "You don't need to". [She] *never* gave me encouragement in anything. So, when I [completed] my HSC, I [took] myself go to the classes for guitar... By myself ... I did everything. Because she didn't encourage me. (ROSE, Int. 1)

My father [was] a government high level officer ... and my mother was not that educated ... plus, she was an extremely religious type of woman... I read stories in books. I read many books when I was like 8 or 10 I was a member of the public library of my area...reading too many books!... reading those stuffs about the other world, other's philosophy, other's social norms and values. It really made me in a confu[sed] state about what I am learning from my family. So I was always wondering when I was [a] child, that, what's true? (MANJUL, Int. 1)

MANJUL's childhood 'confusion' signals a growing dissonance between his own

developing pluralistic liberal values which he later attributed to this curiosity about the world, and the conservative religiosity of his mother. This conflict, he explains, contributed to his being sent to a well-regarded boarding school at age 13 which, ironically, only fed his curiosity and thirst for difference and resistance to family 'norms and values'.

So, then I started to realise that people, actually, it's a different life. And, I started to think, or do things independently... I was always a person that, who try to do new things, with life. Taste new things with life, new adventures, new things. Lets taste it. And it was also a bit of umm, a subtle fight with my mother and my family. They are saying that, ... don't do it... but I have to do it ..I have to see... (MANJUL, Int. 1)

Four other participants, SHARIF, AZAIRAA, NAZMULHAQUA, and HELENA also felt they had lacked parental guidance or support for anything but a very basic formal education, but they had nonetheless, pursued further and higher education. These participants, unlike ROSE and MANJUL above, could be classed as part of more fragile middle class fractions, having little family economic capital and fractured or unstable family histories.

AZAIRAA for example, grew up in a rural village, where there was 'no electricity, no posh people are there, [a] rural village'. He describes himself as having been a competent but 'naughty' pupil, often skipping school. Aged 12 he moved to Dhaka, and reported that exposure to city life, the wider world and higher educational standards propelled him to pursue his education. 'No-one guided me' he says. AZAIRAA described how he made his own choices, actions and decisions in the absence of his father, who was working overseas. Like NEMO, AZAIRAA coupled his account of a self-directed education with a description of

his caring disposition. AZAIRAA's account may, from a position of identification with other, represent a relational form of social curiosity (Phillips, 2016).

'...from the beginning I always try to help the people, I can remember that. I always try to help people. When I was in class one or two, at that time I was really trying to help people...Actually I could say that I always fe[lt] luck[ier] than other people. Like when I see a guy who is [a] rickshaw puller - so I feel like he ha[s] everything like me, [but] just because of opportunity, he's in that position. So if I could give some help, it might be his life would be happier for him, for a minute, for an hour...'
(AZAIRAA, Int. 1)

Elements of curiosity and care, self-authorization and creative agency are perceptible in these biographical narratives. While at school, college¹⁴ and university, over a quarter of participants spoke about taking on roles as counsellors, peer-mentors or tutors. Whether intended in part to support themselves financially or as voluntary extra-curricular activities, such engagements with diverse others, may have both expressed and enhanced capacities for a kind of sociable curiosity that is empathetic, relational and caring. In addition, there are signs of a tendency towards self-authorization and subtle resistance to hegemony and hierarchy in the accounts: ORLANDO and FARABI's studying 'out of syllabus'; ROSE's claim to have 'made my own arena'; MANJUL's 'subtle fight' with his family's truths; AZAIRAA's 'naughtiness', truancy and subsequent autonomous decision-making.

¹⁴ In Bangladesh, 'college' is equivalent to post-16 education in the British system, offering Higher Secondary Certificates and sometimes British 'A' Levels as pre-university qualifications. In Bangladesh, colleges are often separate from secondary schools and may include residential boarding facilities.

These interweaving themes come together in a gentle narrative told by DANIEL, who spoke in glowing terms about his secondary schooling at a liberal English-medium co-educational boarding school elsewhere in South Asia. He remembered arriving on his own as a boy of 11, his uncle having just died, and being shown care and kindness by the teachers and other pupils. He proudly described naughty episodes of minor disobedience, but spoke at length of the camaraderie and mutually supportive atmosphere he experienced. The ethos behind the school motto seemed to have instilled a profound sense of awareness of difference in him and a sense of commitment to the tempering of social hierarchies.

[At school I was] mixing with different kinds of people, they have different ideas, they have different cultures, so you get to know different cultures, and you'll get to know many things, ... we're talking about many things, like some people, some of my friends they're talking about their daily lives, some are, some of my friends, they're talking about their life styles, so from there I get to the main knowledges... you'll get to elaborate your ideas in a more broader way. (DANIEL, Int. 1)

When I came back to Bangladesh ... people like, they have a separation of junior and senior... [at school] we always [had] respect for the seniors, but we ... like there was no boundary for juniors and seniors. We all are same, together. 'Since we are sitting under the same roof we all are brothers', that's actually our motto. Since you are staying under the same roof, there should be no senior and no junior because at the end of the day you have to help each other, so why should be there senior/ junior? (DANIEL, Int. 1)

The large majority, but by no means all, of the participants reported receiving significant parental support and encouragement for their formal schooling, and

a handful spoke about their parents' nurturing of a broader approach to education. There is an additional theme of autodidacticism linked to Phillips' (2016) notion of 'sociable curiosity' that is clearly apparent through at least five of the participants narratives of their early lives. This may be a correlate of what Roth (Roth, 2015, p.67) has identified as an 'inexplicable attraction' to development work. Phillips defines 'sociable curiosity' as a 'strong desire to know or learn something about others in society' (Phillips, 2016, p.3) and describes it as having two aspects: empathetic curiosity, pertaining to wondering and finding out *about* others; and relational curiosity as being curious *with* others. Phillips also makes a connection with the concept of care insofar as curiosity is held to result from a combination of wonder and care. Curiosity, Phillips argues, quoting Foucault, 'evokes the care one takes for what exists and could exist' (Foucault, 1988, p.328) and is therefore implicated in the expression of values, processes of categorization and, I would add, creative imagination.

In the next section we shall see how participants have learnt to manage societal expectations and social mores in order to pursue their own values and goals. In the introduction to this chapter, the quote from ORLANDO pointed to the 'pretensions' of Bangladeshi society and elsewhere in the data participants told stories of how social practices and social- and self-identities are produced, resisted and developed.

'Creating yourself': Negotiating dilemmas of identity

Alongside accounts of sociable curiosity and dispositions of care, depictions of self-authorization and creative agency featured across much of the participants'

biographical data. This section will demonstrate how the biographies of these development workers are subject to shifting economic and social currents and how participants experience and negotiate a pathway forward.

In the interviews, participants were asked to bear in mind the topic of negotiating dilemmas, and all of them, in one way or another, recounted stories of managing dissonances between their own desires and values, linked to identity formation and self-awareness, and the expectations of their parents, families and society at large. These identity conflicts often appeared to be negotiated by recognising and embracing areas of congruence whilst pursuing processes of self-discovery. RUBY, describing her arrival at an overseas university, referred to the discovery of self through having a concurrent 'binding' to certain values and behaviours, and freedom from certain societal expectations and subject identities. Although not explicitly mentioned by any of the participants, the gendered concept of *izzat* as a 'system' for governing womens behaviour was discernable in RUBY's account.

Sometimes you sort of feel like the expectations of how you're supposed to behave and things [you're] just supposed to do and not supposed to do. So it was a great experience to get out of that system and go to a place where family, nobody needs you, nobody had expectations of all things which you say or don't say, or do or don't do, so it was interesting to find that out about yourself - to see, to now have a binding as such, but not in like a parental sense, but more in a behavioral sense like you know, you're not necessarily ... the 'quiet girl'...(RUBY, Int. 1)

You know, you're not put into a box as soon as you get there, so you have a chance to, ... So you have a chance to sort of reduce this cover and identity. You want to make, create yourself. (RUBY, Int. 1)

NEMO and MANJUL provided sketches of how these 'binding' expectations and frameworks of values are passed down the generations. MANJUL, in particular, placed his creative choices in the context of wider historic and economic changes, as he explained how he managed to carefully sabotage his family's expectations.

In my village we are kind of a respected family – in Bangladesh teachers are respected a lot. So I had a picture whenever I was born that I'm a son of a teacher...So I couldn't do any bad thing because people will blame my father that he was a teacher and your son is doing something wrong. (NEMO, Int 1)

This culture has been changing... for like, 50 years...up till 2000, ninety-nine per cent of the parents - middle class families - want their child either to be a doctor or an engineer or a civil servant... either. Because at that moment there was no service sector ...it was mostly the government sector, ... public sector, and you either have to be a doctor or an engineer ... so, my father was a doctor ... I wanted my family not to push me to be a doctor ... I didn't take any of the biology course in my A-levels ok? So my intention was - so that they [w]on't be able [to] tell me to be a doctor..(MANJUL, Int 1)

MANJUL hinted at how the needs of a modern economy - the new 'service sector' - offers new opportunities, but rather than pursuing a particular career path he went on to explain how the choices he made in higher education were motivated by the need to maintain a respectable middle class identity whilst simultaneously providing the space to develop his own identity.

...[I]ndustrial engineering then ... it had 'engineering' at it's end, it sounded good, and whenever I told others ... they didn't know anything about it because it's a new thing. It has ... 'industry' and 'engineering' -

that was really, sounds good ... like you are in a good subject, so I took it. ... [The family said] 'Oh you are not going to be a doctor ... at least there is a engineer in it ... so go'. So I went there. Most of our students, when we went there, I discovered that they [also] didn't know about the subject! But they came here because there is an 'industry' and 'engineering' in the term ... and their parents want them to be engineer ... but the subject is mostly about management! [laughs].(MANJUL Int 1)

Like MANJUL, NEMO managed the expectations of his family and social milieu in a way that was performative of the values of the older generation, but which satisfied his own sense of purpose. NEMO recalled how, by the time he arrived at university, he was rather more interested the social life and opportunities for self-discovery than the pursuit of academic achievement. But as he indicated, this 'project of the self' required a significant degree of emotional labour and reflexivity.

So from whenever I was born I was supposed to go to a university because I should do better, because [my father] is a teacher, I should be good student. It's kind of presumed in society you know....so that's one reason why I went to the farthest university from my home so I could leave my identity... I tried to figure out who I am, and what's my faults, and what I can do, and no-one has to say, 'okay this is [so-and-so's] son, he's doing something wrong. (NEMO, Int. 1)

So I mixed in all the type of people. People who take narcotics, who do politics, who goes to mosque and pray all night and day...That's what I did really. I am making friends. I wanted to make friends. I wanted to hang around all type[s] of people. Like people who didn't get the certificate...people who came first, they are my friends too... I wanted my own identity, whom I am. I wanted to get rid of that influence and I

wanted a place where no one knows me. I tried to be who I am, and that takes courage to be. It takes a lot of courage. (NEMO, Int. 1)

RUBY, NEMO and MANJUL demonstrate some constituent qualities of 'identity capital' according to Côté (2005). This social-psychological concept refers to the 'intangible resources' of 'personality attributes' which include 'a sense of purpose', 'self-esteem', 'an internal locus of control' and capacities for 'self-monitoring' (Côté and Schwartz, 2002, 575). The use of these resources, Côté argues, for the developmental task of individual identity formation, can enable people to resist and act against social and economic influences.

NEMO's reflexive search for an understanding of 'who I am' reportedly took off once he was free from the constraints of home. He presented his process of 'figuring out who I am' in relation to diverse others, referencing distinctions in terms of moral behaviour, social status and ideological values. MINTU also spoke of disrupting a 'typical Bangladeshi' identity by getting away to a more diverse environment, echoing the theme of 'sociable curiosity'.

And I wanted to actually go [overseas] and - get lost. That was - I didn't want to go to university, I didn't want to go to college, I just wanted to, sort of, discover things. Again, not something a typical Bangladeshi would be like. (MINTU, Int 1)

RUBY, MINTU and MANJUL's families were all firmly established in the middle classes and, like NEMO, had inherited cultural capital insofar as their parents and families were university-educated. They related being able to manage family and societal expectations whilst keeping perceived social transgressions largely under the radar of the extended family. For others in more fragile class

fractions, such as AZAIRAA and FARABI, the conflict was more explicit and as NEMO suggested, appeared to require a degree of courage and self-assurance.

AZAIRAA described how he was strengthened in his capacity to resist family disapproval and social opprobrium by a strong sense of purpose, of wanting to distinguish himself from others in his social milieu. With an eye to the developing modern economy, AZAIRAA chose to pursue a vocational degree relevant to the garment sector. He explained how the industry was perceived at the time, over a decade ago, as something for 'illiterate' and 'foolish guys'. As he recalled, his deviation from classed norms elicited the disapproval of his family and friends and precipitated a temporary estrangement from his father. Despite the social and emotional costs, the desire to be different and to carve out an individual identity - the non-typical Bangladeshi in MINTU's account - appeared as an over-riding motivation. The 'unconventional' identity is also heavily present in FARABI's account of his educational trajectory and life-choices.

When I completed my HSC (higher school certificate), people said that you should go abroad, you should study BBA, (Bachelor of Business Administration), people start suggesting to me 'do this and do this', they are suggesting a lot.... but I always try to do something different. ...
(AZAIRAA, Int 1)

...I was always trying, I mean, I wanted to do something like, unconventional ... I will not go in a general way, like people go. (FARABI, Int 1)

FARABI described how he spent a short period of time in Europe awaiting university enrollment but for various reasons, was unable to take up his place. He returned to Bangladesh despite family and peer pressure to remain in Europe.

You know like from the middle class family, when I just leave Bangladesh, they don't think like you'll come [back] immediately. Nobody cares if you study there or not, the final word is that you're making money. So everybody was protesting. They said 'No you should not come, you must stay there, you're stupid, what are you doing there? You shouldn't come, why don't you just do something in a restaurant or somewhere?' I said 'No'.... It was the first time, I think it was the first time I have made a huge decision by myself against everybody, everybody around me. It was kind of crazy. (FARABI, Int 1)

FARABI recounted that he suffered ridicule and the opprobrium of Bangladeshi friends and family on his return. This socially transgressive decision, which made explicit his own values, is presented by FARABI as a turning point in the formation of his identity, that appeared to invigorate his sense of self-authorization, a resource which he later drew upon in pursuing a career with an INGO and disrupting other social conventions, including becoming an atheist¹⁵ and marrying a non-Muslim.

STUART, one of the elite and perhaps the most cosmopolitan of the participants reported that immediate family colluded in the management of his social

¹⁵ It should not be forgotten that in the light of a number of murderous executions of so-called 'atheist bloggers' and free-speakers, to declare oneself an atheist in Bangladesh has become a significant and courageous political act in itself.

transgressions and disruptions. Gendered and classed differences were apparent overall and for women the social pressures and levels of public scrutiny were far more intense, circumscribing their scope for resistance, subversion or transgression of social norms and values. The women's experiences, at the intersection of class and gender, warrant particular examination and this is presented in Chapter 8.

Côté' argued that the provision of 'institutional platforms for positive identity formation' could enable young people to reflexively resist economic and social forces that impinge upon their moral and ethical choices. Linking this to Putnam's idealized form of social capital based on reciprocity and trust within families, Côté suggests that a capacity for both independent and interdependent relations with others, developed through education, produces individuals who may become 'moral-ethical contributors to civil society, both locally and globally' (Côté, 2005, p.234).

The following section, through the stories of four women, will look at how university life as a particular institutional platform for identity formation provides enabling conditions for the creation and development of the self and through this pathway, the capacities and inclinations to work with and develop others.

'My very golden time': The significance university life for futures in development work

As we have seen, not all the participants' routes into and through university were easy: AZAIRAA describes having to manage and direct his own education; NAZBULHAQUA as the first in his family to go to university, struggled

financially; and SPIDER talks specifically of his own difficulties, his fathers early death and his mothers sacrifices in enabling his education. For these participants as with the preceding extracts from RUBY, BROWNIA, MANJUL, NEMO, and MINTU's reflections, the experience of college and university was seen as crucial to a developing sense of self and was associated with specific generative experiences of overcoming obstacles and balancing the needs of self and other.

The liminality implied by significant transitions between life-stages and episodes of re-evaluation or crisis were suggested by Roth as unifying characteristics in the biographies of development workers.(Roth, 2015, p.66)(p66). She also identifies political and social engagements as facilitative of an orientation toward Aid work. This section demonstrates how universities have acted as facilitating environments for social and political engagements through exposure to diversity and opportunity.

RUBY's experience of diversity at university not only developed her sense of identity, but like HELENA, BROWNIA, and JUDI, provided an arena in which to take up roles of leadership and responsibility. In RUBY's case, the experience of studying social science overseas, she said, had contributed to developing her feminist activism and had directly informed her practice, although she said she did not consciously contemplate a career in professional development work.

I never actually planned or considered that I would be so involved with the development sector and such. It was sort of by chance. ... I was looking more into social science areas and the university [in Europe], they had this interesting major called Integrated Social Sciences. ... I

liked the idea that it had a mix of subjects, social science and political science and things like that. Areas which I had not really had a chance to study here, and it also allowed me to move out of physics, biology, chemistry, but not be confined to any specific social science area, or like communications or business, or something. ...So yes that was the reason I got into that [degree subject] and ...I got a chance to try out a lot of different things, started up clubs, and things like that. It gave me chance to, you know, kind of find things out about myself, which I didn't really necessarily know. So by the time I graduated, I quite liked the idea of going into... areas like that, ...things I was trying, sort of playing with over there. (RUBY, Int. 1)

One of the most profound instances of personal transformation at university was recounted by HELENA, a woman in her early forties who repeatedly, and with tearful emotion, described her student years as her 'golden life' echoing, perhaps *claiming*, the language and imagery¹⁶ of Bangladesh's national liberation (see contextual chapter 2) as she describes her own emancipation. HELENA said she found a voice at university and with it a sense of identity and purpose, but her process of creating her new self-identity was not without moments of doubt.

Following her mother's early death HELENA, the youngest of nine, was brought up by her older brother in a protected military cantonment. She followed her other siblings to a publically funded university but initially, simply living independently in the student hostel was a personal challenge. Supported and encouraged by relatives, she quickly became a student representative and later

¹⁶ *'Amar Shonar Bangla*, the title and refrain of the Bangladesh national anthem translates in English to *'My Golden Bengal'*. Written and composed by the 1913 Nobel poet laureate Rabindranath Tagore it is a deeply affective ode to the natural beauty of the country.

a vocal political activist, but was concerned, it seemed, by the ambivalence this implied for her social and class identity.

My university life, I enjoyed very much, it was my golden life. I always [say] it was my golden life. Because that time was 100 per cent mine... It was my very golden life. After a long time I got freedom. Actually in our culture - when I lived with my brother and my sister, they were very good, but in my mind I was a little bit introvert. (HELENA, Int. 1)

This [was] the first time I gave somebody my opinion, before that I did not give my opinion to others. When I take responsibilities, then I do. From then, I learned everybody should give [their] opinions, everybody, from [when they are] very little. But I didn't get this opportunity, but when I learned this, faced this - enjoying [this] time, then I think everybody should, from [the] very beginning they should. (HELENA, Int. 1)

I was always concerned about my status, I am the middle class. [But] I am not living the very fast life... because I was, I always remember my father's voice... It was just [my] very first life, mixing with others. Although I, I thought I am a slum person, [laughs] and a middle class [person] so, I was concerned about this. (HELENA, Int. 1)

It is clear from her account that exposure to a wider social milieu at university and opportunities to take up positions of leadership and responsibility proved to be a personal turning point for HELENA. However, referring to the patriarchal authority of her 'father's voice' and a 'slum' identity indicate that she was concerned with preserving a feminine and respectable 'middle class' identity – a theme that is strongly echoed in almost all of the women's interviews and explored in Chapter 8. BROWNIA's account provided further indications of the kinds of structural constraints - social, ideological and pedagogical on the development of her sense of self.

What is noteworthy about BROWNIA's experience is that in contrast with HELENA and RUBY the institution she attended acted as a structure for the closing down of HE as a political space. BROWNIA had looked forward to the freedom to 'do politics' at a public university, but was 'forbidden' to do so within the private provision. However, she found other freedoms, which came with the added respect and dignity of a medical career, and channeled her energies in alternative ways.

No, [it] was [a] non-politics campus. So we are not allowed to do any politics. It was forbidden for students. ... In medical school it is actually very restricted, not to do any politics. ... But we are conscious about the changes, political commitment, political flaws, and political statements. We used to discuss y'know, among ourselves. But formally, we cannot engage. (BROWNIA, Int. 1)

[In the third year] we started night duty in the hospital. So it was another freedom! First time in life we can stay outside at night! [laughs] In my country, parents do not allow you to stay outside. It was great. It was great ... it was a mixed group. It was the first experience of having boys and girls at night, we're chatting outside, we're doing something professionally... y'know, giving [out] the drugs and whatever... ...the nurses were following, and patients are coming, saying '*Asalaam alaycum*, Madam. Please see my son. He is feeling bad. If you can come'. Then we go and see. So it was an honour you know, that I'm making some decisions. I'm you know -very much empowered now, [laughs] that feeling we felt, for the first time. (BROWNIA, Int. 1)

BROWNIA became what she called a 'hostel in-charge', managing the logistics and financial administration of a residence catering to the needs of 80 of her fellow female students, and combined this with an informal pastoral role

catering to the students' emotional needs. She identified a general lack of attention to students' psychology or pastoral care in the very 'formal and hierarchical' pedagogy of the education system.

I was a very good counsellor, everybody tells, my friends, everyone. ... they used to come... First of all they cry for five minutes and then they start telling what happened, they open up, yeh, ventilate. And then I give some suggestions or I counsel. I don't know what I used to say... but they did find some way to... overcome this situation, at least for some women... But that time it was very important that she should be comfortable ... These kind of initiatives and you know, in mobilizing students, I did a lot. (BROWNIA, Int. 1)

[O]ur Bangladesh education system, teachers are not that much friendly except a few schools who have got the early childhood things, y'know... Somehow they know, or they are oriented on the early childhood issues or the child psychology. (BROWNIA, Int. 1)

JUDI's experience of developing a self-identity at an overseas university closely mirrors other womens experiences although it was presented as an intensely conscious and de-politicised process. Like BROWNIA and HELENA, JUDI found responding to other peoples needs and to her own reparative impulse developed her skills and confidence.

I became the head mentor. ... organising all the orientation program, and I have been through so much during the first few years of my university that I actually know what students, international students can go through. So I was doing counseling session[s] as well. So whoever had any problem, they would come to me and I could coach them, and I could send them to camps, and I was organising all of that. I loved it. ... but only last year I did all that. The first two years were a struggle. So I

came out as a very, very strong person and umm, I was also very independent and I was very vocal, as in my presentation skills were very, very good, like I don't get scared of anyone. I can just go at a whole room and I can speak. That's how confident I became. (JUDI, Int. 1)

University life undoubtedly offered opportunities that were previously unavailable, to develop leadership, advocacy and caring skills alongside hard academic skills for BROWNIA, RUBY, HELENA and JUDI. KATARINA and RAINA told similar stories of personal empowerment. Like RUBY, BROWNIA and HELENA connect their university experience directly to their current work. BROWNIA went on to establish her own clinic before working for INGOs on issues of public health whilst HELENA now works as an advocate for children's and workers' rights.

Actually, in our country we cannot [listen to] any opinion from [our] daughters, or from [our] very younger persons, but [we] should. This is my feeling... We always try to pressure [them], just force them. 'No. This [is] not good for you, [do] not do this, don't do this' like this. - I don't [agree]. I got this mentality from my university. That is why it is my golden time ... I got self-dependent, and freedom. I feel different feelings. It was my kingdom! (HELENA, Int. 1)

Now I understand because I work with children, I work with psychological things. I've managed adolescent problems for several years under HIV/AIDS programs. So, now I understand how we should - what's the role of [the] teacher, how ... the ideal teacher should behave, you know? Now I understand. But we didn't get those kind of things from the teacher in our time. (BROWNIA, Int. 1)

Five of the participants referred to in this chapter, two men (STUART and MINTU) and three women, (RUBY, JUDI and RAINA), graduated from overseas

universities. NEMO and ORLANDO both conveyed a sense of having 'missed out' on opportunities to study overseas, whereas FARABI, AZAIRAA and DANIEL actively eschewed the opportunity. For participants in the established, upper middle and elite class families, an overseas university education holds considerable social cachet as well as instrumental value, but whether studying abroad or at home, in private or public provision, the experience of university life seems to have enhanced the development of the knowledge, skills, capacities and ethical positions that are currently employed by development workers in their professional roles.

Summary

Roth identified three contexts in which her respondents became interested in Aidwork which she connected to broadly sequential stages in the life course (Roth, 2015). These are loosely categorized as early childhood experience; interest emerging gradually from political and social engagements; and experience of crisis or epiphany. In my study, there is much evidence to support this discernment of contextual factors, which contribute to people's involvement in development. The data provided here offers a richer and more nuanced understanding of the inter-relatedness of these conditions and the resulting search for meaningful work. Roth (2015) identified a unifying quality of 'liminality' in the careers and biographies of the wide variety of aid workers she studied, defining this in terms of life-stage transitions and the 'straddling of different cultures' (Roth, 2015, p.66)(p.66). My participants are in a similar position, of what I have referred to more specifically in chapter 3 as metaxy - a

state of being simultaneously 'in-between' and 'of both', making identity and value choices according to the shifting contexts of contemporary life.

In my study, this segment of middle and upper-middle class development workers were intensively engaged in negotiating and resisting social constraints and expectations from early on in their lives. They are, to varying degrees supported by inherited liberal values and invigorated through experiences of social diversity. They are empowered by nurturing pedagogies and wider social opportunities, which lead to further feelings of self-authorization. These social- and self- identity-forming processes are as potent in the accounts of those who have studied at home as they are in the accounts of those studying overseas, at a distance from the social and cultural mores of Bangladesh. Overseas graduates are clearly returning to Bangladesh with enhanced liberal values and reflexive capacities that may represent a form of progressive political remittance, which is congruent with similar development-orientated dividends arising from participants' experiences of HE inside the country.

This section has provided indications of some of the institutional forces pushing participants away from certain identity and value positions and pulling them towards opportunities that are consistent with a public service ethos and which enable them to leverage their relative privilege for the simultaneous development of themselves and others. It has described how participants' school-based learning has been complemented by elements of 'sociable curiosity' and exposure to diversity, evoking notions of care and responsibility. It has also traced how participants manage and resist social expectations, holding on to certain values while eschewing others, in order to create new identities

and new careers paths for themselves. Participants appear to be seeking new social and professional identities congruent with their values in what they recognise as an increasingly diversified labour market.

In the next section, I shall consider in more depth how participants enter the NGO workforce; the disciplining affect that working in such organisations can have on them; and how some participants were exploring ways in which they can effect change beyond the domain of Aidland.

Chapter 7: Stories of Aidland: Getting in, getting on, negotiating the challenges

Introduction

The last chapter has shown how early transitions and diverse educational experiences that are self-directed, collegiate and punctuated by care and curiosity have shaped and developed the self-identities and capacities of these development workers. This chapter explores the stories that were told of how participants became engaged in their present roles and explores their experiences of working within Aidland for development organisations and beyond, as social activists and change makers. It will explore the kinds of internal and external negotiations and dilemmas that this work entails. Three aspects of Roth's (2015) unifying contexts of liminality are relevant here, taken in the broadest sense: transitions; exposure to other cultures and processes of re-evaluation.

In terms of transitions from one life-stage to another, the first section relates to the orthodox three sector model of development (referred to in chapter 3) and examines participants' accounts of push and pull factors associated with their options to work in the public, civil society or private sector. These factors relate to Etzionian (1961) modes of governance and are the basis for what Lewis sees as a 'tidy concept' disrupted by messy realities (Lewis, 2013). Weak regulatory institutions and the shrinkage of the Bangladeshi state's developmental capacity, when compared to the impact of growth in the private sector, appears to be one of the messy realities these development workers have adapted to.

The second section illuminates the liminal experience of working cross-culturally with 'international' staff, in INGOs and the affect of increasingly target-driven operations. This section, drawing on Botsis (2015), pays particular attention to the use of language which exemplifies the production of a metaxic or hybrid (Bhabha, 1984) position for participants caught between and within different and overlapping cultures. In the aidnography literature it is the poor beneficiaries of aid that are almost exclusively framed as Other. In this study, conversely, the voices of development workers from the Global South are heard to frame Westerners as Other, reversing the quasi-imperial gaze and going against the grain of contemporary development studies discourse (Kabeer et al., 2008). The participants testimonies illustrate ways in which national development workers experience the development sector as a contact zone (Conway, 2011) or 'interface' (Long, 2003) between citizens, organisational cultures and epistemologies of the Global North and Global South. Roth has noted how these encounters 'reflect and perpetuate North-South relationships at the micro-level' (Roth, 2015, p.128) and how different forms of knowledge and evaluation are central to these encounters. This view is compatible with Bostis' (2015) Bourdieusian perspective on the significance of field, capital and habitus.

The third section examines participants' reflections on affecting change beyond and outside the networks and institutions of Aidland. It pays particular attention to transnational experiences and the notion of emotional capital, as well as noting the potential for social and political remittances that are associated with the returning diaspora. Implicit in all these stories, and in those that have been

presented so far, are specifically gendered subjectivities and trajectories. The differential experiences of women and men warrant special attention in the context of development and will be examined in the following chapter.

‘Making society’, ‘doing something good’: routes into Aidland

Acknowledging the significance of transitions and boundary-crossings, Roth (2015) has noted how national aid workers have tended to turn away from more ‘traditional’ middle-class professions towards development work. However, the breadth of her study and the dominance of the Western voice it contains, leaves little room to interrogate why national workers might be attracted to development work or eschew other public and private sector employment opportunities. Lewis (2008) also brought attention to boundary-crossing in the careers of UK-based development workers who moved between public and third sectors, but there are very few examples of this zig-zag trajectory within my own study.

Overall, there was surprisingly little talk of options to work within state institutions or the public sector. Bangladesh’s reputation for corruption is well known and those participants who did talk about government bodies were highly critical of the self-serving and politicised motivations of those in government service. MANJUL spoke of ‘the power play, the corruption, the money ...control of the dorms, and everything like that’ in reference to how the two main parties had seized control of student politics, and this portrayal of a ‘partyarchy’ extends and applies equally to the civil service (Hassan, 2013). There was certainly no discernable appetite for employment within the state

bureaucracy and the shrinkage of the state in recent decades, in line with neo-liberalist development policies, also means far fewer professional opportunities exist than in previous eras. Historic structural constraints, such as entrance exams and compulsory regional postings restrict opportunities further. Only one participant, aged 43, spoke of passing the civil service exams and working for a short time in the public education sector. Her posting, some 60 miles from home, proved practically onerous for a working mother.

...your duty station is there, so you need to stay there, and also you need to look after these children ...which is totally - I cannot manage [it].
(PIYA, Int. 1)

Thus the public sector, which formerly provided employment for many of the participants' professionally-qualified and 'service-class' forbears seems to have become an untenable destination, and practically irrelevant to the participants' career and employment choices, marking a clear break from past generations for this segment of the middle class.

Employment in the private sector was more often within purview of the development workers in this study, demonstrating a greater general propensity for private/third sector boundary-crossing than for Lewis's (Lewis, 2008) public/third sector zig-zag. Just under half the participants, most of them men, had worked in the private sector at some stage, but only KATARINA, SPIDER and STUART had found ways to align their ethical values with a profit-seeking business ethos through involvements in CSR and social enterprise. Both KATARINA and SPIDER had 'carefully' chosen to work for 'MNCs' (multi-national corporations) because of their ethical codes and 'international values'

as SPIDER put it. FARABI and ORLANDO, after forays into commercial marketing, specifically chose to turn away from the corporate sector and its for-profit values. They described this work as unsatisfying and 'disappointing', with 'culture and rituals' that effectively pushed them towards third sector organisations where they were able to align their pro-social ethics with their professional occupations.

When I was a student I worked with ad agencies, they gave me huge money but that was not, like, that was not life, you know, the way they work, I did not like it ... It's not like I am making society. It's not something, like - nobody thinks it's good for the society. The first thing you have to do is sell your product ... what they are doing is not good for, like, it's good for nothing! (FARABI, Int. 1)

Several women reported oppressive levels of sexism in private sector workplaces including JUDI, ROSE, SHAYLA and KATARINA, who all rejected the pervasive culture of sexual harassment in nationally-run companies. The experiences of women who turned towards the NGO sector and the (not unproblematic) promise it offered as a refuge from gender discrimination is explored in chapter 8, Gendered Stories.

Roth (2015) found that international aid and development work was an attractive career option presented and supported by university curricular (Roth, 2015)(p.75) in the Global North. Whilst my data confirms that graduate status is an important, even essential, gateway qualification into NGO work for Bangladeshi nationals and an increasingly demanded requirement for international professionals only two of 24 participants, (MARIUM aged 26 and NAZMULHAQUA aged 28), had consciously considered development as a

viable career path and had tailored their university qualifications appropriately. As we have seen in chapter 5, NAZMULHAQUA's story is the most explicitly aspirational of the entire sample and the most concrete illustration of the alignment of personal ambition with moral and political values that all participants appeared to be seeking. MARIUM wanted to explore new curriculum opportunities, but was also especially propelled to work in gender and human rights after experiencing a painful bereavement, in line with Roth's (2015) findings that crises and epiphanies can act as catalysts for entry into development work. The gendered aspects of MARIUM's story are covered in more detail in chapter 8, but like AZIARAA and his RMG-related degree, she went against the grain when she chose her university course.

I faced a few problem like, ah, relatives and people asking me what is environmental science what do you do after your graduation? What's the field to work? I was always confused because *I know*, I knew well that no, there is a field in development sector ... But it was strange and it was [a] bit difficult to understand, make them understand, that no it's a good subject, very good subject (long pause) But my parents always support me, supported me, my younger brother also supported me. (MARIUM, Int 1)

For at least two thirds of the sample, participants' accounts of how they entered the development sector tended towards an explanation of their career trajectories in terms of 'chance' and happenstance, as RUBY's quotation in the previous section (p.231) illustrates. Reinforcing the Althusserian idea referred to in chapter 5 of being 'hailed by discourse', the participants accounts imply a kind of unconscious drift into the sector and a longing to 'do something', which is rooted in a general curiosity about the world and propelled to varying degrees

by subjective experiences of personal growth, including episodes of moral shock or crisis. NEMO reflected on the experience of his first job as a data collector and recalled his emerging thoughts and sense of shock when faced with the reality of extreme poverty.

So that time ...I had to go walking in the fields or hire a motorbike ... to collect data or to visit their home or talk to them. Like, I was burning under the sun, and I was hungry, but I was involved... But I enjoyed the job....because it's the fact that I'm doing something good. I'm trying to learn why they are in such misery and they don't find any way out. And so I enjoyed that dull job and I roamed, I love to mix with people, no matter who that is... [The] ultra poor...they're in [a] miserable place. Once I went to a house in Northern District who literally didn't have a single penny! ...So I didn't know that.... I wanted to help people so I really enjoyed [that] and I really was curious, how to solve this problem. I mean they're poor; they're miserable. So is there anything we could do about it? (NEMO, Int. 1)

A handful of participants, including DANIEL, SHARIF and ORLANDO gradually grew into their roles having initially taken them on as 'just a job'. ROSE and AZAIRAA, after reportedly suffering difficult personal circumstances admitted to being quite unprepared for their first jobs inside development organisations, but all these participants began to see how the work was congruent with their values and solidaristic identifications which in turn fortified their commitment.

To be honest, before I joined [the organisation], I had little information about [them]. But when I joined, I feel like actually there's a huge opportunity to do something for others. (AZAIRAA, Int. 1)

ORLANDO, a more experienced forty-year old who moved into development from the private sector was conscious of projecting an image of compassion, aligning himself with the discourse of the INGO and playing by the 'rules of the game' in order to get a job, but he also came to define himself by humanitarian rather than corporate values.

When I first joined the [INGO], it was just motivated about joining an organisation... they asked about why do you want to join? I just, I said kindly, I was just condescending - I said that it was a 'noble organisation, I would like to work with the poor suffering people and I would like to contribute my share of work, contribute my share of responsibility to this organisation'. Actually... Now I think I believe in that particular thing ... gradually I believe that sort of thing, which... now I can think in that way because I don't want to return to corporate. I just want to work in kind of, humanitarian organisation... this sort of stuff. (ORLANDO, Int. 1)

ORLANDO, like NAZMULHAQUA seemed highly unusual in having applied 'cold' to the NGOs they now work for through advertisements and 'circulars'. Ninety per cent of participants talked about how they had gained knowledge of opportunities leading to employment through networks of personal, social and professional connections. STUART articulated this feature of recruitment, which calls into question the value of qualifications or experience alone.

'It's 100% about connections... It's just all about meeting people.... The people you meet, who you talk to, just having like informal chats with people "Oh yeah, there's a position opening up here, you take it." That's how you get a job here. ...That's how things happen here. Which is sad. The formal employment routes are... well, there aren't any, I don't see that many. (STUART, Int. 1)

STUART aged 27, had access to considerable wealth, a prestigious overseas education and powerful social connections, but despite his distance from the socio-economic class position (see chapter 5) of most the other interviewees, his account highlights the significance of social as well as credentialized cultural and 'identity' capital in getting into development work. What is illuminating about STUART's story is that he appeared to be engaged in a process of mutual exploitation of this capital with his employers. At the time of his interview, he was hired by a tech-based social enterprise start-up with North American partners who were, in his account, undoubtedly attracted by, and benefitted from, his social connections and privileged access. Similar exploitation of the social identity, knowledge or status of local participants by Western internationals can also be seen in PIYA's story in appendix 9. These relationships may have qualities of Putnam's 'linking' social capital (2000), in NEMO's case connecting the young inexperienced participant with more influential potential employers, but they were also recognisably exploitative relationships inflected by obvious inequalities of power.

The professor, one professor I worked with, he has a classmate, who was a senior economist and working in this city. Both of them went [to university] together in [North America]. So that [guy], he requested to that professor that, 'I need someone good, who will work at low salary, but work hard' (laughs). (NEMO, Int. 1)

In contrast to the kind of helpful networks often borne of out of chance peer-to-peer encounters identified by Roth's (2015) study, the relationships most useful to national workers tended to be rather longer-established, trusting and affectionate. These relationships stemmed from familial ties, social contacts,

shared educational cohorts and professional acquaintances. PIYA was apparently encouraged to apply for her first development research job through an older sister, MANJUL had been encouraged by his university friends, JUDI was much encouraged by a university tutor and SHARIF, AZAIRAA and DANIEL had been introduced to their NGO positions through social and professional connections. At particular stages of their careers, at least half the women said they benefitted from the guidance of significant others: fathers and older relatives; unofficial educational and professional mentors; coaches or 'gurus' (as two women described them) whose encouragement had had a significant effect upon their careers. Peer-to-peer support proved crucial to the later stages of the careers of PIYA, ROKEYA and HELENA who since meeting through a mutual employer in their early twenties, have remained supportive colleagues and co-workers over a long period.

Employment in the development sector often appeared as a negative choice, presented as an alternative to the corruptly ineffective public sector and profit-centred machismo of the private sector. While graduate status is an important gateway to development work, social connections and supportive relationships with powerful others that imply patronage, exclusivity and exploitation also paradoxically offer opportunities for those oriented towards more equitable social change and development. In the following section, the experience of trying to progress both individual and societal ambitions, of 'getting on' in Aidland, is addressed with particular reference to how this Bourdieusian 'field' is experienced as a contact zone where national workers attempt to straddle cultural differences.

‘They’re different animals’: Getting on in Aidland

Once employed inside the development sector, many of the participants spoke of the ways in which they had had to adapt to the culture, values and neo-liberal managerialism inside international development organisations. This section focuses on how participants were required to adapt to these particular working environments and the internal habitus apparent in some organisations.

At the time of the interviews NEMO was a research analyst for an international development finance institution. At 32, he was approaching mid-career, consciously working his way up and still learning to adapt to the organisational culture, which seemed to epitomize a risk-averse, target-oriented managerial regime. He described getting to grips with this mode of operation and emphasized the cultural, spatial, linguistic and (potentially) ethical differences between nationals like himself and the international staff from the Global North who are typically in charge.

[A]t the moment, I need to learn, they are different. I mean the people they’re different animals, over their working... This is a different thing, they are different people, they are different animals, okay. ...[T]hey have a lot of terminologies and lot of complexities...so a lot of jargons I've never heard of. So this is, kind of complex things.

I mean, this [place] is people[d] with, posh people, and they are like, they don't move without AC [air conditioning]. So wherever you go you have to have a posh jeep, everything, or go [by] air. So this is bad, everyone is here getting rich by saying why you are poor....I don't feel good. But I don't have any choice you know. (NEMO, Int 1)

NEMO seemed to accept the challenge of working in different ways with these

'different animals', but the evident hypocrisy (Hancock, 1989, Easterly, 2013) and social/spatial distance (Smirl, 2015) fueled his disquiet. That he felt he didn't 'have any choice' demonstrates how these kinds of organisational cultures act as disciplining structures into which workers must fit themselves in order to progress. NEMO also noted, along with RUBY, NAZMULHAQUA and six others in a cluster working for the same consultancy organisation, the increasing pressures to deliver more with less, often to unrealistic targets designed from a distance and a heavy and complex workload. In addition, RUBY, PIYA, MANJUL and JUDI recognised the precariousness of short-term or project-oriented employment contracts. These are aspects of national development workers' professional lives that may be exacerbated by increased contracting-out and competitive project-to-project funding cycles associated with NGO-isation (Roth, 2016, Watkins et al., 2012).

'...one year, one year, sometimes six months, sometimes three months, so you don't know that next contract, is there any contract or not? (PIYA, Int. 1)

This is a really challenging a job, actually... its really hard to do my job because sometimes that we are working with ... well, its really hard to work with the foreigners to understand our countries culture and the other things. (SHARIF, Int. 1)

One mode in which organisational cultures and structures expose difference, reinforce existing hierarchies and shape the minutiae of relations was evident in the use of the English language, which was identified as a terrain in which difference was made manifest and hierarchies reinforced. HELENA, NAZMULHAQUA and MANJUL reported a significant level of anxiety over their

command of the English language, while conversely RAINA, a fluent English-medium educated speaker found her Bangla skills somewhat inadequate for communication with project beneficiaries. The friction at this interface between national and international workers (Crewe and Fernando, 2006) and its affect can be seen in a collection of stories told to me by MANJUL, who was a recently appointed team leader in a North American-based development consultancy organisation. His organisation has grown 'exponentially' and his salary doubled after being 'just a research guy sat in a corner' as he put it. This supports Roth's (2015) observation that development organisations often have to adapt to quickly changing circumstances and sometimes fill posts urgently with under-qualified candidates. MANJUL said he was encouraged by his Western line managers to reinforce his new position of seniority by changing the 'tone' of his communications.

These days I have become so regular...sometimes you forget that these are big things, these are ethical things. They become regular things, Like, just this morning, [laughs] one of my field team leaders... [sent] me email...saying that 'We want to do a study. So we want supporting help for it, in the tool designs. So can you please give me that by tomorrow morning?' ... It was very normal...a normal thing to me. Then one of the directors came into my room, he was copied into that mail, and he was saying that 'You're in a senior position...why, how come, she might be a team leader, but you are a senior level team leader, so you are in a senior position. So how come a team leader tells you... to deliver it, your support, by tomorrow morning? The tone has to be that "We want to start it the next day. It would be very helpful or kind of you if you can do it". So don't answer that email. You know? Make them wait!' [T]hey want [me] to do it because today [the field workers] are saying this to me, and tomorrow they might use the same language to them. But in the

corporate culture you have to maintain some order and some things. So these things become very regular. (MANJUL, Int. 2)

MANJUL recognised how his previously 'normal' horizontal modes of communication are regulated by vertical power relationships to 'maintain some order' within the 'corporate culture' and shape the behaviours that reinforce hierarchies. By the same token, MANJUL was also left in no doubt as to his own position.

I wrote an email [to] the country director, and three directors, four people. And I first said 'Hi', full stop, and then started my ideas. Just after five minutes one of the directors came in my room and said 'MANJUL, you need to be very sharp on communications. First, you do not first contact the country director. You first have to come to us. If we approve or if we feel that it's a good idea, then we will go to the country director ... second ...how come you first said 'Hi' to them?'

So you cannot use 'Hi'. So these are the very new things...that I never even thought, that 'Hi' could be a bad thing, you know? So this is also a difference of culture, difference... of just, hierarchy ... communications style, many things. So now I get very confused often, still ... when I start communicating with the top management, but I'm learning and I think I've improved. But I read my mail three to four times before I send it... ... so you, if you are a bit ...so you...if you just follow, be a bit smart, then you will just understand the tone. (MANJUL, Int. 2)

There was evidence of other ways in which communication is disciplined and circumscribed by organisational cultures engineered around strict performance and efficiency indicators. RUBY makes the point that she is often not in a position to raise questions about the efficacy of projects and that problems encountered can only be discussed in limited fora. The dearth of mechanisms

for an effective and constructive upward-facing critique is a feature of PIYA's story, as detailed in appendix 9.

... a lot of the times, you know something's not working and you don't necessarily have the position to portray it as not working. I personally try to avoid talking about it then... I just try to avoid talking ... I wouldn't mention [that] side of it at all ... there are platforms where it's understandable and open, and the idea is to learn from mistakes in the project, but then there are a lot of platforms where you just don't - because it wouldn't be the right place to bring it up. (RUBY, Int. 2)

About a quarter of participants, mostly female, criticized the lack of training and opportunities for career progression. Only one participant, ROSE, referred to training that had had a substantial impact on her career progression. MARIUM spoke of competition between colleagues for training places that were sometimes allocated inappropriately despite what she termed as 'participatory' decision-making.

I am deprived here. I think so... Sometimes someone argues that 'No, I should be going here' or 'No, I should be going there', but our team leader, our seniors' job is to do the equal participation, take the participatory decision. But when senior peoples they're like this, then we can't, we have to stop there because they are very senior. If I raise my voice, before him or her, it will be misbehaviour, you know? ... But when an irrelevant person, in an irrelevant post attends this workshop, they can not work it out. They don't share it, they don't know how to share it, okay. So, sometimes I think it's ethically - I'm not sure, but this kind of problem sometimes happens. (MARIUM, Int. 2)

Almost all participants talked in different ways about learning and getting to know the mores and the lingua-franca, not just the buzzwords (Cornwall and Brock, 2005) of the development sector, and were, or were becoming, adept at

'playing the game' by the given rules and values. This shaping of the 'tone' of working relationships across divides of class, ethnicity and culture could be said to be more than an indication of the increasing professionalisation of development workers. In the absence of the power to question the dominant power itself as RUBY and MARIUM have explained, rather than being experienced as dilemmatic spaces, the field of Aidland may perhaps be more accurately characterized as a disciplining space in which participants may have to make choices between compliance (de Jong, 2009, Dar, 2014), mimicry (Bhabha, 1984) and resistance.

Botsis (2018) has recently expounded on how 'the micro-politics of power are refracted through ideological categories' of class, language and ethnicity, in postcolonial contexts. Her work covers South Africa in particular where, as in Bangladesh, language struggles were catalytic for the independence and liberation movements, and argues that material economies and Bourdieusian 'fields' such as post-apartheid schooling, or in this study, professional engagements with Aidland, have the power to position subjects hierarchically in terms of their proximity to cultural capitals such as language. Material conditions of contractual precarity, lack of training and ill-preparedness; and tangible inequalities of pay and protection between national and local workers feature strongly in the literature on humanitarian and development workers. Although only briefly highlighted here through the 'small stories' (Phoenix, 2013) told by MANJUL, the data overall suggests language is but one mode of operation that functions to position participants in the social space of Aidland and reinforces an effectively racialised hierarchy (Crewe and Fernando, 2006, Eriksson Baaz,

2005). The dominant and paternalistic power held, and often embodied, by workers from the Global North over workers from the Global South may contribute to a concomitant unsettling and uneasy 'emotional habitus' borne out of these inequalities that resonates with the accounts of international workers' experiences (McWha, 2011, Eyben and Turquet, 2013, Swidler and Watkins, 2017).

Having explored accounts of working professionally within conventional NGOs and INGOs, the next section offers a brief overview of how a handful of participants positioned themselves as engaged in processes of change at a personal level and with citizen initiatives (Pollet, 2014) and social movements on the margins and beyond Aidland.

'The possibility of doing different things': development beyond Aidland

By taking a broad view of national 'development workers', not necessarily restricted to those working in NGOs, this study offers a glimpse into how this relatively well-resourced group of people are engaged in efforts for social change in different ways and at different levels. Their activities and approaches challenge and dissolve the division between doing development work in 'Aidland' and the realities of 'normal or 'real' life, that is a recurrent theme in the testimonies of international workers collected by Roth (2015). The data presented in here illustrates how various forms of economic, social and cultural capital are integrated and leveraged by people who, like their international counterparts have a commitment to social change, but who have qualitatively

different experiences and more immediate, deep rooted and perhaps more complex sources of inspiration and support.

Personal relationships with local people in domestic and professional contexts are often characterized by international development workers as evoking feelings of ambiguity, guilt and discomfort in the face of stark social inequalities (Heron, 1999, Fountain, 2011, Eyben, 2014, Cook, 2005). However, almost all of the national development workers in this study characterized the arena of personal relationships as one in which they felt able to behave 'ethically' by acknowledging and distancing themselves from the visceral and symbolic violence inherent in such inequalities.

The egalitarian framing of these micro-encounters is most clearly exemplified in the accounts of those with relatively politically active 'service class' parents. RAINA, from a liberal background, with both parents in professional jobs, recalled an incident from her adolescent years. She explained her disapproval of the way a school-friend once viciously scolded a domestic worker, saying 'I would never make a person feel lower'. Similarly, SHAYLA offers an example of her approach to personal relationships at home and at work, which acknowledges power differentials and illustrates the importance of the intergenerational lineage of values, or inherited habitus, that is in play (see chapter 5). SHAYLA, from a 'service class' family, describes the scene at home with her 'business class' in laws.

...like, you can always shout [at] the people who are under you... like our culture, and, sometimes in my private life, like I have a lot of maids in my house. I can really shout on them because everyone shouts at home,

everyone, but I never...I never do that because I could not because...I will never do that. The option is there... In work life, same thing. We have caretakers, boys, drivers – I have people under me. I can really do many things with them, but I never, ever... this is the thing – I cannot. I never... I don't do that... Why I'm like that? Because of my father and my family. They are like that. I saw them like that [across] my entire life. But if I was born and brought up in my in-law's place I will be, like, shouting... (SHAYLA, Int. 2)

SHAYLA and RAINA provided examples of how participants attempt to resist local classed patterns of relating, bolstered by familial pre-dispositions. The hierarchical social norms that are resisted are not solely rooted in the cultural context of Bangladesh. MINTU from an elite, politically active, service class background, refers to his experience in a high-pressure corporate environment overseas and links the behaviour of a senior manager to his current practice as a team leader in Bangladesh.

He was just such an absolute nightmare that you work with, because he would screw-up things, and I was the youngest obviously in that chain, and he would blame the next guy, the next guy would blame - and until all the fault was mine.

And so I saw how the world worked. And I made the decision that I would not do the same thing. And I've been very happy that I've never done that. (MINTU, Int. 1)

These orientations can be seen as ideologically-based and historically supported stances and resistances similar to those found in Yarrow's (2011b) study of national development workers in Ghana. Yarrow's participants shared a common bond deriving from the political struggle for independence whereas

RAINA, SHAYLA and MINTU, as well as NEMO and DANIEL are the offspring of political activists and are resisting social hierarchies buoyed by familial orientations as much as direct attachment to collective struggles. It is clear that these participants, as with the majority of the sample, understand the personal, domestic and professional realms as ones in which significant political choices and expressions of values are made. This personalizing of ethical conduct may also suggest how participants attempt to construct a cohesive sense of integrity across their professional and personal lives, in the context of institutional constraints and limited access to formal political structures.

Stories emerged from at least a third of the participants of their voluntary work in different types of service provision and activism, reflecting Kaldor's spectrum of 'liberal' and 'radical' social action, which was interweaved with their paid development work. These extramural activities ranged from helping out at an orphanage to feminist campaigning, activities that would be considered within the scope of civil society and the work of the 'third sector' in the Global North (Hoggett, 2009c, Lewis and Gellner, 2010). The data indicated that the more affluent development workers see their unpaid activities as an opportunity to follow their own agendas freed from programmatic constraints and perceived neo-colonial and neo-liberal patterns of control. RAINA, aged 25, the youngest of the sample, spoke explicitly about her desire to keep a critical approach to working for a donor-funded INGO to avoid the 'rigidity' of this framework. Her sense of financial security enabled her, she felt, to concern herself more with 'issues' and ideals than 'survival'.

I'm scared, that if I continue in, in development, in kind of organisations that are slightly rigid, I am scared that I will turn very jaded... Like, I do want to...do my own thing, may be do it for NGOs or whatever, or for people who, or for myself, but not be a part of the kind of 9 to 5 development job... I think if I keep doing this... I think this will turn into just a job for me one day, and I am gonna stop caring so much about, about making a change, all that kind of stuff... (RAINA, Int. 1)

I have met a lot of people in development who are just kind of like NGO hopping, cos they're like 'oh this is a better job, that's a better job...' the issue is not so much a big deal for them. For me, because I don't have to take care of the family, I don't have to support my parents, and I don't have to like feed myself really, the money is not a very big issue for me... it's not survival money. (RAINA, Int. 1)

I think, I think cynicism is good sometimes... I like, I haven't come to point where I don't *care*, that for me it's just a job....even if I have become more say, practical minded about it, and less emotional about it I still very much, I still do think 'Oh this is like something needs to be fixed, it's bothering me still' you know. I hope it never stops bothering me! (RAINA, Int. 1)

At the same time as seeking new ways of working in development, RAINA's employment within the INGO has enabled her to become 'less emotional' but still 'bothered' by issues. This learning of emotional management speaks to the capacity to be both passionate and thoughtful, to be aware of emotion without suppressing emotion, that Hoggett identified in UK workers (Hoggett, 1990, Hoggett, 2009c). Materially, development work inside Aidland can facilitate development work outside or on the margins of Aidland, and vice versa.

RUBY, aged 30, described herself as a freelancer, she combined paid work in a 'niche' aspect of development with voluntary activism and advocacy, and has resisted the possibility of a long-term career in Aidland. RUBY saw her paid and unpaid work as intertwined, as equally important parts of her effort to effect social change.

I'm not so much career-oriented as like, doing diverse things at the same time... For me, it's more like, does this allow me to do a lot more things than I'm doing currently? Would this be more interesting for me to do this? So ladder-wise, freelance is not necessarily climbing the ladder, because, I mean it gives me... the freedom to be in different destinations or positions in different places, but it's not a straight up the ladder.
(RUBY, Int. 2)

I don't see myself going and becoming a country director or whatever. I'd rather see myself being in a place which allows me the possibility of doing different things ... in the next two years, I'd rather have the possibility of doing a lot more different things in different aspects. Because I have been [on] the ladder... for the last almost eight, nine years... And I've seen how it's going and where it's going, and if I wanted to I could do that. (RUBY, Int. 2)

The desire to do 'diverse things' rather than climb a career ladder, is similar to the reluctance of some development workers in the UK and elsewhere to move away from the 'coal face' of work with beneficiaries into management positions (Hoggett, 2009c, Heron, 1999, Eyben and Turquet, 2013). The opportunity to operate free of 'rigid' institutional structures and avoidance of 'how it's going and where it's going' contribute to the pulls and pushes affecting RUBY and RAINA's involvements with Aidland and in other forms of social activism.

For RAINA and RUBY, their economic capital facilitates other more satisfactory routes to affecting change beyond the orthodox NGO-dominated paradigm. ANIKA provided another example of how class privilege is harnessed for development activities. ANIKA might be considered an 'accidental aid worker' according to Pollet' et al's (Pollet, 2014) analysis but in contrast to the individuals they studied from the Global North who are fuelled by their 'outsider' experience of the Global South, ANIKA tells a story of her own direct experience and struggles with gender-based violence. These struggles precipitated ANIKA's move to the Global North, and her increasing involvement in fundraising for disaster relief in back in Bangladesh. Echoing Roth's association between development work and episodes of epiphany, ANIKA was, by her own account, much changed by this experience and astonished at her fundraising success, prompting her return to Bangladesh to establish a charitable organisation. ANIKA described herself as a non-practicing Muslim, and explained how she eschewed a materialist trajectory and how what she sees as the transformative work of her organisation is supported by her wide range of social contacts in the prosperous Bangladeshi diaspora:

They trust me. They would give me the money.

I could have chased a corporate job that would pay me maximum a hundred thousand dollars a year, *maximum*, right? And then I would probably own a nice home and drive a nice car but that's it. But I always wanted to serve y'know... I could see how people trust me and how I can be a catalyst and how I can - you know, with the advent of the internet, how you can use that as a system to feed your purpose - and the result is amazing. (ANIKA, Int. 1)

The organisation and its various projects targeting the poor are similar in form to the growing number of Northern-based 'citizen initiatives for global solidarity' mapped by Pollet et al (2014). But ANIKA's trajectory also has commonalities with processes of reverse migration (Chacko, 2007) or the 'brain gain' phenomenon (Hunger, 2002). Like Chacko's reverse migrants ANIKA is part of a privileged elite and has returned to Bangladesh with enhanced cultural and social capital. Like Pollet's citizens initiatives, she was using technology to harness this enhanced social capital, bringing wider diasporic resources into the country. ANIKA already had considerable economic capital and, contrary to the highly economic, rational-choice model of the 'brain gain' phenomena, is not 'investing' in Bangladesh for her own material profit. She has entered into what she calls a 'spiritual contract', 'investing' to continue the metaphor, what might be conceived as her emotional capital (Reay, 2004a). At the time of interview, ANIKA had reached a liminal position in which she was contemplating her transition from private benefactor to paid development worker.

So, the ethical question that I am facing right now, since I have to give all my time here, it's only fair that I earn my living through it. For so long... we didn't have any money.... But now, you know, there is this income-generating opportunity, a social enterprise, and I am working full-time behind it... But, that has been a tremendous tug of war, you know, because of my own mindset that, you know... That, 'Oh, my need comes the last', that is not an effective mindset and you can't really go too far [with] that. ... My spiritual contract was 'no overhead charges [to the NGO]', and now, my overhead charges are significant.

...I had a lot of conflict ... do I charge from the pool of money or do I not? I haven't so far, and that has created a serious dent in my personal available resources. (ANIKA, Int. 1)

ANIKA's sense of moral ambiguity and process of self-analysis and evaluation of what is 'fair' was pronounced at this boundary between her voluntary and professional identities. She was involved in extensive reflexive emotion work, reflecting the 'continuous engagement with the inner self' that Hoggett (2009c) found to be fundamental to the ontological stance of successful development workers in the UK. Pollet (Pollet, 2014) noted how the citizen initiatives of 'accidental aid workers' can struggle, initially, from a lack of professional expertise. This was so for ANIKA, who built a capacity for practical and business solutions through her own research and learning practice, and furthermore, invested in the services of a mentor/coach to help build her emotional and psychological capacity – what could be called her 'emotional capital' – to support her through these dilemmatic situations.

Whereas ANIKA was embroiled in an ethical dilemma over her professional identity status, MINTU, another reverse-migrant (Chacko, 2007) faced more tangible and existential threats. When interviewed, he was running his own enterprise, which supported his pro bono human rights work. Given the challenges of working with weak and corrupt judicial institutions and the political sensitivities human rights work can entail, he felt he was putting himself and his family at some risk, but his independent economic position and the wider affective contexts of his family history and orientation supported his actions.

I mean I go to meetings where, in this environment, potentially I will be in jail at some point. I know people who are being abducted, I know people of my circle who are... the activist circles, whose lives are in danger... it's just like [I'm] sort of saying, 'Look, I'm willing to lose my business to do

this, because I'm willing to lose my—and I'm willing to take a hit'.

(MINTU, Int.1)

We have been successful materially which again allows us to do certain things. I mean I have money set aside for my son's college and if I die tomorrow, my family is going to be setup, there's going to be help. I mean, that makes taking risks easier, right? I mean, a lot of times, a lot of activism does come from the ivory tower, it does come from people who are fairly comfortable because they can take [more] risk, than someone who has to worry, if they're not around, 'What's going to happen to my kids?' ... most families wouldn't support their children to do things that will put them at risk. My family, there is. So like, "Okay, go ahead. Finally. Finally, one of our nephews wants to do something."

(MINTU, Int.1)

Roth referred to this kind of voluntary risk-taking as 'edgework', noting that aid-workers acknowledge that 'dangerous situations are unavoidable and just need to be dealt with' (Roth, 2015, p.91). However, whereas international aid workers in situations of physical risk are enabled by their organisations to either separate themselves in securitised compounds or simply and quickly 'abandon a mission' (Roth, 2015, p.91), national activists like MINTU are deeply embedded in the societies in which they live and work and have very little of this kind of formal protective support or organisational infrastructure. The need for complementary psychological and emotional support for vulnerable aid workers is increasingly acknowledged, but there is a discernible sense in which these 'change-makers' at national level were going it alone. Although MINTU and ANIKA's stories may be exceptional, they are dependent upon the resources and support, materially, socially and psychologically, that they can mobilize

themselves, externally from their compatriots and peers, and internally within themselves and their attachments to family histories.

A growing body of work harnessing theories of cultural diffusion and circulation is shining a spotlight on the concept of social and political 'remittances', focussing upon the affects these remittances have on economic growth and transnational politics in developing and post-conflict contexts (Boccagni et al., 2016, Levitt and Nyberg-Sørensen, 2004, Boccagni and Decimo, 2013, O'Mahony, 2012, Hanifi, 2006, Ahmadov and Sasse, 2016). Consideration of the type of transnational social, political or perhaps 'psychosocial' remittance suggested by MINTU and ANIKA's stories is beyond the scope of this thesis, but provides an ample field for further investigation.

Summary

What is clear from this chapter is that the development workers represented here have harnessed their economic, social, and cultural capitals and their emotional capacities to find and pursue what they frame as meaningful work in Bangladesh and have integrated developmental social action into their personal as well as their professional lives.

In considering the life-stage transitions, boundary crossings and liminality of the lives of development workers in Bangladesh, it might be proposed that institutional weaknesses in the public sector are pushing those with an historic or experientially-acquired public service orientation to look elsewhere for occupational satisfaction. For some, involvement in the private sector is contingent upon its perceived 'international values', suggestive of transparency

and greater gender sensitivity, for others the private sector does not fit easily with their apparent post-material values (Inglehart, 1981). Meanwhile, the development sector in Bangladesh is increasingly dominated by pressure to conform to a neoliberal, managerialist model of development (Neusiedl, 2016) which brings with it disciplining mechanisms, be they requirements for a flexible workforce or the minutiae of language, that maintains and reproduces the hierarchical social order. This section has provided examples of how participants adopted a range of alternative strategies, harnessing their own particular resources, to resist and alter the status quo: from employing everyday civilities in respect of subordinate others, through combining paid development work with unpaid volunteerism, to 'going it alone' in their own citizen initiatives. In this way they might be said to be performing their habitus, seeking a cohesive integrity to their sense of self and social identity.

This chapter has presented examples of participants acting in contexts where different capitals are differently valued, social structures and subjectivities are mutually constitutive and agency is in a generative relationship with constraint in a way that is consistent with Botsis's Bourdieusian theoretical framing. In the next chapter, this generative relationship between constraint and agency is made all the more apparent in the stories the female participants told about how gendered subjectivities cut across and affected their lives as development workers.

Chapter 8: Gendered stories

Introduction

Chapters 5 and 6 have covered inter-generational inheritances in terms of social locations and the dynamics of class; and the formation of identities and the liberating social space provided by education. Chapter 7 explored the participants' efforts to align their values with their actions and the experience of Aidland as a disciplining space. Throughout this study, gender has overshadowed every aspect of the development workers' experience and accentuated the liminal, metaxic and marginal positionalities of women. Considering the importance given to 'gender mainstreaming' within development discourse, the distinct gendered experience of the women in the study deserves a separate and broader analysis and addresses some familiar themes in more detail.

The female participants shared certain characteristics that made them appear generally more of a piece than the male participants, indicating important continuities of experience. Firstly, the women were more consistent (60%) in describing their backgrounds as part of the established, upper middle class than men in the study. Although this may be a feature of the recruitment method (see chapter 4) the discrepancy might suggest a greater visibility, accessibility and presence of established middle class women in the development sector than women (or men) from more precarious backgrounds.

Secondly, the women tended to be employed in roles that specifically

addressed the marginalization of other women: in gender-related monitoring and evaluation, and on projects related to health, nutrition, domestic violence, women's employment and extreme poverty (which in Bangladesh disproportionately affects women). Thirdly, in every one of the women's accounts there were examples of how they have faced gender discrimination, and more precisely, social pressure to conform to a socio-culturally defined image of respectable womanhood and 'the pervasive notion of what a 'good girl' or 'good woman' is and how she is expected to act' (Cornwall and Edwards, 2010, p.4).

Another way in which the women's data differs from the men's is in the way in which particular themes emanating from the women's interviews are tightly woven into each other. This knitting together by female development workers of stories about expectations, employment, sexism, feelings, marriage, fathers and respectability is reflective of the relationality and intersectionality of women's experience not just in Bangladesh, but across the world. The themes sketched here represent some of the multifaceted narratives of how these women are positioned and how they see themselves in on-going struggles between following their desires for autonomy (socially, financially and bodily) and risking social, economic and personal losses or at worst, physical harm.

This chapter is arranged in three sections, the first addresses the obstacles and constraints to autonomy that women reported; their identifications with other women and the effects of disrupting, challenging or negotiating these constraints had had on their life-courses and careers. The abiding affect of patriarchal dominance can be discerned in the context of social expectations and the significance of marriage, and in problematic experiences of work in the

private sector and in the development sector itself. The second section explores how women find their positions in this milieu both dilemmatic and transformative, and the third section addresses individualised and relational mechanisms of coping and support, and in particular, the role of the father figure in clearing a 'pathway to empowerment'. This reported phenomenon suggests consideration of an *affective* patriarchal contract that is being negotiated to avoid the patriarchal risk (Cain et al., 1979) of a 'precipitous decline' as Kabeer puts it (Kabeer et al., 2011, p.4) in reputation, social status and (potentially) material conditions, if women find themselves deprived of patriarchal recognition, respect and approval.

Hossain (2017) and others (Cornwall and Edwards, 2010, Kabeer et al., 2011, Sultan Ahmed and Bould, 2004) have observed the historical failure and gradual weakening of the patriarchal bargain (Kandiyoti, 1988) in which women's economic and social position in Bangladesh was contingent upon men's action, protection and decision-making powers. The actions of the post-Liberation state in family planning, the provision of micro-credit by NGOs, together with a globalized labour-intensive economy and improved access to education has resulted in higher levels of women's employment and undoubtedly contributed to Bangladeshi women's personal and collective empowerment. However, as O'Reilly pointed out, women's participation has emerged as a 'site of struggle' (O'Reilly, 2004, p.180) both in terms of how female development workers contributions are acknowledged and encouraged within NGOs and in contestations over the meaning of women's empowerment and participation in development projects.

The stories contained in this chapter suggest that in their continuing struggles for a greater degree of autonomy, women working in the development sector in Bangladesh are in constant negotiation on both a professional and personal level with oppressive structures of dominance. In these struggles the personal choices made continue to be political choices, although not necessarily framed as such. Appendix 9 pays particular attention to the stories told by one of the older women, PIYA, of her life-experiences and a career in the development sector. This singular example illustrates how all the elements and themes featured in this and other findings chapters can come together to produce a narrative of the professional and personal challenges Bangladeshi development workers confront and explores this individual's strategic responses. Here first of all, are the female participants accounts of the obstacles and constraints they face in society more generally.

Obstacles and constraints

Gendered expectations: 'We're in a pond, not in the sea'

Almost all participants, male and female, spoke of the social and familial expectations and the duties, responsibilities and reciprocities implied by these relationships (Wood, 2003, Wood, 2000, Wood, 2012). In addition, all the women in the study related experiences of gender discrimination: within the family in terms of circumscribed expectations, and in their everyday experiences of wider society, including in the workplace. The women's accounts described how social expectations and gender discrimination closed down opportunities and narrowed their horizons for possible action. The everyday discrimination the women in the study encountered was often described in a very matter-of-fact,

almost taken-for-granted manner, whereas other descriptions of sexualized incidents, harassment or abuse were carefully couched in polite euphemisms or understatement. Two women, ROSE (41) and KATARINA (27), whose accounts seem somewhat haunted by the spectre of *purdah*, specifically described the constraints they faced in spatial terms.

ROSE began her life story with the reflection that her position in the family meant she was cocooned within the home, and was never expected to work either inside or outside the home.

[F]rom the very beginning, as I was [the] only daughter of my family, and from my mother's side also, so, I [was] brought up like a—I never do any work... I never take one glass [of] water to drink, my mother always give me water... My routine was to go to school and then come to my house... My mother [didn't] like to mix me with anyone, so I made my world... That time, my thinking was, 'I'll never do any job'... 'I'll always be housewife, looking after my children'... That time I just [thought] that. Because my arena that time [was] very little, I don't know nothing about the reality. (ROSE, Int. 1)

ROSE, a divorcee who had suffered spousal abuse, described the position of women in Bangladesh by drawing a direct comparison with the interviewer's own self-evident position.

We're in a pond, not in the sea. You have [the] opportunity to go [to] one country, to another country, but we don't have any opportunity to go one district to another district alone. (ROSE, Int. 1)

Similarly, only child KATARINA, evoked an image of the restricted and claustrophobic social environment of women's experience. She referenced her

'small' work and 'small world' echoing ROSE's 'little arena'. In addition, KATARINA expressed her valuing of education and commented on the consequences of disrupting gendered identities and transgressing normative expectations of respectability.

Because, I'm a girl and I have studied in a girls' school and girls' college previously - at that point of time my work was very small. I used to live in a small world where girls are expected to be cooks and learn sewing and [are] expected to stay back home and be a good bride. But see, I broke the traditional clichéd image of a good girl. I stepped out of it. I studied, I worked, and I was rebuked by the society... yeah, at that time I got rebuked from my neighbours for being a girl and working, and for traveling alone without being accompanied by mom or an aunt.

(KATARINA, Int. 1)

JUDI (29) from a far wealthier and rather more religious family than either ROSE or KATARINA drew a contrast between her time at an overseas university, where her confidence and self-esteem blossomed, with the expectations she faced on her return to Bangladesh.

I was in a constant struggle... with my father who thought that I should not join the workforce in Bangladesh because he's like, 'Someone from your background doesn't go out and work'.

Despite the differences in age and social class position between ROSE and KATARINA as discussed in Chapter 5, the pressure to remain at home and away from the workplace is felt in the same way, as part of an on-going struggle.

Across the sample, women's reasons for going out to work went far beyond the desire or need for financial reward, a phenomenon that is effectively obscured in economic rational choice framings of the dynamics of the labour market. JUDI said she was less motivated by monetary reward than by a determination to 'become something' and 'prove herself' (see chapter 5). ROSE's impetus to seek work was a mixture of both material and psychological factors following what she described as her failed and 'shameful' marriage. KATARINA had both a strong emotional investment in restoring her family's social position and a financial incentive to help pay her way through university. Although their motivations for seeking employment differ, like all the women in the study these three women actively 'broke the tradition' and 'stepped out' into the world of work as KATARINA put it, and were by dint of their paid employment alone already resisting the strictures imposed upon them by their gendered identities. However, the women in the study were still subject to what might be called an abiding affect (Jasper, 2011) of the patriarchal structuring of Bangladeshi society.

Challenging marriage: 'I totally damaged their dream'

The centrality of marriage to women's lives in Bangladesh (Kabeer et al., 2011, Sultan Ahmed and Bould, 2004) was made evident as the interviews progressed. The particular ways in which these women talked about marriage, and specifically about marriage *choices*, brought to light how they felt about challenging patriarchal structures by asserting their authority and autonomy in one of the most significant realms of their lives.

Four of the twelve women, RAINA (25), MARIUM (26), KATARINA (27) and JUDI (29) had never married. ROKEYA (44), HELENA (44) PIYA (43), BROWNIA (36) and 25-year old SHAYLA were currently married. Three women were divorced including RUBY (30) and ROSE (41), and only one, ANIKA (38), had remarried. Ten of these women told stories of intimate relationships and marriage as part of their biographical narratives. In addition, RAINA noted how she was always asked about her marital (and thus social) status by beneficiaries in the field. Only JUDI did not speak of marriage. The five oldest women had made what they called 'love marriages' with partners of their own choosing, despite strong opposition from their families. Two of these marriages were in fact elopements, made in secret, without parental knowledge or permission, but the stories appear quite differently in the telling.

PIYA made one such 'love marriage' and tells her story with wry humour. She recounts how she defied social norms, marrying a fellow student in secret aged 19. She recalls her impulsiveness and the ensuing family uproar and hurt it caused to her parents. 'I totally damaged their dream' she said, laughing heartily. PIYA's father, by her account, struck a deal insisting she finished her undergraduate degree before any formal, public ceremony of recognition was undertaken to validate the marriage. Having won this victory, PIYA said proudly, she took other more unusual steps in having her first child whilst still at university and another child whilst fully employed.

ROSE on the other hand, spoke of her misplaced passion and sense desperation about her marriage decision. She was also determined to exercise what little power she had to make her own choice. She described her action in

terms both of a response to the 'angriness' she felt about her cocooned life and the search for a benign and authoritative, guiding figure that she felt she lacked.

I was [a] very emotional type... that time I think I was...16 years old. Sometime I would think that, 'What I can do?', because nobody's telling me, 'You can do this, you can do this'. No direction, no guidance from anybody. And when I [was]18 years old and I have some, I have some anger in my head, I had to do something. I'll show my, I have to do this, I have to do this. That time I did one mistake, I choose a person who's actually not suit(ed) for me...[N]obody has guided me, but he guided me and I just choose to fall in love with him... I closed my eyes and people said he's wrong, but I never believed them...when I started living with him, as married, my mother never accepted this... Because he's not a right person. But I had some distance with mother, family, so I never shared this. (ROSE, Int. 1)

ROSE eventually divorced her husband and went out to work. Throughout the interview she hinted at, but was not explicit about her husbands' abusive behaviour. ANIKA was more open about the violence she had suffered in her first self-chosen marriage, but despite her otherwise effusive manner, there seemed to be a limit to the stories that could be told of these 'failed' marriages. In their contained stories, these women presented their life-narratives as agentic survivors rather than unknowing victims.

Women in their 40s like PIYA, HELENA, ROKEYA and ROSE are of a generation that may well have a valid claim to have re-inscribed the available horizons for action with regards to marriage for middle class women like themselves. But old and new negotiations of values were on-going for the younger women in the arena of marriage and intimate partner relationships.

SHAYLA, from a 'service' class family had recently bridged the business/service class fissure by marrying into a business-orientated family (see chapter 5). In her interview she focussed upon the negotiation of values within her husband's family accepting that resistance to their mores, or what might be called their family habitus, may continue to punctuate her married life. RUBY suggested her marriage floundered on questions of gendered expectations and similarly, KATARINA found it difficult to negotiate more equitable and reciprocal intimate relationships, saying:

[I]t has to be a two way road. If I am taking one step for you, you need to take one step for me as well. Most of the guys do not do that, at least the ones that I've known... Bangladesh is a male dominating society. The girl is expected to bow down and compromise. But the guy is not. So when I [say] that ...they [are] taken aback... 'Ok, that's new' ... They thought that... 'Ok, she is always going to be a rebel' and I don't want a rebel in my life. I want someone I can control'. And that is when I said 'goodbye'.

The choices the younger women were making in terms of intimate relationships were compromised by societal expectations of women's roles and the status attached to marriage. Kabeer has revealed that for working women, marital status makes a significant difference to women's stress levels, with single, separated or divorced women feeling under more constant pressure than those who are married (Kabeer et al., 2011). MARIUM stated explicitly that her struggles at work would have been greatly lessened if she were married, but making herself available for marriage interfered with and restricted her job prospects. In her account MARIUM exposed the institution of marriage as an ambiguous, sometimes contradictory social apparatus for women to negotiate, offering in her case, a sense of both liberation and constraint.

Women in the study, three-quarters of whom were from a 'service class' background, (see chapter 5) often reflected on the parallels and contrasts between their own lives and the lives of other women especially the female beneficiaries of donor-funded aid. These reflections were often associated with a realisation of their own agency and the impetus to want to 'give something back' and to 'help others'. Roth (2015), Fechter and Hindman (2011) and Stirrat (2008) have observed a similar kind of missionary zeal often stemming from their own experience of shock or trauma in workers from the Global North, that is tied to opportunities for the aid workers' own personal growth. Eyben and Turquet (2013) have pointed to a process of identification amongst women working in development organisations that is based on a recognition of their own 'relative oppression'. Hoggett (2009b), in his application of psychoanalytic concepts to moral feelings notes that it is not simply the shared suffering, but the knowledge of 'what we are capable of' in an 'ambiguous, mixed up, and messy' world that 'mobilizes a reparative drive, a desire to make things better' (Hoggett, 2009b, p.125).

Identification with disadvantaged others: 'no one was there for me... I will be there for everyone'

KATARINA's life course and career trajectory, by her own account, was driven to a significant extent by her desire to restore her fathers lost social standing, a process through which she also discovered and claimed her own autonomy and authority. Linking the institution of marriage to womens wider struggles and her own impetus for social activism, KATARINA recounted in an incident involving a woman close in age that spoke directly to her own contestation of the patriarchal bargain.

I remember this particular incident, I knew this girl who was one, two years older than me...one day she came to our house crying...she was beaten up by her husband.. and she did not have anywhere to go.. and the reason why he beat her up was very silly. ...When I asked her “Why are you staying with this man, why do you take it?” Her answer was...”Who do I go to? My father would not take me now. I am married and I have to listen to what my husband says. I am dependent, who will take care of my living? Who will give me food? Who will give me shelter? Where do I go?” So that is when it struck me real hard that no, this is not what I want... Just because I was not financially solvent...I have to cry? I have to live by others choices? ...I did not want to do that. And it struck me really hard that moment, that’s not what I want... I’ll break through... I was left alone and no one was there for me when I suffered, so I make it a point... I will be there for everyone... [This is] the point I could actually think of giving back to the community, because at that point of time I realised I have a platform... (KATARINA, Int. 1)

KATARINA clearly identified with the beaten woman in being ‘struck hard’, experiencing this incident of injustice as a ‘moral shock’ (Jasper, 1998).

MARIUM told another story of ‘moral shock’ about the sudden loss of a close friend. In the tearful telling of this story it was clear that she has been much affected by the tragedy, but like KATARINA, the experience appeared to have cemented an enduring passion to use her leverage to improve the lives of those more disadvantaged than herself. MARIUM acknowledged the emotional roots of her motivation to work in development and in the following quotation clearly signals a solidaristic defence of ‘our rights’ as part of that work. Similarly, ROSE made a direct connection between her female beneficiaries and her own experience which she now uses directly to inform her work, whilst acknowledging the relative differences in levels of oppression.

My heart inspired me to work...I work within extreme poverty, poverty and gender, women and poverty. I'm very much interested, very much passionate to work... I really feel hurt when I see any human being, especially female, deprived of our rights. I try to raise my voice....I want to work for women's rights. Yes, that's it. (MARIUM Int. 2)

In [my current work]... I actually go [deep into] ... women's problems, women's pain, women's - everything I saw, that I never saw before... when I work with these women, I found that what they're like, is like me! ... So, from my life I tried to mix with them. I tried to develop them... I know their pain, and I try to help them to overcome this. I know how to work on this. They can overcome, because, from my side, because I, step by step, I overcame the situation... So, I try to be like the [person] who guided me, and I now guide them. (ROSE, Int. 1)

These relatively well-resourced and relatively empowered Bangladeshi women were propelled by a commitment borne out of their own experience of oppression and engaged in on-going struggles for recognition and validation for themselves and other women. Nonetheless they were also, at times, confronted by what JUDI claimed was 'a culture that I can't change'.

Hostile values, structured worlds: 'I'm going to the development world'

For those female participants who entered into employment in the private sector the workplace was experienced as a particularly hostile environment. ROSE, in her very first job following her divorce, recalled how her employer exploited his position and proposed off-record payments to the female employees in exchange for sexual favours.

Some people [said] this boss's character is not good... because he's... er... affectionate to women. You know, the woman come, he stay with

[her] one night and then pay [for] it... He tried... [He said] 'Every month you'll come to me. I'll give you extra money. You can collect this money from me'... I [said] to him, 'No sir, I don't want to take this. If you increase my salary, you have to increase in front of everybody. I will not take this money from you'... One day my colleague came to me, she said 'I left the job'. Because one day she went into my boss's room, that time he had tried to enter his hand on her breast... That time I became afraid because, as he's doing [that] with her, he can do with me. So, I become afraid and I tried to search [for a new] job. So, now I realised ...I wasn't in [a] very good position, in corporate sector, you know? And this is [the] time I passed [into] the development sector. From the corporate to the development [sector] (ROSE, Int. 1)

Some women in the study felt obliged to take strategic action for their own safety and well-being. JUDI and ROSE were explicit in framing the development sector, with its discourse of womens empowerment, as a safer, more female-friendly alternative to employment in the private sector. They perceived it as a refuge from a particularly oppressive and sexist corporate culture. JUDI shared ROSE's experience of the hostility directed at working women and spoke of an additional intolerance of highly educated women, illustrating how gender disadvantage is exacerbated by the intersection with class privilege in this context and how the use of English as cultural capital carries with it variable currency in different fields (Botsis, 2018).

I started working there and I, what I felt after getting into that company is that I didn't fit in...They didn't accept me. They didn't accept the way I speak. They didn't accept my English. They didn't accept who I was. And um, the culture I thought, is very offensive towards young women over there, who want to pursue their career, because the way they look at women is not funny. I mean, it really, it's like a sex object. I didn't like

that at all. There was a lot of harassment and bullying going around and I just couldn't take it. I left within six months...I'm like, I'm not going to work for any corporate because the culture is going to be similar. So I'm going to the development world. (JUDI Int. 1)

In her account, KATARINA made it clear that she has struggled to reconcile her own needs with her reparative drive to help others. She was emphatic that she had chosen a large multinational private-sector employer 'very carefully' for the more progressive, service-oriented organisational culture and level of financial and job security it offered. She regrets however, how this choice has compromised her capacity for what she refers to as her 'social work', relegating it for the time being to the level of mentoring in her HR role, which she said had been inspiring for many of her colleagues.

ROSE and JUDI gave the impression that they were confronted with a choice between relatively well-paid employment in the national private sector and the prospect of intolerance and discrimination, or less-well remunerated but less stressful and more satisfying work in Aidland. This finding adds some contrast to Roth's (2016) suggestion that national aid workers are particularly attracted to the relatively well-paid jobs available in NGOs. While this may be true for some national workers, particularly those in non-professional or auxiliary roles, it obscures the fact that change-oriented women are attracted as much, if not more, by the values espoused by the organisational discourse and embodied in everyday workplace practice as by the potential financial rewards. As the stories of ROSE, JUDI and KATARINA have shown, well-educated, professionally ambitious women may expect to secure at least comparable incomes, and

perhaps additional 'facilities' (such as pensions or sickness benefits) from employment in the private sector but choose not to.

As JUDI made plain, although she was already seeking out a career congruent with her development-orientated values, her experience of the private sector reaffirmed her resolve to find work with an NGO in the development sector.

ROSE on the other hand, was seeking alternative 'safe' employment and only later found that development work satisfied more than her material needs. As the findings in chapter 7 have indicated, almost all the participants, whether they had worked in the private sector or not, were inclined to view a set of profit-focussed values and the 'culture and rituals' they associated with it with critical ambivalence, or in ORLANDO and FARABI cases out-right rejection. For professional women like KATARINA, JUDI and ROSE employment in the national private sector is perceived as untenable - by dint of its patriarchy and levels of sexual harassment - as the public sector is through corrupt practice and 'partyarchy' (Hassan, 2013), leaving only the internationalized arena of multinationals and Aidland as viable fields in which to express themselves and their values.

Discourse and Practice: 'High hopes' and 'tough' times

It is not surprising the development sector is perceived as offering a more welcoming workplace environment for women of all classes, given the discourse and rhetoric of womens empowerment that is espoused, and yet familiar patterns of womens work and discrimination persist. Roth (2015) has identified this dissonance as one of the many paradoxes of Aid work and one that places women in development organisations in a marginal position (Eyben and

Turquet, 2013). My data confirms that the everyday experience of female development workers is not immune, nor can it be separated, from the constraining values and oppressive customary practices of wider society.

Despite strategic choices made by these relatively well-resourced women to overcome the limitations set for them, they still encountered situations in Aidland in which their progress and effectiveness was thwarted. MARIUM's story, for instance, features many of the kinds of issues and challenges, such as the burden of work and lack of training, that were evident in other participants' stories. The women's stories tended to add an additional burden of inadequate leadership, lack of recognition and little recourse in the face of injustices leading to a process of intense self-examination. MARIUM, an unmarried woman, was one of the few participants who lived and worked far from her parental home in Dhaka. This 'independent' lifestyle, as she called it, meant she endured threats to her reputation and respectability, which were felt as a particular kind of 'hurt'. She was, in effect, suffering a social injury. Her sense of isolation and the emotional work necessary for her psychological well-being was readily apparent in her story.

You know in NGO sector, development sector, men, women...have to shift [to] different areas six months here, six months there. It's really a challenging life, so I took the challenge for my career and I also loved to work for extremely poor people. I'm very committed to my responsibility... I always think about what I want to do, what I love to do... I want to work in [this] sector. I'm very passionate about it. So, when I took the challenge to live [in the regional town], leaving my parents, my brothers, here in Dhaka, it was really tough, that time... As I'm the documentation officer, I have to write... articles. I have to write

the reports. I have to finish the minutes of the meetings... I have to write and summarize it as soon as possible. I have to do more work after the end of the working hours... Last two or three months... we are very busy, and I am the only female staff in... regional senior management... So I have to work for long hours, ok?. But I don't take it like a burden. I take it as my responsibility and I happily do it, but [a] few people don't recognise it. Don't appreciate it, rather they [are] whispering. 'Why's MARIUM late in office? Is there any other interest?' ... yeah whispering like 'I heard that maybe [the] team leader likes Marium, maybe [the] supervisor likes Marium'. So it's very hurting. You know, I am, I am dedicated to my hours, I am dedicating my days, my nights, to my organisation, to my work,.. So it's disheartening. As you know I am too young, I am still unmarried. I have to work, to work, to work... Ok, but last [few] months when I'm growing and doing better, then [a] few people, not all, people are trying to stop me...I don't share...it's very confidential [what] I'm sharing with you. It's very hurting, but I'm also so strong... / know what I'm doing...Nobody can bring [these] obstacles in front of me. (MARIUM, Int. 2)

ROSE, who is 15 years older than MARIUM and divorced, reported an almost identical experience as a result of her working after-hours 'alone' with male colleagues in her Dhaka office. Considering the centrality of marriage as an institution to the lives of women in Bangladesh, it was apparent that marital status, rather than age was the primary reason women were vulnerable to this kind of reputational attack.

Managerial systems within organisations that, as MARIUM reported, are subject to manipulation by male colleagues, can cramp womens achievements and career progression. She detailed a commonly used performance appraisal system in which each supervisor is strictly limited in the number of 'A' ratings he

(sic) can approve. According to MARIUM's account, her (male) supervisor initially agreed that her extra responsibilities for gender work deserved a top rating. However, before this appraisal decision could be officially signed off, she recounts, her male peer vehemently opposed the decision.

After having a meeting in the team leader's room, my supervisor came to me. He said "MARIUM I'm sorry, I could not give you 'A' this time". The prize was in my hand, but it was taken out, you know... he got the 'A' and I got the 'B'. So how much pain I got! ... I know what that supervisor thinks about me. He wants to give me 'A' but he can't. But I know what I did, I exceeded the requirement ... They don't tell me about the other person, but I understand the whole [thing] what's happening, what's going on... Does he get to know what I have sacrificed for him? ... I have to sacrifice it only because he's not going to be convinced. He will do too much talk with headquarters, so there will be many problems arising. Complaints. So [for] the sake of my supervisor, my team leader, I thought it's okay, only one [person] gets it, it does not matter. Next year I will get the 'A rating... but it is very important if I apply [for] another position within the INGO, it will be very important ... No, I didn't complain to seniors, because complaining does not always give a solution, I think. I have to manage it ...I compromise a lot. Lord! Give me more patience, give me more patience, I can handle it, I can handle it. I keep my reputation very well. It will be more blooming, blooming, blooming.

(MARIUM Int. 2)

MARIUM speaks of 'much pain' and the 'sacrifice' she made for the sake of preserving workplace relationships and reputation. These painful feelings are managed by engaging in an internal self-reassuring conversation with herself. Chapter 7 noted how MARIAM acknowledged the limits to her agency and how she valued familial support, but she is also fully aware of the contingency of her position on reputational grounds and the compromises she must make.

JUDI, although from a wealthy family and less reliant on material rewards, recognised her contingent position in her workplace identifying the strength of the 'male voice', which she experienced as intimidatory, as having a silencing effect upon her. Again, using space as a metaphor as in ROSE and KATARINA's stories, JUDI evokes contrasting spatial images of 'whole areas' and 'corners' in which she first expands and then delineates the scope of her action, recognising the limits to her agency.

Well, when I started working in [this INGO], my whole area, my whole concept is that I will work for the betterment of the society and at the same time, I'll have a career, and I'll have a stable income... be recognised... it's very important for me to be financially independent myself, no matter how much money I have inherited. When I joined [this INGO], I had high hopes, but um, the culture is very male dominant. I thought I will be appreciated, but the culture is such that, um, the males have a very strong vocal, voice over there... During a meeting, they will start using slang words. If I say something, they'll criticize me in such a way that it's a turnoff. I don't want to say anything anymore. They use the "F" word... and they scream and shout, and I get very offended, and I hold myself back on saying my opinion, because I think they are going to start screaming again. And this is a culture that I can't change myself... Yeah, because, um, I don't want to get cornered out, because if I say something, if I complain about someone or if I raise my voice that this person is behaving in this way, then somehow, it always, they always get to know about it and they're going to corner me out. (JUDI, Int. 1)

MARIUM and JUDI both understand that speaking out is risky and may in fact compound the situation. This is a very different strategy than that available to white female aid workers from the Global North who may be better able to adopt 'masculine' roles or confront macho cultures by leveraging their racial privilege

(Goudge, 2003, Roth, 2015). Current efforts to tackle workplace inequalities in the development sector would do well to understand the contextualized and intersectional nature of womens responses and the different strategies deployed by national and international female development workers at the intersections of race, class and gender (Bruce-Raeburn, 2018).

Structural factors as well as psychosocial obstacles obstruct womens access to development work. Roth has broadly characterized aid workers as a mobile workforce but both PIYA (44) and MARIUM (27) as noted in chapter 7, and HELENA and ROKEYA felt geographically restricted by their family responsibilities. A mobile and flexible workforce is one of the features of neo-liberalism and late capitalism and the development sector increasingly makes the same demands of its workforce (Neusiedl, 2016). PIYA, one of the more experienced participants also discussed how the increasing use of short-term, daily-rate contracts could be unfavourable towards women. She told a story that exemplified the kind of discretion used by Lipsky's street-level bureaucrats and exposed a disjuncture between policy discourse and practice. In contractual negotiations, PIYA felt that she was treated differently by an employer, a younger white European female representing, ironically, an organisation promoting ethical labour practices. These conditions suggest a powerful complex of issues including gender, age and language as well as cultural difference were in play.

So she had lots to bargain with me for the contract... [I am] bargaining for myself, lots of negotiation for the work and pay... I joined as a country manager with 14 days booking... My colleague he ... joined full time and he has all the things the full time job, this amount of salary, this is the

bonus, this is the travel allowance, all that sort of thing but for me, only 14 days... Every time there is lots of bargaining, negotiation, for you. ... And what I found, [the] same lady, the way she bargained with me, the same strong bargaining power is absent with men... They are not as strong, they are not as strong with men... when you are taking in a new person and you are taking a man, that man puts [his] logic and [his] bargain in a gentle way...that time you are actually giving more than [for] this old lady... I feel this is quite a strange way of dealing with people. ...Which is a big surprise to me. (PIYA Int. 1)

MARIUM, JUDI and PIYA's stories illustrate the kinds of challenges faced by countless working women in other sectors in Bangladesh and across the world, but which are particularly paradoxical within the development sector. If women are required to make the kinds of strategic choices and risks illustrated above, it is important to understand more precisely why women engage with this work under these conditions and what they value in relation to it. The literature on development workers (chapter 4) acknowledges the salutogenic effects of engaging in meaningful work and the following section addresses the transformative potential of this work on the workers themselves and the routes by which women reach for their own empowerment whilst empowering others.

A dilemmatic and transformative space

Kabeer (2011) has demonstrated empirically how, in Bangladesh, womens paid work can provide a pathway to empowerment stating that 'it is the kind of work women do, rather than the fact of paid employment, that influences womens voice, agency and relationships' (Kabeer et al., 2011, p.37). Mahmud and Sultan (2010) had previously noted how, from the late 1970's, Bangladesh's innovative family planning and community health programmes provided the first

major field of 'respectable' employment available to educated women outside the home. Although still subject to the 'respectability' rules of *izzat* (Gunasinghe et al., 2018) and despite initial hostilities, Mahmud and Sultan described how a transformative potential for an increase in women's agency, choice, voice and involvement in civic structures (Mahmud and Sultan, 2010) emerged as a by-product of women's inclusion in these care-based occupations. An important connection can also be made between the work of caring in public health contexts and caring in and for human development (Raghuram et al., 2009, Razavi, 2007), insofar as the notion of 'care' is especially relevant to women's lives and material conditions.

'I didn't just work for the cause!'

The participants' class inheritance, their formal and informal experiences of education and the cultural resources that new social situations and 'exposure' to diversity contributed to their routes into development has already been explored in chapters 5, 6 and 7. The women in this study were as alert to the personal social and emotional rewards offered by employment in development organisations as to the material benefits; and several stories of personal transformations were recounted. An example that illustrates the parallel processes of negotiating both the personal and professional realm of development was provided by the youngest participant, RAINA, in her description of coming to terms with her own contradictory positions of class privilege and gender disadvantage. Echoing the spatial referencing of other women, RAINA acknowledged her work for an INGO had enabled her to break out of her 'very protected environment' and gain from new experiences of diversity.

I was kind of going on these like long bus rides, getting to meet a lot of people who work in NGOs, and then getting to talk to a lot of beneficiaries so it was *huge* kind of, yeah, it was great learning [for] me, I was really breaking out my comfort zone and getting to meet lot of people. (RAINA, Int. 1)

In chapter 6, BROWNIA recalled the euphoric feelings of emancipation that she experienced when working as a health worker at night in a mixed gender group. Similarly, RAINA recounted how, as a volunteer with a local charity, visiting the slums was an entirely new and deeply affecting experience, which has deepened her commitment.

I really never go out into the street alone at night or anything...it was like [a] very *busy* area in Dhaka at night, um I had never been there at night walking on the street, I have never been there... so I was quite intimidated, I was quite shy at the beginning with the work, all these people here they're watching me and um it was really weird... that was a really, like, important experience for me that made me [want] to continue with it. (RAINA, Int. 1)

From a well-established, upper middle class family, RAINA said she initially had misgivings about being employed by a large INGO, being critical of the orthodox development aid paradigm as neo-colonial and self-serving. She described how she came to feel that her own financial independence, albeit achieved through employment in the sector, was part of her own process of development and maturation.

I think having my own money, like I have, I live with my parents still, they take care of the housing and the food, but ... I think that's been an important kind of, like, part of my growing up... I felt very independent, I

thought that was very important, so like I've forgiven myself for that [laughing] - that I didn't work just for the *cause!* (RAINA Int. 1)

She makes a connection between her own personal change and the work of effecting change and with some reflection, managed to come to a resolution of sorts between her own needs and those of the beneficiaries she is endeavouring to serve. The emotional labour that was required to manage such feelings of guilt and shame, for which she said must 'forgive' herself was evident, but the process of reflection on such issues and feelings had also served to solidify and strengthen her commitment to empowering others.

'This is my pride, my dignity'

RAINA, together with BROWNIA, RUBY, KATARINA, ROSE, MARIUM and HELENA all spoke in some detail of how financial independence through employment begets other affective costs and rewards. They spoke in terms of the travails of breaching social constraints and the affective rewards in terms of achieving dignity, recognition and autonomy. HELENA, a programme officer in her 40's, offered a story that highlighted another common feature of the womens data, which was the contingency and precariousness of their social positions. HELENA's wider family had refused to support the intimate partnership she chose. Despite this, she married anyway and when the cushion of potential of support from her family was withdrawn, she was effectively thrown back on her own resources. Her work became not only a source of material sustenance but provided her with a sense of self-worth and dignity. Her affective needs were wrapped up in very practical considerations of financial independence.

Actually I never want to be jobless, because of only one thing, I have no helping hand. I always never [have a] helping hand. My family will not help me, if I [have] no [money], they will not help me. And I never want them [to], this is my pride, I always pray to God, please do not give me this situation where I have to ask money from my family. I will not face this situation, that's why I'm always searching for jobs. And, my life is challenging, why not do a challenging job? [Laughter] (HELENA, Int. 1)

HELENA made a wry connection between her own struggles and the struggles she encounters in her 'challenging' work. She revealed a sense of how her pride in having overcome her own personal obstacles informs and inspires her professional work. ROSE was unequivocal about the personal gains she had made which again are not primarily measured by financial remuneration but in social and affective terms. As a divorcee, ROSE was subject to stigma and shame. Her job had enabled her to reclaim a sense of dignity and respect for herself and for the next generation, as she made clear.

[When] I came [back] to my parent's house... I have everything, so I don't have to do any job. But I found that people are not accepting me like before. There is some ignorance... [a] burden, [I] feel like this. Burden, burden... Or, not that respect. Not that dignity. That time, I feel like I had to do something... because, everything is now gone. I have to rebuild myself again. This is my real life....Because of my job...this job... I am not [a] burden now. I have my own dignity and I have my . . . you know? I don't want people to give me money... Everything's great. Now people say, "Oh, your mother's income is now this. [laughs] You can share. Bring food today". My daughters... so, they have some also, some [pride] about this step. That mother is now, she also says, "My mother is not like [a] simple mother. My mother is [a] service holder".... I don't do it actually, not for money. There was little money. Only to [be] involve[d] in some job, because I realise I have to involve [myself] in the work... This

is my dignity. Because, now this is my first priority. My children [are] not now my first priority... My first priority is my job, because it give[s] me dignity. If I have dignity then my children have some. (ROSE, Int. 1)

This is one of many examples of how the female participants engaged in processes of simultaneous development of the self and others. A much stronger sense of identification with disadvantaged others was apparent in the womens data than in the men's accounts. Through direct experiences of discrimination that connected them to the beneficiaries of aid, the women in this study articulated the salutogenic aspects of their work - what might be called affective and psychosocial remunerations - which were especially relevant to their lives and the kinds of work they were involved in.

Managing the load: coping strategies & practices

Cornwall and Edwards (2010) argued that development practices and policies that fail 'to understand the social dimensions of constraints' and the 'cultural limits of choice' reduce womens agency to 'strategies for individual self improvement rather than struggles for transformation' (Cornwall and Edwards, 2010, p.3). This conclusion called into question the value of pursuing a 'liberal' rather than a 'liberating' model of empowerment (Sardenberg, 2008). As has been demonstrated, the materially and culturally well-resourced women in the sample faced difficulties associated with entry to the labour market and challenges encountered once inside the workplace. Social constraints, in terms of moral judgments on the acceptability of certain behaviours are interleaved with structural obstacles to their progression in appraisal systems, the use of short-term contracting and away-from-home postings, which in combination

hinder women's career advancement and impose additional psychosocial burdens, not least of which is the maintenance of a 'respectable' identity.

Patterns rooted in patriarchy and colonial history were evident in the female participants' accounts of pursuing education and employment in the development sector and the emotional and social costs of breaching social conventions was clearly apparent. Sultan Ahmed and Bould (2004), studying women's working in garment factories, noted how 'a woman's life in Bangladesh typically has been a succession of dependencies on men: father, husband and son'. Kabir (Kabir et al., 2011) observed how family support was vital to women's achievements (Kabir, 2005) and positive feelings of empowerment, but the benign influence of fathers and other representative figures of patriarchy in these processes have been poorly studied.

Fathers and gurus: 'A hero of my life'

The figure of the father was remarkably and powerfully present across all the participants' interviews. In contrast, mothers were mentioned far less frequently, and it was only when the maternal relationship was experienced as oppressive or constraining, as in ROSE and MANJUL's descriptions (chapter 6) that significant details of maternal rather than paternal influence emerged. In a handful of cases, mothers were completely absent from participants' biographical accounts. Despite a few critical comments from one or two particular participants, it was abundantly clear that all other participants (regardless of 'service' or business' class backgrounds), held their biological fathers in high, or very high esteem. Male and female interviewees regularly attributed their own ethical values and liberal orientations to the influence of

their biological fathers, but the affect of paternal power and authority was qualitatively different in the women's accounts with respect to the direction of their life-courses. This contrast is evident in ROKEYA and AZAIRAA's accounts of the 'honest' values they have inherited in the context of institutionalised corruption. Whereas ROKEYA's father apparently laid down certain rules and set her on her own course, AZAIRAA's father, unable to offer formal educational or career guidance (see chapter 6) is remembered for the simple moral and financial advice offered.

My father always say, he's very honest and he always told us to do the right thing, honestly ethically. He followed these rules. For this reason we have not so many, we have no big house or so many land. Because he is not interested in this. He just [gave] us proper education. You take proper education, then you survive, yourself. This is his theory. (ROKEYA, Int 2)

So my father always each and every time say that, please don't ever give a try to earn dirty money because that money, see you are earning 5 taka money. That 5 taka dirty money will kill 15 taka [of] your [clean] money. (AZAIRAA, Int 1)

The capacity of a father, as an authority figure, to make far-reaching decisions affecting their daughters, was acknowledged in all of the women's accounts.

The benign authority of men in power, in educational institutes and development organisations, was also evident in accounts of the effect on their life-courses of male mentors – or 'gurus' as two women referred to them.

ROSE, JUDI and ANIKA attributed their own personal development and career advancement to having found a mentor outside the family. ROSE described the

fatherly qualities of this relationship and JUDI recalled the catalytic effect on her:

[M]y boss was my, my guru, my teacher... he's the person who built me....My development started from there... [If] I don't want to go outside, he says, 'You have to go' Like this, like what I'm doing with my daughter. 'You have to go. You have to do [it]. You have to say this. You have to do this. You have to do this.' Even when I don't want to. But he always forced me... He said 'You have to go [to a] workshop'. I said, 'how could I go?' 'You have to go walk to the bus-stand and take a bus ticket and walk. [Laughs a lot.] You know, I have to say... He helped me a lot... And he helped me a lot to realise me, to break me, break myself from this arena and give me courage, give me everything... And I always tried to follow this. (ROSE Int. 1)

[O]ne of the lecturers... He has a big influence in my life... He has a very big influence in my life, so he really, when someone really believes in you that way, and you sort of want to give it back. So he really did believe in me, and I shined. That whole belief really sort of, I came out of my shell. [It] opened things up for me. Yeah, that's exactly right. (JUDI, Int. 1)

ROSE and JUDI recognised the benign authority they experienced was exceptional and opened up arenas for action and reproduction for them. This benign and empowering exceptionality engendered in MARIUM a kind of idolization. SHAYLA also described her father in glowing terms as 'very good', and 'a very honourable person'. Yet her description of the influence of patriarchal authority contained ambivalent feelings that such an approach can be both helpful and 'harsh'

My father is a hero of my life. I have seen very few people like my father, very few male persons like my father, he is a very hard worker. Very helpful. (MARIUM, Int. 2)

I used to study a lot. Whatever I do, I do because, like I have to do that. I have to gain that. That passion is always into me, like, this is something, I need to do that. I have to do that. This is what I was. And the motivation behind this spirit was my father. He's, he's such a person who used to like, always 'you should be, you should not think like you are a girl. You are from Bangladesh, you should always think you are like, like [a] powerful human being, not a girl or a woman'... And, so, always, he used to like motivate me. Sometimes he was, like, harsh on me like, 'Do that. You have to do that.' Like that. (SHAYLA, Int. 1)

In SHAYLA's account the father's authority was also attributed to the definition of identity, linked to a notion of national identity and the rejection of the subjectified identity of 'girl or woman'. SHAYLA, MARIUM, ROKEYA and other women reported having followed paths within and at the edge of the parameters set for them by their fathers, but there was also a contract implicit in this settlement, in terms of their reciprocal compliance with social and familial pressures to maintain a measure of respectability. KATARINA framed herself as 'lucky' to have had a supportive father, but his backing was apparently contingent on her being a respectable and trust-worthy daughter. KATARINA explained her position, dramatically demonstrating, like MARIUM above, a critical awareness of the wider normative constructions of power and authority:

Luckily I had the go ahead from my parents, because my dad was not a part of that typical society and he belonged to a different caste, and he always had a different set of values in his mind. He inspired me... although he was also rebuked that 'ok your daughter is doing this...going

out... you are not being a good dad, you are not controlling her'. He said 'I trust her'...that was the only answer that he gave. (KATARINA Int. 1)

KATARINA conveyed the message that her father had implicit trust in her to behave 'properly' in the same assumed way that JUDI used when she said she is the kind of daughter who does not, 'do anything that's wrong, see anything that's wrong, you get the picture?' In their narration KATARINA and JUDI were both making a point about the importance and significance of women's respectability in Bangladesh.

This deeply gendered thread of respectability, and associated processes of its attainment, recovery and maintenance runs through the womens data affecting almost every aspect of their lives. The mantle of respectability appears essential to womens effective functioning in the workplace and within the family, and the dependence upon fathers and father figures for approval and sanction implies, for these women, vulnerability to a kind of *affective* 'patriarchal risk' (Kabeer et al., 2011).

RUBY, who had 'very liberal parents' reported that she had come to terms with the personal criticism she attracted for breaching gendered social norms, and in the following passage demonstrated a capacity for self authorization and the reciprocal nature of relations between different 'authorities', in this case herself and her parents, that can incrementally re-order the social world.

I think I've gotten more comfortable making my [own] decision on what I want to portray for myself. So I'm comfortable with saying I'm the person who wears sleeveless and goes out, and everybody knows that. And I'm comfortable with everybody taking that for granted. I'm comfortable with

everybody taking it for granted that I do drink, I do go out, I have a life, which is not necessarily acceptable for them, for their children, but I will have it. Yeh, and I think it also came that the more comfortable that I got with it, eventually my parents got more comfortable with having me portrayed as that, also. So yeah... a lot of these dilemmas used to come on a regular basis. (RUBY, Int 1)

The dilemmas that RUBY and many of the other women discussed are tightly bound up with the immense pressure on women to maintain a measure of social respectability. These development workers, self-identified feminists or not, are operating on the edge (Eyben and Turquet, 2013), negotiating a precarious pathway to empowerment contingent upon maintaining moral and social standards that are, in themselves, somewhat fluid. Eyben (2013, p.27) has noted how 'conscious and sustained reflective practice' helps the feminist development bureaucrats of her study to 'tolerate their marginal position'. At the same time, the discourse of development increasingly reflects a neo-liberal individualisation of responsibility.

Individualisation: 'I control myself'

The women in this study managed everyday dilemmas and challenges by adopting different coping strategies, separately or in combination, with which to contain the level of 'social suffering' they felt (Hoggett, 2015). One strategy was to relate their problems to those of other women, minimizing and putting their own struggles into perspective, a tactic noted by Hoggett and Randall (2016) in their study of sustainable activism. A more clearly apparent strategy that peppered the womens data was to individualise the challenge, turning the responsibility for escaping their predicaments in on themselves in a form of

introspective identification. This emotion work placed an additional strain on some of these women indicating a degree of emotional 'burn out'.

MARIUM's response was fairly typical. As detailed above, she reported being subject to sexism and undermining from her male colleagues and threats to her reputation. When she confided in a female peer, also in the development sector, she recalled receiving this counsel:

And [my friend] said, 'MARIUM, it's very easy it's very normal. It's the lowest thing you can see. There are many more dirty things happening around us, so it's nothing. So don't worry.' I said, 'Really?' She said, 'Yes, you cannot imagine how much dirty things is going on around here we females have to face'...[It was] a bit helpful. Like, I was getting hope, that no, maybe really it's very minimal, it's nothing. There's more sorrowness happening around my friends and other females, so I have to tackle it. [But] It's very tough. (MARIUM Int. 2)

This more proportionate view of her own suffering led MARIUM to explore more individualised strategies of altering her self and her attitude, to defend against the hurt she experienced, whilst continuing to resist patriarchal pressures.

I tried to be more friendly with him, you know. I have tried to be more friendly. What's his problem? Why is he doing this actually? I try to know, but my feelings is that he did it all because of jealousy, as he is in my peer group. That's it... I don't care, I have to work, to work, to work. [I] could not think about this... Like sometimes when [there's] lots of work, even my father complains, he's very critical, very tough [when I] go away, morning to night, work, work, work....that time I'm doing lots of work, lots of hard work, but not getting that much appreciation. Rather getting whispering. That's it. But, yet, I control myself, I can get strength but I

don't know what will happen in future. But I am hoping [things will be] better. (MARIUM, Int. 2)

MARIUM's attitude was very similar to the articulations of the other women. In the absence of mechanisms through which to challenge and transform the dominant patriarchal social order, the hope that 'hard work' and personal development will overcome their problems pervaded many of the women's narratives. KATARINA constructed a pronounced individualised notion of agency despite her acknowledgement of the structural constraints of 'social pressures' and 'stigmas'. She presented herself as a very hard-working and professional, modern woman. KATARINA said of her advocacy work that she 'tried to give this message, that a girl can live a life on their own, of themselves... [they] just need that push from inside'. JUDI, also in her late 20s exhibited a similar discourse of self-improvement through a process of continuous inner dialogue and self-assessment.

I am the type of person who - I'm in a constant struggle to improve myself, like I take feedback from other people at a yearly basis and what's my strength and what's my weaknesses. I try to work on my weaknesses, so all those things are there. So I do that and I actually I made a big change. (JUDI Int 1/ 6.48)

These women appeared to be caught in an intense process of introspection as part of a strategy to assess and cope with the limits of their agency. This individualised response can bring with it feelings of stress, isolation, over-work and other emotional costs and consequences. Another of the younger participants, SHAYLA, had a very similar personal narrative of self-identity as someone who is 'driven' and 'can do anything' though dogged hard work. She

described how she had reined back her ambitions and responsibilities in order to avoid burn-out.

If I really want, I know I have the drive. I can do anything and everything if I really want to. The only problem with me is... Like I put all my hard work... but the thing is that, at some point I feel like this is it, this is enough. I have pushed myself enough and now I need a break ... I really, this is the problem with me, I am so committed sometimes and sometimes it's so... and I got tired soon, because I made all the commitments so fast and at the end, it's like, oh okay, it's enough. I had it enough now, I need a break. So this is a problem... This is the problem with me... [it's] no effort or full effort [laughs].

At the time of the interview, SHAYLA had been looking for alternative employment in the HE sector, in the hope of better working conditions. It was apparent from their stories that younger women working in development like SHAYLA, KATARINA, JUDI and MARIUM were under particular pressures that are both externally and internally derived, and they appeared to adopt individualised and introspective responses. Participants were asked about particular resources or relationships that they could draw upon to support them in their work and the importance, but scarcity of peer support became apparent.

Associative bonds: 'Friends on the same page'

Highlighting the contingency of their situations, the data suggested speaking to family members and those working outside development about workplace challenges and dilemmas may increase a sense of precariousness. When asked if she could confide in members of her family, MARIUM immediately replied 'Oh no! They will feel more nervous!'. RAINA experienced a sense of

isolation and a cleaving away from her previous social group when she began working for a large INGO. She used the resources of those with whom she now feels 'on the same page' to help manage her emotional and cognitive commitment to the work.

[S]omething I *definitely* struggle with especially after I got this job, like my social life is *so different* from my work life. ... [L]ike I had at one point kind of isolated myself, I was at *home* a lot more than with my friends... I think for me it was mostly a venting thing, that I need to talk about it. Once I had people to talk about it with... I was less angry ... I was able to talk to [those] other people about it... the ones that I grew up with... those friends... of that certain class... [they] were difficult for me to be around all the time. But I made a lot of friends who maybe went to international schools, like me or went to English medium schools, have pretty much same background but, like me, have decided to work in development too, so with them I have conversations about all the stuff that I think about, and we are on the same page completely, so that's been good. (RAINA, Int. 1)

The image of 'venting' was also used by RUBY to describe how she manages her frustrations with larger cultural and systemic challenges. RUBY said she felt fortunate to have a group of female peers with whom she can express her frustrations. In response to a question about the potential to become cynical, she said:

It's not my.. my go-to feeling. Frustration, frustration is something I go into, which usually comes out as anger. So I need to just go and vent it out with somebody. Go-to people are usually my friends, so it is five to six people that I'm close with, so one or the other will be my venting window. (RUBY, Int. 2)

The importance of peer relationships is not confined to the younger female participants. PIYA, HELENA and ROKEYA were long-standing colleagues having worked together on various projects over the last two decades. PIYA, indicated that rather than confiding in her husband or family, like MARIUM she preferred to discuss professional and ethical matters with peer-level female colleagues, including two other long-standing female colleagues who also participated in this study. This small group of mutually supportive women in their early forties stood out from the rest of the sample in so far as they constituted a visible horizontal network of Bangladeshi women within an organisation predominantly run by women from the global North. PIYA's story in appendix 9 includes her account of the role this network played during an episode of conflict between the organisations discourse and practice.

Summary and discussion

In this study, the women's data can be analyzed through a number of lenses and categorizations: through an ideological lens as a chronicle of the effects on women of the encroachment of neo-liberal and NPM approaches in development organisations; through an organisational management lens as a matter of professional labour management; psychoanalytically as an expression of mechanisms of protective and defensive psycho-logic; and sociologically as an example of tactical resistances to subjected identities at the intersections of class, ethnicity, age and gender. My intention has been to draw attention to the differential experience of women in the study and to explore it in its complexity and in the context of findings common to the whole sample.

The female development workers in this study were facing familiar patterns of challenges that have been confronting feminists for decades: struggles for freedom and recognition; access to employment, fair conditions and pay; financial and bodily autonomy; and equity in personal relationships. The data has identified social and psychological processes at work that structure womens professional and personal routes to empowerment in this contested field.

The women in the study tended to have a come from affluent backgrounds, enabling relatively easy access to HE, and most have a family habitus that is oriented towards a public service ethos. At the same time, women were very aware of their own circumscribed position as women in patriarchal Bangladesh, with limited horizons and contained spaces for possible action. They were occupying positions of privilege and disadvantage simultaneously, living an everyday life of intersectionality and developing strategies to manage the conflicting emotional and material demands inherent in this metaxic position. Their testimonies, like those of international 'feminist bureaucrats' (Eyben and Turquet, 2013) closer to the centre of Aidland, expressed feelings of solidarity and identification with 'beneficiaries' and other women. For national workers, their own struggles and experiences of disadvantage sharply informed their development work and strengthened their commitment to effecting social change. There is some evidence of a 'structure of feeling' attached to the development sector that makes it an attractive workplace for women, but the sector also expresses continuities of wider social and cultural norms, the abiding affect of *purdah* and *izzat* for instance, that presents an obstacle to womens advancement and obstructs their contributions. In many cases,

negotiating the limits of their own agency appeared to lead these women into intense introspection in which their reflexive efforts towards self-development sometimes increased feelings of isolation or placed an additional emotional burden upon them. Opportunities for peer-support in effective 'safe' spaces, where women could 'vent' their frustrations or simply externalize their thoughts were relatively uncommon.

Despite social constraints and wider familial pressures, many of the women were also beneficiaries of benign patriarchal power. Psychoanalytically speaking, the data suggests that fathers fulfill a significant role as an object of 'good authority' internalized by many participants, which acts as an important psychological resource. Hoggett et al (2009c) contend that the notion of authority and power is highly significant for development workers whose roles are characterized by being both 'in' authority, in the sense of having some weight as professionals, and 'against' authority insofar as development often requires contestation of complex relations of both authority and power. The father-figures within and outside the family clearly provided an ethical and moral basis which sustained the commitment of participants and enhanced their capacities for resilience and psychological well-being.

And yet, the women in the sample were keenly aware of the contingency of their social and moral positioning and its dependence upon their maintaining a measure of female respectability. It could be said that the female development workers were experiencing and negotiating both external and internal struggles to maintain, challenge and re-define the subjective identity of women. A primary site of the struggle for autonomy and self-determination was in the intimate

sphere of marriage and spousal relationships. Aidographies of international development workers have identified personal and sexual relationships in terms of responses to the geographical and social displacements and psychological stresses entailed in aid work. In contrast, in the realm of the national worker at home in their own land and culture, such intimate choices are part of the everyday lived experience and have the character of affective personal and political statements of identity and values.

The detailed and interweaving nature of the women's interview data demonstrates how this strata of female development workers of the Global South are simultaneously the objects and subjects of development, experiencing both privilege and disadvantage across intersectionalities of class, 'race' and gender at an everyday level. Their experience differs from female international or 'ex-pat' experiences, documented by Roth, Fechter, Heron and Smirl (Heron, 2007, Cook, 2007, Fechter, 2012a, Fechter and Hindman, 2011, Roth, 2012, Roth, 2015, Smirl, 2015) who remain distanced spatially and socially from the everyday dynamics of the communities with whom they work. Fine (2016), citing Adorno reminds us that 'distance is not an empty space but a tension filled field' and she argued that those affected by disadvantage and oppression 'don't simply incorporate dominant messages' but 'metabolize, resist, rework and engage' in 'a delicate blend of survival and resistance' (Fine, 2016, p.351). The notion of 'survivance' that Fine referred to was used to characterize the narratives of Native Americans (Vizenor, 2008) and accurately reflects the nature of the stories told by the female participants in this study.

National development workers, and especially female development workers, are deeply embedded within the social and cultural orders of their country and in continuous negotiation, both internally and externally, with locally- and globally-derived structures of power and authority. These development actors, as agents of change are implicated and engaged in processes of 'doing', 'un-doing' and 're-doing' gender and opening up opportunities to renegotiate 'race' and 'class' in specific localized forms and at personal, familial and professional levels. Their struggles to create new identities and their contributions to social change and development are often under-recognised and overlooked as developmental activity but are expressed and exposed as such in their life-narratives. PIYA's story (in appendix 9), which played out over the course of the field research, dramatically illustrates how many of the thematic threads teased out in these findings chapters coalesce into a narrative of survival and resistance in a context that in many ways epitomizes the contemporary development paradigm.

Chapter 9: Discussion

Introduction

The findings in chapters 5 - 8 have demonstrated how a heterogeneous group of middle-class Bangladeshi development workers and social activists view themselves and their work. The data and its interpretation through a narrative and psychosocial methodology, has shed light on the material, social and biographical resources they draw upon to negotiate ways through the challenges, contradictions, paradoxes and dilemmas they encounter whilst effecting social change. By weaving together the 'small' personal stories of twenty-four individuals into themed sections, I have been able to trace larger narratives of the development of self and social identities. The significance of inherited habitus and processes of identity formation have emerged as influences on their social actions, interactions and career choices. The overarching effect of gender inequality has been recognised and the specific challenges faced by women highlighted.

This chapter will discuss the implications of these findings with relevance to three main areas of focus for development studies. Firstly, I address the characteristics of these Bangladeshi development workers' middle class-ness and how this might affect their roles in development. Secondly, I consider the cross-cutting effects of gender particularly in relation the psychoanalytic notion of a 'good authority' and the reproduction of inequalities. Finally, taking a broader perspective, I review the dominant 3-sector model of development and its limitations in the light of the findings and consider alternative social relations

approaches and the relevance of a feminist ethic of care. I will begin by briefly revisiting the policy and discursive contexts in which this study is situated, and the rationale for the research.

Re-directing and re-focusing the gaze, unearthing the voices of national development professionals

As has been demonstrated in a review of the literature on a broad spectrum of humanitarian aid and development workers, much of this area of research has been approached from a medicalized, operational and organisational perspective. The focus has been on identifying risk factors for mental ill-health (or 'burn-out') amongst these workers and the affects of exposure to both psychological trauma and physical vulnerabilities, to the detriment of direct consideration of ethical, moral and political dilemmas. The 'inner conflicts' of humanitarian workers' experience and the 'salutogenic' benefits of aid work have been incidentally acknowledged but under-researched (Nordahl, 2016).

In the context of humanitarian aid workers' experience especially, structural and subjective aspects of gender have been largely ignored except in regard to workers' vulnerability to physical and sexual violence, underlining the importance of operational rather than political considerations in this sphere of research. Only in the latter stages of writing this thesis has a spotlight been thrown on issues of sexual misconduct, harassment and gender discrimination within aid organisations and by development workers, and this has only come about as part of a far wider '#me too' movement against everyday and institutionalized sexism. The repercussions from the February 2018 'Oxfam

scandal' have yet to be fully realised (Hopkins, 2018, UK House of Commons, July 2018), but the revelations have publicly exposed the underlying potential for sharp contrasts between organisational rhetoric and 'professional' practice in 'Aidland'. Some commentators have not been slow to link the hypocrisy of individuals in one particular INGO to a neo-colonial 'white saviour mentality' inside the aid industry as a whole (Hirsch, 2018).

Over the last ten years, driven to some extent by a caucus of feminist scholar-practitioners, the gap between abstracted development policy research and personal accounts has narrowed, prompting questions about the nature of subjects and subjectivity and further eroding the binary of altruism/self-interest. In 2008 Stirrat identified a range of motivational identities displayed by international development workers that crystallized around archetypal images of development workers as mercenaries, missionaries and/or misfits. He found these attitudinal modes of practice intertwined and sometimes self-contradictory over the life-course and in day-to-day practice, illustrating the complexity of unpicking these emblematic values and orientations. He noted overlapping conceptualizations of the individual as 'strangely asocial, acultural' (Stirrat, 2008, p.415) and suggested the 'missionary' was being drawn towards more 'mercenary' ways of being in the context of increased competition and credentialization.

Further elaborations of development workers' subjective experience have highlighted the multifarious dilemmas, contradictions and paradoxes of aid and development work (Arvidson, 2008, Fechter and Hindman, 2011, Fechter, 2012a, Eyben and Turquet, 2013, Roth, 2015). Not least of which is the

paradox faced by feminists working, sometimes 'invisibly' both within and against existing development bureaucracies in order to secure change in social relations of power (Eyben and Turquet, 2013). These aidographies have made the political, personal; and ethical challenges faced by 'international' development workers of the Global North far more visible and explicit. But as some have acknowledged, as a body of work they lay bare a glaring gap in coverage insofar as the accounts of 'national' development workers of the Global South remain almost invisible and their voices practically unheard. Eyben and Turquet (2013) were explicit in noting the potential for this limited self-examination to become narcissistic. There is a need, as Heron (2007) articulated, to engage in substantial perhaps uncomfortable reflection regarding how we, positioned in the Global North, are implicated in acts of domination (de Jong, 2017), but also an imperative to shift the gaze, to make the discourse of development less of a 'white space'. Taking these two, perhaps paradoxical demands into consideration, whilst it is impossible from my position as a white, British subject, limited by language, to *reverse* the gaze (Kabeer et al., 2008), this research is an attempt to shift potentially narcissistic enquiry away from 'ourselves', as development professionals and scholars from the Global North, towards a better understanding of the experience of development professionals and social activists in the Global South. Without consideration of the experience of the 'local' development professional, it is unclear how Aphorpe's (2011) question 'who is international aid?' can be fully answered. The subjects of my study represent only a small sliver of the personnel of aid and my positionality and cultural capital has limited my purview tightly focussing my attention on English-speaking participants. However, because of the historic and

contemporary valuation of the English language in Bangladesh, my participants represent a certain class of persons that are of growing interest in development theory.

What is clear is that over the last three to four decades, as 'civil society' has become a recognised actor within the orthodox three-sector development paradigm, a vast nexus of INGOs, managing agencies and multi-lateral development institutions has burgeoned, employing thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of citizens across the globe. Concomitantly, the delivery of aid in the pursuit of development goals has shifted away from charitable and altruistic modes of care or more solidaristic principles and towards industrialized forms of operation that stimulate processes of NGO-isation and privatization. Aid funding and implementation is increasingly funneled through corporate-like INGOs and cascading contractual relationships with 'non-profit' and private sector agencies that focus on measurable outcomes and 'value for money' (DFID, 2011) under regimes of New Public Management. Although envisaging symbiotic relationships between state, private enterprise, and civil society sectors based upon ideal-type incentives and governing modes, the dominance of a neo-liberal and market-driven ideology is increasingly pervasive across all three sectors. Critics of this industrialization of aid, have pointed to the shortcomings of economistic approaches and modes of operation in what has become known as 'Aidland' that are de-politicised, neo-colonial in nature, and managerialist and marketized their application.

At the same time, the MDGs and SDGs, developed with civil society organisations, have concentrated the minds of development policy makers and

achieved notable advances. As these efforts in tandem with economic development gradually pull people in the South out of poverty, the global middle classes, and the roles they might play in development, have become an object of growing research interest. This interest is largely attributable to the perceived potential of the middle classes to shape socio-economic and political development through aspirational consumerism, and a presumed ability to hold authorities to account (Wietzke and Sumner, June, 2014, Hassan, 2013). To a lesser extent it is due to their 'slippery', liminal position and perhaps their implicit status, if nailed down, as a tangible indicator of 'successful' development. Viewed globally, the middle classes are as much a product of development as they are agents of development but their heterogeneity and the instability of a 'middle class' status presents a challenge for scholars and theoreticians.

From a neo-liberal economic perspective the middle classes have been characterized, and idealized as fundamentally self-interested rational choice consumers. Certainly, with relative privilege and access to valued social, cultural and economic resources, the middle classes of the Global North can be held to be agile in their efforts to maintain and reproduce their social position of relative privilege and can be generally reluctant to engage with systemic social transformations. This is also true of characterizations of the middle classes in South East Asia (Tiwari et al., 2013) and is congruent with Bourdieu's observation, as Eyben (Eyben and Turquet, 2013) have noted, that those 'best placed to change' the social order 'by changing categories of perception' of value are also generally, 'least inclined to do so' in order to protect the value of capitals with which they are already endowed (Bourdieu, 1985, p.731).

In developing countries such as Bangladesh, as this study has shown, it is a section of the highly-educated, professional middle classes who are employed by international and national NGOs and development agencies to manage and implement social change through the modalities of foreign donor aid. In this study, these aid workers are joined by philanthropic social activists and entrepreneurs who have turned their resources towards similar goals of human development. This slice of the population, the relatively well-resourced, *national* development workers and social activists who occupy a particular discursive position between global and local discourses is therefore a valid topic for research; and their identities, orientations and capacities for action should be of interest to scholars of development studies, practitioners and policy-makers alike.

As foreign aid and development co-operation budgets are increasingly subject to domestic political and economic pressures in the global North, there is a risk that this aid is becoming increasingly re-purposed in the service of security and trade considerations. This shift has added a pragmatic stimulus to principled moves toward a greater 'localisation' (Cordell, 2008) of development initiatives and organisations, and ongoing calls for a reassessment of development aid , including what 'development' means, how it operates and who benefits from it.

Within these discourses of development, the middle class development workers of my sample can be considered on intersecting planes of class and occupation as simultaneous beneficiaries and agents of change. While they can be seen as marginalized in the field of power that is 'Aidland', these change-makers can also be viewed as caught in the middle, one might say in the eye of the storm,

of contested notions of development, identity and subjectivity and as such engaged in ongoing processes of negotiation. As Roth (2015) has noted the vast majority of the aid worker population are nationals, therefore for any meaningful reassessment of development aid it is vitally important to understand the roots of the motivations of this 'middle' class of national development workers and their positions in relation to structures of power and domains of affective, material and political action. This is what this thesis has set out to do.

A Bangladeshi 'middle' class and their social actions

Development scholars and institutions have sought to identify and define the middle classes globally (Brandi and Büge, 2014), but these research efforts have tended to focus on relative and reductionist measures of economic status that become problematic when applied trans-nationally (Banerjee and Duflo, 2008). My research is not about class analysis *per se*, but about subjective experience, in which class is implicated. My interest is less inclined towards knowing and defining participants' incomes and economic status, but pays more attention to the discursive position of 'in-between-ness' that my participants, as relatively well-resourced national development workers, inhabit. As the research progressed, driven by the data, I refined this deliberately equivocal starting point into a conception of the sample as a group caught between specific discourses and material realities. That is, between the dominance of the neo-liberal managerial and universalist discourse of mostly Northern-based, mostly white-run development NGOs and the invidiousness of the patron-clientelism of the state; between sometimes contradictory social and professional attitudes

towards womens empowerment; and between connected notions of the human subject as autonomous individual or relational being.

While objective measures of material possessions have sometimes been used as a proxy for class status (Birdsall et al., 2013), in Bangladesh, a proficiency in the use of the English language, may also be used as a proxy, albeit imperfect, measure of socio-economic class. In this sense, the middle-class-ness of the sample has emanated from the data as much as it has been imposed by the researchers interests, needs and limitations. In other words, I have of necessity as much as by design had a 'class' effectively defined for me according to a particular form of cultural capital shared between researcher and researched, which has led to the inclusion of a handful of highly capitalized, economically 'elite' participants as well as those from the lower middle 'petit bourgeoisie' class. A Bourdieusian approach to class enables an understanding of distinctions within this broad range of the more commonly defined economic middle classes, although Bourdieu held that while economic capital is implicated in the accrual of other forms of capital, social class is not reducible to it (Bourdieu, 1984).

Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, understood as a constellation of pre-dispositions, is particularly relevant to this study, insofar as it has made the cleave in attitudes and values between a 'business class' and a 'public service class' clearly discernable and apparent. Distinctions within the Bangladeshi middle classes, which have emerged from the biographical data, suggest a genealogy of class that can be traced back to both the bureaucratic structures of the colonial era and post-independence developmental state, and the pre-colonial

land-owning and feudalistic *zamindar* structures. In the participants' accounts, these 'service' and 'business class' distinctions carry with them sets of moral and cultural values and are imbued with differing ideological outlooks. Overlaid across this affective landscape is the faint imprint of nationalism, made explicit in one in six of the accounts and seemingly embodied by those who have returned from the diaspora, that harks after a vision of Bangladesh as an independent, modern and fully developed nation, no longer the 'basket case' of the Third World. Jasper's (1998) conceptualisation of 'abiding affects' might be used to capture the sense in which the participants' accounts display shared and enduring feelings about these distinctions and their associated values, which are rooted in past and no longer extant political and historical circumstances and yet continue to influence their attitudes and actions.

There are indications in the data that the business/service class distinction is being gradually eroded by professional and personal 'border crossings' between the two classes of orientations and to some extent, by a confluence of the respective ethical and value orientations. In the visceral realm of spousal relationships, one might suggest the increased ability of women to choose their own partners (and their capacity to withstand social opprobrium as necessary) has contributed to the emergence of more postmodern, individualised identities and weakened an historical mechanism of social reproduction. In the professional realm, the NGO-isation of aid propelled by neo-liberal managerialist regimes and the concurrent rise of 'ethical' business models, practices and corporate responsibilities has muddied the waters in terms of the attribution of moral and cultural values to these representational sectors.

Lewis (2008) recognised the 'border crossings' of national development workers between the public sector and third sector and the continuities in professional identities. By contrast, the development-oriented nationals of my sample were highly, almost completely, averse to engagement with the state sector that has previously, for the large majority of participants, provided a recognisable and recognised social status and occupational class identity for their parents and predecessors and shaped their family's and their own *habitus*. As the state apparatus in Bangladesh has become increasingly politicised and divided and governed through unequal clientelistic relationships (Wood, 2000, Devine, 1999, Hassan, 2013), the generalised disgust, dismissal and quiet disparagement that the vast majority of participants displayed towards the public sector strongly suggests a collective loss of trust in the authority and impartiality of the public sector. As Lewis put it (2013), the tidy concept of 'the state' has been disrupted by the messiness of reality and generalised trust in the authority of institutions - Putnam's 'social' capital - is distinctly lacking.

A 'structure of feeling', as Hoggett (2009c) presents it, is a constellation of feelings and emotional states pertinent to a particular era and it could be said that a sense of frustration, irritation and disgust with the state combined with the hope of and commitment to social change that the development sector represents can be conceptualized as a structure of feeling. The impact this has on the way people act relates to an inner psycho-logic of continuities and discontinuities in familial identity – the 'binding to' and 'freedom from' that RUBY spoke of - and externally, relocates the third sector as a site of authority and power in both the maintenance of professional identity and in effecting social

change. My research has shown that a large majority of participants have shifted away from professional engagements in the public sector towards occupations in the third sector, or in a handful of cases, in carefully chosen social enterprise and private sector environments. Rather than crossing between the public and 'third' sectors as in Lewis' (2008) study, for participants in my study there seemed to be a greater acceptance of 'crossings' or blurred boundaries between the third and private sectors, although participants' engagement with the latter was still highly contingent. There were also a small number of individuals from previously politically active and 'business class' backgrounds who were now moving into the development sector in an effort to align themselves with a more public-spirited 'service class' ethos, sometimes combined with the application of an explicit business-like approach. The national development workers of my sample have both sought out, and been hailed by, the social justice discourse of development organisations, which presents professional opportunities to enact and express a public service ethos that aligns with an evolving, and mutating 'service class' habitus.

This affective and discursive ground is to some extent a field of contestation between a discourse of social justice and a relational view of the human subject on the one hand, and the hegemonic profit-seeking individualism of late capitalism on the other. Reading the data from a discursive perspective, these 'middle class' participants inhabit what might be thought of as a liminal socio-cultural position. In the domain (or Bourdieusian 'field') of 'Aidland' national development workers and social activists were presented with everyday dilemmas that require them to balance and integrate material or psychological

self-interest with the felt imperative, the 'abiding affect' of a public service habitus, to serve others and society through 'bureaucratic', 'occupational' and 'lifestyle' forms of social action (Roth, 2016).

In the context of Bangladesh's national development, perhaps a more relevant divide now is the gulf between those frustrated by the dysfunctional state apparatus but deeply averse to the idea of 'doing' politics and those represented by the small minority of the sample who are more explicitly politically engaged and feel able to at least attempt to hold the state apparatus to account. The 'class' of people represented in this study may or may not have been 'doing politics' in the formal sense (and most of them are not) but as this thesis has argued, they were nonetheless deeply engaged in making micro-political acts in their choice of career and in the ethical conduct of their professional and personal lives.

My research has demonstrated that a segment of the Bangladeshi middle classes were clearly turning to development work and third sector occupations in search of meaningful work and professional identities that are congruent with their *habitus*, their historically embedded and in this sample dominant 'public service' values and ethos. Rather like the Canadian workers interviewed by Heron (2007) although not expressed as such, these national workers may have wanted to see themselves and be recognised as 'the good guys'. Using Bourdieu's notion of habitus can go some way towards explaining the 'inexplicable attraction' to development work as noted in Roth's (2016, p.67) study.

Eyben and Turquet (2013) used Bourdieusian social theory to explain that whilst those with power and valorized capitals are least likely to change those values and power relations, a minority, 'who feel marginalized because of an identity which places them in a relative position of subjection despite their powerful position in the bigger scheme of things' are motivated 'to transform the power structures that oppress others more seriously' (Eyben and Turquet, 2013, p.21). Subsequently, Roth (2015) observed that the unifying feature across the biographies of diverse international development workers, and one which draws them into aid work is a quality of liminality, which might be linked to relative positions of subjection, on one or other or both sides of a boundary. She identified transitions in the life-course and the straddling of cultures as particular aspects of liminality relevant to development workers experience and observed patterns in early childhood experiences; interests springing from social and political engagements, and epiphanic or episodes of crisis that involved processes of re-evaluation. She also noted how 'aidwork offers opportunities to transcend boundaries and overcome cultural, social and political restrictions' (Roth, 2015, p.99). The findings of my own research confirm and support the analyses that certain states of liminality and relative forms of marginalization and subjection often to engender an impulse to help transform existing oppressive structures.

Education and development

As has been shown, the participants' biographies featured strong elements of sociable curiosity in childhood and young adulthood that developed into diverse social experiences of care and learning. Bourdieu's social theory of distinctions in the formation of groupings in social space relies not only on the practice of

distinction but on the recognition of other. NEMO's childhood story of following a person with a 'bizarre hat' comes to mind, in that it was a recognition of difference from which he could reflect on his own identity.

For these development workers and social activists, the accumulation of cultural capital – education and learning in all its forms, including exposure to and engagement with a diversity of people and ideas - was closely associated with the evolution of their liberal values and progressive change-oriented dispositions. Higher Education played a pivotal role in their identity formation and social and political development. The university degree, an institutionalized form of cultural capital, functioned as a gateway to employment in development NGOs, conferring competencies that may be more or less relevant to the sector. We might recall ROKEYA's striking, perhaps surprising, reference to the continuing relevance of her Philosophy degree to her development work. But the experience of HE also offered other 'soft skills' and developed capacities for self-reflection through associative opportunities for social mixing and for nurturing self-authorization in leadership.

To what extent HE institutions in Bangladesh will struggle to maintain this aspect of university experience in the context of constraints on public provision and widening private provision that has been shown to lead to social segmentation in other countries (Davies and Zarifa, 2012, Gerald and Haycock, 2006) remains to be seen and is an avenue for further research. In Bangladesh, with the opening of a foundation-run women's university the potential for the emergence of a tiered and segmented HE system has an added gendered dimension, and the pitfalls and potential benefits of creating a women-only

space in HE is another area worthy of exploration. How and why private universities govern the political activities of students in the contemporary context is a yet another crucial question of interest to educational sociologists and political scientists.

Bangladesh has achieved substantial success in meeting its Millennium Development Goals in regards to school enrolment (especially of girls) in primary and secondary education. The importance of pedagogic cultures and widening participation in higher education may prove a significant focus of policy, and contestation, in Bangladesh's development having implications for both the agile and fragile middle classes, and the social mobility, segmentation and orientation of its population.

Gender and development in patriarchal Bangladesh: an affective bargain

A biographical approach has captured the educational and career trajectories of these NGO workers and activists and demonstrated how their identities, orientations and values were deeply rooted in family histories linked to colonial and post-independence developmental state bureaucracies. Capacities for sociable curiosity and identification with others were bolstered by experiences of social mixing in HE and shaped their liberal values and development-oriented attitudes. These biographies also demonstrated the deeply gendered nature of the participants' life-experiences and provide insights into the dilemmatic and sometimes paradoxical experience of working within the development sector in Bangladesh, and at its margins in different forms of social activism. Being alert to narratives of curiosity and care, personal growth, and the resistance and

survival of women and men in the study has made visible 'bigger' stories that may be analyzed psychosocially.

There was a clearly articulated lack of trust in the state as a 'good' public authority and deep frustration with formal political structures and the corruption of a politicised civil service. By extension, public service within government bodies was perceived as an untenable arena for effecting developmental social change. Convergent with this lack of trust in the state's authority, father figures, whether literally as biological kin or in the form of male gurus and mentors, loomed large in all the participants' life-stories. These male figures appear as 'good authorities' across almost all of the interview data,¹⁷ prompting questions and consideration of the psychoanalytic functioning of 'good authorities' in the context of a classically patriarchal society. These considerations will be discussed below in the context of writings on feminists in development organisations and womens paths to empowerment in South Asian society.

Bangladesh has been described as meeting the criteria of 'classic patriarchy' (Kandiyoti, 1988) particularly in relation to family, kinship and domestic household arrangements (Kabeer, 2011a). Therefore, promoting womens interests, implementing gender equality and 'mainstreaming gender' presents particularly difficult and extensive challenges, both for local womens movements and for aid donors.

¹⁷ Only one of the participants spoke negatively of his father.

Gendered subjectivities were outstandingly salient to the everyday experiences and activities of the development workers and social activists in this study. All the women in the study articulated experiences of gender discrimination and faced many issues familiar to second wave feminists including juggling domestic responsibilities with the demands of employment and discrimination in the workplace. The women in the study recounted their struggles for financial independence and autonomy but above all, their accounts document the intense pressure they are under to maintain a sufficient degree of respectability whilst also striving to carve out new identities as women and as professional development workers. In contrast, the men in the study seemed to have far greater opportunities to pursue a much wider range of socially disruptive actions with lesser demands to maintain respectability and as a consequence they enjoyed a greater scope of social acceptance of their difference and transgressions.

It is clear that the women in the study were deeply engaged in creating new identities for themselves as empowered and emancipated change-makers, but at the same time appeared to feel assailed by the dominance and persistence of oppressive and discriminatory gender norms in society at large exemplified by the notion of izzat and, paradoxically, within the ostensibly gender-sensitive development organisations for whom they worked. Women in the study were engaged in struggles for equal treatment within the workplace despite the equalities discourse espoused by their NGO employers. In addition to negotiating this dissonance between development discourse and practice and the gendered norms of the workplace and domestic sphere, there are

indications that female participants also felt subject to the critical gaze of other women, colleagues and relatives, who appeared to uphold and police such norms particularly in relation to notions of female 'respectability'. In Bourdieusian terms, these latter acts are theorized as a desire to protect the value of womens symbolic capital in the domestic sphere. Skeggs and Loveday (2012) have acknowledged this task of valuing 'respectability' and the political nature of womens claims to value and re-value its qualities. In the face of ongoing gendered constraints and the burdensome task of defining their own measure of 'respectability' the younger female development workers in this study were engaged in an internalized process of reflexive self-development. This 'project of the self' entailed a significant amount of emotional labour and a resort to exercising their stifled agency through smaller 'political' acts in the realm of personal and domestic relationships.

The literature on development, aid and humanitarian workers has been substantially enlarged by the publication of collections of essays by women many of whom have worked in the sector themselves. The experiences of mostly white, 'international' female development workers from the global North, has been catalogued by Anne-Mieke Fechter (2012b), Rosalind Eyben and Laura Turquet (2013) and Sara de Jong (2017). These aidnographies included accounts of the troubling nature of the aid workers 'raced' and classed identities, which generated reflection on the uncertainties of their credibility as advocates for disadvantaged 'third world' women and the discomfoting question of complicity in the reproduction of inequalities. These authors have also drawn attention to how the conditions of international development work

intrude into the private and personal sphere of aid workers lives, recognising that working away from 'home' is conducive to social segregations in compounds, clubs and social circles (Smirl, 2015) and the maintenance of social as well as economic distance from both the targeted beneficiary populations and their own colleagues, the national development workers.

Eyben (2013) analyzed the problems and pitfalls of mostly 'international', ex-pat gender specialists working in Aidland bureaucracies, identifying four interconnected areas as potentially problematic. First she noted the spatial, cognitive and social distances between development workers and beneficiaries, and secondly, characterized these relationships as inflected by colonial legacies that can lead to processes of categorization, stereotyping and othering. Thirdly, the notion of 'expertise', also inflected by colonial legacy, privileges universal solutions over local and contextualized forms of knowledge with the risk of reproducing rather than challenging or transforming existing relations of power. Finally, Eyben notes, the complexities and lacunas of accountability between donors, international NGOs and beneficiary populations expose problems of legitimacy and credibility.

The female Bangladeshi development workers in this study were in a particularly liminal position - privileged by class and subjectified as women - but appeared to be far less troubled than their international counterparts by this identity position. They were intensely subject to gendered oppressions within the context of an enduringly patriarchal society, and easily identified with aid beneficiaries. The women in this study were deeply engaged in fighting for their own empowerment and autonomy, through personal acts of resistance, as

much as for the empowerment of other women through institutionalized interventions.

The findings have shown that although deep differences exist between the female participants themselves, and between female national development workers and female beneficiaries, these women shared a common experience of Bangladesh's patriarchal social and cultural systems. The female participants' experiences inside Aidland demonstrate how they are marginalized through language, organisational structures, working patterns and mechanisms of one-way accountability and how these strictures are intensified and intertwined with their personal lives through gendered norms associated with respectability and marital status.

NGOs, and particularly INGOs were viewed by the women in this study as progressive workplaces that can and do provide opportunities for the advancement and empowerment of female development workers as well as for beneficiaries. The availability of an ostensibly progressive, inclusive, fair and nurturing workplace is especially valuable to working women who are subject to a generally more hostile labour market environment.

Eyben & Turquet (2013) wrote of the advantages and disadvantages of (international) feminists' marginalization in bureaucracies, asserting that 'working from the edge' can become a strength given the capacity of passionate and politically skillful feminists to live with contradictions. They argued that relative subjections can be motivating and discussed how making strategic alliances within and beyond donor-driven organisations can enhance credibility

and authority and help create spaces for personal and collective critical awareness. Eyben and Turquet based their strategizing conclusions on the experiences and contributions of a small sample of what might be considered part of an 'elite' group of international feminist development workers inside the head offices of multilateral organisations, government agencies and large INGOs. The social, spatial and occupational status differences between this elite stratum and the women in my study seem stark but both groups of development workers drew upon their capacities for negotiation in the face of ambiguities and complexities and the resources of identity. Where might this leave considerations of feminist solidarities across Aidland? How might the pitfalls that Eyben elucidates including the privileging of universal solutions over local and contextualized forms of 'expertise' and its colonialist inflections be avoided?

As noted earlier fathers, and father figures in the form of mentors and 'gurus', featured consistently throughout the all the research interviews as benign ethical guides and paternalistic patriarchs. For the women in the study, the power and authority invested in the patriarchal figure was especially enabling and provided pathways to financial independence and empowerment in terms facilitating their education, socialization and support for their employment. Kabeer (2011a) through empirical analysis of the effects of womens work in Bangladesh, reiterated that womens empowerment was path dependent and that these routes were associated with three broad sets of resources: material, cognitive and relational. She concluded that:

Women's empowerment is not a single, unified process unfolding in a linear fashion in the course of social change. It is multi- stranded, uneven and frequently contradictory so that gains made on some fronts can be diluted or negated by increased costs, risks and set- backs on other fronts. (Kabeer, 2011a, p.50).

In this study, taking a psychosocial approach, we might consider the relational and affective resources provided by the benign father figure and the relational and affective costs and risks associated with the pathway these women appear to have followed.

Thinking psychoanalytically: The affective patriarchal bargain as a structure of feeling

As discussed in the methodological chapter, psychoanalytic concepts and interpretations have been widely applied in therapeutic clinical settings and latterly to cultural, organisational and management studies. There is increasing interest in bringing this specialism 'outside the clinic' to understand social phenomena, society and politics (Frosh, 2012, p.223). I have adopted a psychosocial approach that recognises the interplay between participants' internal and external realities, and which makes connections between emotional, affective, material and social processes identifiable and open to exploration. Taking a psychoanalytically-informed sociological approach (Clarke, 2006) provides a platform to explore what Hoggett (2008) refers to as the 'psycho-logic' within the participants biographical accounts. Following this analytical route leads me to suggest, somewhat speculatively and with some caution, that the role of the father figure in the context of a deeply gendered patriarchal contributes to a 'structure of feeling', an *affective* patriarchal bargain

that can be explained through the psycho-logic and sociologic positions of the participants. Hossain's (2017) argument that the patriarchal bargain in which women's vulnerability and their protection by male patrons and the Bangladeshi state has been eroded by long-term political and economic upheavals may stand materially, but my research suggests the abiding affect of patriarchy, an affective contract implying a reciprocity of care and responsibility, is still in existence in the emotional consciousness of society.

Within the object relations school of psychoanalysis and developed from Winnicott's (1991) notion of the 'good enough' parent, the notion of an internalized 'good authority' functions to contain painful or disturbing anxieties. Such anxieties and discomforts include identification with the social suffering of others and are associated with discursive contradictions and cognitive dissonances within the family, workplace and society at large. In all the participants' accounts the father figure looms large and using this conceptualization could be said to fulfill the role of a 'good authority' within their narratives, almost without exception. However, the benignity of the patriarchal father is, in the women's accounts, conditional upon maintaining a certain level of respectability or *izzat* (honour) that is carried by the women themselves and on behalf of the extended family (Huq, 2012). This affective structuring mechanism, or what might be conceptualized as an *affective* patriarchal bargain can be discerned in JUDI's story of negotiating the approval of her father to work in development and her adoption of an identity position as a respectable young woman who behaved morally and had something to 'prove', as if seeking perfection (Gunasinghe et al., 2018). The patriarchal risk that these middle

class women were exposed to is not so much a loss of material protection, but the loss of psychological and **social protection, embedded in their social relations**. ROSE's return to the parental home following divorce was accompanied by feelings of shame and guilt until she was able to reclaim her dignity through employment with an NGO where she worked in a programme to support other women through material and psychological hardships.

Gunasinghe (2018) observed how the relational aspects of *izzat*, in terms of seeking the care and support of elders and authority figures in the community, functioned beneficially in maintaining Muslim women's social and self identity and improving their mental health.

The relatively privileged feminists in development organisations and the managements of development agencies more broadly might consider to what extent they are able to position themselves as 'good', or 'good enough' 'authorities', competent in the task of 'holding' and containing affective anxieties within their organisations and personnel, and thus able to support staff in their own self-authorizations in negotiating and overcoming the dilemmas, contradictions and paradoxes inherent in processes of social change.

Development organisations might well be reluctant about adopting, or even considering their potential role as 'good authorities' for several reasons. To do so would demand a more critical reflection upon the organisation's own internal culture and practices, and examination of the political nature of choices made by organisations that are nominally politically neutral. Organisations would need to come to a better understanding of how an individual's orientations, values and capacities can and do impact on and contribute to the operations of

the organisation. Such a consideration would entail a recognition that 'development' takes place not only in the external, social and economic realms of communities and institutions, but also within the personal sphere, as part of our internal and psychological processes and functioning. NGOs, INGOs and the phalanx of consulting agencies that have proliferated over the past two decades have become increasingly driven by a neo-liberal market-oriented competitive ethos, much encouraged by the managerialist, almost wholly outcome-oriented strategies of donors (e.g. DfID) and the space for such reflections is largely antithetical to this paradigm. As Rao (Rao, 2013) has described it, spaces for such critical reflection are:

[I]nherently subversive, both because they unearth deep assumptions that collide with dominant organisational cultural norms and because they focus on how power dynamics within the institution influence practice. (Rao, 2013, p.190)

These conceptual leaps would entail a wholesale reconsideration of the meaning, realms and ethos of development itself, and these are the kinds of demands made by advocates of progressive post-development alternatives.

Bringing the personal into the picture: an ethic of care

There are some broad continuities between the experiences of international and national development personnel in the challenges they identify. My research shows there is a shared cognisance of the unequal relationships and social and spatial distances that exist between them, which can be problematic. There is also growing recognition of the difficulties of inculcating gender equality into the work of development organisations internally (within organisations) to align

rhetoric with practice; and that associated challenges of intercultural communication and the negotiation of difference persist (Fechter and Hindman, 2011, Eyben and Turquet, 2013, Roth, 2015). Both national and international development workers also appreciate that negotiating the ethical challenges, contradictions and paradoxes of this work demands significant psychological and emotional resources. This study has illuminated some of the personal, psychological and emotional aspects of development work and demonstrated how national development workers in Bangladesh faced particular challenges related to their embedded and liminal social positions, and how they drew upon biographical identity, identifications and relational resources, which contributed to their capacities for reflexivity, emotional resilience and self-authorization.

Aid and development work has been characterized as an arena in which both emancipatory self-actualization through engagement in meaningful work and emotional burn-out can arise (Nordahl, 2016). The extent to which these outcomes are experienced is dependent upon psychological and material supports available to individuals and the vulnerabilities they experience (Roth, 2015). My research has demonstrated that the motivations to work in the development sector in Bangladesh tend to stem from inherited classed positions and orientations, and exposure to subjectified identities. The sector offered both professional opportunities that aligned with an evolving 'service class' social identity as well as personal opportunities particularly for women, to resist subjectification and pursue agendas of personal fulfillment and empowerment.

Raghuram et al (2009) noted a 'wrongheaded-ness' about our understandings of the motivations for political and social action and formulations that assume 'relatively privileged people do not care about 'distant strangers', pointedly linking this to 'geographies of responsibilities'. Raghuram et al. (2009) suggested that the notion of care offers an 'affective register' for our increasing concerns with 'how to think ethically and act responsibly towards close and distant others' (Raghuram et al., 2009, p.6). Barnett and Land, (2007) cited by Raghuram, argue that 'the partiality inherent in caring and responsible relations' is a condition of ethical relations' (Barnett and Land, 2007, p.1073). They acknowledge and emphasize the unequal nature of power relations involved in such interdependent relations, taking the debate some way towards a postcolonial reading of care and responsibility.

As Barnett et al (2008) subsequently pointed out in their examination of governability, the 'responsibilization' of the social field is not only the work of states and policy-makers, but also of NGOs, charities and campaign groups. Barnett et al found the ideal of the neo-liberal subject 'elusive' and instead encountered people with 'busy lives', 'torn loyalties', 'multiple commitments and scarce resources who do what they can' when these actions 'fit into ongoing elaborations of the self as 'practical and narrative achievements of 'good enough' moralities' (Barnett, 2008, p.647). Similarly, in empirical research, Goetz (2007) observed the affects of an unequal distribution of responsibility for ethical practice in development operations modeled on liberal economics and universalist approaches that rest on the discretion – and I would posit the

passionate and thoughtful care - of 'local heroes' for their successful implementation (Goetz, 1996).

What has been missing from the tripartite model is any acknowledgement of the personal dimension on which development and social change might occur and which could be said to be 'governed' in the Etzionian sense by subjective experience and social relations as much as by objective experiences of coercion, reward or value congruence. Nearly twenty years ago, Sylvester accused advocates of this model of an un-reflexive approach to problem solving in which there are 'no people... just modes of organisation' (Sylvester, 1999, p.706). Barnett asserted that without a coherent theoretical framework that accounts for how processes of administration and politics connect with 'cultural processes of self-formation and subjectivity', 'the idea that organisations and networks might share rationalities through which they problematize and seek to intervene in specified areas of social life seems worth pursuing' (Barnett, 2008, p.624). Whilst theorizations of personhood, selfhood, the subject and the individual encompass subtle but important differences (as addressed in chapter 4), an alternative model or organising schema, arising from the literature on health, care and welfare that *does* include the personal dimension through which action is mediated has been referred to as the 'care diamond'.

In the context of health and welfare, 'care' is primarily thought of as 'an action, a mental state and a moral value' (Reddy, 2014, p.5) but also as a fundamental principle that governs and directs relationships between and within communities, groups or sectors (Rabe, 2017). The heuristic organising device of the care diamond has been widely adopted as an institutional framework for

its value in drawing attention to the internal dynamics and relationships between sectors; and has demonstrated its utility in making visible the previously-hidden, unpaid and heavily gender-skewed work of caring for others.

While semiotic similarities between the notions of 'care' and 'aid' might appear obvious, the basis for comparisons between the 'care diamond' and the 'development triangle' not only lie in the commonality of multi-sectoral framings, but also in parallel assumptions which underlie a view of development intervention as institutionalized welfare. The contemporary development policy emphasis on social protection and the provision of safety nets (Barrientos and Hulme, 2009) supports this association, and is, in itself, is an acceptance of the failure of (or at least flaws in) the ideological ethos of neoliberal free-market economics.

Development, as with care, is the subject of competing ideologies and outlooks. Both domains risk employing idealized and/or outdated institutional forms and norms, whether they be of family, community, state, civil or private sector (Rabe, 2017). The potential of the 'care diamond' framework as an organising principle lies with a sectoral configuration that includes the personal realm of action, change and development, and an acknowledgement of the politics of relations of power between actors. Moreover, as Hoggett et al state:

The ethic of care perspective perceives the web of reciprocal obligations and commitments that characterise relationships between helper and helped, givers and receivers. The ethic of care also highlights the affective foundations of ethical behaviour, the love and compassion that

motivates moral behaviour and informs judgments about what is right and what is wrong. (Hoggett, 2009c, p.79)

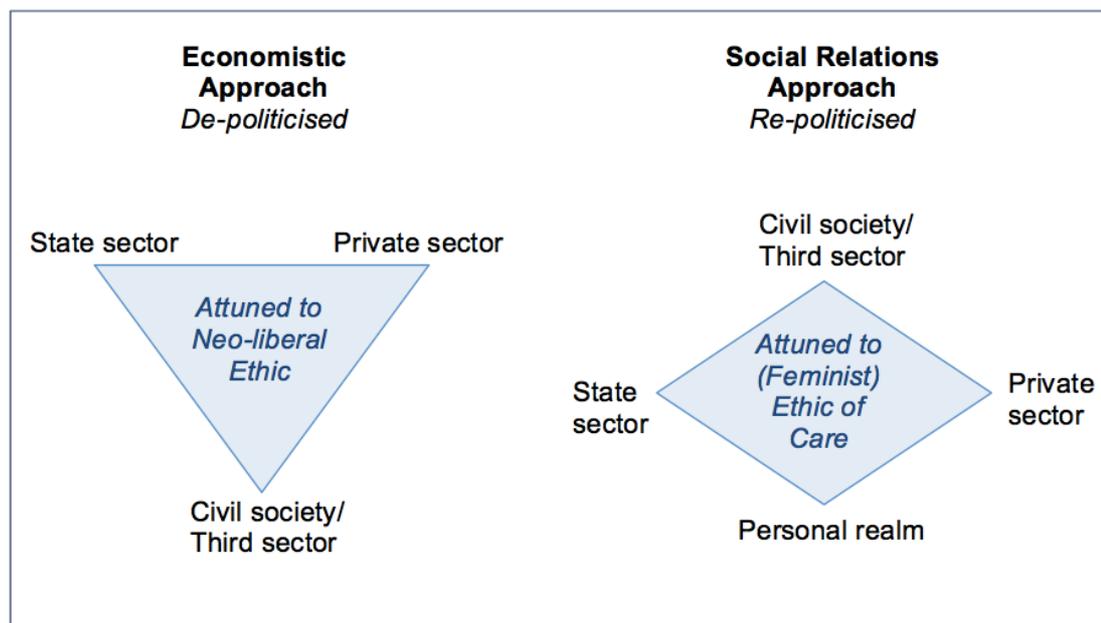


Figure 6: Schematic models of the tripartite and alternative 'care diamond' frameworks

Development and the development sector itself, has been acknowledged as an inherently political arena (Ferguson, 1990, Easterly, 2013) and conceptualized as a dilemmatic space in which there are 'continuing struggles to balance the competing demands and desires of those in need of services, with the limits imposed as a result of wider underlying power structures' (Hoggett, 2009c, p.5). A feminist ethic of care, grounded in a social relations approach has been suggested as an alternative and 'viable normative approach' (Hankivsky, 2006, p.91) to development policy and the striving for a just and equitable global society (Tronto, 1996). Joan Tronto (1993) identified five attributes or criteria for an ethic of care: attentiveness (to needs); transparency in allocating responsibility; competence in appropriate skills; mutual responsiveness; and integrity in maintaining of a focus on the alleviation of suffering. Hankivsky (2006) argued that an ethic of care, with values and principles attentive to

relationships and responsibilities is an essential platform from which to respond to the global challenges of inequality. This perspective departs significantly from an individualistic and economistic world view and universalistic theories of justice (Tronto, 1995). Rooted in notions of relationality and interdependence this ethical framework is congruent with significant features of intersubjectivity and relationality apparent in notions of Ubuntu, Swaraj and Buen Vivir and 'the basic idea that humans are engaged in each other's lives in a myriad of ways' (Sevenhuijsen 2001). An ethic of care promotes an understanding of ethical practice as 'everything that we do to maintain and repair our world so that we can live in it as well as possible' (Sevenhuijsen, 1998). That world includes our bodies, our inner worlds and our environment, all of which we seek to 'interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web' (Fisher and Tronto, 1990, p.40). Raghuram also argues that 'responsibility and care have much to offer in thinking through the relationalities that make up a postcolonial world' such that 'a more pragmatic responsiveness, one that involves a 'care-full' recognition of postcolonial interaction' is possible (Raghuram et al., 2009, p.5).

Recent reports of abuses of power by personnel within aid organisations (Plummer, Feb 2018) have dramatically heightened concerns over the inequalities of power and voice within Aidland. The practical and moral exercise of a duty of care towards beneficiaries and both local and foreign staff is seemingly all the more urgent as development organisations rush to review their safeguarding and protection policies and procedures. Whether the repercussions of these incidents will lead to a more fundamental reassessment of development intervention that addresses existing inequalities of power or see

a response that simply protects the funding and interests of Aidland organisations and their northern personnel, remains to be seen.

Kapoor (2004) warned of a tendency towards hyper-reflexivity and asserted that the narcissistic gaze of aidnography rests on an outdated and unrealistic view of aid and development. Focusing on the ethnography of aid and experience of development professionals, it has been argued, may unhelpfully divert attention away from the relations of power in which the politics and material effects of interventions are embedded (Harrison, 2013). I would take issue with this position insofar as acknowledging that although the dangers of a hyper-reflexive narcissistic gaze exist, the recent rash of aidnographies has brought much-needed attention to the politics and relations of power within development interventions. By extending, conceptually and through transdisciplinary means, the reach and scope of explorations of development workers experience to include national workers, the insights provided by these initial ethnographic endeavours can be built upon. By studying the experience of national workers through life-history methods and narrative analyses, a more comprehensive and representative picture of the psychosocial world of Aidland and the complex social relations that exist within and beyond it can be drawn.

Limitations and potential further research directions

Limitations

The obvious and foremost limitation of this research was its reliance on English as a medium of communication and concomitant issues of inequalities of power, control of knowledge production, and articulations of the self that this implies.

More than half of the participants were fluent and confident English speakers, including some with first-language level skills, whilst roughly a quarter were significantly less fluent or more limited in their vocabularies. It was only with this latter group that I experienced some practical difficulties in communication. It took extra time and the patience and commitment of both parties to achieve mutually satisfactory understandings but the challenge was by no means insurmountable and the level of ease or difficulty in communication varied with each participant as often it does with same-language speakers. In psychosocial interviews, the researcher needs to become especially attuned to the metaphors and cultural references of the interviewee, and be able to grasp and echo their phraseology and lexicon (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000, 2012) in order to reach mutual understanding. This process of reaching mutual understandings does not interfere with the process of data generation unless one is conducting fine-grain or conversational discourse analysis. In this study there were many areas of assumed ignorance as well as areas of assumed (shared) knowledge and these aspects have been addressed in the appended reflections of my own experience of the research (appendix 8).

In hindsight, a tighter demographic or occupational focus on the selection criteria for the recruitment of participants would have facilitated a more cohesive and singular unit of analysis than one that relied upon a conceptual social and discursive position. A concentrated focus on a particular age, gender, occupational or organisational grouping may have provided greater scope for direct comparisons with other studies such as those on gender specialists within INGOs. However, as the paucity of research on development workers of the

Global South shows, there is merit in taking a broad sweep in order to lay the path for further more focused studies.

My aim was to explore the experiences of those people who might be thought of as occupying a discursive liminal or metaxic space between modernity and tradition, and between the 'local' and 'global', but I have not addressed the role religious faith plays in shaping individuals' orientations and capacities. Religion and religious faith was not an obvious feature of the participants' stories, and this source of motivation and moral influence did not surface in the data to any significant extent. Rather, participants tended to identify variously as non-practicing or not strongly religious, somewhat agonistic and in one case atheist. Further research would undoubtedly add to our understanding of the motivations and capacities of similar professional development workers in this context, complementing the work of Pickering-Saqqa (2015) in explorations of organisational habitus in religious NGOs and enabling comparisons with secular development organisations.

Avenues for further research

In addition to more tightly focused and comparative studies of national development workers in the global south, and investigations of the role of religious faith in individual navigations of developments challenges, other avenues for research are suggested by the findings in this study.

As noted in chapter 2 and 3, the 'global middle classes' are increasing the focus of development research but the resources for sociological study of the growing middle classes in Bangladesh are limited. The development of methodological

and conceptual instruments for the exploration of class distinctions and social and political values and actions, following a Bourdieusian framework, could yield important and more comprehensive information for the formulation of policy in areas of education and economic and social development, and inform efforts to promote democracy, social mobility and tackle inequalities.

Chapter 10. Conclusion

Addressing the research questions

This study set out to explore how individuals who are involved in efforts to bring about social change in their own country in the global South negotiate the complex demands and dilemmas that arise from their activities, and to understand the resources they draw upon to do so. I have undertaken an in-depth study of a purposively recruited 'middle' class of English-speaking Bangladeshi professionals employed in development NGOs and engaged in developmental social action to address these questions.

The research has taken a psychosocial and narrative approach to better understand the nature of their internal and external resources and the interactions between the inner and outer worlds of people negotiating development and social change. This approach has brought to the surface accounts of their sense of identity as change-makers; illuminated the foundations of their orientations and illustrated how conflicting demands, ethical dilemmas and contradictions are perceived and managed. Twenty-four men and women who occupy particular, perhaps pivotal, social and occupational positions have taken part in a series of in-depth biographical interviews. Their contribution of scores of 'small' stories has captured the texture of their lives in a manner that fills a lacuna in the literature on the personnel of contemporary aid and development work.

The study has deployed classic Bourdieusian concepts and contemporary iterations to examine the identities, orientations and social actions of my sample and explored the utilization of such capitals and sets of pre-dispositions by individuals. I have applied the heuristic device of symbolic capitals - economic, cultural and social - to explore processes of social reproduction and accumulation and have considered emerging notions of structures of feeling, abiding affects and emotional habitus and the impact they may have on processes of social change and development.

A psychosocial analytical lens, attuned to feminist and decolonialist perspectives of 'bi-focality' has been used to illuminate affective and material power relations, structures and gendered inequalities exposing ways in which development organisations maintain and reproduce, or at least fail to disrupt, oppressive neo-colonial, gendered and subjective hierarchies. As one of the wellsprings of psychosocial and narrative research, feminist philosophy and methodology has shaped both the theoretical and empirical bases of this study. This stance towards the research has necessitated substantial reflection by the researcher on her own social position and subjective experience as a researcher, which has further informed the treatment and interpretation of the data.

Research outcomes

My findings demonstrate how NGO workers and social activists in Bangladesh possess sets of classed pre-dispositions, inflected by colonial and post-independence bureaucratic administrations that lead them into seeking public

service and meaningful development-oriented work that is congruent with their personal, social and political values. The accounts of these workers also show that despite a degree of cautiousness and their critical awareness of the failures of local NGOs, the international development sector is largely perceived as providing opportunities for meaningful work and a field in which these values can be expressed. This is especially so in the face of far deeper and more widespread reservations among the change-oriented participants about working inside the state apparatus and ambivalent, contingent feelings towards the private sector. The testimonies of these development workers illustrate how NGOs also sometimes fail to live up to the image and the rhetoric of equality and rights-based development practices. The influence of a neo-liberal managerialist ethos is implicated here but perhaps more visible are the effects of entrenched gendered norms and the neo-colonial tendencies of development agencies that effectively maintain and reproduce racialised and intersecting hierarchies and structures of power and privilege.

Importantly, unlike international development workers, national workers tend not to experience or conceive of development as change occurring 'out there' happening to 'others' 'away from home'. Rather, the processes of effecting change and the affects of change are integrated into their personal and social relationships and viewed not simply as a professional project but as an intentional and on-going practice across all realms of their lives and reflection on their own sense of self.

I have drawn upon psychoanalytic concepts from the British school of Object Relations to inform and illustrate processes of identification, internalization,

projection and authorization to produce a sociological account of the emotions of this sample, whilst heeding the cautions to lone psychosocial researchers of the potential for producing 'wild analyses' from limited non-clinical data (Elliott et al., 2012, Brown, 2006). Therefore it is with some cautiousness that I have offered an account of an affective patriarchal bargain, or affective contract, as a 'structure of feeling' that operates at both a psychological and societal level, impacting on the actions of these workers.

The challenges and dilemmas national NGO staff and social activists confront on a daily basis in their work and personal lives are negotiated with recourse to the social, cultural, and emotional resources they have accumulated and developed as a result of their social position. Familial and associational ties and exposure to social diversity and learning opportunities throughout their education and especially at university are particularly salient. Despite the agility and creativity of these national development workers and social activists in managing conflicting demands and negotiating the everyday dilemmas they encounter some structural obstacles and institutional processes remain beyond their power to change or influence.

With this in mind, I have begun to consider an alternative relational approach and organising model of development based upon an ethic of care that brings the individual into the realm of development discourse through a recognition of the value of personal, subjective experience.

Originality and contribution

The research is trans-disciplinary, taking its theoretical framework from Bourdieusian sociology and informed by the object-relations school of psychoanalysis. It acknowledges the contribution of feminist methodology and political philosophy, and considers post-colonial and post-modern critiques of human development. The methodological approach is narrative and psychosocial, tapping into the characteristically human activity of storytelling that is both universal and perennial.

My research complements the recent flush of 'aidnographies' – ethnographies of aid - by pulling the focus of attention away from the international experience and concentrating on national development workers in a single aid-receiving country of the global South that has been the site of a panoply of development initiatives for over 40 years (Hossain, 2017). In some senses, the research has shifted the potentially narcissistic imperial 'gaze' from the self-reflections of the international mobile aid worker who experiences aid, whether as job or vocation, as distinct from 'normal' life. In this sense, my attention has been focused on the experience of the 'other' - the nationals of aid-receiving countries – and their perceptions and experiences of foreign interventions as part of everyday life in the contact zone of the development sector and in the context of their whole life histories. This study of national development workers' experience has not been solely focused on the professional arena of NGOs nor on professional, voluntary or political activism *per se*. Whilst valuable, such a tight focus in institutions or activity also risks compartmentalizing systems and experience, whereas my research provides a broader, yet still in-depth perspective.

The study has contributed to filling a significant gap in the 'aidnography' literature, which has, so far, been dominated by the voices and experiences of mobile professionals from the Global North. Uniquely, it has explored the experiences of Bangladeshi nationals working for development in their own country through a psychosocial lens and illuminated the continuities and discontinuities between national and international aid workers' experiences.

The reflective and dialogical nature of the biographical interviews in this study has enabled an exploration of the dynamics of internal and external forces and the emotional and affective landscape of development workers across the life-course, and to some extent intergenerationally, to produce an holistic portrait of these participants identities and the context in which they are produced.

This study confirms the heterogeneity of aid and development workers and expands upon considerations of the emotional aspects of development work, showing how emotional investments and orientations are affective histories within family histories. The study found a stratum of reflexive, well-resourced and highly committed development practitioners in Bangladesh who, despite the constraints of classed and gendered identities and obstructive structures of governance, draw upon their accumulated 'symbolic capitals' including psychic and emotional resources, to carefully and skillfully manage everyday dilemmas of development in order to help maintain a sense of integrity between their values and actions.

This thesis argues for a re-consideration of the realms in which development takes place, suggesting that the internal or personal realm in which

psychological and emotional capacities develop and new self-identities are forged, has a crucial role to play in managing the external, social, material and political challenges in ongoing processes of development.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethical approval

EXTERNAL AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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Quality Assurance and Enhancement



6th December 2013

Dear Phoebe

Project Title:	Negotiating the Dilemmas of Development: A Psycho-Social Investigation
Researcher(s):	Phoebe Beedell
Principal Investigator:	Meera Tiwari

I am writing to confirm that the application for the aforementioned proposed research study received ethical approval at the meeting of University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) on **Wednesday 4th December 2013**.

Should any significant adverse events or considerable changes occur in connection with this research project that may consequently alter relevant ethical considerations, this must be reported immediately to UREC. Subsequent to such changes an Ethical Amendment Form should be completed and submitted to UREC.

Approved Research Site

I am pleased to confirm that the approval of the proposed research applies to the following research site.

Research Site	Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator
UEL Fieldwork	Meera Tiwari

Approved Documents

The final list of documents reviewed and approved by the Committee is as follows:

Document	Version	Date
UREC Application Form	1.0	30th October 2013
Participant Information Sheet	1.0	30th October 2013
Consent Form	1.0	30th October 2013
Indicative Questions	1.0	30th October 2013
Letter of Support	1.0	30th October 2013

Approval is given on the understanding that the [UEL Code of Good Practice in Research](#) is adhered to.

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of this project.

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EXTERNAL AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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Quality Assurance and Enhancement



Yours sincerely,

Joanne Wood
University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)
Quality Assurance and Enhancement
Telephone: 0208-223-2678
Email: researchethics@uel.ac.uk

Appendix 2: Information for participants

University of East London, Docklands Campus, London E16 2RD

The purpose of this briefing note is to provide the information that you need to consider before deciding whether to participate in the study:

Negotiating the dilemmas of development: A psychosocial investigation

Who am I?

My name is **Phoebe Beedell** and I am a **qualitative social researcher**, with several years experience studying international & community development, social mobility and psychosocial approaches at two universities in the south west of England. I have been awarded a scholarship by the school of Law and Social Sciences at the University of East London (UK) to embark on a doctoral-level study to examine the professional identities and coping strategies of a range of professionals working in Bangladesh.

What is this research about?

The aim of the research is to generate insights into the *internal* (psychological and emotional) as well as *external* resources that **people who are involved in working for social change** draw upon in order to manage the factors that contribute to, or undermine their motivations, commitment, and values. The intention is to contribute to broader efforts to support pivotal change-makers as they go about their often complex and sometimes emotionally-demanding work.

Who can take part?

I am currently seeking a broad sample of **English-speaking Bangladeshi professionals who are actively committed to social justice and economic empowerment** but not *necessarily* employed by NGO's or the conventional donor-driven aid organisations. Potential participants

Might include 'ethical business' people; private philanthropists; campaigners and organisers; as well as professionals working within development, media or law-related organisations. I am also keen to include some participants who may have had an overseas education or are part of the 'returned diaspora'. My aim is to gather a sample of up to 20 participants aged between 20 and 50 years old.

What will it involve for participants?

The research will consist of a **life-history interview (in English)** and some discussion of the particular dilemmas you might experience in your work or personal life. I expect the interview to last for approximately one hour and would like your consent to record the interview on digital audio. Interviews will normally take place at a venue of your choosing: at your office, home or any other mutually agreeable location. If it is not possible for me to travel to your location, the research interview may be conducted by Skype or phone. Future

research activities **might involve one or two follow-up interviews exploring a how a particular dilemma or problem is managed** and/or an invitation to join an enquiry group where I can feedback and 'test' my initial findings and analysis in dialogue with a small number of participants. If you consent to join an enquiry group, the fact of your participation (but not the content of your interview) will obviously become known to other research participants.

What happens to the information I provide?

The interviews will be transcribed by a professional typist and anonymised. If you wish, I can provide you with a copy of your transcript. All audio, transcripts and other data (such as your contact details) will be **stored securely and confidentially** on password-protected digital equipment. Access to original material will be restricted to myself, my two supervisors and the transcriber, subject to legal limitations (or where there is disclosure of imminent harm to yourself or others). Your contribution will be strictly anonymised in the final thesis submission and in all other outputs such as working papers, articles, conference papers and teaching materials. At the end of the project all data generated in the course of the research will be retained in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy.

Possible hazards and risks

Most people enjoy the opportunity to talk about themselves and reflect on their lives. However, recalling certain events and episodes can sometimes stir up strong feelings that can make some people tearful or emotional. If this happens during the interview, or seems likely, I will ask you if you wish to continue, or suggest we take a short break. You can also pause or stop the interview at any time. In addition, you are welcome to contact me at any time after the interview if you would like to discuss any matters it has raised or if you are concerned about the content in any way. If necessary, I will seek further advice from my academic supervisors.

What if I change my mind?

Participation is entirely voluntary, with **no obligation to take part** in this or any further stages of the research. Even if you consent to take part, you may withdraw your consent and data at any stage without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason.

How to contact me:

If you are interested in taking part or have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me for a chat without any obligation.

Phoebe Beedell MSc.

Apt D5, House 23, Road 63, Gulshan, Dhaka, Bangladesh

8 Quay Street, Lostwithiel, Cornwall, PL22 0BS, UK

By text or telephone: ++ 44 (0)7977 121 888 (UK); ++ 88 **0178 393 2279**
(Bd)

Emails: phoebebeedell@gmail.com; u1326145@uel.ac.uk

If you have any queries or concerns regarding the conduct of the research, please contact my Director of Studies or the University Research Ethics Committee who have granted approval for this research:

Dr Meera Tiwari, Head of Global Studies, School of Law and Social Sciences (LSS) University of East London, Docklands Campus, London E16 2RD, UK

Telephone: 0208 223 7422, Email: m.tiwari@uel.ac.uk

University Research Ethics Committee, Merlin Harries, Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE), External and Strategic Development Service (ESDS), University of East London, Docklands Campus, London E16 2RD

Telephone: 020 8223 2009, Email: m.harries@uel.ac.uk

Many thanks for your consideration. Please feel free to pass this information to any other friends, relatives, colleagues and contacts

Appendix 3: Consent form

University of East London, Docklands Campus, London E16 2RD



Consent to Participate in a Doctoral Research Programme

Negotiating the dilemmas of development: A psychosocial investigation

- I have read the information for potential participants relating to the above research project in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy of this information to keep.
- The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information.
- I understand what is being proposed and the processes in which I will be involved have been explained to me.
- I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher Phoebe Beedell, her supervisors and a professional transcriber will have access to my original data. However, if I consent to join an enquiry group, I understand my involvement in the research process (but not the content of my interview) will become known to other research participants.
- It has been explained to me what will happen once the programme has been completed.
- I understand that anonymised quotations may be used in associated academic presentations and appear in publications emanating from this study.
- I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me.
- Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the programme at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Participant's Signature

..... Date:

Investigator's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Investigator's Signature

..... Date:

Appendix 4: Interview schedules

Preamble, before recording

- All the material/data is confidential and anonymised
- This is mostly a free flowing interview, please select what material or stories you feel are relevant or important to you, and that you are happy for me to record.
- My intention is to understand both psychological and social aspects of your experience.
- I'll start with some straightforward questions, then put recorder on & ask a prompt question
- You will do most of the talking, I'll try not to interrupt but sometimes I'll ask you for clarification, or more detail,
- There is no obligation to answer any question or respond to my probing.
- Sometimes, interviewees are reminded of events or situations that trigger an emotional response. I am mindful that some experiences may be painful to recount. Please discuss things at a level that you feel comfortable with.
- I have a duty of care towards research participants
- You, or I, may stop the recording at any time.
- You are free to withdraw (yourself and your data) from the research at any time without giving a reason.
- Is that ok? Do you have any questions you would like to ask?

Informative questions/check list:

Choose a pseudonym

Gender, Age

Job title & Organisation

Organisational function/Sector

Highest Educational Qualification

Earnings?

Identifications/Affiliations:

"How would you describe your background in terms of social class, or religion, or political affiliations?"

Consent form signed?

Time, date, location of interview

Details for correspondence: email, phone, address etc

Interview 1. Free association/biographical narrative Interview

1) Prompt question:

“I know that you are [job title/occupation] and you know that I am interested in exploring how people in your position manage the dilemmas that you may come across. I’m also interested in discovering the roots of people’s motivations and values. With that in mind, could you tell me about your life history and how you came to be in your present role?”

Evolved into coverage of :

Family origins, structures, life course events (births, marriages, deaths etc)

Childhood,

Schooling/Education, identity

Movements and disruptions: shifting/rooting

Politics, values, motivations

Work history, crossing between sectors

Work aims/tasks, aspirations

Problems and challenges

Dilemmas ... a time when no clear right or wrong, felt anxiety, ambivalence?

Psychological resources

Problem-solving and coping strategies

2) Potential ending questions

What is your vision/dream of/for Bangladesh?

Can you tell me of a time when you have felt particularly positive/satisfied/happy/joyful in your work or personal life, and what were the conditions or circumstances in which that feeling came about?

Anything else you’d like to add, perhaps something I’ve missed out that you feel is relevant or important

Interview 2. Dilemmas-centred narrative Interview

Preamble, before recording, explaining the purpose of this interview

- to reflect briefly on the last life history interview
- to tease out a shared understanding of the concept of an 'ethical dilemma' (*noithic shongkot*) and to explore your attitude towards, or understanding of, ethical conduct
- to capture specific stories of any ethical dilemmas experienced
- to talk about coping strategies

Recorded interview, prompt questions:

1) *Re-Cap & catch up:*

'At the last interview you told me about your work and your life history. I wondered if you had any reflections on that interview that you could share with me?'

Perhaps how it felt to tell your story, what it made you think of later, or any themes/surprises that came out for you?

What has happened since our last interview?

2) *Main question:*

'Now can you tell me about a time when you've faced a particular dilemma, an ethical dilemma, perhaps in a situation when it has not been entirely clear what's the best thing to do, or perhaps when you have had to weigh up conflicting demands?'

3) *Additional prompt questions:*

These questions were used as a guide, not all questions were asked verbatim.

Experience of ethical dilemmas, in personal AND/ OR work life:

What did you do? What guided your decisions? How did you experience that?

Can you tell me about any ethical issues are you facing currently?

Defining 'ethical':

What do you understand as ethical (in terms of conduct)?

What constitutes 'being ethical' or working ethically?

Scope for ethical conduct:

How much scope do you feel you have to act ethically?

In personal sphere, public/social realm, political arena?

Can you tell me about a time when your options to act ethically were particularly constrained (limited) or enlarged (widened)?

What enhances or inhibits your capacity to work ethically for social change?

Identity:

How do ethical actions relate to a sense of professional & personal identity?

To what extent do you see yourself as working for social change? i.e. being an agent of change? a change-maker? activist? development worker?

Coping:

What do you do to cope with stress? And/or the challenges of the job?
How do you relax?
Who/what do you turn to?

4) Endings

What would you like to see come out of this research that might help your work/support your practice?

Anything else you'd like to add, perhaps something I've missed out that you feel is relevant or important?

Appendix 5: Creating and signaling in pseudonyms

The participants' choices were sometimes surprising and meaning-laden, offering incremental weight to my understandings albeit through a process of uneven accretion. When looking at the range of names chosen by participants in their totality, the choices reflected cultural influences and associations that are both old and new, local and global. They range from traditional common Bengali nomenclature such as SHAYLA and SHARIF, to names that imply European and Judeo-Christian influences such as DANIEL and STUART or reflect contemporary globalized culture, as with NEMO. A handful of participants explained the personal associations and significance of their pseudonym choices. The honoring of people known to them personally or identification with hero-figures was not unusual. SPIDER for instance, told me his choice related to the legend of Robert the Bruce and the inspirational efforts of the spider this Scottish king is said to have observed. SPIDER's choice not only reflected the strength of British influence on his cultural repertoire but more significantly, how this participant chose to articulate his identification with a determined, persistent and catalytic agent. Another participant did not explain the significance of her chosen pseudonym - ROKEYA - but it later became apparent, as I learned more about South Asian feminist history, that reference was likely being made to Begum Rokeya (1880 – 1932) a champion of Bengali women's emancipation. This knowledge offered some insight into how the participant might be positioning herself. Her choice of 'ROKEYA' which was expressed with a wry smile and very little hesitation suggested an element of agency in prompting the researcher to make the connection herself. Similarly, I wondered to what extent the name NEMO had been chosen as a signaling device. NEMO's account

contained stories of going out into the world to discover himself, and of subsequent career disappointments and subjection to the whims and currents of other people's desires. At the time of interview, NEMO was on the bottom of a career ladder in a vast global organisation, populated by 'different creatures' as he put it. Reading his interview transcript it was difficult not to draw metaphorical parallels with the little lost fish of the Disney tale *'Finding Nemo'*, whose curiosity led to him being captured by humans and precipitated a series of daunting adventures in the vast uncontrollable sea. These three examples demonstrate the creative ways in which participants can generate meaning for themselves, by drawing upon a wide range of available cultural narratives in interaction with the assumed cultural references of the researcher, to position themselves within their life-narratives. The weight of validity given to these inferences is heavily qualified by cautions against 'wild analyses' (Brown, 2006, p.186) and recognition of the inconsistent visibility of such signaling to the researcher. Perhaps a more important point is that researchers' choices in such seemingly minor matters as naming and use of pseudonyms are, in Guenther's words 'important components of the experiences of conducting field- work and presenting and disseminating data, and should not be taken for granted' (Guenther, 2009, p.412).

Appendix 6: Higher Education in the sample

As Swidler and Watkins (2017) pointed out in their typology of different groups of national development workers, educational qualifications are highly significant in relation to the position these individuals might hold within Aidland. All but one of the participants in my study had Masters degrees, placing them in the realm of the 'national' and 'cosmopolitan elites' (Swidler and Watkins, 2017) with access to extended tertiary education. Since 2008 the entry of private providers into the HE market has precipitated an expansion in tertiary education in Bangladesh and has, to some extent, brought a broader, more modern curriculum into the sector and this development presented new opportunities for the middle class participants.

According to UN statistics (UNESCO, 2016), participation in HE in Bangladesh has grown slowly but rather unevenly since 2009 from just over 10% to 17% by 2017, although this gross enrollment ratio still remains below comparable regional rates. Female enrollment lags well behind male enrollment but while a small minority of university students are women, in comparison to the UK, a greater percentage of female students have graduated in scientific subjects (Bangladesh Ministry of Education, 2017). This may reflect the traditional focus of middle class families in Bangladesh on medical and engineering related professions.

The men in the study tended to have pursued degrees in economics, business and finance, with notable exceptions for textile sciences and English. Social science subjects and specific development-related studies tended to be taken

by the female participants, again with some notable exceptions.

Male participants	Female participants		
Bachelors	Masters	Bachelors	Masters
* Overseas education			
Agriculture Apparel manufacturing Business Business Admin Business Admin (Accounting) Economics Economics & Political Science* English English Lit Industrial Engineering Not specified Not specified*	Development Studies Fine Arts International Economics Law* MBA MBA MBA (HR) MBA (Marketing) MBA/Marketing Not specified*	Business Commerce* Environmental Science Finance Geography Liberal Arts* Medicine Not specified Not specified Social Science*	Development Planning Development Studies Development Studies* Disasters Management Food & Nutrition Human Resources* Management MBA Philosophy & Business Philosophy & Psychology Population Sciences Public Health

Five participants (2 men, 3 women) had attended Anglophone universities overseas which were clearly held in high esteem. Differentiations were also made between the quality and reputation of Bangladesh's national universities. Three of the men had attended the same prestigious pre-university college in Dhaka and one more had attended a well-known boarding school in India for most of his schooling. At least eleven participants had attended international curriculum English-medium schools. One spent a short period of time at school in Japan and another in Hong Kong. The rest of the participants had been schooled in Bangladesh and had access to a generally high quality of

education. DANIEL, KATARINA, SHAYLA, JUDI and STUART were clearly very proud of the prestigious institutions they had attended.

Appendix 7: About the author

My social and ethnic background is relatively straightforward as I was born and spent most of my early life in Bristol in the south west of the UK. My father was a university lecturer in social work policy and my mother, in between caring for four children, was an 'unqualified' social worker and community and political activist. I attended a small Church of England primary school and a large state comprehensive, as well as spending a year and a half at a private girls' school and at least a year at a FE Technical College, although I achieved only very moderate exam success.

From 1979 to 1981 I trained in graphic design and visual communications at Goldsmiths' College in London and like many of my generation I became politically active in my teens and early twenties during the 1980s Thatcher-Reagan era and the rise of neo-liberal conservatism. I returned to Bristol to care for my mother after she suffered a stroke in 1985, and in 1989 I escaped the unappealing political landscape of the UK by finding a job in a small independent communications company in Lesotho, Southern Africa. In hindsight, my motivations were in line with those of many budding development workers and 'misfits' (Söderman and Snead, 2008, Stirrat, 2008).

At that time, Lesotho provided a strategic toe-hold in Southern Africa for international development agencies until the democratization of South Africa in 1994 effectively emptied it of the high concentrations of diverse INGOs, UN agencies and diplomatic missions, all of whom had needed and used the local communication and design services my employer provided. Although

unarticulated at the time, this was my introduction to 'Aidland'. Having experience of communications and marketing, I worked with the Family Planning Associations in Zimbabwe and Lesotho on reproductive health campaigns and especially on the social marketing of condoms in the context of the growing threat of an HIV/AIDS epidemic. In 1994 my own daughter was born in Lesotho, and I lived in Maseru until 1999 with my Mozambican partner, making a somewhat precarious living from a variety of development-oriented jobs, including administering programs for the US Information Service, editing documents for foreign consultants and freelancing for the Irish Consulate. The death of my mother in 1997 and widespread political violence in Lesotho 1998 presaged my return to the UK in 1999 to care for my ailing father and do a Masters in development studies at Bristol University. Following the death of my father in 2001, I worked part-time as a consultant in partnership with an older and highly experienced facilitator and organisational analyst, Alan Turkie, assisting, facilitating and learning more about participatory approaches to community and public engagement in Bristol and southwest England. In 2003, with encouragement from Alan, I began work as a research associate (RA) on Paul Hoggett's 'Ethical Dilemmas' project (Hoggett, 2009c) at the University of the West of England's Centre for Psychosocial Studies. Paul Hoggett and I also developed a good and productive working relationship and he was, I realized on talking to other RA's, a generous 'Principal Investigator' including and respecting my contributions and encouraging me to author and co-author publications. On reflection, I can see that encountering these two generous, empowering and professional older men in the period following the death of my father held significant meaning for me in terms of presenting a substitute 'good

authority' figure during my personal adjustment and accommodation of the bereavement at this transitional life stage, echoing, in some respects, the unofficial mentors of some female participants in my study.

I continued working in Bristol as a contract researcher on a number of research projects with different academics over the following ten years, with short interruptions of more active community development work and sojourns back to Lesotho, Mozambique and latterly to Bangladesh, before embarking on this PhD journey. I moved to Cornwall in 2013 and I continue to be involved with local community politics as a Town Councillor and in global and national politics as an activist and scholar.

Appendix 8: Reflexivity and subjectivity in the field

As discussed in chapter 4, reflexivity is an essential component of psychosocial research practice. For the psychosocial researcher, recognising and critically assessing their own emotional and intellectual responses throughout the research activity is key to a valid appraisal and interpretative analysis of the data. Being transparent about my own feelings, my position and how I felt the participants positioned me enables the reader to grasp the affect these subjectivities had, or may have had, on the arc of the research process.

This appendix to the thesis contains my reflections upon my own experience of the research; on incidents that occurred within and beyond the interviews; the emotions provoked by the research process, and on my thoughts and feelings about my position and how I felt the participants positioned me. This account is largely based upon journals that I kept throughout the research process and used most intensively during the fieldwork. This journal-keeping practice not only involved capturing in-the-moment thoughts and feelings, but the journals, or parts of the journals, were re-read every few months, and referred back to extensively while immersed in the interview data, providing answers to the questions 'what was I feeling/thinking?' and 'what else was going on?'. This contemporaneous and retrospective reflection not only produced insights, which influenced the biography of the study itself, but also enabled consideration of my positionality as highly fluid and dynamic.

In chapter 4 I explored the value of 'working the hyphens' (Fine, 1994, Cunliffe and Karunanayake, 2013) and the use of these metaphorical hyphen-spaces as

an heuristic tool to aid reflexivity. I argued that the concept of hyphen spaces of 'insider – outsider'; 'sameness – difference'; 'emotionally engaged – emotionally distant' and 'politically active - actively neutral' provided a suitable framework for reflection and analysis, capable of capturing both momentary and enduring responses on a number of significant dimensions.

My part in the story

I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you, I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still the colonizer, the speak subject, and you are now at the centre of my talk. (hooks, 1990, p.151)

The warning voices of bell hooks, Spivak and other postcolonial scholars had been ringing in my ears since the outset of the research and the fluidity and contextualized nature of my identity position was clearly apparent from my first visits to Bangladesh in 2010. My partner at the time was managing a large 'flagship' project for DfID and was a respected and popular team leader. I met and spent time socially with many of his colleagues and fellow development workers who were Bangladeshi and expatriate (from the Global North and South), including what Swidler and Watkins (2017) would recognise as the 'cosmopolitan' and 'national elites'. My partner's employment facilitated my frequent visits to Bangladesh and by the time the fieldwork began in early 2014 I had acquired the quasi-official title of 'trailing spouse', a marginal position with connotations of fulfilling a domestic and social role (Eyben, 2012, Leonard, 2016), inside the personal realm and outside the professional.

I enjoyed access to many of the privileged 'spaces of aid' (Smirl, 2015) which function as both cosmopolitan and colonial 'contact zones' (Conway, 2011); serving as places of cultural practice and inscription for the so-called 'international community'. My connection to and separation from the operation and personnel of development NGOs in this milieu provided valuable pathways to accessing participants and a considerable amount of 'insider' knowledge. As my investigation with participants progressed, I observed parallel processes in the negotiation of ethical and political tensions and dilemmas within my partner's professional practice and plentiful opportunities for informal participant observation of the sociology of aid. More importantly, my position as a 'trailing spouse' provided me with opportunities to visit various development projects both in Dhaka and the provinces and to meet with a range of NGO workers and social activists.

I attended a variety of development-related events and formal Aidland gatherings seeking contextual insights and participants. On these occasions I would often feel like an interloping head-hunter, relying on propinquity to approach potential participants in a 'guerilla mode' of engagement (Kapoor, 2004, p.640): a mode of operation that is less easily amenable to positivist research methods. My interest in the experiences of local professional development workers was largely welcomed and greeted with respect and enthusiasm. In the course of conversations with potential participants I usually found myself mention my own experience of development work garnered during a ten-year sojourn in Southern Africa. This may have solidified my identity as an external-insider: new to Bangladesh, but with an understanding of the

development scene and aid industry, and a research purpose which was clearly distinct from any NGO appraisal and monitoring processes. My strategy of recruiting through personal contacts like this proved very fruitful, reassuring me that there were unheard stories to be told, stories with a narrative force behind them.

My position on this external-insider tightrope faltered during one particular interview, when a young female participant was concerned that I might take offence at criticism of her manager, a British man with whom I was socially acquainted. I reiterated my duty of confidentiality and clarified that although I knew the man he was not a close friend, so there was also no danger of causing offence. Her questions to me (a subversion of the interviewer-respondent role in itself) enabled her to gauge the strength my 'insider' allegiances and my 'external' professional values. This participant was the only interviewee who seemed particularly bothered by the audio recording of our conversation. Her account contained strong criticisms of the conduct of her colleagues and the quality of leadership in her organisation. As soon as the recorder was turned off, she visibly relaxed. Following her cue, and accustomed to such 'doorknob conversations'¹⁸ we continued talking informally for some time. She spoke more explicitly about the sexual harassment she was facing and asked for my advice directly. In taking me into her confidence, off the

¹⁸ A phrase I've heard used colloquially by interviewers, referring to the off-guard, off-record and often deeply significant and revealing conversations that occur at the very end of an encounter, when someone has their hand on the doorknob.

record, I was aware of her positioning me as an older, aunt-like figure¹⁹, and indeed I was some 20 years her 'senior'. I noted the subtle shift of my role from feminist researcher to feminist advocate and advisor. The direction of questioning was reversed but my duty of care remained. This incident not only emphasized the daily struggle and endless negotiation of safe spaces endured by women and the toll it takes on them; but also the ways in which the researcher can be positioned in different ways as 'expert', and how the participants, once assured of this identity, might open up and seek ways to utilize this attribute.

Jain (2017) has recognised the ambiguous position between researcher and advocate in feminist empirical studies and examined her own strategic dilemmas of complicity in, or challenging of, oppressive structures and practices. The fluidity and contextualized nature of my 'external-insider' identity was leveraged by two participants on another occasion beyond the research context, in a performative manner that challenged my own sense of identity and values and served as a stark reminder of how the traces of colonial and racial dominance persist and are reproduced.

Two potential participants whom I had met recently, one an experienced worker and one an local intern, invited me to attend a presentation organised by the local branch of a European-based INGO working with street children. My

¹⁹ *Khala* □□□□ or 'auntie' is a familiar endearment often used to refer to a symbolic relationship with an older woman that confers a particular hierarchy of pastoral duties and responsibilities. *Didi* □□□□ or 'sister' is used in a similar manner to express solidarity and a more egalitarian friendship.

companions were only indirectly involved with the INGO, which had encouraged the homeless children to produce artworks. It was an opportunity for me to get to know these two women and the work of the INGO. On the way to the venue, it became apparent that the Northern donor's representative, the 'guest of honour' had cancelled her attendance. On arrival at the venue it was clear that I was the only non-Bangladeshi person present. Choosing an unobtrusive position at the back of the room, I listened carefully to the whispered translations of my younger companion. Some ten minutes into the event my older companion, with a big grin on her face, asked if I would step in and present awards to the street children in the absence of the 'real' guest of honour. The moment was one of mutual recognition of the symbolic value - and a misrecognition (James, 2015) - of my white, female body, and an acknowledgment of the excessive, unwarranted currency it had within the room. With a grinding mix of self-conscious loathing and a rather British middle class compulsion to be polite, I reluctantly agreed to perform the 'guest of honour' role. Escorted to the top table, I gave a three-minute off the cuff speech about the value of art, distributed certificates, shook hands with the silent but beaming children and posed for the obligatory group photo for the benefit of the invited press.

My companions and I later discussed the incident with good humour and frankness. My obvious personal discomfort with this ritualized 'guest of honour' performance may perhaps have conveyed some sense of solidarity to my companions in the sense that I was also demonstrably engaged in the messy negotiation of Aidland's ethical dilemmas. Being accepted by these two

potential research participants as 'in' on the game – sharing a critical but pragmatic acceptance of the social rules imposed by the situation – perhaps marked me as a kind of trusted 'insider'.

Later still, with less need for the strategic use of humour to deflect our discomfort in talking about race, I reflected on the Bourdieusian symbolic violence contained in this incident. For me, the mixture of organisational face-saving and the re-inscription of symbolic privilege was a strong reminder of the continuities of colonial disciplinary forces at work in this context and the taken-for granted performances of racialised privilege. It was an abject lesson in how positional dilemmas of this type can suddenly emerge and confront international and national development workers, and an example of how collusion with this kind of misrecognition - the misattribution, or over-attribution, of qualities to a person or entity – reproduces it. I was, in hooks words, 'still the colonizer', still the 'outsider'.

Subsequently, my companions introduced me to other participants and agreed to be interviewed themselves. Later, they were able to speak easily about the inconsistencies and challenges inherent in their development work, although racialised analyses were still difficult and painful issues to explore.

This incident demonstrated how the hyphen space 'insider-outsider' can become folded in upon itself, stretching the limits of the dyadic metaphor to produce something that is perhaps 'other than' or at least has permeable, less stable and less easily drawn boundaries (Crossley et al., 2016). Locating one's position in the hyphen space of insider-outsider involves acknowledging the

spatial and relational dimensions as well as the nature - affective, cognitive, moral, or embodied constellations - of commonalities and differences and considerations of the notion of shared habitus.

The extent and nature of my sameness or difference in relation to my participants became apparent in the interview encounters, which were firmly bounded by the limitations of language. Many participants had been educated in English-medium schools and universities, and most were fluent and confident English speakers, albeit that some participants used a vernacular version of English, 'Banglish' as one person joked, or in some cases an Americanized English to which I had to become attuned. In these cases, researcher and researched were on a relatively equal footing in terms of the medium of communication. At least one participant was more comfortable speaking in English than Bangla, admitting her local language skills sometimes interfered with her work with beneficiaries. The two or three participants who were significantly less fluent in English spoke about how this language deficit impinged upon their work, creating anxieties in their relations with foreigners.

The 'language issue' - a potent symbol in Bangladesh - became an explicit part of many of the research conversations, which yielded useful discussions and opportunities for mutual clarifications as part of an ongoing and explicit negotiation of meaning. The limitations of language *did* impede the progress of a small number of interviews but in these encounters the lack of shared vocabulary was usually overcome by simply allowing extra time to negotiate and secure a sense of mutual understanding. The participants' mixing of gender pronouns was a common and confusing practice, and simple grammatical

errors of tense sometimes hampered communication. During these interviews, it was necessary for me to re-cap or paraphrase, using their words as far as possible to check with the participants that I had correctly grasped the material facts and meaning of what they were describing (Hollway and Jefferson, 2012). Occasionally, participants dried up or left sentences incomplete. As an experienced interviewer, I did not find these silences and pauses discomforting, in the manner perhaps of a 'defended researcher' but I had to work hard, to think in the moment and judge if, and at what point I might offer a word that seemed to me to be on the tip of their tongue. Was it a useful interjection? Was it a word they might have used themselves? Most often, the response to my interjections would be a gratifying 'yes, yes' or 'exactly, exactly'. On the few occasions I got it wrong, or misunderstood, we would continue the negotiation until we reached a level of shared meaning that seemed mutually satisfactory. A reminder of the new tools available to us and shared responsibility for meaning-making came on one occasion when the participant whipped out her smart phone to look up a translation of 'cynical'. In all these interactions, the qualities of sameness and difference were present in the language we used, and were a constantly shifting dynamic between interviewer and interviewees.

At times, participants made their own use of my difference, as embodied in my language and culture, in order to achieve a kind of sameness, echoing the convolutions present in the 'guest of honour' moment described above. At least two of the participants acknowledged that being part of the research was a useful opportunity to practice their English language skills and to 'build capacity' as one said. Another was explicit in wanting to engage in a form of intellectual

discourse said he felt was rarely available to him, reaching for a sameness when there was difference, while to some extent I assumed difference where there was sameness.

As the sample grew, I was a little surprised to find that all but one of the participants had Masters level degrees and that this effectively functioned as a threshold qualification for certain development workers in NGOs. Two of the older cohort had PhD's. As the life stories of the participants unfolded, it became clear not only that I shared this particular form of cultural capital with my research subjects but it was recognised and highly valued by them. Being attached to a British, London-based University seemed to have additional currency, lending respectability, credence, and validity to my position as researcher and to the study. It was clear that as researcher and researched, we shared a (more or less) common language and a common set of values in relation to education and academia. Other aspects of our shared cultural and colonial histories were assumed and expressed by participants in various analogous references to cricket and literature for instance.

In my experience, a certain level of performance anxiety on the part of interviewees (and sometimes interviewers) is not uncommon. In free association or open-ended interviews participants have often asked 'Am I making sense?' 'Is this useful?' or 'Is this what you want?'. These sorts of comments were widespread amongst the interviews with Bangladeshi participants, and I wondered if this was perhaps due to a deferential over-estimation of my academic or social status. I came to believe there was a sense of unfamiliarity with the free-ranging nature of the interview itself. This

points to another dimension of sameness - difference that has to be negotiated in the interview encounter. The metatheoretical approach of the interviewer may not match the expectations of the interviewee. All the participants in this study spoke about their experiences of schooling in primary, secondary and tertiary education and described a system that leans heavily toward a didactic and objectivist approach to knowledge production. This may explain why some participants took time to grasp the subjective and intersubjective nature of these biographical interviews as co-created narratives, unique to the encounter. Most participants seemed pleasantly surprised and comfortable with this epistemological approach as it became apparent in the course of the interviews.

The sameness-difference in the way the research was perceived can be interleaved with the way gender sameness and difference played out across the interviews. On the whole, the women gave me far more of their time and were more easily forthcoming in conversation than most of the men. Female participants seemed generally quicker to grasp the open-ended nature of the biographical interview and easily took up the opportunity to tell me the details of their family background, education and career and were candid in expressing their feelings and emotions. My field notes after interviews with the women are dotted with references to them as 'definitely chatty', 'needing little encouragement', 'warm' and 'engaged', 'amiable', 'very expressive' but also 'serious and intense', 'tough' and 'a political live-wire'. While it was initially more difficult to recruit women and arrange interview times, they were much more easily available for second interviews, suggesting that they had more to say, more stories to tell and were comfortable not just with me, but with the nature of

the research. With many of the men in the study, I often felt I had to work much harder to elicit more than just a 'told story' – a series of verifiable facts (Wengraf and Chamberlayne, 2006) - as opposed to the 'lived life' of experience and feeling. By contrast, my field notes after interviews with men contain descriptions of the encounters as 'formal at first', 'slightly awkward at first', 'eventually relaxed and forthcoming', 'didn't expand on much', 'jolly but shy'. One male participant began the audio-recorded session very formally by announcing his name, place of birth and the minutiae of his school grades. Two other men gave me a brief summary of their whole lives and careers in under 15 minutes, before coming to a grinding halt. These kinds of interviews would tend to require more probing, more specific but still open questions to elicit stories, and clarification of my interest in thoughts and feelings as much as in facts. As a woman doing research from a qualitative feminist tradition, in a highly patriarchal society, I anticipated that my gender would colour the way in which the data was generated. The hesitant beginnings of the male participants meant I had to work harder to build a rapport based on qualities of sameness of class and culture in order to circumvent the intransigent difference of gender.

Traversing the hyphen of emotional engagement-distance whilst acknowledging 'a kind of a gap' came through my relationship with one of the younger women, with whom my sense of empathy was based on both 'knowing' and 'not knowing'. My empathetic response was both immediate, in-the-moment and more long lasting. I had recruited this young woman indirectly through my partner who represented the major funder of her employer. My field notes record her sitting quite formally with pen and notebook at the beginning our first

interview. I noted in my journal that she was 'obliging and interested in my topic, happy to help though perhaps a bit apprehensive, perhaps making an effort with her English pronunciation'. I felt very conscious of being perceived as the 'big boss's wife' in this situation and attempted to distance myself from this identity by reiterating the separateness of my agenda and making extra clear assurances of confidentiality and anonymity. After about five minutes of audio-recording she asked if her 'talking' was ok and in response to my affirmations and encouragements began to relax. In the course of this biographical interview, the participant told me a tragic story about the suicide of one of her friends, due in part to social inequalities, which had helped propel her to work for womens empowerment. She became tearful at the recollection and I also began to well up, knowing the pain of bereavement and feeling empathy with the manifest injustice. We paused, and laughed a little at our own emotionality, perhaps as an aid to recovering some of the 'formality' of the interview. The young woman continued her account, explaining her difficulties in finding a suitable marriage partner and how this was troubling her family and affecting her choices about where to work. She confided in me about other difficult and gender-related workplace issues and I felt a keen sense of obligation to offer her some support. I found myself thinking about her situation and her friend's suicide for several days and mulled over her marriage dilemma for weeks afterwards, wondering how things would turn out. My feelings of helplessness for her manifest in private fantasies of introducing her to one of my male participants, and it took some time for me to come to a more appropriate, emotionally-distant position, accepting the 'not knowing' of how I might help, or quite how she felt about these familial and social pressures.

By this stage of the research, I had heard many stories of women's careers and personal flourishing being circumscribed by gender norms and gendered violence. I had listened to several accounts of personal experiences of loss, harm or discrimination that motivated these women to work in the development sector. Gair (2012), in her consideration of empathy and researcher positioning brings attention to three overlapping phases of empathetic listening and in hindsight I noted that the arc of my emotional engagement with the young woman and her testimony echoes these phases. Firstly, Gair notes the emergence of the experience of empathy through objective and thoughtful listening and a process of 'tuning in' which draws on understanding and imagination; secondly, a deeper accommodation of the data connects with the emotional and subjective response of the listener; and finally, a re-emergence of objective insights occurs informed by these subjective responses. Following this model, 'working the hyphen' between emotional engagement and emotional distance became a dynamic process over time. Through this process I came to a far deeper understanding of how, in a profoundly patriarchal society, making a 'good' marriage confers on women high levels of social respectability, which then functions to protect female development workers from social opprobrium as they work to challenge these very gender norms, often driven by their own experience of injustice or loss. This reflexivity helped to strengthen my understanding of the multiple ways in which gender, and specifically discrimination against women, dominates the everyday lives of these development workers.

In many ways, the biography of this research is intertwined with the topic and logic of the research itself. My efforts have been directed towards reflexively exploring the participants' reflexivity and acting ethically whilst researching the ethicality of others. I am also, paradoxically, critiquing the domination of patriarchy, of neo-liberal ideologies and the neo-colonial tendencies of the aid and development sector, whilst simultaneously being closely imputed in their structures, power relations and practices. In writing about others I am indeed writing myself 'anew' as hooks noted. The act of undertaking and completing a doctoral thesis entails a process of shifting identity and my own progress through this arc is but one aspect of the biographical nature of my research. I am recognisably middle class, from what participants might recognise as a public 'service' oriented family and having worked in the Global South and been involved in social activism overseas and in the UK, I certainly have a sense of identification and solidarity with the participants. By establishing the identity of 'researcher' and delineating the scope and purpose of the study, boundaries are constructed both implicitly and explicitly between the participants and myself. These boundaries are nonetheless subject to the negotiation of different positionings and mutual influences between researcher and participants and it is at these blurred edges that we begin to question our place and purpose (Cunliffe and Karunanayake, 2013, Mutua Kombo, 2009).

The social, cultural and physical terrain of this research was relatively unfamiliar to me compared with my substantial experience of living and working in Southern Africa. This knowledge deficit made me particularly curious and conscious of how the participants might be agentic in positioning me. Their

response to the research has left its impression upon me as well as on the data. One particular participant, PIYA, introduced me to a cluster of participants I may otherwise have found difficult to access, opening up and enriching the sample substantially. The richness and immediacy of her own account, which included an explication of a contemporaneous dilemmatic situation and her willingness to contribute to the research encouraged me to reassess the balance of power – the politics – in the relationship between researcher and researched. Whose needs were being served in the telling of this story? How might we, together, negotiate this propitious encounter? I found De Jong's (2009) notion of constructive complicity productive and practically applicable to this challenge as it was the force of PIYA's narrative, the sense of an important story needing to be told that aroused my curiosity and inspired an extended interview series with her. The inclusion of PIYA's singular story in the following appendix is not just an intellectual endeavour, nor I hope, an indulgence. It is in some small way a political act that, in Fine's words, 'makes legible the underbelly' of practices that sustain the current development project (Fine, 2016, p.347). It is a story that elucidates both the affective dimensions of negotiating development and the more undesirable practices of Aidland.

Despite periods of doubt and uncomfortable moments of uncertainty throughout the fieldwork and spilling into the analysis, I was reassured in my endeavours by the interest and enthusiasm for this topic shown by so many participants, local contacts and potential recruits willing to actively contribute to the study. My initial anxieties about complicity in exploitative social and intellectual processes heightened my awareness of 'self' and 'other' and the dynamics of power. This,

I believe, contributed to a reflexive research practice that enabled participants to become active agents in the telling of their stories. Following Smith (2012) and the paths taken by Yarrow (2008, 2011a, 2011b), Arvidson (2008, 2013) , McNamara & Morse (2004) and Goetz (1996, 1996, 2002, 2007) before me, my stance is empathetic as well as critical. I hope that the participants in their reading of this interpretation of their stories, will find much that is recognisable and resonant, and elucidating for them as much as for academics, policy-makers and other readers.

Appendix 9: PIYA's story: Ready-made ethics: 'It's the same thing in different places'

Introduction

PIYA's story is included as an appendix because it demonstrates how, within one person's personal and professional biography, the issues highlighted in chapters 5 – 8 can come together to produce conditions in which challenging dilemmatic, paradoxical and contradictory situations arise and affect operations in 'Aidland'. PIYA's story provides a complementary Labovian-style narrative to the themed findings chapters as it brings together as a cohesive whole a variety of experiences of other participants and serves as a 'coda' to the research.

My opportunistic and snowballing approach to recruiting of the sample generated a cluster of participants employed by an award-winning European based development consultancy organisation, that I shall call BLUE, specializing in labour rights and ethical trade in over ten countries. In the course of my fieldwork, I interviewed six of the eight professional-level workers, three men and three women between January and July 2014, including PIYA, the Country Director of BLUE's Bangladesh office²⁰. This cluster of interviews began with a focus on each individual's experience of development work and social action and grew into a stream of intertwining stories that seemed to crystallize how dilemmas arising from the contemporary three-sector neoliberal

²⁰ All the quotations in this chapter are from interviews with PIYA unless indicated otherwise.

development paradigm are experienced and responded to by local development professionals.

Following the catastrophic collapse of the Rana Plaza building in April 2013 which killed over 1,100 people, the majority of whom were garment workers, funding from bilateral government and corporate donors for remedial development activity in the RMG sector increased substantially. As a direct consequence, BLUE increased the scope and scale of its activities in Bangladesh from small-scale social audit and monitoring projects funded by multinational clothing brands to embrace much larger-scale factory management and garment-worker training programmes with a broader funding base.

Over the course of our initial interviews in 2014, PIYA found herself increasingly in dispute with BLUE and in a third interview, conducted by Skype from the UK in January 2015²¹, she gave an account of how this conflict had come to a head and described the circumstances and effects of her subsequent dismissal from BLUE. A short follow-up telephone interview was conducted a month later in February 2015.

²¹ In a deviation from the method and timing of other participants' interviews, I contacted PIYA from the UK after learning of her departure from BLUE and mindful of our last encounter in which PIYA had shared her misgivings and concerns.

PIYA's background

PIYA was born and brought up in provincial Bangladesh the fifth born of six children. Her father was a senior government employee and the family lived a modest but relatively privileged life in reserved housing. Like many other participants raised in the provinces, PIYA's family moved to Dhaka to take advantage of the educational opportunities it offered. As a teenager, PIYA was struck by the heightened class divisions in the city. Higher education exposed her to further social diversity and new ways of thinking. Having attended only single-sex schools, PIYA found the co-educational environment of college and university particularly eye-opening. PIYA married as an undergraduate, and in secret. When the truth came out, PIYA's father insisted upon her completing her studies as a condition of publically approving the union.

Entering Aidland

After graduating with a Masters in management, an older, similarly well-educated female relative suggested PIYA should join a UN-sponsored research team. The ILO as a UN agency was seen PIYA explained, as a respectable employer for educated middle-class women. Through this respectable first job PIYA met fellow recent graduates ROKEYA and HELENA. All were recruited to survey female workers in the RMG sector and over the following years their work encompassed surveying, social auditing, working with families and employers to combat child labour, and improving industrial relations and occupational health & safety.

Although the opportunities PIYA, ROKEYA and HELENA that led to their employment within the UN system suggest a consistency between development theory, policy and practice, institutional instrumentalism and inconsistencies between discourse and practice were quickly apparent to these women. All three felt disadvantaged by precarious project-to-project employment on different contracts and sub-contracts over a long period with the ILO. PIYA described her own experience and initial naivety.

[O]ne year, one year, sometimes six months, sometimes three months, so you don't know that next contract is there, any contract or not? But, [at the] end of the program it's ten years you have already spent within this organisation. But, when you start that time, you only sign [a] one-year contract. And at that time, we are coming fresh and don't know that much about UN organisation, and also other organisational knowledge and we are similar age, similar sort of background, fresh, young people.' (Int. 1)

We do not get the staff contract as well, because every month, every year, contracts change. So, we again will sign the new contract...the same designation, but is not a continuation. Because, every time it's closed, closing it, and again another... [staff contracts] have lots of facilities [benefits]. So, to avoid those facilities, they give this sort of [short-term] contract.' (Int. 1)

[N]ow I realise how they misused us, especially the UN organisation....From the beginning, they have all the information, but they are not the ones to make a change in the real field. ...they don't want to pay fair wage and also fair facility for the people who are working with them... last ten years. With empty hand, we leave the job. There is nothing for us...No, no redundancy...nothing is there.' (Int. 1)

The irony of working for an organisation promoting improvements in working conditions and labour rights, whilst being employed on precarious project-to-project funding is not lost on PIYA. She explained how at one point she tried working in the public service but this entailed living more than 60 miles outside Dhaka.

[M]y posting was ...quite far and that time I have two children...younger one is eight months...your duty station is there, so you need to stay there and also you need to look after these children ...which is totally - I cannot manage. I cannot handle that one because I need to stay there, and need to rent a house ...and though there is facilities...what [about] my children?... who will look after them? (Int.1)

PIYA made a direct approach to the ex-pat director of her previous employer and despite what he apparently referred to as her “Tarzan English” she managed to negotiate another contract with the ILO. PIYA recalled this incident with self-deprecating good humour, but importantly for PIYA, she claimed the manner in which she negotiated this contract caused consternation amongst her Bangladeshi colleagues.

[S]o this is the way I came back, which is a surprise for the total group in the project....There is lots of politics... office politics is there... they feel surprised how I made it because that time my spoken English is not that much good. Sometimes, I use sign language; sometimes I use written word (laughing)... because I'm trying... that time I really struggled to find the words (laughs loudly). That time ...how I managed to, having a conversation with the Director of ILO... is a surprise to my colleagues. (Int. 1)

Commenting on her various experiences working within the UN system, PIYA described an organisational field saturated with relations of power and divergent interests. She contrasted the subtly-veiled hierarchy and obsequiousness of Bangladeshi managers with the more egalitarian and outwardly-friendly, but essentially disinterested, orientation of foreign consultants.

The culture of Bangladeshi people, when they are working with the Bangladeshi they are sometimes - they are 'the boss', or their chair is separate so they are 'the boss', it's something different... What I found in the UN Bangladesh office, all the people are very weak and - 'foreigner' means 'master' and so "I'm at your service everyday". It's like that, and also [they] never raise questions... "Master, master what are you saying?, Boss yes, boss yes" [They] never raise [a] question. (Int 1).

[A]nd foreign people they are, their treatment is in a different way UN organisation treatment is different, especially ILO, there is equal treatment. They try to behave equally with everybody.... But they don't know that much about our contracts with ILO ...because as a...technical adviser, you do not need to go down that much deep. (Int 1)

PIYA understood this 'equal treatment' to be associated with micro-level personal interactions and communication styles and acknowledges and values the 'gentle' and persuasive manners foreigners adopt, in contrast to the coercive invocation of 'fear' and scorn for subalterns she claimed was normal workplace practice between Bangladeshis. PIYA was, however, critical of the structural disconnect between local and international staff. She felt local staff like herself were often marginalized and that relationships between foreign and local 'experts' was extractive and unequal in nature.

[B]eing a chief technical adviser, you set up a meeting... So, there's 23 people who are sitting in front of you, and being a foreigner, you are head of these projects. You get all the ideas, after that you pick up those ideas and also make a nice report. But nobody knows actually whose idea is this. It's not coming from your brain, it's coming from the people's brain, but those people are not...recognised, end of the day, and also not valued as well. (Int. 1)

[A]lways we are talking about that need to make change, these are the areas, working conditions, peoples lives, lots of things, in the proposal. In the bigger world...in all the donor agencies or the UN organisations, we talk about lots of nice, nice things. Actually, who are implementing? Those people are always neglected... It's like, if I compare this project to [the] garment sector, mid-level management, always they are actually handling the expectations of owners, all those expectations of the workers. The same level of thing, who are actually implementing this proposal? So their careers, their performance, their initiative, their willingness, their brain work, [is] never recognised.. Actually, it's the same thing in different places. (Int.1)

PIYA's comparison of her position with that of the garment workers pointed to her strong identification with the targeted beneficiaries of her work, and a profound understanding of the problems they faced. Obstacles were portrayed as structural, socio-cultural and gendered, sometimes in convoluted ways, and required creative strategies to overcome them. PIYA explained, for example, how women judged the moral worth of other women, or their level of *izzat*, by engaging in office "gossip" to the detriment of collegial and efficient working relationships:

Like for example that when you make a plan, okay, let's go for having Chinese together, like for example, seven people together...if it is seven

boys that time, there will be no problem, next day you will not hear any gossip in the office. If it is seven ladies, next day we'll hear gossip in the office. "She did not do this, she did not do that, it's not good". That sort of comment is there in the office. And when it's mixed, male and female, males do not talk about it, they keep silent, but the ladies talk about it in a different way...they look at it in a different way .. "oh yah, I observe you give him more and..." (Laughing) that sort of...gossip! ...Now I realise that actually we do not have anything in Bangladesh that much, you know, for fun or for recreation. So that's why we use more talking and also clash... [T]his is one kind of entertainment for them, because otherwise what to do? (Laughing) And sometimes, you know, people make problem more, longer, because this gives you more entertainment. So that's why you like to continue this problem (Laughing)..dramas, yes.

PIYA described how some women responded to gender norms in the workplace by nurturing and exploiting their subject positions, giving the example of one colleague in particular from whom she clearly distinguishes herself. In the following quotation is possible to discern the seeds of PIYA's paradoxically discriminatory but practical approach to the employment of young unmarried women within the BLUE organisation, which unfolded in the subsequent interview.

I feel that it's more comfortable to work with men...because females are more you know, they are more - I don't know about others but - these females, I feel they are more - selfish? They are focussing on their own facilities. And they are taking advantage of being a woman, every woman takes advantage of men! (Laughing). Like, "oh today I am sick, I cannot, I have, I have headache, I have stomach pain, I cannot go [to] that area. This is very far away". So that time I'm the person who goes there [to the factories]. And also she is pregnant, so, but she is physically fit to do the work, actually.' ... That time I was pregnant, I was in ILO that

time, I never made this sort of thing, “oh I cannot go there I am feeling sick”, that sort of thing...I never mentioned that...’ (Int. 1)

[With men] that sort of “ne-ne-ne” things is not there. Not nagging things is there. They’re quite straightforward and so more focussed when they do the work. They do the work, when they do fun, that time they do fun. And also fun it will come in a different way...Now when you do something fun, it’s never come as, officially, as a complaint or as a “you are a bad person or you did this, you do that”, that sort of thing. (Int. 1)

Across the sample, PIYA was not alone in feeling irritated by women who are perceived as submitting to their subjective position by adopting a weak and vulnerable identity. PIYA’s response was what might be called a ‘tough love’ approach, which is informed by her own *habitus*, itself a co-mingling of a public service ethos and the entrepreneurial business class into which she married, as well as her experience of the realities of a competitive labour market.

Towards the end of a rolling series of project-based contracts with the ILO, and as an economic buffer to the precarity of working in Aidland, PIYA established, in her spare time she insists, a small business. However, this business interest was the subject of much office tittle-tattle according to PIYA, and she said she believed that despite being highly qualified she was denied further employment opportunities by her Bangladeshi middle-manager at ILO in favour of those less qualified but without such a buffer or fall back position. Despite these obstacles, she went on, her accumulated experience and valuable contacts in the RMG sector eventually led to offers of a variety of short, daily-rate freelance contracts.

Negotiating terms, compromising values.

During this period of her career, PIYA worked for several foreign retail brands and was involved in interviewing workers, translating, monitoring and conducting social audits. She was soon offered a string of short contracts with BLUE, a development consultancy company specializing in the RMG sector, as an 'Associate'. But here, too she found challenges of intercultural working and continued to experience the precariousness and vagaries of flexible contract work. Eventually she negotiated a small retainer with BLUE but this, she said, became a complicated arrangement and an unreliable source of income as the pace of work ebbed and flowed. Occasionally, PIYA recalled, the work dried up completely but more often than not she found herself working unpaid overtime and paying for her own office equipment. Both HELENA and ROKEYA to whom short pieces of work were also occasionally sub-contracted during this period, independently confirmed this was also their experience. PIYA described the insecurity of this of hyper-flexible employment regime and alluded to the loss of institutional knowledge as well as the inequalities that it provoked.

[T]here is no guaranteed work. When there is work, that time they will take you. So, as an Associate, for the child labour monitoring, there is some regular work. That time I signed a contract with them that is guaranteed work. Every month, they book me for five days... Guaranteed work that is for six months. I take the contract and after that, I take the money and there is less work. So after two months, I wait for the work but there is no work so that money is in my account and...I need to count the time in... I need to adjust... and then I thought that if there is not regular work, not to take regular money. (Int. 2)

It's like that ... gradually you are improving... you come to know this company, after that ...then you are getting old with this company and so now you realise there are, what are the policies there. So that time it's harder to work with you. If you want to make a cheaper deal, that time th[ese] old people are not cheaper. That time obviously new person is cheaper, but when you are taking in new person and taking a man...that time you are actually giving more [remuneration] than this old lady! (Int. 2)

Yeah, this time you need to adjust [to] this thing and...actually I don't know from which brain this idea is coming, but this is a very different idea. You can use anyone. You can take anyone for your service. You do not need to think about, "Oh she is that, she is this," very easy. You can ask anyone, you can propose "Oh can you do this one for me?" This is one day work. After that I give you pay." Very easy. (Int.2)

In Bangladesh, freelance daily-rate remuneration, whilst the norm for unskilled agricultural or construction 'day labourers', is a relatively new experience for the professional middle classes used to a more secure, monthly paid, 'fixed' salary. This upward percolation of 'flexible' terms and conditions spreads insecurity across the labour market, suppresses wages and militates against organisational learning. An agile, middle class response veers toward the diversification of income streams. In PIYA's case, this accounts for her spare-time beauty parlour business, but other participants indicated they also had supplementary, often family-owned, business interests. This insecurity of income makes the commitment to NGO work contingent and risks potential and/or perceived conflicts of interest. In addition, such flexibility in hiring can entail additional transactional costs in time and effort and lead to contradictory responses as PIYA's account went on to suggest.

PIYA recalled the tenor of her contractual negotiations with BLUE, noting inconsistencies in the way Bangladeshi men and women were treated by the foreign agency, and suggesting there was some form of 'weakness' in her female employers approach. PIYA went on to explain how she subverted this kind of discrimination, using her own local knowledge, cultural assumptions and social capital to employ older women in positions of seniority and younger men, but not younger unmarried women in her project office. She acknowledged the dissonance with ethical practice but justified this discriminating approach as a practical response to the ambitious workload and business-like ethos of the organisation.

'Every time there is lots of bargaining, negotiation. That's why I feel these days - I started thinking in a different way. That - is it good to deal with ladies? Or is it good to deal with men? And what I found, the same lady [the Managing Director BLUE], the way she bargained with me, the same strong bargaining power is absent [in negotiations] with men. I feel that there is some weakness or maybe she don't know how to handle men - because she is expert with ladies, how to handle ladies²² ... Yeah, I'm saying that actually ...they are not as strong. They are not as strong [in negotiations] with men...(Int. 2)

Nowadays, I take boys and when I find out... the weakness they have, so why not you take [it to] men? One of the reasons [for employing] young people [is] because, that time, it's the start of this program. We [need] people that are quick. The [young men] are quick learners. They are very encouraging -- they learn very quickly. They have all the business logic... It's 200 [factories]! And...you need some experienced people

²² I took this as a reference PIYA was making to the fact that BLUE's European head office is almost exclusively staffed by young and mid-career women.

who can support...so, all the women are there because they were in ILO. [They know] how to handle people, managers; how to handle foreigners. (Int. 2)

'[The] thing is that I don't take the young ladies because I don't want to create anything. Because I observed a lot in the work area. If you are having a similar -- because there are young men, they are unmarried. So if I bring young ladies and they are unmarried, there will be times -- [to] get married or something, which I don't want to - because this is business. I don't want to create any problem with my workers.'

Interviewer: Okay. Is that ethical?

No, it's business. Because I'm not talking about ethical. (Int 2)

PIYA is self-mocking as she says this, acknowledging the contradiction between the discourse and practice of this of ethical business promoter. Her mood at first interview, with a substantial new project on the horizon, was optimistic and upbeat. By the second interview, PIYA appeared disillusioned with the attitude and actions of BLUE and the large international garment retailers and is succumbing to their 'business' ethos. She began interview 2 by reflecting on our first interview and her feelings about the work, saying:

Yes, compared to that time and now, there is a big change and also [a] change in my mental ideas... Yeah, I feel that it's more business actually, there is no ethics. Meaning, we talk about 'ethical, ethical, ethical'. Actually, we're talking about 'business, business, business'. It's not ethics, it's business. It's money. Money is involved. (Int .2)

She went on to give a detailed critique of the disconnect between the clothing brands' 'ethical teams' and their buyers or 'sourcing teams' in terms of expertise

and approach. PIYA recounted how the 'ethical teams', who are tasked with ensuring factories meet rigorous but widely disparate standards, are viewed by the retail brands as adding cost rather than value. These 'ethical teams', PIYA asserted, were untrained and unfamiliar with Bangladesh labour law and are effectively ignored by the 'sourcing teams'. As PIYA said scathingly, the ethical teams operated with missionary-like zeal, unrealistic personal motivations and an 'emotional logic'. And yet these 'ethical people' also held immense power in being able to subject factories to up to 25 audits per year on pain of losing their vital orders.

These ethical people, everybody has their personal wish, "Oh, I have this." "Oh, my father is doing like this, my mother is that, I have the feeling about children, I have lots of..." so personal, personal, thinking, thinking, which they come and want to apply here. You cannot apply your personal opinion here in one country.' (Int. 2)

The sourcing teams, by contrast, were portrayed as 'very open/shut', solely concerned with extracting the best possible product quality, price and turnaround time, enforcing a 'business logic', as PIYA described it, as well as compliance with the specific ethical standards of that particular brand.

After audit, if you have some problems, then they will publish the report. That time, your problems will escalate, this is one [thing]. Another one is that 'price, quality and time', that is always – it's like a universal truth - that is always there for any factory even though you are compliant. There is no commitment from the brand's side. (Int 2)

PIYA was highly critical of this process of intense scrutiny in the absence of any sense of responsibility or commitment on the part of the brands. She described

a situation where RMG manufacturers were required to meet inconsistent, sometimes inappropriate and arbitrary standards²³, but have no support to reach such a state of 'compliance' or any guarantees of forthcoming business from the brands as an incentive. This audit and inspections regime, she pointed out, can and does lead to factory closures and the loss of thousands of womens jobs, whilst the 'sourcing' could quite easily be moved to another low-labour-cost country²⁴. "Is that ethical?" she asked.

The limitations of inter-sectoral collaborations

This broad and globalized perspective on the challenges of development was present in our first interview, in which PIYA discussed structural issues of state corruption and the pivotal role the Bangladesh garment manufacturers association (BGMEA) plays in national development. She notes how these structural issues are highly pertinent to, but not addressed by internationally-sponsored post-Rana Plaza initiatives. In particular, PIYA criticized the lack of courage, commitment and understanding on the part of foreigners who seek to help but are unreflexive and selective in their engagements and resist critique.

The thing is that our political people are so corrupted...Who will take this lead?... Everybody get[s] afraid of BGMEA. Everybody knows BGMEA is ...holding a big power, but nobody wants to deal with that power... Nobody can ignore the power of BGMEA but they don't know how to

²³ Examples cited by SHARIF include fire-fighting training and equipment, but little support for fire prevention; and by PIYA, requirements to retrofit sprinklers in older buildings, and provide liquid soap and hot-air hand dryers in toilets.

²⁴ Anecdotal evidence from Western buyers in Dhaka suggests Ethiopia is likely to be the next country of choice for clothing brands seeking low-cost labour and a capital-friendly regulatory environment.

handle that power... Sometimes they [the clothing brands and development consultants] do not feel that these are the things they can change here. Sometimes I feel that their mindset is not that much open. They cannot think in a broader aspect. (Int.1)

Sometimes they cannot have eyes to see the things, the differences between countries. [laughs] ... When they are here, that time they see lots of things are not happening here, but they're expecting something which is really tough to adjust [to] with this country's culture. (Int. 1)

Sometimes I feel that it's not - they [the clothing brands and development consultants] do not have open heart. They do not have open eyes. It's more - quite blocked, and also they get afraid to put logic, that "This is the proposal and actually it's not workable, we need to change, we need to make a change in this area". So that openness, that courage is sometimes, they also do not have... to understand your mistake and also talk about it and "These are the areas we need to change" - that courage is not there... Nobody is talking about their own weakness. Everybody is talking about other people's weakness. (Int. 1)

Maintaining commitment the intersection of interests and values

Having laid out this ground early on in the first interview, in the second interview PIYA explained how she saw her present role primarily as an inter-cultural communicator and interpreter, approaching it not from a position of 'emotional logic', morality, or indeed cultural relativity, but with a sense of practical 'business logic' and rationality. She frames this responsibility as an important part of her professional identity, and eschews the potential to see her work in a mercenary light as 'just a job':

These days I put logic to BLUE: If you [don't] understand this country's culture, if you're not understanding the mindset of the people, you cannot

apply anything which will make a change in the workers' livelihood. So you need to understand the country's culture, understand the mindset of the people, understand the system of this country: which are the things to watch, which are the things [that will] not work and what are the plans you are planning there? Can this [be] applicable here or not? So you need to think [about] those areas and also need to apply them. That time it will be more effective. (Int.2)

I need to say it because I feel that this is my role and responsibility to talk about the country's culture because we are taking a project where these garments workers lives will change. If I keep silent, okay, let's do it, no problem with that because end of the month, I will get my salary. I can do it that way. So just do it, no problem. At the end of the day, give us [the salary], but this is not me. I do not do it this way. I cannot keep silent if something is you know, not the way it should be and also if I [do] not share what is the concern, then how they will know?' (Int. 2)

In addition to the challenges of working insecurely and cross-culturally, PIYA observed that BLUE's contractor-client relationship with international clothing brands made it difficult to draw attention to the inadequacies within the garment retailing companies themselves, both at the domestic and international levels. Another participant employed by BLUE confirmed there were difficulties in working with the retailers' local (Bangladeshi) representatives. SHARIF explained that the contractual arrangements between BLUE and the multinationals made the local representatives of the international brands suspicious of BLUE's motivations and created an atmosphere of mistrust and hostility towards the efforts of the BLUE team. Where significant inequalities exist in these inter-and intra-sectoral partnerships, holding to account those with power constitutes a risk to the material conditions of the individual, as becomes apparent in the remainder of PIYA's account. Hoggett holds that this up-ward

critique - 'biting the hand that feeds' - is a politicised undertaking, which can also pose a threat to workers' notions of self identity (Hoggett, 2009c, p.15).

In PIYA's second interview, she was concerned about the pressures exerted on her team by the BLUE head office and the unrealistic expectations laid down in the new training programme. She made another correlation between her own position and that of the factory managers:

At present, there are lots of clashes started [with BLUE] because of the money, budget, time, and you need to handle everything. So there is a limited budget, [but] the expectation is very high. So you need to control expectation. [We have] six persons, how can they do these 200 factories? So you have your expectation, but you are limiting your cost. With the garment factories, it's also the same here. So this 200 target is not [a] realistic target, with this six-person team.' (Int. 2)

Swidler and Watkins (2017) noted how this kind of training *en masse* was very often the favoured activity of development organisations and served to obscure the more complex and challenging aspects of aid work, which in PIYA's story appeared to be the problematic relationships between different actors and stakeholders in the RMG and development sectors. PIYA also confirms the Swidler and Watkin's findings that members of the 'national elites' were often extremely busy delivering measurable results and reports of activities undertaken (Swidler and Watkins, 2017).

Culture clash, disputed integrity and the break down of relations

PIYA said she voiced her concerns over the project budget with her European head office manager shortly after she had organised a move to larger premises

where the new project would be based. PIYA told me she had discovered a 'mistake' in the European team's project design insofar as they had not allocated any budget to cover catering for hundreds of trainees' lunches. By her account, PIYA had argued for several months that it was highly inappropriate, culturally speaking, to skimp on this kind of hospitality; and instrumentally damaging to their efforts to recruit factory owners and managers into the training programme. In her interview, PIYA explained how food and mealtimes play a very significant role in Bangladesh's organisational culture, likening the social function of office lunches to the traditional European 'after-work drinks in the pub' culture. She argued that trainees' positive or negative 'gossip' about the quality of the training environment, including its catering and social functioning, would have an immediate effect on levels of participation, whereas the expected financial return on the trainees (or their company's) investment in terms of increased productivity resulting from the training would only be seen after some time. PIYA acknowledged that her manager 'understood that, but did not want to spend the money'.²⁵ Although PIYA said she agreed to manage with a figure of approx. £4.50 per head per day for lunch and tea breaks, the BLUE HQ would apparently only approve a maximum of £3 per head per day.

And that time I started getting angry and mentioned that you cannot treat people in this way...it will bounce back (Int. 3)

During these negotiations, PIYA said she was under intense pressure to economize by undertaking the catering in-house at the office premises. She

²⁵ I later calculated these costs as equivalent to less than 0.16% of the multi-million pound total project budget, however this calculation is based only on figures mentioned in the interview.

said she resisted the extra responsibility for food hygiene and the logistics of catering telling me 'this is not my area, not my job' .²⁶ PIYA recounted how she then suggested an alternative: that savings might be made on the cost of business-class hotels and flights, that were managed under the remit of the European HQ.

I started you know, bargaining with her, and she mentioned that this is the first time...I am not thinking about the solution of this problem... every [other] time I am thinking about solution[s]... but this is the first time I am not thinking about the solution of this problem...I am actually continuing the problem.... I said this problem is not created by me... I am thinking about solutions. (Int. 3)

PIYA reported that when the UK manager next visited Bangladesh their previously warm personal relationship, which had built up over a number of years, had evaporated. Relations turned cold and PIYA was apparently sidelined from important meetings she would previously have attended. PIYA said that at the end of one particular day's training with factory managers, she was called into her own office for a meeting with the European manager. During this meeting, according to her account, PIYA was accused of misappropriating a sum of approximately £4,000. The overseas manager is said to have asserted that personal financial gain was PIYA's underlying motivation and accused PIYA and, in a racial slur Bangladeshis in general, of being dishonest and

²⁶ Food adulteration, for instance the illegal preservation of fish with formaldehyde, is a widespread problem across Bangladesh and in Dhaka city's food markets. Maintaining high food hygiene standards in the context of a lack of infrastructure presents further challenges.

corrupt. PIYA drew on her accumulated social and economic capital to argue that this accusation made little sense.

I said that ‘why would I take this amount?... why [do] I need to?’ and she says that I need money for my daughter’s study, I need money for my father. Yes, I do need money for them but not this way, I am not alone, my husband is there, and my other sisters are there to look after my father’s treatment, it is not only me who is responsible for that. And this is a real big surprise to me. (Int. 3)

PIYA said she strenuously denied any wrongdoing and explained to her manager that she was happy to provide all the accounts, but instead, she recalls, the European executive presented an ultimatum. PIYA could leave the company in one of two ways:

She said that “You are the initial cheat, and I do not trust you anymore, so you just need to exit, and there is two options for you, one is good exit and one is bad exit.” ...and she is saying that... if I take good exit, she will not tell anyone, if I take bad exit she will tell everybody about me and she will cut down [payments owed to me²⁷] by this amount that she think[s] I [have] take... and she takes the mobile, and she needs five minutes, and within five minutes she tells me that “which one you actually...what do you choose?” (Int. 3)

PIYA, mindful of the length and quality of her professional experience, personal connections, family network and her confidence in the viability of the team she had helped establish, explained why she elected for the “bad exit”.

²⁷ A significant proportion of PIYA’s salary was held overseas “to save company taxes” (Int 3)

[T]hen I said I choose bad exit, I like to see what actually I did last 20 years... it's my country, I am here last 20 years and I introduce everybody [to BLUE] in 2005, so I wanted to see that whether, can people see my hard work or not? And also actually do they know me or not? And all my brothers and sisters were there for me, and my sister and brother is there, and my university teacher is there. (Int. 3)

I prepare everything and my team is ready, she have a ready team and that team is quite strong, if I am not there the team can handle the work, so she can save my salary, so I thought this is how she can do" (Int. 3)

In addition to the confiscation of her company phone, PIYA said she was required to relinquish her laptop and was not allowed to talk to other members of staff. She said she was then escorted to the lift by the European manager. According to PIYA, her colleagues were subsequently told to carry on and concentrate on their jobs in hand. However, after learning of her sacking that evening, PIYA said, all but one of the team resigned the following day, leaving only the office administrator in place.

Interestingly, an interview with one of PIYA's junior colleagues, conducted many months before her dismissal occurred, contained a discussion of his understanding of 'ethics' and 'being ethical' that foreshadows this collective act of loyal solidarity.

'Ethical', if you like to talk about ethical, it's loyal... You have to be loyal to your workers, you have to be loyal to your owner [employer] also. ... So like, if I'm being loyal to PIYA that means PIYA can have trust on me. And, if PIYA, is loyal to her employees also, that means... we all can also trust in her.... So on both the sides... I should not only take... my mentality should also be like... I should also give. ... So, that's the way, actually,

business grows, ethical comes. And, to do a fair trade, obviously you have to keep these things in mind.

Interviewer: OK, so you're seeing ethics is a kind of balancing - a kind of exchange of give and take.

Yes. Obviously

Interviewer: [I]n the way the garment workers are treated, and the way that you act within the office itself?

Yes... I think everybody should have this kind of scenario. And... that's actually pretty much professional. Keeps the decorum of the office, and also you are in a structure. (DANIEL, Int 2)

Here, DANIEL seemed to be describing not just an organisational hierarchy but another structure of feeling that is expressed in the ethic of mutuality and responsiveness that he perceived as operational under PIYA's leadership. DANIEL, like PIYA, saw parallels between his own work and the garment industry and linked his view of what 'ethical' means in the RMG sector with the way he experienced his own workplace ethic. He foregrounded values of social connection and reciprocity as key ingredients for development and growth **within the discourse of ethical business practice**: "business grows, ethical comes" as he said.

The strength of commitment to these values was apparent in the level of sacrifice PIYA's colleagues are willing to make. Not only did they apparently resign en masse, but a no-competition clause in their contracts meant that PIYA and her team were barred from working with certain clients and contacts for a period of six months. In the 3rd interview conducted by Skype, PIYA reported

that her colleagues were now working in their families' businesses or were reliant on their spouses' incomes. This indicated that despite the relative precarity of their employment positions, in conditions of social connection and mutuality these middle class 'national elite' retain the capacity to act 'entrepreneurially' (Swidler and Watkins, 2017) in accordance with their values.

When I interviewed PIYA for the third time in Jan 2015, PIYA said BLUE HQ had already completed an audit of her Dhaka operations, and the internal report had found no discrepancies or irregularities. On the contrary, PIYA said, her local procurements of office equipment and premises were deemed to be of good value for money.²⁸ PIYA said she was in the process of using a solicitor acting under Bangladesh law to obtain outstanding payments and extricate herself from her legal position as company director. In a passing comment that underscored the dysfunctionality and irrelevance of state institutions for the middle classes, she said that although she was taking recourse through the law, she wanted to avoid going to court because "it makes you tell lies". In this way she had drawn another moral line in the sand.

PIYA was very measured in describing her immediate feelings about being dismissed, although with some probing, she reflected on her experience in detail, alluding to the symbolic violence of the dismissal. She spoke of how the European manager 'threw' her, and 'hit' and 'marked' what seemed to be her most precious strengths and attributes – honesty and integrity. Drawing upon

²⁸ According to PIYA, the financial audit was conducted by the partner of one of the BLUE executives, adding another layer of irony to the situation considering the detailed insinuations of nepotism and corruption that had been leveled at PIYA.

her childhood experience, and notably, a disposition derived from her father's ethical stance, she used her family habitus to validate her own sense of authority, which supported her through this difficult experience.

Emotionally - I just - It's like there's someone throwing you on the street (Int.3)

Yeah, it's like - you are - actually, it's a fight with you, with you only, that you are a trustworthy person, or you are an honest person, you are a sincere person. You do not need to prove [to] other persons. You need to prove [to] yourself that what actually you are... This is the main thing, after the time, thinking and what-what (Int. 3)

And - and she hit my strength...hit on my strength. My strength is honesty and sincerity. I do not have - you know, my father do not give me a huge amount of money or...it's not like that. Only thing I have got is honesty ...And she put [a] mark on my honesty...it's like that she's— she's challenging me...And I would like to take that challenge this time to prove myself. I take this thing seriously... Because I've got, yes, because I can handle everything... I can handle...that thing. When you are saying that you... take bribe, that is saying, yeah, that is, that is not a single thing in my family, not a one! At my childhood, I see that some people...come to my father [with] a packet. In that packet, there is money. But my father throw that money [back]...my father's having a very honest and very sincere life. So I grew up in that environment. So now, she's saying that I am [a] cheater, which I am not...So - it's a very big challenge for me. (Int. 3)

As Hoggett (2009c) predicted, PIYA perceived this 'big challenge' as a threat to her sense identity as Hoggett which in itself was constituted by her class position, family background, education and upbringing. With values informed by her father's actions and orientation, the choice between taking a 'good exit' and

tacitly admitting to being 'a cheater' or resisting this identity and taking the 'bad exit' option was it seemed both an personal and political undertaking (Hoggett, 2009c).

In the previous quotation, it is noticeable that she invoked not only her 'brothers and sisters' but also her 'university teachers' as allies and witnesses to her integrity which lent legitimacy to her choice of action. This capacity for self-authorization **using biographical resources** has much in common with the regeneration workers described by Hoggett et al (2009c) in the UK, but differs in the extent to which it is more explicitly expressed and externalized, or 'socialised', *as well as* internalized as part of PIYA's self-identity.

Conclusion

Each of the participants in this study carried with them a biography that was unique but which contained elements of a collective history. The constellation of their class and gender subjectivities and the interaction with experiences of family, education, employment, society, and politics has fashioned their dispositions towards the development of their country, and shaped their capacity to respond to the challenges inherent in this task.

The data presented here is a précis of PIYA's narrative, but richly encompasses her recollections of a stable and contented middle-class childhood and exposure to social diversity through urbanized higher education that facilitated a broad view of the world and critical attention to social class and gender divisions. Education, and changing attitudes both locally and globally, opened up new employment opportunities for PIYA and her female peers and heralded

the development and maturation of their skills and knowledge of how development organisations operate. This experience revealed to PIYA some incongruous dissonances between development practice and discourse. Her experience of gender relations in the workplace combined with the managerialist targets of the development agency provoked the pursuit of an unusual constellation of older women and younger men working together under PIYA in the BLUE organisation in Dhaka. It was a creative and practical response and a striking inversion of the patriarchal structure that characterized most other participants' organisational contexts. Overlaid on this situation was a mismatch between private sector and civil society values and knowledge systems. These tensions were exacerbated by top-down project planning and lead to racialised conflict and a breakdown of the organisation.

PIYA's story has illustrated the multi-layered and complex dynamics operating within the current development paradigm that is bringing private sector interests, values and modalities into contact, and conflict, with values, interests and modes more closely associated with civil society. As David Lewis (2010) has pointed out, the dominant three sector model of development obscures these messy areas of interaction and privileges market-driven, competitive management regimes. Development consultancy firms and organisations such as BLUE occupy an ambiguous position within the public/private/civil society triad. They are certainly non-governmental but receive funding from bilateral and multilateral government donors as well as commercial enterprises. They profess a moral interest in development, in this case developing good practices and improving conditions for the lowly paid garment workers, but have

commercial interests in demonstrating results and efficiencies to secure contracts for further aid-funded and CSR development work which tend to undermine congruence between development discourse and practice.

PIYA's testimony suggests her erstwhile employer is deeply embroiled in this messy milieu and its response is Janus-faced. The organisation seemed highly concerned with the outward manifestations of ethical practice but was apparently unable to internalize or embody the values that it preached. The profit motive, including preservation of its reputation with current and potential clients, seemingly over-rode the moral responsibility the organisation had to its own workers. A more psychoanalytically-informed interpretation might see BLUE as a 'culturally autistic'²⁹ organisation, concerned with the outward appearance or image of being ethical, and yet unable to internalize or take that 'ethicality' into its being. This procedural phenomena has also been referred to as 'the institutionalization of shallowness' (Hoggett, 1990). PIYA's testimony demonstrates that a lack of congruence between the professed values and internal practices of development-oriented organisations continues to exist and that such inconsistencies are often rooted in and exacerbated by the dominance neo-liberal models of development planning, management and execution.

²⁹ 'Cultural autism' is a term associated with the psychoanalytic concept of 'adhesive identification' (Bick & Meltzer, 1968 cited in TURP, M. 2012. Clinging on for dear life: Adhesive identification and experience in the countertransference. *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 28, 66-80, *ibid.*) in the object relations tradition. That is, neither projective identification nor introspective identification, adhesive identification is concerned with the liminal space in between. It is an identification that is 'stuck' so to speak, to the boundary or 'psychic skin' between self and Other. A simple example of cultural autism is the 'Irish pub' in say, Bangkok or Ibiza – festooned with cultural symbols that perform an associative function, but lack authentic substance or value.

This adjunct to the findings chapters has focussed upon how one woman, equipped with economic, cultural and psychological resources of her social position and generation, has negotiated her way through the substantial challenges and dilemmas of development work. It has highlighted the salience of gendered subjectivities in this process whether expressed through benign paternalism or the oppressions of patriarchy. It suggests cultural capital - education in all its forms, including exposure to other - is an enabling force in the evolution of liberal values and an enhancement of development-oriented dispositions.

PIYA's narrative is characterized by the ongoing negotiation between 'business logic' and 'emotional logic' and pertains to the psychological and emotional as well as objective and social aspects of processes of development. Capacities for reflexivity, resilience and self authorization have appeared as invaluable assets for PIYA in negotiating such challenges. Given her demanding position at the confluence of so many different and often opposing forces, of gendered social mores; spurious and entrenched hierarchies; of hostile working environments; insecure employment regimes and hard bargaining overlaid with subtle sexism and racism; it is perhaps not surprising that PIYA has had to adjust her values and jettison some of her idealism in order to manage the everyday dilemmas of this kind of work. As a whole, PIYA's story demonstrates both the stable continuities of her identity position and the mutability of her ethical position and attitude. She has responded to the challenges she has faced in employment with both agility and creativity, and with an immovable

steadfastness and courage in her response to the cultural clash that arose over the catering issue.

Her story has demonstrated that ethical issues and the negotiation of dilemmas are part of the everyday experience of this segment of middle class development workers and activists. Despite the agility and creativity of development workers and social activists in negotiating these dilemmas, some structural obstacles appear insurmountable within the current development paradigm in which the three-sector model is deeply embedded. PIYA's story and her contingent recourse to the law underlines the weakness of state institutions in Bangladesh and the resultant manner in which middle class development professionals may seek to avoid significant engagement with the public sector. This particular story of development in the RMG sector, following the Rana Plaza collapse, also exemplifies the dangers of rapid, top-down action and the problematic out-sourcing of development activities (Watkins et al., 2012) in the wake of disasters (Smirl, 2015) and moral panics (Swidler, 2006, Swidler and Watkins, 2017).

Epilogue: Ongoing precarities, dissonant ethics and an ending of sorts

PIYA was a highly experienced development worker who had been engaged in efforts to improve the lives and working conditions of (largely female) garment workers for over twenty years. She was well placed to recount and reflect upon the operational dynamics and forces governing her work in this field and was at ease with the opportunity to do so. Her story, of course, has some potential to be dismissed as an embittered account of a disgruntled (ex)employee and

musings in my contemporaneous field notes reflect this possibility. Certainly, her account was filled with critique and complaint, but these features were substantiated both by the accounts of other participants, objective circumstances and the development studies literature.

PIYA accepted my intrusions on her time and energy graciously, and delivered her account with a good deal of frankness, mixing good humour with gravity, at turns both sanguine and sardonic. Our sometimes-painstaking efforts to reach a state of mutual comprehension across language and cultural differences required both patience and commitment from participant and researcher. As a narrative, co-constructed in the encounter and re-constructed here, it is cohesive, and yet the telling of it was somewhat fragmented by the process.

In the third interview, PIYA described how she was in the process of formalizing a consulting company in partnership with a European-based academic, with whom she had worked closely in the past. The aim of the new company would be to offer independent training courses and research capacity to the RMG sector in Bangladesh. PIYA said she was trying to negotiate a more equal relationship with this overseas partner and was insisting on clear principles and responsibilities in regards to budgetary design and financial transparency. She told me that after the six-month no-competition period is complete, she was aiming to start promoting their own training programmes to factory managers and owners, using some of the same staff she had assembled at BLUE.

I contacted PIYA again in January 2016 to consult her on my use of her interview data in presentations. I was also curious to know how the new training

and consultancy enterprise had developed. In a short exchange of emails and a lengthy Skype research conversation, PIYA reported that the new partnership had not taken off at all. The European partner had, she said, likened himself to a 'solo athlete' rather than a 'team player' and PIYA linked this individualism and cultural distance directly to his refusal to commit to any legal agreement that involved registering as a tax-payer in Bangladesh. During these negotiations, a short piece of research work on behalf of a prestigious North American University research institution was undertaken by PIYA and her now-freelance team. The research, she indicated, was of the 'quick and dirty' variety and had to be completed rapidly before the start of Ramadan. However, the research institute would apparently not pay PIYA directly, insisting that payment was routed through the well-known European consultant/academic. At the time of this fourth interview, PIYA had received half of the fee up front to cover expenses. She said the work was completed and delivered on time and was used as the basis of a published report. According to PIYA, she had asked for the remainder of the fee to be paid promptly so that the team could receive their payments in time for the Eid holidays, but several months later, and despite taking the matter up with the research institution directly, PIYA had still not received any further funds from the European consultant and the team had not been paid for their work.

According to PIYA, DANIEL, SHARIF and AZAIRAA had found other RMG sector-related jobs; ROKEYA and HELENA were 'at home', presumably caring for their families. PIYA was now working as a monitoring and evaluation officer for another international NGO. At the end of our conversation, in a final

exchange, I asked her about her beauty parlour business. She replied that it was still running successfully, employing and training many young women. PIYA estimated that to date she had trained and provided marketable skills to at least 50 young women. For me, as a European feminist 'outsider', having been troubled by the inconsistencies in her attitude towards women and her employment strategy, this offered a rather rewarding resolution to the whole narrative. It also served as a reminder that 'business' and 'social' development can coexist within a single organisation, and that the resources, agility and capacities of the middle classes are sometimes more effective for development without the interference of foreign actors.

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