



Decolonizing Social Innovation for Global Development

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Decolonizing Social Innovation for Global Development

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A Thesis in the Field of International Relations
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Abstract

Systemic barriers inherited from colonialism—read coloniality—block equitable access to resources and diminishes the agency of non-hegemonic actors in the world today. In the area of social innovation, coloniality limits the agency of formerly colonized and non-hegemonic groups engaging in social innovation projects and systems. Overall, this undermines effective collaborations between actors, and in the global development sector, the very aim of its work. Research is needed to deconstruct power dynamics linked to coloniality in the social innovation for development (SI4D) sector to create more effective collaborations and inclusive social innovation processes and systems.

Today, in the global development sector, uncritical approaches to social innovation support the maintenance of power asymmetries linked to coloniality by confirming blind spots (even where there may be good intentions) and failing to focus on and address the persistent inequities that are animated in their approaches and practices. By providing insights into how coloniality manifests through social innovation processes, this thesis provides new insights into where power asymmetries and imbalances continue to exist, and what some social innovation actors are doing to diminish and eradicate them; in essence, we learn about how social innovation activism is engaging in decolonizing movements to transform coloniality-shaped innovation landscapes.

Specifically, this critical qualitative research explores how social innovation actors are working to eradicate those barriers—read decolonizing social innovation—by going beyond neoliberal models, market outcomes, and funder-metrics to integrate global

social justice into how they engage and reshape social innovation systems, practices, and its discourse. Also, this research makes a case for why inclusive innovation is not a euphemism for decolonizing social innovation.

Decolonizing social innovation for global development prioritizes replacing a saviorhood approach to social innovation with a solidarity-approach as the latter can deliver not only social impact but also diminish systemic oppression both internally and externally. By changing the nature of engagement between actors, decolonizing approaches to social innovation can foster deeper collaborations, more reciprocal relationships, and more empowering outcomes for non-hegemonic groups. This decolonizing approach to social innovation can transform opportunity structures to affect social transformations that are invested in global social justice.

Dedication

This is for all who strive to create a more liberating and just world each day.

Acknowledgments

To all the people who have helped me to become who I am: my family who have cultivated, accepted, and loved me unconditionally—Nambago Kalema (Daddy), Rita Kalema (Mommy), Maliza Kalema, Maaso Kalema, and (Auntie) Doreen Kalema and the rest of my beautiful expansive family; my circle of strong women and men who have always lifted me up—Dr. Yaminah Gilles-Apolonio, Wayne Jackson, Dr. Deidre Ammah, Zoe Ozveren, Dr. Giuseppe Cantafio, Russ Morgridge, Nancy Adams, and Dr. Alistair McKnight; my first visionary friends who urged me to begin on this journey many years ago when I was unsure: Amir Khan, Andrew Damron, and Glaucia Ribeiro; my many teachers who've inspired me throughout my life—Mr. Gokey, Professor. James Miller, Professor. Antonio Lopez, Betty Ikalany, Professor. Dan Frey, Dr. Keridwen Luis, and Joost Bonsen; my Dimick home—Amit Gandhi, Dr. Dan Sweeney, Tim Huang, Heewon Lee, and Jess Huang; my thesis director whose courage, wit, and intellect guided me through this process—Professor Doris Sommer; all of my ancestors who dreamed me into existence before there was an “I”; and the future generations who will someday come.

List of Acronyms

CoB	Coloniality of Being
CoC	Coloniality of Culture
CoK	Coloniality of Knowledge
CoP	Colonial Matrix of Power
IGO	Intergovernmental Organizations
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPO	Non-Profit Organization
SI	Social Innovation
SIE	Social Innovation Ecosystem
SI4D	Social Innovation for Development
SIA	Social Innovation Activism

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Chapter I.

Introduction

It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.

—Audre Lorde, “The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House,” 2007

The global development sector often fills in institutional voids and public service gaps stemming from poverty and inequality. Practitioners in the sector have identified social innovation as a mechanism for building more robust and sustainable solutions in society. Just as international development followed after the end of colonialism, some are beginning to look towards social innovation as the “new development.” This thesis performs research that focuses on critically investigating development-centered social innovation, in particular, their pathways to cultivating more just and sustainable futures throughout the Global South.

The term innovation ecosystem refers to the large number and diverse networks of actors, institutions, and resources that drive innovation processes and outputs. Social innovation ecosystems include a variety of stakeholders: investors, entrepreneurs, community members, researchers, customers, educators, users, venture capitalists, and technical service providers (e.g., engineers, designers). These ecosystems work to create structures that promote socially beneficial innovation by enabling its diverse network to connect actors and resources better to solve social problems—by diminishing the friction

or barriers which arise along innovation pathways. Finally, these ecosystems work to cultivate a culture of innovation in certain geographic areas or around specific themes.

Social innovation scholarship has remained relatively silent about the ways coloniality continues to underwrite many of the processes and systems which operate and sustain social inequality and its symptoms. Decoloniality promises a shift in perspective by listening to people—that takes humility as a pressing priority. It can provide another lens for identifying not only how and where coloniality continues to operate but also how it shapes the systems which make up our world. This research investigates one of those systems: social innovation for development (SI4D) ecosystems.

This thesis is an interdisciplinary drawing from the fields of development studies, decoloniality, and social innovation. In the social innovation for global development (SI4D) area, this research investigates its collaborative processes and its facilitation of new types of engagement between privileged and marginalized actors. This research presents a body of evidence that supports the need to explore social innovation’s linkages to global social justice and thus, social transformations. Specifically, this research tries to develop and introduce a new concept of what I am terming “decolonizing social innovation.” Decolonizing social innovation aims to diminish and eradicate contemporary forms of coloniality that continue to animate our global systems through innovation processes. This thesis explores how decolonizing approaches to social innovation can be put in service of developing more democratic and liberating modes of global development, by interrogating questions of who innovates, who creates, who decides, and towards what end.

Decolonizing social innovation brings forward new points of inquiry. For instance, how might we think about social innovation as a mechanism not only for providing services and products that can improve people's lives but also as a mechanism for fundamentally transforming the power relations and opportunity structures for some of the most marginalized and excluded members of society? Applying a critical decolonizing perspective to social innovation can provide more insight into social transformations and the extent to which they are diminishing various forms of structural and epistemic injustices stemming from coloniality. This thesis takes the position that social innovation, social transformation, and global social justice are inextricably linked.

Further, this thesis contends that inclusive innovation is not a euphemism for decolonizing social innovation. Inclusive innovation does not necessarily equate to global social justice as it does not facilitate the redistribution of power nor the transformation of power dynamics linked to coloniality. Rather, when not critically examined, an inclusive approach to social innovation may sustain power dynamics linked to coloniality that continues to privileged, hegemonic, and Global North actors around social innovation for development processes and within its ecosystems.

Overall, decolonizing social innovation means turning away from a saviorhood-approach to global development (see Teju Cole's "The White Savior Industrial Complex," 2012) that centers and prioritizes the experiences of privileged actors in global development efforts and maintains power imbalances stemming from coloniality even through its seemingly benevolent efforts. It is an approach that sustains inequality between the Global South and Global North actors. I use interchangeably the term Global

North with “West” and vice versa within this thesis. Bhaba (2012) emphasizes this point in the following:

The hegemonies that exist at ‘home’ provide us with useful perspectives on the predatory effects of global governance however philanthropic or ameliorative the original intention might have been. The economic ‘solutions’ to national and international inequality and poverty as practiced by the IMF and the World Bank, for instance, have the feel of the colonial ruler.... It is the reproduction of dual, unequal economies as effects of globalization that render poorer societies more vulnerable. (Kindle Location: 178–190)

Bhaba’s point warns against the saviorhood-approach to global development. Instead, it means turning towards a solidarity-approach to global development which prioritizes the experiences, engagement, and agency of marginalized and subalternized people and communities around their own development efforts and vision. Decolonizing social innovation is not so much about giving others a voice; it is about learning how to listen to those presumed to be voiceless. It is a reorientation of global development from that of being top down to instead being bottom up (or led from grassroots movements).

Highlighting this point, Fanon (2004) stresses that people “must have the opportunity to speak, to express themselves and innovate.... It is a privileged opportunity for the individual to listen and speak. At every meeting the brain multiplies the association of ideas and the eye discovers a wider panorama” (p. 136). As it relates to coloniality’s linkages to saviorhood-approaches, Giridharadas (2018) adds the following:

No matter how efficient we are told it is, the context of the helping is a relationship of inequality: the giver and the taker, the helper and the helped, the donor and the recipient. When a society solves a problem politically and systemically, it is expressing the sense of the whole; it is speaking on behalf of every citizen. It is saying what it believes through what it does... this right to speak for others is simply illegitimate when exercised by a powerful private citizen. (p. 262)

It through decolonizing praxis that global social justice may be realized, not through technocratic, expert-led, and paternalistic forms of SI4D.

Thus, this thesis looks towards decolonizing and global social justice approaches as critical perspectives that can inform our understanding of social innovation for development (SI4D) in compelling ways that create a more equitable world.

Today, people are engaging in social innovation activism around issues of decoloniality and global social justice throughout the world. These social innovation actors are not merely creating social inventions and services, but also working to dismantle, diminish, and eradicate oppressive systems shaped by coloniality in the social innovation for development sector by reclaiming, rewriting, and creating new types of social relations between actors. To decolonize its practice, social innovation activists are co-constructing, co-collaborating, and co-creating new forms of engagement between privileged and marginalized actors in social innovation processes. They advance their work by reducing asymmetries and imbalances of power linked to coloniality through various strategies. From their stories presented in the case studies, we learn from them about their work to affect socially transformative changes invested in global social justice through social innovation approaches, processes, and ecosystems.

Research Problem

In the context of social innovation, how does coloniality—the arrogance of Global North actors who presume to know the “colonized” and what is best for their lives—get enacted and undermine global development impact? Further, can co-creation,

participatory practices, cultural agility, double-coding, and curiosity undermine the enactment of coloniality to allow oppressed individuals to move toward self-fashioning?

This thesis explores these questions through one-on-one interviews with social innovators to develop a conceptual framework. Next, that framework is used to analyze and develop a case study of the Pre-Texts program, an education-related social innovation created by the Cultural Agents Initiative in the late '90s. The Cultural Agents Initiative is “a network of academics, artists, educators, and organizations who develop recognition of the arts as resources for positive change” (Cultural Agents, n.d., Background). This research shows how this socially innovative program diminished the coloniality enacted by schools and teachers who presume to know the “colonized”. I will also show how the pedagogical tools of the Pre-Texts program which promote cultural agility, double-coding, and curiosity can transform the enactments of coloniality into more liberating modes of practice through its decolonizing approach to social innovation.

Questions

This thesis explores these objectives through two broad categories of questions: (1) questions on the level of analysis and (2) questions on the level of practice.

On the level of analysis, this research aims to investigate coloniality’s effect on the experiences of social innovation actors in social innovation for development ecosystems. Also, this thesis investigates what new insights a decolonial lens can contribute to the study of social innovation regarding power dynamics and engagement strategies in the global development sector?

On the level of practice, this thesis asks what decolonizing social innovation approaches are and how they affect social innovation processes and ecosystems especially as it may relate to engagement strategies, social impact, and social transformations.

Justification

To a large extent, the justification for this research is based on the absence of scholarship on power dynamics linked to coloniality in the context of social innovation. There is a growing focus on social innovation as a driver of global development due to its ability to engage many types of Global South and Global North stakeholders around its efforts. It is believed that this research can highlight opportunities for creating more equitable practices around social innovation and reveal the importance of decolonizing approaches to social innovation.

Hypothesis

Due to the lack of existing information on this topic, there was no hypothesis adopted before this research took place. Through its performance, it was hoped that its findings provide preliminary responses to the research questions posed. When it comes to conceptualizing and developing new types of knowledge in understudied areas, case studies can be an especially useful research approach (Mukhija 2010, p. 418). While it may not provide quantitative generalizability, it is hoped that it can at least provide analytic generalizable insights that point to the phenomenon being studied—decolonizing social innovation—to, perhaps, guide future areas of study with a testable hypothesis. This research is highly qualitative, and it is primarily focused on highlighting the key

elements that characterize decolonizing approaches to social innovation in the context of SI4D.

Chapter II.

Theory

We always need to think about the specific social contexts from which generalisations grow, and the contexts to which they are being made. Theorising grounded in specific landscapes is not trapped in those landscapes. But it certainly needs another criterion of significance from the criterion and abstract-universal theorising has used... Our interest as researchers is to maximise the wealth of materials that are drawn into the analysis and explanation. It is also our interest to multiply, rather than slim down, the theoretical ideas that we have to work with. That includes multiplying local sources of our thinking. (p. 207)

—Raewyn Connell, *Southern Theory: The global dynamics of knowledge in social science*, 2015

This chapter discusses the critical perspectives used to explore social innovation in the context of global development. It looks at colonialism and its legacies—coloniality, developmentalism, and modernity—to discuss its linkages to social innovation for development today. Finally, this chapter describes the critical perspective of decoloniality and how it works to delink various systems from coloniality through decolonizing strategies.

Colonialism

Colonialism was legitimized as a necessary tool to develop societies whereas more powerful countries had dominion over less powerful countries until they were deemed “capable” of sustaining liberal and democratic government institutions on their own (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). During the nineteenth-century, political philosophers promoted the liberal principles of enlightenment and universalism while still maintaining the legitimacy of Western colonialism and imperialism as a necessity for “civilizing” the

rest of the world (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). Part of that civilizing mission involved promoting Western values and creating English-speaking subjects that profited colonial empires (Sommer & Mohamed, 2014, p. 86). While political colonialism has mostly ended, its legacies still animate global systems of power today (e.g., anti-blackness, patriarchy, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, etcetera). Skeptical of whether the end of political colonialism occurred whereas formerly colonized nations are now free, Bart-Williams (2015) questions this idea with relation to Africa in the following:

Why is it that 5,000 units of our currency, is worth one unit of your currency when we are the ones with the actual gold reserves?... It's quite evident that the aid is in fact not coming from the West to Africa, but from Africa to the Western world... So how does the West ensure that the free aid keeps coming?... While one hand gives under the flashing lights of cameras, the other takes, in the shadows... Western economies, established on the post-colonial free-meal system. ("Change Your Channel")

Coloniality

After the end of direct colonial rule, coloniality became the contemporary and invisible power structure that sustains colonial relations of exploitation and domination (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, pp. 240–270). Coloniality is a system of racialized epistemic hierarchies and erasures which shape globalized structures of power and capitalism (Tucker, 2018, pp. 215–219). This system's social construction creates, maintains, and promotes the Global North's dominance over the Global South. The North-South divide affects global relations of power through things like imaginaries, practices, hierarchies, and violence.

To understand the mechanisms of coloniality, Quijano conceptualized the "Colonial Matrix of Power" maintaining that coloniality operates through three primary systems: hierarchies, knowledge, and culture (Quijano, 2000). The Colonial Matrix of

Power (CoP)—Coloniality of Being (CoB), Coloniality of Knowledge (CoK), and Coloniality of Culture (CoC)—provides a useful framework for understanding how “colonial patterns of racial domination, hierarchization, and marginalization” contribute to distortions, exclusions, and other forms of violence in the world today (Tucker, 2018, p. 215). The CoP seeks global control in four areas: control of economy (e.g., land appropriation, exploitation of labor, and control of natural resources); control of authority (e.g., institutions, military); control of gender and sexuality (e.g., family, education, and reproduction) and control of subjectivity and knowledge (e.g., epistemology, education, and formations of subjectivity) (Quijano, 2007).

The Coloniality of Being (CoB) refers to the embodied form of coloniality that is the classist, gendered, racialized, and politicized social stratifications formed around an invented Eurocentric standard. It underlies and justifies Western colonialism and imperialism (e.g., racism, sexism, classism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, etcetera). Maldonado-Torres (2007) develops this concept by describing the Coloniality of Being as “modern forms of colonialism... by means of the naturalization of slavery, now justified in relation to the very physical and ontological constitution of people by virtue of ‘race’” (p. 247). He explains that the process of racialization also relates to gender and sexuality adding that “it is an order of things that put people of color under the murderous and rapist sight of a vigilant ego... ego conquiro... And the primary targets of rape are women. But men of color are also feminized... that racialization works through gender and sex” (pp. 247–248). Expanding upon the gendered dimensions of the CoB, Lugones (2008) adds that intersectionality should inform the way we think about the CoB along dimensions of gender, sexuality race, and class.

The Coloniality of Culture (CoC) refers to the Eurocentric hierarchies created around human cultures and systems that have been globally proliferated (e.g., neoliberalism, capitalism, globalism, etcetera). David Kim (2015) explained that “nearly every non-Western nation on the planet had been dominated by Western imperialism or neo-imperialism... the global imperium did not only alter the politics and economies of subordinated nations... it also profoundly transformed the global epistemological landscape in its own image... behind what we call, ‘Eurocentrism’” (pp. 157–158). The CoC creates a hierarchy that places Western cultures on the top and the measure against which all non-Western cultures are judged and ranked. Mignolo (1999) points out the following:

The very concept of “culture” is a colonial construction and that, indeed, “cultural difference” is indeed the effect and the work of the coloniality of power... “colonial difference” underlines power relations, the coloniality of power, in the very making of cultural differences. The colonial difference is indeed the underlying logic, and power relations holding together cultural differences have been articulated by... global coloniality and the current reproduction (mass-finance, mass-mediation, mass-migration) of the colonial difference. (p. 40)

The Coloniality of Knowledge (CoK) refers to the centering of the West as the locus of epistemic enunciation for the entire world (Mignolo, 2003). To study the Coloniality of Knowledge is to investigate the imperial dimensions of Western epistemai and hegemonic discourses. The hegemonic principles of knowledge originated in the West and by claiming its own universality, it pretended to be formed independently of the geohistorical (i.e., European and later, the US) and biographical (i.e., white, male, scholars) conditions out of which it emerged (Mignolo, 2017). What is presented as a universal conception of knowledge, is often times Western epistemology. The CoK tries to obscure the political and violent conditions that led to the universalization of Western

epistemai. By placing the West at the center against which all other cultures are judged, it creates a system that provincializes all the non-Western epistemai, cultures, and beings making them, at best, periphery and, at worst, inferior to the West. It makes the Global South into objects to be described and studied from the perspectives of the West (e.g., Orientalism).

Overall, coloniality is an ideological project linked to historically and politically driven projects of conquest and domination. Today, coloniality, like capitalism, is no longer coming from one center; rather, it is geopolitically distributed across multiple centers which operate through various global systems (Mignolo, 2017).

Developmentalism

While political colonization ended, the relationship of power between the Global South and Global North continued to be one of colonial domination (Quijano, 2007). The “civilizing mission” of Western (Global North) countries on non-Western (Global South) countries centered on the idea that the latter required the tutelage of the former. Further, it was claimed that through a temporary period of political dependency that the Global South societies could become advanced and modernized—read “civilized”—through a process of assimilation. It is no wonder then that around the time that formal political colonialism ended, from 1945 to 1960 (U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, n.d.), developmentalism emerged. Developmentalism is still ideologically underpinned to the Global North’s “civilizing mission” but this time to eliminate poverty and the issues stemming from it in the Global South through modernity.

Hickel (2018) explains that the hegemonic myth surrounding global development was that the Global North developed “because they were better—they were smarter, more innovative and harder working.... By contrast, the countries of the global South were.... still behind, ‘underdeveloped’ and struggling to catch up” (p. 9). This point highlights how innovation and technology have always been tied to the development discourse to serve as evidence of the Global North’s superiority over the Global South. The matter of what is deemed an innovation, who is deemed innovative, and where innovation is said to occur is tied to coloniality’s structuring of global power relations.

As an ongoing ideological and political project, Tucker critiques development as a “process whereby other people are dominated and their destinies are shaped according to an essentially Western Way of conceiving and perceiving the world. The development discourse is part of a material process whereby other peoples are appropriated and turned into objects” (Tucker, 1999, p.1).

Overall, developmentalism grew out from the ashes of political colonialism to maintain its legacies. Today, while global development is viewed as being a mostly benevolent gesture on the part of the Global North, its ideology is still rooted in the power imbalances formerly underwritten through colonial violence. When thinking about how this has occurred within Africa, Bart-Williams describes this point in the following:

By systematically destabilizing the wealthiest African nations and their systems, and all that backed by huge PR campaigns, leaving the entire world under the impression that Africa is poor and dying, and merely surviving on the mercy of the West. Well done, Oxfam, UNICEF, Red Cross, Life Aid, and all the other organizations that continuously run multimillion-dollar advertisement campaigns depicting charity porn, to sustain that image of Africa, globally. (Bart-Williams, “Change Your Channel,” 2015)

Emphasizing that point, Freire (2000) warned that when an unjust social order is the source of a “generosity,” nourished by poverty and suffering, it is false (p. 44). He stresses that any “attempt to ‘soften’ the power of the oppressor in deference to the weakness of the oppressed almost always manifests itself in the form of false generosity... True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity” (p. 45).

Modernity

Modernity is necessarily tied to the construction of the colonial in the global imaginary, and so, global development. In the Global North, the logic the US used in its development of the Third World came to resemble the logic of colonization (Alcadipani, 2012, p. 133). Modernity and coloniality are constitutive of one another; on one side are the imagined ideals attached to modernity and on the other side is coloniality—the logic of subjugation and oppression (Mignolo, 2007, p. 162). Elaborating on the connection between modernity and colonialism, Bhaba (2012) adds that the “discourses of civility were defining the doubling moment of the emergence of Western modernity. Thus the political and theoretical genealogy of modernity lies not only in the origins of the idea of civility, but in this history of the colonial moment” (Kindle Location: 1193).

As Europe reeled from the devastating aftereffects of WWII, many former colonies of Europe became newly independent nations (Williams, 2014). By the '50s and '60s much of Europe's political colonization project transformed into development (which would later shape globalization) continued to embody the Enlightenment ideals of modernity and scientific rationalism (Caouette & Kapoor, 2016, p. 3). Providing critical

insights into understanding why the advent of global development immediately followed the end of political colonialism, Aníbal Quijano explained that although political colonization had ended, the relationship of power between the West and non-Western countries continued to be one of colonial domination (Quijano, 2007).

Development came to be seen as the primary mechanism for achieving modernization and progress—which was “conveniently” tied to Western expansion. The logic of coloniality explained the Global North’s dominance over other societies, legitimized its control of other territories, and provided an explanation for its subjugation of the Global South in service to their modernization and thus, development (Caouette & Kapoor, 2016, p. 2). Tellingly, modernity remains the epistemic foundation used to justify coloniality and global development. Tucker (1999) stresses that “Discourses of progress and civilization were used to legitimize slavery, genocide, colonialism and all forms of human exploitation. These processes are not a mere aberration from the Enlightenment ideal, they are a central part of it (p. 5).

The imperial and capitalist orders that the Global North continues to impose on the Global South have the same epistemological foundation, and so, without global cognitive justice, global social justice will always remain an impossibility (Sousa Santos, Arriscado Nunes, & Meneses, 2008, p. xix). When it comes to advancing global social justice, decoloniality is a necessity due to its ability to delink systems, hierarchies, and cultures from coloniality’s epistemic foundations, modernity.

Finally, today, innovation is seen as the driving force of modernity that has in the process subjugated other ways of knowing (Tunstall, 2013, p. 233). Thus, the uncritical incorporation of social innovation discourses and practices in the global development

sector run the risk of reproducing, reinforcing, and re-legitimizing the Coloniality of Power to exacerbate global social injustice; decoloniality becomes a critical tool for achieving global social justice.

Decoloniality

In his polemic work *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon (2004) explains that decolonizing “implies the urgent need to challenge thoroughly the colonial situation. Its definition can, if we want to describe it accurately, be summed up in the well-known words: ‘The last shall be first.’ Decolonization is verification of this” (p. 2). Central to that effort is decoloniality. Decoloniality is a concept that emerged out of the Americas and the Caribbean as part of various (trans)local struggles, social movements, and actions to resist and subvert the legacies, patterns, and relations of power established by external and internal colonialism (Mignolo, 2018, Kindle Locations 424–426). Decoloniality is a relational way of seeing the world, with regard to privilege and oppression, that strives to decenter Western rationalities as the only legitimized framework for analysis and thought; this is performed by opening up discourses to perspectives and positionalities of non-Western traditions, particularly those belonging to subalternized or oppressed groups (Mignolo, 2018, Kindle Locations 450–457).

Decolonization refers to the process by which colonies obtained their independence from the colonizing countries (e.g., Britain in the case of India) or imperial rulership (e.g., the US in the case of the Philippines) (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017). Decoloniality is distinguished from decolonization. The latter works to delink epistemically from imperial or colonial societal structures and the former,

decoloniality, works on the decolonization of knowledge and being by changing not only the content of discussions but also the terms thereof (Mignolo, 2013, pp. 131–133). By applying a decolonizing lens to the analysis of social innovation processes and practices, we can begin to learn how social innovation is affected by coloniality. For people in or of the Global South, enduring the oppressive state structures required entrepreneurial approaches to “making do” and creating new pathways of resiliency (Sommer & Mohamed, 2014, p. 86). Further, Sommer and Mohamed (2014) explain that “countless expressions of everyday entrepreneurship... hold out a promise of social innovation” (p. 87). Thus, exploring how social innovation actors are working to delink social innovation from coloniality holds the promise for realizing social transformations invested in global social justice.

In sum, decoloniality is utilized to undo, disobey, and delink from the Colonial Matrix of Power by creating pluriversal epistemic pathways (Mignolo, 2018, Kindle Locations 174–195). Delinking means moving away from the universality of Western modernist discourses and towards pluralistic ones that recover the silenced, repressed, and subalternized knowledges of many cultures to affect a decolonial shift (Mignolo, 2007, p. 453). The act of decoloniality is “decolonizing,” and for as long as coloniality has existed so too has its resistant force—decoloniality.

Chapter III.

Social Innovation

Against this background, millions of other people are forced by poverty, wars, and environmental disasters to move from villages to... and from their original country to others (where they hope to find a better and safer life). Each of these problems is a challenge for society as a whole and for its political institutions and agencies, on every scale from local to global. Each of them is a vast, worldwide social problem the solution to which cannot be found in traditional economic models and in top-down initiatives... most importantly, individuals, families, and communities must actively and collaboratively participate. This is where social innovation can help... In this state of things, social innovation steps in as a potentially powerful agent of change. (Kindle Locations 423-432)

—Enzo Manzini, *Design, When Everybody Designs An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation*, 2015

The call to decolonize various structures within the world continues to grow ever more prominent, and such calls have emerged around the realm of social innovation (Ignite Institute, 2018). This chapter discusses social innovation and some of its key characteristics. It begins by outlining the various definitions of social innovation and its key processes. Next, this chapter surveys the existing scholarship on social innovation to learn to what extent themes relating to decoloniality have been explored. Further, this chapter discusses the precedence for exploring themes relating to power in social innovation research. Finally, this chapter highlights the growing movement to decolonize academia by deconstructing power dynamics linked to coloniality within academic institutions and scholarship to advance decoloniality and overall, global social justice.

Definitions

According to van der Have and Rubalcaba (2016), a plethora of definitions, concepts, and theoretical frameworks have emerged around social innovation scholarship, and so the emergent knowledge of this discipline remains somewhat fragmented (p. 1926). One of the most cited definitions used for social innovation comes from Moulaert, MacCallum, Mehmood, and Hamdouch (2015), they define it in the following:

When we talk about social innovation we refer to finding acceptable progressive solutions for a whole range of problems of exclusion, deprivation alienation, lack of wellbeing, and also to those actions that contribute positively to significant human progress and development. SI means fostering inclusion and wellbeing through improving social relations and empowerment processes: imagining and pursuing a world, a region, a locality, a community that would grant universal rights and be more socially inclusive. Socially innovative change means the improvement of social relations between—micro relations between individuals and people but also macro relations between classes and other social groups. (p. 16)

This definition points not only to what constitutes social innovation but also how it operates as a process which transforms relationships between individuals and society on varying levels by its prioritization of inclusion and empowerment. Echoing this description, Mumford (2002) adds that social innovation is “the generation and implementation of new ideas about how people should organize interpersonal activities, or social interactions to meet one or more common goals” (p. 253). Thus, for the purposes of this research, these two definitions are jointly used to define social innovation as detailed in the following:

The process of identifying and developing solutions for a variety of ills stemming from a wide range of social problems that can positively contribute to human progress and development. By fostering social inclusion, through empowerment of people and the transformation of social relations, social innovation engages various stakeholders in its approach to create an additional social benefit. The transformation of

social relations refers to the micro-relations between individuals and macro-relations between classes and other social groups. (Moulaert et al., 2015; Mumford, 2002)

Both definitions highlight the role of social innovation in shaping interactions as a part of its process. A theme common to both definitions includes the focus on the role of the social—in terms of relations and goals—as central to understanding social innovation. Emphasizing the importance of social relations, Moulaert et al. (2015) stress that their definitional approach to social innovation is a politico-ideological positioning tied to a three-dimensional framework: (1) satisfaction of needs, (2) empowerment, and (3) transformations of social-relationship processes with regard to mobilization, participation, and outcomes (p. 2). While there is no consensus on how to define social innovation, nor on what distinguishes it from other types of innovation (van der Have & Rubalcaba, 2016; Edwards-Schachter & Wallace, 2017; Pol & Ville, 2009), there are two themes common to most definitions: social impact and social transformation.

Social innovation is an emergent area of study, especially concerning its integration into policy and governance domains. It is found under the larger umbrella of innovation studies. For institutional actors, social innovation has come to be seen as an attractive approach to addressing some of the most intractable problems in the world, by virtue of its superior ability to meet the diverse needs of our rapidly changing society (Grimm, Fox, Baines, & Albertson, 2013, p. 437). As a result, there is an increased interest in researching social innovation premised on “finding alternative ways for solving social problems which address regional differences and pay attention to the expectations of society” (Agostini, Vieira, Tondolo, & Tondolo, 2017, p. 386).

Social innovation is multidisciplinary and intentional about engaging diverse actors around its efforts to create more social benefits. It does so by fostering social inclusion through the empowerment of people and the transformation of social relations. The transformation of social relations refers to the micro-relations between individuals and macro relations between classes and other social groups (Agostini et al., pp. 253–254). Grimm et al. (2013) add that while social innovation is looked towards as a mechanism for creating more societal cohesion, more research is needed into how it can be utilized to address the needs of the most vulnerable groups in a society (p. 437). Groups are made vulnerable through a variety of factors—oppression, bias, prejudice, etcetera—, and so investigating how social innovation works to undermine oppressive systems is highly relevant to understanding how social innovation can better cultivate positive social transformations. Overall, an examination of the social relations that continue to underwrite various forms of engagement between the Global South and Global North requires an investigation of the power relations that emerge from the context of social innovation for development (SI4D).

Expanding upon Moulaert et al. (2015) and Mumford's (2002) definitions, Westley (2017) advocates for a more holistic approach to defining social innovation making the distinction that while “there are many initiatives that self-identify as social innovations, from new technologies to new forms of old technologies, from social initiatives to social movements... only a small fraction of these will go on to be ‘game changers,’ to transform the system dynamics that created the problems in the first place” (p. 239). Put another way, a precondition for social innovation is a social transformation; it is not about putting a Band-Aid over colonial wounds, it is about healing them through

the eradication and alleviation of power dynamics linked to social inequality—exclusion, bias, disempowerment, and prejudice. Apoliticized approaches to social innovation are divorced from global social justice because it fails to contest the relations of power that sustain inequality. Echoing this point, Anand criticizes in the following that:

To live in a society... ‘dependent on the arbitrary will of another. It would be like a form of servitude.’ Think of the person who seeks to ‘change the world’ by doing what can be done within a bad system, but who is relatively silent about that system. (Giridharadas, 2018, p. 259).

Social transformation demands that oppressive systems be changed rather than ignored or accommodated and so, deconstructing power becomes critically important to ensure that such transformations are in service of global social justice rather than injustice.

Relations of power and their dynamics are central to this research, and so Moolaert et al. (2015), Mumford (2002), and Westley’s (2017) definitions are used to define what social innovation is and what it aims to do in service of socially beneficial transformations. It is from this foundation that this research emerges. The joint adoption of these three definitions seems to be supported within the existing social innovation scholarship.

For instance, van der Have and Rubalcaba (2016) performed research analyzing 172 scholarly publications on social innovation and outlined four distinct clusters: (1) community psychology; (2) creativity research; (3) local development, and (4) social and societal challenges (p. 1927). Running throughout all four clusters are two key elements: (1) the emphasis on the transformative nature of social innovation when it comes to social relationships, structures, institutions, and systems; and (2) that those social transformations are directed towards solving social problems, meeting social needs, or advancing social goals (van der Have & Rubalcaba, 2016, p. 1928).

Examining the current state of social innovation studies requires an investigation of existing relations of power. Moulaert et al. (2005) explain that most relevant to social innovation processes are the dynamics of power which exist between dominant and marginalized people in a society (p. 1983). Moreover, civil society is the site on which social transformations and innovations occur and on which social power relations are negotiated (Swyngedouw, 2005, p. 1996). Relevant to many social innovation processes is the growing interest in understanding how relations of power are restructured and renegotiated through collaborative forms of engagement (Ayob, Teasdale, & Fagan, 2016).

Preliminary Research

There is precedence for investigating power dynamics in the context of innovation studies. For example, McCabe (2000) outlines how power is exercised in the context of innovation research arguing that a hegemonic discourse denies or negates alternative or competing discourses and that it is productive of relations of power that seek to ‘reproduce’ itself in others. (pp. 932–933). Moreover, González and Healey (2005) add that a network of non-traditional actors from diverse sectors can, together, contribute towards innovation by contesting existing political boundaries and discursive practices (p. 2066). There is an emerging body of research on power relations in social innovation studies (Swyngedouw, 2005 (political governance); Henry, 2017 (indigenous emancipation); and Moulaert & Nussbaumer, 2005 (community development approaches)).

As an area of inquiry, investigating power dynamics is well established in the existing scholarship on social innovation. This thesis extends that work using a critical decolonizing perspective to uncover and examine how power dynamics linked to coloniality affect SI4D, and it tries to understand the efforts being undertaken by social innovation actors to affect socially innovative transformations.

Next, this thesis set out to explore social innovation's existing scholarship to learn the extent of its discussion on power dynamics relating to coloniality, decoloniality, and decolonizing efforts.

Survey of the Existing Scholarship

An analysis of the prior scholarship was carried out beginning with a search for citations in international databases on the Web of Science platform. When it came to locating the data, the Web of Science platform's bibliographic reference produced by its core collection was utilized. The core collection consists of ten indexes containing information gathered from thousands of academic journals, books, series, reports, conferences, and more.

Searches

A search was conducted on June 14, 2018, with the keyword "social innovation" which yielded 1,506 results; however, upon performing refinement searches on those results using several keywords: "coloniality," "decoloniality," "decolonize," "decolonial," "decolonialism," "postcolonialism," and "postcolonial" out of the 1,506 possible results on social innovation, 0 results were found.

Again, a search was conducted on March 1, 2019, with the keyword “social innovation” which yielded 2,009 results; however, upon performing refinement searches on those results using several keywords: “coloniality,” “decoloniality,” “decolonize,” “decolonial,” “decolonialism,” “postcolonialism,” and “postcolonial” out of the 2,009 possible results on social innovation, 0 results were found.

Power Analysis in Social Innovation Scholarship

There is an extensive body of research which looks at specific types of power relations within the context of social innovation: social innovation’s reproduction of racial inequality (Ruha, 2016), moral power and social innovation (Pérez & Molpeceres, 2018), the role of gender for women social entrepreneurs in the social economy (Spiegler & Halberstadt, 2018), linguistic power in social innovation interactions (Salim & Ellingstad, 2016), and the E.U.’s social innovation policy and its neo-liberalizing power (Fougère, Segercrantz, & Seeck, 2017).

As coloniality is enacted in power dynamics that we see today (Smith, 2012), it was surprising that little attention seemed to have been directed towards the historical, political, and epistemic legacies of colonialism in this area of study. The absence of scholarly literature examining coloniality in the context of social innovation raises questions about what these silences mean with respect to the knowledge being produced in this area of social innovation studies. Overall, it leaves one to wonder about hegemonic approaches to social innovation, its level of inclusion of marginalized people, and subalternization of others both within the scholarship and in its various ecosystems.

Kabeer (2003) explains that in instances when a form of domination is not examined, it can be a strategy used to obscure that power's mechanisms for reproducing itself and normalizing its dominance as the status quo (p. 253). It suggests that there is a prevalence of social innovation interventions not yet being designed with a critical awareness of the interplay between coloniality and SI4D. This can diminish their likelihood of creating a more enabling environment for marginalized people and achieving social justice. Finally, as power dynamics are already embedded in social innovation studies, a decolonial analysis can contribute to a richer understanding of social innovation.

Decolonizing Movements in Academia

Globally, there is an emergent area of social activism, decolonizing academia. It is a global movement that works to delink what goes on within the academic institutions and the scholarship that emerges out of them from coloniality. Bhambra, Gebrial and Nişancioğlu (2018) explain that the “recent calls to ‘decolonise the university’ within this wider context, giving a platform to otherwise silenced ‘decolonial’ work and offering a resource for students and academics looking to challenge and undo forms of coloniality in their classrooms, curricula and campuses” to form a wider social movement (Kindle Locations 78–82). Escobar (2018) adds that concerning universities there is a movement to “fight for its epistemic decolonization and pluralization, especially in the face of the unrelenting corporatization of the academy going on in so many countries” (Kindle Locations 4837–4840).

Prominent contemporary examples of student-led decolonizing movements at universities include the “Rhodes Must Fall” campaign in South Africa, “Rhodes Must Fall in Oxford” campaign in the United Kingdom, “The Landless Peasant Movement” in Brazil, “The Indigenous Universities” campaign in Ecuador, the “Decolonising our Universities” movement in Malaysia, and the “No Democratization Without Decolonization” campaign in the Netherlands (Bhambra et al., 2018).

With respect to efforts directed at decolonizing academic scholarship, there has been an emergent form scholarly activism in various areas of study: decolonizing academic research (Antoine, 2017), decolonizing international relations (Taylor, 2012), decolonizing feminism (McLaren, 2017), decolonizing wealth (Villanueva, 2018), decolonizing the academy (Parker, Holland, Dennison, Smith, & Jackson, 2018), decolonizing university curricula (Saurombe, 2018), decolonizing management studies (Ruggunan, 2016), decolonizing pedagogy (Buttaro, 2010) and decolonizing development (Chouinard, 2016).

Existing Scholarship on Decolonizing Social Innovation

Outside of scholarship, when it comes to decolonizing efforts around social innovation, in May 2018, the Ignite Institute and Impact Hub Berkeley held a one-day workshop on decolonizing social innovation that featured a panel of social entrepreneurs discussing how colonial power structures and modes of thought continued to affect their experiences around social innovation (Ignite Institute, 2018). During that workshop, discussions focused on how these actors were utilizing decolonial approaches to

innovation (Ignite Institute, 2018). This workshop is one example of an articulated need calling for decolonizing approaches to social innovation.

While there is no scholarship specifically examining the nexus of social innovation, power dynamics, and decolonizing perspectives, there is one piece of scholarship that came closest to the concepts investigated by this thesis. This scholarship is with respect to a journal article by Muhan Dutta and Ambar Basu titled "Subalternity, Neoliberal Seductions, and Freedom: Decolonizing the Global Market of Social Change." This article provided an auto-ethnographic account of academic activists engaging marginalized communities in the Global South in social change processes directed at decolonizing knowledge production (Dutta & Basu, 2018).

Similar to what this thesis sets out to explore, Dutta and Basu (2018) look at how coloniality gets enacted in social change enterprises intimately tied to globalized neoliberal expansion (p. 82). They discuss the elitism of social change discourse (p. 82) and critiques its entanglements with hierarchies (e.g., class, race, sex, and caste); its colonial production of knowledge; and relationship to colonial forms of global development (Dutta & Basu, 2018). Furthermore, an expressed aim of the authors' research is to diminish hierarchies linked to coloniality through one's "commitment to building infrastructures for listening to heterogeneous subaltern voices through journeys of solidarity" (p. 92). They posit that decolonizing practices in the realm of social change specifically work to undo hierarchies of power (p. 91). This article provides insight into how knowledge production in the context of social change can begin to be decolonized. Moreover, this article is one example of research taking place around the subject of social change in relation to decolonizing efforts.

However, there are a several reasons why Dutta and Basu's article is distinguished from this thesis' research. First, this article presents an autoethnographic discussion of decolonizing social change but provides no practical examples of how that is currently occurring in practice. Second, their research primarily focuses on the "disembodied" knowledge produced upon subalternized groups which depend on their systematic erasure. This focus is differentiated from this thesis' research as its central focus is to understand how social innovation actors are working to undo coloniality's erasure of subalternized and marginalized groups through their engagement of decolonizing approaches to social innovation. Basically, the former works to understand how coloniality is being enacted on people through social change; and the former, works to reveal how coloniality's effects are being eradicated and diminished through the mechanisms of social change. Dutta and Basu (2018) are primarily working to characterize the problem, while this thesis is primarily focused on exploring potential solutions to such a problem. Finally, while the authors' article mentions power relations (p. 86), it does not discuss what characterizes those power relations, how social innovation engages with them, nor how decolonizing approaches to social innovation can transform them.

Nevertheless, this article is encouraging because it provides credence for the central idea that animates this research: understanding how actors in social innovation are confronting and diminishing coloniality in the context of global development. Also, this article provides evidence of the central importance of engaging marginalized and subalternized communities around social change processes. This thesis' research extends their scholarly discussion by specifically working to understand what characterize those

power relations linked to coloniality in SI4D and what people are doing to delink them from systems through social innovation processes today.

Social Economy

The social economy in societies have three primary types of actors: (1) the public sector (e.g., governments—local, national, and foreign—and academia), (2) the private sector (e.g., corporations, businesses, financial institutions, and private philanthropy), (3) the third sector (e.g., nonprofits, social enterprises, charitable foundations, international nongovernmental organizations (INGO), and intergovernmental organizations (IGO)), and (4) the informal sector (e.g., advocacy groups, and movement groups). The social economy's global scope is quite broad as it incorporates a lot of different types of stakeholders around its efforts.

Within the social economy (SE) are social innovation ecosystems (SIE). These systems coordinate engagement across the social economy to advance social innovation, and they have many types of actors including activists, advocates, policy actors, social entrepreneurs, social intrapreneurs, impact investors, university researchers, global development practitioners, hackers, and NGO/INGO/IGO actors. This diverse (and by no means comprehensive) collection of actors within the social economy are sometimes broadly referred to as social innovators; what characterizes this group is its aim to affect social impacts and societal transformations through socially innovative inventions, processes, services, or practices.

Social Innovation Ecosystems

Today, researchers are increasingly thinking about social innovation and its policies interrelatedly. This trend has emerged from policy actors interest in creating more enabling environments around social innovation systems and processes. Concepts used to describe this conceptual approach includes open innovation, innovation networks, and innovation ecosystems (Adner & Kapoor, 2010, p. 307). The construct of the innovation ecosystem emerged as an especially promising approach to conceptualizing innovation in the literature (Gomes, Facin, Salerno, & Ikenami, 2018, p. 16). Gomes et al. (2018) explain that innovation ecosystems, unlike business ecosystems, are predominantly focused on value capture whereas innovation ecosystems are focused on value co-creation (p. 16). The features of an innovation ecosystem include it being oriented around facilitating the co-creation of value and is composed of interconnected and dependent actors, co-evolving in new ways; involved in life-cycle and co-evolution processes; and characterized as having actors that face cooperation and competition within it (pp. 16–17).

Within the context of social innovation, in addition to social enterprises, there are a variety of stakeholders engaged—advocacy groups, global development entities, governments, universities, charities, and businesses—in innovation ecosystems through international networks (Mason, 2017, p. 26). The application of the ecosystem metaphor is especially valuable in the context of social innovation due to its ability to highlight the interwoven and networked relationships between social innovation actors and communities. By increasing the level of participant engagement through empowerment, innovation ecosystems can leverage their innovation capacity by enabling people and

institutions to converge, collaborate, and create innovations, while sharing resources and knowledge (Cantafio, 2017, p. 8).

Social innovation works dynamically by enabling collaboration between its various actors around processes which can lead to and support the eradication of inequalities in society (Mason, 2017, pp. 26–28). Adner and Kapoor (2010) explain that innovation ecosystems need to be further studied with respect to the exchanges and interactions that take place between its actors (p. 329). Social innovation by its very nature is engaged in social-political work. Thus, the development of its ecosystems should not only be aimed at learning about their social impact but also creating new types of movement and collaboration around the diminishment of social challenges and inequalities as well in the world today.

Social Capital

Social capital concerns the connections between and within social networks that encourage civic engagement, social cohesion, trust, and mutual support (Fuad-Luke, 2009, p. 7). Furthermore, social capital can be utilized to facilitate individual or collective actions to establish norms that contribute to a group's shared interests and wellbeing (p. 7). There are two types of social capital (i.e., bridging social capital and bonding social capital) that can deliver positive impacts (e.g., bringing society together) or negative impacts (e.g., dividing society) depending on how it is used (p. 7). First, "bridging social capital" fosters inclusion by looking outward at ways to join people and social groups together from different social units; a historical example of this is the American Civil Rights movement (p. 7). Second, "bonding social capital" is exclusionary as it aims to

reinforce an identity within a social group; an example of this could include a sorority or a cult (p. 7).

Bridging social capital and bonding social capital operate within a social innovation ecosystem and can affect different social innovators in different ways. Bridging social capital, it can become a mechanism for fostering an increased level of inclusion within the system and affect a transformation of equity (p. 7). However, within a social innovation ecosystem, bonding social capital in its negative form can lead to the marginalization, exclusion or discrimination of certain groups within a system. It can essentially become a mechanism for excluding or diminishing the capabilities for certain actors deemed to be not part of the group from effectively engaging in social innovation ecosystems and processes.



Figure 1. Social Capital's Procession through Social Innovation Ecosystems

Describing why social capital matters for global development, Moyo (2009) articulates in the following:

Social capital, by which is meant the invisible glue of relationships that holds business, economy and political life together, is at the core of any country's development. At its most elemental level, this boils down to a matter of trust... And while trust is difficult to define or measure, when it is not there the networks upon which development depends break down or never even form. (p. 58)

Social capital shapes how actors engage and move about social innovation ecosystems, and it has been shown to have a material effect on development (Kay, 2006). To better understand relationships between people and institutions where there may be differing levels of societal power, development studies scholars have been investigating social capital's role in societal power hierarchies (Woolcock, 2001). Extending that work further by applying a decolonizing lens to social innovation to understand how coloniality affects social capital and in turn, power dynamics for social innovation actors is warranted. In social innovation ecosystems (perhaps even more so for SI4D) using a decolonial critical perspective to understand how coloniality functions and to what extent it is being diminished may provide insights into a social innovation ecosystem's level of inclusion.

By examining how coloniality affects social capital and thus, social innovation ecosystems, it may reveal how coloniality affects social innovators experiences and outcomes. Further, it may help us understand not only how coloniality operates through social innovation ecosystems but also its specific mechanisms for doing so. Examining coloniality's diminishment of bridging social capital (i.e., maintaining or increasing of power asymmetries and imbalances) and its maintenance or increasing of negative forms of bonding social capital in the context of social innovation is useful.

This research aims to understand more about the experiences of social innovation actors and how they are working to diminish coloniality through their adoption of

decolonizing approaches to SI4D. Further, this thesis sets out to understand how social innovation actors are contesting relations of power shaped by coloniality to engage in a new form of activism I will call “social innovation activism.” Social Innovation Activism (SIA) serves as an intervention directed at making SIEs more inclusive and capable of yielding outcomes and engaging in practices invested in social impact and global social justice.

In sum, social capital is a form of currency within social innovation ecosystems, and it affects the experiences of social innovators, SIE outcomes, social impacts, and social transformations. Decoloniality offers us another lens for understanding social innovation ecosystems by providing new insights into how coloniality affects SI processes: (1) coloniality’s distortion of social capital and its impact on power dynamics, (2) the types of power dynamics (i.e., colonizing and decolonizing), and (3) its effects on outcomes (or lack thereof) in relationship to global social justice.

Global Social Justice

Connell contends that due to “the restructuring of the world economy and the growth of the global-private, issues of social justice unavoidably have an international dimension (Connell, 2015, p. 231). As one of the more significant sites of engagement between the Global North and Global South today, it is especially interesting to think about how power relations affect social innovation for development and global social justice. Bhambra et al. (2018) explain that the “historical reality is flattened, in favor of a reading that portrays the Global South as the passive recipient of other people’s innovation and development. It also relies on a lack of understanding around how

colonialism's power dynamics have shaped contemporary global inequalities, and uneven access to resources, development and democratic agency" (Kindle Locations 627–642). Understanding more about how this geometry of power manifests itself within these social innovation systems becomes an especially rich site for understanding how coloniality is articulated through relationships and interactions on the local and global level.

Scholars have linked the role of social innovation to dismantling global social injustices including the Global North hegemonic control of knowledge production and silencing of the Global South. For instance, Hulgård and Shajahan (2013) explain that the role of social innovation is to provide empowerment for marginalized groups (p. 96). Critical to this effort is open-model innovation (OMI) practices—participatory processes, co-creative knowledge formation, and forms of collaborative governance—which enable diverse and multidisciplinary networks of actors with varying levels of power to connect (pp. 96–98). A move towards a dialogical understanding of the sector that adopts co-creative processes and embraces diverse forms of knowledge is called for (p. 95). Decolonizing social innovation can move towards those goals. This research provides examples of how that happens through decolonizing social innovation approaches that can be more pluriversal, inclusive of marginalized and subalternized groups and epistemai to move towards a more expansive understanding of social innovation and social transformations that advance global social justice.

As seen within the Global South-Global North binary, particularly within the context of the global order of coloniality, disjunctures in the imaginations of privileged and marginalized actors are normal, and the agency of marginalized actors is often read

as being disruptive due to its confrontation of a hegemonic status quo (Muppidi, 2005, p. 285). However, social innovation is also a context built around generating new and disruptive interventions for society. It is precisely meant to disrupt the hegemonic status quo to transform society and its structures to disrupt familiar patterns along the contours of social benefit. Conversely, it is depoliticized approaches to social impact that is not socially innovative and disruptive of global social injustice. Giridharadas (2018) contends that “watered-down theories of change that are personal, individual, depoliticized, respectful of the status quo and the system” are not disruptive (p. 120), and so the “more genuine criticism is left out and the more sunny, actionable, takeaway-prone ideas are elevated, the shallower the very idea of change becomes” (p. 120). Within social innovation processes, where old relations of power shaped by coloniality remain prevalent, social transformations invested in global social justice are impossible. Rather, for some social innovators, disruptions are thought to be connected to the desire for subalternized actors to be made visible to redefine their role in the global order (Muppidi, 2005, p. 285). In short, social innovation is not only about social impacts (i.e., the symptoms of inequality) but also advancing global social justice (i.e., the causes of inequality). Escobar (2018) explains the following:

An ethical and political practice of alterity that involves a deep concern for social justice, the radical equality of all beings, and nonhierarchy. It’s about the difference that all marginalized and subaltern groups have to live with.... and that only privileged groups can afford to overlook as they act as if the entire world were, or should be, as they see it. (Kindle Locations 221–224)

It is worth learning more about how social innovators are working to renegotiate, resist, subvert and transform existing relations of power shaped by coloniality through decolonizing praxis.

Chapter IV.

Power

The social architects developed a strict hierarchy of authority, the pyramid model, in which the small number of the Us perched at the very top, holding the authority and the vision. Pyramid processes are top-down, closed-door, and expert-driven. Populating the base of the pyramid, with the greatest numbers but the least power, were the Them—the Others, basically—less human and less valuable, due to receive fewer rights and resources. (Kindle Locations 607–615)

— Edgar Villanueva, *Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous Wisdom to Heal Divides and Restore Balance*, 2018

Power is defined as “the ability or official capacity to exercise control” over one’s social or physical environment (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*, 2019). Where there exists an asymmetrical relation of power, a power imbalance is said to occur which can take place between people, institutions, and nations (Girvan, 2007, p. 6). Power is relational. A power asymmetry occurs when differences in status exist between actors and groups within a hierarchy, and these differences result in them having “a differential ability to take action or cause [sic] action to be taken” (IGI Global, n.d., What is Power Asymmetry). Sustained power asymmetries amongst people, institutions, or nations can come to form power imbalances, which occur “when A has more control or influence over B’s behavior than vice versa. Control may be exercised by the use of superior force, economic means, and the control over knowledge and information” (Girvan, 2007, p. 6).

For example, the Global North’s dominance over the Global South concerning knowledge construction—meaning the constructs, assumptions, and beliefs held by people to make sense of the world—is used as a justification for hierarchical relations

between the actors (Girvan, 2007, p. 6). Tucker (1999) explains the importance of critically interrogating the “unequal relations of power in the production of knowledge, and to acknowledge the important role of the development discourse as a central part of the process of domination” (p. 24). Given the significant power imbalances between the Global South and Global North within global systems, development provides a uniquely rich site for the investigation of power relations (Girvan, 2007, p. 6).

Coloniality is an example of a power imbalance embedded in our global systems. Precisely due to the Coloniality of Knowledge (CoK), scholarship from the Global South is marginalized and devalued (at least until it is later “discovered” by the Global North) while scholarship from the Global North is privileged and seen as more valuable (p. 20) so as to create a development knowledge dependency power dynamic (p. 22).

Giridharadas (2018), questions the assumed supremacy of the privileged in the following:

To question their supremacy is very simply to doubt the proposition that what is best for the world just so happens to be what the rich and powerful think it is. It is to say you don't want to confine your imagination of how the world might be to what can be done with their support. It is to say that a world marked more and more by private greed and the private provision of public goods is a world that doesn't trust the people, in their collective capacity, to imagine another kind of society into being. (p. 244)

Coloniality's “theory of post-political problem-solving” (p. 213) is anti-democratic particularly when it comes to redistributing power. Thus, power is not necessarily evidence of something or someone's supremacy nor indicative of it or them uniquely equipped or in possession of all the right answers; that is one of coloniality's biggest myths. In the context of global development, this myth shows up in the archetype of the savior, Villanueva (2018) describes this in the following:

Despite all their talk of wanting to help, reform, even revolutionize the world, saviors won't touch the underlying system of privilege and power because that's what grants them their status and position in the world. In the end, saviors don't heal anything. The savior complex often goes hand in hand with white supremacy. Not all saviors are white; some are people of color and Indigenous people who have been infected by the power dynamic of colonization and internalized oppression. Here's the thing about saviors: No matter how much they think the victim may need their help, rescuing someone can only reinforce their victimhood... It states that there are three roles in abusive or oppressive situations: perpetrator, victim, and savior. (Kindle Locations 1269–1275)

Regardless of intent, the maintenance of power imbalances in SI4D is fundamentally dishonest to its claimed mission. Rather, where sustained and significant power imbalances continue to persist, domineering forms of engagement continue. For example, highlighting this point, Tucker (1999) explains that “one-sidedness, this tendency towards monologue rather than dialogue, is rooted in the unequal power relations” (p. 10). Where that power remains highly concentrated in an inequitable manner, these occurrences might serve as one of the most reliable indicators of who or what maintains the mechanisms of global social injustice. Girdharadas (2018) illuminates this point further in the following:

Inequality is not about giving back. Inequality is about how you make the money that you're giving back in the first place. Inequality, he said, is about the nature of the system. To fight inequality means to change the system. For a privileged person, it means to look into one's own privilege. And, he said, 'you cannot change it by yourself.' (p. 122)

Thus, when it comes to deconstructing relations of power or transforming them, crucial to both efforts is equity and in the context of SI4D, global social justice.

Chapter V

Research

Self-determination in a research agenda becomes something more than a political goal. It becomes a goal of social justice which is expressed through and across a wide range of psychological, social, cultural and economic terrains. It necessarily involves the processes of transformation, of decolonization, of healing and of mobilization as peoples. The processes, approaches and methodologies—while dynamic and open to different influences and possibilities—are critical elements of a strategic research agenda. (Kindle Locations 2517–2521)

—Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous People*, 2018

This chapter outlines the research performed, and it discusses how it was carried out and analyzed. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews with social innovation actors, and a general inductive approach was used for its analysis. A critical qualitative research approach was employed. This research was designed to learn more about coloniality, social innovation and decolonizing efforts in the context of social innovation for development. This data is situated into a broader discussion of what decolonizing social innovation is and why it is essential, particularly in the context of global development. As critical perspectives informed this research's design, the benefits and limitations of the approaches adopted are also discussed.

Methodology

The understanding societal structures is relevant to knowledge creation. Critical approaches to qualitative research investigate the ways epistemology, power, and resistance intersect around research processes (Bhavnani, Chua, & Collins, 2015, p. 166). Critical approaches to qualitative research provide new opportunities to identify and

analyze the manifestations of disempowerment and through the research process, work to restructure those relations. Overall, critical research approaches offer fresh insights into the lived experiences of people negotiating asymmetrical relations of power, including those that show up around hegemonic approaches to research itself (Bhavnani et al., 2015, p. 171).

Further, critical qualitative research investigates lived experiences which are especially crucial to researchers working against disciplines that have silenced specific groups and to resist imperialist research practices and the reproduction of epistemic violence (p. 176). Thus, the choice to adopt a critical qualitative research approach for this study was based on its ability to generate new understandings (or reclaim them) and to engage people in reflecting and making meaning of their actions and interactions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). This approach is able to facilitate the co-creation of knowledge rather than engaging in more extractive forms of knowledge creation. Also, this critical approach has the ability to recognize and make meaning of specific experiences about which a lot might not yet be known (Patton, 2003). Finally, this approach can present a rationale or justification for specific reforms (Creswell, 2003).

Also, this research shares examples of how social innovators are using decolonizing approaches to their work and engagement with communities to transform, subvert, or eliminate relations of power linked to coloniality in practice. This study involved a small pool of interviewees (16) and was conducted through semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Typically, a qualitative sample is big enough to yield rich information that informs the research question, and that contains critical cases, typical cases, and occasionally deviant cases (Evans, Miller, Hutchinson, & Dingwall, 2015, p.

183). This thesis uses the N-of-One-Plus-Some methodology to analyze those case studies to provide new insights into what areas possibly to investigate in future research.

Due to the decolonizing aspects of interviewing (Smith, 2012), the semi-structured interview format was adopted. This thesis conducted individual semi-structured interviews to as Svend Brinkmann (2015) explains “make use of the knowledge-producing potential of dialogues by allowing a lot more leeway for follow up” (p. 286); and so “the interviewer has a greater chance of becoming visible as a knowledge producing agent” (p. 286). The interview questions were used to provide a starting point for these conversations. Notes were taken during the interview and validated with each interviewee, respectively. From the data collected from those interviews, one primary case study and several secondary case studies were developed and used to create a conceptual framework. Next, that conceptual framework was used to analyze the primary case study on the Cultural Agents’ Pre-Texts workshops.

The primary data for the present research took the form of extensive semi-structured in-depth interviews with various social innovation actors in the SI4D sector. First, interview individuals were recruited via an online Facebook posting. Participation in the study was limited to social innovation actors performing work in the Global South and purposeful sampling was utilized. For the Pre-Texts case study, a semi-structured interview was performed with a Pre-Texts facilitator and program coordinator from Cultural Agents. Secondary data was derived from the Pre-Texts program’s website and scholarly sources.

For all potential interviewees that communicated an interest in taking part in the study, an initial email was sent to them with an explanation of the goals of this study and

that detailed the duration of the interview (i.e., 60–90 minutes). The email invited them to take part in a one-on-one personal interview and informed the subjects they were free to discontinue the interview at any time and where requested any information obtained in connection with this research could be anonymized or remain confidential. The interested social innovators scheduled a time to learn more about the goals of the study and where necessary signed a consent form.

A follow-up email was sent to individuals who indicated their desire to participate in the study and where necessary, provided a signed the consent form to confirm the date, time, location, platform (i.e., in person or WhatsApp or via Skype) for that interview, and where requested, some preliminary potential interview questions were shared. The questions primarily asked about the participants' experiences as actors engaging in social innovation processes in the SI4D sector. The objective of this process was to provide interviewees with an additional opportunity for reflection outside of the interview process and to provide them with the opportunity to enlarge upon these issues during their interview with the researcher. This research complied with all the requirements of Harvard University's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Finally, this study was designed to provide preliminary answers on how social innovation actors subvert or undermine the coloniality to decolonize social innovation processes and ecosystems. The data collected from these research questions can provide a starting point for more narrowly focused research and testable hypotheses in the future, by widening the conceptual frameworks used for its analysis to be more inclusive of non-hegemonic perspectives.

Analysis

First, through semi-structured interviews with social innovators working in the Global South, this research investigated how social innovation actors are transforming dimensions of power linked to the Coloniality of Power (CoP) through three dimensions: Coloniality of Being (CoB), Coloniality of Culture (CoC), and Coloniality of Knowledge (CoK). Interview questions were directed at learning more about the SI4D power dynamics, and global social justice. Second, the interviews were analyzed to see what patterns or themes emerged as derived from the social innovation actors' responses. That information was used to develop a conceptual mapping of how coloniality impacted power dynamics (i.e., power asymmetry and power imbalances), outcomes, and social transformations. Following the completion of a comprehensive literature review, its analysis was synthesized with the insights gained through the secondary interviews. From that process, a preliminary conceptual framework was created, and it illustrated how these themes might work in SI4D. Specifically, from that process emerged the Decolonizing Social Innovation Conceptual Framework (see Figure 2.). It was tested on a real-world social innovation intervention, Pre-Texts, to see what that framework helped to reveal about coloniality and decoloniality in the context of social innovation for development.

This conceptual map illustrates how coloniality affected relations of power (i.e., power asymmetries and power dynamics) for social innovation actors working in the Global South. Also, this map shares one way of looking at how social innovation actors actively worked to transform power dynamics to engage in a form of social innovation activism. Information on the scope and format of the semi-structured interviews are

detailed in the appendices: Interview Social Innovation and the Coloniality of Power worksheet (see Appendix 1.), Interview Guide (see Appendix 2.), List of Questions (see Appendix 3.).

The N-of-One-Plus-Some methodology (Mukhija, 2010) was utilized to bring some degree of analytical generalizability to this research project. It aims to help researchers develop a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the primary case that is informed by several assisting case studies that are secondary (Mukhija, 2010, p. 417). The assisting cases' primary purpose is to inform our understanding of the primary case by "helping to identify issues... questions to ask, and data to look for in the main case" (p. 417), and to "corroborate the veracity of its data and information collected" (p. 417). Overall, the secondary case studies can provide suggestions on how to frame the primary case's narrative (p. 417).

This methodological approach is especially useful when it comes to developing new knowledge and understanding in the context of understudied communities (p. 418). Knowledgeable informants are a critical factor when it comes to helping researchers identify and investigate issues that are missed in the primary case or that are currently being underplayed or ignored in the existing scholarship (p. 417). Finally, this methodology can help researchers to identify the more distinguishing aspects of the primary case from its more generalizable elements (p. 417).

Limitations

While this thesis may offer insights into how decolonizing approaches can transform social innovation, nevertheless, there are many limitations which need to be

considered due to the preliminary nature of this research. For instance, due to the absence of existing studies on decoloniality in the context of social innovation, there is a lack of existing scholarship to situate the findings from these interviews into a broader perspective.

Next, because of the highly qualitative nature of this research, which relies mostly on people's accounts with little quantitative data to confirm or refute the insights emerging from those accounts, requires that follow-up studies are made to confirm the results. The sample size of interviewees was small. The problem with such a small sample size is that it makes running statistical tests very difficult and thus, the information gathered from these interviews are not at all quantitatively generalizable. However, it is hoped that this study can at least provide some analytically generalizable insights on decolonizing social innovation.

Finally, due to the small subject pool, it is unclear how representative the participants' experiences are of other social innovators. Further, self-selection effects impair the representativeness of the subject pool. In addition, the positionality as an academic researcher from the Global North investigating the experiences of the individuals from the Global South can reenact specific asymmetries linked to coloniality. As a researcher based at a Global North institution, the researcher recognizes her points of privilege in the context of such discussions. However, it is hoped that this investigation can stimulate future investigations which prioritize the views, perspectives, and knowledge systems from and led by Global South and marginalized communities.

Chapter VI.

Findings: Secondary Case Studies

Fifteen social innovation actors were interviewed for the secondary case studies, seven of whom are women and eight of whom are men. These interviewees were geographically diverse; four of them were from the Global North—specifically the U.S.—and eleven of them were from the Global South. The fifteen interviewees were spread out through several continental areas: four in Africa, four in South America, three in Asia, three in North America, and one in the Middle East-North Africa region.

For this thesis, five of the fifteen social innovation actors interviewed are discussed in the secondary case studies. For the secondary case studies, each case shared illustrates the themes which emerged from all fifteen interviews and those themes are encapsulated in the secondary case studies discussed herein.

Where inclusion of one's name was not explicitly requested by the interviewee, names have been replaced with pseudonyms as denoted by an asterisk (*) in the first instance of its use.

Secondary Case Studies: Academia

Renato

First, Renato*, based in Bogota, Colombia, is a doctoral researcher in Engineering at the National University of Colombia. Renato's research focuses on the nexus of peace-building processes and communal innovation as a facilitative process that can help to build community cohesion. The social mission of his research is to democratize

knowledge through the commons creating a dialogue between academic institutions and the community at large. His mission relates to his larger objective of reorienting the directionality of research agendas by using these dialogues to help academia engage in research that is relevant to the needs of the people and engaging marginalized communities.

He along with others set up a non-formal, community-academic research group known as “*semilleros*” which is the Spanish word for seedbed. The *semilleros* aim to be transdisciplinary and to better engage communities around the shaping of research objectives and to learn from each other as knowledge creators. Their meetings take place on a weekly basis and engage artists, engineering, academics researchers, and social scientists.

Besides this, Renato tries to integrate better feedback loops into his research process to make sure it is accessible and understandable to the marginalized groups he works within a variety of ways. This action was performed by ensuring that researchers went back to the communities they may have learned from creating a dialogue about the research. To facilitate this engagement, the researchers welcomed and answered questions and worked with community members to think of ways to translate that information so it could reach a broader audience within that community.

Sometimes, that meant translating the research into indigenous languages in addition to Spanish. In other cases that meant working with community members to translate the research findings onto different mediums such as videos, artistic murals, songs or oral storytelling. Finally, he worked to make sure that the research produced was open access to remove cost barriers so it could be freely accessed all over the world.

Overall, Renato worked to diminish barriers to knowledge by engaging communities in its production all along its creation process to facilitate communal forms of innovation. He used co-design processes to engage with communities around the collaborative co-creation of knowledge and uses pluriversal approaches in a manner that prioritized participation and de-centered the Global North as the epistemic locus of knowledge production. Renato's work diminished asymmetries of power between stakeholders.

His manner of performing research is not merely extractive, as it works out to be more of an exchange, but its inclusion of many types of actors with varying levels of power helps to increase bridging social capital to create a more inclusive social innovation ecosystem. This case study presents an example of how a decolonizing approach to social innovation helps to diminish the Coloniality of Knowledge. Further, by refocusing communal innovation on peace and community cohesion rather than just market capitalism, communities were able to set other priorities around their development and actively engage in shaping their collective dreams for the future through social innovation processes. Thus, Renato's approach helped to diminish the Coloniality of Culture as well.

Guy

Second, Guy*, a postdoctoral researcher in Human-centered Design Methodologies, is based in Botswana. Guy has a background in design-thinking approaches focused on equity and social justice. Guy has performed ethnographic research on the innovation ecosystem in Botswana, specifically the portions of it that

were geared towards global development. He explained that to a large extent, innovation is seen as the new “development” of our times. Through his research, he works to unpack the narratives around innovation and development processes.

Guy asserts that innovation is a new systemic mechanism for development. He explains that since its start as a sector, it has moved through various areas of primary focus (e.g., the Green Movement, and structural adjustment programs). Guy adds that today, in the development sector, that focus has shifted to innovation. Guy sums this up by adding that there is a growing discussion claiming that in order to develop a society into a knowledge economy, there needs to be a robust innovation ecosystem.

He explained that Botswana is trying to use innovation as a mechanism to undo fifty years of dependency syndrome caused by its reliance on the diamond industry as almost the sole source of its GDP. He says that it is believed that this reliance has undermined the country’s own development and thus, people look towards innovation as a mechanism for diversifying its economy. However, Guy went on to say that the government’s innovation strategy to a large extent only focuses on mining, clean technology, biotechnology, ICT and indigenous knowledge systems (e.g., hoodia). He criticized that to a large extent, policymakers view innovation in purely commercial terms and in an apolitical manner.

Guy has found that there is a misalignment between institutions and social innovation actors which have led to structural inadequacies in the country’s overall social innovation ecosystem. He explained that power dynamics show up in the development of design innovation for, with, and around poverty issues (and also towards social activism and justice) with respect to shaping country-wide innovation strategies. Guy added that

due to the various intersectionalities of marginalized people, it was difficult for them to engage around those processes. Thus, the social mission of his work has involved exploring ways for marginalized and subalternized communities to further come into contact and engage with the country's innovation processes around their own needs and social agendas.

For example, Guy worked with the San Research Centre, a multidisciplinary group that facilitates the engagement of researchers in collaborations with the San culture and people. After the San community faced an onslaught of unethical encounters with early European researchers, including the study of their community in the name of scientific racism and the extractivist manners in which that research was performed—which often was financially and culturally exploitative to the community. The San Research Center's leadership is composed of San and non-San individuals who have worked to open new institutional pathways for the San community to engage in society. Guy explained that the San Research Centre is an institutional innovation that was created to prevent the international research community's continued exploitation of the San people.

Guy believes that innovation must be thought of in a politically if it is to engage in deep, sustainable, and power-laden social transformation. He explains that there needs to be a three-part approach to decolonizing social innovation: a historical analysis of the context, the further democratization of innovation processes that explores themes related to power—who, what, where, and by whose authority—and an acknowledgment of the researcher's positionality in the research's context to reflect on how one's privilege and biases may impact their work.

Guy summed up a decolonizing approach to innovation as requiring the destruction of visible, historical and hegemonic institutions that prevent people from being liberated. He added that it would be useful for policymakers to adopt a more expansive view of what innovation encompasses to not inadvertently engage in an approach to innovation that fosters the Coloniality of Culture by focusing its efforts in a neoliberal manner. Guy stressed that it is crucial to better understand the local context in order to better circumscribe the design imagination of communities. He added that this must be considered when one is engaging in activist design and innovation.

For example, Guy explained that indigenous knowledge systems was an area of focus for the country's innovation strategy. He added that engagement in that area primarily had to do with commercial usages of traditional plants and herbs indigenous to Botswana. Guy discussed the curious case of devil's claw. Devil's Claw is a plant native to South Africa that was traditionally used as a natural remedy by the San people to treat a wide range of ailments. After studying the San people, in the 1960s a German scientist brought it back to the U.S. and placed a commercial patent on it. While the San people had sustainably used the plant for many years and knowledge of this plant (along with many others) was a part of their knowledge system, they could not capture most of the wealth derived from it on global markets. Unfortunately, this led to a modern formulation of the dependency relationship between Botswana and the Global North.

As a result, an international mandate has been put in place to make sure that there are beneficiary relationships for the people who harvest these plants—largely very impoverished and marginalized individuals—and to prevent the indigenous communities

from being monetarily alienated and from their cultural products being co-opted and appropriated by the Global North.

When asked what does decolonizing social innovation mean to him, Guy responded that the complex issues of supporting innovation are not yet becoming pan-global nor intersectionalized. Guy explained that he defined innovation as anything new that helps a specific community. He explained that it must be new to that community, and it must be worthy and good. He added that, currently, dominant forms of innovation throughout the world are not decolonized nor outside of the neoliberal dynamic. He commented that they are not outside of the class constraints in terms of who has access to mentorship, resources, and funding within social innovation ecosystems.

He illustrated this point further by adding that by viewing development and innovation for commercial-purposes only, Botswana created an innovation ecosystem that is not decolonized and may in fact be reenacting coloniality. Furthermore, he expressed that innovation needs to be discussed in ways that give people an understanding of its expansiveness. If colonization is continuously adapting and remaking itself (interacting even without people noticing it), then decolonizing innovation must do the same.

Overall, Guy explored how innovation is currently thought of in Botswana and talked about opportunities to decolonize it. Guy discussed how academic researchers engaged with indigenous communities in an exploitative manner thus leading to the creation of the San Research Centre to present an example of an institutional social innovation that worked to balance the power between an indigenous community and institutional actors. Guy concludes as he explains how the narrow view of innovation at

the level of policy is exclusionary, and he contends that there should be more done to make conceptualization of innovation more expansive and more inclusive for marginalized communities in Botswana.

Secondary Case Studies: Activist

Oswaldo* is a scholar, hacker and activist based in Bogota, Colombia, who self identifies as a researcher activist. He has been engaged in technology since the 1990s and thinks technology should be further embedded into society as a mechanism to help people protect and amplify their rights. Oswaldo is currently working on his doctoral dissertation, which looks at how technology and design can bridge the world of academia and activism around liberating themes—particularly as it relates to issues which arise between the Global South and Global North. As an example of how the two areas interact with each other around issues of technology and coloniality, Oswaldo mentioned that to a large extent, much of the software used in Colombia and throughout the Global South comes from the Global North. As a result, there are often instances when that software may not be well adapted to the needs of people in the Global South for example as is the case with computer software and algorithmic models. Thus, Oswaldo and his collective of hacker activists learn to code and become the creators of innovations that create computer software that can fit the needs of people there, and that can help them advance issues related to justice.

Oswaldo sees social innovation as trying to put new things into existing social systems to create systemic change. Oswaldo stressed that engaging in social innovation through technological means can transform how people organize by making information

more available for communities to access and for them to exercise their own political voices as advocates. Specifically, he uses technology to protect or amplify rights for marginalized communities in Colombia. Through this work, he has engaged communities not only in Bogota (an urban area of Colombia) but also in the remote coffee-growing regions of the country. Through these efforts, Oswaldo works in solidarity with community activists to create more bridging social capital between citizens and institutions.

Oswaldo described the hackerspace, He explained that the hackerspace brings together men, women, librarians, researchers, social innovators, and activists who learn or teach each other coding. One of the hierarchical relationships that his community of hackers seeks to diminish is the power asymmetry between developers and users of technology. They work to deconstruct this process by engaging ordinary citizens in the writing of code and software. Another power asymmetry that their work tries to diminish is the asymmetry that exists between governments and citizens. By using data scraping techniques and data visualization to make the public data of national government more accessible and understandable to a broader mass of people, they work to equip people with information they can use to contest the relations of power between institutions and communities. They use technology to make government practices more transparent. This work has garnered the attention of some government actors and has made them more responsive to citizens' needs.

Oswaldo explained that the social transformation that this group is trying to affect primarily pertains to empowerment and power dynamics. He adds that the group tries to embody its mission by practicing alternative forms of governance. For instance, this

group explores alternative models of self-organizing, shared decision-making, and decentralized power sharing that is embodied through their practices at the hackerspace. They use a transitional hierarchy model and try to create room for plural views and actions at the hackerspace.

In another example, Oswaldo explained that actors from the Global South needed to be treated as equals when it comes to shaping the futures of the world. He adds that the coloniality worldview tends to dominate partnering relationships between the Global South and Global North in academic settings. He explained that this sometimes manifested in a condescending manner in which Global North actors would try to engage Global South actors in social innovation projects.

For example, Oswaldo recounted an experience where a Global North institution had open-source data, and it was looking for ways to engage with them; however, it only attempted to engage them at the end of the process not along its initiation nor creation. He criticized this approach as enabling the Global North actor to dictate what engagement should entail unilaterally. Oswaldo opined that while on the surface this might look like an inclusive effort, more should be done to promote equitable opportunities for engagement in ways that redistributes power, resources, and agency. He added that there needs to be more work done to deconstruct power dynamics, not just within academia, but within society at large.

Oswaldo is working to diminish the idea that the world should be understood in universalizing terms that make everything revolve around neoliberal and capitalistic ideals—in other words, to diminish the Coloniality of Culture (CoC). He sees playfulness as an essential approach that can keep groups from becoming colonized through the

dominant efficiency worldview. He explained that playfulness is a form of decolonial resistance to the idea that everything must be productive in an economic sense. In an inversion of this ideology commonly found in the Global North, Oswaldo thought the work done around innovation in the Global South tended to be more agile and joyful precisely because of the financial and resource restrictions found there.

Oswaldo explained that for him, social justice is about changing the ways we read the world from a rights perspective so we all think more critically about equality and diversity. He adds that by amplifying the rights and voices of those at the periphery of society, the oppressed can be innovative. Oswaldo stressed that we cannot have social justice if we do not also have mechanisms that can lend itself to transparency and critical dialogue. Oswaldo concluded that life needed to be re-politicized. He stressed that we need to care more about each other. He pondered that perhaps decolonizing social innovation could help to better achieve both goals.

Secondary Case Studies: Non-Governmental Organization

Mamunur is from Bangladesh and is the managing director of an NGO called Ella Pad. Ella Pad works with garment factory workers. Women comprise much of the global garment labor force, and in Bangladesh, there are 40 million women who work in the garment industry with much of their production destined for big clothing brands in Western markets (United Nations Institute for Training and Research, 2018). With its contribution of \$28 billion USD to the country's economy, the garment industry has been a primary factor in the development process of Bangladesh (United Nations Institute for Training and Research, 2018). Concerns about labor exploitation and unsafe working

conditions seemed to reach a head after the Rana Plaza tragedy took place. In 2013, a large garment factory in Bangladesh collapsed and killed 1,134 factory workers (United Nations Institute for Training and Research, 2018).

Attention was once again drawn to worker safety after a seventeen-year-old garment factory worker fainted and soon died on the way to the hospital after a parasite was found in her uterus. In fact, reproductive health-related infections were not uncommon in these factories, as many of the women workers had little to no access to sanitary bathrooms (United Nations Institute for Training and Research, 2018). For many women who worked in these garment factories, the typical wages of this woman-dominated workforce made menstrual hygiene products largely unaffordable and thus, out of reach for many women (United Nations Institute for Training and Research, 2018). As a result, women workers would often resort to recycling old rags to substitute for menstrual hygiene products, which exposed these women to potential infections or for other women, they would simply stay home from work losing wages for 3–4 days on average each month (United Nations Institute for Training and Research, 2018).

Ella Pad works to address the labor safety challenges women workers are experiencing in the garment factories due to the lack of access to on-site sanitation facilities and low-cost and safe menstrual hygiene products. The social mission of Ella Pad is to help make the garment industry safer for women workers, starting with addressing the sanitation challenge, and consequently, more productive for garment factories. The missed work days in the women-dominated workforce led to a loss of productivity that cost garment factories. The NGO aims to explore the gendered

dynamics of labor safety issues and to organize groups of women around these issues with factory managers.

Seeing this challenge, Mamunur developed the concept for Ella Pad. The Ella (Eco-friendly Low-cost Liquid Absorbent) pad is made of recycled garment scrap to create an ultra-inexpensive pad that was made available to the factories' women worker force (Towhid, 2018). Women-workers would self-organize to form a group that would then work with the NGO and factory management to engage collaboratively in a creative design process. However, within these factories, the power structure tended to be top-down and hierarchical with the women workers making up a majority of the workforce at the base of that hierarchy. As such, while women managed the group, workers making up this group were at first reluctant to speak up and engage with higher-ups who were almost exclusively men.

To help change this power dynamic, the NGO facilitated a design-process workshop that engaged the women as knowledge experts around the design of the pad and a factory protocol for their production and dispersal to fellow women workers. Management learned to value the knowledge and input of women workers in a new way as they were engaged as the knowledge experts around this issue during the design process. There was a reversal of the typical power dynamics whereas people from the base of the labor hierarchy were facilitating bottom-up changes to their working environments.

These workshops have spread. Ella Pad is currently working with five garment factories servicing 2,500 beneficiaries (Towhid, 2018). This social impact eventually gathered the attention of several media outlets as news about Ella Pad spread. As

factories were often contracted by big brands based in the Global North, manufacturers had to look for opportunities to reduce the cost to gain competitive orders. As there was growing media attention about the work of Ella Pad, their discussions with large global brands from the Global North became more effective in creating a safer culture for garment factory workers. Disrupting the Global North to Global South unidirectional approach to global development, the NGO engaged these brands to partner with them to scale this project to other parts of the country to transform the country's garment industry.

Ella Pad facilitated collaborative co-creative processes between women workers and factory management. This diminished hierarchies by its adoption of methodologies that engaged marginalized actors as the knowledge experts of their challenges and suffering. By working to cultivate knowledge and expertise from these women, this disrupted the Coloniality of Knowledge by centering the experiences and knowledge of marginalized subalternized actors around social innovation. Having mobilized around the challenge of creating ultra-low-cost menstrual hygiene products for themselves and women like them throughout the factory, this group of women soon brought up other safety challenges affecting their community or fellow workers at the factory. The dialogue opened the space up for new conversations to emerge.

By disrupting existing power relations, Ella Pad adopted a solidarity-approach to SI4D by engaging these women as fellow collaborators. Positioned as knowledge experts from the onset with management, more horizontal relationships emerged between the women and managers to create more power symmetry around safer working conditions for these women who worked in the garment factories.

In the past, due to class and gender inequality, the concerns of many women who worked in these factories were not listened to by management. Through Ella Pad's approach to social innovation, the voices and experiences of women factory workers became central to advocacy efforts. Women workers used their voices to address this issue their voices would later find a new audience with first the local media, then national policymakers, and finally, large Global North clothing companies.

As the priorly subalternized women organized, their voices emerged beyond the walls of their factories. Here, this NGO from the Global South, Ella Pad, along with the women who made up the base of this global industry, were using their collective voice to urge some of the world's largest companies to make a public commitment to source their products from factories with safer and more ethical labor standards. They sought justice and accountability from other actors along the global clothing supply chain by literally taking matters into their own hands as the users, producers, and advocates of Ella Pad. This case study presents an example of how a social innovation intervention helped garment factory worker renegotiate safer labor experiences by engaging in social innovation processes (i.e., co-design) to reduce a power asymmetry between these women workers and management which helped to open new opportunities for dialogue around other labor concerns with management and global clothing brands.

Secondary Case Studies: Social Enterprise

Baruti*, based in Botswana, runs a global social enterprise startup that aims to cultivate social innovation and entrepreneurship in rural communities. He shared more about how coloniality impacts his work and how he goes about trying to change that.

Baruti engages in the work of social innovation having personally experienced issues like those of the people he works with. This profoundly shaped how he approaches development work from the standpoint that it should be diminishing relationships of dependency between the Global South and Global North. Baruti explained that when actors from the Global North came to work with communities from the Global South from a position of privilege, this can not only be disappointing but also damaging to the community. Baruti explained that when people work with the community from the position of privilege, it can give people the sense that they are poor, weak, and lack knowledge. He lamented that there had been instances when Global North partners did not seem to get that.

Baruti believes that social justice is not about charity; it is about solidarity. He clarified that the work of his social enterprise is not charity work. Baruti said that his startup provides people free training in the hope that it can give people the tools to empower themselves to make a living for themselves. He added that his startup's training process is based on helping people to lift themselves out of poverty by either building technology or by providing a specific service within a village. Training and up-skilling people in this way allows them to claim power for themselves, it bridging the social justice gap, by helping the dispossessed to understand their own rights and worth in a way that leads to self-empowerment.

Baruti added that his work relates to social justice because it focuses on enabling people to uplift themselves and others like themselves within their community. He stressed that his was a dignifying approach for people. Baruti concluded that when privileged people engaged with marginalized people in social innovation, doing so from a

charity or sympathetic point of view—as opposed to a solidarity and empathy point of view that sees everyone as equal and equally capable—can result in the skills and capabilities of marginalized people remaining dormant, even where that might not be the intention of the privileged people.

When asked to reflect on how hierarchies linked to coloniality impacted his work, Baruti explained that in Botswana, one's proximity to whiteness was seen as a status symbol that imbues a black person with perceived power and higher social status. Baruti added that in Botswana, white people are referred to as “*mzungus*” (a term meaning white people). Consequently, black Botswanans who were perceived as rich and powerful, are referred to as “black *mzungus*.” Baruti explained that this had to do with a pernicious inferiority complex some people had internalized about themselves due to coloniality's mythology of the racialized supremacy of white people. Baruti concluded by saying that privilege tied to whiteness and Eurocentrism tended to undermine indigenous and Global South knowledge systems and actors and tragically, caused some to undermine themselves.

Baruti opined that this privileging of the Global North and whiteness undermined collaborative co-creation because ideas and the evaluation of those ideas were tainted by biases linked to coloniality. This effect would lead to Western actors from outside these communities dominating collaborations and prioritizing their own ideas (and agendas) and the undervaluing of ideas that came from people from within those rural communities who tended to be black and indigenous. This privileging of ideas and voices tied to the West—rather than from within communities—lead to the development of design solutions that failed or did not fit the needs of people affected. He added that such chains

needed to be broken so that people could develop confidence in their abilities and others could recognize their voices as equally valuable during social innovation processes (i.e., co-design).

Baruti also reflected on how his own privilege (due to being perceived as a black mzungu) shaped his work. In his work in social innovation, Baruti explained that this inferiority complex would sometimes manifest itself in odd ways. For instance, when he went to work in rural villages, some would initially assume that he is a typical “city guy” and thus, more knowledgeable about the nature of the challenges they were facing in their day-to-day life.

Baruti shared that he tries not to enter social innovation work from the position of privilege, and he instead works to engage with communities from a position of cultural humility and deep respect for their knowledge. In some cases that could simply mean speaking in the local language rather than in English. He does not engage in his work from the position of being the one with all the answers. Baruti would stress that he was careful to highlight to the people he worked with that he was only there to share more about social innovation processes that other people—including people from places and villages similar to their own who were living in Uganda, Tanzania, and Haiti—had found useful. He would begin by sharing with these communities that he, too, had once lived in a rural village and when younger, a refugee camp. He would express to them that he engaged in this work after being inspired by his mother who had once done the same in Botswana as well. His work in solidarity with these communities was deeply meaningful to him.

Baruti added that he engages people from the standpoint that everybody has potential. For example, when running workshops, Baruti mentioned that gender issues or patriarchy sometimes emerged in the form of a man insisting he would do all the wood sawing for the women during a wood-building exercise. In such instances, Baruti is quick to step in and suggest that instead, everyone try sawing for themselves. He would do this so that women and old people discovered their capabilities and to challenge the gendered assumptions about what certain bodies were capable of or should be doing. He explained that it was through this approach that confidence could inspire self-empowerment.

Baruti recounted the example of one man who dropped out of junior high but studied technology on his own and created inventions to assist with his household chores and sell to others in his village. Baruti explained that when he brought this man to work with a mechanical engineering student from M.I.T., a Global North person, initially, this man's goal was to show that student that while he may not have gone to M.I.T., he could still do amazing things. Baruti explained that this man was trying to challenge assumptions that people often held about people like himself. Baruti added that during his social innovation workshops, he tried to create a collaborative space rather than a competition space by having people work together. He stressed that creating the environment for collaboration is vital. Baruti explained this was so people could feel secure about their gifts and so, look at each other's gifts as something that was good.

Baruti recounted an example of how colonizing forms of social innovation processes could be exclusionary. He shared his reflections about an upcoming national innovation award competition. Baruti explained that one of the eligibility criteria for entrants was that he or she can read and write in English. He explained that in a place

where many people, particularly those from marginalized communities, may have felt most confident using their local languages, such a requirement tended to alienate certain classes of people. Further, Baruti commented that these were not skills that were necessarily tied to one's ability to create innovative products or services. Baruti criticized that it was rules like these that prevented inclusion, undermined grassroots innovation, and that spread the mythology that innovation is inherently Western or for the elite.

Baruti added that decolonizing social innovation, foremost, was about killing the myths around what social innovation is, as dominant discourses from the Global North defines it. He said that decolonizing the system is about recognizing and working in solidarity with marginalized peoples' engagement in social innovation ecosystems; as such, decolonizing approaches to social innovation combined with co-creation was the way forward.

Baruti concluded that when it comes to thinking about how his engagement in social innovation was transforming society in Botswana, he thought it was helping his society to believe in their own abilities to address their own livelihood challenges and in finding their own solutions to transform themselves and their communities.

Chapter VII.

Findings: Primary Case Study

Traveling to Coimbatore, a city in the state of Tamil Nadu, in Southern India, Polly and Jahnvi, Pre-Texts facilitators, began a year-long collaboration with the CSI Girls Higher Secondary (CSI-GHS) school (Cultural Agents, n.d., Pre-Texts in India: A weave of learning in the textile city of Coimbatore). In a Tamil-speaking area was a school for girls ranging from grades six through twelve, and Polly and Jahnvi had traveled there to collaborate with the school to facilitate a Pre-Texts workshop with the school's teachers (Cultural Agents, n.d., Pre-Texts in India: A weave of learning in the textile city of Coimbatore). During that workshop, an excerpt from chapter one from Arundhati Roy's masterful debut novel, *The God of Small Things*, was selected as a reading prompt for that workshop (Cultural Agents, n.d., Pre-Texts in India: A weave of learning in the textile city of Coimbatore). In one of the school's classrooms, Polly, Jahnvi, and seventeen teachers from CSI-GHS school began their work together (Cultural Agents, n.d., Pre-Texts in India: A weave of learning in the textile city of Coimbatore).

During the workshop, the educators gathered to explore new ways of using creativity and art to integrate literacy learning into their curriculums further. CSI-GHS school is a bilingual school whereas some students were taught in English and others in Tamil. While some of these teachers educated the students in English, for the teachers, English was their second language. As they began the Pre-Texts workshop, they would be immersed into this rich text, first by listening to it read aloud by someone from the

workshop, as each individual at the workshop reinterpreted what they heard into artistic book covers created from markers, colored pencils, and recycled pieces of cardboard.

Immediately after hearing the text, everyone gathered into a large circle, in which participants would reflectively think and share about what they had just done. During these times, as a learning community, everyone—facilitators and trainers alike—would be on the same level whereas when it came time to share more about what they had just done, they, too, would have to share. Some of the few (if not only) rules that came up during these times was that everyone was responsible for sharing something; also everyone had to speak at least one time before anyone who'd already talked could speak again. Each person in that circle was responsible for checking in with the person on either side of them. They did this to confirm that each had talked. Nobody was called on. People would speak when they were ready.

There are interesting things to note about this process. First, in order to build a democratic learning community, everyone had to take part. They had a responsibility to their learning community. Second, by requiring everyone to speak once, it ensured that all voices were heard and acknowledged to bring about mutuality of respect between everyone. Third, no person had more power than another nor authority over others; instead, accountability was exercised and decentralized so that everyone was responsible for checking on those next to them; in this way power and accountability was equally imbued on all members of the circle.

Later, everyone would again delve into the text, this time reading it to choose an excerpt to act out before the group silently. Each small group was composed of two or three people. Once each of the small groups settled on what they would share, everyone

gathered into a circle. One by one, each of these small groups moved into the center of the circle. There, the group would pantomime clues to a particular line or element from the text. While doing this, everyone around the circle would look back into the text to guess what was being acted out in the center of the circle. Upon all the groups finishing, a reflection on what they all had just done would begin with a single question: “What did we do?” and continue from there. This inquiry was not the first time this question would come up. It would come up after every activity, and it often invited people to reflect on what they had just done together which would prompt many to share more. For instance, some teachers admitted that they had at first found the text challenging because of it only being in English. It was moments of vulnerability like this that created space for others to share, encouraging everyone to reflect empathetically, and be reminded of what it may have been like for their young students who struggled with English.

Pre-Texts provided these educators with an approach they could use to open a new variety of pathways for their students’ literacy learning (Cultural Agents, n.d., *Pre-Texts in India: A weave of learning in the textile city of Coimbatore*). On day one, they would receive directions to bring in something they found which to them connected to what they were reading in the text. Through this exercise, people used the text to explore how it related to the world around them. This item could range from a poem, a news article, a story, a song or a piece of art. By going off on a tangent, people were encouraged to think about the text in relation to their own lives. The following day, all the women would hang up what they had found on an ordinary clothesline, and once done, everyone would begin to peruse everyone's contribution on what had become a makeshift gallery of sorts.

This renewed level of awareness for the teachers would become a valuable tool when, on the second day, they designed and created their own learning activities using this pedagogical approach. Reflecting on Roy's excerpt and what they had just experienced, each of these teachers used the pedagogical protocol to design and create new and innovative learning activities for their classrooms. They thought of new ways to disrupt the hierarchical approaches to teaching by exploring creative ways of learning which ranged from games focused on mathematics to local songs which could help to provide more pathways for young learners to enter literacy learning. Throughout this second part of the workshop, each teacher tried out a learning activity they had designed with everyone else. Afterward, the group would reflect on what they did with one another through the circle reflection exercise and share constructive feedback. Knowledge was cultivated from within the learning community and shared out rather than knowledge being disseminated into the group.

Primary Case Study: Interview

Jahnvi is a Pre-Texts facilitator who has run workshops at Harvard University, Boston University, and in Tamil Nadu, India. Recently, she traveled to Coimbatore, India for a Pre-Texts training-of-trainers which took place at an all-girls school. Jahnvi explained that Coimbatore was a very interesting area and considered a historical city. Jahnvi, an experiential designer by training, started by saying she was a social constructivist, and she added that for her the learning process involved people using their experiences, cultures, and understandings to make meaning of the information they took in. Thus, by engaging people's experiences around learning processes along with

others—very much Pre-Texts’ approach—was essential. Jahnvi added that the Pre-Texts protocol helped to cultivate more equitable spaces of learning.

Jahnvi shared more about some of her other experiences with Pre-Texts. She began by outlining that Pre-Texts is a pedagogical protocol used to build and strengthen literacy, innovation, and citizenship in the learning environment. She explained further that central to this process was a challenging text which during the workshop everyone would work to interpret, read, and understand together by integrating it with artistic and cultural practices from within the community, and their own experiences.

Jahnvi asserted that the difference between Pre-Texts and other kinds of learning engagements was because of how they worked to transform power structures between learners and educators throughout the entire workshop. Jahnvi explained that the facilitator would end up being another participant as everybody would facilitate an activity. It was through this style of engagement that everyone would experience being a facilitator and learner during the workshop. Jahnvi elaborated that everyone would engage in the workshop as learners and facilitators so that no single person was in a position merely to oversee and judge an activity.

Jahnvi added that following each activity the group would reconvene in a circle to reflect on what they had done. During these shared moments of reflection amongst the group, Jahnvi explained that each person would share something and that everybody would have to speak at least once before the dialogue opened so people could speak again if they wanted to. She stressed that this activity was structured this way to ensure that everyone was treated as equals, people recognized the diversity of strengths were within

the surrounding people, and all voices were valued regardless of age, language, ethnicity, formal education level or any other differences.

Jahnvi clarified it was often the case that people in the workshop would have varying levels of literacy and writing abilities. To bridge such gaps between people, during the workshops, people would experience the text through a variety of mediums. Also, these workshops would sometimes take place bilingually or in a language other than English.

Typically, each workshop would begin with somebody who volunteers to read the text aloud to the entire group who would work to create artistic representations of how they envisioned the text. Jahnvi said the Cuban tradition of “*lectores*” (readers) inspired this part of the protocol. The *lectores* would read high literature and newspapers aloud in tobacco factories. While their hands rolled the tobacco into cigars, people would listen to the literature read aloud to them over the many hours of work. After the group’s reading during Pre-Text, the entire group would then be asked to take a moment to come up with a question they asked about or of the text. Jahnvi explained that the questions asked of the text could be anything; it could range from philosophical to basic questions. During these portions of the workshop, many interpretations of the text would emerge.

Jahnvi discussed another example of a Pre-Texts workshop that had taken place this time in a poor informal community in the outskirts of Madrid, Spain. Like before, they selected a challenging text for the workshop. The people engaged in the workshop were individuals from the local university and people from the informal community nearby. At first, some university actors expressed concern over using a challenging text for the workshop because of their assumption that people from the

informal community could not understand its meaning and thus fully engage with its subject matter. However, it was decided that they should test these assumptions, and so, they used the text excerpt to see whether there was any merit to the concerns raised. Instead, what happened next surprised some people. Jahnvi explained that the people from the informal community were very engaged in the text and shared nuanced and multi-layered interpretations of the text with the workshop cohort. Jahnvi mused that those who had doubted the abilities of the marginalized people from the nearby community had to retract their assumptions. Pre-Texts had become a vehicle for challenging preconceived notions about people and stereotypes.

Next, Jahnvi reflected on how Pre-Texts confronted various forms of coloniality through its work. She explained that in a learning space it was not just about the physicality of that space; it was also about the people who would come together to form it. Jahnvi warned that “just as bias shows up in the world, it, too, can appear in the classroom,” (J. Singh), personal communication, February 22, 2019). Thinking on her experience working in classrooms, Jahnvi shared that in India, there is a strong culture of patriarchy. She added that this could take the form of boys being called on first in the classroom to there being the notion that girls did not need to be educated so much. This belief was based on the idea that since it was boys who would go onto becoming future breadwinners, educating girls was not as important. This assumption could result in girls being kept home for school more so than boys. However, Jahnvi added that not all schools were like this, and that cultural attitudes were changing around this issue. In settings like this, Jahnvi explained that ensuring that everybody spoke was a deliberate practice to breakdown people’s assumptions about the capabilities of certain bodies

versus those of others; it was about giving everyone the opportunity to exercise their own voices and agency in a public setting.

Jahnvi explained that the workshop cultivated a safe space that helped to foster a sense of camaraderie between all the learners. She mentioned that this contrasted from the traditional learning environments that tended to be hierarchical. These hierarchies were seen in the relationships of younger teachers and older teachers, teachers and their students, and even amongst students themselves (in the form of class rankings or student competitions). Opposite to that, Pre-Texts tried to create a space for shared learning (rather than that of competition) to diminish hierarchical relationships shaped by power asymmetries.

Jahnvi shared some of the social transformations that had taken place since the completion of the workshop. She mentioned that teachers introduced peer learning into classrooms and Pre-Texts exercises. More focus was placed on creativity and arts throughout the school overall. Jahnvi added that in terms of changes, teachers became much more open about not having all the answer in front of their students and instead inviting students to learn the answer along with them. Finishing this thought, Jahnvi explained that the workshop had not only helped to lower the power distance between teachers and students, but it also helped teachers to design and try out more experimental and embodied forms of learning that were student-centered and student-directed. Pre-Texts helped teachers to integrate more of local languages, events, and culture into the classroom to make things more contextually relevant to the lives of their young students.

Jahnvi summed up her definition of decolonizing social innovation by saying,

My understanding of social innovation is creating products, services, experiences that allow everyone to voice their opinions and beliefs. To

function and exchange these ideas as a society, community, or group of people in an equitable way. It really is about giving everyone the agency to affect their own changes. I don't think I'm engaged in social innovation because I create learning programs for others or for a type of community, it is because my focus is to enable all learners to take control of their learning so as to allow everyone to access learning materials and knowledge in ways that are equitable. (J. Singh), personal communication, February 22, 2019)

Jahnvi concluded by recounting the words of the program's founder, Professor Doris Sommer, ending by saying "Pre-Texts is educational acupuncture" (J. Singh), personal communication, February 22, 2019).

Primary Case Study: Lessons

Pre-Texts provides an education of liberation rather than an education of domination. Created and developed in 2007 by Professor Doris Sommer, Pre-Texts is a training program and creative pedagogical protocol that combines high-order literacy, innovation, and citizenship learning. Pre-Texts combines "popular Latin American practices with the pedagogy of Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal, along with Friedrich Schiller, Maria Montessori, and John Dewey" (Cultural Agents, n.d., About Pre-Texts). Pre-Texts provides an "innovative approach to teaching language and literature" (Sommer & Mohamed, 2014, p. 88) that integrates arts as a vehicle for learning and diminishes authoritative teaching-styles to facilitate the critical engagement of students through creativity and innovativeness (p. 89). Sommer (2014) sums up Pre-Texts "train instructors to liberate their own creativity through variations on activities" introduced by the protocol and the new activities they create during the workshop (p. 126).

When looking towards what can be drawn from the primary case study on Pre-Texts, we can see that this intervention speaks to an approach that diminishes the

Colonial Matrix of Power across all three dimensions—CoB, CoK, CoC—and presents a tangible example of how decolonizing approaches to social innovation processes works in practice. Pre-Texts critical to innovation efforts by “disarming hierarchies through cultural interventions” (Sommer, 2014, p. 147). Pre-Texts’ case study illustrates how a transformation of power dynamics between actors can open new opportunities for understanding the work of social innovation on the level of outcomes and thus, social transformations.

The Pre-Texts case study draws attention to how coloniality operates within English-only educational interventions and presents social intervention that has taken a decidedly different approach through its use of bilingual and dialogical practices. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's book, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of language in African literature*, draws on his own coloniality-infused educational experiences around language and literacy to warn in the following:

But the night of the sword and the bullet was followed by the morning of the chalk and the blackboard. The physical violence of the battlefield was followed by the psychological violence of the classroom... In my view language was the most important vehicle through which that power fascinated and held the soul prisoner. The bullet was the means of the physical subjugation. Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation. (Ngũgĩ, 2005, p. 9)

Thus, moving towards multilingual forms of facilitative learning helped to delink educational experiences from coloniality to begin decolonize learning communities.

Specifically, this intervention has led to the cultivation of more equitable cultural exchanges and global citizenship learning opportunities leading to social impact and socially innovative transformations of power. Further, in these collaborations which featured actors from the Global North and Global South (and also across many other

dimensions of differences) power was decentralized and redistributed equally amongst the group. The power symmetry between actors was able to affect meaningful forms of collaboration that fostered co-creation. The diminishment of sustained power asymmetries and power imbalances between actors occurred not only within the workshop but also had a ripple effect on how teachers went on to engage students and younger teachers. Through this case, we see how the implicit pessimism of “coloniality” transformed through the work of Pre-Texts.

When it comes to decolonizing efforts, Fanon (2004) stresses that “To be responsible in an underdeveloped country is to know that everything finally rests on educating the masses, elevating their minds, and on what is all too quickly assumed to be political education” (p. 138). Due to how coloniality continues to shape education throughout the world, there is a prevalent problem of education systems alienating students from their own academic experiences. It does so by divorcing classroom learning from their everyday lives, cultural contexts, modes of expression, and community practices to undermine learning (Sommer & Mohamed, 2014, p. 87).

Pre-Texts engages learners from the standpoint that education can also be a vehicle for advancing social change and justice to offer “an alternative to authoritarianism and then assessed the micro-political effects of that alternative in a typical school” (p. 87). Dominant (e.g., teachers) actors and non-dominant (e.g., learners) actors are engaged in a manner that facilitates more equitable forms of participation through democratic practices. Pre-Texts teaches people how to harness the arts and creativity to create an educational experience that helps learners develop a new level of awareness about themselves and their abilities through co-intentional education.

Illustrating this point, Fanon (2004) explains that creativity and arts provide a new stimulus that can help schools to innovate and inspire activism (p. 175).

As colonial pedagogy has “stultifying effects,” (Sommer & Mohamed, 2014, p.

89) Pre-Texts works to undo this through five key objectives as outlined in the following:

- To promote each student’s ownership of classical texts
- To experience creative thinking as critical thinking
- To recognize that interpretation legitimately involves one’s own experience
- To show that texts need creative intervention in order to make sense
- To illustrate that language is an art that triggers other artistic processes. (p. 90)

Through these five objectives, Pre-Texts works to create socially innovative transformations which “causes authoritarian pedagogy to give way to mutual respect and admiration” (p. 94). This intervention presents a conception of education that is rooted in the empowerment of learners and which is guided by social justice (McMahon & Portelli, 2004, p. 72).

Pre-Texts promotes a pedagogy that challenges dominant schooling practices and trains educators on how to develop counter-hegemonic curricula through democratic learning approaches, creative agency, and facilitative teaching. For instance, during a pilot study of the Pre-Texts intervention in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, participants would engage in a Freirean circle process to reflect collectively on what they had learned; develop civic skills, through patience and democratizing practices; and diminish various asymmetries between people (Sommer & Mohamed, 2014, p. 90).

In a classic Pre-Texts exercise called “Stone Soup,” this activity invites participants to bring together resources from throughout that cohort to create something new and meaningful for the entire learning community. It is a metaphor for how everybody brings knowledge, experiences, and insights that can lead to more learning exchanges that are vibrant and deep. Many of Pre-Texts’ activities engage everyone as learners by inviting them to use a text to reflect on it in relation to their own experiences and through a process of sense-making and dialogue, become the co-creators of knowledge. It works to ensure that nobody is viewed from a deficit perspective, and it challenges stereotypical ways of thinking about non-hegemonic groups. Rather, everyone is engaged as collaborators and agents of change.

Pre-Texts is presented as a case study of how this pedagogical approach is working to expand the definition of social innovation through its harnessing of arts and cultural agency to make learning processes more inclusive for learners and communities alike. Instead of depositing knowledge into the group, this workshop shows people how to cultivate and harness knowledge from within the group.

For instance, in another example, Pre-Texts uses a theatre activity technique created by Augusto Boal called Forum Theatre. Forum Theatre is a political-art innovation which invited the public to take part as intervenors in tragic performances that featured social challenges (e.g., poverty, violence, and exclusion) (Sommer, 2014, pp. 54–55). It is an activity used to engage learners/audiences in the performance to intervene against oppression and explore solutions aimed at advancing social justice. Specifically, it offered a “perspective on a range of possible paths to social justice from a broad base of creative agents” (p. 55).

Activities like these are why Pre-Texts' approach enables what Freire (2000) described as making "those who have been completely marginalized... so radically transformed... [and] more likely to decide to take upon themselves the struggle to change the structures of society, which until now have served to oppress them" (p. 29). Pre-Texts teaches its participants how to help learners achieve critical consciousness to break out of the "culture of silence" to engage in dialogical learning experiences that facilitate high-order literacy learning, critical thinking, and civic-mindedness. As a precondition for social inclusion, fostering literacy is seen as a pathway for promoting social inclusion and diminishing inequality (Sommer & Mohamed, 2014, pp. 90–91).

Pre-Texts is presented as a social innovation intervention that reduces coloniality in the context of engagements between hegemonic and non-hegemonic actors, which is why it is particularly useful in the social innovation for development context which brings together many types of stakeholders with varying levels of power. Pre-Texts can not only bring a variety of people together but also do so in a way that makes places inclusive by increasing power symmetry, creating a power balance, catalyzing peoples own process of self-empowerment, and approaching its collaborative learning experiences from a solidarity-approach. Relatedly, Pre-Texts does not maintain power asymmetry by specifically rejecting domineering practices and approaches.

Also, Pre-Texts creates equitable learning exchanges by not maintaining power imbalances through the privileging of some actors over others. This is accomplished by its decentralization of power which is spread out amongst all actors rather than having more power concentrated in any particular member of the group. Next, by creating a space for everyone to speak and be heard, it prevents people from remaining in a

disempowered state, everybody has a voice. Finally, Pre-Texts fosters a culture of solidarity between all actors as they work to create socially innovative learning activities and teaching approaches.

A theme throughout the secondary case studies pertained to the way these actors were trying to transform power dynamics through social innovation processes by paying attention not only to the impacts they were trying to affect but also by fundamentally trying to diminish coloniality to advance global social justice as well. For them, the work of doing social good was inextricably linked to advancing global social justice. They worked to be in solidarity with the communities they worked with rather than adopting a saviorhood stance which even if acting in a benevolent manner, maintained power imbalances rather than eradicating them.

By disrupting the colonial dynamic between educators and learners, the Pre-Texts pilot study in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe revealed exciting outcomes. First, there were positive transformations in student-teacher relationships. Second, through the introduction of bilingualism, allowing students to engage in their mother tongue, Ndebele, led to increases in student confidence and participation. Third, there were positive changes in important school indicators (e.g., a reduction in the number of student absences) (p. 92).

Overall, decolonizing approaches to social innovation bring into focus why solidarity, dignity, and social justice matter. Social challenges facilitate social innovation which can affect social transformations. Sommer (2014) explains that “follow through from the call of social challenges to the responses of aesthetic innovation is to stimulate collective change” (p. 51). Overall, this research aimed to understand what a decolonizing approach to social innovation was and how social innovation actors were

trying to do this. Crucial to these efforts is the transformation of asymmetrical relations of power around the cultivation of socially innovative changes that reduce global social inequalities.

Chapter VIII.

Decolonizing Social Innovation Conceptual Framework

What does decolonization look like? How would you reverse the trend? Well, I think it is necessary but not sufficient to have a dramatic shift in the complexion and the voices that are around the table. By that, he said, he didn't just mean the usual push for ethnic and gender diversity, nor the keeping around of tokens. What about having the kind of people the foundations seek to help as part of the leadership? (p. 152)

— Anand Giridharadas, *Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World*, 2018

This thesis explores social innovation in the development sector specifically looking at how coloniality affects power dynamics. Through its investigation of several case studies, this thesis investigates what characterizes decolonizing social innovation and how that relates to outcomes. Next, the thesis used the insights obtained through that investigation to develop a conceptual model to illustrate what was learned with respect to significant themes.

Through a series of interviews with social innovation actors, what emerged from that analysis was a greater understanding of how power dynamics linked to coloniality affected social innovation processes and systems. In the Decolonizing Social Innovation Conceptual Framework (see Figure 2.), a conceptual mapping of how coloniality affects social innovation processes is presented.

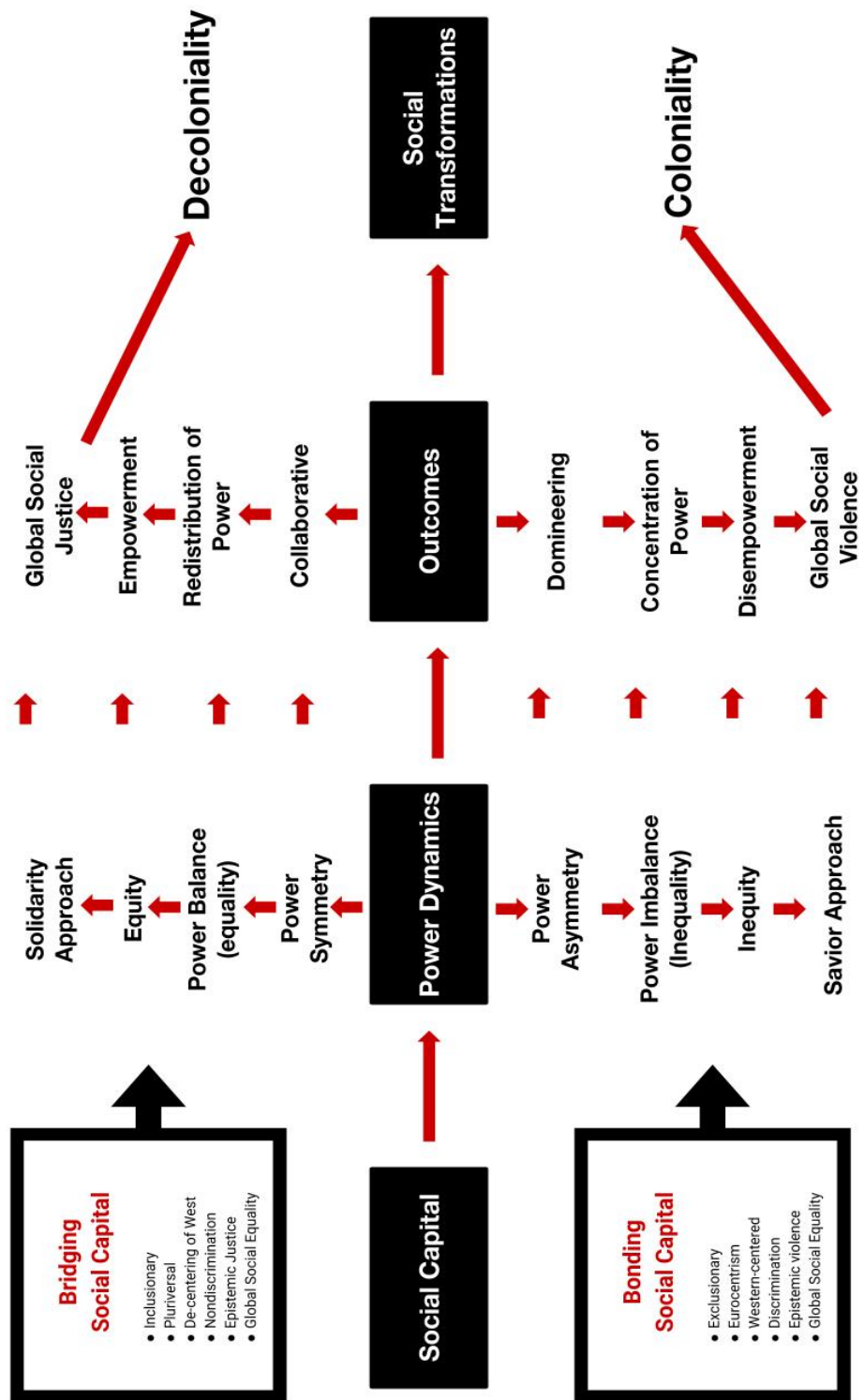


Figure 2. Decolonizing Social Innovation Conceptual Framework

When it came to social capital, decolonizing approaches to social innovation created more bridging social capital amongst diverse and multidisciplinary actors particularly where power asymmetries and imbalances existed. The case studies provided numerous examples of how this occurred in practice. First, these social innovation actors formed coalitions between community members and transdisciplinary researchers to create participatory research agendas. Second, researchers worked with policymakers to create a more expansive understanding of social innovation outside of market logic. Escobar (2018) echoes this point stressing that there needs to be a “rethinking of innovation beyond conventional business, commercial, and service design consulting and toward transformative kinds of social innovation” (Kindle Locations 3475–3476).

Third, a hacker collective worked with ordinary citizens to co-create software that enhanced transparency around government practices. Fourth, an NGO engaged workers and managers in social innovation processes (i.e., co-design) around a labor challenge to create safer working environments and foster other types of dialogue around labor practices. Fifth, a social entrepreneur started an innovation center worked to remove barriers to social innovation processes by challenging various forms of discrimination linked to coloniality (e.g., gendered assumptions, racialized bias, privilege, and ethnocentric practices, erasures, and elitist exclusionary practices) to expand the perception of who an innovator is to create a more inclusive social innovation ecosystem. Sixth, a socially innovative educational intervention’s pedagogical protocol engaged and collaborated with educators to co-design creative learning activities and invited people to integrate their culture and experiences around literature to facilitate groups in cultivating new forms of knowledge through dialogue and democratic practices.

In each of these case studies, these social innovation actors (or as this thesis proposes social innovation activists) not only set out to affect social impact they also actively worked to foster more inclusion around social innovation processes through their approach to engaging people in this work. In all of these cases, these social innovation actors worked to transform power dynamics between privileged and non-privileged actors to diminish coloniality and in service of global social justice.

As it pertains to the mechanisms of decolonizing social innovation processes through the transformation of power dynamics, several themes emerged: power asymmetry versus power symmetry, power imbalance (i.e., inequality) versus power balance (i.e., equality), inequity versus equity, and a saviorhood-approach to SI4D versus a solidarity-approach to SI4D. Collectively, these social innovation actors engaged in transforming power dynamics linked to coloniality through decolonizing praxis.

First, with respect to power symmetry versus power asymmetry, where people had different levels of social capital, decolonizing social innovation activists would work to diminish those asymmetries through their practices. For example, Renato looked at various mechanisms to engage community members at all stages of research projects—from conception to dissemination—process on innovation to diminish the Coloniality of Knowledge (CoK). Furthermore, when sharing research back in marginalized communities where people may not be literate, he collaborated with community members to translate those lessons into culturally relevant mediums like art, music and oral storytelling. Fanon (2004) explains that the struggle to end colonialism and its inherited legacies provide “the optimal conditions for cultural development and innovation” (p. 178). Baruti, facilitated interactions between privileged actors with marginalized people

from the rural communities of Botswana, tried to create a collaborative environment and diminish a competition environment for groups. Mamunur helped the women workers producing garments engage in co-design teams with management as the experience experts. In the case of Jahnvi, power was decentralized and imbued equally on all workshop participants through Pre-Texts' activities.

Second, with respect to power balances versus power imbalances, where this came up, decolonizing social innovation activists would work to diminish those imbalances through their practices. For instance, Oswald worked to teach non-technical members of the community to code to turn people into the creators of technology affecting their world and life rather than merely its user. Baruti would run workshops that had everybody try out their skills to challenge gendered assumptions concerning the technical ability of women, girls, and different-abled bodies. Fanon (2014) stressed the importance of decolonizing movements not being patriarchal; rather there should be gender equity in everyday life—schools, factories, etcetera (p. 142). Guy worked with the San Research Centre to ensure that the San indigenous community was not exploited nor alienated from their own cultural products by Global North researchers.

Third, with respect to equity versus inequity, where this came up, decolonizing social innovation activists would work to diminish inequities within the scope of social innovation. For example, Oswald and his collective worked to use data visualization and data scraping techniques on publicly available government data to create more accountability between the national government and its citizens, where their rights were being diminished. In another example, Mamunur mobilized women factory workers around a challenge they were facing in their working environment, which became a

springboard for them advocating for other safer labor conditions in the media, and eventually grabbing the attention of some large global brands.

Fourth, with respect to the saviorhood-approach to SI4D versus the solidarity-approach to SI4D, these decolonizing social innovation activists engaged with communities through collaboration, the redistribution of power, the adoption of shared decision-making strategies, and the engagement of communities at the formation of partnerships and engagements. Decolonizing social innovation seemed to involve privileged actors engaging less privileged actors in a way that was collaborative rather than domineering. Relatedly, instead of approaching marginalized communities with the mindset of those communities being at a deficit to contribute, these social innovation activists looked toward these communities with cultural humility and an openness to learn from them about their experiences and other ways of knowing to provide rich fodder for social innovation processes (i.e., co-designing and co-creating). The people with the most lived experiences of the challenges that affected them in their day-to-day life were integrated into social innovation processes as solution makers and power relations were explored and addressed. The humility of their approach helped to create space for pluriversal knowledge to be cultivated and engaged around social innovation processes rather than ignored or discounted. Escobar (2018) emphasizes that collaborations and dialogic processes hold a visionary and pluriversal capacity for social innovation (Kindle Location: 3536–3541).

These decolonizing social innovation activists worked in solidarity with marginalized and subalternized communities to prioritize their own vision of development. In short, they employed a grassroots-driven over a top-down approach to

social innovation in the context of development. Villanueva (2018) explains we can structure systems in a more horizontal and empowering way by moving to the top “people who used to be powerless, at the bottom of the old pyramid model... moving toward open, participatory, and transparent processes... and incorporating wisdom from all levels... with the recognition that important insights and innovations come from those who were previously not included” (Kindle Locations 1731–1737).

Whereas top-down approaches (i.e., saviorhood, domineering, and coloniality approaches) to social innovation focused primarily on market-oriented performance, these solidarity-driven approaches to social innovation were more expansive, as they also engaged issues of social justice and social movements as well.

Overall, by understanding more about how power dynamics, as it related to power asymmetries and power imbalances between people, these social innovation actors utilized the resources and networks cultivated around SI4D to put those systems in service to global social justice and the diminishment of coloniality—a type of global social violence. Understanding social impact in a way that is divorced from social justice is limiting. By thinking more holistically about not only affecting impact but also trying to transform relations of power, these social innovation actors were not merely trying to alleviate people’s suffering or pain; they were actively working to change the power dynamics and oppressive systems that brought them about.

Primary Case Study Discussion

Using the Decolonizing Social Innovation Conceptual Framework, this thesis outlined the decolonizing strategies that Pre-Texts used to diminish coloniality, create

bridging social capital for more inclusion, and to advance global social justice. This thesis utilized that framework to discuss why Pre-Texts is an example of a decolonizing social innovation that is bringing about social impacts along with global social justice.

First, Pre-Texts implements mechanisms to reduce power asymmetry. During the workshop, Pre-Texts required the participation of all parties engaged, facilitators and learners alike. Throughout the workshop, everyone experienced being a learner and a facilitator to put everybody on the same level with respect to roles. In another example, during the reflection circle process, while everybody was responsible for sharing a response, everybody talked when they were ready. Instead of the facilitator having to call on people to speak, everyone was imbued with the same level of power to check-in with the people beside them to see if they talked. In this way, power symmetry was achieved, as everyone around the circle had the same level of accountability and responsibility. Importantly, it was only through a mutual exchange of those things that a checking-in process took place. Overall, Pre-Texts diminished domineering forms of instructions and welcomed people to collaborate in the co-facilitation of the workshop. Power was more evenly distributed between all actors through this approach thus diminishing the Coloniality of Being.

Second, Pre-Texts employed strategies to reduce power imbalances. During the workshop, Pre-Texts' activities explored various ways of encountering the text. For instance, the text was first read aloud so that people would have an opportunity to hear the text. Later, people would have the chance to see excerpts of the texts acted out as a charade as people worked with each other to guess what was being shown. Also, people

were encouraged to reflect on how the text related to their own experiences and interests through the “going off on a tangent” activity.

These three activities created space for people with varying levels of literacy or relevant language skills to encounter the text in ways that did not only rely on their individual reading of the text. This approach also encouraged peer learning as people would collaboratively encounter the text together. By encouraging people to bring in their own experiences and worldview into contact with the text, it positioned everybody as the knowledge expert of how the text applied to themselves or other areas of their life. Also, it is an approach that was designed not to have educational inequalities affect barriers to a meaningful engagement nor the co-creation of knowledge. Overall, Pre-Texts works to disrupt the power imbalance between institutionally educated and less (or not) institutionally educated people. It is a pluriversal approach to learning that does not center that process only on Western epistemai, to foster more equitable forms of collaboration and diminish the Coloniality of Knowledge.

Third, Pre-Texts adopted an approach of solidarity rather than saviorhood-approach with respect to its engagement strategies with partners. This approach is particularly important when it comes to hegemonic institutions partnering with non-hegemonic stakeholders (e.g., Global South or in the US, marginalized people). Imoka (2016) explains that in the context of learning there is “ethical responsibility to engage students in a way that humanizes them and facilitates their participation” (p. 102) which is of particular importance in the context of development’s aim to shape societies. Pre-Texts is dynamic in its ability to center people’s experiences and cultures around its learning processes in ways that maintain the dignity and the agency of all actors involved

especially the communities they collaborate with during the workshop. Also, the workshop's emphasis on inviting people to explore how a text relates to their experiences encouraged critical reflection on contemporary society and the world. Pre-Texts' solidarity approach to SI4D is a form of decolonizing praxis directed at social transformations that diminish the Coloniality of Culture.

Overall

In sum, Pre-Texts diminishes the Colonial Matrix of Power—CoB, CoC, and CoK—through its educational intervention. Pre-Texts aligns its practices with the values it espouses. Instead of divorcing its understanding of social innovation from that of political questions of power and agency, the workshop delves deeper into the complexities of those questions. Further, it does not approach social impact as being unrelated to questions around justice whereas power is redistributed, decision-making is shared, and it centers critical thinking and critical reflection all along the way.

The melding of decolonizing efforts around social innovation processes is a political project due to the fact that they contest the relations of power between people, communities, institutions, and societies that continue to be shaped by colonialism. If activism is characterized by one trying to bring about social and political transformations, decolonizing social innovation is a form of social innovation activism (SIA). Its contribution to global social justice is its work to undo the social violence of coloniality in the world today. Apolitical approaches to social innovation, while capable of affecting social impact, by not acknowledging the political dimensions of the social transformations it is trying to affect, limit its ability also to advance global social justice,

and in the worst case, may even lead to the maintenance of the political conditions which affect the very challenges they are trying to solve.

Chapter IX.

Conclusion

Our strategy should be not only to confront empire, but to lay siege to it. To deprive it of oxygen. To shame it. To mock it. With our art, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness — and our ability to tell our own stories... Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.

— Arundhati Roy, *Confronting Empire*, 2003

If social innovation operates on things, systems and societies, decolonizing social innovation is an expansive approach to social innovation for exploring alternative pathways to a more liberating, just, and life-affirming future for our world. Social transformations invested in global social justice needs to be at the heart of how we think about social innovation going forward which means reducing asymmetries and imbalances of power linked to coloniality. Social innovation refers to the harnessing of systems, sectors, and actors to create socially beneficial impacts; thus, it holds the potential for affecting structural transformations in many societies throughout the world. In global development, social innovation is looked towards as a mechanism for addressing some of the sector's most intractable problems. Central to that effort, there is a growing emphasis placed on the cultivation of more inclusive social innovation ecosystems throughout the world.

Decolonizing social innovation transforms opportunity structures by working to advance global social justice efforts through social innovation processes. Decolonizing efforts work to diminish the continuance of power relations—structures, logic, and

culture—linked to coloniality that are today animated through world systems (Maldonado-Torres, 2017). Decolonizing approaches to social innovation create new relations of power between and amongst people, institutions, and communities that diminish the Colonial Matrix of Power—Coloniality of Being, Coloniality of Knowledge, Coloniality of Culture. It fosters a more expansive understanding of social innovation and views social impact as being fundamentally tied to global social justice.

Apolitical approaches to social innovation might be capable of affecting social impact, but by not acknowledging the political dimensions of the challenges they are trying to solve for, it fails to transform inequality, the root cause of many of those challenges, and may, in fact, lead to the maintenance of systemic inequity. The melding of decolonizing efforts around social innovation processes is a political project. Further, if activism is characterized by one trying to bring about social and political transformations, decolonizing social innovation is a form of social innovation activism (SIA).

As discussed in the primary and secondary case studies, decolonizing approaches to social innovation diminish the Colonial Matrix of Power through its interventions and practices. For example, Pre-Texts aligns its practices with the values it espouses. Instead of divorcing its understanding of social innovation from that of the political questions of power and agency, the workshop delves into the complexities of those questions. Further, its social impact is not viewed as being unrelated to questions around justice. For instance, in the case of the Forum Theater activity, facilitators invited participants and spectators to act as intervenors of injustices they experience or see in everyday life.

Overall, power is redistributed, decision-making is shared, and critical reflection is practiced in a collective manner all along the way.

Next, this thesis tried to do three primary things: (1) uncover how coloniality shows up within the context of social innovation for development (SI4D), (2) discover how coloniality undermines the work of social innovation actors within the sector, and (3) share examples of how social innovation actors are working to diminish coloniality through decolonizing approaches to social innovation.

This thesis investigated these three things through a qualitative research approach. This research developed six case studies and used the N-of-One-Plus-Some methodology to analyze those case studies (i.e., one primary case studies and six secondary case studies).

First, I interviewed sixteen social innovators about their work in the Global South with marginalized communities around SI4D. Their insights enabled us to learn more about their experiences as social innovation actors working to diminish coloniality and provided insight into how decolonizing social innovation approaches were performed.

Second, this research used those preliminary interviews to see what themes and patterns emerged around their experiences and work. From those themes and patterns, a preliminary conceptual framework was created to illustrate how these actors were confronting and working to transform power dynamics linked to coloniality through social innovation pathways.

Third, this research used the preliminary conceptual framework to analyze a primary case study of Cultural Agents' Pre-Texts' pedagogical protocol, a training-of-trainers workshop that uses texts and creativity to facilitate higher-order literacy, civic

agency, and innovation. The conceptual framework enabled this research to investigate how decolonizing approaches to social innovation were operationalized in practice.

Limitations

This study has two primary limitations: (1) it is not quantitatively generalizable, and (2) there was little existing scholarly literature on social innovation and coloniality and decoloniality to inform this study. Also, owing to the diversity of the social innovation ecosystems of the case studies—Bangladesh, Botswana, Colombia, India—it is difficult to perform a comparative analysis. Also, there is the issue of researcher subjectivity regarding my performance of this study as a researcher from a Global North institution performing research about social innovation taking place in the Global South.

Objectives

The objective of this thesis was to explore relations of power shaped by coloniality in SI4D. Another aim of this research was to conduct semi-structured interviews with a variety of social innovation actors to see what themes emerged from those interviews to develop a preliminary conceptual framework detailing how coloniality and decoloniality showed up with respect to power dynamics. Next, that preliminary conceptual framework was used to perform a decolonial analysis of Pre-Texts to understand how it is engaging in a decolonizing approach to social innovation. Key lessons emerged including that decolonizing approaches to social innovation can cultivate deep collaborations between stakeholders to effect solidarity-driven partnerships between actors with different levels of power. Future research might use this preliminary study to develop a testable hypothesis.

Implication

The implication of this research on social innovation for development is that more research is needed to explore social innovation not merely from the level of social impact, but also in relations to social justice. Exploring social innovation from lenses that fail to examine how power dynamics materially and immaterially affect social innovation actors and processes limits our understanding. This research argues that social innovation for development must not merely be inclusive and participatory, it must also engage in changing power dynamic shaped by injustice between actors that operate within its systems; it must be politicized.

Lessons and Recommendations

This research does not offer a prescriptive guide on how to perform a decolonizing analysis of social innovation as there are many pluriversal approaches to understanding this phenomenon. Instead, this research works to demonstrate why deconstructing power dynamics linked to coloniality in the context of social innovation research is useful, and to show instances of how this type of analysis may be relevant to SI4D and global social justice overall.

The critical lesson from this research is that performing a decolonizing analysis of social innovation processes and practices is helpful when trying to uncover how exclusionary practices prevent the emergence of more democratic forms of social innovation on all levels of society.

It is recommended that there be more research that explores the nexus of social innovation, global social justice, and power dynamics. Further, it is recommended that this nexus be empirically researched in the future.

Final Impression

Coloniality, a mechanism of injustice and oppression, continues to operate through various systems, including social innovation. A marginalized actor versus a privileged hegemonic actor in such systems may see and experience coloniality in ways tied to one's own power and privilege (or lack thereof). This thesis investigated how social innovation actors from and of Global South communities continue to resist coloniality by destroying its mechanisms of injustice and oppression through their work to affect social transformations. This thesis contends that not all social innovation actors confront these mechanisms simply by supplying a social benefit. Depoliticized and top-down-oriented approaches to social innovation that call for the inclusion of marginalized actors is not equitable nor a reorganization of power. Rather, it is the maintenance and continued concentration of power in the hands of a hegemonic and privileged few or in the case of SI4D, Global North actors and institutions.

Inclusion is defined as “the act of including” (Merriam-Webster, 2019) or “the state of being included” (Merriam-Webster, 2019). There is an emerging area of scholarship relating to inclusive innovation: inclusive Innovation academia (Arocena, Göransson, & Sutz, 2018), inclusive innovation in policy (Phiri, Molotja, Makelane, Kupamupindi, & Ndinda, 2016), and inclusive innovation for the Global South (Wong, Soman, & Stein, 2014). However, when it comes to trying to understand who might be

doing the including and, on whose terms, these types of questions begin to reveal the potential limits of inclusive innovation, particularly where uncritically performed.

For instance, in SI4D, inclusive innovation may enact the same dynamics of power linked to coloniality, in that it relies on powerful actors to allow or let in marginalized actors and even then, only on their terms. For example, Global North institutions that engage in SI4D in what they claim to be a politically neutral fashion often use gatekeeping techniques that negate the self-determination and agency of Global South civil societies and grassroots actors engaging in the political work of confronting and resisting oppressive structures linked to inequality and coloniality. While these Global North actors may claim to operate in a depoliticized way, their “strategic” gatekeeping approaches are, in fact, political whether that has to do with their funders’ priorities—often linked imperial or neoliberal financial interests—or Global North institutional research agendas for example.

Further, to be “included” it often requires disempowered actors to assimilate and concede parts of themselves for entry. Many times, inclusion is not about liberation; it is about assimilating actors into the status quo. It seduces a marginalized few to engage with the mechanisms of injustice and oppression rather than to up-end them. Inclusive innovation does not go far enough to transform oppressive systems linked to coloniality; it merely cracks the door a little wider to let a few priorly excluded people into its elite inner circle rather than, as resistance demands, eliminating that door altogether. It is a tepid approach to fostering global social equality.

By itself, inclusive innovation is not a shortcut to global social justice and in some instances, may operate as a diversion from it. Overall, inclusive innovation is not a

euphemism for decolonizing social innovation, as the former may sometimes act as a barrier to the latter.

When looking at how the imagination and creativity brought into social innovation can be harnessed, there exist rich opportunities to explore how such networks and systems can be reorganized through decolonizing praxis to diminish global social inequality. Decolonizing social innovation is working to expand social innovation discourse from the bottom-up and the periphery of the hegemonic global imaginary. Decolonizing social innovation investigates what social innovation looks like in relation to global social injustices and oppression. It is but one more chapter in an older and more expansive story of decolonizing movements, liberation and solidarity. Throughout the world, particularly in the Global South, social innovation activists are decolonizing social innovation processes and discourse to cultivate more just infrastructures throughout the world. They explore the work of SI4D, not merely through socially beneficial products and services but social transformations as well.

Decolonizing social innovation is about creativity, imagination, self-determination, and transformations that resist oppression, prioritize the redistribution of power and diminish the unjust structure of coloniality in service to global social justice. Decolonizing social innovation is an expression of love for our shared humanity as human beings rather than the continued exploitation of our perceived differences for economies of violence, cultures of supremacy, and the subjugation of some through racialized and gendered hierarchies—read inequality. When it comes to cultivating more liberating futures for oppressed people in their ongoing struggle to survive and be free, decolonizing perspectives to social innovation question whose vision for that future

should be prioritized and toward which ends. When it comes to crafting an approach to SI4D that sincerely works to empower oppressed, marginalized, and subalternized people, decolonizing social innovation presents itself as another pathway to liberation that is not predicated on the subordination of one group to another group. Decolonizing social innovation is a space for us all to dream more expansively as we explore new forms of solidarity and co-liberation through social transformations.

Appendix 1.

Interview Social Innovation and the Coloniality of Power Worksheet

Social Innovation Actor:			
	Coloniality of Power		
	Coloniality of Being	Coloniality of Knowledge	Coloniality of Culture
Social Mission			
Social Impact			
Social Transformations			
Power asymmetries prior to social Intervention			
Power asymmetries after social Intervention			

Observations

Mechanisms:

Transformations:

Ecosystem:

Justice:

How does your theory of change relate to issues of justice?

What does it mean to you if it does not?

Appendix 2.

Interview Guide

Consequently, the qualitative approach will be to explore the below main themes of interest (based on existing literature) and continuously evolve and strengthen the themes discussed based on the responses received from the participants.

Demographics (Geography, gender, age, nationality, other)

General Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Types of tasks the innovation actor is involved in on a day-to-day basis including their current duties and responsibilities.

Action Plans:

1. Interviewees will be asked to identify, the existing and future action plans regarding inclusive social innovation: the aims and main targets to achieve sustainable global development.

Social innovation aspects:

1. How do you define social innovation? What are the influencing factors of social innovation?

Decolonial Aspects:

1. What are the influencing factors of decolonial praxis in the context of social innovation?

Resources:

1. Availability and accessibility of resources within these networks?
2. What is exchanged and what are the aims of the exchange?

Context:

1. How does coloniality (e.g., racism, sexism, patriarchy, xenophobia) constrain or facilitate collaboration between stakeholders?

Interview Approach

1. Advertisement of the research study via social media
2. Initial outreach via email to social innovation actors interested in the study
3. Introduce myself, and explain what will take place and why we're doing it
4. Explain that they are free to discontinue at any time and where requested, information can be anonymized or made confidential (and thus, excluded from the study), and share the consent form
5. Skype/phone call (email if call not possible) to conduct interview

Appendix 3.

Interview Questions

How are you engaged in the social innovation sector?

What is your social mission/impact/transformation?

How does your work relate to social justice?

How do you define decolonizing social innovation?

Does social justice relate to your work? If so, how?

What are the social transformations you hope to yield from your work as a social innovator?

To what extent do those social transformations relate to global social equity and justice (if at all)?

How has your work transformed societies or people's lives?

How do you engage the community around social innovation efforts and at what points?

What are some of the power dynamics which show up in your work around social innovation?

How do you navigate the tension between respecting a community and trying to change/transform it through your work?

Does your social innovation or approach to it, disrupt oppressive systems of privilege which exclude, marginalize, or delimit the participation of communities or individuals they hope to impact through their work?

Does your social innovation or approach to it, participate in oppressive systems as privileged actors or diminish them?

Appendix 4.

List of Definitions

Colonialism

Colonialism refers to a globalizing system which impacts the relations of power between the Global North and Global South. According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Kohn & Reddy, 2017), colonialism is “a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another” (Kohn & Reddy, 2017) and it “involves political and economic control over a dependent territory” (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). The hegemonic countries legitimized colonialism as a necessary tool to develop the societies until they were “deemed” capable of sustaining liberal and democratic institutions and governments on their own (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). Colonialism was a political mechanism for the Global North to extract wealth and resources from the Global South.

Coloniality

Coloniality refers to a theoretical concept that questions the notion that knowledge is divorced from specific geo-historical locations and contends that what is presented as a universal conception of knowledge is, in reality, Western epistemology. After the end of the direct colonial rule, coloniality is the invisible power structure that continues to sustain colonial relations of exploitation and domination afterward (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, pp. 240–270). By centering the West as the locus of epistemic enunciation (Mignolo, 2018) and the rest of the world’s epistemologies as periphery—to

make them into the objects to be described and studied from the Western perspective—is linked to a historical and politically driven colonial project.

Decoloniality

Decoloniality is a theoretical concept that emerged out of the Americas and the Caribbean as a part of various (trans)local struggles, social movements, and actions to resist and subvert the legacies, patterns, and relations of power established by external and internal colonialism (Mignolo, 2018, Kindle Locations 424–426). I distinguish decoloniality from decolonization; the latter works to delink epistemically from imperial or colonial societal structures and the former works on the decolonization of knowledge and being by changing not only the content of discussions but also the terms thereof (Mignolo, 2013, pp. 131–133). Decoloniality is a relational way of seeing the world that strives to de-center the West.

Education

Education in its broadest sense refers to the social continuity of life and a society through the transmission of ideas and practices through communication, teaching and learning, and while schools play a role in facilitating this process, education can be obtained through non-formal means including one's experiences (Dewey, 1916, pp. 1–11).

Global Social Justice

Due to contemporary global power relations, global social justice recognizes the global dimensions of rights and liberties imbued on a person beyond the scope of national

borders (Widdows & Smith, 2011, pp. 151–152). In their book *Global Social Justice*, Widdows and Smith (2011) explain further that the focus is not only on the individual treatment of people but also directed towards their social context as explained in the following:

experiences, relationships, community, and context...global social justice is about relationships at every level of society...with significant others, families, groups, distant others and future generations. In short, justice has to be social as human beings are fundamentally relational and social beings and defining justice in this way helps us remember our connectedness. In addition, this connectedness is global...Therefore non-global justice, cannot, in the current context of globalization, claim to be justice at all...Global Social justice defines the necessary scope of contemporary justice—the globe—and recognizes the fundamentally social nature of human beings who require justice. (pp. 151–152)

Global South

Global South refers to a transnational political subjectivity under contemporary capitalist globalization. As a concept, it is related to postcoloniality because it captures both a political subjectivity and ideological formulation that arises from coloniality. Through the solidarities among the world's multiple "Souths", the concept of the Global South goes beyond postcolonial theory which limits its analysis to that of colonial difference. Global South theory analyzes the formation of a Global South subjectivity, the study of power and racialization within global capitalism in ways that transcend the nation-state (Mahler, 2017). The "Global South" is a symbolic position of exclusion and marginalization which can be a place and condition of being in contrast to the "Global North" (or West), the position of privilege formed by its intimate relation to coloniality (Maldonado-Torres, 2012, p. 4). I use interchangeably the term Global North with "West" and vice versa within this thesis.

Pedagogy

Pedagogy refers to the practices and methods of teaching and learning. Pedagogy also involves the arrangement of subject matter to aid in the effective use of information (Dewey, 1916, pp. 194–195).

Social Innovation

Social Innovation: refers to the process of identifying and developing solutions for a variety of ills stemming from a wide range of social problems that can positively contribute to human progress and development. By fostering social inclusion, through empowerment of people and the transformation of social relations, social innovation engages various stakeholders in its approach to create an additional social benefit. The transformation of social relations refers to the micro-relations between individuals and macro-relations between classes and other social groups (Moulaert et al., 2015; Mumford, 2002).

Subaltern

Subaltern refers to a concept first developed by Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist political activist, in his widely known Prison Notebooks series. In them, he describes subalterns as any marginalized person or group of people in a particular society excluded from established institutions and denied by the means people have a voice in society by the hegemonic domination of a ruling group (Gramsci, 1971). Subalternity also considers the implications of historical developments brought onto the politics of globalization (Louai, 2012, p. 5).

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