A Tale of Two Stories:
An evaluation of the Caribbean Workers Outreach Program, and a reflexive analysis of the evaluation/research project

by

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ABSTRACT

A TALE OF TWO STORIES:
AN EVALUATION OF THE CARIBBEAN WORKERS OUTREACH PROGRAM,
AND A REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EVALUATION/RESEARCH PROJECT

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This thesis tells two paralleled stories: namely, that of a member-informed program evaluation, as well as a critical, reflexive analysis of the researcher's experience of conducting this investigation. The focus of the research and analysis was an appraisal of the Caribbean Workers Outreach Program (CWOP), a prominent social inclusion initiative to/for Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers in the Niagara region (Ontario, Canada). Still, in light of the academic literature on alternative/emancipatory epistemologies and methodologies and thus an understanding that knowledge is situated, value-laden, political, and intricately connected to power, the author has overtly written a reflexive practice into this thesis too. In summary, the qualitative data arising from the member-informed program evaluation revealed support for the importance of social inclusion efforts for seasonal agricultural workers, as well as specifically highlighted some of the greatest strengths and challenges facing CWOP (as a case-study), along with targeted recommendations for future improvements.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

internship in particular was pivotal to meaningfully connecting me to the Niagara, the Caribbean Workers Outreach Program (CWOP) and Caribbean worker communities, and hence, in the end grounding me as an engaged scholar. To be explicit, I acknowledge that this, without a doubt, laid the necessary foundation for me to reciprocate in/through my separate/distinct academic efforts.

Similarly, I offer endless heartfelt thanks to Jane and Brian Andres, who allowed me to "pitch my tent" so-to-speak alongside theirs. Indubiously, in addition to their generous hospitality, Jane's faithful devotion to the migrant workers in her community was/is nothing short of inspirational. This, along with the innumerable words of the encouragement and support, was precious to me, and consequently I find myself even now at a complete loss for words to adequately express my appreciation in all these regards.

To my husband Andrew, who celebrated with me at the height of my joys and offered a listening ear and strong shoulder as I worked through some of the tough(er) decisions along this journey too: thank you! Your dedicated friendship and sacrificial love over all these years, but especially over the last few months, was integral both to bringing me to and through this amazing experience. Please know you are sincerely appreciated.

Of course, I also joyfully offer my deepest regards to all of the leaders and volunteers (past and present) engaged in the Caribbean Workers Outreach Program (CWOP). More than anything else, I hope that in reading this thesis, they will realize just how important their efforts are, and moreover how appreciated CWOP is by the men and women it serves. On this note, special thanks are offered to all of the volunteers who participated in the following evaluation, as well as to the leadership team for welcoming my presence and moreover

involvement in this incredible community. Indeed I look forward to learning and working with all of you for years to come.

Last but certainly not least, I most fervently acknowledge all of the Caribbean participants who welcomed me into their community and who offered their words of wisdom as a contribution to this evaluation project. I also offer my greatest thanks to the small group of Jamaican men who worked tirelessly with me on this evaluation. Principally, I owe my endless gratitude to them for the transformation I experienced over the course of this work. Naturally then, above all else, in completing this evaluation and thesis, I hope I have made my Jamaican colleagues in this project most proud. I dedicate this work to each one of them especially.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CWOP   Caribbean Workers Outreach Program

GDP   Gross Domestic Product

GNI   Gross National Income

GNP   Gross National Product

HDI   Human Development Index

IFI   International Financial Institutions

ILO   International Labour Organization

IMF   International Monetary Fund

MCC   Mennonite Central Committee

MDG   Millennium Development Goals

NOTL   Niagara-on-the-Lake

SAWP   Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program

UN   United Nations

INTRODUCTION

History, culture and positionality are woven tightly into the social construction and

production of knowledge. Explicitly, ideologies, discourses, theoretical models and other

forms of knowledge (including practices) are "laden with cultural values, norms,

assumptions, attitudes, and linguistic habits and beliefs, implicit and explicit, rational and

irrational, formalized and intuitive" (Nimmagadda and Cowger, 1999, p263). Furthermore,

to the extent that not all knowledges are equally regarded as legitimate, power is an

undeniable factor as well. More precisely, power is inextricable from truth and knowledge

(e.g. to the extent that power is exercised through one's influence on knowledge and/or truth,

and vice versa). Moreover, power operates through knowledge and truth not only in the sense

that it has the effect of ordering behaviours and society more broadly in a way that is to the

benefit of some groups of individuals more than others, but access to knowledge and thus to

influence what is perceived as true/truth is therefore also access to power (Foucault, 1980).

On this note – that is, regarding access to power and/in the production of knowledge –

historically speaking, research has played a particularly central role. In stating this, as the

foundation of knowledge production and in relation to power, it is important to recognize

research's long history in European imperialism and colonialization (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

In this context, White European researchers went to foreign lands to 'objectively' study

Indigenous people occupying desired spaces (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). The accounts

produced often formed the sole representation of 'the Other' from a White gaze (and for a

White audience). Explicitly, exemplifying Foucauldian theory on the power-knowledge

relationship (1980), in turn these extremely problematic, ethnocentric reports of the "dark-

skinned Other…a group that stood in the way of White settlers" often became central in colonizing strategies, directly informing "ways of controlling the foreign, deviant, or troublesome Other" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p1,2; Foucault, 1908; also see Escobar 1995).

This history, or more specifically the possibility of repeating it in any shape or form, of course, is the lurking fear so many critical researchers (e.g. in the social sciences) and practitioners (e.g. in international development) today are troubled by, myself included, particularly as a novice. Nevertheless, it is necessary to concede forthright that research in/ from mainstream academia today continues to define the Other. Unquestionably denoting a certain level and access to power, universities for instance have long held an especially central role in defining what (and who's) knowledge counts (Hall, 1998; Kovach, 2005). Consequently, many knowledges are marginalized, outrightly denied, disregarded and/or silenced. Rajesh Tandon (1988) explains that part of this history is that with the expansion of the knowledge industry throughout the twentieth century, epistemological options were increasingly narrowed and limited. Needless to say, the systematic oppression and exclusion of epistemologies[1] from the perspectives of marginalized groups has produced an incomplete and disillusioned picture of 'reality', whether acknowledged or not. Unequivocally, it has "thwarted the abundant possibilities of what knowledge could encompass," and the injustice inherent in the absence of voice from marginalized communities in the realm of research and thusly the (formal) production of knowledge is critical and, moreover, alarming (Kovach, 2005, p22).

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[1] Manu Aluli Meyer (2001) refers to epistemology as the philosophy of knowledge. Similarly, epistemology has also been defines as one's views about "the nature of the relationship between the knower and would-be knower and what can be known" (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2004, p21).

Nonetheless, subjugated epistemologies (theories of knowing/knowledge) and methodologies (theoretical frameworks for *how* we study) have resiliently emerged from the margins, and with fervent resistance and emancipatory objectives at the heart of their cause. Specifically, in the 1950-1970s, in response to a surge in postivitism in academia, and in light of a resulting growing critique of the exploitative nature of research, emancipatory epistemologies and new methods (specifically alternative methodologies to the conventional scientific model) started to gain clout in research debates throughout North America (Kovach, 2005). Unsurprisingly, the tensions between mainstream academia and, conversely, methodologies from the margins continue to consume debates about research theory and practice at present.

To elaborate, emancipatory research encompasses a wide variety of research epistemologies and methodologies. Humphries, Martens, and Truman (2000) for instance list several approaches including epistemologies informed by and/or birthed out of feminism, postmodernist, critical hermeneutics and critical theory. Generally speaking, theorists who practice from within alternative (i.e. anti-oppressive) paradigms share in common recognition of the role of power and domination in the production of hegemonic knowledge, and in response to this, actively struggle to resist the perpetuation of political and ideological oppression and disempowerment of subjugated social groups (Guba and Lincoln, 2004). Central to the struggle is the underlying goal of challenging and ultimately reclaiming power in knowledge production and the research process in particular (i.e. including who should define, control, and own research) (Roulston, 2010; Kovach, 2005). Ultimately, this speaks to a shared belief amongst emancipatory approaches that in spite of injustices of conventional science, science and politics are nevertheless essential elements in efforts to "see the world

'behind,' 'beneath,' and 'from outside' the oppressors' institutionalized vision" (Harding, 2004, p68).

One especially momentous and prominent epistemology from within the alternative camp (and which is central to this thesis, both theoretically and practically) has been standpoint theory. Feminist scholar Sandra Harding (2004) is a leading advocate for standpoint theory. Like others from within emancipatory epistemological approaches, Harding essentially not only questions the volition of objectivity but the plausibility of universal truths as well. That is, as a critique of the history and philosophy of traditional science, standpoint theory seeks to actively challenge hegemonic ways of knowing in developing and advocating knowledge specifically from the perspectives of those traditionally relegated as outsiders to conventional knowledge production (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2004). Through the introduction of new theories and methods in order to broaden the scope of what is accepted as valid knowledge and *ways* of knowing, standpoint theory can be conceptualized as simultaneously an epistemology and alternative methodology, in which case both are meant to uncover and give voice to the resistance and inherent power of/in subjugated knowledges in spite of their marginalized status.

More specifically, foundational to the argument inherent in standpoint approaches is the notion that differential status attributed to identity positions in matrices of power and oppression result in differential knowledge(s) (Harding, 2004). That is, understandings of the world are markedly different based on one's class, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, ability, age, sexuality, and a variety of other social categories related to oppression and discrimination, merely because we live in societies which are materially and hierarchically organized and structured accordingly (Hartsock, 1998). In particular, standpoint

theory acknowledges that various social positions of privilege and oppression intersect (e.g. gender, race, class, etc) within one's identity and result in unique sets of experiences, in turn producing distinctive knowledges which are extremely valuable in revealing the biases and distortions inherent to the hegemonic perspectives of dominant social groups (e.g. epitomized in the white, heterosexual, upper-class, able-bodied, Anglo-Saxon male) (Sprague and Zimmerman, 2004). Consequently, the political (namely emancipatory) struggle of a standpoint epistemology and methodology is particularly aimed at dominant perspectives, reified as natural and universal, and more broadly, deconstructing dominant power-knowledge relations, including actively resisting the perpetuation of these in both the research relationship with participants and in the outcomes of the research produced (Roulston, 2010). To this end, standpoint theory aligns itself with a subversive politic, specifically one which seeks anti-oppressive ends by inverting conventional relations of power and advocating for the intellectual inclusion of historically disadvantaged and marginalized groups.

Informed by this critical approach, the following thesis details my humble attempt to put anti-oppressive epistemology and methodology into practice. Namely, as will of course be detailed further in the following account, I was recently employed to conduct a program evaluation (an increasingly popular task and research focus in the field of international development) However, as an outworking of a personal value system which prioritizes inclusion, rather than merely using my expected expertise as an academically trained scholar and practitioner to *singularly* assess the outreach (though this is officially what I was asked to do), I advocated to approach the evaluation as a facilitator instead, producing what I genuinely believe to be a much more comprehensive and useful appraisal for the community group. To be precise, by utilizing the formal(ized) research skills I have acquired throughout

my training in the social sciences, I lead a participant-informed evaluation of the program. Methodologically, I triangulated open-ended and semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions conducted with Jamaican seasonal agricultural workers and Canadian volunteers with my own ethnographic observations in order to highlight for the community group's leadership team what their program participants consider to be the group's greatest strengths, areas for potential improvement, and (targeted) recommendations for continuing this critical (that is, to the lives of those involved – the leading research finding) outreach effort.

Part and parcel, akin to any other committed anti-oppression researcher (and standpoint theorist more specifically), because I understand that statements espousing an ideal of impartiality are merely naive denials of the ways in which a 'knower' and her/his values, beliefs, positionality, etc are embedded and reflected in the knowledge claims she/he judges to be true, I have been very intentional about practicing reflexivity. Moreover, in honour of an understanding that knowledge is situated, value-laden, political, and intricately connected to power (Haraway, 1991; Guba and Lincoln, 2004; Harding, 2004; Kovach, 2005), I have overtly written this into my recount of the evaluation/research experience. Thus, as I hope the selected title of this thesis effectively communicates, the following document is intended to tell two paralleled stories: that is, (i) as with any other traditional thesis, I present the outcomes of the research, or in this case, my effort to facilitate a participant-informed evaluation of/for the Caribbean Workers Outreach Program (CWOP), a prominent social inclusion outreach to/for Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and (ii) in light of the academic literature on anti-oppressive/ emancipatory epistemologies and methodologies, I also present an otherwise unconventional

but nonetheless important second narrative through which I offer a critical, reflexive analysis of my experience and performance conducting the evaluation/research.

To provide a brief overview, the first chapter will present a epigrammatic review of the academic literature pertaining to both Jamaican seasonal agricultural workers (i.e. deconstructing this identity category in order to (re)construction an informed appreciation for the value of primary research with(in) this community), as well as theories of/ on anti-oppressive research practices (e.g. see 'Theorizing the Research Process: Linking ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods'), in an effort to appropriately contextualize both the rationale and significance of the research *and* my critical reflections of the process. Next, chapter two uses the framework of the first three stages of a research process as identified by Pillow and Mayo (2007) – choosing, doing, and analyzing/writing – to turn a critical, reflexive gaze on the specific qualitative methods and methodologies of my research. Following this progression then, the next two chapters presents a respective summary and discussion of the results of the research experience. Specifically, chapter three re-presents the findings of the program evaluation (including the major strengths as well as challenges facing CWOP[2], along with member identified recommendations for strategically moving "from strength to strength" in the future of the outreach program), as well as some additional striking insights arising from the research process, whereas the fourth chapter considers these findings within the context of the academic literature more broadly. Last but not least, predictably a short concluding section proffers a summative reflection on the practical and theoretical implications of this thesis research.

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[2] To clarify, while the program under evaluation is faith-based and moreover specifically intended to meet both the social and spiritual needs of Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers, my own intention in working with(in) this community as part of my thesis research was never to end up writing a Sociology of Religion paper. Consequently, I have not focused on this literature in the following theoretical discussions.

In short then, mirroring the work of anti-oppression researchers and scholars before me, my emphasis from deciding upon right through to retelling the research is split between attention to specific outcomes for/of the research endeavour and an intentional, critical, and reflexive focus on the process itself: above all, the methodology (the hows and whys of the research) to achieve this first end. Consequently, again keeping with the tradition of a participatory development paradigm and an emancipatory community- and organization-based research methodology, this thesis implicitly and explicitly challenges the myth of objectivity and neutrality in empirical social scientific research. Specifically, I have written myself into this report, not only even in spite of a concerted effort to always pursue consensual validation of participant- and data-grounded responses and theorizations, but moreover by consciously choosing to write subjectively throughout this document. Residually, similar to other writings from this epistemological position and methodological practice, in reading this thesis you may "[feel] as if [you have] learned more about [me] the researcher than about the subjects or topic at hand" (Pillow and Mayo, 2007, p165). Albeit unconventional, given the underlying epistemological framework for this project, this is ironically not only to be expected but as argued, absolutely fundamental to the overall research process.

CHAPTER 1:
CONTEXTUALIZING THE RESERCH, AND FOLLOWING ANALYSIS, WITH(IN) THE ACADEMIC LITERATURE

> *Antiracist feminists, particularly women of colour, have critiqued and continue to challenge knowledge that presumes to be outside history, beyond the contexts and workings of actual people (Bannerji 1995; Collins 2000; Mohanty 2003; Narayan 1997)...Practically, such critiques suggest that, too often, well-meaning feminist researchers embark on projects involving [their subjects] without a thorough and grounded knowledge of their contexts and the histories that have produced those contexts. They suggest that feminist researchers should carefully think through the purpose of interviewing; that they must study and learn as much as possible before approaching others. In particular, feminist researchers should avoid using interviews – especially with [participants] in vulnerable or marginalized social locations – as a way to learn things that could be gleaned from available sources.* (DeVault and Gross, 2007, p187-188)

As previously introduced, the purpose of this community-engaged research endeavour was to produce a program evaluation for the Caribbean Workers Outreach Program (CWOP) in Niagara-on-the-Lake (Ontario, Canada). By and large, CWOP is a grass-roots social inclusion effort which has existed in the Niagara region for over two decades. With two active groups – one in Niagara-on-the-Lake (NOTL) and another in Lincoln – CWOP's mission is to offer spiritual and emotional supports to Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers. Initiated first by the United Church in Canada in partnership with the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, as an entirely volunteer-driven effort, CWOP has expanded and grown into a diverse, ecumenical/ multi-denominational collective. Together, volunteers in Canada and visiting pastors from Jamaica provide Christian worship services throughout May and June each year, along with pastoral care, and fellowship and social/recreational opportunities (e.g. an annual cricket match, dominoes tournaments, and a celebration dinner). Structurally, this vibrant civil society community is comprised of the

following stakeholders: a CWOP Chair appointed by the United Church in Canada; at present, two (volunteer) Coordinators in Niagara-on-the-Lake and one in Lincoln; two visiting pastors each season from Jamaica (pastors can come for up to two consecutive years); Canadian volunteers, typically from various faith communities partnered in the ministry; and last but certainly not least, Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers to the region.

Overview of stakeholders engaged in the Caribbean Workers Outreach Program

United Church in Canada & United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

CWOP Chair (appointed by the United Church in Canada)

2 Jamaican Pastors (each year)

CWOP-NOTL Coordinators

CWOP-Lincoln Coordinator

Volunteers

Caribbean Seasonal Agricultural Workers

Volunteers

Caribbean Seasonal Agricultural Workers
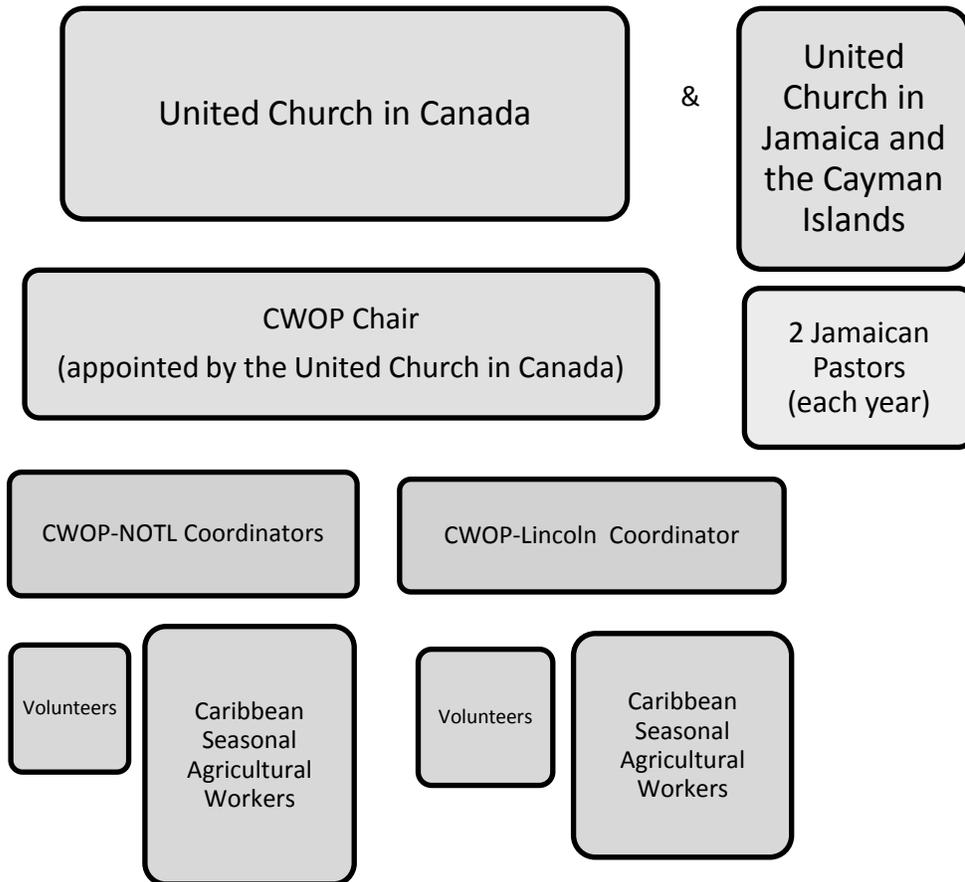
As part of an effort to hear from the program participants themselves – that is, to facilitate a participant-informed evaluation – the Jamaican[3] seasonal agricultural workers who are members of the CWOP community were naturally the main body[4] of participants in the research process as well (as will be discussed in more details in the second chapter). Thus, although the focus of the research was a *program evaluation* specifically, if I take heed of the quote by DeVault and Gross (2007) above, and other scholars such as Jane Parpart's (2000) who specifically challenges participatory-action researchers to "develop a more nuanced and sophisticated analysis of power," specifically one which "incorporate[s] an analysis of the way global and national power structures impact on the local, the character and resilience of local power structures, the link between knowledge/discourse and power; and the complex ways people seek to ensure their well-being in the world..." (p18), contextualizing the appraisal within the broader context and literature is nevertheless imperative. Subsequently, while the nature of the findings (which are the focus of the third chapter of this thesis report) is pertinent to CWOP (e.g. as opposed to experiences of Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers more generally, which is the typical nature of literature on this population), this chapter begins with a critical review of Jamaica's post-colonial politico-economic history as well as a brief overview of the literature on the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP). My hope is that though minimal, these short scholarship summaries will provide an introductory contextualization for you as a reader so that you might in turn appreciate the participants of this research and community in

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[3] As is also noted later in this document, while men from other Caribbean islands working in Niagara have typically regularly participated in the social activities hosted by CWOP, the church services tend to be attended by Jamaicans exclusively.

[4] That is, participation in the evaluation mirrored the fact that Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers make up roughly four-fifths of the CWOP community. To be explicit, local volunteers (i.e. Canadians) were also interviewed for the research but proportionally represented a much small sub-set of the participant pool for the evaluation/research project.

a broader sense, as was the case for myself too (that is, as a result of immersing myself in this literature before entering the community). Last but not least, thirdly a short review of some of the academic literature pertaining to critical research methodologies is also presented. Above all, my hope for this third section is to highlight for you, the reader, key aspects of the framework from which I approached the evaluation as well as my post-research reflexive analysis (the two stories presented throughout this thesis).

A brief post-colonial politico-economic overview of Jamaica

Again, since the focus of the research was an appraisal of an outreach effort for Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers and it was exclusively Jamaicans who participated in the church services (the heart of the ministry) offered by CWOP, it seems only appropriate to start by offering a bit of a background to appreciate Jamaicans working under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP). Moreover, in light of this dual identity category, since the men and women identify their humanity and nationality as Jamaicans before being 'workers' (under the SAWP), likewise I would like to begin this section with a brief politico-economic[5] overview of this island nation. Specifically, the following content is meant to offer a critical history of post-colonial Jamaica in order to build a judicious understanding of some of the factors which lead some individuals to participate in this particular transnational labour migrant scheme.

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[5] On this note, it is most certainly worth nothing that Jamaica has/Jamaicans have a rich cultural heritage. In other words, the picture painted in the following overview is only a single piece of a much bigger and significantly more elaborate puzzle.

In 2010, in light of many of the nation's social and economic improvements in the years previous, Jamaica was reclassified as an upper middle-income country[6] (World Bank, 2012; UNDP, 2011). Moreover, in the 2011 Human Development Report titled *Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All*, Jamaica was celebrated as one of only a few countries with a Human Development Index (HDI) that had significantly improved. In particular, after achieving a HDI value of 0.727 and thus status in the high human development category[7], Jamaica's new positioning as 79th out of 187 countries acknowledged a 20% increase in the nation's average measure of basic human development achievements over the previous three decades (UNDP, 2011). Related to this, according to Jamaica's Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Report in 2009, the country had achieved the MDG goal of universal primary education, and was well on its way to eradicating extreme hunger and said to be on track to ensure environmental sustainability as well. Furthermore, despite the grips of austerity measures associated with structural adjustment policies, in less than two decades Jamaica had managed to cut the percentage of people living in poverty by almost two-thirds (from 28.4% in 1990 to 9.9% in 2007) and most recently had cut the national poverty rate by almost half between 2003 and 2007 alone (UNDP, 2011; World Bank, 2012). Frankly then, despite being a developing nation and small island in the Caribbean whose 50th anniversary of

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[6] To put this into perspective though, it is worth nothing that with a population of 2.709 million people in 2011, Jamaica's GDP per capita was US$5,267 (note, when purchasing power parity is calculated, this amount is equivalent to US$9,100, which is only a third of the world's weighted average for GDP per capita), and its Gross National Income per capita was just US$4,980 (World Bank, 2012; IMF, 2012). To be clear, according to the World Bank (2012), GNI per capita (formerly GNP per capita) is defined as:

> Gross national income, converted to U.S. dollars using the World Bank Atlas method, divided by the midyear population. GNI is the sum of value added by all resident producers plus any product taxes (less subsidies) not included in the valuation of output plus net receipts of primary income (compensation of employees and property income) from abroad.

[7] It is perhaps important to note, however, that Jamaica's improved HDI is below the average for the high human development category as well as below the average for Latin America and the Caribbean more generally (UNDP, 2011).

independence from the British Empire was celebrated only in 2012, Jamaica has arguably made many noteworthy strides in terms of its socioeconomic well-being as a country.

Real GDP Growth in Jamaica, 2001-2010 (%)									
2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
1.3	1	3.5	1.4	1.1	3	1.4	**-0.8**	**-3.1**	**-1.4**

Source of Data: IMF, 2012

Unfortunately however, as a result of the recent global economic crisis beginning in 2008, this upward trajectory has not only slowed but taken a turn for the worse. Specifically, in the same year that Jamaica was reclassified, the percentage of its population living in poverty almost doubled (i.e. it had increased to 17.6% in 2010, as indicated by the Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2011). Directly related to this, the national unemployment rate reached 12.4%[8] in 2010, representing an almost 3% decrease in the national labour force that year alone (UNDP, 2011). Moreover, concerns increasingly rose regarding the specific distribution of the socioeconomic improvements in years previous and the more recent effects of this reversal. For instance, when Jamaica's HDI value was adjusted to account for

Macroeconomic Health Indicators, 2008-2012 (%)					
	2008	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012** Est.
Inflation Rate	22	9.6	12.6	7.5	6.9
Public Debt (general gvt gross debt as a % of GDP)	126.4	139.5	141.4	139	145.9
Public Deficit (gvt net lending/borrowing as % of GDP)	-7.4	-11	-6.4	-6.5	-8.3
Unemployment Rate	10.6	11.4	12.4	12.8	13

Source of Data: IMF, 2012

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[8] That said, when age and gender were accounted for, this rate was significantly higher for women and youth (e.g. comparatively, the unemployment rate for women was almost double their male counterpart's rate, and in 2010 the youth unemployment rate had increased to 30.86%) (UNDP, 2011).

inequality (denoted as IHDI), this corrected measure fell to 0.61, representing a 16.2% loss in potential human development due to inequality in the distribution of the HDI dimension indices (UNDP, 2011).

To further elaborate on this gap, calculations of inequality in the distribution of monetary resources in Jamaica show that while only 5.85% of the population[9] lives on less than US$2 a day, the poorest 10% have a household income (or consumption by percentage of share) of a meager 2.1% of the nation's income while the wealthiest 10% of Jamaica's population have a household income of/consumes 35.8% of the nation's income, resulting in a Gini index[10] of 45.5[11] (World Bank, 2012; CIA, 2012). Furthermore, deeper analysis to uncover whom is most affected by these inequalities reveals typical patterns of social stratification. Namely children, youth, the elderly, disabled populations, women, rural and other marginal(ized) communities are disproportionately impacted by poverty (which ultimately highlights the ways in which poor economic wellbeing is intimately tied to social, physical and geographic marginalization too) (UNDP, 2011; CARICOM, 2006).

In light of the frustration of taking a large step backwards after only *just* making some very significant strides forward, the Jamaican government has (re)committed itself to a national goal of again improving its socioeconomic wellbeing in light of difficult times (namely amidst the global economic recession as well as numerous other crises including most recently Hurricane Sandy). Not surprisingly however, yet again, addressing Jamaica's repeating and mounting trade imbalances are at the forefront of this political agenda, which

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[9] This is equivalent to roughly 159,120 people (all of whom deserve to live with dignity and improved means of satisfying their basic human needs).

[10] The World Bank explains that the Gini Index measures the extent to which the distribution of income or consumption expenditure of individuals/households deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. With regards to interpreting the Gini figure, an index of 0 represents perfect equality while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality in wealth distribution.

[11] Consequently, on this particular measure, compared to global patterns of inequalities in wealth distribution, Jamaica ranks 38th (CIA, 2012).

serves as a reminder that the complex challenges Jamaica faces today cannot be fully appreciated without a sufficient understanding of the nation's politico-economic history first and foremost. For this reason, I believe it is fundamental to consider a critical historical analysis of Jamaica's post-independence struggles and some of the general impacts this has had on Jamaica's ability as a small island nation to autonomously direct its own development and thus care for its citizens.

Jamaica claimed its independence on August 6, 1962, after over 300 years of British colonial rule (meaning that 2012 marked the 50th anniversary of Jamaica's independence from Britain). In remembering this pivotal point in the nation's history, Michael Manley, Jamaica's most infamous Prime Minister, recalled that like most other former colonies, Jamaica found that when it became "free," it was soon in "every kind of financial problem because they didn't have the economic strength to, shall we say, make it on their own," and that like many newly independent nations, what Jamaica really needed was "time to build economies that could then make it in the world" (Black, 2001; also see Headley, 1987). Without this though, a decade after its autonomy, Jamaica's national debt was already US$800million (Black, 2001). Furthermore, by the end of the 1980s Jamaica's debt had increased to more than US$4billion, and then rose by another US$3billion by 2000 (Black, 2001; Headley, 1987). Sadly, this trend has continued: by the end of last year, Jamaica's national debt was estimated at US$13.83 billion (an increase of over one billion from the previous year), which is 126.5% of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (ranking 4th highest in the world on a per capita basis) (Johnston and Montecino, 2012; CIA, 2012). In turn, for every dollar the national government collects, it pays more than half to loan repayments,

which to be explicit is therefore *more than all of its other expenditures combined* (Johnston and Montecino, 2012).

Arguably, a significant factor in the genesis of Jamaica's accumulation of arrears was the oil embargo shortly after its independence. As global oil prices rose throughout the early 1970s (in response to the oil crisis), Jamaica "needed to find sums of money they'd never dreamed of before, just to make ends meet" and "as a matter of survival for the nation" (e.g. in order to meet the rising costs of food production among other necessities) (Michael Manley, quoted in Black, 2001; also see Headley, 1987). In response to becoming increasingly impecunious and thus overwhelmingly in need of financial support, Jamaican leaders made the difficult decision to enter into borrowing/lending agreements with a number of International Financial Institutions (IFIs), including the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (Black, 2001). Unfortunately, also in response to the oil crisis in addition to the growing popularity of neoliberal ideology, these institutions became particular invested in (marco)economic reform, conditional aid lending and structural adjustment, the combination of which ultimately earned the 1980s the title, "The Lost Development Decade" (de Haan, 2009, p111; also see Bird and Mosley, 2003; Rodrik, 2006; Weiss, 2008; Kendall and Petracco, 2009).

Reflecting on this aspect of Jamaica's history (that is, the genesis of the nation's relationship with various IFIs but particularly with regards to Jamaica's ties to the IMF), former prime minister Michael Manley stated that "It was a terrible experience…It was one of the bitter, traumatic experiences of my public life" (Black, 2001). Specifically, Manley reflected that the IMF policies have had severe implications for Jamaica, politically, economically and socially. For instance, as will be detailed further further, in addition to an

overall reduction of self-determination, some of the other primary effects of the agreements with IFIs such as the IMF and World Bank have been: currency devaluation and increased inflation; reductions in social spending (e.g. in health and education, rural development, food security measures, etc), and related to this, a substantive reduction in subsidies as well as trade barriers resulting in a flooding of imports, related job losses, market vulnerability (e.g. in the agro-food sector), etc; and of course, significant debt, thus a cyclical need for more capital, resulting in perpetual aid dependency in many respects.

To elaborate, the lack of new hospitals and schools as well as the absence of a comprehensive sewage system even at the turn of the century is as much a direct result of the devaluations imposed by the IMF as the resultant rapid inflation (e.g. at one point under the IMF agreement, Jamaica's inflation rate rose by 18% in one year) and weakness of the Jamaican dollar (Black, 2001; Headley, 1987; Massing, 1983). Each interrelated, Stanley Fisher, former Deputy Director of the IMF, explained that the desire to undervalue the national currency was a strategic maneuver, namely that "[Jamaica] needed to expand their exports and diminish their imports and the best way to do that is to make foreign currency more expensive" (Black, 2001). Unfortunately however, Dr. Michael Witter, Professor of Economics at the University of West Indies, clarified that because the country is so heavily dependent on imported products (e.g. food, fuel, books for school, medicine, etc), devaluing the currency made these items unaffordable for the average citizen and now the economy is at the whim of foreign institutions, not through direct ownership but rather through "the mechanism of debt" (Black, 2001). Likewise, Dr. Witter also explained that the IMF "set conditions which the (Jamaican) government could not meet, and when the government failed to meet them, [they had] to renegotiate a new loan in which the conditions became

tighter," and so while the IMF may have not explicitly cut any specific education or health program per se, "what the IMF said was 'You must spend only so much on health and education' and the implications of that was that [Jamaica] had to cut out some programs"[12] (Black, 2001; also see Massing, 1983; Headley, 1987; de Haan, 2009). In any case, social spending was sacrificed at the expense of building social and human capital and this is increasingly so as Jamaica's debt accumulates.

Still, while Manley's failed struggle to create a socialist Jamaica is pinnacle to understanding the nation's early post-colonial history, it is especially important to note that neoliberalist ideologies ultimately bore roots when the socialist party under Manley's leadership (1972-1980) was replaced by Edward Seaga's pro-capitalist party (winning 51 of the 60 seats) on October 30, 1980, five days prior to the correspondent election of Ronald Reagan in the United States. Similar to Massing (1983), Headley (1987) explains that the simultaneous election of these two neoliberalist parties was not only a prime factor in Seaga's platform, but as promised, became particularly significant following the formation of a partnership turned "high-stakes experiment…intended to show the superiority of capitalism to Manley's brand of socialism, the free market to state control," in which in Jamaica was selected to be "the showpiece of capitalism in Latin America and the Caribbean" (p17). In pursuit of this goal, since foreign reserves had almost entirely diminished by the middle of Manley's second term (in light of banking windows in the West closing to the socialist party), looking to create conditions which would attract private investors Seaga's party not only readily enacted the market liberalization policies suggested by the Reagan administration but also those of the IFIs that the previous socialist party had actively resisted

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[12] This point directly challenges statements by the IMF and the World Bank in which each argues that "under fiscal crises governments had to address their spending, but [the IMF and the WB] have not forced governments to reduce spending on education and health more than other sectors" (de Haan, 2009, p76-77).

(Headley 1987; Massing, 1983). Thus, in addition to measures such as the elimination of rent-control ceilings previously strictly enforced under Manley, and inviting the interests of the private sector to take the lead in housing (rather than maintaining a priority on public housing), Seaga's party readily accepted the conditions of the lending agreements stipulated by the IMF and World Bank (Headley, 1987; Massing, 1983), resulting in increased pressures on nationals on all fronts. Among the IFI conditions, measures to open Jamaica's markets to international trade, for example by reducing the trade barriers put in place by the previous government (e.g. eliminating price controls, withdrawing import restrictions, eliminating subsidies, reducing taxes, etc) have had significant economic and social impacts, many of which have been especially problematic for the nation. Former Deputy Director of the IMF, Stanley Fisher (as quoted in Black, 2001) explicitly explained the rationale behind this conditionality:

> Jamaica is a very small country. It's not a country which would thrive by only producing for itself; we believe very firmly that countries are going to grow better if they are integrated into the world economy, and that means reducing tariffs; and it needed to allow its importers, its people (sic) access to goods from the rest of the world, rather than having them rely on this little, little (sic) economy.

In direct contrast however, one of the major effects of opening Jamaica to globalization and moreover the world market was/has been that the local economy was/is flooded with foreign goods, which were/are cheaper than the products produced locally (and consequently, Jamaica has suffered both a loss of self-reliance as well as jobs and entire industries) yet due to inflation, are largely unaffordable for citizens even still (Headley 1987; Black, 2001; Kendall and Petracco, 2009).

Jamaica's Major Trading Partners* (2010)			
Top 7 Major Import Partners		**Top 7 Major Export Partners**	
Trading Partner (in rank order of 50 total partners)	**% of total value of imports**	**Trading Partner** (in rank order of 50 total partners)	**% of total value of exports**
United States	34.3%	United States	32.2%
Trinidad and Tobago	15.3%	European Union 27	15.1%[13]
Venezuela	14.3%	**Canada**	**14.9%**
European Union 27	6.8%[14]	Norway	9.0%
China	4.9%	Russia	4.7%
Canada	**2.6%**	Venezuela	3.4%
Brazil	2.6%	Trinidad and Tobago	2.6%

*Not specific to agriculture   Source of Data: EUROSTAT, 2012

Consequently, like many resource-rich, post-colonial nations, Jamaica's economy (including its agricultural sector) continues to be export-oriented at the expense of providing for its own people, a legacy of the nation's colonial past (as a natural resource producing colony, e.g. sugar cane through slave labour), as much as the economic policies entrenched in the 1980s and 1990s, with structural adjustment. For example, in 2010 although goods and service exports for the government totaled US$1.37billion and accounted for 25.6% of GDP (CIA, 2012; World Bank 2012), still Jamaica consistently carries the burden of negative account and moreover trade balances (along with negative goods and services and net income balances). Namely, Jamaica's imports for that same year were estimated to have totaled US$4.629 billion, and almost four times the value of its exports[15] (CIA, 2012). In particular, the very fact that food goods are Jamaica's leading import commodity (CIA, 2012) combined

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[13] 41.9% of the total value of exports to EU27 was attributable to agricultural (food including fish, and raw materials) (EUROSTAT, 2012).

[14] Of this total amount, agricultural products accounted for 19.8% (EUROSTAT, 2012)

[15] It is worth noting that as a percentage of GDP, imports tend to be only double that of exports, which implies that the discrepancy then between dollar values and percentages of GDP is related to the cost of imports, in terms of dollar values (typically being around 3 times what the country earns for its annual total exports, at least based on my assessment of account/trade balance reports from the last decade, e.g. see Economic and Social Surveys available for the government's website). This point was also reported in an assessment by Segura (2010) where the author stated that as of 2008, "imports into Jamaica accounted for 3.14 dollars for every dollar of exports" (p7).

with the fact that the nation is importing more than it exports, resulting in a negative trade balance year after year, has meant that food sovereignty has become a top priority for the nation – a rather ironic fact since thousands of Jamaican men and women travel to Canada year after year for seasonal employment in the agricultural sector.

Adding to the irony, while the impacts of conditionalities of IFIs (e.g. the World Bank in addition to the IMF) have been severe across many sectors, the consequences of these measures have absolutely devastated Jamaican agricultural sector in particular, which though as a sector contributed only 6.3% to Jamaica's 2010 GDP (while the service sector accounted for 71.3% and industry comprised 22.4%) has been for decades and still continues to be the second largest employer of labour (World Bank, 2012; Kendall and Petracco, 2009). Specifically, the argument has been made that when Jamaica lost its ability to protect its markets, it also lost its ability to protect its national food security most importantly (i.e. in light of the new global economy having totally changed Jamaica's agricultural landscape, geographically, politically and economically). For instance, as a result of pressures on the government (e.g. as part of conditionalities) to lift policies that previously ensured a protected market, many Jamaican farmers now cannot compete in the world agro-food marketplace. Thus, previous fruitful croplands lie barren year after year because many commodities (e.g. peanuts, carrots, etc) are not farmed anymore, and in turn, literally thousands of farmers are without the work that had once secured their families a livelihood generation after generation (Kendall and Petracco, 2009; Ministry, Berardi, and McGregor, 2009; Black, 2001). Additionally, the agricultural commodities that are still produced by Jamaican farmers are increasingly difficult to sell in local markets because the food that is imported (e.g. from Canada and the United States) is significantly cheaper, especially after

Jamaican farmers have paid the premiums of importing everything but labour and the sun to produce the same crops but at a higher cost (not to fail to mention the influence of subsidies in other countries which are disallowed as part of IFI lending conditionalities) (Black, 2001; Kendall and Petracco, 2009; Ministry, Berardi, and McGregor, 2009).

In light of all of this, Jamaican farmers and civil society more generally have not been silent on these issues, and this ought not to be of surprise: if nothing else, the fact that agriculture employs roughly one in every five working Jamaicans but accounts for only a sixth of total GDP points to the economic pressures under which agricultural producers in Jamaica work and live. One Jamaican farmer interviewed by Stephanie Black (2001) stated: "It's an insult to our dignity, not be able to produce and sell in your own market, at home," while another farmer shared the same critique of the IMF conditionalities, demanding "This is our country, our turf! Give us back our market." Pointedly yet another farmer interviewed in Black's (2001) investigation explained, "The problem is that we are competing with an unfair situation," then proceeded to list some of the factors, including not only differential rules around subsidies, but also access to equipment (e.g. machines versus machetes), capital (e.g. under IMF dictates, Jamaica could not lend to their own farmers except at double the interest rate of the IMF loan – this being anywhere between 19-40% depending on the loan year), etc. Clearly then, the inequalities and desperation that has resulted have frustrated many Jamaican nationals.

Still, while IFIs like IMF and the World Bank have openly acknowledged that their loans to Jamaica have "achieved neither development nor poverty reduction" (excerpt taken from a confidential document by the World Bank, as quoted in Black, 2001), and even though the World Bank has since advocated (albeit rather ironically considering the

organization's track record) that the "exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs" is absolutely essential[16] to good governance[17] (1989, p60), they of course have not ceased to participate in Jamaica's ever-growing debt burden. So, though none the measures which were promoted by the lending IFIs have helped Jamaica get out of its debt bind, Jamaica's national debt continues to grow at an alarming rate; meanwhile its ability to self-sustain is rapidly diminishing (Black, 2001; CIA, 2012). Coming full circle once more, as Manley so stressed, "Look at every IMF country today and tell me which countries has a really good hospital service, a good education system, a good anything!" (Black, 2001); instead of faring better, all of the countries continued to be "trapped in that old colonial crisis of finance" (Manley, as quoted in Black, 2001), making the analogy of IFIs to "late colonial authorities" (de Haan, 2009, p91), heavily invested in the oppression of the poor (Black, 2001), seemingly appropriate, or at the very least arguably valid. Perhaps it is no wonder then why the government entered into the bilateral agreement(s) with Canada to be part of the SAWP, or why tens of thousands of Jamaicans "temporarily" migrant on a cyclical basis in search of better prospects for their families.

Transnational labour migration and the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program specifically

> "*Although temporary workers have a place in the economy, the existing Canadian policies exclude them from having a place in the nation*" (Gordon, 2004, p16).

In an age of globalization, transnational labour migration has grown significantly. The International Labour Organization (ILO) (1994, 2006) for instance reported that the

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[16] And yet, "To this day, the crisis in the UN is the continuing demand of so-called Third World for a voice in the strategic IMF policy so that they become sensitive to our interests" (Michel Manley, as quoted in Black, 2001).

[17] Given the scope of this thesis, I have not given focused consideration to good governance per se, but for more details on this topic I would highly recommend Grindle, 2007; Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith, 2005; Jenkins, 2001; Weiss, 2000; etc.

number of people migrating around the world increased by 50% between 1965 and 1990, and then rapidly increased again by an additional 50% between 1991 and 2005. Additionally, the remarkable growth in the sheer number of people crossing borders has not been all: the number of migrant sending and receiving country rose considerably by the end of the 20th century as well. More precisely, the number of nations of migration origin almost doubled, rising from 29 to 55, and the number of receiving countries (to which workers were migrating) grew to 67 from a previous 39 (ILO, 1994).

In critically analyzing these trends, it is arguably crucial to acknowledge that the most dramatic increases in transnational labour migration have coincided with the institutionalization of neoliberalist economic policies, such as structural adjustment which wreaked havoc on many developing nations' economies throughout the 1980s and 1990s (de Haan, 2009; Kendall and Petracco, 2009; Harvey, 2007; Feldmann and Olea, 2004; Murillo, 2000; Munck, 1994). Specifically, similar to the case of Jamaica as just discussed, in many developing nations where such policies were introduced, unemployment increased, and inflation rose alarmingly which meant that wages become relatively worthless as exorbitant sums of money were required to purchase basic necessities (Anderson and Cottringer, 1988; Black, 2001). Furthermore, turning to International Financial Institutions (IFIs) for relief, the resultant conditionalities demanded that governments cut public spending, thus withdrawing social and labour services such as pensions and unemployment assistance, along with supports for education, health services, etc (Munck, 1994; Bird and Mosley, 2003; Rodrik, 2006; de Haan, 2009), leaving affected nations and their citizens often in increasingly pressured situations.

Although for the most part the economic conditions which popularized this period are not as dire today as they were then, overall the general trend of low wages in developing countries has continued whereas in contrast, wages have tended to steadily increase in developed nations (Feldmann and Olea, 2004). In the case of Jamaica for instance, as of January 6th 2014 the national government raised the minimum wage rate from J$5000 to J$5600 per 40 hour work week (Cunningham, 2013). For the sake of comparison, once converted to Canadian dollars, J$5600 is equivalent to roughly C$57.02 per week[18], or C$1.43 per hour (compared to C$10.25 per hour in Ontario). Not surprisingly then, the necessary search for higher wages has meant that more and more individuals - in Jamaica and elsewhere - are making the brave sacrifice to travel great distances, including leaving their homelands and familial networks behind, to attain ever-elusive economic security. In other words, transnational labour migration has increasingly become a common livelihood strategy (as connoted in the statistics that roughly four of every five of the more than 200 million men and women crossing borders every year at the turn of the century did so in search of better work opportunities specifically[19]) (ILO, 1999; Feldmann and Olea, 2004; Wickramasekara, 2006).

Pertinent to this thesis, this astonishing surge of transnational migration has not overlooked Canada either. In fact, (im)migration has been the basis for Canada's development as a nation for centuries, though this has begun to shift in very important ways. Specifically, whereas the Canadian government has traditionally amended its permanent

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[18] Again, it is absolutely crucial to keep in mind that the cost of living, that is of basic necessities including food staples, are comparable to the Canadian context however. For instance, a loaf of bread in Canada in 2012 was roughly C$2.89, compared to J$270 or C$2.75 in Jamaica (Xpatulator.com, 2013).

[19] The other one in five transnational migrants represents those individuals forced to leave their homelands on account of dire circumstances including "famine, natural disasters and environmental degradation, and violent conflict or persecution" (ILO, 1999, p3).

immigrant policies in an attempt to meet its labour needs, the last half century has seen a marked change in this practice: from providing opportunities for permanent resettlement, which have fallen out of political favour, to an emphasis on temporary labour migration instead (Leach, 2013; Faraday, 2012; Hennebry, 2009; Basok, 2008; Ferguson, 2007; Preibisch 2007). The Canadian Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) is one example of this latter practice, and as such, is actually considered an acclaimed model for managed temporary labour migration programs worldwide (Sorenson, 2008c; Basok, 2007; McLaughlin, 2007; Sharma, 2001). On this note, a concise history of the SAWP as well as admittedly very brief review of the relevant literature of the program forms the basis for the remainder of this section of the chapter.

On a global scale, Canada is a leading country in terms of agricultural production and moreover food product exports (Gibb, 2006). Paradoxically, among other factors, perhaps precisely because this work demands arduous physical labour paired with exposure to other hazards (i.e. operation of heavy machinery, toxic chemicals including herbicides and pesticides, etc) yet is generally poorly compensated (by domestic standards mainly)[20], year after year for decades Canada has faced labour shortages in its agricultural sector (Gibb, 2006). As a result, by mid-century, farm owners across Canada organized and petitioned the government to design a new labour scheme for the nation's farming industry. Namely, growers suggested that the Canadian government consider acquiring foreign labourers rather than relying exclusively on a consistently unreliable and insufficient domestic workforce (Basok, 2008; McQueen, 2006). The government responded by establishing the Canadian Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program in 1966 via a bilateral agreement with newly

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[20] As a result of fierce global competition (e.g. in light of North America Free Trade Agreement or NAFTA), both small-scale and large farms are under tremendous pressure to keep their economic costs as low as possible, a large part of which is labour costs of course (Preibisch, 2007; Gibb, 2006).

independent Jamaica, and that year 264 temporary employment visas were issued so that

Jamaican nationals could be permitted to work on Canadian farms (McLaughlin, 2009;

Preibisch, 2007, 2004; Gibb, 2006; Basok, 2002; Knowles, 1997; Cecil and Ebanks, 1991;

Larkin, 1989). Deemed successful by the government, over the next few years bilateral

agreements were also established with Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Organization

of the Eastern Caribbean States, and almost a decade later Mexico was added to the list of

SAWP sending nations as well (McLaughlin, 2007; *Ibid*). Today, almost 50 years later,

approximately 40,000 mainly male[21] transnational labourers from the Caribbean and Mexico

are employed in Canada's agricultural sector each year (UFCW, 2011); in fact, the short-term

migration of Caribbean and Mexican workers through the Canadian Seasonal Agricultural

Workers Program has been essential to the stability and thus security of Canada's agricultural

sector (and therefore the nation's food security too) (McLaughlin, 2007).

Unfortunately however, while the Canadian government promotes and recruits

"foreign agricultural workers"[22] using a rhetoric of this scheme being a win-win-win

opportunity (that is, temporary migration is intended to provide otherwise unavailable

financial benefits for Caribbean workers, while also generating remittances and relieving the

employment burden in the sending countries, and meet labour needs in Canada), the literature

suggests this is not (nor has it been) the reality[23]. Generally speaking, activists and scholars

alike have been highly critical of the program. In particular, their advocacy efforts have

largely revolved around the systemic and structural inequalities inherent to the SAWP-related

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[21] Only 3% of seasonal agricultural workers in Canada under the SAWP are women (Preibisch, 2004).

[22] This phrase appears in quotations because this is an official classification according to Canadian immigration policy (e.g. see http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/sawp.shtml).

[23] To be explicit, similar to other transnational labour migration trends (Feldmann and Olea, 2004), and reflective of globalized patterns of inequality (Nef, 1999), the Canadian economy (and to a lesser extent but nonetheless: farm owners) disproportionately reap the benefits of the cheap labour, tirelessly hard work, and countless sacrifices made by Caribbean ad Mexican seasonal agricultural workers employed on Canadian farms each year.

policies and practices, and consequently, concerns regarding workers' physical, social, political, and economic vulnerability and moreover exploitation. For instance, with regards to the workers' physical health and safety, a lack of adequate protective measures is evident in the fact that there are roughly 1,500 serious work-related injuries each year (in addition to countless other chronic physical occupational stresses) (McLaughlin, 2007, 2009). Worst yet, the alarming number of worker deaths is of paramount worry as well: there are typically over 100 seasonal agricultural worker deaths across Canada every year[24] (McLaughlin, 2009; UFCW, 2011). In each instance, it is important to remember that the losses endured due to injury and worse still, the loss of each human life, affects countless other people's lives as well, particularly the families of such individuals and, equally as important, that these tragedies can and must be actively avoided altogether.

Overall, in addition to the aforementioned, scholars and advocates have also expressed concern regarding access to health care services more generally. For the most part, although seasonal agricultural workers pay taxes to the Canadian government and thus are supposed to be able to use provincial health services as needed, their marginal status - geographically, socially and legally - means that few have adequate access. Moreover, there seems to be confusion (from the workers themselves to their employers to physicians) regarding the health care rights of seasonal agricultural workers (McLaughlin, 2007). In fact, the marginalization of seasonal agricultural workers (especially geographically and socially) is often included among advocates' critiques too. Needless to say, being that seasonal

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[24] In view of the sanctity of all human life, even one death would be one too many (although numerous reports did suggest that Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers are subjected to much greater risks for injury and death than their Canadian counterparts would be, e.g. see CCFR, 2012, UFCW, 2011, McLaughlin, 2009, 2007, etc).

agricultural workers live[25] and labour on farms in rural Canada, workers frequently report

feeling lonely and extremely isolated (geographically specifically) (Preibisch, 2004; Gibb,

2006). This sense of being cut off is further aggravated by practical barriers, such as limited

transportation infrastructure in rural communities to the social barriers, such as negative

perceptions of migrants (e.g. rooted in racism and xenophobia), and language barriers for the

Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers with strong accents and even more so for Spanish-

speaking Mexican workers. Still, in addition to all of this, since workers are not permitted to

bring their families with them and are thus away from their most important social networks

for up to eight months at a time *on a cyclical basis*, these vital relationships are often strained

(related to which are definite health, e.g. emotional/psychological, consequences too), of

course adding to their sense of social insecurity (Preibisch 2004; Scantlebury, 2009;

McLaughlin 2007; Faraday, 2012).

Despondently, the vast majority of transnational labourers nevertheless remain silent

about the hardships and conditions they face, work related or otherwise, since the SAWP is

structured in such a way that their best chances of returning (and thus earning) the following

year depends on being "named"/requested by their employers (Scantlebury, 2009). To

elaborate, the SAWP issues work permits to employers, rather than workers, which means

that the Caribbean and Mexican men and women who labour in Canada under this program

feel immense pressure to conform and comply to appease their employers, even when doing

so risks their own wellbeing and safety (McLaughlin, 2009, 2007; Preibisch, 2007, 2004;

Faraday, 2012; CCFR, 2012). Moreover, because their permits are tied to their employers,

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[25] Under the bilateral agreements, employers are required to provide housing for their employees, and of course this is almost always on-site accommodations (Faraday, 2012). On this topic, both workers themselves and advocacy organization alike frequently report that these accommodations are poor and in some instances entirely inadequate, again underlining the exploitation of Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers' vulnerabilities (e.g. see CCFR, 2012).

when employees are abused, they cannot (legally that is) simply leave to look for better working conditions elsewhere (McLaughlin, 2009, 2007; Preibisch, 2007, 2004; Faraday, 2012; CCFR, 2012). Unquestionably, this aspect of the SAWP policy increases the workers' vulnerability to exploitation tremendously.

Furthermore, although the federal government administers the SAWP, responsibility to ensure and enforce the protection of the workers' human and labour rights (including workplace safety, the adequacy of accommodations according to the relevant housing standards, etc) is shared between provincial and municipal governments (Faraday, 2012; Preibisch 2010; McLaughlin 2009). Reflective of this disjunction in governing the multiple legal aspects of this program (e.g. the respective enforcement officers are rarely seen on farms to ensure employer compliance), the applicable standards, regulations and laws (of which workers are often unaware) are either poorly monitored or unenforced when the employers commitment is likewise insufficient (Faraday, 2012; Gibb, 2006). As a consequence, in too many instances protections under the SAWP are little more than symbolic (thus in practice, workers are yet again not appropriately protected). Worst still, seasonal agricultural workers in Ontario are legally precluded from the right to form unions (though they can form associations, such as worker groups) and thus are politically made even more vulnerable in terms of their abilities to raise awareness about and seek the necessary protections for their physical, social, political and economic security (Gibb, 2006). Additionally, the ubiquitous threat of immediate repatriation, which according to the contract can occur for any reason deemed fitting to the employer and does not have to answer to due process (McLaughlin 2009, 2007; Faraday, 2012; Feldmann and Olea, 2004) serves to ensure

that this and all the aforementioned unspoken rules of appeasing one's employer are indisputably followed.

Lastly, although the wages are arguably higher than what the workers would earn back home, SAWP participants are typically only paid minimum wage and then this income is subject to taxation and other deductions (e.g. employment insurance, pension, etc) by both countries, the social and economic benefits of which are almost never provided to the workers or his/her families even when they otherwise ought to qualify[26] (Faraday, 2012; McLaughlin, 2009). Additionally, more than underpaid, in terms of their wage rates, seasonal agricultural workers are also consistently overworked (i.e. the average workweek is 6.5 days reportedly, and 16 hour work days are not uncommon during harvest[27]) but they are rarely appropriately compensated for their overtime (McLaughlin, 2007, 2009; Gibb, 2006; Faraday, 2012; CCFR, 2012). Also, the work contracts are typically five to eight months in length, and because of the cyclical nature of the SAWP, seasonal agricultural workers are not able to hold other consistent jobs in their home nations; their unguaranteed on-and-off-again involvement in Canada's agricultural economy is their primary and/or sole source of economic sustenance. Lastly, but certainly not least, returning full circle, in circumstances where workers risk everything to earn in Canada and end up seriously injured, their future prospects for economic security can be permanently devastated (e.g. if their injuries mean that they do not qualify to return to Canada, are not able to do similar hard labour in their home countries, and cannot access disability benefits). Of course, it ought to go without

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[26] To clarify, I am not critiquing the fact that their income is taxed so much as the fact that they rarely benefit from the social protection programs into which they are paying. In this case, it is my opinion that even more than ensuring access to these supports when needed, the huge sums of money that Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers are paying into the Canadian economy through taxes should be reinvested into supports and services to meet their needs more specifically.

[27] Again, in terms of the interconnectivity between the various forms of (in)security, chronic exhaustion as a result of being routinely overworked can have very serious health implications (e.g. fatal accidents) too.

saying that the situation is much worse when a worker who comes to Canada is killed as a result of dangerous working conditions, leaving the surviving family members destitute since individuals who participate in the SAWP are often their family's primary income-earner. Taken together, reviewing the relevant literature leads me to conclude that even SAWP workers' sense of economic security is in actuality terribly insecure too.

Altogether, in analyzing the physical, social, political and economic conditions of the SAWP, although there is comparably less research dedicated specifically to the experiences of seasonal agricultural workers' social exclusion (and moreover inclusion, the focal point of this research project), an increasing number of scholars and activists agree that this is actually a critical factor. Specifically, the argument here is that the aforementioned vulnerabilities faced by migrant workers is predicated on their exclusion. Scholars such as Leach (2013), Preibisch (2010), Blackwell, Smith and Sorenson (2008), Foster (2005), Sharma (2001), and so forth remind us that the SAWP, and the Canadian government's shift from immigration-based to temporary migration-based policies more broadly, was about racial exclusion precisely; that is, the official dogma at the time was unquestionably rooted in an ethnocentric, xenophobic and racist value system: ultimately, "Canada was meant to be a place set aside for a specific and narrowly defined group" (Foster, 2005, p.x). This particular brand of nationalism then, as an ideology and discourse as well as an instituted set of accompanying rights and privileges, has had tremendous implications for both those systematically included and moreover excluded thusly.

Particularly, through this analysis it is apparent that materially and ideologically, borders and nationalism are double-edged swords by which communities are sliced along lines of belonging. Consequently, while they provide the benefit of a distinct sense of

community and identity on the one hand, both are socially and politically constructed in such ways that the undeniable underlying truth is that they are ultimately inherently exclusionary. Nandita Sharma (2001) for instance explains that "borders are both physical *and* existential; they define material as well as ideological grounds" (p417). Accordingly, rather than recognizing the shared humanity of all people as central, nationalism as an extension likewise inspires loyalty only to one's national group while simultaneously encouraging the subjugation of non-citizens (also see Blackwell, Smith and Sorenson, 2008). This in turn has very practical and real consequence:

> …categorizing a person as a citizen or a migrant worker is an ideological practice, for the exploitation of migrant workers is concealed and produced through the notion that citizens can expect certain rights and entitlements that non-citizens can not and that this expectation is perfectly 'normal'… As a result, it appears perfectly ordinary that those categorized as non-citizens (migrant workers, for example) would be denied those rights and protections that Canadian citizens are seen as solely entitled to. Why should migrant workers get the same rights as citizens? They are, after all, migrant workers. The circularity of the argument ensnared migrant workers (and others classified as non-citizens) in a particularly vicious way. (Sharma, 2001, p435)

Ultimately then, since migrant workers are categorized as non-immigrants and moreover non-citizens, their treatment - socially and politically - is characterized by their difference. Importantly though, as Sharma (2001) and numerous other scholars point out, this difference is not merely a connotation of diversity but rather of inequality, since the operation of the binary category as well as the SAWP policies more specifically mean that individuals admitted as temporary migrant agricultural workers are not permitted and/or protected by rather *de facto* or *de jure* social, economic or political rights associated with Canadian citizenship.

Still, in spite of this and all of the above noted resulting challenges, thousands of workers have returned year after year on five to eight month contracts for decades, and as

many authorities on the topic acknowledge, thousands more across the Caribbean and

Mexico "still vie for spots in the SAWP on a seasonal basis despite the recognized

hardships" (Scantlebury, 2009, p10). Perhaps this should not be surprising: after all, as

previously stated, the research suggests that the vast majority of individuals who opt to

participate in labour migration programs do so as a livelihood strategy, to improved their

economic security. For this reason, candidates seemingly decide that financially, the benefits

of transnational labour migration (e.g. compared to the current economic situation in their

homelands) outweigh the potential costs[28]. In other words, whether conscious or

subconscious, individuals who participate in transnational labour migration programs (such

as the SAWP) chose the potential for economic benefits over everything else, including their

physical, social and political security (which arguably speaks to the vast inequalities that

exist globally[29], which cause people to have to make such drastic decisions), all of which

have the added cost of effecting his/her sense of self and well-being too.

Contextualizing the Research Process: Linking ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods

"Wha fall pon head drop pon shoulda" (Jamaican proverb)

"What we study, analyze, and write, and how we study, analyze, and write is integrally connected to our methodological and theoretical lens" (Pillow and Mayo, 2007, p157).

In the same way that ethical considerations in research ought to be far more reaching

than the technical process of gaining clearance from the institutional ethics board (DeVault

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[28] This assumption seems to be supported by (although largely implicitly) scholars in the literature (e.g. see Scantlebury, 2009; McLaughlin, 2009, 2007; Gibb, 2006; etc).
[29] Or as Grabb (2007) puts it, the "global and international nature of social inequality" (p201).

and Gross, 2007), considering one's research approach likewise ought to be more than a matter of selecting and employing specific methods. With this conviction at the forefront of my mind and likewise at the centre of the theoretical debate taken up in this thesis, theories of research practices and their implications for people and communities have formed the foundation for this thesis experience for me personally. Subsequently, more than a matter of mere semantics, being ever cognizant of the distinct significance of ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods has informed my modest attempt at an anti-oppressive evaluation and research project from start to final product.

Ontology → Epistemology → Methodology → Methods

Above all, Sandra Harding (1987) and Sharlene Hesse-Biber (2007) have been particularly influential in shaping my understanding of the interconnections of the aforementioned. That is, in reading their works, I have come to understand ontology as, broadly, one's theories of being, and epistemology more specifically as one's theories of knowing (and knowledge). More importantly, both delineate sets of assumptions about the social world and in turn influence who we are, the positions we assume and roles we play, and naturally, not only *what* we study but also the methodologies and in turn methods we engage in as part of the research process. Methodologies, then, provide a theoretical framework for *how* we study, in which case methods are the precise techniques and tools for gathering the research data specifically (Harding 1987b; Hesse-Biber, 2007; also see Lykes and Coquillon, 2007; Pillow and Mayo, 2007; DeVault and Gross, 2007; etc).

Thus, in an attempt to discern and deconstruct the multiple layers of my research practice, I identified that assumptions related to humanistic values (e.g. a profound belief in human potential/agency and value, individually and collectively), as well as ideals pertaining to equality and inclusion (e.g. democratic participation and decision making), and a pragmatic ontology which begged to be satisfied through an action- or change-based focus formed the three foundational pillars of my approach to research. More specifically, a personal and professional commitment to anti-oppression framed my thinking and guided my approach almost immediately. On this note however, as a point of clarification, given the understanding that identities are complexly multifaceted, and layered in such a manner that all forms of power and oppression operate simultaneously and therefore must also be examined and challenged simultaneously (Pillow and Mayo, 2007, p156; also see Hesse-Biber, 2007; Brisolara and Seigart, 2007), following in the footsteps of women of colour feminists, such as Patricia Hill Collins (1998), Naples (2003), hooks (2004), Denzin and Lincoln (2005), Smith (1987, 1991), etc, I have come to see feminism, like anti-racism, as one of many intersecting social justice missions. In light of this, while the methodological and epistemological literature which shaped my research practice over the course of this evaluation and thesis was largely feminist by definition, I selected to use 'anti-oppression' as a conceptual framework and reference for the more general emancipatory goals of this project. In short then, anti-oppression (which I would situate within the larger context of critical social theory, and which for me has largely been informed by anti-racist, feminist scholars) provided a methodological and epistemological lens for carrying out my research.

Also arising from the consulted literature, aligned with standpoint epistemology (which is arguably inherently anti-oppressive) my inclination has always been to employ methods

which genuinely seek to allow typically marginalized knowers to speak for themselves, to name their own thought, emotions and experiences, and in doing so, to (co-)construct academic reflects of their lives as they see them (Dodson, 1998; Smith, 2007). Not surprisingly then, I gravitated towards qualitative research methods, which are generally more conducive to the "preservation of participants' individual input and particular context than many deindividualizing positivist methods" (Lykes and Coquillon, 2007, p314). That is, a deeply entrenched part of the set of assumptions with which I come to research (and community-based practices more generally) is: (i) that "people are the knowers, the subjects of knowledge, rather than the objects of study" (Smith, 2007, p409), and equally as important (ii) that "knowledge is produced and mediated through lived experience" (Hesse-Biber and Piatelli, 2007, p147-148). In turn, an inductive approach to building, rather than imposing, theory based on lived experiences (e.g. grounded theory), along with a theoretical understanding of knowledge as situated and socially constructed, informed by a symbolic interactionist sociology (i.e. an implicit use of George Herbert Mead's concept of perspective that emphasizes partiality, situatedness, and multiplicity) (e.g. see Clarke, 2007; Brisolara and Seigart, 2007; Lykes and Coquillon, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Crooks, 2001; Haraway 1991, 1997; Hawkesworth, 1989; Smith, 1979; Blumer, 1969; etc) set the basic parameters for the project.

Furthermore, to the extent that I agree with feminist social scientists (i.e. within sociology among other disciplines) who have rejected the notion that scientist (even feminist scientists) can be "experts" in the lives of others, I played close attention to their emphasis on the need for meaningful engagement and participation from the community involved in the research process, particularly in co-constructing the meaning of issues of importance to them

(Stanley and Wise, 1989; Brisolara and Seigart, 2007). In light of this, my approach to this research has prioritized not only a commitment to conduct research which re-presents the individuals involved on their own terms[30], and their ideas and concerns according to their own perspectives, but moreover through research which is meaningful to the group involved, or better yet, which serves to meet any number of their (self-)identified needs and goals foremost. In fact, in spending time immersed in methodological theory, I have come to accept that if one claims to be practicing anti-oppression (and decolonizing research more specifically), it is absolutely imperative that the research benefit the researched community directly[31] (Stanley and Wise, 1989; Smith, 1999; Borland, 2007; Brisolara and Seigart, 2007). As a result, a participatory-action research approach seemed most fitting for this assignment.

To elaborate on this rationale, as Lykes and Coquillon (2007) explain, epistemologically as well as methodologically, participatory and action research inherently challenges the (illusion of) neutrality and objectivity which has traditionally characterized much of the empirical social scientific research by instead "emphasiz[ing] subjectivity and involvement throughout the research process and striv[ing] for consensual validation through data collection and analysis formulated around local priorities" (p298). On this latter point especially, central to this approach is an understanding that personal, professional and institutional agendas must be checked, and sometimes altogether dismissed (a critical point to which I will return in the next chapter), in the interest of generating knowledge and action which serve the community (Martin, 1996; Khanna, 1996; Lykes and Coquillon, 2007). That

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[30] That stated, I strove to write in 'third voice' (discussed in the following chapter) so as to best guide against the multiple vulnerabilities experienced by seasonal agricultural workers (as per their repeatedly communicated concerns).

[31] In the next chapter, I elaborate on how this commitment meant that I had to completely reconsider my original research ideas.

is, this methodology seeks to "create participatory processes that tap into and engage local knowledge systems toward emancipatory practices" (Lykes and Coquillon, 2007, p298) in such a manner that knowledge generation through collaborative learning is as important as creating opportunities for social change/ transformative action out of this consciousness raising (each facet of which is yet again aligned with an anti-oppressive paradigm too). Ultimately then, Lykes and Coquillon's (2007) summary of the major components of this community-engaged research model seems to best connote why it fit so well with my own ontological and epistemological stances (as noted previously):

> Participatory-action research seeks to recognize and value the multiple intelligences, diverse ways of knowing, and frequently contradictory and sometimes silent or silenced voices among us toward developing 'just enough' trust to initiate a coresearch process. It requires we create 'safe enough' spaces that strive to be inclusive and supportive of these developing relationships, valuing our strengths and capacities while being sufficiently challenging to engage us in reflective critical practices that problematize the matrices of power, privilege, and domination that circulate among us and in our social worlds. (p301)

Namely, among other significant features, of particular importance then is that not only does this approach emphasize both the process as well as the outcomes of the research itself (which I have attempted to mirror in the presentation of critical reflections on *both* the outcomes and the process itself as part of this dually storied thesis), but exemplified in the above quote is arguably one of the most important topics in much of the critical theories on research practice: reflexivity, that is, critically reflecting on, examining, and exploring the nature of the research process and one's roles and responsibilities within the research endeavour (Lykes and Coquillon, 2007; Pillow and Mayo, 2007).

Indeed, being of the theoretical persuasion that subjectivity permeates all research investigation, from the questions asked (including how they are asked) to the re-presentation

of data in response to these questions (and thus, that the pursuit of objectivity in research is a mythical goal), I consider reflexive practice to be absolutely imperative to all investigatory projects. Similarly, Sprague and Zimmerman (2004) for instance write that alternative/critical approaches to research required special attention to the nature of one's communication (e.g. in form and content), as well as the manner in which one interactions with others. That is, both of these concerns require reflexivity and critical self-interrogation. Correspondingly, standpoint theory also becomes particular relevant in this instance, especially to the extent that this theoretical viewpoint speaks to researchers with social privileges and consequently relatively more power in relation to those with whom they ally in their emancipatory research. bell hooks (2004) for example speaks to the crucial need for developing an understanding how one's positionality may influence/ is affecting the research and research process, particularly to ensure that one does not "reinscribe" Western traditions of oppression (p151). Above all, this reflexive practice demands the researcher constantly situates and resituates herself/ himself within her/his work (e.g. the research practice and methodology) in order to scrutinize how her/his behaviours, position(ality), and discursive choices potentially reproduce unequal power relations and the possible effect these have on the people involved in the research (Irwin, 2006; Botts, 2010). Not surprisingly then, given my active role within the community group as well as a facilitator and interviewer in the evaluation/research process, entertaining arguments that reflexivity is especially important in cases whereby one makes explicit use of herself (or himself) as a data source and instrument (Stanley and Wise, 1989; Brisolara and Seigart, 2007), I have been explicit about including reflexive practice as part of this experience, so much so that I have made it the second tale narrated throughout this thesis.

CHAPTER 2:
THE EVALUATION/RESEARCH PROCESS

Arising from the previous chapter, in review of the literature pertaining to the

Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program, the wealth of knowledge from scholars and activists

alike who highlighted concerns regarding the structural vulnerabilities and in some cases

exploitation of seasonal agricultural workers (i.e. physically, socially, politically, and

economically) was certainly most apparent. Indubitably concerned by these findings, perhaps

in light of my social work background, overall the relatively little attention paid to issues of

migrant workers' social exclusion/ inclusion (i.e. most often only noted in passing, if at all,

an observation also noted by Dr. Kerry Preibisch (2004)) in particular peaked my intellectual

as well as practice-based (e.g. in community-development) curiosity especially. Secondly, I

also noted a significant shift in the relevant literature towards a greater focus on the

experiences of Mexican seasonal agricultural workers, mirroring a change at the turn of the

century where the number of Mexican workers coming to Canada under the SAWP began to

exceed the number of workers from the Caribbean (Preibisch and Binford, 2007). Thus, in

light of these two observations, I set out with the goal of conducting my thesis research

specifically on examining the experiences and importance of social inclusion for Caribbean

seasonal agricultural workers in Southern Ontario, where roughly 80-85% of seasonal

agricultural workers to Canada settle 'temporarily' (that is, for up to eight months of the year,

sometimes year after year) (McLaughlin, 2007; Preibisch, 2007, 2004).

Still, because ultimately my primary goal in conducting a thesis research project was

to practice community-engaged scholarship with anti-oppression, advocacy and inclusion as

central, underlying components of the experience first and foremost, I knew that this would

not be either a straightforward or easy task. Moreover, since methodologically speaking such

an approach requires flexibility (i.e. given the inductive nature of the research process) as

much as active listening, humility and reflexivity, I realized that as I entered the field, my

own research agenda would necessarily transform (as was I likewise transformed in and by

the process, which will be elaborated upon in further chapters). This journey – the journey of

grounding my research in community-based research practice – is the topic of this chapter[32].

Choosing: How the research focus was decided upon

> *Fonow and Cook (1991) note that key to feminist ethnography is a 'tendency to use already given situations both as the focus of investigation and as a means of collecting data' (p11). Fonow and Cook argue that feminist approaches to research are thus necessarily more creative, spontaneous, and open to improvisation, stumbling across the unexpected and being willing to follow where the unexpected leads. Such an approach yields research with a focus on the everyday world, on the lived experiences close at hand to us as researchers, and often results in the researcher feeling like the research found her or him rather than the researcher choosing the research. Researching in this way often means that the research will be changed from what the researcher expected (Delgado-Gaitan 1993; Pillow 2004).* (Pillow and Mayo, 2007, p161-162)

Indeed, much like what Pillow and Mayo (2007) describe in the quote above, the nature

of this thesis also transformed over the course of the research process. Pertinent to this

chapter, the guiding questions in particular and directly related to this, the methods and my

methodology in some albeit lesser ways too, changed. For instance, when I prepared to

relocate to be part of the community in Niagara (what I thought would be the first of an

number of stops throughout South Ontario), I arrived with the intent to examine the

experiences of and importance placed on opportunities for social inclusion for Caribbean

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[32] Again, as a reminder, I have used Pillow and Mayo's (2007) stages – choosing, doing, analyzing/writing – of the research process as framework for this discussion.

seasonal agricultural workers, but as was mentioned previously, since my primary goal was

to work from an anti-oppressive, community-engaged paradigm, my own agendas had to be

checked (Martin, 1996; Khanna, 1996; Lykes and Coquillon, 2007), and in this case, in the

interest of generating knowledge and action which most meaningfully served the community,

altered. That is, the exact focus and scope of the guiding question shifted and narrowed to

meet the most pressing needs of this community (i.e. an assessment of CWOP in order to

strategically plan to strengthen the outreach effort, to the benefit of the Caribbean seasonal

agricultural workers it seeks to serve) specifically.

As per my original proposal, I set the very ambitious goal of addressing both a

discursive/ theoretical debate[33], as well as a number of matter-of-fact questions[34] regarding

individuals' (both migrant agricultural workers' and local volunteers') experiences of civil

society organizations involved in social inclusion efforts for Caribbean seasonal agricultural

workers. Broadly, to explore the growing number of community-based civil society

organizations' efforts (as noted by Preibisch 2007b), I wanted to purposely examine the

perceived successes as well as opportunities for improvement of some of the major outreach/

inclusion programs. My hope in setting out to uncover worker/ participant-informed answers

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[33] Namely, in conducting a review of the literature I noticed that while the dominant discourse/narrative was that seasonal agricultural workers come to Canada (and moreover continually return despite the popularly reported harsh realities of working under the SAWP) because of economic necessity (e.g. McLaughlin 2009; Gibb 2006; Knowles 1997; etc[3333]), Sherry Larkin's thesis research (1989) offered testimonies of Jamaicans who expressed that a desire to build transnational relationships was an equally important piece of/to their rationale for choosing to seek employment opportunities abroad. In light of curiosity sparked by Larkin's unique finding, I set out to speak with Caribbean workers about *why* they migrate temporarily to labour on Canadian farms, with the hope of learning more about if and how a desire for transnational friendships factor into an expected variety of reasonings.

[34] My research questions in this respect were: Foremost, what are the social inclusion opportunities available to Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers in Southern Ontario? What are Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers' perceptions of these efforts? How have the civil society organizations served to meet their (the Caribbean men and women's) social inclusion/ relational wants/ needs? How could these efforts be improved (this question applies both to specific programs as well as the opportunities more generally, e.g. in terms of gaps in the latter instance)? And potentially, why do some Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers choose not to participate (if/ when their coworkers do)?

to these queries was to produce research which would serve the academic and moreover civil society communities engaged in seasonal agricultural worker movements, ultimately to the benefit of the Caribbean men and women themselves. In this sense, even more than perhaps being able to add to the literature on the importance of opportunity for social inclusion (a noted theoretical debate[35]), or the shift from social exclusion to increased social inclusion more generally, in exploring the perceived strengths and weaknesses of prominent organized attempts to foster increased social inclusion, I hoped to be able to provide legitimate academic (research) support for these and future outreach programs (e.g. for the purposes of funding applications, new partnerships/programs, etc).

However, as has been elaborated upon in the previous chapter (i.e. see the section on Contextualizing the Research Process: Linking ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods), given my epistemological commitments and the ways in which this has informed my approach to conducting research, I purposefully sought input and feedback (e.g. confirmation, rejection or suggestions) from the CWOP and Caribbean seasonal agricultural worker communities regarding my aforementioned proposal. Serendipitously, in the process of meeting with Caribbean migrant workers and local community members engaged in outreach efforts, I learned that the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), a prominent relief and development organization, was in the process of seeking a summer student intern to conduct research perfectly aligned with my proposed thesis project (i.e. similar research questions and methods, but in the Niagara region exclusively). To my delight, upon applying and being interviewed for the internship position, I was hired as a Migrant Worker

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[35] My original argument in this instance was that a mistake has been made in that the importance that some Caribbean individuals who chose to work temporarily in Canadian agriculture place on opportunities for meaningful social connections has been largely overlooked in the existing literature. Consequently, I had originally hoped to be able to find support to reinforce Larkin's (1989) findings and thus re-center this narrative and thus argument.

Engagement Intern for May through August 2013 (thought I remained in the community for two additional month after this), solidifying my engagement within these communities.

Specifically, MCC had been called upon by its constituencies (i.e. local congregations and members affiliated with the Mennonite community) to mobilize efforts to reach out to and better serve migrant workers in Niagara. Prior to MCC's involvement this past summer, there were three types of outreach efforts to the seasonal agricultural workers in the region: an annual Workers Welcome Concert in its sixth season, a pastoral care ministry in its second season, and third and most prominent, the Caribbean Workers Outreach Program (CWOP), a multi-denominational (faith-based) collective which has served Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers in the region for over two decades by offering spiritual and social supports. Facing a number of very real challenges over the last few years however, including critical illnesses and the passing of founding members, changes in leadership, a dwindling volunteer base, funding cut-backs, etc, CWOP warmly welcomed assistance from MCC, and partnering together, specifically requested help in terms of more (wo)man-power. Moreover, upon hearing about my research interests, the CWOP Chair personally invited an evaluation of their efforts given the vantage point of new members' outsider perspective in an effect to strengthen its work. Naturally then, with the peace of mind from knowing that I would be an expectantly active, engaged member in the CWOP community for the next few months (e.g. given my role as a representative of a partner organization), and equally as important to me, in response to such a pointed invite, I decided to refine the parameters of my research focus to an evaluation of CWOP distinctively. Hence, modified, the evaluation of CWOP serves as a case-study example of a renown social inclusion effort for migrant workers in Niagara-on-the-Lake (narrowed from Southern Ontario more broadly), and to Jamaican workers

particularly since only Jamaicans participated in the church services this past season. In

short, it was decided upon, conversationally, that in light of the three key learning objectives

desired by CWOP leadership, the CWOP participant-informed evaluation would focus on the

following three research questions: What are the perceived key strengths of the Caribbean

Workers Outreach Program? What are the perceptions of the challenges, or limitations, or

areas for future growth and development of the outreach program? And thirdly, in imagining

the outreach program functioning at its best, what specific suggestions for improvements

would CWOP participants recommend?

Doing: How the evaluation/research was conducted

    Again, given the value I place on community-engaged scholarship and an interest in

anti-oppression-infused participatory and action research methodology specifically, I

approached this experience keenly attentive to power and *how* knowledge is uncovered and

re-presented (e.g. throughout the evaluation process as well as in writing this thesis, which is

the topic of the third section below). Of utmost importance to me then has always been

honouring people as knowledgeable, active agents and moreover full human beings, rather

than passive objects to be studied (Hesse-Biber and Piatelli, 2007). Subsequently, while my

own experience of being immersed in the Niagara, CWOP and Caribbean seasonal

agricultural worker communities more broadly was certainly a source of knowledge in the

evaluation (e.g. through ethnographic and participant observation field notes), it was much

more important to me that I find genuine, meaningful ways to involve members from the

CWOP community in the assessment. Therefore, seeking to make this a truly community-

based and engaged review of the outreach's strengths, challenges and potential opportunities

in moving forward, above all I sought the testimonies, narratives and critical thoughts and reflections of both local volunteers and moreover the Jamaican men and women themselves through interview and focus group discussions[36], and then and only then, triangulated this information with my own ethnographic observations.

In other words, with scholarship on methodology as my guide, the 'doing' of this research was intended to solicit a collaborative, participatory evaluation: one which "[engaged] a wide variety of individuals as real participants in a critical discussion of the evaluation and related issues" (Brisolara and Seigart, 2007, p283), so as to ensure a truly anti-oppressive and ultimately emancipatory knowledge building experience, where meaning is co-created through "reciprocity and negotiation" (Hesse-Biber, 2007, p15; DeVault and Gross, 2007; Lykes and Coquillon, 2007; Naples, 2003; Paget, 1983). Specifically, while the feedback which formed the basis of the evaluation was gathered primarily through both open-ended and semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with the Jamaican participants as well as with local (Canadian) volunteers, an equally important part of my methodological approach was to include some of the Jamaican participants in the interpretation and analysis of the data as well. More than being a matter of opportunity to clarify issues of literal and cultural translation (though it certainly served me well in this respect), and even more than being a procedural attempt towards creating alternative modes of inclusion in the research process itself (though it served as this too), these repeated "member-checks" (DeVault and Gross, 2007, p189) enriched the evaluation/ research data as well as the experience far more than I could have anticipated at first. For instance, where circumstances (e.g. worker transfers) prevented me from following up with individuals to

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[36] To clarify, while I relied upon both focus group and interview methods in speaking with Jamaican CWOP participants, I only conducted interviews (no focus groups) with volunteers on the other hand.

flesh out important ideas raised in earlier conversation (and where I failed to address these points in moments of listening), I was nonetheless able to return to this smaller group of co-researchers for their insights and cultural expertise. In turn, they either provided additional information and/or a more contextualized understandings/ interpretations to reflect the perspectives and values of their fellow-countrymen, and each and every instance of this was hugely beneficial to the final report. After all, "...how stories are told is not just an individual matter; people's stories...reflect the perspectives and values of their communities" (DeVault and Gross, 2007, p185). Likewise, engaging this smaller group of Jamaican CWOP members in the evaluation/research process also provided me with an opportunity to explore and in as much as possible make meaningful assessments based on the contradictory accounts which had arisen over the course of the interviews and focus group discussions (a function also noted by Gorelick, 1989; DeVault and Gross, 2007). Last but not least, particularly during the more formal analysis and writing process, these interactions also provided opportunities for the men to speak into the silences they observed in the data (e.g. since data is shaped by the questions asked), as well as for me to press them for information where I worried there were gaps.

What is more, in terms of the nature of the data collected, I approached this exercise with an appreciation for the fact that there are many ways of knowing and hence forms in which knowledge can be expressed; for instance in and through perceptions, reflections, conceptualizations, representations, imagination, inference, intuition, emotions, rememberings, etc (Hawkesworth, 1989), not to mention the interactive development that occurs within relationships (Brisolara and Seigart, 2007). Consequently, engaging with participants through radical, active listening was the first stage for me in the data gathering

and analysis process[37] (DeVault and Gross, 2007; also see Brisolara and Seigart, 2007). Part and partial to this, I not only paid careful attention to the above noted expressions of knowledge, but also for difficulties in speaking about certain topics, silences and gaps (and the implied and then verified meanings beyond and behind these too), along with "the pauses and patterns of speech and emotion that appear in everyday talk, and placing talk into historical and situational context" (Hesse-Biber and Piatelli, 2007, p149-150). More generally, in addition to the 'how' of communication, along with "the structures and organization of language, talk and discourse" (DeVault and Gross, 2007, p184), I was also very careful to be sensitive to 'what' evaluation participants wanted to spend time focused on, and then be open to following 'where' they took these conversations[38] (e.g. I found I moved from semi-structured interviews to more open-ended, instead). Lastly, as part of my regular reflexive practices, I was also intentionally cognizant of noting my own responses and reactions to listening, including all of the aforementioned ways of knowing for myself too.

This brings me to the topic of my own observational and ethnographic field notes. Specifically, in light of choosing a participatory action-research methodology, I used the observational/ ethnography data to supplement/ triangulate the discursive, "dialogic ethnography" and thus fill in some of the silences in the information gathered through the two other methods. In this sense, aligned with the literature on program evaluations which speaks to the importance of taking participant observation as well as action/ performance-related field data seriously (e.g. see Scott, 1992; Sawin, 2004; Borland, 2007; Clarke, 2007; etc), by intentionally turning a critical gaze upon my experiential learning/ lived experience –

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[37] Discussed in greater detail in the third section below.
[38] This was certainly a large part of me finally resolving to focus on the evaluation of CWOP exclusively, dropping the plethora of other research questions I had originally intended on seeking answers to.

being an active and engaged member of the CWOP community – and the situation itself (which I would add seemed only appropriate, again given the overarching methodology, and nature of the investigation: evaluation), I was able to ground my standpoint in the context/ CWOP community in a critical and thus particularly meaningful way. Consequently, I believed that the adoption of a deeply empirical, inductive approach to the assessment (e.g. rather than imposing theory from/on the context) meant that the resultant feedback to the (CWOP) community-group would indeed be data-grounded, or in the words of primary scholars on the topic: yield "data-grounded theorizing," specifically by "abductively tacking back and forth between the nitty-gritty specificities of empirical data and more abstract ways of thinking about them" (Clarke, 2007, p346; Atkinson, Coffey & Delamont, 2003).

On this note however, the explicit use of myself as a data source and instrument in this research endeavour again pointed to the necessity for critical self-reflexivity (Stanley and Wise, 1989; Brisolara and Seigart, 2007), another methodological consideration relevant to the practice of emancipatory epistemologies (but which much more broadly, I would argue that this should be a part of all research practices). Specifically, as mentioned in the previous chapter, advocates of alternative approaches to research emphasize special attention to the nature of communication (e.g. in form and content), as well as the manner in which one interacts with others, both of which in turn require mindful self-interrogation. Above all, this reflexive practice requires the researcher to repeatedly (re)situates herself/himself within her/his work (e.g. the research practice and methodology) in order to scrutinize how her/his behaviours, position(ality), and discursive choices potentially reproduce unequal power relations and the possible effect these have on the people involved in the research (Irwin, 2006; Botts, 2010).

Thus it ought to go without saying that even in spite of trying my best to make this a truly participatory process, as the lead evaluator/ researcher on this project, I undoubtedly needed to pay close and constant attention to the significant influence entailed in/by my position(ality). Whether it was through what Chase (1995) referred to as ambiguous empowerment (that is, how perceptions of similarity and difference influence every aspect of the interview project, from the questions asked or not, the ease or difficulty with which informants are recruited, the degree of rapport developed, and/or the lenses through which the researchers produces and analyse the data), or what DeVault and Gross (2007) call "complementary awareness" (whereby when "working with accounts constructed linguistically... telling requires a listener and that listening shapes the account as well as the telling...both telling and listening are shaped by discursive histories so that fragments of many other telling are carried in any embodied conversation, and so on" p179), every aspect of the evaluation/research process was indeed influenced by my unique participation.

Taking the suggestions of Borland (2007), Lykes and Coquillon (2007), and Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007) among other scholars who have written extensively on the topic seriously, since operating reflexively and relationally means I ought to also consider my own biography and context, intellectual and otherwise, as well as relationship to and concern for the topic at hand, it is important to acknowledge that my Social Work background (academically and professionally) in addition to current studies in Sociology and International Development had a significant effect on my approach to this work. Likewise, as explored in the section on 'Contextualizing the Research Process: Linking ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods,' the values (e.g. humanistic values) and belief systems (my faith/religion) which first drew me to these subjects certainly also played their

part. Out of these, similarly, my personality (e.g. sensitivity, humility, etc) and resultant behaviours and practices (e.g. active listening, participatory inclusion, etc) also shaped the research process and thus outcomes.

Expanding on my positionality – as a young, able-bodied, White British-Canadian woman married to a Black Jamaican-Canadian man, in addition to also being a graduate student, trained Social Worker, practicing Christian, a temporary migrant to Niagara, English-speaking, etc – in particular meant that I was simultaneously similar to and different from the other members of the evaluation/research team. To be unambiguous, being that most of the individuals (that is, all but a handful of local Canadian volunteers) involved in the CWOP community and thus evaluation were Jamaican men working under the SAWP, I was different from my Jamaican colleagues in the evaluation according to gender, race, nationality and culture[39], and in most instances educational attainment, though we often shared faith beliefs, class status within our respective primary contexts, and English-as-a-first-language, and with some, age and marital status too. Added to this, I happened to also share with the some Caribbean workers "outsider" status as I had temporarily migrated to Niagara for employment purposes, was living apart from my spouse and primary faith community for the duration of this stay (though my spouse and I were able to see each other at least bi-weekly, which the men and women were not equally privileged to enjoy), and unable to afford a personal vehicle, I relied exclusively on my bicycle for transportation

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[39] This point is complicated however. For instance, given British colonization of both Jamaica and Canada, there are many commonalities between all three of these national cultures. Furthermore, given that I have been with my Jamaican-Canadian partner for over a decade, I have adopted many of the Jamaican cultural practices within my own day-to-day living, and moreover have a grounded understanding from which to interact with ease and sensitivity too. Likewise, in many respects, given the repeated and lengthy stays of many migrant workers to Canada, they similarly have a deep appreciation of Canadian culture, which again was called upon in cross-cultural interactions, to close the socially constructed gap between us. Lastly, an interesting observation on the part of both myself and my co-evaluators was that where we shared multiple identities with one another, for instance age and faith, it would seem that we had much more in common than otherwise anticipated specifically as a result of the shared *sub*-cultures related to the intersectionality of our identities.

much like each of them too. All in all then, my multiple identities in light of those of the other research participants bore different implications – both strengths and challenges – for position and relationship, as well as the actions and research/evaluation taken.

That stated, given the overarching focus on social inclusion (both related to CWOP specifically, as well as more generally, within the broader community), to the extent that many men and women communicated that they perceived racial differences and the outworkings of this (e.g. power relationships, experiences of race-based discrimination, etc) to be at the core of the problems they experienced, scholars were for the most part accurate in warning that our different racial backgrounds as co-evaluators in this collaborative process, particularly in the initial stages, threatened to maintain a barrier between us (e.g. see Stern 1998; Lykes and Coquillon, 2007; DeVault and Gross, 2007; etc). On this topic, DeVault and Gross (2007) for instance wrote that "research participants no doubt always make assumptions about the interviewer, and feminist researchers would be wise to consider those assumptions, and their effects, even when they are not so evident" (p180). At the same time though, Lykes and Coquillon (2007) acknowledge this too but also write that participatory and action research approaches have a tendency to blur the insider-outsides lines. Namely, they write that this methodology is particularly unique as a process of theory building to the extent that otherwise "static, boundaried notions of insider and outsider or researcher and participant" are implicitly and explicitly (that is, intentionally) challenged (Lykes and Coquillon, 2007, p313). Still, in terms of being personally reflexive about such effects then, I am nonetheless sure that my position as new to the community (an "outsider" at least at first), young and female caused some suspicion, but perhaps above all my Whiteness may have even prevented some of the Caribbean individuals from participating in the evaluation

process[40]. My hope and sense, based on some of the comments made by participants in the evaluation, is that my complete immersion and moreover very active and engaged involvement "within" the community for the six months in which I lived and worked in Niagara, along with the rapport and in many instances friendships formed over the summer, served to quell these inhibitions. Furthermore, in light of countless very candid and sometimes even difficult[41] conversations in the following respects, I also believe that my intentionality about creating an openness and space in my interactions with the men and women for naming and addressing our similarities and differences, especially around issues of race, and their thoughts and concerns arising from these (as well as power relations and instances of oppression as well as privilege more generally) helped to foster opportunities for many of them to seek their own answers to questions they had about me.

In short, while DeVault and Gross (2007) raised an important point in writing that "researchers have long been concerned with the identities and social locations of parties [involved in research], worrying that differences will produce failures of rapport that limit disclosure and that similarities may lead to 'over-rapport' and bias" (p179), my hope is that my efforts to practice anti-oppression, conduct this research ethically (beyond the parameters set by the institution's approval process), and reflexivity, seeking always to honour the dignity of others, that I mitigated these concern in as much as possible. Moreover still, I am genuinely hoping that in learning from the anti-oppressive social science scholars before me (e.g. see Chaudhry 2000; Delgado Bernal 1998; Kondo 1990; Taburt 2000; Villenas 2000; Visweswaran 1994; Pillow and Mayo, 2007; etc), I likewise developed effective avenues to

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[40] In general though, what I found was that Jamaicans who had particularly painful experiences of racial discrimination in Canada also chose not to take part in many of the available social inclusion opportunities, and thus were not part of the evaluation of CWOP specifically, given that it is an outreach to migrant workers organized by the local churches.

[41] To clarify, personally uncomfortable, but never contentious.

use the momentum of my "lived status as outsider/within" to provide a unique lens of analysis, despite the distinctive, conflicting, and productive issues this status raised (i.e. issues faced by all researchers – issues of relationships, reciprocity, representation, and power). For instance, given the makeup of our diversities, having noticed a number of occasions where racial, national and gendered differences between myself and the Caribbean evaluation participants resulted in their adoption of strategic attempts to thoroughly explain their ideas to ensure I did not subsequently misunderstand the information (that is, as a result of my unique social location), at first I tried to assert my aptitude with regards to cultural understanding and sensitivity in order to narrow the perceived space between us in light of our differences (e.g. for rapport). However, similar to the reports of other researchers/ scholars, in reflecting on these encounters it soon dawned on me that rather than intervening, it was perhaps more important that I welcomed the implicit reminder that I needed to humbly *listen* attentively, with the intention of understanding *deeply*. Thus, accepting the limitations of my standpoint given my positionality in light of the topic matter and hence a genuine need to constantly seek confirmation that I am making sense of the data accurately – that is, as the men intended for their testimonies and evaluations to be taken – I used their early perceptions of my differential location as a point from which I could enrich the data gathered, and encourage their input with regards to interpretation and data analysis. Overall then, in light of offering a case-in-point example to the broader academic discussion via a modest attempt to practice anti-oppressive research methodology at the master's level, this important learning and resultant shift in approach as an 'outsider-within' is perhaps my most meaningful contribution, albeit merely yet another reminder of this within the broader literature.

Analyzing/Writing: How the research was interpreted and ultimately re-presented

> "*Writing and choosing how to tell the stories of our research are political acts as well as places of responsibility*" (Pillow and Mayo, 2007, p165).

As noted previously, a smaller group of CWOP participants, comprised of Jamaican seasonal agricultural workers specifically, were critical to the interpretation and analysis of the data which formed the final evaluation (report). To my surprise and delight, this group produced rather organically: that is, either as a result of their expressed interested in the project early on, or in light of budding friendships and thus a comfort on my part in seeking their insights and a welcome on their part in response (in almost all instances, in the end, both factors were at play - intrinsic interest as well as relationship - and as will be discussed in the following chapter, in addition to enriching the data and process, this often had many other positive outcomes too, such as increased self-esteem, etc). In particular, I was especially grateful for the individuals who expressed an invested interest in seeing the appraisal succeed since as is the case with data-ground methodologies, analysis begins as soon as there was data (including my ethnographic and participant observation field notes[42]) (Clarke, 2007). Specifically, as Glaser (1978) noted, coding begins immediately, and theorizing based on that coding did as well, however provisionally[43].

To be explicit, in order to identify and categorize all of the points from which we would re-present the findings (which included perceived strengths, areas for improvements

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[42] To clarify, while the data gathered out of my own involvement was the first method employed, it producing the final report, it was used to secondarily to the voices of the participants themselves.

[43] On the note of provisional processes, it is perhaps also worth explicitly noting that directly related to this being a necessarily data-grounded methodology (being that the goal was a program evaluation), sampling was not based on requirements to be 'representative' (especially since the population of CWOP is primarily Jamaican men working under the SAWP, with just under two dozen local/Canadian volunteers); instead, akin to grounded theory approaches to sampling, the focus was on "finding *new data sources* (persons– and *not* theories) that [could] best explicitly address specific theoretically interesting facets of the emergent analysis" (Clarke, 2007, p346).

and specific recommendations), and in light of the collaborative process to interpreting and

analyzing the data more generally, open-coding was used. This particular approach – open-

coding – quickly proved to be particularly valuable specifically because it allows for multiple

simultaneous readings (codes) of the data, and in doing so, all readings are assumed to be

"temporary, partial, provisional, and perspectival – themselves situated historically and

geographically" (Clarke, 2007, p349). Of equal importance, this was also the approach

selected by the co-evaluators, both sub-consciously (e.g. in how they were interacting with

the cumulative data on a regular basis, albeit conversationally at first) and consciously (e.g.

upon explicit discussion of the topic). Explicitly then, while computerized software has

become a standard method typically, given limited access to necessary resources and

moreover varying literacy levels, etc, coding was carried out primarily dialogically, with the

aid of copies of printed output read aloud and discussed as a group, along with easel boards

and highlighters to categorize the data until refined to the point of consensual agreement.

In stark contrast however, in terms of my independent analysis of the data (again,

including participant observation, reflexive and ethnographic field notes in addition to the

interview and focus group data), I discovered that unlike my colleagues, my gut reaction was

to actively resist the thematic fragmentation and resulting decontextualization of presented

information. In searching the academic literature on research methodology to understand this

further, I found Elliot Mishler (1986) theorized around this, which provided a communicable

language to my instinctive reaction: that is, while more conventional approach essentially

disrupt the coherence of subjects' perspectives, such as by extracting thematic bits from

(ever-pervasive) stories/narratives, if one instead strives to understand presented information

in its given context (i.e. the longer stretches of discourse/narratives people tell as well as how

they tell them – respectively referred to discourse and narrative analysis), one might begin to broach the possibility of maintaining the coherence of a person's perspective. Indeed, this is what I therefore decided to attempt to achieve in my own analysis (complementary to the more conventional approach I practiced with my Jamaican colleagues): namely, a more contextual interpretative analysis to understanding the meanings held by the speakers/ respondents themselves – what I considered to be part of an implicitly anti-oppressive endeavour.

This brings me to the topic of writing as well. As part of my theoretical paradigm/ practice (that is, anti-oppression above all), although I strove to foster spaces in the evaluation process where participants could openly express their own voices, in re-presenting their input, I was not looking to "give voice to the voiceless or marginalized" but rather to somehow create a "third voice" so-to-speak to capture the participatory and collaborative efforts of our work together (Lykes and Coquillon, 2007, p315). Related to this, also reflective of my epistemology and selected methodology, I knew that it was imperative that I openly challenge the myth of objectivity and neutrality which tends to typify empirical social scientific research. That is, while I actively strove for consensual validation in data collection, interpretation and analysis, aligned with participatory action research methodology and epistemology, I also needed to acknowledge my own subjectivity: in this case, through the telling of the *second* tale of the evaluation story.

Furthermore on the topic of writing, I also need(ed) to acknowledge the unique implication that arose from facilitating a program evaluation specifically. That is, as Brisolara and Seigart (2007) explain:

> Evaluation is a political activity. The contexts in which evaluation operates are politicized and imbued with asymmetrical power relationships. The personal

experiences, perspectives, and characteristics evaluators bring to evaluations (and with which we interact) both come from and lead to a particular political stance. (p280)

To be explicit then, while the Social Worker in me empathized deeply with the many practical and systemic challenges faced by CWOP's leadership team in coordinating and facilitating an outreach program from within the world of non-profits (pressures which I too felt first hand, alongside the leadership team, as a paid intern for a partner in their efforts), on the other hand "advocacy, like politics, is inherent in evaluation and so the decision becomes for whom we advocate and in what ways" (Brisolara and Seigart, 2007, p289, with reference to Green, 1995), and when push came to shove, it was apparent that I ultimately aligned myself with the Jamaican seasonal agricultural workers. Consequently, charged by the Jamaican participants specifically with the task of re-presenting their suggestions for moving "from strength to strength" in such a manner that would not potentially jeopardizing this important aspect of their Canadian experience, I have attempted to indeed honour this responsibility with integrity. In doing so, however, much like in choosing to narrow my research focus, there have been many instances in writing the report as well as this thesis that I have had to subjugate my own desires (e.g. to expose the ideological, political, and social processes underlying and permeating systems of inequality) for the greater good of ensuring that I would unjustly ostracize the CWOP leadership and other important partners in this work more broadly, and consequently altogether fail to inspire action and thus the very solutions required for the well-being of the Jamaicans and other Caribbean individuals served. Undoubtedly, this political stance has been written into this thesis in what is (not) reported and how[44].

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[44] Hence, I would ask you to read this document with the call of the Jamaican participants at the forefront of your mind.

CHAPTER 3:
OUTCOMES OF THE EVALUATION/RESEARCH PROCESS

To reiterate, although I was invited to conduct a program evaluation from an 'outsider' vantage point specifically, I immediately advocated for the importance of hearing from 'insiders' chiefly and thus a participatory-action research methodology instead. In doing so, in order to facilitate a participant-informed evaluation above all, I prioritized finding genuine, meaningful ways to involve members from the CWOP community in the program assessment. To this end, through interview and focus group discussions[45] on (i) the perceived strengths, (ii) perceived opportunities for improvement, and (iii) specific recommendations for further development[46], I systematically sought the critical thoughts and reflections as well as testimonies of both local volunteers and moreover the Jamaican men and women themselves in order to assist CWOP leadership in their ultimate goal of strategically planning for greater future success. Lastly, and only then, I triangulated this data with my own ethnographic observations. Consequently, the results presented below (including the recommendations) are a representation of the findings from these three methods, but foremost, the reflections of the Jamaican men and women as well as a number of volunteers who are part of the CWOP community specifically.

Secondly, as explained in the previous chapter, after a lot of struggling (within myself), I eventually came to terms with the fact that I had really set out to do too much, especially given the methodology – participatory-action research – and directly related to this, the demands of conducting a participant-informed evaluation well, in addition to my

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[45] To clarify, while I relied upon both focus group and interview methods in speaking with Jamaican CWOP participants, I only conducted interviews (no focus groups) with volunteers on the other hand.
[46] To be explicit, these three areas of foci were identified by leadership as learning objectives, and thus formed my three guiding research questions.

other (full-time) employment commitments. In light of this acceptance, I finally allowed my

focus to shift to an evaluation of CWOP very specifically (what the community I had chosen

to immerse myself in had communicated as their primary need), rather than trying to divide

my energy and attention between multiple, varied research questions. Consequently, while I

do not have a sufficient data base to comment on the original questions (i.e. from my much

broader research proposal) with rigor and thus methodological confidence, in principle what

is more important to me is that in the freedom this resolution permitted me, I was able to

simply be present with the men and women who I had come to learn with/from, and

genuinely listen to their stories, as well as fully engage in the development of reciprocal

friendships. Serendipitously, in this process, as I reflect upon key interviews and focus group

conversations and moreover my ethnographic field notes especially, I learned a number of

(other) important and noteworthy lessons nonetheless. Hence, what I have titled "Secondary

findings" captures some of those important observations at the closing of this chapter.

Primary Research Findings: Results from the Caribbean Workers Outreach Program Evaluation

Perceived (major) strengths of CWOP

Above all, Jamaican participants readily spoke about the important role and countless

positive impacts this community has played in their lives[47], year after years. To provide some

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[47] So that the subtle implication here is not missed, I should be explicit in explaining that many men and women spoke about the ways in which the positives impacts of CWOP in their lives cross borders with them. In other words, while this community is only part of their Canadian experience, the benefits offered also provide a source of strength as the men return "home".

clear examples, as an outworking of CWOP's mandate to reach and serve Caribbean[48]

seasonal agricultural workers in Niagara, narratives of how CWOP has positively impacted

them included: through training, support and encouragement in their spiritual lives and

development; related to this, personal encouragement through worship (music), pastoral care

(primary goals of the ministry), and the valued fellowship with their country(wo)men before

and after services, as well as at social events; for some men and women, important

friendships formed with local individuals (a secondary, or hoped for, outcome of the

ministry); the opportunities this ministry offers to serve/use their gifts and talents to bless

others (e.g. on the worship team); by providing a much-appreciated break in the monotony of

an otherwise uneventful yet stressful work week, and a positive distraction from the pain of

being away from their families, friends, and other social (including faith) communities "back

home"; the material supports[49] offered, especially in times of crisis; etc. Overall, the chief

finding in this respect was that in both implicit and explicit ways, through their testimonies

the men and women repeatedly drew connections to the many ways in which CWOP is vital

to their overall well-being and in ensuring a more positive experience in Canada generally.

Taking for granted that CWOP in and of itself is arguably the greatest assets in the

larger backdrop of experiences of social inclusion for migrant workers in Niagara then, and

turning a critical eye to the structure of the organizations more specifically, the

organization's formal partnership between the United Church in Canada and the United

Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands was identified as one of its top strengths.

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[48] That said, in actuality only Jamaicans are participating in this community group (see recommendations for a discussion of this further).

[49] Though not exactly pervasive in the larger scheme of testimonies, a number of Jamaican men and interesting the women especially commented that some of the volunteers' efforts to also meet their physical/material needs too was a deeply appreciated aspect of CWOP, and while snacks after church and Bibles was the most popularly noted provisions, the in-kind goods (e.g. clothing), and for a very limited number of individuals the very generous financial gifts offered to in times of family crises, were clearly important points in the testimonies of the handful of seasonal agricultural workers who noted these material offerings in their responses.

Specifically, this tie provides the necessary human and financial resources to bring up two Caribbean pastors[50] each season, who serve not only to provide the message at the Sunday evening church services but they also make farm-visits a priority in the evenings in order to offer more intimate spiritual care to the men and women working in Niagara under the SAWP as well. Importantly, both the volunteers and Caribbean participants (especially[51]) highlighted the purposeful inclusion of Caribbean pastors as a critical component to CWOP's uniqueness, appeal, and overall success. Directly related to this point though, volunteers in particular were quick to add that over and above this formal partnership, CWOP is not merely bolstered by its ecumenical operation on the ground (an additional strength in terms of the structure and operation of CWOP) but in actually could not function without these crucial ties[52] within the wider Niagara faith community too.

In addition to CWOP's appreciated commitment to bringing up Caribbean pastors, both the inclusion of Caribbean-style worship practices and the migrant workers in this were two other primary reasons people were first drawn to and now actively involved in/ committed to CWOP. Still, though local volunteers and Jamaican members similarly identified the Caribbean-style worship as a major strength in the organization's operation, while this was communicated more as an appealing point of CWOP for the majority[53] of the

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[50] Given the magnitude of the number of seasonal agricultural workers (e.g. an estimated five and half hundred from the Caribbean in Niagara-on-the-Lake alone this past year) and the fact that there is only one pastor here at a time, some men and women never actually have the opportunity to be connect with/be visited by the pastor however. It is also worth noting that the pastors are shared between the two CWOP groups (that is, in NOTL and in Lincoln/Vineland), and so their time is split between both geographic communities.

[51] To be most frank, I am not sure I can emphasize the importance of the Caribbean pastors enough if I intend to accurately represent the voices of the Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers consulted for this report. The shared cultural understanding is of utmost value to them, both in terms of feeling open enough to share during prayer visits in the evenings as well as in enjoyment and benefit from the messages at the church services.

[52] Namely, although officially a ministry of the United Churches, at this point in time there are no individuals from this denomination involved in the work hands-on/on-the-ground besides the Caribbean pastors.

[53] The connotation here is that this point was not unanimously appreciated by all Canadians involved in the CWOP community; there were a handful of volunteers who clearly did not fully grasp the importance of this aspect of the outreach. Furthermore, if I take into account conversations beyond the formal interviews

volunteers, it was absolutely fundamentally significant for almost all of the workers

consulted. Similarly, the involvement of Caribbean workers in the leadership of the worship

services was also mutually noted as a major strength by both local volunteers and Jamaican

participants, but again especially important to the Caribbean men and women.

Last but by far not least, the social benefits offered through this outreach were also

repeatedly raised in conversation about the strengths of CWOP. In particular, this included

both the fellowship time after the church services each week, as well as the annual events

(e.g. cricket match, dominoes tournament, and celebratory meals). With respect of the latter,

the Jamaican participants communicated that these events in particular have and continue to

be highlights of their time in Canada, and as such, are integral to the support and

encouragement[54] provided to them by the local church community. In fact, whereas

participants in the focus groups and interviews were almost exclusively all attendees of the

CWOP church services (though not necessarily *regular* attendees), when the topic of the

annual social events came up in these conversations in ear-shot of other Jamaican seasonal

agricultural workers, individuals who were not otherwise involved in the conversation taking

place in that moment would nonetheless chime in/ interject to talk about how much they

appreciated the annual social events, and often also offered recommendations to further

strengthen this aspect of CWOP's outreach. Frankly then, this made it most apparent that

there are not only many men and women who do not attend church services but who do in

fact benefit from participating in the social events but moreover, that they are eager and

invested in seeing the continuation of this component of CWOP's work within the

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conducted with locals, there were also numerous comments made by Canadians which either/both criticized and/or devalued Caribbean worship practices (e.g. everything from debates surrounding the use of drums to the theology of the lyrics to popular worship songs/medleys).

[54] One gentleman used the word "sanity" in place of this, which I thought was particular powerful.

community. Additionally, almost all of the focus groups raised the point that the social events which involve "the other side" of Niagara via bringing together the two CWOP groups (both in NOTL and in Vineland) are especially important to them. Upon elaboration, it became apparent that these are often a highlight of their time in Canada since they provide many men and women with the only opportunity to see friends and family from "back home" who though traveling to and working in the same region of Canada are still yet too far to visit, since migrant workers in rural communities face pressing transportation barriers. In short then, while the church services ultimately provide spiritual nourishment for the members of this community (both migrant workers and local Canadians), Caribbean CWOP community members see the social aspects of church (namely including the opportunity to worship with Canadians as well as their fellow country(wo)men working on other farms, refreshment time after service, and the recreational and social gatherings, etc) as having equal importance in their quality of life while working in Canada. That is, since they are physically, socially and symbolically marginalized and hence isolated within the broader community as well as from their families and faith networks "back home", the social time after services and the Niagara-wide events especially provide the sense of community and moreover family that they are otherwise grieving (as missing). Still, as one final note, other men also offered the reminder that leadership ought not to forget that the social activities additionally serve to connect some of the non-Christian workers to the church, which they emphasized as being of equal importance to the benefits of connecting with others socially since this is a fulfillment of the purpose of the church according to Christian teachings too.

Identified challenges faced by CWOP

Everyone seemed to be in agreement that CWOP's shrinking volunteer base poses the

greatest challenge to the present and on-going success of this outreach. Arising from

narratives across the board, this growing awareness has not only become more evident with

the loss of founding members of the ministry over recent years, but also in light of

difficulties around the CWOP's most practical need: transportation! That is, directly related

to this latter point, the outreach is especially challenged with the task of finding more

Canadian volunteers who can assist with providing rides to help members get to and from the

church services safely and on-time[55]. Pleasantly, the expansion of CWOP's volunteer

network to meet this need would/could also alleviated a great deal of the stress felt by

leadership in terms of planning and coordinating the weekly churches services as well as

annual social and recreational activities (another identified challenge for CWOP) by not only

increasing the support base in sheer numbers (to share the work load) but equally as

important, the gifts, talents and expertise brought to the planning table too. Additionally,

more volunteers would also provide the means for more discipleship and cross-cultural

Christian fellowship opportunities which so many of the Caribbean men and women have

communicated as a point which the organization'sleadership could/should look to expand

(but which the limited volunteer base has inhibited to date).

Another central concern/challenge that arose is the reduced funds which have resulted

in shortened stays for the visiting Caribbean pastors (from six weeks to only four weeks per

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[55] Arising from the interview and focus group conversations with both the Caribbean as well as Canadian participants was the suggestion that in terms of communicating this important point to new volunteers, it is perhaps worth noting explicitly that the need for rides for the workers is both cultural as well as practical (i.e. they have worked long hours doing physically-demanding tasks which often means they are exhausted and so the thought of ride their bikes or walk to church is daunting, not to mentioned they are short on time too). Additionally, because they are short on time, some sensitivity (i.e. demonstrated in patience) should be expected for those scrambling to get ready "on time" to be picked-up for church.

pastor). From a more conceptual/theoretical vantage point, this was a concern for both

volunteers and some of the Jamaican participants who consider having Caribbean pastors

(e.g. to lead the church services and visit with workers throughout the week) *the* major

strength of the ministry. Still, the very personalized assertions of this concern from men who

have expereinced crises in the past and who therefore spoke of the value of this aspect of the

ministry to them, as well as the disappointments communicated by men (and their friends/

allies, including CWOP's visiting pastors and volunteers) who *could* have benefited from this

aspect of the minstry over the last two years but were not able to given this cut-back, were

also extremely powerful testimonies to this challenge. For the volunteers on the other hand,

this cut-back from twelve consecutive weeks of pastoral care support each season to only

eight weeks again highlighted the felt strains and resultant growing concern in light of an

ever-shrinking volunteer support base.

Lastly, communication in a most general sense (i.e. between leadership in NOTL and

Lincoln/Vineland, between CWOP and its partners, between leadership and the visiting

pastors, between leadership and volunteers, between volunteers and workers, and between

workers and the visiting pastors) seems to be major challenge in the functionality and thus

success of CWOP.

Recommendations[56]:

Strengthen and expand CWOP's partnership base: In light of the acknowledged needs/

opportunities for improvement, in terms of strategic planning to foster a stronger support

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[56] Again, as noted previously, the following recommendations represent the thoughts and specific suggestions offered by evaluation participants first and foremost. In order words, to be clear, these *are* research findings in and of themselves.

network, investing in both further strengthening and expanding CWOP's formal and informal partnership bases (e.g. local churches, ties to the Mennonite Central Committee, etc) would be beneficial.

- In light of conversations with local volunteers (thus representatives from existing partnerships), a practical suggestion offered to bolster existing ties was that CWOP leadership could/should be even more intentional about including partners in regular communication, event planning and decision-making, etc.

- Investing the time and energy into strengthening the commitment of the United Church in particular would also be strategic in moving forward. Namely, beyond securing the continued funding of the two pastors annually (or even better, reinstating the full funding), being intentional about connecting with the local United church community might be one way to get the denomination involved in CWOP hands-on again.

- CWOP might also consider asset mapping to identify other potential partners[57] who could be invited to work together (with CWOP and vice versa) to serve Caribbean migrant agricultural workers.

Strengthen and expand the CWOP's volunteer/support team: Rather than cutting all social events (which has been discussed by leadership as a possibility in moving forward, given the pressing capacity constraints), investing time and resources to develop a larger volunteer base in the off-season particularly would not only alleviate some of the stress on

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[57] For example, CWOP might consider developing a working relationship with or moreover becoming active involved in the Niagara Migrant Workers Interest Group; at least it would be beneficial to communicate and work together with some of the agencies/individuals who are a part of this collective (e.g. so as to avoid some of the event date overlaps that decreased attendance this past season, to assist with making referrals, etc).

leadership (e.g. by expanding the gifts and knowledge that can be drawn upon), and meet all of the needs of the individuals CWOP intends to serve (since the men and women repeatedly commented that the social events are important to them), but this would allow CWOP to continue to function at full capacity as well as support the sustainability of this social inclusion effort in the long-run (e.g. through training of new volunteers/leaders).

- Foremost, prioritizing volunteer coordination and care[58] could assist with retention as much as attraction in the development and expansion of the outreach's support base (e.g. all-round joyful volunteers will be motivated to get others involved too). Suggestions in this respect included more and more regular volunteer meetings/ gatherings, both to communicate on matters related to the ministry (e.g. planning, year-end reflections, etc), as well as to develop a sense of teamwork and community among/ between the volunteers.

- Similarly, both current volunteers as well as local community members interested in becoming more involved in the effort suggested that Canadians could be invited to engage more fully, and perhaps most importantly, offered volunteers roles according to their skills/talents and interests/passions. One suggestion for approaching this latter point in particular would again be to consider some sort of asset mapping exercise to paint a clear(er) picture of the strengths around the table and then use this more effectively to connect the dots. For instance, such an exercise might help identify individuals or better yet clusters of volunteers who could form sub-groups to take on some of the roles and responsibilities still needing to be filled, such as that of

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[58] To be explicit, unfortunately many volunteers (including leadership too) felt disconnected from the other local Canadians engaged in the outreach effort, as well as underappreciated (though most often not by the Jamaicans, but rather their peers in serving the Caribbean workers).

administrative supports (for meeting minutes), transportation coordination, volunteer care and coordination, communications, etc.

- Consultation with the Caribbean pastors raised the suggestion that they too could be utilized more fully in the planning and coordination of the weekly church services.

- Often individuals and church groups who are otherwise not regularly involved in the CWOP community arranged the refreshments for after service (for one week), and while this certainly meets a need, it would be great if these individuals were then plugged into the outreach in more meaningful ways too.

- Over and above volunteer care, a strategic plan should be implemented for volunteer recruitment, including for instance in-person or pre-recorded audio-video presentations, distribution of materials[59] to advertise the ministry in local churches, etc.

- With respect to the demographics/composition of the current volunteer team, since there are no young people serving (aside from myself/Rachel that is), specifically recruiting, and then meaningfully including[60] and mentoring younger generations in serving in the ministry[61] would not only diversify the support team and skills within this, but could additionally be beneficial to long-term planning/sustainability.

- Additionally, since the Caribbean pastors are here for a shorter length of time (and even then, because they are shared between the two CWOP satellite sites: Niagara-

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[59] As a start, a new brochure was produced for CWOP by the summer intern hired by MCC. Other communication tools could include a newsletter publication with the CWOP calendar, as well as increased on-line communication forums from a more regularly updated facebook page, website or blog, etc. In particular, given the tendency for younger generations to have developed some of the technical skills needed to produce these sorts of communication mediums, this might be one of many great opportunities to involve more young adults in the social inclusion/outreach effort.

[60] To be explicit, this means making a place for younger people to use their gifts and skills in the ministry.

[61] On this note, many of the Caribbean participants also added that as leaders in youth ministries "back home", this would also provide an opportunity for them to serve the local community in return, too.

on-the-Lake and Lincoln), it may be beneficial to make connections with other Caribbean pastors residing in Canada[62] who might be willing to partner in the work. Namely, the visiting guest speaker this year was a noted highlight of the season for many men who attended that church service, and so what was communicated implicitly and explicitly in this respect was that having more culturally-relevant speakers on board would add strength to the organized outreach efforts all the more.

Strength communication: Overall, establishing clearer lines of communication could ensure more effective outreach to all the men and women whose lives are touched by CWOP.

- In particular, more face-to-face meetings that include volunteers too could foster both a greater sense of everyone being on the same page as well as involvement from others in the team.

- Additionally, greater efforts to coordinate CWOP efforts during the off-season could alleviate some of the stress felt by leadership when the season kicks in, as well as help to identify roles and responsibilities that can be delegated to skilled volunteers early on (before May and June, when CWOP is in full-swing), freeing leadership to invest in one-to-one relationships with their longstanding Caribbean friends (where leadership says they function at their best), etc. In fact, on this latter note, an especially encouraging finding was that the countless truly inspirational volunteers presently invested in CWOP would readily take on more responsibilities if needs were communicated to them more clearly and/or they were asked by leadership

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[62] However, building these partnerships should, of course, not come at the expense of the vital ties with local pastors.

specifically (in stark contrast to the discourse/ assumptions made/projection by leadership that volunteers are overwhelmed).

- While the conversational-style review of the visiting pastors' reflections and suggestions have been much appreciated by CWOP volunteers and partners alike (that is, when these opportunities do arise), since the feedback that the Caribbean pastors share is especially important, it would be beneficial to the entire CWOP volunteer team (including leadership and volunteers, including partners) if the electronic and/or printed copies of the reports from the visiting pastors were openly shared (rather than only circulated among leadership). Among other benefits, this might not only increase accountability but could also serve to foster conversations around implementing strategies to fulfill the important recommendations offered by the visiting pastors.

- Circulation of contact information for the visiting pastors so that Caribbean (wo)men in need of prayer could reached the visiting pastors directly would facilitate greater support for workers.

- Debriefing meetings at the end of each season could also serve multiple important functions for the group, including bringing everyone together one last time to celebrate all of the hard work that went into coordinating the services and events, as well as creating a space where critical reflections could be shared so as to improve future efforts.

Provide more opportunities for leadership and volunteer training and development: As with any organization, investment in leadership training and skill development would provide

a plethora of benefits to stakeholders across the board. Likewise, investing in training for volunteers would be beneficial too. In particular, since this is a cross-cultural outreach, it would be especially beneficial to offer more cultural awareness and sensitivity/anti-oppression training particularly.

- While it might be worthwhile to plan to develop a set of resources in the future, since the group presently faces pressing "capacity constraints", CWOP could partner with any of the many Jamaican (or other Caribbean) organizations (i.e. in near-by Toronto) that specialize in offering cultural awareness workshops. For instance, one of these agencies could be invited to facilitate a fun and informative Patois 101 class(es) as part of pre-season training for volunteers (including leadership). In addition to making another important agency-to-organization connection, along with the inherent benefits of team-building that this could result from this training, moreover it might help volunteers feel they have a more solid foundation upon which to communicate more comfortably with the workers (and thus hopefully also building lasting friendships). Subsequently we might also see that they are more willing to personally call the Caribbean participants to coordinate rides, which would save a tremendous amount of time and energy on the part of leadership each week, as well as provide a solution to one of the main frustrations of the Caribbean community memebers: without a call, they are never sure whether they will be remembered, what time they should be ready, etc.
- Likewise, anti-oppression training has and continues to be a common part of new volunteer orientation in many community-based organizations. This being the case,

CWOP could partner with any number of agencies in the Niagara region to receive on-going training and support in this respect.

- Of course, while these connections with other groups could be especially helpful, CWOP (itself) could also plan to organize other enticing consciousness raising opportunities for volunteers as well as the wider community (e.g. invite partners and members from their constituencies). For instance, to increase cultural awareness (and thus hopefully sensitivity), as well as open dialogue, CWOP could arrange a viewing of "Life and Debt", an award winning documentary on the social, political and economic context in Jamaica leading up to the turn of the century.

- As part of the cultural awareness and sensitivity training, perhaps arranging for another experiential learning tour in Jamaica (as was arranged through the United Churches in the past) would be a beneficial option for volunteers who could afford this first-hand learning experience. In fact, even Caribbean CWOP participants raised this – volunteers visiting the island, and whenever possible, the workers themselves at "home" – as an especially important exercise in closing socially constructed gaps[63].

- Even still, in addition to the aforementioned training, efforts to *equip* volunteer drivers to really care for the (wo)men who they pick up each week would also be helpful. That is, while volunteers and leaders alike agree that this is the ideal model – that drivers assigned to certain camps would also befriend the (wo)men they drive on a deeper, more personal level too – some individuals, for a variety of reasons, need

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[63] Though noted by only a few Jamaicans, it is nevertheless an interesting point: That is, that the other half of understanding how to reach and serve Jamaican migrant agricultural workers requires that volunteers also have some sort of foundational knowledge of the nature and reality of farming in Canada (including but certainly not limited to the particularly important role that migrant workers play in this landscape).

help with getting to this point (e.g. strategies and suggestions for building meaningful connections/friendships, *especially before and after the two-month CWOP season*).

Continue to (meaningfully) include Jamaicans in leadership positions: While there was unanimous consensus that the involvement of the workers in the services each week is a major strength of CWOP, many (Jamaican and Canadian) men and women nonetheless commented that this could be bolstered even more. Specifically, Jamaican participants shared that they would hope to see even more opportunities to grow in and moreover use their skills and talents. One gentleman so perfectly put it this way: "We are not just farm-workers. There's more to us than that... We all have special God-given gifts and talents which make each of us unique." Other men offered the reminder that they are leaders in their churches "back home," and unambiguously stated that they would like to continue to exercise their faith by serve others in the church in these ways even while working in Canada. Additionally, a number of other men and women specifically commented that they would like to be part of planning some of the special events too. In fact, many of the Jamaican participants stated that in many instances all they really need is a space, and rides, and that they would happy take care of many/most of the other details (e.g. to organize pot-lucks, dominoes nights, open-mic talent nights, etc). Lastly, more than showcasing their talents, tied into the previous recommendation, numerous Caribbean participants remarked that the incorporation of more opportunities for workers to develop their skills and talents (especially instrumentation for worship) within this community would be welcomed just as readily too.

Honouring and acknowledging Caribbean participants: While CWOP was started and continues to function solely as an act of care and outreach to Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers, making even more of a concerted effort to acknowledge and honour "the workers" as individuals and full human-beings (e.g. leaders, fathers/mothers, etc) central (e.g. in thank you speeches, acknowledging first-time and retiring workers, and special celebrations like Fathers' Day, birthdays, etc) would be another noted element that could be strengthened all the more. Specifically, while some members of this community might assert that it is simply not realistic to celebrate every participant's birthday for instance[64], many volunteers and participants alike offer the reminder that acknowledging birthdays from week to week during testimony time, or noting these important dates so that a simple phone call or card could be extended during the off-season could be a task delightfully taken on by someone on the team. Likewise, since Father's Day *always* falls within the CWOP calendar, planning a special service in this respect seems intrinsic.

Suggestions pertaining to the weekly services:

- Both Canadians and Caribbean workers alike communicated that they are interested in there being more opportunities to build cross-cultural friendships, so adding more opportunities to mingle and greet one another at the services (e.g. as is practiced in many churches, shaking hands with one's neighbour) and social events might be a

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[64] Roughly more than a hundred Jamaican seasonal agricultural workers attended the eight church services offered this May and June for example, and literally hundreds more participated in the social and recreational gatherings.

rather natural starting point for this[65]. Of course, more creative activities could also be brainstormed and tried out by the group too!

- The talent show/concert night was yet again a major highlight of the year for many Caribbean participants and local Canadians too. In fact, CWOP not only had its best turn out from the community that night but quite a few individuals (again Caribbean and Canadian) commented that they would love to see this happen regularly during the CWOP off-season, or incorporated into the CWOP's regular calendar of events more often (e.g. once a month) during the season.

- Since the time after service to meet briefly downstairs over refreshments has been highlighted as an asset to CWOP, it is important that services are kept "short and spicy" so that this precious time to mingle and catch up is not lost.

- Presently, there are *only* Jamaicans participating in the CWOP faith community (e.g. weekly church services throughout May and June), but there are men from other Caribbean islands (i.e. Barbados and St. Vincent) working in Niagara-on-the-Lake too. An exercise in critically reflecting on why this might be, and moreover how the group could better reach and serve other Caribbean workers would perhaps help the group live even more fully into its name and mandate.

- Keeping in mind that some workers arrive the first week in January, and others staying as late as the second week in December, countless Jamaican participants explicitly commented that they wish CWOP was active for longer than only two months of the year. That is, they continually remarked that in terms of their identities

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[65] Though not entirely pervasive in the shared comments, a handful of Caribbean men and women, as well as a few volunteers, also noted (and always concernedly) the segregation in terms of where individuals sit during the services. In light of this, perhaps being intentional about adding in a component to encourage people to mix and mingle every service might help everyone feel more comfortable with one another, and thus address the underlying reasons why there seems to be a divide.

and priorities, they are Christians before they are workers, even if they are here in Canada for the purpose of working. For this reason, there is a definite desire to see more church services, as well as other types of opportunities for spiritual care and nourishment (e.g. Bible studies), not to mention opportunities to gather for fellowship (socially)[66], beyond the typical May and June CWOP calendar of events.

Suggestions related to events: *In addition to the resounding response of "MORE!" of course:*

- "Timing is everything!" – Countless Caribbean workers, as well as their employers(!)[67] and some volunteers, have offered the reminder that CWOP could be more sensitive with regards to the timing of some of its events[68], both in terms of the pick-up and start-times, as well as their timing in the crop seasons. As a constructive suggestion, perhaps some of these issues could be worked out by fore-planning and promoting events[69] sooner rather than later, so that there is time to work out these issues (and adjust accordingly) as they are brought to the team's attention, or better yet, by including some of the more than capable Jamaican men and women on these event planning committees so as to have their informed feedback along the way.

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[66] In a sense, this could be facilitated with a more strategic focus on fostering friendships between CWOP volunteers – e.g. drivers – and camps/(wo)men.

[67] Building relationships with employers, or at the very least doing one's very best to not cause difficulty between CWOP's perceived value and employers, or worse still employers and the workers, could be another area for growth.

[68] Again, these social and recreational opportunities are extremely important to the men and women, and so when CWOP plans for the events to start at the same time that individuals are getting off work, meaning that they are excluded, it can feel like disregard for the workers, rather than an innocent oversight, for some individuals (particularly those who have been pointing this out for a number of seasons now).

[69] Again, drivers that are trained and encouraged to be more than 'a driver' could be encouraged to assist with event promotion as they are visiting the camps they develop relationships with.

- Transportation to and from special events seemed particularly troublesome. Even when a bus was rented, for instance, which theoretically should have meant that more Caribbean men and women could participate in the events, if events started fairly early in the evening, trying to coordinate a (logical) route for the driver which took into account both the time it would take to stop at multiple locations *and* the times that the (wo)men could realistically be ready after working all day seemed like an impossible task, and worst still, at times meant that people at some camps could not be picked up by the bus (meaning a back-up driver was needed instead). Complicating matters, because events were frequently held on evenings other than those of the typical church services, volunteers were often unable to help. Thus, even more than seeking an actual commitment from regular drivers to help with driving for events, a number of volunteers noted that advanced notice (and in some instances, altogether remembering to advertise to the volunteers too) and frequent reminders would be beneficial, so as to avoid scheduling conflicts, etc. Ultimately though, either way this raises the issue of communication with volunteers again, as well as a need to welcome more local Canadians to become involved in the CWOP community. After all, these events are so incredibly important to the men and women they are meant to encourage, and so greater strategic planning in respect would be a wise investment.
- Upon directed questioning, many men thought that the posters to advertise the CWOP church services and events have been excellent (especially with the addition of a contact telephone number), but that it would nevertheless be great if volunteers from the group would stop by the camps personally, and more often than just once a season, to extend personal invitations (especially to typically non-participating

Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers), and to remind everyone of upcoming

special events[70].

Secondary Research Findings:

Finding a balance as an observer and a participant – when to wear the researcher hat and when to become involved by giving your opinion, providing help, or actively leading a project – is difficult and specific to each research context. Furthermore, as Wax (1971) argues, having successful or unsuccessful relationships with subjects is not something that can be taught, instructed, rehearsed, or measured – rather the relationships must be experienced, and we may often find we are unprepared for what we experience in the research setting. For example, Delgado-Gaitan (1993) discusses how she became more involved with her research subjects than she ever imagined or ever thought was 'right'. As Delgado-Gaitan entered her research setting, she found that her research protocol did not fit the needs of the subjects she met. The longer she was in the field, the more the design and intent of her study became less important and shifted according to the subjects' needs. For Delgado-Gaitan, these shifts were impossible for her to avoid – she came to feel that ethically she had to change her research as she questioned her privilege and the doing of her research over the explicit needs of the people she was studying. Delgado-Gaitan further notes that as much as the research question and process changes, she too was changes by the changing nature of her research. Her relationship to subjects, her relationships to research, and her relationships to methods were all affected and challenged by the changing of the research. Delgado-Gaitan's experiences acknowledge that research relationships can be reciprocal and not simply one-way; that indeed the researcher may find herself more 'changed' by the research than the subjects themselves. (Pillow and Mayo, 2007, p163)

As aforementioned, I eventually came to terms with the fact that I had really set out to

do too much, and eventually, in light of this I finally allowed my focus to shift to an

evaluation of CWOP very specifically, rather than trying to divide my focus between

multiple research agendas. More than anything else, what is most important to me is that this

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[70] There are many factors that informed this suggestion, including but not limited to varying literacy levels, a sense of being isolated and thus longing for more contact and connection with others outside their extremely limited working and living social circle, some difficult dynamics in the houses which make it uncomfortable for individuals to single-handedly serve as the CWOP representative and ambassador on their camps, etc.

meant than even though I did not have the data base to confidently answer my original research question (that is, from the first thesis proposal), I was able to simply be present with the men and women who I had come to learn with/from. In turn, in genuinely listening to their stories, as well as fully engaging in the development of reciprocal friendships, I learned a number of really important and noteworthy lessons/ themes/ points too, as I hope to successfully highlight here.

Born and raised in Toronto, my experience of growing up was enriched by the humanistic learning that comes from living multiculturally. In stark contrast, like so many other rural communities, Niagara-on-the-Lake is largely racially homogenous with the exception of its seasonal (migrant worker) residents. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, *so many* men and women on the program spoke about what I experienced in listening as excruciatingly painful experiences of racism. In fact, testimonies of overt and covert racial and xenophobic discrimination seemed to be as dominant to their narratives of the "Canadian experience" as readily recalled experiences of the cold weather for the first time (in comparison to the welcomed heat of Jamaica). Related to this, as a young White woman regularly visiting these men's places of residence, worship and popular (social) gathering spots, as well as even more frequently being readily seen in open public spaces with my Caribbean peers and friends, I personally felt the gaze that comes with violating rigidly defined social divisions (in this case, racially-defined social borders). At times more than easily ignored curious, suspicious or disdainful stares, some White individuals would feel so justified in their prejudices that they would openly comment (e.g. I was called a "n*****-lover" more than once over the four months of my internship), or even try to intervene (e.g. White acquaintances, and even a stranger in one instance, would go out of their way to pull

up beside me in their vehicle, insisting that I "get in the car!" rather than walk home with one of my friends).

Familiar with the literature, a part of me expected that hearing stories of discrimination would be a component of the conversations I shared with the Caribbean men and women with whom I set out to work. Additionally, knowing better from my own lived experience of being interracially partnered, an even deeper part of me was prepared for these recounts as well as the personal social consequences of building cross-racial/ cross-cultural relationships too. Nonetheless, it hurt no less to hear or co-experience these stories, listen to the recoil in the voices, read the pain on their faces, feel the discomfort in my body as I subconsciously mimicked the change in their body language too, or moreover begin to understand the ways these experiences of oppression were affecting their sense of self (esteem, worth, dignity, etc).

Similarly, neither the literature or anything from my own lived experience beforehand could have fully prepared me for what I witnessed with regards to the degree of social isolation with which these men and women live year after year. Despite the fact that so many people from the Caribbean are in Niagara either for as long as or longer than the time they spend in their "home" countries each year, it was apparent in almost all of my conversations with local residents that Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers are like strangers among them. Likewise, for the vast majority of Jamaican individuals that I met, almost all of whom had been traveling to Canada for employment for at least a number of years so far, I was often one of less than a handful of White/ Canadian people they had ever engaged with in conversations that went beyond polite platitudes (excluding their employers). Subsequently, they spoke about the distant, unfamiliar and almost mythical White Other in very similar

ways as I was hearing White individuals speak about the Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers. In short, living and working in the exact same community(ies), Canadians and Jamaicans are still living worlds apart.

Nonetheless, as a testimony to their resilience, in spite of pervasive experiences of physical and social isolation and marginality in the community[71], so many Caribbean men and women working in Canada seasonally under the SAWP still communicate (overtly and covertly) a deep desire to build friendships with Canadians, to learn about this culture as well as teach others about their cultures too[72], and ultimately to simply be known and part of the larger community in which they spend so much of their lives. Expectantly, this is what makes the Caribbean Workers Outreach Program appealing and fulfilling for many of the individuals I met this summer. Consequently, in light of the testimonies shared by the workers with regards to the positive impacts and thus vital role that the CWOP church services and social events play, what shines through then is a message about the even greater possibilities available[73] to the larger (faith) community in ensuring the overall health and wellbeing of the guest workers to Canada[74].

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[71] To add to this, much more complicated than the title of Kevin Fraser's documentary of Jamaican agricultural workers in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the social dynamics in the bunk houses are knotty (bearing only the resemblance of "Living as Brothers" in a dysfunction family at times), which adds extra layers to feelings of isolation and marginality as well.

[72] For instance, some of the best relationships I formed this summer were built sitting around the table or picnic bench learning how to play dominoes, or standing over a hot stove learning to cook traditional Caribbean dishes.

[73] In terms of actual suggestions offered by the workers: everything from fun fellowship gatherings (e.g. a shared meals, recreational and sports activities such as dominoes or soccer, outings to local attractions, movie nights/documentaries viewings, etc) to personal development (e.g. whether it be spiritual development, strengthening their literacy skills, budgeting and future planning, computer knowledge, artistic abilities, farming knowledge, conflict management skills, cooking, etc), as well as legal supports, medical health and wellness care, etc.

[74] As an aside, based on brave admissions from workers starting at the end of the summer to now, it would seem as though a sense of loneliness, isolation and depression really start to dampen spirits at the camps in the fall, making this an especially critical time for outreach and social inclusion efforts (and unmet need to date).

In light of as much as in addition to the men's resilience, graciousness, humility, gratitude, and hopefulness (which I hope I have captured above), I also learned to see my (now) Jamaican neighbours, colleagues, and in many instances friends as so much more than the often one-dimensional portrayal offered in the literature: namely, social, political and economic victims; a caricaturization of what Borland (2007) terms a dominant discourse of the "plight of Third World [people]" (p624). Instead, living and working with Caribbean seasonal agricultural workers for the last six months, worshipping beside them, conducting this evaluation/research together, and continuing these relationships (albeit long-distance) since we have parted ways, has taught me to appreciate them as extremely knowledgeable, active agents in their own lives. I also got to personally experience their candid humor, care and concern, protectiveness, generosity, excellent cooking, jaw-dropping dominoes skills, etc, and for this, I am extremely thankful to my friends, and the Mennonite Central Committee for the internship opportunity.

On this note, I return full circle to the excerpt by Pillow and Mayo (2007) at the beginning of this section. In particular, more than any other finding arising from the research, I find myself transformed by the experience. Namely, in the same thought wave that it dawned on me that my (Jamaican) colleagues in the evaluation process had become so invested in the research that as they wrestled with contradictory accounts, reflections and/or suggestions, or found answers to my inquiries which pressed for (more) information, challenged taken-for-granted constructions, etc, and subsequently that they sought me out to initiate these conversations after long, hard days, I also realized that without a doubt these reciprocal encounters of co-creating meaning (and on a more human-to-human level, powerful and vulnerable exchanges on very personal topics, from pragmatic

recommendations to theological debate) had become the highlight of my experience too[75].

Reflecting on this revelation and looking to understanding it in the context of research and scholarship, I found solace in McIntyre and Lykes (2004) and Lykes and Coquillon (2007) who assure that reflective of its roots in qualitative methods as well as its links to critical theory and constructivist feminist research, participatory action research is fundamentally and necessarily practiced in and out of the development of relationships through which all participants (including the researcher) are transformed. More specifically, the bonds and attachments of these relationships "stretch the boundaries of the presumed dichotomy between researchers and participants," often resulting in genuine, reciprocal friendship, and "...such bonds are the stuff of transformation" (Lykes and Coquillon, 2007, p316). For this reason, I cannot wait for the new growing season, and thus the return of my friends.

Last but not least, as both listener and the recipient of this gift, I have also come to appreciate what a profound and radical act something as otherwise seemingly simple as listening can actually be (Olson, 1998). Indeed, just like the testimonies of my colleagues, I too learned first-hand that:

> Listening is not as simple as it sounds...Active listening means more than just physically hearing or reading; rather, it is a fully engaged practice that involves not only taking in information via speech, written words, or signs, but also actively processing it – allowing that information to affect you, baffle you, haunt you, make you uncomfortable, and take you on unexpected detours, 'away from abstract...bloodless, professionalized questions,' towards peoples, knowledges, and experiences that have been disavowed, overlooked, and forgotten (Gordon, 1997, p40). (DeVault and Gross, 2007, p182)

Again, as an avid reader of the works of antiracist feminists such as Audre Lorde, I know their theorizations of the transformative potential of active listening, and yet still the literature has literally come alive for me once more, and in a most powerful and

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[75] That is, according to the testimonies of many of the men whom this is written with in mind, this was a highlight for them as well.

unanticipated way. Of all the lessons learned, this one – my lesson in listening, and moreover the power of this act in transforming the lives of both parties involved – is the most significant of all that I take away from this experience, and first and foremost in light of my anti-oppressive goals in this (participatory and action) research endeavour.

CHAPTER 4:
A DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS,
AS WELL AS THE EVALUATION/RESEARCH PROCESS

Discussion of the Evaluation/Research Findings

> *Power is multifaceted and complex; therefore, if our aim is to understand how power works, we need to make a concerted effort to map the relations among people's activities, experiences, struggles, histories, and broader geopolitical and economic systems...Mapping is fundamental to any project seeking to explicate relationships among groups, histories, and contexts. As a methodological tool, it brings the social (i.e., historicity, activity, and agency) back to the knowledge we produce. We cannot understand the worlds we live in, comprehend how power works, or create meaningful change without making our connectedness to people and economic, geopolitical, and historical processes clear. Moreover, because we are always located (in terms of our race, class, nation, ability, sexuality, and age, and as employees of institutions of higher learning), we must also map the political, intellectual, and institutional context in which we write (Mohanty, 2003, p224). In our interview studies, it is our responsibility not only to report back on what our respondents said, but also to locate our informants' responses in a particular historical context and to recognize each response as emerging from a very complex set of local and global raced, classed, and gendered relationships. Our emphasis should not only be the 'micropolitics of context, subjectivity, and struggle,' but 'the macropolitics of global economic and political systems and processes' as well (Mohanty, 2003, p223). -DeVault and Gross, 2007, p191*

While there were a variety of identified reasons why the men chose to participate in

the Caribbean Workers Outreach Program, interest in expressing and developing their

personal faith was purported most frequently. Still, another recurrent theme from these

conversations (in both interviews as well as the focus group discussions) was indeed the fact

that CWOP is practically the only opportunity that these men and women have to meet and

meaningfully interaction with Canadians (implicit in which is a communicated desire for

opportunities to build cross-cultural and transnational friendships), other than their

employers[76] of course. Parallel here then is that out of the narratives that accompanied this point, CWOP was heralded as a life-line to the women's and men's sense of emotional and spiritual well-being as well as a grounded sense of meaningful connection to others, which many men and women explicitly communicated as being just as important to their emotional and spiritual well-being too. On this latter note, they tended to emphasize that CWOP and the volunteers involved in particular (even if only a handful of local residents) provide them with a sense of family/community away from home (that is, both in a sense of feeling connected to the larger faith community, the Niagara community, and to their fellow Jamaican country(wo)men in the region too), and that this is absolutely invaluable to them.

These findings are important in and of themselves no doubt, but there is something to be said for appreciating the deeper meaning of these sentiments regarding the positive impacts on their sense of well-being in light of the academic literature on the SAWP more generally. Specifically, despite the Canadian Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program being asserted as an ideal transnational labour migration scheme, the literature (formal and informal) reports are most frequently anything but encouraging. For instance, taken together, a dominant narrative is that tens of thousands of men and women who come to Canada each year as seasonal agricultural workers arguably face physical, social, legal[77], political, and economic insecurities. Specifically, even though the Canadian government has promoted and recruited workers from the Caribbean and Mexico to work under the SAWP using a rhetoric

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[76] In light of the academic literature in this respect, I think it is worth noting that as per my experience this summer, there were many instances where worker-employer relationships were positive, even remarkable, and explicitly acknowledged as especially significant to/for the Caribbean (wo)men.

[77] For instance, as Faraday (2012) states, "At each stage in the labour migration cycle, migrant workers face insecurity that is either created through law or sustained because the law fails to prevent practices that are known to undermine workers' security and capacity to enforce their rights" (p33).

of offering a win-win-win opportunity[78], the academic evidence seems to rather consistently

demonstrate that in all too many cases, in the process of meeting a significant need in/for the

Canadian economy, seasonal agricultural workers are underpaid, overworked, subject to

dangerous working conditions, denied adequate protections and/or rights like health and

safety and decent housing, are socially isolated, etc (see Faraday, 2012; CCFR, 2012;

UFCW, 2011; McLaughlin, 2009, 2007; Gibb, 2006; Preibisch, 2004, 2007; Sharma, 2001;

Bauder 2008; etc). Frankly then, in stark contrast to the overall highly positive reflections

that arose out of conversations regarding the Caribbean Workers Outreach Program, there is

another narrative, with significant merit, which advocates that the Canadian government has

prioritized (regardless of intentionality or lack thereof) its own wellbeing (e.g. food security)

at the expense of the wellbeing of seasonal agricultural workers, and consequences are

experienced by workers painfully; meanwhile, however, similar to other transnational labour

migration trends (Feldmann and Olea, 2004) and reflective of globalized patterns of

inequality (Saith, 2006; Nef, 1999), both farm owners and moreover the Canadian economy

disproportionately reap the benefits of the cheap labour, tirelessly hard work, and countless

sacrifices made by seasonal agricultural workers and their families "back home". To this end,

in thinking about social inclusion efforts for guest workers, Neve Gordon (2004) appears to

be justified in asserting that while seasonal agricultural workers most certainly have a place

in the Canadian economy, they are ultimately still largely excluded from having a place in

the political as well as social fabric of the nation. Subsequently, without a doubt, in so far as

scholars such as Sharma (2001), Foster (2005), Saith (2006), and Blackwell, Smith and

Sorenson (2008) explain that people who live on the outskirts and furthest margins of society

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[78] That is, to the extent that this temporary migration opportunity provides otherwise unavailable financial
benefits for Caribbean and Mexican workers, while also generating remittances and relieving the employment
burden in sending countries, and meeting labour needs in Canada too (Scantlebury, 2009; McLaughlin, 2009).

are socially constructed as least valued via a process of reifying their social and legal status[79]

as essentially non-people[80] (i.e. in relation to the institutional functioning of state, civil

society institutions, and the market)[81], and moreover that "the most extreme form of poverty

is destitution" (Saith, 2006, p882), the reprehensible (social) indignity experienced by

seasonal agricultural workers ought to be of greater concern amongst Canadians (and global

citizens/humankind most inclusively).

Following these sentiments, I am convinced that issues of ideology and socialization

are at the root of oppression or to be more specific to the subject matter at hand, the

conditions faced by people who travel to work temporarily in Canada. As Blackwell, Smith

and Sorenson (2008) for instance explain, much like Nandita Sharma (2001) as discussed in

the first chapter, cultures of division, exclusion, and prejudice are not just antithetical to

human dignity but more precisely "a mainstay of social oppression and exploitation" (p13),

and in the given context, the underlying state which permits the injustices noted by countless

scholars and activists. Consequently, this aspect of Canadian ethos and socialization needs to

be addressed in meaningful and radical ways if collective action to achieve social justice,

human equality, and genuine social inclusion is to be realized. Hence, acknowledging that

although a holistic solution will need to be more complex (e.g. including practical legal and

political revisions and provisions), even still subverting and strategically shifting the culture

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[79] To emphasize this point, the fact that Canada was a leader in formally institutionalizing the UNDP's 1994 HDR Human Security Framework as a central political theme in its own national policies (Jolly and Ray, 2006) also makes the negative reports of this transnational labour program on Canadian soil a great shame (or at least it should be a source of tremendous embarrassment!). Surely, no matter how hard it tried, the Canadian government cannot honestly be so disillusioned as to not see the limitations in the CSAWP, especially in light of its commitment to ensuring the security of all persons: According its own definition, human security entails "a condition or state of being characterized by freedom from pervasive threats to people's rights, their safety, or even their lives" (Government of Canada's Human Security Programme as cited by Jolly and Ray, 2006, p4).

[80] Which I suspect is tied to colonialism's casting of other groups as primitive and inferior, as less-than-fully-human (Sorenson, 2008b).

[81] This point is parallel to Foster's explanation of the links between socialization and stratification.

and underlying ideology of division between people and ultimately of prejudice must be part of the resolution stratagem at the deepest level, and in my opinion, first and foremost. After all, as Harvey (2007) remarks, "isolation is the capstone of the powerlessness of the powerless" (p32), and so as long as social divisions along lines of power and oppression are rooted aspects of Canadian socialization and thus social organization, marginalized groups, such as seasonal "foreign" workers, will continue to face unjust social and material conditions.

One offer of hope within this matter though is arguably (that is, as I see it) that to this end, in addition to being a safe space in the interim, CWOP and similar efforts in other communities (locally and globally) have an important role to play. Regarding CWOP in particular, being that the group is at a critical point in its development, marked by a desire to evaluate their efforts and strategically plan to strengthen and improve their work moving forward, this social inclusion outreach is uniquely positioned to take an all-the-more vital role in the community to actively work towards greater social justice (i.e. starting with social integration) for the ideologically and materially marginalized groups in its midst. In doing so though, in the same way that Canadians ought to be concerned (or better yet disturbed to action) with regards to the reports of social exclusion (and related factors), I would add the recommendation here that members of the Caribbean Workers Outreach Program in particular must consider the ways in which their specific foci (and thus efforts) are limited at present, especially with respect to the fact that it is currently the only outreach effort of its type in the community. As a starting point then, I wonder if more work could be done to not only recruit more volunteers to this particularly social inclusion effort, but to inspire and support other outreach and inclusion efforts within the region and beyond too. Either way,

learning from the evaluation conducted and reviewed here, in moving forward, pursuit of an

even broader vision for social inclusion would be most beneficial. Specifically, one major

concern that I have noted arising from the narratives of the Caribbean men and women is the

appearance of two-tiers of participants: those who are practicing Christians and thus served

through this faith-based social inclusion effort, and all of the other workers (which represents

about four-fifths of the Caribbean workers in Niagara-on-the-Lake) whose experience

remains largely marred by exclusion[82] (e.g. again, to be explicit, both because they are not

practicing Christians and because they are not other pervasive efforts to reach out to migrant

agricultural workers in the community[83]). Pragmatically, of course CWOP must define

realistic parameters for its scope (in this case, since the purpose is to offer spiritual supports

foremost, religiosity sets the primary delineation); nevertheless it is concerning that so many

individuals are missing out on the benefits of fellowship as a result. Thus, while whether this

is something that CWOP is able to address and rectify in future is yet to be seen, regardless

of the group's decision, the inherent limitations are notable especially for other efforts from

here-on-out too, whereby the ultimate hope is that either way, other collaborations will form

to not only add much needed additional supports but also address this existing gap (in which

case my co-researchers and I hope the work completed in evaluating CWOP this year will

provide helpful insights and suggestions).

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[82] That is, asides from a couple social and recreational events organized by CWOP each year (e.g. a cricket match and BBQ, a dominoes tournament, and celebratory meal at year-end), and an annual Workers Welcome Concert organized independently of CWOP (though some of the individuals involved in organizing this significant event are also volunteers for CWOP).
[83] Though, that stated, this is (hopefully) changing, with the focused efforts of the Mennonite Central Committee.

A Reflexive Evaluation of the Process Itself:

> *In calling for the integration of research and science in an emancipator process, I do not have in mind a particular action or action research model...It is much more a matter of the reunifications of life and thought, action and knowledge, change and research. -Mies, 1991, p68*

> *How feminist evaluations are implemented may vary widely; however, there are some key role responsibilities for the feminist evaluator. The feminist evaluator should engage in dialogue with key stakeholders of the project, immerse herself or himself as much as possible in the evaluation context, reflexively engage with others to understand and check out emerging ideas and analyses, and self-disclose (to others but also by documenting one's own reflections) regarding any biases or identities that might lead to limits in perspective...* -Brisolara and Seigart, 2007, p292

Perhaps as important as adopting anti-oppression as the guiding principle for this research, and applying the sensitivity, empathy, and active listening skills of my social work training, the basic fieldwork principle of sustained immersion in the community was a particularly important point of strength. Above all, I believe that relocating to live and actively participate within the Niagara community for an extended period of time (six months) was *the* pivot factor which allowed for genuine, long-term, reciprocal relationships to form. Still perhaps equally as important in this respect then was my eventual decision to allow the design and intent of my original research plans to shift according to the needs of the community (much like Delgado-Gaitan, 1993). Specifically, despite committing to a comprehensive participant-centered evaluation of CWOP early on and deciding that this would become my primary research focus for the thesis too, actually letting go of my initial (academic) goals was very challenging. In fact, as opportunities arose in conversations, I found that I was yet still trying to uncover answers to my early curiosities. Eventually however, this became detrimental to my research commitment and much more importantly to being present on a human-to-human level. Namely, in writing and analyzing my field notes it

became increasingly apparent that I was splintering my focus and energy in an attempt to satisfy my own intellectual curiosities. More than becoming increasingly overwhelmed from the girth of data resulting from juggling too many research questions at once though, most importantly it dawned on me that this was problematic to connecting meaningfully with others (e.g. in practicing active listening). Essentially, in wearing too many hats at once (e.g. pursuing too many research agendas), I was also listening with too many ears as well, and realizing that trying to answer my own questions was inhibiting my ability to listen fully to the men and women who were becoming my friends truly troubled me the most. Subsequently, about mid-way through my time in Niagara, I *finally actually* resolved to allow myself to meet the community's communicated needs over my own intellectual curiosity and perceived academic commitment/responsibilities. That is, I finally allowed my humanist values to superseded my over-ambitious academic self, and in reflection, rightly so (especially in light of the scholars such as Nash (1997) and Borland (2007) who openly criticize researchers who prioritize their own theoretical inquiries over the important practice and thus possibilities embedded in community-engaged, grounded and focused fieldwork) (also see Martin, 1996; Khanna, 1996; Nash, 1997; Borland, 2007; Lykes and Coquillon, 2007; etc). In fact, my only regret in experiencing this shift in the research is that I did not *really* narrow my focus sooner.

Additionally, on the topic of perceived strengths of the research design, as much as the focus groups and interviews are indeed powerful methods (i.e. as direct exchanges of ideas), I believe that the "collaborative moments of making knowledge" (Paget, 1983) that came out of working with the smaller group of co-researchers was the greatest strength of my methodological approach to this project. In particular, more than enriching the data in ways

that I could not have fully foreseen beforehand, the men who took part in this aspect of the evaluation have repeatedly commented (even after returning home) on how personally transformative this experience was for them (e.g. in building their self-esteem; feeling like their voices were valued; through the transformation of being heard, and having a sense of purpose; the friendships formed out of these conversations, etc), much like it was for myself. In light of these gratitudes, I believe that the research process at least broached what Nancy Naples (2003) argued is required for true collaboration: a space of genuine reciprocal engagement and one whereby participants can assert themselves through reflective, dialogic and democratic processes among other benefits. Part and parcel, I believe that it was precisely through "collaborative inquiry and reflexive knowledge building" and "empathetic, interpersonal relationships" (Hesse-Biber and Piatelli, 2007, p148) that I was successful in deconstructing the typical hierarchical relationships in the how of research.

Nonetheless, while I believe that I was successful to some consequential extent at developing a foundation from which we "co-create[d] meaning through reciprocity and negotiation" (Hesse-Biber, 2007, p15), I recount that Lykes and Coquillon (2007) wrote that participatory action researchers "seek to develop a community-based process wherein participants develop their capacities to identify *and share their needs and from that base begin to develop change processes*" (p310, italics added for emphasis), and it is upon this reading that I find my foremost regret. Namely, I wish that had provided more opportunities for interested co-researchers to conduct (e.g. from focus groups and interviews to the surveys in the original plan for this project) and re-present the research with me. Initially, I just assumed that especially with all of the time and energy demands on the men already, but also considering various interpersonal dynamics between them and their peers, literacy levels, etc,

that this would be more burdensome than emancipatory. In hindsight however, particularly

with the feedback from the men who formed the smaller group, I think that I was incorrect.

Unequivocally, in order to "share their (*own*) needs and…develop change processes"

(Lykes and Coquillon, 2007, p310) that would have perhaps continued to include Caribbean

participants centrally, I wish I had fostered more opportunities for my peers in this evaluation

to present the summative results with me. Other scholars such as Maguire (1996) and Fine

(1992) have also challenged me in this respect, as I reflect back on my practice in light of the

literature. Fine (1992) for instance refers to researchers who speak for participants as

'ventriloquists' and warn that in doing so, they risk contributing disinformation as well as

altogether eclipsing the voices of the individuals the research is meant to (re)present. Thus, to

counter these potential effects, much like Lykes and Coquillon (2007), she urges researchers

to specifically allow participants to give their own testimonies to a public who can then be

held accountable, for having heard these stories (Fine, 1992). Expectedly, the literature is

rich with scholars who advocate for similar practices, including Maguire (1996) for example,

who in the same vein calls researchers to empower and equip participants to act on their own

behalf, rather than act *for* them. In light of these works, I ashamedly believe that I have

perhaps failed my colleagues in not advocating for and/or personally organizing these

opportunities. To be explicit, as I will elaborate upon below, I think that my decision to

present the findings without my peers was a poor choice (and in response, since my

involvement in this community will resume immediately upon graduating, I intend to rectify

this mistake by being sure that I make creating these opportunities a top priority moving

forward, especially in preparation for the upcoming CWOP season - a timely opportunity to

revisit the suggestions and work as a more unified group to improve CWOP "from strength to strength").

That said, to provide more details on how the results were presented to the leadership team, while the Coordinators communicated gratitude for the comprehensiveness of the report and moreover for the fact that feedback from the Jamaican participants themselves formed the foundation for the recommendations specifically, as was appropriately anticipated, there were some tensions (which is the condolence I have the oversight in ensuring the participation of my colleagues at this stage). Firstly, I had hoped to facilitate a reflexive exercise with the leadership team before presenting the findings, to get them to (self-)identify the strengths as well as areas that could be improved, but this plan fell through; since the initial meeting date had to be rescheduled last minute (postponed), this sort of conversation had already taken place amongst the Coordinators (only) before hand, and despite my attempts to solicit their reflections, the leadership team resisted and insisted that the evaluation findings be presented instead. I consider this an unfortunate omission from the presentation since I had hoped that such an exercise would have solicited the same/ similar responses to those found in speaking with the volunteers and Jamaican participants, and if this had been the case, I could then merely affirm that they were 'on the same page' so-to-speak with the other individuals in the CWOP community, and then fill in the remaining gaps as necessary (e.g. to make the girth of information feel less overwhelming). Additionally, particularly with regards to the areas needing improvement, I had hoped that hearing these from one another would be easier, and where the group raised those also uncovered in the findings, this would ease the anticipated discomfort associated with me, as an outsider, raising them.

Adding to this, as Brisolara and Seigart (2007) pointed out, "The contexts in which evaluation operates are politicized and imbued with asymmetrical power relationships" (p280), and while the senior most leader was the one to invite the evaluation, for those closer to the frontlines of the ministry, this had always (and now especially) felt uncomfortable, causing guards to be raised (which they identified and named openly, though this did not resolve it). Related to this latter point, based on comments made in the meeting I believe that leadership challenged some of the recommendations (e.g. especially with regards to the recommendation for leadership development opportunities and a need for more work around anti-oppression specifically) based on the fact that I was a young woman, and thus perceived as inexperienced; ironically, conversely however, the paradox to this was that comments were also made with regards to my status as a post-secondary student, and thus the evaluation (both in terms of the rigorous research process as well as final report) was commented as being "too academic". Immediately arising out of this for me though was the stark realization that evaluation is a political activity, and as aforementioned, since advocacy like politics is inherent in evaluation (Green, 1995), and appropriately since the purpose of the evaluation was to present a summary of the culminated ideas of the Jamaican CWOP community members first and foremost (and so I advocated for them specifically), I believe that I may have inadvertently made the leadership feel 'othered' - distinct and separate from those they were serving (e.g. in presenting the reflections of the participants, in instances whereby the information was surprisingly and new, I was essentially pointing out the distance between them and those they serve).

Furthermore, while I appreciatively celebrated with the group the ways in which CWOP is structured according to anti-oppressive values (e.g. the focus on worshipping

"yard-style"/ Caribbean style and the purposeful inclusion of the men in leading worship, as well as in the organization's dedication to bringing up Caribbean pastors, in addressing practical barrier to participation via the provision of rides for workers for instance, etc), and I also took seriously the call from the Caribbean participants to help CWOP move "from strength to strength" (which I understood to mean essentially working from a strengths-based approach), I nevertheless wrestled tirelessly with what I perceived to be problematic discursive/ ideological, political, and social processes at play as well. Specifically, I repeatedly struggled with whether I could stick to the charge of the Caribbean evaluation participants interviewed, who collectively tended to speak from a place of tremendous gratitude and humility, as opposed to discontent in light of imperfections, and still present a challenge to reconsider some of the group's practices which were troubling to me, and which I believed needed to be named and addresses in order to seek (re)solutions, or as Lykes and Coqillion (2007) put it, to "transform the social inequalities exposed through research by facilitating and engaging in specific actions that contribute to human well-being and a more just and equitable world" (p298; also see Ward, 2002; Brisolara and Seigart, 2007). Struggling back and forth with this for a number of months, I turned to role models in this work, and in I searching the literature I found feminist researcher Katherine Borland's (2007) recount of a similar experience in which she wrote about this struggle in the following way: "The paradox of ethnographic authority, then, remains: The feminist's ethical commitment to reveal the relations of women's oppression will at times conflict with her commitment to honour voices and experiences of other women with whom she collaborates" (p623). Ultimately then, much like the other anti-oppressive scholars who wrote about their similar ordeals, I did end up pointing out these disparities, following the conviction that after all,

"the [anti-oppressive] scholar looking at an oppressive situation … has both the right and obligation to point out that the situation *is* oppressive" (Lawless, 1992, p312).

The most pressing issue as I saw it was some of the ways a number of the group's members spoke of the Caribbean men and women in either/both covertly or/and overtly stereotypical and/or prejudicial/discriminatory (e.g. racist, xenophobic, ethnocentric, etc) manners. Specifically, I pointedly addressed this core issue with leadership, explaining the seriousness of this concern and being forthright with respect to the fact that this was the impetus for my own added emphasis on a need for greater anti-oppression training within the group among the recommendations to CWOP. Namely, what I observed was that as Pillow and Mayo (2007) and countless other scholars point out, "identity categories, even when ascribed, do construct the lived experiences of those who inhabit those identities" (p156), and in the case of this community group, when leadership and/or volunteers conceive of the (wo)men served by the community in these ways, this ends up (regardless of intention) having very real implications for how they are perceived and treated (not to mention, could also impact their sense of selves[84] in turn too). As is perhaps only human, this feedback was received with mixed responses from leadership: for instance, some members likewise acknowledged this as a concern, while one person withdrew and others altogether jumped to defense.

Reflecting on this particular aspect of the presentation of the evaluation/research findings highlighted a number of noteworthy points for further consideration (as well as raised flags for me to note for my own self-improvement). Firstly, I quickly realized how identifying one's politic can be problematic in terms of exacerbating the political realities of evaluation (Brisolara and Seigart, 2007; Pillow and Mayo, 2007; DeVault and Gross, 2007;

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[84] Which was certainly found in conversations with the men, as noted in the previous chapter.

Richardson, 1997), though I still concede this is a worthy (self-)disclosure. Namely, much in

the same way that my status as a Master's student became a point for deflecting (e.g. as being

"too academic") my more difficult-to-hear findings, and particularly my concern with regards

to discourses present within the group about the Jamaican men being served by CWOP's

efforts, naming anti-oppression as a critical lens for proceeding with and understanding the

evaluation was likewise used to minimize the validity of this observation. These deflections

immediately caused me grave concern as I worried that offended members would altogether

dismiss the need for more work around consciousness raising and sensitivity training[85].

Moreover however, in light of "the connection between our practice as researchers and

educators and the implications of that practice for people's daily lives" (DeVault and Gross,

2007, p175), I panicked that since this became a heated and extended point in the dialogue

about the appraisal of the program, I had potentially jeopardized the ministry for the men and

women I had intended to advocate on behalf of (i.e. I worried that leadership would jump to

giving up altogether since given the difficulties, e.g. "capacity constraints", faced by CWOP

at present, the option had been presented that perhaps it would not continue in the future). In

turn, I feared that I failed the Caribbean participants especially. Related to this ethical worry

pertaining to allegiances, the warning offered by Lykes and Coquillon (2007) and reiterated

by Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007) – that "researchers who engage in close, interactive

relationships should be aware of the potential for participants to feel misunderstood,

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[85] Related to this, I think that Audre Lorde's (1996) theorization around the power and potential inherent in healthy appraisals and appreciations of difference can be a point of strength for the group, in moving forward; namely:

> Advocating the mere tolerance of difference between women is the grossest reformism. It is a total denial of the creative function of difference in our lives. Difference must be not merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic. Only then does the necessity for interdependency become unthreatening. Only within the interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal, can the power to seek new ways of being in the world generate, as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters (p159).

disappointed, or exploited if the research effort fails to meet their expectations," which subsequently demands great effort on the part of the researcher "to continuously find ways to reflexively examine her or his positionality, relationships, and the research process to ensure that confidentiality and trust are upheld" (Hesse-Biber and Piatelli, 2007, p151-152) – in the case of CWOP leadership as one of my partners in this endeavour, I wished that I had done more before reaching this point to clarify expectations, etc.

Thankfully however, though this was indeed a difficult conversation (and rightly so, since raising concerns around issues of discrimination should be uncomfortable, as a sign that the issue is being taken seriously, and that people are disturbed by the potential injustice), overall the evaluation findings, including recommendations, were received with gratitude and praise from the leadership team. That stated, being that they were presented at the end of the CWOP season, we have yet to see how (and if) the specific recommendations will be implemented in the future. Excitedly for me though, whereas in most cases of program evaluations it is the group members as opposed to the evaluator who carry forth the results and implement the changes (Brisolara and Seigart, 2007), being that I intend to remain part of this ministry and the Niagara community, I will fortuitously also be part of this natural continuation of the experience of moving CWOP "from strength to strength" (in other words, this evaluation was not the end of my involvement). To my utmost delight, this evaluation is just part of an emergent story, and one to which I excitedly anticipate returning soon.

CONCLUSION

Program evaluation has and continues to be a hot topic in international development studies (Brisolara and Seigart, 2007), and foremost the growing need for anti-oppressive approaches is at the centre of these discussions. As part of this agenda, participatory-action paradigms offer a grounded framework for co-creating meaning and thus emancipatory knowledge building, as well as action which is specifically aimed at mobilizing otherwise typically oppressed groups to act on their own behalf, as opposed to acting for them (Maguire, 1996; Hesse-Biber, 2007; Lykes and Coquillon, 2007). Part and parcel to this, the essence of a more inclusive and empowering approach to knowledge construction and collaborative action is that these efforts become *relational* processes primarily, rather than objective products, and as emphasized throughout this thesis, in turn this demands critical self-reflection as much as dialogue and interaction (Hesse-Biber and Piatelli, 2007; Collins 2000; DeVault 1990; Mies 1983). To this end, ultimately the successful deconstruction of hierarchical relationships both in the 'what' and 'how' of research and practice is imperative to the simultaneous construction of useful and meaningful (that is, to those who participate with us, as well as to larger society) research and action. Thus, humbly, through empathetic, interpersonal relationships, collaborative inquiry, and reflexive knowledge building in which my role as the researcher was to "engage and interact, working with participants to promote dialogue, foster relationships, and collectively develop greater understanding" (Hesse-Biber and Piatelli, 2007, p 148), I hope I have managed to do justice to both the model and moreover the community I set out to work with.

Returning once more to the literature, at the heart of my own reflections as well as the theoretical debates in the literature on standpoint theory has always been the underlying

question: Can/should members of a dominant social group produce knowledge pertaining to subjugated communities, given unequal power relations and histories of oppression and injustice? Similarly, in the context of international development studies, in light of colonial legacies, the persistence of domination, subjugation, marginalization, and imperialism has stirred a heated theoretical and morally-charged debate regarding the appropriateness for privileged (i.e. Western/Northern[86]) researchers and practitioners to work with oppressed groups (e.g. in the Third World). For instance, within this dispute, on one end there are advocates, such as Erika Haug (2005), who believe development projects involving Northern intervention in the South have not only failed to meet their intended outcomes of poverty alleviation, but worse yet all too often exacerbated the problems of poverty, dispossession and powerlessness of local people in these regions (also see Healy, 2008; Nurse, 2003; Scheyvens and Storey, 2003). Others in this school of thought, like Samir Amin (1993), have gone so far as to assert that "the only possible progressive intervention by the West in the affairs of the Third World is non-intervention" (p138). In other words, perspectives from this side of the question see a direct link between international development and colonial histories, and subsequently theorize international development today as an extension of colonial and imperialist pasts in present day[87].

Located at the other end of the theoretical debate, however, are arguments that support the volition of development work *but* which of course preface this with advocacy for collaboration characterized by genuine reciprocity and informed by understandings of social

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[86] I fully acknowledge the inherent problem of terms such as 'Western,' 'North' and 'South', but after much consideration, I opted to use them here (albeit apprehensively) since they continue to be the language most commonly adopted throughout the disciplinary discourse, and comparatively, an alternative phrasing may not have equally sufficed in terms of drawing on the taken for granted shared understanding (of the meaning) captured in these terms.

[87] Drawing the parallel to research and colonial pasts then, the ethnographer of today might be accused of repeating the same terrors of centuries past as well (as noted in the introduction to this thesis).

issues from the oppressed's perspectives (e.g. Wehbi, 2010; Wilson, 2005; Haug, 2005; Razack, 2002; Keith and Keith, 2010). Wehbi (2010), for instance, writes:

> Solidarity goes beyond this limited conception to an understanding of how the North is responsible for creating much of Southern misery. In this sense, it is not equitable to say that we are motivated to be involved because we see the interconnections; we need to be involved because we were, and still are, part of the problem, as much as we have the potential to be part of the solution. (p59)

The role of agencies working in partnership with developing nations is therefore meant to be one of rallying in support of long and complex histories of resisting oppression, including the decolonization of knowledge by historically oppressed groups (e.g. through the indigenization of Western/Northern models). Unambiguously, Wehbi (2010) reminds us that in emancipatory politics, "by acknowledging the existence of resistance, we shatter the idea that oppression exists uncontested" (p52).

To be most explicit, this second position (in the outlined debate) is grounded by similar underlying theoretical understandings as those espoused by standpoint theory. For example, directly in line with the aforementioned position, alternative epistemologies are produced by or at least *with* and therefore directly reflect the values and knowledge of subjugated communities. Of course, implied above, there are individuals in each theoretical orientation that hold fast to the belief that liberation must be birthed from within oppressed communities (e.g. grass-roots movements). In these cases, if outside activists and likewise researchers who embody positions of privilege are involved, they must necessarily acknowledge their greater access to power (e.g. to influence discourses and produce knowledge that may be more likely to be accepted by mainstream academia) and ultimately use this privileged access to rally *in support* of a social justice ends. In doing so, such researchers in particular should be careful that they are respectful and honour the dignity of

the individuals with whom they conduct their research[88], both in process and in terms of the research outcomes (Roulston, 2010; Sprague and Zimmerman, 2004), and this in turn demands that reflexivity therefore be a central and intentionally embedded aspect of the research practice. Taking this seriously, then, in working collaboratively and in solidarity, in my own work described throughout this document, given my positionality compared to that of the other participants in the research, and moreover the ways in which this necessitated considerations for the "cultural, social, national, racial, and gendered composition of historically different and specific forms of knowledge" (Hesse-Biber and Piatelli, 2007, p148) that would arise from the research process, reflexivity has been central. That is, through (self-)critical reflections on my standpoint as a researcher and as a community member/ CWOP participant, I accessed different kinds of knowledges, but returning to the situatedness of knowledge (and to Mead specifically), these insights needed to be appropriately considered respective of a re-presenting of *all* understandings, all knowledges and actions of those involved in the research, as perspectival too (Haraway 1991, 1997; Lykes and Coquillon, 2007). Perhaps most importantly though, an intentionality on being reflexive facilitated self-criticisms which lead to adjustments and improvements in my approach in both respects too (e.g. understanding that my multiple 'selves'/identities in this experience had different implications and posed different strengths and challenges, such as for position and relations, as well as for the research and actions/ participation taken), for instance with regards to concerns about ensuring genuine reciprocity on my part in relationships with participants, as well as with issues of power, equality and inclusion, representation, voice, listening, etc (also see Pillow and Mayo, 2007; Lykes and Coquillon,

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[88] For instance, one might ask himself/herself "Am I creating space *or* taking space?" as a means of gauging the degree to which his/her work is in fact collaborative and respectful (Kovach, 2005, p26).

2007; etc). Scholars who emphasize the importance of this research practice have likewise noted the significance of reflexivity for these reasons, leading to me to believe and hereby argue that writing this explicitly into the thesis, especially as a novice attempting to put an alternative epistemology into practice, was as valid and important as the primary findings themselves.

In conclusion, values and politics are intricately tied to the social organization of science and knowledge production more generally (Sprague and Zimmerman, 2004; Harding, 2004; Kovach, 2005). In this regards, given the embedded politics of/in knowledge, it is no wonder then that the conventional trend in knowledge production and exchange mirrors global inequities and power relations: that is, in large part the informational flow continues to be predominantly unilateral (e.g. North-to-South)[89], reflective of histories of imperialism and colonialization (Sprague and Zimmerman, 2004; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Kovach, 2005; Ferguson, Dortzbach, Dyrness, Dabir & Spruijt-Metz, 2008; Scheyvens and Storey, 2003; Razack, 2002; Nurse, 2003). In contrast, however, in line with Foucault's (1980) more nuanced understanding of the operation of power[90], alternative ways of knowing carry with them a charge of insurgent power that although perhaps not broadly recognized, exists and

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[89] An example of these hierarchical and unequal power relations is illustrated in the ways in which Western-European/Northern theories continue to dominate and hegemonize development theory practiced internationally (Healy, 2008; Razack, 2002; Haug, 2005; Keith and Keith, 2010; Scheyvens and Storey, 2003) in spite of the fact that this relationship (not to mention the underlying assumption that Western-European/Northern models can be implemented universally, too) have been widely scrutinized (most particularly in the last two decades).
[90] This point alludes to Foucault's (1980) assertion that:

   ...power is not to be taken to be a phenomenon of one individual's consolidated and homogeneous domination over others, or that one group or class over others. What, by contrast, should always be kept in mind is that power, if we do not take too distant a view of it, is not that which makes the difference between those who exclusively possess and retain it, and those who do not have it and submit to it. Power must be analysed as something that circulates...It is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application. (p98)

persists nevertheless. Theorists who practice from within these critical paradigms not only recognize the role of power and domination in the production of hegemonic knowledge, but moreover struggle to actively resist the perpetuation of the political and ideological oppression and disempowerment of subjugated social groups (Guba and Lincoln, 2004). In the process, these political and scientific struggles aimed at revealing institutional and disciplinary practices of power in the production of knowledge are in turn themselves also systematically knowledge producing (Harding, 2004). In any case, ultimately neither the production of knowledge nor the consequent 'truths' are value-neutral or apolitical, regardless of whether the focus is on dominant or marginalized epistemologies and/or knowledges. The innate irony then is that politics, power and science are simultaneously both problematic and in the case of emancipatory research, part of a potentially liberating solution (that is, based on the aforementioned argument in many alternative approaches that states that reclaiming both science and the embedded politics of knowledge production are necessary in working towards emancipation). And although at first puzzling (that is, that a mechanism used in oppression and injustice could be reclaimed as part of a resolution), perhaps this makes sense. After all, in spite of being "one of colonialism's most sordid legacies" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p1), it would be utterly ridiculous to villainize research in its entirety. Of course, research and the advancement of new knowledge have led to remarkable discoveries and important new understandings of the world and social relations within it. At last, this again highlights the function of an ever-present and pervasive underlying factor in determining the effects of knowledge: power.

Thus, again drawing from Foucault (1980)'s theory of power as not a static *thing* to be held over, stored up or employed, but rather a concept meant to encapsulate the ability to

order (that is, 'to command', 'to arrange', 'to classify', 'to regulate', etc), I have argued throughout this thesis that power is not only central to but inextricably embedded in the (re)production and differential regard granted to various knowledges. Ultimately then, power is the mechanism by which knowledge and truth directly and indirectly influences and structures behaviour (albeit and importantly, to the benefit of some people/groups more than others). In this sense then, to the degree that research (and all knowledge production for that matter) can be made to be more inclusive, access to power will be more equitable and therefore one might hope that the escarpment between power and oppression in ordering behaviours will likewise be lessened. If this is the desired objective, then it is a plausible logical deduction that research (as a source of knowledge production) and power (as a mechanism) need to be reclaimed for an emancipatory and social justice ends, especially if knowledge is to subvert the reproduction of social inequalities. Towards this end, however, more than the methodological paradigm (e.g. whether qualitative or quantitative) adopted, or the details of the researcher's positionality, above all else, the question of whose voice and knowledge is being showcased and whether this is done in a respectful, anti-imperialistic, liberating way is of uttermost importance in efforts to decolonize knowledge and its production. That is, by creating a space for groups otherwise excluded to share their knowledge, both the process and product of this emancipatory achievement is political and ideally, the power differential slowly but surely just might begin to equalize as a result too.

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