

Program of Study

‘Helping People Help Themselves’:

Democracy, Development, and the Global Politics of Poverty in Canada, 1964-1976

My dissertation is a political, cultural, and intellectual history of the changing meaning of democracy in an emerging global world. I argue that development programs were central to Canadian efforts to democratize society and to spread democratic values across the globe during the Cold War. The federal government initiated a number of development programs from the mid-1960s that sought to “help people help themselves.” Development - at the community, regional, and international levels - emerged as a common, if contested, paradigm to promote social change and to revitalize liberal democracy within and beyond Canada’s borders. Development initiatives, often considered in isolation from one another, should instead be critically and comparatively analyzed in an integrated framework.

In that framework, poverty was a crucial issue. Significantly, Cold War imperatives (Westad 2005), anti-imperialist movements (Prashad 2007, 2011), working-class agitations shaped by global economic changes (Milligan 2011), and transnational counterculture movements (Henderson 2011) encouraged anti-poverty activists and theorists to focus their attentions on the global patterns of democracy and development (Rist 1997). Their various reconceptualizations of the meaning and importance of inequality were contested within what I call the global politics of poverty. By thinking in terms of development, many commentators envisioned a binary globe, bifurcated between developed and underdeveloped areas (Frank 1971, Escobar 2011). But just what did eradicating poverty and underdevelopment entail? Could poverty be addressed, as liberal internationalists suggested, by enlarging the social, political, and economic space of democratic capitalism through a process of modernization, so as to accommodate the well being and active political participation of marginalized people (Rostow [1960], Gilman 2007)? Or, as radicals argued, did eliminating poverty necessitate a deeper and implicitly post-capitalist restructuring of the base and forms of democratic participation? This debate was at the heart of the global politics of poverty and permeated international, national, and local spheres. A range of federal government development programs directed at the Third World (Webster 2009, Teigrob 2009, Brouwer 2010a) and at the poverty in Canada’s own inner cities, rural communities, and aboriginal reserves (Shewell 2002) brought activists, decision makers, and ordinary Canadians into an engagement with democracy and development that had a global reach.

In examining the relationship between democracy and development - and following its trajectory domestically and internationally - this dissertation will historicize themes hitherto largely dealt with by political scientists, sociologists, and anthropologists. Placing an emphasis on the lived experiences of human beings, the project will contribute to the new understanding of the long Sixties not as a period of the rise and decline of student radicalism (e.g., Marwick 1998), but as one in which a distinctive kind of radical and global consciousness took root (Dubinsky et al. 2009). By seeing social change in terms of development, liberal internationalists and leftists alike were compelled to consider the quality of democracy on a number of scales. Canadian historians have collectively argued that the cultural and political changes of the postwar years, generally instigated by social movements, contributed to the broadening of the welfare state (e.g. Adams 1997, Fahrni 2005, Iacovetta 2006, Tillotson 2008) and the democratization of society (Mills 2010, Owsram 1996, Palmer 2009). The present task is to critically bring

the ideas and on-the-ground activism of reformers and radicals into dialogue with the global and transnational context in which they actively and consciously rooted their efforts to renew or remake democracy.

This project's key methodological and epistemological innovation is to discuss democracy and development on three different scales within a single frame. The focus of the local scale is on projects undertaken in Northern Alberta and Montreal by the Company of Young Canadians (CYC), a state funded and youth driven organization created in 1966 (Brushett 2009, Daly 1970). I will examine how the CYC's development activities brought differing conceptions of community development and grassroots democracy into relief and how the agendas of local communities, the state, and youth activists often conflicted. The national scale has to do with the efforts from 1969 to embolden federalism and validate the promise of democratic citizenship by boosting the economies of "underdeveloped" regions in Canada (Bryden 2007, Savoie 1992). Focusing on Cape Breton and the workings of the Cape Breton Development Corporation (DEVCO), I will explore how federal designs were complicated by regional political and economic desires and realities. The international scale has to do with the Third World interventions of the Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO) (Brouwer 2010b, Smillie 1985), funded in large measure by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) from 1968 (Morrison 1998). I will examine two CUSO teaching projects and trace how initiatives to foster greater democracy abroad reflected back Canadian democratic values. All of this work will be informed by a synthesis of the historical literature on development, democracy, and Canada in the postwar period.

My research is well advanced. In October, I defended a 50-page dissertation proposal that outlines a rigorous strategy for handling the abundant records of CYC, DEVCO, CIDA, and CUSO. Although my work is progressing on many of the most informative files held in Ottawa - including CUSO's little studied data on the work of volunteers overseas - I have still to exploit important regional files, such as the Beaton Institute's DEVCO-related fonds, necessary for a full analysis of the subject. My methodology combines empirical analysis of the themes presented by these sources with the close analysis of texts characteristic of contemporary critical theory.

This dissertation builds on work that I have previously done concerning democracy, politics, and city planning in 1960s and 1970s Canada. My master's work culminated in two peer-reviewed articles about the efforts to modernize Vancouver through interventionist city planning, on the one hand, and the public outcry and protest over the lack of democratic control over this process, on the other (Langford 2012, 2013). I have presented my work at several conferences, including a paper drawn from my current project delivered at the McGill-Queen's History conference in early 2013. My dissertation seeks to broaden and deepen this work by looking at the symbiotic impulses of development and democratization in 1960s and 1970s Canada.

I am currently enrolled in the second year of the doctoral program in History at Queen's University. My work benefits from the guidance of my advisors, Ian McKay and Karen Dubinsky, who specialize in areas of political and cultural history closely tied to my project (e.g. McKay 2000, 2005 and Dubinsky 2010). Therefore, I am uniquely positioned to demonstrate that development programs were central to Canadian efforts to democratize society and to spread democratic values across the globe during the Cold War. This work will challenge and change existing understandings of democracy, development, Canadian politics, and the history of Canada's place in the world.

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Program of Study

In 1943, an editorial in the *Journal of the National Medical Association* proclaimed: “Medicine is always constructive. Its underlying concepts disregard geography, race, and creed. It is not too much to hope that in the post-war reconstruction the spirit of medicine may help lead science to lead mankind to higher ground.”¹ I propose to study how this sentiment guided medical practitioners as they informed and shaped the policies of international organizations after the Second World War. How did doctors, nurses, and public health experts envision their place in the changing world order? To what extent did their evolving ideas about pediatrics, obstetrics, nutrition and public health shape the policies of international institutions that provided health services to millions of people in war-ravaged Europe? How prevalent were calls to improve public health to foster political unity, and to what degree were medical ideals used to particular political ends? The war created instability and strife, and had a particularly detrimental effect on the lives of women and children. Initially, the needs of refugees were targeted by the efforts of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). When the organization was dissolved, its activities were absorbed by various branches of the United Nations, including the World Health Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization, and United Nations Children’s Fund. Central to the mandate of each organization was devising programs to promote and protect the health of women and children.

My doctoral research will focus on the contributions made by three nations – Canada, the United States, and Britain – in the development and implementation of these programs. The central questions guiding my transnational investigation will be how and why the ideas of medical practitioners concerning public health in each nation were adopted by officials responsible for instigating programs to address deficiencies in childhood and maternal health between 1942 and 1953. My core consideration is the influence of the professional culture of medicine in shaping international institutions and policies.

Each of the three nations played an important role in the establishment of the emergent international institutional structure. The United States provided ideational and financial support, Britain brought its legacy of diplomatic leadership, and Canada was invested in creating multilateral institutions in which its potential as a “middle power” could be fully realized. Moreover, the selection of Canadian psychiatrist Brock Chisholm as the first Director General of the World Health Organization further underlined Canadian involvement in the institutions. Certain events combine to lend coherence and plausibility to the selection of my timeframe. In 1942, the Beveridge Report called for a comprehensive welfare system for Great Britain; the thinking that inspired this recommendation also influenced British discussions of how to proceed with the reconstruction of Western Europe. The 1953 end date corresponds with the expiration of Chisholm's term, UNICEF's elevation to become a permanent arm of the United Nations, and the end of the Korean War.

My research is informed by a new approach to international history that calls for consideration of the importance of culture, NGOs, and factors outside of traditional diplomacy in the creation of international policies (Suri, Rotter). My own work follows this path and seeks to broaden it by examining the extent to which the culture of the medical profession may have influenced policymaking. I will focus on the debates and discussions in the medical literature about maternal, childhood and public health in the domestic and international context for each of the nations under review. It is also my intention to examine institutional archives, diplomatic and domestic policy papers for the three countries, along with the political debates that shaped the policies, in order to seek out connections between domestic and international actors and the views of the medical community.

Preliminary examination of the medical literature reveals a shift in the way in which medical professionals saw their involvement in the changing social and political reality of the Cold War. Initial

¹ P.P.B. “War, Science, and Medicine (Editorial)” *Journal of the National Medical Association* 35, no. 1 (January 1943): 35

discussions about the place of medicine in the world order emphasized how doctors could combat disease in the same way that Allied nations had fought their foes.² Later, in the context of the establishment of the United Nations and its constituent organizations, the literature championed the formative role that the medical profession should play in promoting peace and goodwill around the world, especially in light of the perceived universality of medical compassion and ethics.³ I am interested in how far these early ideals were realized. To what degree were UNRRA and its successors able to incorporate the belief in the positive and formational influence of doctors, nurses, and public health experts into policy? What ideational or bureaucratic roadblocks were encountered on either side?

I will also investigate whether there was a sharing of ideas about the “medicalization of motherhood” between medical professionals and international policy makers. I am also interested in the relationship between domestic health and welfare policy, and the ideas that shaped humanitarian aid. My research will address questions including whether the rise of the welfare state in Canada and Britain affected their foreign policies with regard to supporting improved child and maternal welfare in a wider context. Additionally, did any of the doctors or medical journals in question take up particular positions on aspects of child and maternal health, like childrearing and infant feeding? Were these ideas also evident in public health internationally?

Attempts to improve the lives of women and children through attention to the physical and social determinants of health were highly politicized, especially in the context of the early Cold War. The early days of the WHO showed a fierce division between “magic bullet medicine,” which utilized scientific advancements to eradicate particular diseases, and the idea of social medicine, which emphasized the importance of improving the social and economic determinants of health (Farley). The immediate impact of magic bullet cures resounded with the Cold War goal of “winning hearts and minds” away from communism. My research will consider how these oppositional ideas were appropriated by medical professionals and policymakers from each nation, and how they were manifested in the policies and programs enacted at the level of international institutions.

Some research has been conducted on the correlation between international organizations and Cold War diplomacy, but with a focus on public health in Latin America, and on malaria eradication (Cueto, Packard, Packard and Brown). Less attention has been paid to the activities of these organizations in Europe, and to the relationship between diplomacy, the politicization of humanitarian aid, and the provision of health services. Furthermore, while there have been numerous nationally-focused studies of childhood and women’s health in the period (Apple, Baillargeon, Comacchio), none have considered the way in which the ideas that lay behind changes in domestic public health policy may also have affected a nation’s approach to international humanitarian efforts. My doctoral research would seek to bridge this gap in the historiography by addressing this important and persistent problem.

My undergraduate work at Carleton University prepared me for further study of the history of child and maternal health, and introduced me to the new theoretical and methodological approaches of international history that are central to my proposed research. Additionally, I developed an expertise in the history of Canadian medicine through my participation in a SSHRC-funded study of the 1918 influenza pandemic in Ontario. My ongoing Master’s research at Queen’s University will examine how the development and expansion of British humanitarianism and internationalism affected questions of transnational health and medicine in the 1930s. This project will serve as a springboard to my dissertation topic, because the ideas and institutional frameworks that were developed in this earlier period may have had a formative influence on humanitarian ideas during the early Cold War period. For my doctoral research, I intend to remain at Queen’s where there is a concentration of scholars in public policy and public health, including Dr. Jacalyn Duffin, Dr. Ishita Pande, Dr. Tim Smith, as well as a constellation of scholars in the national fields under my purview.

² NA. “Relief and Reconstruction in Europe,” *British Medical Journal*, (28 October 1944): 566-67.

³ F.M. Purcell, “A United Nations Medical Association,” *British Medical Journal*, (6 February 1946): 220.

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Research Contributions

Refereed Publications

.....authors names..... "Almost only women: Canadian volunteer response to the 1918-20 pandemic," *American Journal of Disaster Medicine* 4, no. 6 (November-December 2009): 331-344.

My contribution to this article was as a research assistant to Professor Joseph Scanlon, compiling and analyzing the relevant primary sources from St. Thomas, Ontario, and investigating the existing literature on voluntarism in Canadian history, specifically with regard to medical volunteers.

.....authors name....., "Dealing with Mass Death in Disasters and Pandemics: Some Key Differences but Many Similarities," in *Disaster Prevention and Management* Vol. 20 No. 1 (February 2011): IN PRESS, 30 pages.

My contribution to this article was as a research assistant. My specific focus was on the media coverage of pandemic influenza and death notices St. Thomas, Ontario, as well as an investigation of the media coverage of the 1982 Ocean Ranger oil rig disaster in Newfoundland.

Other Refereed Contributions

R "The Prevailing Malady: Two Ontario Communities Cover the 'Spanish Flu,'" with Nicole Marion, Canadian Communication Association Annual Conference, June 1, 2010.

I co-presented this paper with my colleague Nicole Marion. We discussed the media coverage and community response to the 1918-1920 influenza pandemic in St. Thomas and Kenora, Ontario. My focus was on the experience of St. Thomas, and how the volunteer public health response in each community reflected and undermined provincial guidelines for appropriate course of action to take under pandemic conditions.

Non-Refereed Contributions

"Microcosm of War, or International Festival of Peace? The Diplomatic Implications of the Berlin Olympic Games of 1936," Carleton University Undergraduate History Colloquium, April 7, 2009.

"The Foster-Parent Trap: The Social and Medical Implications of the British Evacuation of 1939," Carleton University Undergraduate History Colloquium, April 8, 2008.

Forthcoming Contributions

....author names.... "The Prevailing Malady: Three Ontario Newspapers Cover the 'Spanish Flu'" *Canadian Journal of Communication* (Forthcoming): 28 pages.

I contributed to this article as a primary researcher, focusing on the media coverage of the 1918-1920 influenza pandemic in St. Thomas and Kingston, Ontario. I also co-wrote the article, and participated in the process of revision for publication. The article grew out of the conference presentation that I gave (with Nicole Marion) at the Canadian Communication Association Annual Conference in June 2010.

Program of Study

In August 1576 five men serving the Elizabethan explorer Martin Frobisher disappeared following an Inuk guide at Baffin Island. Over the next two years the English tried various methods of communication with the Inuit – including miming, drawing, writing and kidnapping “interpreters” – but were unable to recover their lost men or even learn their fate. During this frustrating period English-Inuit relations deteriorated steadily from friendliness to bloodshed. Case studies such as Frobisher’s experience with the Inuit of Baffin Island illustrate how very limited communication was between European explorers and aboriginal peoples during early contact and offer a unique glimpse at the mechanics of this makeshift wordless communication.

Despite its centrality to understanding early contact, the initial phases of communication between Europeans and aboriginals have been greatly understudied by historians. The majority of scholarship pertaining to the early language encounter in the Americas has examined the training of interpreters and the acquisition of spoken language. Studies specifically focused on “wordless communication” are rare. They have generally used Spanish case studies and have been interdisciplinary in their approach, delving into linguistic and sign language theory. For instance, the study of John Bonvillian, Vicky Ingram and Brendan McCleary, which appeared in the journal *Sign Language Studies* in 2009, analyzes two Spanish case studies: the expeditions of Bernal Diaz del Castillo and Alvar Nunes Cabeza de Vaca in 1517 and 1537 respectively.¹ The most comprehensive overview of the subject is a collection of essays entitled *The Language Encounter in the Americas, 1492-1800*, edited by Edward Gray and Norman Fiering, which attempts to encapsulate the entire scope of communication methods utilized by both parties – gesticulation, images and symbols, cartography, makeshift jargons, pidgin languages, interpreters, alphabets, reading and writing.² However, due to the collection’s immensely broad scope in time, place and subject it lacks depth.

My doctoral research analyzes the initial phases of communication between Englishmen and aboriginals along the east coast of North America from 1500-1610. I am currently in the third year of a doctoral program at Queen’s University under the supervision of Dr. Jane Errington and with guidance from Dr. Jeffrey Collins and Dr. James Carson. I am examining several major Elizabethan case studies, including the arctic voyages of Martin Frobisher (1576-8) and John Davis (1585-7), the Roanoke expeditions (1584-90) and the first phase of the Jamestown expedition with John Smith (1607-9). These expeditions are all available in print, most preserved by the Elizabethan Richard Hakluyt in his twelve volume collection, *The Principal Navigations*. Any other relevant – albeit fragmentary – evidence found from encounters between 1500 and 1610 will also be included.

Many historians gloss over the issue of the language barrier during first contact, assuming miming occurred and that little can be discerned about this process. However, a close reading of explorer narratives reveals descriptions of how these wordless exchanges took place. These texts also indicate the types of assumptions made by communicators when creating and interpreting messages and the preconceived notions that produced such assumptions. This dissertation examines the types of wordless communication experimented with, how each functioned and how their limitations shaped English-Aboriginal relations.

¹ Bonvillian, John et al. “Observations on the Use of Manual Signs and Gestures in the Communicative Interactions between Native Americans and Spanish Explorers of North America,” *Sign Language Studies* 9:2 (2009), 132-65.

² *The Language Encounter in the Americas, 1492-1800: A Collection of Essays*. Edward Gray and Norman Fiering, eds. New York: Berghahn Books, 2000.

The four case studies are linked and treated as a unit from Baffin Island to Jamestown to chronologically chart change over time. What transformations occurred in English communication policy and practice from Martin Frobisher to John Smith? Did the English learn over time? And was there any shift in how the transmission of information was presented in travel narratives? Alden Vaughan's study, "Sir Walter Raleigh's Indian Interpreters, 1584-1618," attempts to link the Frobisher and Roanoke expeditions via language policy.³ However, the article focuses on interpreters, does not account for the contemporary Davis expeditions and scratches only the surface of the subject. I wish to extend Vaughan's linkages of the Elizabethan and Jacobean case studies whilst applying the close reading technique utilized in the Bonvillian study.

My research also explores a number of related themes, including language as a tool and the relationships between language and power and language and identity. I am also considering the role of pride, intelligence, imagination and emotion in language exchanges. The ways in which miscommunication, guesswork and assumptions played into these early encounters will be closely analyzed. An understanding of the underlying perceptions and preconceived notions that influenced the creation and interpretation of messages between parties is fundamental to this project. Moreover, a study of how earlier expeditions to Africa, Russia and Ireland influenced English expectations and interactions with the indigenous peoples of Northeastern America will be included.

I will also examine the epistemological and methodological issues this project inherently raises. Historians have long known that explorer narratives are skewed and to be interpreted with caution. Fragments of the Amerindian or Inuit perspective have to be teased out from between the lines of the European perspective with great care and with an admittance that to do so is an imperfect art. Yet the experimental and inaccurate nature of wordless communication means that this process is far more complicated than has typically been acknowledged. Many scholars have taken accurate communication for granted and accepted contemporary European interpretations at face value in their research. Yet how can historians access the effectiveness of such communication? Such transmissions were highly subjective with no way of confirming that messages were being correctly understood. Other historians have simply glossed over the language barrier issue or accounted for it only partially. How do we properly interpret what survives of the communication between Europeans and aboriginals? This dissertation will explore this important methodological question and call for a deeper consideration of the language barrier when studying early encounters.

Wordless communication was fundamental in laying the foundations for and establishing the nature of each new relationship between European and aboriginal groups. Moreover, the language barrier remained a reoccurring challenge throughout the colonial period. The information is not lost to historians and language exchanges can be deconstructed more thoroughly and given deeper consideration. It is crucial to understand the language barrier and the flawed process of communication not only to better interpret the beginnings of European-Aboriginal relations, but also to practice due diligence as a historian.

³ Vaughan, Alden T. "Sir Walter Raleigh's Indian Interpreters, 1584-1618." *William and Mary Quarterly* 59:2 (2002), 341-76.