



'A philosophy of change': Emotions, civil society and global development[☆]

Sarah Peck

Department of Geography, Northumbria University, UK

ARTICLE INFO

Handling Editor: D Drozdowski

Keywords:
Civil society
Global development
Emotions
Caribbean
Shame

ABSTRACT

Dominant paradigms of global development have historically been devoid of emotions, connected with racialized and gendered ideas of rationality and civility. Within contemporary scholarship there is however increasing recognition of the importance of emotions for understanding development processes. This paper adds to this body of work by exploring the ways that emotions shape how people who are trying to 'do' development actually do it. Drawing on empirical material from conversations with civil society activists based on the Caribbean islands of Grenada and Barbados, this article explores some of the emotions that are present within civil society organizing and makes the case that in this context emotions are not just felt, they are generative of civil society organizing and wider development processes. Focusing on shame, the article demonstrates how emotions are produced relationally within civil society organizing, how emotions are generative and can co-construct spaces for civil society and how civic organizing can act as counter-expressions to these feelings. Emotions are then constitutive of global development, yet often neglected in dominant discourses of civil society within the development sphere, with professional subjectivities dominant.

1. Introduction

Dominant paradigms of global development¹ have historically been devoid of emotions, connected with racialized and gendered ideas of rationality and civility. Within contemporary scholarship there is however increasing recognition of the importance of emotions for understanding development processes (Baillie Smith and Jenkins, 2012a; Kapoor, 2020; Wright, 2012). This paper aims to add to this body of work by exploring the ways in which emotions shape how people who are trying to 'do' development actually do it. Drawing on empirical material from conversations with civil society activists based on the Caribbean islands of Grenada and Barbados, this article explores some of the emotions that are present within their work and makes the case that in this context emotions are not just felt, they are generative. Development, as produced by these civil society actors, is then a product of complex emotions and is constituted through emotional assemblages, logics and registers.

The paper begins by tracing the dominant conceptualizations of civil society and civil society actors in the global development sphere, highlighting the dominance of professional subjectivities that leaves

little room for understanding the emotional aspects of their work. The paper then moves on to consider emotions in this context. There are myriad emotional logics associated with civil society organizing, with the civil society actors I spoke to talking of the happiness their work elicited, their sadness at the way the sector is changing and their anxieties about their work. Shame, however, seemed particularly significant for civil society organizing and engaging with three vignettes from civil society activists this paper moves on to focus on shame as an emotional register within civil society organizing. Three key points can be drawn from these vignettes, firstly that shame and shaming are bound-up with socio-political inequalities, secondly, that shame is felt relationally between groups and individuals, co-constructing spaces for civic organizing, and finally, that shame is generative of civil society activism and civic organizing can act as counter-expressions to these feelings. The article concludes by thinking more widely about how these emotional registers of civil society organizing are also constitutive of global development, yet often neglected in dominant discourses of civil society, with professional subjectivities dominant.

[☆] The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

E-mail address: sarah.peck@northumbria.ac.uk.

¹ Whilst the idea of what development is remains contested, this paper is led by Wilson (2012:4) for whom development is "understood broadly as incorporating the whole complex of unequal material relationships and processes which structure engagement between the Global South and Global North, as well as the primary discursive framework within which these relationships have been constructed for over 60 years."

2. A 'professional' civil society

A chronically ambiguous term, civil society can be defined as the sphere in which 'citizens can organise, debate and act' situated between the market, the family and the state (Buyse, 2018:967). In the global development context civil society was an integral part of the World Bank's good governance agenda, in which liberal democratization and market liberalization were framed as solutions to development's problems, accentuating processes such as participation and decentralization (Abrahamsen, 2004; McIlwaine, 1998:458; Porter, 2003). Within this context civil society, particularly in reference to the global South, has (problematically) come to be associated with "formal NGOs [non-governmental organizations] and CSOs [civil society organizations], often aid- or foreign-funded, involved in service delivery or undertaking a 'watchdog' function by holding government and other actors to account." (Hossein et al., 2019:9).²

Despite becoming prominent development actors, criticisms of inefficiency and ineffectiveness and wider shifts within the (neoliberalising) global development industry³ have initiated the push to develop a 'professionalised' civil society sphere. Often understood as an agenda imposed on civil society groups by states and international donors, professionalization within the current neoliberal development context encompasses particular social, cultural and affective norms and working practices (Banks et al., 2015; Baillie Smith and Jenkins, 2011; Höhn, 2013; Jenkins, 2009; Mercer and Green, 2013). Within this context being able to demonstrate professionalism is a way to thrive within the competitive civil society sector, with the legitimacy gained through professional identities, formations and operating practices potentially providing increased chances of access to donor funds (Banks et al., 2015; Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011; Jenkins, 2011). Civil society organizing within the development sphere has become intimately connected with these 'professional' working cultures and subjectivities. Whilst attention has been paid to how the professionalization agenda has been subverted by civil society groups (see Humble, 2019 Mercer and Green, 2013), the importance of professional subjectivities for civil society organizing remains.

In emphasising the importance of professional identities there is limited room for attention to the emotional registers that are part of 'doing development work'. The normative positioning of civil society groups as rational and professional actors echoes dominant (positivist) discourses of development that have historically been devoid of engagement with emotions or affect.⁴ This stems from the uneven geographies on which development is premised; from the positioning of the global South, and its people, as irrational, requiring the West to assist their development (Wright, 2012). The lack of recognition of emotions is tied to the racialized infantilizing of the global South, with emotions understood as primitive, childlike and 'uncivilised', contrasting with a 'strong West' (Ahmed 2004; Noxolo et al., 2012; Clouser 2016; Hardy 2012; Kapoor 2020:13). Ideas of rationality and impartiality are inherently gendered and racialized, connected to the figure of the unemotional heterosexual white male, with emotions seen as feminine, unimportant and inferior (Ahmed, 2004; Hirsch, 2021; Kapoor, 2020;

² Whilst the terms non-governmental organization (NGO) and civil society organization (CSO) are often used interchangeably the use of the term NGO is perhaps sometimes used to suggest a degree of formalisation, with CSO sometimes used to refer to more informal organizations. Civil society is also used as an overarching term, which would include, for example NGOs, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations etc.

³ Here the global development industry refers to the "complex of state and non-state actors, donors and NGOs focused on planned intervention in the Global South" (Baillie Smith and Jenkins 2012:640).

⁴ Wright (2012:1126) considers "While emotions are generally considered expressible, work on affect emphasizes the inexpressible, the visceral and instinctive energies, intensities, senses, smells and all those things and flows that make up our world in ways that cannot be named." See also Pile (2010).

Wright, 2012).

It is in this dominant context of denial that Wright (2012:1114) questions "how can the concept of development *not* be emotional?" Emotions constitute development in myriad ways – they are called upon when people are asked to donate money (guilt, pity, shame, altruism, pleasure), emotional logics are used to justify particular interventions (fear, insecurity), emotions are felt by people who are on the receiving end of development interventions (sadness, grief, loss, gratitude) and they are experienced by those who are engaged in the doing of development (solidarity, hope, fear) (Clouser, 2014, 2016; Kapoor, 2020; Schech, 2021; Schwittay, 2019; Sultana, 2011; Tallon and McGregor, 2014; Wright, 2012). Emotions then matter in development, enhancing understandings of the power, politics and inequalities on which development is premised (Clouser 2016; Schwittay 2019; Wright 2012). But how can emotions be thought about in this context? It is to this topic that this paper will now turn.

3. Thinking about shame

There is then increasing acknowledgement of the foundational nature of emotions in many aspects of development. Of particular interest to this piece are the emotionalities associated with working in the development sphere and the 'doing of development'. Emotions can be understood as central to everyday life, including work (Bondi et al., 2007; Felski, 2000; Hochschild, 2011; Webster, 2020), with Askins (2016) developing the idea of emotional citizenry to help to explore the role of emotions in such everyday spaces. Emotional citizenry emphasizes the socially and culturally constructed nature of emotions and their contextual relationality (Ahmed, 2004; Askins, 2016; Bondi, 2005; Webster, 2020). This relationality is crucial; emotions are not individualized experiences, they are produced in the relations between people and places, between people and materials and between different (groups of) people (Ahmed, 2004; Bondi, 2005; Bondi et al., 2007). Emotions are however not without anchor, they are also social and cultural practices, constructed through and embedded within particular contextual landscapes (Ahmed, 2004). Neither are emotions benign; they are generative and can be co-constructive of wider groups and collectives (Askins, 2016). This productivity is particularly noted in the literature on emotions in social movements and contentious politics, with emotions associated with mobilizing activism, sustaining (or not) activist activities and producing collective identities (Brown and Pickerill, 2009; González-Hidalgo, 2021; Jasper, 2011; Ransan Cooper et al., 2018).

The emotionalities associated with work within the global development industry have not always been well acknowledged, yet studies of NGOs highlight the emotional aspects of this work, with Hilhorst (2003) detailing the roles that kinship played in producing social networks in the office of a Filipino NGO, whilst Bosco (2007) discusses the importance of emotional labour within human rights networks. Emotions are also crucial in struggles over land and resources, articulating the deep emotional connections between people and places (Murrey, 2016; Sultana, 2011; Wright, 2019). Also of note is the intertwining of emotions; Wright (2019:2) identifies the importance of hope yet comments: "But hope sat alongside, entwined with, these other emotions; not in opposition to them but bound tightly". In this piece, I attend to shame in an attempt to think through its meaning for and importance to the civil society activists I spoke to because I sensed from the research participants the possibilities it held for their work. Of particular interest then is the place of shame in civil society organizing and it is to theorisations of shame that this paper will now turn.

Shame is often thought to be a universal emotion but one that is intimately socially, culturally and politically situated, as Probyn (2005:14) comments: "shame comes in different hues of intensity ... with cross-cultural complexities, but it is human to feel shame." Shame is associated with strong visceral reactions; feelings of wanting to melt away - to 'sink through the floor', yet despite this viscerality shame is inherently relational; it can be brought into being through a closeness to

or distance from others (Felski, 2000; Johnston, 2015; Probyn, 2004, 2019). Shame is then connected to our everyday social relations - it may arise through the recognition of differences between ourselves and others. Felski (2000:43) articulates:

“Those who are poor often experience shame when their poverty is exposed before the eyes of others. Shame, in other words, rises out of a discrepancy between certain norms and values and others perceived as superior.”

Shame can be connected to a (enforced) dislocation from society or a sense of not belonging (Felski, 2000), but as well as distance, shame is also associated with proximity to others. Probyn (2005) explicitly connects shame with interest, for her shame comes from paying attention to the self and others, from an eagerness for connection, from caring about others. She reflects (2005:14):

“Shame illuminates our intense attachment to the world, our desire to be connected with others, and the knowledge that, as merely human, we will sometimes fail in our attempts to maintain those connections.”

Feelings of shame then force us to consider and question our relations to others. With this connectivity shame brings with it generative political possibilities through questioning our value system and forcing an assessment of ourselves – why am I ashamed? Can I make it better? (Probyn, 2005:xii). For Probyn (2004:346) shame is incredibly productive:

“Sometimes it leads to reactionary acts, sometimes it compels close inspection of how we live, and becomes the necessary force to catalyse an ethics of the everyday ...”

Shame is understood as powerful emotion that can encourage us to reflect on who we are individually and collectively. Sites of shame can be productive of civic organizing, acting as transformative catalysts and generating possibilities for counter-expressions of shame (Johnston, 2015; Probyn, 2005, 2019), yet dichotomously shame can also be used to patrol the intersectional borders of ‘normal’ society (Ahmed, 2004; Johnston, 2015; Probyn, 2005; Shefer and Munt, 2019). Understanding the relational power and politics embedded in emotions contrasts with dominant thinking on civil society within the development sphere, where professional subjectivities often dominate. It is to the emotional registers, and shame in particular, of civil society activists working within the global development sphere that this paper now turns.

4. Context & methodology: civil society in Barbados & Grenada

This paper is drawn from a collaborative research project that explored the role of CSOs working towards sustainable development in Barbados and Grenada. Barbados and Grenada are both located in the geographically Eastern Caribbean in the Lesser Antilles group of islands. Grenada, a tri-island archipelago of 133 sq. miles and 110,821 people (CARICOM, 2022a) is comprised of mainland Grenada, and sister isles Carriacou and Petit Martinique. Barbados is a single island of 166 sq. miles and 285, 000 people (CARICOM, 2022).

With histories of enslavement and colonialism, Barbados gained independence from Britain in 1966 and independence from Britain was achieved in Grenada in 1974.⁵ Since independence both countries have placed great emphasis on expanding and diversifying their economies, with contemporary development concerns framed by symbiotic economic and environmental vulnerability. The region is characterized by

⁵ In 1979 a bloodless coup in Grenada resulted in the formation of the socialist-inspired People Revolutionary Government (PRG) led by Maurice Bishop and Bernard Coard. Ideological fractures within the PRG led to Coard launching a military coup in 1983 resulting in the assassination of Bishop and seven of his supporters, with several civilians killed in the violence. The Revolutionary Military Council established by Coard lasted six days before the United States along with other OECS countries invaded Grenada and deposed Coard. Elections were held in December 1984 and Grenada has since returned to a parliamentary system of democracy (Steele 2003).

highly dependent economies, low economic growth, fluctuating economic volatility, reliance on a fragile tourism industry and environmental vulnerability. Despite this economic fragility both islands have achieved high levels of human development as measured by the human development indicator (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2021). Although these achievements should be celebrated, concerns remain over the unevenness of this development, growing inequalities, fluctuating employment levels and environmental degradation (Bishop, 2010). It is this context that contemporary civil society groups operate, yet associational life is a longstanding feature of life in the Caribbean, incorporating self-help groups, friendly societies,⁶ labour movements, and faith associations, all of which developed to challenge the exploitative practices of enslavement and colonial rule (Hinds-Harrison 2014).

Within the contemporary global development context, CSOs are seen as important development actors in the Caribbean, with increasing external funding provided to organizations in the 1970s and 1980s when the relatively recently independent region was seen as a priority for the governments and non-governmental institutions of the USA, UK and Canada (Webson, 2010). Despite critiques civil society groups remain crucial development actors in the region and are incorporating a diverse range of activities into their work, including, but not limited to, environmental conservation, improving wellbeing, gender equality, education and food and energy sovereignty. The sector is made up of a range of groups, with varying ways of working, organizational structures, fundraising activities and principles. Many groups are community-based, with some working at national and regional scale, or advocating for the sector more widely. Civil society groups are likely to be registered and incorporated, with CSOs in Barbados and Grenada recognised as legal entities through the Charities Act and Companies Act respectively.

This paper draws on research with forty civil society groups working in the development field in Barbados and Grenada between September 2015 and March 2016. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with representatives from fourteen groups in Barbados and with representatives of nineteen organizations in Grenada. Alongside these semi-structured interviews, the project included in-depth work with seven case study organizations (four in Barbados and three in Grenada) incorporating repeat interviewing, sustained participant observation (and sometimes observant participation) and informal conversations. The participant observation (and sometimes observant participation) took the form of being with the groups as they went about their day-to-day work. This included, for example, attending workshops and talks, helping out on an organic agriculture project, attending a protest march and supporting administrative activities. The repeat interviews took a work-life history approach, foregrounding the work element, in this case civil society, but recognising that this is not separate from other aspects of life, for example family, faith and other jobs (Baillie Smith and Jenkins, 2017). These interviews were (gently) semi-structured, often opening with a broad question about the activist’s journey and their story of involvement in civil society work to date, before moving on to questions about the development of the organization, their everyday experiences of this type of work, and reflections on successes and challenges. This paper draws on these more in-depth encounters. Interviews were audio-recorded (with permission) and transcribed by the author, with data coded and analysed manually using thematic analysis, with fieldnotes made on the interviews and my experiences with the groups. To try and maintain anonymity and confidentiality I have used pseudonyms in this paper and altered some identifying details to aid the preservation of organizational anonymity.

In thinking through the emotional registers that may be part of civil society organizing I became conscious of the ways in which I was

⁶ According to the Government of Barbados (2021): “A Friendly Society is a body of people who join together to ensure financial provision for members and their close relatives, ...by means of voluntary subscriptions on a regular basis.”

interpreting the emotions I perceived to be part of my conversations with participants. Very often it was me as a researcher who was labelling and giving a name to these emotions, primarily based on analysis of the recorded interview and written transcripts. This problematizes the linguistic labelling of emotions⁷ and I sometimes felt I was imposing these labels from the outside. I also became aware that in trying to understand these emotions I was relying to some extent on the emotions I felt during and after the interview, and on the emotions I felt on re-listening to the recordings and re-reading the transcripts. Awareness of the stirring of emotions in the listener is a common starting point for psychoanalytic work and I have tried to reflect on the feelings generated in me by these conversations as one way of understanding what was being said. I am also aware of my role in the co-construction of these emotional registers, and the connections between some of these emotions and my myriad positionalities. I am also conscious that I am more likely to have been aware of emotions that were heightened and those which resonated more strongly with me, negating those that may be more nuanced or hidden, or the more complex emotional logics that participants did not wish to explore. The vignettes below and their analyses are then subjective senses of the emotional registers of civil society, co-constructed through me and given discursive attention by me in my (powerful) position as a researcher.

5. Three vignettes about shame and civil society

In the next section I detail three vignettes with civil society activists who took part in this research: Lincoln, Jacob and Alyson. These vignettes are tied together by the central part shame seemed to play, in different ways, in generating civil society space and civic organizing. Each of these vignettes explores how shame can be generative of civil society organizing with civil society activism acting in each case as a counter-expression to feelings of shame. This is followed by a detailed discussion on feelings of shame and civil society organizing.

5.1. Lincoln: 'our community evolved with very negative stigma; we came out of a flood ...'

Lincoln is the founder of a community development organization based in a suburb of Barbados (Silvertown) in which he grew up and lived for a period of his adult life. The organization is involved in a variety of community development initiatives working across social, economic and cultural development, including educational and vocational training, sustainable business facilitation and creative programmes. The organization also has a prominent role and voice within wider civil society in Barbados and the wider Caribbean. Over the course of three interviews with Lincoln I was struck by the sense of pride and achievement that seemed to exude from him as he talked to me about his work and the organization. He emphasized the way in which he felt the organization had helped 'turn around' how Silvertown was perceived in Barbados and how it gave hope to the Silvertown community. This sense of achievement extended to his own position in civil society, and the contributions he made to the wider sector. He began by explaining how the development of the organization he now leads was driven by a desire to re-shape how Silvertown was perceived as a place and community:

"... at the root of what we did was a philosophy of change. The negative that this community had, our community evolved with very negative stigma, we came out of a flood, I think in 19, either 48 or 55, sometime like that there was a flood, a big flood in Barbados and the community [of Silvertown] were formed after this flood and they brought people from different areas and started to build houses, people from many different backgrounds. There was a lot of social problems in the early days and the community had a very negative image. So, this image trailed us throughout our early 60s, 70s, 80s and even now some

people still hold onto that image and so we [the organization] were grounded in our philosophy to change this negative image and this negative stigma. So, everything we did was towards that, with our football ... we wanted to show people that good things could come out of [Silvertown] ... That we could do better. We organized an agricultural programme, we had educational programmes ... So we were constantly looking for avenues to always challenge the status quo and to show them that yes something good could come out of Nazareth. Actually, one politician made that statement about us: 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth⁸?' in front of us, so we were inspired to show them different and therefore our work was grounded in this, and we were determined to fight for people from low-income communities and this is where our inspiration came from and still comes from."

Lincoln articulates how the work of his organization is directed at changing the stigma that is associated with Silvertown and the community there. As he says there is a desire to show people that positives can come from deprived areas, and from him I sensed a very personal desire to be proud of Silvertown. This sense of achievement against the odds was also reflected in the way Lincoln spoke about the civil society sector more widely. He spoke about how civil society is often dismissed, in what he described as a rooted in 'class bias':

"Because our society is class-biased, our class bias is very rooted in Barbadian society. If you go back to the 11+ school system how we put people in one school and we know one school is better than this one, and you go into a school and have an A form, a B form and a C form. So, we develop those class biases from way back then and ... it permeates and continues. So private sector they have a level of importance and they are important, public sector people they are important, but civil society you are not so important, you are our outcasts, trying, wanting to [be a] do-gooder, so there's that level of disrespect ... They [wider society] look at people who are in civil society as people who could not achieve otherwise and maybe they are just rabble rousers, noise makers, they're under-achievers who didn't have anything else better to do ..."

Conversations with Lincoln, Founder, Barbadian CSO, October 13, 2015, October 27, 2015 & November 23, 2015.

The sense of shame that inhabited both Silvertown and the civil society sector seemed to drive Lincoln's work and his desire to prove people wrong, both about Silverlands and the role civil society groups can have in society. For Lincoln shame and stigma manifested themselves heavily in his civic work, ever in his consciousness, even when he spoke about the successes of the organization. Feelings of shame also play a key role in our next vignette, Jacob's narrative, in which he speaks of crafting civic space to counter shameful activities.

5.2. Jacob: 'I think from that negative we turned it into a positive'

As a youngster Jacob and four friends founded an NGO working with deprived and 'at-risk' youth on farming and agriculture projects, including raising livestock, running horse-riding sessions and organic growing. Over three conversations with Jacob at his house in Barbados I became increasingly aware of his desire to help those engaged with what might be perceived as 'shameful' activities through his civic organizing. One of our conversations had started with me asking him how he came to be involved in the civil society sector. He replied with three points about key influential individuals before he came to the fourth reason:

"Probably not very flattering a reason but most important reason that during my time in scouts we had been promised a lot of activities and happening at the same time I would have had a lot of friends who were dropping out of school basically to get involved in a lot of illegal activities and so on. This was happening around me and I wanted to address that. So, I said to myself, try to encourage my friends to join scouts, but there were two things stopping them. One the cost of the

⁷ See Jasper (2011).

⁸ This biblical reference refers to Nathaneal's sceptical response to Jesus in John 1:46.

uniform, two the lack of activities which I myself felt I was suffering from as well, so I decided I would start my own thing and that's how I started [the Group] in 1998 as a youngster."

Here he acknowledges the shame that was generative for his organization telling me that it is "probably not very flattering", almost seeming full of shame many years later about the catalysts for his activism. He goes on to talk about 'shameful' activities – his friends dropping out of school, illegal activities, inability to afford Scout's uniforms – and how these connected to drive him towards starting his own organisation. I asked him more about the initial activities of his organization:

"Well, that was interesting, I think it started out also with a bit of a negative because at the time we had the idea for it and at the same time there was this girl in the neighbourhood who was what people considered loose so she used to hang out with us ... I think from that negative we turned it into a positive, in terms of using that as a core starting point of the [organization] ..."

In engaging with the girl Jacob describes here as 'loose' it is clear that the shame placed on the girl and relationally engendered through his relationship with her shaped Jacob's activism and the beginnings of his organization. He went on to tell me about how his organization has helped other people turn their lives away from 'shame' and shameful activities:

"[In our organization] we have seen a lot of turn around stories heading for delinquency, and we keep them out of that. The [Group] has inspired them one way or another whether this has been helping them to develop goals ... or giving them leadership responsibility, making them feel a part of it, building their self-esteem ... whatever else we are doing we can't fail them."

Conversations with Jacob, Founder, Barbadian CSO, September 28, 2015, October 12, 2015 & December 14, 2015.

Jacob's narrative emphasizes the relational nature of the emotions that constitute civil society work, for example his own connections with the girl from his neighbourhood. How shame can generate different forms of civic actions and practices is key to the final vignette in this paper, Alyson's story.

5.3. Alyson: 'we realised something bad was happening'

Alyson runs a small community organization based in Grenada, focusing her work on environmental sustainability and social justice. Over the course of three interviews with Alyson at her house, she shared with me her shameful frustrations at the way the global development industry operates. Our conversations were suffused with emotions: anger, frustration, bitterness but also hopefulness, passion and optimism. I would come away from our discussions feeling a whole range of emotions myself. Many of Alyson's words challenged my thinking, my understanding of the global development industry, and of my own place as a researcher within it. She spoke of her immense dissatisfaction of having to work within the global development system, how she felt ashamed of it (and possibly herself), particularly the relations between international donors and civil society. In recounting her experiences of setting up her own organization, Alyson spoke of her antipathy towards her own previous work in the government sector, and as she looked outwards towards other organizations working in the development sector, she voiced her disgust at the way many of them operated. It seemed that much of Alyson's motivation for starting her own organization was founded on the shame she felt for both her previous 'life' and at the sector more widely. She was heavily critical of the wider development sector, yet for Alyson civil society seemed an opportunity to begin again, to re-find herself and her re-define her values:

"First of all, when we were dreaming up our mandate, we thought we're tired of people being sheep. All of us in some way or shape or form were working with government to do proposals and policies and all the workshops and our real lives didn't matter ... We were looking over a lot of NGO papers and the NGOs⁹ always present this beautiful pristine picture of what is going on, but we realised something bad was happening, people were telling us how dissatisfied they were and how the project didn't meet their needs, yet there was these glowing reports and the NGO got more money."

The disapproval directed towards the ways in which the non-profit sector operates drove Alyson to set up her own organization to operate in a different way. She developed an organization based on participatory work with local communities, with much of the work founded on participatory planning and action research to develop projects that she felt were rooted in the community. I sensed a criticality directed towards other organizations and she often seemed ashamed of their behaviour. Alyson told me how she enacted her first project, applying for a planning grant from an international donor. She spoke with anger and despair at the way some organizations operate: "I realised they just go on shopping for projects not making change in people's lives", not only expressing her frustration at the global development sector more widely but also how other NGOs and CSOs seemed to be engaging uncritically with the sector in their own work. For Alyson, it seemed that this frustration, shame and despair was leading her to try and 'do development' in a different way and to operate differently to many other NGOs and CSOs. She became loath to apply for funding from international organizations, feeling that this process removed her from the communities she hoped to work with. She was then emotionally rejecting both international donors and others in her own sector and using these rejections as a foundation for the work she wanted to do. Alyson spoke of a project she had been involved in and how pleased she felt with the outcome of this project, contrasting this with not just how other non-profit organizations operate, but also how they might feel at such an outcome:

"They [the community] were ready to stand up and take ownership and understood how they could participate and how they could put the checks and balances ... they have solar, they reclaim their beach, they're getting wind [power], they're doing the first permaculture ... and they don't even ask me ... I mean to me that's our true success story, but it frightens a lot of NGOs."

Conversations with Alyson, Founder, Grenadian CSO, February 5, 2016, March 4, 2016 & March 23, 2016.

For Alyson the shame she felt is rooted in the cultures of the global development industry. The shame that she directs towards other organizations seemed to be key to her own civic subjectivities in which she rejects and critiques others working in the sector. The shame she felt about the sector more widely led her to developing different, more participatory, ways of working within her organization, with shame for Alyson a productive emotion which she mobilized to try and 'be better'.

6. Working with and through shame

From Lincoln, Jacob and Alyson's vignettes we see that shame and shaming are inherently bound up with socio-political inequalities and are in turn generative of civic organizing. They are also contextually rooted, for Lincoln the class bias in Barbadian society, for Jacob the gendered nature of shame is evident and for Alyson her feelings of shame connect to the mechanisms of the global development industry. This helps us to understand shame as inflected with the Caribbean context of the research, whether this in the post-colonial continuities of the education system, the position of women in society or the place of the Caribbean within the global development industry, yet also connects

⁹ In our conversations Alyson tended to use the terms NGO and CSO interchangeably, with NGO sometimes used to refer to more formalised organizations within the sector.

shame to a spatially expansive sense of place.

In the vignettes shame is understood as relational and constructed through connections with others. For Lincoln and Jacob shame is engendered within the wider community, often stigmatized by (intersectional) societal norms, and acts as a foundation for their activism. Jacob articulates the relational intersectionality implicit in much shaming (Shefer and Munt, 2019), commenting on his friends who were unable to afford scout uniforms and the girl whose morals were questioned. Lincoln spoke of his connections to and desire to care for his community, with Lincoln and Jacob both driven by thoughts of 'How can I make this better?' For Alyson it is her perceptions of and relationships with other organizations that provides the key focus for her shame and the actions that derive from it.

Feelings of shame and the socio-political effects and inequalities they engender and sustain are then generative of new forms of associational life with civil society organizations working to counter these narratives (Probyn, 2004; Shefer and Munt, 2019). The civic spaces that are created by these groups can be understood as counter-expressions to these feelings of shame. With their communities, civil society activists are co-constructing spaces that have the potential to produce alternative narratives of places and communities. It seems important for Lincoln to articulate a sense of pride in his community, challenging the 'negative stigma', with Alyson articulating the agentic nature of the communities she works with through her critique of other development organizations. Imperative for Lincoln, Jacob and Alyson is changing the perceptions of others about the people and communities they work with, with both Lincoln and Jacob seeming to articulate the activities their organization engaged in as acts of resistance to the shaming of their communities and as a way of limiting the reproduction of shameful narratives. The sense of shame Alyson feels at the way other organizations operate has challenged her value system and forced her to assess herself and question how she operates. In this sense shame can be an important aspect of activist subjectivities, with Alyson's civic identity rooted in an articulation of shaming the wider sector and her civic identity formed through her responses to this shaming, but also perhaps acknowledging her own (occasional) complicity in what she perceives as shameful practices.

Lincoln, Jacob and Alyson all articulate that part of their work is being able to co-construct spaces that can act as counter-expressions to feelings of shame. Shame is then central in shaping civic spaces, it seems to allow activists to find a proximity between themselves and the communities they work with, feelings of shame drawing them together. As they each told me about their work, I also sensed a pride in what they had achieved, building on and re-configuring this sense of shame upon which much of their activity is founded. Their work hopes to reshape feelings of shame into something more positive, in Jacob's words "turn around stories", changing perceptions of communities and hoping to produce more just relations within wider Barbadian society. Part of the emotional labour of civil society organizing then is centred around the desire, need or maybe even ability to acknowledge feelings of shame, to articulate them, to re-configure them and to use them as a catalyst for civic organizing. It is through these emotions that civic activities are made meaningful (Kale and Kondon, 2021). Three key points can be drawn from these three vignettes; firstly, that shame and shaming are bound-up with socio-political inequalities, secondly, that shame is felt relationally and co-constructs spaces for civic organizing and finally, that shame and shaming are generative of civil society activism and civic organizing can act as counter-expressions to these feelings.

7. Conclusion

Emotions are important for civic activity, contrasting with the professional narratives engendered by much of the discourse on civil society within a global development context. This article has engaged with some of the emotional aspects of civil society, focusing on the place of shame in civil society organizing, showing that emotions are productive and generative of civil society spaces and actions. There are significant and

varied emotional logics and hues within civil society organizing in the global development context, with global development a product of complex emotions and constituted through emotional assemblages, logics and registers. Three key points can be drawn from this article:

Firstly, that emotions are constructed and felt relationally and flow between people. This articulates the complex emotional assemblages that are constitutive of civil society work and their unsettled and transitory natures. Emotions have the potential to produce boundaries between the civil society sector and others, but they can also help reshape boundaries and challenge hierarchies, as Alyson articulated in her discussion with me about the wider global development industry.

Secondly, whilst significant attention has been paid to the ways in which the civil society has engaged in (or been in engaged by) professionalization, and the social, cultural and affective practices that accompany this agenda, this has often side-lined thinking on the emotional logics that are also part of civil society organizing. These are not mutually exclusive, whilst the civil society actors I spoke to engaged in the activities more typically associated with neoliberal professionalization, their engagement with the sector remained shaped by emotional ties, with the decisions made about the types of development they wished to pursue, and how they would enact this, influenced by emotional drivers and motivations. Thinking about the emotional landscapes of civic organizing attends to the politics that civil society activity responds to and shows how spaces for civic organizing are produced, beyond the sphere of 'neoliberal service provision'. It considers how civic activity is sustained beyond dominant funding models and accountability regimes and how civil society actors may draw in supporters of their cause. Attention to emotions also shows how civil society organizing is not only concerned with service provision, but also has the potential to change understandings of place and community, and, for Alyson, question what development is and what it may mean. Emotions are then generative of civic worlds, with development produced through emotional (as well as 'professionalised') logics, hues and registers.

Thirdly, emotions are part of wider global development processes. If we understand emotions as generative of civil society organizing then the (hoped-for) developmental outcomes (for example, material gains, improved wellbeing, reduced marginalization) of such organizing must also be understood in connection to these emotional registers. Emotions draw people into working in the sector and shape the ways in which they work, the activities they conduct in the name of development and the way they see their work contributing to development. I would argue that (some of) the projects civil society groups in the global development sphere undertake are premised, to some degree, on mixtures of emotions - shame, unfairness, indignity, for example. For Lincoln and Jacob feelings of shame shaped the programmes they conducted as their organizations tried to address the stigma and marginalization felt by members of their communities. For Alyson feelings of shame about the way the global development industry operates directed her towards a more participatory form of development, altering the ways in which community groups engage in their own development. Emotions then generate specific expressions of civil society organizing, in turn shaping wider global development narratives.

Funding

This paper is drawn from research supported by the Economic and Social Research Council [grant number ES/J500215/1].

Acknowledgements

My thanks go to Dr. Daniel Hammett, Professor Jean Grugel and Dr. Chasca Twyman for their support, advice and guidance throughout the project. My thanks also go to all those who took the time to speak with me and made me welcome in Barbados and Grenada.

References

- Abrahamsen, R., 2004. The World Bank's good governance agenda: issues of power and democracy. In: Gould, J., Marcussen, H. (Eds.), *Ethnographies of Aid: Exploring Development through Texts and Encounters*. Roskilde University, Roskilde, pp. 15–44.
- Ahmed, S., 2004. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.
- Askins, K., 2016. Emotional citizenry: everyday geographies of befriending, belonging and intercultural encounter. *Trans. Inst. Br. Geogr.* 41, 515–527. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12135>.
- Baillie Smith, M., Jenkins, K., 2011. Disconnections and exclusions: professionalization, cosmopolitanism and (global) civil society? *Global Network* 11 (2), 160–179. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0374.2011.00317.x>.
- Baillie Smith, M., Jenkins, K., 2012. Existing at the interface: Indian NGO Activists as strategic cosmopolitans. *Antipode* 44 (3), 640–662. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2011.00888.x>.
- Baillie Smith, M., Jenkins, K., 2012a. Emotional methodologies – the emotional spaces of international development. *Emot. Space & Soc.* 5 (2), 75–77. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2011.10.007>.
- Baillie Smith, M., Jenkins, K., 2017. Civil society activists and vulnerability in South India: the relational politics of life history methods and development research. *Soc. Cult. Geogr.* 18 (7), 951–970. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2016.1216157>.
- Baillie Smith, M., Laurie, N., 2011. International volunteering and development: global citizenship and neoliberal professionalization. *Trans. Inst. Br. Geogr.* 36 (4), 545–559. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2011.00436.x>.
- Banks, N., Hulme, D., Edwards, M., 2015. NGOs states and donors revisited: still too close for comfort. *World Dev.* 66, 707–718. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2014.09.028>.
- Bishop, M., 2010. Tourism as a small state development strategy: pier pressure in the Eastern Caribbean. *Prog. Dev. Stud.* 10 (2), 99–114. <https://doi.org/10.1177/146499340901000201>.
- Bondi, L., 2005. Making connections and thinking through emotions: between geography and psychotherapy. *Trans. Inst. Br. Geogr.* 30, 433–448. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2005.00183.x>.
- Bondi, L., Davidson, J., Smith, M., 2007. Introduction: geographies emotional turn. In: Davidson, J., Bondi, L., Smith, M. (Eds.), *Emotional Geographies*. Ashgate Publishing Ltd, Aldershot, pp. 1–19.
- Bosco, F., 2007. Emotions that build networks: geographies of human rights movements in Argentina and beyond. *Tijdschr. Econ. Soc. Geogr.* 98, 545–563. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9663.2007.00425.x>.
- Brown, G., Pickerill, J., 2009. Space for emotion in the spaces of activism. *Emot. Space & Soc.* 2, 24–35. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2009.03.004>.
- Buyse, A., 2018. Squeezing civic space: restrictions on civil society organizations and connections with human rights. *Int. J. Hum. Right.* 22, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2018.1492916>.
- CARICOM, 2022. Barbados Country Profile. Retrieved from: https://caricom.org/country_profiles/barbados/.
- CARICOM, 2022a. Grenada Country Profile. Retrieved from: https://caricom.org/country_profiles/grenada/.
- Clouser, R., 2014. Facing fear: the importance of engaging with fear in development literature. *Prog. Dev. Stud.* 14 (2), 131–146. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464993413517783>.
- Clouser, R., 2016. Nexus of emotional and development geographies. *Geogr. Compass* 10 (8), 321–332. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec.12275>.
- Felski, R., 2000. *Doing Time: Feminist Theory and Postmodern Culture*. New York University Press, London.
- González-Hidalgo, M., 2021. The ambivalent political work of emotions in the defence of territory, life and the commons. *Environ. Plann.: Nature & Space* 4 (4), 1291–1312. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2514848620961737>.
- Government of Barbados, 2021. Co-Operatives department. Retrieved from: <https://commerce.gov.bb/co-operatives-department/>.
- Hardy, K., 2012. Dissonant emotions, divergent outcomes: constructing space for emotional methodologies in development. *Emot. Space & Soc.* 5 (2), 113–121. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2011.10.001>.
- Hilhorst, D., 2003. *The Real World of NGOs*. Zed Books, London.
- Hinds-Harrison, K., 2014. Virtual shop fronts: the Internet, social movements and Caribbean civil society organizations. *Globalisations* 11 (6), 751–766. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2014.904163>.
- Hirsch, L., 2021. Racialised Routines: Organizational Policies as Mobility Infrastructures. Presentation at the RGS Conference. In: 9th July 2021 (With Dr. Sarah Kunz).
- Hochschild, A., 2011. Emotional life on the market frontier. *Annu. Rev. Sociol.* 37, 20–33. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41288597>.
- Höhn, S., 2013. The objects of activism: documents and daily life in Namibian NGOs. *Polit. Legal Anthropol. Rev.* 36 (1), 99–117. <https://doi.org/10.1111/plar.12005>.
- Hosseini, N., Khurana, N., Nazneen, S., Oosterom, M., Schröder, P., Shankland, A., 2019. Development Needs Society - the Implications of Civic Space for the Sustainable Development Goals. Retrieved from: <https://www.ids.ac.uk/publications/development-needs-society-the-implications-of-civic-space-for-the-sustainable-development-goals/>.
- Humble, D., 2019. Recasting professionalization: understanding self legitimating professionalization as a precursor to neoliberal professionalization. *Geoforum* 106, 135–143. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2019.07.023>.
- Jasper, J., 2011. Emotions and social movements: twenty years of theory and research. *Annu. Rev. Sociol.* 37, 285–303. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-081309-150015>.
- Jenkins, K., 2009. Exploring hierarchies of knowledge in Peru: scaling urban grassroots women health promoters' expertise. *Environ. Plann.: Econ. Space* 41 (4), 879–895. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a40361>.
- Jenkins, K., 2011. Depoliticisation and the changing trajectories of grassroots women's leadership in Peru: from empowerment to service delivery? *J. Lat. Am. Stud.* 43, 299–326. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X11000046>, 02.
- Johnston, L., 2015. Pride/shame. In: *Antipode Editorial Collective at Al. Keywords in Radical Geography: Antipode at 50*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119558071.ch40>.
- Kale, A., Kindon, S., 2021. Gender, (im)mobility and citizenship in a refugee women's driving programme: exploring emotional citizenry in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Gend. Place Cult.* 28 (10), 1472–1492. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2020.1846499>.
- Kapoor, I., 2020. *Confronting Desire: Psychoanalysis and International Development*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca.
- McIlwaine, C., 1998. Civil society and development geography. *Prog. Hum. Geogr.* 22 (3), 415–424. <https://doi.org/10.1191/030913298669927952>.
- Mercer, C., Green, M., 2013. Making civil society work: contracting, cosmopolitanism and community development in Tanzania. *Geoforum* 45, 106–115. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2012.10.008>.
- Murrey, A., 2016. Slow dissent and the emotional geographies of resistance. *Singapore J. Trop. Geogr.* 37, 224–248. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sjtg.12147>.
- Noxolo, P., Raghuram, P., Madge, C., 2012. Unsettling responsibility: postcolonial interventions. *Trans. Inst. Br. Geogr.* 37 (3), 418–429. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2011.00474.x>.
- Pile, S., 2010. Emotions and affect in recent human Geography. *Trans. Inst. Br. Geogr.* 35, 5–20. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2009.00368.x>.
- Porter, G., 2003. NGOs and poverty reduction in a globalizing world: perspectives from Ghana. *Prog. Dev. Stud.* 3 (2), 131–145. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1464993403ps057ra>.
- Probyn, E., 2004. Everyday shame. *Cult. Stud.* 18 (2/3), 328–349. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0950238042000201545>.
- Probyn, E., 2005. *Blush: Faces of Shame*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- Probyn, E., Bozalek, V., Shefer, T., Carolissen, R., 2019. Productive faces of shame: an interview with Elspeth Probyn. *Fem. Psychol.* 29 (2), 322–334. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353518811366>.
- Ransan-Cooper, H., Ercan, S.A., Duus, S., 2018. When anger meets joy: how emotions mobilise and sustain the anti-coal seam gas movement in regional Australia. *Soc. Mov. Stud.* 17 (6), 635–657. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1515624>.
- Schech, S., 2021. Affective Politics of Australian Development Volunteering. In: *Third World Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2021.1914020>.
- Schwittay, A., 2019. Digital mediations of everyday humanitarianism: the case of Kiva. *org. Third World Q.* 40 (10), 1921–1938. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2019.1625267>.
- Shefer, T., Munt, S., 2019. A feminist politics of shame: shame and its contested possibilities. *Fem. Psychol.* 29 (2), 145–156. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353519839755>.
- Steele, B., 2003. *Grenada: A History of its People*. Macmillan, Oxford.
- Sultana, F., 2011. Suffering for water, suffering from water: emotional geographies of resource access, control and conflict. *Geoforum* 42, 163–172. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2010.12.002>.
- Tallon, R., McGregor, A., 2014. Pitying the Third World: towards more progressive emotional responses to development education in schools. *Third World Q.* 35 (8), 1406–1422. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2014.946259>.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2021. Regional Human Development Report 2021: Latin America and the Caribbean Region. UNDP. Available from: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/regional-human-development-report-2021-latin-america-and-caribbean-region>.
- Webson, W.A., 2010. Philanthropy, Civil Society and NGOs in the Caribbean from. http://www.caribbeanphilanthropy.org/reports/NGO_Dimension_AWebson_May_2010.pdf. (Accessed 31 July 2019).
- Webster, N., 2020. Migrant women entrepreneurs and emotional encounters in policy fields. *Emot. Space & Soc.* 37, 100730. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2020.100730>.
- Wilson, K., 2012. *Race, Racism and Development*. Zed Books, London.
- Wright, S., 2012. Emotional geographies of development. *Third World Q.* 33 (6), 1113–1127. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2012.681500>.
- Wright, S., 2019. Towards an affective politics of hope: learning from land struggles in the Philippines. *Environ. Plann.: Nat. Space*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2514848619867613>.