



Critical
Development
Forum

RETHINKING OUR ROLE IN “DEVELOPMENT”

Self-Evaluation Report of the Critical Development Forum Seminar in Winter 2012

Dean Chahim

April 19th, 2012

ABSTRACT

Why are Millennial students so interested in doing global development work abroad, yet so *disinterested* in the *politics* at home that create the very problems they seek to alleviate through “development”? What is the role of creative education strategies in responding to this paradox? In the Winter of 2012, I created and implemented a student-led seminar with the Critical Development Forum and Department of Geography at the University of Washington designed to encourage students to reassess their *positionality* in the interwoven systems of oppression and “development.” In only ten weeks, through the practice of critical pedagogy, I found that students became more critically conscious of their privilege and unintentional complicity in oppression, more conscious of the pervasive problems of the “developed” world, more confident that we have much to learn from the global South, and therefore more doubtful about the idea of “development” itself. Members of the class also became more interested in political advocacy and more critical of the “aid industry.” From a pedagogical standpoint, despite steps towards eliminating classroom power hierarchies and creating a safe space for reflection, future implementations must pay better attention to encouraging dissenting voices and ideas to strengthen debate. Nevertheless, students almost unanimously agreed that the course was one of the best courses they had taken at the UW, and that it changed the way they see their role in “development.” The course’s syllabus and pedagogical methods may therefore offer an option for not only introducing the rich ideas of critical development theory, but also increasing students’ understanding of their own positionality and reducing the pervasive emotional detachment common when students learn about global injustice through conventional academic courses.

ABOUT THE CRITICAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM

The Critical Development Forum (CDF) is a student organization at the University of Washington dedicated to promoting a critical dialogue between students, faculty, and professionals at the engaged in global development and global justice work. The CDF's projects provide spaces to reconnect with one another, critically reflect on our work through a social justice lens, and challenge ourselves to move beyond good intentions and take action at the root of injustice - both at home and abroad. More on the CDF is available online at www.students.washington.edu/cdfuw

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dean Chahim graduated from the University of Washington (UW) in Winter 2012 with a B.S. in Civil & Environmental Engineering and an individualized B.A. in Global Development & Social Change. He worked extensively with Engineers Without Borders at the UW before co-founding the Critical Development Forum and directing it from 2011-2012. More information is available online at tiny.cc/dchahim. He can be contacted at dean.chahim@gmail.com.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Developing this new course was a major undertaking and would not have been possible without Matt Sparke's mentorship and the great help of the resource kit of the University of British Columbia's Ethics of International Engagement and Service Learning (EIESL) project. It was inspired by the courses and teaching methods of Stephen Bezruchka, Sunila Kale, Jen Marlow, and Jeni Barcelos. I want to give a special thanks to Theresa Ronquillo, Paulette Thompson, Todd Faubion, Susan Bolton, Dave Citrin, Enina Bogdani, Alexis Valauri-Orton, Rhiannon Bronstein, Maya Sugarman, and the whole CDF Core team for their support and advice along the way.

CONTENTS

Abstract	2
About the Critical Development Forum.....	3
About the Author.....	3
Acknowledgements:	4
Tables and Figures	6
Background.....	7
Purpose: Why a Seminar?.....	8
From the Syllabus	9
Critical Pedagogy for Critical Development	9
Learning Objectives of the Course.....	10
Outline of Report	10
Demographics and Experience	11
Part One: Seeing “Development” Differently	13
Sample	13
Analysis Methodology	14
Results	15
Discussion	17
Part Two: Seeing Ourselves Differently	18
Quantitative Analysis.....	18
Qualitative Analysis & Discussion	19
Part Three: Changing the Way We Engage with “development”	22
Non-profits	22
Political Advocacy, Organizing, and Activism.....	24
Part Four: Student Evaluations of the Seminar	26
Overall Evaluations	26
Change in Perceived Abilities.....	28
Evaluation of Course Mechanics and Components	30
Course Mechanics and Learning Environment	30
Course Components	32
Conclusion	34
Appendix.....	36

TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1. Quantitative Change in views	15
Table 2. Desire to Work With Non-Profits – Examples Of Critical Changes.....	23
Table 3. Interest in Political Advocacy, Organizing, And Activism - Qualitative Changes.....	25
Figure 1. Majors and Minors of Students in Class	
Figure 2. Classes Taken Relevant to "Development"	
Figure 3: Total Agreement/Disagreement Change in survey of views	16
Figure 4. Interest in Political Advocacy, Organizing, And Activism – Quantitative Changes	24
Figure 5. Post-class survey: was this one of the best classes taken at UW?	26
Figure 6. Post-class survey: views of development and roles	26
Figure 7. Post-class survey: optimism about the future	27
Figure 8. Change in perceived abilities after class	29
Figure 9. Evaluation of course mechanics	
Figure 10. Evaluation of course components	33

[After this class,] I now realize that my actions and decisions here at home have a huge impact on countries and people in the global South. I'm not sure my role is to travel and build things, like I thought coming into this class. It may be through educating myself and others and trying to do what I can here at home. And I think that is something that I can integrate into my life quite easily and continue to do my whole life.

-Martin, Engineering student in seminar¹

BACKGROUND

During Winter Quarter, 2012, I designed and facilitated a new student-led seminar at the University of Washington, advised by Professor Matt Sparke titled **Geography 499B: “Beyond Good Intentions² – Evaluating Global Development Work Critically.”** The course syllabus and other content are available online at cdfseminar.tumblr.com. The course was sponsored by the Critical Development Forum, and formed an initial attempt towards a theoretical framework for the organization. This report aims to evaluate the performance and effect of the course, based on a combination of my experiences, student assignments, and extensive pre- and post-class evaluations and surveys. I hope that this report provides a foundation for improving the course in future iterations, as well as offering some minor insights about the dynamics of multidisciplinary undergraduate student learning about the complex topic of “critical development.”

¹ Pseudonym, all names have been changed in this report to protect the privacy of students. Response was part of the post-class survey.

² The course in future implementations will go under a different name to avoid confusion with a similarly-focused organization/book with the name “Beyond Good Intentions”.

PURPOSE: WHY A SEMINAR?

The purpose of the Critical Development Forum (CDF) Seminar is inevitably bound up in the purpose of the CDF itself. College students have become increasingly interested in global development work, as evidenced by the explosion of both academic programs (e.g. the new Global Health Minor at the UW) and non-profit and for-profit volunteering programs abroad. Yet this ostensibly positive shift comes against a backdrop of decreasing civic participation and community-oriented values.³ From my own informal observations, youth participation in the global justice movement in Seattle pales in comparison to the global development movement. There thus exists a central paradox: **why are Millennial students so interested in doing global development abroad, yet so disinterested in the politics at home that create the very problems they seek to alleviate through “development”?**

This CDF Seminar provided a unique opportunity to both explore selected answers to this paradox, as well as one possible way to increase political participation at home and critically reflexive development practice abroad. With the CDF Seminar, I aimed primarily to plant a seed towards the critical consciousness⁴ – not just awareness – of students in the course. I aimed to help students develop a critical and *personal* understanding of their own experiences and role within global systems of both oppression and aid, rather than simply a descriptive and emotionally detached understanding. I feel this personal connection to issues is – despite the best of intentions among faculty – not achieved in most academic courses on “development” due to both a desire to convey content and the large class sizes required in the age of austerity, both of which limit personal discussion and reflection.

Students interested in global development are, by and large, a privileged few. Their relative privilege⁵ allows them to step outside their own personal pressures and focus on the welfare of others in the global South. This is a **massive untapped political power base in the struggle for global justice**. Yet I strongly believe that it is only through deep discussion and critical reflection that these students can begin to understand their roles – positive and negative – in systems of “development” and “underdevelopment,” as well as their *power* to effect enormous change.

Designing the course, my hope was that students would leave not only with a greater political consciousness, but also a commitment to lifelong critical reflection in their work – whether they choose service work to alleviate present injustices, activism to prevent these injustices from reoccurring, or (ideally) a combination of the two. In addition, it was crucial that students become more optimistic that the world *can* and *will* change, because it is the omnipresent pessimism that we are living at the “end of history” that nips our generation’s idealism in the bud.

³ Twenge, J. M., Campbell, W. K., & Freeman, E. C. (2012). Generational Differences in Young Adults’ Life Goals, Concern for Others, and Civic Orientation, 1966–2009. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

⁴ Freire, P. (2000).

⁵ Their axes of privilege are multiple: most students I have met in my work founding and running the CDF are white, middle to upper class, able-bodied, and (clearly) born into a rich country. However, in contrast to other axes of privilege, most are actually female.

FROM THE SYLLABUS

Two sections of the syllabus (the full version is available online at cdfseminar.tumblr.com) are reproduced here to provide a context for the course's philosophy and objectives:

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY FOR CRITICAL DEVELOPMENT

A note to students on the why and how of the use of critical pedagogy in the classroom:

Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the 'the practice of freedom,' the means by which men and women critically and creatively engage with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.

-Paulo Freire⁶

Paulo Freire's words are perhaps as relevant to the education of future "development" workers and activists as they are to the education of the rural poor in Brazil, the original application of his ideas. "Development," as we will find, is a contested idea and system that many argue has failed to deliver on its promises. Rather than "bring about conformity" to a flawed system by educating students on the micro-level tips and tricks of development work abroad, this course aims to help us "critically and creatively engage" at a *personal* level with the macro-level development system.

We will seek to understand our *role*, and our *potential* to make change in the deeply-embedded social and economic system of beliefs and institutions that form "development." In the process, we will start learning how to use our good intentions to reshape the very *idea* of "development" – and in the process, begin to transform our world.

More practically, our focus on critical pedagogy in the classroom means that we come to the discussion as equal partners, and we will learn from one another as much as from our readings. We will focus on our *experiences* and critically reflect on these in the context of each day's topics. In this case "experiences" is not simply understood as our internships, research projects, or formal study of development. It is instead the whole of our collective *life* experience that forms our moral compass and our personal direction.

I will strive to create an environment that elicits this kind of sharing in a respectful, safe way. But this requires your active participation, and your willingness to engage with the material on a deeper, more personal level than you may be accustomed to in traditional classes. Our reward will be *empowerment*; we will gain a critical analysis to understand the development system, tools to begin to change it, and the hope – through the solidarity of others in the classroom – that such a change is completely possible, absolutely necessary, and already in motion.

⁶ Freire, P. (2000). p.16

LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

From the Syllabus:

In short, this course is fundamentally designed to inspire critical inquiry (questioning) of good intentions and the imagination of alternatives (dreaming) to structural injustice.

After completing the course, you should be able to:

- Critically analyze good intentions (both your own and those of other actors) in global development work.
- Identify and compare global systems that help and global systems that harm at a basic level and describe your role within each.
- Describe the basic economic, political, and social structure of the aid system and analyze the motivations of key actors as well as your own.
- Identify and analyze implicit assumptions made in development discourse, and the assumptions made in your own visions of development.
- Describe how your life experience, privilege, and culture affect your view of development, and compare this view to those of others in their own country and in other countries.
- Identify alternative ways of defining development and making an impact personally and collectively on issues of poverty and inequality globally.

OUTLINE OF REPORT

This report provides a way to evaluate the relative success of the seminar against these ambitious stated goals, as well as the underlying goals expressed in the *Why a Seminar?* section. In the first section, I provide an overview of the demographics of the classroom. In parts one through three, I analyze the ways in which students changed their views on themselves, “development,” and their positionality throughout the course. In part four, more typical student evaluations of the course are presented. The conclusion offers a few parting ideas about the course’s impact and the role of this kind of peer teaching and critical pedagogy in “development” education.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND EXPERIENCE

The demographics and experience of the class were hugely important – perhaps the most important – factor in facilitating learning in a discussion based seminar. Thus we consider some of the quick facts about the class here:

- **Total number of students:** 22
- **Gender:** 73% female
- **Race:** 73% White, 27% East Asian, 0% Black, 0% Latino, 0% Native American
- **Socioeconomic Class:** Not specified, but from the various discussions and responses throughout the quarter, it was clear that the vast majority (though not all) were middle to upper class.
- **Average year in school:** 3.5 (there were three 5th year students and one freshman)
- **Preparatory coursework:** All but three students had taken some sort of relevant coursework. These were engineering students. Students with more social-science focused majors, as expected, had taken more (directly) relevant classes. For the distribution and prevalence of various courses, see Figure 2.
- **Academic discipline:** Varied, see Figure 1. Relatively even split between social sciences/humanities and engineering/health science/natural science. Notably no business students.⁷
- **Travel experience:** 91% had been abroad at least once. All but one student would go abroad again given the chance.*
- **Volunteering experience:** 90% had volunteered at least once in the U.S.⁸ All would do so again.*
- **Civic Engagement experience:** 67% had advocated or worked actively towards political causes.⁹

* Note that this data was gathered BEFORE the class started.

⁷ This is likely due to the way the course was advertised.

⁸ **Question:** “Have you ever volunteered here in the United States or worked for a non-profit organization that aimed to help others in our society or abroad (in any way)?”

⁹ **Question:** “Have you ever participated in political advocacy, activism, or community organizing? (E.g. phonebanking, writing letters, canvassing, volunteering for a campaign, attending rallies, engaging in protests or direct actions, etc.)?”

PART ONE: SEEING “DEVELOPMENT” DIFFERENTLY

In this section, I will analyze how student’s views and values relating to “development” changed over the quarter. My interest in changing views ran in concert – but potentially also in conflict – with my desire to develop the critical consciousness of students. It potentially represents a break with true critical pedagogy and a personal contradiction I ran into the course between negotiating my own bias – what I think is “right” – and making a space for others to lead with their own ideas.

Students were required to complete pre- and post-class surveys on their views, perceived abilities, experience, and life plans relating to “development.” The questions about views and perceived abilities were based primarily on expected course outcomes and were evaluated on a Likert scale. For example, students were asked whether they Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, or have No Opinion about the following statement,

Q2: “All countries can become developed eventually without compromising the standard of living of the developed world.”

The course, particularly Week 3 which addresses the ecological limits to growth and the West’s “overdevelopment” via mass consumption, aimed to debunk this myth.¹⁰ Thus my intention was that students would begin to disagree more with a statement like this.

These questions, of course, reflect my own bias on what I intended students to get out of the course. In Table 1 below, I describe whether or not the given indicators showed a change in the “critical direction intended” – this “critical direction” largely follows the learning objectives, as well as the key ideas of the overall “critical development” literature.¹¹ Other dimensions of changes in views not captured in these simplistic indicators are (ideally) represented in the student’s qualitative responses.

SAMPLE

There were 22 students enrolled in the class by the end of the quarter. Of these, 18 took the pre-class survey, and 19 took the post-class survey. I use the high participation to simplify analysis, assuming that the data collected is representative of the class without extensive statistical testing.

There were three students who eventually dropped the course took the pre-class survey, introducing some error into the results. Furthermore, for the anonymous components (the quantitative indicators) of the surveys, there is no clear way of telling whether the subset of students taking the pre- and post-class surveys changed significantly. However, given that over 80% of students took the surveys, it’s unlikely the variance would cause huge effects.

¹⁰ Daly, H. E. (2005). [Economics in a full world](#). *Scientific American*, 293(3), 100–107.; Galeano, E. (2001). Lessons from Consumer Society. *Upside Down: A Primer for the Looking-Glass World* (1st ed., pp. 247-268). Picador.

¹¹ These “key ideas” are largely expressed in the course’s weekly themes, see [cdfseminar.tumblr.com](#). These ideas (noted by the week of the course in parenthesis) include an understanding of: (2) historical injustices, (3) ecological limits to economic growth, (4) the viability of non-Western alternative development models, (5) critical analysis of development discourse, (6 & 7) the importance of power – across many axes – in the relationships of development actors. See, for example: Crush, J. (1995). *Power of Development*. Routledge.; Ferguson, J. (1994). *Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Univ Of Minnesota Press.; Rahnema, M. (1997). *The post-development reader*. London: Zed Books.; Sachs, W. (2010). *The Development Dictionary: a Guide to Knowledge as Power* (2nd ed.). London: Zed Books.

ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

Given that the data was collected technically as a census, not a survey (almost all students responded, rather than a representative subset), the analysis was rather straightforward – I assumed here that no tests of significance are required. The total number of responses in each category of the Likert scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree, No Opinion) were tallied for each question in the pre- and post-class surveys. These were then normalized to the number of respondents to provide a percentage of the class that gave each response. The percentage of the class with a given response before the class was then subtracted from the percentage of the class with the same response after the class to show the change. Thus, for example, “+25% Strongly Agree” means that before the class, 25% fewer students in the class responded “Strongly Agree” to the given statement.

In Table 1 below, only the most striking changes are described.¹² A few points on terminology:

- “Total Agreement/Disagreement” is the sum of the responses “Strongly Agree/Disagree” and “Agree/Disagree.”
- In cases where the change was towards the tails (students changing primarily from, for example, “Agree” to “Strongly Agree”), the change in the extreme category (e.g. “Strongly Agree”) is stated.
- For cases where the change was a more subtle shift across the spectrum, “Total Agreement/Disagreement” is used to show the net change.

Full details on the changes across the spectrum are available in the appendix to this report.

¹² Further analysis, beyond the scope of this report, could answer questions about the interrelationship between answers (via hypothesis testing).

RESULTS

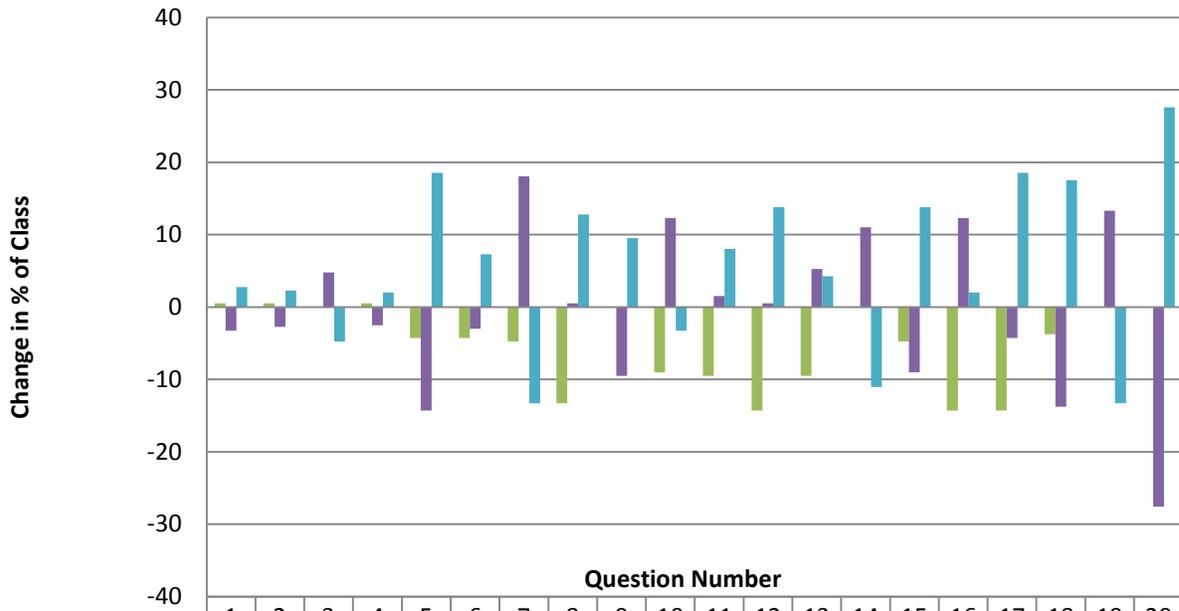
TABLE 1. QUANTITATIVE CHANGE IN VIEWS

Key

Strong change (>15%) in critical direction intended
Medium change (5-15%) in critical direction intended
Weak change (<5%) in critical direction intended
Neutral, very little or insignificant change
Change (any magnitude) in unintended direction (opposite course objectives) or strongly divergent

	Question	Change
1	Overall, development is succeeding around the globe.	+8% Strongly Disagree
2	All countries can become developed eventually without compromising the standard of living of the developed world.	+18% Strongly Disagree , but Divergent with +6% Strongly Agree
3	Global poverty can be reduced.	+5% Total Agreement , 95% Agreement Before Class, 100% After
4	Global poverty cannot be fully eliminated.	+2% Total Disagreement
5	Development is best measured by a country's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita.	+30% Strongly Disagree Convergent towards center; +7% Total Disagreement
6	The developing world needs help from the developed world.	Disagreement
7	The developed world needs help from the developing world.	+18% Total Agreement
8	Capitalism is the best economic system.	+13% Total Disagreement
9	The current distribution of wealth in the world is just, but we need to work on meeting basic needs.	+37% Strongly Disagree
10	Countries today are poor primarily because of the actions of rich countries in the past.	+12% Total Agreement
11	Countries today are poor primarily due to a lack of resources, poor location, or their own culture.	+23% Strongly Disagree
12	On the whole, the United States is helping poor countries more than it is harming them.	+33% Strongly Disagree
13	Knowledge about development is generally objective and non-controversial.	+17% Strongly Disagree Contradictory : +11% Total Agreement (95% Total Agreement before, 84% after)
14	Most people around the world would agree on the same definition of development.	
15	Uneducated people in the poor developing world communities often don't know what's best for their own development and need foreign experts to advise them.	+21% Strongly Disagree +12% Total Agreement , Divergent with +5% Strongly Disagree
16	Development projects usually fail to be sustainable.	
17	Most non-governmental organizations (NGOs) address the root causes of the issues they address.	+33% Strongly Disagree
18	Most NGOs are actively working themselves out of a job.	+18% Total Disagreement
19	The biggest impact Americans can make to help the developing world is to change their lifestyles and advocate for changes in government policies.	+27% Strongly Agree
20	The biggest impact Americans can make to help the developing world is going abroad and sharing their expertise, technology, and time	+28% Total Disagreement

Change in *Total* Agreement/Disagreement



	Question Number																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
No Opinion	1	1	0	1	-4	-4	-5	-13	0	-9	-10	-14	-10	0	-5	-14	-14	-4	0	0
Total Agree	-3	-3	5	-3	-14	-3	18	1	-10	12	2	1	5	11	-9	12	-4	-14	13	-28
Total Disagree	3	2	-5	2	19	7	-13	13	10	-3	8	14	4	-11	14	2	19	18	-13	28

FIGURE 3: TOTAL AGREEMENT/DISAGREEMENT CHANGE IN SURVEY OF VIEWS

DISCUSSION

On the quantitative scales, the class was largely “successful” in moving towards what I consider the “critical development” orientation, as seen in Table 1 and Figure 1. The results, referencing question numbers (represented by Q), show multiple areas of significant changes towards the critical orientation:

- **Q10, 11, 12, 19: Stronger belief that Northern policies and *politics* create injustices.**
- **Q17, 18, 20: Increased skepticism of NGOs and on-the-ground “development” work.** Q16 shows this as well, but shows some divergence. Q1 shows a slight increase in pessimism about the overall “development” system.
- **Q13, 15: Potentially increased understanding of the plurality of development knowledge,** but this trend is inexplicably contradicted by Q14.
- **Q6, 7, 15: Increased confidence that the global South may not only have its own *legitimate* knowledge about what “development” means, but also that we in the North may have something to learn from them.**
- **Q5, 8, 9: Increased dissatisfaction with the current economic system and the use of economics as a measurement of “development.”**

There were, however, interesting responses that ran against the objectives of the course or did not change as much as desired:

- **Q2: Increased optimism that all countries can be “developed” without compromising the standard of living of the “developed” world.**
 - This runs potentially against the critical development and steady state economics literature discussed in class. We would need multiple planets to provide a Northern standard of living – defined in economic terms – for all people around the globe.¹³ However, it is possible that students saw “standard of living” in a more holistic sense that transcended economics. In this case, the response is actually positive, showing that students redefined “standard of living” – which is very much in line with the course objectives.
- **Q4: Neutral (slight increase) in perception that some degree of global poverty is inevitable.**
 - This response reflects a persistent pessimism about the prospects for radical change. However, it is important to note that 74% of students still believe (compared to 76% before the course) that poverty can be wholly eliminated. It may be that this issue is more deeply rooted in the value systems of students than other beliefs, and is thus more resilient to changes.
- **Q14: Small increase in the belief that the definition of “development” is universal.**
 - This is apparently contradictory in light of the responses to Q13 and Q15, however 84% of students still disagree after the class. It runs against the intention of the class to introduce the plurality of knowledge about “development.” One potential explanation is that the 11% that came to agree with Q14 after the class may have come to believe that there is an alternative (non-Western) definition of “development” that is universal.

Overall, despite some contradictions or weak changes, these results show a positive move towards the critical orientation. Qualitative data, presented below, helps to triangulate and explain these results.

¹³ Meadows, D. H., Randers, J., & Meadows, D. L. (2004). *Limits to Growth: The 30-Year Update* (3rd ed.). Chelsea Green.

PART TWO: SEEING OURSELVES DIFFERENTLY

The course aimed to push students to look in the mirror, assessing their own role in global systems of injustice and oppression. Students, as this course confirmed, generally see their role in “development” as that of “helpers” working abroad. Yet all too often, critical reflection leads us to understand that the greatest aid – in the long-term – that we might “give” to the global South is to *end the harm* and oppression perpetuated in our name by our governments and corporations.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

In this section, I draw principally on the responses of students before and after the course to the same question:

*What role(s) do you play in development now? What do roles do you hope to play in the future?
What do you see yourself doing in 10 years? How is it related to development?*¹⁴

Answers to this question assess student’s understanding of their own *positionality* in the broader processes of “development” and under-“development.” This is a key learning objective of the course, and is a crucial step towards critical consciousness.

Students showed a remarkable change in their answer to this question about their “role in ‘development’” – or their positionality as we will refer to it here. Five “roles” came up most frequently in the responses of students both before and after the class. Student responses were inductively coded into categories according to these roles.¹⁵ Each response could be coded into more than one category, and all responses fit at least one category.¹⁶ These coded roles are inherently reductive, but they nevertheless allow us to see some overall trends.

Below are the five categories, with the percentages of responses that fit each category before and after the class, along with the percent change:

KEY: (% Before Class → % After Class, % Increase/Decrease)

1. **Being a U.S. citizen and/or consumer** (17% → 56%, **+39%**)
2. **Advocating for social/political changes in the U.S.** (11% → 28%, **+17%**)
3. **Learning more about the field in general** (39% → 33%, **-6%**)
4. **Helping through direct service abroad** (67% → 28%, **-39%**)

After the course, another role emerged:

5. **Educating others about the themes of the course** (0% → 17%, **+17%**)

¹⁴ This is the question the way it appeared in the pre-class survey. In the post-class survey, the word “development” was placed in quotations. This is a stylistic choice used throughout the course, and I unwittingly changed it.

¹⁵ The total number of student responses is 18. Four students responded to either the pre- or post-surveys, but not both. Their responses were excluded from this analysis, but including them would have had only a minor effect.

¹⁶ A full list of the responses and their coding is available in the appendix.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

In this section, I draw on both the answers to the question about the students' role in "development" and their weekly reflections, especially week 10. This last week's reflection assignment asked students to look back and evaluate how their own thinking changed over the quarter. This analysis shows that, **after the course, students are mostly much more conscious of their responsibility within an unjust political, economic, and social system, as well as their power to change these systems.** This is the start of what I hope is a path towards critical consciousness. But it is clear that the course was only a start; it was not enough to answer the many questions that remained in students' minds. In addition, a few students' thinking remained relatively similar before and after the course.

The question posed to students to describe their "role(s) in global development" (now and in the future) was deliberately obtuse, though seemingly straightforward. Most students responded as one might expect, by and large listing their various courses of study, volunteer experiences, and career goals working for NGOs. As one global health student, Jackie, put it in her pre-class response:

Currently I am an advocated [*sic*] for both the Women Development Association in Cambodia to help raise funds for projects that the WDA needs funding for, as well as awareness so people on our campus can learn about the conditions of much of Cambodia as they rebuild themselves even now after the Khmer Rouge. Also, I work with a program called ELAND to do some of the same work that I do for WDA, except for the Masaai people of Kenya. In the future I hope to do research, something like the KRP.

This response was typical – before the class, 67% of students described ways in which they were involved or wanted to be involved in providing services (doing "development work"). Yet this same student, ten weeks later, saw this question in a very different light:

That is a hard question to answer. I don't know that I want to play a role in "development" as I have come to understand the word. However, I have to be honest and say that *I contribute to development by participating in the culture of America. By not playing a bigger role in political advocacy. I perpetrate oppression on behalf of America by not stepping out of the cycle* But I aim to change that. In the future I hope to be a part of the shift of "development" to "de-growth" and global equity. (*My emphasis*)

This shows a remarkable shift in self-perception. From my own observations, even at the start of the course, Jackie was clearly well-informed about global affairs. She had already traveled to Latin America and Africa. Even from the start of the course, it was clear that she had a relatively nuanced understanding of privilege and the need for reciprocity in global development work. In only the second week of the course, she describes her experience visiting a village in the global South where her family had sponsored a child in this way ("Giving and Taking"):

The first time I went, however, it became obvious that I was in fact the one receiving the most from this act. They weren't visiting my home, I was in theirs – eating their food, learning their culture, hearing their stories and opening my heart and mind to other ways of life through my time with them. *When we change our perceptions of ourselves as the 'giver' and others as 'recipients' we allow the true, holistic picture of what is actually occurring to form.* That instead we are engaging in an interaction, in the human connection. That we are sharing something more than money or resources, that we are moving forward together working on something

beyond the scope of “give and take” and into the realm of collaboration, partnership, humanity.
(My emphasis)

She shows a critical analysis and skepticism about the position of herself as a “giver” in this situation. Yet despite these feelings, at the start of the course she still primarily defined her “role” by the ways in which she *helps* others. It is only after the course that she began to clearly articulate the ways in which she has been an unwilling participant in “*oppression* [of people in the global South] on behalf of America” (my emphasis) by virtue of her status as a U.S. citizen and consumer.

This newfound consciousness represents – at least the start of - an internalized understanding of her role in oppression. It goes beyond a “textbook” understanding that can be easily learned about in an emotionally detached way. Katie, an engineering student, explains her transition from this detachment to a sense of responsibility in her week 10 reflection in this way:

The biggest thing that changed about my thinking about “development” is that I now think we should take personal responsibility for the actions of our country or any group that represents us. I knew about the IMF and World Bank structural adjustment programs, but *I never thought I was a part of that*. It really struck me when you said only one person mentioned being a US citizen as part of the role they play in development (in the pre-survey). But *as citizens, we must take responsibility if we want to change those policies*. (My emphasis)

Katie, like Jackie, was relatively well-informed about unjust policies like structural adjustment even before the class. Yet she “never thought she was a part of [those programs].” After the class, however, Katie is adamant that we are *all* part of these program as citizens, and we must thus “take responsibility” to change them.

Crucially neither Jackie nor Katie stops at a feeling of guilt and helplessness. Guilt came up frequently in the class as we discussed the various ways we in the North have unwittingly profited from exploitation (of other peoples, places, and the environment as a whole), but I encouraged students to channel this inward-focused guilt into a constructive and powerful anger focused outward towards systemic injustices. Jackie’s response’s tone, instead of guilt, expresses a sense of *power* over the systems of oppression; a sense that she has the privilege and ability to “step out of the cycle” and work to change it. This reflects a beginning sense of critical consciousness: Jackie now has both an understanding of structures of injustice *and* a sense of power to change these systems. She feels powerful enough to set her sights on a steady-state or “de-growth” economy,¹⁷ a goal far loftier (and in the long-term, I believe more important) than fundraising for an organization abroad.

Other students showed a similar change: after the course, 56% of students noted one of their roles in “development” to be a consumer and U.S. citizen, compared to 17% before the course. This is a 39% increase, paralleled by a 39% *decrease* (from 67% to 28%) in students identifying their role in “development” as one of providing direct services and assistance abroad. In addition, after the course, 28% more students saw their role as one of advocacy, a 17% increase from the beginning of the course. Similarly, after the course 17% of students also saw their role as one of educating others in the themes of the course, something that no students mentioned at the beginning of the quarter.

Does this mean that these students did not know of their role as a consumer and citizen in systems of oppression before the class? Not necessarily – indeed, this is a limitation of an open-ended question like this. Furthermore, it

¹⁷ Daly, H. E. (2005).

is important to note that almost all students still indicated (elsewhere in the survey) that they are interested in working with a non-profit, thus the desire to “help” has not necessarily been eliminated even if students no longer list it as their primary role in “development.” This change is still significant, since as Katie’s self-reflection above shows, students may not have felt this consumer/citizen role to be as important, or may have not previously internalized it in such a deep way.

While the class clearly encouraged most students to begin to question their long-held assumptions about their role in “development,” a relatively constant proportion of the class (around a third) continued to describe their role as one of learning (category 3 above). Many remained unsure about where they fit in and whether they could handle the weight of the world on their shoulders in this new way, as Katie describes in her reflection from week 10:

We’ve heard a lot about how the system is just broken, and the arguments for that do make sense. But trying to tear down or completely remake the system is such a radical idea that I don’t think I’ve really processed it yet. I think I owe it to myself to do more exploration and active reflection on this topic before I take up this cause. How do I fit in? How can I incorporate these ideas into my life?

I mean, what if I don’t want to devote my life to this? Right now, I’m just tired so I don’t know if it’s the best time for me to be speculating about my future, but I really don’t know if I could be an activist for a living, and clearly that isn’t something everyone can or even should do for a living. Isn’t there a way that I can just incorporate activism into parts of my life? But then I think, what is needed is sweeping change, and I can’t just be working within the system.

There is one part in the Kingsnorth reading¹⁸ that gave me a little bit of direction, though, when he talks about people all over the world who are just taking back space, reconnecting wires, creating their own alternatives without asking anyone’s permission. *Maybe activism doesn’t have to be “activism”. Maybe it doesn’t have to be something special, something only well-qualified, selfless people can do. Maybe it can just be a part of life, an organic expression of what we really need.* (My emphasis)

Katie describes what many students in the class seemed to feel: a sense of immense responsibility, tempered by a sense of fleeting hope and power. Yet her response shows a resolve that perhaps it is not up to only a few dedicated, hardcore “activists” to change the system. It is up to us, working collectively.

¹⁸ Kingsnorth, P. (2004). *One No, Many Yeses*. Simon & Schuster UK. pp. 309-331

PART THREE: CHANGING THE WAY WE ENGAGE WITH “DEVELOPMENT”

After the course, it is clear that students see themselves and their role in “development” very differently. How does this shift in perception translate into intended actions? In this section, I will analyze some of the results of the pre- and post-class survey questions regarding students’ interest in both non-profit work (broadly defined) and explicitly *political* activism, organizing, and advocacy.

NON-PROFITS

In both the pre- and post-class surveys, students were asked to respond freely (short answer) to the following prompt:

Do you have any desire to volunteer or work for a non-profit (either for the first time or again)? If so, with what kind of organization?

Students showed **very little change in their almost unanimous interest in volunteering or working for a non-profit after the class**. This is an expected outcome, and may be partially as a result of poor phrasing – “non-profit” is an extremely broad and unclear category that includes both service- and justice/politically- oriented organizations.

Despite this overall similarity pre- and post-class, **students showed a general shift towards evaluating their own motivations and the motivations and impact of these non-profits more critically**. Six students in particular made it clear that they intended – and felt more capable – to critically sift through the mass of non-profits now emerging to find more effective organizations rooted in their local communities to work or volunteer for, as shown in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2. Desire to Work With Non-Profits – Examples Of Critical Changes

Desire to Work with Non-profits – Examples of Critical Changes		
Pre-class Response	Post-class Response	
David	<p>Yes. I'm getting to the point where I feel guilty that I haven't done anything in a while. Engineers without borders sounds interesting.</p>	<p>Yes, and I'd like to volunteer and travel around the US and the world. This class has given me a critical lens so I can realize my own motives and what I really want to accomplish. I'd like to get involved in engineering organization, but one that works to build solidarity and learn from the places we visit. I want to work on my Spanish so I'd like to travel through Latin America. I'd like to participate with an organization that uses volunteers efficiently to create long-term solutions</p>
Danny	<p>I would like to continue volunteering but in more of a public or global health capacity.</p>	<p>I do still want to work for a volunteer or non-profit, but not exclusively. I think that I would probably shift my focus more domestically, rather than internationally. I will definitely research and critically analyze any organization or group I decide to work for or support however.</p>
Allie	<p>I do have a desire to work for a non-profit organization. Right now my interest is working on issues of food security/insecurity in the United States.</p>	<p>Right now, I am most interested in learning about different organizations and modes of social change. I believe that there ARE good organizations, working on tangible, ethical change, but I need to spend much more time doing research on what different organizations are doing. I definitely see myself working for or with organizations in the future. I am much more focused on doing work from America than I was at the beginning of my social justice education.</p>
Oliver	<p>Absolutely. With a million kinds of organizations, but particularly in domestic and sexual violence prevention, U.S. criminal justice reform, and small-scale/local development and community empowerment work.</p>	<p>I have a strong desire to work in the nonprofit sector (both domestically and abroad), but I have some serious misgivings with many NGOs and, to some extent, with the sector as a whole. One of my primary interests is in the American criminal justice system, largely because I think there's a lack of attention paid to human rights abuses in the U.S., I could be more useful in that field (as an American, etc.) than I could in an area in which I'm a foreigner. Still, I'm interested in working abroad</p>
Alex	<p>Yes. Ideally once I graduate I'd like to work for a pro-business NGO that works towards either economic development or health equity (or both) in developing nations. And I'm always up for volunteering my time and energy to non-profits with a good game plan.</p>	<p>Yes, I do. I'd like the experience of working with a non-profit so that I can understand their motives and actions from another point of view. In choosing one, I would try to find a non-profit that considers long-term ramifications of its actions, and I would likely choose a non-profit in an area I know well, preferentially my home-country.</p>
Mona	<p>(No Response)</p>	<p>Yes, definitely. Through the first couple weeks of this class I was feeling pretty discouraged about volunteering and working for non-profits because we questioned motivations so much, but after hearing from a bunch of them and kind of finding out that I can think critically enough to decide what my own motivations are and how the organization works that I can find one which will be suitable.</p>

POLITICAL ADVOCACY, ORGANIZING, AND ACTIVISM

In both the pre- and post-class surveys, students were asked to respond freely (short answer) to the following prompt:

*Do you have any desire to get involved in political advocacy, activism, or community organizing?
If so, with what issues? If not, is there a particular reason you do not want to get involved?*

Student's short answer responses were qualitatively coded into three categories: "yes" (wants to get involved soon without hesitation), "yes with reservations" (e.g. would want to know more about the issues first), and "no". These categories are reductive, but paint an overall picture of students moving from latent ("yes with reservations") interest in political action to active ("yes") interest in political action after the course, as seen in Figure 3 below.

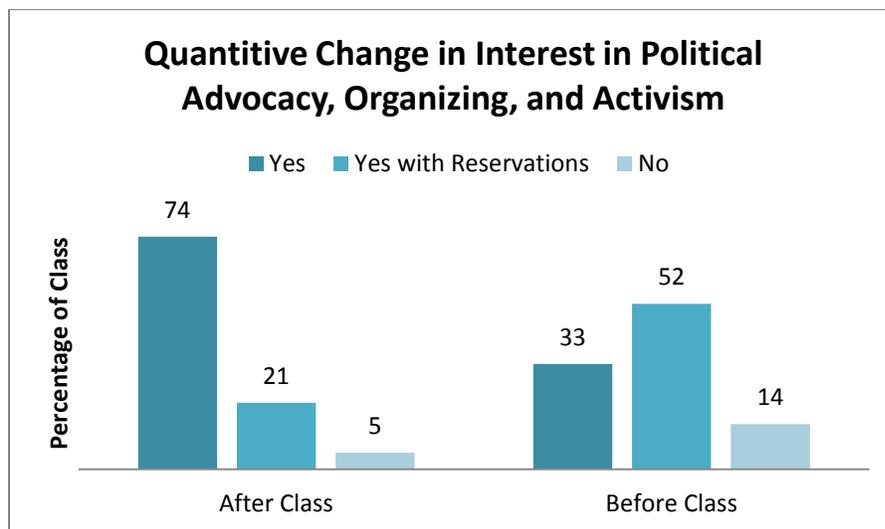


FIGURE 4. Interest in Political Advocacy, Organizing, And Activism – Quantitative Changes

What caused these shifts? Many students, it was clear, were already amenable to the idea of politics before the class – only 14% of students were outright against getting involved in political work before the class. Yet many had reservations about the faults of the political system or their own lack of understanding and awareness of the issues worth fighting for. A handful of responses that illustrate both these perspectives and importantly, how they changed by the end of the quarter, are shown in Table 3 below.

From these responses, it becomes clear that many students – some reluctantly (Joseph), other enthusiastically (Katie) – came to see the need for political solutions to injustices they are passionate about resolving. Other students, who were interested in political action but not sure where to start before the class found guest speakers and other examples to be highly effective (such as those from United Students Against Sweatshops, USAS).

However, like Katie above, students like Danny with set future professional programs (engineering and medicine) found it initially both daunting and unclear how they might best engage in political action. Yet like Katie, Danny expresses an interest in finding other ways to support these movements even if she pursues her interest in medicine. This shows an interest in *engaged citizenship* and everyday activism, which ultimately is necessary on a broad scale.

TABLE 3. Interest in Political Advocacy, Organizing, And Activism - Qualitative Changes

Qualitative Change in Interest in Political Advocacy, Organizing, and Activism		
	Pre-class Response	Post-class Response
Lauren	no, i like to help out others around the community but i prefer not to involve myself in political advocacy, activism, or community organizing because i feel like it far out of ability to help. I also doesn't like to involve myself in politic stuff because i feel like it to complicated and plus i don't have a lot of knowledge about it.[sic]	Yes, i do have some desire being involve in community organizing and the issue I'm most interesting in is human right issue. I strong believed in individual rights and everyone deserve to be treated with respect. [sic]
Joseph	I dislike politics and feel like most political advocacy does not accomplish anything because they are commonly working against a corrupt system. I would rather just be in a practical capacity where I can help people, so I could see myself participating in community organizing and/or activism if I feel it can make a difference.	I have become more open to the idea of political advocacy to prevent injustices, but I still don't feel particularly drawn towards that type of work unless I become forced to do so. The reason is that these people often annoy me with their talking without dong any action. To be honest, all the hatred expressed against the Koney 2012 annoyed my because I feel like it is a powerful movement that is actually accomplishing something. I guess it all has to do with perspectives.
Marcie	I would like to get involved, but unfortunately I have not focused my time on these issues lately.	I'd love to get involved in community organizing and activism with groups on campus that are doing work like the (students against sweatshops) one.
Katie	Yes, but I haven't found the right opportunity/issue yet.	Yes, I've realized that advocacy/activism is vital for change. I'd like to continue with advocating for the Vietnamese community at least. Generally, I'm interested in community building and challenging stuctures of power/privilege in the US (race, economic). Someday I'd like to tackle international issues, but the road is a little murkier that way.
Danny	I don't have any definite feelings either way, I would have to strongly believe in the cause and it would have to be effectively organized.	I think the solidarity portion of the class was really interesting and the most motivating. However, obviously you definitely have to really commit time and energy to these movements. I plan to attend medical school so my time and energy will be fairly overtaken by these demands, but I would like to support them in other ways.
Bobbi	I do but I want to find a movement that I care about and makes sense to me.	Yes, inequality and health...but maybe just inequality in general. I think I'll attempt to be more up to date on what's going on in Olympia and DC.

Key

No
Yes with Reservations
Yes

PART FOUR: STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF THE SEMINAR

In this section, I analyze student evaluations of the seminar itself in the post-class survey as well as change from the pre-class survey. In the post-class survey, a number of statements were provided as part of another Likert-scale battery of questions. Students were asked if they Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, or have No Opinion about each statement.

OVERALL EVALUATIONS

The results show that, on the whole, students greatly enjoyed the class. As shown in Figure 5, 15 students, or 78% of the respondents (n=19) indicated they agreed that “this was one of the best classes [they have] taken at the UW.” While an imperfect question and measure, it confirms some of the personal emails and statements students said directly and explicitly to me. Only two students disagreed, and two had no response.

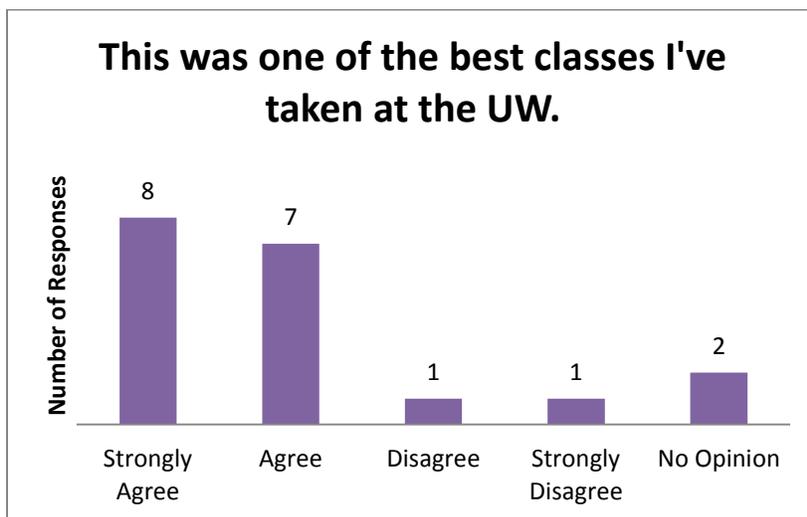


FIGURE 5. Post-class survey: was this one of the best classes taken at UW?

The responses also confirm that students are self-consciously aware of the shift in their perspective on how they see “development” and how they see themselves that I described earlier in this report. As shown in Figure 6, 16 students, or 84% of the respondents (n=19) agreed that “this class has changed the way [they] see ‘development’ and [their] role in it.” No students disagreed; the rest of the class indicated no opinion.

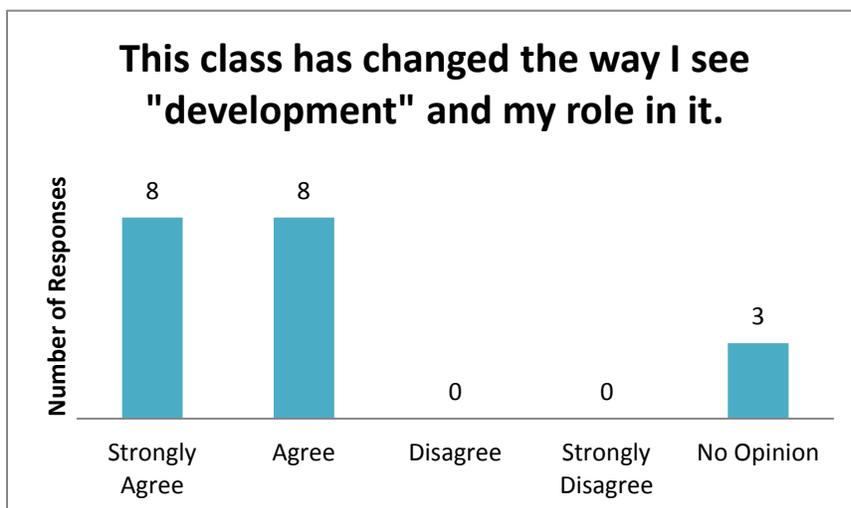


FIGURE 6. Post-class survey: views of development and roles

One of the potential pitfalls of a class like this (focused on being *critical*) is that it could leave students less optimistic, more jaded, and effectively paralyzed to act as every approach seems to be laden with critique. The qualitative statements analyzed above show that students generally still seem very passionate about taking action. Of course, their opinions on the best kind of action changed over the course of the quarter. This is the goal of the course, and the CDF more broadly: the redirection of students' good intentions through critical reflection – not the stunting of their efforts altogether.

That said, the post-class survey question about whether “the class made [students] more optimistic about the future and [their] abilities to effect change” showed a mix of optimism and pessimism. As shown in Figure 7, a slight majority, 11 students or 57% of respondents (n=19) indicated that they agreed with that statement and were more optimistic, while 36% disagreed.

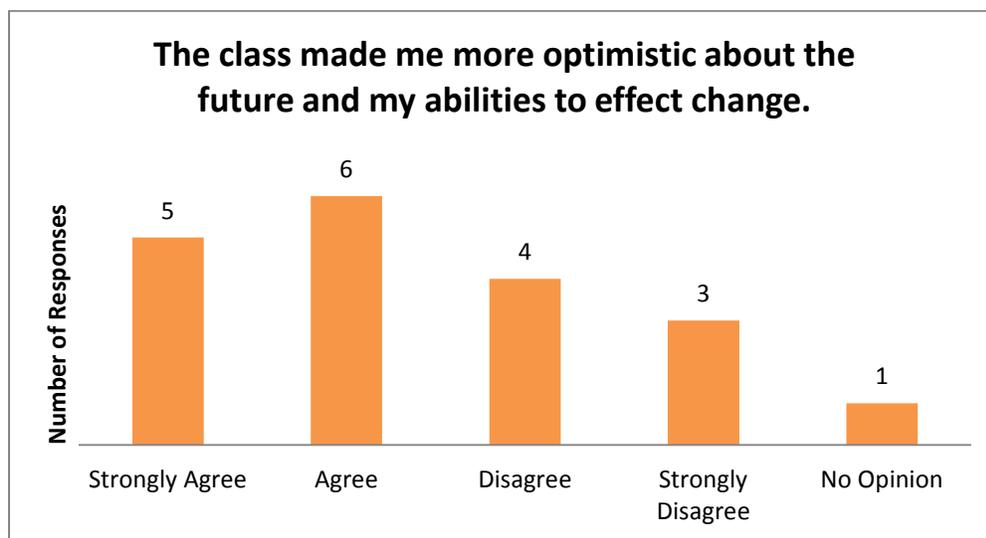


FIGURE 7. Post-class survey: optimism about the future

While not at all ideal (which would be 100% more optimism), 57% of students showing more optimism is still very good. There are explanations to consider as well: (1) The class should, ideally, cut down the over-optimistic views (rooted in ideas like technological optimism that undergird traditional “development” ideology) - although it should also ideally build up the optimism that another world is possible. (2) Disagreement with the statement given does *not* necessarily imply that students became more pessimistic – they may have stayed as pessimistic or optimistic as they were before.¹⁹ (A handful of students were in fact quite jaded about “development” before the class even began.) Nevertheless, it is not unlikely that at least a few students are more pessimistic after the course, which is problematic, but hopefully only a temporary hiccup in the path towards critically reflexive praxis.²⁰

¹⁹ The question would have been strengthened and clarified if the pre-class survey had asked for students' optimism/pessimism to allow for a pre/post-class analysis.

²⁰ Here I refer to “praxis” as the Freirean notion of a constant spiral of “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it.” See Freire, P. (2000), p.36.

CHANGE IN PERCEIVED ABILITIES

Despite this potential pessimism, students generally show a very large leap in confidence about their abilities after the class. Students were presented with a number of statements about their perceived abilities and a Likert scale (from Very Easy to Very Difficult) before and after the class. Figure 8 shows the percent change for each response.

These results show huge increases in the percentage of students leaving the class feeling that they can easily explain:

- What questions to ask about “development” work (24% → 63%, **+40%**)
- How to best help in “development” (5% → 47%, **+43%**)
- Why some countries are poor and others rich²¹ (33% → 68%, **+35%**)

KEY: (% “Very Easy” and “Easy” responses Before Class → % “Very Easy” and “Easy” responses After Class, % **Increase**)

On other points, changes were more muted. Students indicated only a slight change in their ability to explain how their life experience and identity shapes their view of “development.” This was a key learning objective of the course,²² however students came into the class with a high perceived ability, with 81% of students indicating that it was “easy” or “very easy” on the pre-class survey. It thus remains unclear how or whether students gained more ability to understand the origin of their conceptions of “development.”

Similarly, students remained uncertain about how to explain “development” to someone outside the “field”: 24% of students responded that this was “easy” or “very easy” before the class, and 37% afterwards. However, the class did not really intend to clarify what “development” was; in fact in many ways the course aimed to problematize the notion that a single, clear definition was possible or desirable.

²¹ Clearly this does not mean that what the students feel they can explain is necessarily true!

²² Week 6: Unpacking Privilege focused on this topic exclusively, and it ran throughout the course.

Change in Perceived Abilities After Class

(Question: How do you feel about the following statements? Indicate whether these tasks are very easy, easy, difficult, or very dif

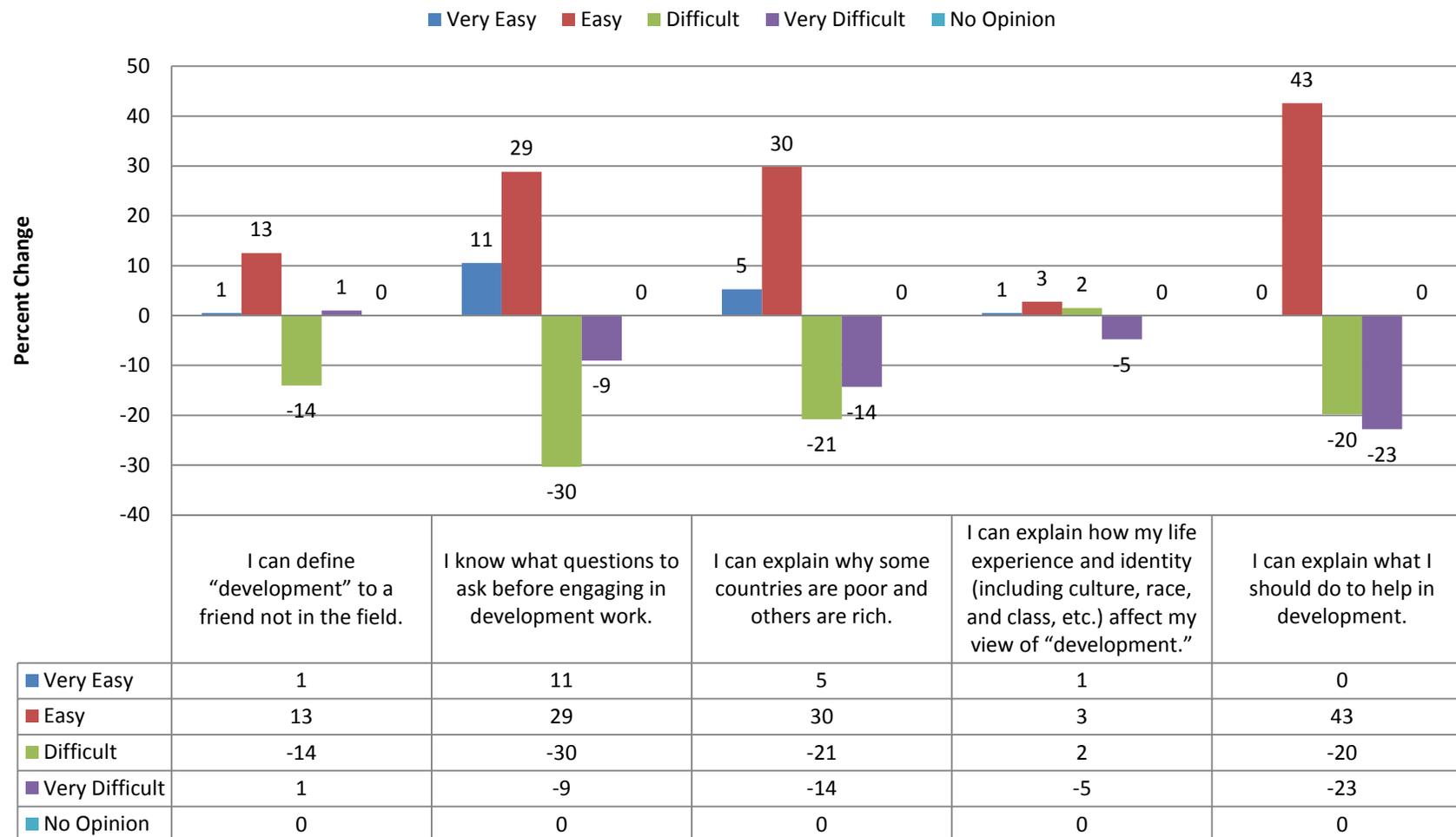


FIGURE 8. Change in perceived abilities after class

EVALUATION OF COURSE MECHANICS AND COMPONENTS

In this section, I analyze the ways students evaluated different components of the course mechanics, based on the post-class survey.

COURSE MECHANICS AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Figure 9 shows the Likert-scale responses to questions regarding the learning environment and mechanics of the course. A number of key points emerge:

- **Students overwhelmingly perceived the class to be well-organized both at a micro-scale within each class session (94% agreement) and at a macro-scale over the 10 week period (90% agreement).**
 - The latter is an especially important point since the course’s breadth was rather ambitious and it was crucial not to feel scattered.
- **Students overwhelmingly (~90% agreement) felt well-prepared for the course, but a third felt that it was too much work.**
 - It is important that students, who came from a wide variety of disciplines and levels of experience (see Demographics section above) felt like they could understand the readings and course ideas, which were designed to be cross-cutting and easily understood. The workload issue was anticipated, and students elsewhere in the survey noted a preference for splitting off the Community Engagement Project (described in the syllabus) as an optional component for more credits.
- **The vast majority – but not all – students (~80% agreement) believed they were acting as “teachers” for their peers and indicated that they felt safe and respected expressing their opinions.**
 - Creating a positive, safe space where students come to the class with a sense that their experiences hold value and should be shared is a crucial aspect of critical pedagogy. Thus while it is excellent that most students felt that they were indeed helping their peers learn, *it is problematic that a sizable minority of the class felt excluded from this discussion.*²³

²³ One student, anonymously, stated this position this way in the post-class survey:

“End the class on a more positive note. **It felt almost as if the class turned into a 'safe place' for students to demonstrate arrogance and knowledge of the field rather than a welcoming environment for critical dialogue.** The mention of the Kony 2012 during the last session evoked a conversation that mocked those unaware of the implications of such 'development work'. I do not believe that those were the intentions of the class, however this became a major theme of the class. I noticed that as the weeks progressed fewer and fewer people felt comfortable speaking up and I have to wonder if this could be attributed to that same energy of arrogance and pessimism that filled the room on the last day of class.”

This is unfortunate, and shows that at least a handful of students were potentially – unintentionally – excluded from the discussion as a critical consensus emerged that did not include their views. In the future, *facilitators must be clearer about eliciting contributions from dissenting voices within the room.*

Evaluation of Course Mechanics

(Question: Now we would like your honest feedback on the course and its effects on you. Please rate whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements)

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree ■ No Opinion

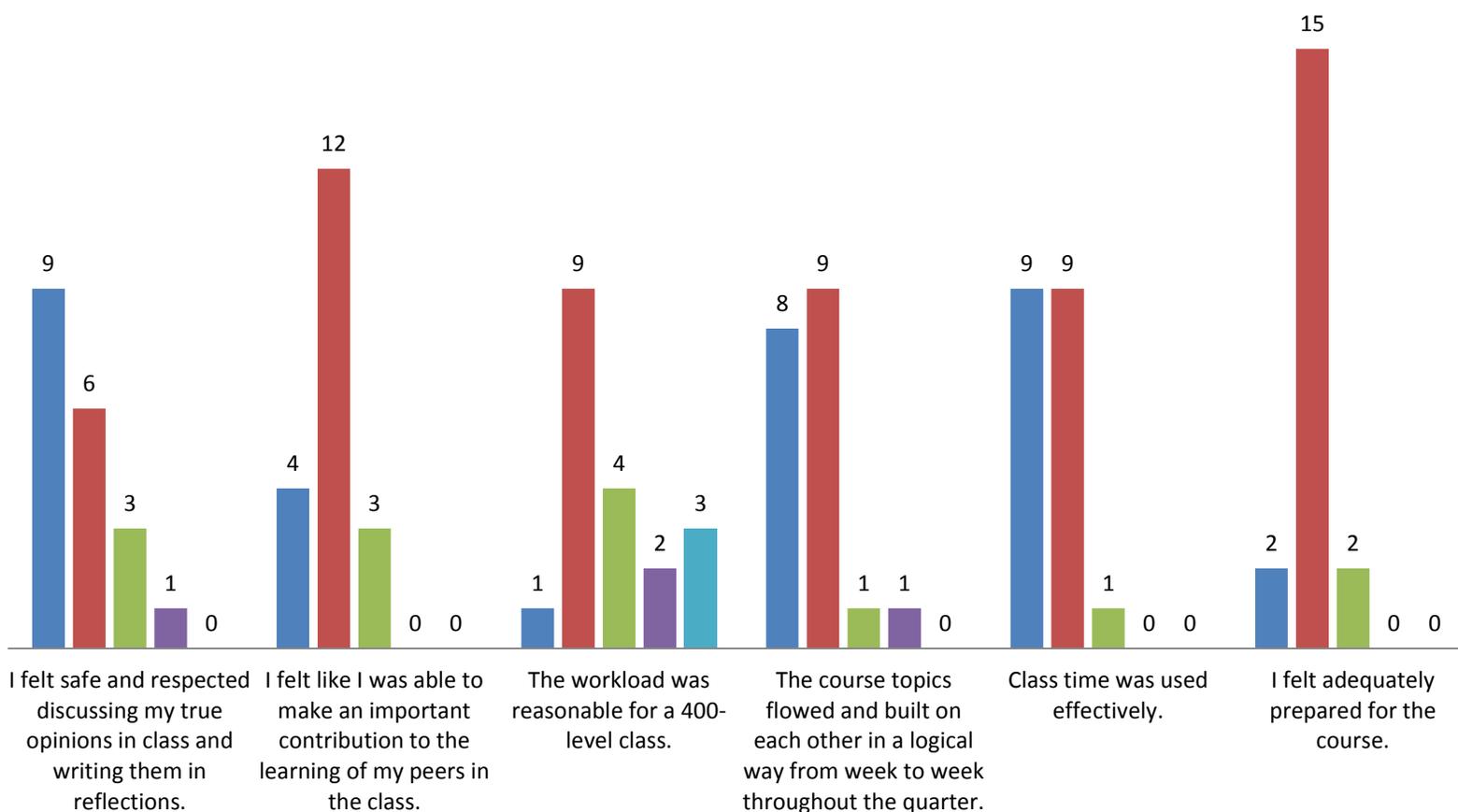


FIGURE 9. Evaluation of course mechanics

COURSE COMPONENTS

Figure 9 shows the Likert-scale responses to questions regarding each major component of the course. From these results, it appears that all the major components were viewed overwhelmingly as effective, except for the community engagement project, which received very mixed (though slightly positive) evaluations.

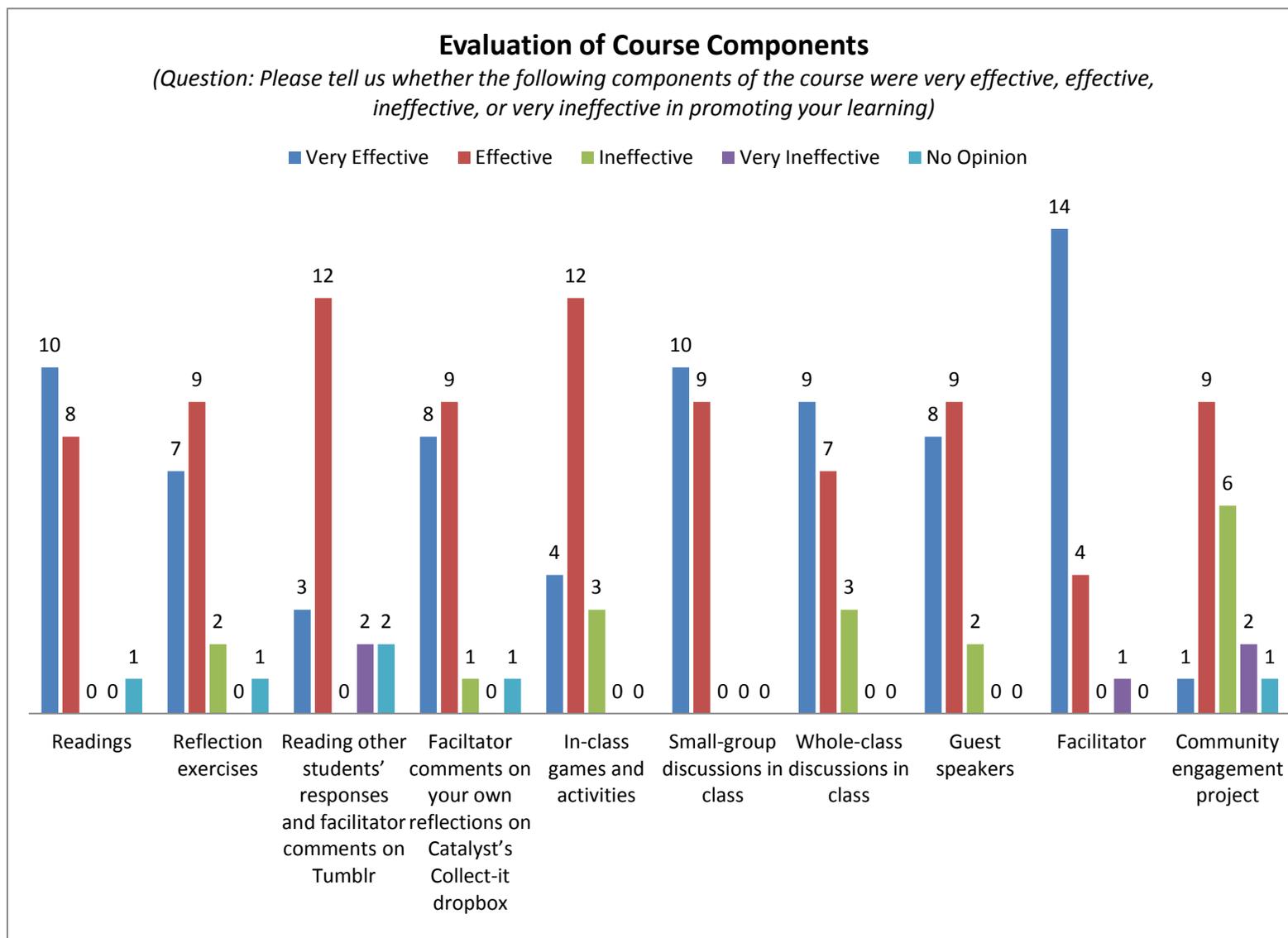


FIGURE 10. Evaluation of course components

CONCLUSION

This quarter, through this class and in other ways, I've met a lot of caring, passionate young people, who make me optimistic about the future of this world. A couple of the readings mentioned this, I think: how can you not be moved, not be inspired or optimistic about the future of the world when you see all of the people out there who are rising up, who care about the world, who are trying to end injustice? And that does give me hope, and gives me confidence to talk about this and other controversial issues.

I still don't really know what I'm going to do with my life, but I at least no longer feel like I can quietly follow the straight path in front of me. Lots more self-questioning is in order. Overall, it's probably a good thing that this class unsettled me and made me question my life, even if that's not the most pleasant thing ever. That's how serious change happens!

-Katie, engineering student²⁴

The results of the course were quite surprising, given that it was only two credits and met only 18 hours over the quarter (Week 3 was missed due to a snow day). As shown in Part One, students generally left more conscious of the *political* causes of injustice in our world and more skeptical of current responses made in the name of “development.” As demonstrated in Part Two, students largely left with a different sense of their *role* in “development.” Instead of acting only as “helpers,” most of them feel a greater sense of responsibility to challenge – often politically – the injustices and inequalities perpetuated in their name as U.S. citizens and consumers. From Part Three, it is clear that students are still motivated to take action, but are more critical of the good intentions of NGOs they might work with, more focused on working from home rather than abroad, and more interested in political advocacy and organizing.

Yet above all, students also greatly enjoyed the course – for almost all students, it was one of the best courses they had ever taken at UW (see Figure 5) and they recognized that their view of “development” and their role in it had profoundly changed (see Figure 6). Furthermore, students left the course feeling that they knew – much better - what questions to ask before engaging in “development” work (see Figure 8).

This impact shows that critical pedagogy and peer facilitation (whether actually a student facilitating or a faculty member coming to the discussion as a peer) have great promise for the education of students interested in “development.” Preparatory traditional coursework (see Figure 2) no doubt was tremendously helpful in enriching our discussions with a theoretical backbone, yet was the students’ *experiences* - both in daily life and in “development” - that created the most engaging discussions. It was clear in the course that this sharing and critical reflection was a piece missing from traditional forms of instruction. Students like Katie who had once seen neoliberalism and structural adjustment as a thing “out there” came to understand it as a system that we must personally take responsibility for, and collectively challenge.

²⁴ Quote from Week 10 reflection. Students were asked to reflect on their own learning over the past 10 weeks.

The course may be rightly critiqued for its limited theoretical depth and relatively one-sided nature. Yet “development” experiences and mainstream education (many UW departments thankfully excluded) are often one-sided themselves or bound up in inaccessible theories that allow us to disassociate ourselves emotionally from the everyday injustice perpetuated by our global systems. We must find spaces and ways to both challenge these dominant discourses (e.g. “growth is good and never needs to end”; “the west is modern, the rest are primitive”) *as well as* this detached form of education about theories for the sake of theories.

The theories do not inspire action until students can reflect on their experiences with a group of peers and come to understand that the theories are not dry, but alive, explaining why some are rich and others poor, why “development” has grown into a indefinable contradiction, and why so much “development” (and “development” education) serves to do little more than reinforce the status quo. I only hope that this seminar created, however imperfectly, such a space and can be replicated and refined by others with more knowledge and experience than myself.

APPENDIX

The full dataset and intermediary calculations on which this study was based are available online at:

<http://students.washington.edu/cdfuw/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Appendix-Sheets-for-CDF-Seminar-Report-WIN12.xlsx>

As with this report, names were withheld to protect the identity of students.