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## Discovery from Failure: Understanding Developing Countries' Battles with Poverty and Culturally Appropriate Answers to Them

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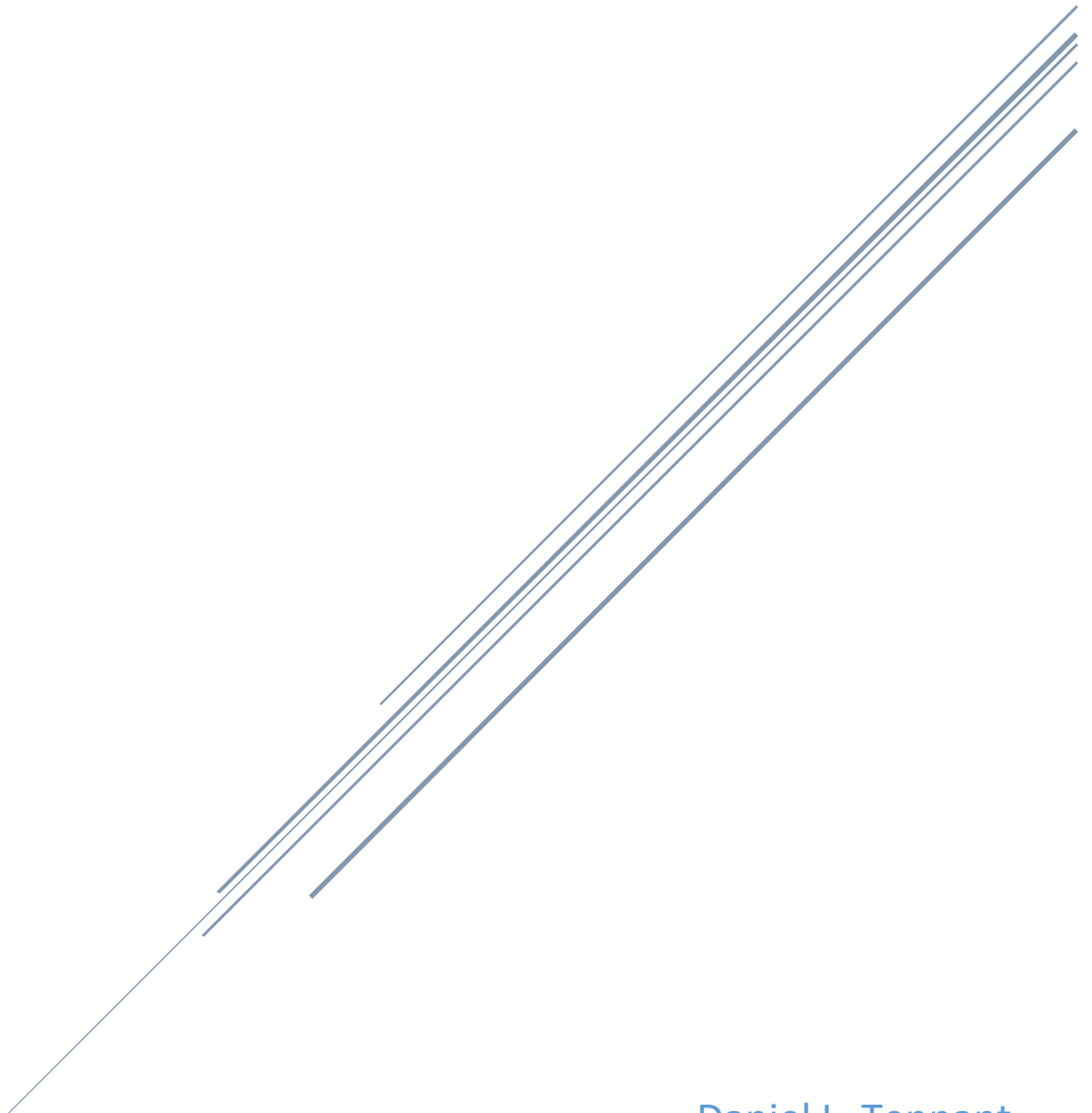
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# DISCOVERY FROM FAILURE:

Understanding Developing Countries' Battles with Poverty  
and Culturally Appropriate Answers to Them



Daniel L. Tennant  
Honors Thesis, 2018

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## 1. Introduction

The smell of burning rubber, a large fire in the middle of the road, intense putrid smoke suffocating everything it enveloped, some people yelling and some screaming, and not the mildest understanding of what was happening in front of me. Men in military uniforms, carrying rifles, coming in on huge trucks to scare off and harm any protestors they could find. I was neither a protestor nor supporter of what was being debated in the streets through violence, but that did not protect me from being included in the chaos that ensued. I was just trying to get to a language class when myself and a handful of other students stumbled upon the scene described. It is one of my first solid memories of my trip to Africa. I went to Dakar, Senegal to do a research project that I had developed with guidance from professors at Western Michigan University, and it could not have gone worse. Not only did my research project entirely fail, not just result in no correlation, but outright failed for being entirely flawed in question, methodology, and whole line of thought. However, this failure turned into a monumental aspect of the learning process and the foundation for my honors thesis.

This document will be broken down into four chapters, however within those four chapters there are two distinct, opposing situations. Chapter two is the first situation where in I detail my failed research in Dakar, Senegal during the summer of 2017. I attempted to answer the question: How does poverty and educational attainment affect where students end up working after graduating university? In other words, I attempted to research the relationship between levels of poverty, educational attainment, and where students ended up working after university education. This failed for multiple reasons from the initial question, to the methodology and execution of the research. For example, the initial question is predicated on the notion that people are going to college to get a job afterwards, that their schooling is in a way job training.

This seems fairly obvious in hindsight but was not noted prior to going to Senegal and talking with university students and professors. Upon talking with some (after already being there for at least one of three weeks) it was pointed out that they are not going to school for a job, but to be better critical thinkers and have informed dialectical conversations. This became a problem because my central research question was flawed, and I had less than two weeks to change my research. The research (and thus what the HSIRB was designed to cover) originally intended to be centered on different sources that did not include ethnographic interviews. But, I was half way around the world needing to figure out not only what ethnographic research was, but how I was going to make doing that work while having very limited time due to the duration of my stay and daily required endeavors such as language and cultural courses. This failed research then stands facing the third chapter where successful research related to what I attempted is reviewed.

I could have easily cut the second chapter without ever denoting my failure but I instead thought it important to include because for me it was an essential step in the learning process that brought me to my final conclusions detailed in chapter four. The project failed for various reasons, detailed within chapter two, but that failure provided a learning opportunity that is critical to my understanding of the research process and of research in this particular field of study (both subject and locational). Furthermore, I have read numerous research articles and have yet to find one that is a published work detailing failed research; research that did not just fail to find any correlation but research that simply failed to produce anything at all. Failed research happens and yet it is not published even if it leads to actual results later. To me, that does not make much sense; thus my failed research, which was decidedly important in the process leading me to my final results, is included with those results.

My study is not quantitative, some research I mention is, but mine is entirely qualitative. It is based on readings of successful research done concerning poverty, the informal economy, and economic, political, social, structures of peripheral regions of the world, namely in West Africa. My study shows that there are some solutions already being discussed but that their implementation will be specific to the location. Most importantly, whatever solutions for issues of poverty found throughout the world, currently looking at peripheral regions, they must be solutions fitting into the culture. Western perspectives cannot dominate how peripheral regions solve their unique problems. The problems they face are the result of Western imposition of things such as neoliberal capitalism, economic systems, political structures, and our understanding of democracy. Western structures are directly responsible for, or at least largely contributed to, struggles developing nations face in areas like poverty. So, whatever solutions are found for those struggles do not inherently need to be found in more Western ideas. Looking away from neoliberalism and capitalist democracies may prove a better path for developing nations.

## 2. Failed Research

The research project was part of a study abroad opportunity from Western Michigan University. Participating students would go to Dakar, Senegal, for a research project they created with assistance from the faculty going on the trip. They would have approximately one month's time to complete their research project while doing additional required course work. Students would also live with host families in the community, take trips to see and understand different aspects of the culture, take classes to learn the local language (Wolof), and sit in on courses taught at Cheikh Anta Diop University (also known as the University of Dakar or UCAD). Thus, as a participating student, I created my own research project that had the goal of attempting to find if there was a correlation between levels of poverty, educational attainment, and where students went after graduating university. The idea was originally to answer the aforementioned question of: How does poverty and educational attainment affect where students end up working after graduating university? I intended to use UCAD as a center to work from, consult professors at UCAD in the economics and geography departments, and make use of the substantial library. Through economic data sets (that would be already mapped or that I could map), and archival data on economic and educational history combined with guidance from local professors to gain a more culturally appropriate perspective I was hoping to make significant head way in understanding my question.

However, when finally able to meet with some professors and students about a week into the trip I was informed that my central question was fundamentally flawed due to the assumption that people go to university for job training rather than something else. Furthermore, there were no datasets to address these questions. I had not even thought through the, again obvious, assumption that the Senegalese government might not keep data on the same scale the United

States government does through things like the census. What data I did collect was not of significant enough help and was always in French which proved to be much more complicated to get accurately translated than I expected. Not only did the data sets aspect to my methodology now seem to be crumbling, but I was not permitted to use the central library at UCAD. The University of Dakar has multiple libraries including a massive central library and an English department library but neither are accessible to nonstudents, and no exceptions were made when I attempted to receive approval to enter. I was only able to get into the English department's library because I knew one of the professors of the department through a Fulbright project he did at Western the previous year. This professor agreed to take me to see the library but it was full of novels and not academic research articles. Even with the professor accompanying me though, the library is in a locked room and behind a massive metal gate that is monitored by personnel. So, I was in a country that mostly is non-English speaking, largely without internet, minimal contacts of my own, no phone, and limited timeframes to get things done in. Thus these two issues alone caused significant problems for my overall project considering now the methodology and entire question I intended to use were thoroughly useless. Without the ability to get large data sets, no access to the library or its sources was further hurt by the only other library I knew of and intended to use being restricted access as well. It was the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, CODESRIA, and requires special approval to enter, which is taken very seriously considering it is protected by large walls, and security guards with rifles and body armor. It took me almost the entire three weeks to be able to get on the inside of CODESRIA. This meant my methodology and research question both needed robust revision. But at least I would be on UCAD's campus where there would be professors, students, and I would make the



limited time I had work to get a new research question and find a practical methodology considering the factors of time and what my HSIRB approval covered.

I shortly found out how wrong I was about this when around the beginning of our second week of three, UCAD shut down due to protests between students, professors and the government. The Senegalese government stopped paying scholarships that students needed to pay for their living situations and food which then resulted in a strike by students that was shortly followed by the professors striking in solidarity. This led to violence on and around the campus that I ended up periodically in the middle of as the Senegalese government tear gassed students, beat some, and committed other violent acts in an attempt to break the strikes. This meant I now had no methodology, needed a new research question, and where I was supposed to do my work and the professors I was hoping to seek advice from were entirely unavailable. At every turn the project was hitting significant roadblocks at this point to where I was fumbling around trying to create a new project in a country where almost no one spoke English, all my intended plans flew out the window, and I had minimal resources to do anything. As someone who normally prides himself on effective, efficient, problem solving to get around obstacles not figuring out solutions was a constant frustration. But with the power of hindsight there was something else I was neglecting to note, culture shock, which caused my ability to think clearly and decisively on the issues with my project significantly more difficult.

Dakar was just so radically different than anything I had ever personally seen or experienced prior to this trip. I had read and studied about Senegal and much of Africa, even taken whole classes dedicated to African culture, but none of it prepared me for being there. Everything we saw, heard, and tasted, every day, all day was so different from anything I had been exposed to before that it was extremely disorienting. It also did not help that I was still

returning to UCAD even though there were the strikes going on. This meant I had gotten caught up in a couple of the conflicts leading to being tear gassed, and having to hide in the upstairs of a building at one point. Combine that disorientation with a high paced schedule every day, and regularly running into issues with my project and it culminates into prodigious confusion, frustration, and an inordinate sense of desultory. That culmination came to define the project for me, and a project that is full of confusion, frustration, and lacking clear direction is quite doomed. Unfortunately I was not in Dakar long enough to work through everything, and eventually hit fourth stage of culture shock, which is supposed to be “integration/biculturalism”; instead I just floundered in the earlier stages of rejection and attempted adjustment until my time was up (Western Michigan University, 2018). While this meant that my research project never resulted in anything it was still important learning experience that served to fuel my curiosity even more about poverty and how it impacts peoples’ futures in peripheral regions of the world.

### 3. Successful Research

#### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I turn to an examination of works surrounding the issue of urban poverty, specifically geographically located in peripheral regions and how that can play into other large political, economic, and social structures. From the reviewed sources themes of broken governance (outdated, convoluted and inappropriate laws) and the informal economy (mostly referring to traders and street vendors) were indicated repeatedly. This followed by a critique about what those research articles neglect to note. The data is largely qualitative and anecdotal and spatially centers on emerging countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Dakar, Senegal will often be used as an example due to my previous experience with it (detailed more in chapter 2) and because successful research articles used here focus on Dakar.

#### 3.2 Broken Governance

Through many sources the issue of convoluted legal frameworks, outdated codes, and poorly imported laws from North America and Europe seem to plague governance in the urban setting (Brown & Dankoco, 2017; Brown, Lyons & Dankoco, 2010; Kironde, 2006; Parnell & Robinson, 2012; Rogerson, 2016). For example, in Senegal the French Civil Code from the colonial era still defines the legal method of land registration (Brown & Dankoco, 2017). There are also situations where the national government takes a stance on something like street traders, and the municipal or state governments are then left to figure out how to enforce the policy. In some cases just doing what the national government said results in extreme backlash for lower government officials. The governor of Dakar (Senegal) discovered this in 2007 when he evicted street vendors, due to national policy, causing three days of riots that shut down the city center.

He was then dismissed from his post by the president (Brown, Lyons & Dankoco, 2010; Brown, Msoka & Dankoco, 2014).

Legitimacy and legality has become a grey area in some countries concerning what is and what is not technically legal activity. In Senegal there is an issue with legal codes and laws “recognizing” street traders but not legitimizing them (Brown & Dankoco, 2017 p. 179). The national government sees them, and acknowledges their activities with laws (though very vaguely stated leaving politicians plenty of wiggle room to do what they want), but still in other laws they criminalize street traders (Brown & Dankoco, 2017; Brown, Lyons & Dankoco, 2010; Brown, Msoka & Dankoco, 2014). Going even further to muddy the waters between legitimate or not street traders often pay a daily fee (90%, which translates to 128 vendors, in one study of six markets in Dakar) to governmental officials for doing business and the ‘right’ to the space that they are set up in (Brown & Dankoco, 2017 p. 177). Payment of these fees suggests an acceptance of street trader’s legitimacy yet from the same research project in six markets of Dakar 90% of vendors (138 responses) had experienced one or more forms of four dimensions of insecurity: harassment 59% of 137 responses; confiscations 59% of 138 responses; extra fines 32% of 137 responses; and eviction 34% of 137 responses (Brown & Dankoco, 2017 p. 177). This data was collected from interviews and surveys rather than quantitative data sets provided by an agency which leads some to then question the accuracy because of the inherent bias of those surveyed. One response to this is that, as numerous researchers point out, informal economies (for example street traders in Dakar) are often highly mismeasured, often erring on the side of putting the scale too low (Horvath, 2017; Charman, & Govender, 2016; Brown, Lyons & Dankoco, 2010; Rogerson, 1996; Satterthwaite, 1997; Williamson, & Kelley, 1984; Stacey, & Lund, 2016).

Laws are also brought in from countries in Europe and North America but are not changed to fit to local cultures. Instead, the laws become disjointed and out of context due to differences in culture and economic activity (Satterthwaite, 2003). But this plays into how all too often these emerging countries attempt to emulate North American and European concepts of modernity. This leads to events like mass evictions of street traders leading up to the World Cup in South Africa in an attempt to make cities seem more “modern” (Brown, Lyons & Dankoco, 2010 p. 678). These sorts of legislative and cultural messes further serve to marginalize the poor and push them towards the criminalized informal economy (Brown & Dankoco, 2017; Brown, Msoka & Dankoco, 2014; Brown, Lyons & Dankoco, 2010). Emerging countries’ concerns over their image and attempts to appear more modern often lead to members of the visible informal market (people like street traders) being cracked down on by governmental officials. These sort of impositions to attain developed countries’ version of modernism is predicated on the notion that there is only one way modernism can look, and it must be culturally homogenous with Europe and North America. This does not do emerging countries any favors. It just highlights how members of the informal economy are at the political whims of those in charge (Brown, Lyons & Dankoco, 2010; Brown, Msoka & Dankoco, 2014; Charman, & Govender, 2016; Rogerson, 1996; Cross, 2000). Which leads into another major theme related to understanding urbanization and urban poverty: the informal economy.

### 3.3 Informal Economy

The term ‘informal economy’ itself has slightly different definitions depending on who is being asked, which lends to a general blurring of lines concerning the informal economy. The term, originally called the ‘informal sector’ initially, was defined in 1972. The term informal economy arose more recently to better include the diversity of workers (Brown, Lyons &

Dankoco, 2010). Economists see it as “the legal value-added activities that are not registered by the government, but would otherwise contribute to country’s GDP...the informal economy does not comprise illegal activities such as drug dealing, gambling, or smuggling” (Horvath, 2017 p.98). Political economists define it as

“the production and exchange of legal goods and services that involved the lack of appropriate business permits, violation of zoning codes, failure to report tax liability, non-compliance with labour [sic.] regulations governing contracts and work conditions, and/or legal guarantees in relations with suppliers and clients” (Cross, 1999 p. 580).

A simpler, concise, definition for general purposes is “economic activity that uses illegal means to produce legal products and services” (Brown, Lyons & Dankoco, 2010 p. 667). Within the informal economy are numerous different groups of workers providing different goods and services just like in the formal economy; they all just have at some point an illegal component. It is important to denote though that the informal economy does not include drug dealing, gambling, smuggling, or other more criminal acts (Horvath, 2017). So, one component of the informal economy are street traders or vendors which some propose constitutes its own economy denoted as the “street economy” (Brown, Lyons & Dankoco, 2010 p. 667).

This street economy is thus logically composed of “street traders” that

“include all small-business entrepreneurs, generally own-account or self-employed, involved in the manufacturing or sale of legal or socially acceptable goods or services who trade from the street, informal market or other publically accessible space (whether publicly or privately owned), but whose operation takes place at least in part outside the prevailing regulatory environment and thus flouts either business regulation, planning codes, or other legal requirements” (Brown, Lyons & Dankoco, 2010 p. 667-668).

The definitions from Brown, Lyons and Dankoco (2010) concerning the informal economy, street economy, and street trader are the definitions I found to best articulate the broader sense of

the topic and thus are what I mean when referencing each term subsequently. The unclear lines and different perspectives between what exactly the informal economy is provides an excellent window into much to do with the informal economy. Many facets of it exist inherently in a sort of grey space between legitimate/illegal, formal/informal, volatile/predictable, needing to be measured/unmeasurable and countless more.

One area of debate for many researchers and people involved in informal economies is what is legitimate and what is legal, and tying directly to that then what is formal and what is not (Brown & Dankoco, 2017; Brown, Lyons & Dankoco, 2010; Brown, Msoka & Dankoco, 2014; Charman & Govender, 2016; Cross, 2000; Horvath, 2017; Rogerson, 1996; Rogerson, 2016). Take the case of a street trader in Senegal for example. If their activities are legitimate it makes it much easier to argue that, street trader or not, they are part of the formal economy. But to be a street trader presupposes that an aspect of their activity is illegal so it cannot be legitimate or formal. Thus by default is informal, and slightly illegal, and thus with no political influence or legitimacy it leaves them at the whims of political leaders and relegated to being poor. When people complain about the injustice of this cycle, political leaders say they must be organized, and have representatives (organizations or individuals), in order for talks of reform to be entertained. But organizations and representatives of illegal activities carry no political or legal clout due to whom they represent, thus governmental officials largely dismiss them and do not legitimize them with any power. Thus street traders still get nowhere, continuing to exist in a grey area between being legitimate, accepted, and having rights; and them being criminalized, demonized, and at the whims of those in power. This trend, unfortunately, holds true for others than just street traders in Senegal. It promotes urban poverty as urbanization grows, and thus so does the informal economy.

Measuring the informal economy (how many workers it includes, what its impacts are, etc.) is something that has proved to be more difficult, under researched, and more important than people previously thought (Horvath, 2017; Parnell & Robinson, 2012; Satterthwaite, 2003; Satterthwaite, 1997). Part of the difficulty has to do with the informal economy being comprised of impoverished people living in unplanned urban zones denoted as “slums” by the United Nations (Kironde, 2006 p. 460). These areas have no urban infrastructure, and do not follow regulations for zoning, construction or living standards but they are the only places that poor people are able to live in urban centers due to extreme costs that accumulate when following the legislative frameworks (Horvath, 2017; Parnell & Robinson, 2012; Satterthwaite, 2003). These unplanned areas provide multiple environmental hazards namely, “biological pathogens, chemical pollutants, and physical hazards” to the people who live in them only worsening urban poverty (Satterthwaite, 2003 p.73). Africa, Asia, and Latin America have “nearly three quarters of the world’s urban population and most of the world’s largest and fastest-growing cities” (Satterthwaite, 2003 p.74). Which translates out to more than 600 million people in urban centers living in slums (Satterthwaite, 2003 p.74). Often the true cost of living in urban centers is not properly assessed which leaves the costs higher than what is listed, only increasing the equality gaps between people of middle to high income and people relegated to poverty (Horvath, 2017).

The informal economy is not solely made up of impoverished people living in slums. However, often aspects of what impoverished people do in the economy falls within the informal economy. It can be for various reasons such as they are making or selling something that is not taxed, done in commercial zones, or with license from the government (Horvath, 2017; Cross, 1999). But the concept of them being ‘impoverished’ should not be taken without question. Poor is a relative term. Fundamentally, it is denoting someone’s ability to afford a certain standard of



living wherever they are. But the locational aspect of it is incredibly important yet regularly forgotten. If someone from Senegal were to be compared with the standard of living and poverty line in the United States it would be possible for them to be considered 'poor' by comparison, but that would not be correct. A Western perspective on poverty and what standard of living denotes being poor is not universal, it is a Western perspective that is rendered void from the cultural perspective of the periphery. Social, cultural, political, economic structures of countries vary the world over, but can be incredibly different between least developed countries (LDCs) and developed countries (as the UN denotes them) (United Nations, 2017). To consider yourself poor has social and cultural implications with it that cause someone for example in Senegal to not consider themselves poor but to be seen as poor by Westerners. This imposition of our perspective on their socioeconomic status is not grounded in their culture and thus inaccurate.

Due to the overall lack of recent research into the informal economy's impact and how to measure them in emerging countries there is unfortunately much too still discover and understand. One thing that has been determined recently by Jaroslav Horvath (2017) is that there is a positive relationship between a country's relative volatility of consumption to output and the size of the informal economy. Furthermore, that in an open economy with a poorly measured informal sector increasing the country's "interest rate generates a contraction in output, consumption, investment, hours, and improvement in trade balance-to-output ratio, and an expansion of [the] informal sector" (Horvath, 2017 p. 96). This becomes an even larger problem as Horvath also denotes that there are large fluctuations of interest rates in emerging countries (2017). A major way that this then becomes important and goes against previous literature is because Horvath asserts that if the informal economy is incorrectly measured, in the presence of interest rate shocks (which are seen in emerging countries), then the "volatility of consumption is

naturally higher than that of output and the [national] economy exhibits countercyclical real interest rates, and countercyclical trade balance-to-output ratio” (2017 p. 97). Horvath designed a model that he calibrates to each country before putting through a data set. He does note that “a model calibrated for Argentine and Mexican data does a fair job of capturing business cycles” for all states (Horvath, 2017 p. 96). His is one of the few mathematical analysis in the overall body of literature.

One thing is for sure though concerning the informal market, however measured, the informal market is growing in emerging countries as their overall population increases (Brown, Lyons & Dankoco, 2010; United Nations, 2017; Satterthwaite, 1997; Kironde, 2006; Williamson & Kelley, 1984). According to the United Nations the globe’s current population of 7.6 billion is supposed to reach 8.6 billion by 2030, and 9.8 billion by 2050 (2017). Furthermore, projections say that half of the world’s population growth leading up to 2050 will be concentrated in just nine countries, eight of which are emerging economies (India, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Pakistan, Ethiopia, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, and Indonesia). Also the 47 least developed countries total population is supposed to increase by 33% between now and 2030 (United Nations, 2017). As populations grow rapidly and people continue to migrate to urban centers at high rates it is projected that poverty will rise (Kironde, 2006; Knox & Marston, 2016; Ritzer & Dean, 2015; Satterthwaite, 2003; Zezza & Tasciotti, 2010). Issues of living expenses being underestimated (as discussed earlier in the paper), not enough urban planning at affordable prices and fast enough rates, lack of physical and social infrastructure, and no other options will drive poor people to slums in urban centers and expand the informal economy as they try to self-employ due to no access to the formal economy. To dismiss the informal economy as inconsequential for any reason is no longer an option; the longer that there is lacking

research into it and it goes without being integrated into the formal economy the bigger the problems will become. Herein lies another important assumption though. The assumption that the informal economy is inherently bad and must be eradicated.

### 3.4 Critique

This critique applies to the greater body as a whole on the subject of urban poverty and the informal economy, as well that the imposition of Western ideologies and practices is often inaccurate and not acceptable. This can be broken more specifically into two areas: one research is too heavily focused on the core regions of the world and neoliberalism; and two there is a massive underlying assumption that the informal economy is bad. To the first point most research on urbanization has focused on core regions' cities and on neoliberal ways of handling it. There is not enough research into critiquing neoliberalism or focusing on emerging countries according to Parnell and Robinson (2012). Urbanization has largely been impacted by neoliberalism as people move from rural spaces to urban centers to participate in market driven systems. For example, the emptying of rural spaces in Mexico to go work in maquiladoras, the subsequent destruction of the ejido system, and a "new rurality" (Burkham, 2012 p. 25). But we are seeing urban centers with massive slums and growing informal economies yet we still look to neoliberalism to fix it when it is what help create the problem. Why not look carefully at neoliberalism and find faults in it, leading to ways to fix those faults and potentially major issues with urbanization in peripheral regions? Borón (2010 p. 32) makes the argument that neoliberal policies are "determined to go to any extremes to reproduce and enhance the unfettered dominance of capital. 'Market-driven' politics cannot be democratic politics at all". Suggesting that if peripheral regions want to be democratic as the West says it is trying to help them become, then governments in peripheral regions need to find an alternative to neoliberalism.

Trying to force neoliberal policies and democratic values into countries like Senegal is contradictory and potentially partially at fault for some of the turmoil in those regions. In order to have “more democracy necessarily implies less capitalism” but the reverse to get more capitalism is also true (Borón, 2010 p. 32).

To the second point on the informal economy being bad it is something I almost did not even notice, but all of the articles seemed to be presuming, without noting, that the informal economy was bad and needed to be fixed. While the informal economy does not provide much if any vertical growth/potential for people there are ways it could become a part of the formal economy without much modification. For example, by adjusting legislation to decriminalize street traders and adding a loose framework to track output, make taxes, and provide better flows into the more formal economy, street trading (a culturally significant aspect of places like Senegal) can be brought into a new picture of modernity in peripheral regions. Without the insecurities they currently face street traders, and others suffering from poverty, would be allowed better security, economic mobility, and a culturally appropriate way of integrating into the national economy.

The informal economy carries a negative connotation for many Westerners due to the implication of illegal activities. But Westerners also are seeing this from an ethnocentric perspective. The Western World is dominated by capitalism to the point where some, like Atilio Alberto Borón, argue that capitalism is so pervasive that the West is not actually capitalist democracies but “democratic capitalisms” (Borón, 2010 p. 4). He argues that capitalism has become so pervasive in our culture that it impacts far more than the economy, and due to capitalism’s inherent inequalities has defeated the notion of true democracy in places like the United States. Thus this shapes how we see things like the informal economy. A sector that does

not properly get taxed, or follow correct procedure (with zoning, business permits, employment structures, and so on) would seem like it needs to be removed and is a hindrance. But from a cultural perspective of Senegal for example not all aspects of the informal economy are considered negative. Groups like street traders are important aspects of many peoples' daily lives as street traders provide numerous goods (clothes, food, and furniture to name a few) that everyone needs. Going to the street traders, and thus the informal economy, is a way of surviving for people. Yet because the West perceives it differently they get forcibly removed for no reason other than a government's image as seen in South Africa and discussed earlier in this chapter (Brown, Lyons & Dankoco, 2010). This disrupts the social and cultural structures in these countries as the West imposes its perspective and creates uncertainty for people like street traders in the informal economy.

To bring this all back together Western World impositions are doing the peripheral regions of the world no favors. By continuing to interfere and impose our perspectives, values, systems, and goals onto peripheral countries we are hindering their ability to develop. Another example of this is seen between countries within the Franc Zone and France. The Franc Zone, according to the Bank of France is an "economic, monetary and cultural area that is equivalent to none other in the world. It is made up of very diverse states...in the former French colonial empire" (Coustin, 2010 p. 1). It is 15 different sub-Saharan countries that are divided into two main groups of West African States and Central African States, each having their own central bank but all falling under the umbrella of the Franc Zone which is controlled by France. They put it as a cooperative relationship working "towards ensuring the smooth functioning of the area's shared institutions" but when there are important groups like the West African Economic and Monetary Union where France gets a voting seat and Senegal (a West African country) gets an

advisory position thing do not seem very equal (Dembele, 2015 p. 75). In 2010 the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO) assigned their primary objective to being “price stability” which sounds nice but given any real thought is foolish at best (Dembele, 2015 p. 76). Dembele points out that “it is difficult to understand why the central bank of among the poorest developing countries prioritises [sic.] the fight against inflation at the expense of economic development through job creation and poverty eradication” (2015 p. 76). Especially when there are studies to prove that increased inflation can go hand in hand with development, job creation and poverty reduction (Dembele, 2015; Ndikumana & Heintz, 2010). Yet because France holds real control over monetary policy choice the BCEAO and its central African equivalent are focused on daily monetary adjustments to maintain a pegged exchange rate which really hinders a central bank’s ability to perform any other operations to bolster the economy. The French impose their will onto the Franc Zone and force those countries’ economies to play by France’s rules and it greatly hinders their economies.

## 4. Conclusion

Urban poverty is a growing issue in peripheral regions of the world. One main way it is being fueled is by poor governmental leadership and legislation. Many people already in and coming to urban centers do not know accurate costs of living, and end up relegated to living in slum-like conditions, with no option but to work outside the formal economy if they are able to find a way to work at all. A few solutions proposed by the literature are: redo legal frameworks from the ground up; more research into critiquing neoliberalism to find new, and culturally appropriate ways, of helping urbanization; legitimize the informal economy or disband it by fulfilling the needs it meets through the formal economy; and let go of the core's version of modernity in emerging countries and instead create their own new version of what a modern civilization can look like. All of these do come with the disclaimer though that the specific solutions themselves would likely be situational do to the extreme diversity among emerging countries and the specific challenges they face. But all of this must come with the understanding that work done for the peripheral regions of the world must actually be done for them. It cannot have Western perspectives, goals, ideologies, or cultural structures imposed with the work done for them. Neglecting that is a huge part of why my research project failed in Senegal. My Western bias/perspective was brought into the initial question and methodology without conscious consideration. Due to much of the West using schooling to attain jobs in the labor market lead right to the flaws in my question because not everywhere uses schooling for that purpose. The whole project and structure of my research was designed in Midwest America and then meant to be imported and imposed onto Senegalese culture and it simply did not work. Unfortunately, I had only three weeks in Senegal and closer to two weeks once I realized my research was critically flawed. So, two weeks to start over with relatively no resources, the whole

university being on strike, and Ramadan which meant most people were not out in the day.

Things like neoliberalism and capitalism frame how the West sees the world but does not mean that different ways are wrong. Whatever solutions are created for issues of poverty must take into consideration cultural and social concepts of the location that they intend to be implemented into.



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