development studies association

What's wrong with Development Studies and how can we change it?

Introduction

British Behuria and Tom Goodfellow

In January 2023, we, as convenors of the DSA's Politics and Political Economy Study Group, organised a conference in Manchester on the theme – *The Politics of Development Studies*. The conference was a response to the growing trend among development studies scholars and departments to seek new development paradigms or to chart new ways forward for the field, combined with recognition of the ethical and political challenges that arise from the growing amounts of research funded by development agencies.

Bob Jessop (2018) identified that academic capitalism – profit- or revenue-oriented, market-mediated competition among higher education institutions – has been on the rise since the marketisation of UK higher education since the 1990s. Universities increasingly prioritise revenues – both from student tuition and from academic grants. This puts traditionally 'interdisciplinary' or 'multi-disciplinary' departments - like development studies – in a unique position to host and attract large grants. In the case of development studies, this was given a major boost in the UK by the channelling of a significant proportion of aid funding into research, including through the Global Challenges Research Fund. As a result, many development studies departments have become increasingly re-shaped into externally-facing grant-capturing bases but also are perceived to be increasingly attractive destinations for postgraduate (and even) undergraduate students.

At the same time, the credibility of 'development studies' as a field of academic study been under threat from a range of angles. Development's colonial origins – and development studies' longstanding association with (often problematic) policy paradigms – has rendered it a target of criticism from a range of academic disciplines, as well as from within. The links development studies have to colonialism are impossible to escape or ignore. Given its association with foreign aid and Western development interventions, including the Truman project, development studies has become an easy scapegoat. However, there were also alternative development framings (e.g., Bandung) from *within* former colonies, which not only saw development as emancipatory project but also acknowledged the inequalities and violence that is inevitably central to capitalist development.

As part of the conference, Ha-Joon Chang's keynote explored not only the many different histories of development thinking but also the many peculiar histories of development studies and development economics departments within the United Kingdom. Despite the consistent criticisms faced by development studies, there are increasing numbers of postgraduate (and even) undergraduate programmes being initiated across the UK. While many of us struggle with the troubling histories of development studies and the problematic issues that persist with development programming and its associated interventions, there is still something that motivates us to continue to either teach within this field or research and publish in its journals. Kate Meagher, during the conference, encouraged us to remember that development studies scholars and practitioners have long been aware of the troubling aspects of this field of study.

Partly as a consequence of critiques, development studies is currently alive with theoretical and ethical debates that give a vibrancy and reflexivity that is relatively lacking in some social science fields.

During the conference, we invited four scholars from different perspectives and positionalities (either working within development studies departments or researching and writing in its journals) to answer two questions from four distinct perspectives: What is wrong with development studies and how can we change it?

Rather than trying to present a coordinated universalistic position – like many popular attempts at reframing the future of development studies - our intention was to begin conversations from pluralist perspectives.

The need for South-centred theorisation in Development Studies

Ingrid Harvold Kvangraven, King's College, London

There has been some introspection in recent years in Development Studies, much more and for much longer than in Economics or in Development Economics. There has been work in the past decade showing that Development Studies is racist – ranging from work showing how the process of Development itself is fundamentally racist to work investigating how to make development interventions, teaching, and research less racist. There has been a lot of work showing that Development Studies has colonial roots. Most of that work has been historical but there is also important work showing how imperialism is a contemporary feature of Development. There has also been a lot of work documenting how the profession itself lack diversity: it is dominated by white people based in the global North. It is good that there is this introspection in Development Studies, which is to a great extent lacking in Development Economics. But in my intervention here, I want to focus on a broader problem, which may also be one of the fundamental causes of these issues that have more recently received increased attention such as the lack of diversity, racism, and colonialism.

The issue I want to focus on is the exclusion of South-centered theoretical traditions in Development Studies: That it is theoretical or epistemological traditions that theorise from the vantage point of the global South. This is not about diversity or even about geography, but about theory. Theorisation from the vantage point of marginalisation is generally important, given that such theorisation is more likely to uncover the power structures that produce that marginalisation in the first place (as Sandra Harding noted decades ago, and as feminist economists have long pointed out), but the exclusion of theory from the South poses particular problems for Development Studies.

Eurocentrism, heterodox economics, and Development Studies

Within Development Studies there has been a widespread tendency to reduce problems of Development to technical questions, which is a Eurocentric way of approaching Development given that it papers over issues such as uneven development, imperialism, and other forms of oppression that underpin capitalist development. Rather, it assumes that capitalist development is a peaceful and technical process of rationalisation and technical improvements. This stands in contrast to historical and contemporary realities that become particularly evident when theorising from the South.

Heterodox economic theories challenge technical and Eurocentric approaches to development by focusing more on power inequalities, uneven capitalist development, and historical processes. There has been a severe marginalisation of heterodox economics in the Economics field, while Development Studies has remained a bit more open. However, South-centred work is also marginalised within heterodox economics – so it's not enough to only think of this problem in terms of exclusions of heterodox work in Development Studies.

This exclusion is exacerbated by reward systems and systems of research evaluation in the global North. For example, the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in the UK discriminates against South-based or non-English language journals – that are likely to ranked at the lowest level if at all listed on major rankings. There are therefore less incentives for scholars to publish in those journals if they want to survive in academia. Development Studies associations also tend to be fairly global North-centric, with the biggest conferences organised in the North and with few panels on South-centered scholarship

When scholars in the global South are included in Development Studies spaces, it tends to be on the premise of scholars in the North and within Eurocentric frameworks. The most extreme example being the Randomista Enterprise – they use a Eurocentric framework based on neoclassical theorisation (based on rationality, universality, and alleged neutrality) – and seek to set up centers all over the world doing randomised control trials (RCTs). This also illustrates how scholars in the South are often incentivised to emulate scholarship in the North given how universities are structured in a hierarchical way with Global North institutions generally higher in the global academic hierarchy. This is what the philosopher Paulin Hountondji calls 'extraversion': a situation, scholars from the global South travel to the North for training in Northern intellectual frameworks, to then get published in Northern journals. In this situation the only legitimate theorising is assumed to be done in the metropole, while the global South plays the role of a site primarily for data collection.

What could change look like? Taking theorising from the South seriously

I want to use dependency theory as an example. I have previously called for a renewal of development studies by bringing the key components of dependency theory as a research program. Ha-Joon Chang said earlier at this workshop that he agrees with the questions of dependency theory but not its answers. However, I would say it is not possible to pin down *one* answer from dependency theory because dependency theory is not one thing – it's a tradition of rich debates. Indeed, one of the problems for the traditions is that it is often dismissed based on a stereotypical and ungenerous reading of the scholarship which equates a rich, mostly South-based tradition with the scholarship of Andre Gunder Frank – the most famous dependency scholar from the global North. Based on my PhD research, I argue that dependency theory is best thought of as a research program, rather than a singular theory, with the following key commonalities:

1. A historical approach that is anti-disciplinary. This stands in contrast to the multi-disciplinarity that is often practiced in Development Studies.
2. Theorisation from the vantage point of the Global South. This was a challenge to Modernisation theory, but also Eurocentric Marxism at the time.
3. Theorisation about the unevenness of development or polarising tendencies of capitalism. That development is a fundamentally uneven process –within and between countries – needs more attention in Development Studies.

4. A focus on structures of production and the social relations that underpin them. While this is important for understanding inequalities and its drivers today, such a focus has been relatively neglected in Development Studies in recent decades.

Not everyone should become a dependency theorist but bringing back some of the key pillars of this tradition would be extremely important if we want a more relevant and radical Development Studies. The insights this tradition brings to light also demonstrates the difference theorising from the South makes – in contrast to Eurocentric theorisation.

Where we are today: pockets of hope and resistance

Somehow there is some shifting going on. There have been some moves in recent years to uncover theoretical traditions and debates from the South (see for example the work of Max Ajl, Margarita Fajardo, Peter James Hudson, or Adom Getachew). Attempts at recovery that are going on do also try to unpack how theoretical developments happen in an interconnected way – as it's not easy to say that any tradition is fully *from* the North or South because of the global exchanges of ideas going on. What's more, after a long slump between 1985 and 2000, contemporary scholarship on dependency seems to be booming if one looks at the number of new publications mentioning "dependency theory" in titles or abstracts.

While the future may be rather bleak for heterodox scholarship within the field of Economics, Development Studies has pockets of hope. These pockets may be places where we can start to change things and give more attention to South-centered scholarship, while also continuing to challenge the structures that limit our discipline. For example, contemporary accepted standards for what counts as rigorous research need to be completely revamped.

Many of us may be able to survive as individual scholars within current structures, but to create more space for South-centered scholarship in Development Studies we need to also build collective movements and alternatives. This means we need to think about how to bring about change in all institutions we are a part of, including our associations, conferences, journals, centers, communities, and seminar series.

Finally, to change the field of Development Studies we also need to change the foundations of the higher education sector, as the neoliberal university is stifling both radical scholarship and the space we have for organising alternatives – as we hardly have time to talk to each other anymore. In that sense, the ongoing industrial action in the UK is also essential for changing development studies so that we can reach a point where we're not just scrambling to finishing marking or running to meetings and have no time to even think about how we could organise our universities differently. The 1970s was dependency theory's heyday, but it was also a moment when scholars were politically engaged. Many of the big dependency names were also heavily engaged in building social movements. Whereas now, scholars have become mostly divorced from social movements and from building political alternatives. Challenging this separation can also help to change Development Studies for the better.

As such, when we go on strike this spring it is not just about pay, pensions, and the Four Fights, it's also about the future of academia and radical academic scholarship – and its space in Development Studies.

Looking inside the 'black box' of Development Studies

Kamna Patel, UCL

This blog makes three points: firstly, it makes explicit where and how I'm situated in the question 'what's wrong with Development Studies and how can we change it?'; secondly, it offers a term that can help us to grapple with this question; and then thirdly, it zooms in (or out, depending on where and how you are positioned) to see 'Development Studies' in some political and economic logics that are in evident circulation in UK universities.

I'd like to start my contribution with a reflection on positioning. I am someone who is affiliated with and holds 'global north power and privilege' (a term I borrow from GADN – the Gender and Development Network). I work for a UK university on an open-ended contract in a development studies department that has a long history of training professionals for careers in the otherworldly 'tropics'. Our longevity, and that of other 70+ year old development studies departments, speaks to a resilience and will to survive, as much as reading or maybe even writing of new mood music. My position has undoubtedly shaped my deep encounters with development studies and the personal frustrations I have in the execution of my job (by frustration I do not refer to an emotional state, but in the sense of being frustrated by process, politics and market logics, themes I'll return to).

Alongside this, for the past 18 months I've been working with a UK INGO to support an agenda of anti-racism in the whole of their work. A role I took on to really understand what repairing the sector – repair in the fullest sense of reparations – might look like, and one where I'm learning about the role of development INGOs in movements of global civil society. As part of this role, I have re-engaged with former students (my own and others) deep in the world of development and humanitarian practice and have seen Development Studies reflected back to me.

This means I grapple with the undercurrent of - echoing the words of Oliva Rutazibwa - 'what does it mean to talk about and practice 'development' from the north?'

So, to the question at hand and the second point I'd like to make: this question - *What's wrong with Development Studies and how can we change it?* - captures the circular logic of naming problems and solving them that runs throughout 'development' as a practice and the studies such practices have informed. Perhaps those who posed the question poured over the word 'how' and whether it should be 'can', settling – for whatever reason, on an idea that Development Studies can solve what's wrong with it, should try and solve it, and not that it's very existence it what is wrong with it.

'Development Studies' is a black box (that's the term I want to offer). This black box is something like how Henri Lefebvre describes 'urbanisation'. He says of urbanisation, "We know what enters the box, and sometimes we see what comes out, but we don't know what goes on inside." (p.17) It's a term used to designate a 'blind field' or a void. With Development Studies, we seem to throw all sorts into the box and fall back on 'multi-disciplinarity', 'trans-disciplinarity' and/or 'global' as terms to describe its content, or perhaps more actually describe what enters the box, perhaps we point to graduate outcomes, research grants, papers and books to describe some of what comes out, but not what actually goes on inside the box.

To thinking about the black box of development studies, I want to add something else, something that does not describe what enters the box, or what comes out, but what the existence of the black box enables (which speaks to what goes on inside), and that is projection. Because it is a black box, we can project whatever we want into it and there are no disciplinary rules to tell us we are wrong – be it the 'Truman project' or 'Bandung project of southern solidarity'; neoliberal visions for kinder economic growth or Marxist and decolonial calls for anti-capitalist economic logic; or a necessity for a career in the sector as a practitioner, or useful to learn technical skills for improvement at 'home' (wherever that is), or an avenue to explore being a global citizen. Into the black box we can project our hopes, aspirations and critiques, whatever they may be.

This is not to say that 'development studies' has no defining features. In his 2007 paper 'The impossibility of development studies', Stuart Corbridge tells us Development Studies is conjoined in a double commitment: one to the principle of difference (for 'us' to exist as a legitimate field of study and inquiry, requires the construction of 'them', a geographically, culturally, economically and materially different space and body); and the principle of similarity (and the use of policy instruments including education, to make 'them' like 'us'). Corbridge does not position this state as either an entirely positive or negative thing. But uses it to flesh out the contours of development studies. He posits: "Development studies does not just look in on the worlds it seeks to describe; it helps to produce them."

This is what makes the idea of projection into the black box an intriguing and possibly dangerous prospect (depending on your point of view): the orientation to practice - without demands for deconstructing our projections (or imaginations of development) and unpacking our positions.

My third point zooms in and tries to shine a light on the black box from a very particular positioning – from my position – to see something of what goes on inside. Here, I'm drawing from a paper I wrote recently on 'Being cosmopolitan: Marketing development studies in the neoliberal university'.

Through the rubric of branding, I am going to focus on an aspect of the relationships between Britain, the discourse of 'Development' and the neoliberal university' – and what sits at the centre of these relationships - UK development studies departments and their offers of Development Studies.

I offer three brief scaler insights:

The first, concerns the idea of **'Nation-Branding Britain'**.

In a competitive and lucrative global higher education marketplace, UK universities – underwritten by the UK government - drive to package UK higher education as a desirable product and the 'British brand' as one associated with globally recognised quality. Critics have long argued this type of nation-branding performed by UK universities generates and plays on a discourse of the relative superiority of Western education and knowledge.

At this scale of nation-branding, international development is pivotal in branding post-colonial Britain. This is evident at two moments: the creation and the dismantling of the UK Department for International Development (DFID). Marcus Power discussed how in the 1990s under Tony Blair's Labour government, a 'new' Britain was purposefully reimagined and remade, in which the idea of DFID encapsulated a global moral authority of a post-colonial

Britain, a Britain "reborn free of an imperial past". Following the announcement of DFID's merger with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 2020, there was lamentation for a globally respected and morally upstanding British export. The former Secretary of State for International Development, Andrew Mitchell, remarked in an ahistorical and decontextualised statement, "Just as America was a military superpower, Britain was a development superpower with its tentacles and work spreading all around the world".

Drawing these nation-branding discourses together, marks the UK as a uniquely desirable destination for the study of development. This context is relevant in light of international student choice literature which finds a hierarchy of prospective student decision-making that runs from selecting a desirable country, then a 'prestigious' institution, and finally an interesting degree course.

The second insight concerns **branding the neoliberal university**.

The university brand is a unique competitive identity that captures the values a university wishes to project externally, for example 'excellence' or 'being global'. In a competitive marketplace, a successful brand identity defines a university's offer in relation to other institutions – for prospective staff, students and funders. The extent to which a brand identity is aspirational or reflects actual performance is subject to debate. Most usefully, we can regard the university brand as ideological and a means to convey a particular purpose.

In the UK, this increasingly means demonstrating public worth in ways attuned to the ideologies of those in political power. Education is never for its own sake, but to do something. Which leads us virtuous corporate slogans such as 'Meeting the challenges of our world', or 'meeting *grand challenges*', that do not just speak to the merits of a particular university but are a response to a desire for the university to be seen as global, impactful and a public good that serves us all. Universities that have their own international development department engaged with the practice of 'development' are a useful demonstration of its corporate virtue.

The third insight concerns **branding of development studies departments themselves** via the courses they offer.

This kind of branding it tied to a university brand: so if a university brands itself as 'excellent' then departments demonstrate how. This is typically done with reference to named staff as experts, to subject rankings, and the outcome of the latest Research Excellence Framework (REF) emblazed on a departmental webpage.

Additionally, course marketing serves to inform prospective students about course content. Here, clarity and accessibility of information on course assessment, content and structure are particularly important alongside *exciting* prospective students. It is within this objective to stir excitement and pique interest in a course, that imaginations of development in development studies courses are captured and textually and visually represented.

When I looked that this is greater detail, the imaginations of development are reminiscent of the type of representations employed by northern development NGOs, which have been heavily and justifiably criticised. Yet, of course resonate with development studies students and meets their expectations of development (projecting into the black box).

Of relevance to the branding of development studies courses are ideas of cause-related marketing and the construction of development as a consumable ethical product (I'm not suggesting that degrees are fungible with t-shirts, though there is something about

purchasing affiliation with a cause). The packaging of development studies courses is supposed to generate a type of global citizenship where 'global citizens' (domestic and hypermobile international students) are sold the capacity and self-belief to intervene to bring about change in societies, based loosely on an individual sense of responsibility for the Other.

So, *what's wrong with Development Studies and how can we change it?* Well, inside the black box (a term I hope can help us grapple with this question), in the UK, we can see the workings of the neoliberal university, discourses of 'development', and Britain and its standing in the world. UK development studies is beholden to these forces. The growth of development studies departments in UK universities and the expansion of offers to undergraduate study, needs to be situated within these logics.

Whatever change we may want to make to Development Studies, must surely entail a deliberate deconstruction of our projections (or imaginations) of development, and the unpacking our of positions; a far greater scrutiny of what happens inside the black box of development studies; and a serious reckoning with the legitimacy of *UK* development studies departments and the range of political causes they serve, intentionally or unintentionally, of the kind that UK INGOs are in the midst of.

Centring social reproduction in the study of development

Sara Stevano, SOAS University of London

I would like to start with a short premise, to clarify my viewpoint on the question we are addressing in this panel: *What's wrong with development studies and how can we change it?* I am trained in economics and, despite having had the opportunity to work across disciplines – particularly with anthropology, development studies and food/nutrition science – I have always practiced in the field of economics. So, from my perspective, I have often looked up at development studies as a space that can embrace interdisciplinary and context-specific approaches, thus more welcoming to critical thinking if compared with the rigid epistemological boundaries of economics. The recognition of such openness should not however neglect the existence of universalising and colonising frameworks in development studies too, as widely discussed at this conference.

Where economics and development studies have a similar problem – most notably in their mainstream versions, but not limited to them – is in the failure to incorporate social reproduction as a fundamental dimension of development. All the work and material practices needed to reproduce life and capitalist relations have never taken a centre stage in the foundational taxonomies of development studies, as shown, for instance, in Andy Sumner's most recent take on the nature of this area of enquiry.

Such absence from the building blocs of development studies is somewhat surprising given that there is a consolidated feminist scholarship that has been pivotal to analyse the role of women or, more broadly, gender relations in development processes. Some of the key debates, just to name a couple, have been for instance on whether economic development leads to more or less gender inequality; whether women's participation in the labour force leads to their empowerment or rather to super-exploitation. It is important to recognise the existence of debates within feminist perspectives on development; yet, the nuance and

complexity of feminist debates is often lost in wider approaches in development studies and, even more so, in policy making. The most limited and neoliberalism-aligned approach to gender and development – Women In Development – has been the most successful in influencing the practice of gender mainstreaming in development policy – leading to calls for a *radical re-appropriation of gender and feminist ideas*, to use the words of Kalpana Wilson in a paper that should be a must-read for all development studies scholars.

How scholarly ideas are translated into policy is an issue of broader concern but, to keep my focus on academic issues, feminist approaches to the study of development face a more specific problem. These approaches exist in an epistemic silo that is granted the legitimacy to exist (every development studies department has a gender expert and perhaps a gender-specific course too), at times they may make inroads into the wider epistemic community, but in fact they are never considered to be a foundational pillar in the study of development.

My call here is for the recognition of feminist approaches to development as foundational to development studies. The way to do so is to go beyond the necessity to document and analyse gender inequality and embrace a wider concern with social reproduction. Centring social reproduction in development processes entails a revolutionary shift in perspective because we need to stop and ask ourselves to consider and shed light on everything that underpins and surrounds the development process. So, if we take as an example the Lewis model of economic development, we need to ask ourselves: how is labour produced? In fact, how is abundant labour produced? Instead of assuming that a poorer context is characterised by abundant labour supply, we need to unpack this assumption and interrogate the conditions that may make it possible.

Such shift in perspective, through foregrounding social reproduction, is necessary for at least two main reasons. First, to capture how structural inequalities are reproduced. Second, to fully understand how capitalist production is organised, and its implications for development processes.

Understanding how structural inequalities are reproduced

Social reproduction offers a unifying lens to understand the articulations of oppression and exploitation on grounds of class, gender, race, ethnicity, migration status and so forth (see for example Bezanson and Luxton on social reproduction in Canada; Bhattacharya on Social Reproduction Theory; Mezzadri, Newman and Stevano on social reproduction and work across various contexts). By analysing the articulation of social reproduction and capitalist production, the allocation of people to different forms of work and their associated value becomes apparent, revealing the fundamental existence of social differentiation. This view reconnects the understanding of inequality with Marx's original formulation in the Grundrisse (p. 95):

'The structure of distribution is completely determined by the structure of production. Distribution is itself a product of production, not only in its object, in that only the results of production can be distributed, but also in its form, in that the specific kind of participation in production determines the specific forms of distribution, i.e., the pattern of participation in distribution.'

In this respect, however, a critical feminist extension of Marx has documented that the working class is differentiated and not homogeneous. As such, structural inequalities are reproduced through the expansion of surplus populations and through the adverse

integration or expulsion from wage labour and global circuits of production (see Bhattacharyya and Mezzadri on these topics).

Towards a full understanding of the organisation of capitalist production

In structuralist approaches to development studies, concerned with production, social reproduction is often considered as residual to capitalist production. However, in peripheral economies, where social reproduction imperatives are not mitigated by the state and social reproduction is largely family-centred, social reproduction comes before and shapes engagement with production – being it agricultural production, cash earning activities or (casual) wage labour. Mozambique, a country that represents the periphery of the periphery in the global economy, exemplifies these dynamics. For example, the workforce in the Mozambican agro-industry, such as cashew processing factories, is highly fluid because often workers are not only wage workers but have to combine wage work with other forms of occasional or seasonal work to make ends meet and, in the case of women, who dominate the workforce in these factories, they have to skip factory work to carry out domestic work at times (see these two articles that use a social reproduction lens to analyse work in the Mozambican agro-industry and in the cashew factories more specifically). Beyond specific sectors and embracing the complexity of Mozambican labour markets not connected to global production networks, it is evident that people with care responsibilities, such as women with young children, are excluded from certain types of work that entail mobility, such as trade; further, the most significant interruptions of paid work are often caused by the necessity to care for an ill relative in the context of very weak health care provision (see this article for a full account of these dynamics). In essence, the social reproduction imperatives are met in conditions of chronic and pervasive precarity of work and life, which produce negative effects on the capital, via low labour productivity and foreign capital volatility, as well as negative effects on labour, through the unmitigated reproduction of intersecting forms of marginalisation and oppression.

In conclusion, the message is clear, we need to bring social reproduction into development studies with the aim to reclaim a feminist political economy understanding of development, not only as an add-on or specialised knowledge, but as a fundamental component of the analysis of development.

Reimagining the politics of development/ studies

Indrajit Roy, University of York

What is wrong with development studies?

Short answer- the problem of Eurocentrism.

What can we do about it?

Short answer- Critically and creatively appropriate Global Development.

What is wrong with development studies?

Over the last two days, we've examined the many limitations of development studies. I'd like to submit that these limitations stem from one fundamental problem.

The problem of Eurocentrism, the notion that Europe, North America, the Global North and their whiteness structure the world. This problem is demonstrated through what has been called the White Saviour Complex which, as speakers have correctly noted, neglects colonial legacies. It is *also* demonstrated through what we might call a White Guilt Complex, which ignores the legacies of actors before and beyond colonialism. I cannot stress this enough: both the White Saviour Complex and the White Guilt Complex collude to consecrate Eurocentrism as a central trope in Development Studies and its academic successor International Development.

Eurocentrism leads us to ignore colonialism. And many speakers have presented us with excellent accounts of this tendency, so I am not going over this in the short time I have.

Eurocentrism also leads us to ignore the agency of countries- states as well as societies- in overcoming the legacies of colonialism. We fail to see, for example, the ways in which China has overcome the century of humiliation to emerge as a provider of global public goods. Good cases include transnational infrastructures such as the Belt and Road Initiative that criss-crosses not only Asia and Africa but reaches deep into the heart of Europe all the way to the Dutch port of Rotterdam. Chinese investments in Europe upend the conventional narrative in development studies that assumes the Global North to be the source of knowledge and investment and the Global South to be passive recipients. But a Eurocentric worldview prevents us from appreciating the import of China's rise (and we don't need to celebrate it to recognise that a profound transition is under way).

Eurocentrism also leads us to universalise Europe's problems as global problems. Neoliberalism has led to the restructuring of the state in Europe causing massive shocks to the European population. The devastation wrought by Reganism and Thatcherism are there for everyone to see. The 1980s and 1990s were dreadful decades for the west. But can we universalise this dread? Across the global South, we see a different set of developments. In India, members of communities historically stigmatised as "low castes" began to gain power for the first time in centuries. Brazil saw the adoption of one of the most progressive constitutions of the world. South Africans successfully dismantled the Apartheid regime. Over the next few decades, the state in these countries and in China instituted some of the world's most ambitious welfare programs. These they did not because of neoliberal globalisation but in response to the political demands of poor people in their own countries. Affirmative actions for historically oppressed people in India, Brazil and South Africa well have coincided with the economic liberalisation of these countries but were not caused by it. I worry that Eurocentric perspectives which offer sweeping narratives of a triumphant neoliberalism flattening everything in its wake lead us to ignore the significant interventions of states and societies in ensuring social welfare across the global South.

Finally, Eurocentrism leads us to assume that the Global South is fundamentally different from the Global North. A consequence of this assumed difference is that the South has nothing to teach the North. Kissinger is reported to have once said, "Nothing significant ever comes from the South", and he drew an arc from Tokyo to Washington via Moscow, Berlin and London to argue that nothing ever worthwhile could be learnt from the South. I don't think anyone in this room would agree with such nonsense. The Southernisation of the world is a reality we cannot ignore. To consider the global effects of climate change is no longer as alarmist as it might have a decade or two ago. Artificial intelligence challenges our lives, livelihoods, and identities in significant ways across the world. And, finally, meeting as we are in the shadow of the pandemic, need I say more about the unexpected ways in which bats, pangolins and viruses

have affected human life in both the South and the North. How are societies navigating such changes? How are they imagining their futures in the wake of such new challenges alongside old ones such as economic inequality, social discrimination and political populism? I appreciate the idea that development studies ought to focus on formerly colonised countries. But I am wary of framing an entire discipline as one whose reason for existence is to observe, study, research "people of colour", that quaint term used to describe the global majority. Eurocentrism segregates the Global South as a "a place to experiment" for the Global North, erecting a hierarchical binary between the two.

Linked to the problem of Eurocentrism is the second problem: the production of knowledge about development. Development studies has conventionally concerned itself with societies "out there". To be sure, not everyone who studies developing countries is a scholar of development studies. But every scholar of development studies focuses their studies on developing countries in the Global South. The colonial origins of development studies was discussed yesterday and a bit today. Gurminder Bhambra has taught us about the ways in which colonial modes of knowledge production distinguished between disciplines. Disciplines such as anthropology, development and area studies dealt with the colonies whereas disciplines such as economics, politics and sociology were concerned with the metropolises. These disciplinary distinctions and their colonial inflections have sadly continued, inhibiting meaningful connections between knowledges.

The modes of producing knowledge about development lead us to the third problem: the tendency to privilege rational humanism. This tendency is based on three assumptions: (i) that human beings across personalities, social characteristics, space and time behave rationally; (ii) that rationality implies a singular pursuit of maximising profit.; and (iii) that the rational human's conquest over nature is complete. Such assumptions sustain artificial distinctions between the cognitive and the affective, and neglects our ability to feel, remember and hope. As a result, we ignore such themes as respect, belonging and imagination.

Reimagining the politics of development/ studies

So- What might we do about these problems? How, in other words, might we reimagine development?

I suggest the solution lies in critically and creatively thinking about the politics of global development.

Politics, as Adrian Leftwich would have it, is as much about the "rules of the game" as well as the "games within the rules".

We must recognise the changing balance of world power, leading to an unprecedented transformation of the global order.

We must consider the agency of states and societies to overcome the legacies of colonialism as well as undermine the depredations of neoliberal capitalism.

We must respect the feelings of people as they navigate shared and disparate challenges.

A global framing of development helps us to appreciate the global ramifications of these local, national, and regional navigations. We might borrow from the emerging field of "global studies", which- as a multicentric field- views global concerns from diverse perspectives across the world rather than the powerful capitals of the richest countries. Such a multicentric

perspective does not replace Eurocentrism with Sinocentrism, Indocentrism, Afrocentrism and others. Rather, it is attentive to domestic and regional hierarchies and is careful not to replace global hierarchies with local ones.

The politics of global development studies needs to embrace connected knowledges that interrogate disciplinary silos within academia. These disciplinary silos are an enduring legacy of colonialism. Connected knowledges through interdisciplinarity across university departments and sectors beyond academia could contribute to dismantling the hierarchical binary between Global North and Global South. One tangible way to do this could be to "reverse the gaze" by encouraging collaborative research by scholars across the North-South divide to study both Northern and Southern contexts.

Embracing connected knowledges would mean that we research and teach topics that we've not conventionally included within the rubric of development studies. For example, while many of us research the so-called rising powers and other emerging markets in the Global South, we could do more to reflect on their roles and investments in Europe and elsewhere in the Global North. Likewise, several of us study the ways in which communities navigate informal and precarious employment in call centres and special economic zones in the Global South: a connected knowledges approach would entail examining the implications of the very same processes on working class communities in the Global North, some of whom live quite close to where we are sitting now. Finally, while colleagues in development studies have enriched our understandings of ethno-racial and religious discrimination in the Global South, there's no reason for us or our students from shying away from examining similar processes in the Global North.

The politics of global development needs to connect scholars of development studies to their immediate surroundings- from "out there" to "in here". This cannot be emphasised in the context not only of industrial action in the universities but the social, economic, and political lives of the communities that we inhabit.

It needs to value the lived experience of people "from" societies that have struggled with development. By value, I mean not only learning from them but actively partner with, co-produce scholarship, and recruit as colleagues 😊

Above all, the politics of global development studies needs to be a project of hope. Hope arises out of attentiveness to the realities of this world, its injustices and inequalities, and from a conviction that something can be done about it. Living in hope therefore accepts the reality of grief, loss and uncertainty in the present moment. It recognises that the past is gone, and the assumptions that once shaped our world no longer hold.

Based on this realistic, wordly, analysis, hope also demands that we carefully and sensitively craft novel alliances that could open up new possibilities. Being attentive to the difficulties of the present moment, hope appreciates the possibility that something unanticipated could arise from its debris. Hope therefore is a political position that refuses to accept that defeat is inevitable. It avoids "fixating on collapse" and calls instead for a granular appreciation of the ways in which people navigate and negotiate crises.

As Murrawah Johnson, climate justice activist of the Wangan and Jagalingiou country in Australia put it recently: "We've seen the end of the world... and we've decided not to accept it".