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The connected politics of global development

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Abstract

Recent years have seen the emergence of 'global development' as a paradigm to analyse the changing world in which we live. The growing traction enjoyed by this paradigm has generated a vibrant, if somewhat polarised, debate. Critics worry that the emphasis on the connections between the Global North and Global South might obfuscate the hierarchies that established the dominance of the former and the subordination of the latter. They fear, correctly, that such obfuscation in turn leads to a neglect of the enduring inequalities between the North and South, which reflect continuities rather than change with colonialism. In defence, proponents of global development dwell, accurately, on the profound changes that have reshaped both South and North but shy away from recognising the agency of actors in the Global South. This paper introduces a connected politics perspective to strengthen the global development paradigm. It elaborates five components of the connected politics approach: 1) interrogating the disciplinary hierarchy that relegates the study of development to particularistic peripheries of the social sciences; 2) recovering the (particularistic) perspectives from the Global South that have in fact shaped (universalistic) ideas of development; 3) rejecting Eurocentric assumptions underpinning development, including the associated tropes of white saviourism and white guilt; 4) recognising the agency of actors in the Global South; and 5) thinking creatively about comparative research that helps recognise the diversity within and across the Global South and North. By blending insights from the emerging fields of global international relations and global studies, the connected politics approach analysed in this article can help global development fulfil its ambition of situating the profound transformations of the world in which we live in their proper historical and comparative perspective.

1 Introduction: the problem

Recent years have seen the emergence of 'global development' as a paradigm to analyse the changing the world in which we live (Gore, 2015; Scholte & Söderbaum, 2017; Horner & Hulme, 2019). The rise of formerly colonised countries such as China, India, Brazil and others in the Global South as major powers in world politics; the growing salience of common challenges such as inequality within countries, climate change, and a global pandemic; and interconnections fostered by the circulation of people, technology and capital have profoundly transformed the planet. Against the paradigm of 'international development', which emphasised the unidirectional flow of aid and advice from the Global North to the Global South, global development documents the convergence between the two geographies. By blurring the boundaries between them, global development calls for blurring the boundary between North and South.

The growing traction enjoyed by global development has generated a vibrant, if somewhat polarised, debate. Critics worry that the emphasis on the connections between the Global North and Global South might obfuscate the hierarchies that established the dominance of the former and the subordination of the latter (Behuria, 2021; Wiegratz et al, 2023). They fear, correctly, that such obfuscation in turn leads to a neglect of the enduring inequalities between the North and the South, which reflect continuities rather than change with colonialism. In its defence, proponents of global development dwell, accurately, on the profound changes that have reshaped both South and North (Horner & Hulme, 2021; Sumner, 2022). Nevertheless, they could leverage their empirical insights further to situate global development in its historical and comparative perspective and help shine a light on the changing relations between North and South, thereby recognising and respecting the agency of actors in the Global South.

To that end, this article introduces and develops a 'connected politics' perspective. This perspective draws on Bhambra's (2014) call for an appreciation of 'connected knowledges', which reveals to observers the relations between different ways of knowing and understanding the world. It resonates with recent efforts not only to challenge Eurocentric understandings of the world but to recognise and respect the agency of the Global South. Part I explores the lineage of global development and the debate spawned by it. Part II elaborates the connected politics framework and its contribution to global development. The connected politics framework bolsters global development by interrogating disciplinary hierarchies, recovering Southern contributions to development thought, rejecting Eurocentric framings,

recognising the agency of actors in the Global South and thinking creatively about comparative research. Part III reflects on the productive resonances of thinking about the politics of global development with the emerging field of 'global studies'.

Part I begins by charting the disciplinary evolution of global development from development studies via international development. It then examines the polarising debates spawned by the emergence of global development that map onto the false binary between universalism and particularism. This binary is sustained, as Part II shows, by a disciplinary hierarchy that relegates the study of development to particularistic peripheries of the social sciences. The discussion exposes the falseness of this binary by noting the ways in which (particularistic) perspectives from the Global South have in fact shaped (universalistic) ideas of development. Thereafter, the paper explores the dilemmas of Eurocentrism and its associated tropes of white saviourism and white guilt, which perpetuate not only disciplinary hierarchies but also hierarchies between the Global South and Global North. The paper then spotlights the ways in which the agency exercised by actors in the Global South undermines these hierarchies. A recognition of the agency of actors in the Global South alerts us to differences within them, leading to an investigation, in the following section, on the ways in which scholars may creatively and constructively compare units without lapsing into Eurocentric framings. Part III draws on insights from the emerging field of global studies to enrich thinking about the politics of global development.

I

2 From development studies to global development via international development

The discipline of development studies was born amid the geostrategic competition between superpowers, ideological rivalry between capitalism and communism, and the decolonisation of countries across Asia and Africa (Potter, 2024). The end of the Second World War was followed by the establishment of multilateral institutions designed to keep the peace in Europe and worldwide. This was accompanied by an ideological divide between the capitalist Western bloc and the socialist Eastern bloc. As the leaders of the newly independent countries identified strategies to develop their economies, they sought aid and assistance from both sides of the ideological divide. In the context of the ideological competition fomented by the Cold War, states and bilateral agencies from both blocs, as well as

the incipient multilateral institutions, actively sought to promote development in the former colonies. Indeed, the US-led 'First World' and the USSR-led 'Second World' often sought to outdo one another in promoting the decolonisation of and development in the 'Third World': US President Harry Truman's promise of aid was matched by Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's commitments. In turn, Third World leaders worked together at such forums as the Bandung Conference of 1955, the Non-Aligned Movement and the New International Economic Order to exchange ideas, practices and assistance on developing their economies. Development studies focused the attention of students on debates on the ways in which states could accelerate processes of economic, social and political change within countries against the backdrop of such geostrategic competition and ideological rivalry.

The debates which characterised development studies reached an impasse as the USSR imploded in 1990 (Schuurman, 2014). Triumphalist accounts of allegedly free markets blended with celebratory accounts of an increasingly globalised world to morph the overarching discourse of the discipline towards international development. An ideological bias in favour of free markets relegated discussions of the role of the state to the margins of the discipline, as the role of businesses and corporations, civil society and philanthropic foundations, and multilateral institutions attracted greater scholarly attention. The stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes adopted by many countries in the Global South widened inequalities and directed attention to old and new forms of poverty. Such attention offered the opportunity for policy experiments designed in the Global North to be implemented on poor people in the Global South. International development thus emphasised debates over which ideas, policies and resources from the Global North could alleviate poor people's suffering in the Global South in the context of free market triumphalism and the celebration of globalisation.

The triumphalism around free markets proved short-lived (Rodrik, 2006). As the global financial crisis battered Western economies – but fast-growing economies of the Global South emerged relatively unscathed – the overarching discourse of the discipline shifted from international development to global development. Attention now moved towards those economies of the Global South that had not only weathered the crisis but emerged relatively unscathed. The formation of BRICS, the acronym for the grouping of countries comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, in 2010 signalled, for the first time in over two centuries, the role of actors in the Global South as protagonists who could save the global economy

from catastrophe. The spotlight on these actors necessarily highlighted, once more, the relative importance of states in provisioning infrastructure, welfare and other development outcomes. Moreover, development challenges were no longer limited to the Global South, including as they do such themes as inequality, climate change and – more recently – the Covid-19 pandemic. Like development studies, global development emphasises the role of states. Unlike development studies, however, it does so in the context of the global circulation of capital, people and technology. Debates in global development emphasise the ideas, institutions and practices innovated in the Global South to address such development challenges that plague not only societies in the Global South but also those in the Global North.

An important caveat is in order here. Although the distinctions between development studies, international development, and global development outlined above map onto specific historical and temporal contexts, they are conceptual rather than strictly chronological. It is not that the themes debated during the Cold War under the rubric of 'development studies' are no longer discussed in the scholarship, nor that the issues that animated international development in the context of free-market triumphalism and the celebration of globalisation are not relevant anymore. Rather than ignoring these themes altogether, global development urges students to reflect on the growing similarities between North and South, the common challenges they both face, and the ways in which the South can overcome the hierarchies of knowledge and power that had subordinated it to the North.

3 Debating global development

The hierarchies of power within which ideas and practices of development are embedded have long been recognised (Kothari, 2005; Kapoor, 2008; Esteves & Assunção, 2014). The Global South is depicted as a passive sinkhole of the world's problems. The Global North is projected as the active provider of solutions through which it can save the hapless populations of the Global South. Implicit within development studies, the hierarchy that established the North as benevolent provider and the South as (not always) grateful recipient was made explicit by international development. The erosion of that hierarchy makes global development not only a possibility but a reality (Mawdsley, 2017). Global development seeks to "move beyond the focus on developing countries to

consider development in all countries" (Sumner, 2022), rendering invalid the defining dichotomy in development studies and international development of 'developed' vs 'developing' countries.

Global development signals "a significant *redefinition* of the Development project" (Alami et al, 2021, p 2, emphasis in the original), which embraces the state as a promoter, supervisor and owner of capital, even as neoliberalism as a project of class restoration and shaping entrepreneurial subjectivities continues apace. This transforming role of the state is not limited to the domestic political economies of countries in the Global South. It is, crucially, also shaping development practice worldwide, as multilateral development banks and even Global North governments scramble to formulate national policies for infrastructure and industries. The worldwide emergence of sovereign wealth funds, national development and policy banks, and state enterprises, in addition to economic nationalism, bears testimony to this transforming role of the state. Furthermore, the role of states in facilitating the global circulation of finance and capital, triggered by China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the growing role of state capitalism, spurred by the 'rise of the South' and under conditions of worldwide integration, suggest a fundamental reorientation of development beyond the North–South divide.

The paradigm of global development has been hotly debated. Proponents argue that the shifting geographies of development have rendered redundant the premise of earlier approaches that perceived the Global South as a recipient of aid and the Global North as its benevolent provider (Horner, 2020; Roy, 2022). They substantiate their argument by noting enhanced incomes and wealth, as well as processes of class formation leading to a growing middle class, across the Global South; increasing inequality across the world, including in the Global North; and changing patterns of development cooperation in which the Global South does not merely receive aid but also provides it. Societies across the Global South and North increasingly face common challenges, such as climate change, poverty and inequality, and public health crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic, which refuse to respect national boundaries. Critics of global development counter by arguing that the shifting geographies of development have been exaggerated, based largely on the success of a narrow selection of countries in achieving economic growth, often at great human cost to their citizenry (Fischer, 2019). They agree that all countries face the common challenges outlined by proponents of global development, but that these affect South and North differently (Sud & Sanchez-Ancochea, 2022).

They worry that global development privileges the global at the expense of the regional, national and local levels, encouraging a universalist approach to addressing common challenges that are differently experienced.

The debate between the universalist approach associated with global development and the particularistic approach that underpinned other paradigms in the study of development has become especially heated since Covid. Influential papers written in its wake proclaimed existing conceptualisations that framed development studies and international development to be anachronistic and not fit for purpose (Oldekop et al, 2020; Leach et al, 2021). They called for a universalistic vision to build development studies back better. Challenging this universalistic premise, critics noted the continued power hierarchies that perpetuate the domination of the Global North and the subordination of the Global South (Wiegratz et al, 2023), which is reflected in the "need for actors in the global South to react and adapt to actors, practices, and financial flows originating in the global North" (Kvangraven et al, 2021, p 121). Even though all countries are affected by global challenges, they are not all equally affected, as examples of vaccine apartheid at the height of the global pandemic demonstrated.

These debates recall the "universalism/particularism conundrum" (Beiner, 1995, p 12) in the social sciences. The conundrum refers to the alleged dichotomy between generalised and differentiated approaches to conceptualising social life. Universalism is accused by critics of flattening difference. Particularism is criticised for essentialising differences that are then used to justify discriminatory practices. In fact, however, the binary between universalism and particularism is rather artificial. As Iris Marion Young (1989) reminds us, particularism is often a means of achieving and consolidating universalism, while universalism is built on particularistic ideas and identities. Demands by oppressed social groups embrace particularistic vocabularies to be universally recognised and respected. Similarly, oppressed groups of nations, such as the erstwhile colonised countries, may well espouse particularistic narratives but they do so with the intention of shaping the universal framework of global order rather than distancing themselves from it. The putative divide between universalism and particularism is thus unsustainable.

The false binary between universalism and particularism stifles, rather than facilitates, the connections between knowledges essential to thinking critically about global development. Interrogating the disciplinary hierarchies that have relegated the study of so-called 'developing countries' to particularistic peripheries of the social sciences is an essential starting point for advocates of global

development, if they are serious about demonstrating the universal relevance of the contexts they study. Building on this first step, an explicit recognition of the Southern origins of the pioneers of development thinking will help proponents of global development to overcome the false binary between universalism and particularism. This will involve a rejection of Eurocentric perspectives that foreground European and North American experiences framed by the twin tendencies of white saviourism and white guilt. Appreciating the agency of the Global South in negotiating, resisting and appropriating the power of the Global North is imperative for analysing the dynamic process of global development. Neither the South nor the North are homogeneous blocs. Understanding differences within and between them requires us to undertake comparisons but to think about these in creative ways that eschew the stageist assumptions that tend to plague comparative studies of development. These five elements of a connected politics approach will strengthen understandings of global development and enable it to offer truly global accounts of the development process in its historical and comparative context.

II

4 Connected knowledges, connected politics

We owe much to the insights offered by postcolonial and decolonial thinkers that allow us to uncover the historical processes on which academic disciplines in the social sciences are based. These insights urge us to reflect on the centrality of colonialism in shaping the possibilities of knowing the world. On the one hand, considerations of poverty, inequality and underdevelopment are relegated to subjects such as development studies or cognate fields of international development, anthropology and geography. On the other hand, disciplines such as economics, sociology and political sciences appropriate for themselves the study of 'modern', 'advanced' and 'developed' societies. As Gurminder Bhambra (2014, p 145) poignantly puts it:

> The very creation of what we understand the global to be, the interconnections that span the world that enable it to be known empirically as the world, are created in the context of dispossession and appropriation. Dispossession and appropriation are also, then, fundamental to the establishment of how we know the world, and yet in being displaced from our knowledge of the world, disappear from most considerations of it. The

> establishment of disciplinary knowledge relegates land (dispossession and appropriation) to the realm of anthropology (and geography and development studies) and thereby separates historical injustices from any consideration of justice in 'modern' societies (economics, sociology and political science).

Overcoming such disciplinary silos is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the world in which we live. It requires an appreciation of knowledges connecting diverse disciplines. Such an endeavour involves undoing the hierarchies that associate certain disciplines with privileged geographies ('politics', 'international relations' (IR), 'sociology' and 'economics' about advanced, developed and modern societies in the Global North), while relegating others to the study of marginalised areas ('anthropology' and 'development studies' being about backward, underdeveloped and traditional societies in the Global South). As Du Bois (1935) and Fanon (1963) have already urged, one must build up alternative histories and establish connections across disciplines and areas that were previously presented as separate. In response to criticisms that global development is merely opportunistic in its appropriation of the decolonial turn in the social sciences (Behuria, 2020), its proponents must establish connections between the disciplines of IR, politics and development studies.

5 Interrogating disciplinary hierarchies

The silos referred to above are the product of hierarchies between disciplines. The concerns of democracy, capitalism and modernity that animate students of politics, economics, IR and sociology did not emerge in isolation from racism, poverty and inequality, and colonialism (Shilliam, 2021; Acharya, 2022). Rather, these exclusions were integral to the establishment of those disciplines (Gani & Marshall, 2022). Neglecting such prior connections ignores the conditions that enabled those disciplines to emerge in the first place and insulate themselves from the concerns of poverty, underdevelopment and global inequality, themselves relegated to the disciplines of anthropology, geography and development studies. Remembering, and interrogating, these hierarchies is a crucial first step to establishing equitable connections between disciplines.

Such a hierarchical sequestering of disciplines and associated geographies neglects the connections that have, in fact, shaped knowledge over centuries. For example, assumptions that democracy, modernity and capitalism are uniquely 'Western' in their provenance permeate knowledge produced across the social sciences. In fact, however, as historians of 'early modernity' illustrate, ideas of capitalism, democracy and liberalism – quintessentially associated with Western modernity – emerged as a product of connections across diverse geographies (Quinn, 2024). By undermining such connected histories, disciplinary hierarchies risk ignoring the role of African influences on the making of the Hellenistic civilisation upheld as the crucible of the modern West (Bernal, 1987; Orrells et al, 2011); of Asian and African pioneers in the emergence of capitalism (Hobson, 2020); and of the significance of Haitian rebels in innovating practices of liberalism (Truillot, 1995). By mainstreaming such assumptions, the knowledges produced in social science disciplines ignore the 'connected histories' (Subramanyam, 1997) through which the 'West' and the 'East' shaped one another. As the emerging field of global history reminds us, the world before European colonisation was not merely an aggregate of discrete entities, but one where connections thrived across vast geographic distances (Zarakol, 2022).

The implications of ignoring such connections are intellectually debilitating. On the one hand, disciplines such as politics, IR, sociology and economics produce Eurocentric knowledges with universalist pretensions. Parochial perspectives from Europe and its settler-colonies infuse these disciplines. Theories, concepts and analytic frameworks drawn from these perspectives are then presented as being universally applicable across the globe. On the other hand, disciplines such as development studies, anthropology, geography and area studies, which produce knowledges drawn from the experience of the majority world outside the West, are relegated to the periphery of the social sciences. The colonial and racist hierarchies of power, subjugation and inequality that underpin the knowledges produced by the self-styled universalistic disciplines are sustained. Their Eurocentric contention that modernity, democracy and capitalism are quintessentially Western ideas and ideals, not influenced by developments in other regions, are taken for granted. The regions and countries that constitute the Global South are analysed on their own terms as unique, distinct entities under the rubrics of various area studies, thereby ignoring the ways in which these regions shape one another as well as the Global North. The 'global' becomes synonymous with the West, while the regions where most of the world's population live is lumped together as 'the rest'.

Alternative perspectives that advance 'Southern theory' (Connell, 2007) and 'theory from the Global South' (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012) offer promising avenues in highlighting such connections but eventually fail to appreciate the truly *global* dynamic of the Global South. To be sure, these works have made a seminal contribution to our understanding of how knowledges produced in and by the Global South expand the theoretical repertoires with which we could make sense of the social world. Moreover, rather than claiming that the Global South is homogeneous, their authors urge their readers to appreciate the enormous heterogeneity and diversity within the Global South. Nevertheless, these works end up essentialising such categories as Global North and Global South as possessing cultures, values, norms and worldviews distinct from one another. While invaluable to appreciating the significance of theorising from the Global South, they continue to ignore the myriad connections that have shaped apparently disparate and discrete regions of the world. We are offered insightful vignettes about influential thinkers and conceptual models from the Global South. However, their very consequential influence on thinkers and models typically associated with the Global North continue to be ignored. Such ignorance continues to perpetuate the problematic notion that the Global South and Global North are disconnected. Interrogating such hierarchies and the disconnections they spawn is a crucial first step towards outlining a connected politics of global development.

6 Southern contributions to development thought

As a field of study focused on the circumstances under which the newly independent countries of the Global South could 'catch up' (Nayyar, 2010) with their erstwhile colonisers, development thinking tended to be deeply influenced by the works and experiences of people from and in the Global South. As scholars subject the 'white gaze of development' (Pailey, 2020) to justified scrutiny, it is essential to remember that many pioneers of the discipline were exemplary intellectuals of Southern backgrounds who, nevertheless, differed sharply from each other on what constituted development and how it could be achieved. If to remember is to resist, then the recovery of such memories of Global South contributions to development thinking are essential to resisting development's 'white gaze'.

An early exemplar was Sir Arthur Lewis (1915–91), born in the Caribbean country of Saint Lucia and among the pioneers of the discipline of development studies.

The ‘dual sector’ model he innovated added theoretical rigour to modernisation-oriented perspectives of development. His parents had migrated from Antigua at the turn of the century and young Arthur completed his schooling in Saint Lucia. His father died when he was seven and it was left to his mother to raise him and his six siblings all by herself. Lewis obtained a scholarship to read for his PhD at the London School of Economics and Political Science and became the first Black faculty in that institution in 1938. In 1947, as the British Empire began its end with India’s independence, Lewis took up a position in Manchester to become Britain’s first Black lecturer, eventually becoming the first Back professor in the country. It was here that he developed his dual-sector model; he then went on to advise newly independent African and Caribbean governments, including Nigeria, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Barbados and, most famously, Ghana, where – as its first Economic Advisor – he helped draw up its First Five Year Development Plan. Knighted in 1963, Sir Arthur went on to hold several academic positions in the Caribbean and the US over the next two decades. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1979 for his path-breaking research into the problems of developing countries.

Almost diametrically opposed to Sir Arthur’s modernisation perspective was the dependency theorist Raúl Prebisch (1901–86). Born to German settlers in Argentina’s San Miguel de Tucumán, Prebisch studied economics at the University of Buenos Aires. An advocate of free trade in his early years, the experience of the Great Depression in the 1930s compelled him to reformulate his views. As he progressed in his career, to eventually become President of the Central Bank of Argentina, he became more and more convinced that his country’s position was peripheral to the global economy on account of its reliance on exporting primary products such as beef. These ideas were further refined when he became the Executive Director of the United Nations’ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in 1950 and provided the foundations for dependency theory. Joining forces with German economist Hans Singer, Prebisch pointed to the imbalance in the terms of trade between the core and the periphery, which continued to enrich the core countries at the expense of those on the periphery. Prebisch’s ideas became enormously influential across the UN and found enthusiastic reception among many leaders of the Global South, as well as some from the Global North. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which he founded in 1964, was to offer a platform for Global Southern leaders from countries as disparate as Chile, Algeria and India to band together from time to time.

Fleshing out the economic analysis of dependency theory with insights from social theory was Samir Amin (1931–2018). Born in Cairo and growing up in Port Said, he left for Paris in 1947 to pursue further studies. In Paris, he joined the French Communist Party but was quickly disillusioned. He then commenced his doctoral studies at the Institut d'Études Politiques (Sciences Po) on 'the origins of underdevelopment'. Meanwhile, back home in Egypt, an army officer by the name of Gamal Abdel Nasser was leading his Free Officers in a revolution to overthrow the British-dominated monarchy in 1952. As Amin was completing his PhD, Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal in 1956 by transferring its ownership from the Suez Canal Company to his new government's Suez Canal Authority. The action sparked outrage among governments in Britain and France, leading to their joint invasion – alongside Israel – of Egypt in a bid to overturn the nationalisation and restore private ownership. Eventually, the invasion collapsed thanks to a lack of support, and both Britain and France suffered a blow to their international prestige. Amin returned to Cairo in 1957 as a research officer to join the Institute of Economic Management established by Nasser to modernise the Egyptian economy. Three years later, he shifted base to Mali's capital, Bamako, where he worked as Advisor to the Ministry of Planning. In 1963, he was offered a fellowship by the UN at its African Institute for Economic Development and Planning in Dakar, Senegal. Since then, until his death over six decades later, Amin split his time between Dakar and Paris, embodying the connections between South and North through his journeys.

A major challenge to the premise of dependency theory was mounted by the work of Deepak Lal (1940–2020). Indeed, Lal disrupted development economics in general by defending empire, criticising the state, and taking seriously the role of culture and tradition. Born in Lahore, the cosmopolitan capital of British India's multi-religious Punjab province, he was seven when it was ripped apart by communal violence. The British departure was accompanied by a brutal partition along sectarian lines between Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan; the ensuing violence killed a million people and displaced at least ten million, sparking one of the largest mass migrations in history. Lal was schooled in Dehradun and Delhi before heading to Oxford to read economics in 1959. He taught in universities across England before heading to the US in 1993. He was president of the Cato Institute from 1999 and served the Mont Perlin Society, one of the world's most influential think-tanks embracing and disseminating free-market values. Lal was a colossus in the field of neoliberal thinking, frequently interspersing his economic writing with examples from the ways in which history and culture shape development drawn from across the globe.

Breaking with the very idea of development as a normative goal was Arturo Escobar. Born in 1951 – four years after Sir Arthur had taken up his position in Manchester, a year after Prebisch had joined ECLAC and a year before Amin had commenced his PhD – Escobar represented a generational change in thinking about development. He was born and raised in Manizales, Colombia and received a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering at the University of Valle in Santiago de Cali before proceeding to the US, where he earned a degree in food science and international nutrition. He returned to Colombia for a brief stint at the Department of National Planning in the capital Bogota before going back to the US for an interdisciplinary PhD at the University of California, Berkeley in Development Philosophy, Policy and Planning. He received his PhD in 1987. Since then, Escobar has taught mostly in US universities, with short stints in Spain, Britain, Finland and, of course, his home country, Colombia. A pioneer of post-developmental thinking, much of Escobar's work draws on discourse analysis of official American pronouncements on development and on ethnographic fieldwork with Afro-Colombian activists in Colombia's Pacific rainforest region.

Where Escobar dispensed with the idea of development altogether, Amartya Sen sought to salvage it by linking it explicitly with notions of human capabilities, choices and freedoms. Born in 1931 to a privileged family in India's Bengal province, Sen's childhood was nevertheless far from sheltered. At the age of 12, he was witness to a terrifying famine that killed at least three million people during the Second World War. He completed his university education in Calcutta (now Kolkata) in 1953, survived oral cancer and earned a second BA at Cambridge, UK two years later. He spent the next few years between a university position in Calcutta and his doctoral studies in Cambridge, before taking up a position at the Delhi School of Economics (DSE) where he taught from 1963 to 1971. It was at DSE that the foundation of his career as a social choice economist was laid, paving the way for subsequent appointments in England and the US. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1998, followed in 1999 by the award of India's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna, and an honorary citizenship of Bangladesh.

These short biographical sketches of select intellectuals who have so profoundly shaped prevailing understandings of development illustrate the connected knowledges that have been key to the foundation of thinking about development. Each of these men (yes, they are all men, illustrating the skewed gender dynamics the discipline shares with others) was born in the Global South and spent his formative years there. Each of them went on to flourishing careers in the Global

North but retained connections with and in the Global South, physically circulating between the two spaces. An understanding of the connected knowledges that have shaped the individuals who influenced global thinking on development helps us to interrogate the false binary between universalism and particularism.

7 Rejecting Eurocentrism

An ignorance of such connections also results in the entrenchment of Eurocentrism (Brohman, 1995), the perspective that places Europe at the centre of all knowledge and meaning. European whiteness is privileged as the normative standard of civilisation and the continent is regarded as the site of all history, politics and economic dynamism (Amin, 2009). In that regard, the major theoretical approaches that have shaped the scholarship on development tend towards offering Eurocentric narratives of change. Most modernisation and neoliberal theories of development, as well as some strands of Marxism, are explicitly shaped by the experience of Europe (and its settler colonies) and expect the parochial experience of that continent to be generalisable across the world. The same problem plagues critical accounts offered by dependency theorists, post-development scholars, and postcolonial thinkers, who take European colonialism and/or postwar American pronouncements as the starting point of their analysis. The consequent consecration of Eurocentrism consolidates two mutually opposing tendencies which together hinder our understanding of the dynamic connections between the South and North: the White saviour complex and the white guilt complex. Both are problematic.

The white saviour complex refers to a "power structure founded on the benevolence of whiteness, which elevates people of white European descent as more capable, more intelligent, thus more developed, which directs their actions in communities of the global South" (Dickson et al, 2023: 4). It imposes the perceptions of donors, international NGO managers and consultants while silencing the voices of the communities with whom aid workers claim to work. As Teju Cole (2012) puts it, "the white saviour supports brutal policies in the morning, founds charities in the afternoon, and receives awards in the evening". White saviourism centres white people as active agents without whose actions poor people in the Global South would simply cease to exist. By foregrounding the emotional need of white people to protect those perceived to be weaker than themselves, the white saviour complex bolsters Eurocentrism.

The white guilt complex "emerges from the feelings that arise when trying to come to grips with the weight and repercussions of historic events, and the crippling feeling that one has no idea of what to do to make it all better" (Flynn, 2018, p 62). Such feeling often degenerates into self-indulgent fixations which, like white saviourism, centre white people's emotional need to feel sorry about the catastrophe unleashed by previous generations (Katz, 1978). By obsessing with the disruption caused by European colonialism, the white guilt complex also neglects the history and agency of the Global South beyond the colonial experience. By holding white people responsible for every problem facing the world, the complex exaggerates European agency, thereby strengthening, rather than weakening, Eurocentrism.

Eurocentrism not only neglects the legacies of colonialism. It also ignores the ways in which states and societies in the Global South are overcoming colonial legacies and shaping the contemporary world. Eurocentric perspectives fail to analyse the ways in which China has overcome its century of humiliation to emerge as a provider of global public goods such as the BRI 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 (Henderson & de Graaf, 2021). Chinese investments in Europe upend the conventional narrative in development studies, which assumes the Global North to be the source of knowledge and investment and the Global South to be a passive recipient (Roy et al, 2024). 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) or the ways in which other formerly colonised or semi-colonised countries, such as India, Brazil, Turkey, South Africa and Indonesia, are overcoming the legacies of colonialism and reshaping the contemporary world.

Eurocentrism leads us to analyse developments in the Global South based on developments in the Global North. For example, neoliberal reforms led to the restructuring of the state in Europe, causing massive shocks to the European population. The devastation wrought by neoliberalism on the West is evident. But the neoliberal restructuring of the state in Europe and North America was not exactly replicated across the Global South – far from it. States in the Global South, eg China, India, Brazil, Turkey, Mexico and South Africa, instituted some of the world's most ambitious welfare programmes (Roy et al, 2018; Yörük & Gençer, 2022). This they did not because of neoliberal globalisation but in response to the political demands of poor people in their own countries (Roy, 2023). Affirmative actions for

historically oppressed people in India, Brazil and South Africa may well have coincided with the economic liberalisation of these countries but were not caused by it. 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 has barely anything to teach the Global North. The former US foreign secretary, Henry 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. Such a segregation of the Global South as a place for the Global North to experiment entrenches the hierarchical binary between the two. Doing this prevents the Global North from understanding the ways in which societies in the Global South can help *Northern societies* tackle emerging global challenges such as climate change (Khasru & Ambrizzi, 2023) and the coronavirus pandemic (Roy, 2020). The pandemic poignantly illustrated the commonalities in the coping strategies across communities in the South and North (Yardımcı et al, 2023). Indeed, scholars have now begun to excavate the Southern origins of development thinking (Thornton, 2023) as well as the institutions that went on to shape international development (Helleiner, 2014).

8 Recognising the plural agency of the Global South

Against the Eurocentrism of the prevailing approaches to development, and the white saviour/white guilt complex that permeates these approaches, a connected politics approach recognises the agency of states and societies beyond Europe, and the active role of non-white people in shaping the world. It entails paying careful attention to the different ways in which agency is exercised by actors generally considered weak and ineffective (Mohan & Lampert, 2013; Táíwò, 2022). Amitav Acharya (2018) notes the ways in which materially weaker powers can innovate ideas which are then universalised and adapted by materially stronger powers. In addition to the circulation of individuals noted above, these dynamics are exemplified by the universalisation of ideas around sovereignty that: (i) advanced decolonisation and limited interference from great powers (e.g. Bandung Declaration, Non-Aligned Movement); (ii) addressed humanitarian crisis

without inviting great power geopolitical intervention (e.g. Brazil's "responsibility while protecting"); (iii) redefined security to take human development seriously (e.g. concepts of human development popularised by Pakistan-origin Mahbub ul Haq), and (iv) ensured a role for regionalism in global governance (e.g. pan-Arabism, pan-Africanism, and subsequent regional bodies such as ASEAN).

Paying attention to the agency of actors across the Global South is necessitated by the ways in which world order is being pluralised. The end of the Second World War saw not only the Cold War and the Iron Curtain but also the establishment of a liberal international order (LIO), brought about by the pact between the US and UK that sought to maintain global peace once the war had ended. The key instruments foundational to the emergence of the LIO were the Atlantic Charter and the Bretton Woods Institutions. The Atlantic Charter "affirmed free trade, equal access to natural resources for all interested buyers, and international economic collaboration to advance labour standards, employment security, and social welfare" (Ikenberry, 1996, p 83). The Bretton Woods Institutions were built on the assumption that it was possible for prosperity to be shared, and that prosperity was the key to peace. The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development were instituted not only to support Europe's recovery from the devastation wrought by the war but also to develop the newly independent countries in Asia and Africa recovering from the ravages of colonialism. The LIO provided the ideological scaffolding for President Truman's famed speech that promised US aid and assistance to the 'free world' (Truman, 1949). The collapse of the USSR only affirmed the primacy of the LIO in world affairs.

In practice, of course, the LIO was "neither liberal, nor international, nor order" (Mehmetcik, 2019). Amitav Acharya (2017 has ably demonstrated the violence and chaos exported by the US and other upholders of the LIO that in fact underpinned it. But the military might and economic strength of the US and its allies in the Western bloc preserved the LIO and successfully staved off any challenges. Despite being an ideological rival and militarily competitive, the USSR could not compete economically with the US. Other economic models, such as the developmental states innovated in East Asia, did not really challenge the primacy of the LIO; if anything, they had been made possible with US economic aid and military guarantees. Demands for a New International Economic Order advanced by the Global South during the 1970s were nipped in the bud. However, the economic catastrophe unleashed by the 2007 global financial crisis in the West and the

subsequent rise of populism in Europe and North America have exposed the illiberal politics of the LIO. More importantly, the emergence of economic powerhouses in the Global South – China and India but also Brazil, South Africa and others that developed their economies relatively independently of Western aid – challenges the primacy of the LIO and promises to pluralise it.

This pluralisation has been the subject of focus in the emerging field of global IR (Acharya & Buzan, 2019; Barnett & Zarakol, 2023). Challenging the Eurocentrism of discussions about the world order that scaffolds knowledges and practices of development, global IR identifies area studies – the study of distinct regions like South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, West Asia and North Africa – as *constitutive* of global power relations. These distinct regions are not merely shaped by the dominant powers in the Global North but are able to deepen relations across regions and reshape the global order. Cultures and civilisations beyond the so-called 'West' are recognised as valuable sites of political practice and knowledge-production, able to set agendas for the way the world is governed. Developments in these regions are not merely relevant within their respective areas but have broader global ramifications.

The understanding of agency offered by the field of global IR is especially pertinent when reflecting on the changing role of actors in the Global South. Acharya notes that an agency-focused narrative in Global IR explains the ways in which actors in the Global South "construct, reject, reconstitute, and transform global and regional orders" (Acharya, 2014, pp 651–652). After all, agency is not the preserve of the strong but may be expressed as the weapon of the weak, a point made long ago by James Scott (1985). In exercising agency, Global Southern actors not only resist efforts by Northern powers to preserve their privilege. They also forge coalitions with each other and with the Global North, on their own terms, to organise global governance and maintain global order (Roy, 2022). To be clear, agency is not to be conflated with or limited to the intentional actions of individual statesmen or influential people. Rather, agency is, as Sherry Ortner (2001, p 77) reminded us a while back, "concerned with the mediation between conscious intention and embodied habituses, between conscious motives and unexpected outcomes, between historically marked individuals and events on the one hand, and the cumulative reproductions and transformations that are the result of everyday practices on the other". Such a perspective considerably enriches the understandings of Global South agency offered by global IR. It also helps to

overcome the Eurocentrism and its accompanying tropes of white saviourism and white guilt that pervade the scholarship on development.

9 Thinking creatively about comparisons

Pluralised perspectives on the agency of actors from the Global South usefully remind us of the diversity within the Global South. A connected politics of global development enables researchers to compare diverse contexts within the Global South (and Global North if they wish) without harking back to Northern-inspired 'ideal types'. Ideal types are influential because of their ability to succinctly illustrate themes and problems. When existing ideal types are exposed as problematic, new conceptualisations are added in a multiplication – rather than a reconstruction – of ideal-type formulations. Indeed, ideal types are always presented as categories that are reformable in the light of new evidence – Weber does present them as 'heuristic' after all. In fact, however, as Holmwood and Stewart (1991) illustrate, proponents of ideal types expend much energy justifying the initial selection instead of accounting for new material. These are presented as 'valid' interpretations, despite the deviation of empirical circumstances and the processes represented within the type. Let us illustrate with some examples.

The ideal type of a 'developed' country is established on the basis of a selection of political, economic and sociological narratives that simultaneously present a normative argument about political, economic and social progress and superiority. Statistics around economic development, social development, political development and human development are marshalled to distinguish progress in 'developed' countries from countries that are labelled 'developing'. 'Developed' countries are contrasted with 'developing' countries in terms of numerous economic, social and political indicators that seek to objectively 'validate' the two ideal types. What is ignored in the construction of such ideal types is the historical process of exploitation, colonial subjugation and environmental degradation through which 'developed' countries came to dominate the economies, societies and polities of 'developing' countries. Developed countries are presented as a normative category which developing countries can aspire to emulate, without any consideration of the violence, oppression and injustice that were constitutive of their 'development'. The connected politics approach does not necessarily entail doing away with the categories of developing and developed countries, but rather

urges us to critically think about what these categorisations reveal and what they conceal.

Another example of an ideal type is offered by what is called the 'varieties of capitalism' (VoC) model. Drawing on insights from economic sociology offered by the writings of Max Weber, two ideal types are identified as constituting the free-market economies that have come to be the hallmark of capitalism: the 'liberal market economies' and the 'coordinated market economies'. Such a distinction has been made on the basis of pre-determined institutional arenas such as industrial relations, corporate governance, inter-firm relations, employer–employee relations, training and education systems, levels of social protection, and product market regulations. In response to criticisms that the VoC draws too narrowly on western European cases, authors have sought to extend the model to eastern Europe (dependent market economies) and Latin America (hierarchical market economies), without considering the 'varieties' of colonialism, slavery and racial dominance that constituted the original categories. The principle underpinning the typology of the original categories is thus upheld and cases are merely added on, further validating the original categories. The connected politics approach does not call for doing away with the different 'varieties of capitalism' that have been outlined, but insists on critical thinking about their historical and social provenance.

A third example of ideal types is provided by such categorisations as 'democracy' and 'authoritarianism'. Given the growing assaults on democratic practices across the globe, comparative political scientists have understandably directed much of their attention to better comprehending the challenges faced by regimes styled as democratic and also to the attractiveness of authoritarian models. Against criticisms that democracy and authoritarianism represent a spectrum rather than binary categories, the concept of 'hybrid regimes' was introduced to reflect the ways in which democratic and authoritarian practices are in fact enmeshed. The category of 'hybrid regime' does not, however, substantively question the original categorisation of regimes as democratic or authoritarian, but merely adds a third category to account for cases that deviate from this norm. Such exercises typically obfuscate the key facets of authoritarianism that underpin every democracy, including the most liberal. The colonial appropriation, xenophobic rhetoric and racist practices that underpin actually existing democracies are ignored. For example, the US was considered a democracy, despite the official prevalence of segregationist policies in that country until as late as 1965. Likewise, Haiti's

contribution to the global diffusion of liberalism has been ignored, despite that country being the first where Black slaves liberated themselves and established a republic. It was never unknown that the US practised segregation until the 1960s, nor that Black Haitians liberated themselves and established a republic. But they continued to be categorised in the ways they were, exposing the politics of labelling countries as democratic and authoritarian. We do not, to reiterate, call for the abandonment of the concepts of democracy and authoritarianism but urge readers to direct critical attention to the politics of categorising countries in such ways.

The issue here is not so much that the ideal types offered by such theorisations are 'right' or 'wrong'. The more fundamental concern with standard approaches to ideal types has to do with the normative principles that underpin their construction in the first place. Such categories as 'developed countries', 'liberal market economies' and 'democracies' are upheld as normative ideals, akin to a standard of civilisation. The relations of power, domination and violence that constituted the original categories are neglected, even when their empirical relevance is questioned and new categories are added. The contests and conflicts that have resulted in development, democracy and liberalism are ignored. The social and ideational conflicts that shaped such categories are almost airbrushed out of existence.

To reiterate, a connected politics approach does not dismiss ideal types. But it does call for a recognition of the relations of power, domination and inequality that have shaped their emergence. Today's developed democracies are erstwhile colonial powers that enriched themselves at the expense of their own oppressed populations, of the people inhabiting the colonies and of the environment. Economic development on the back of exploitation, colonialism and environmental degradation provided the conditions of possibility for these countries to consolidate political democracy and limit the role of the state in their economy. Rather than discarding the categories altogether, as some critics of development have urged, we call on students to appreciate the histories, sociologies and politics that *connect* the empirical categories of 'developed' and 'developing' countries to one another.

The connected politics approach urges us to be cautious while undertaking comparative endeavours. In her prescient analysis of the limits of comparative politics, political theorist Neera Chandhoke reminds us that "the general loss of all certainties has posed problems for all theories", all the more so for comparative

analysis, which is "based on grand theories and categories of understanding" (Chandhoke, 1996, p PE-7). As the growing unpredictability of contemporary life calls into question the certitudes that anchored mid-century (mostly Eurocentric) social science – including development – comparative analysis appears increasingly unviable. With ethnocentric 'grand theories' increasingly suspect, the 'hard science' of the comparative approach, which could be "employed to support some universal theory or meta-narrative" (Fox & Gingrich, 2002, p 1), seems less useful than ever in explaining the continuities and changes of the contemporary era. This is not to suggest abandoning comparisons altogether. Rather, as the thoughtful contributors to the volume entitled *Liberating Comparisons* (Cooper-Knock & Ndlovu, 2021) have illustrated, comparative approaches may yet be valuable, if such accounts are sensitive to history, appreciate process and respect nuance.

The role of history is undeniable in recognising the colonial origins of the contemporary hierarchies in narratives of global politics. Urging us to pay attention to this history, Ini Dele-Adedeji (2021) cautions against the tendency to offer identical narratives of very different organisations, such as Nigeria's Boko Haram and international terrorist organisations. Likewise, Hazel Gray (2021) identifies the circumstances under which Tanzania and Vietnam collectivised as key to understanding the differential outcomes of collectivisation in the two countries. Indeed, as historical analysis becomes ever more careful about identifying differential notions of time across cultures (linear in some, cyclical in others and a hybrid of the two elsewhere), it could teach students of comparative approaches a great deal. In this vein, Anne Griffith (2021) alerts us against the tendency to compare legal developments around the world in relation to values and practices prevailing in the so-called 'West'.

A sensitivity to history leads us to think of the importance of process in comparative analysis. Reflecting on the tendency to focus on such units of analysis as nation-states, societies and cultures, Sally Falk Moore (2005) pinpoints the value of studying process. Analysing processes offers a dynamic, yet focused, account of a given phenomenon that departs from the essentialisms that mar the characterisation of entire communities and peoples. This calls to mind the importance of nuance. Comparativist projects typically hinge on validating Eurocentric theories that style themselves as universal. In this context, calls to 'provincialise Europe' (Chakrabarty, 2000), which insist on exposing the parochial cultural origins of theories of development that pretend to be universally valid, are to be welcomed. But they cannot, at the same time, become an excuse for a

cultural relativism that fails to distinguish human freedom from oppressive relations (Corbridge, 2007).

III

10 A connected politics of global development

The global development paradigm considers development in relation to the entire world, not just the Global South (Gore, 2015; Scholte & Söderbaum, 2017). It also resonates with calls for a 'one-world approach' (Wallerstein, 1979; Hettne, 1995; Singer, 2002; Mehta et al, 2006; Sumner, 2011). Its global scope (Horner, 2020) offers us a timely reminder that development is not only about 'poor countries' (a core concern in development studies) or 'poor people' (a key preoccupation of international development), but about a world where social change cannot be sequestered along national boundaries or binaries between the Global North and Global South. Such a recognition does not entail a dissolution of national boundaries or North–South binaries but rather entails an appreciation of the connections across them. A connected politics perspective helps respond to legitimate worries that global development might impose universalistic framings from the Global North over the Global South.

A connected politics of global development learns much from the agenda for 'global studies' introduced by Jan Nederveen Pieterse (2013). Global studies takes worldwide processes and the global impacts of regional, national and local processes seriously. It views global processes and impacts from diverse perspectives, thus decentring the Global North from social analysis. The advice that "global studies should be multicentric in viewing global concerns not just from New York, London, Paris, or Tokyo but also from the viewpoint of New Delhi, Sao Paulo, Beijing, or Nairobi" (Nederveen Pieterse, 2013, p 508) is particularly relevant to the multipolar world which scaffolds the politics of global development in our times. This understanding prevents us from swapping Eurocentrism with Sinocentrism, Indocentrism, or Afrocentrism. It ensures that we adopt a multicentric perspective.

The scope approach to global development that foregrounds a multicentric perspective may be complemented by a scale approach, which encourages multilevel thinking. Not only does global studies consider multiple centres, it also encourages us to consider the regions and places within the radius of these

centres. It recognises that domestic and regional hierarchies pose possibilities of 'internal colonialism' and is wary of supplanting global hierarchies with local ones. Against the viewpoint of elites and other privileged groups, multilevel thinking insists on appreciating the relations between these and with each other, as well as with citizens and migrants, poor people in rural and urban areas, petty traders and precarious labourers, and middle-class professionals. Such multilevel thinking adds substance to the multicentrism of global studies, enabling us to recognise the role and importance of human agency.

Against modernisation, neoliberal and Marxist theorists, who emphasise the ideational and social dynamics of capitalism in Europe as the starting point of their analysis, a connected politics approach emphasises, with dependency theorists and postcolonial scholars, the politics of colonialism that reconstituted Europe and North America as the 'core' of the global political economy and relegated other regions to the 'periphery'. However, against both dependency theorists and postcolonial scholars, a connected politics of global development takes seriously the ways in which the hierarchical relations between the 'core' and the 'periphery' are *being undermined* by actors in the Global South.

The departure from the valuable insights offered by dependency theorists stems from the very substantive changes in the global political economy. As Branko Milanovic (2016) argues, the inequalities between countries that were the hallmark of the colonial and early postcolonial era are being gradually replaced by inequalities *within* countries. On the one hand, economic and political changes in countries that had been relegated to the 'periphery' of the global political economy by colonialism have resulted in the emergence of a global middle class that perceives itself as more globally integrated than previous generations. On the other hand, countries that had positioned themselves at the 'core' of the global economy have witnessed the shrinking of their middle classes. Inequality has increased in both contexts, rendering the core–periphery cleavage that framed dependency theory unsustainable. The departure from the rich perspectives offered by postcolonial scholarship also warrants comment. Postcolonial scholarship is undoubtedly valuable in understanding the continued significance of colonial legacies for the global order that shapes the politics of global development. However, it is less helpful in appreciating the agency of the colonised: the colonised cannot continue to be defined solely by the colonial experience, as Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò (2023) has eloquently argued. The global order is being substantively reshaped, not least by actors that colonialism

had relegated to the periphery (Roy, 2022, 2023), making it essential for observers to look beyond colonialism to explain contemporary transformations.

The polarising debates spawned by the emergence of global development recall the false binary between universalism and particularism. A connected politics approach to global development helps us move beyond this false binary. It exposes and interrogates a disciplinary hierarchy that relegates the study of development to particularistic peripheries of the social sciences. It appreciates the ways in which perspectives from the Global South have in fact shaped ideas of development that are now universally accepted. A connected politics approach resolutely rejects Eurocentrism and its associated tropes of white saviourism and white guilt, which perpetuate not only disciplinary hierarchies but also hierarchies between the Global South and North. The approach helps us appreciate pluralised conceptions of agency to understand the ways in which actors in the Global South are actively undermining hierarchies between South and North. Finally, the approach is careful not to reify differences between the South and North and to depict these as homogeneous blocs. Rather, a recognition of the pluralised agency of actors in the Global South alerts us to differences within them. A connected politics of global development perspective offers insights into the ways in which scholars may creatively and constructively compare units without lapsing into Eurocentric ideal types.

The emergence of global development as a paradigm to analyse the changing world in which we live is a welcome step forward. It helps us appreciate the profound transformation of our planet wrought by the rise of formerly colonised countries such as China, India, Brazil and others in the Global South as major powers in world politics. It demonstrates the growing salience of common challenges such as inequality within countries, climate change and a global pandemic, as well as the interconnections fostered by the circulation of people, technology and capital. Global development encompasses the changes in relations between the Global South and Global North. It thus promises to unearth the connections between the two, recognising and respecting the agency of the Global South as well as the enormous diversity within it. The connected politics approach analysed in this article can help it redeem its promise and prevent it from becoming yet another ephemeral academic fad.

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