Development and Change
Published on behalf of the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague

Focus

Southern Discomfort: Interrogating the Category of the Global South

Nikita Sud and Diego Sánchez-Ancochea

ABSTRACT

Researchers in development studies have expressed discomfort at the hierarchy inherent in the use of 'North' and 'South', and cognate concepts like 'First' and 'Third World', or 'emerging economies'. Instead of setting aside the terminology, this article delves into the layered meaning-making around the notion of the South. Drawing on multi- and inter-disciplinary perspectives, it maps out the South as (1) territory constructed through history, geography and time, and characterized by (2) relations of domination and othering, which are starkly visible in racial divisions wrought on the world through slavery, colonialism and recent struggles around migration. The article then explores Southern 'talk back' through analysis initiated in Southern institutions which highlights (3) structures that continue to divide the world through a political economy of underdevelopment. Finally, it turns to (4) politics which challenges these structures of domination through direct action and solidarities. The conclusion revisits the 'stickiness' of 'the South'. It is argued that the South as a territorial, relational, structural and political construct is fundamentally about the distribution of power in the global system. While some uses of the concept enhance power asymmetries, others contribute to reducing them. This article concludes that a critical understanding of the contradictory meanings and uses of the concept within development studies is more important than discursive attempts to replace it.

INTRODUCTION

Dualistic hierarchies of development have long troubled scholars. The distinction between North and South, and related concepts like developed and developing, core and periphery, advanced and emerging economies, epitomizes this problem. For Kothari (2005), these are reductive binaries based on crude geography. They elevate the North as wealthy, innovating and a producer of knowledge. The South, by contrast, has been turned into a 'field': poor in both wealth and ideas (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012; Xaxa, 2016). Such a reading of reality has entrenched global inequality (Escobar, 1993).

Development and Change 53(6): 1123–1150. DOI: 10.1111/dech.12742

The weaknesses of the binaries of development are increasingly evident to a greater spread of scholars and institutions. There are several drivers. First, movements such as Black Lives Matter are re-focusing attention on the colonial and racial stereotypes that 'development' continues to foster in postcolonial societies (Pailey, 2020). Second, the East Asian miracle and more recently the emergence of China as a global power no longer allow glib North–South divisions. Third, growing awareness of the global nature of many development concerns — from climate change and pandemics (Oldekop et al., 2020), to rising within-country inequality — have all pushed against the North–South gradation (Horner, 2020).

We see this uneasiness about traditional categories reflected in our colleagues, and especially in our students' questions around the division of the world into two halves. While 20 years ago, students at the Oxford Department of International Development where we teach were happy to limit their research projects to the 'postcolonial' world in Asia, Africa and Central and South America, now they rightly ask why China qualifies for inclusion in this category, but not Greece. Why can't they study disadvantaged groups and development themes in the North? Are indigenous groups in Canada or the deprived in New York not more 'peripheral' than wealthy businessmen in Buenos Aires or San Salvador?

Discomfort with simplistic development models has propelled scholars and institutions to pose alternatives. Horner and Hulme (2019) propose 'global development', a holistic perspective which advocates for a key but not exclusive focus on the South. Even the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) now promotes the universality of development concerns. The Sustainable Development Goals, released in 2015, do not divide the world into developed and less developed halves. We share the concerns of our students, colleagues and several development institutions. At the same time, there continue to be asymmetries in the global development order that reflect conventional North–South distinctions. Traditional hierarchies based on export specialization and uneven access to global finance are still alive, as evidenced, for example, in the costs of 're-primarization'. The latter refers to the recent growth of the share of natural resources in total exports in much of Central and South America and in Africa. The same can be said of the difference in ability to borrow internationally between, say, the United States and South Africa today (Musthaq, 2021; Svampa, 2019). We still require approaches and terms that reflect the asymmetric opportunities for development and transformation that exist at the national and international level.

Even when a country seemingly breaks out of enduring structures of economic inequality, it is hardly catapulted to the status the North may take for granted. China, the world's fastest growing major economy, is a prime example. If being an official finance donor rather than an aid recipient is one marker of geostrategic position, China has made this shift in the aid hierarchy. Its total official finance in 2000–14, including foreign aid and

other forms of concessional and non-concessional state financing, was US$ 354.3 billion. Official financing from the US in the same period was US$ 394.6 billion (Dreher et al., 2017). Yet, despite being a significant donor, China in the new millennium was still facing expectations from 'traditional' donors seeking to 'socialize' it into being 'responsible' in the field (Mawdsley, 2018: 173). More recently, while the origin of COVID-19 is in dispute, the narrative of this being a 'Chinese virus' that may even have been perpetrated by sinister design, refuses to fade. The racism of such a conclusion has been pointed out by scholars from China and beyond (Su et al., 2020). Clearly, an unequal normative universe is hard to shift.

Like other empty signifiers, the South is filled with meaning by those who occupy and engage with it. Our core purpose in this article is to illuminate the layered making of the South. This is not a mere academic exercise. Understanding this construction tells us why the term and the reality it reflects are still relevant and how it simultaneously hides and illuminates the power inequalities that characterize our world. For those interested in development studies, it also helps us to delineate the discipline and define what kind of research belongs to it. In the following pages, we unpack the South as (1) territory created through history, geography and time. The territorial South is centred on the postcolonial world, and comprises the continents of Asia, Africa and Central and South America. We also view it as (2) a set of relationships premised on difference. We analyse this relational view through the lens of race as a primary marker of Southernness. The relational South, comprising the darker 'other', stretches past the territorial South. People of colour breach/ed the boundaries of the North as slaves, labour, migrants and refugees with their Southernness and difference more or less intact. These two uses of the South have contributed to perpetuating inequalities by presenting the South as backward and encouraging (implicitly or explicitly) racist understandings of the world.

Nonetheless, very different approaches have been proposed, emphasizing the uneven distribution of power, and the agency and creativity of the South. Next, we turn to (3) a structural view of the South as peripheral to a developed, Northern core. According to this perspective, the North's control of financial flows and technological innovation facilitates its own development and constrains the transformation of many peripheral countries. This critique of underdevelopment came largely from Southern scholars based in Southern institutions. Using the tools of critical political economy, it is a form of 'talking back' (hooks, 2015). There are other ways of 'talking back', and actively pushing back against territorial, relational and structural dominance. The last layer of meaning we identify in the notion of the South is (4) political in nature. It refers to resistance against the distribution of power and resources in the global system. We highlight this through cases of direct action, and via political solidarities between Southern countries. Our aim here is not to be exhaustive but to provide some illustrative examples of how this mechanism operates. The South and the Southern can be objects

bearing the brunt of politics and power. But they have also been subjects who can appropriate and organize around their Southernness.

Overall, studying the South in this way allows a nuanced insight into how power traverses the global system. We conclude that it is this complex field imbued with power, with its negative and positive connotations, created over decades, even centuries, that is proving to be sticky in the way we think about and do development. The position of countries and constituencies within the South is not fixed. Yet, Southernenss is very much amongst us. It is for this reason that we continue using the terminology of the South in this article, and in our larger work.

Our inter- and multi-disciplinary approach, which spans time and space, and takes power into account, sets us apart from other recent attempts at interrogating the concept of the South. Haug et al. (2021) for instance discuss the prevalence of the South as a concept, how this impacts our understandings and engagements with politics, and how our contemporary usage of the South is diverse. We complement such work by detailing the layered meaning-making around the South. We show how the South, in history and geography, relationality and identity, structures and politics, has been produced and reproduced over time. This informs the contemporary, and points to the endurance of the concept of the South and what it represents. Our conceptualization, which highlights the long-term, multi-dimensional making of the South, is thus also different from recent debates on international versus global development (Horner and Hulme, 2019), and the conceptualization of the South as 'global' or the global South. The latter perspective seeks to shift our understanding of the South and its largely postcolonial constituents. These countries are no longer mere recipients of international development interventions from the North and/or multilateral institutions via post-war development aid. As such, proponents of the 'global South' concept point to a diverse space, crisscrossed by the flows of global capitalism, technology, migration, and more. While these are useful discussions that this article will no doubt speak to, ours is more a project on the making and longevity of the South. Importantly, ours is an attempt to pinpoint the contradictory role of the concept in exposing global structures of inequality. A robust understanding of the South will contribute to ongoing debates about its place in politics, global development, international relations, and more.

THE TERRITORIAL SOUTH

Territory demarcates 'us' from 'them'; it bounds who is in and who is out (Elden, 2010). In this section, we depict the making of the territorial South as dynamic, produced through the workings of history, geography and time. To first take up history: we know that humans have marked the difference between 'us' and 'other' for centuries (Mudimbe, 1988). Those in power

have often defined what is 'desirable' and 'civilized' and contrasted it with that which is 'backward'. This project of self-referential distinction has been particularly evident in the construction of a colonial and post-colonial world defined by Europe and the United States.

The colonial project of capturing the land and resources of a supposedly inferior other, and reinforcing this domination via ideas and institutions, expanded across continental space with advances in transport and energy. The Age of Discovery, a time when Europeans started exploring the world, began in the 15th century, and extended first to the Americas, and then Africa and Asia, mapping the globe for centuries to come. Other cultures and civilizations had criss-crossed the world before the European explorers, including the Polynesians, Chinese, Arabs and Indians (Arnold, 1983). Ancient Europe too had its empires. However, modern Europe colonized the world, and appropriated land, people and institutions on a hitherto unprecedented scale. In the process, it construed its colonies in terms of long-held distinctions between nature and culture, and civilized and savage. Lands from the Americas to Asia were designated 'terra nullius', nobody's land. The representation of the colony and colonized as void sought to obliterate centuries of culture and civilization, and laid the ground for a new civilizing mission.

Paradoxically, as Europe was expanding its imperial projects, it was also experiencing an efflorescence of ideas centred on the rights of man. Celebrated thinkers of the European Enlightenment who expounded the virtues of liberty in their own lands, simultaneously served in colonial institutions abroad, or otherwise supported colonial projects built on slavery. J.S. Mill, for instance, was a long-standing employee of the English East India Company.[1] He joined it at the age of 17 and served for 35 years. While in employment, Mill published the essay 'Civilization' (1836). He wrote:

> We are accustomed to call a country more civilized if we think it more improved; more eminent in the best characteristics of Man and Society … [Civilization]… distinguishes a wealthy and powerful nation from savages or barbarians …. In savage life there is no commerce, no manufactures … In savage life there is little or no law, or administration of justice … These elements exist in modern Europe, and especially in Great Britain … in a state of more rapid progression, than at any other place or time.

Besides being forged in history and ideas, the making of the territorial South is a geographical project. The geography of the other may have been relatively closer to home through much of history, but it has encompassed the globe from colonial times. The postcolonial world has taken on the mantle of the spatial other from the mid-20th century. Development, or rather the lack of it, has been the fundamental distinguishing feature of the postcolony (Mbembe, 2001). We now discuss the geography of the South-making project with reference to this lack of development.

1. The East India Company was an English, and later British, joint-stock company founded in 1600 and dissolved in 1874.

The inaugural address of US President Truman is often cited as an announcement of the post-World War II global development project (Escobar, 1993; Sachs, 2010). In his speech, Truman (1949) urges Europe to take its place at 'the forefront of civilization'. As the leader of the 'free world', Truman is eager to make the 'benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas'. The people inhabiting these areas, 'more than half … the world', are 'living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate. They are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas'. On the one hand, this emerging global geography reproduces old tropes promoted by figures like Mill, in that Europe is equated with civilization while white, Euro-America represents freedom. On the other hand, this is a decided break from the past, as Truman proclaims 'the old imperialism — exploitation for profit — has no place in our plans. What we envisage is a program of development' (Truman, 1949).

While a politician like Truman can be charged with rhetoric, the hierarchized geography of postcolonial development has made it to scholarly texts across the ideological spectrum. In *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-communist Manifesto*, economist and political theorist Rostow (1960) draws attention to 'the southern half of the world'. Here we are to find 'preconditions', or the 'beginnings of take-off' to modernity. These societies are gradually 'losing their old spongy character … [of] awkward transition' (ibid.: 126). Several decades later, development economists Adelman and Morris (1997: 833) were amongst many voices warning against homogenizing the South: 'the process of economic development has been highly nonlinear and highly multifaceted'. They divided 'contemporary developing countries' into three groups. Of these countries, 40 per cent 'were at the lowest end of the spectrum in socioeconomic development'. The next group was 'intermediate' 'transitional economies'. Finally, there was the 'most developed group of developing countries' with effective economic institutions and 'national mobilization for economic development' (ibid.: 833–34). A graded geography of the South, however sophisticated in its hierarchies, continues to keep much of the world in its place. Here, even the 'most developed' remain developing countries. It should go without saying that our illustration of a linear geography of development is precisely that — the drawing of examples to underline our point. Our purpose here, and in the arguments that follow, is not to survey entire fields.

There is a visceral quality to the geography of development, which of course has its roots in a period well before the 'development revolution' of the 20th century. It depicts misery in contexts that are hot and far away. Distance, real or imagined, reinforces otherness and justifies typecasting. Similarly, the climate of the South has long been linked to exoticism, as also despotism and indolence. French political philosopher Montesquieu's (1748/1949) analysis of theocratic despotism in Asia alludes to the 'number

of dervishes and monks' who seem to 'increase together with the warmth of the climate. The Indies, where the heat is excessive, are full of them'. Moreover, 'the cowardice of the people of hot climates has almost constantly rendered them slaves' (Montesquieu, 1748/1949 cited in Dainotto, 2011: 46–47). Such theories of heat, underdevelopment and unfreedom fall apart when considering the climate of Kashmir, Badakhshan or Tibet, among a host of places. Yet, stereotypes of the South are hardly meant to be held up to logic.

The graded spaces of development are marked by certain workings of time. 'Development time', like all time, is variable. In traditional readings of development, the underdeveloped and the backward occupy the past. The linear trajectory they must travel represents the future, one that developed nations already inhabit. The North is modern; the South inhabits an unfinished modernity (Pinheiro, 2017). Catch-up may be promised, but rarely materializes. The reasons for this are interrogated below. Even as development time is kept linear and maintains North–South distinctions, it invariably overlaps with other temporal registers. Take capitalist time, which intersects with, but also unsettles, the working of development time.

Scholars have pointed to the compression of time and space in the fast-paced workings of capitalism (Harvey, 1989). This allows us to cross continents within hours or even seconds, with the assistance of modern aviation or the internet. No matter where we are located, information and communication technology, as well as the field of desires created by capitalism, expose us to worlds that appear within reach. Of course, our aspirations can easily surpass the realm of the materially possible. At the same time, the ongoing challenges of precarious work and joblessness have the effect of lending time a quality of 'suspendedness' (Bear, 2017). The simultaneous animation and suspension of time under capitalist globalization affects all parts of the world. This convergence is demonstrated in analyses of the gig economy in London (Watt, 2020), Iran (Khosravi, 2017) and Ethiopia (Abebe, 2020).

Nonetheless, it is pertinent to ask: 'does a gig worker in Addis Ababa experience the modalities of capitalism in quite the same way as one in London?'. Recently, London's Uber taxi drivers won the right to be seen as workers, with related rights to health benefits, minimum wage, holiday pay and time off (*The Economic Times*, 2021). The US-based ride-sharing app is now considering replicating changes it brought about in California, after its drivers there also challenged the company in court. However, such replication is currently being contemplated for the UK and Europe only. Can Uber drivers in Southern contexts expect these hard-fought rights to filter down to them? For now, this is an open question. We do know that gig economy workers across the world have challenged their self-employed status (Chakraborti, 2018). Like development time, as it currently stands, the depredations of capitalist time show lags between North and South. It is not quite the great leveller. Overall, much historical, geographical and temporal

work has gone into making the South territorially separate from the North. In the systematic 'making-different' of much of the world, a factor that requires a focused discussion is the construction of the South as a racialized entity. Here the territorial other is personified via racial and other relational deviations.

THE RELATIONAL SOUTH

Territory in spatial terms is hardly abstract; it is steeped in social relations. A relational view, which emphasizes human interaction and co-creation of social phenomena, personifies the 'othering' and hierarchies that are inherent in the making of the South. Humans relate to one another, and also create distance between one another, through a range of identity characteristics: class, caste, gender, sexuality, etc. Among these characteristics, race and racial difference are central to Southernness — the South comprises the 'darker nations' (Parshad, 2007). The process of racialization, or seeing space through race, has deep roots. For Quijano (2000), race became a defining feature in the exercise of power with the conquest of the Americas from the 15th century when racial superiority became the justification for colonial rule. Race was hardly a natural distinction in the 15th century. However, it was made into one with an entirely different biological structure being read into the superior or 'white' race and the inferior 'dark' races. The trans-Atlantic slave trade from the African continent reinforced emergent ideas of stark phenotypical difference, or difference based on observed, physical traits. Accordingly, colonialism and slavery reduced a diversity of groups comprising Ashantis, Yorubas, Zulus, Congos, Bacongos and others, who were forcibly shipped to the Americas, into Negroes or Blacks in the course of a few centuries. Similarly, a diversity of indigenous cultures and peoples were diminished as 'Indians': an ethnic brew of homogenized race and culture (Quijano, 2000).

The constructed colour coding of race had real-world effects. It propelled colonialism as a civilizing mission; justified the extraction of non-waged, 'slave' labour from 'uncivilized' populations (Quijano, 2000); and enabled the decimation of indigenous lives, land and culture.[2] The violence of

2. We focus on othering wrought by racialized relations in Asia, Africa and Central and South America, i.e., territories shaped primarily but not exclusively by extractive colonialism. A similar argument can be made for settler colonial projects. Here, white settlers took over indigenous land and resources, reducing the native population to a minority through violence. This would bring indigenous groups in Northern contexts like the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand into our categorization of the relational South. Indigenous 'reserves' could even be seen as territorial Souths within the North. While scholars are pursuing such lines of argument (Darrah-Okike, 2020; McKay et al., 2020), and indigenous groups in Northern countries are increasingly discussed in development studies, a focus on this category falls outside the scope of this article.

racialized homogeneity carries on to this day. The history of people of colour (POC), which can be traced back at least to Roman times in the UK and Europe, has been systematically erased to form the myth of Europe as predominantly white (Olusoga, 2016). In this context, when the existence of POC could not be unseen, it needed to be explained through epistemic contortions. POC in Europe are inferiors, slaves, or in more recent times, migrants and various types of unwanted 'others'. Viewed through a relational lens, the 'dark' South stretches past the territorial lines of Asia, Africa and Central and South America, bleeding into the North, both in the past and in the present.

The UK's Windrush scandal illustrates the racist logic that extends Southernness into the North. The Windrush scandal broke in 2018 when it came to light that the British government was threatening to deport the children of Caribbean immigrants who had arrived in the UK between 1948 and 1971 on ships like the Empire Windrush. At the time, Commonwealth citizens were encouraged to enter the UK to fill post-war labour shortages. With a legal right to remain, they were not required to obtain government documentation to prove their status, unless they needed to leave the country for an extended period. More recently, rising anti-immigrant sentiment has provided a potent tool for a nationalist government led by the Conservative party. The latter has repeatedly faced charges of racism, including in its adoption of a policy which aimed to create a 'hostile environment for illegal immigrants' (May, 2012 cited in Goodfellow, 2019). The Windrush generation, which has spent much of its life in the UK, was made part of this charade of illegality and othering, with the lack of official papers used to undermine their claims to citizenship. The loss of jobs, access to public health provision and housing were the material consequences of this barely veiled racism.

The UK is by no means unique in its racist coloniality continuing into the present. The image of the racial other, who also follows cultural practices and religions that cannot be trusted, has been driving the recent politics encapsulated in slogans like 'Make America Great Again', 'More Courage for Viennese Blood', 'France to the French', and 'Stop Islamization' used by the far-right Alternative for Germany party. If anything, a resurgence of race- and faith-based nationalism in Europe emphasizes the stark divisions between North and South that might have been etched in colonial times, but remain relevant to date. Even when the two intermingle in space, they are made different through rhetoric of the 'clash of civilizations'or 'culture wars', which is rife in contemporary Europe and North America. This contemporary reality underlines that understandings of the South can be nuanced, say via a relational approach that takes global mobility into account. However, a Southern perspective cannot be dispensed with.

As scholars of development, we need to acknowledge that our discipline, and development in practice, are complicit in the project of racialized othering. We provide just a few illustrations to demonstrate this, although the list of our collusions is long. Pailey (2020) points out that development studies

has traditionally been silent on race. The act of unseeing disparity itself is a sign of privilege (Bhopal, 2018). Yet in the wake of movements like Rhodes Must Fall and Black Lives Matter, which were initiated in the territorial and relational South respectively, we must respond to the acute need to confront and subsequently 'decentre the "white gaze" of development' (Pailey, 2020: 729).

The centring of whiteness is amply visible in development studies textbooks and reading lists. As a growing number of our students are increasingly pointing out, these are dominated by Anglo-European-American white men. Until quite recently, the flagship core course in development studies in our department offered a tour of development theory by way of the following marquee names: Comte for an understanding of positivism, Weber on modernization, Marx and Harvey on dominant economic structures, and Foucault for a post-structural critique of the latter. The development economics topics of this course included the canon across the ideological spectrum. We discussed Friedman, Hayek, Nozick, Keynes, Rostow, Rosenstein-Rodan, Myrdal, Sachs, Collier, Easterly, and so on. Franz Fanon, Arthur Lewis, Amartya Sen, Wangari Maathai and Raul Prebisch did make to our reading lists, but they were the exceptions that prove the rule.

The whiteness of the mainstream in development studies is no coincidence. Critical scholars of colour tell us that 'canon building is empire building' (Morrison, 2019: 169). Even as dominant racial and political interests are reinforced through knowledge, they also underline the inferiority of the 'other'. This includes the 'other' we seek to teach in Northern universities. In the words of Kenyan post-colonial theorist Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, culture and knowledge are wielded daily to 'annihilate a people's belief in their environment … in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with what is furthest removed from themselves' (wa Thiong'o, 1986: 3).

As a technology of colonial rule, terra nullius persists in the laying to waste of the 'other's' knowledge. The simple but highly political act of overlooking the vast corpus of the world's knowledge through our teaching, skewed research funding and citational practices furthers unequal power relations. While colonialism, or direct, extractive rule over an 'other' is largely at an end today, the imperial ideas of domination and superiority that enabled colonialism are very much in existence. In this context, we welcome calls to decolonize knowledge. In our own experience as teachers, we find that troubling the canon with readings from, say, Frantz Fanon (1961) is a step in the right direction. Our students have been fascinated and also repelled by this Black Martiniquan's open call to violence against the ruling order of colonial France that he lived under. However, inserting a jarring reading into our course materials, and maybe even our consciousness, need not disturb our long-held beliefs and the structures these enable.

As Kehinde Andrews (2021) reminds us, racism is not prejudice; it is a system that privileges white people, and disadvantages Black people. This system continues to be reproduced in the academy and in the practice of development. A reading here and a diversity initiative there, will not dismantle it. While the play of racialized relationships exposes the divide between a white North and a South of colour, a more structural approach is needed to understand how this becomes entrenched. It is such an approach that we turn to now.

THE SOUTH AS STRUCTURE

The 'pioneers in development', as Meier and Seers (1987) termed them, explicitly rejected the dominant idea that all economies in the world were similar and could be explained with a single, linear model. Starting in the 1940s and 1950s, these iconoclastic pioneers were generally critical of free trade, called for an active role for the state in development, and encouraged the promotion of the manufacturing sector via industrial policy. Some of them, like Arthur Lewis, were influenced by their own experience. Lewis grew up in Saint Lucia in the Caribbean, before moving to Northern institutions to study and then teach.

The role of South American thinkers within this ground-breaking first wave of development writing is particularly significant for our discussion. Focusing on the structure of the global economy — and the distinction between 'centre' and 'periphery' — they developed new methodologies and ways of thinking about their own realities. Similar to other Southern critiques highlighted in this article, they aimed to understand and theorize the unequal state of the world in order to dislodge hierarchies.

The conversation on structuralism was initiated by the Argentinian economist Raul Prebisch and some of his collaborators during the founding of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC). In *The Economic Development of Latin America and Its Principal Problems*, Prebisch (1950) criticized the belief of orthodox economics in comparative advantage and directly linked Central and South America's challenges to the power of Europe and the United States. This criticism was founded in historical analysis, and in a recognition of the multidimensional character of development processes.

For structuralists like Prebisch, the fundamental differences which could be discerned between the centre and periphery were rooted in the process of technical advancement. Since the 19th century, countries of the centre (initially led by the United Kingdom, and later by the United States) benefited from the introduction of new technologies. The power and resources they had amalgamated over the centuries propelled their technologically innovative development. Meanwhile, the rest of the world, the periphery, was left behind, absorbing the technologies created in the centre only later. The

relations of dependence built over time meant that the periphery was perpetually beholden to the centre for technological means to grow its economy. Peripheral countries were forced to use technologies that were not appropriate for their socio-economic conditions.

Growing inequalities deepened structural differences between the centre and periphery, or what came to be referred to as the North and the South. In the centre, technological progress spread rapidly across the whole economy, giving rise to many sectors with similar levels of productivity and with many opportunities for the creation of good jobs. By contrast, economies in the periphery continued to be characterized by two key features: heterogeneity and specialization (Rodríguez, 1980). Heterogeneity was understood as the coexistence of a highly productive export sector and low-productivity activities that use traditional technologies, the latter of which represented the majority of economic activity. Specialization occurred in very few sectors because new investments were concentrated in primary goods for export while the growing demand for other goods and services was satisfied through imports. The situation became particularly bad in the 1930s when the Great Depression, originating in the United States, contributed to a drop in the price of primary goods. Between 1929 and 1933, the price of wheat decreased by 58 per cent, coffee by 59 per cent, and copper by 71 per cent (Rodríguez, 2006). The collapse of world commodity prices and foreign markets led to economic crises across the South which signalled the need to industrialize.

Differences between centre and periphery, generated by the asymmetric distribution of technological change, were also at the heart of the increasing inequality in per capita income between the two sets of countries. This process was the result of higher labour productivity growth in the centre compared to that of the periphery, but especially of a long-term deterioration in the terms of trade of primary goods. This foundational assumption was core to structuralism's negative perspective of free trade. According to Prebisch and his followers, including their European collaborator Hans Singer, the price of manufactured goods exported from European countries grew faster (or decreased slower) than commodity prices, particularly in moments of crisis (Prebisch, 1950; Singer, 1950). A number of explanations were provided for this negative trend, but the most significant had to do with the historical context within which development paths unfolded.

Despite their criticism of the organization of the global economy, mid-20th century structuralists such as Prebisch and Singer (in keeping with leading development economists of the time such as Lewis, Hirschman or Rosenstein-Rodan) embraced the potential of long-term development within a reformed international system. If countries adopted state-led policies of import substitution, they could transform their economic structure, reduce heterogeneity and specialization, and become more like the North. In this way, structuralists replicated the epistemic centrality of the North, or the 'developed' Euro-American world. For them, 'development' required the

emulation of the experience of Europe and the United States. As the Brazilian economist Maria da Conceição Tavares explained, structuralists' industrialization policies 'represented an attempt, in response to foreign trade restrictions, to reproduce in an accelerated form the industrialization carried out in the past by the more developed countries, but in entirely different conditions' (Tavares, 1964/2016: 133).

Structuralism gradually evolved into various dependency approaches, which were more critical about the role of the centre and believed that underdevelopment in the South was shaped to different degrees by various actors from the North. As the Brazilian Theotonio Dos Santos explained, 'the productive system in the underdeveloped countries is essentially determined by these international relations … [T]he industrial and technological structure responds more closely to the interests of multinational corporations than to internal development needs … giving rise to a highly unequal productive structure, a high concentration of incomes, underutilization of installed capacity' (Dos Santos, 1970: 234).

For dependency theorists, it was apparent that transnational corporations and governments in the North had jointly contributed to perpetuating the wrong kind of comparative advantages. This was also a system that furthered structural inequalities between different countries of the world. Building on Prebisch's ideas, authors like Amin (1974) and Emmanuel (1972) added to the concept of unequal exchange (Kvangraven, 2021). They argued that global trade was unfair. Interrelations based on the dominance of transnational corporations kept prices of peripheral exports artificially low and impoverished the periphery.

Dependency theorists put even more emphasis than structuralists on the systematic differences between parts of the world. Rejecting Rostow's theory of stages of economic growth, they argue that development is a historical process with unique characteristics in the South. As the Brazilian economist Celso Furtado explains, 'underdevelopment is not a necessary stage in the process of formation of the modern capitalistic economies. It is a special process due to the penetration of modern capitalistic enterprises into archaic structures. The phenomenon of underdevelopment occurs in a number of forms and in various stages' (Furtado, 1971: 176–77).

Dependency theorists advance a historical and relational understanding of centre and periphery, North and South. In this view, development is not only about the linear trajectory of modernization but also about transforming traditional relations of power at the international level. As Cardoso and Faletto explain in one of the foundational books on the subject, 'it may happen that a society modernizes its pattern of consumption, education and so forth without a corresponding advance in development, if by development we understand less dependency and self-sustained growth based on the local capital accumulation' (Cardoso and Faletto, 1979: 10).

Dependency theorists did not agree on the extent to which this self-sustained transformation in economic structures was possible in the South.

For the most radical authors — many writing within US academia — dependency resulted in the 'practical impossibility of capitalist development in the periphery' (Palma, 2008: 1337). Indeed, authors like Paul Baran (1957), Andre Gunder Frank (1967) and Paul Sweezy (1968) regarded trends in the South as fully shaped by external political and economic actors; they also systematically underplayed the agency of local class struggles. Despite their seemingly revolutionary approach, in certain respects, they perpetuated the image of the South as helpless. By contrast, a second South America-based dependency school adopted a more flexible approach. Cardoso and Faletto, for example, explicitly criticized 'those who expect permanent stagnation in underdeveloped dependent countries' and highlighted the role of domestic actors and state institutions in influencing socio-economic outcomes across the South (Cardoso and Faletto, 1979: xxxiii).

The significant transformation of some Southern countries in the 1960s–1980s undoubtedly questioned simplistic accounts of dependency. A country like South Korea did not just benefit from rapid economic growth but was able to transform its economy, moving from specialization in food and textiles to shipbuilding and then semiconductors and high-tech products (Amsden, 1989). Economic change went hand in hand with a relatively equal distribution of income: between 1975 and 1982, the income share of South Korea's top quintile was five times that of the bottom quintile, compared to 15 times in Mexico and a staggering 27 times in Brazil (Amsden, 2001). The economic success of a few East Asian countries has been followed more recently by China's development transformation.

Yet neither the East Asian 'miracle' nor the Chinese one negates the importance of structural inequalities and their influence in shaping the South even today (Kvangraven, 2021). For example, South Korea's ability to transform its economy was made possible by unique positive external conditions. South Korea was an important ally of the US-led Western capitalist bloc given its strategic location with respect to communist China, North Korea and the USSR. The US bloc allowed concessions to South Korea to maintain and grow its economy; these were not available to most other Southern or peripheral countries. The country received substantial aid, which it effectively used to promote state-led industrialization. It was able to protect its domestic market while aggressively expanding exports (Amsden, 1989).

Moreover, the East Asian experience is consistent with the emphasis the South American dependency theorists place on the interaction between global and local conditions. Authors like Cardoso and Faletto see external conditions, such as those faced by South Korea in the Cold War, as limiting but not determining socio-economic development across the periphery. They focus on the interaction between the state, social movements and elites that take place in specific countries at particular moments in time, with a diversity of results in various parts of the postcolonial world. For dependency theorists such as Cardoso — decades later president of Brazil — 'what was significant was the "movement", the class struggles, the

redefinitions of interest, the political alliances that maintained the structures while at the same time opening the possibility of their transformation' (Cardoso, 1977: 14). In those countries where the state had achieved some level of autonomy from local and international capital, economic policies (from investment in education to sectoral incentives) had become more developmental, and transformation more successful (Evans, 1995). This perspective follows an eminently historical approach. Moreover, it takes seriously the study of different countries in the South. It is able to take into account, say, the emergence of China as a global power. At the same time, it is able to acknowledge the growing developmental constraints faced by commodity exporters, for example, in South America (Mahoney and Rodríguez-Franco, 2018).

Even if change is a central characteristic of global capitalism and some countries have grown rapidly for decades, there is ample evidence of persisting asymmetries between North and South. As we will discuss further in the next section, the structural adjustment policies developed in Washington by the US Treasury Department and multilateral institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank — and enthusiastically supported by many wealthy countries — contributed to 'the development collapses that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s outside of East and South Asia' (Fischer, 2019: 442). Divergence and not convergence has been the norm in many parts of the South in recent decades. Moreover, powerful Northern countries have successfully 'kicked away the ladder' of development, preventing the South from adopting much-needed state interventionist policies (Chang, 2002). Bilateral and multilateral agreements have transformed intellectual property regimes and pushed for free trade, making industrial policy, technological copying and knowledge diffusion harder than ever (Shadlen, 2005). Financial markets have also become a key source of structural asymmetries and dependence. While the Northern countries are able to borrow cheaply in their own currencies, many Southern countries face limited access to credit and struggle with periodic financial crises. The reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic was no exception: according to IMF data, while the fiscal response to the crisis in 2020 was equivalent to 24 per cent of GDP in wealthy economies, it represented only 6 per cent in emerging economies, and less than 3 per cent in low-income countries. Austerity has become the most common policy response in the South, in contrast to the unprecedented macroeconomic expansion in the United States and many European countries (Razavi et al., 2021). Clearly, the South as a signifier of structural inequalities remains useful, despite continuous changes in the global economy (Ghosh, 2019).

THE SOUTH AS POLITICS

Critical understandings of the South, like the ones we have highlighted in this article, have informed political pushback against oppression in Southern

contexts. If politics is understood as a contestation over the distribution of power and resources in the world, then the South has not always submitted to territorial, relational and structural exploitation. In this final section, we explore Southern political resistance and solidarities. As in previous sections, we make no claim to comprehensiveness. Our discussion is illustrative.

Earlier in this article, we questioned the inconsistency of European Enlightenment thinking which propounded liberty while simultaneously serving racist, colonial projects. In this section, we will highlight the crucial role enslaved and formerly enslaved peoples played in the broadening of key Enlightenment ideas such as freedom and equality for all. It is not the 'enlightened' from the North who first broke the chains of slavery. Instead, the first anti-slavery revolution took place in the French Caribbean colony of Saint-Domingue in 1791 (James, 1938). The Black plantation slave labourers of Saint-Domingue rebelled against their white and 'mulatto' (mixed-race) owners. They first successfully fought for their freedom, and then attempted to enforce abolition across the French colonies (Buck-Morss, 2000). They faced violence from invading armies, out to protect colonial, commercial interests. They defeated British forces in 1798, which also strengthened Britain's ongoing abolitionist movement. An initial Slave Trade Act to end slavery was promulgated in Britain in 1807, with white politician William Wilberforce given much credit for this. It is only now that we are beginning to acknowledge the agency of the oppressed in the process (Hazareesingh, 2020).

In 1802, Napoleon again moved to re-establish slavery in Saint-Domingue. French troops unleashed genocidal action against the Black population. The latter once again took up arms against the French, and declared their independence, thus going several steps beyond their initial fight for abolition. They collectivized under the banner 'Liberty or Death', violently obliterated the white population of the island, and in 1805 established an independent nation of Black citizens with the Arawak name Haiti (Buck-Morss, 2000: 845). News from Haiti travelled to Europe, even as events of the French Revolution of 1869 had emboldened the revolutionaries in Haiti. Despite what we have been led to believe, the Enlightenment emerged from global entanglement — of people, ideas and politics — rather than hierarchy and difference (Bhambra, 2014).

Haitian-American historian Trouillot (1995) condemns the 'silencing of the past' in which the agency of the Black slaves of Haiti has been 'unthinkable' for the North. Yet Haiti inspired many anti-slavery and anti-colonial struggles in the 19th and 20th centuries. We know that the 'Liberator of the Americas' from Spanish colonialism, Simon Bolivar, sheltered in Haiti in 1815–16. Assisted with arms, ships and men, he made repeated charges on the South American mainland (Lewis, 1969). A century later, Haiti figured in cultural and literary production around the trans-Atlantic Negritude or 'Black Affirmation' turn. This was led by Francophone political intellectuals like Leopold Sedar Senghor, Black poet, and the first president of

independent Senegal, and Martiniquean poet, writer and politician, Aime Cesaire (Munro, 2004). Negritude, described by Sedar Senghor as 'the sum of the cultural values of the Black world as they are expressed in the life, the institutions, and the works of Black men' (quoted in Washington Bâ, 2015: 44) further inspired anti-colonial struggles in Africa in the 20th century. The South, and those who inhabit it, have thus been talking and fighting back for a very long time.

Resisting domination is an ongoing struggle which has been waged in different theatres across the globe. At times, it has played out at a geo-strategic and organizational level, in the building of alliances of nation states of colour. At other times, people and popular movements have taken the lead, instead of states and state-backed organizations. In the mid-20th century, African and Asian countries were involved in independence struggles. Many looked to each other for solidarity in a hostile world. In 1955, leaders from 29 countries ranging from Ghana, Tanzania and Egypt to China, India and Indonesia were represented at the Asian-African conference at Bandung, the first such meeting of newly independent Southern states. The participants were mostly representatives from English- or French-speaking countries who were emerging from European imperialism (Parshad, 2007). The 'Bandung spirit' of postcolonial solidarity was a call for a new world order, with newly independent states seeking to form a non-aligned power bloc. Anti-colonialism, anti-racism, respect for human rights, collaboration with the United Nations, the equality of all nations, non-interference in the internal affairs of another country, mutual cooperation and respect, and non-aggression were enshrined in the 'Bandung Principles' in a moment of post-colonial hope (Timossi, 2015).

The spirit of Bandung informed the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), established in 1961 in Belgrade at the Conference of the Heads of State or Governments of Non-Aligned Countries. The demand for 'peaceful coexistence' was written into the NAM's founding documentation. In insisting on non-alignment, the postcolonial world repeatedly rejected the continued neo-colonial domination of newly independent countries through the Cold War, controlled by the self-proclaimed First (US-led) and Second (USSR-led) Worlds (Parshad, 2007). With the intervention of Cuba, Central and South America, which have an older trajectory of colonialism compared to Asia and Africa, also formally joined NAM in 1961. The spirit of Bandung has also shaped the multilateral G77 bloc, established in 1964, which remains a forum of Southern countries to voice their interests at the UN and in other international arenas.

Competing interests and alliances among Southern nation states often led to a re-alignment and re-re-alignment of postcolonial solidarities. Some of these fissures will be discussed later in this section. For this moment, we want to emphasize a 'Southern spirit' united against (post)colonial domination. The author Amitav Ghosh (2012) refers to this as a moment of xenophilia or love of the other, which is the opposite of the xenophobia that

drove the colonial project, just as it drives a more contemporary politics of othering.[3] Ghosh cites the transnational friendships between Nehru, Nasser, Nkrumah, Sukarno, Chou En Lai and others, which instilled pride and affinities in their citizenry too. While this may present a rosy view that does not account for the racism experienced between and within postcolonial Southern nations, it offers an alternative to perspectives that were cynical about Third World initiatives. After all, in the middle of the Cold War and a global arms race led by the two superpowers, the US and USSR, the Third World project of non-alignment and peaceful coexistence had been deemed naïve by the First and Second World blocs (Nworah, 1977). That this project was attempted by the former colonies of the dominant countries is all the more admirable.

Race was not necessarily the binding factor in Bandung or NAM, although of course race or racism underpinned colonialism. Next, we discuss the Pan-Africanism of the early and mid-20th century, which was overtly organized on the grounds of race. The First Pan-African Conference, which was held in London in 1900, aimed 'to secure for Africans throughout the world true civil and political rights' (cited in Parshad, 2007: 39). The African-American thinker and political organizer W.E.B. Du Bois, who in 1909 founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in the US, also attended the Pan-African Conference. In his address, he called upon the nations of the world 'to deliberate solemnly upon the present situation and outlook of the darker races of mankind'. In these races he included 'the millions of black men in Africa, America, and the Islands of the Sea, not to speak of the brown and yellow myriads everywhere' (Du Bois, 1900[4] cited in Parshad, 2007: 39).

Half a century later, in 1966, delegates of liberation movements of 82 nations came together in Havana, Cuba. There they formed an alliance termed the Organization of Solidarity with the People of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAAL). OSPAAAL was involved in promoting radical thought, as well as cultural production through literary journals and film. It became an important link between Caribbean, Central and South American anti-colonialism and African and Asian anti-colonialisms. OSPAAAL consciously reached out to Black peoples in the American South. Collectives like OSPAAAL underscore the point that the South went beyond territorial boundaries of colonized states. For them, African Americans occupied 'the guts of the monster' of racism and exploitation (*Tricontinental Bulletin*, 1968: 30[5] cited in Mahler, 2015: 109).

The making of the South through colonialism, racism and structural exploitation, and the resistance of the South to these forms of domination, does

3. Thanks to Nimi Hoffmann for this point.
4. W.E.B. Du Bois, 'To the Nations of the World'. Address to Pan-African Conference, 23–25 July 1900.
5. *Tricontinental Bulletin* No. 25, 1968.

not mean that Southern actors have necessarily converged around common goals. We discuss one grouping of nations with common interests that succeeded in exerting power in the global economy, while inadvertently harming the prospects of other Southern countries in the process. This, we should add, took place with the collaboration of countries and corporations in the global North. We refer here to the cartelization of the oil-exporting countries from the late 1960s onwards. In 1973, the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) imposed an embargo on states seen to be supporting Israel. OPEC saw this support as going against the interests of Palestine. While countries like the US, Canada, UK, The Netherlands, Portugal and Japan were the main targets, the white, Israel-supporting governments of South Africa and the former Rhodesia were also banned from receiving imports. These countries consequently suffered crippling oil shortages, and a massive rise in prices. Globally, oil prices rose by almost 300 per cent within a year (Little, 2008).

Oil exporting countries found themselves with millions of US dollars to invest, which were quickly deposited in some of the leading American and European banks. The resulting growth in liquidity generated a boom in lending to countries in Central and South America, Asia and Africa. Between 1974 and 1982, private banks lent more than US$ 600 billion (at 1988 prices) to countries from these regions (Palma, 1998). When, a few years later, the US Federal Reserve sharply increased interest rates for purely domestic reasons, borrowing countries suffered major economic jolts that affected the life chances of millions of people. The oil price shocks soon dovetailed into a debt crisis for Southern countries, and revealed once again the power asymmetries in the global economy. Northern governments mobilized to protect their banks, increasing lending costs and securing prompt repayment of debt due to them, especially from Southern countries. In 1984, two years after the debt crisis, the largest US banks had overcome the bump: their dividends were already double those of 1980 (Thorp, 1998: 217). By contrast, within the South, the IMF and the World Bank — institutions dominated by the US and Europe — imposed particularly harsh structural adjustment programmes on countries with least bargaining power.

Postcolonial countries made vulnerable by extractive colonialism and, in many cases, also by predatory postcolonial rulers, now faced additional economic challenges. Already heavily indebted, Southern countries were made to liberalize their markets, deregulate their financial sectors and disinvest in the public sector in order to qualify for 'development' loans from international financial institutions (UNRISD, 1994). Countries which had come together on a range of progressive, postcolonial platforms faced market reform largely on their own, and on highly unequal terms set by their creditors. The continent of Africa was perhaps worst affected by structural adjustment, if we consider health, life expectancy or education indicators (Jolly, 1991). As Southern countries suffered the pernicious effects of structural adjustment for years, even decades, the questionable behaviour of Northern

governments and banks during the preceding debt crisis of the early 1980s was by and large forgotten.

At the 1986 summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Harare, Zimbabwe, the South Commission was created to study the political and economic problems facing the NAM countries. Tanzania's former president Julius Nyerere, first president of the South Commission, summarized the post-colonial, Third World project as one of 'growth and hope — then disillusionment' (cited in Parshad, 2007: 286). While the postcolonial world had come together with enthusiasm and righteousness, it continued facing deep structural inequalities — within its societies and in the global system. The individualized, economic and debt-ridden relations that were deepened by structural adjustment, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, made the US the centre of an increasingly unipolar world politics. This meant that Southern countries that rallied around a 'Bandung spirit' now found themselves as lone supplicants before Northern powers in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. A reorientation of the world through neoliberal marketization and political polarization has in effect undermined Southern solidarity. Even where alternate groupings have emerged, for example, the countries comprising BRICS, those unified by the Chinese Belt and Road initiative, or low-lying island nations most at risk from climate change, the solidarities forged are narrower. They reflect an underlying market logic, new donor–donee relations, or groupings based on vulnerability. The spirit of Bandung or OSPAAAL, which had political potential as a third bloc in world politics built on egalitarian principles, is unthinkable in the contemporary moment.

It is not a coincidence that the South as a political collective that could potentially stand against territorial, relational and structural domination has been weakened. Nevertheless, narrower Southern solidarities are still in evidence, as indicated above. Hearteningly, so are more popular, grassroots political initiatives. One such example is the Rhodes Must Fall (RMF) movement, which began in Cape Town in 2015. Students facing high university fees have protested regularly in post-apartheid South Africa. RMF was led by mainly Black students, who also used organizational methods from the Fees Must Fall civil disobedience. They were protesting against the visible and less than visible effects of colonialism and imperialism in their midst. The statue of white supremacist and colonizer Cecil Rhodes symbolized the destructive, deep-rooted afterlife of colonialism (Ndelu et al., 2017). The RMF movement spread to other locations, including Oxford University in the UK.

Black students and their allies have called for the removal of a statue of Rhodes at Oriel College, Oxford. Importantly, they have also questioned the academy's intellectual and financial links to colonialism, which, as this article has demonstrated, is very much in our midst (see also Chigudu, 2021). A transnational movement such as Rhodes Must Fall, like the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement which originated in the US against custodial violence disproportionately affecting the Black population, has sparked a

rethinking around coloniality. From this rethinking emerge initiatives to decolonize academic syllabi, diversify organizations and acknowledge racial and other intersectional privileges that favour some at the cost of others. Popular initiatives like BLM and RMF are opposing state-imposed inequalities and discriminations in the present, but also those that are deeply rooted in the past. The South as we have discussed it — as territory, relations, structures and politics — is imbricated in these recent people's movements, even if the fluidity of the latter also goes beyond Southernness.

CONCLUSION

Confronted with questions about the relevance of the South to the study of development, this article has argued in favour of retaining the concept. The South is an empty signifier which researchers, students, policy makers and others can fill with meaning. The article elaborated on four different ways in which the South has been conceived: as territory, relationality, structure and politics. As territory, the South demarcates the 'other' through history, geography and time. It encompasses the continents of Asia, Africa, and Central and South America, that have been dominated by modern-day colonialism and the postcolonial experience. The relational South is forged through everyday socialities of differentiation, which legitimize and reinforce logics of territorial othering. We illustrated this hierarchized world through relations of race, which extend the South beyond its traditional, territorial boundaries in a mobile context of extractive labour and migration. Both the territorial and relational South are negative categories. They describe and reinforce oppression by turning the Southern subject into an object of analysis, and of historical and contemporary politics and policy.

In contrast to our first two readings of the South, our final two categorizations are formulated by Southern agents. Here, the South is subject not object; she 'talks back' (hooks, 2015), in protest against objectification and domination. In this positive analysis, we first looked at the South as structure. Contrary to prevalent readings of their underdevelopment, and the onus to 'catch up' with the North, scholars and policy makers from Southern contexts argue that the enduring economic lagging of their countries is an imposed structural malaise. Some of these structural inequalities may have weakened, but others persist, explaining many of the problems these countries face. Our final 'talk back' came from the South as politics. We demonstrated that constituents of the South have frequently challenged their territorial, relational and structural domination. Movements against colonialism and slavery originated in the South, also influencing Northern thinkers and politics. In the postcolonial context, Southern countries collectively asserted their political and economic interests, and they did so independently of blocs dominated by former imperial powers. The subsequent realignment of the

post-Cold War world and the march of global capitalism have reduced, but not ended, the potential for Southern collaboration.

The notion of the South is dynamic and remains relevant in our engagement with the world. We don't see the value in doing away with a term that sheds light on our graded existence in a variety of ways. Importantly, we argue for retaining the concept of the South as it illuminates the distribution of power in an unequal system. The creation of the South as territory and through racialized relationships contributes to the exertion of 'power over' (Weber, 1978) space and peoples. Simultaneously, we see the operation of relational power, or the 'power to' get the other to act with or without their consent (Strange, 1988). The making of the South through an overbearing dominance demonstrates how power asymmetries are enhanced in the world. At the same time, alternative interpretations of the South can show us how power asymmetries may be reduced. In the first instance, this may be by pointing to how power imbalances affect some regions negatively and must be modified. Accordingly, this article highlighted structural power to critique actors' and institutions' capacity to control enduring societal arrangements, for example, of security, production, finance and knowledge (Azmanova, 2018). Finally, power can be and is resisted through actively challenging dominant orders. This can take place though intellectual critique, but also through an anti-colonial, anti-racist and pro-South oppositional politics.

As academics and teachers, we have found it useful to trace the complex, multi-layered making of the South. These layers point to why the concept is 'sticky' and cannot be dislodged with the tokens we see around us. That is, changing a name, or including a representative from 'the South' at a conference, diversity event or on a reading list, is a step in the right direction, albeit a small one. Far greater efforts are needed to get to the heart of the matter, which is fundamentally the (re)production of a deeply hierarchical world, and the power that may be both enhanced and possibly challenged in the process. While we have delineated the multi-layered making of the South, we hope that our students and readers will want to go further in challenging and dismantling what the South may represent, especially in its negative connotations. We see this article as a provocation for further engagement.

This article is the outcome of extensive conversations with students and colleagues about the unit of analysis of development studies. Do we continue studying Asia, Africa and Central and South America in departments of international development such as ours? Or could our field be more global? The answer, at the end of our analysis, is that it depends. It depends on what we are studying, and how we are defining the South in this exploration. The South remains at the core of development studies, as the project of development was conceived to contribute to the South's catching up with the North. We have shown that in terms of territory and time, structures and politics, identity and othering, the South cannot simply merge with the North, or into an indistinguishable 'globality'. Due to its enduring difference — both

in the negative and positive sense — the South is the relevant unit of analysis for understanding and 'doing' development. This does not imply that development is irrelevant for the North. It just means that its trajectory in the South and North is very different. Having said that, our students or colleagues may well want to study development within a global framework. For instance, they may have an interest in the difference in access countries have to international finance for greening initiatives. This might involve studying centres of global finance, their policies, politics and actions on the ground in particular locations. The research will likely traverse territorial boundaries of North and South but would benefit from anchoring its engagement in the South as structure as delineated above. It will also require an awareness of power and its unequal distribution across actors within and between countries. We believe that the options emerging from our framing of the South are vast. Our intention is not to limit the scope of analysis in the field of development studies, but to define it more clearly. Anything does not go, as we have argued.

That brings us to our penultimate point, which links back to the title of this article. We began with the suggestion that there is widespread discomfort with the hierarchies of development. The South represents gradations in the global order that many would like to see disappear. Yet, as we have shown, the South is not just a word; it can be understood as a process through which our world has been made. The South may be seen as an analytical tool for understanding the history, geography, politics, economics and society of much of the world. It is also a field of power. As a process, an analytical tool, and as power, the South is going nowhere, our discomfort notwithstanding. Our suggestion to the discomfited, ourselves included, is to stay with the discomfort. Interrogating it and working with it as we have tried to do here, is more productive than waving a discursive wand to change terminology. Apart from those seeking to undo the hierarchies of the global North and global South, albeit somewhat superficially, there is also the larger question of who benefits from the recession of the South from our consciousness, and from development agendas. Whose interests are served if we shift to a global, and somewhat flattened, world of development and development studies? We leave this question open, but the text provides hints, which are ripe for further exploration.

Our final point reflects on this article with an eye to the future. The study of the South, and of development more broadly, highlights a disjunction — or how the South came to be made as 'different'. But ours must also ultimately be a project of connection. One form of connection has been addressed above in our critical discussion of how the North played into the making of the South and still does. The study of connections, and of power, is one form of engagement between North and South. This can be approached in a manner that creates and maintains difference, or in a manner that challenges it. Another more cooperative form of connection would require re-seeing and re-writing the field of development and the spaces we

read as North and South. Here, we would have to draw on understandings that perceive the world and key achievements and moments in it as multi-sited and intertwined (Bhambra, 2014). From the industrial revolution which is inconceivable without Asian advances in agriculture, or Arabian strides in mathematics, to ideas of liberty and democracy which we have shown owe much to the anti-slavery revolution in Haiti — our world is predicated on the creative criss-crossing of people, ideas, cultures and material across the globe. Particularly in a time of ecological crisis, knowledge built out of enabling connection, not disjunction, is something we should strive towards. Such a pluriversal understanding of a multi-sited, relational order would offer the basis for calling a discipline like ours 'global' development studies. So long as this pluriversal sensibility eludes us, hierarchical categories of North and South, or similar, will continue to have relevance in our reading of the world.

Acknowledgements

Our biggest thanks are to our students and colleagues at the Oxford Department of International Development for questions and conversations over many years. Thanks are due to the individuals who encouraged us to put our ideas on this topic to paper, and who kindly read drafts at various stages. Generally, the heterodox and open environment of ODID, and in the MPhil in Development Studies where we teach, has encouraged us to venture well past our disciplinary training, and push the boundaries of many of development's givens. We gratefully acknowledge the seminar participants of the International Development Seminar Series at the University of Sussex, and the Centre for Development Studies at the University of Bath who engaged thoroughly and constructively with our arguments. Finally, we appreciate the detailed comments from the four *Development and Change* journal reviewers, who provided insights that not only improved this article but also gave us a lot of food for thought for future work.

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Nikita Sud is Professor of the Politics of Development, Department of International Development, University of Oxford, UK, and a Fellow of Wolfson College, University of Oxford, UK. Her research interests centre on states, space, energy and nature in the Global South, especially Asia. Her most recent book is *The Making of Land and the Making of India* (Oxford University Press, 2021).

Diego Sánchez-Ancochea is Head of the Department of International Development, University of Oxford, UK. His research focuses on inequality and social policies. His most recent book is *The Costs of Inequality in Latin America: Lessons and Warnings for the Rest of the World* (Bloomsbury, 2020).