# Centres, peripheries, interstices: towards an eclectic political economy of global development

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## Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia

*Full workshop report by Grant Curtis and Allison Chandler, Doctoral Candidates in Political Science, Dalhousie University*

In his introductory remarks, **David Black** noted that the scholarship and mentorship of **Tim Shaw** and **Jane Parpart** has resulted in a multi-generational tradition of inspiring junior scholars. He indicated that that their prolific scholarship ranged from top-down theorizing to granular bottom-up perspectives; both have examined unexpected or unexplored spaces to reveal the interstices of political and social power. The colloquium was designed to pay tribute to their scholarship, mentorship, and friendships by considering some of the interstices they have separately and jointly examined.

## I.  THEORIES AND METHODS

| Critical theoretical eclecticism | | |
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| **Presenter** | **Institution** | **Paper** |
| Lucian ASHWORTH | Memorial University | Global Governance in the Anthropocenes |
| Scarlett CORNELISSEN | Stellenbosch University | Africa's International Political Economy: Theorizing 'Against the Grain' |
| Larry SWATUK | University of Waterloo | Theorizing Global Political Economy in an Era of Ferment |

*How well does the canon of international relations (IR) and international political economy (IPE) theory and their various "isms" account for today's ever more complex international (and domestic) political landscapes? Can we rely on any particular theory to explain the contemporary world, or must we consider new, syncretic, or even eclectic theoretical approaches to help us navigate what seems a very uncertain future? What new ways of thinking are required to address not only the climate emergency, but new conceptions of very real environmental limits to growth? How do we carry forward critical theoretical approaches, including with respect to an Africa/s that is too often essentialized? And how do we move beyond sterile theory to improved IR practice? Panelists explored these questions, thus setting the stage for a larger exploration of the need for a more eclectic approach to the political economy of global development.*

Only two days before the launch of COP26, **Lucian Ashworth** indicated the importance of (re)considering matters of global governance, including how or how much the climate

emergency has shifted or will change the parameters of IR and IPE. Citing Dryzek and Pickering (*The Politics of the Anthropocene,* 2019), he noted that human institutions, practices, and principles require an urgent and thorough re-thinking. He addressed the historical and changing dimensionality of global politics, suggesting that over the past 200-300 years we have moved from a two dimensional, cadastral-based and largely agrarian view of the material world to a machine or industrial age that is more three dimensional, albeit still bounded. Recent decades have been characterized by the over-extraction of resources and the corresponding negative effects on the world's fresh water, its soils, the oceans, and the atmosphere, with further encroachments on both radio and cyber space. Ashworth posited that in addition to over-exploitation, the third dimension of human "progress" also has become one of despoliation, particularly with respect to the disposal and non-containment of waste products which further threaten human existence ("the politics of depletion and the politics of refuse").

Ashworth suggested that the velocity of industrial and urbanized change – and its negative impacts – has pushed the world into a fourth dimension where humankind has surpassed the limits to growth. He suggested that the anthropocenes – experienced across all four dimensions – will present new and perhaps not yet anticipated global governance challenges.

In considering the post-colonial and global International Relations (IR) agenda, **Scarlett Cornelissen** problematized traditional IR. She suggested that Africa is still considered an "aberrant other" that remains mostly outside IR's carefully (or carelessly?) constructed and mostly European-based knowledge paradigms. With modernity the dominant expression of the global imaginary, the African continent often is perceived as outside of this frame. Critical African IR engages with this exclusionary view, and attempts to demonstrate a different perspective more attuned to the African context and experience and based on more hermeneutical or interpretive approaches. Cornelissen argued that African IR must look beyond the Westphalian notion of states by directing more attention to the informal relationships that characterize so much of African life. She also emphasized the need to reflect differently on African histories, suggesting that there is much promise in exploring the impact of capitalism and labour vis-à-vis the emergent role of China and changes in global capitalism, as well as interrogating the spatial, material, and relational dimensions of African IR.

**Larry Swatuk** noted that the proverbial kitchen sink is the only thing missing from Tim Shaw's eclectic theorizing; he praised Shaw's magpie-like tendency to profligately borrow, expand upon, and improve upon earlier theories and IR theorists. Following in Shaw's theoretical footsteps, he termed himself a "pragmatic pluralist" who uses theory to explain why things are the way they are, but with a clear commitment to change and improvement. He indicated that theory has utility in its ability to explain the world of IR, but agreed with Waltz that grand narratives are important only when they can direct action for someone or about something. He also noted that development theory has shifted from explanations of underdevelopment or poverty to a more insistent discussion of how to achieve human development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Swatuk suggested that four neoliberal decades have brought decidedly mixed results to much of the world, and also pointed to the paralysis of academics and the fragmentation of social movements as part of the failure to bring about transformational or sustainable change. He indicated a need for IR to further interrogate the relationships between theory and practice;

structure and agency; order and anarchy; and new or innovative ways of seeing, hearing, and knowing. While acknowledging that instrumentalism and a "disengaged cacophony of opinion" remains at the heart of IR/IPE, he proposed that we all strive for the possibility of positive change everywhere and always.

Discussion on the three papers centred on the need to decolonize and problematize mainstream IR so as to move beyond state-centric and western-oriented IR. **David Hornsby** commented that Ashworth's explication of four dimensions of global politics, and the sinews of governance in relation to these dimensions, forces us into new ways of "magpie nest theorizing." Dominant narratives need to be challenged, as does the tendency to essentialize and homogenize a continent that comprises many different Africas and multiple African identities – again emphasizing the need for eclectic thinking and pluralistic approaches to IR theory.

| Interdisciplinarity, feminism, and 'outside-in' approaches | | |
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| Presenter | Institution | Paper |
| Jane PARPART | University of Ottawa | Rethinking Silence, Voice and the In-between: Exploring a World in Flux |
| Erin BAINES | University of British Columbia | Documenting the unspeakable: relational methodologies, militarized masculinities and paternal love |
| Rebecca TIESSEN | University of Ottawa | Towards a Transformative Vision for Gender and Canadian International Policy |

*What is the relationship between voice and agency? And what of silence, when voice is suppressed, silenced, or purposively withheld? When and how can silence shift from powerlessness to a kind of embedded power or strength? How should we understand silence, and how can we best interpret the in-between spaces that lie between voice and silence and agency as well as the similarities and differences between women's and men's silences? Finally, has Canada's feminist international assistance policy truly "shifted the dial" towards an improved understanding of gender?*

**Jane Parpart** noted that her involvement in the feminist movement and her long experience in both the theory and practice of women in development in Africa led to her to think more deeply about women's voices, and how voice is both a key aspect of agency as well as an important tool for managing one's life. While silence can be interpreted as the absence (or silencing) of voice, she began to explore silence not as a sign of disempowerment, but as a powerful force in its own right. Such thinking resulted in her 2019 book, *Rethinking silence, gender, and power in insecure sites: Implications for feminist security studies in a postcolonial world*, which offered a more multi-level understanding of silence and voice and their many interactions. More recently she has begun to interrogate silence not only as lack of voice, but also in relation to what people don't say, or what they think they cannot say, the silence behind voice, or what she has termed the "in-between." She has come to see this "space" as a necessary and powerful complement to voice and silence in that it can promote both reflection and healing. While voice is a key aspect

of agency, silence and the "in-between" can be equally powerful with, for example, the mothers of "the disappeared" using collective silence to amplify their voices. Around the world, a combination of silence and voice is being used to challenge patriarchal power and gender inequality, with the "in-between" providing space for the kind of reflection and planning that can galvanize action or result in strategies that promote better understanding of gender as a dynamic factor and that lead to greater gender equality. She noted that in the Global North voice is prized and prioritized, so that the power of silence is often underestimated.

Building on her collaboration on the 2015 book, *I Am Evelyn Amony: Reclaiming My Life from the Lord's Resistance Army,* **Erin Baines** offered a reflection on a three-year research project in Northern Uganda that detailed the experience of men who had been insurgents, including those who had been part of forced marriages and other forms of gender violence. Compared to affected women who had been somewhat open to sharing their experience and perspectives (at least in what they perceived to be a "safe" environment), men in the research study proved to be much more reluctant to discuss their experiences and feelings, often choosing to "disappear" into silence. While the interview subjects often established some level of authority or control in their meetings with the research team, it became clear that the former insurgents felt inferior to those of their age group who had not been abducted into the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Such sense of inferiority was reinforced when many joined the Ugandan Army, but at a lower rank than many of their fellow soldiers. They also felt under constant and critical surveillance by their neighbours ("there again goes that rapist") and their superiors. Without mechanisms for sharing either their experiences or their attempts to deal with their past actions, many of these men had retreated into frustrated or hostile silence.

Just as the issue of children born of rape was often met with silence, the research team found that former male insurgents would not discuss matters of love, including paternal love, despite evidence of secret meetings of families, fathers paying school fees, and sometimes even taking custody of children born of forced marriage. Generally, however, men's feelings towards their wives and children remained shrouded in silence. In this, the research team discovered the importance of active listening, intuiting beyond the silences of their interview subjects. Listening through the silence also seemed to be mutual, with several of the male interview subjects later asking, "now that you have met us, what do you think of us?"

Overall, Baines emphasized that trust building, including understanding of and beyond silence, is an important part of ethical praxis.

Complementing the two earlier presentations, **Rebecca Tiessen** reflected on how feminist scholarship has transformed the policy and practice landscape, making specific reference to Canada's feminist international assistance policy. She noted that while a definition of feminism is absent from Canadian policy documents – with more emphasis on "women and girls" than the more complex landscape of "gender"– Global Affairs staff generally "get it" (and have come a long way to do so). She posited that the changed landscape was largely due to academic teaching, including Jane Parpart's scholarship (measured by the number of Internet "hits" and inclusion of her works in course syllabi). Tiessen noted that critical scholarship (e.g. articles in *International Journal,* 75:3, September 2020) are insufficient to fully analyze Canada's feminist foreign policy. There is a need to trace the impetus for a feminist foreign policy and to examine what, if any, changes have been brought about since 2017. She suggested that the new policy has "moved the needle," including in the way that gender data is now collected across all

government departments with significant implications for improved [gender-related] Results-Based Management. She also suggested that with an increased focus on gender as a key aspect of the Canadian development policy, Canada has made a significant step beyond "gender mainstreaming."

In discussion, **Maria Nzomo** noted that while silence often is a survival strategy, it also can be a significant source of power, and agreed that strategic silence can amplify voice as well as underscore pain or trauma that cannot be openly addressed. She also noted that agency is always linked to power.

**W. Andy Knight** agreed that silence can be profound, providing an opportunity for deep reflection and creating awareness outside of other stimuli, thus leading to different ways of thinking. He concurred with Jane that silence – and the "in-between space" – can be generative.

Colloquium participants agreed that active listening is an essential counterpart to silence, "hearing" what is left unsaid or that which cannot be spoken. For field researchers, this can mean more open-ended questions followed by empathetic listening (and observance of body language) as a way of bearing witness or otherwise honouring what is being shared, either verbally or through silence. It also was noted that active listening is embedded in many cultures, as with speaking circles or "speaking sticks" and the embedded "truths" of oral traditions. It was observed that Jane Parpart's "in-between" is more than a gap or absence; rather, it is an important part of self-reflection, empathy, and understanding. The "in-between," then, serves as a liminal space.

**Remembering Ian Taylor**

Colleagues and friends of Ian Taylor paid tribute to his "unceasingly curious mind" and "unwavering intellectual integrity." His "generosity of spirit" also was noted, with one colleague noting that "Ian made me a better scholar, and also a better person." Colloquium participants' reflections were enriched by the reflections of Jo Taylor, Ian's widow, also a friend to many of the extended Taylor, Shaw, and Parpart family of IR scholars.

## II. EVOLVING FORMS OF GOVERNANCE

| New Modes of (Global) Governance | | |
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| **Presenter** | **Institution** | **Paper** |
| Nadège CAMPAORÉ | University of Toronto | Global Governance, Norm Localization and the Resource-Environment Nexus |
| Jason MCSPARREN | University of Massachusetts Boston | Global Governance, Mining and Energy Provision in Africa: International Organizations in Support of Developmental Regionalisms? |
| Rajin KHAN | Dalhousie University | An Uncertain Glory in Bangladesh: Development as Freedom under the Awami Regime (2009-2020) |

*What is meant by 'success' in development? And who are the actors suited to help inculcate and foster that development? From environmental considerations to civil society, regional integration to the importance of political freedoms, what the world understands as 'development' is diverse and contested. While the power and influence of traditional state action persists, the importance of non-state actors in achieving development goals must be fully understood and incorporated. Similarly, attention to 'agency' has grown, both in terms of how the international community should understand agency as well as how it can be supported both internally and externally. Collectively, panelists highlighted the links between agency and development, and the importance of breaking down silos in research. In addition, given the importance of non-state and civil society actors in contexts around the world, the closing of civic space proves an increasingly worrisome development.*

Opening the panel, **Nadège Campaoré** highlighted the interplay of local and global dynamics of governance and their effects on the 'resource-environment nexus'. Looking at the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI), she explored how current conceptions of African agency are incomplete without the addition of non-state and civil society actors in analyses. In Ghana, for example, Campaoré noted how grassroots organizations and civil society were responsible for norm localization that has helped redefine fundamental concepts, including understanding fishing and forestry as extractive industries, which are now gaining ground internationally. In contrast, environment-focused civil society organizations in Gabon garner more suspicion locally due to their financial links to the Global North. She concluded with the assertion that, to produce a global environmental approach to oil and mining governance, alignment between states *and* non-state actors (particularly grassroots movements and civil society) is required. Consequently, grassroots movements and civil society organizations should be considered fundamental to understanding African agency.

**Jason McSparren** continued the examination of resource governance in Africa, focusing on the work of more traditional regional institutions and transnational strategies. To explore the drivers and constraints of regional development in Africa, McSparren examined the implementation of four initiatives by the African Union and the African Development Bank: the African Mining Vision, the African Union Climate Strategy, the Regional Integration Strategy, and

the New Deal for Energy in Africa. He conceptualized these tools, including the African Mining Vision, as acts of quasi-developmental states.

McSparren noted that an African 'variety' of a developmental state could, normatively, be focused on sustainable developments, existing extractive and agricultural sectors, and renewable energy sources. This would have significant implications for International Political Economy, particularly if current neoliberal value chains were displaced by more aspirational, pan-African developmental corridors. Ongoing debates regarding 'resource nationalism' may also further complicate existing standards regarding ownership of mineral resources by the corporations that extract them. Furthermore, he noted an African developmental state may be well-suited to create 'developmental regionalisms' through the pursuit of greater regional integration of economic corridors. This would allow for – among other things -  greater access to markets, improved economic and business development, and more intra-African trade.

**Rajin Khan** presented an assessment of Bangladeshi development over the past 12 years under the political leadership of the Awami League. He noted that political freedoms have not been included in traditional evaluations of a state's development and sought to discover whether Bangladeshi achievements in development also correspond with advances in political freedom. Using Amartya Sen's *Development as Freedom* as a guide, Khan argued that significant economic and social improvements have been realized but political conditions within Bangladesh are "dark clouds" in an otherwise sunny picture. While socioeconomic conditions trend upwards, Khan highlighted that though press freedom has improved and overall fragility has decreased, Bangladesh's overall score in freedom has decreased significantly, reflecting the lack of free and fair elections, vanished space for political protests, and the continuous torture and detainment of civil society critics.

| New Regionalisms | | |
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| **Presenter** | **Institution** | **Paper** |
| J. Andrew GRANT | Queen's University | The Praxis of the Region: Reflections on Regionalisms |
| Laura MACDONALD | Carleton University | New Regionalisms Theory and North America |
| Badriyya YUSUF | Queen's University | Human Trafficking and Smuggling in West Africa: Insights from a Gendered Approach to Shadow Regionalisms |
| W. Andy KNIGHT | University of Alberta | New Vulnerabilities and Insecurities in the 'Intermestic' Political Economy of the Caribbean |

*In discussing 'New Regionalisms', a comprehensively pluralist approach is required. From broadening our understanding of methodologies and key concepts – notably by using language*

*that reflects the diversity of experience even within shared events – to breaking free from false binaries that have plagued the field of political science, researchers should engage reflectively and pluralistically with the world around them. Moving beyond 'the state' is another key factor in developing regionalisms as a topic of study, to accurately reflect the monumental impact of informal structures. It is also necessary to pay attention to silence(s), elevating voices that had previously been neglected and reflecting on ways individuals are still silenced today. Finally, the analysis of new regionalisms must involve clear recognition of a world in flux – a changing world order, and new structures and tools emerging as a consequence.*

**J. Andrew Grant** reflected on practitioner and academic approaches to regionalism(s) and how this may change expectations and perceptions about the world order in the 2020s and beyond. While regionalism can be understood as both formal structures that are very state- and policy-centric, or as informal structures incorporating both state and non-state actors that often challenge existing policies, Grant focused more on informal regionalism. He argued that key concepts, ontologies, and epistemologies should be pluralized to better reflect the diversity of experience; regionalisms, masculinities, femininities, Global Souths, COVID-19s. To this end, even something like praxes should be pluralized so it accurately refers to the agency of the actors who in turn construct regions and regionalisms.

Grant concluded by comparing an article written by Tim Shaw on the outlook for the 1980s with the challenges facing the world today as we enter the 2020s. Where Shaw in 1980 wrote of ecological concerns, growing interstate rivalry, new nationalism, the spectre of anarchy and enlightened internationalism, similar anxieties exist looking forward from 2021. The rise of BRICSAM (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, and Mexico) may result in a new global order, while challenges such as global warming and COVID-19 create significant uncertainties in the years ahead.

**Laura MacDonald** examined how gender manifests in both new and old regionalisms, with a focus on NAFTA in the North American context. MacDonald argued that both old and new conceptions of regionalism are largely genderblind, though feminist political economy critiques have emerged to challenge assertions of gender-neutrality. In reference to trade policies in particular, she noted the "astonishing" speed of the shift *towards* gender-responsive policies, highlighting the WTO Declaration from 2017 to incorporate gender perspectives in agreements, which was signed by over 120 countries. ECOWAS has also been incorporating gender considerations, though MacDonald noted this is in part due to pressure from the European Union. Looking at NAFTA in particular, MacDonald highlighted that despite the explicit adoption of a GBA+ approach to trade by Canada, gender dimensions in the labour chapter of the agreement were eventually revised to exclude such language after opposition by the United States. In practice, despite being the centre of the anti-globalization movement, regional integration within North America limited individual states' abilities to promote progressive policies, resulting in gender concerns disappearing from the actual text of NAFTA.

Returning to questions of informal regionalisms, **Badriyya Yusuf** explored the intersection of "shadow regionalisms" and tracing processes for missing irregular migrants in West Africa. Yusuf highlights the increased role of technology governance particularly in relation to migration, through machine-learning and predictive tools in border management and computerized border guards used to flag high-risk passengers. Non-state actors have also taken advantage of technological innovation to further their aims, whether that be human traffickers using digital

platforms to advertise, recruit and exploit victims, or individuals seeking to track down a missing migrant. Without official processes for finding missing migrants, families seek out information through informal 'shadow' networks (including through smuggling operations and human traffickers).

Crossing the Atlantic, **W. Andy Knight** focused on the Caribbean to illustrate the power of small states coming together to amplify their individual voices. Small states share many environmental, economic, health, and military vulnerabilities. Simultaneously, these states must also contend with limited resources, remoteness, a dependence on international trade, debt loads, fragile environments, susceptibility to natural disasters, and limited capacity. To "punch above their weight" in international fora, Knight highlighted the importance of regional organizations and alliances between small states through groups like the Forum of Small States, Alliance of Small States, and Small Island Development States and shows their impact in the UN system. Capitalizing on plurilateral negotiations, small states are able to pursue niche diplomacy in support of their own priorities, while pooling sovereignty with their neighbours through regional or transregional bodies. Though their success rate has been mixed, by taking advantage of regional arrangements, small states have been able to amplify their voices to be heard at the highest levels of the UN. Moving forward, Knight highlighted the importance of utilizing plurilateral organizations in tandem with non-state actors (and sovereignty-free actors) to give even more weight to the voices of small states internationally.

## III. AGENCY

| African Solutions to African Problems? | | |
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| **Presenter** | **Institution** | **Paper** |
| Maria NZOMO | University of Nairobi | African Agency in IR: Reflections on my intellectual journey with Tim & Jane |
| Peter ARTHUR | Dalhousie University | Jerry Rawlings' leadership, media, civil society and Ghana's democratic consolidation process |
| Alfred NHEMA | University of the Western Cape | African Solutions to African Problems in the 21st Century: Challenges and Prospects |

*Though a clear theme of the conference overall, agency (and who can act as agents) was also a strong thread through the panel on African Solutions to African Problems. Where are the loci of power, in IR as a field, in transnational and regional organizations, and even in national governments? It is important to move beyond conventional approaches to analysis and subject matter, and to amplify marginalized voices wherever possible – particularly in relation to the African continent and its scholars. Linking back to New Modes of (Global) Governance, this theme prompted questions regarding the purposeful pursuit of development by African states and the potential for an African variety of 'developmental state'. Yet states alone are insufficient as research subjects; presentations provided an analysis of a variety of actors and institutional structures that have contributed, or may contribute in the future, to improved development*

*prospects for areas of need. Understanding who these actors are – who is 'Africa'(or 'Africas') – is an important next step for future research.*

**Maria Nzomo** began the panel by reflecting on the impact of Tim Shaw and Jane Parpart's work on understanding African agency, and in particular their long-held recognition of Africa and Africans as active agents in shaping both the continent and global politics, not just as 'receivers of policies'. Shaw has used eclectic approaches to discuss African agency since the 1980s, pushing for new economic, regional and international economic orders while supporting African scholars to take back the narrative about and of the continent. Nzomo argued that Africa has proven to be an innovator in regionalism, and new regionalisms at several levels – both formal and informal – will continue to serve as catalysts for the continent's renaissance in the years to come. These strengths must be both appreciated and changed to reflect Africa in the new millennium, particularly by investing in public diplomacy that involves non-state actors and media to enhance regional cooperation. Finally, Nzomo noted that despite the importance of these innovations, women are still never central to conceptions of state power. Addressing these gaps would be a useful direction for future research and action.

Zeroing in on the case of Ghana, **Peter Arthur** presented a reassessment of former Ghanaian President Jerry Rawlings' leadership over his approximately 20-year career. For many African countries, there has been an increase in the rise of so-called 'illiberal democracy' in the past five years, but Arthur noted Ghana has largely avoided this fate and this is often associated with Rawlings' influential leadership. Rawlings time in power, which spanned the period from the early 1980s to the early 2000s, was heavily influenced by both Rawlings' socialist ideas and the World Bank's financial restrictions on Ghana to impel a capitalist orientation. Arthur describes how, though Ghana was considered "an international success story" in terms of Structural Adjustment after 1983, it was not until significant pressure from the donor community was applied that Rawlings moved to implement real democratic reforms in the nation, lifting a ban on political parties and abandoning his military position. He won the 1992 democratic election and was re-elected in 1996, and ever since Arthur noted that power has been shared roughly equally, and with little incident, between the two primary political parties. Arthur concluded that while Rawlings has some very positive aspects to his legacy, including rooting out corruption and overseeing the transition to democracy, his authoritarian tendencies (particularly in the 1980s) mean Rawlings' legacy must be considered with a critical eye.

Finally, **Alfred Nhema** sought to evaluate the challenges and prospects of African regionalism through an historical overview of major incidents confronting the African Union and African leaders. Created in 2002, Nhema argues the African Union has been a major player in realizing "African solutions for African problems." He highlights the AU's involvement in overseeing peace missions in various states as clear success stories, including intervening in Darfur in 2004, the creation of the Government of National Unity in Zimbabwe in 2009, as well as ECOWAS' role in resolving the Gambian electoral dispute in 2017.

Nhema also noted the challenges facing AU and other regional and pan-African institutions. Somalia remains highly fragile, while the AU continues to deliberate on the way forward in Libya. Ethiopia, where the Tigray crisis is unfolding, is home to the capital of the AU yet no response to the unfolding humanitarian disaster in that country has been forthcoming from the Union. He noted the lack of robust political will by African leaders in conjunction with limited financial means. Furthermore, the growing threat of terrorism across the continent complicates

existing problems while demanding urgent attention. Nhema concluded by arguing that, while intervention mechanisms used by the AU are well-developed and largely accepted, Africa cannot work in isolation on these issues (particularly when contending with the lack of stable, sustainable funding mechanism for the AU). Yet 'Africa' as a concept remains in some ways aspirational; an ambitious aim for 54 disparate countries to work towards, to build on successes in spreading democracy while responding to complex conflicts and their root causes.

| Roundtable on Universities and Think Tanks in Global Development Practice | | |
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| **Presenter** | **Institution** | **Paper** |
| Fahim QUADIR | Queen's University | Changes and Challenges to the Mission of the University |
| Laura MACDONALD | Carleton University | Latin America |
| W. Andy KNIGHT | University of Alberta | The Caribbean |
| David HORNSBY | Carleton University | South(ern) Africa |
| Robert MUGGAH | Igarape Institute | Think Tanks |

*In their engagements with development processes, broadly understood, universities and think tanks face many of the same challenges and opportunities across diverse regional settings. Inequality, and the ways in which institutions can either contribute to it or work towards abating it, is a clear and urgent concern. The tricky task of how to prioritize issues of social good in light of limited budgets is also ubiquitous, particularly as university mandates expand and pressures on think tanks intensify. Perhaps the most pervasive challenge, however, is the double-edged sword of the politicization of the university. While new, more proactive missions for universities in North America and elsewhere, as well as the best ways to support progressive movements abroad are issues of growing focus and concern, forward movement on this front must be approached thoughtfully as there are clear dangers when knowledge production spaces became politicized and partisan. These challenges raise important questions about what the individual responsibility of researchers and academics is, and what the responsibilities of their institutions should be.*

**Fahim Quadir** opened with a statement on the mission of the university, and how post-secondary institutions in the contemporary era should aim to turn knowledge into action to better contribute to both society and the economy. Reflecting on one's responsibility as an academic, Quadir noted the serious political challenges arising today, along with pressures on democracy around the world. He describes how previous models of the university operated on the supply side of knowledge production, with the "invisible hand" assumed to be delivering the benefits of that knowledge to society. Yet societal expectations have changed, and Quadir describes the "new university" as one that has a responsibility to work together with others in society to address challenges and find solutions, by ensuring knowledge is created for the common good and there is more engagement with non-academics and the broader community. Graduates who can act as responsible global citizens, rather than just critical thinkers, should be

an additional goal for the new university. Quadir concluded by noting that universities are not the only legitimate sources of knowledge, particularly vis-à-vis international development, and supporting communities and building equitable partnerships are important elements of the new academic's responsibilities.

**Laura MacDonald** pivoted to explore universities as tools for development in Latin America. Given the diversity of the region, she noted a difficulty in generalizing about universities in Latin America but also that the region's university systems are, in general, deeply unequal, despite attempts to use universities to contribute to development problems without reinforcing existing hierarchies. MacDonald highlighted the neoliberalization of universities in Brazil as emblematic of these problems; Brazilian universities have created their own individual entrance exams, testing different knowledge, so in effect one must pay for private tutoring to attend even a public university. MacDonald also noted the history of the politicization of university space, suggesting that curriculum re-writes conducted under Pinochet in Chile are still present and influencing knowledge production today. She further noted the influence of realist International Relations thinking in some Political Science departments and an underrepresentation of gender or critical approaches, due in part to specific policies undertaken by the US government to spread their dominant conception of IR in decades past. However, she also noted that many Latin American institutions are pioneering new post-colonial and decolonial approaches. MacDonald concluded by noting the politicization of higher education in Latin America, from both the right and left, which challenges socially engaged scholars to consider how to best support progressive movements across the region.

Experiencing similar challenges to those in Latin America, **W. Andy Knight** argued academics must rethink how they understand and operate in the complicated and turbulent region of the Caribbean. Knight argued we are now living in a post-Westphalian era, and this must be taken into account by institutions and networks operating in the region. According to Knight, Caribbean states are being integrated into the global capitalist economy and becoming caught up in the accumulation of private capital to the detriment of their individual national goals. This has resulted in tensions between the dominant transnational elites and the marginalized working classes, repression of liberal movements in the region, and state governments choosing either industrialization or sustainable consumption. Caribbean universities have been grappling with this social context, attempting to understand the impact of different levels of governance in the region. Knight noted that a different *type* of governance is likely needed – one with more resilient structures and robust disaster risk management. This requires significant investment, and many options are available to help overcome developmental deficits, including reparations.

**David Hornsby** echoed earlier explorations of the university as a tool for development, but this time in the context of South Africa. Hornsby noted that, following apartheid, South Africa put great stock in the university as a tool for socioeconomic development and social transformation. This mission remains to this day - students come from impoverished backgrounds and their prospects are then transformed through their access to education. However, the successes of this effort have been relatively limited; Hornsby noted that only 6% of the total population had a university degree as of 2021. Furthermore, the push towards university education meant skills-based training was in some cases actively disincentivized. Financial and development challenges also inhibit this goal. Typically, elites and upper-middle-class individuals are the ones who attend university; this is also true of communities that speak English or Afrikaans, the dominant languages of instruction in South Africa. Emerging criticisms about the modes of learning, still

based on Western structures, are also gaining ground. Finally, Hornsby noted challenges associated with the politicization of university institutions. While universities in South Africa were previously generators of political contestation against the state to agitate for change, since 2015, universities have themselves become the focus of political contestation.

Shifting focus to think tanks, **Robert Muggah** addressed his experiences running the Igarapé Institute, a Brazilian think tank working on convergent human security issues. He highlighted the extraordinary challenges facing think tanks in the Global South, ranging from keeping the lights on to dealing with predatory governments and inconsistent currencies. Muggah noted that, as a consequence of these conditions, think tanks are often too busy dealing with "short-term priorities" to engage in long-term strategizing. This problem is compounded by the lack of long-term, consistent funding. Muggah noted large shifts underway globally that have complicated the environment for think tanks but also created opportunities; for example, digital technologies have opened up significant avenues for collaboration and a sort of democratization of ideas not possible even a decade ago. Moreover, the growth of the think tank ecosystem throughout the Global South allows for greater south-south exchange. However, Muggah was wary of dramatic shifts in political and economic environments wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic. He described a "devastation" across the Global South think tank world as many organizations were not able to weather the pandemic storm. He also described a shift towards a preference for practical projects that deliver an outcome, as opposed to policy or narrative investigations. He also noted a trend in which even globally-oriented think tanks are looking increasingly inward. In Latin America in particular, as countries in the region move towards 'middle income' status, a decrease in available funding for think tanks has resulted as the money has been redistributed towards Africa or other areas of greater need. As a result, Muggah highlighted some questions regarding the long-term sustainability of the Latin American think tank network.

Muggah also described a diminishing tolerance for careful, deliberate, and complex discussions on tricky policy questions in favour of ideological, identity-based narratives. He noted that the biggest challenge to think tank freedom is mounted from the far left, as institutions are criticized as being complicit in injustice when trying to bridge gaps between groups. As a consequence, Muggah described how think tanks must spend significant time and attention addressing these concerns rather than moving forward on substantive issues. This corresponds with a shrinking space for democracy itself, as institutions must weigh the social and political ramifications of speaking with certain politicians against the potential bridge-building that may occur. Consequently, Muggah concluded with the importance of educating the public about the closing of civil space.

## IV. ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

| Prospects for new urban, regional and global orders | | |
|---|---|---|
| Presenter | Institution | Paper |
| Janis VAN DER WESTHUIZEN | Stellenbosch University | 'Gorgeous but dangerous': Branding Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro as 'global' cities |
| David BLACK | Dalhousie University | Sports Mega-Events and changing world orders |
| Raynold ALORSE | Department of Finance, Government of Canada | The Digital Economy – Green Economy Nexus and Governance Deficit: Systems Thinking – Insights for Global Policy Makers |
| Timothy SHAW | University of Massachusetts Boston | 'Global Governance & Human Security' after 2021: beyond Covid19 & global warming |

*While it often has been said that the future is not yet written, we nevertheless can contemplate alternative futures. The US National Intelligence Council's March 2021* **Global Trends 2040: A More Contested World** *charts 5 possible world order trajectories ranging from an optimistic "renaissance of democracies" to a less optimistic "world adrift," to the decidedly pessimistic "tragedy and mobilization."[1] In contemplating such alternatives futures, do IR theorists give sufficient attention to the growing importance of municipal governance, particularly when an ever-increasing proportion of the world's population lives in urban spaces, including burgeoning mega-cities? Does the centre-periphery model still hold? Are sports mega-events reflective of a contested world order? Is the future of humanity inextricably tied to the consumptive resource and energy requirements of an increasingly digitized world? How clearly have we identified the inflection points that will determine our collective future – and will our responses lead to improved global governance and adequate measures of human security? These and other questions were introduced by the panelists as an introduction to a larger discussion about alternative futures, eclectic theory, and a forward-looking IR research agenda.*

**Janis van der Westhuizen** turned to the role of the urban in global politics, outlining his research comparing Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro as two coastal cities that while "gorgeous" in terms of location also share similar problems of poverty, inequality, and violence. His research has explored the importance of urban geography and the kind of soft power that well-located "secondary" cities exert compared with the hard power of a country's commercial capitals. He noted that the power of commercial centres such as Johannesburg and Sao Paolo have been eclipsed by the "exceptionalist branding" of smaller and more attractive regional centres. As an example, he noted the popular narrative that the Western Cape (under opposition leadership) "is run better." In South Africa, this has led to what he termed "senegration," a shift of (mostly monied or retired) people to attractive and desirable Cape Town.

He posited that there is a tension between the allure of such "gorgeous" cities and the fear of their commercial counterparts, with the former inspired by mega-events (such as the Rio

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[1] National Security Council. *Global Trends 2040: A More Contested World.* Washington: National Security Council. March 2021. https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/GlobalTrends_2040.pdf

Olympics) and notions of positive and comfortable lifestyles and the latter rooted in perceptions of crime and violence, spatial inequality and poverty, and gang culture. [A popular Google question "Is Cape Town safe for tourists?" is answered "**Yes**! It's common for tourists visiting Cape Town to be concerned about the level of crime in the area. ... Cape Town has been transformed into a safe place for tourists and families to explore."] van der Westhuizen noted that both Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro have strategically promoted festivals and events to boost their profiles, and that both have become important retirement destinations, often with what amount to gated towns. On the other hand, he also noted that both cities have a history of forced removals of poorer people. In a next phase of (post-Covid 19) research he intends to interrogate issues of "gorgeous city" governance to better understand urban dimensions of hard and soft power.

**David Black** outlined his investigation on how the staging of recent Olympic Games has mirrored shifts in international orders, including reflections on the impact of boycotts and sanctions, which he noted have mostly been performative. Drawing upon the work of Robert W. Cox, he posited that sports mega-events not only are part of the world order, but also serve as a measure or indicator of the pressures and dynamics that build, sustain, or contest the predominant world order. He noted that the conspicuous (or egregious) infrastructure requirements and protocols and ceremonies attached to such events is a clear reflection of the hosts' efforts to enhance their international status and prestige.

With respect to sports sanctions and boycotts, he noted that such measures have represented attempts to legitimate – or delegitimate – social norms and institutions of competing political orders. He suggested that the sequence of the 1980 Moscow Olympics and the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics can be viewed as part of the rise of the hegemonic neoliberal global order, with the 60-country boycott of the Moscow games intended to diminish the Soviet Union following its 1979 invasion of Afghanistan, with the Soviet Union and 14 of its allies responding four years later with their boycott of the Los Angeles games. He also noted that the Los Angeles Olympics – staged amid then-President Reagan's "morning in America" – manifested a major privatization of the Olympics in line with the neo-liberal model.

Tracing the long cycle of neo-liberal hegemony, Black noted that in the case of the 1988 Seoul games, widespread public demonstrations in South Korea forced the regime to adopt a series of reforms that served to advance the country's democratization. The 1992 Barcelona games can now be seen to represent both the end of the Cold War and the end of apartheid South Africa. While the 1996 Atlanta games saw the further, excessive commercialization of the Olympic movement, the games also demonstrated the limitations of such privatization and the need for either public-private partnerships or the commitment of billions (and often billions more) in state resources. He also noted a recent trend whereby as part of their bidding for the games, host cities (and states) promise major reconfigurations of urban space, including the redevelopment of industrial wastelands and promoting games sponsorship as a driver of tourist or sport and culture based economic development. Such efforts, however, have had disappointing results, particularly given overall expenditures.

Black predicted that the proposed boycott of the 2022 Beijing winter games would come to naught, with few nations likely to take a principled stance on China's persecution of its ethnic minorities or its increased authoritarianism because of emergent China's ever-increasing hard power. Nevertheless, boycott campaigns and secondary boycotts of corporate "partners" could

diminish the Games and deepen tensions between China and "the West". He also noted that fewer and fewer countries seem to be interested in hosting the Olympics, with Paris (2024), Los Angeles (2028), and Brisbane (2032) the sole bidders for those games. This casts some doubt on the future of the Olympic Games, including as an expression of soft power.

**Raynold Alorse** explored the inherent competition between an ever-expanding digital economy and the imperatives of a transition to a greener economic model, citing John F. Kennedy's "frontier of unknown opportunities and perils, the frontier of unfilled hopes and unfilled threats." Noting the velocity of exponential technological change and hyperconnectivity, he asked whether the expanding digital economy is compatible with a greener future, and particularly given that the digital economy – reliant on computer chips and rare earth minerals and electricity – does substantial damage to the environment through resource depletion, e-waste, and an ever-increasing demand for energy. In trying to reconcile these two insistent forces, he advocated for a systems theory approach that considers interdependent relationships as part of a "general science of wholeness."

Alorse suggested that the incompatibility of the demands of an ever-accelerating digital world and the pressing need for a greener world is exacerbated by three deficits in resource-based governance: a failure to contain or mitigate the digital economy's negative environmental consequences (production, use, and disposal all contributing to greenhouse gas accumulation as well as environmental despoliation); the digital economy's huge energy footprint (with data centres currently responsible for some 2% of global carbon emissions, or the same as global aviation); and that "coal is still king," with the digital universe and "the cloud's" energy requirements remaining mostly coal-based.

In his summary comments **Tim Shaw** referenced Fareed Zakaria's 2020 *Ten Lessons for a Post-Pandemic World*, noting that we have reached an inflection point where we can continue down a path to our own destruction, or "get more serious about a more sustainable strategy for growth." Shaw noted that global hierarchies currently are in flux, and highlighted 5 key issues that will affect global governance and human security: i) zoonoses leading to Covid-19 and other pandemic diseases and the need for a more coordinated approach that combines environmental factors and human and veterinary medicine; ii) issues emerging from the ever-expanding digital economy; iii) the increasing importance of e-sports in terms of both technology and their influence on young and mostly poor males; iii) the global climate emergency and the continued reliance on coal, particularly in China and throughout much of Africa; iv) the shift to electric vehicles and their environmental impact as well as downstream labour implications; and v) new regionalisms – the subject of his upcoming book. He also suggested that Oran R. Young's work on global governance, including his 2017 *Governing Complex Systems*,[2] might serve as the basis for a future workshop on new directions for IR theory and practice.

## V. IN SUM

In a wrap-up discussion, colloquium participants **considered** what "Alternative Futures" means for the study of IR.

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[2] Young, Oran R. *Governing Complex Systems: Social Capital for the Anthropocenes.* Cambridge MA: The MIT Press. 2017.

**David Black** noted that while we live through moments of change, it often is difficult to immediately discern when such moments become major inflection points. Faced with many trajectory-shaping circumstances (e.g. climate emergency, increased global flow of refugees, the Covid-19 pandemic, an increasingly hegemonic China) we must consider many possible futures. He suggested that IR scholars should focus on efforts to create more socially just futures. An emphasis on praxis rather than static theory was a theme that echoed through many of the presentations.

**Janis van der Westhuizen** emphasized that IR needs to give more attention to local levels of governance, given that urban centres' (in)ability to deliver basic services has become a major human development issue. He cited examples from South Africa where citizens, frustrated with poor service delivery, have directed their taxes to escrow accounts or where courts have disbanded elected governments in favour of a rate-payer based form of local governance. Municipal, and particularly mega-city governance will assume ever greater importance in global international relations as huge metropolises become veritable "states within states," leading to altered political and power and centre-periphery dynamics.

With a focus on eclectic approaches to the political economy of global development, the colloquium's presentation touched on many foundational IR and IPE theories and principles. At the same time, the presentations revealed several commonalities that might serve as touchstones for further research as well as for new theoretical approaches. These new approaches could include an examination or interrogation as to whether earlier and long accepted theories of IR, IPE, and development are still relevant in today's world, or whether new and overlapping imperatives demand, if not new paradigms, at least new ways of thinking about or constructing theory – including "magpie" theory tailored to explain, and perhaps alter, our increasingly complex world.

The colloquium presented new ways to think about silence as lack of voice, hidden voice, and as a form of power and agency. Participants were challenged to look beyond voice to discover or at least intuit deeper meaning, including from a gendered perspective. Participants similarly considered changing conceptions of sovereignty and discussed needed innovations in research methods, including better use of interdisciplinary and pluralistic approaches. The colloquium also looked to new governance relationships and to improvements in the functioning of global institutions, with increased focus on improvements in human security. Threats to civic space also was a recurring thread.

Honouring the wide-ranging nature of Tim Shaw's and Jane Parpart's scholarship and contribution to the discipline, the colloquium gave prominence to three themes. First, the importance of looking beyond static theory to develop and embrace a more eclectic type of theorizing to encourage new ways of thinking or to explore different, sometimes hidden elements of theory. Second, the importance of looking beyond theory as an academic practice to how theory can be used to provoke or support positive change "everywhere and always." And, finally, the importance of academic mentorship and the development of a community of like-minded, but always inquiring scholars.