

Call for Papers — GAE meeting, 16-18 June 2022, Vienna: “Utopias and Dystopias of Global Development: Labor, Migration and the Anthropocene”

**Biannual meeting of the Working Group on Geographical Development Theories
— Arbeitskreis Geographische Entwicklungstheorien (GAE):**

***“Utopias and Dystopias of Global Development: Labor,
Migration and the Anthropocene”***

Date and venue: June 16th (14:00pm) - 18th (13:00pm) 2022, Department of Geography and Regional Research, Vienna

Conveners: Nadine Reis (Mexico City), Johanna Kramm (Frankfurt), Patrick Sakdapolrak (Vienna), Gunnar Stange (Vienna), Raffaella Pagogna (Vienna), Marion Borderon (Vienna), Harald Sterly (Vienna)

Local Organization: Harald Sterly (Vienna), Raffaella Pagogna (Vienna), Patrick Sakdapolrak (Vienna)

Background: Prior to the pandemic, we wrote the call for the (cancelled) 2020 GAE meeting in light of public and scientific discourses about utopias and dystopias of global development at the time: Geoengineering vs. Climate apocalypse; Trading for Development vs. New Economic Imperialism; Smart Cities vs. Planet of Slums; and Digital Economies vs. Surveillance Capitalism. Against the backdrop of the Covid19 pandemic, the "grand narratives" of global development have become even more contested. More so, the utopias of development towards a fundamentally better, more livable future, have increasingly been shattered by pessimistic and more dystopian visions of the future as humankind has caught up with the reality of Covid19: the stark aggravation of social inequality and vaccine apartheid, a significant increase in the power of tech giants, and emerging archipelagos of micro-sovereignities shaped by ultra-right and new “New Age” movements alike are the most visible of these dystopia, which have already become reality while climate change and the destruction of the natural foundations of life have proceeded unabated.

In this historical setting, our aim for this year's GAE meeting is to discuss to which extent geographic development research needs grand theories and what they may be. Which societal paradigms and economic imperatives are currently of particular importance and what do they mean for development theory? How does development geography contribute to understanding (and resolving) the current multiplicity of crises? Key themes refer to the spatial, social and temporal disaggregation of "development" under and after Covid19, the different practices of “future making”, and the political economy of climate change adaptation and global value chains.

We invite all researchers interested in development geography and related disciplines to present their current work. Junior scientists are especially encouraged to present their research. In addition to paper sessions, there will be two keynote presentations and half-day workshops on the topics below. Texts for readings for the workshop will be announced in due time.

Structure: The meeting will consist of 3 modules:

1. Key notes and scientific presentations on development research from geographical and interdisciplinary perspectives (no thematic restrictions) (length and format will be decided according to the number of submissions);
2. Interactive Workshops “Dystopias and Utopias of Global Development”, with special foci on the areas of Labour, Migration and The Anthropocene;
3. Discussion: “Quo vadis geographical development research?”

Workshops

1. Dependency theory and super-exploitation (“Labor”)

(organized by Nadine Reis, El Colegio de México; Oliver Pye, University of Bonn (D); Johannes Jäger, FH Wien; Mariano Féliz, Universidad Nacional de La Plata)

One of the most elaborated versions of dependency theory was developed by Ruy Mauro Marini in his seminal work “Dialéctica de la dependencia” in 1973. At the core of his work is the concept of ‘super-exploitation of labor’, which re-grounds the ‘secret of unequal exchange’ in the production process and in Marx’ theory of value. Marini argued that with the inclusion of Latin America in the world market during Imperialism, an accumulation structure was created in the periphery that is based on the super-exploitation of labor. While in central capitalist countries the capital owners pay labor at the socially necessary cost of its reproduction, in peripheral countries labor is paid below the cost of reproduction, i.e. below subsistence. This accumulation structure continued and intensified during the period of Import-substituting Industrialization (ISI) policies. A recently emerging strand of scholarship in international political economy argues that super-exploitation of labor continues to be the key feature of (dependent) capitalism and the structuring principle of center and periphery in the current global economic system. The aim of the workshop is to introduce the original and recent debates on dependent development and super-exploitation and discuss to which extent they can be useful for current research in critical development geography.

2. Global development, vulnerabilities and migration (“Migration”)

(organized by Patrick Sakdapolrak, Gunnar Stange & Raffaella Pagogna, University of Vienna)

The unanticipated and unprecedented disruption in global migration through the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the role of migration for development, but also the often problematic situations of migrants and the vulnerability of their livelihoods. Unequal global development, socioeconomic and structural inequalities, the uneven distribution of the impact of environmental and climate change as well as armed conflicts are important drivers of domestic and international migration. Therefore, the conditions, effects, management and

policing of migration have become central themes in development research. In public and policy debates, the current and future role and impact of migration in this ever-globalizing world is increasingly framed in highly antagonistic ways. On the one hand, the destabilizing force of migration is highlighted, for example in the context of the spread of international terrorism, the loss of national identity or the prospect of the flow of hundreds of millions "climate" refugees from the Southern to the Northern hemisphere. On the other hand, the potentiality of migration is being highlighted and migration is portrayed as a silver bullet to solve multiple problems such as unequal development, protracted conflict situations or vulnerabilities against climate change. At the same time, the ever increasing public and political focus on migration obscures the by far larger amounts of left behind, trapped, and immobile populations in the Global South. Against this backdrop, the workshop will discuss theoretical, ethical, practical, and socio-political implications for the understanding of migration in the context of global development.

3. Social-ecological transformation, planetary boundaries and the Anthropocene ("Anthropocene")

(organized by Johanna Kramm, University of Frankfurt; Harald Sterly and Marion Borderon, University of Vienna)

It is evident that the presently dominating growth-oriented, extractive and fossil-fuel based economic development model is at its limits. This has been reflected in various concepts and theories in the past decades that have also found their way into paradigms and theories of development (e.g. most notably the Sustainable Development Goals). In the workshop we will focus on the concepts of Social-Ecological Transformation, Planetary Boundaries and the Anthropocene. We will discuss the practical and heuristic value of these concepts against the background of the global ecological crisis, what conclusions can be drawn from them for geographical development research, and what geographical development research can possibly contribute here (we believe that Geography can do so substantially). We also want to take a critical look at these concepts (e.g. to what extent the "Anthropocene" contributes to the depoliticization of the ecological crisis or to what extent discourses of scarcity are a form of neo-Malthusianism), explore what suggestions can arise from them for the analytical-scientific program of development geography, and reflect on what normative conclusions can be drawn from them.

Registration

Suggestions for paper presentations can be submitted **before 15 April 2022** (title und abstract 150 words). Please register and, in case you would like to present a paper, upload your abstract here: <https://population.univie.ac.at/GAE-2022>

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In order to prepare the workshops accordingly, please indicate at which workshop you would like to participate.

Please refer to Harald Sterly (harald.sterly@univie.ac.at) for further questions.

Conference languages are German and English.

Sign up to the GAE mailing list (gae.geographie@lists.univie.ac.at) here:
<https://lists.univie.ac.at/mailman/listinfo/gae.geographie>