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## EDITORIAL

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### ‘THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH’

**Franklin Obeng-Odoom**

The ‘Wretched of the Earth’ are neglected in our ‘compartmentalised world’. The volume of publications on inequality has increased five-fold since 1992, but many of these focus on the top one per cent of households located in the Global North (International Social Science Council 2016). The more recent publication by the leading journal, *Social Forces*, on ‘Liberalization, Economic Growth, and Income Inequality in *Advanced Industrial Societies*’ (Kwon 2016, my emphasis) continues this trend. So, in this special issue of the *Journal of Australian Political Economy (JAPE)*, I asked the contributors to focus on ‘the wretched of the earth’, how their social conditions are shaped by the appalling economic inequalities, the dire implications for society, economy and environment, why this compartmentalisation continues to deepen, and what can be done about it.

Almost all the political economic analysis of the currently extreme global economic inequalities focuses exclusively on capitalism as the root of the problem and neoliberalism as the conveyor belt. Although useful, this diagnosis needs to be situated in a broader view of the nature of Western civilisation and its aggressive expansion. Historically built on a philosophy of exclusion, monopoly, and a superiority complex, Western civilisation fuelled slavery, imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, environmental pillage, and shocking forms of patriarchy. Its ‘discourse upon the origin and foundation on the inequality among mankind’, to

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quote Jean Jacques Rousseau (1776), is patronising. The tendency of its apostles is to claim that the root of inequality can be nature or nurture and that even conventions impelling inequality are patterned after natural forces (Rousseau 1776). Some of these claims are insidious, but toxic nevertheless. Such was eminently the case of the great Karl Marx. As C. J. Robinson showed in his 1983 classic, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, Marx erred in describing the working class in England as 'English' when, in fact, the working class to which he referred had many Black people who were not English. This historic exclusion of Blacks could not have been accidental.

Most citizens, scholars, and students of Western civilisation tend to suffer some form of superiority complex, and many suffer multiple maladies of their own self-importance and the purity of their collective race. Their protestation only comes to bear when they experience a fraction of the ills of this civilisation when it implodes. As Walter Rodney showed in *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972/2011), slaves, in particular Blacks, suffered for many years the humiliation of life with little complaint, including by progressives in the West. Of course, the slave trade was officially terminated. However, it was only when a dose of this treatment was meted out by the repulsive Nazi regime in Germany against sections of the White population that the question of slavery and race-based inequality attained world-wide attention.

This historical experience recalls the penetrating analysis by Frantz Fanon (1961) of the compartmentalisation of the world in which nobody cares about 'the Wretched of the Earth'. Slaves were disproportionately coloured and the coloniser subjected coloured peoples to the most degrading forms of work only to spit them out into townships and shanty towns. The justifying veil of 'cultural difference' used as the logic for compartmentalisation was eventually torn apart and burnt by fiery revolution which, for a while, appears to disrupt the shocking levels of compartmentalisation and appears to be bringing the wretched of the earth to the fore. Alas! With the rails and the chains of the veil and the system unbroken, racialised compartmentalisation reasserts its ugly soul moulded, writ large, in the furnace of neo-colonialism, capitalism, and imperialism.

But, the drama of compartmentalisation continues, and is arguably magnified, in today's gilded age. With some prevarication, the International Social Science Council appears to jubilate that the number

of publications on the issue has increased, but this current volume should raise concerns. Inequality was always an issue: as has been evident in the plunder of resources in Latin America and Africa, the underdevelopment of the Pacific, the Middle East, and many aspects of Asia. Many of our sisters and brothers in Indigenous communities have been living in traumatic conditions while their White neighbours have so much more to eat than they need and more than is healthy to consume. Such stark contrasts have been the focus of Latin American scholars and many others researching the 'development of underdevelopment' (e.g., Frank 1966). So, why now, why the intense interest in inequality? The simple answer is – and Thomas Piketty's *Capital in The Twenty First Century* (2014) demonstrates - inequality is increasingly becoming a major issue in the West. The West has always had a fever of compartmentalisation but this increase in temperature has reached threatening levels, which many fear that will undermine continuing class and race-based privileges. For once, it appears that there is some sort of shared interest with 'the Wretched of the Earth' for a genuinely global approach to fight a common enemy. But even then, the focus continues to be placed on 'the top 1%' in the global core.

In principle, the field of 'development studies' has adopted a mandate to broaden this narrow focus. The idea of 'development', originally found in Marx, was understood as a general social change in societies everywhere (for a brief history, see Obeng-Odoom 2013). However, concern with development has often tended to focus on how rich countries can help poor ones, usually through producing a cadre of Western-educated development specialists who travel from their homelands to help or criticise other nations and peoples. These self-appointed prophets train national cadres, internationally or nationally, to develop local plans for local progress or pontificate global ideals without any detailed understanding of local processes (Currie-Alder 2016). Indeed, in many cases, development studies has created a situation where 'public discourse has become public disco' with comedians and musicians performing on stage using preposterous stories to solicit aid to help the poor (Moyo 2009: chapter 2). In the slums of Indonesia, development has created a theatre where the poor recite poems about their poverty as entertainment for the rich who pass some crumbs to them for being able to artistically describe their material deprivation (Peters 2013). It seems that the 'New Directions in the Political Economy of Development' once identified by John Rapley (1994: 495) as 'the critique

of neo-classical theory' in the 1990s have been rolled back. There is an emergent emphasis on 'post-development' characterised by the celebration of localist interventions and ways of life. Post-development seeks to write the obituary of development itself because the life of development is the death of many (Rapley 2004). Universalist claims popularised by celebrities often create cacophonous noise in the ears of diligent students of development genuinely pondering alternatives, but does a retreat to self-help, tradition and pre-development address unresolved issues? A minute of silence is needed to ponder the words of the late Aime Césaire:

It is not a dead society that we want to revive. We leave that to those who go in for exoticism. Nor is it the present colonial society that we wish to prolong . . . It is a new society that we must create with the help of all our brother slaves, a society rich with all the productive power of modern times, warm with all the fraternity of olden days (Césaire 1972: 52).

In my own contribution to the *Journal of Developing Societies* (Obeng-Odoom 2011), I tried to highlight some of the dangers of self-help and localism, including affinities between localism and some mainstream economic thought, the tendency of localist analyses to misdiagnose the development malady as a gigantism issue, and the penchant for localist advocates to overlook the power of reconstructing social relations and institutions across the globe.

With all its weaknesses, development studies still provides the most fruitful avenue to look for insights on global economic inequalities. A focus on inequality started in the 1960s, as H.W. Arndt's work, *Economic Development: The History of Ideas* (1987: 97-100), shows. However, the focus on inequality quickly petered out, as economists argued that a focus on growth is more important because you need something before you can redistribute it. Since then, 'inequality' has crawled on but more often slipped off the development agenda. Currently, development studies, in the form of development economics, pays more and more attention to inequality, but only as 'risk', as a brake on economic growth, or as a hindrance to poverty reduction. The relentless pursuit of economic growth is, in essence, the Holy Grail in development economics. As exemplified in the contribution of economists to the special issue of *Foreign Affairs* (vol. 95, no. 1, 2016) on 'Inequality: what causes it, why it matters, what can be done', if only growth can be sustained then inequality will take care of itself (see Bourguignon 2016). Indeed, even

without exploring different types of growth and how it is generated (Gore 2007), the mainstream economists Dollar and Kraay (2002) hastily declared that ‘growth is good for the poor’.

But whether it is growth, poverty, inequality, or any of the many changing goals and ends of development, development has become a patronising notion that creates an idealised image of the West in the South or a unique/exotic image of the South as an ‘other’. Development has become an orgy of *Orientalism* (1978), to recall Edward Said’s masterpiece. Helping the poor is a common language, as is ‘sympathy’, whether it is in terms of evaluating interventions (programme/project aid), goals – be they Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or both. Very little attention is paid to nuanced conceptualisation in these goals (on SDGs, see Gore 2016; on MDGs see Obeng-Odoom 2012; and Obeng-Odoom and Stilwell 2013). Questions about the growing power of unaccountable NGOs and Foundations are seldom asked and yet more rarely answered. As Clifford Cobb (2015) has recently publicised, without the accountability and scrutiny to which national bodies are subjected, foundations set the agenda and frequently divert attention away from structural causes of inequality to effects such as corruption of national governments, backward culture and differential levels of human capital.

### **Political Economy, Inequality, Development, and Underdevelopment**

The political economy of development is sometimes seen as a salvation for these deficiencies in mainstream development discourses and practices. On the one hand, this optimism is appropriate. Political economists have offered analytical studies which show that what purports to foster development, in fact, leads to its very opposite, underdevelopment. The ‘development of underdevelopment’ happens on a world scale but also within and across countries. From this perspective, undevelopment (a state of being untouched) is distinct from ‘under developed’, which is a state of suppression and oppression (Frank 1966). Many dependency theorists take the view that development is, in fact, underdevelopment. Geovanni Arrighi, for example, argues that development is an illusion (Arrighi 1991; Reifer 2011). He demonstrates that the pursuit of development leads to inequalities.

This development-inequality nexus is structural. As a modernising project, characterised by a compartmentalised world in which the ‘West’ is ‘modern’ and the rest is ‘traditional’ and all traditional has to look up to the modern (Njoh 2009), the vision of development makes princes of the West and servants of the South. Similarly, within the West, development glorifies opulent White privilege, while downgrading others. Although its claims to superiority have often been scrutinised by scientific studies such as J.M. Hobson’s *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation* (2004), this philosophy continues to destroy and extend its very logic of inequality. It creates dependency and mimicry which reinforces the privilege. According to Arrighi (1991), as the dominant groups set the agenda, they hide the fact that not all wealth can be democratically appropriated. Most wealth is oligarchic and hence is monopolised by a few. Even in terms of wealth supposedly obtained using some time-honoured market principles, the few who control it actively seek to block the widespread access to its acquisition. This is what Cambridge University political economist, Ha-Joon Chang has called *Kicking Away the Ladder* (2002).

On the other hand, a new political economy is flourishing. It preaches social justice, a much bigger goal than to be found in the mainstream, but its inclination is towards respectability, technical correctness and conventional policies for redistribution. Examples can be seen in Thomas Piketty’s important work and, curiously, in many of its critical reviews, including those published in the *Review of Radical Economics* (Reitz 2016), *Metroeconomica* (Skillman 2016), and *Cambridge Journal of Economics* (Rowthorn 2014). The focus on class is commendable but the neglect of race, gender and space is not. Even analytically, such an insular focus obfuscates. As an historical example, Engels’ *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884) gave us only a partial insight into patriarchy as it is centred on class formation and dynamics in capitalism. Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949/2009) brilliantly broadens the terms of the debate by examining patriarchy in other modes of production preceding capitalism, but forgets or downplays race. It is correct, then, for the Black Feminist, Bell Hooks, to ask in her 1981 classic, *Aint I a Woman?* (1982). Such neglect weakens any *avant garde*, as it did when Aime Césaire – a prominent Black scholar and, notably, Frantz Fanon’s teacher - resigned from the French Communist Party, citing as his reason an insensitivity in left circles to everything other than class.

Yet, these forces intermingle, whether in *favelas* (Brazil), *aashwa'I* (Egypt), *bidonvilles* (France), or ghettos (USA). These spaces of colour are created, (allowed to) exist, and expand to contain the coloured peoples who served the colonial empire and to absorb the 'reserve army of labour' after bouts of economic depression when the white colonial regiment channelled its welfare programmes (resources extracted from coloured peoples and their land) to its own race (UN-HABITAT 2003; Peters 2013; Njoh 2009; Obeng-Odoom 2015). It is, thus, futile – as mechanistic economics does – to seek to explore whether it is race or it is class that is more important in this drama of life. Truly dialectical and intersectional analysis can only show that it is both. The slums of the wretched of the earth play an important role in absorbing redundant labour that simultaneously reduces the cost of the privileges enjoyed by White capitalist society. When this analysis cascades up, the entire Global South, the wretched of the earth, can be seen as the slums of the world. Why the wretched of the earth persists despite, in fact because of, being subjected to the modernising and patronising logic of Western civilisation is at the heart of the compartmentalisation of the world in which we live.

### **This Special Issue of *JAPE***

The articles in this journal grapple with these issues of inequality and global development in various ways. At the outset, I would like to thank my colleague Matt Withers, an Australian PhD student working on migration and economic development in Sri Lanka. It was he and Prof. Emeritus Frank Stilwell who invited me to become a member of the editorial team for this special issue. Working together, we developed the call for papers for the issue, distributed it, and empanelled referees for some of the papers received. His contribution was substantial and for that I thank him mightily. Walter Rodney (1972/2011: vii) once wrote that it is 'sheer bourgeois subjectivism' to try to exonerate others by personally taking on all 'remaining errors'. So, I will not issue any further disclaimers about where responsibility lies: in Rodney's words, 'Responsibility in matters of these sorts is always collective' (1972/2011: vii). Matt Withers and I asked the contributors to this issue to focus on five key questions, namely (1) what are the patterns and dimensions of inequality across the world? (2) What causes inequality? (3) Why does

inequality persist? (4) Why is inequality an important focus for political economic analysis? (5) What can and is being done about inequality and by whom?

Frank Stilwell's opening article sets the scene by calling into question the tendency in mainstream economics or development economics to focus mostly on economic growth, assuming that it will trickle down for poverty alleviation. The challenge is not simply to trickle-down economics but also about the separatist analysis of poverty and wealth. Stilwell shows that, because poverty and wealth/high incomes are two sides of the same coin, it is not sufficient to simply focus on poverty reduction as the goal. Indeed, it is *analytically* problematic to focus on one and not on the conditions that sustain the rich-poor divide. The paper serves the additional purposes of setting the scene, looking at the nature of inequality, why it persists, why it must be addressed urgently, and how it can be done. Each of these themes depends on the analytical framework adopted: class, gender, race, space or, as in neoclassical economics, the individual and the household. The scale of Stilwell's analysis is intra-national, international, and global and hence the scope for action is similarly multi-scalar.

The next article, by Ricardo Molero-Simarro, begins the process of studying particular regions and nations by looking at China. It points out how mainstream economists have, hiding behind a contrived interpretation of the work of Arthur Lewis, offered a naturalist interpretation and prediction. According to this version of Lewis, as more and more rural labour is absorbed into capitalist urban production, the grotesque levels of inequality will naturally disappear. That is, after a certain demographic transition – a so-called 'Lewis turning point' - inequality will take care of itself. From this perspective, growing inequality in China is merely a 'moment' and will vanish after some time. Yet, as careful analysis shows, both capital and state are complicit in what inequalities exist, in fact, persist in China. Pricing policies feed into state neoliberalism and this ideology is worsened by the WTO's global trade policies, which have led to the further decline of farmers' wages, putting them in a precarious situation. However, the article shows that it is possible to use Lewis' theories, approaches, or ideas to do a careful political economic analysis of Chinese uneven development driven by neoliberal state policies internally and globally through WTO policies. This article, then, is both a conceptual and empirical contribution to the debates on inequality. Where the share of labour has

increased, the driving forces have been more complex, including labour strikes and trade unionism, rather than mere demographic change.

The next article, by Pedro José Gómez, Serrano Ricardo Molero-Simarro and Luis Buendía, direct our attention to inequalities and imbalances in Europe since the economic crisis began in 2008-9. It describes in detail core-periphery tendencies, whereby the North appears to have surged forward while the South remains and even has become more underdeveloped. Contrary to neoclassical economics theory about convergence as regions 'develop', the 'two Europes' have evidently diverged, leaving convergence as a pipe dream. The article explains this growing divergence in terms of class dynamics reinforced by the institutions and policy choices of the state and international development agencies. The case of Spain is particularly instructive, not only because of its more significant divergence but also because it demonstrates that, even within the periphery (Greece, Spain, Portugal and Italy), there are differences in experiences. A strengthening of the power of employers has gone hand-in-hand with weakening the position of labour. True, welfare and social policies appear to have increased, but the negative effects of the crises have been faster in catching up with labour than the much slower roll out of social interventions. Nevertheless, without the limited social interventions by the state, inequality levels in Southern Europe would have been much worse. Enhancing the redistributive capacity and willingness of the state is, therefore, crucially important for economic policy.

David Barkin's article then describes the materialist basis of the transformation in economic policy from a focus on industrial policy to a focus on market-based, extractive industries driven growth in Latin America. It provides concrete examples of growth-based policies, showing how they are imposed and hence lack popular support and yet have become the dominant paradigm. Widely characterised by a growing dispossession of poor and vulnerable groups, this policy paradigm has also led to the increasing concentration of wealth in the hands of a few transnational corporations (TNCs) that have used international legal processes to force resource-rich poorer countries to transfer modest amounts of rent to the TNCs. This process has led to extreme forms of inequality in the region which the dispossessed and middle-class professionals protested peacefully, at first. However, as their complaints were ignored, resistance has taken on a more violent form. Either way, there is both a popular rejection of growth and a popular demonstration

of alternative ways of life and ways of organising the economy to prevent inequality and violence in the name of development.

Drawing on experiences in India and how they are shaped by global forces, the next article, by Ruchira Talukdar, makes two important contributions. Conceptually, it shows the failings of the notion of 'energy poverty', demonstrating that it does not sufficiently look at inequality. That is, its focus tends to be on absolutes rather than relativities of social experiences. Empirically, the paper shows how coal mining in India is a case of the rich benefiting twice and poor dying multiple times. Based on a model of exploitation, both of labour and the environment, coal in India pollutes the living spaces of the poor and the environment, while making the fabulously rich even richer and making urban residents better off than rural residents. More fundamentally, as the coal labourers are from inferiorised races within India's caste system, the story of coal in India is not only of class and gender but also highly racialised. These intersectional inequalities are hidden by a discourse of 'helping the poor', a discourse that has received support from the Australian political establishment in order to legitimise its own obsession with transnational coal.

Elisabeth Valiente-Riedl's article continues the heated debate between 'free trade' and 'fair trade', using a value chain framework. Although it shows that there are clear differences between the two, the lines can be blurry in practice. Fair trade can be market harnessing, contesting, and affirming. All three models of fair trade create and sustain inequality at different levels or degrees but all through the market and allied institutions or processes. Whether free or fair trade, it is a growth-based development that is advocated. This model of growth is inherently laden with unequal exchange, especially when the trade regime is inspired by neoclassical economics rather than economics centred in the classical school. These subtleties appear to lead to the development of a third way: alternative trade. Not that this is new: indeed, it was the bedrock, but fair trade abandoned it. Valiente-Riedl's call now is for alternative trade in terms of vision and politics, based on better theorisation.

The following article, by Alex Nunn and Paul White, asks whether, in relation to inequality and global development, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has become the mourner who cries more than the bereaved. We learn that its policies, reports, public speeches, and websites are now dominated by concerns with inequality. A careful study of these reports,

including interviews with some IMF high profile staff members, however, shows that the devil is in the details. The IMF does not see all inequality as problematic. In fact, there is 'good inequality' and 'bad inequality'. The good one is what makes us take action, while bad inequality is a brake on growth and poverty reduction. Thus, for the IMF, inequality is only a concern if it prevents economic growth, not because it is unjust. Clearly, the IMF is far from becoming a progressive body. In essence, there is nothing 'new' about its 'new politics of inequality'.

This special issue of *JAPE* also includes reviews of some books that help us to understand particular aspects of inequality and development. Of the five reviews, I choose to comment Gavan Butler's, being the most extensive, but I encourage readers to also pay close attention to the rest. Butler's review considers two recent books by the economist Yanis Varoufakis, now world famous because of his role as former Greek Finance Minister. Varoufakis argues that institutions of capitalism have not only failed to bring about equal societies but also that they have succeeded in keeping societies apart. The international monetary system has been designed in such a way that the USA, through its dollar, is set up to become increasingly powerful. As the global currency, the dollar captures surpluses created in the whole world for American benefit. In this sense, the global monetary system is a Minotaur, uncontrollable or temporarily stabilised only at great social cost. A similar argument, made with reference to the European Union (EU), emphasises how power has been monopolised by Germany, and how the weak have only a limited amount of voice. So, much like the international monetary system, the EU lacks a mechanism to redistribute surpluses collectively generated and, instead, overtly or covertly sanctions the monopolisation of resources in a system in which the rich get richer, while the poor suffer more. The only solution for social justice and egalitarian re-organisation is to develop mechanisms for inter-regional or inter-national redistribution of value and surpluses. However, as Butler points out, it is crucial to ascertain the contribution of Africa, for example, to the generation of the global surpluses as, without doing so, the 'global' in Varoufakis' titles appears pretentious. Overall, however, the review is a positive assessment of Varoufakis' work, showing that only radical reforms can address global inequalities and development.

### **‘The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born’: Towards the Future...**

These articles demonstrate the Ayi Kwei Armah paradox. During the decolonisation period, there was much hope for a new Global South. Revolutionary leaders arose, promising a new world, and offering powerful ideas. Yet, colonial compartmentalisation remained and, in many cases, birthed neoliberal compartmentalisation. The reason was that the social relations bequeathed by the coloniser’s philosopher (slavery, feudalism, capitalism, and imperialism) had not been repudiated. Instead, the logic was that the more that legacy or outgrowth of its roots in the form of capitalist and other modes of production could be embraced through forces of modernisation/denied through ‘villagisation’ projects, the more developed/post-developed the ex-colonies would be. It is this limitation that the novelist Ayi Kwei Armah captured in his all-time classic novel, *The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born* (1968).

That is where the articles leave us. They reveal the often grotesque inequalities in class, race and gender and across space. They show the entrenched character of both intra-national and international inequalities, even if some measures of global inequality have, for now, declined. They reveal some systemic causes, including the rules and the processes of development as well as the agents and institutions that have been identified. Questions about culture, natural forces, and human capital are weaker explanans, it appears. Why does inequality persist? It appears that the answer depends on which inequality, but generally, inequality persists because it is part of the development process itself.

But, if so, what can be done and by which agents? At the policy level, we can, for example, disengage from free trade and look to fair trade, as Elisabeth Valiente-Riedl argues in this issue and Arghiri Emmanuel contends in his book, *Unequal Exchange* (1972). Disengagement will block major problems, but will it change social relations? We could also look to socialism for solutions. The articles in this issue do not explicitly do so; but those by David Barkin and Frank Stilwell, for example, hint at it. Yet, the empirical record of the past and present ‘actually existing socialisms/communisms’ (including Ricardo Molero-Simarro’s article in this issue) shows a different picture. In his magisterial essay, ‘*World Income Inequalities and the Future of Socialism*’, Italian Scholar

Giovanni Arrighi (1991) subjected both capitalist and socialist systems to careful analysis, using income inequalities as a benchmark, showing concretely that the outcomes are similar. Arrighi points to the co-existence of forces of exploitation and exclusion as explanas. Western Civilisation (including particular communist/socialist ideals) holds onto the power of exploitation which forces the Global South into continuing economic disadvantage. Exclusion is different but complementary. It entails how the dominant nations and classes of the West jealously guard their oligarchic power obtained through guns and force (slavery, colonialism, imperialism) to dictate who should be excluded or should be included. This power too is exercised against 'others' regardless of whether the West is communist or capitalist, a point better developed by Aime Césaire in *Discourse on Colonialism* (1972), leading him to break away from the pin-pong of capitalism and socialism/communism. Exploitation and exclusion on a world scale, then, generate forces of 'circular and cumulative causation' (Myrdal 1944) in a compartmentalised world.

Analytically, the articles in this special issue of *JAPE* discard the post-Piketty splitting of hairs about where in the Marxist formula some measurement problem went wrong. Instead, they look more broadly at economic inequalities: by considering space, class, gender, and race. It is an approach to which Australian political economists have made significant contributions (*e.g.*, Stilwell 1993; Stilwell and Jordan 2007). This approach is challenging to development studies that treat 'poverty' as 'multidimensional' while inequality tends to be seen as a monolith. The multi-dimensional approach to inequality has demonstrated that inequality is not a monolith and hence has to be addressed multi-dimensionally. Consequently, the multi-dimensional approach has been widely embraced, including by the International Social Science Council in its latest *World Social Science Report: Challenging Inequalities: Pathways to a Just World* (2016).

A key concern with this approach is that it tends to proceed on the basis that, being separable, the consequences of the various dimensions of inequality are merely additive. Indeed, using this 'multi-dimensional' approach, some political economists tend to estimate inequalities separately for the different dimensions such as gender (Brewer *et al.* 2002), leading to mechanistic claims such as women get less than men; Indigenous people have worse health conditions, developed countries do this or that, while developing countries do so, so and so.

Methodologically, this multidimensional approach can create binaries and hence can be criticised for being only partially dialectical, as Samir Amin (1972: 191-193) reminds us in his magisterial work, *Imperialism and Unequal Development*.

One way to prepare the grounds for ‘the beautiful ones’ is to embrace the idea of ‘intersectionality’, developed by the Black feminist scholar, Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991). Doing so will enable us to look not at *dimensions* but at the *intersections* of race, class, gender, and space. We know that mainstream economics is the ‘economics of the 1%’ (Weeks 2014), so it will not serve as a good canvas for taking this reconstruction forward. As I have shown, political economy as presently constituted, has brought us so far but will take us no further. So which way should we turn? Black economists have started working on ‘stratification economics’ (see Darity 2009; Darity *et al.* 2015). It is political economy that puts the spotlight on structural intersectional compartmentalisation, rejects hegemonic discourses that deliberately or negligently categorise effects as causes, and hence pursues public policies that can bridge the gulf separating us. This political economy can, of course, do more to decolonise methodologies by borrowing from all fields, not just economics (Smith 1999), by more strongly embracing dialectics, and by considering the intersection, indeed, indivisibility between economy and nature (Maathai 2004; Brewer *et al.* 2002) at different scales around the world. Everything at the cleavage of complexities evokes intense attention and interest.

As the articles that follow show, the consequences of the growing inequalities are dire: setting in motion economic recessions, tearing apart societies and providing grounds for violence, and harming the environment that supports all of us. Whether the proposed multi-scalar solutions of stronger, wider, and more inclusive state-based structural (pre- and re-distribution) social protections at different scales can replace existing neoliberal growth-based strategies remains an open question. Similarly, non-state alternatives of collective and social organisations demonstrated in real life scenarios show that it is no longer just about the state or the market but also about the commons.

We need a new approach to equitable development that is centred on changing social relations; not just on changing goals (*e.g.*, from MDG to SDGs) or even the reach of the state or non-state, collective actors. As Charles Gore (2016) argues, we need a new *paradigm* of development.

Even if he does not fully elaborate what that means, thanks to Frantz Fanon's admonition to *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), the struggle for a paradigmatic transformation will not be without vision:

...now is the time to decide to change sides. (235)...Come, comrades, the European game is finally over, we must look for something else. We can do anything today provided we do not ape Europe, provided we are not obsessed with catching up with Europe. (236). If we want to transform...into a new Europe...then let us entrust the destinies of our countries to the Europeans...If we want to respond to the expectations of our peoples, we must look elsewhere besides Europe (239)

What Fanon means is a total rejection of Western supremacist philosophy of exclusion and compartmentalisation. But, as Immanuel Wallerstein (1961) warns, this strategy is not a retreat into hamlet, localist life, but a pursuit of new multi-scalar social relations based on self-determination, sovereignty, equal rights, and equality of race, not just politically but also socio-economically. Voting rights which are currently denied to the 'Wretched of the Earth' in international circles where the 'veto' is the monopoly of the strong and mighty constitute an epic example of modern fascism in the world system that must be named and shamed. Past humiliating social relations (some, as degrading as servitude for three centuries under colonialism/extended slavery) and raw robbery for even longer periods must be ameliorated through *multi-scalar* reparatory justice (Beckles 2013); not aid, free, or fair trade and certainly not the blind faith put in other individual, entrepreneurial options advocated by many such as Hernando de Soto (2000) and Dambisa Moyo (2009).

Even in the *kampung*s of Indonesia (from where I construct this introduction to the special issue), the racist disintegration of Europe and its hegemonic echoes in Donald Trump's America can be felt and seen. But, being in Indonesia also powerfully reminds me of the prospects of what the Global South resolved to do during the historic 1955 Bandung Conference: to build, nourish, and expand a great alliance of the South. Clearly, the power of Fanon's advice is unmistakable. It is in this sense that the call for 'post-development' is founded but not because 'development' is wrong. Rather, the particular ideas about development, such as changing the goals of development from one (set) to another (set), ignoring systemic forces of exploitation (in the Arrighi sense), and remaining silent about the quest to become the oppressor – are hopelessly wrong. It is not because post-development is taking us to socialism –

whatever that means - but because post-development is a march towards new social relations based on equality of race, class, and gender within, between, and across a world in which nature and economy are indivisible (Maathai 2004). With the scale of implosion in the core shaking the foundations of Western civilisation, opportunity beckons for Western progressive scholars to shed off their own patronising and objectifying gaze, 'conscientise' themselves against their deep-seated subconscious glorification of the privileges they enjoy (on 'conscientisation', see Freire, 1970), and genuinely team up with their colleagues in the South to develop a serious intersectional political economy of global economic inequalities and development.

*Franklin Obeng-Odoom is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Technology Sydney where he teaches urban economics and property and political economy in the School of Built Environment. He is a Fellow of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences.*

*Franklin.Obeng-Odoom@uts.edu.au*

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For further information, you can contact the coordinating editor at [frank.stilwell@sydney.edu.au](mailto:frank.stilwell@sydney.edu.au)