

EWIS 2022 – Call for Papers

The Dark Side of Sustainability and Uneven Global Development: Interlinking IR, Area Studies and Development Research

Convenors:

Dr. Hannes Wernecke-Berger, University of Kassel, Germany (hwarneckeberger@uni-kassel.de)

Dr. Luíza Cerioli, University of Kassel, Germany (luizacerioli@uni-kassel.de)

Although the term “sustainability” is irrevocably entering the international political agenda, it does so selectively. Despite aiming for social change, sustainability as a project is still mainly concentrated on the Global North. Circular economies, recycling, e-mobility, and energy transitions are hypothesized and materialized mainly within developed countries and then projected to the rest of the world. Conversely, non-sustainable activities, particularly raw materials extraction and exportation, are still the most accessible path towards economic growth in the Global South. That brings us to the unavoidable (and uncomfortable) predicament of the **dark side of sustainability**: it does not have an equal or equalizing design. Therefore, we sustain that, whichever direction the sustainability discourse chooses, it must address the challenges it produces as a globalized and unequal project today.

On the one hand, climate change forces us to rethink how we use and distribute natural resources globally. On the other hand, the supply and access to such resources are uneven, translating into different development trajectories in the Global South, many that do not conform to expectations for a greener future. *What will happen to the countries without a leading role in the global sustainability discussion? What are the development venues for those not accessing green technology, still dependent on non-eco-friendly revenue activities? What are the geopolitical consequences of an exogenous push towards sustainability in world regions that traditionally rely on non-renewable resources?* **International Relations (IR), Development Studies, and Area Studies** propose different answers to these questions, struggling to find an integrative analysis of development trajectories that situates the issue of sustainability simultaneously in the context of social-economic relations of production, regimes of power, and the international system.

This workshop takes as a starting point this critique and argues that without intense interdisciplinary debate, the three fields will continue to constrain the space for building concepts concerning development trajectories and sustainability that link the international and the domestic. Ultimately, we claim that more interdisciplinary interchange is vital to tackle the pressing – however understated – issue of the dark side of sustainability. Bridging the gap between these fields can recalibrate them towards fruitful new arguments, concepts, and ideas, connecting theory, methods, and empirical knowledge into inter/trans-disciplinary discussions. Thus, the workshop aims to bring together approaches from IR, Development Studies, and Area Studies interested in a cross-area and interdisciplinary dialogue. The goal is to create a forum for de-Westernizing science and expand our knowledge about the dark side of sustainability as well as case-specific, regional and/or global trajectories of development.

The workshop welcomes papers that examine the Global South, comparatively or single case studies, and its particularities to address the following themes:

1. Theoretical and methodological approaches to the dark side(s) of sustainability and uneven global development.
2. The interconnectivity between domestic and international factors shaping sustainability.
3. The interdependency between the North and South in an increasingly globalized environment.
4. Metatheoretical discussions about a transdisciplinary future, connecting IR, Development Studies, and Area Studies and exploring links, gaps, and miscommunications in the literature.
5. Critical approaches towards sustainability as a Global North project and the alternatives from the South.