

(Dis)comfort, judgement and solidarity: affective politics of academic publishing in development studies

Kaira Zoe Alburo-Cañete, Shonali Ayesha Banerjee, Sochanny Hak, Tanya Jakimow, Chanrith Ngin, Mahardhika Sjamsoe'oad Sadjad, Susanne Schech, Yvonne Underhill-Sem & Joyce Wu


To cite this article: Kaira Zoe Alburo-Cañete, Shonali Ayesha Banerjee, Sochanny Hak, Tanya Jakimow, Chanrith Ngin, Mahardhika Sjamsoe'oad Sadjad, Susanne Schech, Yvonne Underhill-Sem & Joyce Wu (2022): (Dis)comfort, judgement and solidarity: affective politics of academic publishing in development studies, Third World Quarterly, DOI: [10.1080/01436597.2022.2039064](https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2022.2039064)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2022.2039064>



Published online: 09 Mar 2022.



[Submit your article to this journal](#) 



Article views: 109



[View related articles](#) 



[View Crossmark data](#) 



(Dis)comfort, judgement and solidarity: affective politics of academic publishing in development studies

Kaira Zoe Alburo-Cañete^{aa}, Shonali Ayesha Banerjee^{bt}, Sochanny Hak^c, Tanya Jakimow^{dt}, Chanrith Ngim^c, Mahardhika Sjamsoe'oed Sadjad^e, Susanne Schech^f, Yvonne Underhill-Sem^c and Joyce Wu^g

^aFaculty of Arts and Social Sciences, School of Social Sciences, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia;

^bDepartment of International Development, University of Sussex, Brighton, UK; ^cDevelopment Studies, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand; ^dCollege of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia; ^eInstitute for Social Sciences, Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam International, Rotterdam, The Netherlands; ^fCollege of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia; ^gSchool of Social Sciences, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

ABSTRACT

The publication of a controversial article in *Third World Quarterly* and the consequent unveiling and critical questioning of journal practices continue to engender strong negative feelings for many scholars. At a critical juncture within the publication process of this collection, we faced an ethical dilemma regarding how to maintain political and ethical commitments while manoeuvring within a sometimes hostile academic environment. Here we examine the dilemma and its resolutions to reflect on configurations of power in academia. Through the lenses of (dis)comfort, judgement and solidarity, we examine the affective intensities that shaped our individual and collective decisions. Reflections on the process reveal the need to attend to how affects shape the resolution of shared ethical dilemmas in ways that reinforce structural (dis)advantages. We argue that 'comfort', achieved through solidarities, allows for the navigation of the ethical-political in ways open to multiple possibilities. Decolonial practice should attend to affective practices that privilege some claims over others and limit the capacity of future scholars to shape the ethical terrain of development studies.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 1 March 2021
Accepted 27 January 2022

KEYWORDS

Ethics
development studies
solidarity
emotions
academic publishing
power in the academy

Introduction: the controversy

Our decision to publish a collection in *Third World Quarterly* (TWQ) was not without controversy. In early November 2020, in the process of contacting potential reviewers for the submitted papers, the co-editors of the collection, Tanya Jakimow and Sarah Homan,¹ became involved in a deeply unsettling email exchange. One scholar responded to their invitation to review with advice not to publish in the journal. The disagreement stemmed from the publication of a controversial article in TWQ in 2017 – 'The Case for Colonialism' by Bruce

CONTACT Tanya Jakimow  tanya.jakimow@anu.edu.au

^{*}Current affiliation: International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Hague, The Netherlands.

[†]Current affiliation: Judge Business School, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK.

© 2022 Global South Ltd

Gilley – that marked a watershed moment in development studies. Shocking in its unapologetic advocacy for the recolonisation of the Global South, and in its argument that colonialism had been beneficial for former colonies, the article contained cherry-picked data, ignored a large swathe of scholarship, and was full of inaccuracies and misrepresentations (Grydehøj 2018). As petitions circulated against its publication and some editorial board members resigned in protest, members of far-right organisations and academics sympathetic to their arguments sought to recast the controversy as academic censorship and an attack on ‘free speech’ (see Sultana 2018). Those leading the protests against the article were subject to threats, harassment, online abuse and vilification, much of which was sexist and racist (Sultana 2018). The piece was eventually removed after alleged death threats against the author and editor.

In Australia, where our two co-editors work, we were aware of the controversy. We nonetheless chose to approach *TWQ* after considering its role in advancing thinking in development studies, particularly related to power, which aligned with the ambitions of the collection. For us the ethical question was not whether ‘The Case for Colonialism’ should have been published. Here, we agree with Sultana (2018, 232), who argues against the false equivalence between academic freedom and free speech, in that the first ‘... is founded on the principles of scholarly rigor, which involves engaging with theories and methodologies, and demonstrating the competency of ideas that have been debated’. Not only did the piece lack merit, it was also ethically wrong to publish dangerous and harmful ideas. Nonetheless, we did not consider our publishing in *TWQ* three years on was an intervention in this debate.

We were disabused of this notion after a series of email exchanges with scholars who challenged our decision to publish in *TWQ*. What started as an email request to one scholar to review a paper for this collection escalated into a sequence of difficult and emotional email exchanges on the ethics and politics of publishing in *TWQ*. In email correspondence with a scholar, who copied others presumed to share a common view, we were confronted with the charge that anyone who publishes in *TWQ* endorses its decision to publish ‘The Case for Colonialism’, and the colonialist stance propagated in that article (email 3 November 2020).² This charge was accompanied by a list of judgements in response to our explanations of why we chose to publish in *TWQ*: that a decision to publish in *TWQ* means valuing journal metrics more than moral, political and ethical arguments; that it could harm our reputations; and that it would actively validate the journal and how it operated. These email exchanges outlined a whole new ethical terrain to navigate. Our decision was no longer about the rehabilitation of *TWQ*, but where we stood as scholars in struggles for decolonisation and how that should be exercised.

Over the next two weeks, we worked as a group of contributors to resolve the dilemma. Evidently, the majority chose to go forward with *TWQ*, but two contributors, including Sarah Homan as co-editor, decided to withdraw. This article is not, however, a justification or an explanation of why we did so. Nor do we directly deal with the controversy over the opinion piece about which others have written extensively (Grydehøj 2018; Sultana 2018). Rather, we reflect on the processes of individual and collective decision-making, attentive to the forces that framed our conversations, kept us awake at night and ultimately shaped our decisions. In doing so, we aim to excavate how productive and disruptive power works through affective intensities of judgements and solidarities in ways that can both reaffirm and disrupt hierarchies in academia.

We first examine the productive potential of discomfort we felt when facing an ethical dilemma, and how the experience of falling out with respected academics was painful but also instructive. The aforementioned email exchange conveyed judgements that disrupted our sense of who we are, engendered discomfort, demanded reflection and hence held transformative promise (Moore 2011). However, the power of a judgement depends on the relationship between the person being judged and those judging them. We reflect on this differential capacity to affect and susceptibility to be affected, and the ways it reinforces hierarchies of power within academia.

The second half of the article examines how we reached a level of comfort in our different decisions. We sought to open up possible resolutions to our ethical dilemmas through establishing solidarities, in the plural. This included seeking guidance and finding much-needed collegiality from other respected academics³ to help us navigate the ethical terrain we were confronted with, while also being attentive to the concerns of early career researchers (ECRs) who comprise the majority of contributors to this collection. This solidarity involved a different set of affective intensities, ones that are less prone to reproducing hierarchies and more open to multiple ethical possibilities. If publishing in different outlets is one component of colonising/decolonising practices, we should be conscious as to how ethical dilemmas around publishing arise, how they are resolved and who is affected by them. Our argument is simply to be attentive to the ways affective intensities shape these resolutions, and to work against affective patterning that privileges the claims of academic elites over those of the next generation.

Productive discomfort

It is difficult to overstate the affective force of the email exchanges that led us to reconsider and reflect on our decision to publish in *TWQ*. For the co-editors, the harshness of the initial emails triggered shock and severe anxiety. Other contributors, particularly ECRs, felt confused, hurt and concerned about potential reputational damage implied by the emails. The signatories of the email also, we presume, experienced strong emotions. Parts of the email exchange were explicit about the emotional exhaustion and significant time investment in dealing with cases like ours. The exchange also came in an extremely challenging year. Some of those involved were in lockdown, caring for children, trying to finish PhDs, or responding to the demands of online teaching and university upheavals. Getting involved in the decision-making process hence put additional pressure on many of us, affecting us physically and mentally. We did not intend to hurt, and we like to think that the senders of the email likewise did not intend to make us distraught. Rather, affective intensities arose in the encounter between us (Ahmed 2004), intensities that were then reflected on and named as emotions.

These emotions, though highly uncomfortable, were productive. What was initially a conversation about *TWQ* as a publishing institution became a reflection about ourselves: who we are, what we stand for, what we are willing to compromise. For example, one contributor reflected on a question she received: 'Do you want to be branded as someone who is an enabler of imperialist thinking?' Such questioning was immensely unsettling to one who had been active for many years in grassroots social justice and decolonial movements. The challenges to our very sense of being can be considered a moral breakdown (Zigon 2009) – that is, a prompt for reflection and self-transformation to reach a level of moral

comfort. In this way, being uncomfortable was productive. It forced us to reflect on the ethics of publishing, and learn more about ourselves as academics, in different stages of our careers.

We were compelled to arrive at a position in relation to an ethical dilemma that we had not anticipated, captured as an uncomfortable and unsettling disturbance. As one contributor put it:

I went to bed disturbed ... having listened to everyone last night, I do not want to discount the discomforts that circulated, including mine. While publishing is stressful in itself ... it shouldn't be this stressful. And it shouldn't have to make us question which values we are willing to compromise.

This email, sent the morning after our group meeting, captures not only the intensities circulating early among us in confronting the dilemma but also the demand for reflection, recalling Zigon's (2009, 82) statement that 'ethics is a creative moment'. We wanted to return to a state of comfort, as the contributor continued: 'In the end, I want to publish knowing that everyone in the group is *at ease* with the decision. So, my position is to publish in another journal. It's been a difficult decision to make, but I think it is something I would *be comfortable with* in the long run' (emphasis added). Managing feelings and intensities became the priority. Our challenge was to sit with the discomfort, confront the hurt, and allow it to be a transformative moment so we could grow as scholars.

Feelings of comfort and discomfort are entangled in power. As Foucault (1986, 68) notes, the 'task of testing oneself, examining oneself, monitoring oneself in a series of clearly defined exercises, makes the question of truth ... central to the formation of the ethical subject'. The power lies in the shaping of these operations of truth – or, in our words, the laying out of the ethical terrain. As with other forms of discursive power, differential authority to speak, and to have one's words counted, shapes the ethical terrain (Pandian 2009). So we asked what power configurations shaped the terrain in which we found ourselves, and in what conditions comfort could return. We were most uncomfortable knowing that those critical of our decision to publish with *TWQ* are people we admire for their significant contributions to the field. Within the encounter, as highly regarded scholars their capacity to affect us was exceptionally strong. The consequence of their affective force was to steer us into a new ethical terrain which we then had to navigate, with strong compulsions to do so in a way that was aligned with their moral and political positions. We believe our moral and political positions were not divergent, but it required practices of generating comfort to be able to see that clearly.

ECRs may not, however, be familiar with this terrain yet, for various reasons. Not all have mentors at the centre of development studies, or, if they do, their mentors might not necessarily be averse to publishing with *TWQ*. And the ethical problem looks and feels different from the peripheries of knowledge production which are at some remove from the heat of scholarly debates and informal discussions. Location – both geographical and socio-political – in the global economy of knowledge matters a great deal (Collyer et al. 2019). Further, most of the contributors to this collection come from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds who are minorities in western academia. In regard to the imperative to know about the controversy, one contributor responded:

... before I commenced my PhD in [place withheld], I could not even access *TWQ* (or other high-ranking journals for that matter) because of the paywall. This statement makes me feel like

I should be responsible for educating myself about the politics of a journal whose contents I could not even access until recently.

Privileged access to informal codes and norms that arise from one's positioning at the 'centre of the field' may allow for a more straightforward view of the ethical terrain. Moreover, determining what the right position is in relation to this terrain is a matter of privilege. The shaping of the 'ethical' is a work of power, dependent not only on discursive authority but also on affective force. At the same time as the exchange offered an opportunity to learn from and follow the example of established scholars, the demand to know this ethical terrain and navigate it in similar ways to well-positioned scholars located in Euro-American institutions seemed to ignore, and hence reproduce, prevailing academic power structures. While we navigated this difficult ethical terrain, many contributors were navigating a different but equally fraught terrain of neoliberal academia.

The pragmatic is political

ECRs are entering a different terrain than that of more established scholars, with increasing managerialism, market-based principles and precarious employment arrangements within the neoliberalisation of higher education. To be employable, one needs to maintain 'an ambitious and rigorous research trajectory that includes heightened expectations in research productivity' (Oberhauser and Caretta 2019, 57), including multiple 'quality' publications in highly ranked international journals that are dominated by a handful of commercial publishers (Collyer et al. 2019). Further, many ECRs need to navigate 'racialised and gendered institutions and norms in terms of hiring, recruitment, promotion, and expectations for faculty based on white, heterosexual and masculinist norms' (Oberhauser and Caretta 2019, 57). Scholars with non-traditional trajectories into academia struggle to get in and to get ahead (Underhill-Sem 2017). Precarity and increased expectations engender fear and anxiety, which can be very forceful mobilisers. In this context, acting ethically comes at a high cost, as one contributor reflected:

I would prefer to be in a place where I could unpack my ethical feelings about our concerns and *TWQ* a bit further, but unfortunately my situation is entirely practical and the immediate negative impact on me personally from further delays is much greater than any lingering moral qualms about the journal's lacklustre response to the BG [Bruce Gilley] article.

Political and ethical positions do not happen in a vacuum. One's positionality matters when simultaneously navigating the ethical terrain of publishing and the neoliberal academies. We noticed that in the meeting and early email exchanges amongst contributors, it was the established scholars who felt most comfortable with moving to a different journal that was ranked lower in the journal league tables, and who were less concerned that such a move would mean delayed publication. Moving journals avoided having to justify publishing with *TWQ*, and it was less critical to more established scholars when and where their papers were published. One contributor developing a career in policy and practice outside of academia felt less pressured to 'publish or perish'. Thus, publishing in highly ranked journals bore less weight in her ethical decisions. For other ECRs, however, the stakes were much higher, and ethical decisions had significant material implications. As one contributor explained, there were publication outputs she was expected to meet that meant she could

not afford any delay. Standing with the signatories of the email would therefore come at huge personal cost in her case. Nevertheless, several ECRs agreed to move journals, reluctantly, because of the pressure to make the 'right' moral choice.

The desire/need to publish with a high-ranking journal was established as the counter-position to withdrawing from *TWQ*. Then, a contributor made a critical intervention via email:

It has been very helpful to read all your thoughts and reflections, and I want to emphasise the point that I respect all the opinions and decisions shared today.

At the same time, I couldn't help but feel that my points and observations made last night have been overlooked which is, academic women of colour have typically been expected to be the diversity champion and sometimes at the expense of their career progression. My concerns are pragmatic as well as political.

I am also uncomfortable with the tacit moral judgements that have been in circulation throughout the discussions. Decoloniality, fighting racism, sexism and all forms of discriminations are vital to my life as academic and as a feminist. I am concerned that there is now an inferred reputation damage to me if I do not go along with the majority view. As such, I do not feel comfortable collaborating in such a group environment and will be withdrawing my submission from the special issue.

This email provides several important lessons. First, in our group discussion we had reproduced the framing of the ethical dilemma as being dichotomous, with someone choosing pragmatic concerns cast as 'unethical'. Unintentionally, the communication had engendered feelings of being viewed as amoral, which can have a powerful and disciplining effect. This perceived judgement produced further discomfort, leading to withdrawal.

Second, the contributor felt that her points relating to the expectation placed on academic women of colour to bear the burden (and costs) of ethical responsibility were being overlooked in the discussion. We listened to them but gave more weight to the ethical demands made by highly acclaimed scholars than to those of our fellow contributors. We were differentially responsive to claims in ways that map onto hierarchies in academia. This intervention created a space for others to question the ethical terrain. As one contributor wrote:

I am about to graduate next year, likely into unemployment It is urgent for myself – my career and my mental health – to see something coming out ... I do not believe that this priority means I am compromising my ethics.

Reflecting on this scenario, other contributors could see their position as an extension/echo of the judgement we were grappling with, delivered from a position of privilege, and oblivious to the desires and constraints of others in our group. It prompted questions about who was being asked to yield, and discomfort with the compromises that ECRs felt obliged to make. One contributor perceived that 'as a financially and professionally precarious brown woman, it is certainly unfair that the burden of example-setting should be placed on me (and all of us)! We needed to shift who had the capacity to make us un/comfortable.

This time, we sought comfort in our *solidarity* with ECRs. That is, we cultivated our 'sympathetic capacity' (Mazzarella 2017, 203) and forged a common goal: what we wanted to achieve together from the collection. Our sense of solidarity increased as we learnt more about the individual histories, positions and contemporary pressures for ECRs. We asked ourselves whether our inclination to skirt around *TWQ* was due to the fear of being judged

negatively by academic colleagues. Were we mainly concerned about what well-established, internationally known colleagues think about decolonisation and the proper way to advance it? If by decolonising development studies we mean destabilising Eurocentric ways of knowing, foregrounding marginalised voices and ‘unlearning’ through reflexivity (Langdon 2013), this can be achieved in multiple ways. Most critically here, one practice can be providing opportunities to female early career scholars to find a credible outlet for their work. We decided it was most important and most *ethical* to support emerging scholars to get into the academy. As Underhill-Sem (2017, 336) has argued, the current conditions of neoliberal higher education mean that we cannot ignore the practical: ‘institutionally-based struggles are ubiquitous and are ignored at the risk of losing critical spaces to conduct radical practice.’ One contributor made a similar case in a succinct email:

There are many ways to decolonise knowledge and the academy, including ensuring scholars with decolonial sensibilities get into the academy. Once they are in, I am sure the kind of discussions we have had will become an important compass point as they continue to hone their navigation skills – as we all have – complete with emotional turmoil!

Achieving comfort

The ethical and moral always involve strong affects and emotions, since what we believe is right and wrong, and how we act on that knowledge, are intimately tied to who we are, and our ongoing projects of self-stylisation (Ahmed 2010). The way that fear, uncertainty, anxiety, desires and hopes circulated within and between us made it difficult to see the best path forward. While emotions have an important role in reasoning, we were at risk of either (a) making a decision based on the strength of another’s capacity to affect us, or (b) making a decision that none of us could live with. After extreme discomfort, we now had to reach a level of comfort to reflect on *our* ethical positions. The collegiality of our peers was crucial to achieve that comfort. After those distressing initial emails, we were heartened by the responses from people whose advice we sought, including editorial board members, respected scholars in the field and our personal mentors. The majority responded, giving their precious time amidst a pandemic, despite many not knowing us. On balance, the experience demonstrated exactly how collegial academia, especially in development studies, can be. To all the people who offered guidance, we are immensely grateful. These acts of care gave us much-needed support and space. In appreciating the grey rather than the black-and-white in the situation, we could see alternative positions and reflect critically on the ethical terrain.

The practices within the group were also important. Sometimes inadvertent judgements threatened to derail our collective decision-making. We did not want our individual decisions to oppose each other, and we were at one stage sitting on different sides of the fence. But we were patient and attentive to circulations of affect. The Zoom discussion and emails in which co-authors shared their emotions and thinking helped to generate connection, instrumental to establishing a sense of solidarity. Practices also included identifying privileged and subaltern positions, which facilitated empathy. We were attentive and responsive to each other’s fears and anxieties, as well as hopes and ambitions. Creating an environment in which we could affect and be affected by each other was important to counterbalance the power of established scholars to affect, reflecting on who we were responsive to, and

why. A knowledge of the relation between affect and power helped immensely in achieving this outcome. Once we had the space and level of comfort to reflect on the ethical terrain, many of us started to see certain things differently. We evaluated the claims made in the email exchange not by how they made us feel, but based on what we believed were their merits within our own moral reflections.

We decided collectively to continue with the collection in *TWQ*. Individually, our decisions varied. Two contributors did not feel comfortable publishing in the journal but gave their blessing to go ahead without them. This included our co-editor, Sarah Homan, who had worked hard on the collection. While maintaining her moral position she offered her

support and blessing to go ahead with *TWQ*, and I thank you all sincerely for letting me step down with yours. There's no judgement here, tacit or otherwise, for the decisions each of you have made and I appreciate the difficulty with which you have had to make them, (as I have had). This was just the right one for me.

Such practices of care were critical to our individual and collective ability to arrive at decisions that we all felt comfortable with. We learned the importance of attending to affective practices within institutional settings and the subtle and inchoate forms of power they sustain.

We argue that decolonising the academy must involve allowing emergent and structurally disadvantaged scholars to both navigate and critically shape the ethical terrain. Decolonial criticism aims to contextualise allegedly universal standards of scientific knowledge production as Western products rooted in a specific historical tradition shaped by colonial notions (Chakrabarty 2000). Decolonisation efforts have focused on practices of knowledge production and circulation, but – we argue – we must also provincialise moral and ethical terrains. We need to include emergent scholars and those from the periphery in the constant renegotiation of the ethical terrain of publishing, which will entail being attentive to affective forces. Advances in development studies have rested on knowing how power works, particularly discursive power, with this knowledge helping us to reverse or at least thwart mechanisms of power (see the introduction). This collection has argued that similarly, an understanding of how power works through and against affect and emotions can improve development scholarship and practice. While power and hierarchies can be bolstered by affective practices, they can also be disrupted through forging solidarity and acts of collegiality and care. Our argument is about the importance of being attentive to the possibilities of both.

Acknowledgements

The authors thank Sarah Homan and Regina Macalandag, who were part of the discussions that form the core of this paper. While they contributed greatly to the decision-making process, they chose not to be included as authors for this article. We are exceptionally grateful to the time and guidance of several academics who we approached for advice; your collegiality meant a great deal to us. Thank you to the editor, Shahid Qadir, for your response to our queries and for your patience, and to several former and current members of the editorial board for your advice. Anonymous reviewers and editorial board guidance also helped to sharpen the arguments in this viewpoint piece. Finally, thank you to the established scholars who responded to our request to review an article with well-intentioned advice, and for the extensive email exchanges among us.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes on contributors

Kaira Zoe Alburo-Cañete is Postdoctoral Researcher for the Humanitarian Governance Project at the International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam (2022–2024). She completed her PhD at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. Her doctoral research critically examined disaster reconstruction in post-Haiyan Tacloban City, Philippines, using a feminist lens. Her current research project focuses on how civil society actors and crisis-affected people can help (re) shape humanitarian governance and explores possibilities for advancing alternative humanitarian ethics ‘from below’.

Shonali Ayesha Banerjee is Research Associate at the Centre for Strategic Philanthropy within the Judge Business School, University of Cambridge. Her current research focuses on system change in philanthropy, specifically in the Middle East, Africa and Southeast Asia. She holds a PhD in international development from the University of Sussex, an MSc in development studies from SOAS, University of London, and a BA in international affairs and political science from The George Washington University. Her research interests include philanthrocapitalism, digital platforms, ICT4D and new media in development.

Sochanny Hak is Research Fellow at the Analyzing Development Issues Centre, Cambodia, and a freelance consultant. Her research interests include land grabbing, indigenous people, gender transformation, natural resource governance, and climate change. Her thesis *Examining Gendered Responses to Land Exclusions and Livelihood Transition in Six Bunong villages of Mondulhiri province, Cambodia* analysed livelihood changes, exclusionary effects of land on indigenous people, and emotional and gendered responses to land conflicts.

Tanya Jakimow is Associate Professor of anthropology in the College of Asia and the Pacific, ANU. She is an Australian Research Council (ARC) Future Fellow, working on a project examining women's political labour and pathways to politics in Sydney Australia, Medan, Indonesia, and Dehra Dun, India. Her theoretical concerns, as outlined in her recent monograph *Susceptibility in Development: The Micro-Politics of Urban Development in India and Indonesia* (July 2020, Oxford University Press), include the intersection of affect and emotions, power and personhood. The book is based on ethnographic research with community volunteers in Indonesia and Municipal Councillors in India, funded by an ARC Discovery Early Career Research Award.

Chanrith Ngin is Research Director at the Centre for Policy Studies, Cambodia, and an Honorary Academic at The University of Auckland, New Zealand. He publishes on the transformation of rural and urban communities by land governance and climate change, migration and disaster resilience. He has been a Designated Professor at Nagoya University Cambodia Satellite Campus, Dean of the Faculty of Development Studies at the Royal University of Phnom Penh and a Senior Research Fellow at The University of Auckland, New Zealand.

Susanne Schech is a human geographer who teaches development geography at Flinders University in South Australia. She co-authored *Culture and Development: A Critical Introduction* (Wiley, 2000), edited *Development Perspectives from the Antipodes* (2014), and has published on a range of development issues including participation, gender justice, poverty reduction, volunteering and humanitarianism. Another focus of her research interest is migration and mobility, particularly forced migration and refugee settlement in Australia. Her current research projects examine the history of humanitarianism through the lens of the League of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and temporary labour migration from East Timor to Australia.

Mahardhika Sjamsoe'oad Sadjad is a PhD Researcher at the International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam. She is in the final stages of her doctoral research, which focuses on

Indonesian host societies' imaginings of and encounters with refugees and asylum seekers as a window to critically examine constructed discourses of 'Indonesianness'. She is interested in people's stories and experiences with movement and migration. Her research applies critical discourse studies and ethnographic approaches in exploring narratives of identity and emotions within the nexus of migration and development.

Yvonne Te Ruki Rangi o Tangaroa Underhill-Sem is a Cook Island New Zealander with close family ties to PNG. She is a Pacific feminist decolonial development geographer currently working at the University of Auckland where she is an Associate Professor teaching Pacific studies, gender studies and development studies. The intricacies of mobilities, maternities and markets continue to catch her attention as she works to resist the erasure of diversity within colonial differences, while simultaneously finding epistemic strength in one's partial position.

Joyce Wu is an academic at the University of New South Wales, and Deputy Editor for *Development in Practice*. Her research interests include gender mainstreaming, male behavioural change and violence against women. Her book *Involving Men in Ending Violence against Women* examined how this work was carried out by activists in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Timor Leste.

Notes

1. This collection originally had two co-editors. Sarah Homan decided to withdraw from the collection over the controversy, but has contributed a great deal to the discussions and this paper, as well as the labour in getting the collection together.
2. We have not named any of the authors of these emails, or of our broader exchange. A draft version of this paper was sent to these academics with an invitation to respond.
3. We note the importance of these acts of generosity below and thank again here the people who responded to emails.

Bibliography

- Ahmed, Sara. 2004. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Ahmed, Sara. 2010. *The Promise of Happiness*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2000. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Collyer, Fran, Raewyn Connell, João Maia, and Robert Morrell. 2019. *Knowledge and Global Power: Making New Sciences in the South*. Clayton: Monash University Publishing.
- Foucault, Michael. 1986. *The Care of Self: The History of Sexuality*, vol. 3, translated by Robert Hurley, New York: Random House.
- Grydehøj, Adam. 2018. "Hearing Voices: Colonialism, Outsider Perspectives, Island and Indigenous Issues, and Publishing Ethics." *Island Studies Journal* 13 (1): 3–12.
- Langdon, Jonathan. 2013. "Decolonising Development Studies: Reflections on Critical Pedagogies in Action." *Canadian Journal of Development Studies/Revue Canadienne D'études du Développement* 34 (3): 384–399. doi:10.1080/02255189.2013.825205.
- Mazzarella, William. 2017. "Sense out of Sense: Notes on the Affect/Ethics Impasse." *Cultural Anthropology* 32 (2): 199–208. 10.14506/ca32.2.04
- Moore, Henrietta. 2011. *Still Life: Hopes, Desires and Satisfactions*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Oberhauser, Ann M., and Martina Angela Caretta. 2019. "Mentoring Early Career Women Geographers in the Neoliberal Academy: Dialogue, Reflexivity, and Ethics of Care." *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 101 (1): 56–67. doi:10.1080/04353684.2018.1556566.
- Pandian, Anand. 2009. *Crooked Stalks: Cultivating Virtue in South India*. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Sultana, Farhana. 2018. "The False Equivalence of Academic Freedom and Free Speech: Defending Academic Integrity in the Age of White Supremacy, Colonial Nostalgia, and anti-Intellectualism." *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 17 (2): 228–257.
- Underhill-Sem, Yvonne Te Ruki-Rangi-O-Tangaroa. 2017. "Academic Work as Radical Practice: Getting in, Creating a Space, Not Giving Up." *Geographical Research* 55 (3): 332–337. doi:[10.1111/1745-5871.12202](https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-5871.12202).
- Zigon, Jarrett. 2009. "Morality and Personal Experience: The Moral Conceptions of a Muscovite Man." *Ethos* 37 (1): 78–101. doi:[10.1111/j.1548-1352.2009.01032.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1352.2009.01032.x).