

GLOBE

L'ÉDITORIAL

Pour une nouvelle
Bildung – l'éducation
comme bien commun

LE DOSSIER

The End of
Development?



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L'ÉDITORIAL

Pour une nouvelle *Bildung* – l'éducation comme bien commun

Marie-Laure Salles

Directrice

Nous vivons aujourd'hui au croisement de crises multiples et imbriquées : recomposition des rapports de puissance, tensions géopolitiques, militarisation et retour des conflits. À ces fractures s'ajoutent les bouleversements écologiques et la raréfaction des ressources ; une révolution technologique qui fragilise nos repères cognitifs et alimente autant la production d'information que de désinformation ; et, enfin, l'explosion des inégalités dont les conséquences sociales et politiques nourrissent l'érosion démocratique, la montée de l'illibéralisme et la dynamique de polarisation fragilisant le contrat social et la cohésion des sociétés.

Ces défis ne connaissent ni frontières ni solutions simples. Ils forment un faisceau de problèmes complexes, interdépendants et en constante évolution. Dans ce contexte, les modes de gouvernance traditionnels montrent clairement leurs limites, que ce soit au niveau national ou multilatéral, appelant à une reconfiguration en profondeur. Lorsque les institutions sont fragilisées ou ne jouent plus leur rôle, alors il faut miser sur l'engagement courageux, créatif et constructif des individus et des collectifs. Et pour que cet engagement soit possible, l'éducation s'impose plus que jamais comme le bien public le plus stratégique.

Dans l'esprit de Wilhelm von Humboldt, philosophe et ministre prussien de l'Éducation, la *Bildung* désigne un projet éducatif orienté vers la formation du jugement, du caractère, de l'engagement et de la responsabilité civique. Il ne s'agit pas d'opposer savoirs pratiques et professionnalisants d'un côté et formation humaniste de l'autre, mais de rappeler que cette dernière constitue le socle permettant



d'acquérir, d'adapter et parfois de désapprendre des compétences dans un monde mouvant. Une telle éducation vise non seulement à assurer l'employabilité, mais aussi surtout à préparer chacun-e à affronter la complexité avec humilité, lucidité, courage et exigence éthique.

L'évolution des logiques éducatives de ces dernières décennies nous a progressivement éloignés de cet équilibre. La privatisation croissante de l'éducation a eu tendance à réduire son ambition à l'employabilité immédiate, comme si son rôle se limitait à répondre aux besoins du marché du travail. Par ailleurs, l'hyperspécialisation a fragmenté les savoirs, du primaire au doctorat : utile en soi, elle devient contreproductive lorsqu'elle empêche de voir les liens, les arbitrages ou les effets inattendus, pourtant essentiels pour comprendre les problèmes complexes d'aujourd'hui. Enfin, la fascination pour les sciences « dures » et les technologies tend à marginaliser sciences humaines, sociales, histoire et arts – disciplines indispensables pour développer l'esprit critique, le sens moral, la créativité et l'orientation vers le bien commun.

Pour inverser ces tendances, il devient nécessaire d'imaginer un véritable New Deal éducatif, adapté aux défis que devront affronter les nouvelles générations. Cela suppose de renouer avec l'esprit d'une *Bildung* contemporaine : un projet éducatif centré sur la capacité à appréhender la complexité, à affronter les enjeux existentiels que pose notamment l'intelligence artificielle, et à assumer les formes d'engagement et de responsabilité qu'exige une période de transformation profonde.

Marie-Laure Salles.
Boris PALEFROY

Que signifierait concrètement un tel projet ? D'abord, inscrire l'esprit de la *Bildung* à toutes les étapes de l'apprentissage, de la petite enfance à la formation continue, avec un objectif commun : former des esprits libres, adaptables et responsables. Ensuite, transmettre non seulement des savoir-faire techniques, mais aussi la capacité d'apprendre à apprendre, voire même à désapprendre. Dans un monde profondément instable et incertain, l'adaptabilité devient une compétence centrale. Il faudrait également redonner toute sa place à l'esprit critique, apte à questionner les données, les informations, les modèles et les indicateurs, repérer les biais et évaluer les conséquences éthiques. Il faut aussi encourager, par tous les moyens possibles, la créativité et le courage qui l'accompagne. Enfin, il faut accorder toute leur importance aux biens communs qu'il va nous falloir ensemble défendre, protéger ou réinventer – climat et planète, inclusion et connexion, science et information de qualité, collaboration internationale, paix.

À l'Institut, plusieurs éléments de cette vision sont déjà bien ancrés : l'interdisciplinarité, la pluralité épistémique, le dialogue constant et l'engagement de nos étudiant-es sur des enjeux concrets avec une grande diversité de partenaires locaux comme internationaux, ainsi qu'une présence active dans le débat public. Mais l'ampleur des défis actuels exige d'aller plus loin. Il nous faut créer des expériences d'apprentissage qui reflètent réellement la complexité du monde et mobiliser encore davantage la diversité qui nous caractérise comme une ressource cognitive collective. Il nous faut accepter l'erreur comme levier

d'apprentissage. Il nous faut nous approprier l'intelligence artificielle tout en affirmant clairement qu'elle n'est qu'un outil, qu'elle doit être sous le contrôle et au service de l'humain. Il nous faut enfin affirmer l'éthique et les valeurs comme fil conducteur permanent. Nous sommes responsables de ce que nous devenons. Le savoir devient pouvoir et en cela il nous engage et nous oblige. Et si le leadership de demain, un leadership qui se devra bientôt de revenir vers la paix et la collaboration internationale comme formes ultimes de sécurité humaine, reposait sur quelques valeurs fondamentales – courage, humilité, intégrité, bienveillance et responsabilité ? N'aurions-nous pas déjà une promesse de progrès ?

Loin de toute nostalgie, appeler à une *Bildung* du XXI^e siècle revient à formuler un agenda pragmatique : former au jugement dans l'incertitude, à la pensée critique face à la désinformation, à la responsabilité dans l'interdépendance, à l'ouverture et à la créativité comme principes autant que comme pratiques pour réinventer. Ainsi préparés, nos diplômés ne se contenteront pas de réagir à la complexité du monde : ils s'en saisiront pour engager la transformation positive dont nous avons terriblement besoin.

L'INSTITUT

Aider les étudiant·es à décrypter la complexité du monde

Entretien avec

Yves Oltramare

Ancien banquier ; philanthrope à l'origine de la Chaire

Yves Oltramare Religion et politique dans le monde contemporain

La Chaire Yves Oltramare Religion et politique dans le monde contemporain a été créée en 2011 grâce aux encouragements et au soutien d'Yves Oltramare, qui a offert d'en assurer le financement. Elle a pour mission d'apporter une contribution scientifique majeure à l'analyse de l'impact des rapports entre religion et politique sur l'évolution des sociétés et du système international. Elle contribue au renforcement du dialogue et à la recherche de réponses, notamment à travers une interaction forte avec les milieux d'expert·es et les actrices et acteurs internationaux concernés.

Qu'est-ce qui, dans votre trajectoire personnelle ou professionnelle, vous a sensibilisé au lien entre religion, politique et société?

Enfant, j'étais fasciné par ces récits où l'idéal religieux semblait irriguer les grandes aventures humaines – croisades, conquêtes, empires – avant de découvrir et de comprendre en mûrissant combien tout cela masquait la violence réelle de l'histoire.



Plus tard, ma profession me confrontant au cœur des problèmes d'actualité, j'ai été amené au fil des années à réfléchir au phénomène de recrudescence d'un certain obscurantisme religieux dans la sphère politique internationale.

Quels éléments vous ont conduit à estimer qu'une chaire universitaire à l'Institut et à Genève était nécessaire pour approfondir l'étude des interactions entre religion et politique?

Ce phénomène d'obscurantisme a pris une dimension planétaire avec les attentats du 11 septembre 2001. Dix ans après ces événements survenaient le printemps arabe et la répression qui a suivi. C'est alors que je me suis ouvert à Philippe Burrin, directeur de l'Institut, partageant avec lui mon avis que le monde était en train de changer de visage et qu'il en résulterait une situation mondiale nouvelle exigeant que nous prenions le temps d'une réflexion sur les rapports entre le religieux et le politique. C'est l'origine de la création de la Chaire Religion et politique dans le monde contemporain, aujourd'hui animée par le professeur Jean-François Bayart sous la direction de Marie-Laure Salles.

Yves Oltramare.
Pierre-Alain FOLLINET

Selon vous, quelles thématiques ont bénéficié d'une meilleure compréhension grâce aux travaux de la chaire?

Je pense d'abord aux mouvances politiques contemporaines qui se reconfigurent autour du sacré, qu'il s'agisse de fondamentalismes, de théocraties, d'évangélismes politiques ou de réenchantements identitaires. C'est une première thématique fortement analysée au sein de la chaire à travers les conférences orchestrées par Jean-François Bayart et le choix des invité·es. Ensuite, il y a celle de la sécularisation qui n'a pas produit la fin du religieux mais plutôt son déplacement du domaine institutionnel vers celui des imaginaires et des subjectivités. Enfin, la nature du religieux même est fortement décryptée dans la chaire : le religieux se mue en un acteur transnational, circulant entre continents, façonnant les souverainetés, alimentant les conflictualités, mais aussi les aspirations éthiques. La chaire éclaire un aspect central : le religieux n'est jamais extérieur au politique. Même plus : nous vivons une crise profonde des démocraties et une absence de programme politique mobilisateur. Face à cela, la religion, sous diverses formes et dans différents contextes, s'y substitue, remplissant le vide et offrant un objet de fédération politique le plus souvent extrême et dangereux.

Quelle contribution particulière Jean-François Bayart, qui la dirige depuis 2015, a-t-il apportée à la chaire?

Jean-François Bayart, par sa prodigieuse culture et ses nombreuses publications, a apporté une orientation intéressante et critique à la chaire. D'une part, en relativisant dans certains cas le rôle du religieux comme élément premier de nombreux conflits. D'autre part, il a révélé la complexité du sujet en évitant une approche trop unilatérale et partisane. Sa connaissance de l'Afrique a certainement ouvert les yeux de beaucoup sur l'importance de ce continent, centre de toutes les convoitises internatio-

nales, et sur son rapport à l'Europe du fait de sa croissance démographique explosive. Sa connaissance de l'islam a aussi permis de nuancer une vision souvent trop simpliste de cette culture conquérante.

Dans le contexte actuel, comment la chaire peut-elle contribuer à préparer les étudiant·es et étudiants à assumer leurs futurs rôles sur la scène internationale?

Avant toute chose, il me semble essentiel que les étudiant·es aient une profonde connaissance de l'histoire pour comprendre les liens qui existent avec les événements présents. Alors que les étudiant·es sont constamment confronté·es aux médias et aux *fake news*, la chaire doit pouvoir les aider à décrypter la complexité et l'accélération des événements en sachant prendre de la hauteur pour ne pas être les jouets de l'émotivité nécessairement liée au vécu dans le présent.

Si je devais donner une définition des objectifs de la chaire, je dirais qu'elle est vouée à former des adultes capables de discerner l'éphémère des valeurs d'avenir auxquelles ils et elles pourront apporter leur contribution.



En savoir plus sur la Chaire Oltramare.

Yves Oltramare

Ancien associé de la banque privée Lombard Odier, Yves Oltramare a un parcours aussi foisonnant que sa pensée. Outre son rôle dans les conseils d'administration des plus grandes institutions de la vie économique suisse et internationale, il a siégé pendant trente ans au comité d'investissement du Fonds de pension des Nations Unies. Dans le domaine scientifique, il a notamment présidé la Fondation Louis-Jeantet de médecine. Son profond humanisme et sa contribution au rayonnement de Genève au-delà des frontières lui ont valu en 1995 le Prix de la Fondation pour Genève. Ses convictions philosophiques s'incarnent notamment dans la publication en 2019 de son livre intitulé « *Tu seras rencontreur d'Homme* » : *une voie vers l'accomplissement* aux Éditions Labor et Fides, et la création de l'Institut À Ciel Ouvert – Science et Spiritualité.

L'Institut exprime sa profonde gratitude à M. Yves Oltramare pour son soutien.

L'INSTITUT

A Call to Reinvent International Cooperation

The *Geneva Policy Outlook 2026*

Achim Wennmann

Director for Strategic Partnerships; Professor of Practice, Interdisciplinary Programme; Nagulendran Chair in Peace Mediation; and Editor of the *Geneva Policy Outlook*



The multilateral system is undergoing a profound structural transformation that is likely to accelerate in 2026. A first wave of budget cuts, downsizing, and delocalisation is already constraining operations and reversing achievements built over decades, often affecting those most in need. In multilateral hubs such as New York and Geneva, the mood is sombre. Resources are shrinking, rhetoric is hardening, and long-standing accomplishments are under pressure.

Yet this is not a story of collapse. Conversations held in the framework of the *Geneva Policy Outlook* throughout the year point instead to a reaffirmation of core values and mandates, and to a determination to continue addressing global challenges through international cooperation. Much of this work may be less visible than before, but it remains consequential. 2026 will be a decisive year: adaptation will shape whether Geneva consolidates its relevance or risks marginalisation in a changing world order.

Geneva has weathered systemic upheaval before. It witnessed the collapse of the League of Nations in the 1930s, yet today it stands stronger and more diversified. Its institutional footprint extends well beyond the United Nations and governments. The city hosts a dense ecosystem of political spaces that enable policy innovation and cross-sector alliance building, including humanitarian and faith-based movements, scientific communities, and corporate networks with global reach. This diversity allows Geneva to connect diplomacy with implementation and to bridge global negotiations with local realities.

Security challenges illustrate the stakes. Nuclear arsenals are being expanded and modernised, and the multilateral arms control architecture is increasingly strained. In February 2026, the last remaining bilateral nuclear arms control agreement between the United States and Russia, the New START Treaty, expired. Its lapse removes constraints on the world's two largest nuclear arsenals and could generate ripple effects among other nuclear-armed states. Whether 2026 becomes a moment for renewed

negotiations — including ideally through a revitalised Conference on Disarmament — will test the resilience of multilateral diplomacy.

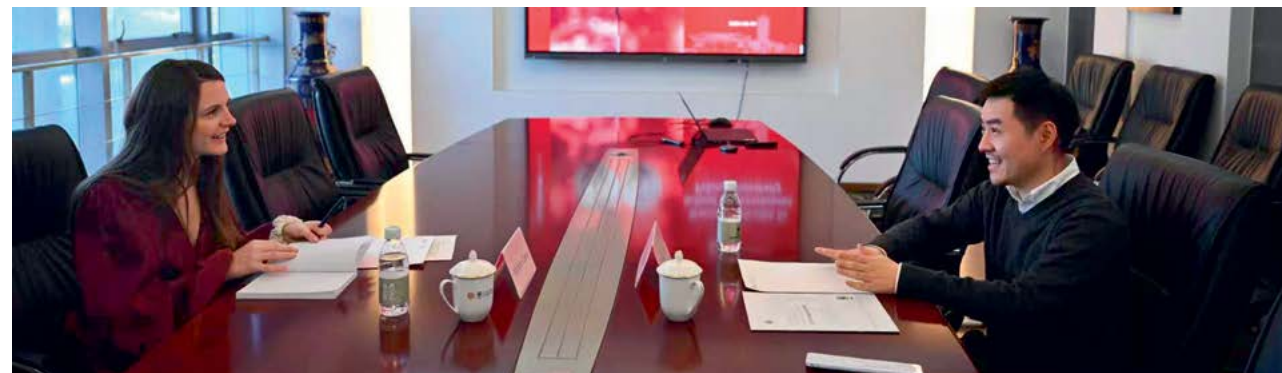
These developments underscore the need for Geneva to adapt proactively. Its future lies in strengthening its role in regulatory multilateralism — negotiating and administering norms, standards, and agreements — while embracing a more solution-oriented approach through scalable, cross-sector partnerships. It also requires weaving stronger bonds between official and private diplomacy and sustaining Geneva's tradition of open dialogue, especially on the most difficult issues.

With its long history as a global hub, Geneva is not standing still. Its strength lies in the political energy between organisations, sectors, and communities, and in its capacity to innovate under pressure. The *Geneva Policy Outlook 2026* is launched at a moment of strain, but also of opportunity: a moment to reflect soberly on what must be preserved, what should be adapted, and what needs to be created anew to ensure that Geneva remains central to international cooperation in a rapidly changing world.

Achim Wennmann.
Boris PALEFROY



Read the *Geneva Policy Outlook*.



L'INSTITUT

Strengthening International Academic Partnerships

The Geneva Graduate Institute is proud to announce that it has signed a series of new partnership agreements with prominent universities across the world in 2025 and early 2026. The agreements support the Institute's dedication to the international community and create wonderful opportunities for students to pursue their international studies from diverse global perspectives.

New exchange agreements were signed with the Université de Montréal in Canada, the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School in the United States, and O.P. Jindal Global University in India. The Institute has also renewed existing exchange agreements with Yale University, the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, and American University, all in the United States. These exchange agreements all allow students from the Institute to spend a semester abroad at the partnering institution and allow for their students to come to Geneva. The Institute has an existing partnership with Yale for a dual degree.

The Institute has also entered into new partnerships with Hamilton College and Mount Holyoke for undergraduate semester programmes, allowing undergraduate students a rare opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of today's global challenges through a semester abroad at the graduate level in the heart of International Geneva.

Adding to its BA/MA programme, the Institute has also signed a new agreement with McGill University to allow their International Development Studies (IDS) students to spend seven semesters of their studies at McGill University to earn their bachelor's degree, before continuing their

studies at the Geneva Graduate Institute for an additional three semesters to fulfil the requirements for a master's degree. The BA/MA programme allows students to graduate with two degrees in five instead of six years, while pursuing their international studies from the perspectives of two of the most respected international institutions.

The Institute also recently conducted a series of visits to partner institutions across Asia, including China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and India. These visits aimed to further strengthen existing collaborations, gain deeper insight into ongoing joint initiatives, and explore opportunities for developing new partnerships with leading institutions in the region. Alexia Lima, International Programmes and Student Recruitment Coordinator for the Direction of Studies at the Geneva Graduate Institute, visited the partnering universities and shared of her experience: "Visiting our partners around the world has shown me that strong partnerships rely on solid and sustained relationships. In an increasingly digitalised world, there is immense value in meeting face-to-face, to grasp the realities, opportunities, and constraints of institutions and students. Ultimately, our aim is to offer our students the best opportunities at leading institutions worldwide, and cultivating close relationships with deans and faculty is essential to achieving this."

CHINA, Beijing.
Alexia Lima,
International
Programmes
and Student
Recruitment
Coordinator for
the Direction
of Studies at the
Geneva Graduate
Institute, meeting
with Professor
Yu Zeng at Peking
University.
10 March 2026.
Li BO



Learn more about our academic partnerships.

“Openness is one of the defining features of the Geneva Graduate Institute. International partnerships contribute to the culture of international understanding, exchange and cooperation that is characteristic of who we are — an approach that is all the more essential in today's international climate marked by retrenchment, isolation, and distrust.”

Marie-Laure Salles, Director of the Geneva Graduate Institute



L'ACTUALITÉ

La force profonde de l'Europe

Entretien avec

Alain Berset

Secrétaire général du Conseil de l'Europe

Cédric Dupont

Professeur de relations internationales/sciences politiques, Geneva Graduate Institute

Alors que l'Europe fait face à des bouleversements géopolitiques profonds et une remise en question de ses valeurs, nous avons invité Alain Berset et Cédric Dupont à répondre à nos questions sur son avenir et la préservation de sa cohésion.

Quelle est votre vision de l'Europe et quelle est sa principale force ?

Alain Berset (AB) : La vision est un socle de valeurs partagées, et sa force est de l'avoir traduite en actes très concrets pour chacune et chacun.

Prenez le rôle central de la Convention européenne des droits de l'homme et de la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme, deux institutions centrales du Conseil de l'Europe depuis des décennies. Ces institutions ont façonné le continent tel qu'il est aujourd'hui : un espace commun de défense des droits individuels. Le droit à la vie privée, le droit à la liberté d'expression, le droit à un procès équitable sont garantis à toutes les personnes qui vivent sur le territoire européen depuis que la Cour a pris des décisions dans ce sens. Je pourrais vous donner un tas d'autres exemples ! Encore récemment en 2026, la fin de ce qu'on appelait le « devoir conjugal » en France

est une conséquence directe d'une décision de la Cour à Strasbourg. Le Conseil de l'Europe a aussi créé une zone sans peine de mort.

Le Conseil de l'Europe rassemble les pays du continent, de la Suisse à l'Arménie, de la Grèce à l'Islande, du Portugal à la Norvège, de la Turquie à l'Estonie – aussi bien des membres de l'Union européenne que des pays qui n'en sont pas membres.

Voilà notre force. L'Europe n'est pas seulement un espace d'intérêts économiques ou politiques. Pour moi, elle est d'abord un continent géographique et une communauté de valeurs, fondée sur la démocratie, les droits humains et l'État de droit. C'est ce qui oriente mes actions.

Nous sommes aujourd'hui confrontés à une rupture profonde de l'ordre international. Dans ce contexte, le rôle du Conseil de l'Europe est de défendre la force des règles, et non la logique de la force. Nous en avons fait la démonstration face à la guerre en Ukraine et avons établi l'obligation de rendre des comptes là où elle n'existait pas.

Ce qui fait la singularité de l'Europe, c'est la solidité de ce socle. De plus en plus d'États, au-delà de notre continent, cherchent à coopérer avec nous et à s'inspirer de ces normes.

À gauche :
Alain Berset.
Conseil de l'Europe,
Strasbourg
À droite :
Cédric Dupont.

Cédric Dupont (CD) : L'Europe pour moi est avant tout un projet, une aspiration née des cendres de l'histoire. Ma vision de l'Europe est celle d'un continent où la coopération prime sur la confrontation. Après des siècles de conflits, des constructions institutionnelles comme l'Union européenne ou le Conseil de l'Europe incarnent ce renouveau européen : construire la paix et la prospérité par le droit et la solidarité.

La principale force de l'Europe réside dans sa capacité à travailler ensemble face à des défis qu'aucun État seul ne pourrait affronter. Cette force s'est illustrée concrètement lors de l'invasion de l'Ukraine. L'Europe a su, certes non sans difficultés, ouvrir ses frontières aux personnes réfugiées et unir ses voix pour sanctionner l'agresseur, prouvant que sa diversité peut être un levier d'action. Nous l'avons également vu durant la pandémie de Covid-19 : malgré les tensions initiales, le mécanisme de relance commun et l'achat groupé de vaccins ont montré que l'intérêt collectif peut, et doit, primer sur le repli national.

Mais cette force ne vaut que si elle reste fidèle à son socle : le respect inconditionnel des droits humains. L'Europe doit demeurer un espace d'accueil et de dignité. Un lieu où chaque personne, quelle que soit son origine, peut trouver refuge et justice. C'est en gardant le cap sur ces principes, comme lors de l'activation de la protection temporaire pour les Ukrainiens, que l'Europe restera un modèle. Un projet toujours inachevé, mais essentiel.

Comment évaluer la place de l'Europe sur la scène internationale aujourd'hui ?

AB : Nous évoluons dans un contexte international particulièrement instable, marqué par la multiplication des conflits, le retour de la guerre sur le continent, l'essor des menaces hybrides, mais aussi par un recul démocratique.

L'escalade de la crise en Iran et au Moyen-Orient soulève des questions fondamentales pour la sécurité européenne et la capacité du droit international à encadrer l'usage de la force.

Je crois que le continent européen joue un rôle essentiel comme pôle de stabilité et de défense des valeurs démocratiques. Mais il doit réfléchir aux moyens d'organiser sa réponse collective à l'instabilité croissante et être capable d'agir ensemble dans un monde ouvert, tout en défendant ses intérêts et ses principes.

Il faut une vision audacieuse et claire. Au bout du compte, le monde a besoin d'une Europe sûre, prospère, fidèle à ses valeurs et prévisible sur le plan politique, constituant un point d'ancrage pour la stabilité mondiale. Nous travaillons sur ce point.

L'architecture de sécurité de l'Europe doit s'inscrire dans un cadre institutionnel stable et permanent. Le Conseil

de l'Europe est la seule organisation ayant l'étendue géographique – avec ses 46 États membres dont les 27 de l'Union européenne –, la légitimité historique et la cohérence juridique nécessaires pour remplir cette mission. Nous avons l'expertise pour trouver des solutions innovantes.

C'est en temps de crise que le Conseil de l'Europe prend tout son sens, lorsque la force menace de supplanter l'État de droit.

CD : Dans un monde redevenu prédateur, où la loi du plus fort domine, l'Europe, et en particulier l'Union européenne, apparaît souvent comme un géant économique mais un nain stratégique. Sa relative faiblesse tient à son refus, délibéré ou forcé, de jouer selon les règles du réalisme agressif. Là où d'autres privilégient l'expansion sans frein, en Ukraine, au Groenland ou ailleurs, l'Europe cherche une voie moins opportuniste, ce qui la rend vulnérable aux yeux de ses détracteurs.

Pourtant, c'est précisément dans cette vulnérabilité apparente que réside sa nécessité historique. Quitte à déplaire aux tenants d'un réarmement massif, l'Europe doit affirmer sa différence face aux défis globaux. Dans un monde rythmé par les crises et la raréfaction des ressources, la spécificité européenne doit être d'assumer le renoncement : renoncer à une croissance infinie destructrice, renoncer à la puissance militaire offensive comme seul garant de sécurité.

Alors que d'autres nations voient dans chaque ressource une opportunité de domination, l'Europe doit avoir l'audace de dire « non ». Sa place sur la scène internationale devrait être celle d'un modèle de sobriété choisie. En acceptant de renoncer à certains avènements technologiques ou économiques pour en sauver d'autres, plus durables et humains, l'Europe transformerait sa faiblesse actuelle en une autorité morale et une alternative sociétale incontournables.

Comment préserver la cohésion européenne face aux contestations des valeurs démocratiques ?

AB : Je crois que la cohésion européenne dépend avant tout de la capacité à renforcer la démocratie. Nous pouvons y parvenir de plusieurs façons.

La sécurité ne peut être garantie que si les institutions démocratiques sont solides et crédibles. Le Nouveau Pacte Démocratique pour l'Europe illustre cette ambition : il vise à restaurer la confiance des citoyens dans les institutions et à consolider la résilience démocratique face aux crises.

Je pense aussi qu'il s'agit de protéger la société civile. L'espace civique est le « poumon de la démocratie ». Il joue un rôle clé en garantissant le pluralisme et la participation citoyenne.

Enfin, et je le fais auprès des capitales, il faut maintenir un dialogue politique constant entre les États européens pour garantir la coopération et le respect de valeurs communes malgré les divergences politiques.

La défense active des droits humains, de l'État de droit et des libertés fondamentales constitue le socle de cette cohésion. Face aux menaces internes et externes – désinformation, ingérences étrangères ou fragilisation des institutions – la démocratie doit être protégée, renforcée et constamment renouvelée.

Soyons clair, garantir un espace européen où la démocratie reste solide et crédible n'est pas un choix, c'est un impératif : c'est ainsi que l'Europe peut continuer à être un espace de liberté et de confiance pour tous ses citoyens.

CD : Préserver la cohésion européenne face aux contestations démocratiques exige d'identifier clairement les menaces intérieures. La première source de danger réside dans la tentation de succomber à la facilité des solutions simplistes. Si la tentation de réduire la complexité des défis actuels est forte, surtout en périodes électorales, réduire des problèmes structurels à de simples équations manichéennes appauvrit le débat public. La démocratie européenne ne survivra que si elle retrouve le courage de la nuance, refusant de sacrifier la réalité sur l'autel de l'efficacité apparente ou d'un populisme nourri par la peur du futur ou de l'autre.

Le second péril provient du creusement des inégalités sociales et des phénomènes d'exclusion. Lorsque le projet européen est perçu comme un accélérateur de fractures sociales, le terreau du rejet se fertilise. Une démocratie ne peut rester cohésive si une partie de sa population se sent abandonnée. La crise des Gilets jaunes en France, répercutée ailleurs, a montré combien le sentiment d'être délaissé par les élites européennes pouvait nourrir la colère.

Pour préserver l'unité, l'Europe doit donc mener un combat sur deux fronts : intellectuel et social. Sans cette double exigence de lucidité face aux simplismes et d'action résolue contre l'exclusion, les valeurs démocratiques risquent de n'être plus qu'un souvenir noble mais impuissant.

Comment renforcer le sentiment d'appartenance des citoyens, notamment chez les jeunes ?

AB : Il faut d'abord renforcer une sorte de « conscience européenne » pour les citoyens en montrant ce que les progrès réalisés apportent dans leur vie quotidienne. Cela passe par l'éducation et la sensibilisation aux valeurs européennes, mais aussi par des politiques capables de répondre aux préoccupations : égalité, justice sociale, transition environnementale, coût de la vie ou logement.

Les jeunes générations doivent pouvoir se reconnaître dans un projet qui place les citoyens au cœur de son action. Pour être franc, le problème n'est pas que les jeunes se détournent de la démocratie, mais qu'ils ont parfois le sentiment que la démocratie s'est détournée d'eux. Là où elle a longtemps été considérée comme acquise, beaucoup s'interrogent aujourd'hui sur son efficacité et sur leur avenir.

En parlant avec de jeunes Ukrainiens, Moldaves ou Arméniens, j'ai constaté combien, pour eux, la paix et l'Europe sont indissociables. Le Conseil de l'Europe continue d'incarner l'idéal qui a présidé à sa création.

La force de nos démocraties ne se décidera pas uniquement dans les parlements ou les tribunaux : elle se construira aussi dans les salles de classe, sur internet et dans l'esprit de la prochaine génération. Il faut donc associer davantage les jeunes aux décisions politiques et développer des processus participatifs et inclusifs, comme nous l'avons fait avec le Nouveau Pacte Démocratique.

Il s'agit de construire une Europe dans laquelle les citoyens se sentent écoutés, responsabilisés et protégés. C'est cela, tout simplement, la démocratie.

CD : Renforcer le sentiment d'appartenance, particulièrement chez les jeunes, exige une introspection sur le sens de l'identité européenne. Cela doit dépasser le cadre étroit des réactions émotionnelles envers la bureaucratie européenne, accusée souvent d'une sorte d'impérialisme réglementaire. Être Européen, c'est reconnaître que notre sécurité, notre prospérité et nos valeurs sont interdépendantes.

Le véritable défi réside dans notre capacité à vivre ces valeurs en temps calmes. Trop souvent, la solidarité européenne ne se réveille que dans l'urgence : la distribution commune des vaccins durant la pandémie de Covid-19 ou l'accueil des réfugiés ukrainiens ont créé un élan puissant, mais éphémère. Or, une appartenance durable ne peut reposer sur la menace permanente ou la gestion de crise. Elle doit s'enraciner dans la conviction que l'Europe offre un cadre de vie supérieur en tout temps.

Pour les jeunes générations, le sentiment d'appartenance naîtra de la capacité à projeter ces valeurs dans l'avenir. La force de l'Europe ne résidera pas tant dans sa puissance économique ou militaire que dans sa résilience morale et sa capacité à protéger les droits fondamentaux au quotidien. Si chaque citoyen parvient à voir dans l'Europe la garantie active de ses droits en temps normal, alors l'appartenance deviendra un réflexe. C'est dans la tranquillité des jours ordinaires, bien plus que dans la turbulence des exceptions historiques, que se gagnera la légitimité du projet européen.

L'ACTUALITÉ

When A Superpower Shrugs at International Law

Fuad Zarbiyev

Professor of International Law

President Trump's recent assertion that "[he doesn't] need international law" and that the only limit on his power abroad is his "own morality" marks a sharp break in United States (US) foreign policy and is a troubling signal for the future of the world order.

Careful observers have long pointed out that international affairs operate within a climate of legality. "Law talk" in international intercourse is too prominent to be brushed aside as empty rhetoric. Governments routinely justify their behaviour using the language of international law. International claims, and the responses to them, are typically framed in terms of legal rights and obligations. No government openly denies that international law constrains its conduct.

Remarkably, this has also been more or less true of great powers. This is not because they are disinterestedly devoted to the common good of the community of nations, but it is at least in part because international law is instrumentally useful to those able to deploy it strategically. Even the most powerful states cannot realistically bear the cost of constantly enforcing their privileges and preferences through sheer power alone. When a particular interest is translated into a rule of international law, the costs of enforcement drop significantly, relying on the generally realistic assumption that most states tend to comply with their legal obligations.

This system, however, works only if great powers are willing to play the game of reciprocity. In practice, this means that powerful states must exercise self-restraint, upholding international law even when doing so requires them to forgo immediate interests they have the material capacity to pursue. This blend of what the political scientist Michael Taylor called "short-term altruism" and "long-term self-interest" is essential to the normal operation of international law.



The culture in which these assumptions were once taken for granted is going through a steady erosion. Particularly troubling is the growing tendency to prioritise, in foreign policy, what Arnold Wolfers famously described as "possession goals" over "milieu goals". Seeking specific rights, advantages, or privileges is a normal feature of the foreign policy of any rational state. The problem arises when these pursuits totally disregard "the shape of the environment in which the nation operates".

American presidents of both parties have, at times, shown blatant disregard for fundamental rules of international law prohibiting the use of force in international relations or the intervention in internal affairs of other countries — rules that lie at the heart of the post-World War II legal order. Yet what sets this administration apart is its apparent conviction that international law is simply irrelevant to the conduct of US foreign policy. Indeed, international law has not featured prominently in the administration's discourse.

Much of the appeal of international law for states lies in its legitimising power. Nations invoke international law to frame their claims and actions because legality confers legitimacy. To dismiss international law as irrelevant to foreign policy is not merely an empty gesture; it exposes an administration completely fixated on "possession goals" and severely weakens the very environment in which the United States operates.

VENEZUELA, Caracas. A demonstrator holds a banner during a march in Caracas to demand the release of deposed Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores. 13 January 2026. Juan BARRETO/ AFP

A more detailed version of this article was first published in French by *Le Temps* on 20 February 2026.



L'ACTUALITÉ

The Pandemic Agreement's Unfinished Chapter

Tortoise or Hare?

Suerie Moon

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Delegates erupted into euphoric cheers when they adopted the WHO Pandemic Agreement at the May 2025 World Health Assembly (WHA). Not only was the treaty to prevent another global catastrophe like the Covid-19 crisis, but its successful conclusion was also raised as a banner for multilateralism in one of the toughest years it has faced since the founding of the United Nations. But the work was not quite finished: the Agreement cannot be opened for signature or ratification until negotiators finalise an “Annex” on pathogen access and benefit-sharing (PABS), for which only basic provisions were agreed in the treaty itself. Countries gave themselves an additional year to hammer out critical details, but PABS was arguably the most technically and legally complex issue to be resolved — the reason it was left unfinished. At this writing, delegates had one week of formal negotiations left on the calendar before the May 2026 WHA deadline, but parties remained far apart on fundamental issues.

At heart, the talks are a search for a global grand bargain that — if struck — could make every country safer. The treaty obligates countries experiencing outbreaks to share biological samples of pathogens and the sequencing data derived from them quickly with the international community. In exchange, the “benefits” resulting from this sharing — including vaccines and drugs, technology transfer, royalties and research collaborations — are to flow back to enable countries to better control and prevent outbreaks. Scientists have previously shared such samples and data relatively openly. But the bitter memory of highly unequal access to vaccines

during the Covid-19 pandemic means many countries want credible guarantees they can access these tools for future emergencies.

As negotiators approach their self-imposed deadline, the clearest disagreement rests on who is obligated to share which benefits and when. Political divisions have largely fallen along North–South lines, with the Global South seen as sources of samples and data and therefore pushing for more definitive benefits to flow from the Global North, which is seen as a source of technology and financing.

Further complicating the picture are bilateral agreements recently concluded between the United States and 24 countries in Africa and Latin America (others are under negotiation), in which countries agree to share pathogen samples and data with the US in exchange for health financing estimated at USD 20 billion over five years. These bilateral arrangements could make it easier for companies and other governments to access pathogen data from the US rather than having to provide benefits via a multilateral PABS system, potentially undermining the grand bargain. But this and other critical issues, such as financing, have had almost no air time in the negotiating room, raising questions on how workable the Annex will be.

Pressure to complete a deal is intense, with multilateralists hoping for another win. Meanwhile, the Pandemic Agreement is in suspended animation. Yet if the deal agreed in Geneva is weak, convincing parliaments to ratify the treaty will become a harder sell and the treaty may ultimately fail. Crafting a clear, workable and fair deal may require more time, but would comprise a more genuine vindication of multilateralism than a fast finish this year.

Peter SCHREIBER/
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L'ACTUALITÉ

Africa and the Reform of Multilateral Institutions

The 9th Pan-African Congress and the Way Forward

Dêlidji Éric Degila

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Professor of International Law



Part of the broader Pan-Africanism movement, the Pan-African Congress (PAC) is a long-standing series of international meetings and gatherings bringing together African political and civil society leaders as well as African intellectuals and diaspora communities.

The 9th PAC dedicated to the theme “Renewal of Pan-Africanism and Africa’s Role in the Reform of Multilateral Institutions: Mobilising Resources and Reinventing Itself to Act” took place from 8 to 12 December 2025 in Lomé, Togo. It was co-organised by the Togolese government and the African Union as part of the Decade of African Roots and the African Diaspora (2021–2031). We were associated with Commission 2 (“Reform of multilateral institutions: role and place of Africa”), with one of us — Éric Degila — acting as the chair of the Commission.

How one approaches the issue of the role and place of Africa in multilateral institutions is very much a matter of the spirit in which one frames the issue. We are both sceptical of the prevailing narrative which portrays Africa as a norm taker, a passive recipient of global standards and decisions shaped elsewhere. African countries’ important contribution to the New International Economic Order or to the delegitimisation of the colonial rule and apartheid on the global stage is well known. More recently, in the context of climate justice, Africa has successfully pushed towards a more equitable climate finance and adaptation regime. During Covid-19, Africa transformed global debates on vaccine equity.

This does not mean, however, that there is no problem to be addressed. The multilateral system currently in place was largely designed in the aftermath of the Second World

War, with some congenital malformations. Today’s world is radically different. Africa is central to climate, security, energy and demographic trends of the world, yet it remains structurally under-represented. At the United Nations, Africa has no permanent seat on the Security Council, even though African situations dominate the Council’s agenda. In the international financial institutions, Africa’s voting power still lags far behind its demographic and economic weight.

The problem is not always about amplifying Africa’s voice; it is also about valuing that voice and allowing it to shape global outcomes. Equally important is the realisation that giving Africa a greater role and place in multilateral institutions is not an act of generosity. A system of governance with serious deficiencies in terms of participation and representation cannot be legitimate. The Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, which call for a more representative Security Council in which Africa is represented with two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats, offer innovative paths to address systemic imbalances and design a new global governance architecture.

From left to right:
Fuad Zarbiyev and
Dêlidji Éric Degila.
Boris PALEFROY



LE DOSSIER

THE END OF DEVELOPMENT?

In 1970, the United Nations General Assembly set the target for donor countries to allocate 0.7% of their gross national income (GNI) to official development assistance (ODA). With the unprecedented decline in international development financing in 2025, this target is once more being called into question. To what extent have successive global shocks — pandemics, wars, inflationary pressures, and the demands of energy transitions — accelerated this disengagement? Are we witnessing the end of development as we have known it, or an opportunity to fundamentally rethink it?

As the post–World War II framework that structured North–South relations for decades seems to be breaking down, will this constitute an opportunity for emancipation and self-organisation for countries in the Global South? Will it lead to new, more ecological or solidaristic approaches to development? Or, on the other hand, will this shift away from aid-based cooperation reinforce neo-imperial patterns marked by asymmetrical trade and investment negotiations, geopolitical influence, and strategic competition?

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THE END OF DEVELOPMENT?

LE DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE ET SOCIAL DU SUD GLOBAL DEPUIS 1950: UN BILAN MITIGÉ

Jean-Luc Maurer

Professeur honoraire d'études du développement

Pour parler de manière succincte d'un aussi vaste sujet que le bilan du développement économique et social du Sud global depuis 75 ans, il est commode de faire appel à l'image bien connue du verre à moitié plein et à moitié vide. Toutefois, avant d'aborder les deux faces du problème, il faut souligner que tous les pays de ce que l'on appellera longtemps le tiers-monde n'entament pas ce processus de développement au même moment. Si la plupart des pays d'Amérique latine sont indépendants depuis le XIX^e siècle, ceux d'Asie

– Japon mis à part – ne se libèrent du joug colonial ou n'acquièrent leur pleine souveraineté qu'au lendemain de la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Quant aux pays d'Afrique, ils devront presque tous attendre les années 1960 pour obtenir leur indépendance et entreprendre leur développement. Ce décalage dans le temps, couplé avec des histoires précoloniales et coloniales dissemblables, des potentiels économiques plus ou moins favorables et l'adoption de politiques de développement fort judicieuses dans certains cas et

largement néfastes dans d'autres, explique les très grandes différences que l'on peut observer de nos jours dans les niveaux de développement économique et social au sein du Sud global. De facto, c'est une immense diversité qui prime.

Cela dit, si l'on se concentre sur la partie à moitié pleine du verre, le développement a enregistré plusieurs progrès considérables depuis les années 1950, à commencer par l'augmentation de l'espérance de vie moyenne à la naissance, passée à l'échelle mondiale de 46 ans en

CHINE, Pékin. Un couple s'abrite de la pluie à un arrêt de bus parrainé par Coca-Cola, devant l'un des principaux entrepôts d'embouteillage de l'entreprise, dans la nouvelle zone de développement de Pékin. 27 septembre 2000. Stephen SHAVER/AFP

« Les inégalités sociales sont une bombe à retardement pour la stabilité politique et *in fine* pour le développement économique. »

1950 à plus de 73 ans en 2025 selon une estimation de Statista. Les avancées les plus impressionnantes sont à mettre au compte de l'Asie et prioritairement de la Chine, mais, paradoxalement, aussi du Tchad, l'un des pays les plus pauvres du monde, où l'espérance de vie a augmenté d'environ 35 à près de 60 ans. Cela reflète bien sûr l'amélioration spectaculaire de la santé, de la nutrition et des conditions de vie en général et une baisse de la mortalité maternelle et infantile. Des progrès substantiels ont aussi été faits dans le domaine de l'éducation, y compris pour les filles, même s'ils sont encore insuffisants dans de nombreux pays africains ou du monde arabo-musulman et ont été entièrement effacés dans l'Afghanistan des Talibans.

La baisse de la pauvreté dans le monde est un autre succès majeur du développement. Selon la Banque mondiale, 50 % de la population mondiale vivait dans une situation de pauvreté extrême en 1950 contre seulement 8,5 %, soit 700 millions de personnes, en 2025. Une nouvelle fois, c'est l'Asie qui explique ce bilan global très positif, avec en tête la Chine qui a tiré à elle seule 700 à 800 millions de personnes de la pauvreté en moins de 50 ans, suivie par l'Inde et l'Indonésie. Le bilan est moins brillant en Amérique latine où la pauvreté demeure plus élevée, à commencer par le Brésil où elle affectait toujours 28 % de la population en 2023, et il est encore plus critique dans de nombreux pays africains où la pauvreté stagne et a même parfois augmenté comme au Nigeria, le plus peuplé du continent, où elle est passée de 43 % en 1985 à plus de 60 % aujourd'hui.

Pour en venir à la moitié vide du verre, on songe en premier à l'explosion des inégalités de revenus, de patrimoines et plus généralement des inégalités sociales partout dans le monde, y compris dans presque tous les pays du Sud global. Les inégalités de revenus *entre pays* ont certes diminué en raison de l'augmentation du PIB par habitant dans les pays émergents, principalement en Asie, et du tassement, voire de la baisse enregistrée en la matière dans de nombreux vieux pays industrialisés, mais elles ont explosé à l'intérieur de chaque pays. Le World Inequality Lab estime que les 10 % les plus riches de la planète captent plus de la moitié des revenus et possèdent près des trois quarts du patrimoine mondial. Les pays du Sud global ne font pas exception à la règle, avec l'Afrique du Sud au sommet du classement des inégalités de revenus, suivie de la plupart de ses voisins d'Afrique australe comme la Namibie, le Botswana ou la Zambie et de pays d'Amérique latine comme le Brésil, la Colombie ou le Panama, selon des données de la World Income Inequality Database. Or, les inégalités sociales sont une bombe à retardement pour la stabilité politique et *in fine* pour le développement économique.

Autre point sombre de ce bilan : le développement économique et social des pays du Sud global s'est largement fait au détriment de la nature. S'inscrivant dans la fuite en avant d'une mondialisation néolibérale avide de profits, il s'est manifesté par une exploitation effrénée des ressources naturelles dans les régions où elles sont abondantes, qui ne fait qu'accélérer le changement climatique de notre ère anthropocène.

L'invention de la notion de développement durable à la fin des années 1980 n'a pas inversé la tendance, alors que le détricotage généralisé des timides mesures prises lors de la conférence de Paris en 2015 précipite la planète entière vers l'abîme. Les pays les plus pauvres en seront toutefois les premières et principales victimes, ce qui ne fera qu'aggraver les migrations massives vers le Nord plus riche et ajouter au chaos du monde.

« Mitigé » semble donc bien le mot le plus approprié pour qualifier le bilan examiné. Mais l'avenir risque fort d'être plus sombre encore avec l'effondrement du système international mis en place après la Seconde Guerre mondiale et l'affaiblissement des institutions gouvernementales et des ONG créées pour veiller au maintien de la paix, au respect du droit, à la résolution des conflits, à la défense des libertés fondamentales et, justement, tenter, à travers la coopération et la solidarité, de promouvoir un développement économique et social plus juste et équitable pour l'ensemble de l'humanité. Cette régression catastrophique résulte de la résurgence d'un mercantilisme prédateur, du retour des impérialismes conquérants et mortifères, de la seule loi du plus fort et des appétits de profit sans limites d'une petite oligarchie techno-financière sans morale ni scrupules, aux tendances autoritaristes sinon fascistes. Si nos sociétés ne trouvent pas le moyen d'y mettre rapidement fin, le bilan du développement économique et social du Sud global au cours des 75 prochaines années sera bien pire que « mitigé ».

RETHINKING DEVELOPMENT: BACK TO THE FUTURE?

Gilles Carbonnier

Professor of Development Economics and Co-Director of Executive Education

“We depend on others for our security forces, depend on donors for our health and education systems, and supply the world’s critical minerals but capture almost none of their value.” This was the stark diagnosis made by Ghana’s President Mahama at the 2026 World Economic Forum, just months after calling for “a re-engineering of the very logic of development itself”. It perpetuates a long-standing debate. Since development succeeded colonialism as the dominant paradigm for North–South relations, the very concept of development and the aid system have been contested. Critics from the neoliberal, populist, and neo-Marxist traditions have each challenged their legitimacy, effectiveness, and underlying assumptions.

defence. In 2025, the United States (US) dismantled its aid agency and distributed less than half the funds it had provided in 2024. Japan and several major European donors are also scaling back official development assistance (ODA).

Favouring defence over development is nothing new. In recent years, the US has spent around 3% of its GDP on defence compared with roughly 0.2% on ODA according to SIPRI and OECD data. In the European Union (EU), these figures have been around 2% and 0.5% respectively. Private philanthropy remains relatively marginal but is on the rise. The Gates Foundation, for example, plans to spend around USD 9 billion a year primarily on global health before winding down by 2045.

over the next decade to absorb new labour-market entrants in low-income countries. Think of the existential threats resulting from climate change and nature loss. Think of the millions of people displaced by multiplying armed conflicts.

Amid this funding crunch, some push for radical change while others seize this opportunity to reassert their own vision and priorities. There is widespread *Schadenfreude* among critics for whom putting the aid sector on a diet is long overdue. Yet the immediate impact of aid cuts is dramatic for those losing access to vital assistance overnight.

As aid allocation is once again driven by donors’ narrow foreign policy interests, we are witnessing the return of tied aid and the use of ODA to buy political allegiance and stricter migration controls. Another concern is the growing risk of developing countries slipping back into unsustainable indebtedness.

Development dynamics are also shaped by rising geoeconomic competition over critical minerals to sustain the digital and energy transitions. The EU has launched the Global Gateway strategy, partly intended to counter China’s Belt and Road Initiative. Meanwhile, the US has supported major infrastructure investments such as the Lobito Corridor linking mining areas in Central Africa to the Atlantic. Will such initiatives ultimately benefit producer states and local communities or result in yet another “resource curse”? This greatly depends on whether policy safeguards are being put in place early on.

It took decades of hard-won lessons to devise aid effectiveness principles such as banning tied aid and favouring partner country ownership, donor alignment, and coordination.

“Rising geopolitical tensions are diverting resources and political attention away from pressing environmental and development priorities.”

Despite recurring critique, the Western-led aid system has proven remarkably resilient. Will it be different today in the face of an abrupt contraction of the global aid market?

Amid rising geopolitical tensions, donors are indeed drastically reducing foreign aid while prioritising

In budgetary terms, further reducing ODA won’t pay for greater defence spending but puts the aid system under huge strain: how can it effectively address contemporary development and humanitarian challenges with less? Think of the 1.2 billion jobs that need to be created



Even if never faithfully implemented, these principles provided a widely accepted reference for greater aid effectiveness that might now be totally sidelined.

Since the 1990s, foreign direct investment and remittances have dwarfed ODA in terms of resource flows into developing countries, with ODA now covering just a few percents of the resources required to pay for the SDGs. Global leaders gathered at the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development in 2025 reaffirmed the critical role of domestic taxes, private investment and technological transfers. Notwithstanding calls to channel more private capital into fragile and conflict-affected contexts, success remains limited to a few ventures associated with micro-finance, public-private partnerships, and blended finance.

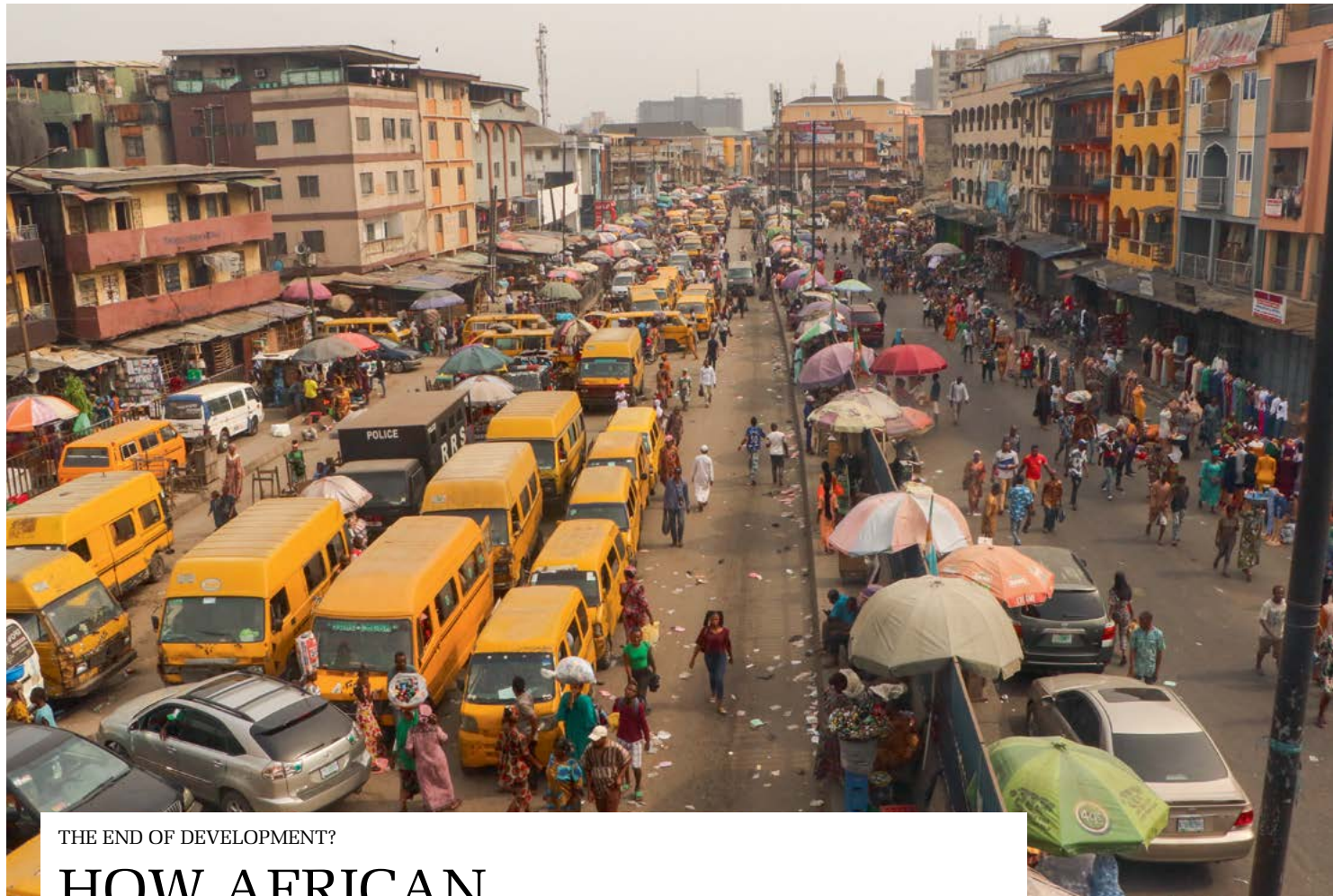
Technological innovation is seen as an opportunity to “leapfrog development”. The home-grown mobile payment system M-Pesa in East Africa, for example, dramatically expanded financial inclusion in Kenya and Tanzania. All eyes now turn to artificial intelligence (AI), with developing countries wary of being left behind. Rwanda recently partnered with Anthropic to deploy Claude AI across its public sector, aiming to build skills and strengthen the country’s knowledge economy. AI holds the promise of enhancing health outcomes, improving agricultural productivity, and moving up the value-added ladder. Yet, the overall impact of AI on employment remains uncertain, which is a huge concern for poorer countries with a large “youth bulge”.

In any case, rising geopolitical tensions are diverting resources and political attention away from pressing environmental and development

priorities. Sidelining them to focus on short-term security concerns will only undermine peace and stability in the long run.

To address such dilemmas, *policy coherence for sustainable development* offers a powerful analytical framework for aligning relevant policy domains to reduce poverty and inequality while protecting global public goods. A case in point is reforming global taxation so that lower-income countries can mobilise domestic resources for development as ODA declines. Participatory processes at local, regional and global levels remain crucial to ensure the ownership and legitimacy needed for sustainable outcomes.

UNITED STATES, Doral. White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller, US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, and US Marine Corps General Francis Donovan, commander of US Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), arrive for the inaugural Americas Counter Cartel Conference. 5 March 2026. Eva Marie UZCATEGUI/AFP



THE END OF DEVELOPMENT?

HOW AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS BORROW

Ugo Panizza

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For decades, conversations about African debt have centred on external creditors — China’s infrastructure loans, concessional loans by multilateral development banks such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank, and Eurobonds. These narratives, while important, miss a fundamental transformation reshaping public finance across the continent: African governments now borrow more from their own citizens than from the rest of the world combined.

This shift represents one of the most significant yet underappreciated changes in African economic policy over the past two decades. In joint work with Mark Manger, David Mihalyi, Niccolò Rescia, Christoph

Trebesch, and Ka Lok Wong, we track over 50,000 individual government loans and securities across 54 African countries and document that domestic debt has quietly overtaken external borrowing as the primary source of sovereign financing. Our African Debt Database reveals that domestic debt markets have more than tripled in size since 2010, growing from USD 150 billion to nearly USD 500 billion today.

The rise of domestic borrowing tells two very different stories, depending on where you look. In countries like Tanzania, Uganda, Nigeria, and Rwanda, the expansion reflects genuine market development — governments systematically lengthening bond maturities, building

investor bases, and creating functioning yield curves. These “market builders” have used domestic debt strategically, supported by credible macroeconomic frameworks and sustained GDP growth.

But elsewhere, the domestic debt boom looks less like development and more like a last resort. In Ghana and Mozambique, governments have turned to local markets not by choice but by necessity, flooding them with short-term treasury bills as external financing dried up. Ghana’s domestic debt exchange in 2022–23 — effectively a default on local bondholders — came after years of escalating reliance on domestic borrowing at unsustainable rates.

NIGERIA, Lagos. Nigerian citizens shop to stock up on essential goods following the announced closure of the country’s land borders, a day ahead of the 2023 presidential and general elections. 24 February 2023. Emmanuel OSODI/ Anadolu Agency/ AFP

These divergent paths reveal a crucial truth: domestic debt is neither inherently good nor bad. It depends entirely on why governments are borrowing and what they’re building with those funds. For market builders, domestic debt provides currency-matched financing that reduces exchange rate risk. For liquidity-constrained borrowers, it becomes an expensive stopgap that amplifies rollover risk without addressing underlying fiscal fragility.

What’s clear is that external financing options have narrowed considerably. Chinese lending to Africa, which peaked around 2016, has contracted sharply since 2021. International bond markets have become more selective and expensive. The result: African governments collectively now repay more to external creditors than they receive in new external financing — a net outflow that forces even greater reliance on domestic markets.

“Domestic debt markets have more than tripled in size since 2010.”

The cost difference is stark. Multilateral lenders like the World Bank charge African governments less than 1% interest on average. Chinese loans typically run 2–4%. International bonds average 6–8%. But domestic bonds regularly exceed 12%, with some countries paying over 15% to borrow in their own currency.

These nominal rates tell only part of the story. When adjusted for inflation, domestic borrowing costs reveal a pattern familiar from financial history: financial repression. Many African governments are effectively inflating away their domestic debt, imposing negative real returns on local bondholders. While this reduces the real burden on government finances, it also discourages domestic savings and can undermine the very market development governments claim to pursue.

This financing squeeze has practical implications that standard debt-to-GDP ratios obscure. Total annual debt service exceeded USD 100 billion in 2026, with repayment obligations remaining above USD 60 billion through 2030. This front-loaded burden is driven overwhelmingly by market-based debt — both international and domestic bonds — reflecting their higher costs and shorter maturities.

The maturity mismatch is particularly concerning. While multilateral loans average over 25 years and Chinese loans run 10–20 years, domestic bonds cluster around 8–10 years, and many countries lean heavily on treasury bills with maturities under one year. This creates a constant refinancing treadmill: governments must continually return to markets, vulnerable to sudden shifts in investor sentiment.

The expansion of domestic borrowing presents a double-edged opportunity. Growing local debt markets can strengthen financial systems, build domestic investor capacity, and provide governments with greater monetary independence. Countries that successfully borrow in their own currency reduce their vulnerability to exchange-rate shocks.

Yet the dangers are equally pronounced. Substantial domestic debt accumulation can starve the private sector of credit, create dangerous interdependencies between government solvency and banking system health, and tempt authorities toward inflation-driven debt reduction. The distinction between genuine financial development and coercive financial repression often proves narrower than policymakers acknowledge.

The African Debt Database offers another crucial insight: comprehensive debt transparency is achievable even with modest resources. A small research team successfully assembled a detailed inventory of African debt instruments by synthesising publicly available information with contemporary digital methods. This demonstrates that well-funded international organisations could readily expand such efforts with greater consistency.

Improved data represents more than an academic achievement — it constitutes a foundation for effective governance. As African borrowing patterns continue evolving, reliable, detailed information becomes indispensable for constructing sound debt-sustainability assessments, nurturing domestic financial markets, and facilitating creditor coordination.



Learn more about the African Debt Database.

DEMOCRACY, DEVELOPMENT, AND ELITES IN BRAZIL

Graziella Moraes Silva

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For decades, democracy and development were often treated as mutually reinforcing. Today that relationship appears less straightforward. Across the Global South, debates about growth and redistribution increasingly unfold alongside concerns about the erosion of democratic institutions and political polarisation.

changes in political and bureaucratic careers. Democracy can even serve elite interests. Electoral institutions and political procedures can channel popular demands in ways that moderate redistributive pressures, allowing elites to maintain economic influence while preserving political legitimacy.

“The Brazilian case suggests that democracy’s trajectory cannot be captured simply through narratives of progress or decline.”

Much of the research on democratic decline focuses on institutional design or the attitudes of average citizens. Yet democracy is also shaped by those who occupy positions of economic, political, and bureaucratic power. Despite this influence, we know little about how elites themselves interpret democracy and its role in development. A common assumption is that they are reluctant supporters of democracy because democratisation shifts power toward broader segments of society. This view oversimplifies the relationship between elites and democratic governance. Elites are not a homogeneous group. Their understanding of democracy can evolve alongside broader transformations such as globalisation, financialisation, and

This article draws on the project “How Elites Shape Unequal Democracies: Perceptions of Redistribution in Brazil and South Africa”, which offers a rare opportunity to examine change over time, thanks to surveys carried out with Brazilian economic leaders, parliamentarians, and senior civil servants in the early 1990s and again in the early 2020s. These data help examine how elite understandings of democracy have evolved over three decades marked by economic liberalisation, social policy expansion, and political polarisation.

Three dimensions of this evolution are particularly revealing, beginning with *commitment to electoral rule*. In the early 1990s, democracy in Brazil was closely associated with the end of military rule. Electoral democracy

was widely seen as providing the legitimacy needed to stabilise the economy and rebuild institutions. Three quarters of parliamentarians and two thirds of senior civil servants stated that an elected government was preferable to an efficient one. Business elites were more divided, with half of them prioritising government efficiency over electoral legitimacy. Three decades later, support for elections remains strong and has increased among business leaders, with two thirds of them considering elected government more important than efficiency.

Yet the meaning of elections has shifted. In the 1990s, elections symbolised democratic transition. Today they function more as arenas where competing visions of development are negotiated.

A second important dimension is *trust in democratic institutions*. In the early years after democratisation, around 80–90% of Brazilian elites believed that institutions such as Congress and the Judiciary contributed positively to democracy. Three decades later, trust in Congress has declined significantly, with fewer than half of respondents in some sectors reporting high confidence in the legislature. Trust in the Judiciary, by contrast, remains comparatively stronger.

Different elite groups interpret these institutions differently. For governing politicians, institutional checks may appear as obstacles. For opposition actors, they function as safeguards. Business elites often view judicial independence as a source of legal predictability, though court decisions can also create uncertainty when they reshape economic policy. Senior bureaucrats tend to see institutional stability as essential for maintaining professional standards within the state.



These shifts also mirror broader changes in development debates. In the 1990s, institutions were expected to support market reforms and macro-economic stabilisation. Today they are expected to play a central role in mediating distributive conflicts, regulating social policy, and balancing fiscal pressures in one of the most unequal countries in the world.

Thirdly, *perceptions of voters’ political capacity* have also evolved. In the early 1990s, two thirds of elites described voters as uninformed or irrational in their political choices. In the early 2020s, scepticism remains common among business and bureaucratic elites: around two thirds still question voters’ political judgment. Political elites, however, have become more confident in the electorate. Nearly 60% now believe voters choose candidates wisely. This change reflects that political elites

have become more socially diverse, and electoral competition has intensified. At the same time, voters have become more mobilised and polarised. These contrasting perceptions reveal deeper tensions within development debates: should democracy primarily ensure procedural legitimacy, or should it respond more directly to demands for redistribution and social inclusion?

The Brazilian case suggests that democracy’s trajectory cannot be captured simply through narratives of progress or decline. For elites in unequal societies such as Brazil, democracy has never been seen only as a system of elections and institutions: it is interpreted through its relationship to economic stability, redistribution, and the management of social conflict. The changing meanings of democracy among elites suggest that the concept itself is being renegotiated in the

context of contemporary development debates. The future of democracy may therefore depend on reconnecting discussions of political representation with those of economic inequality and on confronting the uneasy relationship between political and economic liberalism that has long shaped democratic governance.

BRAZIL, São Paulo. A couple pass political signs for Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso during the country’s 1998 general elections. 4 October 1998. Antonio SCORZA/AFP



THE END OF DEVELOPMENT?

PARLER DE DÉVELOPPEMENT A-T-IL ENCORE UN SENS ?

Jean-Pierre Jacob

Anthropologue, professeur honoraire

La conception classique du développement, qu'elle soit économique, sociale ou humaine, repose sur un présupposé métaphorique fort : celui du développement de quelque chose de plié, d'enveloppé. La tâche des développeurs serait donc de déplier la société pour l'aider à parachever des processus vertueux qui seraient déjà présents en interne mais qui, faute de ressources, n'auraient pas atteint leur plein accomplissement. On suggère un état enveloppé, sous-développé, qui contient en puissance une forme future dépliée, moderne, le développement étant le processus linéaire qui mène de l'un à l'autre, suivant un plan préétabli (celui de la coopération

au développement). On suggère également, à travers cette métaphore, que les sociétés avancées, développeuses, auraient vécu ces phénomènes de dépliage avant les sociétés en développement, ce qui les rendrait particulièrement expertes pour assister et appuyer les mêmes processus dans les sociétés du Sud. Cette histoire est-elle la bonne ?

Les sociétés modernes, que les développeurs présentent comme le modèle sociétal abouti (le déplié), sont en réalité traversées par des plis tout aussi complexes, sinon plus, que les sociétés qu'elles prétendent développer. Une société développée comme la société suisse n'a pas une économie dépliée (transparente, ration-

nelle, optimale); elle a une économie enveloppée par des siècles d'histoire (ruralité, migrations, tertiarisation après-guerre), des institutions complexes (régulations du travail et du capital, système de protection sociale, bureaucratie), des rapports de force (lobbies, syndicats, système politique, traités internationaux), des technologies qui reconfigurent sans cesse les relations sociales (numérique, automatisation, intelligence artificielle). Si l'on suit la métaphore du dépliage, on devrait pouvoir mettre à plat toute cette complexité, la rendre transparente, la rationaliser. Or, chaque tentative de simplification (réformes, dérégulations) ne fait que créer de nouveaux plis, de nouvelles complexités, de nouveaux

TechnicColor/iStock

« Il faut penser le développement en dehors du mythe du dépliage ! »

effets imprévus. La société moderne est une machine à produire des plis, pas à les aplatir.

L'aide au développement ne peut pas non plus être décrite comme un dépliage (une libération de potentialités internes), mais comme un repliement forcé des sociétés aidées dans des formes, des normes et des flux qui viennent de l'extérieur. L'aide est une opération de déterritorialisation (qui défait les plis historiques) suivie d'une reterritorialisation, c'est-à-dire d'un nouveau pliage dans le moule capitaliste; les opérations d'appui aux institutions locales d'un pays sous-développé, ce sont des plis qui rencontrent d'autres plis; le résultat n'est pas le développement, mais l'uniformisation des enveloppements — ce que l'on peut appeler globalisation. Il faut penser le développement en dehors du mythe du dépliage!

Bruno Latour et Amina Shabou notaient — à propos de la Côte d'Ivoire d'il y a cinquante ans — que le rapport entre deux individus d'un même territoire devient sans cesse plus faible lorsqu'augmentent les relations de chacun d'eux avec les institutions comme l'État (et les institutions internationales). La déterritorialisation est marquée par l'impossibilité des habitants de dire de quoi ils manquent: c'est le rôle des médiateurs lointains de le dire. À partir de ce moment, l'accélération du manque est constante: on manque de goudron, de télévisions, de techniciens, de HLM, d'eau, d'espace, de santé... L'enveloppement dans une nouvelle territorialisation

est achevé « lorsque les administrés eux-mêmes demandent plus d'État, encore plus de sous-préfectures, d'encadreurs, d'experts [...], et c'est tout le pays entier qui se met à manquer de la ville, à quêter après la ville »¹. Ce diagnostic, posé il y a un demi-siècle, n'a rien perdu de son actualité.

Dès lors, sommes-nous condamnés à abandonner ce mot de développement? Certains chercheurs comme Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan ont suggéré de lui substituer des termes plus précis comme ceux de « opérations volontaristes de transformation d'un milieu social », parce qu'ils marqueraient mieux l'extranéité des programmes imposés (des opérations cherchant, comme on l'a dit, l'uniformisation des enveloppements) et permettraient de rompre avec l'idée qu'une société aidée se verrait révéler à elle-même — à terme, une fois l'aide ayant atteint ses objectifs — sa véritable essence. Nous pensons pour notre part qu'on peut continuer à utiliser ce terme, mais à condition qu'on s'éloigne de l'idée qu'il consisterait en pratique dans des déplis programmés, et qu'on le conçoive plus comme l'accompagnement des choix des plis externes avec lesquels une société donnée voudrait entrer en résonance. Récemment, et malgré les réticences formulées par la communauté internationale, des pays du Sahel ont remis en cause les partis et les systèmes de démocratie représentative, cherchant à rétablir un certain unanimité politique et un front de combat commun dans le contexte

de luttes très dures contre les organisations jihadistes. En une centaine d'années, ils étaient pourtant passés par tous les plis du politique à l'occidentale: abolition du régime des chefs coutumiers, passage au parti unique à l'indépendance, multiplication progressive des partis et des organes décisionnels où le peuple est représenté (parachevée avec la mise en place récente de la décentralisation à plusieurs niveaux), appui à la société civile.

Par ailleurs, l'urgence climatique actuelle impose l'adoption d'enveloppements nouveaux au Nord comme au Sud, si l'objectif est, comme nous y invite Bruno Latour dans *Habiter la terre* (2022), de recréer du territoire, de décrire en face à face ce dont on dépend vraiment (et ce dont on peut se passer). Le développement doit devenir le nom de ce processus continu, incertain et politique de composition d'un monde commun, et non plus l'application d'un plan venu d'ailleurs.

¹ Bruno Latour et Amina Shabou, *Les idéologies de la compétence en milieu industriel à Abidjan* (ORSTOM, 1974), p. 75-76.

GILBERT RIST AND THE DARK SIDE OF WESTERN DEVELOPMENT

Alessandro Monsutti

Professor of Anthropology and Sociology

There is in Geneva a long and vibrant tradition of critical engagement with the notion of “development”. The work of Gilbert Rist (1938–2023), among others, has marked the field. He was an intellectual, but also a man of conviction, driven by values on which he would not compromise — as evidenced by his commitment to the anti-apartheid movement and the Palestinian cause. After studying political science and theology, he gradually leaned toward anthropology. He embarked on a fruitful and long-standing collaboration with Marie-Dominique Perrot and Fabrizio Sabelli, his colleagues at the Graduate Institute of Development Studies (initially established in 1961 as the Geneva African Institute). Together, they published *Il était une fois le développement...* (1986) and *La mythologie programmée: L'économie des croyances dans la société moderne* (1992), and they directed the book series *Cahiers de l'IUED* and later *Nouveaux Cahiers de l'IUED*, which for many years served as a forum where the notion of development was unpacked and repacked.

In his most famous and influential work, *Le développement: Histoire d'une croyance occidentale* (1996, reprinted several times and translated into numerous languages), Gilbert Rist presents a historical analysis of the concept of development from Aristotle to the present day via Saint Augustine. He focuses on analysing practices while remaining sensitive to the incantatory dimension of development.

Adopting an anti-utilitarianist perspective, he draws on the work of Marcel Mauss, but also on that of Karl Polanyi. These two authors inform him in his rejection of neoliberal economic thought, economism, individualism, utilitarianism, rational choice theory, and — in an environmentalist vein that has grown stronger over the years — extractivism and the use of fossil fuels. He sees Mauss's triple obligation of giving, receiving and reciprocating as a social contract, as the very condition of possibility for being in society, fostering respect between humans and towards the environment. This echoes Polanyi's insistence that the market has not always been the dominant economic form of human society, that

reciprocity and redistribution have most often occupied a predominant place and could offer a foundation for rebuilding contemporary society. He rejects the idea — which might superficially appear to be Maussian — that development, as well as humanitarian aid, constitutes a system of gift and counter-gift.

From Émile Durkheim, Gilbert Rist draws a mode of argumentation that is almost scholastic, with a highly structured exposition of concepts and examples. He is also imbued with the conviction that the social is more than the juxtaposition of individual actions. But above all, he embraces the conception of society as an *ekklesia*, an “assembly”. It is indeed Durkheim's notion of the church that provides the inspiration for conceiving development as a system of beliefs that originated in the West before spreading throughout the world — a system of beliefs that, under the guise of apparent good intentions, masks the commodification of the world and of social relations. Ultimately, for Rist development is not without continuity with the colonial enterprise.

“Development is tantamount to the ‘commodification of the world’; it aims to alleviate the effects of global capitalism rather than to reform the mechanisms that produce inequalities. In short, ‘development is a problem masqueraded as a solution’.”



In this vein, we should also recall the notion of “programmed mythology”, proposed in the book he co-authored with Marie-Dominique Perrot and Fabrizio Sabelli.

Highlighting the global expansion of the market system, Rist views development as a transversal, worldwide phenomenon linking what is known today as the Global North and the Global South. He describes development as one of the components of the ideology of growth, which may indeed be understood as a form of modern religion. From this follows his famous definition: “‘Development’ consists of a set of practices, sometimes appearing to conflict with one another, which require — for the reproduction of society — the general transformation and destruction of the natural environment and of social relations. Its aim is to increase the production of commodities

(goods and services) geared, by way of exchange, to effective demand.” To summarise this definition in a single phrase, we might say that development is tantamount to the “commodification of the world”; it aims to alleviate the effects of global capitalism rather than to reform the mechanisms that produce inequalities. In short, “development is a problem masqueraded as a solution”, as Rist said time and again.

Personally, I have never been entirely convinced that a functionalist view of society as an integrated whole — organised by a system of beliefs essential to maintaining social order and expressed through rituals that bring people together (see Mauss's “total social fact”, a concept so often misused) — fully captures the contemporary world. My inclinations tend to steer me towards the less dogmatic, more open, and at times hesitant

system of Max Weber, characterised by a heuristic quest — which, incidentally, is also found in Marcel Mauss. In these authors, apparent approximation is always an invitation to remember the complexity of social facts — quite unlike Durkheim's quasi-mathematical demonstrations.

That being said, Gilbert Rist's critical response to social evolutionism, individualism and economism — namely degrowth — appears more topical today than ever. For instance, isn't the Covid-19 pandemic a message sent by the Earth to humanity, a critique of the logic of production and accumulation that characterises capitalism? If an author like Walter Mignolo spoke about the dark side of Western modernity, Gilbert Rist spoke about the dark side of Western development, deconstructing its apparent good intentions to uncover what might lie hidden behind a smiling face.

GAZA, Palestinian Territories. A girl stands in a damaged building at a displacement camp in central Gaza City. 27 February 2026. Saeed JARAS/Middle East Images/AFP



THE END OF DEVELOPMENT?

FRAGMENTING DEMOCRACIES AND THE SLOW DEATH OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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International cooperation and humanitarian aid are currently facing a level of contestation not seen for decades. A clear decline in funding allocated to official development assistance (ODA) directed toward countries of the Global South can be observed, particularly among Western countries and liberal democracies, historically the principal providers of development aid. According to the OECD, ODA decreased by approximately 7% in 2024 compared with 2023, and a further reduction of 9% to 17% is expected in 2025.

This contraction is occurring in countries where international cooperation had long constituted a central pillar of foreign policy and an important instrument of soft power. It is accompanied by increasingly security-oriented and nationalist political narratives that tend to delegitimise public resources devoted to cooperation. These trends raise broader questions regarding the social cohesion of liberal democracies and the ways in which their internal transformations are gradually reshaping the international order.

Long perceived as politically stable and socially cohesive, liberal democracies are now witnessing a gradual erosion of their political model. Political polarisation, declining trust in public institutions, fragmentation of public debate amplified by digital platforms, and the rise of populist movements are weakening political consensus on major issues, including international cooperation. Foreign policy is thus increasingly shaped by domestic political rivalries.

COLUMBIA, Medellín. Comuna 13, which was one of the country's most dangerous neighbourhoods, linked to Pablo Escobar's drug cartel and the site of violent battles between FARC and paramilitaries. 1 July 2024. Jean-François FORT/Hans LUCAS

In response to these evolutions, the solutions most often proposed follow familiar lines: "doing more with less", fostering innovation, reforming aid systems, strengthening partnerships with the private sector, or improving aid effectiveness. Several criticisms directed at international cooperation, including limited effectiveness, conditionality, risks of dependency, and potential neocolonial dynamics, are legitimate. Yet the core issue does not appear to be a global shortage of resources. The world has never been wealthier. According to estimates by UBS, global wealth increased at

These questions raise a broader issue: whether the current moment signals the need for a new paradigm in international cooperation. If so, what form should that paradigm take?

Latin America illustrates many of these tensions. In several countries across the region, the deterioration of state legitimacy has facilitated the expansion of illegal economies, strengthened criminal governance structures, and weakened institutional guarantees of rights. Drug trafficking, illegal mining, and human trafficking undermine democratic institutions and threaten social and non-governmental organisations.

modest, their qualitative impact is significant, as they support strategic sectors such as human rights, gender equality, climate change, and institutional strengthening.

The gradual reduction of these resources and the withdrawal of certain donors have worrying consequences: the weakening of democratic institutions, the erosion of social organisations and NGOs, the interruption of knowledge transfer necessary for effective public policy implementation, and the worsening precarity of already vulnerable populations.

Although international cooperation can and should be improved, it remains indispensable. By contributing to the reduction of inequalities and asymmetric relationships, it fosters dialogue between societies and serves as a factor of stability and peace. For many partners in the Global South, the disappearance of development cooperation would mean the abrupt interruption of essential programmes in areas such as health, education, human rights, and environmental protection.

Defending international cooperation does not imply abandoning critical reflection. Approaches must evolve to better respond to the expectations of partners, particularly through strengthening local capacities, reforming public policies, and advancing the localisation of aid. As early as 2005, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness called for strengthening partner ownership and improving coordination among development actors.

The path toward more balanced and equitable partnerships is therefore clearly outlined. However, implementing these transformations requires clarity, political courage, and sustained commitment from those who finance international cooperation.

“The central question is therefore not one of resource scarcity but of allocation. In other words, it is fundamentally a political choice.”

an estimated annual rate of 4% to 6% between 2020 and 2025. ODA amounts to roughly USD 210 to 230 billion per year, while total global wealth exceeds USD 300 trillion. Development assistance therefore represents approximately 0.07% of global annual wealth, a proportion that appears strikingly small.

The central question is therefore not one of resource scarcity but of allocation. In other words, it is fundamentally a political choice. Current debates often avoid confronting this central issue and instead emphasise technical solutions that may be useful but remain insufficient to address the structural causes of the problem.

At the same time, economies that remain heavily dependent on agricultural, mining, or energy exports are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, which increases the risks of rural poverty, food insecurity, and forced migration.

Within the region, international cooperation represents less than 0.2% of annual GDP and approximately 7% of global aid flows. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has long been one of the principal bilateral donors. In 2023, it distributed USD 42 billion worldwide, including approximately 1.7 billion allocated to Latin America. Although these amounts remain relatively

Translated from the original French into English with the help of ChatGPT, March 2026.

LA CONSERVATION DE LA NATURE EST-ELLE L'AVENIR DE L'AIDE AU DÉVELOPPEMENT ?

Marc Hufty

Professeur titulaire d'études du développement

L'idée de la fin de l'aide au développement, voire même du « développement » lui-même, s'impose progressivement alors que la géopolitique globale devient de moins en moins lisible. Dans ce contexte, une hypothèse émerge, celle d'un remplacement de l'aide au développement par le financement des actions contre la dégradation de l'environnement global : conservation de la nature, adaptation au changement climatique ou réduction des émissions de gaz à effet de serre. La pertinence de cette hypothèse dépend toutefois de l'angle adopté.

estimés à 255 milliards de dollars par l'OCDE, mais les financements consacrés à l'adaptation au changement climatique dans le Sud – qui recourent partiellement les projets d'aide au développement et en prolongent la logique et les méthodes – ne représentent qu'environ 26 milliards de dollars par an, alors que l'essentiel des financements pour l'adaptation reste au Nord (50 milliards de dollars) et que l'immense majorité de l'enveloppe pour le climat est consacrée à la « transition énergétique » au Nord. Par ailleurs,

même s'ils peuvent en redéfinir partiellement les contours.

La conservation de la nature dans les pays du Sud global précède historiquement l'aide au développement. Si sa structuration institutionnelle actuelle date des années 1970, ses principes et sa logique datent de la fin du XIX^e siècle, avec la création des parcs naturels et des premiers accords internationaux de conservation. Longtemps, la conservation et le développement ont été conçus comme des domaines distincts, voire opposés : d'un côté, la protection des espaces naturels, souvent au détriment des populations locales ; de l'autre, la promotion de la croissance économique, de la réduction de la pauvreté et de la modernisation des infrastructures.

Avec le temps, la conservation a connu une expansion considérable, tant en termes de financements que de complexité institutionnelle, avec en particulier la multiplication des traités internationaux et le rôle croissant des grandes ONG de conservation. Parallèlement, une convergence progressive s'est opérée entre conservation et développement, par exemple avec le transfert des paradigmes du développement à la conservation, notamment la gestion participative, tandis que les agences d'aide publique, comme l'USAID, ont accru leur implication dans les projets environnementaux.

Cette convergence, selon les travaux de Dan Brockington, Rosaleen Duffy, Jim Igoe, Bram Büscher et Robert Fletcher, s'inscrit dans l'émergence, depuis les années 1990, d'un « régime global de gouvernance des biens publics environnementaux », dans lequel les frontières entre conservation et développement tendent à s'estomper au profit d'instruments communs – finan-

« L'enjeu n'est dès lors pas de savoir si la conservation de la nature remplacera l'aide au développement, mais d'articuler justice sociale et soutenabilité écologique de manière à répondre aux défis cruciaux du XXI^e siècle. »

Les données financières invitent à relativiser cette substitution. Certes, l'enveloppe annuelle globale pour le climat est considérable, de l'ordre de 1300 milliards de dollars selon la Climate Policy Initiative, comparée aux flux financiers internationaux pour le développement,

les financements mondiaux liés à la conservation ne dépassent pas les 154 milliards de dollars selon l'OCDE et sont dépensés à 96 % au Nord. Dans ces conditions, les financements liés au climat ou à la conservation ne sont pas en mesure de remplacer l'aide au développement,



ciarisation, partenariats entre grandes ONG et grandes entreprises, implication accrue des acteurs du marché. La conservation ne se substitue pas à l'aide au développement ; elle participe plutôt à sa reconfiguration, en offrant une nouvelle justification normative à l'intervention internationale dans un contexte de fatigue politique et budgétaire. Ce nouveau régime repose sur l'hypothèse que la protection de la nature, comme le développement, peut être assurée par les mécanismes de marché.

Cette hypothèse met en évidence une contradiction majeure, l'incapacité du régime international de la conservation d'enrayer l'érosion de la « biodiversité ». Dit simplement, dans ce régime, les instruments économiques mobilisés – incitations de marché, mécanismes financiers – sont souvent les mêmes que ceux qui contribuent à la dégradation environnementale. Fondé sur une logique d'accumulation

du capital et de croissance, ce modèle ne remet pas en question les causes structurelles de la crise écologique, ni les inégalités qu'elle génère.

Un indicateur de cette contradiction réside dans le montant des *harmful subsidies*, soit des subventions publiques nuisibles à la biodiversité, que ce soit pour l'agriculture intensive, les combustibles fossiles, la pêche industrielle, l'exploitation forestière ou le transport. Estimées à 1700 milliards de dollars par an par la Plateforme intergouvernementale scientifique et politique sur la biodiversité et les services écosystémiques et, de façon plus conservatrice, à 500 milliards de dollars par an par l'OCDE, elles dépassent massivement les flux financiers destinés à la conservation.

Le retour récent à une logique de *realpolitik* dans les relations internationales n'invalide pas ce raisonnement. Les crises environnementales

ne disparaîtront ni par leur déni, ni par le démantèlement des institutions qui les étudient, ni par l'affaiblissement des politiques publiques environnementales. De même, la réduction de l'aide au développement, notamment au profit du réarmement, ne réduira pas les problèmes sociaux, économiques et environnementaux auxquels sont confrontés les pays les plus vulnérables. Il est temps de repenser les flux Nord-Sud, que ce soit pour l'environnement ou la coopération au développement, non dans une logique de substitution, mais plutôt dans une remise en question du modèle économique et politique dominant. L'enjeu n'est dès lors pas de savoir si la conservation de la nature remplacera l'aide au développement, mais d'articuler justice sociale et soutenabilité écologique de manière à répondre aux défis cruciaux du XXI^e siècle.

INDONÉSIE, Java occidentale, Karawang. Un motocycliste avec son fils traversent une route inondée dans une zone touchée par une importante érosion des sols. 11 janvier 2024. Aslam IQBAL/ NurPhoto/AFP



THE END OF DEVELOPMENT?

EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING IN A TIME OF SHRINKING AID BUDGETS

Lore Vandewalle

Professor of Economics and Pictet Chair in Finance and Development

Around the world, governments are cutting their foreign aid budgets. In the United States, the dismantling of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has led to the cancellation of more than 80% of its programmes. In the United Kingdom, the aid budget has been reduced from the long-standing target of 0.7% of gross national income to 0.5%, with plans to fall further to 0.3% by 2027–2028, forcing the cancellation of several programmes, including international health initiatives. The Swiss Parliament has likewise reduced its 2026 budget for international cooperation and humanitarian assistance.

Much of the political momentum behind these cuts reflects the deep unpopularity of foreign aid among the public. Surveys consistently show that people believe aid accounts for a far larger share of government spending than it actually does — Americans, for example, estimate it at around 25% of the federal budget, when in reality it is closer to 1%. Aid is also widely perceived as wasteful and inefficient. While these perceptions warrant reflection on the structure and effectiveness of the aid system, they do not justify abrupt measures. A recent article in *The Lancet* estimates that the dismantling of USAID alone

could result in more than 14 million additional deaths by 2030, including around 4.5 million among children under five. Although the true counterfactual remains uncertain — what global health outcomes would have looked like in a world where development assistance had never existed, or if it had been gradually phased out — the evidence presented in the article hardly supports the claim that aid has been a pure waste.

Assessing the effectiveness of foreign aid is difficult because donors set multiple, sometimes conflicting objectives: saving lives, promoting long-term economic development,

BURUNDI, Buganda. A Burundian government official speaks with newly arrived Congolese refugees while weighing a sack of rice from the final batches delivered by the now-dismantled United States Agency for International Development (USAID). 6 May 2025. Luis TATO/AFP

and advancing their geopolitical interests. Defining clear aid objectives — such as improving food security, expanding access to education, or strengthening global public goods like vaccination coverage — helps address this challenge. Indeed, this creates an important condition for measuring impact and thus for evidence-based policymaking, which offers a powerful way to make development policy more effective, efficient, and transparent. At its core, evidence-based policymaking relies on two elements: rigorous research methods to determine which interventions work, and the use of these empirical insights to direct public and private resources toward programmes and practices with demonstrated impact.

It is important to evaluate and help scale innovative AI solutions.

At the same time, the mere existence of evidence does not guarantee its use. An article in the *American Economic Review* — “How Research Affects Policy: Experimental Evidence from 2,150 Brazilian Municipalities” — shows that making research evidence more accessible can stimulate policy change. Yet it remains unclear how policymakers identify, interpret, and apply research findings in practice. This suggests that information frictions — such as limited access to relevant studies, difficulties in interpreting results, or uncertainty about their applicability to specific contexts — may help explain why effective policy interventions are not always adopted. Reducing these

“Surveys consistently show that people believe aid accounts for a far larger share of government spending than it actually does.”

Over the past few decades, the number of rigorous impact evaluations conducted in low- and middle-income countries has grown rapidly, resulting in a substantial body of evidence. The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), a global research centre that generates rigorous evidence on what works to reduce poverty, has, for example, launched The Evidence Effect, a collection of cost-effective, evidence-backed policy solutions that can be scaled. Important knowledge gaps remain, however, and new evidence is still needed. For instance,

frictions by providing policymakers with clear insights from cost-effective programmes is, therefore, an important step in helping them make more informed decisions about where to allocate scarce resources.

Academics can play a key role in this ecosystem by providing technical expertise and helping translate research findings into practical guidance for governments and policymakers more broadly. Beyond producing individual studies, there is also a growing need to aggregate existing evidence through meta-analyses.

Other initiatives also aim to bring greater rigour to aid allocation. For example, Michael Kremer, co-recipient of the 2019 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences, co-created the Development Innovation Ventures (DIV) fund, which applies a venture-capital-inspired model to development. (Kremer shared the prize with Esther Duflo and Abhijit Banerjee, who co-founded J-PAL.) Delivering cost-effective innovations in global development can generate substantial returns, yet research and development in the sector receives only a small fraction of total investment. DIV offers three tiers of grants, calibrating funding to evidence and results: support for early pilots, rigorous testing of ideas that have demonstrated success, and large-scale expansion of solutions with the potential for the greatest impact. This staged model helps reduce risk while ensuring that development resources are directed toward interventions with the greatest potential impact. Projects funded by DIV span sectors including health, education, agriculture, and climate resilience. DIV also offers technical assistance to governments, bilateral aid agencies, and multilateral organisations to help design and implement evidence-driven innovation tools.

Evaluations of DIV’s early portfolio suggest a social return of roughly USD 17 for every dollar invested, illustrating that well-designed aid programmes can be highly cost-effective. Ironically, the initiative was created at USAID and was forcefully relaunched as an independent non-profit in 2026. In a context where aid budgets are tightening and scrutiny of their effectiveness is increasing, approaches such as this demonstrate how scarce resources can be directed toward interventions with the greatest proven impact.

L'ENSEIGNEMENT

Navigating the Tides of Change

Interview with
Andrea Bianchi
Professor of International Law



Andrea Bianchi.
Boris PALEFROY

You served as Director of Studies from 2018 and have just stepped down from this position. How would you describe this experience?

Extraordinarily enriching and very challenging at the same time. I had to navigate through the pandemic, the transition between two directors, and, later, I had to cope with the post-Covid world, with all the societal and behavioural changes that have come about. While it is always a challenge to deal with change, I had the good fortune of working with a team at the Direction of Studies that helped me steer a straight course and maintain a positive attitude throughout my mandate. Indeed, the cohesion of the team and the professional and personal relationships I have developed with its members over time remain one of the most gratifying aspects of my tenure as Director of Studies.

In your view, what have been the most significant developments in teaching during your tenure?

Without any doubt, the use of online teaching and the rise of artificial intelligence. Although online teaching was largely prompted by the emergency triggered by the pandemic, its widespread use has lingered on, and it is now an important component of many a university's teaching programmes. If online teaching has facilitated access to knowledge, its actual benefits in terms of effectiveness and inclusiveness are yet to be fully assessed. But the "talk of the day" is artificial intelligence, with the fears it has raised and the expectations it has created in terms of pedagogical potential. In the past few years, we have tried not to demonise artificial intelligence at the Institute, but to promote its conscious and responsible use by enacting a specific directive periodically reviewed to consider the developments in the field.

How has the profile of students evolved over the years?

Students' profiles change alongside the succession of different generations. The demands and pedagogical needs of millennials and Generation X students are not necessarily the same as those of Generation Z cohorts. But generally, there has been a steady decline of traditional sources of learning (libraries, archives, reading, oral transmission). To invest into forms of learning that require a substantial amount of time is no longer considered attractive. Everything is assumed to be promptly at one's disposal according to their own needs. Socially more aware and pedagogically more demanding than in the past, students often reflect and reproduce the societal cleavages and political tensions which we are experiencing in our times. This does not make the job of higher education any easier.

How do you envision the future of teaching over the next ten years?

Not having attended Hogwarts (Harry Potter's school of magic), I always find it difficult to predict the future. But if I were to take an educated guess, I would say that we will need to develop pedagogical tools that are better suited to respond to the learning needs of contemporary generations, without relinquishing our traditional methods of imparting knowledge. If artificial intelligence tools can be used for performing a number of tasks, such as editing or acting as intellectual sparring partners with the good prompts, in-person teaching and reading books will stay with us for the foreseeable future. How to strike a balance between all these different ways of teaching and learning will be the main challenge in the upcoming years.

L'ENSEIGNEMENT

Championing Collaborative Research on Inequality and Democracy

Interview with
Graziella Moraes Silva
Professor of Anthropology and Sociology and Co-Director of the Albert Hirschman Centre on Democracy



Graziella Moraes Silva.
Boris PALEFROY

Graziella Moraes Silva has been recently promoted to full professor of Anthropology and Sociology.

What do you particularly appreciate about teaching at the Institute?

What I value most is the opportunity to engage with an exceptionally diverse and motivated student body across programmes such as Anthropology and Sociology, International and Development Studies, and Executive Education. This diversity continually challenges me to rethink pedagogy and adapt to different intellectual, professional and political contexts. I particularly appreciate the Institute's openness to interdisciplinary teaching. My courses draw on sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, and philosophy, allowing students to critically evaluate global inequalities while connecting theory to contemporary debates and their own lived experiences. The classroom becomes a space of dialogue, experimentation, and mutual learning, which I find deeply energising.

What projects are you currently working on?

I am currently developing several interconnected research projects focused on inequality, race, and elites. One major line of work, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and the Swiss Network for International Studies (2020–2025), examines how economic and political elites in the Global South understand redistribution in contexts marked by persistent socioeconomic and ethnoracial inequalities. In parallel, I am part of an international collaborative project funded by the Volkswagen Foundation (2023–2027) that explores how ordinary individuals across different national and class contexts engage in everyday discussions about inequality.

How has your work evolved over the past few years at the Institute?

My work has expanded both substantively and institutionally. Research-wise, I have developed more comparative and transnational projects that connect race, elites, redistribution, and democracy across diverse contexts, while increasingly combining different methodologies and international collaborations.

How do you see it evolving now that you are a full professor?

As a full professor, I want to continue developing long-term, collaborative research on inequality and democracy, with a strong comparative perspective that keeps the Global South at the centre of the analysis. I also remain deeply committed to teaching and mentoring doctoral students and early-career scholars. Beyond that, I'm very interested in creating more bridges across disciplines, with local and International Geneva, and with academic communities in the Global South and beyond.

You have been Co-Director of the Albert Hirschman Centre on Democracy since 2021. What are the centre's objectives and how has it developed in recent years?

With Gopalan Balachandran and Christine Lutringer, we have sought to strengthen the centre as a hub for interdisciplinary research, dialogue, and public engagement on democracy. Looking ahead, we are deepening our focus on three closely connected priorities: the relationship between technology, democracy and polarisation; the challenges posed by inequalities in multilevel democratic systems; and the question of youth engagement.

L'ENSEIGNEMENT

Professing Global Governance at the Institute

Interview with
James Hollway

Professor of International Relations/Political Science and Co-Director of the Global Governance Centre



James Hollway has been recently promoted to full professor of International Relations/Political Science.

What do you particularly appreciate about teaching at the Institute?

Teaching here is enormously rewarding. Our students come from around the world with remarkable levels of motivation and curiosity, creating classrooms of diverse viewpoints and rich discussions. I learn so much from advising projects and am inspired by students' perspectives and passions.

The freedom in how we teach at the Institute also allows me to design courses that reflect a changing world and my evolving research agenda. It gives space to experiment and adapt to each cohort's specific dynamics. That ongoing process of reflection and adjustment — learning! — is something I value deeply.

How has your work evolved over the past few years at the Institute? How do you see it evolving now that you are a full professor?

Over the past decade, my work in global environmental politics (GEP) and methods education has deepened and broadened. I remain rooted in GEP, and have been amazed by committed staff and students through interactions in the Centre for International Environmental Studies/Hoffmann Centre for Global Sustainability (CIES/HCGS), the Sustainability Committee, and while heading MINT's Environment and Sustainability specialisation. But I've also swum out beyond fisheries governance to research, advise and/or teach on freshwater, energy, climate, forests, biodiversity, oceans, polar regions, outer space, trade, health, AI and data technology. I sought these comparative perspectives

deliberately, and the collaborative experiences have been intellectually invigorating.

I also enjoy sharing research skills with students. This includes how to deal with time and texts, but my course on social networks remains a special highlight for me. In it I get to introduce people to an interdisciplinary theoretical and methodological language that puts relations and interdependencies first.

Looking ahead, this promotion grants me the confidence and space to develop conceptual and computational tools to better understand a complex, rapidly changing world and how we might act in it.

You are Co-Director of the Global Governance Centre (GGC) with Lucile Maertens. What are the centre's objectives and how has it developed in recent years?

What makes the GGC a very special place is the diversity of its people and projects. Our goal is to maintain a space where a broad variety of approaches can thrive and exchange to their mutual benefit.

Together with our truly wonderful staff, we have been investing in processes that help the centre deliver its mission effectively in a significantly changed environment. While much work is behind the scenes, it enables the GGC to build the foundations for initiatives such as our podcast *Practicing Multilateralism* and our investments in the next generation of global governance scholars.

We've recently created the Global Governance Research Centre Consortium (GGRCC) together with peer research centres around the world to exchange insights on the future of global governance and multilateralism, while also creating opportunities for early-career researchers.

James Hollway,
Camila ALVES



L'ENSEIGNEMENT

Embodied Learning in the Age of AI

Minhua Ling

Associate Professor of Anthropology and Sociology

After the pandemic, I looked forward to resuming “normal” teaching only to realise that the new norm was teaching under the spectre of artificial intelligence. Although it is exhilarating to see how generative pre-trained transformers (GPTs) have become effective in aggregating data and summarising texts, it is concerning to consider what the future holds for those committed to teaching, like my colleagues and myself. As much as some anthropological discussions appear to be removing the “anthropo” from anthropology, our research, which extends to our teaching, primarily explores and sees value in human conditions and interactions. People matter.

Howard Gardner writes, “If we can mobilise the spectrum of human abilities, not only will people feel better about themselves and more competent; it is even possible that they will also feel more engaged and better able to join the rest of the world community in working for the broader good.”¹ We humans learn best when we engage not only our intellect but also our senses, emotions, and sense of purpose. As a teacher, I seek to enable such embodied, collaborative learning.

With the great diversity of our student body drawn from so many nations, it is exciting for me to foster an interactive environment, in which students bring so many different personal and cultural perspectives to our discussions. I will never think of instant noodles the same way after learning in my “Food, Society & Sustainability” class from my Indian, Italian and Maldivian students about the ways it is consumed and understood in their local cultures. Experiential exercises, such as visits to farmers' markets, allow students to learn about their material, aesthetic, and social dynamics through physical engagement and sensory

attention. Interviews with family members for favourite recipes reveal heart-felt life stories that are entwined with socioeconomic transformations shaping their dietary practices and those of their communities.

When co-teaching the departmental research methods course with Graziella Moraes Silva, we turned our own institutional environment into a site of inquiry, asking students to interview staff about the Respect Campaign conducted at the Institute. Comparing notes and sharing experiences, the students not only analysed their findings but reflected upon how their physical presence, emotional reaction, and social interaction impacted on the flow, content, and interpretation of the interviews. AI-mediated shortcuts, no matter how impressive, cannot replicate the visceral experience of a fieldwork interview or a live debate.

I am not opposed to the use of technology in teaching, AI included. I offer guidance on AI usage and use online platforms to extend discussion beyond the classroom; I will be publishing an article on AI applications in Chinese education. Still, in my view, the best educational advantages of our Institute are its human-centred teaching and deep commitment to bettering the world we study.

Minhua Ling,
Camila ALVES

¹ In *The Essential Howard Gardner on Mind* (Teachers College Press, 2024), p. 134.



LES ÉTUDIANT·ES

Youth and the Renewal of Pan-Africanism

Interview with

Hafssa Kouskous

PhD Researcher in International History and Politics

Cindy Batchy-Tom, James Mumo Nyumu, and Claudel Simo

Recent Graduates

Four students accompanied Professor Dèlidji Eric Degila as members of the Geneva Graduate Institute delegation to the 9th Pan-African Congress in Lomé, Togo, on 8–12 December 2025. They share their experience at this historic event dedicated to the “Renewal of Pan-Africanism and Africa’s Role in the Reform of Multilateral Institutions: Mobilising Resources and Reinventing Itself to Act”.

What was it like to participate in this historic congress as students? What types of events did you get to attend and participate in? What were the highlights?

Hafssa Kouskous (HK): Participating in the 9th Pan-African Congress as a doctoral researcher was a deeply formative experience, both intellectually and professionally. Being in Lomé meant engaging Pan-Africanism not only as an object of academic inquiry, but as a living political project shaped through debate and collective reflection.

During the Congress, I took part in commissions on the reform of multilateral institutions and Africa’s role within them, as well as on African and Pan-African studies, the decolonisation of knowledge, and the promotion of

Pan-Africanism. Particularly stimulating discussions moved beyond general calls for decolonisation to more concrete questions: Africa’s position within global governance, the place of African and diasporic scholarship in university curricula, the strengthening of Pan-African research networks, and the need for sustainable institutional spaces for African and Pan-African Studies.

James Mumo Nyumu (JMN): Participating in the historic Congress was a surreal and deeply humbling experience. As a recent graduate, selected by the African Union and Government of Togo as one of 20 youth representatives from across the continent, I was honoured to attend a wide range of panels and commissions, bringing the voice and perspective of the youth. The most powerful moments for me were witnessing a new generation boldly speak up and question the status quo. Seeing young people speak without fear, despite a long history of being labelled hysterical for speaking up or complicit for staying silent, was incredibly inspiring. Being part of that energy, courage, and collective demand for change was unforgettable. My hope is that this spirit of youth engagement and fearless advocacy does not end with the Pan-African Congress, but continues to shape Africa’s future.

From left to right:
Claudel Simo,
Cindy Batchy-Tom,
Professor Dèlidji
Eric Degila, Hafssa
Kouskous, and
James Mumo Nyumu.

Cindy Batchy-Tom (CBT): Participating in the 9th Pan-African Congress in Lomé as a recent graduate was a powerful experience. It felt like stepping into a living space of vivid ideas, revisiting history, and planning for the future all at once. Being surrounded by political leaders, scholars, and especially the African young people from across the continent and the diaspora made me realise how rare and valuable this kind of intergenerational and much needed dialogue really is. Overall, the Congress made me feel empowered as a student and more conscious of my role in shaping more inclusive global systems.

Claudiel Simo (CS): From my own perspective, participating in the Congress is a defining intellectual and civic experience. I took part as a 2024 graduate of the Geneva Graduate Institute and as a young professional currently working in International Geneva. Being present alongside H.E. Faure Gnassingbé, other African Heads of State and Government, and leading figures of contemporary Pan-African thought such as Professor Franklin Nyamsi gave the Congress a strong sense of historical weight and political relevance.

Through the Congress, I intervened to stress that Africa’s ability to speak with a strong, credible voice in global governance depends first on its capacity to reform itself internally. I argued for a renewed African sovereignty articulated around four interlinked dimensions: political, economic and monetary, security, and cultural sovereignty. These exchanges were rich, sometimes intense, and intellectually stimulating, and they reinforced my conviction that youth perspectives — grounded in both academic training and professional exposure — have a real contribution to make to continental debates.

Overall, this experience was both intellectually formative and personally affirming. It strengthened my commitment to contribute meaningfully to Africa’s transformation and its positioning within a reformed multilateral system.

How do you see the future of Pan-Africanism in the coming years?

HK: Pan-Africanism today is at a turning point. It is no longer only a historical or ideological project, but increasingly a practical framework for thinking about economic integration, political coordination, and Africa’s place in a rapidly shifting global order, all while being reshaped by a new generation of scholars, activists, and digital publics who are challenging inherited narratives and insisting on more inclusive ways of thinking about Africa and its diasporas. In the coming years, its future will depend on whether it can move from symbolic unity to concrete forms of cooperation — in areas such as education, research, mobility, and collective bargaining power in global institutions.

JMN: The future of Pan-Africanism must be grounded in relevance, accountability and action, shifting towards economic emancipation and justice, institutional reform and meaningful inclusion. Pan-Africanism can no longer exist solely as an ideological aspiration. Rather, it must translate into policies and structures that improve the lived experiences of African people and depend on the active leadership of young people. This new phase of Pan-Africanism must also confront global power imbalances by strengthening Africa’s collective voice within multilateral institutions and advancing intra-African solidarity through tangible cooperation. If Pan-Africanism is to endure, it must be bold, unapologetic, people-driven and uncompromising in its pursuit for justice, dignity and shared prosperity.

CBT: Beyond political discourse, the strength of Pan-Africanism will lie in how it translates into concrete initiatives in areas such as health, education, food security, and institutional reform, actively shaped by the efforts of its young people. What I witnessed in Lomé, especially through civil society engagement, showed me that Pan-Africanism is most powerful when it connects vision with everyday realities. In the coming years, I wish that it will continue evolving as a dynamic force capable of strengthening Africa’s collective voice while remaining attentive to local needs and social impact.

CS: From my perspective, the future of Pan-Africanism will be decisive and transformative, but only if it evolves from a powerful ideal into a structured, action-oriented project. It must deliver concrete political, economic, and institutional outcomes for African populations, resting on a renewed understanding of sovereignty and a valorisation of youth leadership. I believe Pan-Africanism will increasingly position Africa as a reformist force within multilateralism, not a passive recipient of global decisions. A united, internally coherent Africa can influence the ongoing reform of international institutions and norms, but only if it speaks with one voice grounded in internal credibility.

LES ÉTUDIANT·ES

Advancing Doctoral Research through the Gallatin Fellowship



The Gallatin Fellowship was established by the FERIS Foundation of America in 1976 in honour of Albert Gallatin, a Geneva native and US statesman, in order to support transatlantic research. It allows advanced doctoral students from the Geneva Graduate Institute to complete their studies at prestigious universities in the United States and allows US students to complete their studies at the Institute.

Abha Calindi, a fifth-year PhD Researcher in International History and Politics at the Geneva Graduate Institute, was awarded one of the 2025 Gallatin Fellowships. She spent Spring 2025 on academic mobility at the French Department at Columbia University, part of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, to finish writing her doctoral thesis “Echoes of Empire: Counterinsurgency and Securitisation as Governing Paradigms from Algeria to France”. Abha Calindi began her thesis under the supervision of Professor Mohamed Mohamedou until his passing and is working with Professor Emmanuelle Saada, Chair of the French Department, and Professor Bernard Harcourt, Corliss Lamont Professor of Law and Civil Liberties, while finalising her dissertation at Columbia.

“The Gallatin Fellowship ensures I can complete my research and honour Professor Mohamedou’s scholarly legacy. After his passing, having the opportunity to work with experts like Emmanuelle Saada and Bernard Harcourt, whom I collaborated with last semester, whilst accessing Columbia’s resources, represents not just academic support but a way to carry forward the vital research tradition he fostered. The fellowship enables me to bring this work to completion in a way that I hope would make him proud, contributing meaningful scholarship about colonial continuities that remain deeply relevant to contemporary debates about security, citizenship, and justice.”

Abha Calindi’s thesis focuses on the counterinsurgency tactics developed during the Algerian War of Independence, which became embedded as a governing paradigm within French state structures, creating enduring patterns of surveillance, spatial control, and racialised policing that continue to shape France’s approach to security and citizenship today. Through extensive archival research of recently declassified police and military archives, it demonstrates that what began as colonial military doctrine evolved into a fundamental logic of governance that has been both domesticated within France and exported globally as a template for state control.

Abha Calindi brings professional experience from the World Trade Organization, the UNHCR in Geneva, and the UK Delegation to UNESCO in Paris. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in History and Politics from the University of Warwick, and an MPhil in Politics from the University of Cambridge.

Abha Calindi.

LES ÉTUDIANT·ES

Attending the CEPS Ideas Lab 2026



Matteo Bovarini

Master Student in International and Development Studies (MINT)

As part of the Europaeum Ideas Programme, Matteo Bovarini had the rare opportunity to attend the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) Ideas Lab, which took place on 2–3 March in Brussels. He discusses his experience attending as a student representing the Geneva Graduate Institute.

Though it has been a few weeks since I returned, my mind keeps drifting back to my time in Brussels, where I attended the CEPS Ideas Lab 2026 in early March. It was an experience that will stay with me for a long time.

As the flagship event of CEPS, the Ideas Lab stands out as one of Europe’s leading forums for policy debate, bringing together a diverse community of researchers, policymakers, institutional representatives, and — this year for the first time — a select group of graduate and PhD students participating through the Europaeum Ideas Programme.

Walking into the venue of the Square conference centre, I did not know what to expect as a student among seasoned scholars, diplomats, and policymakers. What I found was something far more generative than I had anticipated.

The two days were dense. Plenary sessions alternated with more interactive “lab sessions”, creating a balance between high-level strategic thinking and hands-on discussion. The programme moved with a sense of urgency. The war in Ukraine, like many others, grinds on. Just hours before the event, news had broken of American airstrikes on Iranian territory. Reminders, sharp and unsettling, that the rules-based international order many of the speakers were discussing in measured, diplomatic tones was simultaneously being rewritten — or perhaps ignored — elsewhere.

Topics such as European security, economic governance, artificial intelligence, and the energy transition were not treated in isolation, but rather as interconnected

elements of a broader and complex system in which the EU could no longer remain in the background. As a Master’s student specialising in Conflict, Peace and Security, I found myself noticing the threads that connected these conversations: how geopolitical instability shapes domestic politics, how economic vulnerability feeds democratic backsliding, how technological disruption outpaces institutional adaptation. The Ideas Lab did not resolve these tensions. What it did, though, was force them into the same room, encouraging me to step beyond my own disciplinary comfort zone and engage with unfamiliar viewpoints.

What I will carry longest from the event, however, is not a specific argument or panel, but the quality of the exchanges that happened in the margins, over coffee, during lunch, in corridors between sessions. Conversations with participants from think tanks, NGOs, and EU institutions reminded me that the work of understanding this continent is necessarily collective. No single discipline, no single perspective, holds enough of the picture. The Europaeum community added another layer to this: sharing the experience with fellow students from across the network of European universities made the reflections richer, and the questions that followed sharper. Some of those interactions have continued these past weeks, which feels like the best possible outcome.

The Geneva Graduate Institute is part of the Europaeum, a network of leading European universities that value inter-connectedness and share a mission to give their students opportunities to develop professional qualities to shape the future of Europe for the better. As part of its Ideas Programme, the Europaeum organises a variety of workshops, seminars, conferences, and debates.

Matteo Bovarini.

LES ALUMNAE·I

Interview with Samar Hasan

Co-Founder of Epiphany



Can you tell us a little about your career path and the key milestones along the way?

I've had an interesting career path which has definitely not been linear! I began work at 13 — offering tuitions, teaching, and supporting my mother's plants venture — an experience that shaped my entrepreneurial instinct. During my undergraduate studies at Webster University (2002–2005) and graduate studies at the Graduate Institute (2005–2007), I worked at organisations like the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Small Arms Survey, Aga Khan Foundation, International Organization for Migration, Webster University and École et Quartier. My work spanned research, teaching, content curation, organising conferences and study trips.

Drawn to nascent institutions, I helped establish a liberal arts and sciences university, a vocational institution, and a technology and entrepreneurship institute in Pakistan. I also worked on large-scale development initiatives — a USD 45 million governance project and a USD 200 million financial inclusion organisation (2008–2017).

In 2017, I took a leap of faith and founded Epiphany in Pakistan and expanded it to the UAE in 2024, to build entrepreneurship ecosystems and nurture talent. We have supported 140+ startups, trained 1,000+ founders, and organised 225+ programmes and events. Our work includes a Seed Fund with the World Bank, a nationwide digital training programme with Pakistan's Ministry of Information Technology and Telecom, and a gamified learning platform for vaccinators with UNICEF. I also co-founded an award-winning climate change campaign and launched several women-focused initiatives.

What motivates you in your daily work, and how did your studies at the Institute feed this motivation?

Since 2008, I've been guided by *yohsin*, a belief that the worth of every human being is in the good they do. This

shapes how I approach life and work. I design impactful programmes and partnerships across entrepreneurship, tech, and development. I also support founders and leaders in finding clarity and direction in their work. Currently, I am working towards becoming a certified International Coaching Federation (ICF) Level 1 Coach focused on transformational coaching. Coaching feels like a natural extension of my work — creating space for reflection, growth, and intentional action.

The Institute shaped my ability to operate at different levels — both systemic, large-scale level and bespoke, individual level. It pushed me to think critically, stay curious, and look at problems in a broader context, while also teaching me to express ideas with confidence and respect.

What advice would you give to current Institute students for their future careers?

Be open to non-linear paths. Much of what shapes you won't come from a fixed plan — it comes from saying yes to things that feel meaningful at the time.

Take time to understand yourself — your values, strengths, and what drives you. That clarity will guide your decisions.

Build things when you can. You learn far more by doing than waiting to feel ready.

Think about contribution early — what are you adding? Who are you helping? And what kind of work feels worth doing? That's a strong compass.

Samar Hasan.

LES ALUMNAE·I – INSPIRING STORIES

Patricia Danzi

Class of 2001

Patricia Danzi, a Swiss-Nigerian humanitarian and former Olympic athlete, is fluent in seven languages and has dedicated her career to international development, aid, and climate action. As the first woman Director-General of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), she focuses on development, aid, equality, and migration's effects in Switzerland and beyond. With 25 years at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), she led operations in challenging regions across Africa and the Americas. Her multicultural background helps her connect deeply with those she serves.



© Atelier Image



© ICRC/Boris HEGER

Patricia Danzi worked on missions with the ICRC, across conflict zones in Africa, Latin America and Europe, to protect civilians and promote humanitarian law. Here alongside ICRC President Peter Maurer, she is pictured on a pirogue heading to remote communities in a FARC-controlled area in Colombia.



© Patricia DANZI

Patricia Danzi competed in the heptathlon at the 1996 Olympics. Her athletic background has allowed her to develop a strong ability to concentrate, enhance her capabilities on demand, and build endurance, which proves to be very useful in her career.



© FDFA

Appointed in 2020, Patricia Danzi is the first woman Director-General of the SDC, leading Switzerland's global development and humanitarian efforts. The SDC plays a key role in global stability, addressing poverty, climate change, and migration.

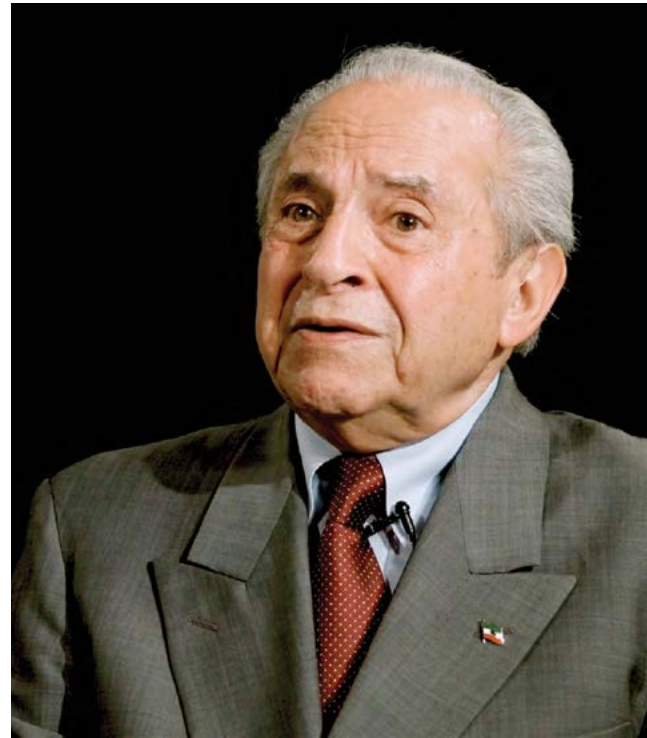


Learn more

Manouchehr Ganji

Class of 1962

Manouchehr Ganji served as Iran’s Minister for Education from 1976 to 1979. He had earlier acted as an advisor to Prime Minister Hoveida between 1974 and 1976. Before that, he was the founder and the first director of Tehran university’s Centre for Graduate International Studies. During the 1979 Iranian revolution, Ganji was forced to flee Iran to Turkey by foot. Since then, he has been active in bringing violations of human rights in Iran by the ruling clerics to the world’s attention.



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During Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi’s reign, Ganji convinced him to invite the International Committee of the Red Cross to open up permanent offices in Iran, to visit and inspect Iranian prisons and guarantee that no torture was taking place there.

Ganji was the first Special Rapporteur for the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on the question of apartheid and racial discrimination in southern Africa, including South Africa, South West Africa (now known as Namibia) and Southern Rhodesia (now known as Zimbabwe), during 1967–1969.

Ganji was the founder and secretary general of the “Derafsh Kaviani” (the Flag of Freedom Organization of Iran “FFO”), a democratic non-violent opposition movement to the clerical regime.



 Learn more

LA RECHERCHE

War WATCH: Bringing Legal Clarity to Today’s Armed Conflicts

Interview with
Paola Gaeta
Professor of International Law and Co-President of the Geneva Academy

Stuart Maslen
Project Lead of IHL in Focus at the Geneva Academy



Stuart Maslen and Paola Gaeta. Tim YOUNG

What prompted you to create the War WATCH portal, and what specific gap in the documentation or analysis of armed conflicts does it aim to fill?

War WATCH is a new portal of the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, created to reconnect facts and law with a view to promote compliance and accountability. While information on violence in armed conflict is widely available, there is often no shared legal reading of when violence reaches the threshold of an armed conflict and what this means in terms of compliance with obligations under international humanitarian law. War WATCH fills this gap by providing global classifications of armed conflicts and structured legal analysis of compliance with international humanitarian law, with a specific focus on civilian harm. It’s astonishing, but no one else is doing this kind of documentation of serious violations of the law.

For whom has War WATCH been created? How and by whom do you hope it will be used?

War WATCH is intended for policymakers, diplomats, humanitarian actors, journalists, researchers and students. It is designed as a practical reference tool: to clarify legal thresholds, inform decision-making, support advocacy and accountability efforts, and provide a reliable basis for research and teaching. With increasing use of universal jurisdiction, ensuring nexus with an armed conflict can help the criminal justice system to prosecute alleged war criminals.

How do you collect, verify, and analyse information to ensure the platform remains both rigorous and accessible?

The portal is built on a transparent and consistent methodology. Experienced legal researchers rely on multiple credible sources, cross-check information, and assess it

against established legal criteria. Particular care is taken to translate complex legal analysis into clear, structured, and accessible outputs, without sacrificing rigour. The research team is sensitive to the fact that they’re reporting on terrible events in people’s lives. We never lose sight of that fact.

Given today’s challenges, from limited access to affected areas to widespread misinformation, how do you see War WATCH contributing to better compliance with international humanitarian law and more informed decision-making?

War WATCH reduces legal ambiguity. It establishes when violence reaches the threshold of armed conflict and documents serious violations such as the starvation of civilians, attacks on healthcare and humanitarian personnel, conflict-related sexual violence, and the growing use of armed drones against civilians.

The portal operates on three main levels: a snapshot overview; conflict-by-conflict summaries and legal classification; and summaries of the legal analysis of compliance with international humanitarian law obligations. The portal also includes a full report on classification and an interactive map with a functional search engine.

In a context marked by misinformation and denial, providing independent, legally grounded analysis helps keep international humanitarian law operational — not symbolic — and supports more informed and responsible choices. It’s important to remember — no armed conflict, no war crime. The potential for accountability is hardwired into the repository.



Learn more about War WATCH.



LA RECHERCHE

Caring in the Face of War

What Does the Ukrainian Experience Teach Us about Care in Wartime Economies?

Elisabeth Prügl

Honorary Professor of International Relations/Political Science

Agnieszka Fal-Dutra Santos

Postdoctoral Researcher and Research Affiliate at the Gender Centre

Yuliia Soroka

Senior Researcher at the Gender Centre

The violence of war is rarely, if ever, contained to the frontlines. Ukrainian women and men face shelling, bombing and destruction of infrastructure; the mental health impact of incessant late night air raid alerts; the pain and uncertainty of being torn away from one's family and community; and the economic violence of increasing cost of living and increasingly inaccessible social services.

Surviving these violences requires the largely invisible, unpaid and underpaid social reproductive labour of care.

Research carried out in Kharkiv and Lviv within the framework of the project Caring to Survive, Surviving to Care shows how diverse Ukrainians have adapted their lives and work in the face of violence in order to survive, and to sustain their families and communities. We refer to this phenomenon as the "wartime care economy."

We distil four sites of the social reproductive labour that sustains wartime economies.

In Ukrainian *households*, the war led to a sharp spike in unpaid domestic and care labour, disproportionately carried out by women. With schools closed, the burden for education and childcare has fallen on the shoulders of mothers, leading to what one interviewee referred to as a "hellish parental burnout".

Among *neighbours*, the full-scale Russian invasion sparked an inspiring surge of solidarity, with people sharing food, water and electricity. Yuliia Soroka recalls such organising in her autoethnographic account of surviving

the siege of Mariupol. We have also documented care networks among those displaced by the war, in which elderly women played a particularly important role.

Within *civil society*, a culture of unorganised volunteering has flourished in the aftermath of the full-scale invasion, including wide-spread humanitarian assistance to those affected and displaced by violence. Civil society organisations also often shifted their activities from advocacy towards distributing relief packages and supporting internally displaced persons.

Finally, within the *state*, social workers have functioned as a bulwark for those least able to cope with the violence of the war. In Kharkiv, they continued visiting the elderly and disabled people in their care amidst heavy shelling and bombing.

The testimonies we have collected in Kharkiv and Lviv have brought to light the invisible yet ubiquitous labour of care during war. Social work, volunteering, and taking care of those in one's family and closest networks have enabled Ukrainian survival in the face of Russian aggression. This often underpaid and underappreciated labour has also, however, raised the spectre of depletion and burnout for those who do the bulk of it — women, including elderly women, social workers, volunteers and activists. Their work needs to be recognised in the ongoing discussions around (post)war recovery.

UKRAINE.
SVPhilon/iStock

LA RECHERCHE

Nouvelles publications



Cambridge University Press. 2026. 298 p. Available in open access.

How Transparency Works

Ethnographies of a Global Value

Edited by Filipe **Calvão**, Matthieu **Bolay** and Elizabeth **Ferry**

Transparency has become a ubiquitous presence in seemingly every sphere of social, economic, and political life. Yet, for all the claims that transparency works, little attention has been paid to how it works — even when it fails to achieve its goals.

Instead of assuming that transparency is itself transparent, this book questions the technological practices, material qualities, and institutional standards producing transparency in extractive, commodity trading, and agricultural sites. Furthermore, it asks: how is transparency certified and standardised? How is it regimented by "ethical" and "responsible" businesses, or valued by traders and investors, from auction rooms to sustainability reports?

The contributions bring nuanced answers to these questions, approaching transparency through four key organising concepts, namely disclosure, immediacy, trust, and truth. These are concepts that anchor the making of transparency across the lifespan of global commodities.



Subaru. 2026. 304 p.

Human Rights: A Very Short Introduction

Andrew **Clapham**

The second edition of *Human Rights: A Very Short Introduction* is now available in Japanese, thanks to a translation by Hiroyuki Kuribayashi. It covers the history and philosophy of human rights and details developments concerning rights related to torture, arbitrary killing and detention, food, education, health and housing, freedom of expression and discrimination. Issues related to the death penalty and the rights of persons with disabilities are discussed in the contemporary context.

The Japanese version features a preface by Ambassador Sumi from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and an afterword by the author and translator situating the topic in contemporary Japan. Yotaro Nishi, an Institute student studying international law, assisted with the translation and the accompanying website.

The book has also been translated into Chinese, Turkish, Swedish, German, Korean, Thai, Arabic, Spanish, and Portuguese.



Transcript. 2025. 126 p. Available in open access.

Women in Science: Experiences of Academics in Switzerland

Edited by Sara **Hellmüller**, Annalisa **De Cia** and Elizabeth **Mesok Khan**

Women in science face particular challenges, such as structural inequalities, highly competitive work environments, and at times toxic cultures.

This collection conveys the experiences of women academics in Switzerland, featuring insights from twelve scholars across various universities and disciplines. Each contributor shares their unique journey in pursuit of a professorship, illustrating the rich diversity of the Swiss scientific community.

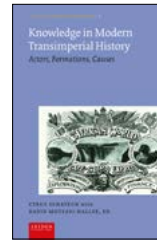
This volume offers hope for those struggling with finding their place in science, emphasising the joys and privileges that can be found in an academic career and the passion and perseverance of those pursuing it.



NORRAG Series on International Education and Development. Edward Elgar Publishing. 2026. 192 p. Available in open access.



FGV Editora. 2025. 188 p. Free ebook available.



Leiden University Press. 2025. 269 p. Available in open access.

Data for Accountability in Education

Global Trends in School Reform

Gita **Steiner-Khamsi**,
Patricia **Bromley**,
Rie **Kijima**,
Kerstin **Martens**
and Antoni **Verger**

This timely book investigates the emergence of data-for-accountability as a governing tool in education. Five leading scholars explore its evolution over time and across regions, highlighting how datafication in education benefits some and disadvantages others.

The authors trace the origins of using data for accountability in education back to the 1990s, demonstrating how various actors have adapted and tailored this trend, thus diversifying its use as a governance tool. They examine the rise of student testing, performance-based evaluation and governance by numbers to reveal the political, economic and pedagogical uses and abuses of data. Drawing on a variety of methods, theories and disciplines, including a combination of macro-, meso-, and microlevel analyses, the authors illustrate how these instruments have taken root globally, why they persist and how their meanings and effects vary across policy contexts.

Como pesquisar elites no Brasil (How to Research Elites in Brazil)

Edited by Graziella **Moraes Silva**,
Débora **Thomé** and Matias **López**

With the worsening inequality around the world, interest in elites has grown both within and outside academia. Brazil is no exception; this discussion is already part of our intellectual and scientific tradition. Many of the historical ills experienced in the country have been attributed to elites: *coronelismo* (local political bossism), patrimonialism, authoritarianism, among others. However, little has been produced by the social science community on how to access members of the elite for research purposes.

This book (in Portuguese) fills that gap. It offers an overview of the methods that can be applied to better understand the world of power and the particularities of implementing a study with elites in Brazil.

Knowledge in Modern Transimperial History

Actors, Formations, Causes

Edited by Cyrus **Schayegh**
with David **Motzafi-Haller**

This volume intervenes in the growing field of transimperial history, which explores interactions across empires — European and non-European — between the mid-1800s and mid-1900s, a period of heightened imperial entanglement. It focuses on how actors from one empire came to know, interpret, and position themselves in relation to actors from other empires, emphasising the role of socio-professional profiles, informal networks, and formal institutions.

The volume is structured around three themes: individual actors and professional groups; formations of transimperial knowledge through diverse textual objects; and the exploration of causes. Altogether, it sheds light on concrete, situated ways in which transimperial knowledge was produced, mediated, and made meaningful in a competitive imperial world.



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