



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

A Critical Political Analysis of the SDGs: Consolidating Neoliberal Development?

School of Social and Political Sciences

Public Event

Anthropology and Development Studies Seminar Series

Dr. Heloise Weber, The University of Queensland

The United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda now serves as ‘the’ framework for global development. It has been hailed by advocates as defining five big transformative shifts underpinned by a normative commitment ‘to leave no one behind’. The signatory states have committed to implementing the SDG agenda at national and local levels. Within the broad purview of the Social Sciences alone, it has attracted attention from scholars of cosmopolitanism, environmental policy and politics, gender, development policy and politics, economics and political economy, in addition to others working in the sciences, including on natural resource sustainability. Some have especially welcomed its multilateral origins and universal premises given current trends towards populism and multi-polarity. Others, welcoming the normative commitments of the goals, have focused on how to speed up implementation. Increasingly, however, there has been critical engagement with the SDG framework, sometimes by way of cross-engagement of goals and targets, by reference to specific goals, their underlying assumptions, targets and indicators, and, in a few cases, by focusing on goals and their specific ‘means of implementation’ targets.

In this presentation, Dr Heloise Weber offers a critical political analysis of the SDG agenda. She does so in two aspects: Zooming out to demonstrate how it is configured in terms of a hierarchy of goals, differentiated by ‘means of implementation’, and zooming in on specific goals, including SDG1 on poverty and SDG2 on hunger. Dr Weber’s approach connects macro-and -micro levels, demonstrating how the agenda is tied to the consolidation of development policy as premised on commercial law. She brings these critical insights to bear on the question of what they mean for community level experiences, as well as for the potential conflicts the agenda is set to engender. Dr Weber concludes with some observations about what the SDG agenda means for prospects of social struggles in and over in/justices in the politics of development.



Event Details

Date:

Wednesday, 26th August

Time:

3.30pm - 5.00pm

Venue:

Online Event

Enquiries:

Anne Décobert
anne.decobert@unimelb.edu.au

Event Registration:

Bookings are free, but required at link:
https://unimelb.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YHetiFn48QgGmlu5Kx4RoQA

Heloise Weber is Senior Lecturer in International Relations and Development at the School of Political Science and International Studies, The University of Queensland, Australia. Her research interests are at the intersection of critical approaches to IR and (Global) Development. Her research includes the politics of the SDGs, the implications (social and political) of microfinance programs, the politics of development theory, and the political economy of poverty reduction and development. From this vantage point, her work engages global dynamics and local experiences of development.

For more, please see: <https://polsis.uq.edu.au/profile/5013/heloise-weber>

