

Standing in the way of rigor? Economics' meeting with the decolonization agenda

By:

Ingrid Harvold Kvangraven, Lecturer in International Development, King's College, London,

ingrid.kvangraven@kcl.ac.uk

Surbhi Kesar, Lecturer in Economics, School of Oriental and African Studies,

sk156@soas.ac.uk

Abstract

This paper critically engages with some crucial aspects of the decolonization movement in economics - its theoretical basis, what it entails, and its implications for the discipline - and identifies the scope for decolonizing economics teaching. Based on a survey of 498 economists, it explores how economists across different kinds of departments (economics/heterodox/non-economics), geographical locations, and identities assess challenges to economics teaching, how they understand the critiques emanating from the decolonization movement, and how they think economics teaching should be reformed. Based on the survey findings, the paper concludes that the field's emphasis on advancing economics as an objective social science free from political contestations, based on narrow theoretical and methodological frameworks and a privileging of technical training based on a limited understanding of rigor, likely stands in the way of the very possibility for decolonizing economics. This dominant approach to economics stands in contrast to key concepts of the decolonization agenda such as centering structural power relations, critically examining the vantage point from which theorization takes place and unpacking the politics of knowledge production. Nonetheless, the survey responses clearly chart out the challenges that the field faces in terms of decolonizing economics teaching and identifies potential for reform.

1. Introduction

The calls to decolonize the social sciences have recently permeated, albeit marginally, the discipline of economics. These calls have especially gained momentum in the wake of the escalation of the Black Lives Matters matter movement in the US in 2020 that questioned the

discipline's limited capacity to address the structural underpinnings of racialized inequalities. While there have been efforts to address the needs to decolonize International Political Economy (IPE), including in this journal, they have mostly come from the more culture-focused postcolonial traditions rather than the more materialist anti-imperialist, Marxist post-colonial, and decolonial traditions. The former interventions often tend to treat colonialism as an IPE 'blind spot' (Bhambra, 2020; Best et al., 2021; LeBaron et al., 2021). This stands in contrast to a radical decolonization agenda, which, instead of seeing Eurocentric aspects of the social sciences as blind spots to be corrected within dominant paradigms, seeks to unpack how dominant approaches may preclude the study of systemic processes associated with decolonization, such as structural racism and imperialism. A radical decolonization agenda seeks to foreground the need for theoretical apparatuses whose frameworks might be more amenable to studying the systemic processes that both aid in subordinating societies that were formerly colonized and facilitate new forms of colonization (Alves et al., 2023). In doing so, a questioning of the very building blocks of economic theory becomes necessary. To carry out such a questioning, we find it fruitful to draw from anti-imperialist (Amin, 1988), decolonial (Quijano, 2000), Marxist post-colonial (Sanyal, 2007), as well as feminist IPE scholarship (Hartsock, 2006). Economics' strong influence on other disciplines also adds urgency to the task of unpacking biases in the field for a broader understanding of decolonization and Eurocentrism in the social sciences (Fine and Milonakis, 2009).¹

In the following section, we first introduce what we mean by Eurocentrism in the context of economics before laying out what decolonizing economics - and decolonizing economics teaching specifically - entails. Next, based on a survey of 498 economists conducted between January and March 2020 we assess the extent to which economists at the 'top' of the discipline are concerned with decolonizing economics teaching. The survey, drawing on established debates about economics teaching as well as insights from the decolonization agenda and decolonial pedagogy, seeks to understand what the respondents think about economics teaching, the ways in which economics teaching could be reformed, and what the constraints to such reform are. An analysis of these top universities is important since they play a central role in what gets accepted as legitimate knowledge. Further, we evaluate how different departments, including mainstream economics, heterodox/pluralist economics, and non-

¹ American IPE, especially, is strongly influenced by methodological and theoretical developments in economics (Cohen, 2008).

Economics departments approach the question of decolonizing teaching differently, before examining how approaches towards decolonization differ across geographies, universities, and identities. Relating these results to the discussion on theoretical and methodological foundations of the economics field, we argue that the field's prevalent understanding of 'rigor' allows only for 'weak objectivity' (following Harding, 1992) without providing space for alternative ways to make sense of social phenomena. This, in turn, acts as a constraint on the decolonization of economics teaching, as well as the field at large. In contrast, we argue that decolonization of economics teaching might be better achieved through an approach that allows for theorization from multiple vantage points and which reveals the implications of choosing different theoretical entry points. Such an approach, while providing a broader understanding of objectivity and rigor, may also pave the way for a more relevant and critical discipline fit for tackling the structural societal challenges we are facing. Finally, we conclude.

2. The evolution of a colonial field and the challenges of decolonizing economics teaching

The Eurocentric bias in knowledge production has been critiqued by several traditions, including in decolonial, anti-imperialist and postcolonial scholarship. While most of these critiques have remained on the periphery of social science disciplines, as pointed out by Kayatekin (2009, p.1113), "economics proved to be the discipline most resistant to change". In this section we first define what we mean by Eurocentrism and how it relates to a colonization of economics, before providing some illustrations of how the field itself can be understood as Eurocentric. We then move on to lay out what we mean by decolonizing economics and, relatedly, IPE, and how this pertains to teaching in particular.

2.1 Eurocentrism and colonialism in economics

There are many entry-points from which to understand Eurocentrism in economics and IPE (Wallerstein, 1997). For example, postcolonial theorists such as Edward Said (1978) view Eurocentrism as a set of attitudes that take the form of a particular discourse, but do not necessarily explore the ways in which they might produce specific regimes of accumulation, expropriation and exploitation. Meanwhile, anti-imperialist and post-colonial Marxists such as Samir Amin (1988) and Kalyan Sanyal (2007) do not see Eurocentrism as merely a particular understanding of the world, but instead view it as a polarizing global project that reinforces imperialism and systemic inequalities and/or unpack how dominant understandings of capitalism fail to recognize post-colonial experiences of capitalist development. For the

purpose of this article, and with a view of the economics field in particular, our understanding finds resonance with Amin's materialist perspective and strands of post-colonial Marxist theory and focuses specifically on the ways Eurocentrism has shaped economists' view of capitalism. In this context, Eurocentrism is an understanding of the world that centers the idea of endogenous capitalist development in Europe, which in turn is associated with the Enlightenment values of rationality and objectivity and views the rest of the world only in relation to it. In such an understanding, capitalist development is presented as a rational and all-pervasive progression that is expected to unfold organically throughout the world (Sanyal, 2007; Rist, 1997). All social processes that do not align with this capitalist imagination, including alternative views of and forms of identities, rationalities, and institutions, are then devalued as imperfections (Zein-Elabdin and Charusheela, 2004).

Following this, the reason Europe emerges as the 'center' lies in the emergence of capitalism as the hegemonic global order, with Europe coming to represent its essence (Lazarus, 2011). Embedded in this understanding was the expectation that all economies would transition along the lines of this Eurocentric capitalist imagination (Rist, 1997; Sanyal, 2007; Bhattacharya and Kesar, 2020). Absent from this understanding are processes of colonialism, the slave trade, drain of wealth, racial violence, among other forms of structural subordination that underpinned the development of capitalism in Europe, while, simultaneously, restricting the possibility of such a realization universally (Robinson, 1983; Blaut, 1993; Alves et al., 2023). What is more, this idolized view sweeps under the carpet *all forms* of oppression that the development of capitalism was founded upon, and continues to rely upon, in order to maintain stable regimes of accumulation, including the disciplining of women's' bodies that was necessary to establish a patriarchal order to guarantee the reproduction of labor power (Federici, 2004). It is, therefore, no coincidence that the radical decolonization agenda has much to learn from feminist political economy.

We consider economic theories that choose as their locus this limited and partial understanding of capitalist development as Eurocentric.² Notably, despite being founded on a specific ideology and worldview, these Eurocentric theories always present themselves as neutral (Harding, 2002), which serves to obscure the fact that there are alternative ways of

² See Hobson (2013) and Blaney and Inayatullah (2010) for similar reflections on how IPE can be considered Eurocentric.

understanding the world that challenge this Eurocentric conception. Such obscuring lays the foundation for claims to universality and neutrality (Grosfoguel, 2013; Ndlovu-Gatssheni 2018a).

Notably, the view we take of decolonization, drawing on feminist IPE, decolonial, post-colonial, and anti-imperialist scholarship, pins the debate at the theoretical and methodological foundations of the field, rather than at the main topics covered. This is in contrast to the prevalent blind spots approach, where even when the field introduces neglected topics, such as race, colonialism, and gender, it does so in a way that retains the field's foundation. This is important because it means that if and when Eurocentric theoretical traditions start to introduce neglected topics such as race or colonialism into their portfolio of research questions, this will not necessarily challenge the Eurocentrism of those strands. In other words, one can study issues such as colonialism, imperialism, the slave trade, and race, from both Eurocentric and non-Eurocentric starting points. However, if one follows the insights of radical anti-colonial scholars to accept that imperialism and structural racism are intricately connected to the development of capitalism in Europe (Amin, 1974; Robinson, 1983; Williams, 1944), then 'correcting' a Eurocentric theory simply by introducing race or colonialism as a topic becomes a mere lip-service to decolonization.

From a lens of decolonization, the core of the mainstream of the economics field appears Eurocentric because it conceives of capitalism as a rational, organized system with laws that are ideally supposed to function in the same way everywhere, albeit with certain aberrations, imperfections, and need of management, and then advancing this understanding as objective (Zein-Elabdin, 2004). In this understanding, the contradictions and antagonisms that are centrally embedded in capitalism as a system, both in its genesis and expansion, remain absent or peripheral. These Eurocentric underpinnings became increasingly hidden with the formalization of neoclassical economics in the 1950s, when social and historical contexts of capitalist development that provided space to identify such contradictions were gradually removed from economic analyses (Fine and Milonakis, 2009). With this development, the field moved further away from viewing the economy as a structure embedded in societal processes towards a more limited view of social behavior seen through the lens of methodological individualism (Alves and Kvangraven, 2020). Furthermore, since the 1970s, there has been a more active exclusion of most forms of heterodox theories, including those whose theoretical building blocks might be more amenable to studying societal processes and the ingrained

antagonism and contradictions in capitalism, making the mainstream of the economics field even more narrow (Lee, 2009). There are, thus, two interlinked critiques of how the field has evolved to retain a Eurocentric framework, both in terms of theory and ontology, a few illustrations of which we briefly outline below.

Firstly, the mainstream of the field has become theoretically narrow, largely relying on neoclassical foundations such as rational (and consistent) economic actors, perfectly functioning markets, and economies in equilibrium as its starting points. Even when these understandings are revisited in the recent decades in terms of introducing imperfections and expanding the definitions of rationality, or the behavioral turn in economics, it has, arguably, failed to break away from these neoclassical tenets (Madra, 2017). Embedded in this theoretical foundation is methodological individualism, where units such as agents, firms, and households are considered independent units (although, at times, being endogenously impacted) rather than as mutually co-constitutive parts of a social structure. In a similar vein, even when institutions and culture are introduced to this framework, their roles are limited to either acting as a constraint on rational behavior or as causes that impact individual rationality, thereby leaving the capitalist notion of modernity and rationality fundamentally unquestioned (Zein-Elabdin, 2009). Such an individualizing theoretical paradigm makes it challenging to see structural inequalities, exploitation and domination (Tilley and Shilliam, 2018), interaction of the economic with other social processes, and other inherent contradictions under capitalism, which are much more likely to reveal themselves if one were to begin with social relations - an entry point employed in many heterodox theories (Alves and Kvangraven, 2020; Resnick and Wolff, 2007).

Secondly, alongside this theoretical narrowing of the field, there has also been an ontological change, as economists have increasingly come to think of themselves as 'objective' modelers, analyzing economic phenomena with the help of mathematical deduction, laws, or uniformities, or as empiricist researchers whose primary concern is empirical 'rigor' in analyzing narrow interventions (Lawson, 1997). The field's quest for such objectivity and rigor has strengthened the field's claim to being apolitical and ahistorical (Kayatekin, 2009). This has in turn made it increasingly difficult for scholars within it to grasp the Eurocentric biases implicitly present in the empirical categories seamlessly employed in economics, and to consider heterodox approaches as legitimate starting points for knowledge generation. This trend has been particularly strengthened in recent years with the 'empirical turn' of the field

(Angrist and Pischke, 2010), which culminated in a recent Economics Nobel laureate likening economists to plumbers, thus suggesting that economists' work is purely technical (Duflo, 2017).³

Despite the field's quest for objectivity and rigor, the narrow approach to empirical phenomena that this has come to entail is in line with what Harding (1992) would call 'weak' objectivity, where research rests on technique rather than a reflection on positionality and how research questions are formed. Where mainstream economics pretends to be 'aperspectival', a feminist approach to science argues that by making one's perspective clear, one can improve the objectivity of the scientific enquiry. Indeed, Harding argues that the strongest form of objectivity is one that includes all standpoints to enable the revelation of different aspects of truth. Similarly, Nelson (1995) insists that what the mainstream of economics considers objective methodologies does not protect economics against biases, but rather constrains economic analysis.

2.2 Decolonizing economics

There are two key tasks that stand before us if we want to decolonize economics.⁴ The first is to unpack the mainstream of the field itself to understand how it may generate and perpetuate Eurocentrism. While this is a mammoth intellectual task that needs further development, we outlined a few illustrations of this in the section above. The second is to explore and center non-Eurocentric ways of understanding the world, which include economic knowledge that takes non-Eurocentric theoretical, philosophical, and methodological apparatuses as their starting points (Santos, 2014). Such non-Eurocentric understanding would also allow for a centering of structural forms of oppression such as colonialism, dispossession, empire, and racism as important forces that need to be grappled with to understand how the contemporary global economy is shaped (Mendoza, 2016). Indeed, identifying the biases in mainstream social sciences that concealed exploitation globally informed a lot of Latin American intellectuals' desire to decolonize the social sciences in the 1970s by constructing alternative theories to the dominant orthodoxies of the center (Kay, 1989).

³ American IPE has gone through a similar empirical turn (Cohen, 2008).

⁴ See Bhambra et al. (2018) for an introduction to the multitude of definitions and interpretations of decolonization in social sciences.

A radical decolonization agenda does not aim to replace Eurocentric views with other universal projections, but rather seeks to reveal that different theories, and their theoretical building blocks, privilege certain specific ways to understand the world, obfuscate and reveal selective aspects of the processes, and have varying political implications. Given the dominance of Eurocentric theories, one key task for the decolonization agenda thus also becomes to ‘provincialize’ the Western experience (Chakrabarty, 2000). As we note this, we must hasten to add two quick clarifications that we will unpack below. First, the call to decolonize is not a call for pluralism *per se*, although pluralism aligns to questioning the universalization of knowledge. Second, decolonization entails making space for frameworks that can help shed light on processes related to decolonization in the real, material world, which necessarily will need to recognize structural inequalities. To the first point, decolonizing social sciences means to recognize that a theory produces a partial explanation of a multidimensional social totality (Resnick and Wolff, 2007), and that certain theoretical frameworks and certain vantage points can provide more relevant perspectives than others, depending on the research question at hand (Harding, 1992; Hartsock, 2006). To the second point, the project of decolonization seeks to open up space for frameworks that are more amenable to uncover unequal social structures and how they interact with individuals. Especially if one is interested in how economic processes impact or are impacted by social structures, a framework that considers social relations - and individuals as entities embedded in and mutually co-constituting social structures - as a starting point could provide more relevant answers. For example, Marxist analyses of class lend themselves to reveal exploitation even in the most perfectly competitive capitalism, which neoclassical frameworks are unable to reveal.

Furthermore, from a radical decolonization perspective informed by feminist IPE, if one wants to uncover the oppressive processes that have been camouflaged by the Eurocentrism of the field, one must take into account the standpoint of the oppressed (Harding, 1992; Hartsock, 2006; Mendoza, 2016; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). Moreover, outlining one’s perspectives and positionality (Kaul, 2008) allows the advancement of a more holistic understanding that is in line with Harding’s ‘strong objectivity’. Note that this is not necessarily about privileging anything that comes from the Global South over the North in geographical terms, but rather to make space for theorization of the same process from the vantage point of the marginalized.⁵

⁵ For example, Western feminism and African ethics of care may be similar because they are a reaction to approaches typical of Euro-American men (Harding 1987). It is not their location or cultural origin that is most relevant, therefore, but rather the fact that they theorize from the vantage point of marginalization.

While allowing for theorizing from a diversity of vantage points has become increasingly difficult in economics because of the narrowing of the field since the 1970s, theorization from the vantage point of the Global South is particularly marginalized in the mainstream of the field (Mignolo, 2010). This is true even among researchers in or from the Global South, given that scholars from the Global South travel to the North for training in Northern intellectual frameworks, to then get published in Northern journals (Hountondji, 1997). This system entails a strong orientation towards sources of authorities in the Global North, where the only legitimate theorizing is assumed to be done in the metropole, while the Global South plays the role of a site primarily for data collection. The relatively recent rise of randomized control trials (RCTs) in development economics, where Northern intellectual and methodological frameworks are held up as a ‘gold standard’ to test the impact of interventions in the Global South, has strengthened this colonial pattern (Kvangraven, 2020).

It is worth noting here that theory and methodology are not entirely separate and that Harding’s (1992) call for increased objectivity is relevant for methodological entry points as well. That is, to decolonize economics, being explicit about what methodological assumptions are being made in the study is key, as this will impact what categories will be studied, and how empirical data will be collected and interpreted. This stands in sharp contrast to the dominance of positivism and empiricism in the economics field today. For example, while development economists employing RCTs have repeatedly claimed that their results ‘are what they are’ (Banerjee et al. 2007), feminist economists have demonstrated how project design and theoretical framing matters drastically for the interpretation of RCTs (Kabeer, 2020). Empiricist accounts prevalent in the mainstream of the field thus remain within what Harding (1992) calls ‘weak’ objectivity. In contrast, non-Eurocentric scholarship often employs methodologies that are not as deterministic as controlled experiments and do not focus simply on isolating specific variables to prove causation. In contrast, data is often used as illustrative in context of a broader theoretical debate rather than final proof, structural relations which are intimately related are often explored, which stands in contrast to determinist hypothesis-testing, and many will crucially seek to unpack the processes through which certain economic categories used in the empirical analysis are normalized (Kay, 1989; Smith, 1999).

2.3 Colonization and decolonization of economics pedagogy

While decolonizing teaching is the natural companion to decolonizing social science, Bhambra et al. (2018, p. 3) find that the relationship between coloniality and pedagogy is “deeply understudied”. Economics teaching in particular has not yet been subjected to critique from a lens of decolonization. In this section, we delve into how economics teaching itself is Eurocentric, before exploring potential ways to decolonize economics teaching.

How is economics teaching Eurocentric?

Generally, the core of the economics curricula is fairly standard across the world and has some almost universally applied features, such as micro and macro theory courses, supplemented by applied options, and a heavy reliance on textbooks.⁶ Undergraduate textbooks, which is the first formal introduction to economics for most students, reflect the colonial dimensions of the field highlighted in the previous section. They present economics as a universal and neutral science, beyond the sphere of intellectual and political contestation, extricated from the social and other non-economic spheres, with little discussion of power and relations of domination as constitutive of the current economic system. Furthermore, they tend to present economics as a set of principles to be learned, such as “markets are usually a good way to organize economic activities” or “governments can sometimes improve market outcomes” (Zuidhof 2014, p. 175). This is in line with the economics field’s sustained focus on training students to ‘think like an economist’ (Mankiw, 2020). As Stilwell (2006, p. 43) points out, teaching students to think ‘like an economist’ only provides students with a “sub-set of a broader array of possibilities for understanding the economy in practice” and it requires students to fit economic questions into pre-existing frames, rather than letting the research question determine the approach. What is more, the foundational textbooks continue to take economies in the Global North with perfect markets as a benchmark, assessing alternative realities only in relation to this utopia, rather than on their own terms (Zuidhof, 2014). Some later iterations of economics textbooks (e.g. CORE 2016) have engaged with these criticisms by centering imperfections rather than perfections (to describe the world ‘as it is’) and focussing on tools to analyze the economy. However, by not engaging with what perfect competition represents as the *normative* idea in economics and simply replacing it with a *positive* representation of the ‘world out there’, such

⁶ Even in countries, where economics education has long been known for its heterodox and a pluralist curriculum, the neoliberalization of higher education suggests that this is about to change (e.g. Guizzo et al., 2019).

attempts fail to reverse the depoliticization of economics teaching. Furthermore, such attempts present economics mostly as a set of tools and fall markedly short of exposing students to the fundamental differences in distinct theoretical entry points for understanding economic phenomena and their economic, political, and social implications.

This approach to economics teaching has not gone uncontested. Many movements in the Global South are at the forefront of calls to restructure and decolonize the university by questioning the manifestations of racial, colonial, and patriarchal power in universities. Indeed, the most recent movements to decolonize the university originated in South Africa. There, the student protest movement, which was originally directed against a statue of Cecil Rhodes on the University of Cape Town campus, ended up receiving global attention and having reverberations across the world, including in the United Kingdom (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018b). These movements are tied to concrete demands for ways that universities and teaching should be reformed.

What does decolonizing economics teaching entail?

We have identified three central issues to consider when evaluating how to change what and how we teach. The first issue is to embed our understanding of the economy within broader social processes, given that a central critique of economics teaching is the treatment of the economy as a separate entity instead of analyzing social structures such as relations of domination and exploitation as a part of the economy (Earle et al., 2016; see Mantz 2019 for a similar critique of IPE). Indeed, this sole focus on ‘the economic’ may be why economics has been identified as the least interdisciplinary of social science fields (Fourcade et al., 2015) and for engaging with other disciplines through economics ‘imperialism’ (Boulding, 1969) - the practice of seeking to engage with traditionally ‘non-economic’ processes through the narrow lens of the ‘economic’ in the neoclassical framework. An example of this is the work of Economics Nobel laureate Gary Becker (1976), who introduced market-like economic interaction to explain social behavior. Another example is the individual-based understanding of discrimination in economics, which is based on preferences (as in taste-based discrimination) or rational choices (as in statistical discrimination), which disregards the rich scholarship in both non-mainstream of economics and other social disciplines that have explored how structural factors facilitate, and are co-constituted, by these inequities. In light of this, decolonizing economics would entail creating space for introducing non-economic

processes and broader social structures as co-constitutive of the economic processes, as well as for theoretical frameworks that allow for these interactions, in teaching and learning about the economy.

The second issue is to challenge the field's claim to neutrality and universality and exposing students to different theoretical entry points and their implications. Challenging the field's neutrality involves presenting various economic understandings and theoretical frameworks as borne out of theoretical and political contestations, not relying on one single authoritative voice, perspective, or approach (Dennis, 2018), and exposing how knowledge production in the field itself is embedded in unequal power relations (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018a). Relatedly, challenging the field's claim to *universality* entails going beyond demonstrating the political and contextual aspects of knowledge creation to also explore how various epistemological frames may yield different insights and produce distinct understandings of the same economic process.

The third issue is acknowledging the variety of forms of power inequalities that shape socioeconomic processes. While decolonization involves addressing power relations embedded in colonialism, empire and Eurocentrism (Quijano, 2000), it also necessitates acknowledging the *variety of power inequalities* that exist within communities across the Global North and South, including gender, race, caste, and class (Alves et al., 2023). In that sense, decolonization presents a fundamental critique of power in all its forms and manifestations.

These three points relate directly to how and what we teach. In terms of *what we teach*, decolonizing the curriculum has been a concrete demand from the decolonization movements. These movements have made it increasingly visible that the content of university syllabi continue to remain principally Eurocentric and to reproduce and normalize colonial hierarchies (Peters, 2015). Teaching about the role of empire and colonialism in shaping societal outcomes is one concrete way that economists can move away from Eurocentric understandings of global history and social relations (Zembylas, 2018; Tejeda et al., 2003). While some of these calls have been reduced to diversification - challenging the origins and identities of the scholars on the curriculum - radical calls for decolonization recognize that location outside the center or non-whiteness is not a guarantee for epistemic pluriversality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015).

Related to calls to diversify and decolonize the curriculum are calls for pluralism - a call that escalated in the wake of 2008, mostly by heterodox economists and economics student movements (Dobusch and Kapeller, 2012; Earle et al., 2016). However, the calls to pluralize, while focusing on expanding the umbrella of theoretical traditions that the students are exposed to, often do not address the challenge of how (and why) to choose a particular theoretical entry point after being exposed to all of them, and the relationship between the theories presented and Eurocentrism. Indeed, calls for pluralism alone risk resulting in “a pluralization of voices that leaves Eurocentric frameworks intact” (Pradella 2017, p. 147).

In contrast, calls to decolonize specifically require that the Eurocentric underpinnings of different theoretical and methodological approaches are laid bare. When doing so, competing understandings of rigor and objectivity can also fruitfully be presented, which can help students identify which theoretical and methodological frameworks may be more amenable to advancing anti-colonial knowledge. Calls to decolonize teaching, thus, counter Eurocentric epistemic monocultures by identifying “other knowledge and criteria of rigor and validity that operate credibly in social practices pronounced nonexistent” (Santos 2014, p. 176). This is also in line with calls to re-politicize the process of knowledge creation by bringing to fore the political implications of competing theoretical and methodological frameworks.

Decolonizing the curriculum also entails presenting knowledge in their colonial and postcolonial contexts (Dennis, 2018). This may involve providing a better understanding of economic history (James, 2012) or history of thought (Tavasci and Luigi Ventimiglia, 2018). As with all pedagogical reform, the way in which it is done has profound implications for how transformative reform is. For example, the way history of thought has been incorporated into the mainstream has often been by presenting the history of thought as cumulative and linear, glossing over disagreements that exist (Mearman et al., 2018). However, the history of ideas and theories are often multi-directional and ideas often assumed to be Western often originated elsewhere (Helleiner and Wang, 2018).

In terms of *how we teach*, economics can fruitfully draw on critical and decolonial pedagogies. Mainstream economics tends to be taught through an instrumental approach to pedagogy, rather than a critical, liberal or decolonial approach (Mearman et al., 2018). Instrumental pedagogy involves students being trained in concrete, identifiable skills, such as problem solving, specific techniques, knowledge of facts, and perhaps knowledge of how to apply theory. While all

education will involve some instrumental outcomes (e.g. students remembering facts or equipping them with tools), only an education specifically with instrumental goals as an end in itself is usually considered ‘instrumentalist’.

Freire (1970/2017) critiqued such approaches to education for limiting students’ critical thinking by treating students as empty containers into which educators should place knowledge. Instead, he promoted critical pedagogy, which aims to liberate those oppressed and excluded by the system (Freire, *ibid*; see also hooks, 1994). In contrast to an instrumentalist approach, critical pedagogy is student-centered and involves unpacking and critiquing everyday concepts in a process of promoting conscientization. Furthermore, decolonial pedagogy concurs with feminist standpoint theory that all knowledge comes from somewhere (Kaul, 2008; Dennis, 2018), which means the politics and position of the scholar and theoretical tradition should be exposed. In short, critical and decolonial pedagogies both open avenues for viewing learning as a transformative process and for recognizing the politics of knowledge creation.

3. Decolonizing economics in practice: a survey

To explore how economists teach in the classroom, their attitudes to pedagogy, and the constraints they face, we conducted a survey of economists in top departments of economics, heterodox/pluralist economics, politics, and development studies.⁷ The survey is an operationalization of the insights from the decolonization agenda as well as the debates about economics teaching discussed above. It has two main themes, one asking respondents to identify problems with economics education and how they relate to the decolonization agenda, and one asking respondents for their views on if and how economics education should be reformed. 498 economists based in over 20 countries responded to the survey, though with a strong overrepresentation of US and UK universities, given their overrepresentation on university rankings.⁸

⁷ The ‘top’ of the discipline is defined by the power hierarchies of the field, not by any measure of quality or relevance of the research that those departments produce. We draw on mainstream rankings of departments of Economics, Politics, and International Development, namely RePEC for Economics departments and QS World University Rankings for the other social science departments. The departments included in the survey are listed in Table A8. As a part of the survey, the respondents were asked to identify which kind of department they are in, and it is this self-identification that is used in the analysis.

⁸ See Table A1 in the appendix for the composition of targeted institutions and tables A2-A7 for the distribution of respondents across disciplinary, geographical, social and demographic characteristics.

3.1 Identifying the problem

We begin by asking whether there is a problem with economics education, and if yes, what the nature of that problem is. The responses, interestingly, largely center around issues that do not challenge the essence of the economics field itself, such as adding more empirical cases, interdisciplinarity, economic history and history of thought, while retaining the core curriculum (Table 1). In short, they do not support the three principles we identify above - embedding economic thinking within broader societal processes, challenging the field's claim to neutrality and universality, or introducing a way to expose and challenge power inequalities in economic thinking. Despite the many relatively non-controversial options one could choose (e.g. it is not interdisciplinary enough) and having an option to define other problems aside from those listed, a relatively high proportion of economists (16 percent) responded that *there is no major problem* with economics education. Breaking down the characteristics of the respondents, we find that while only 3 percent of economists in heterodox/pluralists and 10 percent in non-economics departments report that there is no major problem, 23 percent of economists within mainstream departments respond the same. It is also interesting to note that economists in heterodox/pluralist departments are the most likely (49%) to believe economics teaching is too far from reality (the most voted option), while those in mainstream (24%) and other departments (35%) were less likely to see this as a problem.

Table 1: Do you think there is a problem with traditional Economics education?⁹

Response	Number	Percentage of total
Yes, it is too far removed from reality	159	31.86%
Yes, it is not interdisciplinary enough	156	31.26%
Yes, there is not enough economic history	114	22.85%
Yes, there is not enough history of economic thought	101	20.24%
Yes, it is not pluralist enough	97	19.44%
Yes, it is too abstract	91	18.24%
Yes, it is too math-heavy	84	16.83%
There are no major problems	81	16.23%
Yes, it is not heterodox enough	59	11.82%

⁹ Respondents could choose a maximum of 3 options.

Yes, it is too textbook-based	52	10.42%
Yes, it is too Eurocentric	52	10.42%
Yes, it is too removed from students' own experiences	46	9.22%
Yes, it needs to be decolonized	19	3.81%

We employ a logit regression to estimate how the likelihood to identify a problem with economic education varies with the respondent characteristics (Table 2, Model 1). The categorical dependent variable takes value 1 if the respondents do *not* identify any major problem and 0 if they do. We find that even after controlling for a vector of characteristics (represented as vector \mathbf{X} in the rest of the paper), which include global positionality, gender, racial/ethnic minority status, seniority (proxied by years since PhD), the respondents teaching in mainstream departments are much *more* likely to *not* identify any major problem with economics teaching, as against those in pluralist/heterodox and non-economics departments (including development studies, political economy, political science). Note also that senior academics are relatively more likely than junior academics to *not* identify a problem with traditional economics teaching.

Table 2: Logistic estimation; dependent variable for each specification listed below

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Does not identify a problem in economics \dagger	Move away from textbook teaching \dagger	Stop teaching students to think like an economist \dagger	Difficulty in relating to standard economics curriculum \dagger	Teach course that allow to understand structural inequality \dagger
Department: Pluralist/ Heterodox	0.0892***	2.136***	4.733***	3.470***	11.32***
(Reference Group: Mainstream)	(0.0634)	(0.605)	(1.370)	(0.970)	(4.441)
Department: Non-Economics	0.425**	3.515***	4.672***	2.949***	11.61***

	(0.168)	(0.945)	(1.246)	(0.783)	(4.028)
Region: Global South	1.527	4.102**	2.241	5.155***	4.331**
(Reference Group: Global North)	(1.191)	(2.350)	(1.317)	(2.906)	(3.213)
Years since PhD: 5-15 Years	1.197	0.889	0.715	0.557*	1.972*
(Reference Group: 0-5 Years)	(0.519)	(0.274)	(0.226)	(0.171)	(0.723)
Years since PhD: 15-30 Years	0.965	1.851**	0.875	0.900	1.815
	(0.408)	(0.551)	(0.276)	(0.271)	(0.692)
Years since PhD: More Than 30 Years	2.471**	1.266	0.497**	0.476**	2.630**
	(1.022)	(0.412)	(0.171)	(0.166)	(1.038)
Gender: Woman	0.852	1.584*	1.545*	1.191	2.245***
(Reference Group: Man)	(0.273)	(0.373)	(0.380)	(0.287)	(0.616)
Gender: Prefer Not to say	1.192	0.855	0.737	0.588	0.808
	(0.853)	(0.622)	(0.601)	(0.393)	(0.587)
Belonging Ethnic/Racial Minority:	0.507	1.841**	1.101	1.270	0.844
Yes (Reference Group: No)	(0.249)	(0.552)	(0.357)	(0.393)	(0.296)
Belonging Ethnic/Racial Minority:	2.378*	0.247**	0.613	2.849**	0.754
Prefer Not to say	(1.229)	(0.159)	(0.324)	(1.397)	(0.458)
Constant	0.2282***	0.3181***	0.324***	0.391***	.2742***

	(.083)	(0.083)	(0.091)	(0.107)	(.0950)
Pseudo R2	0.1049	0.0802	0.1218	0.0913	0.2080
N	448	448	446	441	403

Robust standard errors in parenthesis,

Pseudo R square = percent

* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

Non-Economics departments include Interdisciplinary / International Development / Development/Political economy / Politics / Political science departments

‡ (1) Logistic estimation, where the dependent variable is a categorical variable takes values 1 if the respondent does not identify a problem with economics and 0 if they do

(2) Logistic estimation, where the dependent variable is a categorical variable that takes value 1 if the respondents agree with the statement that “We need to move away from the Textbook Approach if we are going to be able to teach students to think critically and independently”, and 0 otherwise.

(3) Logistic estimation, where the dependent variable is a categorical variable that takes value 1 if the respondents agree with the statement that “we need to stop teaching students to “think like an economist”, and rather teach them that there are equally valid ways of thinking about economics phenomena”, and 0 otherwise.

(4) Logistic estimation, where the dependent variable is a categorical variable that takes value 1 if the respondents responded in affirmative to the question if they “find it difficult to relate the standard Economics curriculum to the specific country or socioeconomic context in which you teach” and 0 otherwise.

(5) Logistic estimation, where the dependent variable is a categorical variable that takes value 1 if the respondents responded on affirmative to the question whether the “courses they teach allow for an understanding of structural racialized inequalities and/or the role of European colonialism in shaping economic outcomes” and 0 otherwise.

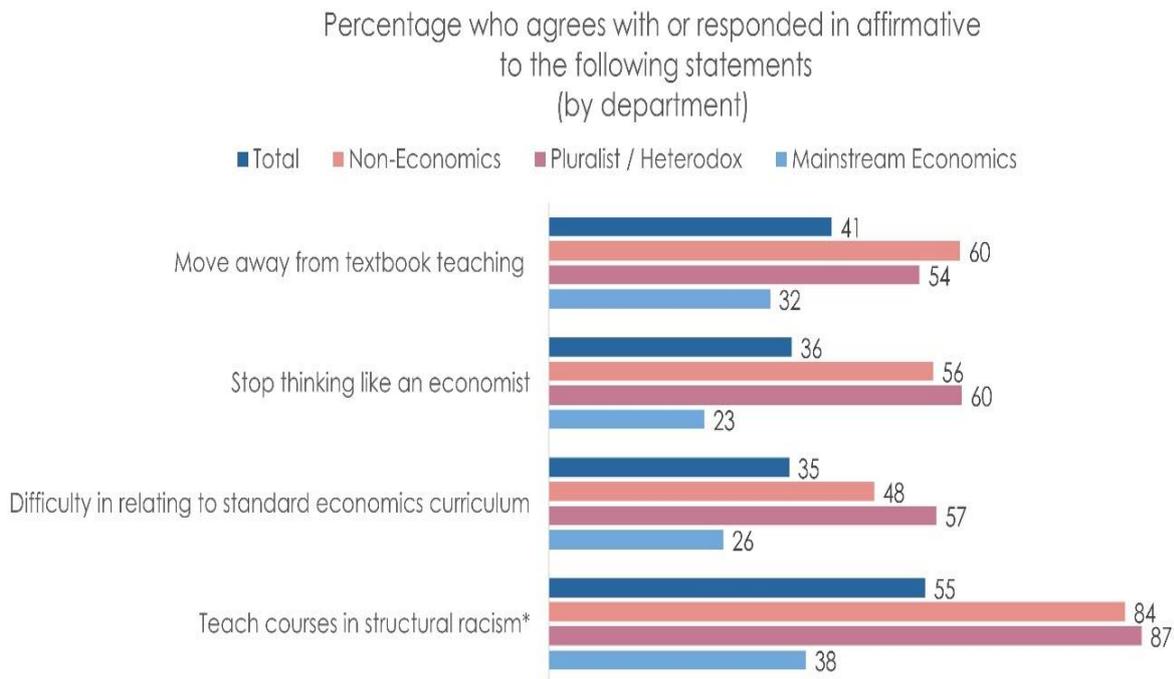
The results are reported as odds ratio, where an odds greater than 1 implies that relative to the base category, those belonging to the non-base category are more likely to subscribe to the opinion outlined in the dependent variable.

Further to identify the specific problems, the survey asked the respondents about their perception towards common methods of teaching in the mainstream of the field, such as the ‘textbook approach’ to economics and the goal of teaching students to ‘think like an economist’. These approaches point to a tendency among economists to neglect the key principles of decolonizing economics pedagogy by teaching economics as if it’s a neutral and universal science abstracted from broader societal processes and power. As mentioned, thinking ‘like an economist’ also involves privileging a set of implicit theoretical assumptions associated with neoclassical economics.

First, the respondents were asked for their preference for the statement “We need to *move away from the textbook approach* if we are going to be able to teach students to think critically and

independently.” Only 32 percent of the respondents agreed with this statement (versus disagree/neutral) (Figure 1). Moreover, only 29 percent of the respondents disagreed with the need to go beyond textbooks. Breaking down the answers by department, we see that it is the economists in mainstream departments driving the enthusiasm for the *textbook approach*, with respondents from non-economics departments being the most opposed to such an approach.

Figure 1: Evaluating various aspects of economics teaching, by department



Full statements respondents were asked to evaluate:

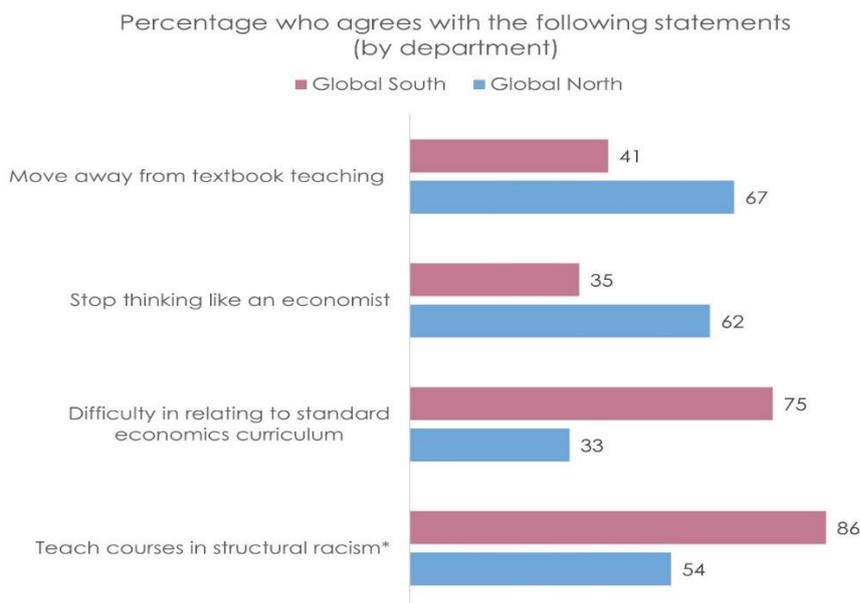
- 1) We need to move away from the textbook approach if we are going to be able to teach students to think critically and independently
- 2) We need to stop teaching students to "think like an economist" and rather teach them that there are many equally valid ways of thinking about economic phenomena.
- 3) Do you find it difficult to relate the standard economics curriculum to the specific country or socioeconomic context in which you teach?
- 4) Do any of the courses you teach allow for an understanding of structural racialized inequalities and/or the role of European colonialism in shaping economic outcomes?

The difference remains significant even after we control for the set of characteristics identified above (represented as vector \mathbf{X} above) and estimate the difference using a maximum likelihood (logit) estimation. On average, *ceteris paribus*, economists in heterodox/pluralist departments are twice as likely, and those in non-economics departments are almost 3.5 times as likely, to respond in favor of moving away from a textbook approach relative to those in mainstream departments (Table 2, Model 2). Further, women and scholars from the Global South are also

much more likely to respond that it is necessary to move away from a textbook approach (Table 2; Figure 1).

Next, as demonstrated in Figure 1, only 23 percent of economists in mainstream departments agreed with it being necessary to *stop teaching students to think like an economist*, while 60 and 56 percent of economists in heterodox/pluralist and non-economics departments, respectively, said the same. The difference is significant even after we control for other characteristics, with odds of being critical of training students to think like an economist being almost 5 times higher for non-mainstream economics and non-economic departments (Table 2, Model 3). Further, 62 percent of respondents in the Global South agreed with the *need to stop teaching students to think like an economist*, versus 35 percent from the Global North (Figure 2). However, the difference between Global North and the Global South are not statistically significantly different after controlling for other characteristics (**X** as identified above). Note that economists with more than 30 years since their PhD are *less* likely than early career academics to agree that we need to stop teaching students to think like an economist.

Figure 2: Percentage who agrees with the following statements (by department)



The resistance to moving away from a textbook approach and training students to think like an economist, points either to ignorance of the existence of distinct approaches to studying economics or to a belief that the dominant paradigm is, in fact, apolitical and the best theoretical and methodological framework for understanding the world. Such a resistance to other ways

of seeing the world is squarely in line with the discipline's claim to universality, neutrality, and objectivity, thus making radical decolonization challenging.

Furthermore, our results demonstrate that economists from pluralist/heterodox departments, as well as economists in non-economics departments, are significantly more likely to respond that they find it *difficult to relate the standard economics curriculum* to the specific country or socioeconomic context in which they teach (Figure 1). In addition, 75 percent of respondents based in the Global South responded that they found this difficult, versus only 33 percent of those based in the Global North. This might not be unexpected since a lot of textbooks are contextualized in a Global North setting and imported to the Global South often without any tailoring. These results are significant, even after controlling for the respondents' other characteristics (Table 2, Model 4). Interestingly, junior academics are also significantly more likely to find it difficult to relate the economic curriculum to the socioeconomic context in which they teach.

Finally, when it comes to whether the courses economists teach *allow for an understanding of structural racialized inequalities and/or the role of European colonialism in shaping economic outcomes*, we find that while 87 percent and 84 percent of economists in heterodox/pluralist departments and non-economics departments, respectively, are likely to teach courses that allow for such an understanding, the corresponding figure for those in mainstream departments was merely 38 percent (Figure 1). This result, while particularly striking, is not surprising. Given the individualizing paradigm in the mainstream of the field, racism is reduced to individual actions, thus hiding structural racism and other forms of oppression (Tilley and Shilliam, 2017). Here, the logistic regression (Table 2, Model 5) suggests that the odds of those from heterodox/pluralist as well as those from non-Economics departments responding yes are *more than eleven times higher* relative to those in the mainstream department, indicating that the former are more likely to teach about racialized inequality and colonialism. Moreover, the odds for those based in Global South, relatively more senior academics, and women to teach such courses is significantly higher than those based in the Global North, relatively more junior academics and men, respectively. The differences between junior and senior academics may suggest a generational shift in engaging with such questions in economics teaching.

Considering what our respondents identified as the main constraints to reforming economics teaching (Table 3), it is notable that the time required for technical training comes up as the

most common answer for why reform is difficult. This, coupled with preceding discussion, has an important implication. Around three decades ago the American Economic Association on the Graduate Education in Economics (COGEE) in a 1991 report on graduate economic association had concluded that “the commission’s fear is that graduate programs may be turning out a generation with too many idiot savants skilled in technique but innocent of real economic issues” (Krueger et al, 1991). Despite this strong conclusion, there appears to have been an increased focus on and prioritization of technical training in mainstream economics teaching, in line with an instrumental approach to pedagogy and a view that neutralizes and normalizes the neoclassical building blocks as the foundations for the field. This is also in line with a recent survey of UK employers of economists that demonstrates that economics graduates are good at quantitative skills but do not know how to apply them to real world problems (Giles, 2018).

Table 3: What are the main constraints to reforming Economics teaching, in your own experience? (by department, in percentages)¹⁰

	Mainstream economics	Heterodox / pluralist economics	Others	Total
None of these constraints are relevant	31	31	41	33
My institution requires me to teach Economics in a certain way	9	7	7	8
Students prefer the standard curriculum	9	11	11	10
Students need to be updated on “the canon” of their discipline	17	23	20	19
Students need technical training, which takes time	40	32	28	37
I don’t have the knowledge and background to teach decolonized Economics	15	11	10	13

¹⁰ The respondents could pick as many as they deemed relevant.

I don't have time to reform the courses I teach	17	16	14	16
My institution does not have the resources required to develop new courses	5	11	5	6
I don't have the training and background to teach pluralist or heterodox Economics	11	4	10	10

3.2 Identifying solutions

To start to identify what can be done to address the problems above, we asked the respondents ways to make economics education as relevant and realistic as possible (Table 4).¹¹ The 'give students realistic/real case studies' dominates the answers. Notably, the top answers with more than 200 respondents are about providing case studies (empirically motivated reforms), including readings from other disciplines (interdisciplinarity), including alternative economic perspectives (pluralism), moving away from mathematics (methodology), including more history of economic thought and embedding the course in economic history - while welcome reforms, none of these *directly* challenge Eurocentrism. Instead, these ways of addressing the problems in the field retain the dominant frameworks, while patching 'blind spots'.

Strikingly, the answers that have the lowest number of respondents are the ones that deal directly with aspects of decolonization that we identified above, such as breaking down the common idea of who is an expert, including more about colonialism and empire, and seeking to include perspectives, scholars, and case studies from the Global South (all of which were the only answers chosen by less than 150 respondents). The answers that have to do with critical pedagogy - shifting assessments and involving students' experiences in the courses - were somewhat more popular among the respondents.

¹¹ In terms of what efforts the respondents themselves make, there was no restriction to how many answers they could select, which explains the much higher percentages here.

Table 4: Percentage who chose the following options as ways to make Economics education as relevant and realistic as possible¹²

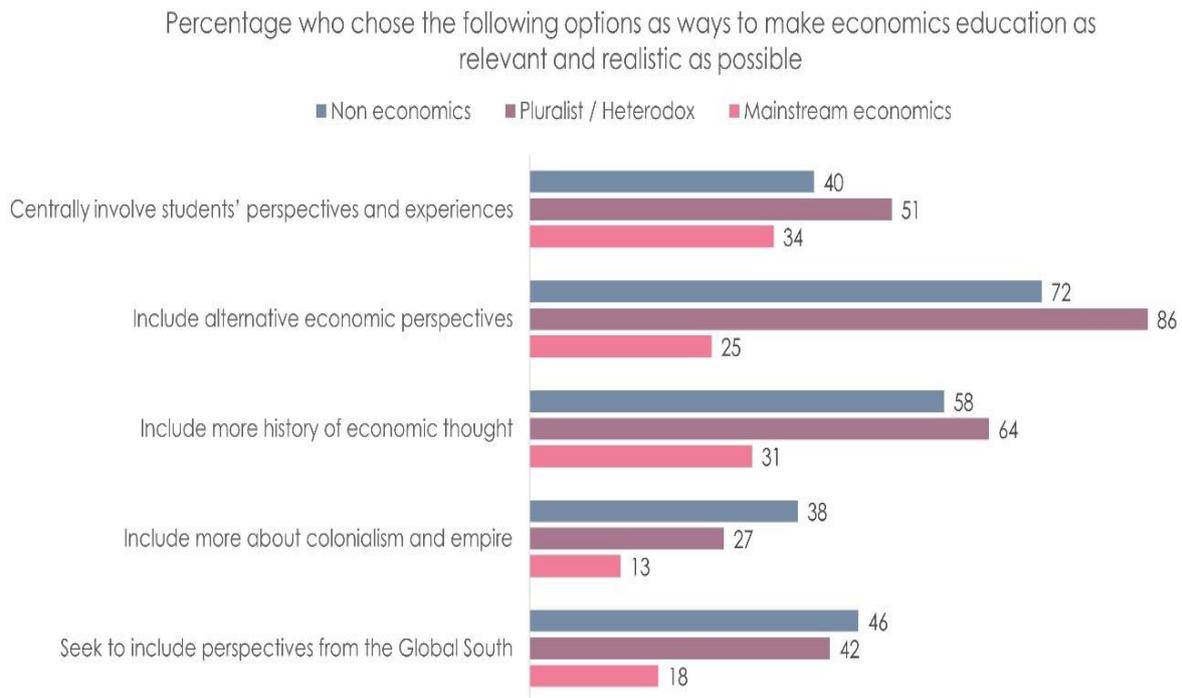
Response	Number of responses	Percentage of respondents
Give students realistic/real case studies	391	79%
Include readings and/or insights from other disciplines	246	49%
Include alternative economic perspectives	227	46%
Don't rely heavily on mathematics	213	43%
Include more history of economic thought	211	42%
Embed the course in economic history	204	41%
Shift to alternative assessments	197	40%
Centrally involve students' perspectives and experiences	189	38%
Seek to include perspectives from the Global South	149	30%
Seek to include more case studies from the Global South	136	27%
Include more about colonialism and empire	104	21%
Break down common ideas of who is an "expert"	101	20%
Seek to include readings from the Global South	97	19%
None of the above	18	4%

When we stratify some of the key responses by department and find that economists in mainstream departments appear the most resistant to an inclusion of themes that have become

¹² The respondents could pick as many as they deemed relevant.

part of movements in academia that seek to center non-Eurocentric perspectives or alternative ways of understanding economic theory (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Ways to make Economics education as relevant and realistic as possible



Rather than recognizing decolonization as a relevant challenge for economics teaching, economists, specifically those in mainstream departments tend to point to reforms at the ‘margins’ of the discipline as relevant, such as maintaining the core of the field, but adding economic history, insights from other disciplines, and adding more empirical case studies. This coupled with the fact that one of the key constraints to economics teaching identified by the mainstream economists is the need to equip students with technical skills, which takes time, while very few respondents choose not knowing how to decolonize the curriculum or not having resources as one of the main constraints, emphasizes the discipline's focus on technical knowledge and increased rigor (narrowly defined).

These results are in line with the most recent attempt to reform economics teaching through the launch of the Curriculum Open-access Resources in Economics (CORE), which around half of our survey-respondents believed to be an improvement over standard economics curriculum. CORE is an educational reform project led by many top economists, which in many ways represents how the mainstream has moved on pedagogy since the global financial crisis. In

their review of the e-textbook associated with CORE, Mearman et al. (2018b) find that it is not pluralist, and it mainly allows for deepening of technical knowledge, rather than a critical broadening of the curriculum. While CORE's use of real-world data allows students to experiment with attempts to make sense of the world, such empirical analysis without critical theoretical and methodological discussion about the ingrained biases that theoretical strands carry suggests that empirical observation is theory-free.

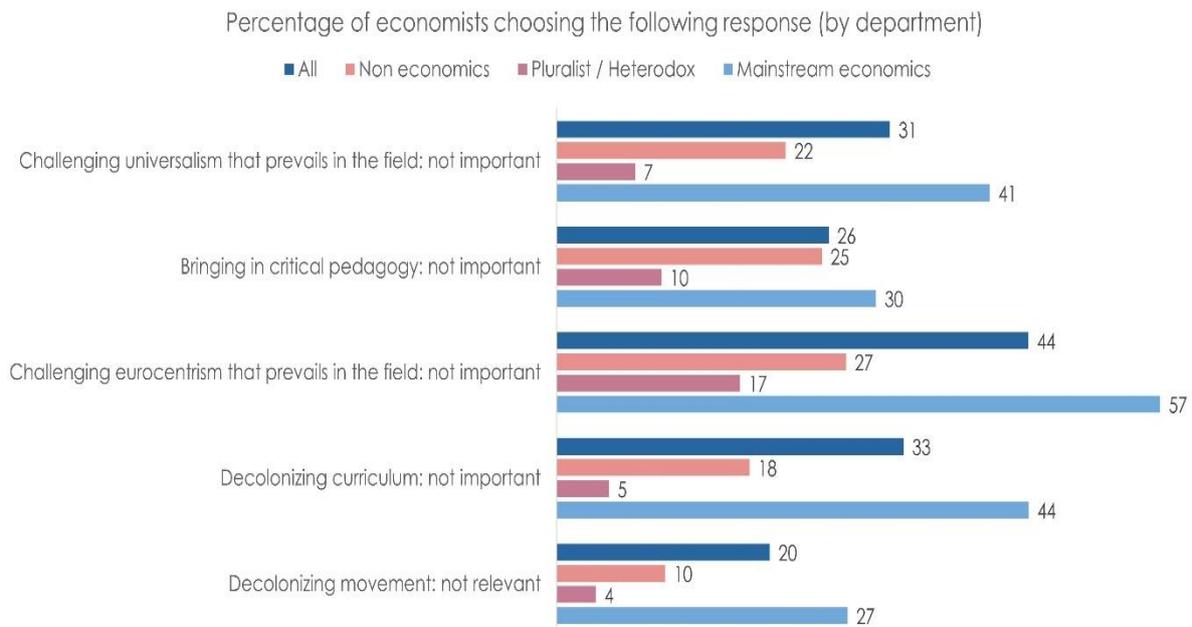
Taking this forward, we asked 'what aspects of the movement to decolonize science, if any, do you find to be the most relevant for improving Economics education and teaching, especially in your own course(s)?' The respondents could choose a maximum of three options out of 'challenging eurocentrism', 'challenging universalism', 'Bringing in historical context to economic theories and concepts', 'Taking positionality, relationality and difference seriously', 'Equipping students with tools to question existing power structures and norms' and 'They are not relevant'. While the top options chosen deal with bringing in historical context and equipping students with tools to question power structures, 28 percent of economists in mainstream departments said the question was not relevant (versus only 4 percent in heterodox/pluralist departments). Following the same pattern, even the logit regression, which controls for other characteristics, suggests that economists in heterodox/pluralist and non-economics departments are significantly less likely to say that efforts to decolonize are not relevant. Women respondents were also significantly less likely to respond that such efforts are not relevant (Table 5, Model 1). Again, this suggests more openness among women and economists in non-mainstream departments towards applying principles of decolonization in economics teaching.

Next, we analyze what our respondents think about the "importance of challenging the Eurocentrism that prevails in the field". The respondents could choose two options among 'Unpacking how Eurocentrism in Economics arose and in what ways it persists', 'Challenge Eurocentric portrayals of the "developing world"', 'De-canonizing and de-centering the Eurocentric mainstream (e.g. by teaching non-European economic theories)' and 'I don't think this is important.' Notably, over half of respondents from mainstream departments said it was not important (57 percent), versus only 17 percent of respondents from heterodox/pluralist departments and 27 percent from non-Economics departments. The results stand even after we control for other characteristics such as sex, ethnicity, years after PhD, and geographical location (Table 5, Model 3). Furthermore, women are twice as likely to respond that it is

important to challenge the Eurocentrism that prevails in the field compared to men, and respondents further out of their PhD (15 years or more) are more likely to say that this was not important compared to junior respondents. This trend needs further exploration and unpacking, but it suggests that the younger generation of economists are more attuned to challenges related to decolonization, when compared with senior academics, many of which have played a formative role in ossifying the narrow boundaries of the discipline.

When asked specifically about decolonizing the curriculum, 33 percent of the respondents replied that *decolonizing the curriculum* was *not important*. Here, too, economists in mainstream departments were significantly more likely to *not* find it important, as were men relative to women, and more senior economists relative to more junior (Figure 4; Table 5, Model 2). This is also reflected in terms of bringing in critical pedagogy, which, as we argued in the previous section, is a key constituent of the decolonization agenda. Again, economists in heterodox/pluralist departments as well as women are *less* likely, while economists that received their PhD 30 or more years ago are *more* likely than their counterparts to say that this is *not* important (Figure 4; Table 5, Model 4). Similarly, in terms of *challenging the universalism that prevails in the field*, economists in heterodox/pluralist and non-Economics departments as well as women respondents are *less* likely to say that this is *not* important (Figure 4; Table 5, Model 5). While there was generally not much enthusiasm for reforms associated with critical pedagogy, heterodox economists were no doubt the most concerned with ‘teaching students to be critical of their own field’ (13 percent of economists in heterodox/pluralist departments considered this important versus 6 percent in mainstream departments).

Figure 4: What aspects of the movement to decolonize science, if any, do you find to be the most relevant for improving Economics education and teaching, especially in your own course(s)?



The survey reveals interesting differences between economists' attitudes to economics and pedagogy based on both their gender and location. For example, women are much more likely to respond that it is important to challenge the Eurocentrism that prevails in the field, they are less likely to say that bringing in critical pedagogy is *not* important, and they are more likely to say that challenging universalism is important, than men. Meanwhile, as noted above, respondents from the Global South were more likely to say we need to move away from the textbook approach, that they find it difficult to relate the standard curriculum to their socioeconomic context, and more likely to say their courses allow for an understanding of structural racialized inequalities and/or the role of European colonialism in shaping economic outcomes. However, for many of the responses, there are no significant differences between respondents from the Global North and the South. Indeed, respondents from the Global South were *no more* likely to say that it is important to challenge Eurocentrism and universalism in the field, for example, and *no less* likely to say that efforts to decolonize are *not* relevant. Thus, the drive to decolonize economics pedagogy appears to neither be primarily driven by scholars in the Global South nor the Global North. This probably is not that unexpected an outcome, given that most institutions in the South also work under Global North's hegemony and are often under an even higher pressure to emulate (Hountondji, 1997; Kesar, 2020). Furthermore,

it also underscores the point that decolonization is not simply about geographical location *per se*, but rather about the theoretical and methodological vantage point.

Table 5: Logistic estimation: dependent variable for each specification noted below (odds ratio)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Decolonizing movement: not relevant *	Decolonizing the curriculum: not relevant *	Challenging eurocentrism: not important *	Critical pedagogy: not important *	Challenging universalism: not important *
Department: Pluralist/Heterodox	0.105***	0.0610***	0.162***	0.273***	0.113***
(Reference Group: Mainstream)	(0.0638)	(0.0328)	(0.0536)	(0.112)	(0.0510)
Department: Non-Economics	0.296***	0.260***	0.244***	0.766	0.404***
	(0.113)	(0.0815)	(0.0693)	(0.224)	(0.119)
Region: Global South	0.992	1.084	0.954	0.166*	1.125
(Reference Group: Global North)	(0.689)	(0.694)	(0.549)	(0.178)	(0.690)
Years since PhD: 5-15 Years	1.146	0.992	1.108	1.180	1.955**
(Reference Group: Age 0-5 Years)	(0.437)	(0.327)	(0.348)	(0.412)	(0.657)
Years since PhD: 15-30 Years	1.145	0.818	2.127**	1.117	1.139
	(0.432)	(0.270)	(0.665)	(0.390)	(0.388)
Years since PhD: More Than 30 Years	1.965*	2.683***	2.434***	2.613***	2.820***
	(0.772)	(0.953)	(0.835)	(0.943)	(1.013)

Gender: Woman	0.560*	0.464***	0.503***	0.543**	0.471***
(Reference Group: Man)	(0.175)	(0.127)	(0.124)	(0.157)	(0.128)
Gender: Prefer Not to say	1.630	1.026	1.066	3.611**	0.809
	(1.094)	(0.645)	(0.697)	(2.335)	(0.511)
Belonging Ethnic/Racial Minority:	0.787	1.024	1.388	1.314	0.861
Yes (Reference Group: No)	(0.324)	(0.356)	(0.444)	(0.456)	(0.301)
Belonging Ethnic/Racial Minority:	0.843	1.631	2.048	1.366	1.925
Prefer Not to say	(0.475)	(0.808)	(1.033)	(0.705)	(0.944)
Constant	0.368***	0.850	0.957	0.3433***	0.521**
	(0.121)	(0.242)	(0.263)	(0.105)	(0.154)
<hr/>					
Pseudo R2	0.0989	0.1646	0.1358	0.0898	0.1210
N	448	403	448	448	448

Robust standard errors in parenthesis,

Pseudo R square = percent

* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

* Non-Economics departments include Interdisciplinary / International Development / Development/Political economy / Politics / Political science departments

(1) Logistic estimation, where the dependent variable is a categorical variable takes values 1 if the respondent say that the Decolonizing movement is not relevant and 0 otherwise.

(2) Logistic estimation, where the dependent variable is a categorical variable takes values 1 if the respondent says that Decolonizing the curriculum is not relevant and 0 otherwise.

(3) Logistic estimation, where the dependent variable is a categorical variable takes values 1 if the respondent say that challenging the eurocentrism that prevails in the field is not important and 0 otherwise.

(4) Logistic estimation, where the dependent variable is a categorical variable takes values 1 if the respondent say that critical pedagogy is not important and 0 otherwise.

(5) Logistic estimation, where the dependent variable is a categorical variable takes values 1 if the respondent say that challenging universalism in the field is not important and 0 otherwise.

The results are reported as odds ratio, where an odds greater than 1 implies that relative to the base category, those belonging to the non-base category are more likely to say that the issue outlined in the dependent variable is not important / relevant, and vice versa.

5. Concluding reflections

The economics field's historical anchoring in a Eurocentric worldview has had a dramatic impact on how the field is taught and how socioeconomic realities are shaped. However, the survey results presented in this article demonstrate that economists in the mainstream of the field appear to not be particularly convinced by reforms to economics education that are associated with calls to decolonize economics. Indeed, the survey demonstrates that scholars in top economics departments tend to favor narrow and instrumental approaches to teaching economics and that they see the need for more technical training in economics education as an important constraint to any attempt to change economics teaching. This view of economics teaching stands in contrast to the three central aspects of decolonizing economics teaching identified in this article, namely placing the economy within broader societal processes, challenging neutrality and universality, and recognizing power inequalities. Thus, the results suggest that the continued dominance of narrow theoretical and methodological approaches in the field, along with claims to neutrality and universality, constitute major obstacles to decolonizing economics teaching.

Nonetheless, these findings, while providing a landscape of the pedagogical practices in economics, also identify some scope for progress. In contrast to the mainstream of the discipline, the respondents in heterodox or pluralist economics departments fared better in terms of their openness to the decolonization agenda. This should perhaps not be surprising, given their explicit focus on structural inequalities between groups, embedded antagonisms in economics and social processes, and structural factors in shaping economic outcomes. However, as the results show, even among heterodox economists, decolonizing economics is not a top priority. This may have to do with the Eurocentrism and universality that is embedded in a lot of heterodox theorizing as well (Kayatekin, 2009). Nevertheless, given the centrality of the role of power, structures, and the politics of knowledge creation in heterodox strands and a recognition of multiple entry-points to theory and methods, they lend themselves more easily to a decolonization agenda than what the mainstream economic framework does. In other words, decolonizing heterodox economic theory can be a fruitful process, while decolonizing mainstream economic theory may be infeasible. However, the marginalization of heterodox and radical strands makes the task of decolonizing economics even harder. Similarly, for IPE, the marginalization of heterodox approaches such as Marxism, world systems theory and critical geography in recent years may make it more difficult for the field to address the calls

for decolonization effectively (Clift et al., 2020). While the relatively forthcoming attitude towards decolonizing economics pedagogy of those with a relatively recent entry into academia when compared to those with more senior economists provides hope for a more critical engagement going forward, for those in mainstream departments, even junior academics with a strong commitment to diversifying and decolonizing the field may be constrained by the tight theoretical and methodological boundaries of the discipline.

Decolonizing economics is not simply a question of teaching or even only limited to research and knowledge production. Indeed, there is a strong relationship between Eurocentric science and imperial expansion, as well as with the unequal nature of capitalist development (Amin, 1988; Harding, 2002). Even after the fall of the old forms of colonial oppression, advancement of specific kinds of knowledge have been used as a powerful tool by the imperial powers to exert their influence over the rest of the world, for example through legitimizing policies associated with the Washington Consensus, post-Washington Consensus and the contemporary Wall Street Consensus (Rist, 1997; Gabor, 2021). Decolonizing economics and IPE teaching must be seen in this context too: a small step towards a more radical project of anti-imperialism and decolonization more broadly. Although taking anti-colonial approaches seriously cannot guarantee increased justice or equality, it can effectively help to undermine and challenge the romanticized view of capitalism in the economics field and enable fresh perspectives on marginalization and inequalities. In order to achieve better knowledge production and teaching, and ultimately a better society, we therefore hope these results can contribute to informed debate about how to decolonize economics and IPE.

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7. Appendix

Table A1: Economists included in the survey on economics pedagogy¹³

Department	Number	Emails identified	Number of respondents (response rate)	Source
Economics	50	2778	299 (10.8%)	RePEC
Heterodox Economics or Pluralist	71	867	81 (9.3%)	A compilation of sources*
Politics / Political Science	25	348	43 (12.4%)	QS Top Universities
Development Studies / International Development	25	262	27 (10.3%)	QS Top Universities

*Since Heterodox Economics is not a well-defined field from an institutional point of view, there are no independent rankings by official bodies. Furthermore, it is often in the nature of Heterodox Economics programs that they are not in prestigious departments (although there are some exceptions to this rule). Therefore, we identified departments by combining lists found in the Heterodox Economics Directory, Reteaching Economics (any department listed with more than 4 members was included), Lee (2009), and we added some additional departments from the Global South that are well known in the Heterodox community, but not on any of the more western-centric lists. Note that not all heterodox economics departments were necessarily formally economics departments, but broader social science programs.

Table A2: Respondents' departments

Your department	Percentage	Number
Economics	60.04%	299
Economics - pluralist or heterodox	16.27%	81
International development / Development Studies	5.42%	27
Political Economy	4.62%	23
Politics / Political Science	4.02%	20

¹³ In terms of the non-Economics departments that were targeted, all faculty members that had something related to Economics in either their title or if they didn't have a descriptive title, then in their research/teaching descriptions on the faculty page, were included. For the purpose of presenting the results, we've grouped all respondents who said they were in a non-Economics department together.

Management / Business	3.41%	17
Interdisciplinary institution	2.81%	14
Public Policy	0.60%	4
Area Studies	0.40%	3
Sociology	0.80%	3
Geography	0.60%	2
Other**	1.00%	5

* Respondents from Mathematics, Education, Economic History, Finance and a cross-disciplinary appointment.

Table A3: Respondents' disciplinary backgrounds

Your disciplinary background	Percentage	Number
Economics	62.45%	311
Economics - pluralist or heterodox	17.47%	87
Political Economy	4.62%	23
Politics / Political Science	3.61%	18
Interdisciplinary	3.41%	17
Management / Business	1.81%	9
International development / Development Studies	0.80%	4
History	0.80%	4
Mathematics	0.80%	4
Sociology	0.80%	4
Anthropology	0.60%	3
Geography	0.60%	3
Economic History	0.60%	3
Other**	1.61%	8

* Respondents from Cognitive Science, Engineering (2), English, Physics and Anthropology, Psychology, Public Policy, Social Welfare

Table A4: Time since PhD of respondents

Time since PhD	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
I don't have a PhD	21	4.22
Less than 5 years	85	17.07
5-15 years	147	29.52
15-30 years	150	30.12
More than 30 years	95	19.08
Total	498	100

Table A5: Country/region in which respondents teach

Region / country in which they teach	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
USA	202	40.56
UK	131	26.31
Australia	21	4.22
Canada	15	3.01
Europe	105	21.08
Global South	24	4.82
Total	498	100

Countries from the Global South include Brazil, India, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, and Zimbabwe. Countries from Europe included Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and Switzerland

Table A6: Gender of respondents

Gender	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Man	350	70.28
Woman	128	25.7
Others / Prefer not to say	20	4.02
Total	498	100

Table A7: Ethnicity/race of respondents

Ethnic or racial minority	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
No	392	78.71
Yes	71	14.26
Others / Prefer not to say	35	7.03
Total	498	100

Table A8: Departments included in the survey

University	Country	Department	Field representing
Harvard	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
MIT	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
University of California-Berkeley	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics

Department of Economics, University of Chicago	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
Paris School of Economics	France	Economics	Mainstream economics
Princeton University	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
Stanford University	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
University of Oxford	UK	Economics	Mainstream economics
Toulouse School of Economics	France	Economics	Mainstream economics
Columbia University, Economics Dept.	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
Brown University	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
New York University, Economics Department	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
Yale	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
Barcelona Graduate School of Economics	Spain	Economics	Mainstream economics
Boston University	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
UC San Diego	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
Dartmouth College	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
University of Pennsylvania	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
University College London	UK	Economics	Mainstream economics
Northwestern University	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics

Columbia University, Finance and Economics Department, Graduate School of Business	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
London School of Economics	UK	Economics	Mainstream economics
University of Wisconsin-Madison	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
University of Michigan	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
University of California-Los Angeles	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
School of Economics and Management, Universiteit van Tilburg	Netherlands	Economics	Mainstream economics
University of California-Davis	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
Boston College	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
Vancouver School of Economics, University of British Columbia	Canada	Economics	Mainstream economics
Michigan State University	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
University of Warwick	UK	Economics	Mainstream economics
Georgetown University	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
University of Southern California	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
University of Toronto	Canada	Economics	Mainstream economics
Duke University	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
University of Nottingham	UK	Economics	Mainstream economics
University of Cambridge	UK	Economics	Mainstream economics

University of Maryland	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
Vanderbilt University	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
Institut für Volkswirtschaftslehre, Wirtschaftswissenschaftliche Fakultät, Universität Zürich	Switzerland	Economics	Mainstream economics
Pennsylvania State University	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
École des Sciences Économiques de Louvain, Université Catholique de Louvain	Belgium	Economics	Mainstream economics
University of California-Irvine	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
Cornell University	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
University of Queensland	Australia	Economics	Mainstream economics
Institut for Økonomi, Aarhus Universitet	Denmark	Economics	Mainstream economics
Department of Economics, W.P. Carey School of Business, Arizona State University	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
Department of Economics, Monash Business School, Monash University	Australia	Economics	Mainstream economics
New York University, Stern School of Business	USA	Economics	Mainstream economics
University of York	UK	Economics	Mainstream economics
American University	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Colorado State University, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brasil	Brazil	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist

Institute of Social Studies (ISS)	The Netherlands	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Michigan State University	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
The New School	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, UK	UK	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
University of California, Riverside, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
University of Greenwich, UK	UK	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
University of Manitoba, Canada	Canada	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
University of Massachusetts, Amherst, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
University of Massachusetts, Boston, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
University of Missouri, Kansas City, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
University of Sydney, Australia	Australia	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
University of Utah, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Berlin School of Economics and Law, Germany	Germany		Heterodox / Pluralist
Cusanus University, Germany	Germany	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
EIPE, Erasmus University Rotterdam	Netherlands	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Universita Degli Studi di Torini	Italy	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
University of Witwatersrand	South Africa	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
HTW Berlin - University of Applied Sciences	Germany	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist

Kingston University, UK	UK	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Roosevelt University, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Schumacher College, UK	UK	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
State University of New York, Buffalo State, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia	Estonia	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
University of Denver, Josef Korbel School of International Studies, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
University of Denver, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
University of Hamburg, Germany	Germany	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
University of Hertfordshire, Business School, UK	UK	Business School	Heterodox / Pluralist
Bucknell University	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
California State University, San Bernardino, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Connecticut College, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Denison University, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Dickinson College, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Drew University, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Evergreen State College, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Franklin & Marshall College, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist

Hampshire College, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Hobart and William Smith Colleges, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Laurentian University, Canada	Canada	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Lewis and Clark College, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Portland State University, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Ramapo College of New Jersey, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Rollins College, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Roma Tre University, Italy	Italy	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
SUNY College at Cortland, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Sarah Lawrence College, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Siena College, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Simmons College, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Southern Oregon University, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
St. Thomas University, Canada	Canada	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
State University of Campinas Unicamp, Brazil	Brazil	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Stetson University, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Universite De Paris 13 Villetaneuse, France	France	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
University of Minnesota Morris, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
University of Southern Maine, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist

University of Tulsa, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
University of Vermont, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
University of Washington Tacoma, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Worcester Polytechnic Institute, US	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
John Jay College, The City University of New York	USA	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Goldsmiths, University of London	UK	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Open University	UK	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
UWE Bristol	UK	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
University of Leeds	UK	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Jawaharlal Nehru University	India	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
South Asia University	India	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR)	Uganda	Economics	Heterodox / Pluralist
University of Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe	Economic History	Heterodox / Pluralist
Harvard University	USA	Department of Government	Political Science
University of Oxford	UK	The Department of Politics and International Relations	Political Science
Sciences Po	France		Political Science
LSE	UK	Department of Politics	Political Science

Cambridge	UK	Department of Politics and International Studies (POLIS)	Political Science
Stanford	USA	Political Science	Political Science
Princeton	USA	Dept. of Politics	Political Science
UC Berkeley	USA	Richard & Rhoda Goldman School of Public Policy (turned out their emails aren't public)	Political Science
Yale	USA	Political Science	Political Science
The Australian National University	Australia	School of Politics and International Relations	Political Science
Columbia University	USA	Political Science	Political Science
National University of Singapore	Singapore	Political Science	Political Science
University of Chicago	USA	Political Science	Political Science
UCLA	USA	Political Science	Political Science
Georgetown	USA	Department of Government	Political Science
UC San Diego	USA	Department of Political Science	Political Science
The University of Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Department of Politics and Public Administration	Political Science

King's College London	UK	Department of Political Economy	Political Science
Freie Universitaet Berlin	Germany	Department of Political and Social Sciences	Political Science
MIT	USA	Department of Political Science	Political Science
University of Toronto	Canada	Department of Political Science	Political Science
The University of Sidney	Australia	Department of Government and International Relations	Political Science
SOAS	UK	Department of Politics and International Studies	Political Science
University of Tokyo	Japan	School of Legal and Political Studies	Political Science
The University of Melbourne	Australia	Political Science	Political Science
University of Sussex	UK	Department of International Development	Development Studies
Harvard University	USA	Center for International Development	Development Studies
University of Oxford	UK	Department of International Development	Development Studies

LSE	UK	Department of International Development	Development Studies
University of Cambridge	UK	Centre of Development Studies	Development Studies
UC Berkeley	USA	International & Area Studies Academic Program	Development Studies
Stanford	USA	Stanford King Center on Global Development	Development Studies
SOAS	UK	Department of Development Studies	Development Studies
University of Cape Town	South Africa	Development Policy Research Unit	Development Studies
The University of Manchester	UK	Global Development Institute	Development Studies
University of East Anglia	UK	School of International Development	Development Studies
The Australian National University	Australia	School of Politics and International Relations	Development Studies
University of Copenhagen	Denmark	UCPH Global Development	Development Studies
University of Toronto	Canada	Centre for Critical Development Studies	Development Studies

UCLA	USA	International Development Studies	Development Studies
Princeton University	USA	Woodrow Wilson School	Development Studies
The University of Melbourne	Australia	Anthropology and Development Studies	Development Studies
University of the Witwatersrand	South Africa	Development Studies	Development Studies
UC Davis	USA	International Agricultural Development	Development Studies
University of Amsterdam	Netherlands	Graduate School of Social Sciences, International Development Studies	Development Studies
Uppsala University	Sweden	Department of Government	Development Studies
University of Chicago	USA	Harris Public Policy	Development Studies
Duke University	USA	Duke Center for International Development	Development Studies