The value of development researchers: Structural racism, universities and UK Overseas Development Assistance (ODA)

Abstract

In this Viewpoint we explore and speculate on the value of development researchers at what is an extraordinary moment in the relationship between UK universities and public research funding from UK Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) in the period following massive cuts to the state aid budget in March 2021. We anchor our exploration in structural racism and its manifestation in the politics of aid and development research conducted in universities, and in the lives of racialised minoritised development researchers. We conclude the Viewpoint with some reflections to help guard against the performative value of 'southern researchers' in development research.

Introduction

In the UK in 2020, and in many other parts of the world, development studies centres, their parent universities, aid organisations and conscientious individuals publicly declared that Black Lives Matter and shared their intention to listen, change and do better to address matters of structural racism. This was a welcome moment and provided an impetus to take seriously challenges to de-centre the white gaze of development (Pailey, 2020), embed anti-racist action in efforts to 'decolonise' development (Patel, 2020), and forge more equitable partnerships between institutions in the 'global north' and 'global south' (Hammond et al., 2020). The importance of race and structural racism seemed to be back on the development research agenda (Kothari, 2006; White 2002).

In 2021, following the creation of the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and, purportedly, COVID-19 related economic pressures to cut Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) from 0.7% to 0.5% of GDP amounting to a £4 billion cut, on 11th March 2021 UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) announced a cut of £120 million to already committed ODA expenditure from streams including the Global Challenge Research Fund (GCRF) and the Newton Fund (UKRI, 2021). In the weeks that followed, ODA projects that UKRI had pledged to fund were either dropped or envisaged to continue fractionally, affecting 800 live projects. Affected universities, and then Principal Investigators, were made responsible for implementing UKRI's decree and called upon to restructure their budgets to accommodate a 68% budget cut with immediate effect. A stunned sector has responded with incredulity and anger (DSA, 2021a), followed by a pragmatic acknowledgement that jobs may be lost as a result (DSA, 2021b). Although the reduction of the ODA target to 0.5% of GDP and the concomitant reduction in GCRF is purportedly only temporary, there is no guarantee or promise of if and when it will be re-instated. The opposition to these funding

decisions come from both the right and the left. Several resignations from the GCRF advisory board, large petitions signed by thousands of academics, and #ODAcuts on social media are registers of outrage over the sudden decision that has shaken the academic community[1].

In this Viewpoint, we reflect on these recent events, unfolding on a daily basis, and speculate on some of their implications through a lens of race by exploring the relationship between race and the value of development researchers, in the context of funding streams like GCRF. We structure this article around a critical discussion of GCRF and the changing politics of aid and development research, illuminating the potential of untied research funding as a correction to structural racism and the unequal racialised distribution of power and resources in development research. We bring into this discussion two broad groups of researchers whom we collectively term 'southern researchers': racialised minoritised researchers (minoritised in the UK context) in the so-called 'global north' and institutional partners in the so-called 'global south'. It is not our intention to conflate nor flatten how issues of race and racism play out in development research in different geographical settings or amongst southern nationals, diaspora, migrant workers or transnational nomads. Instead, we use this imperfect term to allow us to probe commonality, despite geographic and historic differences with racism, in relation to questions of access and the politics of legitimacy and performativity in development research that play out in the identities of predominantly Black and Brown scholars, and to make sense of the marginal positions they tend to occupy in relation to white northern researchers, particularly.

GCRF and the changing politics of aid and development research

The GCRF was established in 2015 with a £1.5 billion research budget to tackle six major challenge areas[2]. It redirected funding from the government's ODA budget to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to support research that will "tackle global challenges in the national interest" and "to achieve a positive transformational impact on development research and on sustainable global development" (BEIS, 2017). Whatever the rationale for the GCRF, its creation is also embedded in the politics of aid budgets and spend, an ideological drive for policy coherence

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[1] This pressure seemed to have marginally paid off forcing the Chancellor of the Exchequer to adjust course in the following spending review. On 18 November 2021, the UKRI announced that the 12 flagship research hubs funded by the GCRF had been awarded a "specific allocation…which will enable them to continue for the remainder of their grant period… With the hubs awarded about £200 million over five years in 2019 to tackle some of the world's most pressing issues, such as climate change, they represented the majority of GCRF-funded projects with an end date after 2021." (Grove, 2021)

[2] The challenges areas are: (i) cities and sustainable infrastructure, (ii) education, (iiI) food systems, (iv) global health, (v) resilience to environmental shocks and change, and (vi) security, protracted conflict, refugee crises and forced displacement.

around a 'Global Britain', and the managed decline of the Department for International Development (DFID) in resource and influence in British government (Newman and Stevano, 2020; Burki, 2020).

Early criticism of the diversion of the aid agenda into university research funding to directly serve UK national interests were expressed as fears of the GCRF becoming a 'soft power' tool of British foreign policy (HM Treasury 2015). A well-meaning pursuit of the SDGs is further complicated by the merger of DFID and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the potential for national policy objectives to triumph over international or transnational ones. For example, on issues like migration (triggered by conflict in Syria), British 'national interest' perceived to be 'anti-immigration' is hard to square with the autonomy to shape a funding agenda on this subject at such a large scale (HM Treasury 2015:7; Manji and Mandler, 2018). Although, delivery partners at research councils maintain a certain level of autonomy in shaping funding calls and the selection process, the power to giveth and the power to taketh away remains with the government, which injects a constant uncertainty around funding, research timelines and priorities. The overall changes to the aid landscape brought about by the merger has also been criticised for its lack of transparency and scrutiny (House of Commons International Development Committee, 2020).

For UK development research, the GCRF was the largest innovation in the UK's aid strategy and accounted for around 10 per cent of public research spending (Matthews, 2015). Although the impact of the GCRF is hard to gauge over the course of the past five years (an independent evaluation is expected to assess research impact from 2024-2028), the Fund significantly transformed how research is shaped and delivered, and because of its size, changed the development research landscape in the following ways:

- Increased cross/trans/inter-disciplinary work in international development, particularly drawing in fields of science, technology and engineering into international development and the SDGs.
- Substantially increased the size of research projects and the number of collaborators, changing the way research is done within university settings, with the subtext of demanding an administrative structure necessary to host large and multi-partnership grants. Awards worth less than £50,000 make up the largest share of awards, but only account for 1% of total GCRF spend, while the largest share of spend (around 69%) has gone into awards worth £1m or more. (Barr et al, 2018, p2)
- Directed aid to building research partnerships in consideration of SDG 17 on global partnerships (discussed in the next section).

- The tie-in of research with the UK aid agenda has propelled an impact-focus and solution focus, with major (underexplored) implications for knowledge production and the role of the researcher including what and whose knowledge is valued to satisfice funders. Sukarieh and Tannock's (2019) examination of refugee research and its funding, for example, revealed the GCRF provided 70% of the total funding on the topic for UK academics since 2015, highlighting the implications for entire fields of study that are almost exclusively funded in the UK by GCRF and the research questions that can be asked that secure funding.

As a result of the size of GCRF funding, much concern - often whispered between confidents - points to the way that UK researchers were drawn to the GCRF, jumping on its bandwagon as a source of funding for research, with PIs receiving funding to work in countries they had neither previously visited nor studied (Sukarieh and Tannock, 2019). This is both within the broad field of international development scholarship and from disciplinary fields that do not have strong traditions of methodological reflexivity, opening the door to exporting UK or 'northern' STEM-inspired 'problem-solving' approaches and 'technical solutions', without necessarily problematizing their ontological grounding. The industrial scale of GCRF-funding awards, also raised the prospect of venture capitalism from speculative researchers, supported by the heavy administrative machinery of large research-intensive universities, driven in part by their own political economy of securing large and multiple research grants. With the belief that 'funding begets funding', many PIs have been able to speculate and secure even more funding from other prestigious funders like the British Academy by leveraging up their GCRF work and credentials, and effectively crowding out funding for smaller researchers and cementing the hegemony of a few northern academics in knowledge production on topics of global significant.

As a behemoth of development research funding, the GCRF (which is untied aid) is also marked by innovative efforts to engender a global levelling-up of disbursement. In recent years, there has been noteworthy effort to drive research funds into Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member countries in ways that are unique in terms of the scale of investment and the levers that UKRI pulled to encourage a global redistribution of research resources. For example, GCRF's Research Hubs launched in 2019, held a £250 million commitment and stipulated that at least 40 per cent of the grant received by hub leads is disbursed in DAC member countries. UKRI's partnership with DFID on a set of Humanitarian Protection grants in 2019 stipulated that Principal Investigators (PIs) from any country could apply, if they met the due diligence required by UKRI. A 2018 GCRF Global Engagement Network grant call was opened only to PIs located in DAC member countries, setting a new model for disbursement of grant funds. While these calls appear to exemplify funding and funder-led efforts to evenly distribute research awards and support development scholarship

globally, the reality of uptake from DAC member countries (uptake meaning having submitted a bid) is not clear nor are the effects of barriers introduced into these 'open' calls such as the stringent criteria for all applicants to meet UKRI's risk and financial assessments.

While information on the effects of GCRF's efforts to disburse funds in DAC member countries is limited, several government-commissioned evaluations of GCRF have taken place (e.g. Barr et al. 2018). One evaluation commissioned by UKRI and conducted by academics, looked specifically at ways of improving the direction of migration-related research in the social sciences, arts and humanities, globally (Hammond et. al., 2020). The study highlighted a range of inconsistencies and inequalities that negatively shape the potential for international partnerships working in practice. They run right through the research process from design, data collection to research methods and conduct. Specifically, the report cites the following concerns: top-down research agenda-setting; inequitable allocation of resources; extractive knowledge production processes; the need for core funds for institution building; divergent institutional capacities for managing grants; different pressures on academics in the 'global south' who may prioritise teaching over research; competing conceptions of impact and its importance; unequal access to library resources and electronic journals; lack of involvement of all research partners in data analysis and write-up; lack of support for the writing of research outputs; and the lack of acknowledgement of the contributions of different researchers engaged in the same enterprise. This echoes a large and growing literature on the inequalities in knowledge production discussed in the next section.

In complement to findings on the deeply problematic set up and running of GCRF-funded partnerships with institutions in the 'global south', is the minimising of Black, Asian and minority ethnic researchers' presence in British research, in general. In the context of Black Lives Matter and the relatively higher rates of contraction and death from COVID-19 for racialised minoritised people in the UK, Black scholars wrote an open letter to UKRI calling for "a review of the systems and processes that perpetuate research inequity towards funding allocation and to stimulate reform within the process." (Adelaine et al, 2020). One of the signatories then followed up with a Freedom of Information request that revealed that in 2019/20 of the £1,684,402,000 in funding that UKRI awarded to 2715 individuals as PIs, only 25 identified as Black (0.9%). Given that UK research has a general race problem across all its funding within the UK, it is not surprising that it also faced sizeable challenges to meaningfully relocate power and resources to partners outside of the UK and specifically in the so-called global south.

Considering well documented barriers for career progression and precarity for racialised minoritised academic staff in research intensive universities in the UK (Alexander and Arday, 2015, Bhopal, 2016;

Ahmed, 2012), it is further unsurprising that GCRF funded projects are woefully under-representative of 'southern research' leads. Statistically, the GCRF remains a white-dominated global endeavor. An independent evaluation (led by team of white researchers) on the whole GCRF programme, states that,

> around two thirds of Co-investigators are male and around three quarters are of 'white British' or 'white-other' ethnicity. The proportions increase slightly further when we consider only PIs. However, these proportions mirror the situation as regards diversity in the UK research landscape as a whole. (Barr et. al., 2018, p4).

That the all-white evaluators think that GCRF representation should be benchmarked against the UK landscapes misses a key point: that not all GCRF funding is tied to UK academics, some of its funding is untied aid intended for global applicants and global beneficiaries so a better benchmark for representation are global demographics, not UK demography or the state of UK academia. The use of UK academic staff demographics leads to the subsuming of non-UK PI identities and positions within UK typologies, this can render them invisible and risks universalising a colonial gaze from the UK onto the global. Operationally, the GCRF has a major representation problem with a racialised hierarchy of decision-making and control that places white academics at the top and embeds in it the proclivities of whiteness (a racialised system of privilege, dominance and subordination). Squaring this with sector-wide calls for decolonisation (be it decolonising development, research or UK universities), raises questions of meaningful epistemological plurality, positionality and 'thinking from the south' in development research, where the subject matter is almost exclusively focused on countries in the south and southern issues of inequity as lived by bodies racialised as Black and Brown.

The presence of 'southern researchers' who know the research context, language, politics and have the networks essential for project success, and who are brought into GCRF programmes as institutional partners, post-doctoral scholars on fixed-term research contracts, citizen scientists or via the use of participatory methods, does not fundamentally address or counteract structural problems of representation and decision-making. Instead, in the absence of meaningful control of the research agenda, programme decision-making and budget, they raise questions of the performativity of racialised minoritised bodies in development research and the legitimacy they are seen to confer. While slithers of resource and prestige are welcome sources of employment and work for many 'southern researchers', their job precarity and certainty – highlighted by the ODA cuts – lay within the ambit of mainly white PIs on permanent academic contracts.

The roles and value of southern development researchers

We focus on two broad groups of researchers that play a pivotal role in development research production in relation to projects held by UK universities and where a PI is from a UK university, that is the types of projects mainly funded by GCRF. These groups are institutional partners in the so-called global south and individual researchers who (in the UK context) are racialised minoritised people and may identify as from the global north or south. Our use of these labels is not a bounded definition of terms; we acknowledge there are blurred lines and that re-conceptualisations of, for example, 'global north and south', would subsequently reframe the labels we use. Nonetheless, grouping researchers by geography and race, which at an individual level intersects with other identities such as gender and social class, supports a particular analysis that is revealing of the legacies and logic of racialised hierarchies of value and how these relate to questions of access to research sites and the politics of legitimacy in development research.

As mentioned in the previous section, the discourse of 'international partnerships' between northern institutions and southern ones, is a hallmark of the GCRF, which in turn serves as a vehicle for the UK's commitment to SDG 17 on global partnership. BEIS states, "The GCRF will encourage the development of new approaches and ways of working across conventional boundaries that will deliver capacity building and partnership in a sustainable way." (BEIS, 2017, p.6). The clarity of the intention for partnership, does not quite match the opacity of its modality, allowing for partnerships that do little to disrupt entrenched ways of working founded on structural racism, hierarchies of privilege and an inequitable distribution of resources, power and influence over the research. A phenomena Bradley (2017, p.46) reports as almost inevitable when "a buyer's market" of northern funders and their agenda governs the research funding opportunities for so many 'southern researchers' and research institutions. This situation of mediated access to development research funding was exacerbated by the GCRF, which heralded larger inter-disciplinary and multi-country research projects with a conglomerate of partnerships around a UK PI.

In recent years, a confluence of decolonial consciousness and dialogue on development research, critical self-reflection, and an openness to listen to partners, interlocutors and employee critiques of unequal partners in north-south partnerships have made tensions visible (Coetzee, 2019; Nolte, 2019; Parashar, 2019; Giwa, 2015). This growing literature foregrounds southern insight on north-south partnerships and the inequities built into expectations, codes of conduct and contracting arrangements to vividly illustrate expectations of hospitality extended to northern researchers that cannot even be imagined as reciprocated such as airport pick-ups (Tilley and Kalina, 2021), contractual arrangements that exclude research assistants from intellectual property rights and thus

expose them to plagiarism and intellectual theft (Sukarieh and Tannock, 2019), intellectual 'gate-keeping' and the operationalisation of a northern political economy that values mining data from the global south for specific valuable research outputs and absorbs as a side-effect the systematic exploitation of data miners (Marchais, Bazuzi and Lameke, 2020).

The ways that institutional partnerships transpire and the relationships between northern PIs and funders and southern research institutes and researchers is intimately connected to a longer history. Ilan Kapoor (2006), citing post-development theorists, notes "working in development inevitably positions us within a 'development discourse', where the North's superiority over the South is taken for granted, and Western-style development is the norm." He explains this means, "Our encounters with, and representations of, our 'subjects' are therefore coded or framed in terms of an us/them dichotomy in which 'we' aid/develop/civilise/empower[/research] 'them'." We added the word 'research' to Kapoor's list on reflection of the accounts given by southern research assistants (e.g. Kalinga, 2019), who add depth and incomparable insight to north-south research relationships and elucidate the position of 'native informant' conferred by their northern PIs. Gayatri Spivak's (1999) accounts of the 'native informant' articulate the framing of western diaspora of the 'third world' and 'third world' researchers as insiders knowledgeable of subaltern subjects, virtue of their heritage (mobilising a racial-cultural determinism), and thus idealised research collaborators. The native informant in development research speaks directly to the politics of legitimacy and representation reigniting discussions (such as from Kapoor, 2004) raised by recent reflections on being a 'southern researcher' and mediator of northern encounters in the south. Kalinga (2019, p.270) notes,

> As local partners, indigenous researchers also have an […] obligation to respect social customs and codes, which are not easily visible to foreign research partners. We have a responsibility to receive and to interpret these codes. We have to interpret body language, expressed anxieties and micro-aggressions.

Yet, this 'insider' knowledge engendered by the research process is minimised as not the right kind of knowledge, or worse, knowledge that works against the research agenda of the northern PI. Kalinga adds (2019, pp.270-271),

> I've now spent nearly 6 years in research and have experienced how African researchers working within global partnerships, which are funded by European or North American partners, are pressured or actively bullied for trying to reveal community discontent... Native and indigenous researchers risk their careers if they choose to reset the process, to build trust and to dig deeper into the sources of discontent. Those of us tied to institutions

in the global North have research frameworks and publishing timelines looming over our career trajectories.

The perceived value of the southern research assistant is tied to the political economy of northern research. As Sukarieh and Tannock (2019) illustrate, northern PIs incentivised and supported by their institutions to win ever larger research grants, enabled by mega-funds like GCRF – which operates within its own political economy of ODA disbursement – travel around the world in short bursts (in between other commitments), visitors to their own research projects, in countries where they may not be fully familiar and face considerable logistical and language barriers, sprinkling expertise. In this context, the 'southern researcher' is immensely valuable as the PI's 'broker to the global South' (Parashar, 2019), helping them navigate cultural norms and geographical terrains in – to them – unfamiliar contexts, a steady and constant presence in multi-year research projects serving as the PI's eyes and ears on the ground, and instant translator, making up for the fact the PI might not know the language, the history, or the culture of the research subject. These are all valuable contributions of 'southern researchers', the problem is regarding this as the totality of the value of 'southern researchers' and as Spivak would remind us, misreading their representations and flattening their identities in favour of perceived 'local authenticity' (as explored in Sultana, 2007 and Raju, 2002).

This is not to say that all northern research projects with institutional partners and researchers in the global south are problematic or inherently exploitative. We welcome the thoughtful insights and practices that work towards equitable research relationships and engage with the questions of distance between northern and southern researchers, and asymmetries of power in knowledge production (e.g. Bliesemann de Guevara, Furnari and Julian, 2020). Our point is that GCRF created a mechanism and made possible different kinds of partnerships and on paper created a space for different kinds of epistemically and geographically located research. Despite critical evaluations of the GCRF and the realities of equitable partnerships in the context of the political economy of northern – particularly British - research (Barr et al., 2018), in the absence or significant curtailment of mechanisms for untied research funding, and the *possibilities* it unleashes for a more radical positioning of researchers and knowledge production, what compromises are made to our anti-racist desires? Considering GCRF cuts, without corollary adjustments to university audit cultures in the global north, promotion criteria, expectations of new recruits into academia and the number of outputs and research track record they are expected to hold, there is a real risk in amplifying northern sense of competition for diminishing resources and thus creating (or upholding) conditions ripe for the continued exploitation of southern development researchers.

Into this context, we add a new dimension to consider, Covid-19 and its effect on worsening already restrictive border controls on southern partner mobility and the relative hyper-mobility of northern researchers. If quick in-country visits to monitor progress or host a workshop are bookended by expensive and prolonged stays in quarantine facilities, where they are possible at all, then the equation of cost and benefit changes for northern PIs. We speculate, this calculation changes the ordinary pattern of research behaviours and research relationships. There is the possibility of more power and autonomy being granted to research partners and researchers in the global south (where sites of development research tend to be located) to set research agenda that are viable and responsive to new contexts, with the prospect that greater agency leads to more equitable collaborations (as discussed by Muwambari, Purdeková and Bisoka, 2021). The converse may also be true, not only in terms of northern PIs feeling the need to increase their surveillance of researchers' activities in lieu of their physical presence (e.g. wanting more frequent update reports), but for all the new research grants that have come online in the past year that require primary data collection in the south and may therefore result in 'southern researchers' and research partners indirectly instructed to take risks with their health and the health of respondents, that northern PIs are inoculated from (within a context of a highly racialised distribution of vaccines globally and racialised uptake nationally, Hwenda et.al, 2021; Osama, Razai and Majeed, 2021). While such imaginable outcomes in development research appear as ethically dubious practice, they would be in keeping with the patterns of value of southern development researchers (Kalinga, 2019; Parashar, 2019; Coetzee, 2019; Marchais, Bazuzi and Lameke, 2020).

Conclusion: guarding against performativity

Professor Suad Joseph said in a recent lecture,

> We are in a transformational moment - there is a rise in collaborative initiatives, intersectional initiatives. We might not recognise the moment when we are in it but it is our obligation to understand it. We need to work more collaboratively, work on large projects, work interdisciplinary to raise the large questions and raise the questions that will put us in the arms of our colleagues in other countries and other paradigms. (Joseph, 2020)

The GCRF raised the large questions facing our planet and its future, from climate change to migration. It forged new opportunities for scientists to work with social scientists to create new knowledge with untied resources. It sent engineers to refugee camps, artists to waste management sites, anthropologists to electricity systems. In several important ways, the GCRF had the potential to lead the drive to advance equity and decolonial principles of shifting power and resource in the research process. If there were sufficient time to act on the recommendations of the independent

evaluations, perhaps more of this potential could be realised. The sudden cut in funding, however, appears to have stalled these conversations as PIs and grant-holding institutions focus on hard decisions on people's livelihoods determining which contracts to terminate and when, whist still delivering promised outputs. For 'southern researchers' in the UK on fixed contracts tied to a grant, the real consequences of these decisions are compounded by a racist hostile environment that hangs over the gifting of work visas, and a hostile sector where they are less likely to be shortlisted and appointed to jobs than white candidates in a 'fair and open' recruitment process and more likely to be paid less and take longer to be promoted than white counterparts, once they have secured a job (UCU, 2012; ECU, 2009). For institutional partners, who have invested considerable social and financial capital in hiring 'local' research assistants, priming communities and organising their workload to accommodate the UK academic year and the research timelines of others, the termination of contracts – done with genuine regret and concern – continues to illuminate asymmetries of power and the wholesale trend of being picked-up and dropped at northern whim.

Furthermore, such a large pot of funding, skewed in favour of those institutions that can service the administrative burden of managing research projects over a million pounds or more, has simultaneously narrowed the field of competition and thus knowledge producers, and raised the prospect of venture capitalism from speculative researchers. Within a political economy that values the quantity of research money and projects an individual can generate, the GCRF model of awarding and monitoring research supports ways of working that minimise the presence and power of 'southern researchers' in favour of mainly white academics. For example, GCRF exacerbates a situation of precarious contracts that already exists for 'southern researchers'. The system of research contracts and contracting that GCRF introduces e.g. short term, fixed, tied to a project and its funding, is particularly troubling within development research, where pay disparities and weak security of job tenure often accompanies a rhetoric of 'building southern capacity'. Given the indispensability of 'southern researchers' (located in the north or south), and the essential role they play in producing knowledge, such fair-weather contracting is immoral. A move to long-term institutional partnerships with actors in the south and long-term investment in 'southern researchers', is within the gift of UK universities and should be permissible and encouraged by the GCRF. Fixed-term or permanent contracts is a choice and question of institutional priorities, as are memoranda of understanding and institutional investments. There are many benefits of secure long-term employment and partnerships that advance decolonial and anti-racist agenda in development research, the most obvious being the ability of researchers speak and share their epistemic findings, having mitigated the risk of termination from upsetting a white PI or articulating contrary findings.

Research funders have an important role to play and some are trying to address systematic inequalities in funding systems in creative ways. The Social Science Research Council in the USA, for example, has experimented with modes of funding in which it funds the planning stage of the multi-disciplinary multi-country projects it seeks to fund, and then invites these projects to submit their proposals to an open call for full funding. This way, PIs in the global south can have the buy-out time they need to work on designing research projects. In addition, the selection committee is comprised of researchers from the region where the funding is going and can be attuned to the context and development needs described in the proposals. This structural shift is in complement to work by researchers who have come together around manifestos to address some of the ethical considerations in collaboration that we have described (e.g. GICN, n.d.).

In this Viewpoint, we tried to make sense of the ODA cuts to development research and their effect on southern development researchers through a lens of race, exploring how legitimacy and performativity is intricately bound in the value of southern development researchers. While we focused on the GCRF, anchoring our discussion in the potential (and reality) of its decolonial promise, our sense-making could easily apply to the Newton Fund or any other research scheme of ODA disbursement. Following the unfolding effects of the decision to cut ODA, we wish to tie reflections on the ODA cut with remaking the political economy of research and re-shaping the value of 'southern researchers' in development research led by northern institutions. We would not necessarily advocate for a return to 0.7% and research business as usual, as we are mindful of how commitments to competition, impact and measurable research outputs of 'global significance' can play out in the lives of 'southern researchers'. Instead, heeding the call to take seriously an anti-racist agenda, we encourage a period of mourning, reflection and momentum building around the following:

> 1. Ending the model of one/central/singular PI for large projects since this has largely put white PIs at the apex of all funded research;

> 2. More accountability and actual decentralised decision-making and governance of large-scale projects of the type mostly funded by the GCRF with something like an Annual General Meeting for each project in the countries where it operates as an open space to review goals and future plans;

> 3. A range of transparent communication channels from the project to the research funder to reduce overreliance on PI reporting, to help guard against personal marketing and branding of 'academic success' for an individual over actual outcomes (including project failures) on the ground;

4. The benchmarking and reporting of researcher representation within projects against the country of interest, including posts in the UK; and

5. The introduction of an independent evaluation of impact over the use of curated 'impact statements' to support summative improvements, methods and outcomes in projects.

These asks speak to a need to realign power in development research projects and to create conditions that reaffirm the value of southern researchers voices, expertise, analysis and research findings.

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