EDITORIAL

Introduction to the launch issue

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Key messages

• Global Political Economy is the much-anticipated journal within the discipline of Global
  Political Economy, with an explicit intention of cross-disciplinarity.
• We are committed to doing things differently, to running our journal in democratic,
  inclusive and respectful ways.
• We must focus our analyses of capitalism beyond the confines of Eurocentric, Whitecentric
  and malecentric lenses.

To cite this article: Clua–Losada, M. and Moore, P.V. (2022) Introduction to the launch
issue, Global Political Economy, 1(1): 3–11, DOI: 10.1332/CNRE1725

The expansion of the discipline of Global Political Economy over the last few decades
has been substantial. Since Susan Strange’s insights and expositions from the 1970s
of the inseparability between politics and economics, a series of crises have erupted
around the globe in ways that were potentially both expected and perhaps not
expected, but as she emphasised, the structures around us are real, power relations are
real, social struggle is real. The success of textbooks such as John Ravenhill’s (2020)
and Robert O’Brien and Mark Williams’ (2020), both now in their 6th editions,
which cater for the growing number of university courses offered throughout the
world to the increasing number of specialised postgraduate programmes, gives a
clear indication that the study and understanding of the GPE is today more relevant
than ever. Other prominent scholars have published GPE textbooks even before this
century, including Stephen Gill and David Law (1998), and later by two women,
Nicola Phillips and Catherine Weaver (2011). These textbooks form only a small
part of what is now a large body of literature. It is not just the numerous debates
and the growing number of journals, but also the research networks, associations and
conferences and the diversity of gender, career level and global reach of researchers
that give testament to a still growing and timely discipline.

Global Political Economy is the much-anticipated journal within the discipline of
Global Political Economy, with an explicit intention of cross-disciplinarity. Articles
and debates housed in our new journal will span the areas of international relations,
political science, business studies, sociology, labour studies, feminism and gender studies, economics, geography, and will integrate disciplines that are not as frequently seen within this arena, including science and technology studies, communications and media studies. Articles, debates and commentary pieces will inculcate and develop discussions across these arenas. Indeed, after over a decade of discussions between colleagues across the globe outlined by Ian Bruff in this first issue, the exigencies of the contemporary moment of a global pandemic and permanent austerity make this the opportune moment to launch this new journal. Offering a critical platform for research that interrogates prevailing institutions, norms and patterns of authority and explanatory categories, as chief editors, we encourage authors to engage with and drive debates around emancipatory discourses and praxis. The timing is exceptional, in our view.

*Global Political Economy* will publish work that discusses issues which concern people both inside and outside of the academy, looking at the global political economy and its systemic contradictions, constant crises and upheaval. We will encourage unfettered critique and debate based on a broad understanding of what constitutes the global political economy. We aim to gain fresh insights into complex and often unseen modes, forms and operations of global power relations, social forces and historical change across different geographical and temporal scales. We are committed to encouraging submissions from early career researchers and scholars based in non-Western institutions (where we will consider translations in some instances). We are committed to diversity and representation of authors with regards to gender, race and class, and we hold the same mandate within our referencing policy, board composition and governance, and reviewer selection.

It is not a coincidence that the journal is brought to life by two women, two scholars with research agendas focused on the global political economy of labour, trade unions, resistance and social movements, and technology and digitalisation. Our first Associate Editorial board is diverse in relation to seniority, origin, geographical reach and gender of its members. In this way, we can demonstrate explicitly that we are deeply committed to diversity and representation. All of us are honoured and proud to be the ones leading the journal in this initial period. While acknowledging the work of the many people who have made this project possible, we hope that our leadership will steer the journal towards becoming a point of reference for scholars researching within the discipline of Global Political Economy.

*Global Political Economy*’s chief editors and associate editors will lead on calls for contributions in specific areas within emerging, reinvigorated or marginalised fields in Global Political Economy research, such as in feminism, technology studies and public health studies. The journal would ideally like to publish one Special Issue per year/volume, and we encourage conversations and submissions about Special Issue ideas. We are committed to supporting Special Issue guest editors and author contributions and particularly encourage early career researchers to submit ideas. Indeed, we currently have two Special Issues provisionally underway, entitled ‘Digital Fragmentations, Technological Sovereignty and new Perspectives on the Global Digital Political Economy’ and ‘The Global Political Economy of Uneven and Combined Development’.

We are committed to doing things differently, to running our journal in democratic, inclusive and respectful ways. We know that academic debates are so often Anglo-centric, that scholars whose first language is not English or who are in non-English
speaking universities, or even more so, in the global South, face very direct and specific discriminations when attempting to publish in English-language journals based in the global North. In every way, our commitment is not simply about words; we will work with our associate editors, with the publishing house and with our reviewers to remove discrimination from all parts of the publication process, including the review stage, where many authors face invisible, but harmful, discrimination or psychosocial violence and harassment, which is all too prevalent in the academy today.

**Why do we need a GPE journal in 2022?**

The world in 2022 faces a series of complex challenges that the discipline of Global Political Economy is well-equipped to approach, analyse and subvert. While every generation considers their time to be a historical turn, the start of a new era, every generation is accurate, as history has sprung so many surprises. However, there are some areas within history that repeat themselves, in particular, economic, social and now health crises, and patterns of resistance are emerging which are distinctly identifiable. In 2022, we entered the third decade of the ‘new century’ (if it is still entirely accurate to call it as such after 20 years). Yet, we are still making sense of a global financial crisis that destroyed the economies of entire countries, the lives of countless people who lost their homes and livelihoods from the streets of Detroit to the streets of Athens. The last few years have forced us to focus our analyses of capitalism beyond the confines of Eurocentric, Whitecentric and malecentric lenses. From the development of global women's strikes to the Black Lives Matter movements, many voices have not simply requested to be heard; they have changed the terms of the debates.

Prior to our current series of crises, trauma and upheaval, we witnessed a series of other episodic economic and social crises. The 1998 Asian Financial Crisis, and subsequent crises in Argentina and Turkey, devastated the livelihoods and stability of entire swathes of populations in several countries and led to significant lines of questioning around whether ‘democratisation’ that had accompanied their rapidly accelerated industrialisation phases was only a masked pursuit of Westernisation and evidence of the early failures of globalisation and unfettered financialisation. The ‘end of history’ after the fall of the Berlin Wall that allegedly ended the Cold War is recalled as we watch Russia attack Ukraine. Recollections of the South American Pink Tide are revived as Lula’s election is imminent and as Venezuela experiences social unrest and divisive governance. Technological changes influencing the scope for government information dissemination impacting elections; for supply chain management and workplace surveillance; and for citizen resistance and campaigning are reflective of the Bush election and of the Arab Spring. The COVID-19 crisis introduces many health and geopolitical questions that reflect SARS and swine flu regional crises, which now require a global outlook. The rising power of China and the war imposed by Russia forces us to think again about the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa) categories and what this means for Global Political Economy research today. The study of Global Political Economy is, in a sense, the study and understanding of these recurrent and periodic crises and is now perhaps more important as a discipline than ever.

While many of us are increasingly raising our voices to highlight the many gaps in the understanding of the global political economy in existing scholarship, the journal
does not exist to simply fill those gaps. What have often been considered ‘gaps’ – the global South, gender relations, labour, race, colonialism or the exploitation of nature – we claim are central organising features of the Global Political Economy journal. The journal is not about gatekeeping the discipline, rather it is about opening the sluice gates and providing a rigorous platform for scholars to share their research; one that is committed to diversity and inclusivity, not from a politically correct slogan, but from a demonstration that this journal has been created to show that a different way of doing research and of sharing and disseminating it is not only possible but our raison d’être.

First issue

We are very proud of our launch issue. We have a fascinating set of research articles and a series of debates and commentary pieces which address some of the most important issues today, from the ecological imperial crisis to platform work and digitalisation, economic theory, the Anthropocene, authoritarianism, dissent, the ascendant far-right and more. Our first issue showcases the work of emerging and established scholars, and we have ensured that there was also gender balance in the authors being published – if we exclude this editorial, six out of the 14 authors are women.

We have ordered articles alphabetically by surname, starting with Bernd Bonfert, David Bailey and Mònica Clua-Losada’s (2022) article ‘Dissent within the global political economy: four frustrations, and some alternatives’ where they claim that there is still a considerable absence of analyses of dissent in much of the Global Political Economy literature. The article is structured around ‘four frustrations’: (1) the marginality granted to considerations of dissent; (2) the ways in which resistance is often portrayed as discrete episodes of protest; (3) the types of questions asked in the literature concerning resistance – why resist and with what effect/purpose?; and (4) the effect is often understood simply in terms of ‘impact’. This leads Bonfert et al to argue that ‘dissent and resistance are ultimately, central to the configurations of actors, institutions, ideas and their power relations that constitute the global political economy, and our understandings of it’ (this issue).

Our second article turns the attention towards ecology and the ‘imperial mode of living’ with Ulrich Brand’s (2022) insightful article, ‘The Global Political Economy of the imperial mode of living’. Brand challenges Global Political Economy researchers to deeply examine our own life practices and modes of living. The dominant patterns of production and consumption render producers and the foundations for our planet seemingly invisible, and even green responses do not go far enough to counter these. Brand outlines a range of scholarship that reveals some of the violence of neo-colonial resource extractivism (including the exploitation of labour power as a resource) in the global South, but he indicates that most Global Political Economy research does not go far enough.

Ian Bruff (2022) delivers the third article ‘Building alternative scholarly folklores: an intellectual–institutional history of the Global Political Economy journal’. This is a very special contribution to the journal as it traces how this collective project was initiated and shaped. Bruff offers an intellectual–institutional history of his participation in the collective efforts to launch the journal from 2009 to 2016. Bruff considers the acts of disruption required in the building of what he names ‘alternative scholarly folklores’ and highlights the fact that projects such as this are
often the outcome of the long-term, and painstaking, mobilisation of collective energies.

The fourth article, by Johannes Jäger (2022), ‘Fighting the beast of the apocalypse: three fundamental reasons for a Critical Political Economy approach to Global Political Economy’, argues that Critical Political Economy (CPE) should be the appropriate theoretical and methodological basis for Global Political Economy (GPE). Jäger proposes that CPE offers GPE scholars three advantages when using it as the lens through which to interpret the global political economy. First, it provides the ethical commitment to emancipatory progressive strategies and struggles. Second, methodologically, CPE’s dialectical method allows for an analysis that moves across different levels of abstraction. And, finally, CPE offers the necessary materialist foundation to reveal the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production.

Sarrah Kassem’s (2022) fascinating article ‘Labour realities at Amazon and COVID-19: obstacles and collective possibilities for its warehouse workers and MTurk workers’ focuses on a case study of platform work in two specific cases, location-based Amazon warehouse workers and web-based Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) workers, in order to identify different patterns of labour organisation and mobilisation. The article furthers our understanding of labour’s agency in different settings and highlights the difficulties in creating networks of solidarity among web-based workers.

Phoebe V. Moore and Chandrima Roy (2022) investigate the state of play for research that looks at technology and work in the global political economy. Their article, entitled ‘Advancing arguments on technology, work, and the body, in the global political economy’, carries out a literature review of prominent Global Political Economy journals to first identify where research on technology has emerged within our discipline. This body of literature overlaps with communications and media studies as well as digital finance and lending, strategic, surveillance, intelligence and science and technology studies work. However, Moore and Roy argue, there is as yet, insufficient research that examines the interplay between work, the body and technology. These authors challenge the discipline to carve out a space for research on these themes that address some of the questions also emerging from sociology and feminist cultural studies, where the impact of technological developments at work have increasingly bodily and affective significance.

Konsta Kotilainen and Heikki Patomäki (2022) call for the necessity of economic theorisation in their article ‘From fragmentation to integration: on the role of explicit hypotheses and economic theory in Global Political Economy’. These authors claim that the field of International Political Economy (IPE) should be renamed World or Global Political Economy to take into account the fact that structures, mechanisms and processes in the political economy are not confined by state borders or limited to nation-states spheres of power. GPE, in their view, could provide the necessary ‘methodological globalism’ that is required to understand the types of challenges afflicting the Anthropocene today.

Inga Rademacher’s (2022) article, entitled ‘Critical junctures and state actors: towards a micro-strategies approach of the global political economy’ poses fundamental questions for our discipline today. Taking Susan Strange’s point seriously that economics cannot be separated from politics, Rademacher exposes some contemporary paradoxes around just how far the discipline of global political economy has not come. Understanding what ‘states do’ is important, but it is not
enough. The recent global pandemic has highlighted this. The Eurozone crisis and a series of economic crises should have been enough of a warning that it is simply not enough to focus on state behaviour, voting patterns or otherwise, as many narrow case studies do. The nexus between state and global and the complications emerging with interests, relationships and conflicts across local and global must be better understood for there to be any real resolutions and advancements in our discipline.

Jokubas Salyga’s (2022) article ‘Monoliths of authoritarianism, cartographies of popular disenfranchisement and the ascendance of the far-right in Estonia’, provides an enlightening account of the ascendance of the far-right in Estonia from a Critical Political Economy perspective. Salyga provides an account on whether the inclusion of Estonia’s Conservative People’s Party (EKRE) in the coalition government can be understood as a break from neoliberalism as many commentators have considered. Salyga’s article provides an excellent contribution to the debates around authoritarian neoliberalism and the rise of the far-right globally.

Saori Shibata (2022) argues in ‘Global Political Economy, additional blind spots and the “US or Europe” problem: lessons from East Asia’, that far too often, Global Political Economy research is Eurocentric, and the models of capitalism literature tend to focus inordinately on outdated or overly caricatured models which do not always hold to historical and empirical realities. Taking South Korea, China and Japan as examples, it becomes clear that these models do not always stand the test of time nor essence. For example, there are a variety of contradictions between a typified ‘developmentalist’ state and the leanings towards authoritarianism seen in South Korea. China’s trend towards digitalisation has not overcome its state-centrism nor advanced its status in the platform economy sphere.

Herman Mark Schwartz (2022), in his article ‘What’s missing when we think about Global Political Economy?’ asks similar questions to Ulrich Brand in this issue. In order to understand the continuation of empire as an unfortunately lasting form of global ecological order, Schwartz claims, one must acknowledge macro, meso and micro levels of power for a comprehension of both resulting and interlinked racial and gender hierarchies and the ways that corporate profit continues to dominate geopolitical and geostrategic activities. Schwartz cites some insights from the first Global Political Economy scholar, Susan Strange, where she stated that ‘Structural power ... confers the power to decide how things shall be done, the power to shape frameworks within which states relate to each other, relate to people, or relate to corporate enterprises’ (1988: 25). Schwartz heralds this founding member of the discipline and indicates that Strange’s early comment remains true today.

Angela Wigger (2022) concludes this first volume of GPE with her intervention: ‘Continuing to fight the beast of the apocalypse: reasons for a Critical Political Economy approach to Global Political Economy’. Wigger, whose work has been crucial to the debates in Global Political Economy for over 20 years, postulates that epistemological and ontological commitments to being ‘critical’ in scholarly research is more important today than ever. Being critical goes beyond critiquing and requires researchers to continuously rethink their ideas, to test assumptions, to look for alternatives, and not take anything as indisputable or as Marx stated, de omnibus dubitandum. Question everything. Global Political Economy is the study of who produces what, when, where and how; deals with the interplay of agents
shaping and contesting production and the social power relations surrounding. To remain critical within this study of political economy, researchers must not only analyze but also problematize the resulting social order, the underlying ideational and material (production) structures and hold the ‘institutional strongholds that create and recreate this order’ to account. Wigger’s insights are fundamental to the developments of the field of Global Political Economy and challenge us the editors, advisory board and the wider field, to remain alert from a position of possibility, transformation and emancipation as we enter the next stages of history.

What do we expect and hope to see over the next few years?

We aim to become the key outlet for research on Global Political Economy from plural and heterodox perspectives. We have a broad understanding of Global Political Economy and we hope to be able to demonstrate our commitment to pluralism through the range of voices and topics we will be publishing. We seek to feature a multiplicity of critical voices, to develop a body of scholarship that questions the status quo and is in pursuit of emancipatory understandings of the global political economy.

We welcome papers in the following areas and more:

- Global relations of (re)production and exploitation
- Domination, disruption, resistance, emancipation
- State, economy, society, nature
- Sex and gender
- Social reproduction
- Global health, public services
- Supply and value chains, production networks
- Technologies of power and surveillance
- Knowledge production
- Digitalisation, platform economy
- Work, labour, industrial relations
- Critical legal and policy studies
- Class analysis, class struggle
- Race and othering
- Statelessness, migration
- Historical materialism
- Development, de-development
- Colonialism, decolonialism, imperialism
- Energy and food
- Environment, ecology
- Slow growth, green capitalism, de-growth
- Education, pedagogy
- Finance, financialisation
- Spatial scales, the production of space
- Regionalisation, triadisation
- Historical sociology
- The rise of non-triad regions
- Varieties of capitalism
• Globalisation, global governance
• Geopolitics, geo-economic rivalry

We are not here to set up our ‘stall’ in the marketplace of academic publishing. We are here to question the logic of such a marketplace. We do not have a blueprint of how we will do that, instead we aim to create a space, in this journal, where we can collectively discuss, develop and critique the very processes that, as scholars and as university workers, we reproduce. We are also actors in the global political economy. We hope you join us in this journey.

Author biographies
Mònica Clua-Losada is Professor of Global Political Economy at the Department of Political Science at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Her research focuses on the contestation, subversion and resistance of labour and other social movements to capitalist relations of domination. She has recently published peer-reviewed articles in Policy Studies, Globalizations, and Comparative European Politics. She is the co-editor in chief of the new journal, Global Political Economy.

Phoebe V. Moore, chief co-editor of Global Political Economy, is Professor of Management and the Futures of Work at the University of Essex School of Business, and Senior Policy Researcher for the International Labour Organization. Moore regularly works with the International Labour Organization and European Union Parliament and the agency for Safety and Health, asking how technologies transform social relations and data subjectivity. Moore’s last research monograph was The Quantified Self in Precarity: Work, Technology and What Counts (Routledge 2019).

Conflict of interest
The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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