



Sustainable Transition with Shifting Power Dynamics in a Multipolar World

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Abstract

Despite advancements in development, growing disparities in GDP are worsening globally, contradicting the fundamental principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The dynamics of power often remain concealed and overlooked during transition phases. By employing targeted terms, 75 publications from 1938 to 2025 have been critically reviewed. This cross-disciplinary analysis explores how power dynamics impact sustainability transitions, underscoring the necessity of grasping power roles in social change. It indicates that power can both sustain and oppose existing systems. Even with increased awareness, colonial power dynamics persist, and inequalities continue to expand, both nationally and internationally, particularly in the Global South. Although it faces significant critique, economic achievement is still gauged by GDP, disregarding human welfare and pressing environmental issues. This research underscores the need to redefine economic achievement to include social and environmental considerations and investigates how governments can foster discussions about well-being in the face of significant resistance. Lastly, it calls for a move away from stakeholder capitalism to establish a more equitable and sustainable economy, urging reforms in governance and corporate practices to tackle inequalities and environmental issues, while encouraging cooperation among various stakeholders to address the complex challenges of our time.

Keywords: colonialism; governance; GDP; inequalities; stakeholder capitalism

1. Introduction

Sustainability transitions have significant impacts on societies and are altering power structures and institutions. Understanding power dynamics is vital, but many studies overlook their influence on innovation and decision-making. Power has become more dispersed, despite some organizations still holding significant influence. The hidden nature of decision-making power raises questions about whether it fosters collaboration or conflict. For innovation to thrive, acceptance from various parties is crucial, leading to new resources like electric vehicles. Systemic power often perpetuates social inequality through cultural norms and laws. Examining struggles for power reveals conditions for change and the impact of colonial history on sustainability and indigenous perspectives.

The connection between knowledge and power can create divisions. The Global South has opportunities for innovation but also faces challenges from its colonial past. Decolonizing research is necessary for sustainability, as non-Western viewpoints are often overlooked. Issues

in the Global South emphasize the need to address local inequalities. Contemporary development still reflects colonial attitudes, focusing on economic growth while ignoring cultural autonomy. Critics argue that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) fail to address power inequalities adequately. Economic measures like GDP do not fully capture social well-being, leading to calls for alternatives like doughnut economics that consider both human needs and environmental limits. Since 2015, reduced international cooperation has worsened inequality in low-income countries. New development financing models are needed to reduce the power of multinational corporations. Improving governance is essential to regulate companies and promote ethical practices.

This research aims to investigate power in sustainable transitions (section 2.1), the relationship of knowledge and power (section 2.2), the critical points of intersection between the pursuit of economic growth as measured by GDP and the influence of capitalist power (section 3.1), power in institutions (section 3.2), stakeholder capitalism (section 3.3), global cooperation beyond Official Development Assistance (section 3.4) and how a decolonized understanding of power dynamics can inform the development of alternative metrics and policy frameworks that prioritize systemic equity (section 4.1).

1.1 Materials and Methods

This study uses a qualitative research design with a literature review to explore how power dynamics affect sustainable transitions in a multipolar world. It aims to identify gaps and new perspectives by reviewing publications from 1938 to 2025, focusing on the relationship between power and sustainability, and how this relates to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The data collection involved a narrative review of 75 scholarly articles on sustainability transitions and power dynamics, sourced from databases like JSTOR, Scopus, and Google Scholar. The selection was based on relevance, citation impact, and a variety of viewpoints across disciplines.

The analysis was carried out through thematic synthesis, where key themes and findings were extracted. It focused on how power dynamics can either support or obstruct sustainability efforts, highlighting colonial legacies and criticisms of GDP as a success measure. The findings were organized into clear themes to express the complex relationships between power, sustainability, and social equity.

To ensure validity, the study used rigorous selection criteria for publications, included diverse disciplinary perspectives, and acknowledged limitations like publication bias. The methodology aims to enhance understanding of how power dynamics influence sustainable transitions in a multipolar world, contributing to discussions on equity and sustainability.

2. Results

2.1 Power In Sustainability Transitions

Sustainability transitions are about changing society and involve significant changes in current systems. Since transitions require changing existing regimes, they also involve shifts in power dynamics. To grasp these transitions, it's essential to understand power and its functions. Despite this, the study of sustainability transitions has faced criticism for not adequately addressing the role of power in innovation and transition, and this highlights a lack of understanding of politics, actors, and decision-making in these processes (Raj et al., 2024). As mentioned by Russell in 1938, power relations will exist no matter where transitions take us, as power is man's ultimate goal, and is, in its many guises, the single most important element in the development of any society.

The important question is how change and innovation affect power relations. It suggests looking at different aspects of power and raises various empirical questions to explore this topic further. The main goal is to understand how these processes may change or maintain current power dynamics (Avelino, 2021).

Dahl (1957) stated that power, once held by kings or monarchs, is now more distributed in modern democracies. Bachrach and Baratz (1962) noted that even in democracies, there are still influential groups that set agendas. Furthermore, Lukes (1974/2005) introduced the idea of hidden power, where preferences and choices can be influenced or manipulated. There are ongoing discussions about the nature of power, including whether it involves cooperation or conflict, limits or opportunities, and the relationship between power and knowledge (Raj et al., 2024).

Innovative power is the ability to create new resources, which can reduce dependence on existing ones, like fossil fuels. By developing resources such as electric vehicles and renewable energy, people can disrupt current power dynamics. This concept draws from Arendt's (1970) idea of natality, highlighting human originality. Arendt defines power as the ability to act together, emphasizing the importance of being seen and having diverse participants. A new resource lacks power if it is not recognized by multiple actors (Avelino, 2021).

Systemic power is shown through established cultural practices, laws, and discussions that shape how power is distributed in society. These historical and geographical elements have supported systems of oppression. Systemic power involves unequal relationships among various genders, classes, races, sexualities, and other social differences, leading to unequal chances and abilities. This concept is connected to systems thinking and reveals how social conditions, shaped over time and location, either support or restrict agency in innovation processes (Raj et al., 2024).

Using experiences of struggle to view power highlights the broader conditions affecting change. For instance, addressing colonial influences reveals how they shape business and governance in sustainability efforts, even in Europe (Arora & Stirling, 2023). Additionally, indigenous philosophies promote a relational understanding of humans and nature, redefining the important “actors” in sociotechnical systems (Raj et al., 2024).

To understand power dynamics in sustainability transition better Rip and Kemp (1998) developed a basic Multi-Level Perspective (MLP) distinguishing three different levels, radical innovations emerging in protected niches, regimes, and sociotechnical landscapes. Innovations in small niches are selected and introduced to existing technological regimes and finally get integrated into sociotechnical landscapes. Later Geels (2002) expanded the MLP comparing niche-innovations with developments in regimes and landscapes (Geels, 2024). According to Avelino (2017) regimes can be seen as spaces of reinforcing power, niches as spaces of innovative power and ‘niche-regimes’ as spaces of transformative power.

2.2 Knowledge and Power

The relationship between power and knowledge is important in social theory. Bourdieu (1989) believes power comes from the ability to define social divisions through knowledge, while Barnes (1988) describes power as the distribution of knowledge, requiring recognition to be effective. Both suggest that knowledge influences power (Avelino, 2021). The Global South refers to regions with colonial history that face challenges in providing basic services. These areas deal with issues like weak institutions and social exclusion (Ramos-Mejía et al., 2018). Despite these difficulties, they have opportunities for innovation. Many countries in the Global South seek development (Escobar, 2011) but struggle with Western models that overlook local

views, leading to social injustices (Kanger & Schot, 2019). As global challenges arise, there is a need for sustainable approaches valuing diverse knowledge systems (Ghosh et al., 2021).

There are ongoing debates on how power relates to knowledge and truth. Lukes (1974/2005) argues that powerful groups affect how knowledge is understood, while Foucault (1980) believes that power and knowledge are closely linked, with each shaping the other. Giddens (1984) critiques this view, saying it suggests power exists before truth (Avelino, 2021). Research focuses on modern science, often seen as superior (Doyon et al., 2021), which can overlook non-Western perspectives (Rosa, 2016). To decolonize research, it's essential to examine modernity and explore diverse viewpoints, particularly for sustainability (Ghosh et al., 2021).

Knowledge has both cognitive and performative roles (Barnes, 1988), influencing how we perceive and classify the world, especially in political struggles to shape social reality. Building knowledge is a way to exercise power and influence resource use (Bourdieu, 1989). Understanding objects grants physical power, while knowledge of social systems grants social power (Haugaard, 2002). Actors uphold social structures through their grasp of social life (Avelino, 2021). Struggles, often seen negatively, can be viewed positively in the Global South as a way to build resilience and create change (Jehlička et al., 2018). Recognizing everyday struggles is vital, as they reflect social realities alongside environmental issues (Sunio, 2021; Yuana et al., 2020). These struggles highlight the role of informal institutions that resist formal rules and play a significant part in transitions. To decolonize transition research, we need to rethink institutions and the social realities involved (Ghosh et al., 2021).

Epistemic colonialism hides inequality in Southern systems and shows how power dynamics can impact social and environmental justice in sustainability efforts (Kumar et al., 2021). Certain groups continue to do well because institutions are not functioning effectively. To ensure a fair transition, it's essential to examine local injustices and understand the deeper issues of inequality (Ghosh et al., 2021).

Scholars emphasize that with power and knowledge comes responsibility. Researchers should address power relations and their connection to rationality and use the concept of phronesis to make social science meaningful. This includes considering the direction of developments, identifying who benefits and who suffers, and determining the right actions to take (Avelino, 2021).

There is a debate between sustainability transition research (STR) and critical social scientists. Critics claim that STR focuses too much on technology and overlooks social issues, leading to a narrow perspective on complex challenges. STR often separates nature from society and reflects Western ideas that may not apply to the Global South, ignoring colonial histories and diverse viewpoints (Kalt, 2024).

Understanding power in social change is about how knowledge is used, and the influence researchers have. Discussing terms like 'transitions,' 'social innovation,' and 'sustainability' shows the exercise of power, as defining these concepts can impact how change occurs (Avelino, 2021). Transformative power allows individuals or groups to challenge and modify existing structures, which may involve creating new legal frameworks or economic systems. This renewal is about reconfiguring what exists rather than creating something entirely new (Haxeltine et al., 2016). Discussions on empowerment must also consider possible negative effects, as social change can unintentionally disempower some groups. It's essential to look at how change affects both the initiators and those impacted, including government officials and conservative groups (Avelino, 2021).

From a critical realist viewpoint, effective actions should mobilize social forces to challenge existing power structures and create radical alternatives. In fighting against fragmented social systems that prioritize markets and individualism, movements must transform and build solidarity, bridging gaps between different regions. A successful counter-hegemony involves uniting marginalized groups around a shared vision (like sustainability for example), developing organizational strength to form a competing historical bloc. This process, known as a war of position (Morton, 2000), is essential for establishing a democratic culture and fostering a new social order (Carrol, 2009).

Research in these fields focuses on change and innovation as ways to improve society, believing in human ability to make things better. However, they often overlook the negative and unintended consequences of social change and the significant power struggles and inequalities involved (Avelino, 2021).

3. Discussion

Colonial thinking still influences modern development ideas, focusing too much on measurable economic factors while ignoring cultural independence. Countries in the global South often view the ecological goals set by Western nations as a form of disguised colonialism. At the same time, these countries face exploitation of their natural resources, benefiting mostly industrialized nations and a few elites. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) fail to address power imbalances and conflicts. Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato si'*, offers important insights by challenging linear growth ideas (Franziskus, n.d.). To effectively implement the SDGs, there needs to be a stronger connection between social and ecological objectives and a better understanding of cultural aspects in development (Vogt, 2022).

We must question if the current concept of development is valid and moral. Is it justifiable to divide countries into 'developed' and 'underdeveloped' or does it perpetuate colonial power dynamics? Development, initially seen as a promise of freedom, has led to division and ecological harm due to Western prosperity models. This raises concerns about the SDGs being a modern form of colonialism and don't represent a true change in perspective (Vogt, 2022).

In the valuable insights of Day's (Day & Academic Library, 2005) analyses, particularly his rejection of the idea of "total liberation" and the narrow focus on state-led change he rightly emphasizes prefiguration as vital to radical politics. Transformative justice requires people to rethink their interests and identities (Fraser, 1995), and prefiguration helps to achieve this. However, anti-hegemony is seen as incomplete, lacking strategy, leadership, and organization. His valuable ideas on direct action and prefiguration should be part of a more cohesive strategy (Carrol, 2009).

Since the Zapatistas opposed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), there has been a focus on experimenting with new forms of political organization rather than rejecting them. Events like the World Social Forum have helped to develop ethical frameworks for creating a better world, leading to new insights and understanding. Concepts like participatory democracy and solidarity suggest that different movements can unite on issues like linking justice and ecology, addressing both current power structures and opportunities to move beyond neoliberalism and capitalism. The emerging left must adapt, finding a balance between current realities and a vision for the future and seeking to move on to a new, unexplored territory (Wall, 2005). We must engage with Gramsci's (Gramsci & Hoare, 1977) question on how to connect present needs with future goals for this transition (Carrol, 2009).

For society to achieve social justice, the current global system must be challenged and reformed. The world economic structure thrives on inequality, preventing true development for all. This means we must rethink our understanding of how the world works and recognizes

colonial histories that contribute to ongoing oppression and power imbalances affecting many regions. Development Studies are focusing on the realities faced by marginalized groups but often overlook the necessity of acknowledging past and present colonial issues that sustain inequalities. Political Scientists work to address inclusion and exclusion but need to consider how policies impact marginalized groups. Therefore, integrating Political Science into the teaching and practice of Development Studies can lead to meaningful changes that have not been addressed by existing development strategies and organizations (Soto, 2020).

3.1 Beyond GDP and Capitalist Power

The modern idea of GDP was created by economist Simon Kuznets in 1934 for a report to the U. S. Congress. He warned against using GDP as a welfare measure, noting that while it was useful for understanding economic issues like the Great Depression, it should not be the only focus. In 1962, he highlighted the importance of distinguishing between different types of growth and considering the quality of that growth. Robert F. Kennedy later stated that GDP measures everything except what truly makes life worthwhile. Economist Diane Coyle (2014) mentioned that GDP is more of a measure used during wartime, showing production capacity but not how to promote happiness and well-being in peaceful times. Policymakers should look beyond GDP to create better policies that support people's lives and the economy (Vanham, 2021). There needs to be more focus on sustainability. Governments need to develop growth policies without harming future growth and living standards (Coyle, 2014).

Power shapes capital from within rather than from the outside, meaning all capital represents power but not all power is capital (Nitzan & Bichler, 2009). Capitalists can be challenged by transformation processes, yet they maintain strong control over society. Corporations and their government allies continually reshape society to boost their power. Degrowth changes are crucial to the conflict of capital accumulation. Although capitalism cannot be completely removed (Boonstra & Joose, 2013), this shows both opportunities and challenges for degrowth in a capitalist system (Julien Vastenaekels, 2024).

Capital is not just about market or economic power (Sacchetti & Sugden, 2003); it encompasses a broader influence. It can shape political will, environmental conditions, international relationships, norms, beliefs, arts, and education, among other areas (Julien Vastenaekels, 2024).

Doughnut economics is becoming popular among policymakers for promoting sustainable development. It emphasizes a "safe and just" space that meets global human needs while respecting environmental limits. Its effectiveness will depend on how it is applied locally and nationally, considering political divides (Turner & Wills, 2022). While it critiques the focus on economic growth, it has been noted that it does not address upper limits on social needs. Setting "societal boundaries" is essential to fight injustice, which requires strong local leadership and public involvement to build legitimacy and resources (Brand et al., 2021), as well as to challenge opponents of socioeconomic limits (Sahakian et al., 2021).

3.2 Power in Institutions

Local governance institutions are important for discussing what makes a good life for all. However, they may struggle to bring about real change due to a focus on growth (Brand et al., 2021) and resistance from powerful elites (Hammond, 2020). Improving these institutions can help community conversations (Brand et al., 2021), but outside support is also needed for progress. Current interests can block sustainable development goals (Littlewood & While, 1997), and local authorities may be reluctant to share power (Diaz-Sarachaga, 2019).

There are ongoing talks about how to improve institutional arrangements for sustainable development. Suggestions include making institutions more effective, redistributing power at

all governance levels, improving global coordination, and enhancing regional governments, while still respecting the state's role. This involves using 'generative power' along with legal authority and finances and building local relationships to involve the private sector and civil society (Sandfort, 2019).]

Leaders can use "interpretive" (Sotarauta, 2016) or "framing" (Morrison et al., 2019) power to explain problems and foster a shared vision, despite differences. However, there are weaknesses in civic and democratic engagement (Sandfort, 2019). Inclusive methods often face issues like lack of planning, power imbalances, and competing interests, which can undermine their success. Although the challenges are recognized, there is no clear plan for achieving a democratic transition to sustainability (Turner & Wills, 2022).

3.3 Stakeholder Capitalism

Markets play a vital role in organizing society and creating value, especially over the past 200 years. They have spurred significant innovation and improvements in life quality during events like the industrial revolution and the rise of consumerism. However, capitalism has also led to issues such as increasing wealth gaps, environmental harm, and social inequality. Emerging challenges like global warming and financial crises are threatening stability, making it essential to analyse the impacts of markets more closely (Freeman et al., 2007).

Currently, we face an "Ethics Crisis" where managers are taught that capitalism lacks morals, leading to a focus on competition over societal values. This misunderstanding, known as the Separation Fallacy (Freeman, 1994), emphasizes individual freedom while neglecting the importance of ethics. Rejecting morality in capitalism risks ignoring the fundamental role of relationships, trust, and care in survival. Cooperation and empathy are vital for individuals and organizations to thrive, as noted by Daniel Dennett (1996).

Business is a social process where morality is important. Scandals and selfish behaviour damage trust and transparency, which are essential for growth. Managers need to consider their impact on others to build trust and loyalty among stakeholders, leading to a sustainable business. Instead of only avoiding the worst parts of capitalism, we should aim for high standards to encourage better behaviour. Those who misuse trust will face consequences, and creating real value necessitates good leadership (Freeman et al., 2007).

The way we talk about and manage businesses affects how they operate. By focusing on creating positive outcomes together, instead of just preventing negatives, we can change our assumptions about value creation. This change can help address serious capitalism issues while retaining progress. It's crucial to think critically and recognize the social elements of value creation, while striving to provide value for all stakeholders (Freeman et al., 2007).

3.4 Global Cooperation beyond Official Development Assistance (ODA)

Since 2015, global cooperation has faced many challenges, with rising fragmentation, volatility, and fragility (Ahmed, 2024) threatening the current international order. Countries are increasingly focusing on their own interests, weakening the rules-based system. Inequality is growing due to uneven technological progress, and issues like climate change and economic instability are making long-term planning hard. Low-income nations are particularly struggling with the effects of climate change and technological disruptions (Morra & Readhead, 2025).

The political landscape is moving towards simpler international agreements. Development finance is at risk from cuts to Official Development Assistance (ODA), uncertainties in global trade, and an impending external debt crisis due to low global liquidity. Lower-income countries are pressured to find domestic resources to fill funding gaps (Morra & Readhead, 2025).

To address these issues, a new approach to ODA is needed. This could include "Beyond ODA," which means integrating more private sector and philanthropic funding (Severino & Ray, 2009). Another suggestion is to create a system where all countries contribute based on their capacity to pay. These reforms require broad consensus, new governance, and political support, which may not happen soon (Ahmed et al., 2025). Strengthening regional trade alliances and promoting South–South cooperation could be vital in this process. (Morra & Readhead, 2025).

African countries are losing between USD 470 million and USD 730 million each year due to tax avoidance by multinational companies in the mining sector (International Monetary Fund, 2025). Research from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) highlights this problem. With the demand for renewable energy and important minerals rising, these countries can rethink their strategies to gain more from their natural resources (Readhead et al., 2023).

Relying only on Domestic Resource Mobilization (DRM) unfairly burdens lower-income countries and may worsen their financial challenges. They need to boost external revenue, especially from trade, to avoid balance of payments crises that could impact their ability to repay external debts and stabilize their currencies (Morra & Readhead, 2025).

4. Recommendations

Since 2020, the wealth of the five richest men has doubled, while nearly five billion people have become poorer, facing daily struggles and hunger. Ending poverty could take 230 years, yet we might see our first trillionaire in just 10 years. Corporate power is increasing inequality, with major corporations having billionaire leaders and contributing to unfairness by cutting worker pay, avoiding taxes, and harming the environment (Oxfam, 2024).

To combat this extreme inequality, governments need to limit the power of multi-national corporations and give it back to regular people. A fairer world is possible if leaders rethink the corporate sector and support public interests. However, as of now, there is a growing gap between the wealthy elite and the majority, worsened by issues like the pandemic, war, the cost-of-living crisis, and climate change. Billionaire owners often use their influence to increase corporate power and prioritize shareholder profits over the wellbeing of the public (Oxfam, 2024).

Fossil fuel companies have long understood that greenhouse gases cause significant climate change, yet they continue to defend their interests by influencing laws and public opinion. They invest heavily in lobbying and campaigns, and they participate actively in UN climate talks. These companies resist efforts to end residential gas use in Australia, weaken emission penalties in South Africa, reduce fuel efficiency standards, and oppose environmental investment practices in the USA. They also maintain close ties with governments, which promotes climate denial (Supran & Oreskes, 2021).

Economist Joseph Stiglitz refers to this as "litigation terrorism," (Malo, 2019) where the fossil fuel industry files large arbitration claims against countries aiming to limit emissions and enhance the environment. They use investor-state dispute systems to challenge government actions against fossil fuels, with claims averaging \$1. 4 billion and total payouts estimated over \$100 billion. Many of these claims come from companies in wealthy countries targeting poorer nations, further straining their already limited resources (United Nations General Assembly, 2023).

All governments can reduce inequality and should set clear national goals with specific targets. One goal is to ensure that the income of the top 10% does not exceed that of the bottom 40%, aiming for a Palma ratio of 1 (Palma & Stiglitz, 2016). A strong government is necessary to control corporate power and fix market failures. It guides the economy, provides public goods,

regulates businesses, and invests in important sectors. Governments should also support businesses through public procurement while promoting collaboration and accountability (Mazzucato, 2023).

Social protection should expand beyond just income support to include a broader view of well-being that doesn't rely solely on GDP as a measure of progress. Nations should assess various types of capital, such as natural, human, and social capital, to promote inclusive and sustainable growth (COMPREHENSIVE WEALTH REPORT Moving beyond GDP through Comprehensive Wealth Findings for Ethiopia, Indonesia, and Trinidad and Tobago IISD REPORT, n.d.). To enhance social contributions, it's crucial to improve social security systems and rethink development approaches, despite the challenges involved (Morra & Readhead, 2025).

We need to change business practices due to wealth concentration, automation, and climate concerns. Current corporate structures benefit only a small elite. Governments can help by supporting employee-owned businesses (following ILO Recommendation no. 193) and cooperatives and by favouring sustainable companies in procurement processes (Promoting cooperatives, n.d.).

One key aspect is to establish international organizations that provide incentives for cooperation and punish infractions, hence addressing the problem of free riding. The WTO (World Trade Organization) model may be used as a source of inspiration. The connection between trade and the environment may be included in a new climate agreement to establish emission restrictions for trade-sensitive industries, according to the WTO architecture (Walker et al., 2009). Even though the need for "transparent and common norms" is widely recognized the legitimacy of institutional enforcement will depend on acceptance by numerous and diverse group of players. But would the world community accept an international body that 'borrows' a body within the WTO framework that, according to critics, perpetuated global inequalities and problems rather than fixing them (Avelino, 2017)?

Rockström (2009) stated that many Earth systems respond suddenly and sharply around certain key limits. Crossing these limits could lead to harmful changes for humans. The authors suggest "planetary boundaries" as a new way to outline the essential conditions needed for human growth (Rockström, 2009). To achieve real social change that helps the poor and empowers people, we need to look at climate change adaptation in a more political way. This means we must highlight, question, and fight against the harmful power relations that continue to exist (Gillard et al., 2016). Economic support should only be given to companies meeting net zero targets, paying decent living wages, and not using tax havens aggressively. There is a choice between continuing a harmful business model that helps only the wealthy or adopting a new vision that values community and worker needs over profit and promotes innovation for all (Oxfam, 2024).

4.1 Conclusion

Examination of power in sustainability transitions and knowledge dynamics reveals the pervasive influence of colonialism, which continues to shape global development and sustainability efforts. The historical legacy of colonialism has left a lasting impact on power dynamics, creating inequalities that persist in modern society. The Sustainable Development Goals, while well-intentioned, have failed to adequately address these existing power imbalances and conflicts, highlighting the need for a critical re-evaluation of governance structures and international cooperation. Furthermore, the limitations of GDP as a measure of welfare have become increasingly evident, prompting a re-examination of economic progress and its impact on society and the environment. The inadequacy of GDP in capturing key aspects

of well-being underscores the necessity for a more comprehensive approach to economic growth. The pursuit of sustainable development necessitates a shift away from traditional growth metrics towards a more holistic assessment that considers environmental preservation and social equity, challenging the entrenched capitalist power dynamics that exacerbate inequalities. Other Beyond GDP metrics like the ones mentioned above could be the Better Life Index, Ecological Footprint, Gender Development Index, Gender Equality/Inequality Index, Human Development Index, Life Satisfaction and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (Jansen et al., 2024).]

The persistent influence of colonialism and the growing wealth inequalities underscore the necessity for strong governance to regulate businesses, reduce inequality, and promote a fairer society. Addressing these complex issues demands a critical and analytical approach, integrating political science, economic insights, and social justice considerations to achieve meaningful change and pave the way for a more equitable and sustainable future.

"What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans and the homeless,
whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or the
holy name of liberty or democracy?"

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)

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