

UFS Department of Sociology Speaker Series

THE SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
DEVELOPMENT THEORY AND POLICY:
AN EXPLORATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



Ntsikelelo Benjamin Breakfast is currently working for the Nelson Mandela University. He has experience in curriculum design and development, teaching, community engagement, internationalisation and management as an academic.

He is the former Head of the School for Security and Africa Studies at Stellenbosch University (SU). While he held the Headship position of the School for Security and Africa Studies, he was responsible for the management of three Departments and supervising Heads of Department; including several academics (including senior academics such as Associate Professor/Professor). Over and above that he has held the position of Chair of the Department of Political Science in the Faculty of Military Science at SU. At the moment, he is the Head of Department of History and Political Studies (and Associate Professor) at Nelson Mandela University. Prof Breakfast has published locally and internationally in accredited journals. More specifically, he has published about 48 peer reviewed accredited articles; about 46 of them are accredited by the Department of Higher Education in South Africa; coupled with five book chapters. He has supervised successfully at M'sand PhD (by co-supervision at doctoral level). This also includes examining doctoral theses for different universities in South Africa. Prof Breakfast is also the Acting Director of Center for Security, Peace and Conflict Resolution at Nelson Mandela University. He has done some work for the BBC, News Central, NBC, Sputnik Afrika, SABC (Channel 404), Ukhozi FM, Nqubela radio station, Bay TV, Power FM, eNCA, 702, Radio 2000, SAFM, Khaya FM, True FM, Eden FM, City Press, Mail and Guardian, The Herald (Newspaper) and Weekend Post (Newspaper), as a political analyst. He is a regular guest on (radio) Umhlobo Wenene FM (SABC radio station) and does some political analysis for Power FM, Cape Talk (commercial radio station).

Abstract

This paper examines the strong nexus between development theory and practice/policy within the context of Development Studies. The aim of this paper is to critically explore the intellectual influence of Development Studies as an academic field of study on matters of development, in particular development theory and policy. I enter the debate with a strategic question, namely: Does the intellectual landscape of Development Studies critically reflect the material conditions of the GlobalSouth and apply contextual development theory and policy? At a methodological level, this is a qualitative literature review assessment study, largely because it is desktop qualitative research. My main line of argument is that Development Studies still remains a Western-inspired and neoliberal-inclined field of study. Over and above that, I argue that there is a great deal of scope to make the field of Development Studies have a human face and appreciate the context of the GlobalSouth coupled with its sociological and cultural makeup. This paper contributes to the ongoing critical discourses of the decolonisation, Africanisation and contextualisation of Development Studies.

Speaker: Prof Ntsikelelo Benjamin Breakfast

Date: 19 September 2025

Venue: South Block Room 25

Time: 12:00 – 13:00

Facilitator: Dr Nontombi Velelo

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