

University of Sussex

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The Thesis submitted for Doctor of Philosophy, Development Studies

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**Title: Emancipation and Overcoming Metaphysics in Post-development Thought:
Singularity, the Political, Responsibility**

Summary

This thesis examines the potential link between post-development thought and the post-Heideggerian themes of emancipatory politics. It will analyse the meta-theoretical implications of the normative claims of post-development thinkers—e.g. ‘beyond development’ and ‘alternatives to development’—, through the lens of several post-Heideggerian themes that are derived from the Heideggerian project of *overcoming metaphysics*, namely *singularity*, *the political* and *responsibility*.

This thesis examines the link between post-development thought and the post-Heideggerian logic of transcending Western metaphysical thinking, specifically focusing on the work of Serge Latouche, a pioneer French post-development thinker. In critically analysing Latouche’s texts on post-development, the thesis elucidates the manner in which Latouche constructs his critique of international development politics upon the Heideggerian theme of overcoming metaphysics. Then, it will demonstrate that Latouche implicitly theorises the post-Heideggerian logic of political emancipation, i.e. the construction of singularity that resists the closure of social ontology. The thesis also examines the implications of Latouche’s logic of emancipation by associating it with

Claude Lefort's theory of the political, Emmanuel Lévinas's logic of responsibility and the insights of other post-Heideggerian philosophers including Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Jean-Luc Nancy and Jacques Rancière.

Through analysis, the thesis argues that 'alternatives to development'—the central topic of post-development thought—can be explored through the category of singularity. Hence, this thesis concludes that post-development research of alternative social orders requires a philosophical method that demonstrates the phenomenon of singularity that will become the source of new social bonds. It also remarks the necessity of developing the normativity of post-development order on a meta-theoretical level.