

## **Indomitable “Others:” Stories of Subaltern & More-than-Human Voices Confronting Liberalisms and sustaining worlds**

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### *Brief Description:*

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Today, various forms of liberalism continue to permeate through the theoretical and policy approaches that frequently dominate diverse areas of governance, analysis, life, and action. However, this dominance is not uncontested. Many voices from the Global South, and subjugated positionalities more generally, have continuously denounced and resisted the impositions and ongoing oppressions that these hegemonic approaches sustain. Oftentimes, these voices push beyond the limitations of liberalisms in calling for more pluriversal and decolonial ways of knowing, feeling, being, and enacting.

By listening to voices that struggle within diverse contexts and axes of power, such as geographic location, class, race, ethnicity, gender, ecology, etc., this book contributes to discussions surrounding the differences and commonalities found within these sites of denunciation and agency. Hence, the authors featured in this volume hope to nurture these pluriversal, intersectional, and decolonial possibilities of speaking up, against, and beyond different forms of liberalism, asking: What are the divergences and the patterns of commonality

that emerge from subaltern critiques of liberalisms, and how do they move beyond these ongoing issues?

Unlike other theoretical or historical debates, our approach aims to analyze how subaltern voices have, and continue to, unveil epistemic politics, potential biases, forms of violence, and oppressive tendencies in various forms of liberalism. While their critiques seek to offer opportunities for the co-existence of multiple worlds by undermining the epistemic privilege of some liberalisms, they often also show how they have historically and/or contemporaneously known, felt, existed, and enacted otherwise. Thus, the book does not seek to find the *essence* of liberalism, an author, an institution, or even a particular historical setting. Instead, it prioritizes the “wounds of colonialism” to analyze epistemic politics and the forms of agency that emerge in those spaces where the subaltern speak against the privilege and violence of liberalisms.

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## *Synopsis:*

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This co-edited, peer-reviewed volume seeks to analyze commonalities and differences among diverse experiences of liberalism and moments of agency. By following decolonial, pluriversal, and intersectional approaches, the book prioritizes a bottom-up possibility of listening to subaltern voices that confront the epistemicide and violence of liberalisms in order to create and/or sustain other worlds. Hence, the book is a dialogue among different “colonial wounds” (Mignolo 2000, 37), moments of confrontation and solidarity (Rivera 2018, 140), epistemologies of the South (Santos 2014, 2), senti-pensar (Escobar 2020, 67), globalized networks of solidarity (Banivanua-Mar 2016; Swan 2022), alternative expressions of resistance, such as “performing identity” in circuits cultivated beyond the state (Teves 2018), revolutionary calls to community unification and political action (Fanon 1963), methodology as evidence of resistant existence (Smith 1999; Wilson 2008; Wilson-Hokowhitu 2019; R. Kapā‘anaokalāoikeola Nākoa Oliveira and Kahunawaika‘ala Wright 2016; Kovach 2021; Osorio 2021; Hernandez 2022) and more. It is an explicitly and unapologetically decolonial and pluriversal approach to speak up against colonial legacies of oppression and to think about a world of many worlds (Cadena and Blaser 2018; Reiter 2018; Escobar 2011; 2020; Fitzgerald 2022).

As a result, the book does not aim to define the core, essence, or historically continuous characteristics of liberalism and its tendencies (Walzer 1990; Parekh 1995; Mills 1997; 2008; Linera 2006). The book does not aim to understand the contextual ways in which liberalism has been sedimented throughout history and diverse institutional settings (Hartz 1955; Ruggie 1982; Mehta 1999; Kohl 2006; De La Barra and Dello Buono 2009; Fernández, Scauso, and Stavrevska 2022). Instead, this decolonial approach centers the study of liberalisms by starting from the experience of struggling voices who confront multiple forms of oppression and violence. The analysis of multiple forms of oppression contributes to a much more pluriversal understanding of epistemic politics, justice, and struggle, while also avoiding the liberal utilization of complexity as an excuse against possibilities of denunciation and agency. Here, decolonial voices emphasize the importance of listening to multiple struggles at the same time because the analysis of commonalities and differences among moments of denunciation and agency allows us to find echoes of our experiences in the voices of others while also understanding the diversity of struggles that speak up to construct different worlds.

To achieve this goal, the different chapters of the book discuss the relationships between epistemic politics and other dimensions of particular voices confronting and denouncing colonial legacies of liberalism. They create the possibility to discuss connections and divergences among multiple experiences of struggle that speak up against dominations and oppressions. Within the praxis and agentic advantages of a decolonial approach that seeks a world of multiple worlds, the book avoids the colonial trap of researching the elusive “nature” or “essence” of an object “out there.” Instead of aiming towards another final or improved definition of liberalism (Habermas 1984; 2001; Walzer 1990; Brysk 2000; Moyn 2010; Russett 2013; Öjendal and Ou 2015), the book listens to those who denounce liberalisms, undermine their boundaries, commit epistemic disobedience, and continue to struggle for other ways of being, knowing, feeling, and enacting. This volume emerges from decolonial voices to start from different “bottoms,” avoiding canonical traps and discussing multiple experiences of domination, oppression, and agency. Hence, the book takes us on an intersectional journey through different struggles of ethnicity, race, religiosity, ecology, gender, and sexuality in diverse regions of the world. Each section includes chapters that focus on particular axes of power or intersections. The chapters discuss the critiques of liberalisms and the moments of agency that emerge in relation to these struggles in particular regions and historical contexts. Then, the final section includes discussions of the divergences and echoes of commonality that emerge among the diverse and intersectional struggles studied in previous chapters.

Both the specificities and the commonalities among these struggles contribute to the understanding of forms of violence and agency. As the result of multiple panels, co-authored articles, workshops, and discussions, the authors of this book seek to contribute to these discussions by focusing on particular experiences emerging in different regions of the world. Within this intersectional and regional form of diversity, the book emphasizes some of the epistemic trends shared in the denunciations and critiques of liberalisms. These voices often point out that liberalisms create epistemic conditions of possibility to protect a “humanity” against its “threats” and the “obstacles” that prevent its pursuit of happiness. Hence, liberalisms presuppose epistemic boundaries against the differences of “others” who often speak up and confront these othering tendencies. Though other intellectuals have studied the epistemic politics of liberal discourses, policies, institutions, and authors (Emberson-Bain 1994; Wynter 1995; Quijano 2000; Mignolo 2000; Bargh 2001; Slatter 2006; Escobar 2010; Lave 2012; Agathangelou 2013; Reinaga

2014; Rivera 2015; Weber 2016; Thaman 2019), this book aims to contribute to these studies by examining and emphasizing the complex ways in which liberalisms are experienced and denounced by particular voices in specific struggles and in distinct contexts. From this decolonial and bottom-up approach, the book highlights some trends while also emphasizing the complexity and diversity of struggles against liberalisms. In this book, authors analyze how these struggling voices denounce the ways in which liberalisms construct different epistemic boundaries and othering biases in relation to particular axes of power, experiences, and historical contexts in order to examine different kinds of violence and agency. These denounced biases intertwine axes of power related to gender, class, sexuality, race, ethnicity, anthropocentrism, secularism, and other experiences. The analysis of denounced othering boundaries and the forms of violence that are related to these epistemic tendencies create a consistent discussion about the intersectional and complex aspects of numerous forms of liberal violence. In the patterns of these othering tendencies and their relationship with violence, the book highlights some epistemic regularities and echoes of proximity among diverse struggling experiences, but the book also highlights their differences and the diverse ways in which epistemic politics play out in different struggles. This analysis contributes to the critique of epistemicide and the notions that continue to reinforce, enable, and/or justify violence. In turn, the analysis of these ongoing issues encourages us to think about possibilities of respectful solidarity among diverse voices and alternatives. In a sense, the book demands a possibility to study struggles while avoiding the usage of the Master's tools to dismantle the Master's house (Lorde 2018). The simultaneous understanding of commonalities and differences allows us to create bridges without assimilating and erasing differences, but it also creates the necessity of a dialogue that calls on the de-universalization of any single experience. This decolonial approach thus avoids the unification of all struggles within a particular framework, but it also calls on struggling voices to listen to each other, which is a condition of possibility for a much more messy, fluid, and multilayered map of justices and pluriversality.

Through a peer-review process of dialogue and construction, the authors involved in this volume engage in these discussions and provide feedback to one another. Since the book contains a decolonial, pluriversal, and intersectional narrative connecting all the chapters, we also hope that the book project will be accepted by a press that will successfully promote the discussion and will favor the authors at the same time.

## *Proposal submission*

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To participate in this book, authors are hereby invited to follow the dialogical and cooperative process below:

1- For the initial part of the process, please submit the preliminary abstract (250 words) and title of your chapter, curriculum vitae, and a small bio. (150 words). We welcome preferences and suggestions about what presses you think might best fit the goals and characteristics of this volume as well.

- a. Deadline for proposals: June 1st, 2023
- b. Editorial evaluation of proposals: final decision by Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
- c. The editors will take all proposals into account in order to create a finalized book project. Before submitting the project to a press, the authors will have an opportunity to provide feedback and revisions for the project. Authors can also contribute in the decision of what Press might be most adequate for the book.

- i. Since they have published co-edited books about critical topics and approaches, we hope to submit our project to Duke University Press (e.g., *Formations of United States Colonialism*. 2014. Edited by Alyosha Goldstein), Routledge (e.g., *Postcolonial Theory and International Relations: A Critical Introduction*. 2013. Edited by Sanjay Seth), Cambridge (e.g., *Leftist Successes and Shortcomings*. 2010. Edited by Kurt Weyland, Raúl Madrid, and Wendy Hunter), or Manchester University Press (e.g., *Postcolonial International Studies Series* edited by Mustapha K. Pasha, Meera Sabaratnam and Robbie Shilliam). We welcome other suggestions as well.

2- The authors whose initial proposals are accepted will receive a notification and an invitation to submit the first draft of their chapters.

- a. Invitations to submit first drafts of chapters will be sent by September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
- b. Submissions of chapters by February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

- 3- Once the editors receive the first drafts of the chapters, they will send each one of them to another author to begin the review and feedback process. The review is meant to be a cooperative, non-blind, and dialogical process to improve and learn about our own work.
  - a. Chapters will be shared among authors by February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024.
  - b. The reviews will be shared with the authors by April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
- 4- Based on the results of this process, authors might be invited to revise or resubmit their chapters.
  - a. Submission of final drafts of the chapters after reviews: July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.
- 5- The final step will include a revision by the editors for minor suggestions before the manuscript is submitted to the press.
  - a. Final submission of the manuscript to the press by February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025.
- 6- We also hope to create panels, workshops, and roundtables in different conferences to encourage our dialogue and to create a more consistent and collective narrative for the book.

### *Proposed Market:*

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This book will be aimed primarily at students, scholars, and practitioners of International Relations and International Studies, but its engagement with diverse literature, discussions of epistemic politics, and insights into different forms of injustice and oppression cross boundaries of Political Science, Sociology, Gender Studies, Latin American Studies, Indigenous Studies, Pacific Island Studies, and Anthropology. The discussions of colonialisms, problems of difference, decoloniality, pluriversality, and intersectionality have been growing in the scholarly work developed in all these disciplines, but the book also aims to tackle complex issues in a manner that is readable for practitioners who are not familiar with epistemic politics and philosophy of science discussions. Readability is a crucial aspect of this book as the normative and political implications of its contributions travel beyond academic debates and towards global politics. Since this book seeks to study different experiences of liberal oppression and the structures that sustain these axes of power and struggles, its relevance grows together with the tensions experienced daily within current forms of globalization. Our hope is that the book will thus contribute to the growing literature concerned with colonial legacies and problems of oppression, will help to expand the

transdisciplinary discussions of decoloniality and intersectionality in university classrooms, and will introduce the discussion of epistemic assumptions into realms of global politics.

### *Contributions and originality*

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The analysis of colonial legacies has been introduced into International Relations from different approaches. Post-colonial works such as *Sovereigns, Quasi Sovereigns, and Africans* (Siba Grovogui, Minnesota Press, 1996), *Transforming World Politics* (Anna Agathangelou and L.H.M. Ling, 2009), and *Creating Boundaries, The Politics of Race and Nation* (Kathryn Manzo, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996) have critiqued colonial legacies while seeking possibilities to move beyond them. Other scholars have studied the limitations of International Relations theories and the colonial legacies that they sustain (e.g., *Methods and Nations*, Michael Shapiro, Routledge, 2004; *International Relations and the Problem of Difference*, Naeem Inayatullah and David Blaney, Routledge, 2004). Post-structuralism was also introduced into International Relations as a way to critique the limitations against differences erected by dominant discourses (e.g., “Speaking the Language of Exile,” Ashley, Richard K., and R.B.J. Walker, *International Studies Quarterly*, 1990; “Patterns of Dissent and the Celebration of Difference,” Jim George and David Campbell, *International Studies Quarterly*, 1990; *Inside/outside*, R.B.J. Walker, Cambridge University Press, 1993). Interpretivism was also introduced as a methodology that could study the complexity of meaning and the problem of biases and domination for example in relation to positivists approaches of International Relations since the late 1980’s (e.g., “The Study of Discourse in International Relations,” Jennifer Milliken, *European Journal of International Relations*, 1999; *Interpretive Research Design*, Peregrine Schwartz-Shea and Dvora Yanon, Routledge, 2012; *Interpreting International Politics*, Cecelia Lynch, Routledge, 2014). Intersectional feminisms have discussed the problem of biases and domination in relation to multiple axes of power (e.g., “Mapping the Margins,” Kimberlé Crenshaw, *Stanford Law Review*, 1991; “Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies,” Sumi Cho, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Leslie McCall, *The University of Chicago Press*, 2013; *Intersectionality*, Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, Polity Press, 2016).

Besides the growing body of literature that aims to contribute to the discussion of domination, oppression, and colonial legacies, there are a number of authors who directly connect these issues with liberalism in the theoretical and historical analysis of the othering tendencies that



it creates. Some authors focus on the theoretical analysis of liberalisms to unveil the epistemic and othering biases that these intellectual productions have created (Parekh 1995; Mills 1997; 2008). Other authors have also taken a more decolonial approach to understand specific forms of liberal violence throughout the world (Quijano and Wallerstein 1992; Quijano 2000; Mignolo 2011; Escobar 2011). Finally, several scholars have engaged in more historical research of liberal violence (Hartz 1955; Rosenberg 1982; Hunt 1987; Mignolo 2005; Goldstein 2014). Our book seeks to contribute to these discussions by filling the gap between them, bringing together the benefits of all of these approaches at the same time, and thereby creating an innovative space of discussion. Hence, the book emphasizes the possibility that decolonial and pluriversal approaches bring to achieve a more systematic, historical, and context-dependent analysis of the epistemic politics of denounced and confronted liberalisms. Additionally, discussions of decoloniality and pluriversality have been largely absent in International Relations and International Studies. A small number of scholars have discussed the advantages of bringing decoloniality and pluriversality into the discipline, but the argument needs to be further developed (Taylor 2012; Tickner and Blaney 2013; Richards 2014; Scauso 2021). To the contrary, Latin American Studies, Native American and Indigenous studies, Pacific Islander studies, and Anthropology have developed discussions of decoloniality much further (Mignolo 2000; 2011; Escobar 2000; 2017). These books and several other articles represent perhaps the most similar set of works to our book, but our contribution would focus more specifically on the denounced issues of liberalisms and particular cases, contributing and expanding the discussion of decoloniality and pluriversality within a more transdisciplinary study of international politics. Additionally, the decolonial and pluriversal approach of this book emerges from the voices of agents who have been largely ignored in International Relations and Political Science. The focus on the ways in which Indigenous, queer, immigrant, green, and other voices of the “south” speak about international dimensions of politics brings about an innovative and ethically driven opportunity to expand these disciplines and debates.

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