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## Emancipating Epistemologies

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# EDITORIAL

## Emancipating Epistemologies

Epistemologies have served as our means of understanding, navigating, and carrying out our collective lives in the globalizing societies we live in. One dominant epistemological tradition that shaped being and knowing from the age of empires through the contemporary world is the universalizing and standardizing knowledge advanced by the Global North. These epistemologies see nature as a resource to be used down to its ends, people into divisions of capital and labor, and societies as protective enclaves meant to keep out undesired fellows.

Northern thoughts, in turn, precipitated global market integration that in turn lead to the reconcentration of resources into the hands of a tiny fraction of the privileged, depletion of planetary resources, and stark economic inequality. Widespread hunger amid record breaking profits for transnational corporations, discrimination, unsecured and suffering localities, rapid transborder spread of diseases, and a far more vulnerable world materialized.

The collection in this volume, which was first presented at a workshop on “Global South Perspectives: Towards Decolonization, De-Stratification and De-centralization of Social Knowledge Production in Hong Kong,” contests the continuing viability of Northern epistemologies as the standard for knowing and frames for acting toward global transformation. These papers posit this challenge amid mounting evidence of widespread sufferings, deepening conflicts, and a planet under severe stress. A couple more papers point to the devastating impact of domestic megalithic infrastructure development and a consumption-driven trading relation on local production knowledge traditions such as that of urban fisherfolk

and shoemakers. In the globalizing societies that we live in, large-scale infrastructure projects and consumption patterns are essentially modeled from the epistemology of globalized capital flows connecting peripheral markets of the South to the core productive enclaves of the North.

The works of Caroline Schöpf, who serves as this issue's co-editor, and Ana Beatriz Martins dissect the disparity and inadequacy of Northern epistemological hegemony vis-à-vis the theories emerging from and debated within the Global South. In "The Coloniality of Global Knowledge Production: Theorizing the Mechanisms of Academic Dependency," Schöpf illustrates the privileging of Global North meta-knowledge production and the systematic subversion of similar thoughts from the Southern academic community as irrelevant, inferior, and even damaging as they are predatory. Martins reviews the diverse, contentious, and expansive epistemologies of time in Southern theorizing, thereby exposing the insularity of the temporal understanding of time in Northern sociological analysis in the article, "Time and Southern Theories: Relation, Consequences, and Debates."

Czarina Saloma, in "The Problem-Solving Mode: Social Scientists Back Home and the Limits of Critique," offers a grounded view of the constraints in contesting Northern epistemology. She situates and nuances the complexity of the lived choices among Global South academics who took the fraught position of engaging hegemonic Western development institutions to manifest in epistemically critical but co-productive, collaborative, and corrective terms of the troubled Western assumptions of local problems.

Tamari Kitossa and Satwinder Singh Rehal examine the epistemic implications of Western normative notions of criminology and Western racist imaginaries once appropriated in non-Western spaces. In "Criminology as Epistemic Necropolitics," Kitossa tracks how the medieval theorizing of crime, punishment, prisons, and human suffering were geopolitically transposed into the modern Western science of criminology and fostered as a normative postcolonial state approach to social control across the Global South. Rehal in "Shifting the 'White Gate' on Black Bodies in Philippine Collegiate Basketball: Toward a Structural Understanding of Covert Racism in the Global South" calls attention to the extension of White racial stereotypes of Black African sports players in Philippine collegiate basketball, exposing the covert form of racism, sense of hierarchies, and internal forms of domination lurking within the Global South.

Fatima Sajjad and Kristine Cabling et al. examine the continuing legacy of colonial education on the neoliberal frames of being and thinking of a decolonized modernity. In “Lagging Behind Others? An Exploration of Muslims’ Educational Outlook in Modern Times,” Sajjad appraises the lasting but insidious residues of the colonial bifurcation of religious and secular education in the binary modern Muslim student ideation of societal and knowledge contribution in Pakistan. Cabling and co-authors of “Foreign Language Policy and Pedagogy in the Philippines: Potentials for a Decolonial Approach” expose the extant colonial framings behind an official Philippine foreign language teaching program geared toward producing a competitive human resource for the shifting needs of the global labor market more than state claims of intercultural openness value formation.

Zona Amper and Marjorie Dino investigate the deep-seated impact of the Northern development, environmental, and consumption paradigms to local communities, economies, and practical knowledge. In “Surviving a Reclamation Project: Shifting Fisherfolk Provisioning Strategies in a Metropolitan City,” Amper presents the adaptive economic survival strategies employed by impoverished urban fisherfolk who lost unconstrained access to the sea following a massive capital-led land reclamation and pockets of marine protection projects along the coastline of a major Philippine metropolis. Dino analyzes the decline of local shoemaking practice and trade amid the onslaught of global consumer forces sweeping through the shoe industry of Central Philippines and in the process effectively emasculating a living knowledge tradition in her piece “Shoemaking in a Central Philippine City: A Disappearing Tradition?”

In sum, the papers of this volume resonate with the broader case for global epistemological transformation grounded on the silenced, excluded, and demobilized knowledge traditions toward the emancipation of epistemologies from a universalizing and standardizing knowledge tradition.

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