

## UnDoing Epistemic Violence

Guest Editor: Claudia Brunner

### General Topic

In the course of the ongoing post- and decolonial turn, the global entanglements of Eurocentrist, Androcentrist and Occidental knowledge with violence have increasingly come into view. Gayatri C. Spivak's feminist-postcolonial understanding of *epistemic violence* as "the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as *Other*" is the preeminent theoretical touchstone for addressing this issue. Other feminists speak of *epistemic injustice* (Miranda Fricker) or *epistemic oppression* (Kristie Dotson). Boaventura de Sousa Santos has coined the strong notion of *epistemicide*, which decolonial theorists embed in the paradigm of *colonial modernity*. In addition to that, many authors have moved beyond criticising processes of Othering and focused on the powerful and privileged position of the colonial and imperial *Self*, for whom epistemic violence is an indispensable prerequisite.

Having shown how deeply embedded epistemic violence is, both in real-world politics and in the foundations of scholarly disciplines, feminist, post- and decolonial, and indigenous theorists proceed towards decidedly counter-hegemonic ways of knowing and modes of organising knowledge with a view to transforming, decolonising and/or subverting dominant paradigms and practices. This agenda is as imperative as it is complex. From Development to Peace Studies, from Educational Studies to Global Sociology, from Philosophy to Gender Studies and beyond, the understanding and implications of colonial modernity have inspired critical voices to search for alternative modes of knowing the world, while fully acknowledging that we all operate on 'modernity's epistemic territory'. Theoretical concepts and notions such as *pluriversality*, *colonial difference*, *epistemic disobedience*, *transmodernity*, *rearguard theory* and many more have shown that, and also how it is possible to rethink the world and thereby transform both in paradigms and policies. However, all of these perspectives are well aware that substantial social and political change has never emanated from theories alone. Substantial societal change will continue to be fought and negotiated in the streets by social movements of marginalised and oppressed people across the world. They themselves have come up with alternative epistemologies, such as *ubuntu*, *re-existence*, and *buen vivir*, to name only a few approaches.

In this issue of the journal, we want to assemble approaches of *knowing the world otherwise* from all kinds of academic disciplines, and from all kinds of social movements, with a special focus on rethinking, unknowing and possibly undoing the, in many ways violent, condition(s) of global colonial modernity. We invite authors to focus on epistemic violence and its entanglements with other forms of violence when exploring ways of knowing the world otherwise. What is the potential of these alternative epistemologies and ontologies, and in which ways are they limited when it comes to un/doing epistemic violence? How can we challenge and change our colonial and imperial modes of knowing the world? In which ways do we have to keep asking, with Audré Lorde, whether the master's tools are adequate to dismantle the master's house, when it comes to undoing epistemic violence, especially within the field of knowledge production and education?

Articles may focus on regional or even local issues, or on specific theories and concepts, but should do so from a perspective that takes entanglements of North/South, West/East, Modern/Colonial and the like into account – or even dismantles these oppositions altogether. We invite authors to present their arguments and material through a deliberate focus on the problem of reproducing epistemic and other forms of violence while trying to undo it. We call on their contributions to carve out this specific focus of 'un/doing' within already critical approaches and concepts of knowing the world otherwise in order to strengthen a multi-, inter- and possibly even trans- or anti-disciplinary debate on un/doing epistemic violence as a prerequisite for reducing other forms of violence that keep existing orders of power in place.

## Potential Approaches to the Topic (not exhaustive)

- debating the phenomenon of epistemic violence and ways of overcoming it, either by way of a comparative approach or within a specific disciplinary frame
- tackling the academia realm, the university or a given discipline as a specific site of un/doing epistemic violence
- discussing alternative epistemologies and ontologies with regard to reducing or avoiding epistemic violence in a given context, taking into account possible limitations and obstacles
- introducing specific counter-hegemonic didactics and pedagogies by which we can address the problem of un/doing epistemic violence
- analysing entanglements of epistemic violence with other forms of violence, with a focus on identifying intersections of potential intervention
- fathoming conceptual as well as political entanglements between violence and non-violence and the resulting problems from the perspective of un/doing epistemic violence
- delineating 'modernity's epistemic territory' by way of exemplifying difficulties and successes in reducing epistemic violence
- challenging the concept of intersectionality when it comes to analysing epistemic violence
- correlating questions of race, sexuality, class and other co-constitutive categories with regard to un/doing epistemic violence
- focusing on social movements and their capacities for addressing and/or challenging epistemic violence

## Schedule

We invite authors from any discipline to send an abstract (maximum 300 words) including title, author(s) and institutional affiliation to [claudia.brunner@aau.at](mailto:claudia.brunner@aau.at) by April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022. By May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022, we will invite authors to write their texts, and inform all others about our decision. The deadline for the submission of full articles (40,000 characters, including spaces) is September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022. After editorial assessment and double-blind review, corrections and proof-reading, the special issue will be published in print and online (green open access) in autumn 2023.

## Guidelines

Please submit abstracts and full papers in English; communication with the editors can also be in German. Further information for potential authors is available [here](#). For any questions regarding the procedures of publication, please contact [clemens.pfeffer@mattersburgerkreis.at](mailto:clemens.pfeffer@mattersburgerkreis.at). For previous articles and issues of the journal, have a look at our [archive](#).

## Guest Editor

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## Journal

The Austrian Journal of Development Studies (JEP) is one of the leading academic journals for development theory and global politics in German-speaking countries and beyond, since many articles and entire issues appear in English. The aim of JEP is to provide a forum for broad critical discussion and reflection on various dimensions of social development in the Global South and North, and especially on their entanglements. Our authors discuss global problems, policies and epistemologies in a broad sense and from multi- and inter-disciplinary perspectives. The topics of the journal cut across Development Studies, Peace and Conflict Studies, Gender Studies, Educational Studies, Global Studies, Global Sociology, Critical and Feminist IR, and many more fields and disciplines.